

**Lora Taseva – Dobriela Kotova – Ivan P. Petrov – Ekaterina Dikova – Petra Stankovska – Georgi Mitov, Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски. Том 1, Старобългарско–гръцки речник. Том 2, Гръцко–старобългарски речник.**

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Homilies are one of the key genres of Old Church Slavonic<sup>2</sup> literature. Their significance transcends the purely religious sphere and is important from both a cultural-historical and, above all, a linguistic point of view. Linguistic analysis of homilies allows for detailed observation of the development of grammatical structures, word formation processes, and syntactic models in the early stages

of the Slavic written tradition. At the same time, homilies provide valuable material for studying the translation techniques of Old Church Slavonic scribes.

One of the important monuments of Old Church Slavonic homiletic literature is the so-called Didactic Gospel of Constantine of Preslav (Presbyter), one of the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius, who found

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1 L. TASEVA – D. KOTOVA – I. P. PETROV – E. DIKOVA – P. STANKOVSKA – G. MITOV, [*Constantine of Preslav's Didactic Gospel. Vol. 1, Old Bulgarian–Greek Dictionary. Vol. 2, Greek–Old Bulgarian Dictionary*], Sofia 2024.

2 In accordance with international terminology, the term Old Church Slavonic is used throughout this text to refer to the oldest Slavic literary language, rather than Old Bulgarian, which is commonly used in Bulgarian academic circles.

refuge in the Slavic south after their expulsion from Great Moravia. It is a collection of 51 homilies (sermons) on the Sunday Gospels throughout the church year, beginning with Easter and ending with Palm Sunday. The text was written at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century as part of the activities of the Preslav Literary School and combines translations from Greek originals with original passages by the author.

The text has been preserved in four known complete manuscripts, the oldest of which is the so-called Synodal manuscript, dating from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> or beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Although the first manuscript was discovered in 1846 by Russian scholar V. M. Undol'skij, a critical edition of the entire collection was not published until 2012 in an edition by Maria Tichova.<sup>3</sup>

The very absence of a critical edition is one of the reasons why this manuscript has not been included in the excerptal base of the *Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic Language*,<sup>4</sup> although it undoubtedly meets its chronological and thematic criteria. The lexicographical pro-

cessing of the Didactic Gospel along with similar texts, such as the Codex Suprasliensis and the Forty Gospel Homilies (Besědy na evangelije), would represent a valuable contribution to further research of the oldest Old Church Slavonic homiletic texts.<sup>5</sup>

The latest contribution to the study of the Didactic Gospel is its lexicographical treatment in the form of the *Old Church Slavonic–Greek* (Part 1) and *Greek–Old Church Slavonic Dictionary* (Part 2). These publications continue a long tradition of research into this literary text, while at the same time significantly advancing it with the extensive manuscript material, modern digital tools, and interdisciplinary cooperation. The result is a pair of specialized dictionaries that not only make the lexical richness of the text accessible but also allow for a detailed analysis of the relationship between the Old Church Slavonic translation and its Greek sources.

An international team of experts<sup>6</sup> led by Lora Taseva from the Institute of Balkan Studies and the Center for Thracology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences contributed to the preparation of the publication. The

3 M. ТИЧОВА, *Старобългарското Учително евангелие на Константин Преславски. Издадено от Мария Тихова с детайлно описание от Елена Уханова на най-стария препис (ГИМ Син. 262)*, (Monumenta linguae slavicae dialecti veteris, 58), Freiburg i. Br. 2012.

4 J. Kurz – Z. Hauptová et al. (eds.), *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského, Díl I–V*, Praha 1966–2016.

