

ORTHODOX MONASTIC EXPERIENCE AND HERMITIC PRACTICE IN THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH*

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ABSTRACT. This paper is dedicated to a famous Ukrainian monastic saint – Jov Knjahynyc'kij (ca. 1550–1621), a founder of Manjava Skete (also known as the Great Skete) in the Carpathian Mountains, an Orthodox monk, who spent a big part of his life *en route* between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Mount Athos, Moldavia, and Muscovy. His itinerary can be reconstructed on the basis of his Vita, which was composed probably soon after his death. Its author is known as hieromonk Ignatij from Ljubarov. The Vita was published in 1860 by Anthony Petrushevych (1821–1913),¹ a Ukrainian historian and linguist. It was also Petrushevych, who edited the most important sources for the early history of the Manjava Skete – the Spiritual Testament by Theodosius as well as the monastic rule of the skete.² Already the first monograph on the history of Manjava Skete, from its establishment in 1611 until its closure in 1785 by Julian Celevič (1843–1892), was based on Petrushevych's editions.³ The translation of Jov's Vita and

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¹ “Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova, osnovatelja stavropigial'noj skitskoj obiteli činu sv. Vasilija, spisana sovremennikom ieromonachom Ignatiem iz Ljubarova.” In: *Zorja Halickaja jako Al'bum na hod 1860* (Lviv: Tipom Instituta Stavropihijskoho, 1860), 225–251.

² “Zavet duchovnyj v ieroschimonasech Feodosija, igumena byvšago obiteli Svjatoj Skitskoj, k vospominaniju i sveditel'stvu, duchovnomu nastojatelju iže po mne suščemu igumenu, i vsem jaže o Christe Otcem i bratiam moim i čadom po duchu ich že sobra blagodat' božija”. In *Akty odnosjaščiesja k istorii Južnozapadnoj Rusi*, ed. Antonij Petruševič (Lviv: V tipografii Stavropigijskogo Instituta poz darjadom Stefana Gugkovskogo, 1868), 56–100.

³ Julian Celevič, *Istorija Skytu Manjavs'koho vid joho zasnuvannja až do zamknennja (1611–1785)* (Lviv: Nakl. NTŠ, 1887), repr. Ivano-Frankivs'k: Ukraïns'ka Pravoslavna Cerkva Kiïvs'kogo Patriarhatu. Ivano-Frankivs'ka Eparhija, 1993. Some further works on the history of the Skete, are: a descriptive one by Bohdan Sušins'kij, *Slovo pro Skit Manjavs'kij. Istorija Skitu Manjavs'kogo XVII – počatku XXI stolit' – na tli christijans'kogo svitu* (Lviv: Dobra sprava, 2004); on historiography of the Manjava Skete, see Mikola Kuhutjak, “Istorija Velikoho Skitu jaž naukova problema.” In *Haličina 22/23* (2013), 455–471.

of the spiritual testament of Theodosius into English was prepared in a critical edition with commentaries by Sophia Senyk.⁴

Keywords: Manjava skete, Mount Athos, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Moldavia, Muscovy, heremit, female patrons, monastic rules

Introduction

What makes Jov Knjahynyc'kij interesting in the context of the mobility of Orthodox monks is that he himself spent a considerable part of his life on the move. Was it his own choice or what circumstances were responsible for his frequent travelling? What was his own idea of being on the way? Was it appropriate for a monk to leave his monastic community and travel that much or to reside in foreign monasteries? Are there any reflections about the general mobility of monks in Jov's Vita? How does his way of life characterised by mobility correspond with the rules of the monasteries he was connected with and first of all with his own hermitic foundation – the Manjava Skete? Which role did networks play in the mobile biography of Jov Knjahynyc'kij?

It seems that mobility in the case of Jov Knjahynyc'kij was crucial for his experience of the Orthodox monastic way of life and the ascetic hesychastic practices, he was able to become acquainted with during his stay on Mount Athos. His connections with various Orthodox monastic centres in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could be established only through his physical presence in these communities. It is also most probable that the financial support he needed for his own monastic foundation was connected with his mobile biography, transferred experience from the Mount Athos, and readiness to share and to implement his knowledge of hesychastic and hermitic traditions and practices into the local monastic landscape of Ruthenia.

Mobile biography

Ioan (known under the monastic name of Jov) Knjahynyc'kij was born in a noble family around 1550 in the town Tysmjanycja, in the part of the Halyč region known as Pokuttja, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, on the

⁴ Sophia Senyk, *Manjava Skete. Ukrainian Monastic Writings of the Seventeenth Century* (Kalamazoo – Spencer – Coalville: Cistercian Publications, 2001)

territory of today-Ukraine. As a child, he was schooled at the monastery of Univ, an important Galician monastic centre in the Lviv province, where “he listened attentively to the reading of the divine scriptures and came to know the order of monastic life, so that everyone marveled”.⁵ From the Univ Dormition Monastery, Jov Knjahynyc’kij moved to the town Ostroh (Rivne oblast of Western Ukraine) in order to finish his studies at the school there.⁶ The school was founded by the influential ruler of Ostroh – Prince Konstantin Basil (c. 1526–1608)⁷ with Ruthenian and Greek scholars as teachers; it would be later known as the Orthodox Academy of Ostroh.⁸

