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THE DATIVE ABSOLUTE IN OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC AND OLD EAST SLAVIC*

1. Surely no Slavic syntactic construction has given rise to more disagreement and more various conjecture than has the dative absolute (DA). A century and a half of research has yielded no conclusive explanation as to why this seemingly anti-intuitive construction should have arisen, and consensus in regard to some aspects of its synchronic nature has been just as elusive. Moreover, there is no agreement concerning either the time of its origin, or the time of or reasons for its disappearance. Scholars do not even agree as to whether the Slavic vernaculars ever possessed such a construction, or whether it perhaps represented no more than a calque based on similar constructions in Greek and Latin. A brief survey of published views on the origin and nature of the DA will be instructive.

2.1. First, researchers have not always been careful to define what they mean by the term *absolute*, nor does there seem to be a consensus concerning its definition and range of usage. While at least some early work (e.g. Miklosich 1883) seems to have relied on a strict definition of the term *absolute* (i.e. referring to a case not governed), other, and especially recent, studies have employed definitions which differ significantly from this conception¹. Moreover, there has been disagree-

* I am indebted to those colleagues whose comments and criticism have influenced the development of this paper, especially to Henrik Birnbaum for thorough and insightful criticism of earlier drafts, and to Dean S. Worth, whose comments have directly affected my conception of the history of the Slavic dative absolute. His own recent contribution (Worth in press) reached me when this article was already in press.

¹ The term *absolute* was originally used as an antonym to *governed*, i.e. to refer to the appearance of a nominal form in a *case* which is ungoverned (Thurot 1864). The definition of the term in relation to the Greek genitive absolute in Spieker (1885:311) adheres to this conception (though he does not use the term *governed* as an antonym). A broadening of the definition can be noted in non-Slavistic literature already in Callaway 1899:1, 1918:1 in which the author defines not an absolutely used case but an *absolute clause*, though "a substantive ... dependent upon no other word in the sentence" is still part of the definition. In some recent work, however, we see reference only to an *absolute clause* which is the nominal transform of a full verbal sentence (Berent 1973:147) or to *absolute constructions*, defined as "syntactic entities ... which have no [surface] syntactic relationship with the remainder of the sentence" (Lehmann 1972b:987) or "case forms of nouns accompanied by participles in constructions which resemble independent clauses" (Lehmann 1974:210). In such definitions the original connection of "absoluteness"

ment as to whether East Slavic constructions consisting of a non-declined gerund plus dative "subject" should be considered manifestations of the DA.

2.2. Second, in attempts to explain the rise of the DA two sub-issues have emerged. One concerns the explanation for the seemingly un-governed use of any case (2.2.1). The other concerns the use of precisely the dative case (as opposed, say, to the ablative of Latin, genitive of Greek, etc., 2.2.2).

2.2.1. Most earlier researchers of both Slavist and Indo-European orientation (e.g. Brugmann 1900:523-4, Delbrück 1897:494, Güldenstübbe 1923:242, Havers 1931:81-82, Hirt 1937:94 ff., Kulbakín 1928:201-202, Potebnja 1958:324 ff., Trost 1958:33-5, Vondrák 1928:403; apparently also Istrina 1923:215-216) assumed that absolute constructions resulted from reinterpretation of governed cases in examples such as:

- 1 *slověňsku jazyku živuščju na Dunaji pridoša Bolgare*² (Delbrück 1897:497)

Under this view, the absolute construction is synchronically unmotivated, resulting from confusion at some earlier time (no further motivation for this "confusion" beyond the structural configuration itself being considered necessary). More recently, it has been suggested that absolute participial constructions represent a *syntactic device* for subordination of one entire proposition to another (Andersen 1970, Berent 1973, 1974). This implies a *synchronic motivation* for the DA and its specific syntactic properties (though, as noted below, under Berent's 1973 explanation the use of the dative case in the Slavic absolute construction is from a synchronic point of view unmotivated). Under such synchronic (syntactic) explanations there is no need to postulate an original reinterpretation. A third explanation (e.g. Lehmann 1972b, 1974, Gebert 1987) links the rise of absolute constructions to a period of transition in Indo-European languages from basic OV (object-verb) word order to basic VO order. A fundamental advance in understanding absolute constructions was represented by Horn's

to the concept of government of a nominal form is lost.

² This example is cited from Delbrück. Otherwise, OCS and Old East Slavic examples are transliterated identically, regardless of differences in phonology. Thus the Cyrillic letter Ѧ and its Glagolitic equivalent are transliterated "e," regardless of their phonetic value. Pre-jotated letters are indicated in transliteration by the letter "j." A comma (" , ") indicates a dot used as a punctuation mark. Abbreviations are resolved with missing letters supplied in parentheses.

(1918) discussion of the LA applied by Berent (1974) to

2.2.2. Explanations of the absolute construction have been given. The dative of the Slavic absolute (echter Dativ, 1897:494). He reflecting an earlier temporal originally temporal meaning contrast, had conjectured the construction precisely because express temporal meaning (that the dative case was used and broad – it can often in Slav. Thus, Slavic "chose" dative meanings. Trost (1958) notes a common feature of both BA and the absolute construction is Andersen (1970) has attempted absolute construction in Slav. of this case's Gesamtbedeutung in the Jakobsonian case feature. Yet other authors have entirely dative case in the Slavic absolute

Neither is there an accepted found in the absolute constructions languages. A number of authors the DA to be a calque from a bookish construction affected Greek construction, have postulated two cases and a "special relationship between genitive and dative in danov 1988:9-10, Grünenthal 6, Miklosich 1883:617, N 1958:332, Růžička 1961, Ve

³ On serious reservations regarding notably Birnbaum (1986a), with n

⁴ Though note the more limited replacement (in his view) of the отвечает семантическим системы общеславянского сн Greek.

(1918) discussion of the Latin ablative absolute and the similar idea applied by Berent (1974) to the Slavic DA (cf. § 4.2 and note 26).

2.2.2. Explanations of the use of the dative case in the Slavic absolute construction have varied drastically. Delbrück held that the dative of the Slavic absolute construction goes back to a "true dative" (echter Dativ, 1897:494). Hirt (1937:97) saw use of the dative case as reflecting an earlier temporal meaning of that case, in line with an originally temporal meaning of the absolute construction. Miklosich, in contrast, had conjectured that the dative case appeared in the absolute construction precisely because that case was otherwise seldom used to express temporal meaning (1883:615)! Stanislav (1934:6-7) explained that the dative case was used because its meaning is both specialized and broad – it can often in Slavic take over the meaning of other cases. Thus, Slavic "chose" dative because it was the case with the most meanings. Trost (1958) noted that the dative case of a subject is a common feature of both Baltic and Slavic, and that the dative case of the absolute construction is an instantiation of this well-known fact. Andersen (1970) has attempted to show that the dative case of the absolute construction in Slavic is quite to be expected as an expression of this case's Gesamtbedeutung of peripherality and directionality within the Jakobsonian case feature system (cf. Jakobson 1971a, 1971b)³. Yet other authors have entirely ignored the issue of the motivation for dative case in the Slavic absolute construction.

Neither is there an accepted explanation for the broad range of cases found in the absolute constructions of Slavic and other Indo-European languages. A number of authors, including some who have considered the DA to be a calque from the Greek genitive absolute or at least a bookish construction affected by awareness of the corresponding Greek construction, have pointed to similarities in the meaning of these two cases and a "special relationship" of variation and neutralization between genitive and dative in the Indo-European languages (e.g. Duridanov 1988:9-10, Grünenthal 1910:346-356, Güldenstübbe 1923: 235-6, Miklosich 1883:617, Nečásek 1957:17, Polák 1948, Potebnja 1958:332, Růžička 1961, Večerka 1961:53)⁴. This view was especially

³ On serious reservations regarding Jakobson's Gesamtbedeutung concept see notably Birnbaum (1986a), with references to further literature.

