

Manufacturing a Past for the Present

*Forgery and Authenticity in Medievalist Texts and
Objects in Nineteenth-Century Europe*

Edited by

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Excellent Scholar—Excellent Forger: The Case of Karl Benedict Hase

Igor P. Medvedev

In loving memory of Ihor Ševčenko

One would think that no serious scholar would put his reputation at risk for the sake of a forgery, however exciting it might be . . . It was probably due to this assumption that those starting to question the authenticity of some widely renowned writings were met with such incredulity and almost total resentment by the academic community. Unfortunately, a rather vast experience of forgery disclosures is proof of our fellow scholars being only human, including the most prominent ones. Motives of such “criminal” behaviour could be very different—anything from patriotic pathos feeding on the growing interest in the heroic national past (as was the case with James Macpherson and his Ossian cycle of poems that had a powerful reinforcing effect on the forgery trend) to the vain dream of a scholar to create a work of genius—even if anonymous or in the form of some kind of an intellectual game (it turns out that few people manage to resist the urge to present their wishful thinking as something real)—to merely mercantile considerations as was the case with our “hero”. Well, judge for yourselves.

As is well known, in 1819, the famous Parisian Hellenist of German origin Karl Benedikt Hase (1780–1864) published the first edition of Leo Diaconos’s *Historia* commissioned by Russian Chancellor Count Nikolai P. Rumiantsev (1754–1826). The explanatory notes (*Notae philologicae et historicae*) accompanying the text of this tenth-century Byzantine scholar contain, among other things, a long anonymous letter that, according to Hase, could be regarded as a complement to Leo’s brief description of the seizure of Kherson (Korsun) by the Russians at the time of Vladimir the Great. The letter was supposed to be a first-hand account of the event, found by the editor in one of the handwritten Greek *corpora* that came to the Royal Library at the time of Napoleon’s contributions but was later—due to the agreements of 1814–1815—returned to an unknown destination along with other manuscripts.¹ At any rate, in

¹ *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historia, scriptoresque alii ad res Byzantinas pertinentes*, C.B. Hase (ed.) (Paris: Typogr. Regia, 1819, 254–9). As a considerable part of the edition (125 copies out

Hase's publication the manuscript is already referred to as missing (*qui fuit Bibliothecae Regiae*).

Since then these obscure and enigmatic text fragments, gracefully named "The Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus" by Academician Arist Kunik, have brought forth an entire library of scholarly works dedicated to them (more than 60 titles by 1971!),² turning into some kind of charade, deciphering of which would allow the authors (among them such well-known names as Academicians Arist Kunik and Vasiliy Vasilievskiy, and among the contemporary ones, Gennady Litavrin, Maria Nistazopoulou, etc.) to demonstrate their intellectual potential, erudition and wit. There have been all kinds of speculations: on the unnamed area that was the scene of the events described in the Fragments (some suggested Bulgaria, others Tauris), on the nameless and belligerent barbarians devastating the environs of the Byzantine *strategos'* residence (there were assumptions that they could have been Russians or Khazars), on the unnamed powerful ruler from the Northern Danube area—most often identified as one of the Russian princes (Igor, Oleg, Sviatoslav and Vladimir were all suggested), on the local subjects of the Byzantine Toparcha (the actual author of the Fragments) who managed to convince the latter to accept the predominance of the Russian (?) ruler when faced with the threat of a barbarian invasion (the common guess was they were Crimean Goths), and so on. Hase himself suggested that all the events described in the Fragments had taken place in Crimea and specifically at the time of Vladimir's seizure of Korsun—that is, in 988 A.D. Quite naturally, almost all the authors tended to view these fragments as an important source of information on ancient Slavic and Russian history. They clearly appreciated the favorable image of the (presumably Russian) "barbarians" presented in the Fragments: the author of the Fragments acknowledged their "former justice and lawfulness" that at the moment were being "destroyed" but had earlier been "very highly respected and therefore had given these people the biggest trophies so that cities and peoples had given themselves to them of their own accord" (257.11.1). Here is

of 400) was lost in a shipwreck during its transport to Saint Petersburg, the text was reprinted in Bonn in the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1828, vol. 11; the text of the Fragments: 496–504). See more about this in Igor Medvedev, "Novye dannye po istorii pervogo izdaniya Lva Diakona" [New data on the history of the first edition of Leo the Deacon], *Vizantiysky Vremennik*, 61(86) (2002), 5–23. The notes in the text refer to the Parisian edition (254–9; the number of each of the three fragments is denoted in Roman digits and the paragraph number by an Arabic numeral).

