

# **Editing the *Bdinski sbornik* as a multilayered reality**

Lara Sels (KU Leuven and Ghent University)

David J. Birnbaum (University of Pittsburgh)

*Abstract:* The *Bdinski sbornik* (*BS*), and, in fact, any manuscript, is a complex reality, with many inter-related layers of meaning. This reality informs our *reader-oriented theory of edition*, which guides our creation of a digital edition that prioritizes accommodating this complexity by bridging the gaps that separate different traditional types of edition (e.g., facsimile, diplomatic, text-critical, etc.). Our goal is to support a variety of research programs through the design and implementation of a mode of edition that recognizes the inherently multilayered reality of the manuscript and is simultaneously responsive to codicological, text-critical, linguistic, orthographic, and other research questions.

## **Introduction**

Contemporary scholars, whatever their individual research interests and perspectives may be, cannot fail to be aware of the multilayered nature of any manuscript. We can look at a manuscript as a physical artifact, as linguistic evidence, as a material text, as a concrete instance of a text understood more abstractly, and in other ways. Nonetheless, whatever our domain of inquiry, and however concrete or abstract our research agenda, the primary bearer of evidence to which we all must turn is inevitably the physical manuscript. Human readers have always understood this intuitively; for example, the codicologist, the textologist, and the linguist may look at the manuscript quite differently, and may look past or through some of its layers and dimensions in order to concentrate on others, but they all find their evidence and their object of study somewhere within one and the same physical object.

This inherent multilayered quality may acquire additional dimensions by virtue of acts of translation and compilation. In the case of the *Bdinski sbornik* (*BS*), the ubiquitous dimensions of text, of language, and of the physical object are complicated by the distances, in both time and place, that we now know to exist among 1) the translation of the individual entries (texts) of the manuscript, 2) the compilation of the text collection as a unified and coherent miscellany, and 3) the copying of the *BS* manuscript itself (Sels and Stern: 360–61). Part of the reality of *BS* is that:

- *BS* is a fifteenth-century codex—a physical object, a text in its artefactuality, probably a copy (direct or at some remove) of Tsaritsa Anna’s fourteenth-century book, which is no longer extant (Petrova). In this respect it is a meaning-bearing object in the sense that it implements a network of both lexical codes and bibliographic codes.<sup>1</sup>
- *BS* is also a unique extant text witness to a purposefully organized feminine text collection that belongs to the fourteenth century. In that respect, it is a peculiar, later compilation of what were originally mutually independent pre-metaphrastic vitae of

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<sup>1</sup> “These presentation or design features [viz. kind of paper, margin width, distance between lines, binding, cover, etc.] constitute the ‘bibliographic codes’ of a text to distinguish them from the more usually acknowledged aspects of text, letters, accents, and punctuation, that constitute the ‘lexical codes.’” (Shillingsburg: 16) These bibliographic codes affect the way in which a reader perceives the physical instantiation of a text and they are an inherent part of its meaning.

female saints, where the act of compilation asserts a textual relationship that is rooted in but transcends the textuality of the individual constituent vitae.

- *BS* is a source of evidence, a text witness (one of many), for each individual Slavonic vita in the collection. We know from the present state of research that the vitae of *BS* did not originate with this fifteenth-century codex, or with the fourteenth-century compilation from which it was copied, and that, rather, prior to the fourteenth-century compilation the constituent texts were already circulating independently of one another, as individual translations, some as early as the tenth century.
- *BS* is, furthermore, also a text witness to the particular stage of the *Greek* source text traditions that gave rise to the Slavonic translations. *BS* plays a sometimes ancillary and sometimes crucial role in its capacity as an indirect witness to the Greek tradition of each of the constituent texts of the collection, most importantly in situations where the Slavonic texts may be derived from an ancient stage of the Greek tradition that is no longer fully documented by extant Greek witnesses.

The 1973 typeset edition of *BS* by Scharpé and Vyncky presents *BS* as a unified entity, a perspective that is consistent with the editors' idea that the selection of texts, their translation, and the act of compilation coincided in time with the production of the codex itself (cf. the introduction by E. Voordeckers in Scharpé and Vyncke: 11–40, esp. 38–39). The 1973 edition is designed to represent the extant manuscript text in a more or less diplomatic rendering,<sup>2</sup> but it also seeks, at the same time, to be a critical reading text.<sup>3</sup> The theory of edition implicit in the 1973 publication is not insensitive to various perspectives on the manuscript text, but these perspectives must compete for implementation and attention within one conflated, semi-documentary and semi-interpretive representation of the text, so that often each can gain only at the expense of the other. In our theory of edition, *BS* is fundamentally a multilayered reality, with different moments of interest and different possible research questions attached to each layer, and although we recognize the important ways in which these layers emerge from the same ink on the page, and the ways in which they inform one another, we also consider it important to distinguish the various functions, making it possible to preserve, where necessary, the boundaries that separate various levels of our edition.

