

MANUSCRIPT RESEARCH IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SERBIA: A SHORT OVERVIEW

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Abstract: National Library of Serbia started gathering old books since it was established (1832). Their cataloging and research throughout nearly two centuries turned out to be integral part of the general development of Serbian archeography with great, in several aspects decisive impact on it. The 19th century period, when manuscripts were seen primarily as philological and historical sources, was crowned with Ljubomir Stojanović's catalog of the collection of NLS (1903). Systematic approach to description of all manuscripts, strongly encouraged by the destruction of NLS and its complete fund in 1941, was adopted only after Archeography Department was founded in 1961. The article indicates some of the most important points in the development of the Department as key institution for cataloging and research of Cyrillic manuscripts in Serbia, offering a glance at its portfolio.

Keywords: National Library of Serbia, Cyrillic manuscripts, archeography, Ljubomir Stojanović, Vladimir Mošin, Dimitrije Bogdanović.

1. The beginnings: individual efforts

Serbian scholars were aware of the broad cultural significance of older book heritage already in the first half of 17th century. Pajsije I of Janjevo (1614–1647), then patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), not only read older manuscripts, but also ordered that a large number of them be restored, and for the most precious and damaged ones, to be copied (including illumination), insisting that afterwards they be kept in organized libraries of the monasteries from which they originated. In the 18th century, Zaharija Orfelin strongly emphasized the necessity of collecting, describing and publishing antiquities, including manuscripts (Орфелин 1768). But true beginnings of Serbian archeography as a hybrid auxiliary discipline of manuscript description can be found in the first decades of 19th century and linked to the names of lucid archimandrite and Bishop Lukijan Mušicki¹ and Vuk Karadžić, self-taught philologist and the most important reformer of Serbian language (Караџић 1826). Symbolically, they described collections in two empires in which Serbs lived in at the time: Habsburg and Ottoman. As

¹ Mušicki cataloged numerous old books in present-day Vojvodina and Slavonia, guided by his own methodological rules, but he never published his catalog.

Serbian archeography occurred and developed under the auspices of Slavic philology, manuscripts were primarily viewed as philological and historical sources, and this remained the case for a long time².

Some prominent researchers of Serbian manuscript heritage from the same century, such as Đura Daničić, Janko Šafarik and Stojan Novaković, were at some point in their careers main librarians, i.e. Directors of National Library of Serbia (NLS). This cultural institution of great importance for the restored Serbian statehood started gathering old books practically from its foundation in 1832. However, the first catalog of manuscripts of NLS appeared decades later, at the turn of centuries. Its author, Ljubomir Stojanović, was the most prominent Serbian archeographer of the era and his book set an example for his contemporaries (Стојановић 1903)³.

Apart from its scientific significance, Stojanović's catalog, together with its addition by Svetozar Matic (Матић 1952), have additional value. Namely, they are the most valid records of nearly 1400 manuscripts, early printed books and charters, the largest collection of that type ever gathered in one Serbian institution, burned to the ground along with the rest of the Library and its fund during unannounced German bombing of Belgrade in 1941. Some sources suggest that it was specific Hitler's order to destroy NLS, among other institutions, and by destroying their written heritage and historical memory, to break the resistance of Serbs and take revenge for the defeat in the First World War. All unique and priceless books from the now-called Old collection, among which, ironically, a copy of Gutenberg's Bible on parchment, perished in flames. For things to be worse, inventory books were destroyed too. But, it was thanks to Stojanović's and Matic's catalogs that NLS later managed to recover a part of manuscripts that went missing already in First World War, and even today we still receive requests from all over the world based on their data, concerning collection that ceased to exist long time ago.

The destruction of several Serbian manuscript collections during Second World War emphasized the fact that in order to properly preserve, perceive and study manuscript heritage, that is, to realize all of its scientific, cultural, educational and other potential, the necessary first step is to list and archeographically describe each and every preserved book or fragment, wherever they may be. This task is especially significant, but also challenging,

² A concise overview of the development of Serbian archeography until the beginning of the 20th century: Убинпарип 2016.

³ For example, Radoslav Grujić was guided by Stojanović's approach, but his descriptions of manuscripts from the ex Varaždin Generalate and Slavonia (northern part of today's Croatia), including their codicological bits, are more detailed. He also introduced some novelties such as the description of watermarks, although without filigranological parallels. However, Grujić's description produced during the first decade of the 20th century, remained unpublished until recently (Грујић 2016).

for Serbian manuscript heritage⁴. Namely, on one hand, the largest part of it fell through during foreign rule over Serbian lands, which increases the significance of the remaining ones; on the other hand, those remains are nowadays geographically scattered. Today, in Serbia, they are in the collections of several public institutions of culture and in the institutions, monasteries and churches of SOC. But the largest number is in countries created from Yugoslavia and throughout Europe and world, whether they are owned by SOC, public institutions or private collectors. Clearly, job as demanding as the systematic description of manuscripts, either as a geographical or a cultural whole, can be done only by a specialized institution and by several generations of researchers. Still, in communist Yugoslavia, there was no interest in it until a wider international initiative arose.

2. Archeography Department

The idea of a systematic description of Cyrillic manuscripts in all Slavic countries was presented by Ljubomir Stojanović at the First international congress of Slavists in 1929, but it did not bear fruit before the Second World War. Only just during the Fourth congress, held in Moscow in 1958, it was agreed that they start work on forming General catalogue of Cyrillic manuscripts. As a result, in several Slavic countries, among which was Yugoslavia (1959), the strategic care of old books was taken over by the newly established state archeography commissions. In parallel with the commissions, in some cases even before them, Old Slavic institutes with archeography departments were founded (e.g. the Old Slavic Institute in Zagreb), or archeography departments were established as parts of national institutes, in addition to language history departments (e.g. the Department for bibliography, study and editing of monuments at the V.V. Vinogradov Russian Language Institute in Moscow). In Serbia, an Old Slavic institute, which would determine the corpus of Serbian manuscripts and work both on their processing and study, was never created. The systematic collection of data and primary processing of South Slavic manuscripts was entrusted to the (Yugoslav) Archeography Commission, while the corresponding philological scientific unit (Old Slavonic Department of the Institute of Serbian Language of SASA) was established much later (1969), and almost instantly marginalized.

