

# The Project *Hagiotheca Preslavica*

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**Abstract.** *Hagiotheca Preslavica* (Reconstruction of the Preslav hagiographical collections: Publication and Research of the Stanislav's menaion-chetii<sup>1</sup> manuscript) is a project, developed by a team of young Bulgarian medievalists<sup>2</sup>. Its principal task is the preparation and publication (both digital and traditional) and research of the Stanislav's menaion-cheti (better known as 1039 manuscript from the "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" National Library. Although it is a 14<sup>th</sup> century copy, the manuscript preserves a number of authentic texts that allow us to reconstruct faithfully the initial contents of menaia-chetii, compiled and translated during the Golden Age of the medieval Bulgarian literature and culture. The realization of the project will be completed by web-based, easily navigable digitalization of the Stanislav's menaion-cheti, creation of a matrix for the description of the texts, enabling searching and grouping. This will provide the conditions necessary for the work of the team as well as of the wider academic community.

**Keywords:** Manuscript, Edition, Hagiography, Collections, Menaion-chetii, Digitalization

## 1 Introduction

The use of contemporary computer technologies for the preservation, publication, and research of written records provides an exceptionally beneficial and easily accessible environment for work with medieval artifacts. The possibility of visualizing manuscripts, which are usually scattered in different libraries and hardly accessible, could be an incentive to broaden the medieval studies with new methods and approaches, coming from different disciplinary fields.

*Hagiotheca Preslavica* (Reconstruction of the Preslav hagiographical collections: Publication and Research of the Stanislav's menaion-cheti manuscript) is the title of a project, developed by a team of young Bulgarian medievalists (Dr. Diana Atanassova,

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<sup>1</sup> The term menaion-chetii/menaion-čet'i in the palaeoslav studies signifies the same type of hagiographic collections, known as menologia in the Byzantine studies.

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Sofia University – coordinator; Dr. Aneta Dimitrova, Sofia University; Dr. Irina Kuzidova, Bulgarian Academy of Science; Dr. Lyubka Nenova, Southwestern University, Blagoevgrad; Cvetomira Danova, PhD candidate at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center and Mag. Krassimir Popovsky, Bulgarian Orthodox Church). Its principal task is the preparation and publication (both digital and traditional) and research of the Stanislav's menaion-chetii (better known as 1039 manuscript from the National Library in Sofia). It is one of the most valuable medieval Slavic manuscripts, preserved in the "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" National Library. The significance of Stanislav's menaion-chetii is due to the fact that, although it is a 14<sup>th</sup> century copy, it preserves a number of authentic texts that allow us to reconstruct faithfully the initial contents of menaia-chetii, compiled and translated during the Golden Age of the medieval Bulgarian literature and culture.

## 2 Why the Stanislav's Menaion-chetii?

### 2.1 What We Know

The manuscript is a menaion-chetii (menologion) for the months September through November, comprising hagiographical texts, that is, readings for corporate and individual use for each day of the year, starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September. In its present-day condition, it consists of 370 preserved sheets of parchment paper. Unfortunately considerable part of the manuscript has been lost. On the last page is the beginning of a *Life of St. John Chrysostom* (13<sup>th</sup> November). But it is almost certain that the manuscript comprised texts for until the end of November. This assumption proves another Slavic manuscript – the pre-Metaphrastic menaion-cheti for the months of September through November preserved in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb (sign. IIIc24). It dates from approximately the same time and stands comparison with the Stanislav's menaion-chetii in terms of configuration of the texts' margins and of letter size [11].

The significance of Stanislav's menaion-chetii has been pointed out repeatedly in publications by authoritative Bulgarian palaeoslavists (see for instance [4–7], [10–11]). In practice, every scholar in the field of hagiography either starts with or gets to a few key manuscripts representative of the oldest Slavic hagiographical tradition: Codex Suprasliensis (that is 10<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript), Uspenskii Codex containing vitae (12<sup>th</sup> c.) and Stanislav's menaion-chetii (14<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript). The first two manuscripts were published long ago [8, 9, 12, 13]. In this perspective, Stanislav's menaion-chetii remains an inexplicable gap in the editorial priorities of Medieval Bulgarian studies and of Palaeoslavist studies in general.