⁴ Though note the more limited assertion by Birnbaum (1968:59) merely that replacement (in his view) of the Greek genitive by Slavic dative "вполне соответствует семантическим категориям, лежащим в основе падежной системы общеславянского синтаксиса," with no reference to the case system of Greek.

advanced by Havers' noted volume (1911) on the *dativus sympathicus* (dative in alternation with genitive) in Indo-European, as well as by awareness (or at least assertions) that Greek seems once to have had a nascent dative (as well as genitive) absolute (cf. Classen 1977:159-160). Andersen (1970) and Birnbaum (1970:43-45 with notes 40, 41) assert more generally that it may be impossible to reconstruct an original Indo-European absolute case, since the variety of cases encountered in attested languages results from changes in case systems over time which cannot themselves be reconstructed. Berent (1973) hypothesizes that absolute constructions originally occurred in various cases in Proto-Indo-European depending on the function of the absolute construction, similar to how the infinitive, a deverbal noun, could originally appear in various cases. According to this hypothesis, the single predominant absolute case of later Indo-European languages resulted from a process of fossilization. Thus the dative case of the Slavic absolute construction may have been synchronically unmotivated.

2.3. An understanding of the origin and nature of such a construction must certainly be reached through a thorough understanding of its synchronic functioning. Yet even in this regard agreement has been far from complete. Two issues stand out as being of primary importance.

2.3.1. One is the relationship of the DA to finite subordinate clauses. One of few points of relative consensus among scholars has been that absolute participial constructions are semantically equivalent to subordinate clauses. Some have seen absolute constructions as primarily temporal clauses (which can also be used in related functions, cf. Istrina 1923, Kulbakín 1928, Hirt 1937, etc.), while others have stressed that they express the more general meaning of subordination of one proposition to another entire proposition (e.g. Andersen 1970, Berent 1973, Večerka 1961:48, Trost 1958). In some recent work it is argued that absolute constructions are derived from (Berent 1974, 1975) or equivalent to (Gebert 1987) nonrestrictive relative clauses. Berent (1974, 1975) in fact sees absolute constructions (in Slavic and English) and nonrestrictive relative clauses as being both derived from conjoined (paratactic) constructions. A number of scholars, moreover, have insisted that the dative absolute can in certain instances function as a main or coordinate clause, either with or without a coordinating conjunction (e.g. Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963:445, Istrina 1923:213; cf. also the discussion in Gebert 1987:567-568, and § 7 of this paper).

2.3.2. The other broad issue concerning the DA concerns the limitations of the construction. Two issues have been noted. First, the DA does not do with subject non-identity. In other words, subject non-identity (between the subject and the absolute) is not a fundamental property of the DA. A majority of scholars hold that the rule holds in Slavic (though not strictly as in Greek and Latin). See Kuznecov 1963:445, 447, Bulaev 1923:242-3, Istrina 1923:213, monosov 1952:566-7, Miklosich 1928:403). Others have argued that it does exist (Gebert 1987, as evidenced by the fact that unlike subjects without coordination, the DA is in apposition to the sentence (Belorussov 1899).

Second, while it has been argued that absolute constructions are "inherent" (i.e. can be defined) not introduced by conjunction, the issue over the status of this tender of conjunction is a defining issue (e.g. Gebert 1987), such that the DA represents violations of a rule. Others seem to posit that the DA is not others see instances of DA as being infrequent, though not necessarily so. See Kuznecov 1958:438-9 on Old Russian.

2.4. The most intense debate concerning the DA has been concerned with the time of its origin. This issue has broken down into two main camps. Most scholars hold that the DA was never a feature of the direct borrowing from Greek. Others see the dative absolute as being a direct borrowing from Greek. See Birnbaum 1961, Ružička 1961, Večerka 1961.

⁵ To be sure, most scholars see the DA in OCS not as a simple borrowing but as a feature that certain preconditions for the shape of the Slavic case system

2.3.2. The other broad issue of the synchronic functioning of the DA concerns the limitations on its use (i.e. its distribution). Here again two issues have been noted and disputed from early on. The first has to do with subject non-identity. All researchers have been aware that subject non-identity (between the absolute and main clause) is a fundamental property of the Latin ablative absolute and Greek genitive absolute. A majority of scholars has asserted or assumed that a similar rule holds in Slavic (though often noting that it is not adhered to as strictly as in Greek and Latin, e.g. Berent 1974, Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963:445, 447, Bulaxovskij 1958:438, Ferrand 1981:431, Gùldenstùbbe 1923:242-3, Istrina 1923:216, Kulbakín 1928:202, Lomonosov 1952:566-7, Miklosich 1883:615, 617, Potebnja 1958:324 ff., Stanislav 1934:65, Stecenko 1977:127, Večerka 1961:49, Vondrák 1928:403). Others have either tacitly assumed no such condition to exist (Gebert 1987, as evinced by the parallel examples with like and unlike subjects without comment), or even explicitly denied its existence (Belorussov 1899).

Second, while it has been assumed by a majority of scholars that absolute constructions are "normally" (in some sense which remains to be defined) not introduced by a conjunction, there has been dispute over the status of this tendency or rule. Some have emphasized that lack of conjunction is a defining characteristic of the absolute construction (e.g. Gebert 1987), such that instances of conjunction-introduced DA represent violations of a rule or indications of breakdown of the system. Others seem to posit no such restriction (e.g. Večerka 1961). Yet others see instances of DA introduced by conjunctions as *relatively* infrequent, though not necessarily violating any rule (cf. Bulaxovskij 1958:438-9 on Old Russian).

2.4. The most intense debates over the DA have certainly been those concerned with the time of its origin. Once again, this seemingly simple issue has broken down into several smaller ones, each of which has given rise to polemic. Most importantly, one group of linguists has held that the DA was never a feature of Slavic vernaculars, being either a direct borrowing from Greek, or at least patterned after the Greek genitive absolute (Birnbaum 1968, Mrázek 1963, Nečásek 1957, Růžička 1961, Večerka 1961⁵). Among these we must separate out the

⁵ To be sure, most scholars advocating such a position see the introduction of the DA in OCS not as a simple syntactic borrowing or calque. Rather, they assume that certain preconditions for the DA already existed within Slavic (both in the shape of the Slavic case system and the existence of similar constructions in which

opinions of Belorussov (1899) and Stecenko (1977), who held that while the DA was originally patterned after the Greek genitive absolute, it developed a life of its own in Slavic and expanded beyond its original distributional limitations⁶. An opposing camp has held that the DA was indeed a feature of Common Slavic (Andersen 1970, Berent 1973, 1974, Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963, Delbrück 1897, Gebert 1987, Gldenstubbe 1923, Hirt 1937, Miklosich 1883, Stanislav 1934, Trost 1958, Vondrk 1893, 1928), or encompassed at least a part of the Common Slavic linguistic territory (Polk 1948)⁷.

