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ON THE ORIGIN OF NOVGOROD AND STARAJA RUSSA *o*- STEM NOMINATIVE SINGULAR MASCULIN ENDING *-e*

Introduction [1]

In recent years it has become a familiar fact that in the North Russian dialect reflected in early texts from Novgorod and Staraja Russa the nominative singular of the nominal and pronominal masculine *o*-stems ended in *-e*. A few examples: *Иване* (№ 430, 633), *дешеве* (№ 424), *саме* (SRu 6), *въдале* 'дал' (№ 238, 119, 509), cf. also the following phrase, which consists entirely of nominatives in *-e*: *позвале дворянине Федоре Внездове внуке* (№ 289).[2]

The ending *-e* limited to the Nsg of the *o*-stems; the Asg always takes *-ъ*, as do both the Nsg and Asg of the *u*-stems; the *jo*-stems appear to take *-ь* in both the Nsg and the Asg, the way they do in all other Slavic dialects.[3] The Nsg ending *-e* never causes stem-final velars to undergo the First Palatalization, so that we find, e. g., *замъке* (№ 247), *новъгородьске* (№ 562), *кето* 'кто' (SRu 12), *кожюхе* (№ 141), *лихе* (№ 163), rather than **замъче*, **новъгородьще*, **чето*, **кожюше*, **лише*. For a detailed discussion of the evidence I refer to Зализняк.[4]

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[1] I am indebted to Андрей Анатольевич Зализняк for his critical comments during the Novgorodiana conference in August 1993.

[2] Examples from birchbark letters. «N» means «Novgorod», «SRu» means «Staraja Russa». Numbers refer to the Academy Edition (Новгородские грамоты на бересте...): *Арциховский А. В., Тихомиров М. Н.* Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1951 г.). М., 1953. № 1—10; *Арциховский А. В.* Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1952 г.). М., 1954. № 11—83; *Арциховский А. В., Борковский В. И.*: 1) Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1953—1954 гг.). М., 1958. № 84—136; 2) Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1955 г.). М., 1958. № 137—194; 3) Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1956—1957 гг.). М., 1963. № 195—318; *Арциховский А. В.* Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1958—1961 гг.). М., 1963. № 319—405; SRu 1—SRu 13; *Арциховский А. В., Янин В. Л.* Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1962—1976 гг.). М., 1978. № 406—539; *Янин В. Л., Зализняк А. А.*: 1) Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1977—1983 гг.). М., 1986. № 540—614; SRu 14; 2) Новгородские грамоты на бересте : (Из раскопок 1984—1993 гг.). М., 1993. № 615—710; SRu 15—SRu 23.

[3] Due to the properties of the «бытовые» spelling systems of Old Russian (in which the letters *ь* and *е* were interchangeable in principle) and due to the position of local linguistic elements in the sociolinguistic system (which made importation of non-local and Church Slavonic elements possible or even mandatory in texts not devoted to lowly subjects of a domestic or commercial nature), the question whether the Nsg of the msc *jo*-stems was *-ь* or *-e* is still controversial.

[4] *Зализняк А. А.* Новгородские берестяные грамоты с лингвистической точки зрения // Янин В. Л., Зализняк А. А. Новгородские грамоты на бересте. М., 1986. С. 129—314; *Зализняк А. А.* Лингвистические исследования и словоуказатель // Янин В. Л., Зализняк А. А. Новгородские грамоты на бересте. М., 1993. С. 206—211.

On the rules that determine the distribution of the Nsg *-e* in the early seventeenth-century language reflected in Tönnies Fenne's *Gesprächsbuch* see now: *Schaeken J.* Zum

The existence of the Nsg ending -e confronts historical linguistics with the problem of explaining how it arose. An adequate explanation will have to consist of a plausible mechanism that accounts for the following things.

1. The phonetic shape of the ending.
2. Its distribution.
3. The absence of the First Palatalization.

The problem posed by the Nsg in -e has been on the agenda for quite a long time now and many explanations have been proposed, none of which has been widely accepted, no doubt because they are all plainly inadequate.[5] This is largely due to the fact that the precise rules governing the distribution of the ending have become known only comparatively recently. Whereas formerly the ending could be regarded as an infrequent optional variant that was used alongside the presumably «regular» ending -ъ, it has now become clear that in the earliest documented phase of the Novgorod and Staraja Russa vernacular the regular ending was -e, whereas occurrences of -ъ are to be regarded as intrusive, e. g. as originating in the language of the Church (*богъ* always has -ъ) or in spoken East Slavic dialects that were closer to the Slavic averange.

