

**An introduction to Vlach grammar.** By JOHN MARANGOZIS. (Languages of the World 39.) Munich: LINCOM, 2010. Pp. ix, 143. ISBN 9783895868979. 70€.

Reviewed by **Jason Merchant**, *University of Chicago*

This short potpourri of information about the Vlach language and its speakers clearly represents a labor of love for its author. Unfortunately for the field of linguistics, it does not represent a labor of scholarship, consistency, decent editing, or insight. It contains four short chapters, ‘Vlach alphabet and Vlach scripture’ (5-8), ‘Vlach phonology’ (9-20), ‘Morphology’ (22-56), and ‘Vlachs and the Greek revolution of 1821 / Πολεμικά Τραγούδια – Επική Ποίηση’ [Songs of war – Epic poetry] (59-73), followed by a brief bibliography (74-76), an index, and a Greek-Vlach glossary (alphabetized by the Greek lemma, with English glosses after the Vlach) (79-141). The text vacillates between English and Greek, and the best that can be said of this book is that the list of apparently randomly chosen words from Greek translated into Vlach that constitutes almost half the book is not entirely worthless as one person’s record of how certain words were pronounced. No information is given about the source of any of the data, nor for any of the historical claims (the author claims to have written a study of Epirotes but does not cite it). It is clear that the text is innocent of any revision by a competent writer of English: fricatives are called ‘rubbed’ (a mistranslation of the Greek τριβόμενα), Greek γένος ‘gender’ is rendered as ‘gene’ (also in Latin), ‘neuter’ comes out as ‘neutral’, and we read (p. 14) that ‘Verbs are seemed to by syntaxed with the Syzyyia I’. The only part of this book that may have been of interest to scholars, the glossary, is marred by the

complete absence of any grammatical information about any of the words (no indications about gender, declension or conjugation class, etc.). Although the author includes in his bibliography the grammars of Weigand (*Die Sprache der Olympo- Walachen*, Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1888) and Katsanis and Dinas (Γραμματική της Κονής Κουτσοβλαχικής, Thessaloniki: Arkheio Koutsovlakhikon Meleton, 1990), it is clear that he was unable to profit from their much better descriptions: those grammars remain the best sources on the language in German and Greek, respectively. Finally, it is sad to note that the best description of Vlach in any language goes unreferenced here: Gołąb's masterful grammar (The Arumanian dialect of Kruševo in SR Macedonia, SFR Yugoslavia, Skopje: Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1984) is uncited. Scholars and libraries need not waste their time or money; Lincom seems to have become a peer-review-free vanity publisher in this case.