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Featured Review

Olga Mišeska Tomić, *Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-syntactic Features* (Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 67). Dordrecht: Springer, 2006, 749 + xxi pp.

INTRODUCTION

In *Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-syntactic Features* (hereafter, BSMF), author Olga Mišeska Tomić (hereafter T) sets for herself an enormous challenge, namely to discuss the morphosyntactic properties of a large number of languages found within the Balkan peninsula of southeastern Europe, languages that have historically converged with regard to various features of a structural nature, especially, but not exclusively, in the realm of morphosyntax. This areal convergence has long been noted, since at least the 1820s, as T reminds the reader on page 1 in her chapter 1 that briefly surveys what has been said about the Balkan languages over the years. It was then, specifically in 1829, that the Slovene linguist Jernej Kopitar, a censor for Imperial Austria, remarked famously¹ with regard to some languages of the Balkans that “nur eine Sprachform herrscht, aber mit dreierley Sprachmaterie” (“only one grammar dominates but with three kinds of language material”).² The fact of such extensive convergences being localized geographically has given rise to the notion of a “Sprachbund” – a term with no satisfactory English equivalent³ – namely a group of geographically connected languages that, due to intense and sustained contact among their speakers, have come to show convergence on various features and thus, in many instances too, divergence from their earlier states in the direction of a common structure.

What is particularly challenging about the task T has taken on is in large part the sheer number of languages involved. She surveys nine in all: Albanian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, (Modern) Greek, Macedonian, Megleno-Romanian, Romani (the Arli Balkan variety), Romanian, Serbo-Croatian (= Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, hereafter BCS), and in principle she could have added Turkish and Judezmo (Judeo-Spanish), as these languages also show some Sprachbund features,⁴ and possibly even other languages as well. Her selection of which languages to survey raises questions about the nature of the Sprachbund and which languages are to be counted as being in it.

1 Jernej Kopitar, “Albanische, walachische und bulgarische Sprache,” *Jahrbücher der Literatur* 46 (1829), pp. 59–106.

2 T only quotes part of this observation and mistranslates it at that saying that Kopitar “pointed out that the languages spoken south of the Danube have analogous forms expressed through ‘different language material.’”

3 The term *linguistic area* is sometimes used (cf. Lyle Campbell, Terrence Kaufman, and Thomas Smith-Stark, “Meso-America as a Linguistic Area,” *Language* 62 (1986), pp. 530–558), but many Balkanists and contact linguists writing in English simply borrow the German term, thus enriching the English lexicon through contact.

4 T does in fact give some mention to Turkish and Judezmo, but very little data; the latter occurs really just in footnote 4 on p. 2, and the former is mentioned in several places though no examples are given. Thus no systematic treatment of either one is attempted.

THE NATURE OF THE SPRACHBUND

As just hinted at, and as T's discussion in chapter 1 (*passim*) suggests, the issue of "membership" in the Balkan Sprachbund is a nontrivial one, inasmuch as it depends to a certain extent on which features one focuses on. Thus, many Balkanists exclude most of BCS – the Torlak dialects of southeastern Serbia being an exception to this exclusion – since some "typically Balkan" features are realized only incompletely in that language, such as the loss of the infinitive, or not at all, such as merger of dative and genitive cases.⁵

I have deliberately put "membership" in scare quotes because the very use of the term – as well as English terms such as "linguistic union," as is found to some extent in the literature (T notes its use in chapter 1, footnote 3 (p. 1)) – can convey an impression that the Balkan Sprachbund is somewhat like a club or even like the European Union (EU) and that languages vie for membership. Some of T's characterizations can give that impression, such as when she states, on p. 31, footnote 53, that "the East Serbian Timok dialect gains full membership" in the Sprachbund when one considers nominal inflection and developments with the infinitive, as if being a member is a status that is bestowed on a language. In fact, though, the Sprachbund is a construct invented by linguists, designed to describe a particularly interesting result of an intensive, and extensive, language contact situation. With the EU, membership *is* decided by a body consisting of representatives of existing members and membership means something for individuals within the member states, but such is not the case with the Balkan (or any other) Sprachbund. With the EU, members know that they are part of a particular grouping and there are certain political and economic benefits that flow from that membership,⁶ but the Balkan linguistic union is not an entity that offers its members – and more importantly, the speakers of each "member language" – any particular benefits beyond any that might come from knowledge of several languages (since bi- or multi-lingualism is at the heart of what made the convergence possible); it is important to realize that speakers would have knowledge of those languages regardless of what linguists think of the status of their language vis-à-vis the Sprachbund and its various languages.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The number of languages and the number of features involved mean that T has taken on an ambitious task. She lays out her case concerning Balkan morphosyntactic features in six chapters. In the introduction she surveys, rather briefly, what others have said about the features which are most relevant for the Balkan Sprachbund, along with a brief (two-page) presentation on how the Sprachbund features arose; there is then another chapter of an introductory nature on "Ethno-historical Considerations," which covers (again, rather brief) facts about the historical setting and development of the languages of interest in the book. These chapters are then followed by one on "Cases and Articles," one on "Clitic Clusters and Clitic Doubling," another on "The