Even those who hold that the DA was once an integral component of the Slavic vernacular cannot agree about the time of its origin or demise, or the reasons for its disappearance. One body of scholarship has held that absolute participial constructions originated in parallel in various Indo-European languages (Delbrck 1897:493-4, Gldenstubbe 1923:242, Stanislav 1934:1, Trost 1958⁸). Against this view others have asserted a Proto-Indo-European origin for absolute participial constructions, though even here there are differences concerning what the original case(s) of the construction would be, or even whether an original case can or should be reconstructed: Andersen 1970, Berent 1973, Meillet and Vendryes 1924, Wackernagel 1950 (though without direct reference to Slavic), Hirt 1937. Yet a third group of linguists asserts that we can date the origin of absolute constructions relatively, linking them to the process of transition from basic OV to VO word order (Gebert 1987, Lehmann 1972b, 1974). Finally, Polk (1948) suggested that the Slavic DA is an areal feature, ultimately one aspect of a Black Sea linguistic Sprachbund⁹.

the dative case was governed), the introduction of a new literary register together with the omnipresent Greek model providing the impetus (толчок) for the development and activation of the new construction (cf. especially Birnbaum 1968). A variant of this point of view in relation specifically to East Slavic holds simply that the DA was never a component of the East Slavic vernacular, being borrowed from Church Slavonic and remaining a bookish form throughout its history (Bulaxovskij 1958:438-441, Āernyx 1954:292-4).

⁶ A similar possibility is allowed, though not advocated, by Horlek (1955:229).

⁷ Buslaev (1959:466-7) stated simply that the DA belonged to both Church Slavonic and Old Russian, which would seem to imply Common Slavic origin.

⁸ This same view is implicit in a number of works (e.g. Brugmann 1895:143) in which Slavic is not mentioned explicitly.

⁹ If this view were correct it would be reasonable to suspect a link between the Slavic DA and the dative absolute construction attested in Gothic (though few scholars at present accept that absolute constructions are autochthonous in the latter language).

Fewer scholars have debated views differ as to both the time (Be (1923), Stecenko (1977)) and the linked loss of the DA to loss (1958) sees the disappearance of the subject (Stanislav (1934) felt that loss of hypotaxis, and specifically means of rendering its means of reasoning, though with Sapir, he sees loss of reflecting a gradual shift (Lehmann (1972b, 1974) and conditions as characteristic of a order from OV to VO and the latter (SVO) word order.

Even in regard to the time agreement. For example, Sapir (1929) is used in East Slavic up and Kuznecov assert that in some northern and southern

3.0. The preceding survey have been debated in common may agree with the articulation should be clear, however, the transition which has ensued over review and critique of previous monographic format. Even on the origin of the DA was topic. It should hardly be has been difficult to reach origin of the DA.

Given that the DA exists

¹⁰ For further references on to less accessible literature, see

¹¹ For example, I have not DA was by rule limited to a whether the dative "subject" especially, human), or the long nature of constructions of the ty

Fewer scholars have dealt with the demise of the DA, but even here views differ as to both the time of and reasons for its loss. Gldenstube (1923), Stecenko (1977), Istrina (1923) and Karskij (1956) have linked loss of the DA to loss of declension in participles, while Trost (1958) sees the disappearance of the DA as a corollary of the monopolization of the subject function in Slavic by the nominative case. Stanislav (1934) felt that loss of the DA was due to the development of hypotaxis, and specifically to the rise of more concise and explicit means of rendering its meanings. Berent (1973) follows a similar line of reasoning, though with no reference to Stanislav. Citing R. Lakoff and Sapir, he sees loss of absolute constructions in Indo-European as reflecting a gradual shift from synthetic to analytic syntax. Finally, Lehmann (1972b, 1974) and Gebert (1987) consider absolute constructions as characteristic of a transitional period in Indo-European word order from OV to VO and link their disappearance to stabilization of the latter (SVO) word order pattern.

Even in regard to the time of disappearance of the DA there is no agreement. For example, Sreznevskij (1959:62-63) saw the DA as being used in East Slavic up to the fourteenth century, while Borkovskij and Kuznecov assert that it was still alive even early in this century in some northern and southern Russian dialects (1963:449)¹⁰.

3.0. The preceding survey has not included all of the questions which have been debated in connection with the DA¹¹, and not all scholars may agree with the articulation of the issues presented above. What should be clear, however, is the tremendous complexity of the discussion which has ensued over the past century and a half. A thorough review and critique of previously expressed views would require a monographic format. Even a review of opinions and evidence bearing on the origin of the DA would require a separate article devoted to that topic. It should hardly be surprising under such circumstances that it has been difficult to reach any consensus concerning the nature or origin of the DA.

Given that the DA exists nowhere in Slavic today as a productive

¹⁰ For further references on dialectal occurrences of the DA, including references to less accessible literature, see Kedajtene (1968).

¹¹ For example, I have not gone into the issue of word order (i.e. whether the DA was by rule limited to a position preceding the main clause), animacy (i.e. whether the dative "subject" of the DA construction tended to be animate or, especially, human), or the long-standing and inconclusive debate concerning the nature of constructions of the type *pozde byvbu*.

category, and had disappeared by the time of the first linguistic inquiries concerning it, successful study of the construction must be founded on its properties and distribution in attested textual evidence, as well as on available evidence concerning its dialect geography. However, there are serious inconsistencies within both the "canonical" OCS (henceforth simply OCS) and Old East Slavic (OES) textual data, which together comprise the vast majority of available evidence. Moreover, there are significant differences *between* these two bodies of evidence. These differences and inconsistencies have, not unexpectedly, given rise to conflicting views on the synchronic properties of the DA.

If we wish to overcome these obstacles and sort out the actual properties of the DA in any given time and geographic-linguistic context, we will do well to adopt two methodological postulates.

3.1. First, we must discuss the facts of OCS and OES separately. We have no reason to assume that the same rules of usage were followed in both literacies in the centuries from which evidence is available. (Of course, if there were differences in usage, we would expect some interference from OCS to be manifested in the OES texts.) Moreover, we expect a specific relationship to hold between the OCS and OES situations. As I have argued elsewhere (Corin 1994) we expect the OES data to reflect a more innovative situation than is manifested by the OCS data. We will return to this issue in § 6. For the purposes of clarity, I will make the further simplifying assumption that the functions and distribution of the DA in OCS continue in large part a situation which was already present in Late Common Slavic (remaining all the time aware that in reality the manner and extent of employment of the DA in Slavonic literacy was subject to influence from Greek textual models). The autochthonous nature of the Slavic DA is certainly supported by a preponderance of the evidence now available, though a thorough review of the issue will require a more expansive format¹².

¹² We may note here that in addition to indirect arguments such as that based on the dative case of the Slavic absolute construction vs. the genitive case of the corresponding Greek construction, those based on parallelisms between various Indo-European languages, or less certain evidence from Bulgarian and Old Czech, there is now a significant body of direct attestation of the DA in East Slavic. First and foremost, use of the absolute construction, albeit in most cases with undeclined gerunds rather than declined participles, and in a limited number of examples suggesting loss of productivity and extreme decadence of the construction, is reported from a variety of Great Russian dialects, both northern and southern (cf. especially Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963:449-451, Kuz'mina and Nemčenko 1956:120 and 1971: 239-40, Kedajtene 1968; it should be noted that recent statements rest in part on the earlier attestations by Grandilevskij 1903:84 and Volockij

3.2. Second, we must take care of enumeration and tabulation of the syntactic properties of the DA. In the data, we must be prepared to account for the DA and then attempt to account for its development.

3.3. In the remainder of the paper I postulates in an attempt to explain the directions of its development and the directions of its development. I will first (§ 4) review the attested literature and data, and then (§ 5) attempt to explain the development of the DA. In § 6 I will discuss the DA from a diachronic perspective, with the goal of explaining the development in East Slavic. I will excerpted from the texts of the DA and will attempt to show just how (historical) OCS and to our knowledge of its development.

