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TEXT-CRITICAL NOTES TO CONSTANTINE OF PRES LAV'S DIDACTIC GOSPEL*

Abstract. Constantine of Preslav's *Učitel'noe evangelie* was written at the end of the ninth century but came down to us in only four full, much later, copies from the twelfth (the single East Slavonic manuscript [S]) to the fourteenth century (the other three South Slavonic manuscripts [G, H, W]). Copies are both scarce and distant in time and place as well as different in script from their lost (Glagolitic) protograph, with the result that scribal

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errors are inevitable, yet not always noted. The article proposes three methodological approaches to reconstruct some of the lexemes distorted by the manuscript tradition, even in passages without an attested Greek source text. The first approach relies on variant readings in situations that lack a Greek parallel. In cases that lack variant readings, the second method is applied, which considers references and allusions to Biblical or patristic texts to elucidate the meaning behind sometimes incomprehensible phrases. The third approach counts on the very meaning of the respective portion of text (i.e., the direct context of a word) and the rhetorical techniques used in it.

Keywords: Old Bulgarian / Old Church Slavonic translations from Greek, catenae, homilies, Biblical quotations, diachronic lexicography

Preliminary notes

The prevailing practice¹ in Slavonic ecdotics is to mirror a single manuscript and to base the edition of a medieval monument on this representative copy, even when the edition reflects variant readings from other copies and – for translations – also from a corresponding Greek text². In contrast, editors of Byzantine texts usually aim at establishing an Urtext, that is, at attempting to reconstruct the text in its initial form, which, inevitably, differs from its (extant) witnesses. The gap between the two approaches is explained by various historical factors: the existence of only much later Slavonic copies of a lost Slavonic protograph, the lack of a single Slavonic orthographic norm, the lack of a critical edition of the respective Greek original, and,

¹ For a brief presentation of the three directions in Slavonic ecdotics with examples of each, and a proposal to use them all, see J. FUCHSBAUER, *The Edition of the Slavonic Dioptra: Challenges and Solutions*, [in:] *Editing Mediaeval Texts from a Different Angle. Slavonic and Multilingual Traditions*, ed. L. SELS, J. FUCHSBAUER, V. TOMELLERI, L. DE VOS, Leuven–Paris–Bristol 2018, p. 179–191.

² A useful systematization of the types of the Greek source-text critical apparatus to the editions of Slavonic translations is proposed by L. TASEVA, *Greek Critical Apparatus to Editions of Slavonic Translations: Necessity and (Im)Possibility*, [in:] *Editing Mediaeval Texts from a Different Angle...*, p. 401–427.

sometimes, a complicated manuscript tradition of the translated texts that were continuously re-edited (and compared to their sources) by various scribes³.

A useful starting point for a reconstruction of target texts (that is, translations) is a concentration on particular words (especially on unclear, incomprehensible ones), and a search for their initial appearance before distortions were introduced during copying. In this article I discuss a methodology for such lexical reconstructions, or, more precisely, three different approaches, which have been applied successfully to the creation of the Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian Word Indices to Constantine of Preslav's Didactic Gospel (*Učitel'noe evangelie*⁴, henceforth UE).

UE, a 9th-century cycle of Sunday sermons⁵ commenting on Gospel readings for the entire Church year is a useful, representative case study for at least four reasons:

First, the edition⁶ is based on the oldest extant copy (the East Slavonic⁷ Synodal copy of the late 12th century, GIM 262, henceforth S), but it also reflects variant readings from the other three extant full witnesses (all Serbian: the Gilferding copy of the year 1286, RNB 32,

³ F. THOMSON, *The Problems of Editing Slavonic Translations*, [in:] *Editing Mediaeval Texts from a Different Angle...*, p. 427–439.

⁴ *Evangelienhomiliar* is probably the most suitable identification for the monument (cf. IDEM, *Constantine of Preslav and the Old Bulgarian Translation of 'Historia ecclesiastica et mystica contemplatio' Attributed to Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople*, Pbg 10.1, 1986, p. 41–48), although the designation *Uchitel'noe evangelie* has become widely accepted in the scholarship. The corresponding English term, as suggested by R. Cleminson, is Gospel Homiliary (personal communication 18 VIII 2025).

⁵ The 51 sermons in it are intended to be delivered at the Sunday liturgies for the whole year – from Easter to Palm Sunday – providing instruction and guidance based on the Gospel reading for that week and on other peculiarities, such as the repetition of a sermon.

⁶ М. ТИХОВА, *Старобългарското Учительно евангелие на Константин Преславски по най-стария препис (ГИМ, Син. 262)*, Freiburg i. Br. 2012 [= MLSDV, 58].

⁷ One of my anonymous reviewers suggested that this copy should be referred to as either *Old East Slavonic* or *Old Russian*. In medievalist scholarship, however, there is a widely accepted practice of naming copies according to their local characteristics, since the historical timeframe is clear and the repetition of *Old* is considered redundant.

henceforth G; the Hilandar copy of the year 1344, Hil 385, henceforth H; and the Viennese copy of the 14th century, ÖNB № 12, henceforth W). This allows for a traditional variant-based text-critical approach.

The edition of UE⁸ gives, in the footer of each page, the parallel Greek text according to Cramer's⁹ edition of the catenae to the Gospels¹⁰. Yet, during work on the bilingual word indices to UE, further Greek parallels were found¹¹ for some of the Old Bulgarian parts that had previously been thought to have been authored by Constantine. Available Greek parallels have always been not only reliable evidence in general, but also an aid and corrective in understanding an Old Bulgarian translated text.