Among existing explanations, the view according to which forms in -e are vocatives used as nominatives is the only one that is to some extent classical.[6] Though Соболевский's explanation has not been completely abandoned [7] most investigators have always had reservations about it. Spread of the vocative ending to the nominative is not unusual in the case of nouns referring to persons, but is difficult to credit in the case of nouns and adjectives referring to other types of entities, not to speak of adjectives and participles in predicative constructions.[8]

Spread of the vocative to the nominative has few serious parallels in Slavic.[9] Moreover, if the Nsg in -e really continued the vocative, one would expect to find

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nordrussischen Nominativ Singular auf -e im Gesprächsbuch des Tönnies Fenne (Pskov 1607) // Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics. 1992. № 17. S. 285—293.

[5] For a critical survey of the principal solutions that were advanced up to the early sixties see: *Филин Ф. П.* Об одном загадочном явлении в языке северных памятников древнерусской письменности // Prace filologiczne. 1964. N 18/2. P. 337—345. For a discussion of a recent proposal by: *Иванов Вяч. Вс.* Отражение индоевропейского casus indefinitus в древненовгородском диалекте // Russian Linguistics. 1985. № 9. P. 327—334. See: *Зализняк А. А.* Древненовгородский диалект и проблемы диалектного членения позднего праславянского языка // Славянское языкознание : X Междунар. съезд славистов. София, 1988. Сентябрь. Докл. советской делегации. С. 170; for criticism of the explanation proposed by Николаев, Дыбо and Зализняк (as reported by Зализняк ibid.) see: *Vermeer W.* The mysterious North Russian nominative singular ending -e and the problem of the reflex of Proto-Indo-European *-os in Slavic // Die Welt der Slaven 1991. 36/1—2. P. 282—283; On explaining why the Early North Russian nominative singular in -e does not palatalize stem-final velars // Russian Linguistics 1994. № 18.

[6] *Соболевский А. И.* Лекции по истории русского языка. Киев, 1988. С. 137.

[7] *Журавлев В. К.* Диахронная морфология. М., 1991. С. 103.

[8] *Иванов Вяч. Вс.* Отражение индоевропейского casus indefinitus... С. 327—328.

[9] In Serbo-Croat the use of the vocative instead of the nominative is limited to nouns denoting persons and is a feature of the artificial language of folk poetry. In Polish it is virtually limited to hypocoristics denoting male persons or animals. See: *Zaleski J.* Wołacz w funkcji mianownika w imionach męskich i rzeczownikach pospolitych (Formy typu *Józiu, Stasiu; wujciu, dziadziu*) // Język polski. 1959. № 39. P. 32—50. I am indebted to Henk Proeme for drawing my attention to this publication.

the First Palatalization in stems preceding the ending, in other words: one would expect to find **_замъче_ rather than the actually attested form _замъке_.

The phonetically regular endings of Late Common Slavic

The discussion starts from the phonetically regular Late Common Slavic reflexes of the following endings:

— the nominative, vocative and accusative singular of the masculine _o_-, _jo_-, _u_- and _i_-stems;

— the nominative/vocative/accusative singular of the neuter _o_-, _jo_- and _es_-stems.

The relevant Proto-Indo-European endings and their phonetic reflexes in Late Common Slavic are shown in:

<div align="right">T a b l e   1</div>

Proto-Indo-European endings and their Late Common Slavic reflexes

		Nsg	Vsg	Asg
masc.	_o_-stems	-os > *-o	-e > -e	-om > -ъ
	_jo_-stems	-ios > *-"e	-ie > *-"e	-iom > -"ь
	_u_-stems	-us > -ъ	-eu > *-"u	-um > -ъ
	_i_-stems	-is > -ь	-ei > -i	-im > -ь
neut.	_o_-stems	-od > -o		
	_jo_-stems	-iod > -"e	= Nsg	= Nsg
	_es_-stems	-os > -o		

For a correct understanding of Table 1, the following remarks must be kept in mind.

1. In the Slavic endings, the diacritic " indicates the effects of earlier _j_ on preceding consonants.

2. Asterisks mark endings which, though they are to be expected on the basis of the phonological developments, do not correspond to the ones found in the attested material (either in early North Russian or in more central varieties of Slavic). They will all be discussed below.

3. It is not excluded that at the stage at which the relevant changes took place the phonological shape of the endings was substantially more archaic, e. g. *-_u_ rather than *-_ъ_, or *-_ou_ (or *-_au_) rather than *-_u_. As far as I can see, this does not affect the argument and in the remainder of the discussion Common Slavic endings will be adduced in the shape they had or must have had at a stage of phonological development which corresponds with Old Church Slavonic.

Discussion of the Proto-Indo-European endings

The relevant Proto-Indo-European endings are unproblematic, except perhaps in two cases.