The next Jov’s relocation followed his studies in Ostroh – he was sent as an envoy of the Orthodox Prince Konstantin Basil to Mount Athos. Jov Knjahynyc’kij was assigned to bring the prince’s alms and letters to the monasteries on the Holy Mountain.⁹ During his visit to Mount Athos, Jov visited many monasteries as “prince’s servant and an honoured guest”, he “saw the common [monastic] life like a second paradise and the monks like other immaterial angels”.¹⁰ Because of his obligations towards Prince Konstantin Basil, Jov had to return to Ostroh, where he asked his patron to discharge him. He left Ostroh and his family (which intended to marry him to a girl from a rich family) and moved back to Mount Athos.¹¹ He spent some time in a skete together with a certain hieromonk Isidor, before the latter sent Jov to the Vatopedi monastery, as he considered the coenobitic life more appropriate for a young person than a skete, an institution mainly aimed at ascetic hermitic isolation.¹²

According to his Vita, Jov learned perfectly Greek during his stay on Mount Athos. That is why, after Jov spent twelve years in the Vatopedi monastery “without ever going away”, he was sent on a long trip to Muscovy (1597–1598) together

⁵ “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 228; English translation: Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 74.

⁶ “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 228; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 74.

⁷ To the person, see: Johannes Krajcar, “Konstantin Basil Ostrožski and Rome in 1582–1584,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35 (1969), 193–214; Tomasz Kempa, *Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski (ok.1524/1525–1608) Wojewoda Kijowski i Marszałek Ziemi Wołyńskiej* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1997).

⁸ Leonid Timošenko, “Heneza ta ideja Ostroz’koï akademii u svitli istoriografii ta novych hipotez,” *Ostroz’ka davnyna* 3 (2014), 148–191. On the school of Ostroh and the idea of the Orthodox revival in Ruthenia, see: Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform. The Kievan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 128–132.

⁹ “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 229; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 74–75.

¹⁰ “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 229: “такo княжій слѣга и гость честный”, “видаше бо іако вторый рай обще житіе, и іакоже вторыхъ ангеловъ безвещъныхъ”; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 75.

¹¹ “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 229–230; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 76.

¹² “Žizn’ prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 230; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 76–77.

with other monks in order to gather alms. The reason the monks chose him for this mission was that he was acquainted with both, the Greek and the Ruthenian language.¹³ It was a regular practice to send monks from Mount Athos to Muscovy for alms. Russian rulers wanted to be seen as imperial patrons of Mount Athos, as legitimate heirs of the Byzantine emperors also in this role, among other things. For instance, Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible (1530–1584) sent bigger donations to Mount Athos, especially after 1581, as his son Ivan Ivanovič's died by his hand. Monastery Vatopedi received on this occasion the biggest donation among all Athonite monasteries. Certainly, the spiritual influence of Mount Athos was one of the reasons to donate to the monasteries there, as Athonite monastic prayers for the salvation of one's soul and remission of one's sins were considered particularly valuable among Orthodox rulers and nobles.¹⁴

Jov and other Athonite monks arrived in Muscovy during the last years of the reign of Feodor Ivanovič (1584–1598). They were able to bring generous alms back to the Holy Mountain. That is why some years later Jov was asked again to go to Muscovy and he had to set off, even though, according to his Vita, he did not want to go again.¹⁵ The reason why Jov was specifically sent to Muscovy was once more his knowledge of the language and of the land.¹⁶ The author of the Vita does not provide any explanation as to why Jov Knjahynyc'kij was not keen on travelling to Moscow. It may be that he wanted to show how Jov would have preferred to live the solitary life on Mount Athos instead of spending months or even years on the way to Muscovy and back. This kind of mobility would have in that case been an enforcement against the wish of the Jov himself due to the hegumen of Vatopedi. Another explanation for the refusal could be Jov Knjahynyc'kij's possible negative experiences during his first mission to Muscovy, which led him to prefer not having to deal with them again for a second time. Or it was simply the fate of Maksim the Greek (c. 1470–1556) who scared Jov, that former monk of Vatopedi, who once was sent as a translator to Muscovy and had to spend most of his life in captivity in Russian monasteries until he died in 1556. It can only be speculated about the exact reasons, why Jov

¹³ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 230; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 78.

¹⁴ Vatopedi received 820 rubles, and monasteries Hilandar and St. Panteleimon received a little less. It was a considerable amount of money, considering that at that time for 100 rubles you could buy ca. 100 cows or 100 horses; Kira Egorova and Ksenia Zubacheva, "The ruble's journey through time, from the Middle Ages to the present day," *Russia Beyond*, 14 May 2020, <https://www.rbth.com/business/332176-history-russian-ruble> (last accessed on 3 April 2023). The money was brought by the tsar's emissary, Ivan Mišenin, in 1582; *Rossija i grečeskij mir v XVI veke*, edited by Sergej M. Kaštanov. Vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), 24.

¹⁵ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 230; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 79.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

preferred not to be sent to Muscovy. Anyway, as it is clear from his Vita, even against his will, he did not have a choice, but to obey his hegumen and go.

Luckily for him, their mission which took place in 1601 had to be cancelled halfway, as the monks learned during their stay in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth about riots and revolts in Muscovy in the so-called "Time of Troubles" (*Smutnoje vremja*); the Athonites went instead to Moldavia, to the *metochion* of the Vatopedi-monastery, whereas Jov remained at a monastery in Tysmjanycja,¹⁷ his birth town on the territory of today-Ukraine. In the following years, Jov Knjahynyc'kij stayed in Ruthenia. Shortly after the Union of Brest (1596), many Orthodox dioceses in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were transferred to the jurisdiction of Rome.¹⁸ Especially in the monastic circles, there was strong opposition to the Union. However, Ruthenian monasticism was rather undeveloped during the early modern period. The wish to progress and reform Orthodox monasteries in this area was, nevertheless, widespread among the church hierarchy.¹⁹ This setting could be helpful in explaining the further "trajectories" of Jov Knjahynyc'kij.

