

REVIEWS

Schenker, Alexander M., *The Dawn of Slavic. An Introduction to Slavic Philology*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press 1995, xx + 346 pp.

The book under review offers an overview of the historical, linguistic and textological data that are relevant for the reconstruction of the earliest period (the "dawn") of Slavic civilization. The somewhat old-fashioned word *philology* used in the subtitle is "a convenient cover term for the study of the earliest linguistic manifestations of any national culture. This is how it has been used with reference to Slavic antiquities, and this is how it will be used in the present book" (p. xv; cf. also the introductory notes to appendix A on p. 241).¹

The Dawn of Slavic is divided into three major chapters: "Historical Setting" (pp. 1-60), "Language" (pp. 61-164) and "Early Writing" (pp. 165-239). The chapter on language is an expanded version of Schenker's contribution titled "Proto-Slavonic" to *The Slavonic Languages* (eds. B. Comrie and G. G. Corbett, London-New York 1993, pp. 60-121).

Furthermore, the book contains four appendices of which the first is a sketch of the rise of Slavic philology (pp. 241-252). Appendices B and C present a chronological table (pp. 253-257) and a brief commentary to the Orthodox church calendar (pp. 258-259). Interesting and useful though this commentary is, it lies somewhat outside the scope of the book.

The last and largest appendix (pp. 261-302) offers samples of early Slavic writing, including short descriptions, facsimile illustrations, transliterations and translations of fourteen early Slavic texts: the Glagolitic Old Church Slavonic Kiev Missal, Codex Zographensis and Codex Assemanianus, the Croatian Glagolitic Baška Tablet, the Hum Graffito and Beinecke Glagolitic Fragment (a less known document representing angular Glagolitic writing of the fourteenth century), the Cyrillic Old Church Slavonic Mostiĉ and Samuel Inscriptions, Sava's Book and the Codex Suprasliensis, the Russian Church Slavonic Ostromir and Serbian Church Slavonic Miroslav Gospels, the Old Russian birchbark document no. 109 from Novgorod (cf. below, note 4) and the Freising Fragments written in Latin script.

The book concludes with a bibliography (pp. 303-335) and an index (pp. 337-346) listing various names and terms. The bibliography is divided into six sections. Apart from "Abbreviations" and "Bibliographies and Guides to Archives" there are separate bibliographies for each of the three major chapters and for the appendix on the study of Slavic philology. The thematic division serves well as an independent bibliographical tool for the beginner. However, as a reference guide for the studies mentioned in the text, the structure of the bibliography is not very efficient, because the reader often has to search through different sections in order to find the reference he is looking for. For example, the five references mentioned in fn. 244 to the chapter "Early Writing" (p. 200), have to be traced in three different bibliographical sections: Dinekov, ed. 1985, Kuev 1979 and Lixaĉev, ed. 1987, 1988, 1989 in the section "Early Writing", Kowalenko, ed. 1961 in "Historical Setting", and Šmidt, ed. 1984 in "Bibliographies and Guides to Archives".

More disturbing are the number of references in the text that are nowhere listed in the bibliography, e.g. Bloomfield 1933 (p. 64, fn. 109), Birnbaum 1975 (p. 70, fn. 113), Topolińska 1980 (p. 73), Poppe 1985 and Arximandrite Leonid 1883 (p. 177, fn. 200), Meillet 1921 (p. 187), Sreznevskij 1868 (p. 207), Picchio 1973 (p. 220, fn. 272), Mareš 1972 (p. 224), Kiparsky 1971 (p. 236) and Balaban 1925 (p. 239). Unfortunately, I also found a number of discrepancies between the references in the text and the titles in the bibliography, e.g., Schenker 1987 on p. 5 is obviously Schenker 1985 in the bibliography, Meillet 1937 (p. 77, fn. 121) = Meillet 1934, Szemerényi 1960 (p. 129) = Szemerényi 1957₂, Vaillant 1948 (p. 195) = Vaillant 1948₁ and Vaillant 1948 (p. 248, fn. 321) = Vaillant 1948₂ (i.e., *Manuel du vieux slave*; the second edition of 1964, "revue et augmentée", is not mentioned), Kožuxarov

¹The subtitle is reminiscent of L. Moszyński's *Wstęp do filologii słowiańskiej* (Warsaw 1984), a book that is in many ways comparable to *The Dawn of Slavic*.

