

Telling Parallel Translations from Retranslations in Byzantine-Slavic Hagiography

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The present paper addresses the problem of telling independent translations from later retranslations. Though telling these apart forms part and parcel of the practice of Paleoslavonic text research, up to this date no effort has been made to formulate a generally applicable methodology of going about this task. Sound intuition and personal reading experience are still the standard to go by. In this paper an outline is provided of what such a methodology could look like, suggesting and discussing a set of basic criteria for distinguishing what we term parallel against retranslations. This will be done based on the Slavonic Life of Eupraxia, for which alternate renderings pointing to starkly different text versions have been registered. This paper will take the cards on Eupraxia from Francis Thomson's cartothea as a point of departure and start with a discussion of the translations identified on his EUPRAXIA cards.

Introduction

Having two or even more Slavonic translations of what would count as the same Byzantine base text is quite a common phenomenon, so much so that Lora Taseva dedicated a special volume to this intriguing fact of Slavic cultural history in 2006.¹ Up to this point, however, most Paleoslavonic research treated translations, among them parallel translations, primarily as a factor to be taken into account on coming to grips with the history and transmission of individual texts.² Secondary³ translations were hardly ever addressed as a phenomenon in its own right, despite their obvious value in shaping our view of Slavic cultural history, especially the ideological underpinnings of the cultural practice

1 L. Taseva et al. (eds.), *Многократните преводи в Южнославянското средновековие*, Sofia 2006.

2 T. ROSÉN, Методы и проблемы при датировании и локализации анонимных церковнославянских переводов, *Slovo: Journal of Slavic Languages and Literatures* 46, 1998, 103.

3 We use the term secondary translation as a cover for both parallel and retranslation, rather than the seemingly more obvious term double translation, which in Paleoslavonic studies has been assigned a quite different meaning, viz. the translation of one source term by a chain of two synonymous terms in the target language (cf. E. HANSACK, *Der Übersetzungsstil des Exarchen Johannes*, *Palaeobulgarica* 1/3, 1977, 33–59, and idem, *Zum Übersetzungsstil des Exarchen Johannes*, *Die Welt der Slaven* 24, 1979, 121–171).

of translating. Secondary translations raise the principal question why they were made at all. This is basically a question about the evolution, standards and assumptions of a given literary culture. Secondary translations are equally fit to test hypotheses about translation techniques, such as the application not only of syntagmatic, but also of paradigmatic strict interlinearity in medieval Slavonic translations.

Retranslations vs. parallel translations

The term secondary translation, though appearing quite straightforward at first glance, may refer to quite divergent phenomena, which should be differentiated accordingly.⁴ A text may have been translated for a second time, because its commonly known first translation was considered inappropriate. Inappropriateness may refer to a range of causes, which we will spell out later. For these cases we suggest the term retranslation, presupposing a conscious act of replacement of one text by another. Retranslations would thus represent the most extreme end of text redacting and ought to be considered as redactions rather than translations, accordingly.

In other cases, a text may appear to have been translated a second time by accident, i.e. without knowledge of there already being a translation of the text available. We suggest reserving the term parallel translation to this particular case. The reasons for a parallel translation ought to be sought in the structural prerequisites of a given literacy, rather than in its ideological underpinnings, as in the case of retranslations. Parallel translations may be indicative of the way a text corpus, like hagiography, emerged and disseminated within Slavonic literacy.

In the admittedly unlikely case that the original translation is so bad that the redactor decides to ignore it completely and provide for a completely new translation instead, parallel translation and retranslation become formally indistinguishable. This, however, presupposes a translator of particular vigour who sticks to his initial decision and is never seduced to have a surreptitious glance at the original translation, whenever he encounters a particularly daring and challenging part in his Greek original.

Parallel translations and hagiography

Though hagiography was most likely right from the beginning of Slavonic literacy treated as a set of related texts, which would ideally take the form of a fixed cycle of *menologia* with a standardized set of individual text entries, the reality of hagiographic text transmission displays an enormous variety

4 R. MARTI, Mehrfachübersetzungen als Sonderfall der Textüberlieferung, in: Taseva et al. (eds.), *Многократните преводи*, op. cit., 23–34. L. TASEVA, Перевод и редакция: языковые критерии и жанровая специфика, in: Taseva et al. (eds.): *Многократните преводи*, op. cit., 35–55.

with respect to the composition of hagiographic collections, so much so that individual hagiographic texts may be said to lead a life of their own. Even if a large-scale centralized project of having the whole cycle of *menologia* translated in one big effort could reasonably be assumed, this could not effectively have safeguarded against the occurrence of accidental parallel translations, though it would certainly have helped reduce their total number by creating a standard reference for any later compiler or translator.

We believe that the primary compilation of Slavonic *menologia* was a slow and gradual and, accordingly, a weakly coordinated process, which offered many opportunities for accidental parallel translations. The fact that even the earliest testimonies of Slavonic reading *menaia*, i.e. the Codex Suprasliensis and the Uspenskij Sbornik, appear not to form part of the same, uniform cycle of reading *menaia*⁵ supports our intuition that there was in fact no early coordinated hagiographic translation project. Michail N. Speranskij, though, presupposed for his study of the September and October volumes of the Slavonic reading *menaia* the existence of an original base translation of a Studite reading *menaion*, on which all later Slavonic *menaia* would be based, which would run counter to any expectations of parallel translations.⁶ But firstly, his reconstruction covers only 17 out of 30 days for September and 18 out of 31 days for October, which would leave room for uncoordinated random additions, permitting the intrusion of parallel translations in the slots which had to be filled in, any time later on, starting possibly as early as the 10th century.⁷

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, there is no way of excluding the possibility of Speranskij's reconstruction conflating two or even more independent translations of Greek reading *menaia*.⁸ This is in line with Helmut Keipert's identification of a version of the Legend of the 40 Martyrs at Sebaste found in the Codex Suprasliensis, in which two independent earlier translations were

5 I. DOBREV, Агиографската реформа на Симеон Метафраст и съставът на Супрасълския сборник, *Старобългарска литература* 10, 1981, 37. A. MILTENOVA et al., *История на българската средновековна литература* [IBSL], Sofia 2009, 135.

6 M. N. SPERANSKIJ, Сентябрьская минея-четья до-макарьевского состава, *Известия Отделения Русского Языка и Словесности* 1, 1896, 244. M. N. SPERANSKIJ, Октябрьская минея-четья до-макарьевского состава, *Известия Отделения Русского Языка и Словесности* 6, 1901, 57–87.

7 For the dates that are left blank in Speranskij's reconstructed Slavonic protomenologion of September and October, only the Life of St Menodora (10 September) can be indicated as a possible candidate for a parallel translation (see footnote 8).

