Old East Slavic

Hanne Eckhoff

hanne.m.eckhoff@uit.no

UiT Arctic University of Norway

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Today's topic

- Brief overview of some important isoglosses in the Slavic family
- Focus on Old East Slavic (Kiev era)
- What was different from OCS?
- OCS influence in OES

Liquid diphthongs

- CorC, CerC, ColC, CelC: violates the principle of rising sonority
- Late change, two Slavic strategies
  - **South** (including OCS): metathesis + vowel lengthening CorC $>$ Cr$\bar{o}$C $>$ CraC
  - **East**: pleophony CorC $>$ CoroC
  - **West**: metathesis, vowel lengthening in the south (Czech), but not in the north (Polish)
- orC, olC: metathesis everywhere, always vowel lengthening in South Slavic, but dependent on accent elsewehere

Liquid diphthong reflexes

PSlav	OCS	OES	Polish	Czech	gloss
*gordъ	gradъ	gorodъ	gród	hrad	‘city’
*golva	glava	golova	głowa	hlava	‘head’
*bergъ	brěgъ	beregъ	brzeg	breh	‘river bank’
*melko	mlěko	moloko	mleko	mléko	‘milk’
*olkŭtĭ	lakъtь	lokъtь	łokieć	loket	‘elbow’
*ordlo	ralo	ralo	radło	rádlo	‘plow’

Jer diphthongs (from syllabic sonants) in OCS and OES

PSlav	OCS	OES	gloss
*sĭrpŭ	srьpъ	sьrpъ	'sickle'
*tŭrgŭ	trъgъ	tъrgъ	'market, trade'
*vĭlkŭ	vlьkъ	vъlkъ	'wolf'
*sŭlniko	slъnьce	sъlnьce	'sun'

- Metathesis in OCS
- *ĭl $>$ ъl in East Slavic, but otherwise unchanged
- A complicated affair across Slavic, note that Czech has syllabic sonants again in some environment: srp, trh, vlk, but slunce

The reflexes of *dj, *tj, *kti, *gti

PSlav	OCS	OES	Polish	Czech	gloss
*svētjā	svěšta	svěča	świeca	svíce	‘candle’
*medjā	mežda	meža	miedza	meze	‘boundary’
*noktĭs	nošt^ь	noč^ь	noc	noc	‘night’
*mogtĭs	mošt^ь	moč^ь	moc	moc	‘might’

The fate of the nasal vowels

- Of the modern Slavic languages, only Polish preserves nasal vowels
- In East Slavic they were lost before the first attestation
- In OES we find u for ǫ, ja ('a) for ę
- rǫkǫ : ruku 'hand'
- imę : imja 'name'
- Note that in the nominal paradigms, ę doesn't necessarily get replaced by ę: ja-stem paradigm: ě where OCS has ę (gen sg and nom/acc pl) – more regular development than the OCS one

No more rising sonority: The fall of the jers

- In all Slavic languages the jers (ъ and ь) fall in certain positions and are vocalised in other
- Gives rise to lots of new consonant clusters and closed syllables
- Started on the Balkans around 900, then spread north and west
- We see a number of missing jers and jer vocalisations in the OCS canon
- East Slavic: the jer change took place between 1150 and 1250
- The earliest Old East Slavic texts predate the jer change
- . . . but most of the manuscripts postdate them

Before the jer change proper

- Loss of jers in unaccented first syllable
- kъto > kto ‘who’
- čьto > čto ‘what’
- mъnogъ > mnogъ ‘great, much’

Havlík's law

- Jers are weak and eventually disappear
  - word-finally
  - if the vowel in the next syllable is not a jer
  - if the vowel in the next syllable is a strong jer
- Jers are strong and are vocalised to e or o (in East Slavic)
- if the vowel in the next syllable is a weak jer
- Note that the loss of a front jer leaves the preceding consonant palatalised

The jer change: practical method

- Count jers from the end of the word
- Start again every time you hit a full vowel
- Odd-numbered jers are weak, even-numbered jers are strong
- sъnъ : sъna
- dьnь : dьnьmь
- sъvьrstьnikъ