Firstly, Jov was invited to the monastery Univ (Holy Dormition Lavra) by the hegumen Isaiah Balaban and his relative Gedeon Balaban, the Bishop of Lviv, to share his monastic experience from Mount Athos.²⁰ After his stay in Univ, Jov wished to return to his monastic community on the Holy Mountain, but became ill, lost his hearing, and assumed the *schema* ("Great Schema", the supreme vow of monks²¹).²² After Jov partially recovered from his illness, he was invited by one noble couple – Adam Balaban²³ and his wife – to come to Uhornyky (today district Ivano-Frankivsk), where a church dedicated to the Archangel Michael was situated on their property. Jov was suggested to live

¹⁷ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 231; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 79–80.

¹⁸ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 239–242.

¹⁹ See, on the Orthodox reaction to the Union of Brest, Antonij Mironovič, "Pravoslavnaia cerkov' i unija na territorii Reči Pospolitoj v 1596 – 1620 godach" in *Die Union von Brest (1596) in Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung: Versuch einer Zwischenbilanz*, ed. Johann Marte and Oleh Turij. Lviv: Institut für Kirchengeschichte der Ukrainischen Katholischen Universität, 2008), 49–78.

²⁰ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 231; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 80.

²¹ See, Alice-Mary Talbot, "Schema," in *Oxford Byzantine Dictionary* (N.Y./Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Vol. 3, 1849; on the discussion on the role of the "greater habit" in Byzantium, see: Daniel Oltean, "'Petit' et 'grand' habit. Une dispute monastique à l'époque de Théodore Stoudite," *Byzantinoslavica* 1/2 (2015), 35–56.

²² "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 232; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 81.

²³ Adam Balaban was an Orthodox noble in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th – 17th centuries. He was a relative (possibly brother) of Isaiah Balaban, the later hegumen of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Derman' (since 1606).

there in solitude or establish a monastic community on his own.²⁴ But he could not solitarily live for a long time, as he was soon visited and joined by some monks and laymen. Later he received another invitation, this time from the hegumen Isaac of Derman' monastery, himself an Athonite monk. Therefore, Jov left his just-established monastery in Uhornyky under the supervision of one of the monks and moved to the monastery of Derman'. In Derman' he was supposed to help in organising the communal life, so he gladly participated at spiritual as well as communal works.

He even helped in the printing press of the monastery, where during his visit in 1603 a liturgical book, *Octoechos*, was being printed.²⁵ Afterwards he returned to his new monastery in Uhornyky, where he received a visit from another Athonite monk of Ruthenian origins and his friend, an Orthodox scholar and polemist, Ioan Vyšenskij (c. 1550 – after 1620).²⁶ Again Jov Knjahynyc'kij could not stay long with his community. He appointed a substitute monk to be in charge and set out on a journey looking for a solitary hermitic life in a secluded place, far from worldly disturbance. That is how with the help of another patron, a noble Peter Ljaxovyč, Jov found a place in Manjava, in the Carpathians and established a cell to live in solitude.²⁷

After the death of Jov's acquaintance, the Bishop Gedeon Balaban of Lviv, in 1607, Jov Knjahynyc'kij felt obliged to get again involved in ecclesiastic matters, which meant this time that he had to travel to Moldavia, to Iași, in order to supervise the correct procedure of ordination of a new bishop of Lviv.²⁸ And again, his wish to return to Mount Athos could not be fulfilled. Jov Knjahynyc'kij decided to establish a new monastery in Ruthenia which should be similar to the Vatopedi monastery on the Holy Mountain, with the intention of forming youth for the monastic life. Under the patronage of Lady Anastasia Balaban, a

²⁴ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 232; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 82–83.

²⁵ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 233; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 83–84. As a patron of the printing press at the monastery of Derman' prince Konstantin Basil of Ostroh is known. On the press there, see: Ivan Ohijenko (mitropolit Ilarion), *Istorija ukraïns'koho drukarstva* (Kiev: naukovovidavničij centr "Naša kul'tura i nauka", 2007), 260–269.

²⁶ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 233; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 84. Ioan Vyšenskij is a very famous person in Ukrainian and Russian historiography, because of his polemical writings in defense of Orthodoxy against the Union of Brest. See, e.g., an article by Serhij Šumilo on Vyšenskij's biography: Serhij Šumilo, Starec Ioann Višenskij: afonskij podvižnik i pravoslavnaj pisatel'-polemist. Materialy k žizneopisaniju blažennoj pamjati velikogo starca Ioanna Višenskogo Svjatogorca: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Zhitija_svjatykh/starets-ioann-vishenskij-afonskij-podvizhnik-i-pravoslavnyj-pisatel-polemist-materialy-k-zhizneopisaniju-blažennoj-pamjati-velikogo-startsa-ioanna-vishenskogo-svjatogortsa/1 (last access on 21 April 2023).

²⁷ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 233–235; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 85–88.