The second reason is related to the very nature of UE. It is a combination of authored and translated parts, both of which are the work of Constantine of Preslav. Constantine translated Greek Gospel commentaries but, in the introductions and conclusions of the orations, as well as in the Prologue to the whole book, he spoke in his own voice.

⁸ М. ТИХОВА, *Старобългарското Учително евангелие...*

⁹ *Catena graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum*, ed. J. CRAMER, vol. I, *Catena in evangelia S. Matthaei et S. Marci ad fidem Codd. Mss.*, Oxonii 1840; vol. II, *Catena in evangelia S. Lucae et S. Joannis ad fidem Codd. Mss.*, Oxonii 1841 [repr. 1844]. On the inaccuracies of the editions of the catenae to the Gospels cited here, see, e.g., J. REUSS, *Matthäus-, Markus- und Johannes-Katenen nach den handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht*, Münster i. W. 1941, p. 46–47, 164–168. Other scholars, e.g. M. SCHATKIN, *Cramer's 'Catena on Galatians' and Origen*, T 26, 1970, p. 303, comment on inaccuracies of another Catena edition of Cramer.

¹⁰ As has recently been shown, the Catenae edited by Cramer are related to, but not the same as, the Catenae that served as the source of UE, and the identification of the correct sources has made it possible to find both the accurate and the hitherto missing Greek parallels (Д. КОТОВА, *Византийските източници на Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски*, СЛ 67–68, 2023, p. 13–46).

¹¹ D. Kotova found exact Greek parallels to many passages in UE, not only in the Greek New Testament catenae, but also in the homilies of St. John Chrysostom: Д. КОТОВА, *Слово 19 от Учителното евангелие и неговите гръцки източници*, Pbg 46.1, 2022, p. 3–28; ЕАДЕМ, *Оригинално произведение на Константин Преславски ли е 42 слово на Учителното евангелие?*, СЛ 65–66, 2022, p. 99–126; ЕАДЕМ, *Византийските източници...* I.P. PETROV (*The Greek Sources of Učitel'noe Evangelie Revisited: Sermon 20*, Pbg 46.2, 2022, p. 3–28) added newly identified sources for Sermon 20.

The third important point here is that UE comments on specific Gospel readings. The text abounds in Biblical quotations¹², not only from the New Testament excerpts that form the focus of the weekly homily, but also from other parts of the Holy Scripture. A Biblical quotation in a translated text always provides an opportunity to consult its counterpart in the source language, even though it may be only intertextually related to the rest of the studied work. The same observation applies to the role of other quotations, e.g., of works by the Church Fathers.

The fourth and last clarification to be made here is that in the bilingual dictionaries to UE the common linguistic practice is followed of annotating reconstructed lexemes with an asterisk (*) in order to distinguish them from attested forms, although the asterisk is recorded next to the address of a word in a manuscript, and not to the word itself, e.g.:

врьхъ (2)

- κορυφός (1): 1/W168a25*
- Ø (1): 48/220a1

Respectively:

κορυφός (1)

- врьхъ (1): 1/W168a25*

The majority of the lexical reconstructions in the bilingual indices to UE have resulted from the comparison of lexical forms in the Slavonic target text with their correlates in the respective Greek source text, and a number of such reconstructions have already been

¹² More than 1000 in total. Some of the New Testament ones are identified by Ж. ЖИКОВА, *Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски – текстологични и лексикални проблеми*, дисертация за присъждане на ОНС „доктор”, София 2017, and others – during the creation of bilingual dictionaries to UE. See Л. ТАСЕВА, Д. КОТОВА, И. ПЕТРОВ, Е. ДИКОВА, П. СТАНКОВСКА, Г. МИТОВ, *Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски*, vol. II..., p. 501–542.

identified¹³. Here it is worth noting just a few further examples of reconstructions triggered by a Greek parallel in the absence of variant readings. For example, the phrase **ЮГДАЖЕ ОНЬ Ѡ ДХА ИЗВѢСТОВАНЪ БЫВЪ** (in Sermon 2, W f. 169c35 with no counterpart in S) corresponds to Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἀνέπνευσε πληροφορηθεῖς, which makes it clear that Ѡ ДХА ‘from the Spirit’ is a copyist’s error originating from an initial form *ѠДЪХА, to be lemmatized as **ОТЪДЪХАТИ** ‘inhale, breathe’. Similarly, as **СТРАННО ЖИТЪЕ** ‘strange life’ (Sermon 35, S f. 162b6) corresponds to ἐμπλοθῆ ζώην, the respective Slavonic adjective needs to be lemmatized as **СТРАСТЪНЪ** ‘passionate’. A second type of such reconstructions, which is even more reliable, is when the Greek source accords with the variant target readings, as in the case of **ВѢРА СЛ** (Sermon 48, S f. 217a2) against ἐκθηριοῦσθαι in the source and **ЗОУВѢРЕ СЕ WG ЗВѢРЕ СЕ H** in the other target copies, which all point to an initial **ЗВѢРИТИ СЛ** ‘make oneself a beast’. Similarly, **ВРАЖДЕНЕ** (Sermon 46, S f. 207c7), which is parallel to πολῖται and has a variant **ГРАЖДАНЕ WGH** points to the lemma **ГРАЖДАНИНЪ** ‘citizen’; while **КРОТЪКЪМИ** ‘mild, tame’ (S f. 59c8) for βραχέσι with variants **КРАТЪКЪМИ W КРАТЪКЪМИ GH** needs to be lemmatized as **КРАТЪКЪ** ‘short’.