5 By contrast, the Torlak dialects match what might be termed the Balkan norm with regard to the infinitive and case mergers.

6 In principle, that is!

Perfect and the Evidential,” and finally one on “Infinitives and Subjunctives.” There are three appendices, one being the innovative and quite useful feature of a collection of “Swadesh-style lists” of basic vocabulary for each of the nine languages treated, the second being translations of an approximately 500-word selection from Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* into each of the book’s target languages (though without any interlinear glosses or grammatical tagging, thus greatly reducing the potential utility of this appendix), and the third being a list “of some 40 languages that are spoken on [sic] the Balkans” (p. 33), a feature whose appearance is welcome, though somewhat at odds with the book’s stated goal of focusing on Balkan morphosyntax of the nine languages of interest.

The last four chapters, covering 608 pages in all, constitute the heart of the book. In a sense, there is nothing new in the presentation, as these features have all been discussed elsewhere, in some instances in great detail, but the range of languages covered and the attempt to systematically offer comparable material in the various languages on each of the features surveyed are indeed an innovative (though ultimately flawed – see below) aspect to T’s presentation.⁷

DETAILS OF T’S APPROACH

An important issue that needs to be kept in mind in discussing Balkan morphosyntactic parallels is the distinction I have made⁸ between “Balkan comparative syntax” and the “comparative syntax of the Balkan languages.” The latter looks just at the Balkan languages as natural human languages, and parallels are as interesting (or uninteresting!) as comparisons involving languages that do not share geographic space, e.g. Navajo and Japanese, or Vietnamese and Danish; the former, by contrast, looks at (morph-)syntactic parallels through the lens of language contact amongst the languages in question, and thus focuses on those features which are likely to be the result of speaker-to-speaker contact in the Balkans. Thus Balkan comparative syntax is Sprachbund-oriented whereas comparative syntax of the Balkan languages is simply typologically oriented.

T announces the convergences as “typological” in her very first sentence (p. 1): “Though often genetically only remotely related (and in some cases totally unrelated), the Balkan languages share sets of typological features.” One can quibble as to whether it would have made more sense here to label the features as “structural,” since it is not at all evident what a “typological feature” actually is,⁹ but it is clear that T is thinking in typological terms right from the start.

Yet, by framing the presentation in the context of the Balkan Sprachbund – as

7 See below, however, concerning errors in the material T presents (as well as footnote 2).

8 Brian D. Joseph, “Is Balkan Comparative Syntax Possible?” in Maria-Luisa Rivero and Angela Ralli, eds., *Comparative Syntax of Balkan Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 17–43.

9 That is, could there be a feature in a language that was not “typological”? Perhaps T intends this as shorthand for a “feature that can be used to define a language ‘type’,” but in principle this could be said about any linguistic feature, even those that are unique to a particular language and found nowhere else.

the title of the book itself reveals – and including discussions throughout of such standard Balkanistic topics as the origin of Sprachbund features (chapter 1, pp. 27–29), T is implicitly claiming that the phenomena she discusses are Sprachbund features, i.e. “Balkanisms.” That would mean that the interest of the convergences she discusses is not just typological in nature but rather derives from a contact-related dimension (which is not the case with any parallels that might exist between geographically and genetically unrelated languages). And most of the features that T discusses are in fact Sprachbund-related; for instance, the developments with the infinitive in the various languages (total loss in Greek and Macedonian, and virtually total loss in Bulgarian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, and to a lesser extent (Daco-)Romanian, with parallel developments in Tosk Albanian and Geg Albanian also to a lesser degree (though Tosk more so than Geg), and on-going loss evident in present-day BCS, as discussed for just about all of these in some detail in Joseph 1983/2009¹⁰) have long been recognized as a Balkanism, as has the use of finite clausal complementation in place of the infinitive. Moreover, developments involving nominal cases, with the merger of genitive and dative in all the languages, and outright loss of cases in Macedonian and Bulgarian, have figured in discussions of the Balkan Sprachbund for well over 150 years, as has the postpositive definite article, and several handbooks in various languages, as surveyed in section 6 below, are to be found containing considerations of relevant facts about the Sprachbund.