4.0. In OCS, use of the DA in various dimensions of linguistic structure. I have expressed the *backgrounding* of the DA in the *minence* of another¹³. Syntactic

1902:13). In Belorussian use of the DA (perhaps supported by widespread use in documents of a business nature (1963:450, Bulaxovskij 1958:44-45, 1968:277). The DA seems to be absent from the folk literature and Old Ukrainian

The most significant counterexample is considered the absence of the DA in the Novgorod region), of which near

¹³ I use the term *communicative* structure which is often referred to as *backgrounding* vs. *prominence*, or by other terms. The relative importance or relevance of the DA in many linguists would subsume the DA under the heading of pragmatic structure, or communicative structure – syntactic, communicative

In this paper I will allow a *backgrounding*. I will not, for example, be understood as distinguishing new information, or actions which advance

3.2. Second, we must take our analysis beyond the inductive process of enumeration and tabulation of data and must hypothesize concerning the syntactic properties of the DA. Where we can discern a tendency in the data, we must be prepared to posit a rule based on that tendency, and then attempt to account for conflicting data on some reasoned basis.

3.3. In the remainder of the paper I will apply these methodological postulates in an attempt to elucidate both the nature of the Slavic DA, and the directions of its development since the time of its earliest attestation. I will first (§ 4) present an interpretation, based on published literature and data, of the DA as it is attested in OCS. I will then (§ 5) attempt to explain exceptions to basic rules of usage in OCS. In § 6 I will discuss the dialect geography of the DA in its pan-Slavic perspective, with the goal of formulating expectations concerning its development in East Slavic. Finally (§ 7) I will examine a set of data excerpted from the texts of East Slavic origin in the *Uspenskij sbornik* and will attempt to show just how these data relate to those of (canonical) OCS and to our expectations concerning the East Slavic development.

4.0. In OCS, use of the DA was motivated within at least two parallel dimensions of linguistic structure. In communicative structure it expressed the *backgrounding* of one proposition in contrast to the *prominence* of another¹³. Syntactically it expressed the *subordination* of

1902:13). In Belorussian use of the DA seems to have been more widespread (perhaps supported by widespread use of the DA in Lithuanian), and was indeed used in documents of a business or legal nature (cf. Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963:450, Bulaxovskij 1958:440, Karskij 1956:414-416, 1962:105-107, Kedajtene 1968:277). The DA seems to have been more poorly represented in Ukrainian, though the literature does contain references to use of the construction in Ukrainian folk literature and Old Ukrainian texts.

The most significant counterevidence (albeit of a negative nature) must be considered the absence of the DA in birchbark documents (primarily from the Novgorod region), of which nearly 800 are now known.

¹³ I use the term *communicative* to encompass that dimension of linguistic structure which is often referred to as functional sentence perspective, backgrounding vs. prominence, or by other similarly defined terms which distinguish the relative importance or relevance of items of information in a clause (and which today many linguists would subsume under the broader, and more vaguely defined, heading of pragmatic structure). We will thus refer to three dimensions of linguistic structure – syntactic, communicative, and later also stylistic.

In this paper I will allow a very loose and intuitive definition of *prominence* and *backgrounding*. I will not, for example, define whether this category is to be understood as distinguishing new information from old, important from secondary information, or actions which advance a plot- or story-line from those which do not.

one clause to another, limited (in a generative account we would say conditioned) by *subject non-identity* and *lack of conjunction*.

4.1. While most researchers have concentrated on the syntactic functions of absolute constructions, a few have also discussed their communicative functions (in the sense of note 13). Berent (1975) refers to English absolute constructions as a backgrounding device. Horn characterizes the Latin ablative absolute in the same way¹⁴. Berent (1974), in contrast, characterizes the Slavic DA as an expression of the temporal or logical anteriority of the action of the DA in comparison to that of the main clause¹⁵. Implicit in this narrower semantic definition, of course, there is still a valuation of the relative marginality of the absolute clause in relation to the main clause. Since there are in fact infrequent examples in OCS in which the action of the DA could be said to be neither temporally nor logically anterior to that of the main clause¹⁶, I will adopt the broader assumption that the DA expressed the backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another.

4.2. There has been a convergence in views on the most general syntactic functions of the DA (cf. 2.3.1, above). Participles in Slavic can fulfill or have at some time fulfilled all syntactic functions characteristic of non-deverbal adjectives, i.e. attributive (restrictive), predicative, appositive (non-restrictive), and adverbial. The DA seems to be limited to appositive (in line with Berent's and Gebert's claim that it is equivalent to a nonrestrictive relative clause) and adverbial (actually adsentential, cf. Hirt, etc.) functions.

There also seems to be a consensus that the DA is either a clause or in some way equivalent to a clause. Most researchers have seen it as being equivalent to a subordinate clause (either to a temporal clause, or to a variety of types of subordinate adverbial clauses; cf. § 2.3.1). Berent and Gebert have argued, however, that absolute constructions,

¹⁴ "Auch bei Ablativus absolutus [compared with the *participium coniunctum*, A.C.] fehlt also der finite Modus, weil auch diese Konstruktion eine mehr im Vorübergehen erwähnte, nur angedeutete Verbalhandlung enthält. Auch hier tritt die finite Form zurück, weil der Redende etwas Anderes und Wichtigeres zu präzisieren hat" (1918:13-14, with further references to similar points of view).

¹⁵ A number of researchers into the syntactic functions of absolute constructions have, of course, noted their close affinity to temporal clauses.

¹⁶ Cf. Stanislav's examples of the DA in consecutive meaning, e.g. *i abъje togo trepetъ i neviděnyje obъe, jakože ktomu jemu ne imoštu bezbojaznija, pročėje močiti jee, nъ ostavivъ jo ...* (Suprasliensis 559:27-29), though others also exist, e.g. *oni že išedъše propověděše vъsqdě, g(ospod)ju pospěšъstvujōštu i slovo utvrъždajōštju, poslědъstvujōštiimi znamenimi* (Mark XVI:20 Marianus, similar in Assemanianus).

like other nonrestrictive relative conjoined constructions. The whether at the deepest underlying constructions represent conjoined

Whatever the outcome of the level of syntactic structure the entire clause to another. It is provides an overt expression backgrounding.

Syntactic subordination of of two forms in the Slavic language conjunction followed by a finite two types of construction are noted often in the literature precise definition of the narrow whereas the meaning of a participle the mere fact of subordination between the actions of the main

This categorization implies participial clauses and subordinate that the co-occurrence of the alous. In English, for example conjunctions and participial (For example:

2 While shopping today, is equivalent to:

3 While she shopped/whereas:

4 ? Shopping today, Jo is only marginally (if at all) Nevertheless, in the mode

¹⁷ Berent (1974) presents structure. In fact, the whole structure would be has no obvious example, has distinguished language structures.

¹⁸ Infinitival constructions are but here we may restrict our attention and participial (marked) clauses.

like other nonrestrictive relative clauses, may be derived ultimately from conjoined constructions. The only real disagreement, then, concerns whether at the deepest underlying layer of syntactic structure absolute constructions represent conjoined or subordinate structures¹⁷.

Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is clear that at the observable level of syntactic structure the DA does involve subordination of one entire clause to another. It is further clear that syntactic subordination provides an overt expression for the communicative function of backgrounding.

Syntactic subordination of one clause to another typically takes one of two forms in the Slavic languages, the first being hypotactic (i.e. a conjunction followed by a finite clause), the second participial¹⁸. The two types of construction are not, of course, entirely equivalent. As has been noted often in the literature, use of a conjunction allows for a more precise definition of the nature of the subordinating relationship, whereas the meaning of a participial clause is more general, indicating the mere fact of subordination, and perhaps a temporal relationship between the actions of the main and subordinate clause.

This categorization implies a certain complementarity between participial clauses and subordinating conjunctions. This is not to say that the co-occurrence of the two is necessarily impossible or anomalous. In English, for example, co-occurrence of subordinating conjunctions and participial (gerundial) constructions is quite normal. For example:

2 While shopping today, Joan found a diamond on the floor.

is equivalent to:

3 While she shopped/was shopping today, Joan found a diamond.

whereas:

4 ? Shopping today, Joan found a diamond on the floor.

is only marginally (if at all) acceptable.