1983 (p. 199) = Kožuxarov 1984, Rodić/Jovanović 1986 (p. 206) = Rodić/Jovanović 1936, Abramovič 1911 (p. 224) = Abramovič 1930, Cronia 1952 (p. 238) = Cronia 1956, Miletič 1888 (p. 247) = Miletič 1923, Lehr-Splawiński 1923 (p. 248) = Lehr-Splawiński 1949³ and Lehr-Splawiński/Bartula 1959⁴.

Going back to the first chapter of the book ("Historical Setting"): Schenker starts off by discussing the various theories on the location of the original homeland of the Slavs. The discussion is followed by a historical sketch of the early Slavs, from their settlement during the period of the Great Migrations in central and southern Europe until the arrival of Constantine and Methodius in Moravia and Pannonia in 863. Schenker next outlines the life and works of the two brothers. The remaining pages of the first chapter are devoted to the continuation of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in Bulgaria and Bohemia, and to the history and civilization of the northwestern and eastern Slavs in the ninth and tenth centuries.

What makes this first chapter very attractive and, by the same token, also unique in comparison to other outlines of the history of the early Slavs, are the abundant quotations from primary sources ("in order to show the student where the historian of the early Slavs gets the pieces of the puzzle which he then tries to fit into a larger picture", p. xvi). From p. 9 to the end of the chapter, I counted 56 such substantial block quotations, all of them translations into English. Among them we find large portions quoted from Jordanes' history of the Goths (*De origine actibusque Getarum*), the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, the Frankish *Annales Bertiniani* and *Annales Fuldenses*, Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*, papal correspondence between John VIII and Methodius (*Predicationis tuae*) and John VIII and Svatopluk (*Industriae tuae*), the *Vita Constantini* and *Vita Methodii*, the work of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ja'qūb, and the Primary Chronicle.

There is one topic I missed in Schenker's historical account, namely I. Boba's theory concerning a presumed location of the ninth-century principality of Moravia south of the mid-Danube. Although his theory is highly controversial and in the opinion of most scholars untenable, the fact that it has been dealt with at length in many articles and books (cf. especially the recent writings of the German historian M. Eggers) makes it an issue that should have been touched upon.²

The second chapter ("Language") opens with introductory notes on the historical comparative method, the concept of the proto-language, linguistic reconstruction and phonetic laws (cf. also pp. 75-76 on problems in phonological reconstruction), followed by a survey of the Indo-European and Slavic languages, including a brief discussion of the periodization of Proto-Slavic and the problem of Balto-Slavic. A substantial portion is taken up by an account of the development of the sound system from Late Proto-Indo-European to Late Proto-Slavic. The next large section discusses the morphological changes Proto-Slavic underwent, including inflection as well as word formation. Chapter 2 concludes with notes on syntax and word order, a survey of the Proto-Slavic lexical stock, some brief remarks on grammatical productivity and grammatical analogy, and, finally, a list of the most important Late Proto-Slavic dialect isoglosses.

Schenker did an admirable job by presenting the essential facts of Slavic historical linguistics in only a little over one hundred pages. However, I am afraid that the concise account is sometimes hardly accessible for the beginning student. This, for instance, is the case with the treatment of the Balto-Slavic (and Indo-Iranian) retroflexion of *s* (pp. 80-81). In fourteen lines Schenker not only explains the development of *s* in Slavic in two different ways (the

²Cf. I. Boba, *Moravia's history reconsidered. A reinterpretation of medieval sources*, The Hague 1971; M. Eggers, *Das Erzbistum des Method. Lage, Wirkung und Nachleben der kyrillomethodianischen Mission*, Munich 1996. For a bibliographical survey, see J. Schaeken, "Sprachwissenschaftliche Überlegungen zur geographischen Lage Altmährens", *Byzantinoslavica* 54, 1993, pp. 331-335.

traditional theory being mentioned in a note), but also touches upon problems involving relative chronology and complementary distribution. On the other hand, Schenker discusses at length – and also with great clarity – the Proto-Slavic palatalizations of velars, especially the different views on their relative age (pp. 83-84, 89-92). However, two omissions should be pointed out here. First, no attention is paid to the fact that the second regressive palatalization did not reach the North Russian dialect area, thus yielding such atypical forms as *kěle* and *xěrb* in medieval birchbark documents from Novgorod (for regular *cělъ* and *sěrbъ*) or *kep* and *kedit'* (for regular *cep* and *cedit'*) in contemporary northwestern Russian dialects. Second, no mention is made of the widely held view according to which there is no reason to separate the progressive palatalization chronologically from the second regressive palatalization.³