5 A comparison of the lexical material of the Didactic Gospel and the oldest Old Church Slavonic texts was carried out by V. Kryš'ko and G. Mol'kov, who, as part of an extensive study on the language of the Didactic Gospel, published a list of lexemes not attested in the texts included in the *Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic Language: V. KRYS'KO – G. MOL'KOV, Языковые особенности Учительного евангелия Константина Преславского и его древнейшего списка, Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie 73/2, 2017, 385–387.*

6 Dobriela Kotova, Ivan P. Petrov, Ekaterina Dikova, Petra Stankovska, Georgi Mitov, Achim Rabus, Martin Ruskov, and Hristina Davidkova (p. 12).

research team consisted not only of Paleoslavists but also specialists in Byzantine texts, which enabled an interdisciplinary approach to lexicographical processing. Doctoral students and technical staff also played an important role, particularly in the development of software tools for data processing (p. 12). Work on the project was carried out intensely over a period of four years with grant support from the Bulgarian Science Fund,<sup>7</sup> and its results were presented in 2023 at the international conference in Sofia.<sup>8</sup>

In order to reconstruct the original translation as faithfully as possible, the dictionaries were compiled using not only data from the oldest known copy, preserved in the Russian codex GIM Sin. 262, but also from three complete Serbian copies dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries – the Vienna manuscript (ÖNB Cod. Slav. 12), the one from St. Petersburg (Hilf. 32), and the one from Hilendar (Hil. 385).

The basic source for the Greek part were the catenae to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John (edited by J. Cramer<sup>9</sup>), supplemented by other manuscript material, especially homilies and biblical texts. The team of authors sought to approximate as closely as possible the hypothetical source corpus that could have been available to Constantine of Preslav, and therefore variant readings from the Byzantine tradition were also included in the analysis. Due to the absence of critical editions of catenae type A, more than forty manuscripts from European libraries (Paris, Munich, Vatican, Athens, Oxford, etc.) were compared (pp. 41–55). Through a detailed study of the Greek sources of the Didactic Gospel, researchers have succeeded in identifying additional Greek texts that served as models for sections previously regarded as original commentaries by Constantine of Preslav.<sup>10</sup>

Special software programs were developed to work with the manu-

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7 Project „Словното богатство на Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски: старобългарско–гръцки и гръцко–старобългарски речници индекси.“ Its main goal was to compile verb indexes using computer tools created specifically for this purpose.

8 The conference „Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски и южнославянските преводи на хомилетични текстове (IX–XIII в.): филологически и интердисциплинарни ракурси“ took place in Sofia on April 25–27, 2023. Conference report: P. STANKOVSKA, *Poučné evangelium Konstantina Preslavského. Různé přístupy ke zpracování památky a její místo mezi homiletickými texty raného období slovanského písemnictví*, *Slavia* 93, 2024, 243–245. In 2024, a collection of contributions was published: L. Taseva – A. Rabus – I. P. Petrov (eds.), *The Didactic Gospel of Constantine of Preslav and the South Slavic Translations of Homiletic Texts (9<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> Centuries): Philological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, (Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference in Sofia, April 25–27, 2023), Sofia 2024. See also the review of this publication by Amber Ivanov in *BSI* 82, 2024, 348–364.

9 J. A. Cramer (ed.), *Catena Graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum. T. 1. Catena in evangelia S. Matthaei et S. Marci ad fidem Codd. Mss. T. 2. Catena in evangelia S. Lucae et S. Joannis ad fidem Codd. Mss.*, Oxonii 1840–1841.

10 E.g.: D. Котова, *Оригинално произведение на Константин Преславски ли е 42 слово на Учителното евангелие?* *Старобългарска литература* 65–66, 2022, 99–126.

scripts and compile the basic structure of the dictionaries.<sup>11</sup> The computer-generated outputs were further refined by numerous experts, particularly where it was necessary to distinguish subtle nuances of meaning, consider context, or assess textual variants in their historical and philological framework. The developed software tools were made freely available for download on the project's website, along with detailed instructions for their use.<sup>12</sup>

Biblical quotations were identified according to their occurrence in catenae, homilies, or directly from the Septuagint (Ralfs – Hanhart) and New Testament (Nestle – Aland) editions. Parallels from secondary sources are marked with standard abbreviations.

