

Between Thought and Perception: The Rendering of *νοητός* in the South Slavonic Translations of Synaxarial Verses

Ekaterina Dikova

University of Innsbruck, Austria

E-mail: Ekaterina.Dikova@uibk.ac.at

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7751-0098>

<https://ror.org/054pv6659>

Abstract. This article examines the South Slavonic translation correspondences of the adjective *νοητός* in the synaxarial verses derived from the iambic calendar cycle of Christopher of Mytilene (11th century), which was later incorporated into the Synaxarion tradition. The Bulgarian translation of the Verse Prologue (14th century) predominantly renders this term by means of the cognitive adjective *мысльнь*, whereas the Serbian version (14th century) prefers the perceptual adjective *чувствьнь*. Although these equivalents may appear to be antonymous, their usage is context-dependent and restricted to adjectival forms. Through a comparative analysis of the corresponding passages, the study demonstrates that the concept expressed by *νοητός* was translated in accordance with the immediate poetic context and could be rendered through either intellectual or perceptual vocabulary. The translations also illustrate how sensory metaphor and mnemonic compression make it possible to describe the perception of noetic objects as a form of sensory experience.

Keywords: medieval South-Slavonic translations, synaxarial verses, *νοητός*, *мысльнь*, *чувствьнь*, translation strategies, terminology.

Между мыслью и восприятием: передача *νοητός* в южнославянских переводах синаксарных стихов

В статье рассматриваются южнославянские переводы прилагательного *νοητός* в синаксарных стихах, восходящих к ямбическому календарному циклу Христофора Митиленского (XI в.), позднее включённому в синаксарную традицию. Болгарский перевод Стишного пролога (XIV в.) преимущественно передаёт этот термин посредством когнитивного прилагательного *мысльнь*, тогда как сербская версия (XIV в.) предпочитает перцептивное *чувствьнь*. Хотя эти эквиваленты могут казаться антонимичными, их употребление обусловлено контекстом и ограничено адъективными формами. Посредством сравнительного анализа соответствующих фрагментов исследование показывает, что понятие, выражаемое словом *νοητός*, передавалось в соответствии с непосредственным поэтическим контекстом и могло быть выражено как через интеллектуальную, так и через перцептивную лексику. Переводы также демонстрируют, каким

Received: 2026-04-07. **Accepted:** 2026-05-28.

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образом сенсорная метафорика и мнемоническая компрессия позволяют описывать восприятие поэтических объектов как форму чувственного опыта.

Ключевые слова: средневековые южнославянские переводы, синаксарные стихи, *νοητός*, *мысльнь*, *чувствьнь*, стратегии перевода, терминология.

Tarp minties ir suvokimo: *νοητός* perteikimas pietų slavų sinaksarių eilių vertimuose

Santrauka. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjami pietų slavų būdvardžio *νοητός* vertimai sinaksarėse eilėse, kilusiose iš Kristoforo Miletiečio (XI a.) jambinio kalendorinio ciklo, vėliau įtraukto į sinaksarinę tradiciją. Eiliuotojo Prologo bulgarų vertime (XIV a.) šis terminas daugiausia perteikiamas kognityvinio būdvardžiu *мысльнь*, o serbų versijoje (XIV a.) pirmenybė teikiama percepciniam būdvardžiui *чувствьнь*. Nors šie atitikmenys gali atrodyti antoniminiai, jų vartojimą lemia kontekstas, be to, jie apsiriboja būdvardinėmis formomis. Lyginamoji atitinkamų fragmentų analizė rodo, kad graikų *νοητός* perteikiama sąvoka buvo perduodama atsižvelgiant į artimiausią poetinį kontekstą ir galėjo būti išreiškiama tiek intelektine, tiek percepcine leksika. Vertimai taip pat atskleidžia, kaip juslinė metaforika ir mnemoninis glaudinimas leidžia poetinių objektų suvokimą nusakyti kaip juslinės patirties formą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: viduramžių pietų slavų vertimai, sinaksarinės eilės, *νοητός*, *мысльнь*, *чувствьнь*, vertimo strategijos, terminologija.

