

COMMON SLOVENE AND COMMON SLAVIC

Če nam praslovanščina pomeni zaporedne stopnje jezika, razvijajočega se od praslovanškega indoevropskega satemskega narečja v vrsti dogajanj (kakor progresivna in regresivna palatalizacija, monoftongizacija, prilagoditev samoglasnikov za palatalnimi soglasniki, oblikoslovne prilagoditve) do srednje praslovanščine etimoloških obrazcev in poznoobčeslovanških narečij, potrjenih v stari cerkveni slovanščini in zgodnji vzhodni slovanščini, potem praslovenski jezik lahko označimo kot stanje jezika, ki so ga govorile alpske in panonske skupnosti v 10. do 12. stoletju. To je hkrati pozno stanje praslovanščine in začetna stopnja novega jezika, iz katerega so se razvila vsa poznejša slovenska narečja.

If we view *Common Slavic* as the successive stages of language evolving from a Pre-Slavic Indo-European satem dialect by a series of processes (such as progressive and regressive palatalization, monophthongization, adjustment of vowels after palatal consonants; morphological adjustments) to the Middle Common Slavic of etymological formulas and the Late Common Slavic dialects attested in Old Church Slavonic and early East Slavic, then *Common Slovene* can be defined as an *état de langue* spoken by Alpine and Pannonian communities in the 10th-11th centuries. It is both a late stage of Common Slavic and the initial stage from which all subsequent Slovene dialects developed.

The definition of the term *Common Slavic* varies widely in accord with the diverging views of scholars about the origins of the Slavic languages and, indeed, the ethnogenesis of the Slavs.¹ Any definition takes for granted that modern Slavic languages indeed go back to a common base or *état de langue*, and that the regional dialects of each language in turn go back to a single hypothetical system that is related in specifiable ways to Common Slavic. Similarly, scholars have found it possible to agree that the extraordinary variety of phonological and morphological differences to be found in the manifold Slovene dialects can be meaningfully discussed in terms of a common initial system and a series of essentially regular developments. Let us call this initial point of departure *Common Slovene*. Its phonological structure has recently been set forth explicitly by Logar, and a similar morphological system could easily be elaborated. What then is the relationship of Common Slavic and Common Slovene?

An examination of the oldest surviving texts allows us to establish two systems, Old Church Slavonic (which we may date c950–c1060 and localize to the lands of the First Bulgarian Empire), and the early written language of Rus' c1050–c1200. The differences between OCS and early Russian (as I call the East Slavic of Rus' up to about 1300) are indeed striking, yet they are in fact neither numerous nor decisive. It turns out that any sample of a thousand words or more shares at least 85% of the phonological, morphological, and syntactical units.² In view of the

¹ The relationship of the prefix *Proto-* to *Common* is a further possible complication, as Heming Andersen's thoughtful discussion explores in depth. For English, I favor 'Common' but for German and Slavic I rather prefer *Ur-*, *pra-*, and I find *Pre-Slavic* a useful way around taking a stand about the exact content of 'Balto-Slavic'. What is important is that we all try to define our terms and stick to the definition at least within a single paper!

² Cf. Lunt 1987b. My assumptions, arguments, and conclusions on many of these points are to be found in Lunt 1981, 1984 and 1985.

predominance of shared elements, we may regard the two systems, despite the difference in time and space, as belonging to one system: let us call it Late Common Slavic (LCoS), with a SouthEastern dialect (OCS) and an Eastern dialect (Early Rusian).³ Of crucial importance is that they still contrast the vowels *ъ*, *ь*, and *ě* to each other and to six other oral vowels (*i y u e o a*). The non-shared features that define the contrasting dialects may be specified in terms of hypothetical earlier formulas of Middle Common Slavic (MCoS), chiefly the nasal vowels (*ę ǫ* – still present in OCS), the liquid diphthongs (**tert *tort *telt *tolt; *tbrt *tbrt *tblt *tblt*), and the two-unit sequences **tj* and **dj*. Middle Common Slavic is thus the stage represented in most etymological dictionaries, a stage that assumes that the progressive and regressive palatizations of velars have taken place, that oral diphthongs have become monophthongs (**ou > *u; *ei > *i; *ai > *ě*).