T AND LANGUAGE CONTACT

The very notion of a “Sprachbund” necessarily involves language contact, and in this vein, one aspect of T’s presentation is somewhat curious. That is, despite the interest in either typological or contact-related convergence, T leaves the reader more or less on his/her own in terms of drawing any conclusions about the data. There are long arrays of data, organized by language within each chapter, and with some discussion that is oriented towards each individual language as presented, but there is not much offered in the way of direct or explicit comparisons of the facts given for the languages; the reader generally has to work out the points of convergence, which by implication are to be considered as contact-induced. Such is also true, in general, for that matter, with any points of difference. This latter is important since, as T herself implies (p. 31) when she criticizes previous approaches for “perpetuating a picture of uniformity” for the Balkan languages, there has been more scholarly attention to convergence than to divergence among these languages. Differences are to be found, however, and there are several works that have overtly discussed them; Sims, in discussing this very point,¹¹ mentions “Fielder 1999,¹² Friedman 1983,¹³ 2001,¹⁴ 2005,¹⁵ Joseph 1983,¹⁶ and Rudin et al. 1999,¹⁷ to which one might add the material offered by Sobolev,¹⁸ where differences emerge from the micro-dialect surveys that form the basis of the dialect atlas.

10 Brian D. Joseph, *The Synchrony and Diachrony of the Balkan Infinitive: A Study in Areal, General, and Historical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) (reissued in paperback, 2009).

11 Andrea D. Sims, “Review Article of *Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-syntactic Features*, by Olga Mišeska Tomić,” *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 16 (2008), pp. 331–347.

12 Grace Fielder, “The Origin of Evidentiality in the Balkans: Linguistic Convergence or Conceptual Convergence?” *Mediterranean Language Review* 11 (1999), pp. 59–89.

For that matter, T takes a somewhat odd, or at least incomplete, stance with regard to talking about the languages themselves; in chapter 1 she spends a considerable amount of time surveying features that have been claimed as Sprachbund features without introducing the languages or confronting the notion of what it means to be a “language” in the Balkan context. That is, other than a footnote (note 8 on p. 3) in which she makes mention of the effects of language standardization, T does not address in any serious way the often ideologically tinged debates over the identification of speech forms as belonging to one or another national “language,” debates which in some instances focus on morphosyntactic features. For instance, some parts of the Torlak dialect zone have been claimed as Bulgarian by the Bulgarian linguists Mladenov¹⁹ and Kočev²⁰ based on the morphological criterion of the presence of a postposed definite article.

T does recognize the importance of attending to dialects,²¹ and notes, following the important point made by Sobolev,²² that the “individual dialects of [the various] languages are responsible for the rise of the Balkan Sprachbund.” And indeed, the handbooks to date typically pay scant attention to regional dialects and generally present data just from the standard languages. Thus, T is to be applauded for providing regional dialect material in her presentations of data where appropriate.

Still, it is perhaps strange, or at least reflects a decision that should be discussed and justified, that, given the focus on modern morphosyntax, T would devote any space at all, though admittedly relatively little – just here and there in chapter 2 – to the *ancient* languages of the Balkans (e.g. Thracian, or Ancient Macedonian). These languages are relevant to the *general* field of what might be termed “linguistics of the Balkans,” as I have termed it elsewhere,²³ inasmuch as that field is broadly interested in all aspects of languages of the Balkans, ancient and modern. However, it is not clear

