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DIETARY CALENDARS IN THE SLAVIC MIDDLE AGES: A CASE STUDY*

Abstract. The article attempts to delineate the boundaries of dissemination of dietary calendars in the Balkan Slavic cultural area through the evidence that can be obtained from the names, places, and very rarely patrons, found in the manuscripts that contain them. Special attention is paid to the most eminent men of letters who included dieteticons in their miscellanies – the Moldavian copyist Gavriil Urik, the Serbian monks Gavriil of Mount Athos and Gavriilo Trojičanin, and the Bulgarian priest Avram Dimitrievič. The analysis of the dissemination of dietary calendars in mediaeval South Slavic and Slavic-Moldavian literatures shows that the trajectory of this marginal genre started from royal codices, ran through manuscripts commissioned by rich patrons and produced in scriptoria, and ended in the miscellanies of ordinary priests and laypersons. Whatever their hierarchical dynamics may be in Slavic literatures, they, as a whole, remain outside the context of properly medical knowledge, gravitating around miscellanies of divinatory and astrological works, erotapokriseis and apocrypha.

Keywords: dietary calendars, dissemination in the Balkan Slavic manuscripts, patrons and copyist, Gavriil Urik, Gavriilo Trojičanin, Avram Dimitrievič, monks Gavriil of Mount Athos

As is known, dietetics originated in Antiquity as an attempt to synthesize the humoral theory invented by Alcmaeon of Croton and later developed further by Hippocrates and Galen. A specific form of the genre of dietetic texts are dietary calendars, which contain month-by-month instructions for each month of the year about the consumption of, or abstention from, certain foods and beverages as well as about the observance of particular hygiene practices (bloodletting, bathing, laxative procedures, etc.). Dietetic works found their way into Bulgaria and the rest of the Slavic world through translations from Byzantine literature. It must be noted, however, that the Slavs did not know the extensive dietary calendars with prescriptions for each day of the year, or the detailed instructions for

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making ointments, culinary recipes, prescriptions for therapies, physical exercises, massages, etc., which are found in Byzantine literature. The earliest extant Slavic copies are characterized by brevity, very rarely offering instructions about more than just a few foods and/or beverages¹.

This article delineates the boundaries of dissemination of dietary calendars (henceforth also referred to as dieteticons) in the Balkan Slavic cultural area, attempting to answer the following questions: What kind of manuscripts contain dieteticons, who were they commissioned by, are there any known names of scribes and readers of these texts? When, and in which territories, do we find a heightened interest in dietetics during the long period of the Slavic Middle Ages?

The texts

So far, I know of twenty-four copies of dietary calendars – most of them of South Slavic or Moldavian origin; I have little evidence about the Russian tradition of these works. The extant copies can be classified into several main groups. The only attributed one among them is represented by the *Verses on the Twelve Months* (Στίχοι εἰς τοὺς δώδεκα μῆνας) by Nicholas Kallikles. The text is known in two redactions of one and the same translation. The older redaction is South Slavic and it is represented by State Historical Museum (cetera: GIM), Moscow, Hludov Collection, No. 114 of ca. 1404², and Russian State Library (cetera: RGB), Moscow, Museum Collection, No. 921 of the second half of the 16th century³. The later redaction is Russian and it is represented by two copies in RGB, Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius Collection, No. 177 and No. 762, both of the 15th century⁴. Since the Russian copies contain an abridged version of the text, it is presumed that the translation is South Slavic and could have been done on Mount Athos⁵.

¹ For an archaeographic review of the extant Balkan Slavic copies, cf. И. Кузидова-Караджинова, *Диетологичните текстове в средновековната славянска книжнина. Предварителни бележки*, [in:] *Кирило-Методиевски четения 2019*, ed. А.-М. Тотоманова, Д. Атанасова, София 2020, p. 139–153.

² Edition and study: А. Турилов, *Ранний славянский список календарных эпиграмм Николая Калликла („Птохопродрома“): к вопросу о времени перевода*, [in:] *ИДЕМ, Межславянские культурные связи эпохи средневековья и источниковедение истории и культуры славян. Этюды и характеристики*, Москва 2012, p. 471–477.