⁴ As one would expect, texts of biblical origin make a significant share of Serbian collections. For example, out of 943 units in the Cyrillic collection of the Hilandar monastery, 103 contain New Testament in one form or another (almost 11%, or, counting only codices, without fragments, almost 13%); cf. Богдановић 1978. When it comes to artificially created collections, the percentage of the New Testament can be even two times higher.

Very soon, it became clear that concrete, large-scale tasks overwhelmed Archeography Commission and that they demand a different organizational approach. For that job, members of the Commission recommended Vladimir Mošin, a Russian immigrant who fled to Yugoslavia between World Wars, and who was at the time director of Historical Institute in Zagreb and the best connoisseur of Cyrillic manuscript heritage in Yugoslavia. After consideration of several options, NLS was chosen to procure institutional frame and in October 1961, the *Department for the Description and Registration of Slavic Manuscripts*, generally known by its later name *Archeography Department*, was established. It is important to say that it had nothing to do with the already existing Department of Special Collections and its renewed old books fund. As its first name suggested, the Department had exclusively parent assignments. It was framed as an institute for manuscripts with a long term project consisting in continuous work on registration and description of all Cyrillic manuscripts up until the end of the 17th century in Yugoslavia and of all South Slavic Cyrillic manuscripts abroad, where at least half of them actually were. Basic goals within the project were to compile: (1) General catalog of all collections of South Slavic manuscripts, (2) General catalog of South Slavic manuscripts by collections, and (3) Corpus of descriptions of South Slavic Cyrillic manuscripts, i.e. complete description of all manuscripts, in respective order.

The methodology of description which is basically still applied in Archeography Department, with some modifications, was also forged by Vladimir Mošin. It was based on the practices of major Russian paleographers, previous development of Serbian archeography and Mošin's own experience with manuscripts. Dimitrije Bogdanović, Mošin's collaborator and successor, in one of his papers (Богдановић 1968), a true short handbook in archeography, developed an extensive method, in which, among other things, the goals and scope of archeographic description are indicated and terminology is defined. In that period, practical work was organized in three sections: palaeographic, filigranologic, and for the art history section. Filigranology and palaeographic attribution of manuscripts particularly developed and soon made the Department recognizable for them.

Over time, two dominant features of the approach have crystallized and they need to be highlighted, even though they may seem obvious. One: as a unique monument of literacy, each manuscript deserves equal, full treatment. This is especially important for Serbian heritage since all libraries of Serbian nobility and a large number of church libraries were destroyed during the long Turkish rule, either by force or natural decay. That is why every book and every fragment counts, not only as a source, but also as a sort of "proof of life". Two: we cherish multiplicity – multidisciplinary and multiple persons approach. We try to present each manuscript in such manner that nothing stays hidden from users of our descriptions, who have very different

background, needs and expectations; we try to warn them about what they might expect to find in one book from as many different angles as possible. That is why in the process of full description each book is treated by 3 or 4 archeographers from the point of view of their scientific profiles. In our Department work, or have worked, historians, linguists, historians of literature, theologians, art historians and filigranologists.

The books may be processed on three levels that differ in the amount of data and profoundness of analysis: inventory entries, catalog entries and full descriptions. A full archeographic description is structured as follows:

Material description: tells the story of material characteristics, method of production and present state of the manuscript;

Scribe, date & place: cross data from all available sources – inscriptions, inner analysis, paleography, and, of course, filigranology, if the support is paper;

Scripture and language: general and specific paleographic features and detailed language analysis, especially if there are vernacular treats;

Illumination: description of all of the elements of illumination, not only from the point of view of influences and technique but also regarding their meaning when they are not only ornamental, but also functional or illustrative;

Binding: general appearance and ornamentation, which might lead to discovery of the workshop and approximate date;

Contents: each text is being registered with its original caption, incipit and explicit and provided by facts established in science, if needed;

Inscriptions: each inscription is transcribed in original scripture and language, unless they are single letters or other scribbles;

History: a short history of the book, most often reconstructed on the basis of inscriptions, and

Bibliography: only on a particular book or fragment and not on the topics that they might trigger.

Ideally, description of one manuscript collection consists of 3 tomes: (1) full archeographic description, (2) filigranologic album, with all the watermarks, including their multiple variants, from every manuscript on paper, usually arranged by types of watermarks for easier usage in further comparisons, and (3) paleographic album, where every single scribe from every manuscript is represented in chronological order for easier perception of paleographic peculiarities of a certain period.

So far, inventory of Cyrillic manuscripts in Yugoslavia (Богдановић 1982) and catalogs, or full descriptions of several collections have been published, among which are the ones in largest centers of Serbian culture outside former Yugoslavia: Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos in Greece (Богдановић 1978) and Szentendre in Hungary (Синдик/Гроздановић-Пајић/Мано-Зиси 1991). The experience says that processing of one collection may take decades, as shown by the latest example. This year (2023), we have finished publishing

description of the collection of priest and prof. Radoslav Grujić from the Museum of SOC, on which work had started right after the Archeography Department was established, and then re-visited and supplemented in several waves. The very history of making of this description could explain a lot about the complexity of archeographic work in Serbia and circumstances in which it's being performed.

