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**Abstract. Introduction.** Apollinaris, bishop of Valence, was the brother of the famous Avitus of Vienne, but his biography is practically limited by that. Apollinaris was canonized in Merovingian times, and the only source that can expand our knowledge is the *Life of Apollinaris*. This hagiographical text about the last years of the life of Apollinaris reached our time. The *Life* was first published in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was considered a reliable Merovingian text, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German researcher B. Krusch suggested that it was a Carolingian forgery. In this connection it is necessary to analyse the authenticity of the *Life* and the relevance of the information it contains about the bishop's own personal history and cult. *Methods and materials.* The study of the *Life* has been carried out on the method of critical analysis and the biographical method. *Analysis.* A critical analysis of the *Life*, along with verification of its dating and the reliability of the data concerning the time of the saint's lifetime, has enabled the refutation of B. Krusch's arguments, which asserted that the text was a Carolingian forgery. The author compiled the text in the first person and adequately reflected the realities of the early sixth century. The *Life* was written by a contemporary who personally accompanied the saint on his journey to Arles and Marseilles. This trip was made after the Burgundian king Sigismund was overthrown in 523, when the Gallic prefecture of the Ostrogothic kingdom took over Provence up to the Isere River. Since, according to the *Life*, Apollinaris died soon after this journey, it is possible to assume that the death of the saint himself occurred around 524–525. *Results.* The *Life of Apollinaris* is a reliable source and is an example of Merovingian hagiography of the mid-6th century. This text allows us to reconstruct the last years of Apollinaris' life and to determine the time of his bishopric as 490/491–524/525. In addition, the *Life* demonstrates that the cult of St. Apollinaris began to develop immediately after the saint's death.

**Key words:** Merovingian hagiography, Apollinaris, source studies, kingdom of Burgundy, Ostrogoths, Merovingian history, Church history.

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**АПОЛЛИНАРИЙ, ЕПИСКОП ВАЛАНСА: БИОГРАФИЯ, ЖИТИЕ И КУЛЬТ****Антон Игоревич Каспаров**Санкт-Петербургский государственный химико-фармацевтический университет,  
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**Аннотация. Введение.** Аполлинарий, епископ Валанса, был братом известного епископа Авита Вьеннского, однако этим биография Аполлинария практически ограничивается. Он был канонизирован во времена Меровингов, и единственным источником, который может расширить наши знания, является Житие Аполлинария. Этот агиографический текст о последних годах жизни Аполлинария дошел до нашего времени. Впервые Житие было опубликовано в XVII в. и считалось достоверным меровингским текстом, но в

XIX в. немецкий исследователь Б. Круш предположил, что это каролингская подделка. В этой связи необходимо проанализировать подлинность Жития и актуальность содержащихся в нем сведений о жизни епископа и его культе. *Методы и материалы.* Исследование Жития произведено с использованием метода внутренней критики источника. Кроме того, в работе применялся биографический метод. *Анализ.* Критический анализ Жития, проверка его датировки и достоверности данных о времени жизни святого позволили опровергнуть аргументы Б. Круша, утверждавшего, что текст является каролингской подделкой. Автор составил текст от первого лица и адекватно отразил реалии начала VI века. Данное произведение было написано современником, который лично сопровождал святого в его путешествии в Арль и Марсель. Это путешествие было совершено после свержения бургундского короля Сигизмунда в 523 г., когда часть Прованса до реки Изер была передана Галльской префектуре Остроготского королевства. Согласно Житию, Аполлиний умер вскоре после этого путешествия. Следовательно, смерть самого святого произошла около 524–525 годов. *Результаты.* Житие является надежным источником по описываемому периоду и представляет собой образец меровингской агиографии середины VI века. Этот текст позволяет реконструировать последние годы жизни Аполлиния и определить время его епископства как 490/491–524/525 годы. Кроме того, Житие показывает, что культ святого Аполлиния начал развиваться сразу после смерти святого.

**Ключевые слова:** меровингская агиография, Аполлиний, источниковедение, Бургундское королевство, остготы, меровингская история, история церкви.