Introduction¹

The iambic calendar composed by Christopher of Mytilene in the early² eleventh century represents a sophisticated Byzantine achievement, merging hagiography with non-hymnographic poetry within a liturgical calendar framework. From the twelfth century, distichs from this cycle were incorporated into certain recensions of the Synaxarion of Constantinople³, where they were transmitted together with the synaxarial commemorations and stories about saints and feasts. It is this recensional form of the Synaxarion that underlies the two complete fourteenth-century South Slavonic translations, collectively known as the Verse Prolog⁴. The Bulgarian⁵ Verse Prolog survives in numerous witnesses and served as the basis for the East Slavonic manuscript tradition, whereas the Serbian version is less widely attested. This study concen-

¹ I thank Tomáš (Kliment) Mikulka and Ivan P. Petrov for commenting on an earlier draft, Dorothea Getov for his crucial remarks, Ralph Clemenson for expert final editing, and the anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions.

² The year 1022 has been proposed as a more precise date for this cycle [Dikova 2026].

³ The reference is to the recension of the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion designated *M* in Delehay's edition, representing the latest and widely disseminated version [Luzzi 2014, 198].

⁴ The complexity of the Slavonic Prolog, including its verse versions, has been extensively analyzed by Marina Chistiakova [Čistiakova 2013–2024].

⁵ The South Slavonic Verse Prolog versions are termed Bulgarian and Serbian according to the presumed origin rather than strictly linguistic criteria. For discussion of their respective places of origin and designations, see [Дикова 2023, 11–12] and the literature cited therein.

trates on the summer half-year, covering feasts from March to August, since only for this period are the Greek text and both South Slavonic translations available in a parallel edition [Дикова 2023, 177–475] that allows a direct comparison of their lexical choices.

In this section of the cycle – the summer half-year – the *νοέω* / *νοῦς* word family appears mainly as the adjective *νοητός* (15 instances)⁶ and the noun *νοῦς* (15 instances); the verb appears only twice⁷, and other lexemes, such as *νοερός*, are absent. Both South Slavonic translations agree in rendering of the noun consistently: in the Serbian version, *ноуѣс*⁸ is invariably translated as *оумъ* (15 out of 15 instances), while the Bulgarian version employs *оумъ* in ten instances, *мысль* in two, omits two further distichs containing *νοῦς*, and provides no direct lexical equivalent in the remaining case. By contrast, the two translations diverge markedly in rendering the adjective: the Bulgarian version predominantly uses *мысльнь* (12/15 occurrences), alongside *оумнь* (3/15), whereas the Serbian opts for *човѣкствень* (13/15), with one further rendering as *разоумнь*, and one occurrence lacking a translation equivalent. This opposition appears paradoxical, since *човѣкствень* is traditionally associated with sensory perception and thus appears at odds with its Greek parallel. However, the divergence is restricted to the adjective, which strongly suggests that it does not result from lexical misunderstanding but reflects a systematic translational strategy.

The article examines *νοητός* in the summer half of Christopher of Mytilene's iambic calendar and its South Slavonic counterparts in the Verse Prolog. It analyses translation patterns, focusing on the semantic divergence between *мысльнь* and *човѣкствень*, and the linguistic and contextual factors behind these choices. Highlighting underexplored translation strategies in medieval South Slavonic texts, it sheds light on semantic shifts in transmitting Byzantine Greek concepts. The study proceeds in three stages: contextual uses of *νοητός* in Greek and its Bulgarian and Serbian equivalents; comparison with other Slavonic translations; semantic analysis including possible extralinguistic influences. In the analysis below, the Bulgarian translation of the verses is marked with B, and the Serbian translation is noted with S.

⁶ Metaphors with *νοητός* in the synaxarial verses are discussed in [Cresci 2001, 261–262].

⁷ Under June 15th, *νοέω* appears as a finite verb (Ἐργῶ στεφανᾶν τὸν Στεφανᾶν μοι νόει), whereas, under March 30th, as mediopassive participle (Ὁ τῆς Σιών πρόεδρος αἰσθητοῦ θρόνου / Πρὸς τὴν Σιών ἀπῆρε τὴν νοουμένην). The latter distich is the only one containing *αἰσθητός* in the corpus. The Serbian translation preserves the opposition by rendering *νοουμένος* as *разоумнь* and *αἰσθητός* as *човѣкствень*.