Unfortunately, other important linguistic evidence primarily culled from the growing corpus of North Russian birchbark documents is also not taken into account in the morphological section of chapter 2. Thus, in the treatment of the Late Proto-Slavic substantival endings (pp. 123-126) the North Russian nominative singular ending *-e* of both the nominal and pronominal masculine *o*-stems (contrasting with *-ъ* elsewhere in Slavic) is left out.⁴ Speaking of new linguistic material, it should be noted that the original nominative singular form *kry* (genitive *krъve*), labeled on p. 122 as "OESI." (Old East Slavic),⁵ has now also been identified in the recently discovered late Old Church Slavonic Psalter of Dimitri.

Although Schenker in most cases keeps close to the mainstream of the discipline of descriptive historical linguistics, his classification of the Slavic verb is rather unusual (pp. 130-133). In my opinion, the introductory nature of the book would have required a more representative approach, as for instance the classical one by A. Leskien.⁶ Schenker first distinguishes between athematic and thematic verbs (Leskien's class V versus classes I-IV). The thematic verbs are then sorted into two large groups: the so-called root verbs (Leskien's class I) and the verbs with a verb-forming suffix (classes II, III and IV). The first group consists of three subclasses (of the types *greti*, *mrěti* and *biti*), the second of six (types *manqti* = class II; *kapatī*, *cělovati* and *dělati/bělēti* = class III; *buditi* and *gorěti* = class IV).

In the third and last chapter ("Early Writing") Schenker first deals with the genealogy and structure of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets. He then discusses the evidence of and the various theories on the beginnings of Slavic writing. A brief overview of some important paleographic and codicological aspects of early Slavic writing practice (e.g., ligatures, abbreviations, numerals, punctuation, parchment, palimpsests) is followed by a survey of the formation and periodization of Old Church Slavonic and the subsequent local recensions of Church Slavonic, including their most striking phonological features. After some preliminary remarks on translations versus original works, authors and authorship of medieval Slavic writings, and textual criticism, the remaining portion of chapter 3 is devoted to the contents of

³Cf. A. Meillet, *Le slave commun*, Paris 1934², pp. 88-93; A. Vaillant, *Grammaire comparée des langues slaves*. I: *Phonétique*, Lyon 1950, pp. 53-55.

⁴On Old Russian birchbark documents, see now A. A. Zaliznjak's monumental *Drevnenovgorodskij dialekt*, Moscow 1995. By the way, it is a pity that in appendix D (pp. 298-299; cf. also p. 235) Schenker has chosen no. 109 as a sample of writing on birchbark in medieval Novgorod, since "грамота № 109 не имеет никаких однозначных признаков древненовгородского диалекта; более того, некоторые ее черты ... отличают ее от основной массы новгородских берестяных грамот XI-XII вв. Возможно, ее автор Жизномир был родом из Юго-Западной Руси" (Zaliznjak, p. 237).

⁵As far as I know, the original nominative singular *ū*-stem form is otherwise attested only in Old Polish (*kry*), Slovene (*krī*) and in the Čakavian dialect area; cf. M. Vasmer [Fasmer], *Ētimologičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka* II, Moscow 1986², p. 379; P. Skok, *Ētimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* II, Zagreb 1972, pp. 216-217.

⁶On Leskien's classification, see recently N. S. Smith, "Three Old Church Slavic verb classifications based on the present stem from Schleicher, Leskien and Jagić", *Anzeiger für slavische Philologie* 22/2 (= *Fs. R. Aitzetmüller* 2), 1994, pp. 37-51.

the oldest Slavic texts and to the characteristics of the extant manuscripts (dated from the tenth to the turn of the thirteenth century) in which they have come down to us. The texts are grouped into the following "genres": biblical, liturgical, and homiletic texts, miscellanies and florilegia, hagiography, hymnography and other poetic works, monastic and learned writing, historiography, legal texts, epistolary literature and correspondence, epigraphy, glosses, place and personal names.