1. The neuter _o_-stem NVAsg. By general consent, the Proto-Indo-European ending is reconstructed as *-_om_, which would have yielded **-_ъ_ in Slavic, rather than the attested ending -_o_. This i usually explained along the following lines. At an early stage which was common to Baltic and Slavic, oxytone (end-stressed) neuters replaced the ending *-_om_ (or its reflex) with the pronominal ending *-_od_

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or its later reflex *-o. Barytone (stem-stressed) neuters did not share this development: their NAsg ending *-om regularly yielded -ъ and they eventually became masculine[10] (see further Иллич-Свитыч 1963: 131—133). Hence for those nouns that appear as neuters in Slavic we have to deal with the ending *-od.

2. The masculine u-stem Vsg. This ending is here reconstructed as *-eu,[11] but has also been reconstructed as *-ou. The difference is not essential from the point of view of the problems treated in the present contribution.

The Slavic reflex of *-os: -o or -ъ?

The phonetic reflex of *-os has often been assumed to have been *-ъ (rather than *-o, as assumed in Table 1). However, most interested linguists nowadays assume that the phonetic reflex of *-os is fact -o, for a whole series of reasons, of which the following are the most important.

1. The assumption that *-os developed into *-ъ is not supported by other clear instances of *-os yielding -ъ. On the other hand the assumption that *-os developed into -o is supported by at least one other type of cases: the NAsg og the neuter es-stems: nebo < *nebhos. If the regular reflex of *-os were *-ъ we would expect **nebъ and it would have to be assumed that the final -o of nebo is analogical. An analogical mechanism that would plausibly account for this ending has never been devised.[12]

2. The endings -o and -e in names like Russian *Садко,* Serbo-Croat *Мирко, Благоје* (and similar forms in most Slavic languages) can be interpreted as direct continuations of the Common Slavic Nsg endings *-o and *-e.[13] The traditional idea that these endings somehow continue the neuter NAVsg is, I think, very difficult to accept. Why would a masculine ending be replaced with a neuter one in nouns denoting adult male human beings?

3. The suffix found in Serbo-Croat names like *Милош* (and similar forms in Russian, Polish, Czech and Sorbian) can be explained as the original Nsg of the definite form of the adjective (< *milos-jьs, corresponding to modern Lithuanian mielàsis), on which subsequently a new declension was built.[14]

4. The o in such forms as Old Church Slavonic *ко-жьдо,* old or dialectal Polish *kóżdy* is mysterious unless it can be regarded as the original reflex.[15]

[10] *Ebeling C. L.* Historical laws of Slavic accentuation // To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, 1967. P. 581; *Kortlandt F.* Slavic Accentuation. Lisse: Peter de Ridder. 1975. P. 44—46.

[11] *Kortlandt F.* On final syllables in Slavic // Journ. of Indo-European Studies. 1983. N 11. P. 178.

[12] *Leskien A.* Über slavisches o in Endsilben // Indogermanische Forschungen. 1907. N 21. S. 335; *Hujer O.* Slovanská deklinace jmenná // Rozpravy České Akademie Císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění. Praha, 1910. Třída 3. Číslo 33. S. 25—26, 34—36.

[13] *Rudnyc'kyi J. B.* The problem of nom. sg. endings of o-stems in Slavic // Ed. by D. Gerhardt et al. // Orbis scriptus Dmitrij Tschiżewskij zum 70. Geburtstad. München, 1966. S. 653—658.

[14] For Shevelov's objection to this: *Shevelov G. J.* A Prehistory of Slavic: The Historical Phonology of Common Slavic. Heidelberg, 1964. P. 228; *Vermeer W.* The mysterious North Russian. P. 280; *Torbiornsson T.* Die bestimmten Adjektivformen der slavischen Sprachen // Zeitschr. für slavische Philologie. 1925. N 1. S. 277—279.

[15] *Rozwadowski J.* Przyczynki do hystorycznej fonetyki języków słowiańskich // Rocznik slawistyczny. 1914—1915. № 7. S. 14—17; cf.: *Kortlandt F.* On final gyllables in Slavic. P. 182.

In view of these facts it is quite impossible to avoid the conclusion that in Slavic the phonetically regular reflex of *-os is -o. If that conclusion is correct, one expects *-ios to yield *-e. This offers a basis for an explanation of the curious fact that the Slavic jo-stems have a borrowed Vsg ending: attested *koňu* (with the u-stem ending) instead of phonetically regular **koňe. The substitution can be understood as a natural reaction against the otherwise unusual coalescence of nominative and vocative singular (both *koňe). If the jo-stem Nsg were something else than *-e (e. g. *-ь) the substitution would remain a mystery. Note that the u-stems offered the only solution to the problem posed by the loss of the distinction between Nsg and Vsg in the jo-stems, because the i-stem Vsg -i would have been perceived as a nominative plural (**koňi). By the way, there is no evidence that the substitution ever took place in the variety of Proto-Slavic that is continued by the North Russian dialect that is reflected in early texts from Novgorod and Staraja Russa.