³ Edition and study: В. Былинин, *Календарные эпиграммы Николая Калликла в южнославянской и русской письменности XV–XVI вв.*, [in:] *Естественно-научные представления Древней Руси*, ed. А. Боголюбов, Р. Симонов, Москва 1988, p. 39–51. А. Turilov defines the codex as Moldavian, stressing that the content of the manuscript is more typical rather of Wallachian manuscripts, while the archetype of the miscellany is most probably Serbian, cf. А. Турилов, *Ранний славянский список...*, p. 472.

⁴ Edition based on MS 177 of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius: Н. Тихонравов, *Памятники отреченной русской литературы*, vol. II, Москва 1863, p. 402–404.

⁵ А. Турилов, *Ранний славянский список...*, p. 474.

The dietary calendars ascribed to King Solomon are the most widespread in the Balkan Slavic world. All representatives of this group begin with the month of September, but only some of them contain the name of the biblical king as a pseudograph. The instructions are exclusively about nutrition, with brief notes on the possible pathology if the regimen is not followed. There are variant readings between the copies themselves, mainly when it comes to food terms, but it is obvious that they belong to a common archetype. This group includes the following manuscripts: MS 677, SS Cyril and Methodius National Library (cetera: NBKM), Sofia, of the 15th century; a calendar preserved in two fragments held by different libraries: Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (cetera: RGADA), Collection 188, No. 778, and RGB, fund 178, No 923, of 1447; MS F. 313, No. 47, National Library of Ukraine, ca. 1561⁶; MS 201, fund 209, Ovčinnikov Collection, RGB, of the first quarter of the 16th century⁷; MS 649, Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (Tulcea Miscellany), of the first half of the 16th century⁸; MS 36, National Library of Serbia (Prizren Miscellany), dated to the third quarter of the 16th century; MS 428, Library of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, of the 16th century; MS 394, National Library of Serbia, of the year 1800; MS A 42/18, Library of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, of 1836; MS IIIз27 (250), Zographou monastery, of the beginning of the 19th century.

Another group is comprised of the anonymous dietary calendar **О исправленіе зодиахъ**. Only three copies belong to this group. Two of them begin with March – MS 724 in NBKM, of the 18th century⁹, and MS 698 in NBKM, of 1824 (Gabrovo Miscellany) – while the third, MS 115 in the National Library in Plovdiv (Bulgaria), of 1674, begins with September¹⁰. The copies in this group are the most extensive in content. They include humoral explanations for the prescriptions, notes on climate for each month, the listed foodstuffs are many more in number, and the advice offered covers a wider range of topics (bloodletting, bathing, abstaining from physical activity, drinking laxative herbs, etc.).

A version ascribed to John of Damascus is known in two copies. One is attested in Tsar Symeon's florilegium (*Izbornik*) of 1073¹¹, the other is the second dietary calendar in the above-mentioned Tulcea Miscellany¹². The distinctive feature

⁶ Edition: А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *Неизвестное апокрифическое сочинение „Сказание Соломона како ясти во вся дни” в славяно-молдавской книжности XV–XVI вв.*, Р 54.4, 2018, р. 13–32.

⁷ Edition: А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *Неизвестное апокрифическое сочинение...*, р. 13–32.

⁸ Edition and study: М. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Храна и аксиология според два текста в молдовската сборник Ms. Slav. VAR 649 от XVI век*, Slov 8.2, 2019, р. 140–162.

⁹ Electronic edition: <http://www.scripta-bulgaria.eu/bg/sources/dietetikon-sporod-mesecite> [30 V 2021].

¹⁰ The text is published almost in full in Б. ЦОНЕВ, *Опис на славянските ръкописи и старопечатни книги в Пловдивската народна библиотека*, София 1920, р. 173–181.

¹¹ *Симеонов сборник (по Станиславовия препис от 1073 г.)*, vol. I, *Изследвания и текст*, София 1991, р. 695. *Симеонов сборник (по Станиславовия препис от 1073 г.)*, vol. III, *Гръцки извори*, София 2015, р. 1154. The Old Bulgarian translation is on p. 1155.

¹² Edition and study: М. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Храна и аксиология...*, р. 140–162.

of this dieteticon is its brevity – for each month, there is a single, short sentence, which usually refers to only one foodstuff or beverage.