The clarity and erudition with which the huge mass of data is presented and interpreted in chapter 3 certainly meets high standards. This, however, does not mean that all information is correct or up to date. Especially the philological commentary on the early Slavic documents contains several flaws. Here follows a selection:

- The Cyrillic ligature ѿ does not occur in South Slavic documents "as early as the thirteenth century" (p. 180), but as early as the eleventh century (Sava's Book; also present in the Ostromir Gospel from 1056-57).
- The information on dated epigraphic texts is confusing. On p. 183 we read that the Samuel Inscription of 993 is the "oldest dated monument of Old Church Slavonic". However, on p. 187 (fn. 223) three older inscriptions of the Bulgarian period of Old Church Slavonic are listed: Krepča of 921, Preslav of 931, and Dobruja of 943. On pp. 235-236 the Samuel Inscription is "one of the oldest monuments of Cyrillic dated Old Church Slavonic text". Here also the Bitola Inscription is mentioned: "made during the rule of Samuel's nephew Tsar John Vladislav (r. 1015-1018)". It should be pointed out that the date is poorly legible and that some scholars do not read the year 6522 (= 1014), but 6742 (= 1234).⁷ On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with the date of the Dobruja Inscription, as Schenker writes on p. 236. The only real problem with the inscription from Rumania is its doubtful authenticity.⁸
- The largest Slavic palimpsest is not the Bojana Gospel of 42 folios (p. 185); the newly discovered Vatican Palimpsest, mentioned on p. 204,⁹ is at least twice as large. By the way, as far as I know, the Enina Apostol is not a palimpsest, as claimed on p. 206.
- The Codex Zographensis does not count 288 folios (pp. 189, 209), but 270; the Psalterium Sinaiticum not 177 folios (p. 189), but 209 (cf. p. 207); the Euchologium Sinaiticum not 109 folios (p. 189), but 134 (cf. p. 207); Sava's Book not 126 folios (pp. 189, 204), but 129; the Codex Suprasliensis not 284 folios (pp. 189, 212), but 285.
- The Sluck Psalter does not belong to the classical texts of Old Church Slavonic (pp. 190, 207), since it displays some East Slavic dialect features. On the other hand, what is missing in the canon of Old Church Slavonic manuscripts in the narrow sense (cf. the list on pp. 189-190 and the section on early Slavic texts) is the evangeliary known as the Fragmentum Sinaiticum.¹⁰

⁷Cf. H. G. Lunt, review of I. Zaimov and V. Zaimova, *Bitolski nadpis na Ivan Vladislav samodržec bŕlgarski*, Sofia 1970, in: *Slavic Review* 31, 1972, p. 499; R. Mathiesen, "The importance of the Bitolja Inscription for Cyrillic paleography", *The Slavic and East European Journal* 21, 1977, pp. 1-2.

⁸Cf. G. Nandriš, "A spurious Slavonic inscription from the Danube canal", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 38, 1960, pp. 530-534. A photograph and drawing of the inscription was provided by I. Dobrev in: *Kirilo-Methodievska enciklopedija* I, Sofia 1985, pp. 602-603.

⁹The reference to the description of the Vatican Palimpsest in the catalogue *Opis na slavjanskite rŕkopiis vŕv Vatikanskata Biblioteka* by A. Džurova et al. (Sofia 1985) has long been superseded by T. Krŕstakov, "Bŕlgarski Vatikanski palimpsest (Kirilsko kratko izborno evanĕlie ot X v. v Cod. Vat. gr. 2502)", *Palaeobulgarica/Starobŕlgaristika* 12/1, 1988, pp. 38-66. An edition is scheduled to appear in Sofia in 1997.

¹⁰Cf. M. Altbauer and F. V. Mareš, "Fragmentum glagoliticum Evangeliarii palaeoslovenici in codice Sinaitico 39 (palimpsestum)", *Anzeiger der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Klasse* 117/6, 1980, pp. 139-152; M. Altbauer and F. V. Mareš, "Das Palimpsest-Fragment eines glagolitischen Evangeliars im Codex Sinaiticus 39 – Ein neues altkirchenslavisches kanonisches Denkmal", *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 7, 1981, pp. 253-258.

— The additional part of the Psalterium Sinaiticum was not found in St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai in 1968 and published by Altbauer in 1971 (p. 207), but turned up in 1975 and was published in a facsimile edition by Tarnanidis in 1988.¹¹ Among the discoveries on Mt. Sinai in 1975 is also an early Glagolitic menaeum fragment. However, it is not, as claimed, a menaeum "with Cyrillic additions" (p. 223), but without.¹² At the same time and location, the oldest Slavic medical – and thus not religious – text (inserted in the Psalter of Dimitri) was found (cf. p. 227); none of the six editions of the text published between 1990 and 1995 is mentioned.¹³