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- 13 Victor A. Friedman, “Grammatical Categories and a Comparative Balkan Grammar,” in Norbert Reiter, ed., *Ziele und Wege der Balkanlinguistik (Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen, Vol. 8)* (Berlin: Osteuropa-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin, 1983), pp. 81–98.
 - 14 Victor A. Friedman, “Les marqueurs de frontière dans la grammaire du romani: Structure de la langue et résistance au contact dans la diaspora balkanique,” *Faits de langues* 18 (2001), pp. 23–34.
 - 15 Victor A. Friedman, “Admirativity: Between Modality and Evidentiality,” *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 58:1 (2005), pp. 26–37.
 - 16 Joseph, *The Synchrony and Diachrony*.
 - 17 Catherine Rudin, Christina Kramer, Loren Billings, and Matthew Baerman, “Macedonian and Bulgarian *li* Questions: Beyond Syntax,” *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 17 (1999), pp. 541–585.
 - 18 Andrej Sobolev, *Malyi dialektologičeskii atlas balkanskikh iazykov* (Marburg: Biblon, 2004).
 - 19 Stefan Mladenov, *Geschichte der bulgarischen Sprache* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1929).
 - 20 Ivan Kočev, ed., *Bŭlgarski dialekten Atlas. Oboshtavasht tom: I–III Fonetika, Akcentologija, Lek-sika* (Sofia: Trud, 2001), p. 55.
 - 21 T does give mention (p. 2, footnote 6) to relevant work by Sobolev (Andrej Sobolev, “On the Areal Distribution of Syntactic Properties in the Languages of the Balkans,” in Olga M. Tomić, ed., *Balkan Syntax and Semantics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), pp. 59–100) and the dialect atlas he has been preparing (see footnote 18).
 - 22 Sobolev, *Malyi dialektologičeskii*, p. 2.

that the ancient languages T briefly surveys generally have anything to do with all the developments in question.

It is true that some linguists, e.g. Miklosich²⁴ and Weigand,²⁵ have claimed that the loss of the infinitive is due to substratal influence on the Balkan languages. But, as I have discussed elsewhere,²⁶ the chronology of the infinitival developments argues against that, as do other considerations, including the fact that virtually nothing is known about the features or even the identity in some accounts of the putative substrate language; some have suggested Thracian, but there is little or no information on its syntax so that one is replacing one unknown with another.

And yet, there are a couple of convergent Balkan features, including one that T presents, that are reasonable candidates for origination in some prehistoric language (though not necessarily one that T mentions). That is, the postpositive definite article, as analyzed by Hamp,²⁷ might well be a feature of substratal origin, based on his interpretation of the ancient place-name *Drobeta* (a site on the Danube located near modern Turnu Severin in Romania, in northwestern Oltenia) as deriving from an earlier **druwātā* (connected to the root for “wood” in Indo-European), where the final element is a postposed demonstrative element, such as is clearly the basis for the Sprachbund definite article (cf. Macedonian *kniga-ta* “book-the”). Also, the parallel between Albanian and Romanian in regard to the preposition for “with” (Albanian *me*, Romanian *cu*) requiring a definite noun form when the noun is unmodified, e.g. *me shqiptarët* “with Albanians” (versus **me shqiptarë*, with an indefinite form), may well involve, as I have suggested,²⁸ substratal influence on Balkan Romance involving an “Albanoid” substratum, to use the term coined by Hamp²⁹ for the stage of what was to later become Albanian after the language diverged from its Balto-Slavo-Albanian subgroup within late Proto-Indo-European, but before there was contact with Latin of the Roman em-

23 Joseph, “Is Balkan Comparative Syntax Possible?”; this term is to be distinguished from “Balkan linguistics” (just as “comparative syntax of Balkan languages” can be contrasted with “comparative Balkan syntax,” as alluded to above). This latter term refers to Sprachbund-related (contact-connected) investigations, whereas the former term is for any linguistic investigation involving a language of the Balkans. One might consider also the term “linguistic Balkanology,” a term just coined for use here; since “Balkanology” can take in aspects of the culture and history (etc.) of the area that have nothing to do with linguistics, adding the specifier “linguistic” here accomplishes the same effect as “linguistics of the Balkans.”

24 Franz Miklosich, “Die slavischen Elemente im Rumunischen,” *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 12 (1861), pp. 1–70.

25 Gustav Weigand, “Texte zur vergleichende Syntax der Balkansprachen,” *Balkan Archiv* IV (1928), pp. 53–70.

26 Joseph, *The Synchrony and Diachrony*, pp. 196–199.

27 Eric P. Hamp, “The Oldest Albanian Syntagma,” *Balkansko ezikoznanie* 25 (1982), pp. 77–79.

28 Brian D. Joseph, “Romanian and the Balkans: Some Comparative Perspectives,” in Sheila Embleton, John Joseph, and Hans-J. Niederehe, eds., *The Emergence of the Modern Language Sciences: Studies on the Transition from Historical-Comparative to Structural Linguistics in Honour of E.F.K. Koerner. Volume 2: Methodological Perspectives and Applications* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), pp. 218–235.