A separate group is comprised of *О лѣтнѣ обѣдѣхъ и въдоушнѣхъ проѣмененихъ*, which is found in three copies: MS Slav. 83 in the Austrian National Library, of 1644¹³; MS IXG7 in the National Museum in Prague, of 1648¹⁴; and the above-mentioned MS 177 in the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius Collection, which contains also the dieteticon of Nicholas Kallikles. These calendars begin with March and include information – found also in other manuscripts – about the names of the months in different languages, seasonal characteristics, and the humoral dynamics directly related to the latter.

The last group is represented by an anonymous, untitled dietary calendar. It consists of a dieteticon in MS 159 in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, of the second half of the 15th century, and a dieteticon in MS 54 in the National Library of Serbia, of the 17th century, which was burned during the Second World War¹⁵. In the later copy the dietary prescriptions are not formulated as calendar entries for each month, they are given as general instructions, but both texts undoubtedly stem from a common archetype. In both manuscripts the dieteticons are preceded by the work *Галиново на Ипократа* (*Galen's Interpretations of the Doctrine of Hippocrates*).

Time of dissemination

Tracing the dissemination of dietary calendars in the Balkan Slavic world, one is impressed by the prevalence of late copies. The only early copy, in Tsar Symeon's florilegium of the 10th century, is followed by a four-century-long hiatus until the appearance of the next copies. The heightened interest in them during the 15th and 16th centuries is largely due to the flowering of Slavic-Moldavian literature at the time, which often reproduced the Middle Bulgarian written tradition¹⁶. A significant part of the copies of dietary calendars known to me are of Moldavian origin. The hypothesis that there could have been earlier, 14th-century, translations of dietetic works in Bulgaria which have not survived to this day, needs further

¹³ The text is included for variant readings in an edition based on MS IXG7 in the National Museum in Prague, cf. П. СЫРКУ, *Стари српски рукописи са сликама*, [in:] *Летопис Матице српске*, vol. СХСVII.1, Нови Сад 1899, p. 1–54.

¹⁴ Edition and commentary: П. СЫРКУ, *Стари српски рукописи...*, p. 1–54.

¹⁵ For a description and dating of the manuscript as well as for an edition of the dietary calendar, cf. С. НОВАКОВИЋ, *Сказаніе ѡ пиштахъ чловѣчьскыхъ и кою пользѣ творѣтъ и кою врачеваніа соутъ въ нихъ и како подѡбають части и блюсти се*, [in:] *Примери књижевности и језика старога и српско-словенскога*, ed. Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, Београд 2000, p. 587–589.

¹⁶ On the character of Slavic-Moldavian literature, cf. А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Критерии определения славяно-молдавскихъ рукописей XV–XVI вв.*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Slavia Cyrillomethodiana. Источниковедение истории и культуры южныхъ славян и Древней Руси. Межславянские культурные связи эпохи средневековья*, Москва 2010, p. 410–438.

proof of the existence of a Bulgarian translation of the collections in which these texts are found¹⁷. Another literary phenomenon also contributed to the wider dissemination of dietary calendars in the Late Middle Ages – the appearance of mixed-content miscellanies. As is known, these miscellanies comprise works on various subjects and in various genres – astrology, prognostication, medicine, Old Testament and New Testament apocrypha, Paterikon stories, erotapokriseis, etc.¹⁸ At the same time, a significant part of their content is purely liturgical – excerpts from euchologia and hieratika, hymnographic works for particular feasts in the church calendar, typikon instructions, etc. Given their utilitarian purposes, these miscellanies included works providing medical knowledge – in the form of excerpts from medicinal books, and dietary calendars. There were several preconditions for the emergence of this type of miscellanies. On the one hand, the increasing literacy of ordinary laypeople to whom it was important to learn about the lives of martyrs, to catechize themselves through erotapokritic works, to recall biblical stories and parables, but also to learn about the health of their own bodies, about the possibilities of predicting their future from natural omens, even to learn a recipe for ink. On the other hand, these miscellanies were often compiled by itinerant monks and priests who served large areas beyond their small parishes and provided diverse services – hence the reason why the miscellanies acquired this anthological, manual-like form. In this sense, the dieteticon found itself in an ambivalent setting – in the unpretentious miscellanies of the low clergy who, however, had to respond to the needs of their ever more curious parishioners.

