University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola
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ISSN: 1857- 8888
DOI: 10.20544/teacher.29.15

MEDIEVAL LITERARY HERITAGE OF BITOLA

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Abstract

Medieval literary heritage of Bitola has a direct connection with the activity of St. Clement of Ohrid, his educational and spiritual mission in these areas. The influence of the Ohrid Literary School, the organized educational and liturgical activity in the many churches and monasteries contribute to Bitola and the wider Bitola region having a central place in the creation of the entire literary activity in the Middle Ages. Numerous manuscripts confirm that these areas impose themselves with leadership in the production of literary texts and in a very large period from the IX century - to be precise the XVII century (the manuscripts found on the territory of Bitola and the Bitola region date from that time).

Bitola truly represents a significant space in the medieval period, a very important one, not only for the establishment, promotion and preservation of cultural collective memory, but also a true and respectable base of literacy and literature in these regions and beyond.

Key words: literary heritage, Bitola, St. Clement of Ohrid, educational activity, worship service

St. Clement and the Macedonian Medieval Literary Heritage

According to the assumptions of researchers, St. Clement was bishop in Kutmichevica for 23 years. That period is understandable to be the most fruitful for his literary activity, although there are also serious allegations that point to the fact that St. Clement began to create texts even when he was a follower of his teachers Ss. Cyril and Methodius in the Moravian mission. The literary activity of St. Clement is an inseparable part of the great work of the students of the enlighteners. They are working on translating the books of St. Cyril and Methodius, necessary for the service - Gospel, Apostle, Psalter, Parimejnik, Euchologij, prepare the necessary books for the service in the Old Slavonic vernacular (Feast and Flower Triodion, Official Miney and Psalter), and that process include translated and original texts, determined some biblical books translated by St. Methodius and others translated them again (the interpretations of the Old Testament texts). The translation work of the students of Ss. Cyril and Methodius includes many oratorical and hagiographic works, extensive theological literature (instructional, philosophical, dogmatic, exegetical, artistic and scientific, polemical), a large number of works of monastic literature and some of the great Byzantine chronicles. They compiled extensive collections with various contents, determined the translation of the Nomocanon and created legal texts, and created numerous original works (oratorical, hagiographic, hymnographic, polemical, euchological)**.** (http://www.eslavsanct.net/viewobject.php?id=2378&lang=bg).

„ Every nation that has its own liturgical language and literature possesses both its own distinct mission and its own legitimate place in the Christian ecumenism. The spirit of the cultural spring seems to bring joyful optimism to many of the early works of the Cyril and Methodius tradition: it stems from the awareness of the Slavs that they had acquired their own historical identity through the reception of the Christian "letters" in their own language (Obolenski, 2011:12-13). The nature of the Cyril and Methodius tradition – Slavic in form and initially mainly Greek in content – thus created an admirable channel for the spread of Byzantine culture in Eastern Europe...

At the end of the ninth century, St. Clement of Ohrid, a disciple of Methodius, transplanted it from central Europe to the Balkans, where it took root and flourished on the soil of Macedonia." (Obolenski, 2011:15). For the Byzantine-Slavic meeting to bear real fruit, something more than imperial diplomacy and missionary zeal, or just an Eastern European desire for culture was needed. It was inevitable that it would take place in an environment that was common to both worlds and that was capable of acting as a mediator and catalyst. Such an environment required a creative energy that was strong enough to leave its mark on religious beliefs, literature, and social and political ideas. It also required a cosmopolitan character, capable of bridging state borders and linguistic boundaries, and which could be understood as a common tradition of Eastern Europe: and it had to attract and control the loyalty of people of different nations and connect them to each other through bonds of common learning and friendship.