²⁸ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 235; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 88–90.

new cell was founded in 1611.²⁹ With funding from several lay donors, a bigger church and a monastery were built in Manjava, being consecrated in 1612.³⁰ Instead of staying here, Jov Knjahynyc'kij set off on foot again, this time on a pilgrimage to Kyiv, desiring to visit the Caves-monastery there.³¹ The hermitic character of this place corresponded to the hesychastic ideals Jov got to know on Mount Athos.

Jov came back from Kyiv, took a short break in Manjava and decided to finally go to Mount Athos, but he could not reach further than the town of Kolomyja, because of "great illness". His subsequent attempt to reach the Holy Mountain, in response to an invitation from Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris of Alexandria (1602-1620) to accompany him on a journey through Moldavia, also ended in failure. According to the Vita, God intervened to prevent his return to Mount Athos, recognising the importance of his role in developing the monastic tradition in his homeland, Ruthenia.³²

At this time, Theodosius, the later author of the monastic rule of Manjava, was ordained priest and was later to become hegumen of Manjava, while Jov was away to Kyiv, being commissioned to instruct the hegumen and monks at the monastery of the Caves on common life after Athonite model.³³ In the meantime, a new bigger church was erected in Manjava. In 1620, the skete received from the Patriarch of Constantinople Timotheos II (1612-1620) and Patriarch of Alexandria Kyrillos Loukaris a privileged status of a *stauropegion* (a monastery subordinated directly to the patriarch).³⁴ Again, Jov had to leave his skete, as he was asked by the above-mentioned lady Balaban to take care of the monastery in Uhornyky. She wanted to become a nun, so she gave away her possessions and moved with her spiritual father, Gerasym – the former hegumen of Uhornyky – to Volyn'. Jov established a monastic community there and appointed a hegumen.³⁵ After that, Jov returned to the Manjava skete, where he died on 29 December 1621. He was buried in the new church, on the right side of the narthex.³⁶

It is hard to imagine a monk, who would spend more time on journeys than Jov Knjahynyc'kij, even though only a smaller part of his trips were really long distances. Apart from his journeys to and back from Mount Athos, to

²⁹ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 239; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 99.

³⁰ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 239-242; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 100-104.

³¹ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 242; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 104-106.

³² "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 242-244, Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 106-107, 109-111.

³³ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 246; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 114-115.

³⁴ Ieromonah Dosoftei Dijmărescu, "Două manuscrise de la Schitul Mare (Maniava) aflate la mănăstirea Putna." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008), 209.

³⁵ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 248; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 119.

³⁶ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 248-249; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 119-124.

Muscovy, and Moldavia he spent most of his life in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, visiting numerous monasteries, instructing hegumens and monks, making his own monastic endowments. His knowledge and experience of the Orthodox monastic tradition in its common and hermitic form were in great demand in Ruthenia, which made him wanted by numerous hegumens and lay patrons of monasteries.

As Jov Knjahynyc'kij's biography implies, the mobility of early modern monks was rarely completely voluntary. They depended on their lay and monastic patrons, who chose for them, where they were needed, and they showed obedience. Political and ecclesiastical circumstances limited or favoured mobility – wars and uprisings hindered monks from their missions; ecclesiastic issues had to be solved in the presence of bishops and patriarchs and thus contributed to the necessity of movement. Not less important for the mobility of early modern monks was the mentioned obedience to the Lord, their wish to follow the divine plan for them. In the case of Jov Knjahynyc'kij, the Vita shows that his wish of travelling back to Mount Athos was repeatedly prevented through divine interference in the form of illnesses or other issues he had to deal with, which made him stay in Ruthenia and fulfil his destiny through the development of monasticism in his homeland.

Monastic centres and networks

Monastic networks were crucial for the mobility of monks. Jov Knjahynyc'kij had contact with numerous Orthodox monasteries, first of all in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also certainly on the Mount Athos, where he had been tonsured at the Vatopedi monastery. His education was connected with Univ monastery; he spent time at Derman' monastery and supported its printing activities, he established the monastic communities of Uhornyky and Manjava, and played as well an important role in the spiritual revival of the monastery of the Caves in Kyiv. Apart from monastic centres, also people – friends and acquaintances among monks as well as lay patrons constituted a broad network, which supported Jov Knjahynyc'kij in his peregrinations. Alone his Vita mentions more than forty-five names of contemporaries he was in regular contact with.³⁷

Mount Athos played a particular role in the mobile biography of Jov Knjahynyc'kij. Although Mount Athos was far away from Ruthenia under Ottoman rule, the Orthodox noblemen and church hierarchs seemed to be interested in maintaining close contact with the Holy Mountain. For the Prince of Ostroh

³⁷ Beljakova, "Afon i Manjavskij skit", 62.

Konstantin Basil, supporting monasteries and monks on Mount Athos was fundamental for his prestige as a local Orthodox ruler, patron and sponsor of the Orthodox Greek hierarchs and monks. Not least, he supported the printing press with Church Slavonic and Greek typefaces and established an Orthodox academy. Good connections to the Athonites were a part of this image and it needed to be kept alive by exchanging letters and books, sending alms and showing hospitality to envoys.³⁸ For Jov Knjahynyc'kij, who first got to know Mount Athos as an emissary of Prince Konstantin Basil, Mount Athos became a place of perfect monastic life and solitude, where he spent most of his younger years. It appears that Mount Athos held a dual significance for Jov. On the one hand, it was a tangible location where he resided as a monk. On the other hand, it represented an idealised and heavenly space that he sought to recreate in his homeland. It was a model of perfect monastic life he wanted to implement in his own monasteries. His wish was surely to live on Mount Athos, but the divine intervention ensured that he remained in Ruthenia and spread the Athonite ideals there. Other Athonites of Ruthenian origins became part of Jov's networks, among them the hegumen of Derman' monastery, Isaac, as well as the famous publicist and Jov's friend, Ioan Vyšenskij.