⁸ I. P. Petrov has studied *νοῦς* and related terms in medieval Slavonic translations [Петров 2020; Petrov 2024]. On contemplation in early Slavonic homiletics, see Mikulka 2025.

Table 1. South Slavonic renderings of νοητός in the summer half-year of the synaxarial verses

Distich location	Saint(s)	Greek phrase	B	S
III.06.2 ¹³	Arcadius	ὁσφὺν νοητήν	чрѣсла мысльными	чрѣсла чювьствєна
IV.03.1	Nicetas	περοῖς νοητοῖς	крылы оумными	периемь разоумнїи
IV.04.2	Callicus	θηρὸς νοητοῦ	звѣрю мысльногоу	звѣроу чювьствєн'ногоу
IV.23.3	Anatolius	φῶς νοητόν	свѣтъ оумныи	свѣтъ чювьствєн'нїи
V.22.1	Basiliscus	νοητοῦ βασιλίσκου	мысльнаго василиска	чювьствєннаго василиска
V.30.6	Euplius	νοητοῦ ... ἡλίου	мысльнаго солнца	чювьствєн'наго... слн'ца
V.31.3	Magicians	νοητοῦ φαρμάκου	мысльнаго вѣлиа	чювьствєн'їе лѣчеы
VI.09.5	Cyrus	νοητήν εἰκόνα	мысльнаго образа	чювьствєн'наго образа
VI.24.2	Firminus & Firmus	θρόνοι νοητοῖ	источници мысль'нїи	прѣстоли чювьствєн'нїи
VII.06.3	Isaurus, etc.	σαύρας νοητῆς	пламенеи'тъ мысль'ныи'тъ	злѣи чювьствєн'ныѣ
VII.12.3	Veronica	νοητῶς δράττεται	вєщи мысль'ни	[adjective omitted]
VIII.07.11	Styracius	ὁσμήν νοητήν	аханїе оумное	воню чювьст'вєн'ноу
		νοητός τις στύραξ	мысль'ныи т'реск'ъ	чювьствєн'нии ст'уракъ
VIII.09.03	Psoi	παίει νοητὰς δαιμόνων... ψόας	оуран'єт'ъ вѣсов'ъ ладвї	ранами м'лтвѣ' выѣ чювьствєн'нїи вѣс'ъ... ψοи
VIII.14.3	Marcellus	κνίσσαις νοηταῖς	трѣбамн оумными	плѣт'ми чювьствєн'нїи

All occurrences refer to the noetic realm, and, in all of them, νοητός is applied to lexemes denoting materially or sensorily accessible referents (such as light, smell, physical objects, or physical actions), and thus it produces a

¹³ See note 9.

deliberate semantic tension between intellectual abstraction and sensory imagery. This tension appears to have been a significant factor in the Serbian translation strategy, where *чювѣствѣнь* (from *чювѣство*¹⁴) is chosen to re-express the experiential dimension implicit in Christopher of Mytilene’s sensory metaphors, but extends sensory reference to the attributive adjective itself. The following analysis will probe this hypothesis through two illustrative examples¹⁵.

A particularly illustrative case is provided by the distich on Isaurus and his companions (VII.06.3):

Τμηθεῖς Ἰσαυρὸς σὺν συνάθλων πεντάδι Σαύρας νοητῆς καρδίαν [var. καρδίας] τέμνει μέσον.	
B	S
посѣченъ исавръ съ състрѣлци платорицѣхъ пламенемъ мыслѣннымъ сѣца сѣчетъ посрѣдѣ	оуѣсѣкновењъ исавръ ѿ състрѣлци пѣтѣноу злови чювѣствѣньнѣ ѿ срѣди срѣцѣ ѡсѣкаѣтъ

The Greek verse presents Isaurus, with his five companions, as piercing the heart of the noetic lizard, compressing both his martyrdom and spiritual victory into a single metaphor. The expression belongs to the register of noetic combat familiar from ascetic literature, where demonic forces are frequently construed as non-physical enemies to be overcome. The word *σαύρα*, though foreign to the theological discourse, is used for the adnominatio (*Ἰσαυρὸς – σαύρα*), creating mnemonic and vivid imagery of the saint defeating evil often symbolized as a reptile. While the pun is inevitably lost in translation, both Slavonic versions preserve martyrdom as inward spiritual combat.