Analogical substitutions in Slavic

If *-o is the phonetic reflex of PIE *-os it has to be concluded that the o-stem Nsg ending -ъ attested in all Slavic languages (except early North Russian) is analogical. Leskien explained a long time ago[16] what happened and why.

In the system of endings as displayed in Table 1, the position of the Nsg of the masculine o- and jo-stems is precarious, because the ending risks being perceived as a mark of the neuter gender: whereas in the Asg the endings -o and -ъ signal the neuter and masculine gender respectively, in the nominative this pattern is disrupted by the masculine Nsg in -o (*kolo, *zamъko).[17] In the case of the jo-stems the problem is much less serious than in that of the o-stems because underived neuter jo-stems are very few (pol'e, mor'e and one or two others) and because the overwhelming majority of neuter jo-stems are characterized by clear-cut suffixes, so that the risk of a masculine Nsg in -"e being perceived as a neuter is much smaller.

It is obvious that the morphosyntactic problem posed by the masculine Nsg in *-o could be eliminated by analogically replacing the regular ending with a different nominative ending. Several candidates were available, in particular:

A. The u-stem ending *-ъ.

B. The jo-stem ending *-e.

Both possibilities threatened to undermine case distinctions present elsewhere in the system.

— Adoption of -ъ would cause the difference between the Nsg and the Asg to disappear, except in those cases (to the extent that they existed) where the distinction was marked additionally by accentual phenomena.

— Adoption of -e would obliterate the difference between the Nsg and the Vsg (Nsg *kole = Vsg *kole), again with the exception of those cases (a minority) where the distinction was additionally marked by other means, in particular the First Palatalization alternations (Nsg *zamъke vs. Vsg *zamъče) and by prosodic phenomena.

[16] *Leskien A.* Die Declination im Slavisch-litauischen und Germanischen// Preisschriften gekrönt und herausgegeben von der Fürstlich Jablonowski'schen Gesellschaft zu Leipzig 19. Leipzig, 1876. S. 3—5.

[17] See further: *Vermeer W.* The mysterious North Russian. P. 273 f.

Most of Slavic chose the former possibility. I hold that the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic chose the latter and that this is the origin of the masculine Nsg in -*e*.

The elimination of the *jo*-stem nominative singular ending *-*e*

This brings us to the question why the *jo*-stem nominative singular as attested in Novgorod and Staraja Russa is -ь rather than **-*e*. It is easy to understand why *-*e* was replaced with -ь if one examines the system as it existed after the substitution of *-*o* with -*e* had taken place in the *o*-stems. Table 2 shows the relevant endings immediately after the substitution had taken place.

Table 2

The North Russian dialect of Common Slavic

		Nsg	Vsg	Asg
masc.	*o*-stems	-e	-e	-ъ
	jo-stems	-"e	-"e	-"ь
	u-stems	-ъ	-"u	-ъ
	i-stems	-ь	-i	-ь
neut.	*o*-stems	-o		
	jo-stems	-"e	= Nsg	= Nsg
	es-stems	-o		

In the system displayed in Table 2, the Nsg of the *jo*-stems can still be perceived as neuter. As we have seen the problem is less serious than in the case of *o*-stems, but it is undeniably present. The only ending that can reasonably be borrowed to eliminate the problem is the *i*-stem Nsg ending -ь.[18]

The absence of the First Palatalization

If it is true that in the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic the phonetically regular ending *-*o* was replaced with its *jo*-stem counterpart *-*e*, it is simplest to assume that the borrowed ending was just added to the stem shape that appeared in the original Nsg, in other words, that -*e* was added to **zamъk-*, yielding *zamъk-e.

In this context it is essential to realize that in the original *o*-stems the stem shape **zamъk-* appeared in all case forms (singular, plural and dual) with the sole exception of the Vsg (*zamъče). This is a consequence of an important fact which was established by Глускина [19] and which has become quite well known [20] since the Second Palatalization never reached North Russian, which reflects early

[18] On the theoretical problem involved see: *Vermeer W.* The mysterious North Russian. P. 289—290.

[19] *Głuskina S.* O drugiej palatizacji spółgłosek tylnojęzykowych w rosyjskich dialektach północno-zachodnich // Slavia Orientalis. 1966. N 15. P. 475—482; *Глускина С. М.* О второй палатализации заднеязычных согласных в русском языке : (На материале северо-западных говоров) // Псковские говоры 2: Тр. 2-й псковской диалектологической конференции 1964 г. Псков, 1964.

[20] *Зализняк А. А.*: 1) Новгородские берестяные грамоты с лингвистической точки зрения. С. 111—119; 2) Берестяные грамоты перед лицом традиционных постулатов славистики и vice versa // Russian Linguistics. 1991. N 15. С. 218—219.