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**Introduction.** *Life of Apollinaris* was first published in Latin without commentary by the Jesuit F. Labbé in 1657 [11, pp. 698–693]. In 1770 another Jesuit, J. Ghesquierus, once again released this Latin text and provided it with commentaries in the series of *Acta Sanctorum (AS)*. He claimed that *Life* was compiled by a contemporary of the events, deacon Eladius [14]. In 1896 the German researcher B. Krusch in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica (MGH)* again published this text in Latin [15]. B. Krusch's edition differs only in minor details from the publication of J. Ghesquierus: a different division into paragraphs and transcriptions of some proper names (Alifius/Alisius), including the name of the supposed author, who is also an actor in the text (Eladius/Claudius). B. Krusch dismissed the Merovingian date of the text, arguing that the author wrote in Carolingian times. In his opinion the hagiographer was a falsifier who, in order to reliably portray contemporary events, used scraps of information drawn from the texts of Avitus of Vienne, *Life of Caesarius* and the writings of Cassiodorus. After such a sceptical assessment by an authoritative scholar, interest in this work clearly waned, and it was out of most researchers' field of view. At the same time, the arguments of B. Krusch were not accepted by all researchers [2, p. 218], and the *Life of Apollinaris* was sometimes mentioned as a Merovingian text, unsupported by any arguments [5, p. 557]. But

only in 2015 the Austrian philologist A. Kinney released a critical article on this *Life*, where she completely refuted the linguistic assumptions of B. Krusch [10]. This was followed by our joint work with Professor B. Ward-Perkins with a summary of *Life* (MGH version) accompanying a short article in the Oxford University e-project *Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity*, where the main arguments were raised that the *Life* is a Merovingian text [9]. This project focused on the publication of texts or their summaries, and the problems related to the source analysis were presented only in the short form of the commentary. For this reason it is necessary to release a more extended special analysis of the *Life* as a historical source.

**Methods and materials.** The study was conducted on the basis of several methods. The critical method of source analysis was the main one. It implied rechecking *Life's* authorship, dating, and purpose of creation, as well as scientific interpretation, in order to understand the adequacy of reflection in the text of the realities of the analysed period. The biographical method made it possible to reconstruct the facts of life and activity of the saint.

**Analysis.** Bishop Apollinaris governed the episcopal see of Valence in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. He is known from various extant reliable sources. Apollinaris took part in several church councils held in Epaon in 517 and in Lyon

in 518–523 and put his signature under their decisions [2, p. 218]. Some letters of Apollinaris to his brother Avitus, the bishop of Vienne, have survived. They testify to the tender affection between the two brothers [13, pp. 243–258]. All other biographical information about Apollinaris has to be drawn from his *Life*.

According to this text, Apollinaris was born into Vienne in a noble and influential family. The author did not forget to mention that the saint was the brother of Avitus of Vienne (§ 1). According to the hagiographer, the senators Parthenius, Ferreolus and Arcutamia were relatives of the saint (§ 10). Apollinaris was a representative of the highest South Gallic aristocracy. Their descendants occupied the episcopal sees in cities of Gaul and were important actors at the courts of the barbarian kingdoms of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. They formed a close-knit circle of educated elites that directly implemented the continuity of Roman institutions in these early mediaeval kingdoms.

The author of the *Life* omitted mentioning the saint's parents, his childhood, adolescence, and youth, as well as the circumstances of his election and administration of the episcopal see. But the hagiographer gave much concrete information about the events of the last years of the bishop's life and his personal communication with the saint. This can also serve as an argument that the text was written by a younger contemporary of the saint. The Carolingian forger would certainly have used in his work the usual canons and topoi of hagiography in describing the childhood and adolescence of Apollinaris and the choice of service to God, rather than confining himself to the account of the last years of the saint's life.

The hagiographer began his account with an episode about the royal courtier Stephen, who was a head of the *fiscus* in the Burgundian kingdom of Sigismund (516–524). Stephen had married the sister of his dead wife. This marriage was considered close-related and was forbidden by the decrees of the church. For this violation the bishops, including Apollinaris and Avitus, excommunicated Stephen at the Council of Lyons (516–523) (§ 2). According to the hagiographer, this decision angered the king, and all the bishops involved in the council were sent into exile *in oppido Sardinia* in the region of Lyons. In this region a town with a similar name is unknown.

B. Krusch assumed that the author meant the island of Sardinia, where the Vandal kings usually exiled their clergymen. In the opinion of B. Krusch this assumption exposes the Carolingian author, who confused the Burgundian and Vandal kings in his work. B. Krusch also saw a contradiction between this account and the acts of the Council of Lyons, where Stephen suffered only a temporary minor excommunication. In his opinion the exile of the bishops did not take place. However, it should be noted that there is no reason not to trust the author of the *Life* and call into question the fact of the bishops' exile after the decision to excommunicate Stephen. About the place of exile (*in oppido civitatis Lugdunensium, quod nuncupatur Sardinia*), A. Kinney suggested many possible interpretations: from a settlement unknown to us or a figurative name of this place by the exiled bishops ("our Sardinia"; the place called "Sardinia"), which was transferred to the text of the *Life*, to a common mistake of the later copyist or corruption of the manuscript itself [10, pp. 165–167]. There are many different variants that demonstrate the appearance of *Sardinia* in the text, and to give preference to one of which is not possible at the moment. One thing is certain: the mention of a reference *in Sardinia* does not necessarily point to a later author.