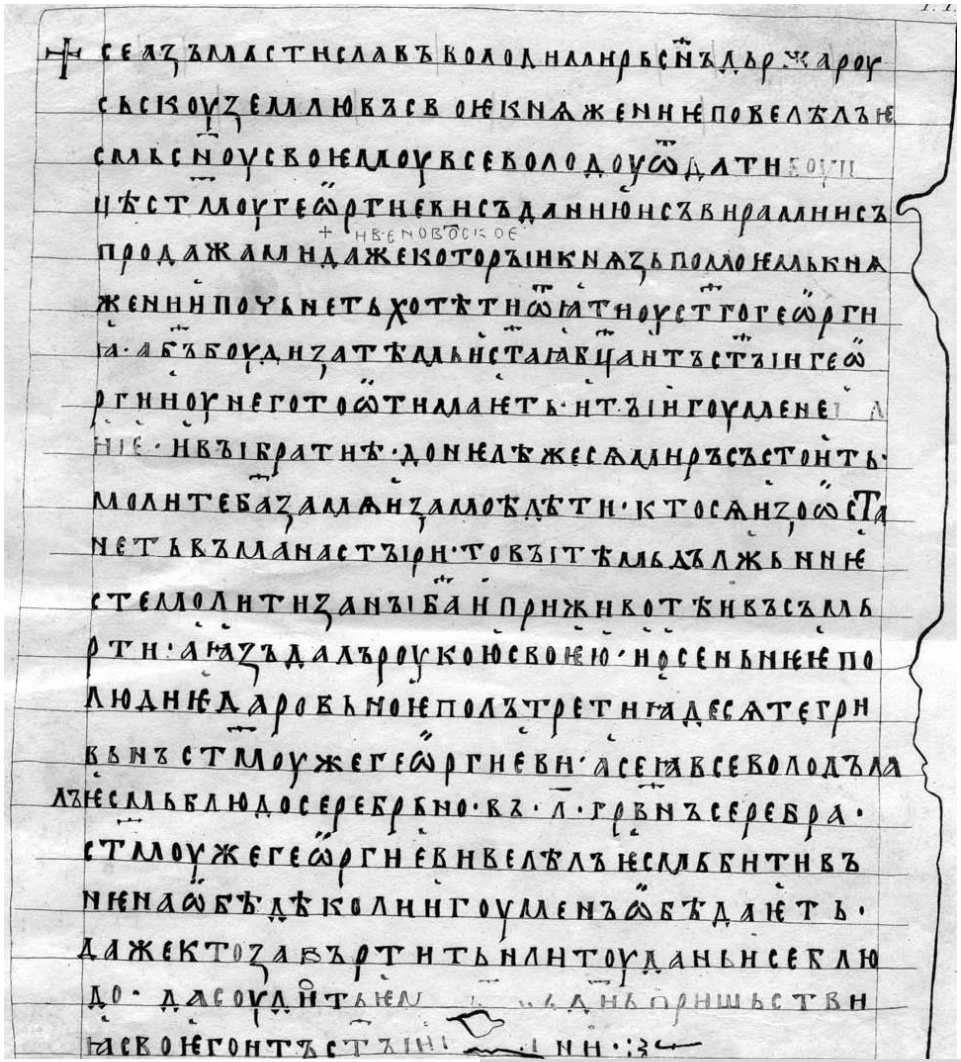
What kind of silly sound law is this?

- The alternating pattern strongly suggests that this has to do with metrical organisation (feet)
- Several scholars have suggested that the jer is vocalised if it's the head of a trochaic foot (built from the right)
- All other jers fall

Pairs of palatal and non-palatal consonants

- The loss of the jers and the nasal vowels firmly established pairwise palatal and non-palatal consonants in East Slavic
- The j palatalisation had already established r : r', l : l' and n : n'
- s and z potentially had palatalised partners due to the third palatalisation
- Now all non-velar consonants (and palatalisation products) got partners too: t : t', p : p', m : m' etc.
- Since k, g, x never occurred before a front vowel (due to the palatalisations), they had no palatal partners
- As a result they were apparently palatalised themselves, we see them occurring with i where we expect y (typical difference between soft and hard paradigms)

Mstislav's letter, 1130



Mstislav's letter

- A letter from Grand Prince Mstislav Vladimirovič of Kiev to the Jur'ev monastery
- 1130 – before the yer change

Sentence 1

se azъ mьstislavъ volodimirь snъ dьrža rusьku zemlju vъ svoje knęženije povelělъ jesmь snu svojemu vsevolodu otdati buicě stmu georgievi sъ daniju i sъ virami i sъ prodažami
'Lo, I, Mstislav, son of Volodimir, holding the land of Rus' in my reign, have ordered my son Vsevolod to give Buicy to Saint George with tribute and fines and penalties'