Common Slavic *koil- 'целый' as kěl- (rather than **cěl-, as is the case elsewhere in Slavic), e. g. Nsg msc kěle (N 247). Hence the stem shape *zamьk- appeared even in such forms as the Lsg (*zamьkě), the Npl (*zamьki) and the Lpl (*zamьkěxъ), where other varieties of Slavic show the outcome of the Second Palatalization: zamьcě, zamьci, zamьcěxъ.[21]

Immediately after the introduction of the new ending the paradigm was the following: Nsg *zamьke, Vsg *zamьče, Asg *zamьkъ. Since as a consequence of the substitution the difference between Nsg and Vsg was lost in all nouns with a stem not ending in a velar (Nsg *brate = Vsg *brate), one expects either elimination or extension of the alternation found in Nsg *zamьke vs. Vsg *zamь-če. Now it is important to realize that in the specific case of North Russian, extension is extremely unlikely. Since the Second Palatalization never reached the area, the alternation was completely isolated: nothing like it existed anywhere else in the nominal system. This fact must have favoured complete elimination of the alternation over its extension to the nominative. It is well known that attestations of Vsg with retained velar have been found in Novgorod texts as early as the *Menaea* of 1095 and 1097 (*архистратиґе*, several attestations).[22] A comparable replacement did in fact occur in possessive adjectives in -inъ, where the original alternating forms like *Lučinъ were eliminated in favour of non-alternating *Lukinъ* before the onset of the written tradition (for discussion see Зализняк).[23]

A second reason for not expecting **zamьče is provided by the fact that the replacement probably started in nouns denoting inanimate objects because it is precisely in the case of such nouns that the risk of confusion with the neuter gender is most serious. Now in nouns denoting inanimate objects the vocative is rare and virtually limited to stylistically marginal types of language, e. g. fairy tales.

To a traditional Slavist with an elementary knowledge of Old Church Slavonic, forms like zamьzke simply look wrong because in Old Church Slavonic (and no doubt in most if not all contemporary Slavic dialects) sequences of velar plus front vowel were inadmissible or at best limited to marginal layers of the vocabulary of the type illustrated by such OCS examples as *кедр, аггелъ, херовимъ*. In normal varieties of Slavic the alternations involving velars were protected for quite some time by a phonotactic constraint. In early North Russian, where the Second Palatalization did not take place, this constraint did not exist. As a consequence, sequences of velars and ě or i were not only acceptable, but even frequent and if -ké/-gé/-xé/-ské and -ki/-gi/-xi/-ski were phonotactically all right, it stands to reason that -ke/-ge/-xe/-ske were acceptable, too.[24]

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[21] Of course it is not certain that in the bulk of Common Slavic the Second Palatalization had taken place by the time the masculine Nsg ending *-o started to be replaced. The point is irrelevant from the point of view argued in the present article. For a reconstruction of the sequence of events that produced the seemingly contradictory North Russian reflexes of velars affected or potentially affected by the Second or Third Palatalization see: *Vermeer W.* The rise of the North Russian dialect of «Common Slavic» // Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics. 1986. N 8. P. 503—515.

[22] *Карнѣева М.* Языкъ Служебной Минеи 1095 г. // Русскій Филологическій Вѣстникъ. 1916. № 76. P. 126, with footnot by Дурново.

[23] *Зализняк А. А.* 1) Морфологические модели *Луце—Лучинь* и *Луке—Лукин* в славянских языках // Studia Slavica (к 80-летию Самуила Борисовича Бернштейна). М., 1991. С. 156—157; 2) Лингвистические исследования. С. 226—227.

[24] On the reasons why we find unmodified stem-final velars before the Nsg in -e see in more detail: *Vermeer W.* The rise of the North Russian dialect...

Relative chronology

The chronology of the substitution that gave rise to the North Russian Nsg ending -*e* can be determined with respect to several other developments.

— It was later than the First Palatalization of velars. If it had been earlier, velars preceding the new ending would have been palatalized, yielding **zamъče and **liše, so we would have to assume that the palatalized consonants were analogically eliminated in the attested material. Moreover, since no internal Slavic dialect differences are known to have antedated the First Palatalization, it would be extremely unlikely that rise of the Nsg in -*e* would be so early.

— It was later than the loss of word-final *-*s*, which caused *-*os* and *-*o* to merge and so gave rise to the motivation for the substitution. Unfortunately the loss of word-final *-*s* is difficult to relate to other developments, although it obviously cannot have survived the series of developments known as the «law of open syllables». Kortlandt puts the loss of word-final *-*s* at the end of his «Early Middle Slavic period», i. e. the period that saw the palatalizations and the monophthongization of diphthongs; it preceded the rise of prothetic consonants, which in turn preceded the delabialization of *$u/\bar{u}$ (ultimately *ъ/y*).[25]

— It was later than the monophthongization of diphthongs, which reintroduced sequences of velar and front vowel (which had been eliminated earlier by the First Palatalization).

