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## Aims, Methods and Problems of Editing Church Slavonic Biblical Texts with Special Reference to the Psalter

It is sometimes seen as a matter for regret that Church Slavonic translations of scriptural texts are not available in critical editions which reconstruct their original, or at least their earliest attainable form (e.g. Bruni 2017: 135-143). This paper will argue, on grounds similar to those recently applied to the Apostol (Cleminson 2018), that a reconstructive critical edition of the Old Church Slavonic Psalter is neither methodologically feasible nor practically useful.

The difficulties which would attend such an edition can be seen in two published attempts at reconstruction (Dunkov 1994; Theissen 1994). Comparison between them is complicated by differences between their approaches to the editor's task. In his apparatus Dunkov cites, often sporadically, only a sub-set of the sources listed in his bibliography, and he does not make explicit the rationale for his choices among them, which therefore has to be inferred from his practice. He appears to rely primarily on the earliest witness, the Sinai Psalter (Sever'janov 1922), plus one other main source, the Bologna commentated Psalter (Jagić 1907), which he seems to take as representative for the rest of the early tradition; from ps.138 onward, however, he also draws on the Pogodin commentated Psalter (Jagić 1907), presumably because the end of the Sinai Psalter is lacking in Sever'janov's edition. It is not clear why he does this, since the missing part of the Sinai Psalter was discovered in 1975 and published photographically (Tarnanides 1988: 249-281) prior to Dunkov's edition.

By contrast Theissen presents data from his chosen witnesses systematically and offers some explanation for his editorial decisions. Because he adduces a number of witnesses, especially the Bologna and Pogodin Psalters plus the Vienna commentated psalter (Hamm 1967), he is able to argue on the basis of ostensible majority readings. Not surprisingly, Dunkov and Theissen sometimes diverge in their reconstructions even of the short and relatively stable text of ps.22:

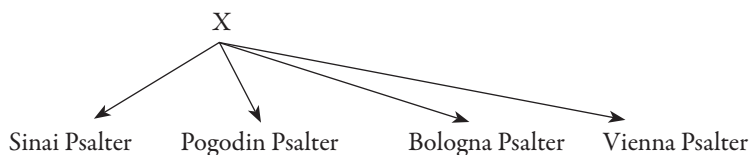
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|---------|---|
| verse 2 | εἰς τόπον Dunkov: <b>НА МѢСТѢ</b> , earliest attested reading, but Theissen: <b>ВЪ МѢСТѢ</b> , majority reading.                                  |
| verse 3 | τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ Dunkov: <b>ИМЕНЕ ЕГО</b> , earliest attested reading (supported by Greek), but Theissen: <b>ИМЕНЕ ТВОЕГО</b> majority reading. |

Where these straightforward criteria – earliest witness or majority reading – are not adequate to resolve divergences among witnesses, Dunkov seems to rely on the authority

of the standard Greek text, whereas Theissen privileges expected OCS usage over variants supported by Greek:

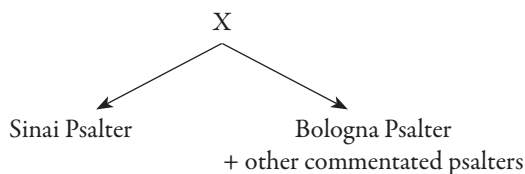
verse 3     ὁδηγήσεν Dunkov: НАСТАВИ МА, majority reading, supported by Greek, but  
Theissen: НАСТАВИЛЪ МА ЕСИ, earliest attested reading and expected usage.

The trouble with these approaches is not simply that they give different results, nor even that the criteria on which each editor relies may come into mutual conflict. A more fundamental difficulty about Theissen's apparatus is that the stemmatic relationships which it assumes do not take account of secondary Greek influence on the commented psalters. Theissen's use of sources can be represented diagrammatically thus:



The implication is that each witness has equal and independent weight; but this is unlikely, because the Pogodin, Bologna and Vienna Psalters exhibit shared peculiarities which presumably go back to that stage in transmission at which the Church Slavonic version of the psalms was checked against Greek as the translation of Hesychius' catena was added to it, e.g. pss.17:24 ОЦѢЦИѢ СѦ, 19:7 РАДОУМѢХЪ, 26:9 НЕ ОТВѢРЪЗИ МЕНЕ ОТЪ ЛИЦА ТВОЕГО, 44:18 Г҃И at the start of the verse, 106:19 СПАСЕ, 140:4 СЪЧЕТАИѢ СѦ, where other sub-types of Redaction I, together with Redaction II, have СЪХРАНИѢ СѦ, ПОЗНАХЪ, НЕ ОТВРАТИ ЛИЦА ТВОЕГО ОТЪ МЕНЕ, ИЗБАВИ, СЪЧЕТАИѢТЪ СѦ, and lack Г҃И in ps. 44:18.