8 For quite a number of the Saints included in Speranskij's reconstruction of the Slavonic protomenologion there are indications for the assumption of parallel translations: (i) The Miracle of Archangel Michael at Khonai (6 September), (ii) Eustathius, Theopist et al. (20 September), (iii) Cyprianus and Iustina (2 October), (iv) Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus (12 October), (v) Carpus, Papyllas and Agathonice (13 October), (vi) Nazarius, Gervasius et al. (14 October) (see footnote 7). If the assumption of parallel translations should prove correct in these cases, this would indeed provide a valid argument against the idea of there having been a uniform base translation of the reading *menaion* as reference point.

mixed.⁹ Apparently, parallel translations of hagiographic texts abounded already in the 10th and 11th centuries. This short theoretical paper is not the place to enter a detailed discussion of the cultural historical background for Slavonic parallel translations. After the vibrant translation activities of 10th century Symeonitic Bulgaria, a second wave of Slavonic translation activities falls within the age of liturgical reforms in the fourteenth century in both Bulgaria and Serbia.¹⁰ As for hagiographic texts, future research has yet to show at which of the two periods in question most parallel and also retranslations emerged.

Thus, parallel translations would have been a consequence of a commonly felt need for translations of a particular text or group of texts at a given time combined with a weak coordination of the common efforts to satisfy the need. But it is not only weak coordination that accounts for parallel translations. At least in some cases, parallel translations may be due to ambiguities about the genre of the given text and the function it is supposed to serve. As for hagiography, a principal ambiguity arises from its inherent parallel function of serving doxological needs within a saint's cult on the one hand and its more general didactic potentials as illustrations of ideal ways of life, on the other hand. Thus, any saint's life may principally be imbedded in two quite different contexts: (1) within the liturgical context of the church calendar, which would imply the text's being included in a menologion under its appointed date, or (2) within the context of Christian instruction or edification, as exemplified by ascetic-theological miscellanies. For many hagiographic texts one of the two functions predominated in such a way as to determine its major domain of transmission. In cases with a predominant functional interpretation within a collection that is not regionally restricted only one translation ought to be expected, which, as the text tradition unfolds, becomes firmly associated with its particular domain, so much so that it becomes easily retrievable for the occasional introduction of the text in question into other domains of use. Thus, the Life of Abraham of Qidun, owing to its assumed authorship of Ephrem the Syrian, became early on a fixed element of the Slavonic Paraenesis rather than the Menologion. This saint's life was read as a model case of a hermit's life rather than a text in devotion to Abraham himself. Only occasionally has this text been included in the devotional context of hagiographic collections, and some such collections, instead of copying the text, simply refer the reader to the Paraenesis, as in the case of the 14th century menologion/panegyrikon for November from the monastery of Cetinje (ms. 20), which under the date for St Abraham of Qidun has the simple reference *иши в стѣмь Юсфремѣ писано*

9 Н. КЕИПЕРТ, Eine Übersetzungskontamination im "Codex Suprasliensis", in: J. Zaimov (ed.), *Проучвания върху супрасълския сборник*, Sofia 1980, 18–35. Н. КЕИПЕРТ, Nochmals zur Kontaminationsproblematik in Nr. 5 des "Codex Suprasliensis", *Prace filologiczne* 44, 1999, 275–280.

10 L. ТАСЕВА, Паралелните преводи на византийски богослужебни книги като извор за преводаческото изкуство на Балканите през XIV в., *Списание на БАН* 5, 2014, 21–22.

instead of the Saint's Life.¹¹ But in other cases, there appears to have been an equal demand for the text as both devotional and edifying. A case in point appears to be the Life of St Eupraxia, which is found in ascetic miscellanies and in menologia alike. And, in fact, there are strong indications of this text having been translated twice unbeknownst of each other. This is suggestive of the Life having been translated once as part of the menologion and then once again as part of an edifying Paterikon.¹² Unfortunately, though, the distribution of both versions, or rather translations over menologia and miscellanies does not straightforwardly corroborate the assumption of a functional divide. As for texts whose transmission is restricted to menologia, the assignment to different dates in the church calendar may be considered a possible cause of parallel translations, although we are for the time being not able to point out a suitable example. Rather to the contrary: the Life of St Irene has been assigned once to the 17th of April and yet again to the 4th of May, but no parallel translations can be identified for this text.¹³ In general, when dealing with widely different versions of a hagiographic text, it is certainly commendable to take into account the possibility of a pronounced functional divide within the tradition of the text in question. Wherever such a divide can be established, the argument for a parallel translation can be given additional support.

Up to this time only few cases of parallel translations of hagiographic texts have been identified and established for sure, such as the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste,¹⁴ St Anthony the Great,¹⁵ St Euphrosyna,¹⁶ St Eupraxia of Constantinople

11 K. IVANOVA, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica* [BHBS], Sofia 2008, 158.

12 M. PETROVA-TANEVA, *The Bdiniski Sbornik: A Study of a Medieval Bulgarian Book*, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Central European University), Budapest 2003, 153.

13 V. KRYS'KO – W. НОСК, *Мучение Ирины*, Moscow – St. Petersburg 2024.

14 A. SOBOLEVSKII, *Жития святых по древнерусским спискам. 1. Мучение св. Климента Римского. 2. Житие св. Василия Великого. 3. Мучение 40 мучеников в Севастии*. [Памятники древней письменности и искусства, 149] Saint Petersburg 1903. S. Ivšić, *Ostaci staroslovenskih prijevoda u hrvatskoj glagolskoj književnosti*. Hrvatski glagolski fragmenat “Mučenja 40 mučenika” iz 13. vijeka, in: *Zbornik kralja Tomislava*, Zagreb 1925, 451–508. D. IVANOVA-MIRČEVA, *Непознат вариант от старобългарския превод на “Μαρτύριον τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐνδόξων τεσσαράκοντα μαρτύρων τῶν ἐν Σεβαστείᾳ μαρτυρησάντων”*, *Известия на института за български език* 17, 1969, 51–103. M. CAPALDO, *Zur linguistischen Betrachtungsweise der Komposition des Codex Suprasliensis (Die Passio der vierzig Märtyrer von Sebaste)*, in: *Contributi italiani all'VIII Congresso internazionale degli slavisti (Zagreb-Ljubljana 1978)*, Rome 1978, 23–60. KEIPERT, *Eine Übersetzungskontamination*, op. cit. KEIPERT, *Nochmals*, op. cit.

15 T. HELLAND, *The Greek Archetypes of the Old and Middle Bulgarian Translations of the Life of St Anthony the Great*, *Palaeobulgarica* 28/4, 2004, 3–18. A. ДИМИТРОВА, *Третият превод на житието на св. Антоний Велики*, *Старобългарска литература* 47, 2013, 92–107.

16 M. PETROVA-TANEVA, *Житието на св. Ефросина Александрийска в староизводния четимней НБКМ 1039 от XIV в.*, in: D. Atanasova (ed.), *Агиославика. Проблеми и подходи в изследването на Станиславовия четимней*, Sofia 2016, 107–121.