Middle Common Slavic is very close to actual OCS and early Rusian written words, but can we say anything about the time(s) and place(s) it might have been a living system? On this evidence we might conclude that MCoS could have been spoken in the Bulgarian lands as late as 800 and in Rus' as late as 900. What about the Alpine and Pannonian areas, where Slavs had appeared as early as 550?

The major difference between MCoS and early Common Slovene vowels are few but crucial. The two vowel-pairs *i/y* and *ь/ъ* have become simply *i* and *ə*. Notice, however, that the same changes are shared by the initial stage posited by Brozović and Ivić for all Serbo-Croatian dialects. The quite different-looking vowel tables in the Logar and Brozović–Ivić systems (Ivić 29, 221) is a practical matter of what the authors wish readers to focus on. We must assume a complex interplay of long and short vowels and tonal contrasts for all dialects of Middle or Late CoS; what is distinctive in the Pannonian and Alpine zones is that the development of vowel quality is inseparably bound up with vowel length, further influenced by accentual characteristics. Logar therefore gives his vowels twice, emphasizing that each of the nine units occurs long and short. In broader terms, then, the segmental vowels of SouthWest Slavic differ from those of all other regions; this array defines the initial stage for further regional developments to Slovenian and to major kaj-, ča-, and štokavski dialect groups, and it sets SW apart from both the SouthEast (OCS > Bulgarian and Macedonian) and the NorthWest and the East.

Here are the correspondences of the vowels of early SouthWest Slavic to OCS, which in these items does not differ from Middle Common Slavic,⁴ and to Common East Slavic = E[arly] R[usian].

³ Keep in mind that the linguistic system of any community is the result of development from a previous stage, possibly still present in the speech of the oldest speakers, and even more probably at least in their memories. It is also, however, the point of departure for future linguistic developments. Thus OCS is representative of a broad regional Late CoSl dialect and at the same time the initial system from which all modern Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects have developed; early East Slavic (which I define by the neologism Rusian) is both eastern LCoSl dialect and the initial system for Ukrainian, Belorussian, and (Great) Russian. Linguistic change does not proceed at the same rate in all areas; here we allow that in the east LCoSl survived for several generations after it had given way to an initial Common Bulgaro-Macedonian system in the southeastern part of Slavdom.

⁴ The eight liquid diphthongs of MCoS constituted a vocalic sub-system, but the changes that produced OCS eliminated these sequences from the new system in a way generally shared by SW dialects; they need not be treated here. (Cf. Lunt 1962).

SW	<i>i</i>		ǝ		<i>e</i>	<i>ě</i>	<i>ę</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>o</i>	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>u</i>	[<i>ɔ</i>]	[<i>u</i>]
OCS	<i>i</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>ь</i>	<i>ѣ</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ě</i>	<i>ę</i>	(<i>ä</i>)	<i>a</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>u</i>	(<i>ǝ</i>)	(<i>ü</i>)
ER	<i>i</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>ь</i>	<i>ѣ</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ě</i>	<i>ä</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>		<i>ü</i>		

The *ä*, *ü* and *ǝ* were surely not independent units in MCoS and OCS, but are posited as important positional variants that played a role in the development of Russian and Czech-Slovak; for early SW Slavic they merged with *a*, *u* and *ɔ*, respectively.⁵

Subsequent developments in local dialects are sensitive to the initial conditions inherent within the framework of this phonological system. In particular, the allophonic characteristics of the *jers*, the nasal vowels, and **ě* differed regionally and determined the divergent paths that emerged. The *ě* of OCS was surely low, and we must assume that it was also low not only in the NorthWest (i.e. Lechitic dialects, as has long been recognized), but also in parts of the SouthWest, as Rigler showed so elegantly (1963). In contrast, for most of the SouthWest, the central West (Czech-Slovak) and Rus' – which is to say most of Slavdom – it was relatively high. What is important for the period to about 1100 is that /*ě*/ remained a distinct unit in all dialects.⁶