In the course of time, the focus has shifted, the scope has broadened and the tasks have multiplied. Dimitrije Bogdanović has already opened some new perspectives, for example, by pointing out the importance of codicological and paleographical research, as well as observation of each manuscript as a whole, as a preparation for fulfilling textological tasks. Printed books in Serbian Church Slavonic from 15th-17th century have been included into the corpus, because in most aspects they follow and imitate manuscripts. Aleksandar Mladenović, famous language historian and the head of the Department for more than 3 decades, devoted special attention to 18th and 19th century manuscripts and to the linguistic research. The breakup of Yugoslavia left us with decreased number of domestic collections of Cyrillic manuscripts whose processing hasn't changed, and with increased number of manuscripts abroad with shift from South Slavic to only Serbian.

During the work on descriptions, copies of watermarks, ornamentation and bindings have been made, thus forming derived, handmade collections. Also, almost right away started gathering of the recordings (predominantly, on microfilms, then on photographs and later on digital media), for documenting and research purposes. Manuscripts recorded till today belong to public institutions and institutions of SOC in Belgrade and other places in Serbia, then, several cities of former Yugoslavia but also further, from Ireland to Russia, and from Denmark to Mount Athos and Mount Sinai. With over 5.700 items, Collection of microfilms may be the richest respective compilation in our part of Europe; the same goes for the Collection of watermarks with over 34.000 copies. Finally, two newly formed collections of originals: Manuscript collection and Collection of early printed books, were transferred from the Department of Special Collections to Archeography Department, which entailed work with users.

Almost instantly after its establishment, the Department became a gathering place for members of the domestic and foreign scientific community. Due to gathered material, as well as an extensive Reference library, it stayed a starting point for any manuscripts- and early printed books-related research in Serbia.

Apart from already numbered tasks, employees of Archeography Department participate in organizing exhibitions, they hold lectures for groups of students, guests of the Library and members of the public, they cooperate with media in order to share awareness about manuscript heritage among general public, etc. But, most importantly, they are encouraged to continue research in their own

specific fields as a sort of superstructure of their work on descriptions. So, in addition to archeographic research, the subject of which is Cyrillic and Glagolitic manuscript and old printed heritage itself, this heritage is also used as a source material for various other lines of research, whether principled, case studies or consideration of individual issues. Various fields are covered: linguistics, considering both literary language and vernacular (Irena Grickat-Radulović⁵, Aleksandar Mladenović⁶, Biljana Jovanović-Stipčević⁷, Ljubica Štavljanin-Dorđević, Jasmina Nedeljković); filigranology – dating of manuscript collections and studies on a smaller scale (Vladimir Mošin⁸, Mirjana Grozdanović-Pajić, Radoman Stanković, Ljupka Vasiljev); art history and paleography, in particular, manuscript attribution and the work of scribal centers (Lucija Cernić, Ljupka Vasiljev, Katarina Mano-Zisi, Jovana Stanojlović); codicology – its elements, reach and place within manuscripts studies (Dimitrije Bogdanović⁹, Vladan Trijić); early Serbian printing – editions, technique and aesthetics (Katarina Mano-Zisi, Miroslav Lazić); history of monastic libraries and younger manuscript heritage (Ljiljana Puzović), etc. Naturally, special attention was always dedicated to texts of original Serbian literature, their critical publication and analysis, then, to the place and role of South Slavic transcriptions of certain texts or book types (such as Prophetologion or Paterikon) in the wider Slavic and Greek tradition, up until attempts at an in-depth understanding of medieval poetics and literary creativity on the middle ground between theology, philosophy and literature (Dimitrije Bogdanović, Biljana Jovanović-Stipčević, Milanka Ubiparip, Vladan Trijić, and others).

Part of these researches would probably remain unknown to the public if own publishing activity had not been started relatively early on. For decades now, Archeography Department publishes inventories, catalogs, full descriptions, albums of watermarks, paleographic albums, critical and phototype editions of most important monuments, monographies and studies, miscellanies, exhibition catalogues, etc. At the moment there are three active editions: *Description of South Slavic Cyrillic manuscripts*, *Archeographic studies* and *Archeographic phototypes*. Since 1979, we also publish an annual *Archeographic papers*, still the only scientific journal in our part of Europe specialized for archeography and the results of related disciplines based on (mostly) Cyrillic manuscripts and early printed books. Needless to say, all domestic and eminent foreign archeographers and Slavists have published in it. More recently, besides “classical” articles, it reflects methodological diversification in the humanities and contemporary topics, for example, from the field of applied

⁵ Her bio-bibliography: Марковић 2010.

⁶ Personal bibliography: Богдановић, Недељковић 2020.

⁷ Selected papers: Јовановић-Стипчевић 2017.

⁸ Basic bibliography of his works (“Библиографија” 1977) was supplemented on several occasions, last time by: Поп Атанасов 2009, 285-309.

⁹ Personal bibliography: Суботин-Голубовић, Пузовић 2016.

paleography (Мацуев/Скопина 2017), or about Serbian as *lingua franca* in postmedieval Balkans (Поломац 2020), or on the influence of the so-called Jerusalem typicon on the reform of Slavic horologion, with a new typology (Andreev 2022). After all, it was there that a newly discovered Sinaitic South Slavic Glagolitic fragment from the 11th century, probably a part of the horologion, was presented for the first time (Glibetić 2015).

3. Collections

As mentioned above, besides collections of recordings and handmade copies, derived from own work, Archeography Department takes care of two most precious collections of originals of NLS: Manuscript collection and Collection of early printed books.

3.1. Manuscript collection

The so-called Old collection, destroyed in 1941, counted nearly 1400 items¹⁰, of which more than 100 were on parchment. From that fateful event until today, 322 manuscript codices, fragments and scrolls have been bought, presented or recovered¹¹. They mostly date from the 13th to 17th century but there are also later ones, from the 18th and 19th century, that follow the traditions of medieval literacy. These monuments are mainly Cyrillic and written in one of the redactions of Old Church Slavonic. Serbian literary language of Middle Ages, the so-called Serbian Church Slavonic (“srpskoslovenski”) prevails, and Russian Church Slavonic, which SOC started to use as its liturgical language from the second quarter of the 18th century, is also represented in large numbers. Hence the paramount importance of the collection for Slavic studies. Only few manuscripts are in other languages and scriptures: Greek, Latin, German, and Ge’ez.