Two such environments encouraged the encounter between Byzantium and the Slavs: the Cyril and Methodius tradition and the religious and cultural movement that arose in the monasteries of Mount Athos.(Obolenski, 2011:12-13). Slavic science is faced with the question of why St. Clement of Ohrid is one of the most popular writers of the Orthodox world throughout the Middle Ages. It is quite understandable that this is due to the character of St. Clement's works, their content, their deep thoughtfulness conveyed through an impressive form, the strength and sincerity of feelings, the simplicity of expression - elements that provide these works with a strong influence on listeners, readers, and copyists. Thus, the biographer of St. Clement - Theophylact of Ohrid notes: "he composed simple and clear lyrics for all holidays, which do not contain anything deep and very wise, but which are understandable even to the simplest person ",with those words, St. Clement breaks down the "rock of ignorance" and blesses human souls. (Milev, 1966: 133) The simplicity and purity, which Theophylact speaks of, are essential attributes of St. Clement's sermons. Therefore, they are preferred over the sermons of a number of other writers and live for centuries in the memory of generations of the entire Slavic world and the non-Slavic Romance people, and St. Clement is one of the most respected Old Slavic writers. The works of St. Clement, with his name in the title, were published in XVII century, во печатените руски пролози (from 1642-1643 and in the further period) as well as in the famous Macariev chet - minei.

St. Clement of Ohrid is the key figure in the development of Macedonian cultural history and the present. He is an introducer to the Christian faith, a preacher, teacher, enlightener, advisor, father of the Macedonian nation. Both the being and existence and the entire Macedonian spiritual and cultural treasury rest on the foundations laid by the gifted teacher and the inspired follower of Christ and the most virtuous, most valuable and most gifted student of St. Cyril and Methodius. St. Clement of Ohrid is definitely the person who marked the Macedonian millennium and built the construction of the Macedonian cultural and spiritual identity.

Medieval literary heritage of Bitola - criteria

Starting from the fact that the entire fund of written texts in the Middle Ages were exclusively for the function of worship in the churches, that is, for the establishment of the church and liturgical life, the need to create an active literary and transcription activity was born. This was done in the numerous churches and monasteries built after the arrival of St. Clement and St. Naum in these areas, and thus they began to function as educational and literary nuclei, which brought about the further development of Slavic literacy. "This activity was particularly intensified after St. Clement received the episcopal rank in 893, when he organized the Velika Eparchy and laid the foundations of the Slavic church in Macedonia."(Despotova, 2000:164).

This issue of the literary medieval heritage in Bitola and the Bitola region is discussed by Vangelija Despotova (Despotova, 2000:166) for which she uses 2 criteria. The first is their dialect characteristics (Despotova, 1995:155-163), and the second criterion is when the writer himself announces in the text the location where he wrote the manuscript, but this criterion is almost unproductive because such determinations in the corpus of texts that are the subject of our interest are very rare. (Despotova, 2000:167). The most common data for determining manuscripts are the locations where the records were found. Previously, Vera Stojchevska-Antikj and Blazhe Koneski have observed Bitola's medieval literary heritage.

Literary heritage of Bitola - description

Of all these numerous manuscripts, which we include in the rich medieval literary heritage of Bitola, unfortunately only two manuscripts are now in Bitola, in the Bitola Museum. These are: The Four Gospels from the second half of the XIV century. The manuscript contains 58 parchment leaves, a Serbian-language redaction, The Four Gospels were found in Bitola, and are kept in the Museum under the number. 206. (Stojchevska-Antikj, 1988: 57-66).

The second manuscript is a ***Liturgical Collection*** from XVII century, containes 173 sheets (the sheets 96-103 are from XVI century), under No. 140. (Stojchevska-Antikj, 1988: 57-66).