29 Eric P. Hamp, “Albanian,” in R. E. Asher, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistic* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), pp. 65–67.

pire (dating from around 200 BC).

A key factor in making the type of language contact needed to form a Sprachbund – intense and sustained day-to-day face-to-face contact involving bi- or multilinguals of varying degrees of competence in the various languages – was the period of Ottoman occupation of much of the area. Not only did this lead to numerous Turkish loanwords (which are irrelevant to T’s concerns, admittedly) but it also provided a degree of stability that allowed for Sprachbund-conducive contact in the villages and towns and cities of the Ottoman Balkans. Indeed, if contact is implicitly to “blame” for the features she discusses, one might expect to see some consideration as to which language is the donor and which the receiver in the linguistic interactions that led to the Sprachbund features, yet there is virtually no such discussion to be found in the book. Nor does T spend any time on the nature of the contact itself, e.g. as to whether it was casual, whether it was substratal, whether it was via code-switching, etc. These are issues that most Balkanists are interested in, as are other linguists, especially those involved in the study of language contact (“contact linguistics”). All such issues are completely ignored by T, understandably, one might say, given her interest in synchronic evidence of parallel features, but then why does she include any discussion of the historical side of the Sprachbund and why was the book provocatively (from a Balkanist’s perspective) as titled “Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-syntactic Features”? In a sense, it is as if the book (or the author, more realistically) cannot “make up its (her) mind” as to what its purpose is.

Still, it must be admitted that in certain ways (though not all) T has done her homework, so to speak,³⁰ and as noted above, she cites a wide range of sources. The bibliography contains some 400 items, and comes to 13 pages, printed in an oddly chosen ultra-small font. That is a useful part of the book, despite some gaps in citation coverage. And, with regard to citations, one distressing aspect in the book is the occurrence of at least two lapses of citation etiquette in which T quotes material verbatim from sources without clearly indicating that it is quoted. That is, virtually all of footnote 8 on p. 3 (in Chapter 1) copies directly, without attribution, a passage by Sobolev,³¹ and the five-line passage on p. 703 that reads “A distinction ... the Hellenistic Koine” follows word-for-word a passage by Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton,³² without indicating as much.³³

COMPARISON WITH OTHER WORKS

Morpho-syntax is perhaps the most complicated domain of convergence in the Balkans: all of the available modern handbooks on the Balkan Sprachbund (Schaller 1975,³⁴ Banfi 1985,³⁵ Feuillet 1986,³⁶ Demiraj 1994/2004,³⁷ Asenova 1989/2002,³⁸ and Steinke and Vraciu 1999³⁹) devote far more pages to morphosyntax than any other area

30 To a certain extent, with the caveat alluded to in footnote 7, and expanded on below, concerning errors in the data.

31 Sobolev, “On the Areal Distribution,” p. 68.

32 Brian D. Joseph and Irene Philippaki-Warburton, *Modern Greek* (London: Croom Helm), p. 2.

33 This lapse is curious, because the same paragraph contains a sentence taken from the same source and indicated as such. Perhaps T was just careless in marking the beginning and end of quoted material here, but it is disturbing nonetheless to see such passages.

of grammar. In many ways, T's book would appear to be an advancement over most of these, given its size and scope. There is very little mention, if any at all, of Romani or Aromanian or Megleno-Romanian in these works, for instance, though Asenova is an exception to this, and for the most part, they all have far less on morphosyntax than is to be found in BSMF. Of these works, for instance, Asenova's by far has the most extensive treatment of this area with 215 pages out of a 400-plus-page book, and the others have far fewer pages, some under 50. T's total of more than 600 pages on this grammatical domain far outstrips these. Moreover, she offers a level of detail that is not found in the presentations in these handbooks, though Asenova perhaps comes close, generally lacking only the extent of exemplification that T offers. Still, T does not give any details on phonology or the lexicon, areas of crucial importance to a more general understanding and appreciation, beyond morphosyntax, of the Balkan Sprachbund, and in that regard her work cannot stand as a "full-service" introduction to Balkan linguistics. Moreover, as is clear from the next section, there are other issues with BSMF that prevent it from being regarded as a suitable rival or even successor to any of these others; and, it must of course be measured against the classic work in the field by Kristian Sandfeld,⁴⁰ as this must remain as the gold standard for a work in this field and is one that BSMF cannot measure up to.

AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT

However, an important caveat is needed here with regard to the exemplification, and more, to be found in BSMF. Despite the appearance of T's having done a large amount of careful and detailed research, when it comes to the presentation of the data, which represents the core of the book and in principle ought to make the book a compendium of information for the ages, there are serious lapses that reduce its value considerably.

Indeed, one aspect of BSMF I have not commented on yet but which needs to be brought to light, as has been done in other reviews (e.g. that by Sims⁴¹), is the number of errors to be found in the book. All books of course have some errors, many of which are inadvertent mistakes that slipped past the author and the copy editor, but in this case, the sheer amount of misinformation all throughout BSMF, including, unfortunately, in the data itself, though also in various other aspects of the presentation, render it totally unreliable as a resource.

34 Helmut Schaller, *Die Balkansprachen. Eine Einführung in die Balkanphilologie* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1975).

35 Emmanuele Banfi, *Linguistica balcanica* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1985).

36 Jack Feuillet, *La linguistique balkanique* (Paris: INALCO, 1986).

37 Shaban Demiraj, *Gjuhësi ballkanike* (Skopje: Logos-A., 1994 [2nd edn., Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e Republikës së Shqipërisë (Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë), 2004]).

38 Petja Asenova, *Balkansko Ezikoznanie. Osnovni Problemi na Balkanskija Ezikov Sŭjuz* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo. 1989 [2nd edn., Sofia: Faber, 2002]).

39 Klaus Steinke and A. Vraciu, *Introducere în Lingvistica Balcanică* (Iași: Editura universitații "Al. I. Cuza," 1999).

40 Kristian Sandfeld, *Linguistique balkanique. Problèmes et résultats* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1930).

41 Sims, "Review article."

As just a sampling of the literally hundreds of errors to be found in the book, consider the following:⁴²

- There are errors in the forms cited, e.g. p. 5, example (3d) has Greek *pju* as the comparative marker when it should be *pjo*.
- There are errors in translations of forms, e.g. p. 17, example (37e), curiously misidentified as Bulgarian when in fact it is Greek, has Greek *vlepo* as meaning “read” when it should be “look at.”
- There are errors in discussion surrounding data, e.g. p. 489, section 3.4.1, the claim that in Serbo-Croatian “indicative sentences, only present tense forms of imperfective verbs are used” is wrong since imperfectives are possible in the past tense and in the future tense; if what T meant was that in the present tense only imperfectives are found, then that too is wrong, since perfective present tense forms occur in the expression of repetitive or habitual completed action.
- There are misleading statements that give the wrong impression as to analysis of material, e.g. p. 207, section 9.2.7, where T says (admittedly here, following some traditional presentations, such as that implicit in the dictionary entry in Stavropoulos⁴³) concerning the Greek relative pronoun that “*opio* ‘who/which’ is, as a rule, preceded by the definite article”; this is true, in a sense, but given that *opio-* (with a hyphen as a more proper way of citing it, since the form inflects and *-o* pure and simple would signal the neuter singular nominative/accusative form) does not occur as an independent form, a better way of presenting this relative form is as *o opio-*, as done by Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton,⁴⁴ with the definite article given as part and parcel of a doubly-inflected form (thus the feminine is *i opia*, neuter is *to opio*, and so on).
- There are errors in ancillary information, e.g. the reference on p. 504, section 5.3.1 to Attica (in Greece) as an island is mistaken, as it is part of the Greek mainland (a peninsula, not an island).

And so on and so forth, all throughout BSMF.

The total effect of these errors is most unfortunate, as they diminish the book’s utility considerably and put it at a serious disadvantage against other compendium-like works on Balkan languages (see section 6). BSMF, therefore, is a book with great potential for lasting value, but despite the welcome features and despite the good intent that went into the book, in the final analysis, the execution does not rise to the challenge that the topic posed.

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42 I thank Victor Friedman of the University of Chicago for help in locating these errors, which go beyond those that Sims identifies. Friedman has informally compiled a non-exhaustive errata sheet (with input from Andrej Sobolev and Sims as well) that runs to five pages; these errors mostly come from that list. Note also footnotes 2 and 7.

43 D. N. Stavropoulos, *Oxford Greek-English Learner’s Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

44 Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton, *Modern Greek*, pp. 23, 166.