(or in Thebais),¹⁷ St Theodora of Alexandria,¹⁸ St Eustachius Placidus,¹⁹ St Condratius of Nicomedia,²⁰ and St Menignus,²¹ but many more parallel translations may still be awaiting their identification. A perusal of the entries of the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica* reveals variant texts for a significant number of saints' lives, many of them displaying very marked differences which may possibly be taken as indicative of a parallel translation.²² It looks

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- 17 PETROVA-TANEVA, *The Bdinski Sbornik*, op. cit. D. STERN, The Double Life of St Eupraxia within the Old Slavonic Tradition, in: A. Anđuševa et al. (eds.), *Vis et sapientia: Studia in honorem Anisavae Miltenova*, Sofia 2016, 493–513.
- 18 M. PETROVA-TANEVA, Неизвестен източник на изборника от 1076 г.: една непозната славянска версия на житието на св. Теодора Александрийска, *Старобългарска литература* 47/1, 2013, 11–45.
- 19 O. V. GLADKOVA, *Цикл агиографических текстов о Св. Евстафии Плакиде в русской средневековой литературе: история создания и опыт интерпретации*, (Ph.D. thesis (докторская диссертация), Moscow State University 2015).
- 20 V. JAGIĆ, Zur Berichtigung altrussischer Texte, *Archiv für slavische Philologie* 6, 1882, 225–231. I. TÖTH, Житие Кондрата, *Studia slavica* 21/3–4, 1975, 237–275. A. VOJADŽIEV, Житието на св. Кондрат – първоначалната история на неговия славянски текст и развитието на старобългарската правописна система с голям ер, *Кирило-Методиевски студии* 10, 1995, 46–81. E. MIČEVA, Житието на св. Кодрат Никомидийски (10 март) в славянската традиция, in: Anđuševa et al. (eds.), *Vis et sapientia*, op. cit., 559–571. E. MIČEVA, *Староизводните и новоизводните сборници – преводи, редакции, книжовноезикови особености*, Sofia 2018, 225–255.
- 21 L. TASEVA, Die Viten des heiligen Menignos in zwei südslavischen Übersetzungen, *BSI* 76, 2018, 176–201.
- 22 BHBS registers incipits of variant texts but wisely abstains from classifying the variants as either redactions or independent translations (see the foreword to BHBS on p. 11). The same caution is, however, not observed with respect to parallel finds from Makarii's Reading Menaion (VMČ). Thus, BHBS qualifies a sizable number of texts attested in VMČ as being (possibly) based on a translation different from the one(s) found in the South Slavic tradition. The following list will give an impression of the overall extent of independent translations as explicitly identified by BHBS: **1** The Miracle of Archangel Michael at Khonai (6 Sept., BHBS 186-7) – **2** Phokas the Gardener (22 Sept., BHBS 219) – **3** Carpus, Papylas and Agathonice (13 Oct., BHBS 245; the extant South Slavic versions look also rather like independent translations) – **4** Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius and Celsius (14 Oct., BHBS 246-7) – **5** Artemius (22 Oct., BHBS 256-7) – **6** Bishop Peter of Alexandria (25 Nov., BHBS 322-3) – **7** Sabbas the Sanctified (5 Dec., BHBS 337-8) – **8** Bonifatius and Aglaïis (19 Dec., BHBS 365-6; the extant South Slavic versions look also rather like independent translations) – **9** Agatha of Palermo (5 Feb., BHBS 463) – **10** Nicephorus of Antiochia (9 Feb., BHBS 465) – **11** Theodorus Tiro (17 Feb., BHBS 472 [text 3]) – **12** The 42 Martyrs at Amoria (7 March, BHBS 480-1) – **13** Xenophon (26 Jan., BHBS 451-2) – **14** Pope Gregory the Great (11 March, BHBS 486-7) – **15** Aninas Thaumaturgus (18 March, BHBS 491) – **16** John the Hesychast (31 March, BHBS 510) – **17** The Third Invention of the Head of John the Baptist (25 May, BHBS 536-7). To these can be added a similar number of saints' lives for which South Slavic versions are listed in BHBS which display a very pronounced textual divergence such as to be suggestive of parallel translations rather than of variation due to transmission or conscious redaction: **18** Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora (10 Sept., BHBS 199-200) – **19** Eustathius, Theopiste, Agapius and Theopistus (20 Sept., BHBS 217-8) – **20** Cyprianus and Iustina (2 Oct., BHBS 234-5) – **21** Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus (12 Oct., BHBS 244-5) – **22** Menas of Phrygia (11 Nov., BHBS 291-2) – **23** Apostle Philip (14 Nov., BHBS 303) – **24** Amphilocheus of Iconium (23 Nov., BHBS 316-

like secondary translations were indeed quite a common phenomenon within the Byzantine-Slavic hagiographic tradition, so much so that they seem to be the rule rather than the exception.

Retranslation may have played an additional role when the earliest hagiographic translations, which probably originated in the mission of Cyrillus and Methodius, were transferred to Preslav in the times of Symeon, so that for the 10th century the possibility of either parallel or retranslation must be weighed, accordingly. The only other cultural event which has brought about a major revision of the extant hagiographic repertoire, was the introduction of the metaphrastic *vitae* into Slavonic literacy, though it begs the question whether retranslation would be an appropriate term in this case given the tremendous dissimilarity between the metaphrastic texts and the original *vitae* these were meant to remodel. It may be safe to assume that metaphrastic and premetaphrastic texts were generally not considered as just two versions of the same base text, but rather as different texts which just happened to fill in the same functional slot within the hagiographic cycle of the liturgical year. So, translation of metaphrastic texts should be judged as a case of cultural shift rather than a retranslation in its strict reconstitutive sense.

Telling parallel from retranslations

Great care should be taken to determine for any given text whether it presents a parallel or a retranslation. Some general observations may provide useful guidance.

(1) A retranslation as an act of conscious replacement should ideally be reflected in an altered tradition, with the first translation being primarily found in manuscripts up to a certain point in time, whereas the second translation ought to prevail from this point in time onwards. This criterion may, however, prove deceptive, since it does not consider the overall conditions of Slavonic text transmission with its decentralizing effects.²³ The better known and the more firmly established a text tradition is, the less likely it appears that its constituent

7) – 25 Catherine of Alexandria (24/25 Nov., BHBS 319-20, 323) – 26 Pope Clement I (25 Nov., BHBS 321-2) – 27 Barbara (4 Dec., BHBS 333-4) – 28 Philemon and Apollonius (14 Dec., BHBS 359) – 29 Eleutherius of Illyria and Anthia (15 Dec., BHBS 360) – 30 Ignatius Theophorus (20 Dec., BHBS 368-9) – 31 Anastasia of Sirmium (22 Dec., BHBS 372) – 32 Anthony the Great (17 Jan., BHBS 442-4) – 33 Martinianus (13 Feb., BHBS 467-8) – 34 Alexius of Rome (17 March, BHBS 489-91) – 35 Mark the Evangelist (25 May, BHBS 523-4) – 36 Marina of Antioch (17 July, BHBS 584-5) – 37 Adrianus and Natalia (26 Aug., BHBS 618-9).