So Theissen's stemma collapses to that implied by Dunkov's apparatus:



This in turn is problematic as a starting point for textual reconstruction, because a stemma consisting only of two branches does not provide a method of evaluating variants: there can be no majority readings, and therefore no means of distinguishing between original readings and secondary idiosyncrasies even in the earliest witness (Thomson 1998: 829-830), except the editor's judgement. In Dunkov's case this is exercised arbitrarily: he usually favours the Sinai Psalter, but sometimes prefers the readings of the Bologna Psalter, e.g. pss.19:8 КОЛЕСНИЦАХЪ NOT ОРЖЖЪИХЪ, 77:47 СОУКАМИНЬЕ NOT ЧРЪНИЦА, 119:5 КИДАРЬСКЪИМИ NOT ТЕМНАѢ, and pss.19:4, 49:8, 50:18, 65:15 ОЛОКАВЪТОМАТА notwithstanding the Sinai Psalter's consistent use of ВЪСЕСЪЖАГЛЕМАѢ.

The early textual transmission of the Church Slavonic Psalter should preferably be represented in a way which allows for recurrent checking against Greek (or Latin), pervasive linguistic revision and consequent indeterminacy in the relationships among the earliest manuscript sources. **DIAGRAM 1** (cfr. page 98) aims to reflect these complications.

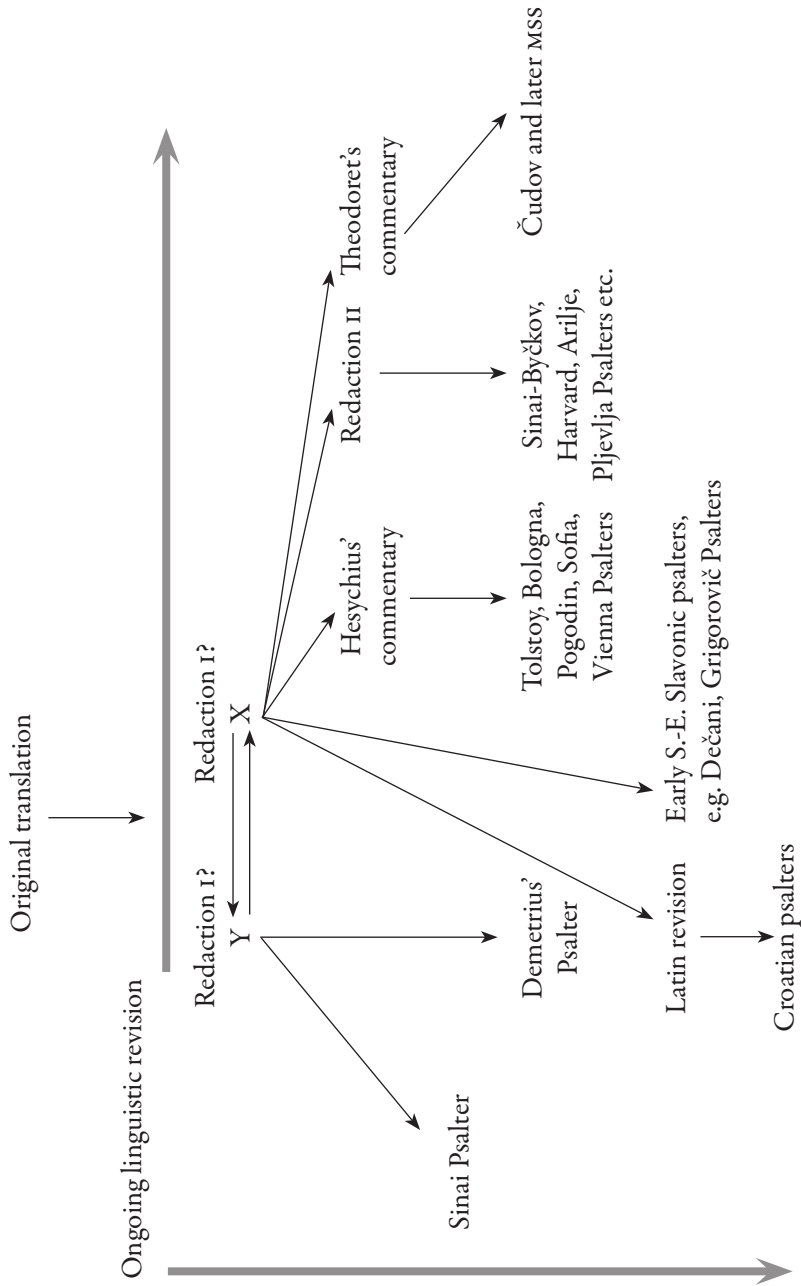
A crucial feature of this diagram is the choice which it offers between two possible root nodes, either of which may be equated with Redaction I of the text. If node X is given this status, then node Y represents a stage of textual development specific to the two Glagolitic psalter manuscripts, the Sinai Psalter and Demetrius' Psalter. If Y is taken as root node, X stands for a secondary stage from which all other sub-types of Redaction I derive. The problems which would ensue if one were to adopt the latter view are illustrated by places where the Sinai Psalter offers a completely different translation of Greek from all the other witnesses, including Demetrius' Psalter (Miklas 2012; Miklas *et al.* 2021), which otherwise shares many of its peculiarities, e.g.:

- ps.41:1 ὃν τρόπον: ѿкоже in commentated psalters and Redaction II, ѿко in Demetrius' Psalter, early South-East Slavonic psalters (Karačorova 1989: 182) and Croatian psalters (Vajs 1916; Šimić 2014), but имъже оѡражомъ in the Sinai Psalter.
- ps.138:17 ἀρχαί: владыиѡства in commentated psalters, владыиѡствѣ in Demetrius' Psalter, early South-East Slavonic psalters and Redaction II, владыиѡствѣ in Croatian psalters, but здыѡла in the Sinai Psalter.

If we assume that Y is root node and that the readings in the Sinai Psalter are inherited from it, we have to accept that in these instances the direction of change was, unusually, from more to less literal translation, and that Demetrius' Psalter contains a revised or contaminated text. But since the Sinai Psalter itself shows clear signs of revision elsewhere (MacRobert 2018: 158-162), the alternative view, in which X is root node, is at least as plausible. On this interpretation, all branches of the tradition have been subjected to some deliberate revision. In such circumstances reconstruction is fundamentally problematic, because it depends on subjective judgements of priority which are open to question.

Moreover, traces of an early attempt at revision are found in at least three distinct sub-types of Redaction I: the change by which *δορεάν* is rendered as *ашоуѣ* in ps.34:7 & 19 but as *спзгити* in pss.68:5, 108:3, 118:161 and 119:7 is attested unanimously in the Sinai Psalter and Demetrius' Psalter, in the Pogodin Psalter and in the Croatian tradition. It is also implicit in the Tolstoy and Sofia commentated Psalters, MS Ф.п.1.23 in the Russian National Library and MS 2 in the Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the translation of the commentary on the psalms by Theodoret of Cyrrhus extant in fifteenth and sixteenth-century East Slavonic manuscripts (Lépissier 1968: 2-3), and the early South-East Slavonic Dečani and Grigorovič Psalters (Mitrevski 2000; Pavlova 1978). These manuscripts reflect different lexical preferences: the Tolstoy Psalter switches from *ашоуѣ* in ps.34 to *везоума* subsequently; the Sofia Psalter has *везоума* in ps.34 but *спзгити* elsewhere, as do also, though less

DIAGRAM I



consistently, the Dečani and Grigorovič Psalters (MacRobert 1993: 67; MacRobert 2005: 44); the East Slavonic tradition of Theodoret's commentary changes from *ашоуѣ* in ps. 34 to *тоуѣ*. But with the exception of the Bologna Psalter, which generalizes *спзати* for *δωρεάν*, and Redaction II, which prefers *взгоуѣ* throughout, all these witnesses change their choice of translation at the same place, ps.68:5. This pattern of variation, which looks like the outcome of deliberate if incomplete revision, has to be referred back to the stage in transmission, whether X or Y, from which all the sub-types derive. Consequently, even if X or Y could be reconstructed by classic text-critical methods without excessive appeal to subjective judgement, neither of them could be equated with the original translation of the Psalter into Church Slavonic.

