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## Verbal aspect in Old Church Slavonic

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## ***o PRELIMINARIES***

### ***o.o Introduction***

Slavic languages are well known for their aspect opposition between perfective and imperfective verbs. This opposition is assumed to stem from the ancestor of all Slavic languages, Proto-Slavic (Van Wijk 1929, Kuznecov 1953, Maslov 1961, Andersen 2009) and cannot be traced back to Indo-European aspect, hence it must be regarded as a Slavic innovation (Van Wijk 1929, Růžička 1962: 18, Galton 1976: 293, Szemerényi 1987, Schuyt 1990: 411, Galton 1997).

The aspect system that can be found in the modern Slavic languages shows such similarities between the various languages, in both its use and its morphology, that it is possible to treat it as a single system (cf. Galton 1976, Dahl 1985, Lindstedt 1995, Tomelleri 2010). However, in recent decades several studies have shown that there are also considerable differences in the use of verbal aspect among the modern Slavic languages (Galton 1976, Mønnesland 1984, Stunová 1993, Dickey 2000, Barentsen 2008). This raises the question as to the kind of system that the modern Slavic verbal aspect systems originate from and how aspect functioned in the earlier stages of Slavic. Since there are no means of directly studying the source of all Slavic languages, Proto-Slavic, studies into the origin or development of aspect in Slavic concentrate on specific languages or dialects, mostly Old-Russian (cf. Růžička 1957, Forsyth 1972, Bermel 1997, Nørgård-Sørensen 1997, Mende 1999).

The subject of this study is the verbal aspect system in Old Church Slavonic (OCS), the oldest attested Slavic language. The system in OCS is comparable to the systems in modern Slavic languages insofar as it concerns aspectual morphology. Scholarly opinion differs, however, when it comes to the questions of the functioning of the OCS aspectual system. For example, Antonín Dostál (1954) distinguishes four main categories of verbs with regard to verbal aspect: perfective, biaspectual (more perfective), biaspectual (more imperfective) and imperfective. However, other studies discern three categories (Amse-de Jong 1974) or merely two (Eckhoff & Janda 2014). The general research question that arises from the comparative studies of modern Slavic verbal aspect and the differing opinions on the functioning of the OCS verbal system can be formulated as follows:

*What does the verbal aspect system in OCS look like?*

I will break down this main research questions into a number of more specific questions in Chapter 3 regarding the way aspect can be established,

which verbs participate in the aspect system, the functions of verbal aspect, comparison to modern Slavic languages and the development of verbal aspect. In the same chapter I will also give a *further outline of the study*. However, this is only possible after I have discussed the two main subjects of this study: Old Church Slavonic (Chapter 1) and verbal aspect (Chapter 2) in more detail.

The approach I take is not driven by a specific theory or framework, but it is usage-based, in the sense that I take an empirical, data-oriented approach to verbal aspect.

### 0.1 Terminology

I will use a number of terms with regard to verbal aspect and given the lack of a standard terminology throughout studies dealing with verbal aspect, it is important to clearly define each term. The various terms and the concepts they stand for are discussed extensively in Chapter 2, but the most important terminology is already summed up below, with references to the sections in which the various terms are discussed.

First, I discern *lexical aspect* (2.1), which refers to the inherent semantic properties of a verb, or a predicate. All verbs express lexical aspect and the kind of lexical aspect they express depends on three main parameters: qualitative change, temporal dimensions and *boundary* (2.1.2). For this study the latter parameter is the most significant, since this is the lexical parameter around which the OCS grammatical aspect system revolves. Verbs expressing a boundary are *terminative*; they express a change of situation or, in other words, connect two qualitatively different situations. Hence, in a terminative verb the boundary is part of the lexical content of the verb to which I will refer as the *inherent boundary*. A boundary between two situations can also be expressed by other means (2.1.5), in which case it is no longer an *inherent* boundary. Therefore, a predicate can be terminative even though the verb that is part of the predicate is not terminative.

Secondly, there is *grammatical aspect* (2.2), which is a form-meaning category concerning the different ways in which an event can be viewed or presented. It puts an extra layer of aspectuality on the event, which is added to the lexical aspect that is present in each verb. In the most general terms *perfective aspect* is used to present an event in its totality, while *imperfective aspect* is usually defined as the opposite of the perfective aspect (2.2 and 2.2.2). There are, however, various ways in which an event can be presented in its totality and for the sake of clarity, I discern two distinct systems. There is *Slavic-style aspect* (2.2.1), which concerns an opposition between perfective and imperfective verbs that revolves around terminative verbs, hence verbs expressing an inherent boundary. In this system the perfective aspect presents the event as *complete*: the inherent boundary is attained.

