



ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОБУЧЕНИЕ – БАН

1000 София
ул. „Сердика“ № 4
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Basic Information:

Course Title: SLAVIC PALEOGRAPHY: CYRILLIC, IDENTIFICATION OF COPYISTS AND USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS

Lecturer: Prof. Veselka Zhelyazkova, PhD

Phone: +359895494293

Email: vzhel@abv.bg

Total Teaching Hours: 30

Annotation:

The course aims to introduce participants to the main theoretical and contemporary methodological approaches to the study of Slavic medieval writing, with a focus on Cyrillic script, handwriting analysis, and the application of digital technologies. It examines the history and development of Slavic paleography, its relationship with Greek paleography, and the interaction between paleography and graphology in the study of individual scribal characteristics. The course presents both Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts, their graphic principles, structural features, and the development of letter forms in different regional and chronological traditions. Special attention is devoted to the Cyrillic script in the Balkans during the 13th–14th centuries, as well as to the methods and limitations of scribal identification. The course also introduces modern digital approaches, including image analysis, automatic recognition of graphic elements, and the creation of corpora and databases, together with the possibilities of their application in a Slavic context. The programme combines 20 hours of lectures with 10 hours of practical work based on manuscript samples adapted to the participants' academic background and research interests.

Course content (brief description by topics or modules)

- Topic 1. Slavic Paleography as a Scholarly Discipline: Scope, Methods, History of Research, and Relations with Greek Paleography.
- Topic 2. Paleography and Graphology: The Development of Writing and the Study of Individual Handwriting Features.
- Topic 3. Glagolitic Script: Origin, Graphic System, and Main Paleographic Characteristics.
- Topic 4. Cyrillic Script: Origins, Graphic Principles, and the Structure of Letter Forms.
- Topic 5. The Development of Cyrillic Writing in Different Regional and Chronological Traditions.
- Topic 6. The Adoption and Development of Cyrillic Script in Kievan Rus': Main Paleographic Features.
- Topic 7. The Novgorod Birch-Bark Letters as a Special Paleographic and Methodological Case.
- Topic 8. Cyrillic Script in the Balkans during the 13th–14th Centuries: Bulgarian, Serbian, and Athonite Traditions.
- Topic 9. Typology of Handwriting and Functional Characteristics of Different Types of Manuscripts.
- Topic 10. Famous Slavic Scribes and the Problem of Scribal Identification.
- Topic 11. Contemporary Methods of Handwriting Analysis and Identification: Traditional Approaches and Digital Tools.
- Topic 12. Digital Paleography: Corpora, Image Analysis, and Perspectives for Slavic Manuscript Studies.



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Teaching and assessment methods

- ✓ In-person or online instruction;
- ✓ Course paper or presentation on an assigned topic, followed by an oral discussion/interview.

Competencies acquired as a result of training (3–5 points)

- ✓ Knowledge of the main approaches, methods, and terminology of Slavic paleography;
- ✓ Skills in reading and paleographic analysis of Glagolitic and Cyrillic manuscripts;
- ✓ Ability to identify regional and chronological features of Cyrillic script;
- ✓ Skills in handwriting analysis and basic approaches to scribal identification;
- ✓ Basic competencies in the use of digital tools and resources for paleographic research.

Literature:

- Велчева, Б. *Актуални въпроси в славянската палеография и дипломатика* – В: Славянска палеография и дипломатика. София, 1980, с. 18–24.
- Гюзелев, В. *Училища, скриптории, библиотеки и знания в България XIII–XIV в.* София, 1985.
- Джурова, А. *Въведение в славянската кодикология. Византийският кодекс и рецепцията му сред славяните.* София, 1997.
- Иванова, Кл. *В началото бе книгата. Разказ за старобългарската книга и нейната съдба.* София, 2002.
- Йончев, В. *Шрифтът през вековете.* София, 1971.
- Карский, Е. Ф. *Славянская кирилловская палеография.* Ленинград, 1928.
- Коцева, Е. *Александрийско попгерасимово писмо в български ръкописи от втората половина на XIV в.* – Старобългарска литература, 1, 1971, 369-401.
- Коцева, Е. *Към въпроса за палеографските особености на кирилските ръкописи от X–XIII в.* – В: Помощни исторически дисциплини. Т. 3. София, 1981, 68–91.
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- Мусакова, Е. *Писмо и писачи в българските ръкописи до края на XVII век.* София, 2015.
- Рипаранте, М. *Предложение за палеографски анализ на средновековната южнославянска кирилица* – *Palaeobulgarica*, XLVIII (2), 2024, 113–127. DOI: 10.59076/2603-2899.2024.2.06.



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- Уханова, Е. *Византийский унциал и славянский устав: проблемы источников и эволюции*. – в: Монфокоп. Исследования по палеографии, кодикологии и дипломатике. Москва – С.-Петербург, 2007, 19–88.
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- Cleminson, R. M. *Slavonic Palaeography*. – in: *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*. Ed. by A. Bausi (general editor). Hamburg, 2015, p. 310–315.
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- Riparante, M., M. Davidović. *Who Was the Real Collaborator of the Copyist Damijan-Iosif?* – in: *Digital Presentation and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage*, 15, 2025, 117–128. <https://doi.org/10.55630/dipp.2025.15.11>.
- Stančev, K. (red.) *Description et catalogage des manuscrites médiévaux*. Sofia, 1984 (CIBAL, Balcanica III, Etudes et documents, 3).