The author of the *Life* adds that after some time the king ordered all the bishops to return from exile, except Apollinaris, because he was the most persistent in denouncing Stephen (§ 3). According to the *Life*, Apollinaris in exile performed a miracle when, during an unprecedented heat wave, the waters of the Rhone became undrinkable, but a fresh spring flowed from the ground. The hagiographer added that this spring had dried up when Apollinaris left the place of exile, and this proved that it appeared thanks to the saint's virtues (§ 4). The return from exile occurred after the king had fallen with fever. According to the author, the queen went to Apollinaris to implore his help to heal her husband. She persuaded him to let her have his hooded cloak (*cuculla*), covered the king, and he was immediately cured (§ 5). The grateful king repented of what he had done against the bishops and allowed Apollinaris to return from exile. The hagiographer quotes him as saying, "I am a sinner because I have often plagued honest [people] with impious torments" (§ 6). This episode demonstrates that

the role of King Sigismund in the *Life* is certainly negative. At the same time, Sigismund himself was already venerated as a saint at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. According to Gregory of Tours, the cult of Sigismund became widespread, and those seeking healing flocked to his tomb [4, p. 87]. The negative role of the king in the *Life* was incompatible with the image of a venerated king-martyr known since the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This allows us to conclude that the biographer of Apollinaris did not know about the cult of Sigismund. It's an important argument that the text was compiled by a contemporary of the saint, who composed the *Life* before the spread of the cult of Sigismund in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century.

At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the border between the Burgundian and Gothic kingdoms was along the river Durance, and the diocese of Valence was under the rule of the Burgundian king. But by 523 relations between the Burgundian and Ostrogothic royal courts had reached a peak of tension. The Burgundian king Sigismund, whose kingdom was sandwiched between the aggressive Frankish kingdoms and the united Gothic power, in his politics sought support from the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, he more and more conducted pro-Byzantine and consequently anti-Gothic policy [3, p. 40]. The reason for the war was the murder by Sigismund of his son, who was at the same time the grandson of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great. Theodoric made an alliance with the kings of the Franks. As a result, Sigismund was drawn into conflict with the two most powerful forces in Gaul. The Franks invaded the Burgundian kingdom. Theodoric ordered his general Tuluin not to rush into Burgundy but to wait for the outcome of the battle between the Burgundians and the Franks. Burgundian kings Sigismund and his brother Godomar were defeated in battle in 523. On hearing the result, Tuluin entered Burgundy and occupied the land unhindered. In this case usually said about the territory between the rivers Durance and Isere [18, p. 448; 8, p. 82-83; 7, p. 125-128].

In connection with these political events should be considered Apollinaris' trip along the Rhone. According to the hagiographer, Apollinaris at the end of his life was warned from Heaven about his imminent death and decided to make a journey along the Rhone. This trip, according to

the author, was 'frightening' because of the rapid flow of the river. But the saint was able to calm the storm with his prayers and drove a demon out of the body of one of his travelling companions named Alifius (§ 7-8). This story demonstrates that in the eyes of common people of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, travelling along the Rhone continued to be a dangerous undertaking, as was mentioned long before by Strabo [6, p. 220]. The *Life* says that one of the main purposes of his trip was Arles – from 508, the centre of the Gallic prefecture of the Ostrogothic kingdom, organised by Theodoric the Great. According to the hagiographer, upon his arrival in Arles, Apollinaris was cordially welcomed by Bishop Caesarius, accompanied by the people (*plebiis comitatus obsequiis*) and Prefect Liberius, as well as by his relatives Parthenius and Ferreolus (§ 10) [12, pp. 677-684, 833-834; 10, p. 173]. This solemn official meeting, reminiscent of the *adventus* of the Roman ceremonial, could be realised only after 523, when the Gallic prefecture of the Ostrogothic kingdom had expanded as a result of the war with the Burgundians. It was not accidentally at this time that Apollinaris, who was at death's door, ventured on a 'frightening' journey down the Rhone and was solemnly welcomed at Arles by the heads of the prefecture and church of Provence. Certainly, this journey must be regarded as necessary for the head of Valence's community to determine the principles of existence under the new government. Up to this time such a journey by a bishop of Valence had been practically impossible owing to the enmity of the two kingdoms. Apollinaris' arrival in Arles can be dated to 523-524. According to other sources, the boundaries of the expansion of the Ostrogoths' possessions in Gaul at this time are not clearly defined. H. Wolfram suggested that the power of Theodoric the Great in that period extended over the territory northwards from the river Durance to the river Drome, 'but most probably to the river Isere' [18, p. 448; 8, pp. 82-83]. The arrival of the bishop of Valence in Arles mentioned in the *Life* is a documentary confirmation of this assumption. Thus, the *Life* is an important source defining the northern border of the Gallic prefecture in 523-530 along the Isere River.