Nevertheless, in the modern Slavic languages such combinations

¹⁷ Berent (1974) presents extensive arguments in favor of a basic conjoined structure. In fact, the whole question of what the "deepest" layer of syntactic structure would be has no obvious answer. Birnbaum (1968:51-52, 1970), for example, has distinguished language-specific, typological, and universal deep structures.

¹⁸ Infinitival constructions are of course a third form of clause subordination, but here we may restrict our attention to a comparison of finite (normal, unmarked) and participial (marked) clauses.

occur rarely if at all, suggesting that there is something “normal” about complementarity at least in this particular language family, and moreover that this situation has been present from Common Slavic onward.

We therefore expect complementarity between subordinating conjunctions and participial constructions (absolute and non-absolute alike); that is, DA and other participial constructions are not expected to be introduced by subordinating conjunctions. In OCS this expectation is for the most part met. In non-absolute participial constructions subordinating conjunctions are rare (cf. Večerka 1961:49, 99 ff.). For the DA Stanislav found only eleven examples with conjunctions indicating temporal (*egda* – one example), causal (three examples of *jakože*, two examples of *zan'e*, one of *jako*), concessive (one example each of *ibo* and *čě*; cf. Stanislav 1934:23), and consecutive (one example each of *jako* and *jakože*) meaning. He also noted several examples containing the explicative particles *bo* and *ubo*, at least the former of which may be considered a causal conjunction¹⁹.

While the use of subordinating conjunctions to introduce the DA is syntactically unmotivated, use of coordinating conjunctions to introduce the DA or link it to the main clause would seem to be counter-intuitive, since the DA is a means of syntactic subordination. Nevertheless, this does occur. To be sure, in a majority of apparent examples the coordinating conjunction is properly construed as introducing the complex clause of which the DA is a part, e.g.:

- 5 [i [vьlězъšu emu vь korabl'ь, [po n'emь idošę učenicu ego]]]

¹⁹ One may object that a discussion of the use of subordinating (and coordinating; see the discussion immediately below) conjunctions in connection with the DA is misplaced, since this is properly an issue of participial syntax irrespective of whether a participle's (actually its subject's) case is governed or not. To this I would reply that such a discussion is not only germane, but essential if we are to understand the use of the DA and its decadence in OCS and OES. On the one hand, we must discuss the use of conjunctions if we wish to define the nature of the DA. Its relationship to other participial constructions is not obvious, and needs to be stated and demonstrated through syntactic parallelism. On the other hand, and of more immediate importance, this is necessary in order for us to define criteria (cf. § 5 and 7, below) as to just what does and does not represent evidence of decadence of the DA. The fact that the evidence adduced here may also be relevant to a broader discussion of participial syntax does not obviate the need for it in relation to the DA. The discussion of the use of conjunctions in this context would be superfluous only if the interpretation suggested here (cf. § 5.2) were both: a) common to absolute and non-absolute participial constructions alike; and b) already established in the field, having been posited and discussed in earlier literature. However, the interpretation suggested here is new and cannot be tacitly assumed.

(Mat. VIII:23)

rather than:

- 6 [[i vьlězъšu emu vь
(Mat. VIII:23)

and thus only seems to
examples the conjunction of
or other subordinate clause,

- 7 přebývajoštu že mi
joštu, glagola jedinně

In yet other instances th
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- 8 ašte vidiši osla vra
minui, nъ vьstavę v
(Suprasliensis 126:1

In Stanislav's document
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- 9 онъ же ... vьsta i vь
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There are, however, a v
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- 10 se že svętyimъ glagol

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²¹ Cf. § 7.2. While use of th
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(Mat. VIII:23)

rather than:

- 6 [[*i vьlězъšu emu vь korabl'ь,*] [po n'емь idoše učenicі ego]]
(Mat. VIII:23)

and thus only seems to be attached directly to the DA. In other examples the conjunction coordinates a DA with a preceding participial or other subordinate clause, as in:

- 7 *prěbuvajoštu že mi i moleštu se, i pokaati se velmi oběštava-joštu, glagola jedinь* (Suprasliensis 167:7-9)

In yet other instances the conjunction *i* may be construed as introducing a noun or noun phrase in the sense of 'even' or 'also,' rather than the entire DA construction:

- 8 *ašte vidiši osla vruga tvojego radъša rodъ brěmenemъ ne minui, nъ vьstavę vьstavi i, takožde že i solomonu glagol' oštu* (Suprasliensis 126:16-19)

In Stanislav's documentation there are no certain examples in which a DA is introduced by a coordinating conjunction (*i* or *a*) in such a way that the absolute construction seems to be coordinated with, rather than subordinated to, a preceding main clause as in OES examples of the type:

- 9 *опъ же ... vьsta i vьsěde na konь, ti tako poide putьmъ, a pr(ě)-p(o)dobъnuumu theodosiju na vozě sědjaščju,* (Uspenskij sbornik 43c9-15)²⁰

There are, however, a very few instances in which a coordinating conjunction stands between the DA and a following main clause, giving the impression of syntactic coordination rather than subordination²¹:

- 10 *se že svętyimъ glagol' ostemъ, i сгькьвиšte karištъnoje razori se*

²⁰ There are several difficult or corrupted OCS textual locations which might *questionably* be placed in this category. Jagić, also, though he adduces examples of this construction from OES, Old Czech and Old Polish, notes none in OCS (1900:71).

This and subsequent examples from the *Uspenskij sbornik* are cited by folio and column according to the edition ().

²¹ Cf. § 7.2. While use of the conjunctions *i* and *a* to introduce the DA or a following main clause is rare, Stanislav did note that the DA often contains the particle *že*, which may arguably be considered an enclitic paratactic conjunction.

(Suprasliensis 180:21-23)

as well as three examples in which the conjunction *i* stands before both the DA and following main clause, forcing us to conclude that the DA was indeed introduced by a conjunction, e.g.:

- 11 *i slъnъcju mъkъđju*, i katarpetazma съковънаѣ razdъra se (Luke 23:45, Zogr.)
 τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ μέσον

It should be borne in mind that the occurrence of coordinating conjunctions (just as was the case for subordinating conjunctions; cf. the discussion above, incl. note 19) with participial constructions is not limited to the DA. In fact, a larger number of such instances occurs in non-absolute constructions, and about these an extensive literature has developed from the mid-nineteenth century onward (e.g. Jagić 1900: 69-71, Večerka 1961:128 ff., Ferrand 1981, 1983; for further discussion and literature see Birnbaum 1986b:248-250). Večerka (1961: 134 ff.) notes that the use of coordinating conjunctions to introduce participial constructions (absolute and non-absolute alike) or a following main clause is common in OES and Old Czech texts, and this leads him to the conclusion that this was an autochthonous Slavic feature with roots in the vernacular. Jagić's (1900:69-72) and Ferrand's (1983) analyses, with examples from OES, Old Czech, Old Polish and even Old Serbian texts, would seem to support the same conclusion²². Nevertheless, in non-absolute, but especially in absolute participial constructions, such examples are exceptional in OCS, and the conjunction may be used to render a similar word in the Greek original (cf. δε in example 11). Circumstances in OCS, together with the typological facts of the modern Slavic languages, thus justify our positing a general rule that the DA was not introduced by conjunctions, either subordinating or coordinating. We must therefore accept the need to explain the presence of exceptions to this rule.

In the modern Slavic languages use of participles (actually the indeclinable gerunds historically derived from them) for sentence subordination is largely limited to instances in which the implied subject of the participle (gerund) and that of the main clause coincide.