2 See a detailed bibliography in the addendum (177–80) to Ihor Ševčenko's article mentioned in n. 4, below.

what Vasiliy Vasilievskiy said on the matter: “We agree with Kunik’s remark that such an honorary judgement could not possibly refer to the Petcheneg savages (*die wilden Pesnaere* of the Nibelungs) as Dmitry Ilovayskiy first suggested. As unconvincing are the arguments for the Khazars being the object of this favorable comment. Nowhere in Byzantine sources can we find a similar comment referring to the Khazars whereas the common opinion about the Russians among the Byzantines of the last quarter of the tenth century happens to be very close to the above mentioned quote.” As proof of this there is a reference to prince Sviatoslav’s speech in Dorostol, reported by Leo Diaconus and containing the following passage: “Gone will be the glory that hitherto has followed the Russian arms, effortlessly conquering neighbouring peoples and subduing entire countries, if we now disgracefully yield to the Romans” (i.e., the Byzantines). “Even this parallelism of phrasing displayed by Leo Diaconus and our author,” concluded Vasilievskiy “makes us inclined to support the popular belief that this passage (of the “Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus”—*I.M.*) refers to the Russians.”³

This spontaneous process of “historical exegesis” would probably still be going on if it had not been for one researcher who—almost regrettably—put an end to this whole discussion. The American scholar, Ihor Ševčenko, in his report for the XIIIth International Congress of Historical Science and in the following articles claimed that the famous Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus were actually nothing more than a fabrication of their first publisher Karl Benedikt Hase.⁴ To our Byzantinists it was like a bolt from the blue, at first provoking vehement resistance⁵ which, however, soon started to recede and now

3 Vasiliy Vasilievskiy, “Zapiska grecheskogo toparkha,” [The note of the Greek Toparcha] in *Trudy V.G. Vasilievskogo* vol. 2 (Saint Petersburg: Russian Imp. Acad. of Sc., 1909), 159.

4 Ihor Ševčenko, “The Date and Author of so-called Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 115–88 (plates 1–28). See an abridged version of the article (under the same title) in *Bulletin d’information et de coordination de l’Association Intern. des études byzantines*, Athens, 5 (1971), 71–95. See also Ševčenko’s foreword to the reprint of the 1901 edition: *Die Fragmente des Toparcha Gothicus (Anonymus Tauricus) aus dem 10. Jahrhundert*, F. Westberg (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat, 1975).

5 Apart from some rather emotional oral objections at the Congress there was also a published one: Ivan Bozhilov, “Hase’s Anonym and Ihor Ševčenko’s Hypothesis,” *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, 5 (1978), 245–58. The article was also included as an addendum in the same author’s monograph that was published one year later but had obviously been written before Ševčenko’s publications: Ivan Bozhilov, *Anonimăt na Chase: Bălgarija i Vizantija na dolni Dunav v kraja na x vek* [Hase’s Anonymous: Bulgaria and Byzantium at the lower Danube at the end of the tenth century] (Sofia: Bulg. Akad. Nauk., 1979), 132–46. The author was faced with a rather difficult dilemma: whether to acknowledge the discovery of the American scholar (making

seems to have entirely abated⁶ as the evidence presented is so convincing that the opponents practically “haven’t a leg to stand on.”⁷ Ševčenko’s work is akin to that of a clever criminalist who manages to define both the components and the motive of the crime.

Here we are going to try to present a summary of Ševčenko’s argumentation. Having spent a considerable amount of time trying to locate the missing manuscript containing the Fragments, the researcher—by a process of elimination—finally ended up with the Heidelberg manuscript Palatinus gr. 356 with contents similar to those of the document Hase had described (letters of St Basil, St Gregory of Naziansus and Falaris), only to discover that it did not contain (and never had) any of the above mentioned fragments.⁸ All hope

publication of the monograph virtually impossible) or try to refute it. He chose the latter option but was hardly satisfied with his own argumentation.