23 See in particular A. TURILOV, Traduzioni antiche e nuove nella civiltà letteraria slava orientale tra la fine del XIV e il XVI secolo, in: M. Di Salvo – G. Ziffer (eds.), *Traduzioni e rapporti interculturali degli slavi con il mondo circostante*, Milano 2016, 5–6 for the vagaries of replacive translations, especially cases where the replacive text is transmitted alongside the text to be replaced within the same manuscript.

texts were translated a second time by accident. We therefore also presume that accidental parallel translations of hagiographic texts typically occur within roughly the same period, when the first translation was not yet commonly known and firmly established. The Life of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste, both translations of which can be shown to date back to the beginnings of Slavonic translations of Byzantine hagiography because the contamination of both translations occurred at a very early stage,²⁴ seems to point in this direction. Thus, a significant time gap between the first attestations of both versions is indicative of a retranslation, whereas an almost simultaneous appearance of both versions is suggestive of a parallel translation. It must, however, be emphasized that in most cases the criterion of temporal proximity or distance is difficult to apply, as almost none of the hagiographic translations can be straightforwardly assigned a particular date of origin. Beyond that, one should also take care not to take this criterion too strictly, although the underlying argument is fairly straightforward. The longer a text exists and the wider it gets disseminated, the less the likeliness for its remaining completely unknown within the narrow class of translators and text redactors. However, a text which never found a wide circulation, may be particularly hard to come by for any redactor-translator at any later time, so that he could in theory be forced to make a parallel translation out of sheer necessity.

(2) We assume that retranslations must in some way or other be motivated, though it must be admitted that it might prove a daunting task to pinpoint the exact motives for a retranslation from the vantage point of a modern investigator. Retranslations may be expected to be driven by a desire to provide for a new text which markedly and principally differs from the original translation which it is meant to replace. This provides for another criterion to tell both parallel and retranslations apart. If one of two translations is to be classified as a retranslation rather than a parallel translation, there should be a marked difference in one or more of the following aspects: (i) quality of craftsmanship of the translation (as the quality of the prior translation will be judged by the re-translator on the basis of recent available copies, this includes also the general state of corruption a prior translation has undergone up to the time of the retranslation), (ii) a different approach to translation technique, (iii) concerns about the quality of the original being used for the first translation.²⁵ Where it can be shown that one of the translations is replete with mistakes while the other is not, or that one translation adheres to a principle of strictest literalism while the other does exactly the opposite, or that both translations are based on

24 KEIPERT, *Nochmals*, op. cit. MARTI, *Mehrfachübersetzungen*, op. cit., 29.

25 It must be noted here that for the re-translator or redactor (i), (ii) and (iii) are likely to be conflated in his judgment that urges him to a revision/retranslation. In checking a text under revision against a possibly widely divergent Greek text at his disposal he is likely to judge the Slavonic text in terms of low craftsmanship or inappropriate liberties against the backdrop of his Greek text, though the Slavonic text may in fact reflect an adequate translation of a very different Greek original.

markedly divergent versions of the original (slightly divergent versions may be expected in any case of secondary translation, anyway), a good case can be made for a retranslation. In all cases, where no such principal difference in translation style can be identified – with certain allowances for random variation in retranslations, of course – the default assumption should be that of a parallel translation, especially if the preconditions for parallel translations are particularly favorable, as we assume to be the case with hagiography. The case for a parallel translation rather than a retranslation is significantly strengthened, if it can be shown that both translations originate from divergent genre contexts. If any two translations therefore differ from each other in an unsystematic, unprincipled and unpredictable manner, a parallel translation should be assumed rather than a retranslation. A caveat must be placed here. Marked differences in style and approach as such do not preclude the possibility of both translations being parallel translations. As a matter of fact, we may expect any two translators to apply their specific technique and have their specific preferences of dealing with features of the source languages, such as outlined by Dimitrova, and we may also expect that the Greek original is likely to deviate somehow in any case, so much so that we would also expect for parallel translations some degree of difference in craftsmanship, style and original.²⁶ Thus, criterion (2) actually works only one way, and that only if the differences are very pronounced, indeed. It can be reliable for identifying retranslations, but it cannot be used to positively identify a parallel translation.

(3) Retranslation presupposes that the first translation was known and available to the re-translator and was accordingly used by him in doing his retranslation, which means that at least a partial overlap of exactly matching passages for both translations should be expected.²⁷ Where this is not the case, the assumption of a parallel translation is the more likely option. We even have a hard criterion here. Any significant literal overlap which cannot be accounted for in terms of default translation solutions with a high likeliness of occurrence or a low potential for alternative solutions excludes the possibility of a parallel translation. Lora Taseva identifies shared mistakes and shared non-synonymous lexical replacements as the most indicative types of overlap, which would straightforwardly force the assumption of retranslation.²⁸ As was noted above, we consider the case of a re-translator who would never consult an already existing translation at his hand to make use of its better solutions, as highly unlikely. We expect, in fact, partial overlap in most if not all retranslations. Granted these assumptions, absence or presence of partial overlap might prove to be a very strong indicator of either parallel or retranslation, with very few cases falling through the grid.

26 A. DIMITROVA, Авторски и преводачески стил в старобългарската агиография, *Старобългарска литература* 45–46, 2012, 165–177.

27 MARTI, *Mehrfachübersetzungen*, op. cit., 30–31.

28 TASEVA, *Перевод и редакция*, op. cit., 43–49.

(4) Most research on individual texts will approach the issue of either parallel or retranslation in an apparently intuitive manner. Thus, Maya Petrova-Taneva in her effort to demonstrate that the extant versions of the Life of Theodora of Alexandria are in fact parallel translations, quotes a number of passages, which are all marked by a high quantity of differences between both versions, leading her to the conclusion that we are dealing with a true parallel translation.²⁹ Horace Lunt, however, demonstrated on the basis of the Slavonic NT transmission that variant readings can accumulate throughout a long transmission in a manner that makes the extreme ends of a long transmission chain (in his case the Codex Marianus against the Dobrilovo evangelie) formally indistinguishable from true parallel translations.³⁰ Thus, one could argue that our general intuition about marked differences being indicative of parallel translations is misleading if not downright wrong. But then, the quantitative criterion may prove to be not so bad, after all. Firstly, the Slavonic NT transmission is a very exceptional case in that it is a text which has been copied much more often than any other Slavonic text. The explanation of marked variation testifying to a long and diversified transmission would thus only be applicable to this text group, but not or in a much lesser degree to texts with a less extensive transmission history. Apart from that, there is ample documentation of all the intervening stages of the NT history, and the same ought to be true for any two versions of a hagiographic text. Thus, in any case where enough copies are preserved and all extant copies testify to a strict divide between two starkly different versions without any intervening stages, the most reasonable interpretation is that of its representing a parallel translation. Later contamination, which is not a very uncommon phenomenon in Slavonic text transmission, would then be the event that could come in the way of identifying a true parallel translation (see below). Notwithstanding these issues of transmission, the quantitative intuition can be spelled out as a formal criterion, in the end. We assume different patterns of text variation for both parallel and retranslations. True parallel translations, which are being produced blindly, i.e. without knowledge of the other translation, will typically display an even and uniform pattern of persistent variation between each other throughout the whole text. Uneven patterns of variation between texts are, on the contrary, in our view suggestive of retranslations or redactions. In sampling passages that all show the same even distribution of persistent and dense variation, Maya Petrova-Taneva made this structural point visible, and I think she is right in doing so.³¹ Another distributional aspect is that of predictable vs. unpredictable variation of equivalent lexical or other choices. We consider as absolutely equivalent those choices which are neither driven by any criteria related to space (region), time (period) nor style. Let us take one quite inconspicuous case of lexical variation, viz. synonymous *съподобие* vs

