XV.—AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN SOME PECULIARITIES OF MODERN RUSSIAN BY COMPARISON WITH ITS EARLIER FORMS, AND WITH OTHER SLAVONIC LANGUAGES. By W. R. MORFILL, M.A.

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My object in the following short and somewhat rambling paper, is to comment on a few points in Russian phonetics and word-formation, which can only be explained by a study of the early documents of the language. The points to which I desire to call attention will be recognized as presenting difficulties by those who have made a study of the language.

(1) The beginner is apt to be embarrassed by the difficulty that the genitive case of the adjective and pronoun, *aro* (*ago*), *ero* (*ego*), is pronounced *ava*, *evó*, and when *a* is accented, *ova*, thus *добрый* (*dobrii*) ‘good,’ gen. *доброу* (*dobrago*), pronounced *dobrava*. *дурной* (*durnoi*) ‘bad,’ gen. *дурнаго* (*durnago*), pronounced *durnóva*. In the latter case some authors write *oro* (*ogo*). Prof. Malinowski, in an article in Kuhn’s *Beiträge*, traces the origin of this to the *в* in the possessive adjective, thus *оцовъ* (*otsov*) ‘belonging to a father,’ gen. *оцова* (*otsova*). Prof. Sobolevski, in his *Лекции по Истории Русскаго Языка* (Lectures on the History of the Russian Language), thinks that it arose as follows: the *г* (*g*) in these genitive cases was pronounced *h*, as it still is in some Russian words, thus *хорошаро* (*khoroshago*), *доброу* (*dobrago*), *моеро* (*moego*), were at one time pronounced *kharashaha*,

dobraha, moyehó; but in the course of time the sound of *h* was lost, and there was a hiatus. This hiatus, according to a law of the Slavonic languages, instances of which we are continually finding, was supplied by the letter *в* (pronounced *v*). Thus they became pronounced as if written *хорошово* (*khoro-shovo*), *доброво* (*dobrovo*). Instances of this spelling are found in Old Russian: thus in an inscription on a cross of the date 1434 we read: *бoгoлѣпoвo прeобрaзжeнiя* (*bogoliepovo preobrazheniya*) 'the transfiguration of the one agreeable to God.' So also in the Laurentian Codex of the Old Chronicle ascribed to the monk Nestor we get *пoвoсты* (*porosti*) for *погосты* (*pogosti*) 'cemeteries,' and in some of the Russian dialects we find *кoвдa* (*korda*) for *кoгдa* (*kogda*), *тoвдa* (*torda*) for *тoгдa* (*togda*), etc.

(2) Some Russian nouns ending in *ъ* (*ǔ*), *ь* (*i*) and *o* form their N., G. and D. plural in *ья* (*ya*), *ьевъ* (*yev*), *ямъ* (*yam*), as:

братъ (*brat*) *братья* (*bratya*), *братьевъ* (*bratyev*) 'brother.'

стулъ (*stul*), *стулья* (*stulya*) 'a chair.'

зять (*zyat*), *зятья* (*zyatya*) 'son-in-law.'

The history of these forms is illustrated by Old Slavonic, where the plural frequently became a collective noun, and was of the feminine gender; thus O.S. *братия* (*bratiya*), fem. 'brothers' (collectively). The same form is seen in modern Serbian.

(3) After the numerals *два* (*dva*), *три* (*tri*), *четыре* (*chetire*), and also *оба* (*oba*), f. *обѣ* (*obé*), both, in the case of masculine nouns, the suffix *-a* is added if the noun is in the nominative or accusative case. This is often wrongly explained as a genitive case; it is however the remains of a dual form, and we shall find that if an adjective is used, it is put in the nominative or accusative plural, as *первыя два большіе стола* (*pervye dva bolshie stola*) 'the first two large tables'; a practice, however, seems coming in of using sometimes a genitive plural from false analogy, as *два другихъ сочиненія* (*dva drugikh sochineniya*) 'two other works.' In all other in-

stances, except the nominative or accusative, the numeral is in the same case as the substantive, and is treated as an adjective, as *четырёх кораблях военных* (*chettyom korablyam voennim*) 'to four ships of war.'

