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IN DEFENCE OF AUGUST LESKIEN

Leskien, A., Rottmann, O. A.: *Handbuch der altbulgarischen (altkirchenslavischen) Sprache. Grammatik, Texte, Glossar*. Erstellt auf der Grundlage der Ausgabe von A. Leskien von Otto A. Rottmann unter Mitarbeit von Alf Hausmann und Christina Schwarz. Elfte, vollständig neu erstellte Auflage, Heidelberg: Winter, 2002, 264 pp.

A review of a handbook of Old Church Slavonic in a journal devoted to Russian linguistics calls for an explanation. There are two good reasons for reviewing this “vollständig neu erstellte Auflage” of Leskien’s classical manual in the present volume. First, many university programs in Russian Studies offer introductory courses in OCS. Especially in German-speaking countries, Leskien’s book still serves for this purpose. Second, what is new about this edition is that the comparative data pertain almost exclusively to Russian.

August Leskien’s manual has a long history. The first edition appeared in 1871 under the title *Handbuch der altbulgarischen (altkirchenslawischen) Sprache. Grammatik, Texte, Glossar* (Weimar: Böhlau). The grammar was based on the language reflected in three groups of manuscripts (“handschriftenklassen”): those of Bulgarian recension (Sava’s Book, the Codices Suprasliensis and Assemanianus as well as Pogodin’s Psalter of the thirteenth century), of Serbian recension (Nikolja’s Evangeliary of the early fifteenth century), and of East Slavic provenance (Ostromir’s Evangeliary, the *Izbornik* of 1073, and Mstislav’s Evangeliary of the early twelfth century). The second edition of 1886 (“völlig umgearbeitete Auflage”, now with the new spelling *altkirchenslavischen* in the title) became the norm for all subsequent editions and for many other grammars of OCS. Especially V. Jagić’s publication of the *Codex Zographensis* in 1879 led Leskien to the conclusion that he had made a mistake in the first edition by including texts of East Slavic, Serbian and Middle Bulgarian recension and that only early manuscripts of Bulgarian provenance (“im eigentlichen und engsten Sinne”, 1886, III) could serve as a primary source for a grammar of OCS (“... dass die echte Ueberlieferung der Sprache in dem Zographosevangelium und den ihm verwandten glagolitischen oder kyrillischen Denkmälern enthalten ist”). The grammatical part of the second edition was translated into Russian by A. A. Šaxmatov and V. N. Ščepkin in 1890 (*Грамматика старославянского языка. Съ дополненіемъ по языку Остромирова Ювангелія*). Leskien also prepared the third, fourth and fifth edition of his manual. The third one (1898) included only minor changes and corrections. In the fourth edition (1905), the chapter on phonology was re-

formulated “in einigen wesentlichen Punkten” (1905, III) and a sample from the Kiev folia (already published by I. I. Sreznevskij in 1876 and in an exemplary way by Jagić in 1890) was added, thereby completing what was to become known as “Leskien’s canon”. The fifth edition (1910) contains many minor corrections, a list of prepositions was added (§ 85a) and the paragraphs on verbal aspect and tenses were expanded (§§ 149, 150).

On several occasions Leskien stressed that, despite the many revisions, the overall structure (“Gesamtanlage”) of his manual had remained unchanged in the three editions since 1886. The same applies to all the subsequent printings that appeared after his death (1916) until the one under review. Whereas the first five editions were published in Weimar by Hermann Böhlau (1871; 1886) and Hermann Böhlau’s Nachfolger (1898; 1905; 1910), all new printings have come out in Heidelberg (Universitätsverlag C. Winter).¹ The sixth edition was published without any changes in 1922. In the seventh edition (1955), some misprints were corrected, and the bibliography was updated. The eighth edition (1962) was prepared by J. Schröpfer, who added at the end of the book bibliographical references, phonological and morphological tables, and an index. Schröpfer also included maps, a new table of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabet, some notes on syntax, and a sample from the diplomatic edition of the Codex Assemanianus. The ninth edition (1969) remained unchanged, whereas the tenth (1990) contained some minor additional corrections and bibliographical updates by Schröpfer.

Let us now turn to the new edition. From the table of contents it becomes immediately clear that the grammatical part has been substantially shortened (now comprising 100 pages in contrast to some 175 pages in the previous editions) and, above all, restructured in a way that virtually nothing has remained of Leskien’s text, aims and approach to the material.

