

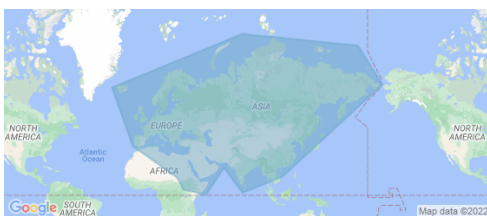
# Barlaam and Ioasaph

also known as “Barlaam and Josaphat”

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Entry tags: Western Medieval text, Byzantine text, Pictorial-textual compositions, Christian Traditions, Hagiography, Medieval Christianity, Buddhist Traditions, Text, Orthodox/Eastern Christian, Religious Group, Roman Catholic

Barlaam and Ioasaph is the legend of two mythical saints, enjoying remarkable popularity in the literatures of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. It exists in dozens of versions. The legend takes place sometime after apostle Thomas evangelized India. It narrates the story of the Indian prince, Ioasaph, son of the pagan king Abenner, a persecutor of the Christian Church. Ioasaph despite his father's confinement to a palace for being isolated from contact with Christians, embraces the religion after being taught by monk Barlaam. Abenner troubled by his son's conversion engages in more severe acts of persecutions and makes several unsuccessful attempts to make Ioasaph recant his faith. As a last resort, he tries to seduce Ioasaph with power and glory by letting him reign over the half of his kingdom. The secular, yet holy life of his son inspires conversion to Abenner who lives his last days as ascetic. After the death of Abenner, Ioasaph reigns during few more years but he then renounces his kingdom. He wanders for years through wilderness and finally finds Barlaam. After their death, their relics revered as holy are moved to the capital of the Indian kingdom where numerous miracles are performed. The story goes back to Indian legends about the life of Buddha, but it is impossible to establish a single source. From India, the legend emerged in the Arab-speaking world between 750 and 900 CE and was later translated before 900 CE into Georgian. This version was used by Euthymios the Athonite († 1028), cofounder of the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos, for the Byzantine Greek translation assumed to have been completed shortly thereafter 985 CE. By 1019 CE the Greek revised version of the text was also in circulation. The legend was popularised in the West via a Latin translation known as the “Vulgate” and was soon adapted into several vernacular versions. Some of them derive from the Latin “Vulgate”, while others were adapted from the thirteenth-century CE abbreviated version found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. The surviving witnesses of the different versions of the text that have come down to us are numerous. A small minority among them has received cycles of illustrations. Barlaam and Ioasaph includes a set of allegorical stories (or apologues) woven into the narrative framework of the text. These apologues were disseminated independently from it and can be found in many well-known European literary works, such as collections of fables or short stories like the *Disciplina clericalis* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, plays like Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and many others. Depictions inspired by the apologues are another proof of the wide dissemination of these apologues, since they can be found in different religious and secular monuments throughout Europe.



Date Range: 750 CE - 1700 CE

Region: Dissemination of Barlaam and Ioasaph

Region tags: Asia, Europe, Asia Minor, Greece, Byzantium, North Africa, Mount Athos

The regions included in the map refer to those in which Barlaam and Ioasaph was disseminated

## Status of Readership:

✓ Elite    ✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## Sources and Corpora

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### Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Volk, Robert, *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et loasaph (spuria) II: Text und zehn Appendices. Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VI/2-Patristische Texte und Studien 60*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2008.
- Source 2: Volk, Robert, *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et loasaph (spuria): Einführung. Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VI/1-Patristische Texte und Studien 61*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2009.
- Source 3: Levine, Nathan H., 'Barlaam and Josaphat'. In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism Online*, edited by Jonathan A. Silk, Oskar Von Hinüber, and Vincent Eltschinger. Accessed May 31, 2022. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2467-9666\\_enbo\\_COM\\_2008](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2467-9666_enbo_COM_2008).

### Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: [https://sheptytskyinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/THE\\_WONDEROUS\\_TALE\\_OF\\_BARLAAM\\_AND\\_JOSAPH.pdf](https://sheptytskyinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/THE_WONDEROUS_TALE_OF_BARLAAM_AND_JOSAPH.pdf)
- Source 1 Description: General overview of the sources and versions of Barlaam and loasaph
- Source 2 URL: <https://parabelproject.nl/a-man-fleeing-from-a-unicorn-falls-into-a-well-with-a-dragon-parables-in-the-legend-of-barlaam-and-josaphat-2/>
- Source 2 Description: The apologue of the Man chased by a Unicorn studied as a short story
- Source 3 URL: <https://www.philology.no/barlaam>
- Source 3 Description: Comparative analysis of Barlaam and loasaph versions

### Online Corpora

Relevant online Primary Textual Corpora (original languages and/or translations)

- Source 1 URL: <https://barlaamandjosaphat.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

## General Variables

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### Materiality

Methods of Composition

- Written



Inked

- with Ink

Medium upon which the text is written/incised

– Paper



Specify type of paper

– Specify: Parchment and vegetal paper

Was the material modified before the writing or incising process?

– Physical preparation

Was the text modified before the writing or incising process?

– Corrections

## Location

Is the text stored in a specific location?

[Note at which point in time, for reference, if known; select all that apply]

– Yes



Tomb

– No



Cemetery

– No



Temple

– I don't know



Shrine

– I don't know



Altar

– I don't know



Devotional marker

– No



Cenotaph

– No

↳ Church

– Yes

↳ Mosque

– No

↳ Synagogue

– No

↳ Triumphal Arch

– No

↳ Monument

– No

↳ Mass Gathering Point

– I don't know

↳ Cave(s)

– I don't know

↳ Hilltops

– No

↳ Other natural sanctuaries

– No

↳ Boundary markers or lines

– No

↳ Domestic contexts

– Yes

↳ Library/archive

– Yes



Specify

– Specify: The manuscripts containing Barlaam and Iosaph were kept by their owners, lay or religious persons

Is the location where the text stored accompanied by iconography or images?

– No

Is the area where the text is stored accompanied by an-iconic images?

– No

## Production & Intended Audience

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### Production

Is the production of the text funded by the polity?

– I don't know

Is the text considered official religious scripture?

– No

Written in distinctly religious/sacred language?

– No

### Intended Audience

What is the estimated number of people considered to be the audience of the text

This should be the total number of people who would serve as the intended audience for the text.

– I don't know

Does the Religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members?

– Field doesn't know

Are there clear reformist movements?

(Reformism, as in not proselytizing to potential new conservative, but "conversion" - or rather, reform - to the "correct interpretation"?)

– No

Is the text in question employed in ritual practice?

– No

Is there material significance to the text?

– No

## Context and Content of the Text (Beliefs and Practices)

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### Context

Is the text itself accompanied by art?

– Yes

↳ Calligraphy?

– Yes

↳ Illustrations?

– Yes

↳ Illuminations?

– Yes

↳ Is there spiritual value associated with the coloration?

– Yes

↳ Is there gold?

– Yes

↳ Other forms of illumination?

– Specify: No

Are there multiple versions of the text?

– Yes

↳ Are multiple versions viewed as proper?

– Yes

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↳ If multiple versions are proper, is there a differentiation among versions by any means?

– Yes

↳ Age of extant version of text?

– Yes

↳ Content of text?

– Yes

↳ Ritual purpose of text?

– No

↳ Is there debate about which version is proper?

– Yes

↳ Among debates about proper versions of the text, how is authority established?

– No

Notes: Via the existence of written evidence

Is the text part of a collection of texts?

– Yes

↳ Is there a sense of canonization?

– No

↳ Is the text part of a series of volumes?

– No

If the text is not explicitly scripture, is it part of another important literary tradition?

– Yes

↳ Cultural with religious implications?

– Yes

↳ Behavioral literature?

– No

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: Hagiography

## Content

Is the text - or does the text include - a ritual list, manual, bibliography, index, or vocabulary?  
(Select all that apply)

–Other [specify]: None of the above

Are there lineages or a single lineage established by the text?

– No

Does the text express a formal legal code?

– No

Formulating a specifically religious calendar?

– No

## Beliefs

Is a spirit-body distinction present in the text?

