

St. Petersburg University, Bibliotheca Biblica and the Department of Biblical Studies

Report about the Activity 2013-2014

1. Transportation and Correspondence

The custom regulations permit sending book packages to 15 kg by weight. The only limitation: *no financial documents are to be enveloped*. In this case the package becomes an object of custom's interest that produces a long official process and rather high taxes.

The mail address:

Prof. A. Alexeev. Bibliotheca Biblica
Faculty of Philology
St. Petersburg University
Universitetskaya nab. 11 (= University Embankment, 11)
199034 St. Petersburg.

The most part of periodicals till now comes to the previous address. We expect EELC distribute this information among the publishers.

For e-mail correspondence the following addresses are to be used:

Anatoly A. Alexeev alexeev.anatoly@gmail.com or a.alexeev@spbu.ru

Sophia Fomichova amerboozille@mail.ru, department assistant.

2. Staff

Sasha Mashtakova traveled last year to Belgrad so happily that changed her name for Madame Kovachevich and left us for Serbia. She was probably our best post-graduate student (enrolled at the year of our Department's foundation, 2002) and very valuable colleague. Now Docent Ekaterina Druzhinina (k.druzhinina@rambler.ru) is scholarly secretary of the Department. She is classical philologist and post graduate student of the known Alexander Gavrilov, her PhD thesis is devoted to something of Homer's lexicon, however her study is drifting now to the question of ancient Greek-Semitic parallels. She teaches Greek, NT Greek, Latin and reads Latin Fathers.

3. Books and Library work

During the year a modest number of books (about 60) and periodicals has been received by mail. At the first time the University made investment by purchasing a dozen books in Russian necessary for the teaching.

The number of regular readers is 48.

Dr. Natalja Stenina-Rodionova (stenina@rambler.ru), Director of the Library appointed by the Main University Library in April 2013, has prepared the full list of the periodicals and now describes the library collections with the computer-aided library system IRBIS, used by the University. We have to regretfully state that all the efforts and funds spent for adjustment of Allegro system are lost in vain.

In the last period a considerable number of electronic books became easy to access, and it makes the whole situation more comfortable. *The readers of the main University library have*

received free access to JSTOR; it makes possible to reduce the number of periodicals received through subscription.

4. Teaching

During the year no substantial changes have been done at the curricula. Our efforts were directed at promotion of self-instruction of the students, so some topics instead of being lectured were discussed in a series of abstracts presented by students. Among topics were NT soteriology, Paul's ecclesiology, Biblia Hebraica Quinta, Bible and folk lore. Several additional lectures were given by guest-professors:

- on Slavonic Apocrypha by Prof. Dr. Milena Rozhdestvenskaya (SPb University);
- on the written documents of Zoroastrianism by Academician Ivan Steblin-Kamensky (the former Dean of the Faculty of Orientalistics and the editor of the published translations of these documents into Russian);
- on Zoroastrian eschatology by Dr. Olga Chunakova (Institute of Orientalistics, The Russian Academy of Sciences);
- on Masoretic orthography by Dr. Victor Golinec (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, München);
- on pneumatology of 1 Thessalonian by Dr. Volker Rabens (Jena University).

The possibility of inviting Dr Enric Cortès, Prof Emeritus of Theological Faculty of Catalunya, was discussed in answer of the several Spain banks' offer to pay international contacts of SPbSU, however the University made its choice in favor of instructors of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. However this chance may come again during the next academic year.

Four graduating students defended master's theses and received master's degree. The topics were:

- The book of Genesis in Russian translation from Hebrew of 1819 by Archim. Philaret Drozdov;
- Three English Bible translations (Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV) from the point of view of the theory of translation;
- Bible Hexameron and gnostic Valentinus' cosmogony;
- The Homily on Jonah by Ephraem the Syrian in its connection to Peshitto and the Pseudo-Philo's Homily.

5. Scholarly Activities

In March, 2014, the Annual conference of the Faculty had in its schedule the section 'Bible and Christian Literature' with two sessions and 15 speakers. To the plenary session our colleague Petr Pokorný came and presented his paper in Russian on the mission according to Matthew. Some papers were based on NT MSS of SPb collections. Summaries of the papers are published on the Faculty's Internet site in Russian and English. Some weeks ago Faculty published a volume of selected papers of the Annual Conference 2013, among them two delivered by our section (Archim. January Ivliev's on anthropologic metaphors in 2 Cor 5.1-10, and Alexeev's on semeion and doxa in John).

As it was in previous years some members of the Department took part in the scholarly session of the SPb Judaica Institute (December, 2014).

