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Alexander Lubotsky, *Alanic Marginal Notes in a Greek Liturgical Manuscript.* (Veröffentlichungen zur Iranistik, 76. Grammatica Iranica 2.) Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017
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In 1992, the Byzantinist Sysse Engberg came across a liturgical manuscript in St. Petersburg containing glosses written in Greek letters, but composed in a non-Greek language. A query on *Linguist List*, back in those early days of the Internet, prompted a response from the Indo-Europeanist Alexander Lubotsky of the University of Leiden, who definitively identified the language of the glosses as Iranian, specifically that of the medieval Alans of the northern Caucasus, ancestors of the modern Ossetes. The two scholars intended to publish them jointly, but except for a preliminary report in the Ossetic journal *Nartamongæ* (Engberg and Lubotsky 2003), an article on the dating of a historical event referenced in one of the glosses (Ivanov and Lubotsky 2011), and references in works such as Kambolov 2006: 202–7, they remained largely inaccessible to the wider public. Fortunately, interested readers now have before them a beautifully produced edition, complete with color photographs, discussion of the historical and cultural context, and linguistic analysis.

The discovery of these glosses in an Old Testament lectionary (manuscript no. Q12 in the Library of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg) has added greatly to our knowledge of the history of Ossetic, the lone descendant of ancient Scythian and Sarmatian and medieval Alanic. Previously, the only sources for Alanic were the Zelenčuk inscription (probably 11th or 12th c.; Zgusta 1987) and two tantalizing lines from the epilogue to the *Theogony* of Johannes Tzetzes (12th c.), to which one may add the word list on a document from 1422 in Jassic, the language of the Jász, who migrated to present-day Hungary in the 13th c. and retained their language for several centuries (Németh 1959). The suggestion of Abaev (1949: 43) that the Greek script of the Zelenčuk inscription must have been employed more widely to write Alanic has now been proven correct.

The book is divided into ten chapters: “Preface” (5–6), “Description of the manuscript” (6–9), “Paleography” (9–12), “The Ossetic dialects” (12–4), “Alanic and the Greek alphabet” (14), “The complete list of the marginal notes” (14–6), “Comments on the marginal notes” (16–7), “Alanic marginal notes” (17–42), “Greek marginal notes” (42–5), and “The spelling and the language of the notes” (45–50). These are followed by a valuable appendix on “The Alanic text in the Tzetzes’ “Theogonia”” (51–65), a list of references (67–9), and high-

quality color plates of all of the folio leaves on which marginal glosses, Greek as well as Alanic, are found.

The author of the glosses must have been an Alanic-speaking priest who could read Greek, but added glosses in his native tongue for convenience to help locate feast days (7–8). The manuscript is dated 1275, but the glosses could have been added anytime in the following century, before the massacres of Timur at the end of the 14th century (9). Paleographically, the glosses closely resemble the hand of the ʼΙωάννης who wrote the bulk of the manuscript and the colophon (9–11), but there are also significant differences, above all the "Alanic alpha" (10–1; see below). Most of the individual word forms may be understood at once on the basis of present-day Ossetic, e.g. 107r ἀστέμα̲κ 'eighth', 116v ζιρὴν 'golden', 69r στούρ 'great' (cf. Oss. *æstæjmag*, *zærijnæ*/*zærin*, *(æ)stur*/*styr*),[1] but a number resist easy interpretation, e.g. 10r φιστηνίκ πα̲ρὰς 'Lent is about to begin (?)' (cf. Oss. *festujnag*/*festinag* 'forthcoming, about to begin', *barysč'i*/*baræsk'æ* 'fasting'), 108v ἠζίπα̲τζικ ρό[...]κουκάνι, 109v οὐρηα̲γ/βα̲ναὶ, 124v ἀβήνα̲τὴ.

As is to be expected, the language of the glosses is archaic in several respects compared to present-day Ossetic and, as far as one can tell, appears to be at approximately the same stage as that of the Zelenčuk inscription and the Alanic of Tzetzes. The most obvious phonological feature is the retention of POss. **a* before nasals (κὰμ 'mouth', πάν 'day' vs. Oss. *kom*, *bon*), for which cf. Tzetzes ταπαγχὰς 'good day to you', Jassic *daban horz* 'id.', *dan* 'river' (Oss. *dæ bon x*^{w}*arz*/*xorz*, *don*). This vowel is regularly represented in the glosses by a special alpha with long oblique stroke, aptly dubbed by L. the "Alanic alpha", in contrast to common alpha for POss. **æ*. The consistency of this orthographic distinction alone furnishes all but incontrovertible evidence that the glosses (and the Zelenčuk inscription) were not isolated attempts to render Alanic, but rather belong to an established practice of writing Alanic in the Greek alphabet.