Unfortunately, the Bitola sheets do not exist today. The manuscript in Bitola was discovered by Jordan Ivanov (Ivanov, 1931:446-452) and for that reason they are so named. Originally it contained two sheets (21 x 14,5 cm and 17,5 x 13,5 cm), and in content it is a fragment of an octoich. It was written by two scribes in a constitutional script slightly tilted to the right and is incredibly reminiscent of the Dobromir Gospel from the beginning of the XII century. (Despotova, 2000:167) The linguistic characteristics of the manuscript indicate the existence of a verbal preposition and indicate that it belongs to the same scriptural school as the Dobromir Gospel, the Undol Leaves, and the Slepche Triodion. The presence of more archaic features allows it to be dated towards the end of the XI century. The claim remains probable that the Bitola sheets were written in the wider territory of Bitola. (more about the paleographic characteristics of the text in Stojchevska - Antich, 1988:197).

The Bitola (Kicevo) Triodione is kept in the manuscript department of the ***Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia,*** under no. 38.9. It was written on parchment in the second half of XII century, with constitutional script, and in the Cyrillic text, entire expressions with verb script have been inserted in 56 places. There are 101 leaves (27,5 x 19,5 cm.). According to its content, it is defined as a Lenten Triodion. In the Bitola Triodion, along with the triplets of the Byzantine hymnographers, the original triplets of Konstantin Preslavski are also preserved, and in several places ekphonetic signs are found. According to the records found in it, it can be concluded that the manuscript was written by Georgi Grammatik from the village of Vapa, Debar region, in the village of S'lp, Kichevo region. According to its linguistic characteristics, the Bitola Triodion belongs to the same group as the Ohrid Apostle and the Bologna Psalter, in the order of manuscripts from the Ohrid literary school. (Petkanova, 1992: 59).

And the Bitola Triodion was found in Bitola by Jordan Ivanov (Snegarov,1932), in 1907, at the Bitola Bulgarian Trade Agency, where it was brought in 1898, along with other Slavic and Greek manuscripts from the surrounding villages in the Bitola region. More at (Stojchevska-Antikj, 1988: 197-200).

Lenten and Flower Triodion from the first half of XIII century, is kept in the Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (more at Mosin, 1955), with signature IV d 107. The manuscript contains 196 leaves. (19 x 26,7 cm) and is written in a beautiful medium constitution, in which old forms in the script are noticeable. In several places there are remains of ekphonetic notation, the vocabulary is characterized by a high degree of archaism, and the linguistic features confirm its belonging to the manuscripts of the Ohrid group. The manuscript was taken to Zagreb from Bitola. (Despotova, 2000:168).

The appearance of the Bologna Psalter is dated to the period 1230-1242. The manuscript contains 264 parchment leaves (27 x 20 cm.) and is kept in the University Library of Bologna. "For the origin and dating of the manuscript, the data from the note of one of the scribes on the sheet are important 126: „ Remember, O Lord, your servants Joseph and Tycha, who, with the help of God and the holy ever-virgin Mary, wrote this book. It was written in the city of Ohrid, in the village called Ramne, during the reign of Tsar Asen of Bulgaria" (probably Asen II). On the same page there is a later entry: "I bought this book from Grammaticus Theodore of Ramna and I gave the hieromonk Danilo the gilded earrings of the popadija and two perpers in the middle of the city in Bitola". At the beginning of XVIII century The manuscript was already in Bologna, as part of the manuscript was published in 1746 in a Latin translation by Ignatius Kershinsky.“(Despotova, 2000, 169).

Lenten Triodion of Bitola in the first half of XIII century. The manuscript contains 153 parchment leaves (30 x 21 cm). It was written in a small constitutional script by two scribes. The first part of the text was written by Theodore Grammaticus. According to the linguistic features, this text belongs to the Kratovo Literary School, but on the last leaf of the Triodion it is written: ***Lenten Triodion of Bitola***. ***Lenten Triodion of Bitola*** It is kept in the National Library "Ivan Vazov", Plovdiv, Bulgaria. (Conev, 1920, op. No. 57, 37-3R, Table 23.)