¹⁴ Although, outside this study’s main scope, *чювѣство* is primarily glossed as ‘understanding’ or ‘knowledge’ in relation to *αἴσθησις* in [e-SJS, Бончев 2012, 338, and Христов 2019, 46]. This semantic aspect of the Greek noun is also documented in the resources gathered in e-LSJ (<https://lsj.gr/wiki/αἴσθησις>, “also of the mind, perception, knowledge of a thing”), and is particularly explicit in Lampe (1961, 52, “C. *intellectual perception, understanding*”).

¹⁵ Deviations from the otherwise stable renderings of *νοητός* as *мыслѣнь* and *чювѣствѣнь* may reflect semantic distinctions within the noetic sphere, though other explanations remain possible. Bulgarian uses *оумѣнь* in three cases (IV.23.3; VIII.07.11; VIII.14.3), apparently where light and scent are directly apprehended. In Euplius (V.30.6), *мыслѣнь* is retained because *νοητός* qualifies the source rather than the manifestation of light or, as suggested by a reviewer, may also reflect the influence of the Akathistos Hymn (“Χαῖρε, ἁκτίς νοητοῦ ἡλίου”), where the Athonite Slavonic translation likewise uses *мыслѣнь*). Serbian departs once from *чювѣствѣнь* (IV.03.1), rendering *περοῖς νοητοῖς* as *перѣнь разоумѣнѣнь*, perhaps emphasizing the operative faculty of ascent.

The Bulgarian and Serbian translations diverge markedly in their interpretation of the image. The Serbian emphasizes perceptible malice (злобѣ чювьствѣныиѣ), which the saint cuts off “from the midst of the hearts”. The Bulgarian portrays Isaurus as piercing the hearts of many through the flame of thought, retaining the epigram’s riddle-like, sensory quality. The plural ‘hearts’ aligns with the Serbian translation and likely arose from interpreting the Greek genitive singular form (the variant καρδίας, given in square brackets above¹⁶) as an accusative plural, echoing the synaxarial vita in which Isaurus affects many before dying with them. Bulgarian also employs sound repetition (e.g., сѣ-са-сѣ-сѣ-срѣ-сѣ-срѣ and по-па-па-по) to mimic the Greek adnomination, producing mnemonic and aesthetic effects and even reproducing the isosyllabic pattern. The evil shifts from a reptile to a perceptible, noetic flame, creating a brighter, more active image.

In sum, the Bulgarian rendering produces a completely different, yet not less vivid image, demonstrating how noetic qualities can be represented as dynamic, participatory forces, integrating thought and perceptibility rather than remaining abstract intellectual entities. Moreover, while it diverges from the literal wording of the Greek, it transmits its poetic, enigmatic, sensory, and rhythmic qualities.

The Serbian version, on the other hand, moves further toward abstraction, rendering the perceptual imagery as moral evaluation. At the same time, it shifts the sensory qualification onto the adjective. This suggests that sensory imagery may indeed have influenced the Serbian translator’s choice of the adjective.

In distich VIII.09.3, the Greek phrase νοητὰς... ψόας literally denotes the ‘noetic loins’ of the demons, a strikingly inventive and vividly sensory image.

Μάστιξιν εὐχῶν κᾶν τέλει βίου Ψόης Пауѣ [var. Паіѣ] νοητὰς δαιμόνων δεινὰς [var. δεινῶν] ψόας.	
B	S
ѣзвѣми моли́твенныи аще и конѣцъ житію псѣю• оуранѣтъ мнѣслѣно лю́тыхъ вѣсовѣ ладеѣ•	ранами ѣмѣвѣ аще и на конѣци житіа ле́двнѣ: выѣ чювьствѣныиѣмъ лю́тиѣ вѣсѣ ѱон:~

The distich hinges on the phonetic adnomination Ψόης – ψόας, which binds the saint’s name to the anatomical term and turns the act of striking into a linguistic riddle tied to tactile image. The metaphor “whips of prayers” further

¹⁶ As suggested by a reviewer, the correlate σαύρα – пламы may also indicate a different Greek Vorlage.

frames the solemn act as an instrumental force, with which Psoi strikes the “noetic loins of the dread demons”, a formulation that attributes bodily vulnerability to spiritual adversaries and depicts the invisible struggle both visually and kinetically perceptible. In short, *νοητός* conceptualizes the demons’ *ψόαι* within a noetic register, while they remain metaphorically corporeal.