The manuscript is where it all starts, even though it is not necessarily always the ultimate object of study. That object might be, e.g., the language,<sup>4</sup> the compilation, the transmission of a

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<sup>2</sup> As examples of features traditionally considered characteristic of diplomatic editions, folio breaks (although not line breaks) are transcribed, and errors and orthographic oddities are reproduced in the running text with explanations in footnotes.

<sup>3</sup> The editors have occasionally emended the text and have introduced selected, sporadic text-critical annotations, although those limited annotations are not based on a full analysis of multiple variant witnesses. Furthermore, they have introduced paragraph divisions, capitalized according to modern conventions, and resolved abbreviations.

<sup>4</sup> The language of the manuscript (or, more precisely, of a text or a part of a text in the manuscript) is not, of course, purely the language of the translator, the compiler, or the copyist, but a linguistic compromise between the scribe's linguistic usage and the language of his model, which, in turn, emerged as the result of a long process of translation, transmission, and adaptation.

particular vita, the relationship of certain vitae to their Greek source texts, translation technique, etc. Our goal is to create an edition that accommodates this complexity and that responds to various types of user engagement. At its core, we believe that such an edition must combine, at a minimum, a documentary (diplomatic) perspective on the manuscript, with all of its orthographic and codicological idiosyncrasies, and a text-critical perspective, thus combining the archival (documentary) with the interpretive (critical). An edition—even the most meticulous diplomatic edition—is never merely a transcription, since it is impossible to transcribe and translate with perfect fidelity the multidimensional and analog nature of the original into digital form. An edition is always one of many possible interpretations of the physical object, an object that encodes information on many levels. Any edition can select only part of that information, create a particular view of it, transform it into a representation (not reproduction) in another medium, and present it from a particular perspective.<sup>5</sup> The most relevant or useful perspective depends on the research question, and some research questions depend simultaneously on multiple perspectives. We want to provide access to scans of the Ghent manuscript that show it as an artifact;<sup>6</sup> we want to create a linguistically annotated diplomatic edition, and we also want to undertake text-critical research—not on the level of the text collection, as it is unique and we know of no other manuscript with the same or a similar collection, but on the level of the individual vitae and on the basis of multiple witnesses, including the Greek source text tradition.

Our multilayered theory of edition emerges from two sets of considerations:

1. *Intellectual.* As described above, a human reader or scholar turns to the manuscript in pursuit of many types of knowledge and information. While not all levels or types of information are represented with the same directness or transparency in the manuscript, those levels are nonetheless present, in their own way, in the ink on the page. A theory of edition that encodes multiple levels of meaning simultaneously thus comes closer to the human experience of interacting with the multidimensional reality of the actual manuscript object. Much as human readers may engage with the same physical manuscript in pursuit of different types of research, our theory of edition seeks to explore the extent to which it is possible to represent the different levels of information simultaneously (albeit, necessarily, in an interpreted way) in an edition, much as they are present simultaneously in the original manuscript. But because ours is a theory of

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<sup>5</sup> Even a diplomatic transcription or documentary edition can never be a truly faithful or fully objective and will always be a product of interpretive scholarship, cf. Pierazzo, 464–65: “First, no transcription, however accurate, will ever be able to represent entirely (i.e. faithfully) the source document. Some characteristics of the manuscript are irredeemably lost by transcribing it, for instance the variable shape and spacing of handwritten glyphs versus the constant shape of digital fonts or typescripts. [...] Secondly, if every editor necessarily selects from an infinite set of facts, it is evident that any transcription represents an interpretation and not a mechanically complete record of what is on the page. The process of selection is inevitably an interpretative act: what we choose to represent and what we do not depends either on the particular vision that we have of a particular manuscript or on practical constraints.”

<sup>6</sup> Even the highest-quality photographs inevitably present a different visual reality than *de visu* examination, and photography is also mediated and interpreted, even if perhaps less so, in its effect, than character-based transcription.

*edition*, and not only of *publication*, we are conscious of and attentive to the editors' interpretive role at all stages of the process. It is the editors' responsibility to present to the reader a theory of the manuscript and the texts that it witnesses on multiple levels, interpreting both what the text says at the lowest graphic level and what it communicates at the most abstract textual level.