Manjava Skete was also known beyond Ruthenia. There is evidence from Moldavia, Wallachia, and Muscovy about existing connections with this skete. Some manuscripts from Manjava were found at the monastery Putna in Moldavia, among them the copy of Jov's Vita and Spiritual Testament by Theodosius containing also an icon with both saints – Jov and Theodosius.³⁹ In Bucharest were discovered manuscripts from the Manjava Skete as well.⁴⁰ From Muscovy, Manjava Skete (known there as the Great Skete) received a number of printed liturgical books.⁴¹ Consecrated by the Eastern Patriarchs, the Skete Manjava continued to maintain contact with Greek hierarchs. Among the well-known monks in Manjava Skete was Theodosius, a hieromonk from the Moldavian Putna Monastery⁴² and another Jov, the later hegumen of the famous Ukrainian Pochaiv Lavra and an Orthodox saint.⁴³

³⁸ Krajcar, "Konstantin Bazil", 207–214.

³⁹ Ieromonah Dosoftei Dijmărescu, "Două manuscrise de la Schitul Mare (Maniava) aflate la mănăstirea Putna." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008), 205–228.

⁴⁰ Mikola Kuhutjak, "Istorija Velikoho Skitu jaž naukova problema." *Haličina* 22/23 (2013), 455–471, on p. 462.

⁴¹ Beljakova, "Afon i Manjavskij skit", 61.

⁴² "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 237; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 93–94.

⁴³ Dijmărescu, "Două manuscrise", 209.

Patrons and friends

It seems that during his studies in Ostroh, Jov learned Prince Konstantin Basil and his family pretty well, as he copied out for Konstantin's son Alexander the Psalter.⁴⁴ The prince himself became obviously a patron of Jov Knjahynyc'kij, as he later demanded Jov to go to Mount Athos at his request. A noble from Uhornyky, Adam Balaban, and his wife were happy to become Jov Knjahynyc'kij's patrons, as they invited him to move to their lands, to take care of their church and possibly to establish a monastery on their estate in order to keep close a famous monk to pray for them. Another patron, Peter Ljachovič, was essential for founding the skete in Manjava. He also sponsored the building of a church there.⁴⁵

Later acquaintances of Jov Knjahynyc'kij were famous Ruthenian scholars like Ioan Vyšenskij – a publicist and Athonite monk himself. His letter to Jov Knjahynyc'kij is preserved, where he appears as an advocate of wandering monks. He draws a parallel between the Slavic verb “скитати” and a “skete” (скит) for anchorites.⁴⁶ Also in further writings he vigorously defended the idea of monks wandering to the desert in search of solitude and ascetic living instead of staying at urban monasteries.⁴⁷ An Orthodox hieromonk and author Zacharija Kopystenskij (died in 1627),⁴⁸ who knew Jov, wrote a complimentary passage about the monastic life and the skete of Manjava in his book “Palinodia” (1621).⁴⁹ Among other major contacts were Isaias Balaban, a hegumen of the Univ Dormition Monastery, and later the head of the printing shop in Ostroh, as well as Gedeon Balaban, the bishop of Lviv (1569–1607).⁵⁰ All of them are mentioned in his Vita, as deeply interested in, and fascinated by, Jov Knjahynyc'kij's experience of hermitic life in solitude and silence or by his knowledge of the Eastern monastic traditions, rites, and rules.

⁴⁴ Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 74.

⁴⁵ “Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova”, 238

⁴⁶ See Ivan Vyšenskij, *Sočinenija* (“Poslanie Iovu Knjaginickomu”). Edited by E.P. Eremina. (Moscow/Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955), 209: от кѣлия до велия и от монастыря до монастыря скитати.

⁴⁷ Ivan Vyšenskij, *Sočinenija*, 212–218. See also here: Beljakova, “Afon i Manjavskij skit”, 65.

⁴⁸ Zacharija Kopystenskij is well-known as an Orthodox scholar and polemist, who was active in Kyiv as a member of the Orthodox brotherhood. He supported the activity of the printing press in Kyiv, wrote several books and became the hegumen of the Cave monastery in 1624.

⁴⁹ See, “Palinodija. Sočinenie kievskogo ieromonacha Zaharii Kopystenskogo, 1621 – 1622 goda.” In: *Russkaja istoričeskaja biblioteka, izdavajemaja Archeografičeskoju kommissijeju*. Vol. 4: *Pamjatniki polemičeskoj literatury v Zapadnoj Rusi*, 1. (Saint Petersburg: Archeografičeskaja kommissija, 1878), 313–1200, on p. 856.

⁵⁰ Elena V. Beljakova, “O nekotorych osobennostjach rasprostraneniya kirilličeskich pamjatnikov cerkovnogo prava u slavjan v rannee novoe vremja.” *Slavica slovaca* 55, no. 1 (2020), 37–45, on p. 41.