- 6 Here I do not take into account those who still—implicitly, and as if nothing had happened (probably out of ignorance), continue to use the Fragments as a source of historical information. See for example Andrei N. Sakharov, “Vostochny pokhod Sviatoslava i Zapiska grecheskogo toparkha,” [The eastern campaign of Sviatoslav and the Note of the Greek Toparcha] *Istoriia sssr*, 3 (1982), 86–103; Idem, *Diplomatiya Svyatoslava* [Sviatoslav’s diplomacy] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1985), 112–27; Vladimir P. Kozlov, *Kolumby rossiyskikh drevnostey* [Columbuses of Russian antiquity], 2nd edition (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), 133; Idem, *Rossiyskaia arkheografiia kontsa XVII—pervoy chetverti XIX veka* [Russian archaeography from the late seventeenth to the first quarter of the nineteenth century] (Moscow: Nauka, 1999), 224.
- 7 Aleksandr Kazhdan wrote in his article on “Toparcha Gothicus” in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, A.P. Kazhdan (ed.), (New York-Oxford: OUP, 1991), 3, 2094–5 that “Ševčenko put forth serious arguments demonstrating that Toparcha Gothicus was a forgery by Hase,” but this conclusion is followed by a rather incomprehensible statement about “the majority of East European scholars” not having accepted his hypothesis. Here, he refers to the above mentioned articles by I. Bozhilov and A. Sakharov, of whom the latter was apparently “out of the loop.”
- 8 Ihor Ševčenko did not know yet that long before him, in 1927, Vladimir Beneshevich had actually done the same thing, figuring out that it must be Palatinus gr. 356, and getting the same negative result. See Igor Medvedev, “Neozhidanny Beneshevich: zametki po materialam arkhiva uchenogo” [The unexpected Beneshevich: notes on the archive of that scholar], *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, 55(80) (1994), 27–8. We should also exclude the supposition that the manuscript could have been lost in a shipwreck to Saint Petersburg during transport of Leon Diaconus’ publication copies. See Maria G. Nystazopoulou, “Note sur l’Anonyme de Hase improprement appelé Toparch de Gothie,” *Bulletin de la Correspondance Hellénique*, 86 (1962), 320. From Hase’s letters to Academician Krug we know quite well about the contents of the lost box: it never contained any manuscript. And why on earth—as Nikolaos M. Panagiōtakēs, (*Λέων ὁ Διάκωνος*, Athens: n. p., 1965, 122) cleverly observes—should Hase have sent a manuscript, that did not even belong to him, as a present to Count Rumiantsev?

to find the original manuscript (or at least a handwritten copy of it) was now gone but there were still Hase's papers from the National Library in Paris (*Supplement Grec 858*) to be examined, first of all the copy of the Fragments in Hase's own handwriting that had been used for the original typesetting. It was upon careful examination of these documents that Ševčenko came to his sensational conclusion. Comparison of Hase's autograph (supposedly an apograph of the missing manuscript) with the printed text of the document revealed striking and completely inexplicable discrepancies and variations in the description of the manuscript, its dating, the definition of its contents and size as well as of the last time it had been inspected in the National Library, and the reported number of the fragments (the Latin description at first referred to just one fragment, then the number was changed to two, and when those two had gone to print a third fragment came up). Most important were stylistic discrepancies in the text of the document giving evidence of corrections already made during proofreading, which naturally made Ševčenko wonder: on the basis of what? The description gives a clear indication that at the time, the manuscript was no longer in Paris. This is what an author may do to his own writing, but not what would be expected of the editor of a manuscript text. It is in fact surprising that Hase did not care to destroy such conclusive evidence of his falsification. The apprehension of fraud proved true when the language of the document had been analysed (displaying phraseological parallelisms with Hase's favorite Greek authors, for example Thucydides) along with the historical and geographical realia appearing in the Fragments: anachronisms and oddities resulting from the author's poor knowledge of history which Hase himself had confessed in his letters to Academician Philip Krug, being at the same time an excellent philologist proficient in Greek.

All of the above made Ševčenko take a closer look at Hase as a person, as far as the latter's biographical materials allowed. As it turned out even this prominent scholar was only human; engaging in amorous pursuits described in Greek but still quite blatantly in his "clandestine diary"; demonstrating a propensity for "philological games" (his *anonym* was by no means his only contrivance); and a weakness for money and honours. He got plenty of the latter from "the ingenuous Rumiantsev" in return for his services, real ones (like the publication of Leo Diaconus), or potential ones (Rumiantsev also paid in advance for some other publishing projects of Hase's, for example the first edition of Michael Psellos' *Chronographia*,⁹ the Chronicle of George Hamartolus, etc.) as