In the Slavonic translations, however, the phonetic correspondence cannot be reproduced, and the balance between name-play, corporeality, and noetic abstraction is consequently altered. The Bulgarian version shifts the grammatical construction in a way that foregrounds the saint’s active agency – his action is noetic¹⁷, and the emphasis is on it. Both translations render *μάστιξιν* as ‘wounds,’ and, in the Serbian text, the respective word agrees with *чювьст’вьнїиѣ*, so, there, the qualifier is transferred from the object struck to the instrument of striking. As a result, what becomes intelligible in both cases is not the evil itself, but the force that strikes it. This produces a markedly different image, and the metaphor shifts from ascetic action directed at an intelligible demonic corporeality to the conceptualization of prayer as the very power of spiritual combat. This, however, does not change the overall message of the original distich but deepens its theological resonance.

In sum, Christopher of Mytilene constructs experiential metaphors to present the saints’ deeds as vivid and memorable, and *νοητός* in his calendar distichs qualifies lexemes denoting materially accessible referents. The Bulgarian translation remains closer to the traditional rendering of the adjective through equivalents associated with the intelligible (*мысльнѣ, оумнѣ*). By contrast, the Serbian choice of *чювьст’вьнѣ* to render *νοητός* bridges cognitive and sensory perception, encompassing both rational and inwardly sensed apprehension and, indeed, seems to be triggered by the experiential dimension of the imagery in the source text, but departs from it in emphasizing the modifier rather than the modified element. Whether this is related to a deliberate translational strategy or occasional interpretive variation cannot be determined with certainty, as there is no evidence of other writings by the same translator for comparison. Nonetheless, a closer examination of the Greek adjective’s lexical and functional profile is necessary to assess whether this choice is grounded in its semantic range.

Notes on the semantics of *νοητός*

Derived from the verb *νοέω*, *νοητός* belongs to the semantic field structured around *νοῦς* and denotes not simply the spiritual or mental quality but that which is apprehensible through intellectual rather than sensory faculties. The

¹⁷ Another *Vorlage* with the adjective used adverbially cannot be excluded.

lexicographic tradition – conveniently systematized on the e-LSJ platform (<https://lsj.gr/wiki/νοητός>) across nine historical dictionaries – shows remarkable stability in defining the adjective as referring to the quality of being cognitively apprehensible.

Across the major lexica, νοητός is described as:

- English (LSJ): “falling within the province of νοῦς, mental”
- French (Bailly abrégé): “qu’on peut percevoir par l’intelligence”
- German (Pape): “was nur geistig wahrgenommen, nur mit dem Verstande begriffen werden kann”
- Russian (Dvoretzky): “умопостигаемый, умозрительный”
- Greek (Liddell–Scott): “ὁ δυνάμενος νοηθῆναι, ὁ ὑποπίπτων εἰς τὴν διὰ τοῦ νοῦ ἀντίληψιν”

These formulations consistently emphasize intellectual apprehension rather than ontological status, defining νοητός as what is accessible through the νοῦς, frequently in contrast with the perceptible (ὁρατός, αἰσθητός). Already in Platonic usage, this opposition structures a distinction between the νοητός κόσμος and the visible world.

The additional lexicographic formulations in e-LSJ reinforce this semantic core:

- Middle Liddell: “perceptible to the mind, thinkable”
- Woodhouse: “existing only in the mind; to be apprehended only by the mind”
- Greek monolingual tradition: “αὐτός που μπορεί να νοηθεί, να γίνει καταληπτός με τον νου”

Since νοητός derives from νοέω, the verb must also be considered. E-LSJ defines it as intellectual apprehension, often opposed to sensory perception. Rather than denoting abstract cognition detached from perception, νοέω designates a mode of access to reality through the νοῦς, often conceived as parallel to, or in contrast with, sensory perception. This semantic structure underlies the verbal adjective νοητός (“that which can be apprehended by the mind”), which preserves the verb’s orientation toward perceptibility rather than abstraction.