2. *Practical.* Manuscript transcription is always an interpretive process, but once the editors have interpreted a reading and encoded a representation of it, the most robust theory of edition would ensure that the editors did not then have to repeat exactly the same process of interpretation and encoding for different but related purposes. Such repetition adds no new information, and can therefore serve only as an opportunity for error and inconsistency. Some information in a manuscript may be interpreted differently for different purposes, of course; for example, a study of orthography may require a different representation than a study of meaning (e.g., literal transcription vs expansion of abbreviation). In many places, though, the same interpretation may be applicable at more than one level of representation, and it is those moments of identity that should not be repeated. Our theory of edition prohibits fully independent transcriptions for different purposes in places where the transcriptions would not differ from one another, and therefore affords the practical advantages of reducing both duplicate effort and the duplicate opportunity for error that comes with it.

## Diplomatic edition of the manuscript

We began preparing our edition first and foremost as a documentation of the material evidence, with new full-color high-resolution scans of the codex (generously contributed by the Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent), as well as an accurate diplomatic transcription of the *BS* text collection, presented in a dialectical relationship with the scans, as in Figure 1, below:

The figure consists of two parts. On the left is a screenshot of a digital interface for a diplomatic edition. At the top, the text '<oo>→<bs> Bdinski sbornik' is displayed in red. Below this is a horizontal bar with three buttons: 'Choose font', 'Toggle magnifier' (which is checked), and 'Go to page'. Underneath the bar, the page number '< 2r >' is shown in purple. A list of 18 numbered items follows, each containing a short line of text in Old Church Slavonic. On the right is a photograph of a page from the 'Bdinski sbornik'. The page is numbered '2' in the top right corner. The text is written in a dark ink on aged, yellowish paper. Some words are highlighted in red boxes, corresponding to the diplomatic transcription on the left. The highlighted words include 'прѣмо прѣ', 'въчурьморѣ', 'тѣль', 'тѣша', 'дѣте', 'гла', and 'лаше'.

<oo>→<bs> **Bdinski sbornik**

Editor: Lara Sels ([lara.sels@ugent.be](mailto:lara.sels@ugent.be))  
Maintained by: David J. Birnbaum ([djbritt@gmail.com](mailto:djbritt@gmail.com))

Last modified: 2013-12-20T14:03:55+0000

Choose font  Toggle magnifier Go to page

< 2r >

1. та́ко же и и́на приено прѣ-
2. дѣятъющи въ чу́рьморѣ
3. ста́тьи ве́брали. тѣ́ца-
4. ше се съвѣтиши въе дѣте-
5. ли. ибо множицо ба-
6. жени съ сльзами мола́ли
7. се бѣгут въ и́ни. да бы и́мъ-
8. да мысль свою къ и́млю.
9. и да не приносят се и́ниско-
10. иже землѣнъ венци. по-
11. неже ба бѣ шутъ. сие. и́мъ-
12. и́не доводно чиставиа.
13. иль толи часъ погреа разъд-
14. яти я. иниции же и си-
15. римъ. и мола́ли стра
16. своего гла́зинъ. къ да въх-
17. и азъ достопна въла твоё-
18. и́стине. и моли ба за ме.

Figure 1: Diplomatic edition of the *Bdinski sbornik*

Even the most meticulous diplomatic transcription is an interpretation, rather than a reproduction, because the process of transferring the analog handwritten information to digital form cannot yield perfect correspondence. In our case, though, because the diplomatic transcription is accompanied by a high-resolution photographic facsimile, we decided to normalize or ignore some types of paleographic detail that in other diplomatic editions might have been represented explicitly, either by more nuanced character-by-character transcription or in paleographic footnotes. Perhaps most conspicuously, we chose not to transcribe supralinear diacritics. We recognize that these might be important for studying either the accentography (accentual orthography and paleography) or the language of the manuscript, but 1) those types of studies were not among our immediate research goals, 2) transcribing supralinear diacritics is intensely time-consuming and highly prone to error, and 3) the fact that ours is a *digital* diplomatic edition means that it is possible to enhance the transcription at a later time by inserting the diacritic characters then, which would not be true of a paper edition.<sup>7</sup>

Building on technology pioneered by the Norwegian Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European Languages (PROIEL) project, which included Old Church Slavonic as one of its target languages, we anticipate enriching the diplomatic transcription with linguistic annotation, as in, for example, the proof-of-concept prototype “Paul the Simple” edition (Birnbaum, et al.), illustrated in Figure 2, below:

## Paul the Simple

*Codex suprasliensis, 86r–88v*

[Lexical/grammatical search] [Full-text search] [About this site]