The consonantal systems of OCS and hypothetical Alpine Slavic of c900 were almost identical. Both had *p b t d k g*, *s z š ž ś ź x*, *c č*, *m n l r*, palatal *ń l' r'*, *w* and *j*.⁷

The major contrast between OCS and the South Slavic dialects to the north and west of Šar Planina lies in the OCS two-segment groups conventionally spelled *urr* and *жд*, which function phonotactically as palatal units. In part they go back to earlier **sk*/**zg* before **j* or front vowel and come from clusters **šč*/*žž* which are shared by all late MCoS dialects (e.g. ER *iščete* vs. OCS *ištete* 'you seek', inf. *iskati*). More important are the instances like ER *riščete* vs. OCS *rištete* 'you run' inf. *ristati* or ER *dъžъь* vs. OCS *dъždъ* 'rain', to be traced back to MCoS **stj*/**zdj*. Such cases are connected with the most significant local southeastern development that sets OCS apart from the rest of the Slavic world, namely that **tj*/**dj* remained bisegmental, probably by way of an intermediate stage *šk*/**žg*. The former **stj*/**zdj*

⁵ The prosodic features of SW Slavic most probably began to differentiate regionally very early; I will not discuss them here.

⁶ For problems concerning variant relationships of *ě* to *a* in Late ComSl dialects, see Lunt 1981a, 53–65. For SW LCoSl we assume the morphophonemic alternations labelled 'ě primum' or {*ě/a*} and 'ě secundum' or {*ě/i*}. On the other hand, we posit a nasal vowel for {*y/ę*} where North Slavic has {*y/ě*} with 'ě tertium'.

⁷ The unit /*s*/ is posited for the pronominal roots /*s*-/ 'this' and (/wьs-/'all', which are historically obscure, cf. Lunt 1981 36–7 and 1987 §6.2; *s* surely disappeared early in SW. An OCS isogloss separates a variant system with an affricate *ž* from one with the continuant *ž* (*кънѣжи тьножи* vs. *кънѣжи тьножи*). Although possibly *ž* existed on the southern and perhaps southwestern edge of present-day Yugoslav Macedonia, and we might assume /*ž*/ in the corresponding morphemes of SW Slavic at the earliest stage, there seems to be no reason to posit it for a period after c1000. The glide /w/ is traditionally written *v* (cyr. в), except in the Slovenian scholarly tradition where *w* is normal.

may have yielded three-unit **ššk/*žžg*, that merged with the two-unit reflexes both of **skj/*zgj* and **tj/*dj*.⁸

The bisegmental sequences **tj/*dj* everywhere but in the SE became single units, which we may represent conventionally as **k/*g*;⁹ initially in the SW the situation remained, but in the Alpine and Pannonian areas **k* affricated to **č*, while **g* lenited to **j*. Concomitantly, the initial continuant of **stj/*zdj* assimilated to the palatal position, yielding **šk/*žg*, sequences that have evolved differently in different areas. Although in attested Slovene and most of kajkavski the bisegmental MCoSl **tj/*dj* are reflected as the single segments *č* and *j*, we may hypothesize that at first all of SouthWest Slavic surely had palatal stops *k* and *g*, that in some dialects the offglide characteristic of the *č/dj* of the modern SC standard language developed early. The table below shows the correspondences of OCS and MCoS with 'Sln' (and ad hoc designation for early Slovene plus kajkavski) and 'SC' (standing for the rest of SW Slavic).

OCS	<i>c</i>	<i>št</i>		<i>ž/z</i>	<i>žd</i>	
MCoS	<i>c</i>	<i>tj</i>	<i>šč</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>dj</i>	<i>žž</i>
"SC"	<i>c</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>šč</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>žž</i>
"Sln"	<i>c</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>šč</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>žž</i>
CzSl	<i>c</i>		<i>šč</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>ž/z</i>	<i>žž</i>

