



## **A Conference on a 14th-century Slavic manuscript**

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It is not very often that one may enjoy a conference on a single medieval monument, not to mention a Slavic one. And yet, this is what happened on 21 May 2013 at the University of Sofia<sup>1</sup>. Prominent specialists in the field of Medieval Slavic Studies in four countries gathered together to discuss topics related to *Studying the Stanislav's Menologion*<sup>2</sup>: *Issues and Approaches*. This conference was part of a research project named *Reconstruction of the Preslav Hagiographic Collections: Edition and Research of the Stanislav's Menologion*<sup>3</sup> subsidised by the Bulgarian Science Fund at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (ДМУ 03/19) and was organised by the project's head – Diana Atanasova.

The majority of the papers were closely linked to the work under consideration – the parchment manuscript 1039 kept at the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia – and proposed remarks on its language, composition, palaeographic, codicological and text critical features and translation problems as well as its representation online. Two of the talks, however, touched upon other electronic editions of medieval writings and the tools they required. All the presentations were heading the same direction, agreeing on the fact that the manuscript comprised an archaic layer of texts and was not homogenous in its language and palaeography.

Klimentina Ivanova opened the topic of the relation between Ms 1039 and *Biblioteca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica* by stating that this volume should be expanded with other sources and amended in relation to the dating of some manuscripts and the terms related to their content (for the sake of their unification). The same direction of thought took Ivan Dobrev who dealt mainly with the dating of Ms 1039 and its denomination. His research on various primary and secondary sources (among which a note on f. 2r) led him to the conclusion that the codex was created in 1353 (or, less plausible, in 1383 due to a letter that is difficult to make out). He furthermore pointed out that “*cheti-minei*” was not the most appropriate denomination of the monument and that it should be rather referred to as either “panegirycy-martirologion” or at least “paneriryco-menologion.” In addition, in his opinion, the natural readership for non-Biblical Christian narrative, as in Ms 1039, was the nascent third estate (together with the clergy and the nobility) and the boyars.

Purely linguistic was Boryana Velcheva's analysis of the demonstrative pronouns in the codex, which led her to the conclusion that the linguistic features of the manuscript relate it to the North-East Bulgarian dialects. Further, she studied the early development of the demonstrative pronouns in the Moesian dialects as reflected in the manuscript.

The second session at the conference was dedicated mainly to the contents of Stanislav's Menologion. Yavor Miltenov observed it from the codicological, palaeographic and text critical aspects and placed it in the context of similar collections to conclude that its protograph probably originated on Mount Athos and that its contents were not homogenous but, probably, continuously amended. Diana Atanassova was interested mainly in the role of the church orders and the dependence of the codex's contents on them. She focused on those parts of the Studite Typicon and the Evergetis Typicon that instructed on the saints commemoration and calendar as well as on the service menaia, in order to find out the sources for the institutionalised reading and the establishment of a codified corpus of texts spread among the South Slavs up to the late Middle Ages.

Aneta Dimitrova was concerned mainly with the question why just three texts in the codex under consideration were attributed to St John Crysostom and found the answer partly in the fact that the collection included texts for only the first quarter of the church year. The session on the contents of Stanislav's Menologion was closed by Iskra Hristova-Shomova, who returned to the problem that certain early miscellanies had not purely menaion type of contents – as including both narrative and rhetoric texts on fixed feasts and movable dates – and found some parallels with the triodion, the tropologion (which contained services for both the movable and immovable Christian feasts) and the festal menaia (containing only selected services for the major feasts).



The third sessions was dedicated to translation studies. Andrej Bojadžiev's linguistic and palaeographic analysis convinced upon the archaic state of the translation. Tzvetomira Danova reached the same conclusion but through a different path – by hypothesising that the three versions of St Andrew of Crete's Homily on the Elevation of the Cross were three independent translations and that the one in Ms 1039 was belonging to a more archaic group of translations. Maya Petrova-Taneva dealt with similar issues in relation to the long version of the Life of St Euphrosyne of Alexandria by outlining some of the linguistic peculiarities of its Slavic translation and of its copy in Ms 1039. The session was closed by Dieter Stern's talk concentrating on the different readings in the Slavic translation of the Life of St Abraham of Qidun to conclude that the translator, though adhering to the principle of literalism, changed the text in a way that reflected some particular Slavic style of text redaction.

The first part of the last session was focused on particular texts in the manuscript. Lyubka Nenova was interested in the Life of St John the Merciful in terms of orthography, morphology and vocabulary as well as in terms of vices and virtues. The last three talks were all concerned with certain electronic editions of medieval Slavic manuscripts and the tools necessary for their publication online. Lara Sels and David Birnbaum reported about the project directed by Dieter Stern, whose main aim was the preparation of a digital edition of the Bđinski sbornik that would reflect both its multilayered reality and that would combine the documentary perspective with the text-critical one. Anna-Maria Totomanova drew the scholarly attention to the set of electronic tools that have been used for the description and publication of medieval Slavic texts in a series of research and educational projects headed by her and run by the Department of Cyrill-Methodian Studies at the Sofia University. Diana Atanasova and Kozma Popovski closed the conference with a presentation of the contents and functionalities of the Hagioslavica Website, where the whole Stanislav's Menologion is already freely accessible together with its codicological description and the information about the project dedicated to this online edition.

To sum it up, this conference was one of this year's significant events for the Slavic medievalists, not just because all the participants in it showed professional diligence, shed light on important issues and shared interesting conclusions, but also because it opened the gate for further international collaboration in preparing digital and online editions of other medieval Slavic manuscripts. One can only await the publication of the conference proceedings, perhaps even on the project's website.

- [1.](#) It is not by chance that the event has occurred just a couple of days before the Day of Sts Cyril and Methodius, celebrated as the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavic Literature (24 May), as well as on the eve of the Third International Congress in Bulgarian Studies (23-26 May 2013), also part of the 125-th anniversary of the Sofia University's.
- [2.](#) The manuscript is known among the specialists mainly by its cataloguing number – CMNL 1039 – i.e. Ms 1039 kept at the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia.
- [3.](#) The website of the project is already working and the whole MS 1039 is freely accessible there: <http://hagioslavica.com>

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