The introductory chapter (pp. 11–24) deals with the notion of OCS, its writing system and sources. Chapter 2 (pp. 25–52) contains an outline of the sound system, much of which is devoted to specific East Slavic features and developments that are of no relevance for a description of the OCS language: see 2.2 ‘Lautveränderungen des Ostslavischen vor dem 11. Jahrhundert’; 2.4 ‘Lautveränderungen des Ostslavischen nach dem 11. Jahrhundert’; and 2.5 ‘Abschliessende Bemerkungen zur Lautlehre’, in which East Slavic topics like *аканье* and the pronunciation of the genitive singular ending *-ogo* are addressed. Also, the two remaining sections, comprising a mere six pages (2.1 ‘Darstellung der Phoneme für die Zeit vor dem AKS [OCS]’ and 2.3 ‘Vergleich des Ostslavischen mit dem Altkirchenslavischen um das 11. Jahrhundert’), only partly deal with phonological features that are specific for OCS.

Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 53–90) offer sketches of the declension and verbal system of OCS, including comparisons with the state of affairs in Modern Russian.

Then follows a one-page chapter on syntax (“lediglich einige Erscheinungen sind erwähnenswert”, p. 91), which mainly discusses the use of the dative absolute. Remarkably, the well-known example **ВЪСІТЪ ЖЕ НАЛЕЖАШТЮ ЕМЪ НАРОДОУ** (Luke 5.1 Zogr.) is cited with four misprints.

The last chapter of the grammatical part is entitled ‘Zur Geschichte der Forschung über die Funktion des Altkirchenslavischen im Neurussischen’ (pp. 93–106). Note 15 (p. 109) informs the reader that the outline of this chapter is based on an article published in 1960 by G. Shevelov (see under Šachmatov/Shevelov in the bibliography) and that the material was originally “thematisiert” for a course on OCS by a student. In addition to this rehearsal of Shevelov’s article, we find a summary of a later paper by G. Hüttl-Folter: see Chjuttl’-Vort 1968 in the bibliography, where a few more recent studies on the role of Church Slavonic in Russian are also listed, but not discussed in the chapter (Chjuttl’-Vort 1978; Hüttl-Worth 1968; Keipert 1971; Worth 1978; cf. also Uspenskij 1987). Instead of putting effort into compiling the chapter in this way (“das Kapitel hat rein referierenden Charakter”, p. 93), it would have been easier to simply refer the reader to both articles and even better to add a more representative list of the literature on the topic.

The second part of the manual consists of the texts and the glossary. The texts (pp. 119–203) are a photomechanical reproduction of the eighth edition, including the brief preface (p. 121), which now contains a reference to the old page numbers. The glossary (pp. 207–264) had to be newly typeset because in the previous editions it contained frequent references to the original paragraphs in the grammatical part. These have not been replaced by new references.² For good reasons, Leskien’s anachronistic **ѣ** has been changed into **и**. Unfortunately, the diacritic sign **ˆ** (used in normalized texts to mark palatal quality, most importantly in the case of phonemic *l*, *ń* and *ř*) has been abandoned completely, thus creating such doublets as **конь** ‘beginning’ and **конь** (instead of **коиѣ**) ‘horse’. All Greek and Latin glosses have been thrown out, practically everywhere without any further compensation. The lemma **прочии** may serve as an example of the consequences of this mechanical procedure: in the older editions we read “**прочии** adj. übrig reliquus; **въ прочий днь, въ прочий** ἐν τῇ ἑξῆς; **прочии** οἱ λοιποῖ”, whereas the text in the new edition is simply reduced to “**прочии** adj. übrig”. In some cases, the lemma has even been omitted altogether (cf., e. g., “**динарь** m. δηνάριον”, “**сидонъ** m. Σιδών”, “**тетрархъ** m. τετράρχης” in previous editions).

If we take a closer look at the information provided in the grammatical part, it is clear that the new edition is no improvement over the previous ones – quite the contrary. The text is highly problematic in many respects. First of all, there is a lot of information that is out of place. We have already mentioned

the East Slavic data that are of no relevance for a better understanding of the linguistic structure of OCS. On several occasions, linguistic terms are explained which belong in an elementary course in general linguistics and should not be discussed in a manual of OCS. See, for instance, explanations of the terms “diachronic” and “synchronic” (p. 25), “casus obliquus” and “casus rectus” (p. 54), and “first person”, “second person” and “third person” (p. 79). Also, one wonders what pieces of information like “Die Weichheit des /t/ im zweiten Wort [Modern Russian *шесть*] wird auf der graphematischen Ebene durch das Weichheitszeichen ausgedrückt” (p. 47), “семя (nicht zu verwechseln mit семья!)” (p. 64) or “In unbetonter Stellung kennt das NR [Modern Russian] nur drei Vokalphoneme” (p. 109, n. 12) are doing in this book.