Although not impressive in numbers, the Manuscript collection is diverse and representative: it contains all of the usual types of liturgical books, biblical texts, patristic, hagiographic and ascetic literature, apocrypha and novels, works of historical and juridical content, etc. Some of the transcriptions are unique, oldest preserved or in other ways especially important. In manuscripts of more recent times, various textbooks, works from geography or pharmacology, as well as poems and short stories written in the spirit of folk creativity appear. Here are some examples.

¹⁰ Not less than 1353, recorded in the Annual report of NLS for the year 1939, but the exact number is unknown. Estimations go up to 1390, or even over 1400.

¹¹ The detailed archeographic description of 180 units is published in 1986 (Штавланин-Ђорђевић, Гроздановић-Пајић, Цернић 1986), while the description of newly acquired books and fragments is under way.

Belgrade Prophetologion (Rs 652) is the oldest codex in NLS. It dates from the first quarter of the 13th century. Its script and overall appearance make it one of the finest preserved Serbian manuscripts of its time. Unfortunately, it is heavily damaged: this remain of a codex once more than double in size, have only a couple of folios left with fully preserved text. It has no inscriptions so both patron and scribes are unknown. Luckily, it is spotted that one of the scribes have also participated in the creation of Vukan's Gospel from the turn from the 12th to 13th century, written in Raška, central region of Nemanjić's state at the time. The manuscript is scribed in monumental uncial scripture (*ustav*), in a sophisticated calligraphic fashion. Its vivid headpieces and initials are a combination of floral, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs. In terms of language, Belgrade Prophetologion represents a veritable treasure prove of different stages of the centuries-long previous historical development of Serbian Church Slavonic.

As it is well known, prophetologions contain liturgical pericopes of biblical origin that in Slavistics are usually called *paroemia* ("parimija"), since most of them come from the Old Testament – although not only from prophetic books. They were to be read (or cantillated) on the eve of important feasts, considered to be announced or interpreted by them. Belgrade Prophetologion is the oldest and most important preserved Serbian transcript of this type of book. Its closeness to the first Slavic, Cyrilomethodian translation and version of the text, including changes in it made at the beginning of the 10th century, make it precious for the whole Slavistic community. It stands as representative for one of the three Slavic textual redactions, the defining characteristic of which is the presence of the reading for Mid-Wednesday of Halving.

Belgrade Prophetologion is also a rare example of a fully processed manuscript: at first, its features became topic of several articles, especially by Biljana Jovanović-Stipčević who was its most devoted researcher¹². Then it got full archeographic description (Штавланин-Ђорђевић/Гроздановић-Пајић/Цернић 1986, 361-365), the text was critically published in an exemplary manner (Јовановић-Стипчевић 2005), and finally, the monument got its phototype edition, on the occasion of 800 years of the autocephaly of SOС (Тријић 2019). On the same occasion, in 2019, it got fully restored, a century after the first attempt to preserve it.

Bratko's Menaion (Rs 647) is a parchment convolute that consists of four parts inscribed in three periods (between the second quarter of the 13th and the fourth decade of the 14th century), by five major (one of which was named Bratko) and several minor scribes using different types of uncial scripture. It contains hymnographic liturgical texts, that is, services to saints and feasts for

¹² Cf. several articles in: Јовановић-Стипчевић 2017.

every day from September to November, and only for selected days during the rest of the year.

Bratko's Menaion has peculiar traits in its language, but it attracts most attention as a guard of several layers of Slavic translations and redactions of services, beginning with the oldest one recorded in Russian menaions from the end of the 11th century. At the same time, it represents a vast literary reservoir not only of translated texts but of the original creativity too, containing works by St. Naum of Ohrid and other anonymous Slavic and Serbian hymnographers. That is why it has been in the focus of scientific research probably more often than any other manuscript in the collection.

Miscellany of Serbian Hagiographies and Hilandar Typikon of "taha-monah" Marko (Rs 17), created c. 1370/75, contains some of the most valuable works of original Serbian medieval literature. They are dedicated to St Simeon Nemanja and his son St. Sava, the founders and monks of the Hilandar monastery, but also the founders of the independent Serbian medieval state and autocephalous Church. Those are *Life of St Simeon* by Domentijan, *Life of St. Sava* by Teodosije, *Eulogy to Simeon and Sava* by Teodosije, as well as a precious copy of the Hilandar typicon compiled by St. Sava for the purposes of organizing monastic life in Serbian monastery on Mount Athos. Both Lives and the Eulogy are works of important Serbian medieval authors, Domentijan and Teodosije, whose literary work is linked to Hilandar, and the book was written by a famous Hilandar scribe who signed as "taha-monah" ("so-called monk") Marko.

Obviously, the manuscript was written in and for Hilandar, and it was kept there up until the end of the 19th century. It reached NLS in 1914. Just before Second World War broke in Yugoslavia, luckily, it was borrowed to professor Vladimir Ćorović, that is, to Belgrade University's Serbian seminar, for study. Thanks to that, it escaped the fate of the rest of NLS and today is considered to be the only manuscript that "survived" the April bombing of 1941.