1. [Gk] [Eng] [86r] Повѣдаше же сѣты вожини . нерад . | и кронни . и нин мнозн отъ братна | о юнхъже хьштж глаголати . яко | пауль нѣк то поѣскын ратан . | издрадъ безълобенъ и прость | житнiemъ . съ красноиже женоиже съпра|же са . ъзлонравънъ разоумъ . яко | отан иго съг҃рѣшаще : на дѣлѣврѣмени же съ села напрасно вѣщадъ въ дому | свон . обрѣте иа ѡзло твораша . промысломъ | на пользюное супрѣмѣжитоу | паула . и видѣвъ ик съ обличиукихъ иса | хотник . въсмѣнавъ са вѣдли къ нима | глагола : довѣрѣвъ | тако ми юсона | не вѣбрѣжъ о томъ . азъ оуже къ тому не | вѣждак иса . идан имѣн иж и дѣти иса . | азъ во идѣкъ умъорицѣца .

2. [Gk] [Eng] [86v] и нн | къ комоу же ииуыоже рекъ . нае въ поѹстѣлѣкъ къ влаженоуому аントонио . | и таљкихъ въ дѣви . и ишедъ же сва|тии аントони . вѣпраша и что хьште . | глагола паула : умъорицѣца хотитъ бытъ . | отъѣвша юсому аントони : шестъ аѣсль аѣтъ съ . и старъ оуже съ . съде умънецъ не можешн бытъ . нѣ па|иже идан въ вѣсь . и дѣлала жиинъ благоударствиа вога . не можешн въ то съѣтъпѣти скрѣпнн поустыннхъ . | отъѣвшасть стадыи деуе : иже аїтие | ма наѹчиши . то то съѣводъ .

1 Διηγείτο δὲ ὁ ἄγιος τοῦ θεοῦ Ἱερᾶς καὶ Κρόνιος καὶ ἔτεροι πλειόνες τῶν ἀδελφῶν. περὶ ὧν μέλλω λέγειν, ὅτι Παῦλος τίς ἀγροικὸς γεωργός, καθ' ὑπεβολὴν ἀπάκας καὶ ἀπλοὺς τὸν βίον, ὥσαιρατὴ γυναικὶ συνεεὐχθῇ κακατόπω τὴν γνῶμην· ἵτις τούτον διελάθανεν ἀμαρτάνουσα ἐπὶ μῆκιστον χρόνον. Εἰσεθάῶν δὲ τότε ἐξ ἀγροῦ αἰρνίδιον εἰς τὸν οἴκον ἤαστοι, εὑρὼν αὐτοὺς αἰσχοτραγοῦντας, τῆς προνοίας εἰς τὸ συμφέρον ὄψηγούστης τὸν Παῦλον. Καὶ θεατέμενος τῷτην μετὰ τοῦ συνήθουσας αὐτῆς, γελάκας σεμνὸν, ἐπιφωνεῖ αὐτοῖς, λέγων "Κακᾶς, καλῶς ... Μὰ τὸν ήσουν, οὐ μέλει μοι ἐγώ αὐτὴν οὐκέτι αἴρω. Υπάγε, ἔχε αὐτήν καὶ τὰ παιδιά αὐτῆς· ἐγὼ γάρ ὑπάγω καὶ γίνομαι μοναχός".

1 God's saint, Hierax, and Cronius and many other of the brothers told me this tale about these things that I now will speak, about Paul, a certain field plowman, exceptionally innocent and simple as to his life. He had married a beautiful woman, of immoral nature, who was secretly cheating on him for a long time. Paul suddenly entered his house from the fields and found them behaving wickedly. Providence directing Paul to his own good, and seeing her with her usual lover, he laughed and shouted to them "Good, good. By Jesus, I don't care about it. Moreover, I no longer see her. Go, have her and her children, because I am going, and I will become a monk."

отъ: prep.+G, goes w. братиа

братиа: G of брати-я, coll. noun used as pl. of братъ, G after отъ

о: prep.+L, goes w. нихъже

нихъже: L.pl.neut. of pron.adj. /j-/ with prothetic i, after o, bif. rel. use

хьштж: 1st p.sg. of irreg. modal verb хотѣти, goes w. глаголати

глаголати: infin. of глагол-а- after хьштж

иисо: sub.conj.

пауль: N.sg. of pers. name паулъ, subj. of S

нѣкъ то: for нѣкъто, N.sg.masc. of pron. нѣкъто, used as modifier of пауль

поѣскын: N.sg.masc.def. of поѣск- (adj. derived from поѣ-о), agr.w. ратана

ратана: N.sg. of ратай-я, subj. of S, in appos.w. пауль

издрадъ: adv., mods. безълобенъ and прость

безълобенъ: N.sg.masc.indef. of безълобън- (note lowered jer), agr.w. пауль

и: conj., links безълобенъ and прость

Figure 2: “Vita of Paul the Simple” from the *Codex Suprasliensis*

As Figure 3, below, shows, the linguistic annotation is available not only for browsing, but also for searching:

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Steensland concerning paleographic, orthographic, and linguistic research questions that require close examination of supralinear diacritics. Because we make all of our materials fully and freely available, including the raw transcriptions, other users who are interested specifically in the accentuation are able to use our transcriptions as a starting point, modifying them to suit their needs. In this way, the possibility of using our transcriptions to bootstrap new research by adding new information is not limited to our own project team.