This approach, which starts from the parallel Greek source, has a long and broad tradition and has often proven to be successful. Here, however, I propose three other starting points – from the variants, from the quotations, and from the context – in an attempt to establish a methodology that also works in cases without an attested Greek source, i.e., in the parts of the collection that are not primarily translations. I demonstrate below that even in such cases reconstructions of certain lexemes are possible. The three methods are often used together, but they are described separately below for the sake of clarity.

¹³ E. BLÁHOVÁ, *Kompletní vydání Výkladu na evangelia Konstantina Prěslavského*, Sla 83.3, 2014, p. 335 mentions several inaccuracies in the word divisions in the edition of UE, but the resource most concerned with all sorts of corrections to this edition is В.Б. КРЫСЬКО, *Учительное евангелие Константина Болгарского: editio princeps*, ИРАН.СЛЯ 76.5, 2017, p. 52–62. His reconstructions have all been taken into consideration in the bilingual indices to the monument and are listed precisely in Л. ТАСЕВА, Д. КОТОВА, И. ПЕТРОВ, Е. ДИКОВА, П. СТАНКОВСКА, Г. МИТОВ, *Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски*, vol. I..., p. 85–118.

Variant-based approach

Variant readings have traditionally been used primarily in connection with establishing a history of a text, and especially with respect to identifying its textological branches, but a variant-based approach can also often help to recover words distorted by the manuscript tradition. Probably the most impressive example of that use of variants in UE is in Sermon 39, where the adjective in the phrase *платоньскыими словесы* S (f. 182d19-20) is reconstructed as *платоньскъ* ‘related to Plato’, thanks to the variants *платон’скъ* (G), *платоньскъ* (H), *платоносъскъ* (W) and the overall message of the surrounding passage¹⁴. But other examples further illustrate how this approach helps in resolving equivocal or completely unclear places in a text.

For example, a phrase from the concluding part of Sermon 37, S f. 169d18-170a6 with no Greek parallel seems meaningful out of context. It follows below as in edition¹⁵, except that the available variants are here given in square brackets for an easier reference.

се слышашаще(!) и видяще• хъль бль нашихъ бываемо• притъчамі [прѣѣмъ W прѣѣмъ
G прѣѣмъ H] къ спсоу нашему• могоущемоу исцелити дша• и телеса наша•

The form *притъчамі* ‘parables’ in S is a noun in the Instr. pl., while its variants in the three other extant full copies are verb forms: *прѣѣмъ* W, *прѣѣмъ* G, *прѣѣмъ* H, all 1st person, pl. imperative of the verb for ‘run towards’. Such a reading of the lexeme, as *прѣѣци*, allows for a more relevant understanding, in which inconsistency about any possible parables addressing the Lord is eliminated:

¹⁴ For details see E. ДИКОВА, *Платонски словеса в Учителното евангелие*, [in:] *Кирило-Методиевото дело в научната и културна памет*, ed. М. ИВАНОВА, Е. ЗАШЕВ, Ц. ВАСИЛЕВ, С. БЪРЛИЕВА 2025 [= КМс, 35], p. 345–363.

¹⁵ М. ТИХОВА, *Старобългарското Учително евангелие...* All the excerpts from UE analyzed below are given with their address in S, by which they could be easily found both in the edition and in the manuscript used as its main source (S).

[We,] having heard and seen this, which happened through Christ our God, let us run to our Savior who can cure our souls and bodies...

Another example illustrates a rather ambiguous phrase clarified only by means of variant readings. The following excerpt is taken from the introduction to Sermon 21 (S f. 106d17–107a01):

огнь во ср̑дцѣхъ нѣхъ понѣцають [погнѣцають W подыгнѣцають G подыгнѣцають H] ѡстѣнѣ
и оуста приготавлиють ꙗ҃зи чюдеса господьна•

Here, the form **понѣцають** is unclear and might be carelessly related to **понашати** ‘reproach’. Fortunately, its counterparts in the other three manuscripts point to an initial **погнѣцати** ‘kindle, inflame’¹⁶. The reading suggested by the variant texts allow the poetry of the passage to emerge:

...because the fire in my heart inflames my mouth and prepares my lips to talk about the miracles of the Lord...

A variant-based approach to lexical reconstruction is the only possible tool to reconstruct both a lexeme and the meaning of the following passage in the conclusion of Sermon 26. This sermon describes mercy and corporeal purity as two spiritual candles, (S f. 128b21-c3):

тѣ бо юсте свѣци дѣховьнѣи• тѣ и нѣкѣ ѡлѣкѣ• не потъкнеть са въ ношѣи• хотѣ [хотѣ WGH]•

¹⁶ One of my anonymous reviewers, referring to А.И. СОБОЛѢВСКИЙ, *Лекции по истории русского языка*, Москва 1907, p. 29, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Соболевский_А.И._Лекции_по_истории_русского_языка._%281907%29.pdf [15 VII 2024], confirmed that, indeed, the two forms should not be connected for morphological reasons and that **понѣцають** results from the loss of **г** before **н**, which is characteristic of early southern East Slavic dialects.

These two are spiritual candles; these two, if holding, a man will not stumble at night, when wanting [walking].