The Bitola election octoich in the first half of XIII century. The manuscript contains 203 parchment leaves (15 x 22 cm) and consists of two parts that were previously separated. The octoich is written in a beautiful constitutional Cyrillic script, but is also distinguished by the insertion of verb letters between the Cyrillic ones. It is named the Bitola Electoral Octoich according to later records, written in Latin, which give its geographical designation of origin: „Iz Bitolje, Zapadna Makedonija", and is kept in the

Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb with a library designation III a 45-46.(Despotova, 2000:169).

In the Archives of HAZU under no. III a 29 there is also a Clerk, who originates from the beginning of XIV century, Serbian redaction and contains 11 parchment leaves. The re-locating as a Bitola manuscript, according to geographical origin, is determined due to a later inscription in Latin script: „Iz okoline Bitolje u Zapadnoj Makedoniji".

The Vranesnik Apostle from the second half of the XIII century. The manuscript contains 26 parchment leaves (15,5 x 24 cm), It got its name from a note on the first unwritten page: „Присланая Попь Јованомь изъ села Вранешница". Blazhe Koneski, in his critical edition of this manuscript (Koneski 1956), believes that the Vranesnica Apostle is from the group of manuscripts that Stefan Verkovich took from the Slepche Monastery, Demir Hisar, and the village of Vraneshnica in Kichevo is not far from this monastery. This manuscript also belongs to the Kratovo Literary School according to its linguistic features, but for a certain period it was in Bitola, which is confirmed by the entry:„Bitolja, Zapadna Makedonija (praxapostolar)". The Vranestica Apostle is kept in the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, with library designation III a 48.

Thirty manuscripts are kept in the University Library in Belgrade, from the collection of the Bishop of Bitola, who later became the Metropolitan of Skopje, Josif Cvijovich. Four Gospels from the XIV century and the November Minuet, originating from the Bukovo Monastery "St. Preobrazhenie". The Four Gospels are kept under no. Rs 6, and the November Minuet is distinguished by visible traces of the Macedonian template and was written towards the end of the 14th century and has the library designation Rs 13. The Flower Triodion from the XIV century is kept under no. Rs 4, then the Minuet for March and April from 1345-1355 is kept under no. Rs 9, etc. The listed manuscripts have a Serbian-language redaction.

In the collection of Josif Cvijović, there are also Macedonian manuscripts, such as the Minejot for the month of November from the year BC. In the 16th c. that has 133 l., now has no. Rs 7.

Manuscripts from a Serbian-language edition, but with remnants of an older Macedonian original and with a note that they were taken from Bitola or the surrounding villages, are also kept in Bulgaria, in the National Library "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia. (Stoyanov, Kodov, 1964: vol. III). These are: Psalter from the beginning of the 16th century, contains 141 leaves and an entry mentioning the Demirhisar village of Obednik, NBKM no. 831. Festive minuet from the beginning of the 16th century, contains 192 leaves, with entries mentioning the Bitola village of Srpci, NBKM no. 907. Minuet for the month of October from the 16th century, 181 leaves, with an entry mentioning the Prilep's village - Toplica, then on page 139 an entry in Macedonian vernacular, on page 149 there is an entry in Cyrillic and Greek script mentioning the Demirhisar, Prilep and Bitola villages of Mechkarica, Dragožani, Bučin, Chepigovo, Toplica, Borotino, Magarevo, Rufci, Klepach, Trnovci, Sekireni, Ramna, Lopatica, Zagoriche, Cmilevo, NBKM no. 916. Service of Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria from the end of the XV century contains 29 leaves, with an entry on the inside of the back cover, stating that the codex belonged to the monastery of Zhitoshe, NBKM no. 985. Nomocanon from the second half of the XV century, contains 57 leaves, with entries on the margins of several leaves in which one can read the village of Sopotnica - Demir Hisar (leaves 21 and 39), the village of Voishta- Boishta- Demir Hisar (leaves 20 and 39), the village of Srpci - Bitola and the village of Leska - Leskovo - Demir Hisar (leave 48), NBKM no. 1117. Collection of works by Dionysius the Areopagite from 1553, contains 333 leaves, with the signature of Kiril Pejchinovich on leaf 290, and on the last page, next to several personal names in Cyrillic letters, but in Greek, Slepche chorion (village Slepche) is written, NBKM no. 1032. Four Gospels from 1567, with 261 leaves. On leaf 5 there is a later entry from which it can be concluded that the manuscript was in the village of Bukovo at that time, with the signature NBKM no. 57 (567). A diary for the month of September from the 16th century, contains 251 leaves, and on the second blank leaf there is a Greek entry in which priest Dionysius reports that he wrote in 1725, and that he built the monastery in the village of Capari in 1724. A book of hours from 1695, with 247 leaves, the manuscript, according to the record, was located in the village of Krklino, NBKM No. 630 (68).