## “Paul the Simple” grammatical report

Found 9 nouns with declension type = \*, gender = n, number = \*, case = \*

Item	Verse	Folio	Lemma	Greek	Declension Type	Gender	Case	Number
брaшно	3	86v	брaшн-o	[omit]	o-stem	n	A	sg
брaшьна	4	86v	брaшн-o	νήστης	o-stem	n	G	sg
връмени	1	86г	връм-ен-0	χρόνον	c-stem	n	L	sg
горе	11	87v	гор-o	ούαί	o-stem	n	A	sg
житиемъ	1	86г	житъ-о	τὸν βίον	o-stem	n	I	sg
лѣто	9	87г	лѣт-o	ἐνιαυτὸν	o-stem	n	A	sg
лѣть	2	86г	лѣт-o	Ἐτῶν	o-stem	n	G	pl
прѣпладынне	12	87v	прѣпладынij-o	τὴν σταθρὰν μεσημβρίαν	o-stem	n	A	sg
села	1	86г	сел-o	ἀγροῦ	o-stem	n	G	sg

Figure 3: Output of a linguistic query in the “Vita of Paul the Simple” edition from the *Codex Suprasliensis*

While the linguistic annotation (Figure 2, right sidebar) in the “Paul the Simple” edition was limited to the encoding of morphological features, PROIEL also supports dependency syntactic annotation, thus providing a gateway to richer forms of linguistic exploration and analysis. The segmentation or tokenization on different annotation layers may be complicated by orthography, synthetic morphology, discontinuous morphology, movement (syntactic transformation), etc., but strategies for dealing with this sort of annotation exist in the corpus linguistic tradition (e.g., ANNIS), as do strategies for incorporating overlapping multi-tiered annotation into the XML architecture on which our edition is built (e.g., TEI Ling).

## Critical edition of the individual texts

A diplomatic edition of the manuscript, even one enriched with linguistic annotation, is essentially an edition of a *document that contains texts*, rather than an edition of the *texts themselves*. The meaning of the texts themselves derives only partially from their representation in an individual manuscript such as *BS*, and a full understanding of the textology of the *BS* miscellany requires the independent application of text-critical methods to the individual constituent texts, that is, research into the sources, the genesis, and the transmission of each individual entry. This, in turn, means collecting, examining, and collating as many variant texts of the *BS vitae* as possible, and then exploring the relationship between the Slavic tradition and whatever we are able to learn from parallel Greek material.

Many text-critical projects privilege the reconstruction of an archetype, and part of the research process in such situations traditionally involves *eliminatio*, the exclusion from analysis of sources that have been determined not to bear independent witness on that archetype. This elimination can simplify the subsequent evaluation of variation by reducing the number of witnesses that must be compared (Maas). However, as we are interested not only in the archetype of the translation, but also in the diffusion and the history of the Slavonic text, with its variation, we need to determine not only which variants are likely to reflect the original translation and which are secondary to it, but also which witnesses arose at which point within the Slavonic tradition. That is, because we are interested in exploring the full history of the transmission of the text, and not only in reconstructing the protograph of the translation, it would not be appropriate for us to exclude from our study manuscripts that do not bear independent witness on that protograph.

In the case of a Slavonic text that is derived from a Greek original, it would be simplistic to speak about “the Greek” text. A proper study of the Slavonic tradition, including establishing the text as we think it looked at the moment of translation, requires undertaking also a proper Greek textual study, and we have to find a way to relate the two traditions meaningfully, collating and examining them together for moments of textual agreement. As there are two traditions involved, there are actually two texts to be established: 1) for the Slavonic, the hypothetical archetypal text that approaches the original translation as much as the material evidence allows; and 2) for the Greek, the point in the textual tradition where the Slavonic translation originated, that is, where we might locate the hypothetical Greek source for the Slavonic translation. Eventually, this would allow us to get to the earliest retrievable state of the text and to an understanding of its textual and linguistic layers. Looking at multiple witnesses of the individual texts and applying textual criticism is, in our project, undertaken first and foremost to come to a better understanding of the principles of selection and adaptation that shaped the *BS* collection as a whole. However, the same philological work also allows us to make text-critical editions of the individual vitae, which is, of course, interesting and valuable in its own right. Eventually, we want to link these text-critical editions dynamically to the diplomatic edition of the manuscript, that is, of *BS*, replicating the reader’s experience of seeing the *BS* version of the text in a particular manuscript and understanding it in a broader text-critical context.