Imperfective aspect, on the other hand, defocusses the inherent boundary. The other system is *Romance-style* aspect (2.2.1) which concerns an opposition between perfective and imperfective verb forms, often restricted to the past tense, which revolves around a *temporal boundary* and which is not dependent on the lexical content of the verb. Hence, in Romance-style aspect a verb does not have to have an inherent boundary to express perfectivity or imperfectivity. Perfective verb forms in a Romance-style system express a temporally bounded event and imperfective verbs forms a temporally unbounded event.

To make matters complicated, Old Church Slavonic has both types of grammatical aspect systems. It has a *derivational aspect* system, in which *imperfective verbs* are derived from *perfective verbs* (2.2.1, cf. also Chapter 5). This is a Slavic-style system, involving terminative verbs. It also has a past tense *inflectional aspect* opposition between *aorist* and *imperfect* (cf. Chapter 6). This is a typical Romance-style aspect system in which the aorist expresses a temporally bounded event and the imperfect a temporally unbounded event.

The *morphological markers* of derivational aspect in OCS are *prefixes*, *suffixes* and *derivational relationships* between verbs (cf. Chapter 5).

Another important term in this study is *anaspectual* (4.1). Anaspectual verbs are verbs in which morphological markers of aspect are absent. These verbs, therefore, do not express the extra ‘viewpoint layer’ of aspect that perfective and imperfective verbs do. Anaspectual verbs differ greatly as to the question whether they are *terminativizable*, i.e. whether, or to what degree, they allow the expression of a boundary by the predicate they occur in (8.3.2).

The *grammatical profile* (4.3.1.1) of a verb is the relative distribution of verb forms that the verb occurs in. The individual occurrence of a verb form in a manuscript is called an *attestation*. The *paradigm* of a verb refers to all verb forms that a verb is attested in (e.g. present, imperfect, aorist, infinitive etc.) (cf. Chapter 6).

I will use the term *event* as a generic term for what is expressed by the predicate. I define the predicate as the *verb* and its *object(s)* (if any). Furthermore, I occasionally use the term *construal*, following Croft (e.g. 2012: 13-19, 83-110). The term refers to how people structure or conceptualize the world (or object of conceptualization) through language. In other words: language is not a way of merely describing reality, but also a way of structuring it, or ‘viewing’ it. In the same vein, verbal aspect is not a property of the real world, but a way of conceptualizing an event.

Finally, I refer to *functions* of aspect and *contexts* in which verb forms occur. It is sometimes hard to draw a clear line between the two. Take, for example, sequentiality: perfective aorist often have the function of sequentially

connecting past events in narratives, while imperfective imperfects present events as occurring parallel to each other. However, there are also examples of imperfective imperfects in sequences of past tense events (cf. 8.2.1.2), in which case sequentiality rather is a characteristic of the context.

## 0.2 Examples

I will give OCS examples in transliteration (see 0.3 for a transliteration table). Accents and titlos are omitted and abbreviations are dissolved by inserting the missing letters in parentheses, e.g. b[og]ъ ‘God’. The manuscripts are written in scriptio continua ‘continuous script’, but the transliteration contains spaces between the words, following the diplomatic editions (cf. 1.4.1). Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of OCS Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible 1995. In some cases I edited the English translation to align it with the OCS version. I will indicate this by adding ‘my translation’. I have chosen to not start the English translation with a capital (unless it starts with a name, or a word referring to God) and not end them with a full stop, thus keeping the English version as close to the OCS example as possible.

For all examples I indicate from which source they originate, immediately after the example, in square brackets. For the sources I will use abbreviations, referring to OCS codices (see 0.4 and 1.4). Whenever an example occurs in more than one OCS codex, the first codex mentioned is the codex from which the example is taken. The examples are almost never completely identical between codices, but I regard them as identical whenever the verb form(s) concerned is (are) similar. The verb form that is discussed is printed in boldface and is glossed (see 0.4). Other verb forms may be glossed when they are relevant to the analysis. The translation of the form(s) that is (are) discussed is printed in italics. The translation field is followed by the exact location of the example, in brackets. When the example is a Gospel text, the Gospel, chapter and verse number are indicated. When I use an example from the Book of Psalms, I use the Psalm numbering as used in the OCS codex *Psalterium Sinaiticum*, which follows the Septuagint. This may differ from the numbering in modern translations that follow the Hebrew numbering. With examples from other codices I use the referring system that is used by Aitzetmüller (1977), with either a reference to the folio and line number, or to a page number and line number.

All of this results in the following format:

- (1) iskoni **bě<sup>impf</sup>** slovo (i) slovo **bě<sup>impf</sup>** u b[og]a i b[og]ъ **bě<sup>impf</sup>** slovo [A, Z]  
in the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the  
Word *was* God (John 1:1)

Finally, I do not indicate the aspect of the OCS verb, since this is not a given. It is in fact one of the parameters I would like to establish in this study. In examples from modern Slavic languages, I will indicate the aspect of the relevant verb.