9 For more details see Igor Medvedev, "Maloizvestny proekt pervogo izdaniya 'Khronografii' Mikhaila Psella" [A little known project of the first edition of the 'Chronographia' of Michael Psellus], *Vizantiysky Vremennik*, 60 (85) (2001), 183–91.

well as “mystificatory” contributions—as in this particular case. It probably had to do with Hase’s desire to extract as much as possible from the pockets of *messieurs pétropolitains* (and possibly having a good laugh at them at the same time); in his letter to E. Miller in 1848 (which Vasilievskiy once found outrageous) he says he feels sorry for those fellows from Saint Petersburg who seem to be “hung up on this Rus”—*ne s’intéressent qu’aux Pῶς*.¹⁰

To my mind, the picture is quite clear, and I find Ševčenko’s arguments regarding the falsity of the so-called “*Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus*” convincing.¹¹ However, this does not preclude the need and possibility of further clarification of certain details in this rather unusual adventure.

In recent years, while preparing a publication of Hase’s extensive correspondence with Academician Krug and partly with Chancellor Rumiantsev,¹² I could not help bearing in mind the story of the Fragments. Of course, I did not expect to stumble upon Hase’s confession of forgery (like “I apologize for playing a hoax on you, dear petropolitans”). The letters are written in a respectful and serious tone that sometimes seems a bit obsequious. Most of them contain detailed information on printing procedures, progress in proofreading, reasons for the overly long-drawn-out publication of Leo Diaconos, and justification of requested financial grants from the count who then immediately made out a check. After the count’s death on 3 January 1826 all work was discontinued, probably due to the lack of “material incentive,” which surely adds another touch to the portrait of our hero. In his letters Hase is also begging for royal awards for both himself and his friends.¹³

As for the Fragments of *Toparcha Gothicus*, Hase never mentions them in his correspondence with Krug but certain things therein deserve our attention.

10 Vasilievskiy, “Zapiska” (as n. 3, above), 144, with a reproduction of the whole letter from *Journal des savants*, 1876 févr., 104 et suiv.

11 I would like to refute one more objection, once expressed by Boris L. Fonkich in a conversation with me: that the idea of forgery is about drawing attention to it, placing it in the spotlight, while the Fragments are almost hidden among other notes in the end of the reference list. Not at all! The text has its own, very important place, picking up and elaborating the extremely interesting but—sadly—too laconic story of the fall of Kherson and its seizure by Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich in Leo Diaconos’ work (τῆς Χερσῶνος ἔλωσιν).

12 K.B. Hase’s letters are preserved in Academician Philip I. Krug’s personal fond in the St Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Fond 88, reg. 2, folder 21; 92 folios). When quoting from the letters throughout the article we refer to the corresponding folios in the said folder.

13 A detailed description of this is given in my article, “K voprosu o nepodlinnosti tak nazyvamoy Zapiski Gotskogo Toparkha” [On the question of falseness of the so-called Note of Toparcha Gothicus], *Mir Alexandra Kazhdana* (St Petersburg: Aleteia, 2003), 160–72.

Already in his very first letter of 24 September 1814 Hase informs his colleague that in the supplementary volume he was preparing for the Louvres series *Corpus Byzantinae Historiae* (that he calls *Byzantina* for short) he is going to include, besides other *inedita* (Leo Diaconos, Michael Psellos, Nicephorus Gregoras), some *anonyma* (f 3v). He mentions it again in his letter of 18 October 1814 (f 5).

One would think that our text could have already then been included among these *anonyma*, but it is not very likely. Important here is the very idea of “saturating” the publication of the main document with additional unedited and anonymous texts. “I am trying, following Banduri’s example, to squeeze in as much as possible of *inedita historica* from our manuscripts,” he wrote on 11 July 1817 (f 8). Quite interesting are Hase’s “methodological” reflections concerning his work on the Notes, expressed in several letters, for example in a long letter of 19 October 1817.¹⁴

Hase’s correspondence, while not presenting any concrete evidence that would shed some light on our “case,” still bears testimony on the man’s pronounced aptitude for experimenting with Byzantine texts (he would not have dared to do the same with Attic ones!), with Byzantine lexicology, and semasiology.¹⁵ Inventing the Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus might be (and to my mind, actually was) one of those experiments.