²² Jagić, it should be noted, also observed a difference between the use of *i* (generally used between a participial clause and following main clause) and *a* (used between a finite clause and following participial clause), which seems to hold across both West and East Slavic.

Use of participles or gerunds is exceptional.

The DA, in contrast, with subjects of the participial construction (the DA referent). For OCS subject non-identity is violated in 5.3% or 5.3% (1934:13, 103), fully 65% of the DA being from the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae; however, only 10% of all the 8 examples from the OCS are due to difficulties in finding an alternative other than with the DA infinitive; cf. Stanislav (1934:13) were in fact a number of exceptions for Slavic translation regardless of subject identity.

Subject non-identity is a feature of European languages with a particular Horn (1918:13) noted that violations of subject non-identity of the period of breakdown of the distinction between the absolute and the *absolutus*. Occasional exceptions are identical to that of the modern languages. Riemann and Goelzer 1899:100 note non-identity condition for the Lithuanian Ambrasas (1918:13) OES, examples in which the DA is rare and syntactically limited to occur only preceding the absolute (Kielhorn 1970:100).

²³ Though Stanislav counted 74 overall, it should be noted that 74 of the 74 Suprasliensis are in fact datives of the participle (cf. Table IV, p. 100). The Euchologium Sinaiticum (6th century) is from that of the main clause. The impression will remain that the use of the DA in the main clause is rare in OCS, with very few exceptions.

²⁴ Stanislav actually counted 74 (Table 2 (p. 88), but cites only

Use of participles or gerunds where the subjects do not coincide is exceptional.

The DA, in contrast, was largely limited to instances in which the subjects of the participial and main clause were not identical (at least in referent). For OCS subject non-identity was a very strong tendency. It is violated in 5.3% or 5.4% of examples (as calculated by Stanislav 1934:13, 103), fully 65 out of 73 total examples with like subjects being from the Codex Suprasliensis²³. Even in that manuscript, however, only 10% of all examples of the DA have like subjects. Of the 8 examples from the gospel manuscripts, all can be ascribed to difficulties in finding an appropriate rendering of the Greek original other than with the DA (most of these involve Greek ἐν τῷ + infinitive; cf. Stanislav 1934:13-14, Nečásek 1957:23 ff.)²⁴. There were in fact a number of Greek constructions which presented difficulties for Slavic translators and tended to be rendered with the DA regardless of subject identity (Grünenthal 1910:4, 356).

Subject non-identity is a well-known characteristic of other Indo-European languages with absolute participial constructions. For Latin in particular Horn (1918:13; cf. also Riemann and Goelzer 1897:791-2) noted that violations of subject non-identity are characteristic precisely of the period of breakdown of the system of hypotaxis and loss of distinction between the *participium coniunctum* and the *ablativus absolutus*. Occasional examples of the genitive absolute with subject identical to that of the main clause can be found even in Greek (cf. Riemann and Goelzer 1897:693-694), though the existence of a subject non-identity condition for that language cannot be doubted. For Old Lithuanian Ambrazas (1962:67-74) reports that, similar to OCS and OES, examples in which the DA and main clause have like subjects are rare and syntactically limited (in that the DA in these examples can occur only preceding the main clause). For the Sanskrit locative absolute (Kielhorn 1970:282-283) and genitive absolute (de Saussure

²³ Though Stanislav counted 65 examples with like subjects in Suprasliensis and 74 overall, it should be borne in mind that by his count 9 of the examples in Suprasliensis are in fact dative participial forms appositive to another dative participle (cf. Table IV, p. 90), while the sole example he cites from the Euchologium Sinaiticum (69a25-69b3) actually has an implied subject *different* from that of the main clause. Regardless of how one modifies Stanislav's statistics, the impression will remain that the DA with subject identical to that of the main clause is rare in OCS, with very few examples outside the Codex Suprasliensis.

²⁴ Stanislav actually counts 9 such examples from gospel manuscripts in his Table 2 (p. 88), but cites only 8 in his data.

1922:274) subject non-identity is again a general rule, though as in Greek and Lithuanian occasional exceptions do occur (Renou 1961:314). This being the case, it seems hardly an accidental pattern in our data that Slavic should also show a high proportion of instances of the DA with subject non-identity. We are clearly justified in defining subject non-identity to be a fundamental characteristic of the DA, and must therefore attempt to motivate exceptions as deviations from our basic or original rule.

From the preceding generalizations we can infer the essential nature of the DA in OCS. Specifically, for OCS (and, by assumption, for some period of Late Common Slavic and early Slavic yet to be determined), we may define the DA to be *the participial expression of subordination of one clause to another in appositive or adverbial function, where the subjects of the two clauses differ*²⁵. This definition ties together all of the crucial characteristics of the DA. It is the participial transform of a finite clause which represents a proposition backgrounded to some other proposition. As such it is like other (non-absolute) participial constructions which express the backgrounding of one proposition to another. It differs from non-absolute participial clauses which fulfill the backgrounding function in that its subject differs from that of the main clause. The use of the dative case in the DA is thus, as noted by Trost (1958), simply one instantiation of the more widespread use of the dative case to indicate the subject of a non-finite clause in Baltic and Slavic²⁶.

²⁵ We might also define the DA as *the participial expression of the backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another, where the subjects of the clauses representing those propositions differ*. In the following discussion I will use such "syntactic" and "communicative" definitions interchangeably. Note that in either type of definition it is unnecessary to stipulate that the DA is not introduced by a conjunction, since the presence of a conjunction at the "deepest" level of syntactic structure is assumed to trigger a finite or "full" clause.

²⁶ That this ultimately reflects a general meaning (Gesamtbedeutung) of the dative case, as argued by Andersen (1970), is likely, but goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

The definition I have given here of the nature of the Slavic DA is parallel and in large part identical to that given by Horn for the Latin ablative absolute. For him also, the ablative absolute is ultimately a backgrounding device (1918:13-14), while in syntactic terms it is the participial transform (actually abbreviation: Satzverkürzung) of a full sentence subordinated to another sentence, where the subjects of the two sentences differ. Essentially the same idea has more recently been applied to the Slavic DA by Berent in his 1974 dissertation.

There is an alternative hypothesis, under which the dative case of the subject is linked to its overt expression. Since the subject of a non-absolute participial clause must normally be omitted, while the subject of an absolute construction is omitted

5.0. The motivations for (those prohibiting conjunctions be suggested, cf. note 11) a

5.1. In the preceding discussion of grounding and syntactic subordination associated with one another, it is typical, this association is not. They are related to different dimensions with Berent to the extent that (by a speaker) as derived from (rather than subordinated) to avoid conflict or incongruity may be. A speaker may sense an implicit relationship between the two clauses at some underlying level. The subordinating relationship expresses the backgrounding of a coordinating conjunction clause, a main clause follows. In examples 9-11, would be a conflict between deep and surface, flattening the two parallel components. cf. note 13) which give rise to

5.2. Use of subordination

12 *egda otvръzъjъ sъ vъrade* (Clozianu)

represents a form of participial syntactic relationship (subordinate level of structure) which

very infrequently, this hypothesis of use of the dative case to its overt expression (dative + infinitive). A detailed discussion in this paper will have to await

²⁷ A different approach has been proposed by Horn who argues (albeit in regard to Latin) that the participial construction is just a "conjunction" as it is without overt conjunctions, though homology with conjunctions, are argued to have been introduced in examples such as *Ес. 10:45*.

5.0. The motivations for exceptions to the above-stated constraints (those prohibiting conjunctions and subject identity; others could also be suggested, cf. note 11) are not identical.