According to the hagiographer, after a short stay in Arles, Apollinaris also visited Marseilles at the invitation of his relative Arcutamia (§ 10)

[12, p. 135]. Having fulfilled his mission at the limit of his strength, Apollinaris finally fell ill on his return to Valence. According to the author of the *Life*, when the saint was lying in bed and could not rise for the morning service, a certain “demon-driven” Paragorius tried to use force and raised his hand against him. However, he was miraculously immobilised in this posture until the arrival of the bishop’s clergy. He could not move his hand until the saint offered prayers (§ 12). According to the *Life*, Bishop Apollinaris died shortly afterwards. The author extols that Valence in Apollinaris received its saint patron in Heaven (§ 14). In view of the fact that Apollinaris died almost immediately after his return from his journey along the Rhone, we can assume that this happened no later than 524–525. If we take into consideration the author’s words that Apollinaris held the episcopal see for 34 years, we can determine the time of his bishopric as 490/491–524/525.

The *Life*, preserved in several manuscripts (the earliest is from the 11<sup>th</sup> century), was presumably written by someone who was present in travel to Arles and Marseilles. This is evidenced by the author’s regular first-person plural narrative in description of this trip (*pervenimus, nos, nobis, vidimus*). Furthermore, the author considers Apollinaris as his bishop and patron (*nostrum pontificem* (§ 8, only in the *AS* version), *noster patronus* (§ 13)). This suggests that the *Life* was composed shortly after the saint’s death by one of his clerics who was personally acquainted with the holy bishop. J. Ghesquierus suggested that the author was the deacon Eladius (*MGH* version – Claudius), who also acted as an actor in the text itself [14, p. 47]. However, this remains only in the field of hypothesis, since the nature of our data does not allow us to confirm or deny this version.

The hagiographer began his story of the saint with events that took place no earlier than 517. The author shows himself to be a contemporary of the last years of the saint’s life, so the text could have been composed immediately after the saint’s death around 525. The city of Valence in the 520–530s passed three times under the power of various barbarian kingdoms. At the same time, the negative role of the Burgundian king who sent the holy man into exile suggests that it could hardly have been composed under the rule of his brother, Burgundian king Godomar II (524–534), under

whose authority Valence was in 530–534. Then the *Life* could have been composed either in 524–530, when Valence was part of the Gallic prefecture of the Ostrogothic kingdom, or after 534, when this city finally came under the power of the Frankish kings. The negative image of Sigismund in the text dictates the upper limit of the creation of the *Life*. King Sigismund in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century had already begun to be venerated as a saint [4, p. 87; 17]. Such a hagiographical text, where Sigismund sends the saint bishops Apollinaris and Avitus into exile, could have been created only before. Then we can conclude that the *Life* is an excellent example of Merovingian hagiography, created in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

A special account should be made of the arguments of B. Krusch, who believed that the *Life* is a Carolingian forgery. In his opinion the author inserted in his text many names contemporary to Apollinaris, borrowing them from the letters of his brother Avitus, the *Life of Caesarius* and the works of Cassiodorus. Then the hagiographer showed considerable erudition, but at the same time, in the opinion of B. Krusch, he placed the island Sardinia in the region of Lyons. B. Krusch believed that the place “Sardinia” was an erroneous borrowing by the author from accounts of African bishops exiled by the Vandals. This is not very consistent with the “erudition” of the author, who was able to flawlessly link names from many Merovingian sources. Furthermore, for the supposed B. Krusch’s “such knowledgeable” Carolingian author, the text of the *Life* itself looks rather primitive. The whole construction built by B. Krusch looks rather contradictory, and the author’s “erudition” is shattered by the Latin grammar he demonstrated. At the same time, such a contradiction did not embarrass B. Krusch. He accused the hagiographer of being familiar with and utilising the works of Avitus of Vienne, Cassiodorus, the *Lives of Caesarius*, and other texts concerning the exile of African bishops. However, his comments regarding the quality of the hagiographer’s Latin are entirely negative. To explain the peculiarities of Latin which he considered anomalous, B. Krusch claimed that the author lacked education or that he was stupid. On the basis of the linguistic peculiarity “revealed” by him, the German researcher tries to present the hagiographer as an uneducated Carolingian