In BANU-Sofia there is a very old Paterik, dated from XIV century, Serbian redaction, contains 286 parchment leaves (20x14 cm). Its place of compilation has not been determined, but on one of its leaves 57a there is an entry mentioning the village of Sloeshtica - Demir Hisar. However, it is believed that

this information may shed light on some of the connections between the copies of the crutches and the territory of these regions. (Stojchevska-Antikj, 1988: 201).

Conclusion

From what science has so far as Bitola's medieval literary heritage, we can name: the Bitola Sheets, the Bitola (Kicevo) Triodion, the Lenten and Flower Triodion from the first third of the XIII century, The Bologna Psalter, Lenten Triodionion from Bitola from the first half of XIII century, The Bitola election octoich from the first half of XIII century, Clerk of the beginning of XIV century, The Vranesnik apostle from the second half of the XIII century, the manuscripts from the collection of the Bishop of Bitola and Metropolitan of Skopje Josif Cvijović, which are kept in the Belgrade University Library and the manuscripts kept in Bulgaria, in the National Library "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia and in BANU. The previously mentioned separate manuscripts are kept in the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, except for the Bologna Psalter, which is kept in the University Library in Bologna.

It is shocking that out of the numerous literary heritage of these regions, only two manuscripts are found in Bitola: ***The Four Gospels*** from the Second Half of the XIV century. The manuscript contains 58 parchment leaves, a Serbian-language redaction, and a Liturgical Collection of XVII century, contains 173 sheets (the sheets 96-103 are from the XVI century). And unfortunately, they have neither been critically published nor processed until now.

The situation with the critical editions of the manuscripts, with the exception of the Vraneshtiki Apostle, published by Koneski, is identical and therefore the data on the subject are scarce for a long period of time. For the manuscripts that are outside the country, there are neither microfilms nor photographs. **This should become a serious challenge for researchers as soon as possible**!

What we can summarize in this text is the fact that in almost all manuscripts with Bitola provenance, and from the corpus of medieval literary texts, but also the entire medieval Macedonian literary production, the presence is visible - the remains of the Glagolitic script, which points to the fact that St. Clement of Ohrid, as its most consistent advocate and admirer, exerted a huge influence that covers a large time interval of about five and more centuries. Also, in these manuscripts there are numerous archaisms in the vocabulary, but the structure of the texts also preserves its archaic nature. The fact of the role of the Slepca Literary School (an important spiritual and scriptural center) cannot go unnoticed, which seems to be alive even after so many centuries, and the Sisterhood of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner, under the patronage of Abbot Seraphim and the blessing of Metropolitan Peter, remains the most consistent continuer of Saint Clement's thought, precisely through the restoration of the Glagolitic script through the transcription from Church Slavonic into Glagolitic of the troparia for St. Nahum, St. Gemel, St. Joachim of Osogovo and St. Niphon of Cyprus. These troparia are only a small part of the calligraphic opus in Glagolitic that the Sisterhood is creating to preserve both the spiritual and literary centuries-old heritage.

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