Finally, one more thing. Until very recently I have been wrestling with the question: what could possibly have inspired Hase to create the vivid pictures of this pseudo-historical piece? Did he really make the whole thing up? Quite relevant here is Ihor Ševčenko’s suspicion that the picture of snowstorms and the frozen Dnieper River could reflect Napoleon’s retreat from Moscow in 1812 which was still remembered in Paris in 1818.¹⁶ But could there also be a literary source? When reading the Fragments I could not help thinking that I had seen something like this—somewhere else. Suddenly it dawned on me: could our dear Hase have borrowed the stuff from Voltaire (whom he knew very well) and, particularly, the latter’s two “apocryphal” and most scandalous stories: *Candide ou l’Optimisme* (1759) and *L’Ingénu* (1767).

If we put side-by-side the storyline and the characters of these works and those of the Fragment, we can discover almost all the themes, figures of speech and even verbal borrowings in the latter even if in a transformed and

14 Ibid.

15 This habit of Hase’s was pointed out by Panagiōtakēs (Λέων ὁ Διάκωνος, 122), after a detailed study of Hase’s working methods before the publication of Leo Diaconos’s *Historia*. Still, he did not start to doubt the authenticity of the Fragments.

16 Ševčenko, “Date and Author,” 166.

more laconic form. Moreover, the whole idea of some kind of caricature of a conflict between various “barbarians,” “savages,” and “enlightened peoples” (either anonymous or with fictitious names like the Bulgars and the Avars in *Candide* or the Hurons in *L'Ingénu*); the scathing irony referring to the innate intelligence and sense of justice of the Barbarians (the Oreillons in *Candide*; the Hurons in *L'Ingénu*); their natural right to kill their relatives, “which is also happening all over the world” (*Candide*, Ch. 16); and playful jesting with the famous words about “this best of all possible worlds” have their echo in the Fragments. Besides these flattering references to the Barbarians (allegedly Russians) with their “former justice and lawfulness” one can also compare the Fragments’ unfathomable phrase about the Barbarians “not being capable of any mercy, not even towards their closest family” (Οὐδε γὰρ τῶν οικειοτάτων φειδῶ τις εἰσῆει ἀυτοῖς) (257.II.1) and another: “And from nowhere one could expect any change for the better” (Ἀνακωχῆς δ’ οὐδαμῶθεν προσδοκωμένης) (256.I.3) which is actually a calque of the antithesis to Pangloss’ assertion we frequently meet in Voltaire’s work (see for example *Candide* 28): “Well, my dear Pangloss,” said Candide to him, “when you were hanged, dissected, whipped, and tugging at the oar, did you continue to think that everything in this world happens for the best?”

The terrible snowstorm and Candide’s overnight stop under the open sky between two furrows in the snow (Ch. 2: “... among the Bulgars”) were in Hase’s version transformed into a similar description of a troop’s progress through a blizzard and its later overnight stop in the snow when “at night the shields were our beds; they served splendidly as both our beds and our covers” (256.I.4); Candide’s canoe trip across a nameless river into the land of El Dorado (Ch. 17) reminds one of the crossing of the Dnieper River described in the Fragments (254.I.1). So the travellers’ benevolent reception by the king of this fairyland and the “beautiful spectacle” of their departure when “The King... embraced them with the greatest cordiality” (Ch. 18) have their counterpart in the story of how the author of the Fragments visited a powerful (allegedly Russian) ruler who “reigns north of the Danube”. The passage in the Fragments “I went to see him and was received in the best way one could possibly imagine” (256.III), can be compared with Ch. 18 of *Candide*: “Candide and Cacambo... threw their arms round His Majesty’s neck, who received them in the most gracious manner imaginable.” True, instead of a flock of enormous red sheep “laden with gold, diamonds and other precious stones” the (Russian) ruler from Hase’s version presents the Byzantine commander with a more practical gift: he “willingly returned to me the lordship over Klimata and added a whole satrapy thereunto, and furthermore presented me with bounteous gains in his own land” (259.III).

Applause and suavity of the Oreillons who finally untied the captives (Candide and his servant) whom they had been on the verge of eating, mistaking Candide for a Jesuit (Ch. 16), are echoed by the applause for the author of the Fragments coming from the “savages” (οἱ ἐγγχώριοι): “And so we started out followed by the savages bidding us solemn farewell, and all of them were applauding me approvingly, looking at me as if we were intimate friends and wishing me all the best” (255.1.3). The story of the Englishmen opening hostilities without declaring war on the French king which “compromised the safety of the province” (Brittany) (*L'Ingénu*, Ch. 7) could have inspired the following passage of the Fragments: “The Barbarians attacked us without any declaration (ἀκηρυκτί) of war, and they did not establish any contacts with us anymore though I offered them a truce thousands of times” (257.11.2). Besides, was not the “quasi-Bulgarian” atmosphere of *Candide* the reason for Hase’s loan of the Greek byword λεία Μυσῶν (257.11.2) representing the common Byzantine name for the Bulgars?