Despite their brevity, the glosses contain notable lexical archaisms, e.g. 21r, 45v, 55v ἄυτεσήρ, 30r, 37v ἄυτεσηρ 'Monday', which survives in modern Digor as *avdisær* 'Monday', but has been replaced in Iron by *k*^{w}*'yrisær*. A comparable retention occurs in 104r ἠστιπα̲ν, for which cf. Digor *istbon* 'holiday, feast-day' (27–8). Undoubtedly the most interesting discovery, however, is 100r πητζινάκ χουτζάου πάν 'Pecheneg Sunday', presumably the Alanic name of the Pecheneg Festival celebrating John II Komnenos's victory over the Pechenegs in 1122 or 1123 (Ivanov and Lubotsky 2011); the name of the Pechenegs survives today in the expression *bic'inæg sk'unun*/*byc'ynæg sk*^{w}*'ynyn* 'strive, hanker, yearn for something', lit. 'exterminate the Pechenegs' (24–6).

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[1] Where two forms are given, the first is in the (generally more archaic) Digor dialect, the second in Iron. Abbreviations: PIr. = Proto-Iranian; POss. = Proto-Ossetic.

Less persuasive is L.'s claim that the language of the glosses shares features with the present-day Iron dialect (49–50). The apparent apocope in 109v τζουβάρ 'cross' and 116v ζιρὴν 'gold(en)' could instead reflect syncope in a compound; this is especially likely in the latter, where ζιρὴν κὰμ is a literal translation of Χρυσόστομος 'Golden-Mouth', hence may well stand for /zirijn-gam/ with morphophonologically conditioned voicing of /k/. That apocope could have begun in some of the Alanic-speaking communities by this time cannot of course be ruled out, but it is worth recalling that the Jassic word list retains final *-a* < **-æ* in six out of seven cases, e.g. *basa* 'soup', *sana* 'wine' (Oss. *basæ*/*bas*, *sænæ*/*sæn*). The other pieces of evidence cited by L. are too uncertain in my view to support an identification with Iron: for 126v φητίβανη 'St. John the Precursor' (Oss. *fìdiwane*/*fydywani*), note that no other examples of POss. **e* occur in the glosses; for 137r κουρ- 'cut off', the vocalism of Digor *k*^{w}*'ærun* may be somehow secondary for **k'urun* (> Iron *k*^{w}*'yryn*); and the equation of 10r φιστηνίκ with *festujnag*/*festinag* 'forthcoming, about to begin' leaves the ι of the final syllable unexplained, as L. himself admits (19). It is not improbable that dialectal variation was already emerging at the time of the glosses, but the main innovations of Iron, such as apocope and merger of **i*, **u* > *y*, still lay in the future.

The orthography of the glosses is remarkably consistent, suggesting, as mentioned above, that there was already a tradition of writing Alanic in Greek letters. As in the epilogue of Tzetzes's *Theogony*, the voiced stops /b/, /d/, /g/ are represented by π, τ, κ, since Greek β, δ, γ, had long since become fricatives. In addition to the distinction of common and Alanic alpha, L. identifies the orthographic rule by which /i/ is usually rendered as η, but a sequence of /i/ vowels is spelled with alternating ι and η, as in πητζινάκ /bic'inag/, φητίβανη /fidiwani/, and most spectacularly τημιτήρι /dimidiri/ 'St. Demetrios' (48). At least some of the inconsistencies in the representation of vowels may indicate subphonemic variation, e.g. the η of 21r, 45v, 55v ἄυτεσήρ, 30r, 37v ἄυτεσηρ and probably also 83r ἀσήρ stands for a raised allophone of /æ/ in /-sær/ 'head'. As for unexpected instances of α and α̲, ἄυτεσήρ, ἄυτεσηρ 'Monday' preserves the historically correct prevocalic allomorph /ævd-/ of *avd* 'head', for which cf. in modern Oss. the fossilized adverbs *færsyl* 'on the side', *ræstæj* 'rightfully', in origin respectively adessive to *fars* 'side' and ablative to *rast* 'right, correct'. In 104r σαρὰβαρὰν 'foundation' (Oss. *særæværæn*), the second α̲ may be a simple mistake prompted by the high frequency of α̲ before nasals, but the first α̲ is more difficult to motivate, as *-sar* occurs in modern Ossetic only as the second member of compounds (26–8).