Within this framework, the opposition between νοητός and αἰσθητός is epistemological rather than ontological, referring to different modes of apprehension. In the broader South Slavonic tradition, this distinction is systematically preserved, with αἰσθητός rendered as човѣкѣтънъ¹⁸, marking the sensory domain against the cognitive equivalents of νοητός.

¹⁸ See e.g. e-LSJ. Yet [Бончев 2012, 338] notes as a third of four meanings of човѣкѣтънъ also ‘understanding’, ‘reasonable’, and ‘wise’.

Counterparts of *νοητός* in Other Slavonic Texts

Across a wide corpus of translated material *νοητός* is generally rendered as denoting the quality of being mentally accessible through a relatively stable lexical cluster that seeks to reproduce its epistemological – and, in Christian usage, ontological – implications. This semantic field is further reflected in the translation correlates of the cognate verb *νοέω*, which shows a comparable range of interpretative strategies, alongside occasional shifts toward explicitly sensory and bodily lexical domains.

The discussion below draws on representative evidence from both earlier and later written monuments, with priority given to general diachronic reference works over editions of individual medieval translations, in order to ensure a balanced corpus of material. Most abbreviations follow SJS (I, LXII–XXIII), Argirovski (for the explanations see [Аргировски 2003, 6]) and SlavaComp (<https://slavistik-portal.de/tools/metaglossar/>); additional sources are introduced with their abbreviations where necessary, and the respective editions or dictionaries are indicated in the footnotes after those mentions. When several abbreviations are separated by a comma, this indicates that they are cited from the same lexicographic source, whereas a semicolon signals a transition to a different reference. A full list of abbreviations is given at the end of the article.

The most frequent equivalents of *νοητός* include *разумѣнь* (e.g., Supr, Slepč, Eug;¹⁹ UchEv;²⁰ DeFide;²¹ MarHom;²² Izb1073;²³ HistEccl;²⁴ compPsalt (also *разумѣнь*), Triod;²⁵ Hval, Rumj, Eug²⁶) and *мысльнь* (e.g. MarHom;²⁷ DeHom;²⁸ Diop;²⁹ HistEccl., SinEuch (also *смысльнь*);³⁰ Doroth;³¹ compPsalt, Parim, Triod;³² Min³³), both of which foreground the

¹⁹ E-SJS, *разумѣнь*.

²⁰ See [Тасева et al. 2024, II, 143], (<http://uchitelnoevangelie.cl.bas.bg/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/UE-2-with-cover.pdf#page=143>).

²¹ See [Илиева 2013, 92].

²² See [Danova 2020, 509].

²³ I. P. Petrov (personal communication, January 2025) identified three cases of *разумѣнь* as the sole equivalent of *νοητός* in the *Izbornik of 1073* (218r1–2, 218v13–14, 245v9).

²⁴ SlaVaComp: <https://slavistik-portal.de/tools/metaglossar/?q=νοητός>.

²⁵ See [Аргировски 2003, 321].

²⁶ See [SJS III, 591].

²⁷ See [Danova 2020, 509].

²⁸ See [Sels 2009, 115].

²⁹ See [Fuchsbaauer & Maion 2026]. The *Suche* interface retrieves 12 contextualized instances of *νοητός* without alternative translation correlates.

³⁰ SlaVaComp.

³¹ See [Димитров 2003, 407].

³² See [Аргировски 2003, 321].

³³ See [Христов 2019, 566].

cognitive accessibility of the referent. **Разуѣмьнѣ** typically emphasizes intelligibility in the sense of rational apprehension, while **мысльнѣ** tends to mark the referent as belonging to the sphere of thought or mentation. A third recurrent rendering, **оуѣмьнѣ** (UchEv;³⁴ comPsalt, Triod;³⁵ TriodSyn;³⁶ DeHom;³⁷ Min³⁸), shifts the emphasis toward the intellectual faculty itself (**оуѣмѣ**).