Patrons and copyists

The patron of a dietary calendar – Tsar Symeon the Great – can be identified with certainty only in the case of the earliest miscellany containing a dieteticon, the *Izbornik* of 1073. The latter is also the only, the earliest, and the most eloquent example of the place of this genre in mediaeval Bulgarian culture, considering who it was commissioned by.

As for the copyists, four can be identified with certainty. All four of them were men of letters and, furthermore, among the most eminent in their regions and cultural areas. They are the Moldavian man of letters Gavriil Urik (15th century), the Serbian monk Gavriil (beginning of the 15th century), who copied and translated works at Mount Athos, the Serbian man of letters Gavriilo Trojičanin (17th century), and the Bulgarian priest Avram Dimitrievič (17th century) from Karlovo.

¹⁷ A. Turilov points out the group of astrological and prognostic works, which include dietary calendars, as one of the few cases in which texts found in Slavic-Moldavian copies are not attested in Bulgarian literature of the 14th century, cf. A. ТУРИЛОВ, *Slavia Cyrillomethodiana...*, p. 424, note 22.

¹⁸ For more on the structure and dissemination of mixed-content miscellanies, cf. А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Сборници с неустойчив, непостоянен състав*, [in:] *История на българската средновековна литература*, ed. ЕАДЕМ, София 2008, p. 715–718.

Undoubtedly the best-known of the four is Gavriil Urik¹⁹. As is known, he worked at the Neamț monastery (Romania) at the time of hegumen Domentian, in the first half of the 15th century. According to A. Paskal, we know of no other so prolific scribe who has left such a rich manuscript legacy in mediaeval Moldavia²⁰. His work directly attests to the entry of the Târnovo, Middle Bulgarian, repertory into Romanian spiritual culture²¹. Evidence that he worked on commission is found in a colophon in a richly decorated tetraevangelion of 1429, now kept at the Bodleian Library (cod. Can. greci. No. 122). The manuscript was commissioned by Marina, the wife of the Moldavian voivode Alexander the Good (1400–1432). However, it is difficult to tell whether it was written at the request of the hegumen of the Neamț monastery or of a layperson, since the extant manuscript is incomplete. Most of it is missing; the few surviving folios are kept at RGB, fund 178, No. 923, and fund 247, No. 75; and RGADA, fund 188, No. 778²². Unlike a significant number of Gavriil Urik's manuscripts, which are liturgical or contain typikon readings including multiple copies of new-redaction²³ texts, the codex in which the dietiticon is found is a mixed-content miscellany. According to A. Paskal, judging from the numbering of the surviving quires, the manuscript most probably consisted of approximately 400 folios, of which only twenty folios have been preserved and identified to date. The Russian scholar has published the dietary calendar preserved in these fragments²⁴ and has identified another copy written in Middle Bulgarian orthography, which is completely identical to Gavriil Urik's text – in a manuscript of 1561 from the Pochayiv Lavra, now kept at by the National Library of Ukraine, fund 313, No. 47²⁵.

Another Gavriil²⁶ appears in a manuscript containing a dieteticon: the Serbian monk Gavriil who worked in the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos where,

¹⁹ For the latest studies and a bibliography on Gavriil Urik's works, cf. А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *Новые данные о рукописном наследии Гавриила Урика в славяно-молдавской книжности первой половины XV в.*, [in:] *Румянцевские чтения*, vol. II, Москва 2016, p. 31–36; ИДЕМ, *О рукописном наследии молдавского книжника Гавриила Урика из монастыря Нямы*, [in:] *Istorie și cultură. In onoarea academiциan Andrei Eșanu*, ed. С. МАНОЛАЧЕ, Chișinău 2018, p. 343–375; ИДЕМ, *О новых автографах молдавского книжника Гавриила Урика из собрания Рогожского кладбища отдела рукописей РГБ*, [in:] *Румянцевские чтения. Библиотеки и музеи как культурные и научные центры. Историческая ретроспектива и взгляд в будущее*, Москва 2018, p. 246–251; ИДЕМ, *Новые данные о книжной деятельности Гавриила Урика Нямецкого*, ТКШ 5, 1994, p. 409–413.

²⁰ А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *О рукописном наследии...*, p. 344.

²¹ К. ИВАНОВА, *Незабелязан фрагмент от Словото за всички светии на патриарх Филотей, автограф на Гавриил Урик*, Pbg 40.3, 2016, p. 7–28.

²² А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *О рукописном наследии...*, p. 350.