— It was earlier than the replacement of the phonetically regular *jo*-stem Vsg ending *-*e* with its *u*-stem equivalent. Indeed, once the Nsg in -*e* had arisen, it is unlikely that the substitution ever took place in North Russian.

— It took place before word-final *-*e* had yielded -*o* after palatal consonants (**pol'e* > *pol'o*). As a consequnce of this development *-*e* and *-*o* merged in the relevant position, so that, say, Nsg *dvoro and *koňo (<*koňe) would have had the same ending, making substitution of the one by the other pointless.

Two Common Slavic dialects

One may wonder why the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic eliminated the masculine Nsg in *-*o* in a different way than all other Common Slavic dialects. I see two possibilities, which, by the way, are not mutually exclusive and may have reinforced each other.

First, archeological facts seem to indicate that the area around Pskov was settled by carriers of a culture that has been identified as Slavic («культура длинных курганов») one or two centuries before the area between Pskov and the middle course of the Dnepr became Slavic.[26] If true, this means that for a time in the Russian North a variety of Slavic was spoken which was shielded from contact with other Slavic dialects by a wide belt of Baltic speakers. One expects that this type of Slavic became differentiated from related dialects with respect to features that are otherwise general, such as the Second Palatalization or the Nsg of the *o*-stems.

Second, a Finnic substratum may have played a role.

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[25] *Kortlandt F.* Od praindoevropskog jezika do slovenskog (fonološki razvoj) // Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku. 1989. № 22/2. S. 49—50.

[26] *Седов В. В.* Восточные славяне в VI—XIII вв. М., 1982. С. 46—58.

It is not controversial that much of the development of disintegrating Common Slavic took place while it was expanding at the expense of other languages. It follows that numerous details can only be understood by taking the properties of substratum languages into account. Occasionally even isoglosses that were present *within* a substratum language can be shown to turp up subsequently in Slavic.[27]

Since the Nsg in -*e* is attested in areas where the pre-Slavic population is known to have been entirely or predominantly Finnic, it is legitimate to look for features in Finnic which may have contributed to its rise. As it happens, the Finnic case systems differs in important respects from Slavic: it never distinguishes between nominative and vocative, whereas it distinguishes the Nsg from the Asg in all nominal inflection types.

Against this background it is instructive to take another look at Table 1. It is evident that speakers used to the Finnic case system must have resisted adoption of -ъ because they would have perceived a morphological innovation that would obliterate the difference between the Nsg and the Asg as quite unnatural. On the other hand, adoption of -*e* was facilitated by the fact that a pattern with Nsg = Vsg conformed to Finnic linguistic expectations and could therefore be extended once it had arisen in the *jo*-stems, where Nsg and Vsg both ended in *-*e* (whereas other Slavic dialects eliminated the syncretism by borrowing the *u*-stem ending). By the way, from the fact that extension of syncretism of Nsg and Vsg was not resisted in the *o*-stems it by no means follows that the Vsg was simultaneously lost in other declensions as well. Elsewhere no morphological model quite like the one provided by the *jo*-stems was around, not to speak of the fact that nothing like the problem of the Nsg in -*o* had to be faced elsewhere.

The fact that the rise of the Nsg in -*e* receives a natural explanation on the basis of a Finnic substratum constitutes evidence in favour of the hypothesis that the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic arose in a Finnic-Slavic bilingual community.

In the past this point would hardly have been worth mentioning explicitly. However, in recent years the dialects where the Nsg in -*e* is attested have come to be interpreted by some scholars as the immediate descendants of the tribal dialect of the northern *Кривичи* (see in particular Николаев).[28] This idea is held to imply in turn that the Common Slavic dialect which innovated by introducing the Nsg in -*e* arose on the basis of a Baltic substratum and reached the Novgorod area as a consequence of a secondary expansion. As for the *Слове-не,* the tribe that is primarily associated with the Novgorod area, their original dialect, which it is reasonable to assume developed on a Finnic substratum, is held to have been much closer related to the other East Slavic dialects, judging by its descendants, which are attested mainly to the east of Novgorod.

It is not the place here for a detailed discussion of Николаев's theory. However, assuming for the moment that the theory is basically correct, it is far

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[27] *Vermeer W.* Traces of an early Romance isogloss in Western Balkan Slavic // Slavistična Revija.

[28] *Николаев С. Л.:* 1) Следы особенностей восточнославянских племенных диалектов в современных великорусских говорах. 1: Кривичи // Балто-славянские исследования. 1986. С. 115—154; 2) Следы особенностей восточно-славянских племенных диалектов в современных великорусских говорах 1: Кри-вичи (окончание) // Балто-славянские исследования. 1987. С. 187—225; 3) К ис-тории племенного диалекта кривичей // Советское славяноведение. 1990. № 4. С. 54—63.

from necessarily the case that the language of the northern branch of the Кри-вичи, which in historical times is linked primarily with Pskov and the Pskovščina, took shape without linguistic influence from the Finnic substratum, which is amply attested in the area.