Significantly, corresponding translations of the verb *νοέω* display a spectrum of interpretative strategies which mirrors different aspects of the Greek verb's semantics of apprehension. Several renderings, such as **разуѣмѣвати** (As, Sav, Zogr, Ostr,³⁹ Nik;⁴⁰ comPsalt, Parim (also **сѣразуѣмѣвати** (Parim)⁴¹ and **разуѣмѣти** (Evang, Apost⁴² (Christ, Slepč, Šiš,⁴³ Eug⁴⁴), comPsalt, Parim, Triod;⁴⁵ Supr;⁴⁶ Zach⁴⁷) clearly emphasize rational or intellectual apprehension reflecting the 'ratio-like' quality of *νοέω*. Others, such as **мысльнѣти** (comPsalt), **помыслити** (comPsalt;⁴⁸ Supr⁴⁹) and **помышлати** (comPsalt;⁵⁰ Christ, Slepč⁵¹) refer to its relation to mental activity.

Notably, however, there is a smaller yet semantically revealing group of counterparts that shifts the verb decisively into the sphere of sensory perception: **оуѣидѣти** (comPsalt⁵²), **сѣмоторити** (Parim;⁵³ also as a parallel of *κατανοέω* and *προσνοέω*⁵⁴), and **чоути** (Zogr, Mar, Nik;⁵⁵ Evang⁵⁶). These denote seeing⁵⁷, observing, or sensing, and thus construe *νοεῖν* not merely as

³⁴ See [Тасева et al. 2024, II, 143].

³⁵ See [Аргировски 2003, 321].

³⁶ See [Тасева 2010, 761].

³⁷ See [Sels 2009, 115].

³⁸ See [Христов 2019, 566].

³⁹ See [SJS III, 591].

⁴⁰ See [SJS III, 592].

⁴¹ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁴² See [Argirovski 2003, 320].

⁴³ See [SJS III, 595].

⁴⁴ See [SJS III, 598].

⁴⁵ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁴⁶ See [SJS III, 594, 595, 596].

⁴⁷ See [SJS III, 598].

⁴⁸ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁴⁹ See [Цейтлин et al. 1994, 157].

⁵⁰ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁵¹ See [SJS III, 158].

⁵² See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁵³ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁵⁴ See [SJS IV, 293].

⁵⁵ See [SJS IV, 900].

⁵⁶ See [Аргировски 2003, 320].

⁵⁷ The semantic convergence of verbs of seeing and understanding is widely recognized as a cross-linguistic cognitive pattern, whereby visual perception provides the primary metaphorical framework for conceptualizing intellectual apprehension.

an act of intellectual cognition but as a mode of experiential apprehension. A closely related case is in the phrase *νοητοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς* rendered in the *Roman Paterikon* once as *очневѣсть*, and once as *чювѣствєньма очима*⁵⁸.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that the noted Slavonic translations were sensitive not only to the lexical meaning of *νοητός* and *νοέω*, but also to their semantic nuances and contexts. The choice of adjectives such as *разоумьнь*, *мысльнь*, and *оумьнь* reflects a deliberate attempt to render the cognitively apprehensible nature of the phenomena, consistent with the Byzantine notions of mental perception.

At the same time, the corpus also reveals a systematic overlap between the verbs of intellectual cognition and those for sensory perception, particularly in contexts where Greek metaphorical usage already blurs the boundary between mental and experiential apprehension. In this respect, even the seemingly sensory rendering *чювѣствєнь* in the synaxarial verses might be understood not as a simple deviation, but as part of a broader logic that extends cognitive perception into the domain of embodied or experiential metaphor.

While the choice of *чювѣствєнь* is likely to reflect an individual translational decision within the synaxarial verse cycle, it is not without motivation in the semantic structure of the source texts themselves, where intellectual apprehension is frequently encoded through sensory imagery. At the same time, the extreme rarity of *чювѣствєнь* for *νοητός* in the broader Slavonic corpus suggests that its systematic occurrence in the synaxarial distichs is marked and context-specific. Nevertheless, its use does not necessarily contradict the semantic field of *νοητός*, but rather participates in its metaphorical expansion within a specific register, leaving open the possibility of additional contextual factors in its emergence.

Conclusion

The analysis of the South Slavonic renderings of *νοητός* in the synaxarial distichs has shown that the translators operated within a broadly shared semantic and epistemological framework shaped by the source text, in which the adjective denotes what is accessible through the *νοῦς* as a mode of apprehension. The predominant equivalent – *мысльнь*, alongside *оумьнь* and the exceptional *разоумьнь* – consistently preserves this orientation toward intelligibility, confirming a general sensitivity to the cognitive semantics of the Greek term.