²³ The term “new redaction” (*новоизводен*) refers to collections structured according to the Jerusalem typikon and composed mainly during and after the 14th century in Târnovo or on Mount Athos.

²⁴ А. ПАСКАЛЬ, *Неизвестное апокрифическое сочинение...*, p. 13–32.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ For a brief biography of the Serbian monk Gavriil, cf. А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Гавриил*, [in:] *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. X, Москва 2005, p. 205–206, <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/161273.html> [30 V 2021].

in 1412, he copied – and may have also translated or revised – the translation of the Book of Job with commentaries by Olympiodorus of Alexandria (GIM, Moscow, Synodal Library, No. 202)²⁷. Another two translations are ascribed to him, albeit not unanimously – of Catena B₂ with commentaries on the Song of Songs²⁸ and of the Books of Kingdoms²⁹. The evidence about the life and work of the monk Gavriil is scarce: it is found only in his colophons in the manuscript containing the translation of the Book of Job³⁰. In addition to the year and place of production of the codex, the sources from which the translation was made are mentioned. Even if he did not translate any of the above-noted biblical books with commentaries³¹, Gavriil was undoubtedly an experienced copyist and erudite man of letters. In the colophon at the beginning of the codex, he demonstrates proficiency in the history of the translations of the Old Testament books from Hebrew to Greek³², comments on the principles of translation, and expresses his disapproval of the quality of the previous translation of the Book of Job.

²⁷ For more on the manuscript, the colophons in it, and the work of monk Gavriil, cf. И. ХРИСТОВА-ШОМОВА, *Книга Йов с тълкувания в славянския превод (по Владиславовия препис от 1456 г., ръкопис № 4/14 от сбирката на Рилския манастир)*, София 2007, p. 18–20.

²⁸ The folio with the colophon mentioning the monk Gavriil is now kept at RGB, Grigorovič Collection, No. 52.II. It was long assumed that the colophon was about a translation of the Wisdom of Solomon, but M. Dimitrova has recently presented a well-argued hypothesis that it is about a translation of a catena with commentaries which survives in a single copy in MS 2/24 of the Rila monastery. The folio with the colophon was most probably torn from the Rila codex. М. ДИМИТРОВА, *Тълкувания на Песен на песните в ркп. 2/24 от Рилската света обител*, София 2012, p. 21–29.

²⁹ According to F. Thomson, in 1416, in the Hilandar monastery again, the monk Gavriil also translated a catena on the Books of Kingdoms, cf. F. THOMSON, *The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament*, [in:] *Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. J. KRAŠOVEC, Ljubljana 1998, p. 762–763. The catena on Kingdoms in the Odessa State Scientific Library, Grigorovič Collection, No. 6, 1/106, contains a colophon in which the copyist, Dositej, copied the colophon of the original autograph in which the translator explained that the translation was commissioned by despot Stefan Lazarevič. For more on the hypotheses about the Slavonic translations of Kingdoms, cf. М. ДИМИТРОВА, *Тълкувания на Песен на песните...*, p. 29.

³⁰ Edition of and commentary on the colophons in GIM, Synodal Collection, No. 202: Б. ТРИФУНОВИЧ, *Записи инок Гаврила, преводиоца тумачења књиге о Јову*, [in:] *Литературознание и фолклористика. В чест на 70-годишнината на акад. Петър Динев*, София 1983, p. 108–111.

³¹ D. Trifunović, following precisely the information provided by the copyist, assumes that the translator of the biblical books is the monk Gavriil, who signed the colophons, cf. Б. ТРИФУНОВИЧ, *Записи инок Гаврила...*, p. 108. I. Hristova-Šomova thinks that this is possible but not certain, and that it is more likely that Gavriil copied earlier translations, cf. И. ХРИСТОВА-ШОМОВА, *Книга Йов...*, p. 18–19. M. Dimitrova does not rule out the possibility that it was Gavriil who translated the Book of Job with catena, but presumes that the translator of Catena B₂ with commentaries on the Song of Songs could have been someone else, cf. М. ДИМИТРОВА, *Тълкувания на Песен на песните...*, p. 28.