writer instead of a possibly quite ordinary Merovingian author. As A. Kinney has convincingly shown, B. Krusch unreasonably defined Latin of the *Life* as a distinctive feature of Carolingian times. According to A. Kinney, there are no obvious anachronisms in the text, and for linguistic reasons, it cannot be dated to Carolingian times. Taking into account the linguistic features of this text, she herself came to the conclusion that the *Life* was most likely composed “by a Gallic hagiographer who either knew the bureaucratic vocabulary of fifth- and sixth-century bishops intimately or participated in it himself” [10, pp. 160-162]. Then we can conclude that the attacks of B. Krusch on the authenticity of the *Life* from a linguistic point of view are untenable.

Another argument of B. Krusch was that the hagiographer did not include in the text several episodes about the saint known to us, such as his participation in the Council of Epaon in 517. But this does not indicate ignorance of the hagiographer and is due to the nature of the genre of hagiography itself. For example, in *Life of Caesarius*, compiled in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the authors did not mention any council at which the saint was present [16].

According to the logic of B. Krusch, it is necessary to recognise that the *Life* is a falsification because the author pretended to be a contemporary of the events. However, about the purpose of the creation of this falsification German researcher did not dare to give an answer. Apparently, the answer to this question seems not clear. Obviously, the text was created to glorify the saint and his cult. Apollinaris was made a saint shortly after his death, and his veneration on 5 October is already mentioned in the gallic recension of *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, compiled around 600 [2, p. 218]. The need to preserve the memory of the saint and the development of his cult were the reasons for the creation of the *Life of Apollinaris*.

The cult of Saint Apollinaris was known from many martyrologies, starting with *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*. This indicates that the saint was venerated almost immediately after his death in 524–525. The author did not mention the place of burial of Apollinaris, but according to some documents, he was first buried in the church Saints-Pierre-et-Paul near Valence. According to

the *Lists of the Church of Valence*, Apollinaris' body was moved to the larger church Saint-Stephan in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century under Bishop Bonitus [2, p. 212]. According to other data, the transfer to Saint-Stephan was made at the time of Bishop Dambertus and it was reported that he was the sixth bishop after Apollinaris. This data does not appear to be reliable; Bishop Dambert is absolutely unknown according to other sources [14, p. 57]. In our opinion, here we are most likely dealing with a corrupted name of Bishop Lambertus, who is also mentioned in *Lists* as the predecessor of Bonitus and the founder of the temple of Saint-Stephan. At the same time, the chronology in *Lists* is clearly broken, because in fact Bishop Bonitus, who was present at the Council in 788, preceded Lambert, who lived already under Louis the Pious (814–840) [2, p. 215, 219]. The contradictions of the extant data do not allow one to speak definitively about the date of the transfer to the church of Saint-Stephan. Apparently, this happened around the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Around 1060 the relics of Apollinaris were transferred to the Cathedral church Saint-Apollinaire in Valence. These relics were kept there until they were dispersed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Calvinists [1; 14, p. 58].

**Conclusion.** All the arguments given by B. Krusch about the Carolingian origin of the *Life of Apollinaris* are untenable. There is no reason not to trust the author, who demonstrated that he was a contemporary of the events. The *Life* was indeed composed shortly after the death of Bishop Apollinaris, which, as shown in this study, occurred around 524–525. The author accompanied Apollinaris on the travel at the end of the saint's life to Arles and Marseilles. Probably the author was the deacon Eladius (Claudius), who is mentioned in the story. The *Life* was composed either immediately after the saint's death in 524–525, but before 530, or after 534, when the kingdom of Burgundy was finally conquered by the Franks. On the other hand, a negative reflection of King Sigismund is incompatible with venerating him as a saint. It allows us to conclude that the author of *Life* did not know about the cult of Saint Sigismund venerated from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. We must admit that the *Life* is a Merovingian text of the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, created for the sake of glorifying the cult of the saint, who during his lifetime occupied a significant role in the

hierarchy of the Gallo-Roman nobility of Burgundy and Provence. The creation of this text in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century allows us to say that the cult of St Apollinaris developed almost immediately after the death of the saint. According to the *Life*, Apollinaris held the episcopal see for 34 years, and we can determine the time of his bishopric as 490/491–524/525.

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