29 PETROVA-TANEVA, *Неизвестен източник*, op. cit.

30 H. G. LUNT, One OCS translation or two? *Die Welt der Slaven* 28/2, 1983, 225–249.

31 PETROVA-TANEVA, *Неизвестен източник*, op. cit.

подобьство (both regularly translating Gr. ὁμοίωμα). We assume that a retranslator, having the previous translation, which is meant to be retranslated at hand, will neatly follow its text and compare it to the Greek original he is using. If this is so, he is likely to keep *подобьство* in those places where he encounters it in the first translation, and he will proceed likewise with *съподобие* wherever he encounters it. Little variation across versions ought to be expected here. In the case of a parallel translation, though, the choice for either *подобьство* or *съподобие* is random and unpredictable and the chances are equal for any occurrence of *подобьство* of translation A to be reflected by either *подобьство* or *съподобие* in translation B. It is this randomness which in part accounts for the perceivable effect of variation being evenly spread out over the whole text.

Before we end and summarize our criteria in a table, I would like to very shortly address the issue of consistent and predictable vs inconsistent and unpredictable variation. Any translator may be assumed to have his personal preferences for certain words he uses as standard translation equivalents, which will lend parallel and retranslations alike the air of systematic redactorial work. Because of this, telling retranslations from parallel translations on the basis of systematic vs random variation, as we suggested above, may not be as straightforward, after all, at least not for lexical variation. There is, moreover, one type of lexical variation, which is quite regularly invoked to identify different text versions, viz. the lexical divide between Ohrid and Preslav.³² As a matter of fact, this divide, if indeed it is a dialectal divide, is of still less use than individual lexical preferences in telling parallel from retranslations, in that it is – not unlike the orthographic conventions known as recensions of Slavonic – more a matter of local scriptorial copying practice than of true redactorial and translation practices. Or to state it more bluntly, no one would care to take the trouble of making a retranslation of a text in which the only thing he finds objectionable is the use of a set of synonymous lexical items which differs from the usage at his own scriptorium. Turning an Ohrid into a Preslav text is just a matter of mechanically replacing one set of words by another set of words. It does not even have anything to do with translating or redacting in its proper sense of text emendation. But still, of course, systematic dialectal lexical differences can give additional clues for the identification of either a parallel or a retranslation by identifying two different localities for the extant versions, thus adding to the plausibility of one's hypothesis under the assumption that parallel translations should never happen at the same place and that retranslations are unlikely to originate from the same time and place.

32 Although this lexical opposition offers a good heuristic orientation, its applicability has met some well justified criticism, most recently by the late Javor Miltenov whose untimely death I deeply mourn; cf. J. MILTENOV, Преславските лексикални маркери. 1. Опит за въведение, *Palaeobulgarica* 44/2, 2020, 54–79 and idem, *Преславските лексикални маркери*, Sofia 2024.

The table below lists the four basic criteria discussed above, which we would like to be considered not so much as a useful tool, which may or may not be used to identify parallel translations, but rather as a diagnostic kit which must be applied in any analysis which claims to identify a parallel translation:

	Retranslation	parallel translation
(1) tradition	complementary (replacement)	parallel
(2) motivation	A and B differ with respect to (i) craftsmanship, (ii) translation technique, or (iii) choice of original	A and B may, but need not differ (though difference with respect to (iii) is likely)
(3) significant overlap	to be expected	excluded
(4) patterns of Variation	Patterned variation hot spots alignment of free lexical variants	random evenly spread (no hot spots) non-alignment of free lexical variants

A word on contamination

We somewhat pessimistically suggested above that contamination may potentially foil any effort at telling parallel from retranslations. In a manner of speaking, retranslation is in fact itself a contamination, in that it combines parts of the original translation with passages of retranslation. And what is more, the motives for both retranslations and contaminations may often be the same, viz. to create a ‘better’ text or fill in larger gaps in the original text. Thus, both contaminations and retranslations are in essence either emendatory or completory and it is little wonder therefore, that retranslations indeed give the superficial impression of a contaminated version of the text. The notable difference is, however, that while in the case of contamination two full texts on which the contaminated version draws, can usually be identified, in the case of a retranslation the second full base text would be “missing”, as it were. There is thus a formal difference between contamination and retranslation. Contamination presupposes the existence of three versions: A, B, and the contamination of these two (A/B). In retranslation no full version of B would ever exist. There is only A and A/B, with B forming a fragment of the full text. Retranslations can, however, always be interpreted as contaminations of parallel translations, where either version A or B did not happen to have come down to us, as is exemplified by Keipert with respect to the Legend of the 40 Martyrs at Sebaste.³³ Since there is no way for us to prove that A or B never existed, the possibility of a positive formal case against a retranslation being in fact a contamination of two parallel translations, of which one was lost, seems to be excluded. This is almost certainly true for completory retranslations, but with emendatory retranslations things may still be different. First of all, we suppose retranslation to be the method of choice for any redactor who finds fault with the original translation on principled grounds. Contamination of extant translations is

33 KEIPERT, *Eine Übersetzungskontamination*, op. cit., 32.

a less suitable emendatory tool for apparent reasons and may be expected to be applied only where there is no access to a Greek source text. Though both rely on mixing, retranslation may be expected to do so less than contamination, the latter being based on mixing as its principal technique. A re-translator may be assumed to focus primarily on the act of translating, taking only additional glances at the original translation to adopt from it what he finds acceptable according to his own translation standards against the backdrop of the Greek original he uses. A redactor restricted to the technique of contamination and lacking the authoritative reassurance of having the Greek original at his disposal, is forced to systematically go through the parallel Slavonic texts and decide at every step which variant to choose, though he may, of course, come to prefer for one reason or other one of the two original translations above the other and make it his baseline text. We therefore expect retranslations to be stylistically somewhat more homogenous than contaminations. All things being equal, there remains a degree of uncertainty about identifying a retranslation, which ought, however, not to be given too much weight. Though contamination in Slavonic manuscript transmissions may be common, the complete loss of versions is probably less so, and the coincidence of both contamination and loss of one of the original, i.e. uncontaminated versions is even less likely. The story of the reevaluation of the textual history of the Legend of the 40 Martyrs at Sebaste in the Codex Suprasliensis by Helmut Keipert teaches us to remain optimistic.³⁴ If a lost second translation is being assumed, it can often be expected to turn up eventually, even if it takes almost 20 years of looking for it, as Keipert did.³⁵