So the traditional aim of a critical edition, to recover the archetype from which extant manuscripts are descended and use it as a basis for inferring the characteristics of the original text, is in this instance unrealistic, and its results would inevitably be controversial. However, editions of scriptural translations have a further purpose, to establish the version in use in a specific period and area and to assist the identification of quotations in other texts composed or copied at that time and place (Michajlyčeva 2000: 82). One example of such a redactional edition is the parallel printing of two fourteenth-century Croatian manuscripts of the Psalter (Vajs 1916), which embody the stable results of light revision against Latin and are supported by more recent investigation (Šimić 2014). Another is Jagić's parallel edition of the Bologna and Pogodin Psalters, with variants from the Sofia Psalter, the Bucharest commentated Psalter, MS Acad. 205 in the Library of the Roumanian Academy of Sciences, and also, in an appendix, from the Tolstoy Psalter. When supplemented from Hamm's edition of the Vienna Psalter, this encompasses almost all the evidence available up to the mid fourteenth century for that sub-type of Redaction I which co-occurs with Hesychius' commentary. In effect Jagić supplies the attentive reader with the evidence both for a reconstruction and for the residual problems which it would face, particularly the aberrant readings in one of the earliest witnesses, the Tolstoy Psalter (MacRobert 1993: 70, 75-77), and the contaminated tradition in the Bucharest Psalter (MacRobert 1995).

Because Jagić focuses on one sub-type of Redaction I, his apparatus is a more limited resource than Valjavec's comparative materials, which include the Croatian tradition (Valjavec 1889-1890: XCVIII, 1-84; XCIX, 1-53), but it is easier to use. Moreover, by adding variants from the uncommentated Sinai Psalter, Jagić created a better basis for checking early quotations than that manuscript provides on its own. So, for example, evidence drawn from the editions of Jagić and Vajs in Nahtigal's apparatus to the edition of the *Euchologium Sinaïticum* shows that ps.4:5 *оумилите сѧ* and ps.53:7 *истинноуѣ* are well-supported readings in Redaction I, in contrast to the Sinai Psalter's idiosyncratic variants *оумолитъ сѧ* and *рѣснотоуѣ* (Nahtigal 1941). Similarly, by using a range of witnesses to Redaction I, Čermák is able to demonstrate more precisely the extent to which the wording of quotations from the psalms translated from Latin in the Homilies of Gregory the Great underwent gradual influence from the Church Slavonic psalter text (Čermák 2013).

It is a pity that analyses of quotations from the psalms in early Church Slavonic sources often either rely on the Sinai Psalter alone (Kurz 1955: xv-xvi; Vlášek 1971; Dunkov 1995: XLIX-LV; Ribarova, Hauptová 1998; Spasova 2004: 73-85) or at best supplement it with references to the commentated tradition, mainly the Bologna Psalter (Moszyński 1971; Naumow 1985; Garzaniti 1994; Garzaniti 2006). These studies tend to conceal the fact that the wording of quotations from the psalms in early sources is usually closer to that of the sub-types of Redaction I dependent on X in the diagram above than to the Sinai Psalter, and is sometimes characteristic of a particular sub-type or even of Redaction II. For instance, ps.110:10 *ЗД҃УАЛО/НА҃УАЛО* (Ribarova, Hauptová 1998: 228) is standard throughout Redaction I, while *ПОКО҃НЪ* is found only in the Sinai Psalter and Demetrius' Psalter. In ps.64:5 *ВЪ ПРА҃ВДѢ* (Moszyński 1971: 147; Garzaniti 2006: 71-72) is widespread in Redactions I and II, though not in the Sinai Psalter, Demetrius' Psalter and the Bologna Psalter. Similarly ps.44:10 *ПРѢОУКРАШЕНА* (Moszyński 1971:150; Garzaniti 2006: 68-69) figures in Croatian and South-East Slavonic manuscripts of Redaction I as well as in Redaction II. In ps.117:27 *ІАВИ СЯ* (Garzaniti 2006: 81-82) occurs predominantly in commentated psalters within Redaction I and is adopted in Redaction II, whereas ps.64:2 *МОЛИТВА* (Moszyński 1971: 153; Garzaniti 2006: 71) is mostly confined to the psalter manuscripts containing Hesychius' commentary. The wording of the Ostromir Codex in ps.44:5 *НАПРА҃ЖИ* (Naumow 1985: 235; Garzaniti 2006: 67-68) is unusual in Redaction I and may reflect early influence of Redaction II.