My point in restating all this familiar material is to focus on the similarities, the samenesses, in order to insist that as late as 900 the isoglosses crisscrossing the Slavic world were utterly insufficient to mark any but the first, still minor, differences that eventually would deepen and multiply. Rigler's discussion of the relations between Slovene and kajkavski (esp. 1978) is of course another way of insisting on the overwhelming unity of the speech of communities in the area he treats. I wish only to emphasize that if we include ALL of Slavdom c900, the picture remains one of a unity that seems incompatible with the notion that Slavs had been spread out from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Aegean for three centuries. It seems to contradict the principle championed by Ramovš, when he speaks eloquently of linguistic variation in time, space, and in particular within each community, emphasizing that change is also constantly present (18): variations and differences are the rule. In fact, he carefully demonstrates that a series of place-names and other items prove that the earliest Slavs to arrive in the lands later called Slovenian had a phonological system virtually identical with MCoS.

⁸ In synchronic morphophonemic terms, OCS *št* alternates with the sequences *sk* and *st* as well as the unit *k*; in SW, on the other hand, *šč* (alternating with *sk*) is distinct from *šk* (~ *st*) and *k* (~ *t*). – Logar and Brozović–Ivić use the symbol *t'* (and *d'*), emphasizing both the historical origin and synchronic morphophonemic relationship. I choose rather *k* and *g* to denote the phonetic quality I find more plausible. What is important is that we agree that there was a 'not-/t/ not-/k/' stop in these systems that resulted from bisegmental **tj*.

⁹ New evidence from the Pskov dialects suggests that this *k/g* remained untouched in some northern areas, later to be displaced in most words by subsequent phonological developments, cf. Živov 152.

The only trace of an isogloss that might be older than the reflexes of **tj/*dj* is the Novgorod evidence that the second regressive palatalization did not occur in that peripheral region, so that the roots **kěl-* 'whole' and **kěv-* 'tube, cylinder' show unshifted **k* (cf. Sln *cel, cev*), see Zaliznjak. We know from early loans into SW that this last palatalization process of Common Slavic applied to place-names encountered by the early Slavs who arrived in the Dubrovnik area (cf. *Cavtat* < **сѣвѣтат-* < Dalm. **kivitat-*) and perhaps in the Alpine zone (*Celje* < *Celeiae*). We can only assume that the rule did not apply to the northern type(s) of dialect spoken by the immediate ancestors of the Slověni¹⁰ who in the late 800s moved into the region of Lake Il'men, partly from the southwest and partly, it would seem, via the Baltic and the river routes.¹¹

The traditional trichotomy of West, East, and South Slavs, which is reasonably valid for recent centuries and has generally been attributed to the distant past on the basis of the 6th-century historian Jordanes and even more ancient sources, is now gradually being abandoned by archeologists (cf. Váňa). For language, as Pohl has recently argued in these pages, it is surely true that a tripartite (or more complex) division can be justified only on the basis of changes that can be no older than the 900s, long after settlement south of the Danube. For the late 900s we can read the dim outlines of Common Slovene into the skimpy evidence of the Freising texts.

For the broader SW region, we conclude that the coalescence of **i/*y* in *i* and **ь/*ѣ* in *ə* surely was complete in the east (Dubrovnik, Bosnia, Raška) by c1180, as is shown by the erratic use of the letters *и/ы* and the exclusive *ь* of attested texts from 1186 on, and about the same time in Croatian lands from which glagolitic inscriptions have survived. The inconsistent orthography of the three Freising texts, datable to c990, points to a somewhat earlier date for the changes in the Alpine zone, although it might be argued that *y* was still distinct from *i* in certain positions. In any case, it is reasonably certain that the jer-shift (i.e. the complex process whereby the jers were lost in 'weak' position and retained, surely with modified phonetic value, in 'strong position') had been completed, and that the typically Slavic modern structural feature – morphemes containing a vowel-zero unit – was present in a form appropriate for the local dialects.¹² Here the equivocal

¹⁰ For the form, see Lunt 1985a; the desinence *-i* is affirmed by OCS acrostics, see Попов 143.

¹¹ On the chronological priority of the progressive palatalization (which produced *отѣць* and *кнѣзь* but left *рѣка* and *снѣгъ* in Novgorod as in the rest of Rus' – and general Slavdom), see Lunt 1981 and 1987; more discussion of the evidence from the Novgorod birchbark *gramoty*, Lunt 1989.