³² For the general commentary on the translation of the Old Testament books from Hebrew to Greek in *Treatise on the Letters* by Constantine of Kostenets, *Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius* by Gregory Tsamblak, Gavriil's colophon in Synod. 202, and the colophon in the Books of Kingdoms with catena, cf. М. ДИМИТРОВА, *Тълкувания на Песен на песните...*, p. 34.

Another translation has also been ascribed to the monk Gavriil: a liturgical miscellany, dated to ca. 1404, GIM, Hludov Collection, No. 114. M. Černilovskaja, after a detailed palaeographic and codicological analysis of the manuscript, has identified the main hand of the manuscript as that of the Serbian man of letters Gavriil³³. The codex contains the earliest copy of the calendrical epigrams of the court physician and poet Nicholas Kallikles (end of the 11th and first half of the 12th century). A. Turilov, who has published the copy, supposes that Gavriil was not the translator of the dietetikon, but that the translation was most probably done on Mount Athos³⁴, possibly in connection with the Serbian translation of the Byzantine *Iatrosophia*³⁵.

Gavrilo Trojičanin, an erudite monk from the Monastery of the Holy Trinity at Pljevlja, Montenegro, is the other prolific man of letters who we know for certain copied dietary calendars in his miscellanies of 1644 and 1648. For Serbian Mediaeval Studies, Gavrilo is important above all with his *Vrhobreznica Chronicle* (*Vrhobreznički ljetopis*) of 1650, but besides this historiographic collection, he penned another approximately ten voluminous collections, some of which are known to have been produced in cooperation with famous illuminators in his day. Such are the Psalter with akolouthia of 1643 (Novi Sad, Matica Srpska Library, PP II 19) and the Hexameron with *Christian Topography* by Cosmas Indicopleustes of 1649 (MS 79 of Pljevlja)³⁶. Very little is known about the life of this Serbian monk – except that he was a hieromonk and that, according to the colophon in the *Vrhobreznica Chronicle*, he was born ѿ стѣфана полта, еже ѿ междорѣчїе тарское и пивское. As P. Syrku concludes, the writing of psalters with akolouthia and menaia shows that Gavrilo produced liturgical books and miscellanies on commission for high-ranking individuals or institutions³⁷. Gavrilo Trojičanin was not merely an exquisite calligrapher with a sense of artistic composition of the magnificent collections he produced. He was a very prolific copyist with encyclopaedic interests and erudition, an active editor and compiler – he abridged, revised, and selected his texts, he invented the overall design and structure of his manuscripts.

Dietary calendars are contained in two of his psalters with akolouthia – in MS IXG7 in the National Museum in Prague, of 1648, and in MS Slav. 83 (II/180) in the Austrian National Library, of 1644. According to the codicological analysis, the Prague codex is a convolute and the dietary calendar is located

³³ М. ЧЕРНИЛОВСКАЯ, *Об идентификации почерков трех сербских рукописей XV в. с Афона*, [in:] *Вопросы славяно-русской палеографии, кодикологии, эпиграфики*, Москва 1987, p. 39–41, 94–97.

³⁴ А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Ранний славянский список...*, p. 474.

³⁵ Only fragments of which survive in a single copy in MS 462 of the Hilandar monastery, 15th century. Edition: Р. КАТИЋ, *Медицина код срба у средњем веку*, Београд 1958, p. 60–62.

³⁶ For information, photographs and literature on the two manuscripts, cf. *Свет српске рукописне књиге (XII–XVII век)*, ed. Z. RAKIĆ, I. SPADIJER, Београд 2016, p. 404–417.

³⁷ П. СЫРКУ, *Стари српски рукописи...*, p. 22.

in the first, main part of the manuscript³⁸. The quire with the calendrical tables and hygiene prescriptions is not included either in the original foliation of the copyist or in the contents he has listed in the beginning of the manuscript. In all likelihood, this quire was written separately and was planned to be the final one of the first part of the convolute³⁹. The difference between the language of the calendar notes and synaxarion tables, on the one hand, and of the main text of the manuscript, on the other, has been pointed out by P. Syrku⁴⁰. In his linguistic commentary on three psalters of hieromonk Gavriilo, the Russian scholar underlines the abundance of Bulgarianisms and vernacular vocabulary in the calendar instructions in MS IXG7 in the National Museum in Prague, unlike the “usual Serbian redaction” characteristic of the rest of the codex as well as of Gavriilo’s other psalters⁴¹. These two facts, the missing foliation and the language of the dietary calendar, suggest that Gavriilo may have used also another, Bulgarian, collection, with which he enriched the contents of his codex.

