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A COMMON MISTRANSLATION OF A FEW LINES IN THE *IGOR TALE**

I propose that the fact that the modern Russian preposition *от* for the most part denotes 'from' rather than 'by' has led to at least three modern mistranslations of the following lines in the Igor Tale:
(1) *Тъгда Игорь възьрь на свѣтлое сълньце и видѣ отъ него тьмою вьсь своѣ воѣ прикрыты* (reconstruction according to Jakobson 1966, 164–165). Jakobson translates these lines into modern Russian as: (2) *И вот Игорь возвел глаза к светлому солнцу и увидел все свое войско покритым от него тьмою.*

In his rhythmical translation Lixačëv (1950a, 54) writes: (3) *Тогда Игорь взглянул на светлое солнце и увидел воинов своих, тьмою от него прикрытых*, but in his explanatory translation (1950b, 77) he writes: (4) *Тогда [в начале того печального похода] Игорь взглянул на светлое солнце и увидел [грозное предзнаменование]: от него [Игоря] тьмою [затмения] все его воины покрыты.* According to Prof. Vadim Krys'ko (letter dated 15 Mar 1999): „Перевод в «обяснительном переводе» Д. С. Лихачева неверен уже хотя бы потому, что, если бы имелся в виду Игорь, в тексте было бы не «от него», а «от себе».“

Compare also the translation of Nabokov (1960, 34): (5) *Then Igor glanced up at the bright sun and saw that from it with darkness his warriors were covered.* I maintain that all the aforementioned translations are incorrect since the Old East Slavic *отъ него* should be translated here as (modern Russian) 'им' or (modern English) 'by it'. I would translate the passage rather as: (6) *Then Igor looked up at the bright sun and saw all his troops covered by it (viz. the sun) with darkness.* (I would herewith correct also my own mistranslation in Schmalstieg 1995b, 165). Although in Slavic the occurrence of agent and instrument in the same phrase can seem awkward, I might suggest a Russian translation: (7) *И вот Игорь возвел глаза к светлому солнцу и увидел все свое войско им [солнцем] тьмою покрытым* (or), *что все его войско было покрито им тьмою.*

In Slavic the preposition *отъ* came to support the original genitive of agent. The appearance of a preposition to support the meaning of an original simple case ending is a well known phenomenon in the history of the Indo-European languages, probably the best known example being the replacement of *īre Romam* 'to go to Rome' by *īre ad Romam* in Italic (Schmalstieg 1995a, 4–15). A modern Russian example is furnished by Krys'ko (1997, 121) who notes that with verbs denoting 'to cross' the accusative of object is gradually being replaced by *через* 'across' plus the accusative. Thus it is logical to suppose that

in Proto-Slavic the preposition *отъ* came to support the old genitive of agent. In Greek the old genitive of agent has come to be supported by the preposition *ὑπό* (see Schmalstieg 1995a, 8). Therefore, as Krys'ko (1995, 504) writes, the Slavic *отъ* plus the genitive construction is native and not borrowed from the Greek *ὑπό* plus the genitive construction. The Slavic construction is, in my view, cognate with the Greek construction, but supported by a different etymological preposition than in Greek.

It is hard to imagine why the three aforementioned translators of the Igor Tale translated the aforementioned passage incorrectly, since the correct interpretation has been known at least since Potebnja (1914, 17) who wrote: „солнце тьмою прикрывало вои... Затмьние представляется дъломъ самого солнца, а не враждебной ему силы; само солнце предостерегаетъ людей."

In addition many modern translations do seem, in my view correctly, to imply to the sun agency rather than source, although it is sometimes difficult to be certain. I think that the Slovenian translation by Nahtigal (1954, 27) is correct: (8) *Tedaj se je Igor ozrl na svetlo sonce in je videl od njega z mrkom vse svoje vojnike pokrite.*

The German translation by Hordynsky (1985, 40) reads: (9) *Da blickte Ihor zur hellen Sonne auf und sah sein ganzes Heer von ihr mit Finsternis verdeckt.* The pronoun *ihr* can refer only to *die Sonne* and although from the point of view of an English speaker *von* is somewhat ambiguous, the most probable English translation here would be 'by' rather than 'from'.

Ohienko (1967, 150) rephrasing the sentence in his Ukrainian translation also has the sun as the agent: (10) *Тоді Ігор поглянув на Сонце ясне, й побачив, що воно прикрило імлою все його військо* 'Then Igor looked at the bright sun and saw that it covered all his troops with darkness'. Avoiding the passive participle construction he was able to put the pronominal referent to the agent Sonce in the nominative case. Kendzers'kyj (1967, 242) also has the sun as the agent: (11) *Тоді Ігор глянув був на сонечко яснее Та побачив, що воно йому Усеньке його військо Чорним туманом геть прикрило* 'Then Igor looked at the bright sun and saw that it hid from him all his troops with a black fog'. With a slightly different interpretation, but still with the sun as the agent Franko (1967, 221) writes: (12) *Тогда глянув князь Ігор угору І поглянув на світлоє сонце. Сонце тьмою своє світло вкрило, Тьмою вкрилось все Ігоря військо...* 'Then Prince Igor glanced up and looked at the bright sun. The sun covered its brightness with darkness and all Igor's troops became covered with darkness.' Obrębska-Jabłonska and Fedecki (1954, 149) translate this into Polish correctly also: (13) *Igor spojrzał na jasne słońce i zobaczył, że pokryło ono jego wojowników ciemnością* 'Igor looked at the bright sun and saw that it covered his troops with darkness'.

Thus, there exist many correct translations as well as the three incorrect ones mentioned at the beginning of this note. Compare now the following Lithuanian translation which maintains the same case relationships as the

original: (14) *Tada* (adv.) *Igoris* (nom. sg.) *pažiūrėjo* (3rd pret.) *į šviesią* (prep + acc. sg. fem.) *saulę* (acc. sg.) *ir* (conj.) *matė* (3rd pret.) *visus* (acc. pl. masc.) *savo* (poss.) *kareivius* (acc. pl.) *jos* (gen. sg. fem.) *uždengtus* (acc. pl. masc.) *tamsa* (instr. sg.) 'Then Igor looked at bright sun and saw all his troops by it covered with darkness'.

It may seem awkward to include both agent and instrument in the same phrase, but note that both occur in the same phrase elsewhere in the Igor Tale, and that here also the agent is expressed by *отъ* plus the genitive, whereas the instrument is expressed with the instrumental case, cf. the Jakobson reconstruction (1966, 170):

(15) *Поскьпаны* (nom. pl. masc. past psv. part.) *саблями* (instr. pl.) *каленьми* (instr. pl.) *шеломи* (nom. pl.) *Оварьскии* (nom. pl. masc.) *отъ тебе* (prep. + gen. sg.), *Яръ* (voc. sg.) *туре* (voc. sg.) *Вьсеволоде!* (voc. sg.) 'Cleft with tempered sabers are [their] Avar helmets – by you, Fierce Bull Vsevolod!'.

Since agentive genitive constructions are known in South Slavic and Baltic (and in fact are common in Indo-European in general), it seems likely that they existed in East Slavic as well. The occurrence of agentive genitive constructions in the Igor Tale is also evidence of their authenticity for Old East Slavic. Their later replacement in East Slavic by the instrumental case must be considered an innovation.

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