An interesting aspect is a question on the relationship between Jov Knjahynyc'kij and women. As we have seen, from his Vita it is known that he avoided marriage. This was partially the reason, why he took refuge in the Holy Mountain. As he arrived at Mount Athos, "he saw no one of the female sex, not even animals, unless a wild one or a bird flying through the air".⁵¹ The rules of Manjava Skete, formulated by Theodosius in the Spiritual Testament, forbade all contact of monks with women. Communication with women was considered to be worse than one with the devil; the testament specifies that it is better for a monk to take deadly poison than to dine with a woman, even if she is his mother or sister.⁵²

But this aversion towards women was hard to be seen in the description of Jov's life in Ruthenia; he seems to have appreciated female patronage and women's interest in his person and his monastic way of life. To mention is Anastasia (Voljanovskaja), Adam Balaban's wife, who welcomed Jov at first at their estate in Uhornyky, where they entrusted to Jov Knjahynyc'kij their church of St Michael the Archangel. Jov contacted her later, as he needed help to establish a hermitic cell in Manjava. This is how Vita describes their relationship: "He [Jov] began to clear off a place for the cell, then told the brethren to continue clearing it, while he himself went to a certain Christ-loving lady, Anastasia Balaban. He told her about his proposal [of establishing a cell "with the rules and customs that he had observed on the Holy Mountain"] and what he had started and asked her to build a cell. She gladly straightway sent skilled workers to build a spacious cell. Thus, he moved to the new cell, [to live] further off in solitude, in 1611."⁵³

It seemed that they had been well acquainted with each other, as Anastasia Balaban not only supported his monastic plans financially, but she also stayed by Jov Knjahynyc'kij, when he was ill. Lady Balaban took care of him, "put cold compresses on him" until he got better.⁵⁴ Later, when Anastasia Balaban was already a widow, she decided to become a nun and to move away from her estate in Uhornyky. She, therefore, addressed again Jov Knjahynyc'kij to take over the control of the monastery there, which he was glad to comply with. She acted as a patroness (кѣтиторка) of this male monastery, which needed to elect a new hegumen, since she intended to take the previous hegumen, her spiritual father, with her on the search for a suitable nunnery. Jov did as he was asked to, took care of the monastic community, found new brethren and a new hegumen for the

⁵¹ Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 75–76; "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 229: наипаче же невидѣ женска пола, даже до скотѣ, развѣ звѣра или на въздѣхѣ.

⁵² "Zavet duchovnyj," 63; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 140.

⁵³ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 239; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 99.

⁵⁴ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 243; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 110.

monastery in Uhornyky.⁵⁵ Lady Balaban went presumably to the monastery in Četvertnja (that had been founded in 1618 by her nephew, a noble, Prince Grigorij Ostafijovič). The first hegumen of this nunnery became Anastasia's spiritual father Gerasim.⁵⁶ Supposedly some other ladies actively supported the Manjava Skete – among them Maria Movilă (ca. 1592–1644), daughter of the Moldavian voivode Ieremia Movilă (c. 1555–1606), Stefan Potocki's wife.⁵⁷ It seems that female patrons could also influence the level of mobility of the monks. In this case, Jov felt supported in his monastic activities, knew that his hermitic plans would be sponsored by a patroness, and could expect to be valued and respected as a monk and human being.

Another connection to a woman, according to the Vita, was intended to show the respect and influence that Jov Knjahynyc'kij enjoyed not only among Orthodox inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also among representatives of other denominations. In this case, he convinced a noble Lutheran lady, Anna Korec'ka,⁵⁸ to choose Orthodoxy over her own confession. This is how Vita reports on this event: "Princess Anna Korec'ka, although she was a fanatical adherent of the Lutheran faith, wanted very much to see the elder. He did visit her; she was very happy to see him and opened her conscience to him. The elder taught her and told her to abandon her damnable heresy, to submit to the teaching of her [local Orthodox] bishop and to keep to Orthodoxy. She carried this out with alacrity; he commended her to the bishop and departed."⁵⁹ Jov's ascetic reputation and monastic authority were definitely important in his contacts with lay women and, as it seems, even to the ones of other confessions.

The Rule of the Manjava-Skete Regarding the Mobility of Monks

As Jov Knjahynyc'kij biography showed, he used to travel a lot, and his monastic habit was not an obstacle to his mobility. It seems, however, that the author of his Vita strove to explain that the reasons for Jov to leave his monastery were by no means that he grew tired of staying in one place or that he enjoyed

⁵⁵ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 248; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 119.

⁵⁶ On Adan Balaban's widow, although the author calls her "Marina" (possibly her monastic name?), see Oleh Duch, *Prevelebnii panni. Žinoči černeči spil'noti L'vivs'koï ta Peremišl'skoï eparhij u rann'omodernij period* (Lviv: Vidavnictvo Ukraïns'kogo katolic'koho universitetu, 2007), 385.

⁵⁷ Dijmărescu, "Două manuscrise", 210.

⁵⁸ About Anna Korec'ka it is only known that she was involved in the legal conflicts with the monastery Vydubyčy near Kiev. See, Laurent Tatarenko, "Violence et luttes religieuses dans la Confédération polono-lithuanienne (fin XVIe – milieu du XVII siècle): l'exemple de la confrontation entre uniates et orthodoxes," *Revue historique* 4 (2008) no. 648, 857–890, here p. 859.

⁵⁹ "Žizn' prepodobnogo otca Iova", 244; Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 110.

travelling and visiting other places and monasteries. He travelled because this was what God intended for him. The hagiographer emphasises Jov's repeated attempts to return to the Athos monastery, in which he had been professed.⁶⁰ On the other hand, it does not seem that Jov's many journeys were considered a contradiction to the monastic habitus.