¹² It appears that early Common Slavic evolved a fundamental structural requirement that every word (not counting a few conjunctions and other 'grammatical' lexemes) must be built on a root of the shape ((C)V)C. Slavic roots must end in a consonant: only pronouns may consist of a single consonant (*t-* 'that', *ov-* 'sheep', *al-* 'crimson', *or-* 'plow'), but the most common roots fit the CVC pattern. Roots with more than one vowel are exceptional. Older apophonic relationships were reinterpreted in Slavic, and after the jer-shift further reinterpretation became common. On the whole, however, the vowel-zero unit plays an important role in the morphology of most Slavic dialects. Sln. *br-a-ti ber-e* is to be interpreted as {b#r} ~ {ber} (with alternate symbolism such as {bьr} according to the investigators' taste) as *san sna* is to be regarded as containing the morpheme {s#n/sьn-}. In terms of both surface phonetics and underlying morphophonemic structure the jer-shift is a decisive turning-point resulting in new local systems that in turn determined divergent developments leading to really new and different dialect groups.

data may permit us to conjecture that the written words in their inconsistent spellings represent an informal or allegro register, and speculate that a fuller formal or lento style may still have existed – a style more commensurate with the glagolitic spelling of the Kiev Folia.¹³ The sparse data of this controversial manuscript provides remarkably little evidence for clear localization. Indeed, there is no way to disprove a claim that it is a copy of a 'Slovenian' text of c900: we need only to posit that the coalescence of **y > i* and **ь/*ѣ > ə* took place during the tenth century, after the KF text was first composed.

I have argued (1985a, 1985b) that the apparently homogeneous linguistic landscape of Slavdom as late as 900 – an apparent contradiction of the axiom that language constantly changes – resulted chiefly from dialect levelling in the process of Slavic ethnogenesis in the 400s and 500s, when the groups we can call Slavs were swept up in the turmoil of the Avar invasions and rapidly spread over much of the vast area they later continued to dominate. Not infrequently a dialect spoken by a migrant group either still on the move or else settled in a new region seems to be relatively resistant to change for some generations (e.g. the early Greek colonial centers). From the initial arrival of the Slavs south and west of the Danube c600 to the emergence of important Slavic leaders and the beginnings of states in the 800s, Middle Common Slavic remained remarkably stable. The divisions that developed from that time on (on the basis of **tj/*dj*, the nasal and liquid diphthongs) have little or nothing to do with differences that may have existed in the 500s.¹⁴ The real individuality of Slavs as opposed to Balts and other neighbors is not ancient; rather, as the Czech archeologist Váňa puts it (26), the Slavs 'appear on the scene after the middle of the first millenium A.D.

Speculation aside, we must be content with the evidence that dictates the following conclusion: a feature-by-feature comparison of Common Slovenian, presumably a 9th-10th century system, with ALL other Slavic dialects of the time (and particularly those of regions now in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia) would show that the percentage of shared elements far outweighed the points of significant contrast.

This in turn suggests that as we move back in time and reduce the contrasts to reveal the older shared elements (**tj/*dj*, liquid diphthongs, oral diphthongs, unshifted velars, etc.), a system we can call Slavic, distinctively opposed to Baltic, cannot have existed for long before 500. By that remote date we are so far from the systematic evidence of texts and attested dialects that speculation takes on a very different character. It seems safe to say, however, that the sort of layers that reach far back into earlier epochs, of the type recently proposed by Martynov in these pages, seems implausible indeed. A large portion of the lexicon, along with nearly

¹³ As a typological parallel for the coexistence of a fuller style with more syllables in many words and a more rapid style with many deletions, see Goddard's remarks on 20th-century Fox, an Algonquian language.