Among the copyists of dieteticons we find the name of another professional scribe – Avram Dimitrievič from Karlovo. It is known that he *worked on commission for several literary centers*⁴² – the Sopot, Troyan, and Zographou monasteries – and that his scribal activity was associated with the Karlovo-Kuklen school⁴³. The scribe left colophons in part of his manuscripts, mentioning patrons and monasteries that had commissioned the codices. Undoubtedly, Avram was one of the most illustrious calligraphers of the 17th century – educated in a school with an established tradition, he himself was an active scribe who left luxurious liturgical codices and *damaskins* as well as disciples. The dietary calendar is included in an impressive codex that ends with a colophon bearing the year, 1674, and the name of the copyist: the much-sinful Avram priest, son of Dimitri (Dimitrievič). The manuscript is voluminous, 626 folios, with rich decoration similar to that of the Elena and Troyan *damaskins*. The dieteticon is published almost in full by B. Conev in his inventory of the manuscripts in the National Library in Plovdiv⁴⁴. It is not in the conventional form of textual exposition – here the dietary instructions are located, similarly to the psalters of Trojičanin, around a calendrical table, along with ecclesiastical and historical information as well as climate characteristics. It is presumed that the calendar may have been based on a Western Catholic

³⁸ For a contemporary description of the manuscript, cf. И. ШПАДИЈЕР, В. ТРИЈИЋ, З. РАКИЋ, З. РАНКОВИЋ, *Српске рукописне књиге у Чешкој*, Београд 2015, p. 72–77.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

⁴⁰ П. СЫРКУ, *Стари српски рукописи са сликама...*, p. 1–54.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 29–34.

⁴² Д. РАДОСЛАВОВА, *Българската книжнина от XVII век. Центрове, книжовници, репертоар*, София 2020, p. 129.

⁴³ On the scribal activity of Avram Dimitrievič, cf. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Старобългарски книжовни средища*, ИНБ 14, 1976, p. 35–51; Д. РАДОСЛАВОВА, *Българската книжнина от XVII век...*, p. 129–135.

⁴⁴ Б. ЦОНЕВ, *Опис на славянските ръкописи...*, p. 173–181. For more on the content, cf. Х. ТОНЧЕВА, *Календарът в Аврамовия сборник*, СЛ 39/40, 2008, p. 220–234.

original because it contains Western commemorations⁴⁵. In terms of content, the dieteticon is identical to the dietary instructions in a Gabrovo *damaskin* of 1824, NBKM, No. 698, and in a *damaskin* of the 17th century, NBKM, No. 724, the only difference being that it begins with September.

In addition to the above-noted attributed manuscripts containing dietary calendars, also extant are other codices with names. They are the latest copies of dieteticons and reveal rather the “private character” of the codices – they cannot be associated with consistent work in scriptoria, with commissions from noble or rich patrons, etc. Conversely, they illustrate the individual interests of their owners and copyists. Among them are the Prayer Book of Sophronius of Studenica of the year 1800 (No. 394, National Library of Serbia), the Prayer Book of the priest Jovan Lorović of Crmnica, Montenegro, of 1836 (Library of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. A42/18), the Medicinal Book of hieromonk Stefan Vitanović of Lepavina, Croatia, of the late 18th century – all of them being manuscripts of the Modern Age which are representative of another type of culture and were most probably influenced by both the Western and the Russian tradition as well as by printing. They bear the imprint of ecclesiastical literacy as their owners and compilers were priests or monks, and have a purely utilitarian character – they were meant to serve as a personal manual on how to care for one’s spiritual as well as physical health⁴⁶.

The codices

A brief overview of the contents of Balkan Slavic manuscripts containing dietary calendars is sufficient to establish that such calendars are rarely found in medical codices. Their logical place would be in medical codices – medicinal books or translated compilations such as the Hilandar medical codex⁴⁷. The fact is, however, that they very rarely appear in such codices. The only codices specifically devoted to medical subjects in which we find dieteticons are MS 54 in the National Library of Serbia, which was burned during the Second World War, the medicinal book of hieromonk Stefan Vitanović, and medicinal book No. 407, NBKM. If there is a thematic core that can be identified around dieteticons, it is the core of divinatory books. Most of the manuscripts in which we find health prescriptions also contain copies of brontologia, palmomantic texts, the *Story about Good and Bad Days*. The

⁴⁵ Л. Илиева, *Българският език в предисторията на компаративната лингвистика и в езиковия свят на ранния европейски модернизъм*, Благоевград 2011, p. 59.