In this passage the variants of the participle $\chi\omicron\tau\alpha$ ‘wanting’ are unanimously $\chi\omicron\delta\epsilon$ ‘walking’, which points to the participle $\chi\omicron\delta\alpha$. In either case, the metaphor about a person walking at night – or who will walk at night – is restored and suggests an association with the New Testament parable about the wise virgins.

Quotation-based approach

It is well known that medieval texts are replete with intertextual references, mainly – although not exclusively – to Holy Scripture. Attention has been drawn also to the authoritative role of quotation in Christian exegesis¹⁷ and it has been underlined that *as it is expected for this genre, [it] is a polyphonic text, in which different voices can be heard*¹⁸. Further, it has been proven that Biblical quotations have a crucial role in determining the place and time of origin of certain texts and their relation to other writings¹⁹. With respect to the earliest Medieval

¹⁷ M. JUVAN, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*, trans. from the Slovenian T. POGAČA, West Lafayette, Indiana 2008, p. 24–25. For authoritative quotations in various literary systems for a period of more than two thousand years especially in introductory lines of texts see C. DIDI, *Le “chiavi tematiche bibliche” nel contesto della tradizione retorica e letteraria europea: un capitolo di poetica storica*, SCer 3, 2013, p. 11–28 and the literature quoted there.

¹⁸ M. DIMITROVA, *New Testament Quotations in a Medieval Slavonic Manuscript with Commentaries on the Song of Songs*, [in:] *Between Text and Text. The Hermeneutics of Intertextuality in Ancient Cultures and their Afterlife in Medieval and Modern Times*, ed. M. BAUKS, W. HOROWITZ, A. LANGE, Göttingen 2013, p. 204.

¹⁹ In relation to the Slavonic ones, see e.g. A. НАУМОВ, *Идея – образ – текст. Исследования по церковнославянской литературе*, Москва 2020, p. 142–162, and, in relation particularly to the Gospels e.g. M. СПАСОВА, *Евангелските цитати в среднобългарското Учително евангелие и проблемът за редакциите на славянския превод на Евангелието*, [in:] *Slavia Orthodoxa. Език и култура. Сборник в чест на проф. дфн Румяна Павлова*, София 2003, p. 367–379; Ж. ЖИКОВА, *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 406–456, or the following articles in *Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски и южнославянските преводи на хомилетични текстове (IX–XIII в.). Филологически и интердисциплинарни ракурси. Доклади от Международната научна конференция в София, 25–27 април 2023 г.*, ed. Л. ТАСЕВА, А. РАБУС, И.П.

Slavonic translations, it should be clearly understood that they are characterized by innovations in all respects, including intertextuality:

The tenth century Old Bulgarian Translations were a kind of deactualization of Late Antique exegesis in a new Christian milieu and in a new liturgical and literary language. Therefore, the medieval Bulgarian translators were confronted with the difficulty how to render the interplay of quotations, allusions, idiomatics, *topoi*, and metaphors, referring to paradigmatic texts of the Jewish and Christian cultures. Later, in the fifteenth century, the Slavonic translators could rely on the earlier Slavonic tradition and could exploit the already established Christian idiomology in different variants²⁰.

As far as UE is concerned, intertextuality is inherent not only in the parts that were translated, but also in those that were authored by Constantine²¹. This situation is not unique insofar as *ecclesiastical authors continued throughout the Middle Ages, without making explicit distinctions, to weave quotations with their own paraphrase and commentaries*²². What is extremely impressive, however, is the opportunities for clarification and understanding that an identified quotation can provide to scholars. Alongside everything mentioned above, it has been recently proven, on material from UE, that a reference to

ПЕТРОВ, София 2024 [= SB, 37]; П. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Евангелските цитати в първата версия на Пространното житие на св. Григорий Акрагантски Akragantski (BHG 707)*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 405–427; P. STANKOVSKA, *Evangelní citáty v autorských částech Poučného evangelia Konstantina Preslavského a jejich srovnání s citáty v Besědách Řehoře Velikého na evangelia*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 235–250; D. STERN, *The Relationship between the Adhortatio ad poenitentiam (Freising II) and Kliment of Ohrid's Homily on a martyr or apostle*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 321–339.

²⁰ M. DIMITROVA, *New Testament Quotations...*, p. 204–205.

²¹ See E. ДИКОВА, *Антропоними и интертекстуалност в Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 133–149; Д. КОТОВА, *Уводите и заключенията в Учителното евангелие: източници и вдъхновения*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*; G. МИТОВ, *Some Aspects of the Slavonic Reception of Isidore of Pelusium: An Isidorian Letter in Constantine of Preslav's Didactic Gospel*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 111–133; М. СПАСОВА, *Трапезната метафора в Учителното евангелие на Константин Преславски и нейните византийски източници*, [in:] *Учителното евангелие...*, p. 79–109; P. STANKOVSKA, *Evangelní citáty...* In UE translated parts, many Gospel quotations have long been identified.

²² M. JUVAN, *History...*, p. 24.

Biblical or Patristic passages and notions can facilitate reconstructing the meaning of a corrupted phrase in portions of text with no attested Greek source and no Slavonic variant readings²³. The reconstruction of particular words is also possible on the basis of an identified quotation only, and this is particularly useful for certain non-translated passages in UE.

There are also cases in which the variant readings accord with the biblical quotations, which makes the respective reconstructions even more reliable, and an example of this type in the conclusion of Sermon 37 illustrates the difference a single letter can make in such a situation. In this text the phrase *и азъ въ покаяю* ‘and I will give you repentance’ (S f. 37/170b10-11) might sound logical²⁴, but after determining that the whole passage quotes Mt 11:28, it turns out that it corresponds closely to *καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύσω*, which means that the last word is to be read not as *покаяю* ‘give repentance’ but as *покою* ‘give rest’. In this case, the other three manuscripts give the same variant *покою* WGH, which confirms the reconstruction.