¹⁴ As for prosodic features V. A. Dybo, in a lecture at Harvard in December 1988, presented evidence linking certain Alpine and Pannonian subsystems with farflung cognates in the rest of Slavdom, quite unrelated to the familiar isoglosses that define phonological and morphological differences and more like the mosaic patterns known from lexical isoglosses. It is to be hoped that his evidence and conclusions will be published soon.

all of the phonological and morphological elements of attested OCS and early East Slavic and hypothetical Common Slovene, can be naturally and systematically accounted for by the hypothesis that Common Slavic came into existence during the period from 300 to c550. Since this hypothesis nicely fits the evidence of archeology and the vague bits of evidence from contemporary writers, it constitutes a plausibly firm basis for further research.

In sum, it appears fully plausible that the initial centuries of Slavic occupation of the southwest, from the Danube and the Friulian region down the Adriatic coast and east to the Aegean, showed only a slow pace of linguistic change from the late 500s through the 800s. The work of the Moravian mission has preserved for us a broad sample of a SouthEastern Late Common Slavic dialect in great linguistic detail, with unmistakable evidence of the *jer*-shift in the late 10th and the 11th centuries. The Freising texts allow us to hypothesize that the earliest of these fundamental structural changes began in the Alpine and Pannonian zones. Since almost identical structural conditions existed elsewhere in the Slavic world, it is not surprising that the *jer*-shift spread during succeeding generations to the Baltic and the Black Sea, reaching the peripheral Novgorod region, in all probability, at the beginning of the 1100s.¹⁵ In the western SouthWest, as the former speakers of Romance dialects were assimilated, as new sociopolitical arrangements were made and the trauma of the Magyar invasion was dealt with, a particular dialect grouping we call Common Slovene developed during the 900s – at the same time it is a variant of Late Common Slavic. In the 11th and 12th centuries, as the influence of continuing contact with the everencroaching Bavarians and with Romance-speakers insistently demanded various sorts of adaptation, the Slavs of the Alpine, Pannonian, and Dalmatian regions slowly developed the dialects we now can meaningfully refer to as Slovene, Kajkavski, and Čakavski.

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¹⁵ The evidence of such manuscripts as the Ostromir Gospel of 1056, as well as that of the birchbark *gramoty* can be read as showing an advanced or even completed stage of this process; I maintain that to insist that the process had been completed in Rus' by 1050 requires us to posit a network of highly efficient schools and a large cadre of well-educated bookmen that – despite scholarly myths that travel from textbook to textbook – is not justified from any source whatsoever, cf. Lunt 1988a.

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POVZETEK

Pisno pričevanje stare cerkvene slovanščine, okrog 950 do okrog 1060, razodeva jezikovni sestav, ki ga imenujemo južnovzhodno narečje pozne praslovanščine, in podatki iz zgodnje rusovščine, od okrog 1050 do okrog 1200, kažejo nekoliko različno narečje istega jezika. Obema je skupno vsaj 85% fonoloških, oblikoslovnih, skladenjskih in verjetno besedijskih sestavin. Razločki vzbujajo pozornost, vendar so malo pomembni glede na splošno pomembnost sestavov in glede njihovih učinkov na sporočanje. Brižinski rokopisi, okrog 990, in primerjava s pisnimi gradivi iz Dalmacije, Dubrovnika in Raške po l. 1180 nam dovoljujejo domnevati podroben sestav, ki ga imenujemo jugozahodna pozna praslovanščina iz okrog l. 900, in tudi (s pomočjo notranje rekonstrukcije iz modernih slovenskih in kajkavskih narečij) podroben razvoj iz 10. stoletja, ki ga lahko imenujemo praslovenski. Te podmene imajo določene posledice, in sicer s sklepom, da je bila srednja praslovanščina, ki v večini svojih značilnosti ustreza stari cerkveni slovanščini razen v nekaterih standardnih etimoloških vzorcih (npr. **tj/*dj*, jezičniški dvoglasniki, itd), opazno dolgega življenja, od pribl. 600 do okrog 850, razvijajoč se zatem v rahlo razločujoča se narečja pozne praslovanščine, ki so se hitreje razvijala na alpskih in panonskih področjih ter v Makedoniji kakor v Rusiji. Zgodnjo praslovanščino je treba pripisovati dobi ne pred 200 let po Kristusu, ko se je etnogeneza Slovanov resno začela.