(4) One of the most striking features in Russian is the extreme poverty of the tense-system. This, in the modern state of the language is restricted to a single past tense, which is really a participle; according to Leskien it was originally a *nomen agentis*, and has gender; thus we say *был* (*bit*) 'he was,' *была* (*bita*) 'she was,' *было* (*bito*) 'it was,' with this the persons of the present tense of the verb *быть* (*bit*) 'to be,' were always found in Old Slavonic; thus *глаголахъ* (*glagolal yesm*) 'I have spoken.' But it began to disappear quite early; thus, in the Codex Suprasliensis, *мать вскармляла* (*mati vskrūmila*) 'the mother nourished,' without *есть* (*yest*). It is still, however, preserved in Chekh, and in Polish is only partially lost, which accounts for our being able in that language to remove the suffixes from the past participle, and affix them to other words in the sentence; thus we may say in Polish either *dobrze pisałem* or *dobrzem pisał* 'I have written well,' *ja pilny jestem* or *jam pilny jest* 'I am industrious.' The suffixes may also be added to particles, as *Bom nie przyszedł wzywać sprawiedliwych ale goresznych do pokuty* 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' In Chekh we still get such expressions as the following: *ja učil jsem* 'I studied.'

(5) The imperfect and aorist, which existed in Old Slavonic, and still exist in Bulgarian and Serbish of the Eastern branch, and Sorbish of the Western. The first of these began to disappear from Russian early. In copies from Old Slavonic originals, in lives of Russian saints, chronicles, etc., it is not rare, but it is not met with in the official documents, nor in the *Russkaya Pravda*, the first code of laws, which is of the eleventh century. It is impossible to tell the exact period when it was lost, but it begins to be very rare in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Schleicher, writing in

Kuhn's *Beiträge*, vol. v. p. 209, thought that he detected a relic of it in the modern Russian particle *бишь* (*bish*), which is used when persons are trying to recall something which they cannot easily remember, as *какъ бишь его зовутъ* (*kak bish ego zovut*) 'now, how do they call him?' This particle Schleicher connected with the imperfect *бѣше* (*béshe*), but the connection seems fanciful, and we cannot wonder that Sobolevski does not agree with him.

The case of the aorist in old Russian documents greatly resembles that of the imperfect. It is met with frequently in translations, in the chronicles, etc., but in official documents rarely; traces of it are found occasionally in the *bilini* or legendary poems, and the conditional particle *бы* (*bt*) is the only remains of it in the modern language. In the same way Polish has preserved the form *bych*.

(6) It is only by studying Old Slavonic that we are able to understand some peculiarities of the first declension, in *-ъ* (*û*) as *рабъ* (*rabû*) 'a slave' (*-a* declension). Thus we are constantly told in Russian grammars that the genitive singular of masculine nouns in *ъ* (*û*), *ь* (*i*), *и* (*i*), signifying divisible matter, often takes, especially in familiar language, the suffix *-y* (*u*) or *-ю* (*yu*); thus, *не хотите ли вы сыру* (*ne khotite li vi stru*) 'don't you desire any cheese?' or *фунтъ сахара* (*funt sakharu*) 'a pound of sugar.' We get *-y* (*u*) also in the locative case instead of *ѣ* (*é*), as *въ году* (*v' godu*), where we should have expected *годѣ* (*godé*). Again, the usual genitive plural of these substantives is in *-овъ* (*ov*), as *рабовъ* (*rabov*), etc., but many substantives are found in which the genitive plural is like the nominative, as *сапогъ* (*sapog*), gen. plural *сапогъ* (*sapog*) 'boots,' *солдатъ* (*soldat*), genitive plural *солдатъ* (*soldat*) 'soldiers'; this is the proper genitive plural of the first declension, and the fourth, as given by Miklosich, that of the *-u* stems, has been in a great measure lost, and its forms have influenced the first declension in the gen. dat. and loc. sing. and the genitive plural. This genitive singular in *-u*, in which some see Polish influences, is gradually displacing the old genitive in *-a* (see