²³ T. MIKULKA, *Příspěvek k interpretaci Poučného evangelia Konstantína Preslavského. Interdisciplinární spolupráce jako klíč k řešení některých textologických problémů*, Sla 93.2, 2024, p. 194–198 proves that *оутрѣнаго и въшьнаго члѣка очистимъ сѧ* (Sermon 28, S f. 134a08-10) is to be understood as *жтрѣнаго и вънѣшняго члѣка очистимъ сѧ*, because it refers to the philosophical concept of the internal and external man and, more precisely to 2 Cor 4:16, even though the respective lexemes do not differ in the other three full copies of UE. Further, E. ДИКОВА, *Платонски словеса...* reveals that *не хытростию въшьнага премоудрости* (Sermon 39, S f. 182d14) is to be read as *не хытростию вънѣшняга премоудрости* and the variant reading in G *не въ хытростию ннѣшняга премоудрости* most probably leads to the same initial reading through the following steps *хытростию въ ннѣшняга* > *хытростию вънѣшняга* signifying the copyist’s attempt to make sense from the otherwise obscure phrase.

²⁴ One of my anonymous reviewers, referring to *Словарь русского языка XI–XVII вв.*, vol. XVI, (*Поднавѣсь–Поманути*), Москва 1990, p. 149, emphasized that the verb *покаяти* (+ acc.) ‘to confess someone’ is attested only in Middle Russian sources and explained the corrupted form *покаяю* as resulting from a missing letter in the iterative present form *покааю* (*покааѣж*) ‘I put to rest, I give someone rest; I set free,’ which shows a vowel alternation typical of the verb’s iterative form. In the context of the Gospel quotation here, however, the meaning is in no way iterative – *ἀναπαύσω* denotes a single, completed action in a future moment and is translated accordingly in all languages, using a form that expresses a non-repetitive action.

There are, however, significantly more challenging passages, including the following excerpt from the concluding part of Sermon 33 (S, f. 154a08–12):

НИЧУСО ЖЕ БО ВЕЛИКА ПРОСИТЬ БѢ́ТЬ ОТЬ НАСЪ • НЕ ПРОСИТЬ НИЩАГО ОБОГАТИТИ • НЕ ГЛѢТЬ БОЛѢЩАГО
ИЩЕЛАНТИ • НЕ БѢДИТЬ ИС ТЪМЪНИЦА ИЗБАВИТИ • НЪ НАПИТѢТИ ОТЬ ИЗБѢТЪКА НАШЕГО • НАПОИТИ
АЩЕ НИЧѢМЪ НИЧУЖЕМЪ [НИЧУМЪ ЖЕ WH НИЧУИМЪ ЖЕ G] НЕ МОЖЕШИ • ПОНѢ ВОДОЮ СТОУДЕНОЮ • НЪ
НЕ ПОЛЪМЪ СРЪДЦА •

God does not request from us anything great – He does not request to enrich the poor, He does not say to cure the ill, He does not insist to save from prison, but to feed from our excess, to give to drink, if you can nothing else, at least cold water, but not half-hearted.

The unusual form here is **НИЧУЖЕМЪ**, and its variants offer little help in reconstructing the original word. It appears to be a corrupted Instr. sg. of **НИЧЪТОЖЕ** ‘nothing’. The adjacent **НИЧѢМЪ**, Instr. sg. m. of **НИЧЪ** ‘one; any, other’²⁵, clearly shows that the copyist understood the phrase as ‘with nothing else’. At first, however, I was tempted to relate the phrase to Mt 10:42 and take **НИЧѢМЪ НИЧУЖЕМЪ** as a distorted parallel to *ἐνα τῶν μικρῶν*; however, such a hypothesis lacks sufficient grounds. Still, the anomalous form, the presence of variant readings, and the deviation of this phrase – through the interpolation of the second-person verb **НЕ МОЖЕШИ** – from the otherwise uniform series of parallel infinitives governed by third-person singular verbs (**ПРОСИТЬ БѢ́ТЬ ОТЬ НАСЪ** ‘Gods asks/requests from us’) suggest that this passage still harbors unresolved issues.

There are cases in which quotations give clues to the understanding but the corrupted lexeme nonetheless cannot be restored fully. In Sermon 21, for instance, there is a phrase with a somewhat unclear meaning (S. f. 109a2-8), and it does not have any attested parallel in the text of the Greek catena published by Cramer and printed in the edition of UE:

ЗЪДАТЕЛА ЖЕ ОУЧИТЕЛА ИЮДѢИСКЪ ИЮЖЕ ИЗЕКИЛЪ РЕЧЕ • ЗИЖДЮЩЕИ СЪБНОУ • И ПОМАЗАЮЩЕ Ю
БЕЗОУМИЕМЪ •

²⁵ Л. ТАСЕВА, *Преводната парадигма на двукоренните думи с ин- ‘единь’*, Pbg 46.4, 2022, p. 51–78 proves that the archaic root **ин-** had a wider semantic spectrum than **юдин-**.