It is within this framework that the Serbian rendering *чювѣствєнь* acquires its significance. Rather than representing a misunderstanding or isolated deviation, its repeated occurrence reflects a contextually motivated interpretive

⁵⁸ See [Дидди 2001, 106–107 lines 24–25; 230–231, lines 14–15]. I thank I. P. Petrov for drawing my attention to this example.

choice that is nevertheless too systematic to be accidental and too restricted to constitute a general lexical equivalent. Its emergence can be explained by the convergence of the verbal-adjectival structure of *νοητός*, the sensory metaphors of the distichs, and their mnemonic compression, whereby spiritual realities are constructed through bodily, visual, and kinetic imagery. This suggests that the sensory imagery in the source text may have influenced this translator's choices, extending experiential apprehension also to the adjective.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that, in the two South Slavonic translations of the synaxarial verses, the Greek concept was transmitted in accordance with its immediate poetic context and reconfigured within a system in which verbal-adjective semantics interacts with sensory metaphors and mnemonic compression, enabling noetic apprehension to be articulated as a form of perceptual experience.

Abbreviations

As – *Evangeliarum Assemani*, 10th–11th c.

Apost – *Apostolus* (Argirovski refers to codices of the 13th–14th c.)

B – Bulgarian translation of the synaxarial verses (14th c.)

Christ – *Apostolus Christinopolitanus*, 12th c.

comPsalt – Commented Psalter (Argirovski refers to the *Bologna* and *Pogodin Psalters*, both of the 13th c.)

DeFide – *De fide orthodoxa* by John of Damascus in John the Exarch's translation (10th c.)

DeHom – *De hominis opificio* by Gregory of Nyssa in translation of the 14th c.

Diop – *Dioptra* by Philip Monotropos, full translation of the 14th c.

Doroth – Dorotheus of Gaza's orations in Middle Bulgarian translation

e-LSJ – the *LSJ – Ancient Greek & Latin Dictionaries* semantic database. https://lsj.gr/wiki/Main_Page

E-SJS. *Elektronický slovník jazyka staroslověnského / Old Church Slavonic Dictionary* online database. <https://gulliver.gorazd.org/catalog/default/dashboard?lang=en>

Eug – *Fragmenta Eugeniana* (Psalterium), 11th c.

Evang – *Evangelium* (Argirovski refers to copies of the 13th–14th c.)

HistEccl – *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Germanus I of Constantinople, first translation (10th c.)

Hval – *Apocalypsis e codice Hvalii*, 15th c.

Izb1073 – *Izbornik* of 1073

Mar – *Codex Marianus*, 10th–11th c.

MarHom – John of Damascus' Third Homily on the Dormition of the Mother of God in a 9th–11th-c. translation, and the First Homily on the Dormition and the Homily on the Nativity in 14th-c. translations

Min – *Menaion* (no further details in Bonchev/ Hristov)

Nik – *Tetraevangelium monasterii serbici Nikolja*, 15th c.

Ostr – *Evangeliarum Ostromiri*, 1056–1057.

Parim – Parimejnik, the Slavonic counterpart of the Prophetologium (Argirovski refers to two codices of the 13th c.)

Rumj – Apocalypsis kept in the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow, 14th c.

S – Serbian translation of the synaxarial verses

Sav – *Liber Sabbae*, 11th c.

Šiš – *Praxapostolus Šišatovacensis*, 1324.

Slepč – *Praxapostolus Slepčensis*, 12th c.

SinEuch – Euchologium Sinaiticum, 11th c.

Supr – *Codex Suprasliensis*, 11th c.

SJS – *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského*

Triod – Triodion (Argirovski refers to the *Zagreb Triodion*, 13th c.)

TriodSyn – Synaxaria in Triodion and Pentecostarion by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos in translation of the 14th c.

UchEv – *Učitelnoe Evangelie* (Constantine of Preslav's), 10th c.

var. – variant reading

Zach – *Paroemiaron Zacharianum*, 1271.

Zogr – *Codex Zographensis*, (Tetraevangelion), 10th–11th c.

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