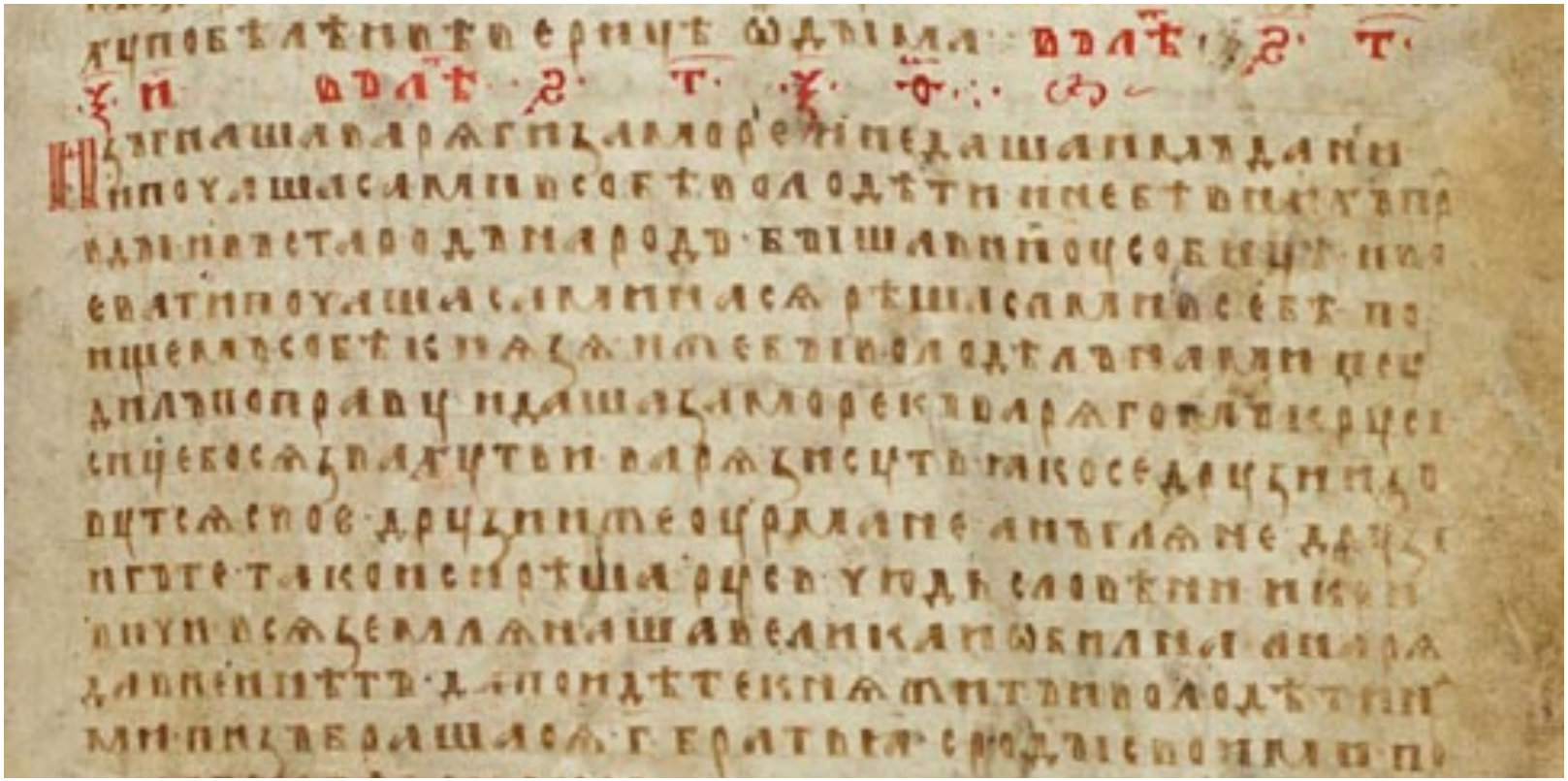
- Volodimirъ vs. Vladimirъ: pleophony vs. metathesis (Lith valdyti, Goth waldan)
- dьrža vs. drьžę $<$ *-i-nt-s
- Vьsevolodъ
- Buicě: jā stem f acc pl
- *-jāns $>$ *-jēns OCS gets -ę, but OES -ě

Sentence 2

daže kotoryi knęzь po mojemь knęženii počьnetь xotěti otjati u stgo georgija. a bъ budi za těmь i staja bca i tъ styi georgii u nego to otimajetь.
'If some prince after my rule starts wanting to take (this) away from Saint George, then let it be so that afterwards both the holy Mother of God and Saint George himself takes it away from him'

- počьnetь: well-behaved front jer in 3rd sg pres $<$ -tĭ
- počьnetь : otjati : otimajetь

The Primary Chronicle (Laurentian ms.)