Tetraevangelion of Dovolja (Rs 638), the manuscript of four gospels for liturgical use originally from the Dovolja monastery in the North of today's Montenegro, was written in the second quarter of the 16th century in Serbian Church Slavonic. Unfortunately, it got heavily damaged by water. The beginning of each Gospel is skilfully decorated with an elaborate headpiece and initial filled with golden ink, and the text is standard. But, the specific value of this codex is rather that each of the four Gospels is preceded by a parchment folio with a miniature representing the respective evangelists, originally from some much older Byzantine manuscript. Judging by iconography and style, they most probably belong to the period of Macedonian Renaissance, that is, to the end of the 10th or the first half of the 11th century. That makes these four leaves the actual oldest bits of written heritage kept in NLS.

All four manuscripts presented so far have been part of the Old collection. Three of them were evacuated from Belgrade in 1915, during First World War, along with several tenths of other most valuable books and documents of NLS. They all stuck at some railway station in inner Serbia from where they were taken by soldiers of the occupying German and Austro-Hungarian armies. But, at least some of the books got careful new owners so eventually part of them found their way home. Tetraevangelion of Dovolja was identified at the National and University Library in Zagreb and returned to NLS in 1966, and Belgrade Prophetologion and Bratko's Menaion reappeared on the market in Germany in 1969, and they were bought back, along with eight other books and one charter from the Old collection. For six other manuscripts from the same group, we know today's location: they are in Hungary, Germany, Ireland and USA.

The charter mentioned above, which went missing in 1915 and was recovered from Germany in 1969, is the **Charter of Stephen III of Moldavia**, also known as Saint Stephen the Great (Ștefan cel Mare), from March 6th 1487 (Rs 653). By that document, voivode Stephen confirmed to boiar Toader Tansa and his successors a piece of land near Petrești, bought from Toader, son of Baloș. The text was composed by logothete Tautul and written by the scribe named Ion in Suceava, in the Moldavian redaction of Old Church Slavonic. The charter also contains a list of witnesses among which are Stephens's sons, Alexandru and Bogdan.

3.2. Collection of early printed books

The other archeographic collection of originals of NLS, Collection of early printed books consists of 102 books or fragments¹³. Most of these belong to the first period of Serbian printing, in Serbian Church Slavonic, that lasted from 1494 to 1638. Among them, especially precious are the only Cyrillic incunabula printed in South Slavic lands thanks to Đurađ Crnojević, ruler of Zeta (today: Montenegro). Most numerous are books issued in Venice, especially the ones printed by Božidar Vuković¹⁴, and later by his son Vincenzo. There are also ones printed across Serbian ethnic space within the Ottoman empire: in Goražde, Mileševa, Gračanica, Belgrade and Mrkša's Church. But the oldest book in the collection is in fact *Tractatus quidam de Turcis*, edited by Conrad Zeninger in Nuremberg in 1481. It is one from a small number of books belonging to other cultural traditions. Among them is also a fragment from Apostle (I 86) printed in Târgoviște in 1547, by Dimitrije Ljubavić, grandson of printer Božidar Ljubavić from Goražde. Dimitrije issued two versions of Apostle with minimal variations, each devoted to one ruler – Wallachian voivode Mircea the Shepherd (Mircea Ciobanul) and Moldavian voivode Ilie II Rareș (Iliăș). One

¹³ History and inventory of the collection: Лазић 2015.

¹⁴ A brilliant new study about personality and activities of Božidar Vuković: Лазић 2023.

more complete copy of Ljubavić's Apostle was destroyed in the bombing of 1941, along with copies of hieromonk Makarije's Wallachian editions from 1507 and 1512. Yet, another book in today's collection reflects Serbian-Romanian cultural and spiritual connections in the 16th century. That is Festal Menaion (I 26), printed in Sebeş in 1580 for metropolitan Genadius by deacon Koresi, who in fact reprinted the famous venetian edition of Božidar Vuković from 1538.

4. What next

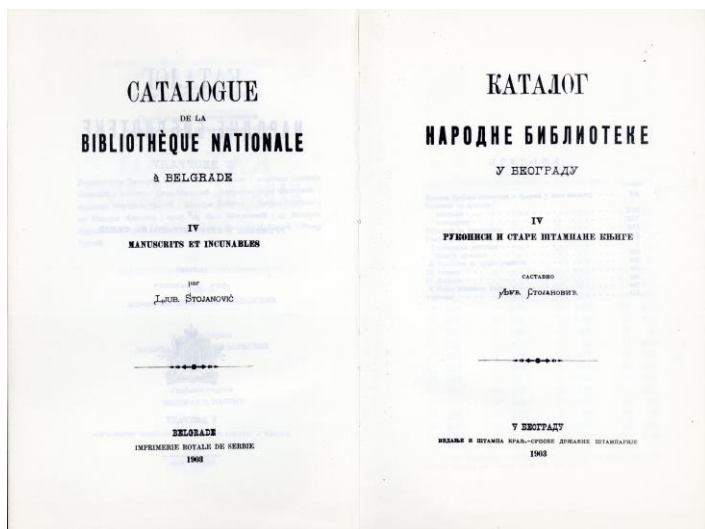
The Archeography Department of NLS has the mission that only a scientific institute can fulfil, and it has reached the appropriate structure, especially in the first two decades of its existence. However, the picture would not be complete if we did not point out some of the challenges that it has faced or is still facing. Among them, the sketchy institutional-legal framework, the absence of a firm connection with a complementary philological institution, and the ideologically motivated resistance of the surroundings stand out, followed by a significant reduction in the number of employees and the dilution of tasks. To that, one should add global trend of suppression of the humanities and their somewhat forced transformation under the influence of new technologies and methodologies derived from natural sciences. It is clear that without strong support from domestic society, but also from the international circle of colleagues and friends, the Department will not be able to speed up and complete the description of yet undescribed collections in the country and Serbian manuscripts abroad, and to efficiently carry out other fundamental tasks, such as the reconstitution of destroyed book funds, proper arrangement of the field of manuscript digitization and accompanying metadata, or monitoring the world market where Serbian manuscripts occasionally appear. The less fortunate alternative is always there: going back to the beginning, to the zeal of talented individuals.