Where several extant manuscripts are close in date to the genesis of the redaction which they all follow, it may be possible to use one of them as either a starting-point or a surrogate for reconstruction, if an apparatus of variant readings from the others is provided. So a critical edition of Redaction III, which is attested from the fourteenth century onward, could be constructed on the basis of the Tomić Psalter (Džurova 1990) plus a selection of approximately contemporary and later South Slavonic manuscripts to show the modest evolution of this version up to the time when it was fixed in print. Obvious candidates would be: the Karadimov-Šopov Psalter, MSS 454 and 1138 in the Bulgarian National Library (Karačorova 1989; MacRobert 1998; Musakova 2008); the fourteenth-century Serbian Church Slavonic MS 34 in Belgrade University Library (MacRobert 1998); the Munich Psalter (Dufrenne *et al.* 1978-1983, II); the 1494 Cetinje and 1521 Goražde printed psalters (Martinović 1986; Mano-Zisi, Barać 2008); the sixteenth-century Plovdiv Psalter (Češko 1989, I: 70-80). Such an approach would incidentally solve the problem of choosing an orthography: it would be anachronistic to use idealized ninth-century Old Church Slavonic spelling for a redaction which emerged in the early fourteenth century.

Another suitable object for a critical edition would be the Church Slavonic translation of the commentary on the psalms by Theodoret of Cyrrhus, of which only an eleventh-century East Slavonic fragment is at present available in print (Pogorelov 1910). We would have such an edition, based on the fifteenth-century manuscript Čud. 7/177 in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, if Lépissier had not died untimely before he could complete it. The recent discovery of a more complete manuscript, Rog. 444 in the Russian



State Library (Veršinín 2018), opens up the possibility that this important early translation may at last be edited in full.

It might also be possible to produce a critical edition of another early version of the Church Slavonic Psalter, Redaction II. The separate existence of this redaction was recognized more than a century ago (Sreznevskij 1877: 15-17, 50-51, 61; Jagić 1884: 36-55). Jagić's analysis, which is informed by a variety of sources including the Croatian tradition, identifies a number of the variants which characterize Redaction II, even though he had to rely for this purpose on Sreznevskij's observations plus a late and eccentric witness, the Simonov Psalter (Jagić 1884: 44-51). His article remains an invaluable introduction to the textual history of the Church Slavonic Psalter, because it distinguishes clearly between redactional peculiarities, especially those which reflect divergent Greek readings or divergent interpretations of Greek, linguistic developments, and orthographical variation (Jagić 1884: 37-38, 54-55).

In other studies a wealth of detail and a less judicious use of sources tend to obscure these crucial distinctions. The doubts which Pogorelov expresses about the coherence of Redaction II (Pogorelov 1901: XXX-XXXII) are based on data from a group of relatively late manuscripts, some of which, like the Simonov Psalter, contain compilations of Redaction II with the commentated traditions (MacRobert 2010). The tabulation of diagnostic variant readings which he supplies (Pogorelov 1901: XLVI-LXIV) in fact gives a rather clearer, though not entirely reliable picture of Redaction II. Because this tabulation draws on a number of witnesses, it is a useful supplement to Karačorova's corpus of textual variants (Karačorova 1989), which includes only one representative of Redaction II, the eleventh-century Sinai-Byčkov Psalter (Altbauer, Lunt 1978; Tarnanides 1988: 283-316), and lists only those variants which it shares with witnesses to other redactions. Consequently Karačorova treats some of the textologically significant readings in Redaction II as idiosyncrasies and subsumes a number of its characteristic linguistic features under later developments. This may in part explain why, although the Sinai-Byčkov Psalter was published over forty years ago, it has not always been used even by scrupulous researchers seeking to identify the wording of quotations from the psalms (Rogačevskaja 1992; Michajlyčeva 2000), though its importance for this purpose has recently been acknowledged in some studies (Slavova 2002: 152-60; Bedina 2004: 26; Ostrowski 2009; Andreev *et al.* 2024: 149-150, 313).