His predecessor – the already mentioned monk of Vatopedi, the famous philologist and translator Maksim the Greek, who had spent his early years travelling from Arta in Ottoman Greece to Italian cities, such as Florence, Milan, Venice, or Padova, where he studied⁶¹ – seemed to be happy to stay for a lifetime at Vatopedi after taking the monastic vows on Mount Athos. But like Jov Knjahynyc'kij decades later, Maksim was also sent in 1516 from Vatopedi with a mission to Muscovy. The task was to translate “divine, namely Greek books”.⁶² He was never allowed to leave Muscovy and join his monastic community on Mount Athos again. He was kept in captivity at different Russian monasteries after being accused of heresy, collaboration with Ottoman authorities, etc.⁶³ According to Maksim the Greek, who authored several treatises on Orthodox monastic life, free movement contradicted flagrantly the monastic profess and vows. He assessed the strict prohibition of travelling and living outside the monastic community as being the traditional practice of the monastery of Vatopedi and other Athonite monasteries. Maksim wrote in his letter to the Grand Prince of Muscovy Vasilij III in 1518/19 that in the monasteries on Mount Athos, “if someone wants to move to another monastery, he is not allowed to do so. If he secretly evades, he is repeatedly called by his hegumen to return. If he does not obey, the hegumen threatens him with excommunication. Being afraid of excommunication, he comes back to his monastery and obeys to his shepherd.”⁶⁴

In his other writings on Eastern monasticism, Maksim the Greek pointed out as well the importance of a sedentary life for monks in one and the same monastery, without free movement, staying true to one's vow, and basically

⁶⁰ Sophia Senyk wrote here on monks' mobility in the pre-modern period: Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 40.

⁶¹ On the 'Italian period' in the life of Maksim the Greek, see Jack Haney, *From Italy to Muscovy: the life and works of Maxim the Greek* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973), 16–27.

⁶² *Rossija i grečeskij mir*, no. 3, 130: всудихом мы, смиреннии служ(е)бники ц(а)рств(а) твоег(о), послати к тебѣ возлюбленног(о) брата н(а)ш(е)го Маѣима, искусна суца и пригожа к толкованію и преведенію всаких книг ц(е)рк(о)вных и гл(а)г(о)лемых елинских, понеж(е) ѿ юноскіа младости в сих возрасте ученияхъ [...]

⁶³ Haney, *From Italy to Muscovy*, 67–68.

⁶⁴ Here in my translation. See Prepodobnyj Maksim Grek, *Sočinenija*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 126: Но аще въскощет нѣкто къ инои обители преходити, не попускается; аще же утаився избежит, призывается многожды от игумена своего, и аще не послушает, тогда под юзами отлучения его полагаетъ, он же отлучения боязнию наказан, възвращается въ свои монастырь и своему пастырю повинуться.

denying any form of physical mobility in favour of the spiritual one in search of virtue.⁶⁵ Several decades later, he writes again even more unequivocally that “in order to know how to please God, you have to listen to Himself, as he clearly put in the law and commanded to us, monks, as follows, ‘Which temple you enter, you have to stay there until you pass away, and do not move from temple to temple.’ That is how the Lord, the ruler of all, clearly commands to us, monks, who emulate apostles in their way of life that we stay until the end there, where we have been called upon in the beginning, without moving from one monastery to another, or from one country to another until we pass away from this mundane life.”⁶⁶

For Maksim the Greek, it was his conviction about the spiritual benefit of staying in the same monastic community which came with prayer, monastic discipline, and contemplation instead of wandering in the world outside that made him critical of monks moving around. But certainly, his own fate of being kept apart from his homeland and his monastery motivated him to focus on this particular subject, in order to persuade Russian rulers that his wish to return to Mount Athos was more than a personal aspiration, but truly his *obligation* as every monk had to fulfil: to remain in his monastery until he died. Otherwise, he would have failed his own monastic vows, and would thus have been deprived of his achievements. His longstanding efforts and endeavours would be annulled, as he would not be able to fulfil his promises to Christ.⁶⁷ Maksim the Greek not only gave his personal opinion on monastic mobility, but vehiculated a *Zeitgeist*.

⁶⁵ Neža Zajc, “U istokov monašeskogo mirovozzrenija prep. Maksima Greka (k 550-letiju so dnja roždenija svjatogo)”, *Germenevtika drevnerusskoj literatury* 20 (2021), 250–272, here 257.

⁶⁶ Prepodobnyj Maksim Grek, *Sočinenija*, edited by Nina Sinicyna. Vol. 2 (Moscow: Rukopisnye pamjatniki Drevnej Rusi, 2014), 144: “Како же ли угодно есть Ему, услышите Самого, сицѣ явьственѣ узаконяюща и повелѣвающа нам инокомъ: «В ню же храмину внидите, в тои пребывайте, дондеже изыдете, и не преходите исъ храмины въ храмину.» Се явѣ Владыка всѣхъ повелительнѣ повелѣваетъ намъ инокомъ, апостольское житие подражающимъ, идежѣ изначала каждо призвани // быхомъ, ту и до конца пребывати, не преходящим от монастыря в монастырь ниже от страны въ ину страну, дондеже изыдемъ от житиа сего суетнаго.” My translation.