What hinders the complete understanding of the clause is the Instr. sg. form of **ΒΕΖΟΥΜΗΝ** ‘foolishness; madness; anger’. Yet there is an indication of intertextuality – **ИЗЕККИЛЪ РЕНЕ**. Indeed, Ez 13:10 presents the false prophets (mentioned in a previous verse, namely Ez 13:9) as people who make others err as if *one builds a wall, and they plaster it, – it shall fall*²⁶. Thanks to the edition of the Old Bulgarian Book of Ezekiel, the respective place, Ez 13:10, is easily available²⁷:

καὶ οὗτος οἰκοδομεῖ τοῖχον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀλείφουσιν αὐτόν εἰ πεσεῖται.	СЪ ЖЕ СЪГРΑЖДАЕТЪ СΤΕΝЖ• А ОНИ ПОМАЗАЖТЬ ѿ• АЩЕ СЕ ПАДЕ
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The Biblical reference does not help much the understanding. Surely, it is mad to plaster a flimsy wall and be surprised when it falls, but still a wall cannot be plastered with madness, even metaphorically. Fortunately, Dobriela Kotova has established that here Constantine of Preslav follows John Chrysostom’s Homily 68 on Matthew to complement the catena²⁸. The text from the catena comes first and then, the text from the homily follows. The latter is given below in curly braces:

οικοδομουντας δε, τους διδασκαλους των Ιουδαϊων· ο και Ιεζεκιηλ φησιν· {οι οικοδομουντες τον τοιχον, και αλειφοντες αναρτυτως·}

²⁶ This is Brenton’s translation, which is fairly literal to the corresponding Greek text (καὶ οὗτος οἰκοδομεῖ τοῖχον, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀλείφουσιν αὐτόν, εἰ πεσεῖται), whereas the King James Version reflects the Hebrew text “one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered [mortar]”. See, for example, <http://qbible.com/brenton-septuagint/ezekiel/13.html> [15 VII 2024].

²⁷ *Старобългарският превод на Стария завет*, vol. II, *Книга на пророк Иезекиил с тълкования*, изданието е подготвено от Л. ТАСЕВА, М. ЙОВЧЕВА, подбор на гръцкия текст Т. ИЛИЕВА, София 2003, р. 184–185. Cf. *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum graecum*, vol. XVI.1, *Ezechiel, herausgegeben von Joseph Ziegler*, Göttingen 1952.

²⁸ Cf. IOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In Matthaëum*, hom. LXVIII, [in:] *PG*, vol. LVIII, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Parisii 1882, col. 642.5–7. D. Kotova finds out that in some of the sermons in UE, including the 21st, there is a compilation between the text of the catena and the text of the homily (Д. КОТОВА, *Византийските източници...*, р. 24; ЕАДЕМ, *Уводите и заключенията...*, р. 24, 39).

What is even more helpful is that the problematic word has an exact parallel in the quotation from the homily – ἀναρτύτως. At the same time, it is only the prefixes of the two corresponding words that correlate, i.e., *βεζ-* : ἀ(ν)-, both implying ‘without’, and there is no semantical similarity between the roots: the Old Bulgarian is related to *mind* and the Greek – to *spices* and *seasoning* (cf. ἀρτυτός) or *preparing* (cf. ἀρτύ(ν)ω²⁹). The correlates are even different parts of speech, as the Old Bulgarian is a substantive and the Greek is an adverb. The only definition of ἀναρτύτως I could find was in the online version of the Spanish-Greek dictionary³⁰ integrated into the wiki-implemented *LSJ* web platform³¹. Under ἀνάρτυτος, the following is stated:

II adv. ἀναρτύτως = sin fraguar del mortero, Sm.Ez.13.10 en Chrys.M.58.642.

This makes it obvious that the meaning of the adverb in question was inferred from the context of the same place – in the same homily of Chrysostom – the one discussing Ez 13:10. Thus, the overall meaning of the passage is more or less clear, even if specialized: the builders are the Judean teachers and of them Ezekiel said: they, building the wall, are plastering it with untempered mortar. The form *βεζογμнѣмъ* might well be a trace to something which meant “sin fraguar del mortero”³², e.g. some combination of *βεζ-* and a lexical root³³, yet, here, no

²⁹ One of my anonymous reviewers pointed also to the meaning ‘mixing of metals in smelting’ (<https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἀρτυσις>, 15 VII 2024) and added that ἀρτύω is closely related to ἀραρίσκω, quoting *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, ed. J. DIGGLE, Cambridge 2021. R. Cleminson further directed me to the references in logeion.uchicago.edu/ἀνάρτυτος [15 VII 2024].

³⁰ *Diccionario griego-español*, ed. F. RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS *et al.*, Madrid 1989–. See <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἀνάρτυτος> [15 VII 2024].

³¹ *LSJ*, <https://lsj.gr> [15 VII 2024].

³² Another reference, as pointed out by one of my anonymous reviewers, is found in G.W.H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961, p. 118, where the word is translated as “without tempering the mortar”.

³³ One possible option would be to relate it to washing (the root in, say, *μύτι*), though no direct evidence supports this beyond the initial letter. L. Taseva thoughtfully proposed *-χογμ-* (cf. Latin *humus*, Greek *χυμός*),

exact reconstruction, for the time being, is possible. This all, however, is a clear example of how significant the context can be to obtaining a proper understanding of a word and to its eventual reconstruction.