Although there is a small amount of early East Slavonic evidence for Redaction I without commentary (Zaliznjak, Janin 2001: 19-20; Bedina 2004: 78), Redaction II is well established in the East Slav area from an early date (Krivko 2015: 107, 361) and appears to have been the main type in circulation there up to the mid fourteenth century; it was also in use among the Serbs in the thirteenth century (MacRobert 1997; Trifunović 2001). So a critical edition based on the Sinai-Byčkov Psalter could draw on manuscripts from these areas and would be of practical assistance to scholars of the period. The East Slavonic tradition could be represented additionally by the twelfth-century psalter MS Typ.221 in the Houghton Library, Harvard (Altbauer, Lunt 1978: 146-177), the Novgorod antiphonal psalters, MSS Sof.62 and 63 in the Russian National Library (MacRobert 2013), possibly supplemented by conservative manuscripts of the earlier fourteenth century, such as

Zacharij's Psalter written for Princess Marina, MS Sin.235 in the Russian State Historical Museum (Sreznevskij 1877: 50-51; Amfilochij 1880-1881), MS 15482 in the regional history museum in Jaroslavl' (MacRobert 1992), and MS Tip.29 in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (Pogorelov 1901: 23-35). The Serbian tradition could supply the late thirteenth-century manuscripts Sinai Slav.7 (Speranskij 1927: 98), the Pljevlja Psalter, MS 80 in the monastery of the Holy Trinity at Pljevlja, and the Belgrade fragments of the Arilje Psalter (Cernić 1980; Cernić 1981; Vasiljev 1963; Vasiljev 1999; MacRobert 1991; MacRobert 2005).

Other editions of Church Slavonic psalters which do more than publish the text of an individual manuscript deploy variants not only from the relevant redactional tradition, but from a wider range of sources, chosen on a variety of criteria, and should perhaps be called orientational rather than critical. On the one hand Sever'janov's edition of the Sinai Psalter adduces evidence from the Bologna and Pogodin Psalters mainly to elucidate scribal errors and linguistic difficulties; Mareš's edition of the part of the Sinai Psalter discovered in 1975 (Mareš 1997) supplies variants from these two sources plus a third, the Vienna Psalter, in a more systematic fashion but essentially for orientation within the tradition of Redaction I, not for reconstruction. At the opposite extreme the edition of the Simonov Psalter (Amfilochij 1880-1881) attempts to locate its text within the whole history of Church Slavonic versions of the psalms; in Alekseev's terms this is a historical edition (Alekseev 1999: 63-63). However, as was pointed out at the time (Jagić 1884: 39-40), it was an over-ambitious project: it is not obvious why it should have been based on the Simonov Psalter, rather than, say, on Zacharij's more conservative psalter manuscript; and it is doubtful whether comparison between an innovative fourteenth-century offshoot of Redaction II and – for example – Firsov's revision of 1683 is of real interest or use to anyone.

In contrast, the apparatus to the psalter text from Hval's Zbornik (Kuna *et al.* 1986) is if anything too modest in scope. The editor provides variant readings from the Bucharest Psalter because the two manuscripts are typologically similar: they are both conflations of Redaction I with Redaction III. But they belong to different functional types, the one liturgical, the other commentated; they do not share a copying tradition; and they draw on their sources in different ways, which the reader can follow only by reference to the two parent redactions, for which systematic information is not supplied.