While lexical similarities severally might not be very convincing, taken together they seem to be quite indicative of “borrowing”. I am thinking of the idea of “a homeward journey” (255.1.2) occurring in *L'Ingénu* (Ch. 1, 3), the word “scouts” (256.1.4) in *Candide* (Ch. 16); “sleep” and “dreaming” (as in: “We were far from getting any sleep and from dreaming” 256.1.4) compared to *Candide* (Ch. 11: “Exhausted, I soon drifted into sleep which was more like fainting than resting”); the word “subjects” (257.11.1) is also found in *L'Ingénu* (Ch. 8); the stars and especially Saturn (255.1.2) are mentioned in *L'Ingénu* (Ch. 11), and so on.

Another curious parallel: one of the characters in *Candide* is a castle owner from Westphalia, a baron whom the courtiers “called Monseigneur, laughing at the stories of his adventures” (Ch. 1). Could this have given Hase the idea to play a joke on “Monseigneur” Rumjantsev? Consider the opinion of “the noble Venetian,” Signor Pococurante, about Milton: “That barbarian who writes a tedious commentary in ten books of rumbling verse, on the first chapter of Genesis, *that slovenly imitator of the Greeks* (italics mine—I.M.) who disfigures the creation. . . . Neither I nor any other Italian can possibly take pleasure in such melancholy reveries” (Ch. 25). Does not this bring to mind the role of “the imitator of the Byzantines” that Hase himself had assumed? And is not there a similarity between Hase’s plan and the subtitle of *L'ingenu*: “A true story taken from the manuscripts of Father Quesnel”—this Father Quesnel being a Jansenist theologian to whom Voltaire assigned his story for censorial reasons? What if Hase compared himself to Voltaire, who had even taken liberties with the Russian Empress?



This rather unusual story would probably have remained unresolved if it had not been for the appearance of yet another document, another work of Karl Benedikt Hase that somehow drew a line under this intricate case. In June 1816 Count Rumjantsev sent Hase a personal letter where he asked him about the city of Sur or Surozh in the Byzantine Empire “which time after time is mentioned in our chronicles.” Hase answered with a very long letter of 7 July 1816 in which he tried to validate his identification of the said city (“which is also the Soldaia of the Genoese and therefore the Sudak of today”) as a city “known among the Greeks as Sarat”. In support of this he refers to an unpublished letter of a certain Maxim Catilianus who was once shipwrecked off the rocky coast of Crimea but survived and made it to “a town named Sarat, perched on a cliff overlooking the sea.” Having published this exchange of letters,¹⁷ Professor Ihor Ševčenko classified this identification of Surozh as Sudak *and* Sarat as another figment of Hase’s imagination.¹⁸ Ševčenko’s main arguments are the following: First: the “Sarat” mentioned by “the Greeks” (or rather by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his *De administrando imperio*) was according to modern scholarship not located in Crimea but in today’s Romania, and was not a town but a river: Seret. Second, and most importantly: not a single one of the preserved manuscripts containing the correspondence of Patriarch Athanasius I (and it was in one of these Hase claimed to have found the letter of Maxim Catilianus) actually contains this text. The conclusion is that either the manuscript containing Catilianus’ letter has disappeared without a trace, or—more likely—never existed. Third: Hase might have borrowed the name Catilianus from Montfaucon’s *Palaeographia Graeca* (1708), a work he was acquainted with, containing a reference to the Bishop of Kythera, Dionysius Catilianos who died in 1629. Probably, it did not even occur to Ihor Ševčenko that Karl Benedikt Hase could have made a copy of the above-mentioned text and sent it to St Petersburg, though Hase’s letter to Rumiantsev contains a couple of hints to this.