Testing the tool kit on the Slavonic Life of St Eupraxia

In what follows, we intend to test the applicability and usefulness of our tool kit on the Slavonic Life of Eupraxia, for which Maya Petrova has made a convincing case of parallel translation.³⁶ Ever since its publication by Jan Scharpé, Frans Vyncke and Edmond Voordeckers in 1973 it has been maintained that there existed three different Slavonic versions of the Slavonic Life of Eupraxia.³⁷ Helmut Keipert made this even several versions, which at least to me sounds like more than three.³⁸ The term ‘version’ is often applied as a general cover for texts, whose relationship has as yet not been the object of closer investigation and might be either retranslations/redactions or independent parallel translations. Francis Thomson, however, explicitly refers to translations on his cards.

34 KEIPERT, *Eine Übersetzungskontamination*, op. cit.

35 KEIPERT, *Nochmals*, op. cit.

36 PETROVA-TANEVA, *The Bdinski Sbornik*, op. cit.

37 J. L. Scharpé – F. Vyncke – E. Voordeckers (eds.), *Bdinski zbornik. An Old-Slavonic Menologium of Women Saints (Ghent University Library Ms. 408, A.D. 1360)*, Brugge 1973, 35.

38 H. KEIPERT, Zur Parallelüberlieferung des “Bdinski zbornik” (Cod. Gand. 408), *AnBoll* 93, 1975, 282.

On the reverse of the first card of a set of two ‘small’ cards entitled EUPRAXIA IN THEBAIDE he notes:³⁹ “Special on both translations: Stern, Translations {...} [and] idem, Life {...}.” On the second card it says about the version of the Bdinski Sbornik: “Another translation is found in a 1479 ms of Rila and yet another in c16 Rus Mss,” which would add up to three translations. The obvious question is, which card is correct: the first one, which implies a total of just two translations, or the second, which adds a third one. The second card clearly reflects Voordeckers’ earlier statement (for which see footnote 37 of this paper), which is correct in identifying the text of the Rila ms. of 1479, which is the Panegyrikon of Vladislav the Grammarian, as a different version of the text found in the Bdinski Sbornik. But Voordeckers’ assessment, of the text from RGB Troice-Sergieva Lavra f. 304, no. 678 from the 15th–16th century, discussed by Dybo and Kučkin,⁴⁰ as yet another different version, although it is not entirely wrong, is at least misleading as it implies that the kind of variation that allows for this text to be classified as a different version from the Bdinski Sbornik text is basically of the same kind as the kind of variation that distinguishes the Rila text from the text of the Bdinski Sbornik. This may have misled Thomson to qualify both versions as independent translations. But, as Maya Petrova has demonstrated in her dissertation, there are indeed only two translations.⁴¹ RGB Troice-Sergieva lavra 304-678 is only a variant of the text found in the Bdinski Sbornik, although a marked one, while Rila 4/8 is indeed a different translation. So, there are only two translations, a fact which is reflected on the first card with reference to Stern, who derived his knowledge from Petrova’s dissertation. It goes without saying that in editing and publishing the cards, this kind of internal contradiction, which may point to misunderstandings, must be identified and accounted for. In what follows we investigate the problem of telling parallel from retranslations with reference to the Slavonic Life of Eupraxia.

The transmission of this saint’s Life is marked by a sharp contrast between two versions, which differ so markedly from each other that parallel translation suggests itself.⁴² In applying our tool kit, we will be focusing entirely on the relation between the version of the Bdinski Sbornik and the more common south Slavic version as represented by the Rila manuscript mentioned earlier.

We will start with (1) the criterion of tradition. Here an uneven regional pattern for the distribution of both versions can be observed, which we will call versions A and B. Except for the Bdinski Sbornik, version A is attested exclusively in manuscripts of Russian origin, while version B is only found in manuscripts of South Slavic origin. Beyond that no obvious distributional

39 For scans of both cards see thomsonindex.org/card/20542, 20543, 20544, and 20545.

40 V. A. ДУБО – V. A. КУЧКИН, Болгарский текст в русской минее XVI в., *Byzantinobulgarica* 2, 1966, 279–301.

41 PETROVA-TANEVA, *The Bdinski Sbornik*, op. cit.

42 PETROVA-TANEVA, *The Bdinski Sbornik*, op. cit. Stern, *The Double Life*, op. cit.

patterns can be discerned. The testimonies of both versions display roughly equal distribution over time and genres. The regional pattern of distribution of Russian vs. South Slavic can, however, be treated as an indication of the relative age of both versions. Russian manuscripts tend to preserve old versions, which would be routinely associated with the Symeonitic period, i.e. the 10th century. South Slavic manuscripts in comparison tend to be more innovative. For them a strong tendency can be observed to replace archaic versions by retranslations or revisions, which are routinely linked to the reforms of Patriarch Euthymius of Tărnovo, i.e. roughly the second half of the 14th century. On the face of it, version A could then be judged to be older, dating back to the age of Symeon, and version B would accordingly represent its Euthymian retranslation or revision. The South Slavic Bđinski Sbornik would be the only remnant of the Pre-Euthymian stage of the South Slavic transmission. This looks like a simple and straightforward account according to which both versions could be linked to well-established traditions. We would be dealing with an obvious case of replacement of an older text by its revised version.

The story is, however, not as straightforward as it appears on first consideration. As a matter of fact, the oldest testimony for the Slavonic *Vita Eupraxiae* is found in GIM Chludov 237, for which a date of origin sometime between 1340 and 1354 has been established.⁴³ The manuscript has been, accordingly, qualified as a predecessor to the School of Tărnovo.⁴⁴ The same holds true basically for yet another early manuscript testimony from roughly the same period, viz. Cod. slav. 42 of the Austrian National Library at Vienna. Both manuscripts predate the presumed beginnings of the Euthymian reforms in the 1370s, and – which is the crucial point here – both manuscripts contain the allegedly innovative version B. We are confronted with two options now: either version B is like version A Pre-Euthymian and could then principally be of roughly the same age as version A, or the Euthymian reforms with its characteristic revisions and retranslations started earlier than has been assumed so far, with the monastery of Paroria, from which Chludov 237 originates, being one of the first sites for systematic text revisions to take place. The latter option seems the more attractive, as otherwise the regional bias of the transmission would be left unaccounted for, but we still must consider the possibility that version B predates the 14th century and might be of the same age as version A. So, the application of the criterion of tradition does not provide an unequivocal answer, although a preference for retranslation rather than parallel translation seems to emerge at this point.