In April, 15 students (bachelors and masters) took part in the Annual Faculty Student Conference. The paper on *alla* in the NT Greek by Daniel Pleshak, the 3d year of education, arrested a special attention by its in-depth syntactic analysis. Some of the students' works were based on the Hebrew MSS Collection of the known Avraamy Firkovich (1786-1874) in the National (Public) Library.

In July, 1, the International Syriac Language Project during its 14th International Conference (SPb, Institute of Orientalistics, The Russian Academy of Sciences, June 29-July 4) visited in corpore the Department to make acquaintance with the Library and curricula. It was pleasure to meet among the guests Dr. Andreas Juckel of Münster NT Institute and discuss with him some NT textual problems.

In 2011-13 years the draft version of the dictionary "Bible and Bible Studies" was prepared by Alexeev, Bitner and Mashtakova, above 600 pages in volume. In needs, however, very serious editorial finalization.

In January 2014 the University assigned means for critical edition of the Slavonic Gospels. The project was initiated in 1993 through my personal contacts with the United Bible Societies; its first stage resulted in 1998 by edition of the Gospel of John based on 1150 MSS from the 10-16th cent. On the second stage the critical edition of Matthew was published (2006) with financial support of the Russian State Scholarly Foundation. According to our present plan, the Four Gospels will be edited in one volume of 400-500 pages and a volume of scholarly maintenance will be added. The colleagues of Department of Russian Language and Department of Applied Linguistics take parts in the project, as well as Prof. Dr. Marcello Garzaniti (University of Florence), the author of study "Die altslavische Version der Evangelien" (Köln; Weimar; Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2001. 796 pp.). The annual budget of the project is above 80.000 Euro, the term is two or three years. It seems possible to expand the project up to the whole NT Slavonic text, so appropriate consultations have been initiated with colleagues from Praha (Dr. Vaclav Čermak, The Old-Slavonic Institute of the Czeck Academy of Sciences) and Sophia (Prof. Dr. Iskra Hristova, the Chair of Cyrillo-Methodian Studies of the Sophia University).

6. Publication activity

At the end of 2013 in the book series *Biblia Continua*, established by "Dimitry Bulanin Publisher", two volumes were published:

- Nikita Meshchersky, *The History of Christian Liturgical Writings*, 526 pages, with editorship of Elena Meshcherskaya
- Martin Noth, *The History of Ancient Israel*, 495 pages, in Russian translation from the German edition of 1986 by Jury Vartanov

The both publications met very positive reaction of the readers.

Together with SPb Institute of Jewish Studies a volume *Jewish and Biblical Studies* (270 pages), under editorship of Kirill Bitner, was published containing papers of the conference of 2012 on Jewish, Biblical and Intertestamental studies. The first number of the series was published in 2012, the next is expected to be out of print to the end of 2014.

The miscellany *The Unity of the Church* prepared by Ulrich Luz and revised in its Russian translation by Alexeev is probably already out of print in the Moscow St Andrew Publishing House by Alexey Bodrov.

Besides, the Faculty published a volume of Alexeev's works on the history of Russian (475 pp.). Among 30 papers included there are some treating the language problems of Slavonic and Russian Bible traditions.

In our portfolio there are some other works ready for publication:

- Russian translation of *Grundinformation NT*. Hrsg. von K-W. Niebuhr
- Original work in Russian: *The Hermeneutic of Apocalypsis*, by January Ivliev.
- Volume of papers and lectures on NT by Luz, Niebuhr and some other our guests, as well as some original papers on NT. Papers of Minsk 2010 can be included.
- Schniedewind, *How the Bible became a Book*. The Russian translation of the book 2004 (needs editorship)
- Meshcherskaya, *Apocryphal Theotokos* (to be completed in some months)

At the moment a reform of the bookselling system is performed in the country, that prevents any new initiatives of the local publishers. We hope the next year will be more propitious for such an activity.

7. Agreements and similar documents

In the last decade Russia became a country of a permanent reformation. The general tendency that may be seen in enormous the Ministry of education's transformative activities aims to replace the national system of education, which arose in the 18 and 19th centuries after the German pattern, by a new one of Anglo-American type with a very narrow elitist sphere. If you enter the last you are free to do what you like with no serious responsibility. Sure, compare the time when the Library project had its beginning 17 years ago, SPbSU became much more wealthy and interested in international contacts, however the bureaucratic procedures became enormous while the bureaucracy less competent. The corruption and anti-corruption constituents of its activity integrates in a unit, and one has impression that preferable those initiatives that include preferences or dividends to persons from administrative stuff. In this situation I have not been able to compose a safe new agreement having support only through the mail correspondence; I think, it needs a serious preparatory steps and a rather long-duration visit of a responsible SNTS (EELC) representative to the country.

Anatoly Alexeev, SPb, 10 July 2014