– Yes

↳ Spirit-Mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other parts?

– Yes

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body?

– No

↳ Other spirit-body relationship?

– Yes

↳ Within conceptions of the mind: are there distinct notions of psychological states or aggregates?

– No



↳ Do practitioners engage in debates about mind-body dualism?

– Yes

↳ Are debates framed in other ways?

– I don't know

↳ Do practitioners distinguish between a corporeal body and an incorporeal soul or spirit?

– Yes

↳ Are there other sides or features of the debate?

– Yes

Notes: Mortal body and immortal soul

↳ What are historical mainstream and minority positions?

– Yes

Is belief in an afterlife indicated in the text?

– Yes

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world?

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space?

– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space?

– No

↳ Afterlife in "other" space?

– Yes

↳ Is the temporality of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– Yes

↳ Is there debate in the interpretation of the language of the afterlife?  
– No

Is belief in reincarnation in this world specified in the text?  
– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses dictated in the text?  
– No

Does the text indicate if co-sacrifices should be present in burials?  
– No

Does the text specify grave goods for burial?  
– No

Are formal burials present in the text?  
– No

Are there practices that have funerary associations presented in the text?  
– Yes

↳ Do these practices take place at tombs/burial sites?  
– Yes

↳ Do these practices take place for the veneration OR worship of the dead?  
– Yes

↳ For the worship of a deceased person(s)?  
– Yes

↳ For the worship of a deified human?  
– No

↳ For the worship of a deceased hero?  
– No

↳ For the veneration of a deceased person(s)?

– Yes

↳ For the veneration of a deified human?

– No

↳ For the veneration of a deceased hero?

– No

Are supernatural beings present in the text?

– Yes

↳ A supreme high-god is present

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic or described in anthropomorphic terms

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld)

– No

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god)

– No

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god

– No

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites

– No

↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites

– No

- ↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good
  - Yes
- ↳ Other features of the supreme high god
  - Specify: Unquestionably just
- ↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world
  - Yes
    - ↳ Knowledge is restricted to a particular domain of human affairs
      - No
    - ↳ Knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region
      - No
    - ↳ Knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region
      - Yes
    - ↳ Knowledge is unrestrict outside of sample region
      - I don't know
    - ↳ Can see you everywhere normally visible (in public)
      - Yes
    - ↳ Can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home)
      - Yes
    - ↳ Can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives)
      - Yes
    - ↳ Knows basic character (personal essence)
      - Yes
    - ↳ Knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight)
      - Yes

- ↳ Has other knowledge of this world
  - Yes
- ↳ Has deliberate causal efficacy in the world
  - Yes
- ↳ Can reward
  - Yes
- ↳ Can punish
  - Yes
- ↳ Indirect causal efficacy in the world
  - No
- ↳ Exhibits positive emotion
  - Yes
- ↳ Exhibits negative emotion
  - Yes
- ↳ Possesses Hunger?
  - No
- ↳ Can be hurt?
  - No
- ↳ Can be tricked?
  - No
- ↳ Can be imprisoned?
  - No
- ↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural being other than the high god?
  - Yes

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature  
– Specify: Many features

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living  
– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life  
– Yes

↳ In dreams  
– Yes

↳ In trance possession  
– No

↳ Through divination practices  
– No

↳ Only through religious specialists  
– No

↳ Only through monarch  
– No

↳ Other form of communication with living  
– I don't know

↳ Does the text make communication with supreme high-god possible?  
– No

Previously human spirits are present

– No

Non-human supernatural beings are present

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can be seen

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can be physically felt

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world

– Yes

↳ Knowledge is restricted to a particular domain of human affairs

– No

↳ Knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region

– I don't know

↳ Knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region

– I don't know

↳ Knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region

– I don't know

↳ Can see you everywhere normally visible (in public)

– Yes

↳ Can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home)

– Yes

↳ Can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives)

– Yes

↳ Know basic character (personal essence)

– Yes

↳ Know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight)

– Yes

- ↳ Have other knowledge of this world
  - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world
  - Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings can reward
  - Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings can punish
  - Yes
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings communicate with the living according to the text?
  - Yes
- ↳ In waking, everyday life?
  - Yes
- ↳ In dreams?
  - Yes
- ↳ In trance possession?
  - No
- ↳ Through divination practices?
  - No
- ↳ Only through religious specialists?
  - No
- ↳ Only through monarch?
  - No
- ↳ Other?
  - Specify: Through prayer



↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world  
– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion  
– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion  
– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger  
– No

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature  
– Specify: They are angels and demons and so they have their characteristics

Does the text attest to a pantheon of supernatural beings?