Second, the text has been edited very poorly. Those who prepared the typescript obviously had great difficulty using a word processor. The layout of the text does not meet professional standards. Special characters are not conveyed adequately: ġ (p. 15) instead of ģ; /i/ (p. 29) instead of /i̇/; no transcription of nasal vowels, yielding such graphemic hybrids as /n'esʝ/, /ɫazyk/³ (p. 30); etc. The use of the right-curved apostrophe to mark softness (') is often inconsistent (see, e. g., on p. 37 /č'/, /ž'd'/, /š'č'/, etc.). Hyphenation breaks are sometimes contrary to accepted editorial practice (e. g. in Chapter 6: “Kirchenslavische”, “-тельство”, “Kirchenslavismen”, “Neoslavismen”, etc.). The number of misprints or simple mistakes is high. For instance, in the reproduction of Leskien's/Schröpfer's table of alphabets (now, however, without the corresponding Greek letters) on pp. 15–16, Cyrillic **І** is missing, **Ѡ** is listed instead of **ω**, **ч** is given the recensional Church Slavonic name **чи** instead **чръвь**, and the Glagolitic letter for **ижица** is actually the one for **з**. Also, what is one to think of dat. plur. **рѣвомь** (p. 58), nom. pl. **костъѣ** (p. 59), adv. **добрѣ** (p. 72), or the 3rd-singular imperfect forms **пѣнѣашѣ**, **пловѣашѣ**, **зовѣашѣ** (pp. 83–84)?

Third and most importantly, many pieces of information can be qualified as incorrect or at least incomplete. This applies to every chapter, and it would take many pages to discuss every point which raises serious questions. Some of the examples listed below speak for themselves and need no further comment:

- “Sichere Hinweise und Daten über die Slaven finden sich im 1. Jahrhundert u.Z. bei Plinius dem Älteren, der die Slaven unter dem Namen „Venedi” erwähnt” (p. 12). Pliny the Elder did not mention that the ancient tribe of the Venedi was linguistically Slavic.
- “Die für die religiöse Unterweisung vorgesehenen Bücher waren in einem neuen Alphabet geschrieben. Bis heute ist aber nicht geklärt, in welchem, denn das altkirchenslavische Schrifttum kennt zwei Alphabete: die Glagolica und die Kirillica” (p. 14). Here, we are thrown back into the scholarly discussion before the 1850s.

- “... so schreibt der *Zographensis* **є** statt **ѣ**” (p. 18). Note that we are dealing with a Glagolitic codex and that in the Glagolitic alphabet there is no such distinction.
- In section 1.2, ‘Altkirchenslavisches Schrifttum’, no mention is made of the Sinai manuscripts discovered in 1975, including additional fragments of the Psalterium Sinaiticum (cf. p. 21) and the Euchologium Sinaiticum (cf. p. 22).
- “Ob es auf ostslavischem Gebiet vor der AKS Periode oder *neben der AKS Literatur* [my italics] ostslavisches Schrifttum gegeben hat, ist nicht nachzuweisen, da hiervon ebenfalls nichts erhalten ist” (p. 23).
- On Proto-Slavic “*gor-dъ”: “die 1. Silbe endet auf einen *silbischen* [my italics] Liquididen” (p. 27).
- On jers in strong and weak position and their further development in Russian: “**сѣвирати** > собирать (Vollvokalisierung des /ъ/ in starker Position)”, given as an example opposed to “**сѣборъ** > сбор (Schwund des /ъ/ in schwacher Position)” (p. 41).
- On the first palatalization of velars: “Wandel von /g/, /k/, /ch/ zu /č/, /š/, /ž/” (p. 48). Note the order of the phonemes. Also, the way in which the conditions are formulated (“... vor Vokalen der vorderen Reihe – wobei /i/ aus USL [Proto-Slavic] /i/ oder /ei/ en[t]standen war ...”) wrongly suggests that this development was preceded by the monophthongization of *i*-diphthongs.
- As for the second and third (progressive) palatalization of velars, at least one of the three developments is correct: “Wandel von /g/, /k/, /ch/ zu /c/, /z/, /s/” (p. 48). The conditioning of the progressive palatalization is described as follows: “... vor bestimmten Vokalen der vorderen Reihe (diese Palatalisierung fand unter bisher nicht vollständig erklärten Umständen statt)”. For “vor” read “hinter”.
- In the introduction to the paradigms presented in Chapter 3 (‘Deklination’), it is stated that endings that are not attested in the text corpus and reconstructed on the basis of comparative evidence will be marked by an asterisk (“im Paradigma durch * gekennzeichnet”, p. 53). There is not a single asterisk to be found in the chapter.
- “Das AKS kennt in einigen Fällen das Phänomen der Genusschwankung (z.B. **лѣсъ** Wald als Maskulinum und **лѣсо** als Neutrum). Diese Erscheinung ist im NR unbekannt” (p. 56). There is no such neuter form as **лѣсо** attested in OCS.⁴
- The paradigms of the nominal *i̇o*- and *i̇ā*-stems are missing (cf. pp. 57–59), thus making it impossible for students to identify forms like acc. pl. **лѣжа** or dat./loc. sg. **доуши** in the texts. Important variants in the nominal declension are also not treated at all, e. g., masculine nouns in *-tel’b* and *-ar’b*

