

Procession cross with a Cyrillic inscription from the National Museum of Archaeology

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Subject of this article is a procession cross with a Cyrillic inscription of St. Paraskevgi's name. It was found in the Ruse region and in 1896 became part of the collection of the Museum of Archeology in Sofia (Inv. № 684). The cross is cast of bronze, including the tang. Its dimensions are 16 x 11.12 cm (21 x 11.5 cm with the tang). The arms are elegantly elongated and each of them ends with two medallions.

The inscription on the cross starts on the upper part of the vertical arm and reads: CTA. It continues on the horizontal arm of the cross and is divided into three parts: ΠA engraved on the right part, the letter T in the middle and KA is engraved on the left part. It is the name of St. Paraskevgi (CTA ΠATKA), to whom undoubtedly the cross was dedicated. On the same side of the cross, at the center of the lower part of the vertical arm, the abbreviation IC XC is engraved (meaning Jesus Christ). The titles above the abbreviation are marked with straight horizontal lines.

The inscription continues on the reverse. The abbreviation IC (Jesus) is engraved on the upper part of the vertical arm, and the abbreviation XC (Christ), on its lower part. The letters N and K are engraved on the left and on the right part of the horizontal arm. It is the well-known formula Jesus Christ Vanquishes. The paleographical analysis dates the inscription to the 13th and 14th century or the early 15th century.

The inscription dedicated to St. Paraskevgi clearly shows that the cross was intended as a present for a temple on some occasion connected with the saint's cult. Or it could have been commissioned by a church, which had St. Paraskevgi as its patron. It is possible that the cross was used by a monastic community in one of the rock monasteries along the Rusenski Lom river: Krassen, Ivanovo, Nissovo or Cherven. However, it seems most probable that the cross with the inscription dedicated to St. Paraskevgi belonged to one of the churches of the medieval town of Cherven.