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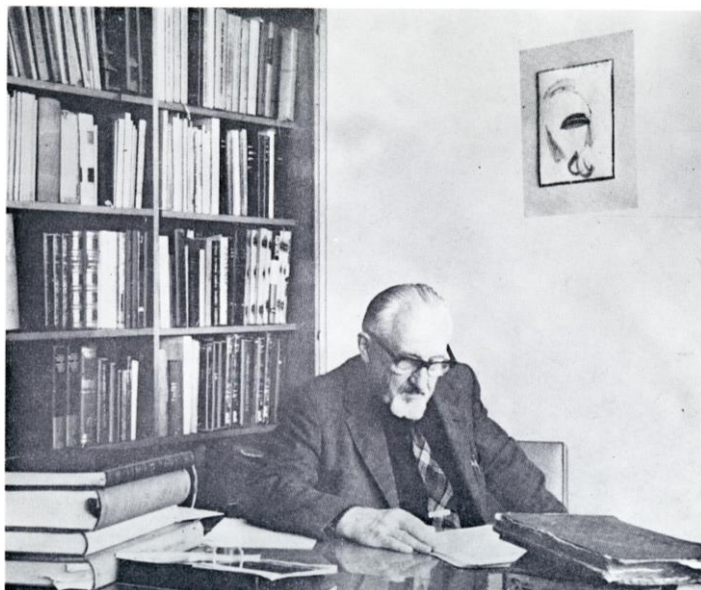
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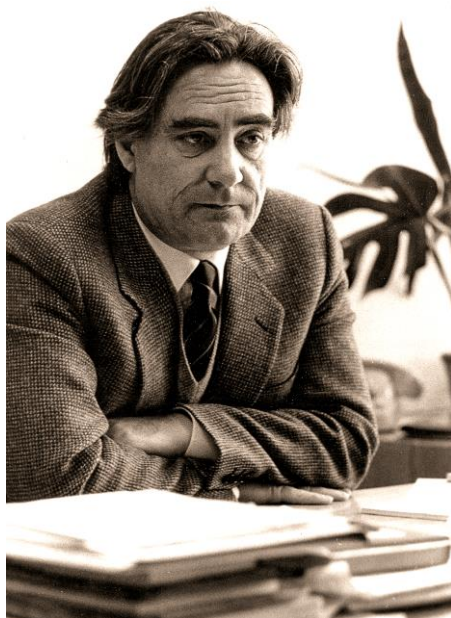
ANEXES:



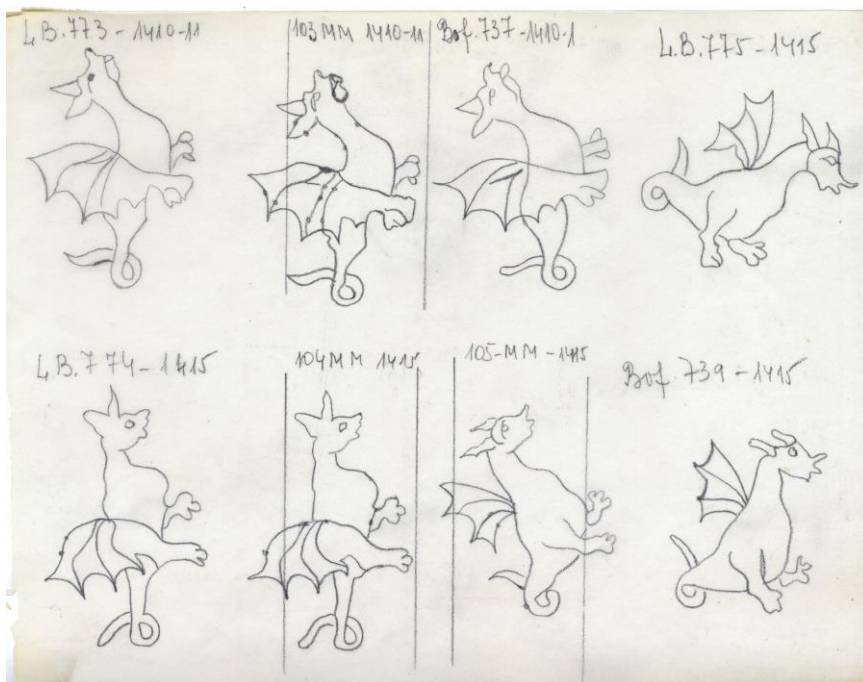
1. Ј. Стојановић, *Каталог Народне библиотеке у Београду. IV. Рукописи и старе штампане књиге*, Београд, 1903



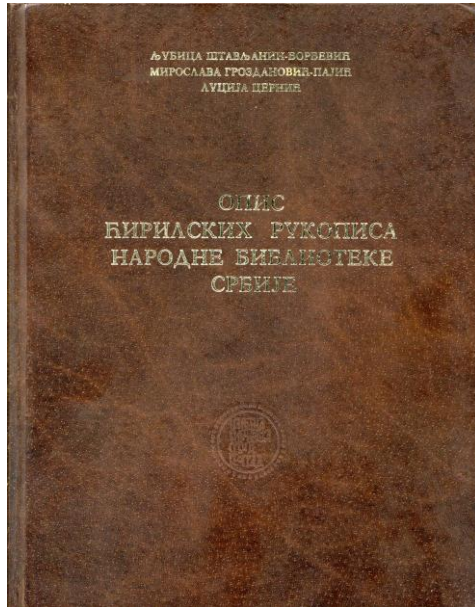
2. Vladimir Alekseyevich Mošin (1894–1987), founder of the Archeography Department