– No

Are mixed human-divine beings present according to the text?

– Yes

↳ Mixed human-divine beings can be seen?  
– Yes

↳ Mixed human-divine beings can be felt?  
– Yes

↳ Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living according to this text?  
– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life?  
– Yes

↳ In dreams?  
– Yes

↳ In trance possession?

– No

↳ Through divination practices?

– No

↳ Only through religious specialists?

– No

↳ Only through monarch?

– No

↳ Other?

– Specify: Saints considered as human-divine beings live an everyday life like every other person, along normal humans

Is there a supernatural being that is physically present in the/as a result of the text?

– No

Are other categories of beings present?

– Other [specify]: Demons transformed into wild beasts

Does the text guide divination practices?

– No

## Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present in the text?

– No

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment in the text?

– No

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards in the text?

– Yes

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known?

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god

– Yes

↳ Done by many supernatural beings

– Yes

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence

– Field doesn't know

↳ Done to enforce group norms?

– No

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness?

– No

↳ Done randomly

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife?

– Yes

↳ Highly emphasized by the religious group?

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure?

– No

↳ Consists of extreme sensory pleasure?

– No

↳ Consists of eternal happiness?

– Yes

↳ Consists of reincarnation as a superior life form?

– No

↳ Consists of reincarnation in a superior realm?

– No

↳ Other?

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime?

– Yes

↳ Highly emphasized?

– Yes

↳ Consists of good luck?

– No

↳ Consists of political success or power?

– No

↳ Consists of success in battle?

– No

↳ Consists of peace or social stability?

– Yes

↳ Consists of healthy crops or good weather?

– No

↳ Consists of success on journeys?

– No

↳ Reward in this life consists of mild sensory pleasure?

– No

↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure?

– No

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health?

– No

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success?

– No

↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants?

– No

↳ Other?

–Specify: Feeling of eternal peace and sense of extreme happiness and calmness

### Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present in the text?

– Yes

↳ Is the messiah's whereabouts or time of coming known?

– No

↳ Is the messiah's purpose known?

– Yes

↳ Messiah is a political figure who restores political rule

– No

↳ Messiah is a priestly figure who restores religious traditions

– No

↳ Other purpose

–Specify: For marking the end of times

Is an eschatology present in the text?

– Yes

↳ Eschaton is in this lifetime  
– Field doesn't know

↳ At specified time in future  
– No

↳ At unspecified time in near future  
– No

↳ At unspecified time in distant future  
– Yes

↳ At some other time [specify]  
– Field doesn't know

↳ Adherents need to perform specific tasks to bring about World's end  
– No

↳ Divine judgment event  
– Yes

↳ Restoration of the world  
– Yes

↳ Start of a new temporal cycle  
– Yes

↳ Establishment of new political system  
– No

↳ Establishment of new religious system  
– No

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↳ Other form of eschatology?  
– Specify: Restoration of human nature

↳ Will anyone survive the eschaton?  
– No

## Norms & Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the text?

– No

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious text?

– No

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the text?