⁶⁷ He addressed in numerous letters the great prince Vasilij III and later the Tsar Ivan IV and asked them to let him go back to the Mount Athos. See, e.g., Maksim Grek, *Sočinenija*, vol. 1, 165: Мнѣ же и сущим со мною братии възвращение къ Святѣи Горѣ за вся просящим даровати да изволиши, от долгя сеа печали свободити. Въздаи пакы нас добрѣ и опаснѣ честному монастырю Ватопеди, издавна нас ждушу и чяюшу по вся часы, по подобию птенцовъ питающа их ждущих. Да не лишимся многолѣтных тамошних трудов и потовъ нашихъ, ихъ же положихом тамо о надежи нашего о Господѣ скончания. Даруи нам, о самодръжче богочестивѣишии и милосердѣишии, тамо съвършити нам Господеви иноческа обѣщания, идѣже волею обѣщание сътворихом пред Христом и страшными аггелы Его въ день пострижения нашего. See Maksim Grek, *Sočinenija*, vol. 2, 143.

His writings were copied and distributed in handwritten form not only in Muscovy, but also in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where some of his treatises – about the sign of the cross (Vilnius, 1585/1595), and against the Latins (Ostroh 1588) – were even printed and distributed among Orthodox Ruthenians.

For Jov Knjahynyc’kij mobility was an intrinsic part of his life, but similar to Maksim the Greek he always cultivated the strong desire that was fundamental for him to return one day to the monastery, where he had been tonsured, in order to spend the rest of his life there accordingly to the canons. His *Vita* states, “he knew well that if someone ends his life in the same monastery where he was tonsured [...] such a monk will unfailingly be crowned with the crown [of victory] by the Judge on the terrible day of his coming.”⁶⁸

The rule of the Manjava-Skete given by Theodosius is quite strict in regard to the mobility of monks. Its chapter 17 forbids monks to leave the monastery without the permission (blessing) of the hegumen.⁶⁹ As the main reason for this prohibition of free movement, Theodosius mentions the spiritual danger for the monk – on the one hand, it is harmful to the monk to demonstrate disobedience towards the hegumen and to leave the monastery without permission. On the other hand, free moving from place to place is risky because of the devil, who enjoys leading wandering monks into sin or even into illness and death. At this point, Theodosius tells a story about an older monk, who – after many years of living in his monastery without ever getting out and being thus a proper monk –, was tempted by the devil and determined to go. He left his cell without the hegumen’s permission, got injured, bled out, and died.⁷⁰ It is, however, relevant that this part of the *Spiritual Testament* leaned on the writings of the Muscovite spiritual authority of Ioseph Volotsky (1439–1515) and was hence a product of earlier perceptions on the mobility of monks, which originated in the rather conservative Muscovite religious landscape.⁷¹

Theodosius’s *Spiritual Testament* was inspired among other things by the so called *Skitsky ustav*, a Slavonic compilation of rules for monastic hermitic communities in the manner of sketes.⁷² It is a rule which similarly restricts the mobility of monks, who are ordered not to leave their cells without major need. In the case of urgency, they are allowed to go out on Saturdays or Sundays.

⁶⁸ Senyk, *Manjava Skete*, 81.

⁶⁹ “Zavet duchovnyj,” 80.

⁷⁰ “Zavet duchovnyj,” 80.

⁷¹ According to Elena Beljakova, this chapter 17 matches with the Seventh Word of the *Ustav* of Yoseph Volotsky, Beljakova, “Afon i Manjavskij skit”, 65.

⁷² Beljakova, “Afon i Manjavskij skit”, 64–65.

Particularly important for the monks was to not abandon their cells and to avoid neglecting the canon during Holy Thursday and Good Friday, not to mention the whole period of Lent.⁷³

It can, furthermore, be argued that although written rules and treatises were often critical towards the free movement of Orthodox monks, the reality was more complex and made it necessary for some of them to be constantly on the move, in order to fulfil their obligations of teaching and instructing (as in the case of Jov Knjahynyc'kij). They had to respond to the call of their lay patrons or ecclesiastical authorities. For "ordinary" monks, the movement was limited to the bare minimum, anyhow, or was even entirely forbidden.

Conclusion

Jov Knjahynyc'kij is a fascinating example of the high mobility of Orthodox monks in the early modern period. Born and schooled in Ruthenia, he moved to Mount Athos, where he became a monk and stayed for many years at the monastery of Vatopedi. Because of his Ruthenian origins and knowledge of the Slavic language, he was chosen to be sent on missions to collect alms in Muscovy. Later, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it was his knowledge of the Greek language and his experience with monastic life on Mount Athos that made him be demanded in questions connected to the implementation and development of the Orthodox monasticism, the initiatives of religious foundations, and the articulation of monastic and hermitic rules for the new establishments. He became the founder of the new Manjava Skete in the Ukrainian Carpathians. The rule for his skete praised the role of sedentary living in a cell and prohibited free movement for the monks without the permission of the hegumen. It is clear that Jov himself stood, certainly, above the rule and travelled to different Orthodox monasteries of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Moldavia, counselled not only monks and hierarchs but lay people as well on the specifics of monastic and hermitic life. He cultivated impressive networks among Ruthenian intellectuals, theologians, and printers, and stayed in contact with some lay women, whom he encouraged to donate to the monasteries, or even to choose – when living in multi-confessional societies – the "right" faith.

⁷³ Elena Beljakova, "Ustav po rukopisi RNB Pogod. 876", *Drevnjaja Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki* 1/11 (2003), 63–95, folio 306, on p. 85.

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