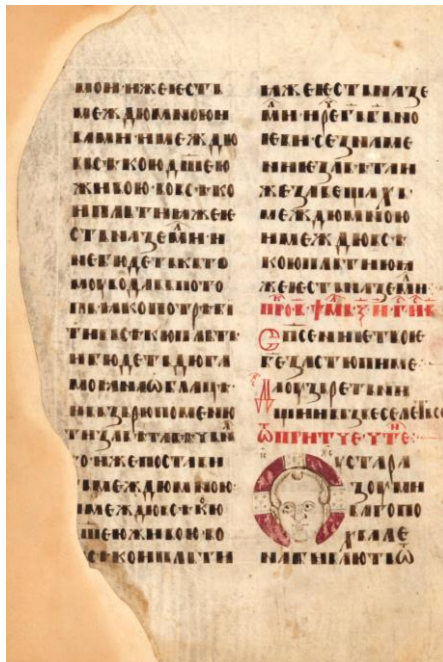
3. Dimitrije Bogdanović (1930–1986), head of the Department 1968-1974



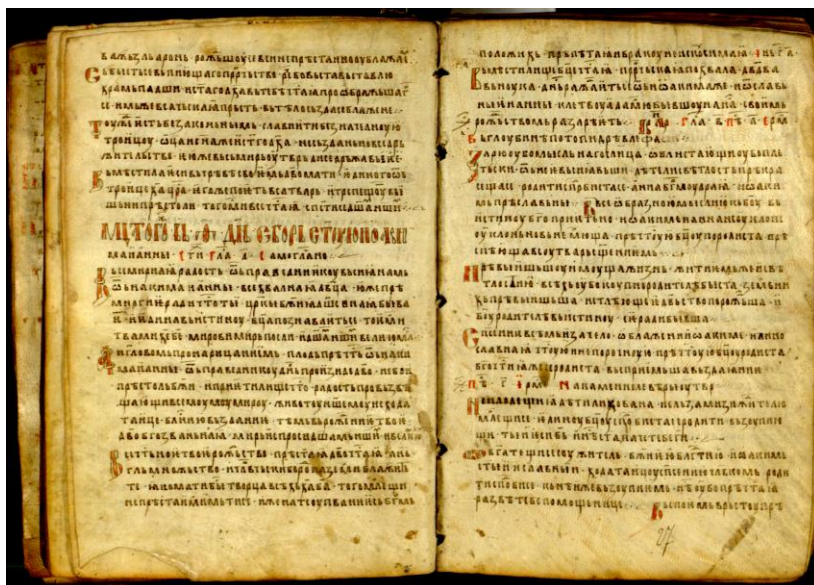
4. From the Collection of watermarks



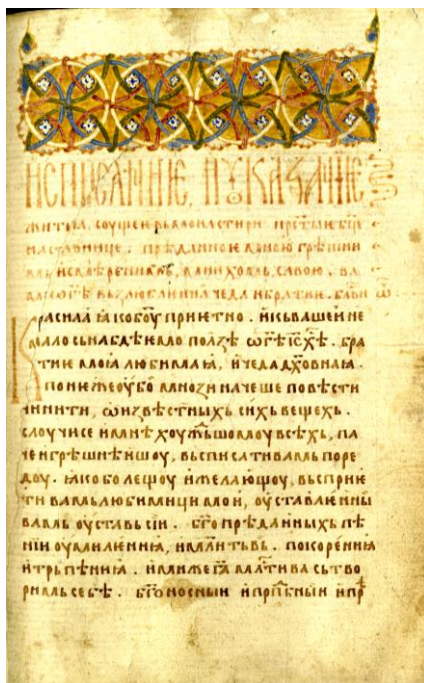
5. Љ. Штавлјанин-Ђорђевић, М. Гроздановић-Пајић, Л. Цернић, *Опис ћирилских рукописа Народне библиотеке Србије 1*, Београд, 1986



6. NLS, Archeography Department, Rs 652: Belgrade Prophetology, 1/4 of 13th c., f. 58v



7. NLS, Archeography Department, Rs 647: Bratko's Menaion, 2/4 of 13th – fourth decade of 14th c., ff. 26v-27r



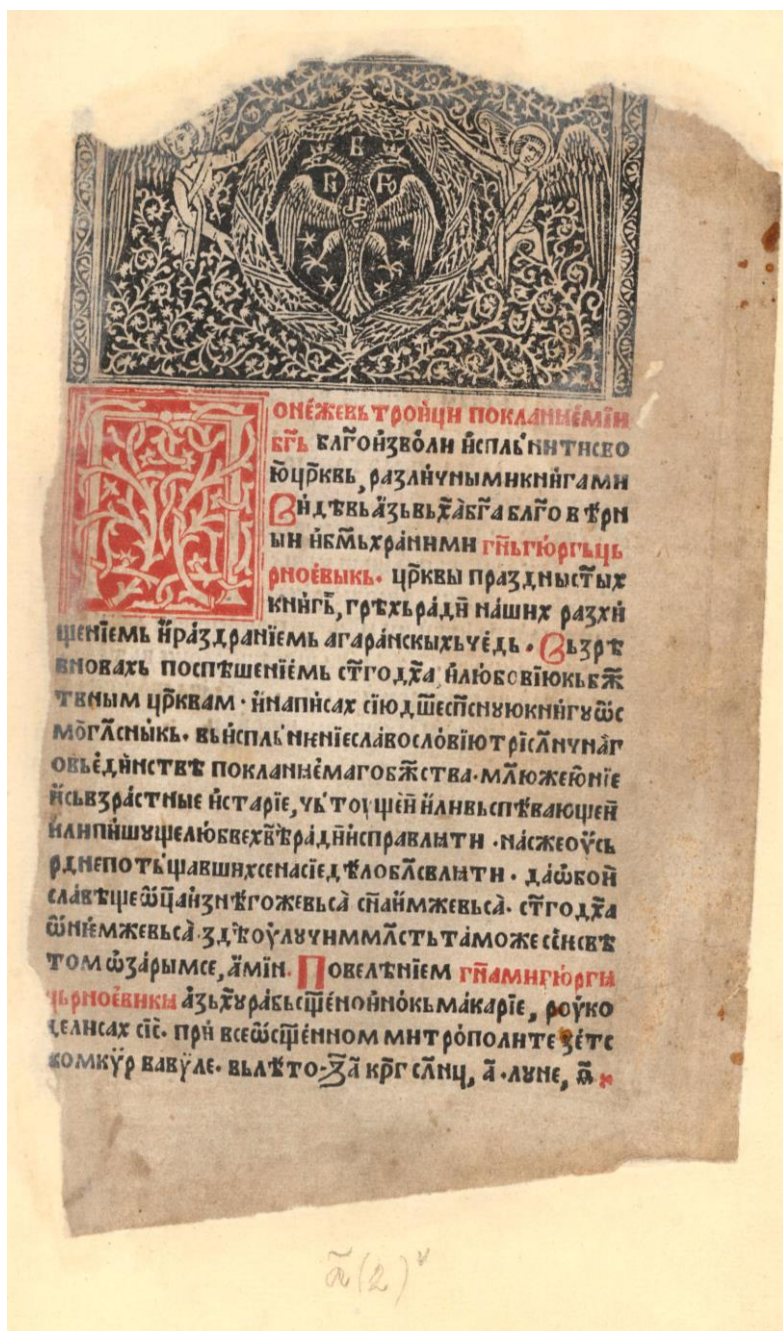
8. NLS, Archeography Department, Rs 17: Miscellany of Serbian Hagiographies and Hilandar Typikon of "taha-monah" Marko, 1370/75, f. 274r