The first volume (*Old Church Slavonic–Greek Dictionary*) includes an extensive introductory apparatus comprising a preface (pp. 7–15), a bibliography (pp. 17–33), a list of abbreviations and sigla (pp. 34–39), an overview of Slavic and Greek sources (pp. 40–55), a table of Greek source texts for individual homilies (pp. 56–60), and a detailed explanation of the lexicographical concept (pp. 61–84). Special attention is also paid to asymmetries between the Greek original and the Old Church Slavonic translation, which are systematically marked and analysed in

the dictionary. These asymmetries include, for example, the translation of one lexeme with two words, Old Church Slavonic analytical verb forms with auxiliary verbs, prepositional/non-prepositional constructions, semantic asymmetries, etc. An integral part of the introduction is also a list of corrected readings for the edition of the Didactic Gospel by M. Tichova (pp. 85–118). Corrections previously noted by V. Kryš'ko in his review of this edition (cf. footnote 5) are marked with the letter K. Unmarked corrections were made by the authors based on their own reading and comparison with a range of other Greek manuscripts.

The volume also contains a list of proper names (pp. 666–669) and a retrograde Old Church Slavonic dictionary (pp. 670–702).

The backbone of the first volume is an Old Church Slavonic–Greek dictionary (pp. 119–664). It contains 3,806 lexical headwords, documented in 50,668 occurrences (p. 61). The headwords are listed according to the Old Church Slavonic standard used in the *Old Bulgarian Dictionary*<sup>13</sup> and in the *Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic Language*.<sup>14</sup> Each dictionary entry contains an Old Church Slavonic headword with its total frequency of occurrence. The entries are further divided according to typologically

11 Their detailed description: M. RUSKOV – L. TASEVA, Специализирани софтуерни инструменти за създаването на речниците към Учителното евангелие, in: Taseva – Rabus – Petrov (eds.), *The Didactic Gospel of Constantine of Preslav*, op. cit., 431–452.

12 The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav's Uchitel'noe evangelie („Didactic Gospel“): Old Bulgarian–Greek and Greek–Old Bulgarian Word Indices, <https://uchitelnoevangelie.eu/?lang=en> (retrieved August 27, 2025).

13 D. I. Mircheva (ed.), *Старобългарски речник. Т. 1, а–н*, Sofia 1999; *Т. 2, о–у*, Sofia 2009.

14 Kurz – Hauptová et al. (eds.), *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského*, op. cit.

classified Greek equivalents, which are accompanied by their frequency of occurrence and the exact location of their occurrence in the text. Greek equivalents are classified typologically into exact, contextual, free, inaccurate or incorrect translations and into phraseological expressions. For enhanced clarity, the authors also make a distinction regarding the origin of the lexemes: they identify those from sections of the text lacking an attested Greek source (which are presumed to be Constantine of Preslav's original authorial contributions) and those from passages that, despite having a Greek model, contain a Slavic lexeme that lacks a direct lexical parallel. Only those variant readings from South Slavic transcriptions that contribute to the reconstruction of the original wording have been included in the dictionary.

The *Greek–Old Church Slavonic dictionary* is based on lexemes from Greek sources for which an Old Church Slavonic equivalent is attested in the text. Hence, this dictionary is smaller and contains 3,328 Greek lexemes in 38,774 occurrences (p. 61). The frequency of use is given for the basic Greek lexeme, and the Old Church Slavonic equivalents are further arranged in alphabetical order and marked with the same typological features as in the *Old Church Slavonic–Greek dictionary* (literal,

contextual, free, inaccurate or incorrect translation, and phraseological connections).

The second volume also includes a list of abbreviations and sigla of manuscripts (pp. 7–12), a retrograde Greek dictionary (pp. 463–489), an index of Gospel readings (pp. 491–499), and a list of biblical quotations from the Old and New Testaments found in the text. These lists are arranged in two ways – first according to the order of the books of the Bible (pp. 501–526) and then according to their occurrence in the chronological order of the text (pp. 527–542). The lists of biblical quotations also include revised attributions of the texts of individual homilies.

The presented *Old Church Slavonic–Greek* and *Greek–Old Church Slavonic dictionary* to the Didactic Gospel of Constantine of Preslav, with its scope and systematic processing, expands and supplements the material of the Old Church Slavonic lexicographical handbooks. The dictionaries thus provide not only valuable linguistic data but also new insights into the translation strategies and linguistic inventions that shaped Old Church Slavonic language and culture. This makes them an indispensable tool for studying the historical and linguistic development, as well as the cultural and theological aspects of early ecclesiastical literature.

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