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## LUKE 24.11 AND THE OLD BULGARIAN PERFECTIVE IMPERFECT

This paper examines a hitherto unrecognized example of the Old Bulgarian perfective imperfect with a view of throwing some light on the invariant grammatical meaning of the form.

### (1) Lk 24.11 Zo Mar Ost

ІѢВНША СѦ ПРѢДЪ НѢМНЪ ТѢКО БЛАДН ГЛѢ ИХЪ І НЕ НМѢАХЪ НМЪ ВѢРЪ  
(*ἠπίστων αὐταῖς*). 'And their words seemed to them to be nonsense and they did not believe them.'

This example is an important one, since because of the agreement of three ancient witnesses, the *Zographensis*, the *Marianus* and the *Ostromir Gospel*, it is extremely likely that НМѢАХЪ in this example stems back to the original Slavonic version. This form has been identified by Jagić (1883:518) and Aitzetmüller (1977:198) as the imperfect tense of the imperfective verb НМѢТИ 'to have'. This identification must be discounted on two grounds: — first on the grounds of translation technique, and second because of the lexical distinction between НМѢТИ ВѢРЪ 'to have faith' and the perfective ІАТИ ВѢРЪ 'to believe'.

The periphrasis НМѢТИ ВѢРЪ translates *ἔχω πίστιν*, while *ἀπιστεύω* is translated by НЕ ІАТИ ВѢРЪ as in Examples (1) and (2), or by the imperfective НЕ ВѢРОВАТИ as in Example (3): —

### (2) Mk 16.11 Mar Zo Ass

(НН ЖЕ СЛЫШАВЪШЕ ТѢКО ЖНЕЪ ЕСТЬ Н ВНАДѢНЪ БЫСТЪ ЕЖ НЕ ІАСА ВѢРЪ  
*ἠπίστησαν*). 'When they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe it'.

### (3) Lk 24.41 Mar Ass

ЄШТЕ ЖЕ НЕ ВѢРОВАШТЕМЪ (*ἀπιστούντων*) НМЪ ОТЬ РАДОСТН Н УОДАШТЕМЪ СѦ  
*ρεγε* НМЪ. ІМАТЕ АН УЗТО СЪНѢДЪНО СЪДЕ. 'While they were still not believing from joy and were marvelling, he said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?"'

Thus the translation technique in Example (1) would be quite anomalous if НМѢАХЪ in this example were the imperfect tense of НМѢТИ and not the

homographic imperfect tense of  $\text{ѠАТН}$ . Indeed, the imperfect  $\text{НМѢАХѢ}$  in Example (1) and the aorist  $\text{ѠАСА}$  in Example (2) are both forms of the perfective verb  $\text{ѠАТН}$  and therefore are distinct only in tense, but not lexically or aspectually. The alternation between perfective  $\text{ѠАТН ВѢРѢ}$  as in Examples (1) and (2) and the imperfective  $\text{ВѢРОВАТН}$  as in Example (3) is quite typical for the Old Bulgarian version of the Gospels.

If  $\text{НМѢАХѢ}$  in Example (1) were the imperfect of  $\text{НМѢТН}$ , the passage would mean that the apostles had no faith in the women, and did not trust them in general, whereas the point is that they did not believe the particular piece of news that the women had brought them.

Thus in Example (1) we have the best attested example of the perfective imperfect in Old Bulgarian, an example that has hitherto been overlooked in the literature. Here the perfective aspect explicitly presents the event in its entirety, while the imperfect tense explicitly presents the event as a continuing state that happened to be valid up till the time of the events related in Example (3). Repetition of the event is not even implied here, let alone specified. Thus this example is very strong evidence of the postulate that the perfective imperfect did not, as a part of its invariant grammatical meaning specify that the event was repeated.<sup>1</sup>

#### REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> The description here follows that given for Supr 511.20—21  $\text{ПРѢЗОВѢАХЪ . . . ѠБРАШТААХЪ}$  in Galton (1976: 181), rather than that given in Vaillant (1964: 345). If one corrects the jumbled word order of Supr 72.25-7 following Ivšić (1925: 460), Supr 72.26  $\text{ѠБРАШТАХОМ' СА}$  would appear to be another example analogous with Example (1) and the examples discussed by Galton.