The Primary Chronicle

- A chronicle of the history of Kievan Rus' from ca. 850 (859) to 1110, compiled in Kiev around 1113–1116
- Attributed to the monk Nestor, but may as well have been mostly the work of Silvestr (1116 redaction)
- Uses Greek chronicle sources for the summary of pre-Slavic history that starts the chronicle
- Written in a fluid mix of Old East Slavic and East Church Slavic
- Written before the jer changes
- However, the earliest manuscript (Codex Laurentianus) is from 1377, and shows signs of many later changes (for more witnesses, see http://pvl.obdurodon.org/)
- Our passage: The Varangians are asked to come and rule the land of Rus' (860–862)

PVL 19.14–15

izъgnaša varęgi za more i ne daša imъ dani.
'They drove the Varangians across the sea and did not give them tribute'

- izъgnaša cf. izъgъnašę $<$ -x-n̥t $<$ -s-n̥t
- varęgi, expected var'agy $<$ *varing-ŏ-ns
- Genitive of negation

PVL 19.15–16

i počaša sami v sobě vološděti.
'and they started ruling among themselves'

- tobě, sobě vs. OCS tebě, sebě: North-South isogloss

PVL 19.16

i ne bě v nixъ pravdy.
'and there was no justice among them'

- pravьdy
- Negative existential construction with genitive subject

PVL 19.16–17

byša v nix. usobicě.
'There arose conflicts among them'

- byša : change of state
- usobicě: jā stem, cf. OCS ǫsobicę *-jās > *-jēs, should have yielded -ě in OCS as well (merger with accusative)

PVL 19.18

i voevati počaša sami na sę
‘and they began waging war against each other’

PVL 19.18–19

rěša sami v sebě
'they said to themselves'

PVL 19.19–20

poištemъ sobě knęzę. iže by volodělъ nami. i sudilъ po pravu.
'Let us look for a prince for us who could rule us and judge us according to law'

- poištemъ : poiskati, št is the OCS transliteration, but the OES value was probably šč, regular reflex of -sk- + front vowel in the 1st palatalisation (not South Slavonicism)
- Conditional (subjunctive) with by rather than bi

PVL 19.20–21

idaša za more kъ varęgomъ k rusi.
‘They went across the sea to the Varangians, to the Rus”

- idaša: all other mss have idoša. New aorist, root aorist would be idǫ (but OES corresponding idu is unattested)

PVL 19.21

sice bo sę zvaxutь

- zvaxutь: imperfect 3 pl of zъvati, cf. OCS zъvaaxǫ
- The imperfect: Slavic innovation
- Suffix -ěa- or -aa- + -x-, endings of the root aorist
- First palatalisation in 2nd and 3rd pers sg, x > š before -e-
- OES: often appends -tь to the 3rd person sg and pl endings

PVL 19.22

i. varęzi sutь.
‘and they are Varangians’

masc.nom.pl. 2nd palatalisation of velar before i $<$ *-oi

PVL 19.22–24

jako se druzii zovutsę svoe. druzii že urmane. anъglęne druzii gъte. tako i si rěša. rusь.
'See, like some call themselves Swedes, others Normans, Angles, others Gotlanders, thus these too said Rus"

- Disputed reading!
- zovutъ sę
- urmane, anъglęne: consonant stems, masc.nom.pl. -e (typically with singulative suffix -in-)

PVL 19.24–20.1

(si rěša. rusь.) čjudь slověni. i kriviči.
'The Chuds, Slavs and Krivichians (said)'

- Chud: a name used for several Finnic peoples (proto-Estonians)
- Krivichi: an East Slavic group (Latv: krievi, Krievija)

PVL 20.1–2

vsę zemlę naša velika i obilna.
‘All our land is great and prosperous’

- Disputed reading! vsę might be the ethnic group Ves

PVL 20.2

a narędа v nei nětъ.
‘but there is no order in it’

narędа, cf. Lith rinda ‘order, row’

PVL 20.2–3

da poiděte knęžitъ i voloděti nami.
'come to reign and rule over us'