Further morphological substitutions

The Nsg ending was not the only ending the *o*-stems borrowed from the *jo*-stems.

It has become clear that in the earliest attested language of Novgorod and Staraja Russa the *o*-stem Apl ending was -*ě* rather than the phonetically regular ending *-*y, in other words, that in the case of the Apl, too, the original *jo*-stem ending found its way into the *o*-stems.[29] Why did this happen?

One of the awkward features of the late Common Slavic *o*-stem paradigm is the coalescence of Apl and Ipl in -*y* as in Old Church Slavonic Apl *рабы* = Ipl *рабы*. Very few living varieties of Slavic have retained this state of affairs unchanged. Whereas most systems have eliminated the instrumental ending, the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic (or its Novgorod descendant) eliminated the accusative ending by replacing it with the corresponding *jo*-stem ending, producing Apl -*ě* opposed to Ipl -*y*. It is likely that this happened during the period when the Nsg of both *o*- and *jo*-stems was -*e* because at that stage the relationship between *o*- and *jo*-stems was particularly close.

In other early varieties of Slavic, introducing the *jo*-stem Apl ending into the *o*-stems did not offer an adequate solution because there sequences of velar plus front vowel were phonotactically impossible, which would have prevented the numerous *o*-stems with stems in velars from carrying out the innovation (Apl ****zamъkě* or —South Slavic —**zamъkę were impossible*).

This substitution had important consequences for the nominal inflexion of the Novgorod dialect.

The *o*- and *jo*-stem Apl was one of a small set of case endings where a «hard» ending -*y* corresponded with a «soft» ending -*ě*. The other instances were the Gsg and NApl of the *ā*-stems (**ženy* vs. **dušě*), where the correspondence of -*y* with -*ě* was now isolated. It is only natural that the *ā*-stems, too, now started to generalize -*ě*. In the language of the earliest Novgorod birchbark texts generalization of -*ě* in the *ā*-stems has been carried through completely, with the proviso that -*y* was still optinally possible in the NApl, unless that form was preceded by a numeral.

These substitutions had two important consequences in their turn.

1. The substitution of Gsg -*y* with -*ě* caused the distinction between Gsg and DLsg to be lost in the *ā*-stems. Syncretism of the two case forms was already a feature of the *i*-stems, most of which were feminine. This gave rise to a tendecy towards the loss of the distinction also in the *jā*-stems on the one hand and in feminine pronouns and adjectives on the other. In the language reflected in the earliest Novgorod and Staraja Russa texts the *jā*-stems had imported the *ā*-stem Dsg ending -*ě* before the onset of the historical period; in the pronoun and the adjective the -*ě* of the Gsg was ousted by the **-i* (probably >/-j/) of the Dsg, a process that is taking place in the earliest texts.

2. The substitution of NApl -*y* with -*ě* caused the formal distinction between NApl and NAdu to be lost in the *ā*-stems. This gave rise to a tendency towards

[29] *Зализняк А. А.* Лингвистические исследования... С. 218—219.

further loss of the distinction between plural and dual in the nominative/accusative. In the neuter *o*-stems, which like the *ā*-stems originally had a NAdu in *-ě*, the ending was replaced with the plural ending *-a*. On birchbark the original ending *-ě* is not attested at all, whereas the earliest attestation of *-a* can be dated to the second half of the twelfth century: *дъва лѣта* (N 113).[30]

All this illustrates that the most important morphological innovations attested in the nominal system reflected in the oldest vernacular material from Novgorod and Staraja Russa are mutually connected and can be explained on the basis of the structural characteristics of the North Russian dialect of Common Slavic.

North Russian vs. Slovene/Serbo-Croat

Зализняк has repeatedly drawn attention to the striking resemblance between the earliest Novgorod dialect and the state of affairs found in Serbo-Croat and Slovene, where we find such forms as Apl *zube*, Gsg/NApl *ruke*, with the original endings of the soft stems.[31] However, if one takes a closer look at the South Slavic facts it turns out that the resemblance is superficial and that a historical connection is unlikely.