Context-based approach

The direct surroundings of a word may aid greatly the scholar where there is no Biblical or Patristic reference that could contribute a Greek passage to parallel the Slavonic one. It should be noted here, though, that corrupted places of the kind are difficult to find because hardly any of them are absolutely meaningless. The introduction of Sermon 6 announces that the miracle with the man blind from birth is going to be discussed (S, f. 32a09):

ДА РАЗОУМНО ИЗИЩЕИМЪ• ЧЮДА ПРЪСЛАВНАГО СЕГО• ЮЖЕ ЮСТЬСТВО [ЮСТЬ WGH]• О СЛЪПЦИ•

This is clear from the whole context and the intention of the Sermon, but the phrase in question is obscure. The variant readings signal that ЮСТЬСТВО ‘nature, essence’ should instead be read as ЮСТЬ ‘is’ or, more precisely, ЮСТЬ СЪТВО[РИЛЪ]³⁴ ‘he created/performed’. With the restored phrase ЮСТЬ СЪТВО[РИЛЪ] < ЮСТЬСТВО the passage has the following meaning:

...let us wisely contemplate this glorious miracle, which He performed, concerning the blind man...

The context in the very beginning of the introduction of Sermon 18 makes it possible to restore another corrupted place. The excerpt (S, f. 88a11-b3) mentions also the author whom Constantine of Preslav quotes in the main part of this sermon:

which is attested in at least one Old Bulgarian source (И.И. СРЕЗНЕВСКИЙ, *Материалы для словаря древнерусского языка*, vol. III, Т-Я, Санкт-Петербург 1893, p. 1422, <https://etymolog.ruslang.ru/doc/sreznevskijT-Ja.pdf>, 15 VII 2024). L. Taseva further pointed out that the consonant χ is unstable, at least in Bulgarian dialects, and thus suggested the possibility of an initial **вѣз** (χ)оумомъ, which might have been misread or misunderstood by a copyist).

³⁴ For the latter I am grateful to one of my anonymous reviewers.

Хръстолубьци [+ $\hat{\chi}$ WG] истовъин [истинънъи W истиннъи GH] богъ нашъ• доуховьноу
трапезоу поставивъ• съзываетъ боголюбие ваше• пирьника приставивъ• златорѣчивааго сего•
ластовицоу благощъботьноу [от. WG]• гърълицоу добро• Горучьноу(!) [от. WG доброгльсьноу
H]•

You, who love Christ, our true God, Who prepared a spiritual table and summons your love to
Him by appointing as a feast master this man of golden speech – the sweet-singing swallow, the
nice-throat turtledove...

The end of the phrase in S – гърълицоу добро• Горучьноу(!) – is obviously a corruption,
but its meaning can be inferred from the context: the three adjacent clauses all poetically
signify the smooth-tongued rhetor, that is, John Chrysostom³⁵. All of them contain compound
words: first, he is described as златорѣчивъ, which is an adjective from *golden speech*, then
two metaphors follow: the one is ластовица благощъботьна – a swallow that makes nice
(repeated) chirping sounds, and the other is related to гърълица – a turtledove that also
produces sounds pleasant for the ear and, probably, also in an unceasing manner. In H the
turtledove is called доброгльсьна, which is the adjective from the compound noun for nice
voice³⁶ and complements the metaphorical image of John Chrysostom that Constantine of
Preslav creates here.

³⁵ Some other complex metaphors in UE, which are related to John Chrysostom and are with two-root adjectives,
are enlisted by E. BLÁHOVÁ, *Kompletní vydání...*, p. 338.

³⁶ Yet добро• Горучьна does not look so similar to доброгльсьна. The first root in the two variants is indubitably the
same, -добро-, but the second differs, even though has the same initial and final letters, i.e. г...на. One of my
anonymous reviewers rightly pointed out that the passage is missing in the other two copies studied here and
specified the reconstructed form which I had not ventured to suggest myself except in the translation of the
passage above, since a similar proposal of mine was previously refuted in a different context. What follows is
his/her suggestion, with which I fully agree: “The -ьн- is definitely a suffix, -гор- must relate to гръло ‘throat’ with
the vocalized ѣ according to East Slavic rules, and ч results from the first palatalization. It is therefore reasonable
to assume that the letter ч is part of the suffix *-ĭk- > -ьц- (> -ьч(ьн)-), present in the diminutive *гръльцьѣ ‘small
throat’ (cf. кольце, зръньцьѣ etc.). The archetype can therefore be established as *доброгръльцььноу”.

The next instance illustrates how the proposed context-based method may help in cases when there is a Greek counterpart of a certain lexeme, but the counterpart is polysemantic. The verb $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\iota\tau\iota$ ‘prepare’ appears twice in UE as a counterpart for $\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$. The Greek verb is related to the feelings of religious awe, fear, respect as well shame, compassion and (asking for) forgiveness, but the Slavonic verb does not seem to have anything in common with it and, therefore, could easily be regarded as mistake. The context, however, offers a different picture. Below, the relevant passages follow the edition of UE, but, again, with the variant readings in square brackets. First comes the excerpt from Sermon 22, S f.114c1-7.