Together with Dieter Stern and Laurent Capron, we have begun doing the text-critical work for the first text in the collection, the second part of the Life of the mid-fourth-century hermit Abraham of Qidun, a text traditionally (if erroneously) attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373). The text was composed in Syriac, presumably in the fifth century, and it was translated early on into Greek and Latin (see Capron: 53–69 and Stern). At this point we have identified some fifty Slavonic text witnesses (predominantly paraenesis manuscripts), twenty-four of which we have been able to examine and include in our present collation. Our results at this stage are necessarily preliminary, but it is already clear that we have two distinct groups of manuscripts: an East Slavonic or Russian group and a South Slavonic (Bulgarian and Serbian) group. The distinction is relevant but, of course, also artificial to some extent, and there are clear traces of contact between the two groups, notably (but not exclusively) in a number of manuscripts that have a contaminated text version. Interestingly, *BS*, although its language is obviously southern Slavonic, follows the so-called “Russian group” textologically in most of its readings.

The traditional publication of text-critical editions as a running transcription of a “best manuscript” (copy text) with a critical apparatus, where significant variation from the copy text and patterns of agreement among witnesses (control texts) are recorded in footnotes, achieves its economy of space at two costs, one involving completeness and the other legibility. Concerning completeness, textology is based on the analysis of significant variation, but reasonable persons may disagree about what should be considered significant, and only an edition that transcribes the full text from all witnesses can allow the editors to present the full evidence for their textological decisions. The editors continue to fulfill their traditional responsibility of analyzing and interpreting the patterns of variation, but the provision of the full data “allows scholars to check all significant variants of any passage with relative ease [...] without having

to depend upon the idiosyncrasies of an editor who decides which readings to report.” (Ostrowski xviii–xix) Concerning legibility, mentally constructing a reading text from any of the control texts in a traditional critical edition is difficult because the information is divided between the running copy text (where the control texts agree with it and no variation is recorded) and the footnotes. To address both of these concerns and to enable us to present separately our interpretation of the variation (in a dynamic constructed alpha text, what Ostrowski calls a *paradosis*) and the evidence that led to that analysis, we have been developing an interlinear collation, an example of which appears in Figures 4 (diplomatic view) and 5 (normalized view), below:

<oo> → <bs> “The story of Mary, Abraham’s niece”								
Unit 3 (31: 16–20)					Unit 3 (31: 16–20): Δεῦτε θεασάμεθα ἀγαπητοῖς τοῖς τὸν δεύτερον Αβραὰμ. Οἱ μὲν γέροντος ἔξελθόν εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῶν βασιλέων καὶ πατέρας αὐτούς ἐπέστρεψεν Λότ τὸν ἀνεψιὸν αὐτοῦ. Οὗτος δὲ δεύτερος Αβραὰμ ἔζηθεν εἰς πόλεμον κατά τούτου διαβόλου δικαίου νικήσης αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τὴν ἀνεψιὴν αὐτῷ.			
Unit 4 (21–27)					Unit 3 (31: 16–20): Come and let us marvel, my beloved ones, at this second Abraham. For the first [Abraham], having gone out in the Battle of the Kings and having vanquished them, retrieved Lot, his nephew. (cf. Gen 14:8–16) But this second Abraham went out into battle against the Devil himself in order to defeat him and to retrieve his niece.			
Greek	καὶ πατάξας αὐτοὺς ἐπέστρεψεν	Λότ	τὸν ἀνεψιὸν αὐτοῦ.					
Alpha	καὶ ποπράψεις αἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	συνεργό.	91a8–10		
Ch397	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή ἥρ.	90b24–25		
Ch384	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σεοή	σύνοψις	329. 4–5		
Par219	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σεοή	σύνοψις	97a8		
Nbkm298	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σεοή	σύνοψις	105v18–19		
Berlin	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σεοή	σύνοψις	90v7–8		
Rila	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή	123–4		
Ch648	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή	117v8–9		
Nbkm299	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή	106v20–21		
Kor	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Ban68	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	104v4		
HAZU	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	114b11–12		
Less	[[ποπράψαι]]	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	301. 3–4		
BdSb	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	6v18–7r1		
Pog	ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	300. 4–5		
Usp	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	302a21–22		
BOZ99	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη   ΤΗΒΖ	Λότη	σύνοψις	185a18–19		
VMC	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	2015. 15–16		
MGU	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	128a		
Tr5	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή	87d29–31		
V1199	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις	17r14–15		
Sar60	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις	15v1–2		
Sar61	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις	169v21–22		
GIM332	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις	239v12–13		
Sar1115	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις	112v9–10		