*o.3 Transliteration table*

<i>Glagolitic</i>	<i>Cyrillic</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
ⱦ	А	a
Ɱ	Б	b
Ɱ̅	В	v
Ɱ̇	Г	g
Ɱ̈	Д	d
Ɱ̉	Е	e
Ɱ̊	Ж	ž
Ɱ̋	Ѕ	dz
-	С	dz
Ɱ̌	З, Ъ	z
Ɱ̍	І	i
Ɱ̎	(І)	i
Ɱ̏	Н	i
Ɱ̐	(Н)	ǵ
Ɱ̑	К	k
Ɱ̒	Л	l
Ɱ̓	М	m
Ɱ̔	Н	n
Ɱ̕	О	o
Ɱ̖	П	p
Ɱ̗	Р	r
Ɱ̘	С	s
Ɱ̙	Т	t
Ɱ̚	У, Ъ	u
Ɱ̛, Ɱ̜	Ф	f
Ɱ̝	Х	x
Ɱ̞	У	o
Ɱ̟	Ц	št
Ɱ̠	Ц	c
Ɱ̡	Ч, Ч	č
Ɱ̢	Ш	š
Ɱ̣	Ъ	ъ
Ɱ̤, Ɱ̥, Ɱ̦, Ɱ̧	ЪІ, (ЪІ), ЪН	y
Ɱ̨	Ь	ь
Ɱ̩	Ѣ	ě
Ɱ̪	Ю	ju
-	Ѧ	ja
-	Ѧ	je
Ɱ̫	Ѧ, Ѧ	ę
Ɱ̬	Ѧ	q
Ɱ̭	Ѧ, Ѧ	ję
Ɱ̮	Ѧ	jq
-	Ѧ	ks
-	Ѧ	ps
Ɱ̯	Ѧ	th
Ɱ̰	Ѧ	ü

Table o.1 Transliteration from Glagolitic and Cyrillic to Latin



#### 0.4 Abbreviations

I will use the following abbreviations:

For **languages**: BCS = Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bg = Bulgarian, Cz = Czech, It = Italian, Gr = Greek, OCS = Old Church Slavonic, OR = Old Russian, Ru = Russian.

For **codices** (cf. 1.4): *A* = *Assemanianus*, *C* = *Clozianus*, *Es* = *Euchologium Sinaiticum*, *M* = *Marianus*, *Ps* = *Psalterium Sinaiticum*, *S* = *Suprasliensis*, *Sk* = *Savvina Kniga*, *Z* = *Zographensis*.

For **verb forms**: aor = aorist, cond = conditional, fut = future, impf = imperfect, impr = imperative, ind = indicative, inf = infinitive, ipf = imperfective, pf = perfective, pl = plural, pres = present, PrsAP = present active participle, PrsPP = present passive participle, PstAPI = past active participle I, PstAPII = past active participle II, PstPP = past passive participle, ptc = participles, sg = singular, sup = supine.

I will use the abbreviation **VOM** for verb of motion.

Abbreviations from the **time-relational model of tense** (Klein 1994, 1995) are: TU = Time of the Utterance (moment of speech), TA = Time for which the Assertion is made, TS = Time of the Situation.

#### 0.5 Bible translations and Greek versions

As mentioned above, I use the New American Standard Bible 1995 for the English translation of the OCS examples. For Russian, the standard translation I use is the Russian Synodal Orthodox Version 1996. In a number of cases I also refer to other Bible translations as found in the Bible software program *BibleWorks 9* or on the website [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com). The following is a complete list of the Bible translations that I have used for this study, with their designation as given in *BibleWorks 9* or on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com):

<b>Bulgarian</b>	Bulgarian Protestant Version, 1940/2005.
<b>Croatian</b>	Croatian Bible, 1974.
<b>Czech</b>	Bible: 21st Century Translation, 2009.
<b>English</b>	New American Standard Bible, 1995. King James Version, 1611/1769.
<b>Macedonian</b>	Macedonian Dynamic Translation of the New Testament, 1999.
<b>Polish</b>	Nowe Przymierze Pismo Swiete Nowego Testamentu, 2009.
<b>Russian</b>	Russian Synodal Orthodox Version, 1996. New Russian Translation, 2006. Easy-to-Read Version, 2007.

**Slovak** Sväté Písmo, 1995.  
**Ukrainian** Ukrainian Version of the Bible, 1996.

I also made use of the software program *Slavonic Bible* for the Church Slavonic Bible version, the so-called Elizabeth Bible.

**Church Slavonic** Elizabeth Bible, 1757.

Finally, for the Greek I made again use of *BibleWorks 9*. In most cases the Byzantine recension must be regarded as the source for the OCS translation. However, there are instances in which the critical text provides useful information as well.

**Byzantine edition** Byzantine Text Form, 2005. Compiled and arranged by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont.  
**Critical text** Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th edition, 1993.