<p>$\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\iota\tau\iota$ [$\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\delta\iota\mu\iota$ WG] $\psi\lambda\epsilon\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\beta\iota\upsilon$ $\rho\eta\zeta\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\gamma\tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\gamma\omicron$• и $\eta\kappa\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon\theta\epsilon$ $\eta\sigma\tau\epsilon$ $\sigma\tau\alpha\eta\iota$ $\sigma\kappa\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta\eta\eta\tau\iota$ $\rho\eta\zeta\tau\iota$ $\eta\lambda\eta\tau\iota$•</p>	<p>$\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\sigma\theta\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ $\tau\eta\eta$ $\phi\iota\lambda\alpha\eta\theta\rho\omega\pi\iota\alpha\eta$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\alpha\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$, $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\eta\mu\acute{\omega}\eta$ $\mu\epsilon\eta\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega$ $\rho\upsilon\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega\eta$ $\iota\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\alpha$,</p>
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Here, the variant reading signals the corrupted form, but does not help its reconstruction, since $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\delta\iota\mu\iota$ ‘please; serve’ has also nothing (or only little) in common with the Greek verb. Both Slavonic variants, however, are contextually acceptable. The one in S and H, – $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\iota\tau\iota$ $\psi\lambda\epsilon\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\beta\iota\upsilon$ $\rho\eta\zeta\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\gamma\tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\gamma\omicron$ – urges us to prepare for the philanthropy of the One Who summoned us (and so accords with the overall topic of Sermon 22, discussing the parable of the wedding feast), while the other, in W and G, $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\delta\iota\mu\iota$ urges us to please it.

The Greek verb $\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, however, seems to imply here feelings of religious awe when encountering God’s philanthropy. Both Slavonic variants are therefore not appropriate parallels for it. In other texts $\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ is translated with $\rho\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\iota$ ‘be in awe of God’, $\sigma\upsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\eta\tau\iota$ $\sigma\alpha$ ‘get frightened’ or with verbs deriving from $\sigma\tau\alpha\iota\mu\iota$ and $\sigma\tau\upsilon\delta\iota\tau\iota$, i.e., verbs for being ashamed³⁷. Supposedly, the initial form of the word was $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\iota$, but it was probably not familiar to the copyists and was therefore transformed according to their understanding of the text.

³⁷ Cf. for example <http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=13431> [15 VII 2024].

There are no variants in the other excerpt containing the same lexeme – in Sermon 25. This sermon is dedicated to the love for God, but it also discusses the parable of the Canaanite woman and her faith. The following words (S f.124a10-21) are actually hers, as taken from Homily 52 on Matthew³⁸:

ДЪРЖНОВЕНИИЯ ЖЕ И КРѢПОСТИ НЕ	παρρησίαν μὲν καὶ ἰσχὺν, φησὶν,
ИМАДИТЬ• НЪ И СТЪЖДА ПЪЛНА ИЕСИМЬ•	οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰσχύνης γέμω•
ОБАЧЕ НЕ ИСТО ВЕСТОУДЬЮ• ЗА	ἀλλ' ὅμως αὐτὴν τὴν ἀναισχυντίαν
МОЛИТВѢЖ ПРѢДЪЛАГАЮ• ОУГОТОВИТЬ	ἀντὶ ἰκετηρίας προβάλλομαι
МИ ДЪРЖНОВЕНИЮ•	αἰδεσθήσεταιί μου τὴν παρρησίαν.

The last clause in Old Bulgarian – *оуготовиць ми държновению* ‘he will prepare my confidence’³⁹ – reveals a certain meaning even though it does not coincide with the patristic quotation, *αἰδεσθήσεταιί μου τὴν παρρησίαν* ‘he will respect my confidence’. But the direct context and the context of the whole story about the Canaanite woman confirms that the word is about the attitude of Jesus Christ to the boldness of the woman who dares not only to speak but to insist on her request. Here, an initial form *оуговѣти* is also plausible and contributes to a better understanding of the text.

If the last two reconstructions are right, the verb *оуговѣти* used to have a broader meaning, close in its polysemic spectrum to *αἰδέομαι*. Both source and target verbs were used to express feelings not only of humans toward God or toward one another, but also of God toward humans. The supposed parallel *αἰδέομαι: оуговѣти* was not exceptional for Constantine of Preslav, but had broader distribution⁴⁰.

³⁸ IOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In Matthaëum*, hom. LII, [in:] *PG*, vol. LVIII, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Parisiis 1882, col. 520.28–31.

³⁹ One of my anonymous reviewers rightly observed that such a translation could not be correct, as “the form *държновению* is in the dative case, while *оуготовиць* governs the accusative,” but we need it here as a starting point to lead us to the reconstructed form of the verb, which requires a Dative complement (cf. the examples given in И.И. СРЕЗНЕВСКИЙ, *Материалы...*, p. 1134.

⁴⁰ Cf. for instance *оуговѣти* in *ibidem*; F. MIKLOSICH, *Lexicon palaeoslovenico-graeco-latinum. Emendatum auctum*, Vienna 1865, p. 1036, especially the first reference, as well as *говѣти* as parallel of the same Greek verb in

Conclusion

Lexical reconstruction is a small but important step towards the establishment of an Urtext. Any diachronic dictionary would benefit from it. Regardless of the exact purpose or degree of the lexical reconstruction, it broadens the scholarly understanding of a work and makes a medieval text more accessible to the modern reader. Lexical reconstruction allows for a clearer understanding and explanation of discrepancies between a source and its translation or between one manuscript copy and another.

The three-fold methodology described here resulted from a comprehensive analysis of UE according to its four full extant copies and the intertextual relations within it. It was developed during the team-work on the bilingual indices to this written monument. Future studies may prove or disprove its effectiveness, and may add or amend details. Its main advantage is that it opens possibilities for lexical reconstruction in texts with no attested sources. It claims that the identification of exact quotations, and ideally of other references, can provide scholars with additional source material as a corrective, and that a closer look at variant readings and direct context are also worthy of attention. The most important point is that in any case scholars need to mark reconstructed lexical forms and to be attentive to their relationship to what is attested.

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