
Upon the death of its founder, Mechitar (Mkhithar) of Sebaste (1676–1749), the Uniat Armenian *Ordo Mechitaristarum,* which since 1717 had had its centre on the island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon, split into two and after some wandering the second community under Adrosat Babikian (1750–1816) arrived in Vienna in 1810, and in 1811 established their monastery there. Printing had always been one of the order’s main sources of income and the new community in the capital of the multinational Austro–Hungarian Empire decided to undertake printing work in the Empire’s many languages. No less a person than Vuk Karadžić helped them to obtain the requisite Cyrillic fonts and in 1818 their first Slav publication appeared, his *Lexicon serbico-germanico-latinum.* From then on the collapse of the Empire they printed a large number of books and periodicals in Church Slavonic, Bulgarian, Croatian, Polish, Russian, Ruthenian–Ukrainian, Serbian, Slovak and Slovene, as well as Latin and German. (The exact number is uncertain since many books were also printed there for other publishers, such as Franz von Mikloshich’s *Lexicon palaeoslavico-graceo-latinum* for Wilhelm Braumüller in 1850, a fact not always noted by the publisher.) The community’s production was by no means exclusively religious, as the publication of works such as the Serbian translations of John Stuart Mill’s *Essay on Liberty* shows. The list of authors includes the names of the Mechitarist order at Vienna (not even the few facts given at the beginning of this review are found in it) and, secondly and more importantly, a list of the hundred or so books known to Wytrzens (see p. 16) as having been published by the Mechitarists but copies of which he was unable to locate either in Vienna or Belgrade. All in all, the book is a valuable contribution not so much to bibliography as to the subject of its subtitle: the cultural history of the Slav nations of the Austro–Hungarian Empire and the Balkans at the time of their national revival.

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This first grammar in a new learner’s guide series is one of two volumes intended to cover both Old Church Slavonic (vol. 1) and its subsequent Church Slavonic redactions, including Synodal Church Slavonic (vol. 2 forthcoming). Each volume consists of fifteen lessons in which subjects are gradually introduced with an increasing level of difficulty. Because of this approach, Trunte’s first volume fills a gap in the overcrowded market of at least one hundred Old Church Slavonic reference grammars; there is only one other book in a non-Slavic language in which a similar step-by-step method is employed, namely P. J. Regier’s *A Learner’s Guide to the Old Church Slavic Language* (1977). Moreover, although there are excellent Old Church Slavonic grammars in German (Leskien, Vondrak, Van Wijk, Diels and Trubetzkoy), none of them are particularly suited to the beginner. In the last book to appear on the German market, R. Aitzelmüller’s *Altbulgarische Grammatik* (1978), Old Church Slavonic is treated chiefly as a means of introducing Slavic historical linguistics and not so much as a language in its own right. Trunte, on the other hand, claims in the Introduction that the main goal of his grammar is to teach students to read Old Church Slavonic texts with the help of a dictionary only. At the end of lessons two to thirteen, small portions of a text are given along with a vocabulary, short commentary, and additional background information. One wonders, however, why Trunte chose only the *Vita Constantinii* which,
while an interesting text from a historical point of view, is not an Old Church Slavonic manuscript dating from the tenth or eleventh century. Even in a 'standardized' (?) version (p. xii), the text does not reflect the actual linguistic make-up of the oldest documents. The same is even more true of the Synodal Church Slavonic orthography that Trunte uses not only in the text of the Vita Constantini but throughout the book, thereby presenting Old Church Slavonic in anachronistic spelling.

Most of the information is presented in such a way as to make the grammar well-suited for private study. However, the additional historical and especially theological background information at the end of lessons two to thirteen is often beyond the scope of an elementary grammar and presupposes a basic knowledge of specialized terminology. One might also question whether the frequent and sometimes far-reaching etymological comparisons of Old Church Slavonic words with their cognates in non-Slavic languages are of any use to the beginner (see, for example, p. 85: ‘... compare Latin foster with French nait or Aragonian mate and Castilian mothe’). At any rate, by rendering these languages in their own alphabets (not only Sanskrit and Hebrew but also Samaritan, Arabic, Syriac, Old Persian, Armenian, Georgian, Mongolian, etc.) Trunte does not, at least not as far as this reviewer is concerned, provoke curiosity, as he hopes to do (p. xiii), but rather frustration and, after a while, even annoyance.

The grammar itself is conceived along traditional lines. Thus, for instance, the nominal inflection is represented according to the Indo-European stem class system, even though the Old Church Slavonic declensional paradigm was already largely determined by gender. Yet, in two major respects the jers differ from the traditional approach. First, he introduces the so-called i-declension for nouns of the type bogvari, ladi(i) and yedi(i) (pp. 34 ff.). These, however, do not constitute a separate paradigm from either a diachronic or a synchronic point of view. The declension is identical with that of the i-stems except in the nsg. (and vsg.), which can be considered merely a pre-Slavic ablaut variant (zero grade -i- to -j-). Secondly, Trunte (pp. 172-74) interprets the vocalization of the jers in strong position as compensatory lengthening (‘Ersatzdehnung’). Even if we were to accept that the jers were ultra-short vowels (in opposition to short and long vowels), the very term would still be inappropriate because a change of vowel timbre is clearly involved here.

What makes Trunte’s book quite unsuitable as a learner’s guide is that it contains too many obvious mistakes and omissions. For instance, in the list of canonical Old Church Slavonic manuscripts (p. 21) we find the following flimsy: the Bojana Palimpsest is part of an aprakos gospel, not of a tetra; the Undol’ski Folia are Cyrillic, not Glagolitic; the Lavrov Folia (No. 40) and the Zograf Folia (No. 25) are two different names for the same document; the Euchologium Sinaiticum (No. 13) and the Sinai Slavonic (No. 17) should be listed together because they belong to the same codex; no mention is made of the Fragmentum Sinaiticum (known since 1971), the Vatican Palimpsest (known since 1982), and the sensational Sinai discoveries of 1975. Unfortunately, similar shortcomings can be found in the treatment of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. To mention just a few: the original shape of the Glagolitic letter ž is not a double ž and therefore does not indicate an ‘older’ pronunciation [ž] (p. 12); also does not mean ‘letter’ in Old Church Slavonic (p. 43); the forms žag, žasaus (p. 46), žaig, imp. bodoza (p. 90), and part. bodož (p. 92) are not attested in Old Church Slavonic; on the other hand, gsg. ‘cvoz’ (p. 46) is and thus does not need an asterisk; obržiti (p. 74) and žiti ‘to reap’ (p. 83) do not belong to Leskien’s class I; the regular aorist of drzgivst is not drživst (p. 75); the assumption (p. 76) that aorists and imperfect forms not in concord coincide is not true (compare contracted imp. žagolivst); dajemvi is not the present passive participle of dati (p. 77); se omim koke položili (p. 107) is not an example of a paratactic but of a hypotactic construction; the further development of dč (as the outcome of g due to the second palatalization) into č is not mentioned (see pp. 152 ff.); the same holds for za + j; čk (see p. 154); the word for ‘to laugh’ is not měti č (p. 167); the althusian verbs are not listed together and the flexion of jastvi is missing; the soft declension of the long adjectives (type niti) is not mentioned. All this is disappointing, because Trunte’s original intention was certainly a commendable one.

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