Meanwhile, I have managed to find the copy of the manuscript containing the letter (Hase’s autograph) in a somewhat unusual place—among the papers of Aleksey Olenin (1763–1843), a well-known Russian cultural figure who was connected to Count Rumjantsev and Hase. He took a lively interest in the publication of Leo Diaconos’s *Historia* prepared in Paris, and in its translation into Russian.¹⁹ The manuscript in question is kept in the Manuscript Department

17 Ibid., 180–5 (pl. 13–22).

18 Ibid., 170–1.

19 See about him: Igor Medvedev, “Aleksey Nikolaevich Olenin kak vizantinist” [A.N.O. as Byzantinist], in *Otechestvennaya istoriya i istoricheskaya mysl v Rossii XIX–XX vv.* [Festschrift in honor of the 75 year old A.N. Tsamutali] (St Petersburg: Nestor – Istoriia, 2006), 17–29.

of the Russian National Library (fond 542, nr 73, fol. 1r-3v) and contains (among other things) two columns of Greek text (*en regard*) in Hase's handwriting: the letter of Maxim Catilianos and Hase's translation of it into Latin. At the top of fol. 1 Hase left a note in his own hand on the origin of the text: "*Ex codice additicio nr 72*" while on the right margin of fol. 3 he has even noted the corresponding folio in the original manuscript as *Fol. 275 verso* (i.e., the whole text took up fol. 274–275 v. of the original document). It is another matter that the Parisian manuscript nr 72 from the *Supplément grec* fond of the National Library, which is apparently meant here, contains neither the correspondence of Patriarch Athanasius I of Constantinople nor any letter of Maxim Catilianos.²⁰

In this way, having submitted an exact reference to the origins of the text (unlike the case of the Fragments of *Toparcha Gothicus*), Hase made a misstep, actually giving himself away. However, when I was publishing the letter in *Vizantiysky Vremennik*, I chose not to remove the question mark from the title of my article.²¹ I thought it was better to let the scientific community decide if we, in this case, were dealing with another forgery of the famous scholar—all the more so because it would be useful to hear the opinion of linguistic experts who might be able to analyze the Greek language of the text. Before the publication of the article I sent a preliminary printout of it to Professor Ševčenko which apparently was the right thing to do: in the very last moment the editorial board received a letter from him containing what he called "an addendum to the article of I.P. Medvedev." This finally set the record straight. And this is how it all happened: having received a printout of my article, in October 2006, Ševčenko actually went on "a one day trip to Paris" (!) where he managed to locate the manuscript that was the real source of Catilianos' letter from Hase's papers. Professor Ševčenko wrote: "To answer the question in short, Catilianus' letter [...] is based on the *Oratio Gratiōsa* by John Eugenikos, a brother of Mark Eugenikos, a well-known participant in the Council of Florence (John's text was published by Sp. Lambros in 1912). The text is a thanksgiving to Christ for salvation in a storm during a journey from Venice to Constantinople in 1438 when the author narrowly escaped shipwreck. Catilianos' letter does not just retell this story; it contains a number of passages that are literally borrowed

20 See *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs. Supplément grec numéros 1 à 150, Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, rédigé par Ch. Astruc, M.-L. Concasty, C. Bellon et al. (Paris: BN, 2003), 172. (In reality cod. 72 contains a printed text of Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King*, published by Sébastien Cramoisi in 1634 and accompanied by handwritten notes).

21 Igor Medvedev, "Novonaydenny text pisma Maksima Katilianosa: eshyo odna poddelka Karla Benedikta Hase?" [A newly found text of the letter of Maxim Catilianos: one more forgery of K.B. Hase?], *Vizantiysky Vremennik*, 66 (91) (2007), 307–22.

from John Eugenikos. One of the passages is adjusted in order to satisfy the interests of Count Rumjantsev, Hase's benefactor. The manuscript Hase used as a source is *Parisinus graecus 2075. Oratio Gratiōsa* was found on its folios 244–282. Marginal notes in Hase's own hand make it clear that the scholar had been using it; the enigmatic notes *fol. 274 verso* and *fol. 275 verso* on the margins of Catilianus' letter (in Hase's handwriting) found by I. Medvedev, are direct references to the folios of *Parisinus graecus 2075*.²²

"Now we can be perfectly sure," concluded Ihor Ševčenko (supported by the author of this article), "that Karl Benedikt Hase produced at least one forgery to satisfy the historical interest of Count Rumiantsev. This fact also sheds new light on Hase's *modus operandi* and may allow us to close the case of the Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus."²³ *Sapienti sat.*

22 Ihor Ševčenko, "Prilozhenie k statye Igorya Medvedeva" [Addition to the article of I.M.], *Vizantiysky Vremennik*, 66 (91) (2007), 322–3.

23 Ibid., 323.