Figure 4: Text-critical edition of the “Life of Abraham of Qidun” (diplomatic view)

<oo> → <bs> “The story of Mary, Abraham’s niece”								
Unit 3 (31: 16–20)					Unit 3 (31: 16–20): Δεῦτε θεασάμεθα ἀγαπητοῖς τοῖς τὸν δεύτερον Αβραὰμ. Οἱ μὲν γέροντος ἔξελθον εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῶν βασιλέων καὶ πατέρας αὐτούς ἐπέστρεψεν Λότ τὸν ἀνεψιὸν αὐτοῦ. Οὗτος δὲ δεύτερος Αβραὰμ ἔζηθεν εἰς πόλεμον κατά τούτου διαβόλου δικαίου νικήσης αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τὴν ἀνεψιὴν αὐτῷ.			
Unit 4 (21–27)					Unit 3 (31: 16–20): Come and let us marvel, my beloved ones, at this second Abraham. For the first [Abraham], having gone out in the Battle of the Kings and having vanquished them, retrieved Lot, his nephew. (cf. Gen 14:8–16) But this second Abraham went out into battle against the Devil himself in order to defeat him and to retrieve his niece.			
Greek	καὶ πατάξας αὐτούς ἐπέστρεψεν	Λότ	τὸν ἀνεψιὸν αὐτοῦ.					
Alpha	καὶ ποπράψεις αἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	συνεργό.			
Ch397	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή ἥρ.			
Ch384	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή σύνοψις			
Par219	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή σύνοψις			
Nbkm298	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή σύνοψις			
Berlin	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότα	σύνοψις	σεοή σύνοψις			
Rila	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Ch648	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Nbkm299	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Kor	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Ban68	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
HAZU	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Less	[[ποπράψαι]]	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
BdSb	καὶ ποπράψεις οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Pog	ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Usp	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
BOZ99	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
VMC	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
MGU	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	σύνοψις	σεοή			
Tr5	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			
V1199	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			
Sar60	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			
Sar61	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			
GIM332	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			
Sar1115	καὶ ποπράψαι οἱ	βύζαρθι	Λότη	ΑΙΩΝΗ	σύνοψις			

Figure 5: Text-critical edition of the “Life of Abraham of Qidun” (normalized view)

Here we take advantage of the capabilities of digital publication to present the text-critical information in a way that allows the reader to configure the shape of the edition. In the upper left corner we have divided our constructed alpha text into units (roughly comparable rhetorically to modern paragraphs) and the units into lines (roughly comparable to modern sentences or phrases). Where standard reference systems exist in the scholarly tradition, an editor would normally allow those to determine these divisions, but the reference system is, in a certain sense, arbitrary, as its principal function is to divide the text into units of convenient length for interlinear display. In the upper right corner we present our interpretation of the closest possible approximation to the location in the Greek tradition that served as the source of the original Slavonic translation. In principle, a representation of the Greek manuscript text that is closest to the Slavonic is to be preferred over the synthetic presentation of individual corresponding readings selected from various Greek witnesses, *viz.* in the form of a hypothetical patchwork Greek text. In cases where more than one Greek manuscript text is relevant for an understanding of the nature of the Greek source, an interlinear presentation of a limited number of Greek texts would be an option. Obviously, the question is much easier to solve in cases where a critical edition of the Greek is available. The English translation below the Greek is our own, and it incorporates the identification of biblical and other sources of the sort that might be found in an *apparatus fontium* in a traditional critical edition. The alpha, Greek, and English panels are interlinked; clicking on a location in any one of them highlights that line in the alpha text and in the corresponding Greek and English sections.