A more successful attempt to locate a manuscript within its broader textological context by means of a variorum apparatus is the edition of the Norov Psalter (Češko *et al.* 1989). This early fourteenth-century manuscript is so far the only known witness to a radical revision, Redaction IV, and therefore has a claim to interest in its own right. The apparatus allows the reader to compare the text with Redaction I, the probable point of departure for the reviser's work; with an alternative revision of similar date, Redaction III; and also with the derivative Redaction V which came to predominate among the East Slavs from the fifteenth century onwards. These are useful comparisons, even if Redaction I might be more suitably represented not by the Sinai Psalter, but by the Pogodin Psalter, which was written at about the same period as the Norov Psalter, and the fourteenth-cen-



tury Tomić Psalter might be preferable to the sixteenth-century Plovdiv Psalter as a source for Redaction III. A more important methodological weakness in Češko's apparatus is the fact that each redaction is represented by one manuscript only. This means that the reader has no way of determining whether a specific variant is typical of the relevant redaction or peculiar to the individual manuscript in which it occurs.

The recently published orientational edition of Demetrius' Psalter (Miklas *et al.* 2021) aims to mitigate this problem. Its apparatus presents the full range of variant readings from the Sinai Psalter, in order to show both the close relationship between these two Glagolitic manuscripts and also the substantive differences between them. In addition, it locates Demetrius' Psalter within Redaction I by drawing on two representatives of each sub-type of Redaction I: the Pogodin and Bologna commented psalters, the Grigorovič and Dečani South-East Slavonic devotional psalters and the two Croatian psalters published by Vajs. The choice of these witnesses is motivated by their relatively early dating and good state of preservation (Miklas *et al.* 2021: 43). As is common in early Church Slavonic manuscripts, they exhibit a range of insignificant variants which are due either to scribal error, e.g. mistakes in rubrication, confusion between the conjunctions *ѣаа* and *ѣааа*, neglect of agreement between the relative pronoun and its antecedent, or to local preferences in spelling and inflexional forms, e.g. the choice of vowel in various case endings, imperatives and dual verb forms, ikavism (Miklas *et al.* 2021: 45-46). Because these types of variant, though informative about the provenance of the individual manuscripts in which they occur, are not significant for the establishment of textual redactions, they are excluded from the apparatus. For the same reason the addition or omission of the word *и* 'and' in a single witness is not recorded. The distribution of this conjunction may be of textological significance when it is shared by a group of manuscripts which follow a specific textual tradition based on Greek. But in individual psalter manuscripts the presence or absence of *и* is commonly due to scribal inadvertence, especially as so many versicles of the psalms start with this conjunction.

Even after these modest exclusions there remain in the apparatus variants which patently result from scribal deviation or local linguistic revision. The rationale for including them is to illustrate the transmission of Redaction I, whose witnesses can mostly be characterized as linguistically conservative but not subject to systematic textual control (Karačorova 1989: 201-239), except when a deliberate revision has been undertaken, e.g. the translation of Hesychius' commentary on the psalms or the Croatian harmonization of the Church Slavonic and Latin psalter texts.

It may be objected that, as pointed out above, two witnesses are not sufficient by themselves to reconstruct a sub-type, that the distinction between redactional and local linguistic features may not always be clearcut, and that it would therefore be better to present maximal information to the reader's judgement (Pope 1986; Pope 1996). But this is to derogate from the editorial function. It is the business of the editor to sift the evidence, to choose those witnesses which occupy key positions within their extant textual tradition, to differentiate between trivial and significant variants and to compile an apparatus which

does not simply consist of raw data, but is rather an extended argument for a particular interpretation. The editor's decisions may not always match the expectations of readers (Taseva 2022: 350), but such discrepancies can be managed if the editor provides a clear introductory explanation of principles and method, indicating where further information is to be found. On these conditions, a redactional or orientational variorum edition of a Church Slavonic scriptural translation can be at least as useful as a reconstructive critical edition, and easier both to realize and to justify.

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### Abstract

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*Aims, Methods and Problems of Editing Church Slavonic Biblical Texts with Special Reference to the Psalter*

This paper argues that the classical reconstructive critical edition is not methodologically well suited to the textual tradition of the Church Slavonic Psalter, which has been subject to repeated linguistic revision and correction against its Greek original. It reviews alternative possibilities, such as critical reconstruction of specific redactions or variorum editions which locate a particular copy or redaction within the wider context of related versions, and suggests instances in which these approaches have been or could be usefully be applied.

### Keywords

Critical Edition; Reconstructive Edition; Redactional Edition; Variorum Edition; Oriental Edition.