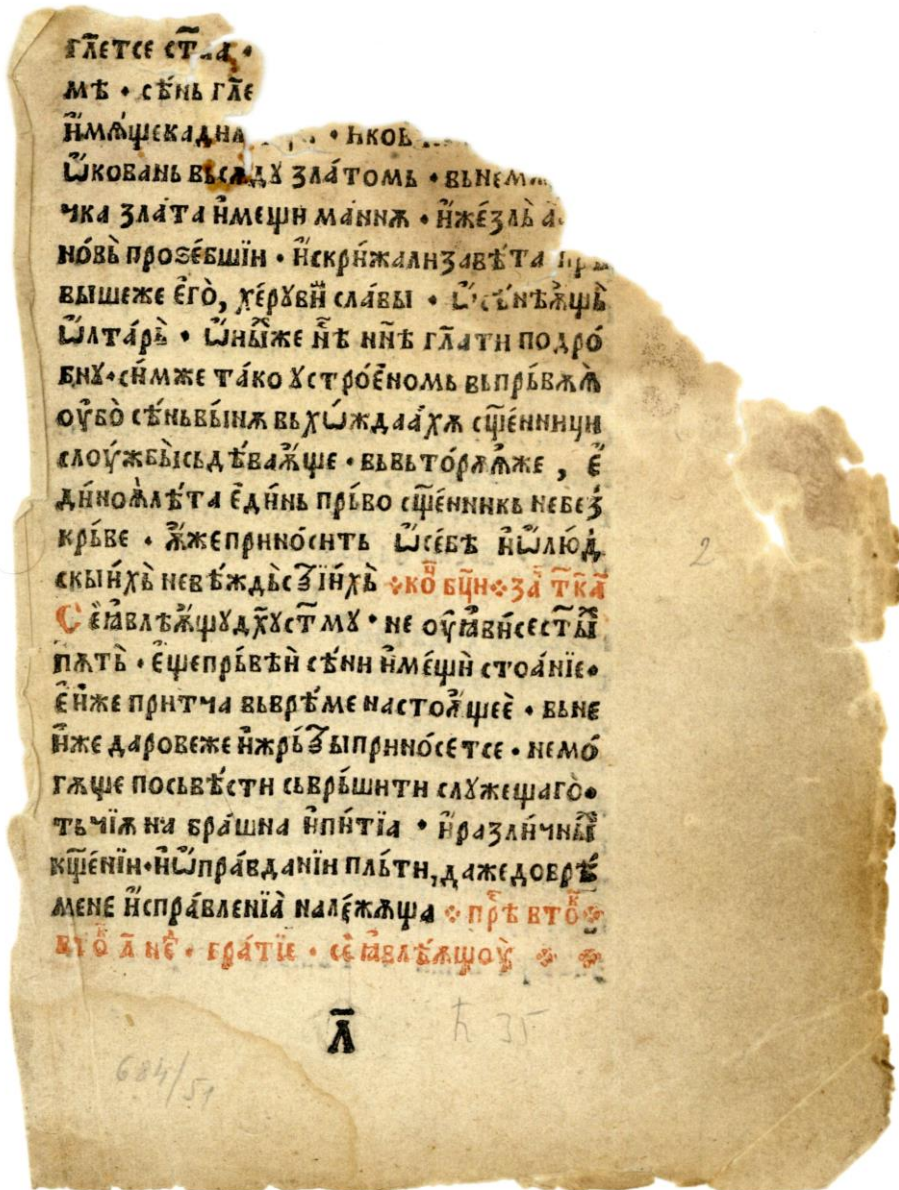
9. NLS, Archeography Department, Rs 638: Tetraevangelion of Dovolja, 2/4 of 16th c., miniatures from the end of 10th – first half first half of 11th c., ff. 6v-7r



10. NLS, Archeography Department, Rs 653: Charter of Stephen III of Moldavia to Toader Tansa and his successors, March 6th 1487



11. NLS, Archeography Department, I 40: Octoechos, tones I-IV, Cetinje: Đurađ Crnojević, 1494, f. 1r



12. NLS, Archeography Department, I 86: Apostle, Târgoviște: Dimitrije Ljubavić, 1547, f. 2r