Clicking in any of the upper panels also loads into the large lower panel an interlinear collation of all manuscript evidence for that line, enabling the reader to examine all of the evidence available to the editors. To the left side of this main panel we provide that evidence, aligned at the level of individual words or phrases and divided, from top to bottom, into four groups. The top group reproduces our alpha text along with an approximation of the Greek source of the translation. The second group contains the South Slavonic manuscripts, the bottom group contains the Eastern Slavonic ones, and the group between those two contains the witnesses that cannot easily be assigned a place within the tradition and are likely to be contaminated, including *BS*. The transcription of *BS* is identical to that in the diplomatic edition of the manuscript because it is extracted automatically from the same source file, but users who do not require that degree of orthographic detail (and who might feel that it compromises their ability to see the patterns of agreement) can toggle between this diplomatic view and a normalized view by selecting between the D[iplomatic] and N[ormalized] radio buttons in the upper right of the interlinear panel, in the gray control bar that runs down the right side of the screen (see Figures 4 and 5 to compare the views). Although the virtual screen is scrollable, and for that reason can theoretically include an unlimited number of witnesses (lines), the point of the interlinear collation is to see the full range of agreement and disagreement at a glance, which becomes impossible once the evidence cannot all fit within the visible window at the same time. To address this limitation at least partially, although the size of the viewport on an edition (screen or paper) is necessarily finite, our edition gives the reader greater control over that space by providing check boxes, in the control bar, to toggle the display of individual witnesses on and off. The number of witnesses that can be viewed at once may be limited, but within those limits, users have the ability to select the variants.

It is clear in our edition where the relationships among witnesses can be described on the basis of changes, deletions, insertions, and transpositions because of the word-level alignment (all the variant readings are there, for everyone to see, which means that readers can look for themselves and try to understand the tradition), but we have not neglected our editorial responsibility of providing a theory of the text, embracing both our reconstruction of alpha and our argumentation and analysis in support of that reconstruction and with respect to the subsequent transmission of the Slavonic text. With that latter goal in mind, we have color-coded certain areas as a way of highlighting textologically significant correspondences that we interpret as representing various levels in the history of transmission. We always use a consistent color to identify a particular moment in the history of the text, a particular knot in the tradition. We are skeptical about whether it would be possible to establish a stemma for this work because we are dealing with a tradition with many witnesses, a tradition that covers a huge area and a huge time span, and, in the first place, a tradition that displays clear evidence of contamination, not only among branches of the Slavonic tradition, but also as a result of revision at various moments in the Slavonic tradition on the basis of comparison to Greek. The color coding will probably change at the point where we add more witnesses and come to know the tradition better, much as a traditional stemma might have to be adjusted if new witnesses are subsequently incorporated into an analysis. What will remain constant, however, is our use of color to depict interpretive levels, and not simply to reflect correspondences or equivalences in a mechanical way (those correspondences are, after all, already visible in the interlinear collation by reading down a column in the table).<sup>8</sup> Our use of color is, instead, a representation of the outcome of our philological work, and it thus reflects a scholarly theory of the text, and specifically about its development in the process of transmission and diffusion among the Orthodox Slavs.

### **BS as a textual compilation**

As we note above, between the diplomatic edition of the manuscript and critical editions of its texts, each of which has its own tradition, we can identify *BS* as “a unique extant text witness to a purposefully organized feminine text collection that belongs to the fourteenth century [...] where the act of compilation asserts a textual relationship that is rooted in but transcends the textuality of the individual constituent vitae.” Because we know of no compilation, Slavonic or Greek, that corresponds closely enough to *BS* to be regarded, as a whole, as representative of the same textual tradition, it is not possible to undertake a text-critical, comparative study of the compilation. If we look beyond *BS* toward a general theory of edition, however, comparative study of the content structure of compilations may provide important information about shared textual transmission, even if in the specific case of *BS* we lack information about possible comparable compilations that would provide a textological perspective at that level.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This means that correspondences that would seem to be the result of coincidence rather than of textual dependency would not be color coded as they would be understood to be textologically insignificant.

<sup>9</sup> See Miltenova for an illustration and discussion of some of the methods of comparing the contents of compilations on a large scale and with the assistance of computational tools.

## Conclusion

Our principles of editing *BS* were determined by several factors. We begin by recognizing that different scholars will approach *BS* from different perspectives, depending on their research questions and interests. At the level of the immediate (even if not ultimate) object of study, *BS*, like any manuscript, is a multilayered reality insofar as, regardless of the specific research question, the primary evidence is to be found by examining, albeit from different perspectives, the same physical object, the manuscript. From the perspective of theories of edition, different types of editions will be suitable for different purposes, and it is the union of these types of editions that might most appropriately be regarded as “an edition of *BS*.” Finally, mindful of the editors’ responsibility to provide analysis appropriate to the level of inquiry, we exploit the fact that an edition is a selective *view* of the data, rather than the data itself, which means that different views (what might elsewhere be called different types of editions) can be generated on the basis of common digital transcriptions, thus mirroring the human process of reading selectively and for a particular purpose, while also reducing duplicate effort and the opportunity for error. Furthermore, the choice of view need not rest solely with the editor, as has always been the case with paper editions. Because users can interact dynamically with a digital edition, selectively choosing views and witnesses and toggling levels of orthographic normalization, our methods enable us to adopt a reader-oriented theory of edition that regards the manuscript as what it is: a multilayered reality.

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