- poiděte: imperative *-oi-te, but with 'imperative particle' da as well
- knęžitъ: supine $<$ *-tum (accusative form of verbal noun in -t-)
- Used after verbs of motion to express purpose (22 attestations in the PVL)

PVL 20.3–4

i izъbrašasę .g. bratьja. s rody svoimi.
'And they chose three brothers with their kinfolk'

- izъbьraša sę
- bratьja: collective noun, f nom sg

PVL 20.4–5

pojaša po sobě vsju rusь.
‘And they took with them all of Rus”

PVL 20.5

i pridoša
‘and they came’

PVL 20.5

starěišii rjurikъ.
'The oldest was Riurik'

- Hrørikr (same as Roderick!)
- Comparative suffix -ějьš- (plus long form)

PVL 20.6–7

a drugii sineusъ na bělěozerě.
'and the other, Sineus, came to Beloozero'

- 'Sine hus' or Signjotr?
- ozero vs jezero, je $>$ o in East Slavic

PVL 20.7

a tretii izborьstě. truvorъ.
'and the third, Truvor, to Izborsk'

- 'Tru voring' or Thorvarthr?
- ьsk > ьsc in 2nd palatalisation, common outcome

PVL 20.8–9

ot těxъ prozvasę ruskaja zemlę
‘from them the land of Rus’ was named’

PVL 20.11–12

po dvu že lětu. sineusъ umre. a bratъ ego truvorъ.
'after two years, Sineus died, and his brother Truvor'

- umьrěti : umьr-e-t (root aorist ending)

PVL 20.12

i prija vlastь rjurikъ.
‘and Riurik seized the power’

vlastь, not volostь!

PVL 20.13

i razdaja mužemъ svoimъ grady. ovomu poloteskъ ovomu rostovъ drugomu běloozero.
'and he gave out cities to his men, Polotsk to one, Rostov to one, Beloozero to another'

razdaja: imperfective aorist! (Much easier to find in Old Russian.)

Old East Slavic aspect, a digression

- Has aorist and imperfect, but the system is probably deteriorating (and their meaning and status is hotly debated)
- Has the same kinds of pair formations as OCS
- Probably has neutral simplex verbs (Forsyth 1972)
- Same as OCS? More advanced than OCS? More archaic than OCS?
- Without our Greek filter, what can we use as foothold?

Sorting verbs by inflectional forms

Verb type	OCS (Mar.)	per cent	OES (PVL)	per cent
-pfv	152	19.0	176	14.2
-pfv(<4)	305	38.1	566	45.6
-ipfv	62	7.7	43	3.5
-ipfv(<4)	215	26.8	304	24.5
~pfv	10	1.3	45	3.6
~ipfv	15	1.9	17	1.4
~neut	42	5.2	90	7.3

Stability and differences

- The overall picture is rather similar
  - Verbs have strong preferences for either aorist or imperfect – inflectional aspect is still around?
  - Verbs that exclusively occur in the aorist are overwhelmingly prefixed and underived (*ubiti* 'kill')
  - Verbs that exclusively occur in the imperfect are simplices (*ljubiti* 'love') or suffix-derived with or without prefix (*izbivati* 'kill', *javljati* 'appear')
  - Relatively few verbs are neutral, and more than half of them are simplices
- More neutral verbs
- Fewer high-frequency verbs have a stable preference
- The 'neutral' category contains a number of verbs with overt aspect markers

Neutral simplices

Atelic simplices can still combine with the aorist for a delimitative/complexive meaning

(1) *trudixom sja i ne moguče sja dokopati*
workaor.1pl refl and not being-able refl finish-digging
'We worked and couldn't finish digging' (PVL 210.6–7)

(2) *ždaša za měsjacь*
wait.aor.3pl for month
'they waited for a month (but he didn't pay them)' (PVL 79.1)

(But what's going on here?)

(3) *i togo stvori lětъ z*
and that did.aor.3sg years 7
'and he did that for seven years' (PVL 202.24)

(4) *i sozda stolpъ to za .m. lět ne sveršenъ bys*
and build.aor.3sg pillar then in 40 years not completed was
'and he built the pillar, and in 40 years it wasn't finished' (PVL 5.7–8)

(Thanks to Anna Alexandrova for the examples!)

Perfective imperfects

Telic-iterative: when demons turned up

(5) *znamenaše lice svoje krstnymъ obrazom. i tako*
sign.imperf.3sg face his cross image and thus
išteznjaxu
disappear.imperf.3.pl
'he made the sign of the cross across his face, and thus they disappeared' (PVL 197.2–3)