The linguistic peculiarities of separate items from Stanislav's menaion-chetii have been subject to close analysis by distinguished Bulgarian palaeoslavists (see for instance [3, 6, 7, 11]). Researching thoroughly in linguistic terms one of the texts in the manuscript, I. Dobrev voices the opinion that 1039 manuscript is "a faithful copy" of the Preslav old-Bulgarian translations [7]. Prof. Boryana Velcheva, whose contribution to researching NLCM1039 is not insignificant, deems that "most of the texts in

manuscript № 1039 (...) bear doubtless traces of translation or revision by the Preslav literary circle” [4]. To Klimentina Ivanova, 1039 manuscript is a replica of the collections of this type compiled in Preslav [10]. Analysing the archeographical and codicological specificities of the manuscript, in her research Ivanova seeks to establish the connection between 1039 and some other 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts that also can fairly certainly also be considered idiosyncratic “copies” of the Preslav collections.

## 2.2 What We Do Not Know

The manuscript has not been published. Only separate texts of its contents have been published following different editorial principles. This is why the publication of *Stanislav's menaion-chetii* is imperative. The research to supplement the edition will be complex (archeographico-codicological, linguistic, comparative-textological, literary-historical) and will concern the manuscript as a whole.

So far, only separate *Lives* from the manuscript have been subject to textological analysis (see for instance [1, 2, 11]). The results of the textological analysis have clarified to a different degree questions about the origins of the manuscript, be it for a small part of the entire text. A problem common to the cited analyses is that the manuscript has been researched “piecemeal”, most often with regard to a particular saint or the identification of separate texts. These questions could be solved only after the entire manuscript has been thoroughly researched. An incentive to such a research is the high-quality digitalization of the manuscript, its entire publication – conventional, diplomatic, and electronic, with supplementary text-criticism.

## 2.3 What We Aim to Discover

- Tracing the presupposed Byzantine prototype of 1039 manuscript. Identifying the Byzantine sources of the hagiographical works translated and included in *Stanislav's menaion-chetii*.
- Tracing of other Slavic manuscripts with such contents – *menaia-cetii* (menologia) – from the same period and later, where copies of the same texts would have been preserved in the same order. As a result of the work of medieval copyists, there are many unclear points, mistakes, and amendments that could be understood only by comparing all the copies of a text. This is why the tracing of the history of the texts is a necessary stage of research.
- Comparative-textological analysis of works in the NLCM1039 codex. Preparation of a critical apparatus supplementary to the publication of the texts, including significant interpretations, amendments, omissions, or additions, will solve a number of questions concerning the history of the manuscript as a whole.

## 3 Stages of the Project

1. Web-based, easily navigable digitalization of the *Stanislav's menaion-chetii* (photocopying of its pages). Creation of a matrix for: a) the description of the texts, en-

abling searching by author, by title, incipit, explicit, and so on; b) grouping of the texts. This will provide the conditions necessary for the work of the team as well as of the wider academic community.

2. Research of the Stanislav's menaion-chetii.
3. A new, revised, and full codicological and paleographic description of the NLCM 1039 manuscript, accessible from the web-page of the project. The initial intention is the description to be made according to the TSM (Template for Slavonic Manuscript) standard developed by the Repertorium of Old Bulgarian Literature and Letters [14] and TEI-P5 standard. Designed to comply with the international standards, this description will enable the exchange of metadata with other digitization projects, meta-search engines, and portal sites (see for example TRAME at: <http://trame.fefonlus.it/trame/index.html>)
  - A linguistic analysis of works in NLCM1039
  - Tracing the intertextual relations between the Byzantine source/ sources and the Slavic translation (based on the data of the manuscript's texts.)
4. Preparation for publication. We envisage the preparation of a traditional diplomatic edition that would be accessible electronically. It will be supplied with the necessary apparatus systematizing the efforts made while researching the manuscript. The diplomatic edition of the texts is to be supplemented by a critical apparatus, an index of the Greek text, and a grammatical analysis (a similar model has been developed by Prof. Birnbaum in connection with the digital edition of *The Life of St. Paul the Simple* (see: <http://paul.obdurodon.org>)).
5. Digitalization of several manuscripts, related to Stanislav's menaion-chetii, thus creating accessible resource for further comparison and analysis.

## 4 Perspectives

The goals of *Hagiotheca Preslavica* are the publication, electronic and conventional, and complex research of one of the significant medieval South Slavic manuscripts. That will provide a fertile ground for further research in Palaeoslavica studies. The creation of the internet portal, giving easy access to the digital copy of the manuscript and its supplementary critical apparatus, will be an incentive to the creation of online library, comprising all the menaia-chetii, which are descendants of the type that probably had existed in Preslav, but did not reach us.

In other words, a model of electronic publication has been sought, such that would not only match the purposes of the project, but also shelter other medieval Slavic menaia-chetii, referring both to the premetaphrastic and to the post-metaphrastic tradition.

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