It is unfortunate that no examples of inherited POss. **e* or **o* are attested, though for the latter cf. 128v ἀποστόλ 'apostle', source of the Digor month name *Amistol* (37–8). The Greek letter ε stands for the sequence /æj/ in 107r ἀστέμακ 'eighth' (Oss. *æstæjmag*) and may also in Tzetzes's form σαοῦγγε (see

below), but I am skeptical that it has this value in ἄυτεσήρ, ἄυτεσηρ /ævdejsær/ 'Monday'. When used absolutely, i.e. without a governed noun, the numerals in Digor take the pronominal suffix *-e(m)-*: genitive *avd-e-j*, dative *avd-em-æn*, etc.[2] This inflectional peculiarity is clearly archaic with respect to Iron, where the numerals inflect identically to other nominals as *avd-y*, *avd-æn*, etc. We are therefore surely dealing with a noun phrase /ævd-e-j sær/ 'seven-PRON-GEN head', with orthographic suppression of the jod. The spelling ἄυτεσήρ, ἄυτεσηρ is thus of no value for determining the origin of the much discussed genitive suffix *-i*/*-y*, which I continue to derive from the merger product of multiple case endings of the shape **-ayā(h)*, rather than the generalized *a*-stem gen. sg. **-ahya*.[3] As for the alleged example of ε for /æj/ in the Zelenčuk inscription, ανη τζηρθε /ani cirt-æj/ '(this) is their stele' (49, following a suggestion of Bielmeier apud Zgusta 1987: 32), one might rather expect a reflex of existential *je(s)*/*i(s)* (Tzetzes -ετζ; see below), and the vocalism of the Digor copula *æj* need not be old in any case (Cheung 2002: 141; cf. Iron *u*). Since this inscription predates the Q12 glosses by a good two centuries, it may well preserve a reflex of **-i* < PIr. **-ah* in τζηρθε (R. Kim 2003: 54, 58).

A most welcome bonus is the appendix, which offers a fresh look at the Alanic lines in the epilogue to the *Theogony* of Johannes Tzetzes. While the form μέσφιλι remains obscure, L. offers new interpretations of κορθὶ καντὰ, which he ingeniously segments as κορθὶκαν τὰ /kordigan dæ/ 'where are you from?' (cf. *cirdigon*/*cyrdygon* 'from where', Digor *wordigon* 'from there'); φάρν-ετζ 'glory is', with copula -ετζ (Oss. *je(s)*/*i(s)*) continuing PIr. **asti*;[4] and σαοῦγγε, where the final -ε stands for the ablative ending /-æj/, hence /sawæng-æj/ (cf. *sawængæ*/*swang*, Iron *swangæj* in *særy swangæj* 'from the very beginning'). The resulting reading makes significantly better sense than all others so far proposed (to which add Testen 1994: 312–5 and R. Kim 2003: 54–5), which have taken as a starting point the obscene Greek interlinear version. The conclusion seems inescapable that the latter does not stem from Tzetzes himself, but was added by a later scribe, most likely prompted by a misunderstanding of καὶτζ 'wife's father' (Oss. *kajes*/*kajys*, *kais*, lit. euphemistic '(he) who is') as **qajis* 'you f*ck' (62).

In summary, Alexander Lubotsky is to be thanked for this small but significant contribution not only to Ossetic and Iranian linguistics, but also to the history of Orthodox Christianity and Byzantine influence in the medieval northern Caucasus. The identification of these glosses has established beyond

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[2] See Abaev 1949: 397, Isaev 1966: 50–1. When the numeral governs a noun, the latter takes the pronominal suffix: gen. *avd bæx-e-j*, dat. *avd bæx-em-æn* 'of, for (the) seven horses'.

[3] On another putative example of ε for /æj/, see below.

[4] Cf. Cheung 2002: 101, 141, 194 on -ετζ, presumably referring to this form. The affricate survives in Ossetic after **r*: *arcæ*/*arc* 'spear' < POss. **arcæ* < **arscæ* < **arštyā* ← PIr. **r̥šti-* (Cheung 2002: 101).

reasonable doubt that the Alans in the period from the 12th to 14th centuries had a tradition of writing their language in the Greek script, with orthographic conventions to render non-Greek sounds such as affricates or the distinction of /æ/ vs. /a/. There is thus reason to be optimistic that further examples will turn up in the future.

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