We can now move on to (2) the motivation for revision. If both versions should be equal in terms of craftsmanship, translation technique and choice of the original, chances are great that we are dealing with a parallel translation.

43 Н. МИКЛАС, Къде са отишли парорийските ръкописи? *Търновска книжовна школа* 5, 1989, 31 and 34.

44 МИКЛАС, *Къде са отишли*, op. cit., 35.

In the opposite case, retranslation becomes a possibility, although parallel translation is by no means excluded. As for the choice of the original, both Slavonic versions represent indeed two different Greek versions, which are easily identifiable by a marked variant right at the beginning of the text.⁴⁵ For the remainder of the text the contrast between both Greek versions is, however, far less pronounced, than the variant incipit suggests. The translation style can be qualified for both versions as moderate literalism, which allows for more or less frequent minor deviations from the Greek original. Version B shows itself to be somewhat more liberal in this respect. This fits in well with the fact that version B, but not A, will occasionally opt for shorter passages of an entirely free translation style, that does not reflect the formal properties of its Greek original. So, a different translation style may be noted, although this difference seems not to point to a principally different idea of translation. This would confirm our preference for retranslation, although these differences would still not exclude the possibility of a parallel translation. However, it is not easy to see on what grounds the author of B could have rejected version A, which offers an entirely acceptable translation in terms of average standard Slavonic translations of hagiographic texts. Accordingly, it is difficult to assume that B could be a revision of A that was driven by objections to its translation style or quality. Rather to the contrary, we would expect that version B would have been considered more objectionable than version A owing to the liberties it takes ever so often.

The next criterion to apply is (3) significant overlap. The assessment of overlap can be muddled up by contamination within the Slavonic tradition. We are happily not bothered by contamination in the case of the *Vita Eupraxiae* (although there is, in fact, contamination within the Greek transmission, which, however, need not concern us here). Both versions are distinct and show not the least sign of non-trivial overlap. At this point the scale seems to tip in favour of a parallel translation. As criterion (2) is a negative one, which deploys its distinctive force only in case of being no differences of craftsmanship there, translation technique or choice of original, it would not exclude a parallel translation, anyway.

(4) Both versions A and B are in a state of constant variation in relation to each other. This variation is of a kind that would discourage any attempt to correlate both texts in terms of simple text transmission, as it proves almost impossible to deduce any variant of A from B or vice versa by assuming any kind of corruption or emendation. It will suffice here to give two examples. Each consists of a sequence of just four words, and still both passages teem with variant readings:

45 STERN, *The Double Life*, op. cit., 499–502.

- | | | |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (i) A | и мѡудрѣ | дѣломъ и словомъ |
| B | прѣмѡудрости испльненъ | словомъ и дѣломъ |
| G | καὶ σοφός | ἐν λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ |
| (ii) A | и благоуѣстьнѣ правити | грѣчьское цѣсарство |
| B | благоуѣстивѣ строа | и римьстѣи жизни дѣлаа |
| G | εὐσεβῶς διοικεῖν | τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς καταστάσεως τὰ πράγματα |

Both fragments give the impression of entirely independent texts. If A were indeed a redaction or retranslation of B, or vice versa, it is difficult to understand why each single feature of the base text should have been replaced by something else. If B were the base text, why should anyone replace *и мѡудрѣ*, which is a neat rendering of the Greek original, by *прѣмѡудрости испльненъ*? If A were the base text, the opposite replacement would be obvious enough, but why should the word order of *словомъ и дѣломъ* be changed? It should be noted here that within the Greek tradition not the least variation is found in either passage. From whichever angle you look at it, there is always a lot of variation that appears difficult if not impossible to motivate from the perspective of a re-translator, who had the other text literally in front of his eyes. It is this constant truly random variation that is strongly suggestive of neither translator having known the other translation.

But there is still more that deserves our attention in the short fragments at hand. Firstly, version A is closer to its Greek source than version B. So, if we would still stick to the idea of retranslation, the only reasonable conclusion would be that version A is a retranslation of version B in an attempt to realign the Slavonic text with the Greek tradition by applying the standard technique of interlinear translation. This would indeed be the only conceivable motivation within the cultural-historical framework of the Slavic Middle Ages. This conclusion would, however, conflict with the idea suggested by our cultural-historical consideration under heading (1) that the Russian version A is likely to be the conservative one, while version B is the one that can be linked to the Euthymian reforms and should therefore be considered a retranslation of A. That our initial assessment is probably wrong is further corroborated by the lexical variation between both versions.

Although lexical variation of the Preslav-Ohrid type, as it was put on firm empirical ground by Slavova,⁴⁶ is not a criterion that would allow us to tell a retranslation from a parallel translation, it can still be useful for determining the relative archaicity of any one text version. Generally, Ohridisms are considered more archaic, whereas Preslavisms are, although not in all cases, replacive of Ohridisms. A text that has Ohridisms rather than Preslavisms should accordingly be considered more archaic, and we should certainly not assume that a text

46 T. SLAVOVA, Преславска редакция на кирило-методиевия старобългарски евангелски превод, *Кирило-Методиевски Студии* 6, 1989, 15–129.

of the Ohrid type could be a retranslation of a text with predominant Preslav features. As the table below, however, shows, in version A, Preslav variants predominate, while version B shows a more pronounced Ohrid profile:⁴⁷

Greek	Version A	lexical source	Version B	lexical source
νηστεύειν, νηστεία	алкати, алчю	Preslav	постити се, пощюу се	Ohrid
σάκκος	власяноюу ярига	Preslav Preslav	врѣтищное врѣтище	Ohrid Ohrid
θυρωρός	вратарници	Preslav	дверьница	Ohrid
πολλάκις	многаци	Preslav	множицею	Ohrid
ἀποστέλλω	пощенымь	Preslav	посланнымь	Ohrid
λυπέω	ωпечалю скръбить	Preslav Ohrid	ωскръблю ωскръбить се	Ohrid Ohrid
κληρονομέω	причестна будеши достоина будеши	Preslav Ohrid	наслѣдуеши	Ohrid
φρέαρ	кладъзъ	Preslav	рѣвеникъ	EuchSin Ohrid стоуденьць
νυμφίος	женихъ	Ohrid	женихъ	Ohrid
πονηρός	лоукаваа	Ohrid	лоукаваа	Ohrid
πλησίον	близъ	Preslav	близъ	Preslav
ζωή	жизнь	Preslav	жизнь	Preslav
ἔλαιον	масло	Preslav	масло	Preslav
τις	нѣкыи	Preslav	нѣкыи	Preslav
μόνον	тъчию	Preslav	тъчию	Preslav

Although there is some lexical mixing going on in both versions, which can easily be explained in terms of ongoing lexical competition, it clearly emerges that version A is predominantly Preslav, while version B displays a strong Ohrid layer. Thus, our assumption that version A cannot be derived from version B by retranslation is corroborated by these lexical findings. Moreover, the strong penchant for Ohridisms of version B should obviously disqualify it as a candidate for Euthymian retranslation. If we ignore our insights from the application of criteria (3)–(4) for the time being, there would still be the possibility of A being derived from B. A is obviously the lexically less archaic text and its more strictly applied literalism would allow for it to be interpreted as an attempt to emendate the perceived shortcomings of B. But in this case, we would have to assume that the retranslation took place in the 10th century,

47 The words that have been selected for this table are recurrent items that reappear several times throughout the text, so we did not consider it useful to identify the passages of occurrence within the text.

as version A has obviously been deselected from the hagiographic repertoire of the Southern Slavs during the Euthymian reforms, and version B was given preference then (for whatever reason).