To begin with, many of the Čakavian dialects spoken around Rijeka have retained the reflexes of the original hard endings. In Omišalj (Krk) the Proto-Slavic distribution has been ratained without major changes, e. g. Gsg or NApl *glavi, brazdi, deski, glavi, gredi, jagodi, kozi* (< -y) vs. *čapje, duše, jamice, kože* (< -ę). As for the continuations of the masculine Apl, which is also used as Npl, cf. such examples as *kamiki, kjini, kjuni* vs. *kjuče, konce, konje, kraje*.[32] Elsewhere the original hard endings have been extended or even generalized, as in Orlec (Cres), where we find not only *kobili, kozi, kravi*, but also *suši, duši, zemji;* *-e* is limited to nouns in *-ica* and part of the nouns in *-ca*, e. g. *šenice, divojčice, blazince* 'подушечка'; the masculine ending *-e* has been entirely eliminated (for further examples and discussion of the synchronic rules).[33] There are countless local differences. In the dialects spoken around the town of Žminj in central Istria, the soft ending *-e* has been entirely eliminated in the Gsg, but has been retained in the NApl not only in nouns in *-ica* (as in Orlec), but also in those in *-inja* and *-ija* and has even been extended to nouns in *-ina* (for discussion and further examples).[34] Retention or generalization of the hard endings is normal in the North West Čakavian dialects of Istria, Krk and Cres-

[30] Там же. С. 219—220.

[31] Там же. С. 218, 219.

[32] My material. Indications of stress and quantity (which are not relevant in the present context) have been omitted. Among the masculines the original nominative is continued only by nouns denoting persons (for the details see: *Vermeer W.* Opozicija tipa «živo/neživo» u množini u jednom čakavskom sistemu (Omišalj) // Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukone dane: Referati i saopštenja. S. 275—288; dialect see also: *Vermeer W.* Die Konjugation in der nordwestčakavischen Mundart Omišaljs // Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics. 1980. N 1. P. 439—472.

[33] *Houtzagers H. P.* The Čakavian dialect of Orlec on the island of Cres // Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics. Amsterdam; Rodopi. 1985. P. 52—56, 70.

[34] *Kalsbeek J.* The Čakavian dialect of Zminjski Orbaniči in Istria (Forthcoming). Amsterdam; Atlanta; Rodopi. Ch. 2.

Lošinj and is also attested in some of the coastal dialects (e. g. Selce near Novi).[35]

Furthermore, although everywhere outside North West Čakavian the soft endings have been generalized in the $\bar{a}$-stems, many Central Čakavian dialects have generalized the hard Apl ending $-i < -y$, so that we find such forms as Apl *zubi* alongside Gsg *koze,* Npl *sestre,* Apl *ruke* [36] (the transcription has been simplified and accent symbols have been omitted).

In other words: generalization of the soft endings as found in the standard languages is very far from being common Slovene/Serbo-Croat; moreover, whereas in the case of the $\bar{a}$-stem Gsg/NApl retention of the hard ending $-i$ is limited to North West Čakavian, which is marginal with respect to both Slovene and the remainder of Serbo-Croat, in the case of o-stem Apl retention of $-i$ is also widespread in Central Čakavian, which is not at all a marginal dialect area and which takes part in many innovations that are otherwise widespread in Serbo-Croat and/or Slovene. This is reverse of what we find in Novgorod, where the $\bar{a}$-stem NApl is the last preserve of the original ending.

These facts diminish the attractiveness of the idea that there is a direct historical connection between Novgorod on the one hand and Slovene/Serbo-Croat on the other. The retention of the hard endings in part of Serbo-Croat strongly suggests that the generalization was not carried to the Balkans by the original settlers. Moreover, in Novgorod the generalization seems to have started in the $\bar{a}$-stem Apl, whereas in Slovene/Serbo-Croat it seems to have started in the $\bar{a}$-stems, as witnessed by the widespread retention of the reflex of the o-stem Apl ending *-y* in dialects that have lost the $\bar{a}$-stem Gsg/NApl *-y*. This strongly suggests that the mechanism that produced the generalization of the soft endings was different in the two dialect areas.[37]

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[35] On North West Čakavian see further: *Vermeer W.* On the principal sources for the study of Čakavian dialects with neocircumflex in adjectives and *e*-presents // Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics. 1982. N 2. P. 279—340.

[36] *Houtzagers H. P.* On the phonology and morphology of the Čakavian dialects spoken on the island of Pag // Studies in Slavic and general Linguistics. 1987. N 10. P. 65—90.

[37] The resulting pattern, with Nsg in *-a* and Gsg/NApl in *-e* looks strikingly Latin, cf. still modern Rumanian NAsg *casa* 'дом' vs. GDsg/NApl *case*. I think it likely that the generalization of the soft endings started in Serbo-Croat in an area where interaction with the local Romance dialect was strong and where nasality was lost relatively early. Subsequently the generalization spread along the rivers (in particular the Sava) to areas where nasality was still retained (in particular Slovene, which retained the nasal vowels for a long time, cf. the reconstruction of the early development of the Slovene vowel systems in Vermeer 1982b). North West Čakavian, which was spoken in an area that was isolated from both a Serbo-Croat and a Slovene point of view, was not affected by these developments.