5.1. In the preceding discussion we have tacitly assumed that backgrounding and syntactic subordination are regularly and necessarily associated with one another. In fact, though it is expected and indeed typical, this association is not a necessary one, since the two concepts are related to different dimensions of linguistic structure. If we agree with Berent to the extent that absolute constructions can be interpreted (by a speaker) as derived syntactically from clauses coordinated with (rather than subordinated to) the main clause, it is possible that a conflict or incongruity may be perceived by a speaker. Specifically, the speaker may sense an implicit incongruity between the equality of two clauses at some underlying level of syntactic structure, and the subordinating relationship which holds in surface syntax and which expresses the backgrounding of one clause in relation to the other. Use of a coordinating conjunction to introduce a DA following a main clause, a main clause following a DA, or both DA and main clause, as in examples 9-11, would have the effect of overtly expressing this conflict between deep and surface syntax, and thus partially de-conflating the two parallel concepts (syntax and communicative structure; cf. note 13) which give rise to it²⁷.

5.2. Use of subordinating conjunctions, as in:

12 *egda otvrъzъšju se pōti, tako vъ sьmъrъtъ, godъ č(lověčъ)skъ vъpade* (Clozianus 595-597)

represents a form of partial redundancy. It reiterates the subordinating syntactic relationship (subordinating at least at the observable or surface level of structure) which is already indicated by the participial con-

very infrequently, this hypothesis encompasses a majority of the data, and ties the use of the dative case to its use with the subject of other non-finite clauses (i.e. dative + infinitive). A detailed comparison of this latter hypothesis to that offered in this paper will have to await another opportunity.

²⁷ A different approach has been advocated recently by Ferrand (1981, 1983), who argues (albeit in regard to non-absolute participial constructions), that what appear to be coordinating conjunctions in such constructions cannot be that, since a participial construction is just as strictly subordinated to its main clause with the "conjunction" as it is without it. Rather, the forms *i* or *a* associated with participial constructions, though homophonous with and derived from coordinating conjunctions, are argued to have developed into correlatives similar to modern Russian *то* in examples such as *Если любишь, то скажи* (example from Ferrand 1983: 45).

struction, while simultaneously specifying the type of subordinating relationship (temporal, causal, etc.).

Use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions with the DA thus represent two types of what Andersen (1973) has termed *variation rules* – a subtype of deductive implementational rules. As such they do not necessarily reflect any breakdown in the Common Slavic hypotactic system or decadence of the DA. Rather, they *implement* – i.e., provide an outward expression – of some covert structural relationship. It is to be expected that such instances will occur, though not regularly, as long as the DA remains an integral component of the Slavic syntactic system, expressing both a syntactic (subordination in cases of subject non-identity and lack of conjunction at the “deepest” level of structure) and communicative (backgrounding) function²⁸. A decided shift in favor of introduction of the DA by conjunctions, however, might signal loss of productivity of the syntactic process which generated the DA, while the external form of the construction remained in the consciousness of speakers (writers) as an available backgrounding device.

5.3. Finally, exceptions to the subject non-identity condition clearly involve change or variation in the function of the DA. By *definition* the DA must be considered a syntactic device, involving, as it did, variation in case (nominative subject – dative subject) and parts of speech (finite verbal predicate – participial or nominal predicate). However, its *function*, and more specifically its *motivating or conditioning factor*, was in part syntactic (subordination in instances of subject non-identity and lack of conjunction in “deep” syntax), but in part also communicative (backgrounding function). It was, as defined above, the participial expression of backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another, where the subjects of the clauses representing those propositions differed. Exceptions to the subject non-identity condition imply neutralization of the sole syntactic feature which differentiates the function of absolute and non-absolute participial constructions. In such examples the motivation for the DA is in essence purely communicative (a facultative means for the expression of backgrounding), since it is syntactically unmotivated. Examples of the DA in cases of subject identity thus give

²⁸ Just such a permanent coexistence of participial constructions with and without conjunctions (albeit in reference only to coordinating conjunctions) is asserted for Old East Slavic by Ferrand (1981:430).

This explanation implies, of course, that in a generative account a conjunction used with the DA would be considered to be inserted at some intermediate stage of the derivation.

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evidence of a tendency to simplify its definition from *a participial expression of the backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another in instances of subject non-identity to a participial expression of the backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another*. Competition between two definitions of the DA, one (original) motivated by backgrounding and subject non-identity, the other (presumably of later origin) conditioned by backgrounding alone, would in fact lead to a situation in which subject non-identity would be maintained in a majority of instances, though not so overwhelmingly as in OCS, and especially the OCS gospel texts. To the extent to which the earlier (syntactically and communicatively conditioned) definition was supplanted by the later (only communicatively conditioned) one, the proportion of examples with identical subjects would increase.

One other factor must also be taken into consideration in explaining change(s) in the nature of the DA. If we assume that the DA existed in Common Slavic, but at the time of the proto-language's break-up was already in a state of decadence tending ultimately toward disappearance of the construction (though at different rates in different languages or language groups, being maintained longest in East Slavic), then the period of decadence of the DA overlapped with the introduction into Slavic of literacy and the new stylistic levels associated with it. In such a situation, given both the already unsure intuition of Slavic translators and scribes concerning the use of the DA and the ubiquitous presence of the analogous genitive absolute in Greek textual models, there could easily have been a tendency on the part of literate individuals to re-interpret the DA as *a syntactic expression of the backgrounding of one proposition in relation to another in an elevated, literary, or otherwise bookish style*.

There are thus two hypothetical scenarios which would each lead to a situation in which subject non-identity was maintained as a tendency, though not as an absolute or nearly absolute rule. One involves simplification of the motivation for the DA by elimination of the syntactic conditioning factor while maintaining the communicative factor. The other involves this same simplification, but also compensation for loss of the syntactic conditioning factor by reference to a third dimension of linguistic structure – that of register and stylistic level²⁹.

²⁹ A possible objection would be that participles are characteristic of an elevated, bookish style regardless of whether they are used absolutely or not. This view may be anachronistic when applied to the 10th-11th centuries. Participles clearly predate the rise of literacy and the styles associated with it among the Slavs. Moreover, the

6. We have now defined several "original" (OCS, and presumably Late Common Slavic) constraints on the use of the DA and the significance of deviations from them (especially in terms of possible decadence of the construction). It remains to be seen how we expect such decadence to be reflected in Slavic dialect geography.

I will begin from the assumption that at or near the end of the Common Slavic period the DA was used throughout the Slavic linguistic territory³⁰. Let us further note that for innovations originating somewhere in the center of the Slavic linguistic territory (typically somewhere in the area of modern Czech and Slovak), East Slavic and East South Slavic often find themselves in the role of peripheral conservative zones (Shevelov 1964:610)³¹. Finally, as I have argued elsewhere (Corin 1994), OCS must be considered doubly peripheral. Not only does it emanate from the extreme southern periphery of the Slavic linguistic territory, but the extant texts represent the earliest attestations of a Slavic language in terms of both the age of the actual manuscripts and the date of origin of the Slavic-language texts contained in them. It is thus to be expected that OCS, as the most peripheral point on the

adverbial use of participles, later "fossilized" as undeclined gerunds, has never been entirely absent from colloquial usage.

³⁰ In this I differ from Polák (1948).