Archiv für Slavische Philologie, vol. xi. p. 455), especially in the colloquial language. In the same way, according to Dr. Wright (*Old High German Primer*, p. 42), the *-u* declension rapidly disappeared from Old High German, but has left traces in the other declensions. It is fairly preserved in Slovenish; in Serb it has almost disappeared, but has influenced the first declension as in Russian; thus, compare the Serb *робѣ* (*robi*), *робѣ-овѣ* (*robovi*) 'slaves' (*Mik. Vergleichende Gram.* vol. iii. p. 33).

In Malo-Russian *-u* becomes the ordinary genitive of nouns expressing inanimate things. The use of the *-u* decl. is more pronounced in Polish, and explains the anomalies of such double forms as *chłopowie* and *chłopi*, the nominative plural of *chłop* 'a peasant,' also the dative in *-owi*, as in Chekh. In Polish grammars it is laid down as a rule that the genitive case in *-u* applies to inanimate things; but we find it frequently violated, as *mąż z narodu* 'a man of the people.'

(7) The *-m* (*t*) stems in Russian of the fourth consonantal declension have a peculiarity not found in the other Slavonic languages. The singular has almost fallen out of use, and is supplied by a diminutive form; thus, *ребенокъ* (*rebēnok*) 'a child,' plural *ребята* (*rebyata*), where we have the anomaly of a masculine singular and neuter plural. Not many nouns belong to this declension in Russian, and they mostly signify the young of animals. In Slovenish they are more regular, as *tele* 'a calf,' pl. *teleta*, Serbian *танѣ* 'the ball' (of a musket), pl. *танѣта* (*taneta*). The declension in Chekh is much fuller; thus we get *hřabě* 'count,' *hřabata*, *kniže*, *kněžata*. It is also rich in Polish.

(8) The article, as is well known to students, is apparently wanting in the Slavonic languages, but has in reality been preserved in the termination *иѣ* (*i*) *ый* (*i*) in adjectives, which is always lost when the adjective is used as a predicate, as *великій король* (*veliki korol*) 'a great king,' *король великъ* (*korol velik*) 'the king is great.' But Sobolevski sees traces

of the use of the demonstrative pronoun as an article in such expressions as *какая-то Англичанка дала мнѣ это* (*kakaya-to Anglichanka dala mné eto*) 'a certain English woman gave me this;' and the form is still extensively used in the dialects, as *мужика-то* (*mushika-to*) 'of that peasant,' *дорога-та* (*doroga-ta*) 'that way,' etc. Sobolevski thinks this is the same use as we find in the Bulgarian postposition of the article, about which all kinds of opinions have been held, and some have imagined that this position of the article in the Albanian, Roumanian, and Bulgarian languages, which have little else in common, except juxtaposition, is owing to the influence of some language originally spoken in those parts, Dacian or something of the kind.

(9) A puzzling form in modern Russian is the word for 'ninety'—*девяносто* (*deryanosto*). This is in Old Slavonic *девяндесятъ* (*devyatdesyat*), which is easy enough to understand. Prusik, a Bohemian scholar, has tried to explain it as follows. He connects the *-сто* with the *-ginta* in the Latin form *nonaginta*, and the Greek *-κοντα* in *ἐνενήκοντα*; this is a relic of the old form for 'ten,' according to Vaniček, the first syllable having dropped off, just as *viginti* is *deiginti*, 'twice ten.' The Indo-European *n* has been changed into *d*, perhaps from false analogy with *десять* (*desyat*), for in Old Prussian we get *neicints* 'the ninth.'

We find another irregular numeral *сорокъ* (*sorok*) 'forty,' which must be worn down from the Greek *τεσσαράκοντα*. The Old Slavonic was *четыредесать* (*chettredesyat*).