— The Old Russian donation charters from 1130 and 1192 which Schenker discusses on p. 234 are not "free of Church Slavonicisms" (cf., e.g., the forms *azъ* in 1130 and *budušćii* in 1192) and the one from 1130 is not "almost faultless in its rendition of the weak jers" (in the first syllable of the stem they are left out in the majority of cases). The references to the editions of the 1192 charter by Marks (1914) and Obnorskij and Barxudarov (1952) have been superseded by Zaliznjak and Janin (1993).¹⁴

— The statement that the birchbark documents which have been brought to light since 1951 "now number in the thousands" (p. 234) is exaggerated; at present there are just over 800 items. The sole reference to the first and third volumes of the Academy Edition of *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste* is, of course, incomplete; what we have now are nine volumes, of which the last appeared in 1993.¹⁵

— In the survey of early Slavic glosses (pp. 237-238) no mention is made of the so-called St. Emmeram glosses, which are held to be the oldest extant monument of written Slavic.¹⁶ Furthermore, it should be noted that the authenticity of many of the Czech glosses in the Prague copy of the *Mater Verborum* (p. 238) is under heavy suspicion; as early as 1876 V. Jagić wrote that the genuine Old Czech glosses are like "rari nantes in gurgite vasto" among the many forged ones of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Also, the Old Czech Gregorian glosses mentioned by Schenker are suspect for containing spurious elements.¹⁸ Finally, the Old Czech Vienna Glosses are available in a much more recent edition than the one by Jagić (1903).¹⁹

¹¹Cf. I. C. Tarnanidis, *The Slavonic manuscripts discovered in 1975 at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai*, Thessaloniki 1988, pp. 87-91, 249-281. A full edition will be published by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 1997.

¹²Cf. I. C. Tarnanidis, *The Slavonic Manuscripts...* (note 11), p. 100: "The writing is Glagolitic without Cyrillic additions". For an edition of the canon of Sts. Peter and Paul which is preserved in the menaeum fragment, see now I. C. Tarnanidis, "Glagolitic Canon to Saints Peter and Paul (Sin. Slav. 4/N)", *Filologia e letteratura nei paesi slavi* (= *Fs. S. Graciotti*), Rome 1990, pp. 91-97.

¹³For full references, see H. Birnbaum and J. Schaeken, *Das altkirchenslavische Wort: Bildung – Bedeutung – Herleitung*, Munich 1997, pp. 146-148.

¹⁴Cf. A. A. Zaliznjak and V. L. Janin, "Vkladnaja gramota Varlaama Xutynskogo", *Russian Linguistics* 16, 1993, pp. 185-202. An edition is also included in A. A. Zaliznjak's *Drevnenovgorodskij dialekt...* (note 4), pp. 374-377.

¹⁵Cf. V. L. Janin and A. A. Zaliznjak, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste (iz raskopok 1984-1989 gg.)*, Moscow 1993.

¹⁶For an edition and further references, see F. V. Mareš, "The Slavic St. Emmeram glosses", *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 12, 1969, pp. 8-18. According to Mareš, the glosses are not the oldest known Slavic document, but rather "a precious monument of the oldest Sorbian CS literature" (p. 17) of the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century.

¹⁷Cf. V. Jagić, "Die Fälschungen in der *Mater Verborum* des Prager Codex", *Archiv für slavische Philologie* 3, 1879, p. 118.

¹⁸Cf. J. Schaeken, "Die tschechisch-kirchenslavischen Patera-Glossen (St. Gregor-Glossen, Prager Glossen)", *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch* 35, 1989, pp. 165-166.

¹⁹Cf. J. Vintr, "Die tschechisch-kirchenslavischen Glossen des 12. Jahrhunderts in der Bibel Sign. 1190 der Nationalbibliothek in Wien (sog. Jagić-Glossen)", *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch* 32, 1986, pp. 77-113.

Despite the incorrect or outdated pieces of information of which some have been mentioned here, *The Dawn of Slavic* is a unique book. The various historical, linguistic and textological themes are summarized and woven together in a systematic and coherent way. It takes into account a wide range of data and offers a clear and broad picture of the first stage in the development of the Slavic languages. Yale University Press is to be congratulated on publishing a beautiful volume in its Language Series. *The Dawn of Slavic* is certainly bound to become a classic, as advertised on the back flap of the book. Hopefully, some of its flaws will be set straight in a subsequent edition.²⁰

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²⁰In a new edition the publisher might also want to correct the name of the present journal on the back flap of the book ("*International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Politics*").