– Yes

↳ Honesty/trustworthiness/integrity  
– Yes

↳ Courage (in battle)  
– No

↳ Courage (generic)  
– Yes

↳ Compassion/empathy/kindness/benevolence  
– Yes

↳ Mercy/forgiveness/tolerance  
– Yes

↳ Generosity/charity  
– Yes

↳ Selflessness/selfless giving

– Yes

↳ Righteousness/moral rectitude

– Yes

↳ Ritual purity/ritual adherence/abstention from sources of impurity

– Yes

↳ Respectfulness/courtesy

– Yes

↳ Familial obedience/filial piety

– No

↳ Fidelity/loyalty

– Yes

↳ Cooperation

– No

↳ Independence/creativity/freedom

– No

↳ Moderation/frugality

– Yes

↳ Forbearance/fortitude/patience

– Yes

↳ Diligence/self-discipline/excellence

– Yes

↳ Assertiveness/decisiveness/confidence/initiative

– No

↳ Strength (physical)



– No

↳ Power/status/nobility

– No

↳ Humility/modesty

– Yes

↳ Contentment/serenity/equanimity

– Yes

↳ Joyfulness/enthusiasm/cheerfulness

– No

↳ Optimism/hope

– Yes

↳ Gratitude/thankfulness

– Yes

↳ Reverence/awe/wonder

– Yes

↳ Faith/belief/trust/devotion

– Yes

↳ Wisdom/understanding

– Yes

↳ Discernment/intelligence

– Yes

↳ Beauty/attractiveness

– No

↳ Cleanliness (physical)/orderliness

– No



Other important virtues

– I don't know

### Advocacy of Practices

Does the text require celibacy (full sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require castration?

– No

Does the text require fasting?

– No

Does the text require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods)?

– No

Does the text require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations?

– No

Does the text require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of adults?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of children?

– No

Does the text require self-sacrifice (suicide)?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of property/valuable items?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of time (e.g. attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.)?

– No

Does the text require physical risk taking?

– No

Does the text require accepting ethical precepts?

– Yes

Does the text require marginalization by out-group members?

– No

Does the text require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household)?

– No

Does the text require participation in large-scale rituals?

– Yes

↳ On average, how many participants gather in one location?

– I don't know

↳ Interval of time between performances (in hours)

– I don't know

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks?

– Yes

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks?

– Yes

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices?

– Yes

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↳ Is there use of intoxicants?

– No

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present as indicated in the text?

– No

Does the text employ fictive kinship terminology?

– No

Does the text include elements that are intended to be entertaining?

– Yes

↳ Drama?

– Yes

↳ Comedy?

– No

↳ Tragedy?

– Yes

↳ Epic entertainment?

– Yes

Does the text specify sacrifices, offerings, and maintenance of a sacred space?

– Yes

↳ Are sacrifices specified by the text?

– Yes

↳ Animal sacrifice?

– Yes

↳ Human sacrifice?

– No

↳ Are there self-sacrifices specified by the text?

– No

↳ Are there material offerings present?

– No

↳ Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory?

– No

↳ Is the maintenance of the place regulated by the text?

– No

## Institutions & Production Environment of Text

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### Society & Institutions

Society of religious group that produced the text is best characterized as:

– A tribe

Are there specific elements of society that have controlled the reproduction of the text?

– A Spiritual Elect

Are there specific elements of society involved with the destruction of the text?

– Other

Notes: The text was never destroyed

### Welfare

Does the text specify institutionalized famine relief?

– No

Does the text specify institutionalized poverty relief?

– Yes

Does the text specify institutionalized care for elderly & infirm?

– No

Other forms of welfare?

– No

## Education

Are there formal educational institutions available for teaching the text?

– No

Are there formal educational institutions specified according to the text?

– No

Does the text make provisions for non-religious education?

– No

Does the text restrict education to religious professionals?

– No

Does the text restrict education among religious professionals?

– No

Is education gendered according to the text?

– No

Is education gendered with respect to this text and larger textual tradition?

– No

Does the text specify teaching relationships or ratios? (i.e.: 1:20; 1:1)

– No

Are there specific relationships to teachers that are advocated by the text?

– No

Are there worldly rewards/benefits to education according to the text specified by the text itself?

– No

## Bureaucracy

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Is bureaucracy regulated by this text?

– No

### **Public Works**

Does the text detail interaction with public works?

– No

### **Taxation**

Does the text specify forms of taxation?

– No

### **Warfare**

Does the text mention warfare?

– No

### **Food Production**

Does the text mentioned food production/disbursement?

– No