(cf. p. 58), feminine nouns having nom. sg. in *-i* rather than *-a* (cf. pp. 58–59), and dual forms of **око** and **оухо** (cf. p. 62).

- On the rendition of the original *ū*-stems in Modern Russian: “Die Wörter, die dieser Deklinationsklasse angehören, sind in die *i*-Deklination übergegangen” (p. 60). What about for instance **букѣты** – *буква* or **жръны** – *жернов*? And on the original *n*-stems: “Die Maskulina gehen zum NR hin in die *o*-Deklination über” (p. 64). What about **стѣпень** – *степень*?
- In the section on the pronominal declension (pp. 65–69), we are missing the treatment of **вьсь**, **сиць**, **иже**, **кѣи**. The following singular forms of **сь** are incorrectly listed as neuter (p. 68): gen. **сѣа**, dat./loc. **сѣи**, instr. **сѣа**.
- In the section on the formation of the compound declension of the adjectives (pp. 70–71), contracted variants of the type gen. sg. **старааго**, **стараго** are not mentioned at all.
- On the formation of the imperfect: “Das Tempus ist in Texten leicht erkennbar, da es durch das Formans **ѣа/аа**, das in allen Formen realisiert ist, charakterisiert ist” (p. 80). No mention is made of contracted forms, yielding for instance 1sg. **разоумѣхъ**, the spelling of which is identical to the aorist form.
- On p. 108 R. Večerka’s well-known scheme of the periodization of Old Church Slavonic is reproduced. Večerka uses the abbreviation “Maksl.” for the period of the Moravian mission. “Maksl.”, of course, stands for “Mährisch-Altkirchenslavisch”, not “Mittelaltkirchenslavisch”, as claimed on the bottom of the page.

These examples, which can easily be multiplied, demonstrate that the grammatical part has serious flaws and is totally inadequate as a guide for reading the text samples. The only justification to publish this manual as the eleventh edition of Leskien’s monumental *Handbuch* would be the photomechanical reproduction of the texts. It is seriously misleading to present the whole as “based on the edition of A. Leskien”. Obviously, the publishing house did not trouble to consult experts in the field of OCS. The result is devastating. If the prestigious Universitätsverlag C. Winter wants to keep up its good name, the one sensible thing to do is to withdraw this “pseudo-Leskien” from the market.

NOTES

¹ The information on the publisher is based on what is printed on the title pages of the editions. It is at variance with the statement in the eleventh edition that the handbook was published as early as 1886 by C. Winter in Heidelberg.

² In the third edition, Leskien chose a different text sample from the Codex Suprasliensis, without, however, removing the words of the old sample from the glossary (“... habe ich die Wörter aus dem gestrichenen Textstück der zweiten Auflage stehen lassen”, 1898, V”). One wonders if these words are still in the newly typeset glossary.

³ Here one would, of course, expect /neso/, /jęзыкъ/. Note that the use of phonemic “/’/” is unclear throughout the book, considering statements like “снимать Aussprache /s’ n’/” (p. 45).

⁴ Of course, there are spellings like **родосъ** (*rodъ sь*) and **домотъ** (*domъ tь*), but these have nothing to do with “Genusschwankung” (cf. P. Diels, *Altkirchenslavische Grammatik*, 1963, 153–154).

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