⁴⁶ On the syncretic role of the lower clergy in the 19th century, cf. S. NOVAKOVIĆ, *Apokrifski zbornik našega vijeka*, [in:] *Starine*, vol. XVIII, Zagreb 1886, p. 165–182.

⁴⁷ MS 517 of the Hilandar monastery, of the 15th–16th century. The manuscript contains treatises on pulse diagnostics, phlebotomy, uroscopy, fevers, etc., which are based on the Hippocratic-Galenic tradition.

list of works usually contained in manuscripts along with such prescriptions can be extended with astronomical and astrological articles, as well as with *The Story about the Twelve Fridays*. It must be noted that this combination of medicine and prognostication is not specific to South Slavic manuscripts – it is characteristic also of the Western Middle Ages.

Another specific feature of the written tradition of Slavic dietary calendars is that they are often included as unplanned additions, they are not an integral part of a thought-out periphery. Some of the codices are with blank folios, sloppy handwriting, they are written without a preliminary concept of their composition, and it is very likely that the dietary calendar was copied to fill a blank space in the manuscript with a brief and useful text⁴⁸. The only basis on which the dieteticon is incorporated into the text of the manuscripts is the calendrical one.

On the other hand, however, the modest statistics of attributed copies of dietary texts raises the question of whether the dieteticons were copied in manuscripts designed for the large monasteries. Paradoxically, the few preserved names point us to professional scribes, to highly erudite men of letters who were connected to prestigious scriptoria and monasteries – Neamț, the Holy Trinity at Pljevlja, Mount Athos, Karlovo. And while Gavriil Urik and the Athonite priest Gavriil devoted their efforts to the development of monastic libraries and translations, the later Gavriilo Trojičanin and Avram Dimitrievič specialized in the production of luxurious manuscripts commissioned also by lay persons⁴⁹. In the codices of these four men of letters, the dietary calendar is not a random addition. It is part of the complex amalgam of miscellanies in which the biblical and liturgical layers intersect with that of everyday pragmatism⁵⁰.

It seems as if the reception of this genre was stretched between two extremes – to be part of the monastic encyclopedia⁵¹, and to be an element of the diverse structure of the unpretentious mixed-content miscellanies. In other words, the receptive trajectory of this marginal genre started from royal codices, ran through manuscripts commissioned by rich patrons and produced in scriptoria, and ended in the miscellanies of ordinary priests as well as of laypersons.

⁴⁸ In a detailed analysis of the dietary calendar in MS 649 in the Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (Tulcea Miscellany), M. Cibranska-Kostova confirms the fact that the dietary calendar has no connection with the previous texts, cf. M. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Храна и аксиология...*, p. 143.

⁴⁹ On the central role of the Mount Sredna Gora literary circle, to which Avram Dimitrievič belonged, in the creation and dissemination of luxurious manuscripts by analogy with Greek ones, cf. E. МУСАНОВА, *Луксозните ръкописи на 17 век*, [in:] *По следите на българската книга. Описи. Находки. Библиология*, Пловдив 2015, p. 247–263.

⁵⁰ M. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Храна и аксиология...*, p. 156.

⁵¹ We can define as a “monastic encyclopedia” not only Tsar Symeon’s *Izbornik* of 1073 but also part of the Moldavian manuscripts of the end of the 15th and first half of the 16th century. M. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Храна и аксиология...*, p. 143.

This article examined only one of the possible perspectives on the question of the reception of the dietary calendar genre in mediaeval South Slavic and Slavic-Moldavian literature – through the evidence that can be obtained from the names, places, and very rarely patrons, found in the codices. It is just as important, however, to identify the sources of the translations as well as to compare the Byzantine and Slavic traditions of dietary calendars. This will enable us to pinpoint the changes and specificities in the history of Balkan Slavic dietary prescriptions.



Fig. 1. Dietary calendar in Psalter with akolouthia of 1674 written by priest Avram Dimitrievič from Karlovo. MS No 115 of the National Library in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

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