So, what to do about the versions of the *Vita Eupraxiae*? As they do not fit into our common frame of expectations, we should consider the possibility that both are parallel translations from roughly the same early period. As the Slavonic *Vita* was not very widespread, the possibility of having the same text translated unbeknownst of the other already existing version seems a realistic possibility, even if we assume that both translations originate from different periods. But what about the replacive course of development which we observe for the South Slavic manuscripts? It can be assumed that replacement would equally apply to already existing parallel translations. If both versions were already in existence before the 14th century, Euthymian reformers would have to make a choice between either version A or B, and they decided in favour of B. In this case we would, however, have to assume that the decision was made without looking into the respective merits of each version, as version A is obviously the better one in terms of the features that were most appreciated in the 14th century.

Conclusion

In the end the question remains to be answered what our tool kit is actually worth. In testing it out on the *Life of Eupraxia*, we observed a conflict between our insights arrived at by applying criterion (1: diverging traditions), which were supported by (2: divergent quality), and the opposite conclusion we arrived at by applying (3: non-trivial overlap) and (4: ubiquitous random variation). In case of a conflict like this the obvious thing to do is to weigh the criteria in relation to each other. We are of the opinion that formal and text-immanent criteria ought to range above external, cultural-historical criteria, i.e. the logically interrelated formal criteria (3) and (4) should range higher than (1). It is true that (2) could also qualify as formal and immanent in a way, but then its application is restricted, as it can only exclude retranslations, but not parallel translations.

Patterns of variation, including overlap patterns (3) as well as ubiquitous random variation (4), are in our opinion the key elements to make a case either for or against parallel translations. We would even go one step further by giving criterion (4) preference over criterion (3), although this may appear counter-intuitive on the face of it, as significant overlap seems to be the strongest indicator of retranslation. But criterion (3) comes with two drawbacks, one practical and one rather principal. First of all, identifying significant overlaps implies a clear notion of what counts as significant overlap. An investigator would therefore tend to provide the most unambiguous evidence to make his case watertight. Applying rigorous criteria may lead to accepting ultimately only such evidence which does not allow for further discussion, such as non-trivial shared mistakes that are unlikely to be repeated independently within a line of transmission.

Apart from the strenuous ordeal of sifting the entire text in the search of at least one piece of good evidence, one can easily imagine that by far not every case will yield evidence that meets the standard of unambiguousness. In this case, the investigator must rely on criterion (4) as a last resort, anyway. Moreover, (4) has one quite obvious advantage over (3). Owing to its ubiquitousness you do not have to make any special effort to detect it. It is either there right in front of your eyes, or it is not. What is more, in both cases a very clear-cut conclusion can be drawn: (a) in case of ubiquitous random variation there can be no doubt about parallel translation, as it is our belief that only parallel translation can account for this kind of variation;⁴⁸ (b) in case of its absence, parallel translation would be excluded, as ubiquitous random variation is a necessary outcome of the process of parallel translation. Thus (4) is by itself sufficient to make a clear case either for or against parallel translation. The same is, by the way, not true of (3). Although significant overlap, such as shared non-trivial mistakes, provides solid evidence of retranslation (if contamination can be effectively excluded), its absence does not entirely exclude retranslation, at least not if we apply strict standards for what may count as significant overlap.

It turns out that (4) ubiquitous random variation is the key element to tell parallel from retranslations, but still, we are reluctant to let go of criteria (1)–(3), entirely. Despite the seeming diagnostic value of (4) we would end up in circularity, if we relied exclusively on it. There would indeed be no possibility of falsifying the results of our tool kit without the additional application of (1)–(3). The key position of (4), however, would imply reversing the order of application of our test criteria. The first thing to do in any case study would be to provide an assessment of the variational patterns of the text as a whole. The Life of Eupraxia may indeed leave the impression that determining ubiquitous random variation is a straightforward thing to do, but not every case may be as straightforward as this particular one, so it would be wise to settle beforehand (i) what counts as variation, and (ii) how much variation is enough for a case of parallel translation. Lora Taseva suggested a percentage of 30% lexical divergence as

48 This comes, however, with an important proviso. If ubiquitous, random variation would be a unique indicator of parallel translations against redactions/retranslations, we would expect it to be restricted to literacies that are marked by translations, like Byzantine-Slavic literature. For literacies that consist for their greater part of original texts, ubiquitous, random variation between texts should be ruled out. If we should detect it to be also common in e.g. Byzantine-Greek literature, it could not possibly count as a unique indicator of parallel translations. We are aware of at least one such case of ubiquitous, random variation between versions of the same text in Byzantine-Greek literature, viz. the Greek Life of Erasmus of Formia. In this case, however, ubiquitous, random variation seems to derive from a translation of one of the Greek versions from Latin (see D. STERN, *Die slavische Übersetzung der Märtyrerakte des heiligen Erasmus von Formia, wahlweise Ohrid, Slovo* 73, 2023, 101), so we would be dealing with translational variation in this case, too. Without having done an extensive survey of Byzantine-Greek hagiography, we assume from our own experience that cases of ubiquitous, random variation are not typical of this branch of Byzantine-Greek literacy.

a cut-off point to seriously consider the possibility of parallel translation.⁴⁹ This quantitative approach is certainly a convenient first step to decide whether the case at hand is worth looking into, but we doubt whether it is capable by itself to settle the question of parallel translation at hand, conclusively. At least, it would have to be shown that (i) any variation exceeding the measure of 30% is evenly disseminated throughout the text to make it ubiquitous, and (ii) that variation is truly random, which means that it cannot be predicted on principled grounds (like e.g. by identifying lexical preferences).⁵⁰ Thus, in order to make a strong case for parallel translation, the structural patterns of the distribution of variant readings must be looked into in the first place.

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49 TASEVA, *Перевод и редакция*, op. cit., 43.

50 The latter would exclude lexical analyses like e.g. the Preslav-Ohrid isoglosses, although, as we have seen above, they may be helpful to settle issues of contextualisation.