

**St. Petersburg University, Bibliotheca Biblica and the Department of Biblical Studies
Report about the Activity 2011-2012**

1. Transportation and Correspondence

The custom regulations permit sending book packages to 15 kg by weight. There is only one 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.

2. New Location

In September, 2011, the Library was removed to the building of the Faculty, located at the historic centre of the city, and placed there at the basement store. The room for the book shelves is spacious, but not sufficient for study and scholarly work of the Department. For teaching the Faculty's study-rooms are used. It took about six months to remodel the shelves to the new rooms. Till now the Library has no telephone line and e-mail connection. For e-mail correspondence two addresses are to be used:

Anatoly A. Alexeev alexeev.anatoly@gmail.com

Alexandra (Sasha) Mashtakova, senior librarian a.mashtakova@mail.ru

3. Books and Library work

During the year small number of books and periodicals is received by mail and catalogued. In total only 112 books were added to the electronic list (catalogue). Some other received books are not yet included in the list since it was proposed by the administration of the main library to suspend this work till the time when the total financial balance of the books included in the inventory of 2011 year will be stricken.

During my stay at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in March-August, 2011, some dozen books were donated to the Library by Israeli colleagues and together with this a very great number of e-mail books (above 10'000). The last was of special importance since during the whole first semester of the academic year the most part of the Library remained packed in boxes.

The number of readers was 156, among them 128 outsiders.

4. Teaching

Some changes were produced in the curricula.

The history of Russian and European Literatures of the 18-20th centuries is taken off as well as some general disciplines provided by the Faculty. Instead additional lessons of Hebrew and Greek are added to the first year's curricula, teaching Aramaic and Talmud is expanded to two years, Syriac and Latin Patrologies are added to the Greek one. The total number of

lessons is reduced whereas unassisted work with support on the Library's and electronic resources is enlarged. My lectures on introduction to OT and NT received a great impact during my work at the National and University Library in Jerusalem, and for the Pentateuch and Deuteronomic Redactions I can use up-to-date archaeological data, for NT – Septuagintal and Targumic ones.

Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr was only foreign lecturer of the year to give a lecture in English on Inter-Testamental Literature, in April, 2012.

Some of Department's graduating students have got job at the Hebrew, Greek and Slavonic MSS depositories of the Russian National Library and Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, some others teach Hebrew and Greek in different theological schools of SPb, including the Theological Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church from where I retired two years ago.

5. Some Perspectives

In September, 2012, two or three positions of postgraduate students for preparing doctor thesis [aspirantura] will be given to the Department by the Faculty. There is no yet in Russian universities something like scholarly degree of doctor of divinity or theology, so our scholarly field, as long as we exist as department of the faculty of philology, has the name of 'linguistic typology'.

In April, 2012, the council of the Faculty of Arts proposed to introduce teaching of theology at the SPb University; in May a round table discussion on this topic took place. It is not yet clear by what way and when the idea will receive its formal realization, in any case this development will touch on the Department and Library and, perhaps, in positive way.

Some months ago the University received several buildings close by the Faculty. It may result in a new removal of the Library. However, no clear information is yet announced.

6. Scholarly Activities

In September, 2011, the Department in collaboration with The State Museum of Hermitage held the conference "Interpretation of the Text in the Culture of the Christian East: Translation, Commentary, Poetic Treatment".

In March, 2012, the Annual conference of the Faculty had in its schedule the section 'Bible and Christian Literature' with four sessions and 25 speakers. Resume of the papers will be publish on the Faculty's Internet site in Russian and English.

Some members of the Department took part in the scholarly session of the SPb Judaica Institute (December, 2011), the conference of the Jadaica Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, SPbSU (March, 2012), and the conference of the SPb Christian University "The Research of the Text: Today's Methods and Approach in Bible and Church History Studies" (April, 2012). In all three cases publication of the papers is expected.

In April, 5 students (bachelors and masters) took part in the Annual Faculty Student Conference. One of them presented a papers to student's scholarly sessions of St. Petersburg Theological (Spiritual) Academy.

During the year the Department published through collaboration with SPb Publishing House "Dmitry Bulanin" three volumes:

- Nina V. Pigulevskaya, *Medieval Syriac Historiography* (this voluminous collection of the works of the late well-known Russian orientalist was prepared for publication by Prof. Helena Meshcherskaya).
- *The Holy Scripture as a Factor of the Language and Literature Development* (21 papers of Intern. Conference of the same name, held by the Department in June, 2009).
- *New Testament Textual Criticism and Nestle-Aland²⁷*, by A. Alexeev (the book contains a short story of the discipline with appraisal of Nestle-Aland's text and apparatus together with Russian translation of the Introduction to Nestle-Aland²⁷).

Besides "Dmitry Bulanin" has accepted for publication Martin Noth's *Geschichte Israels*, translated into Russian by Dr. Jury Vartanov, Docent of the Department. Some other publications are provided.

At the present with a very moderate University's grant the Department realizes the Bible Dictionary project. As distinct to the existing tradition of Biblical dictionaries in Russian this one will cover together with the Bible subjects the whole field of Biblical studies to give its readers information of the present state of the knowledge. Since there is the Government's edict of including Religion in the comprehensive schools' curricula we hope the Dictionary will be useful for school teachers involved in tuition of this new discipline.

Anatoly Alexeev, SPb, July 9, 2012