³¹ The concept of a central Slavic innovating center and periphery during the period of disintegrating Common Slavic is admittedly problematical. Such a central region, identifiable by a *radial* pattern of peripheries with respect to specific central innovations, is expected, and some innovations fitting this pattern have been identified (most discussion has centered around the lenition of compact voiced stops – cf. Andersen 1969, Timberlake 1981, also Jakobson 1962 and Issatschenko 1936, the latter containing a short history of the problem with further literature; but cf. Corin 1994, esp. 136-138, on the apparently central Slavic change of *početi* > *začeti*, etc.). Nevertheless, it must be admitted that a majority of early Slavic isoglosses follow different patterns (in fact a considerable variety of patterns; the complexity of the situation is indicated clearly by the map facing p. 608 in Shevelov 1964 and associated discussion). Despite the difficulty in defining the spacial and temporal coordinates of this putative central area during the final phase of not quite pan-Slavic innovations (e.g. whether it should include the area of modern Czech and Slovak, or only the latter; for a recent discussion of the place of Slovak in disintegrating Common Slavic see Birnbaum 1990), and what innovations or isoglosses are to be associated with it, the idea appears to have both intuitive and empirical validity, and thus merits a thorough investigation and discussion. At the minimum, it will probably emerge that there is an area, roughly identifiable with modern Czech and Slovak, in which far more Late Common Slavic or disintegrating Common Slavic innovations intersect than in the remaining areas of Slavic, though such a conclusion would not by itself imply the existence at any time of a central Slavic innovating center.

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Slavic time-space grid, will show an archaic situation even in comparison to other early Slavonic literacies, while OES will manifest a more innovative situation, and the most innovative situation will be found in Czech and/or Slovak.

What we know about the distribution of the DA in Slavic conforms in large part to this pattern for central Slavic innovations. The DA was obviously a regular feature of the OCS texts, while deviations from the "canonical" constraints of subject non-identity and lack of conjunction are relatively infrequent. It is significant that 65 out of 73 total examples with like subjects are from the Codex Suprasliensis (cf. Stanislav 62-65, 79-81, 84), which is the youngest both in terms of the origin of the manuscript itself and the date of translation of its texts. While all eight examples in the gospel manuscripts (from only three locations in Luke, incidentally: 10,38, Zogr.; 17,11, Zogr., Mar.; 17,14, Zogr, Mar., Ostr., Assem., Sav.) can be explained away on the basis of difficulties in translating the Greek original, not all of the examples in Suprasliensis are amenable to such an explanation. For example, various researchers (Margulíés 1927:143-4, Stanislav 1934:27) have noted examples in which the DA corresponds to a Greek nominative participle agreeing with the subject of the main clause. While the Suprasliensis surely cannot be considered a pristine document of the linguistic consciousness of Bulgarian Slavs in the eleventh century (see especially Leskien 1909: 445-8), it is clear that some factor was to a certain extent counteracting the subject non-identity condition (which, it should be borne in mind, was still observed in 90% of examples). We can say very little else about the history of the DA in the South Slavic languages, except that a fossilized remnant of it *may* be retained in Bulgarian dialects in the form of the final *-em/-um* of the gerundial suffix, cf. Mladenov (1979:290).

If loss of the DA were a central Slavic innovation, we would expect to find the fewest remnants of it in West Slavic. This is indeed the case³². A number of examples of both genitive and dative absolute constructions have been reported in Old Czech literature (as early as Miklosich 1883:616-17, who also noted the presence of genitive and dative absolute constructions in Old Polish). These examples regularly translate Latin ablative absolutes, and this has led some researchers to

³² It must be borne in mind, however, that West Slavic languages are attested only from several centuries later than East and South Slavic. A direct comparison of the earliest attested West, East and South Slavic situations, though it is hardly avoidable, may lead to misleading conclusions.

consider them as no more than an obvious borrowing of a Latin syntactic construction (cf. Gebauer 1929:367, 397), perhaps in combination with influence from Church Slavonic (on the latter possibility, cf. Vondrák 1893, also Sreznevskij 1959:62-3). Nevertheless, as was pointed out by Vondrák, only some of the Old Czech DA's derive from examples in which the Latin ablative case might have been misinterpreted as dative, while for other examples there is no satisfactory explanation for the Slavic dative absolute construction other than that the translator possessed in his own linguistic consciousness a dative absolute construction³³.

7.0. The DA in East Slavic. We expect that OES literacy will preserve the DA in a more innovative or decadent state than OCS, but better than West Slavic (though cf. note 32). In fact, for East Slavic we have evidence not only of literary usage, but limited evidence as well of use in the spoken language (cf. § 2.4, 3.1 and note 12). The DA did indeed tend to fall out of use in the vernacular, though the rate at which this took place in various dialects is not known. As far as textual evidence is concerned, the DA remained in use as a bookish device throughout the pre-modern period. It was known as such even to Lomonosov (who lamented its virtual disappearance from the language: 1952:567³⁴), while the most recent literary use of the construction dates from the early nineteenth century. It must be emphasized that the DA appears not only in Church Slavonic-based literature, but also in a text translated from Polish into Ukrainian in the sixteenth century (Ohienko 1930:415-17), in early Belorussian legal documents (cf. Bulaxovskij 1958:440), as well as in Ukrainian folk literature.

³³ A surer indication of loss (or at least absence) of the DA in the language of a translator would be the appearance of an *instrumental absolute* to render the Latin ablative absolute, which is indeed attested in Old Czech (Gebauer 1929:421), as well as sporadically in Croatian Glagolitic manuscripts.

It is not only the elimination of the DA which seems likely to have occurred earliest in a central Slavic innovating center (probably within the area of modern Czech or Slovak; see the discussion in note 31). Spread of participial constructions (absolute and non-absolute alike) consisting of "finite clause + *a* + participial clause" may also have had its innovative center in Czech, as Jagić conjectured (1900:71) and the discussion in Večerka (1961:136) seems to confirm.

³⁴ Lomonosov felt that only relics of the DA remained possible in the language of his time: "И хотя еще есть некоторые того остатки, российскому слуху чуждые, как: *бывшу мнѣ на морѣ, восстала сильная буря*, однако прочие из употребления вышли. В высоких стилях можно, по моему мнению, с рассуждением некоторые принять" (1952:567).

Clearly, decadence of OES literacy is not equi-
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³⁵ Decadence of the DA, o-
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stojaišča, rucě že na n(e)bo vьz-
(55d26-56a2; cf. also 66a6-12)
is clearly being used without
subordination in a series of co-

Statistics to which I refer
corpus of data from the three
DA was clearly intended, re-
Examples are thus included in
(16c1-12, 20d23-29, 55d26-56a2)
those rare examples in which
ending (37c8-13, 45a10-17).
abbreviation, corruption of the
to determine whether or not
(29a7-9, 33a15-17, 40d3-4, 45a10-17,
58c1, 61c32-61d3, 65c16-20).
main clause, subordinate DA of
an expressed subject (in 59c1)

Clearly, decadence of the construction which can be observed in OES literacy is not equivalent to its loss. Rather, decadence is manifested as an apparent relaxation of the constraints on its use, as evinced by *expansion*, rather than narrowing, of its distribution. If the DA was indeed undergoing a process of decadence in the first centuries of separate life of the Slavic languages, it should be the case that the “canonical” constraints of subject non-identity and conjunctionless usage were better maintained in the earliest texts than in later ones. While a representative sampling of texts from various centuries, geographic settings and genres goes well beyond the scope of the present discussion, I have for the purposes of this paper analyzed the use of the DA in the East Slavic texts of the *Uspenskij sbornik* – the “*Skazanije* of Boris and Gleb,” “*Skazanije* of Roman and David,” (i.e. the miracles of Boris and Gleb), and Nestor’s “Life of Theodosius.” These are the earliest extant versions of texts of East Slavic origin (with the exception of certain short texts such as birchbark documents). In the following sections I will first examine the fate of the “canonical” constraints in these texts, and will then give a more general characterization of the form and use of the DA in them. It will be seen that our expectations are indeed met – i.e. that the same constraints are present as in OCS, though the proportion of exceptions is in each case significantly higher³⁵.

³⁵ Decadence of the DA, or at least a shift from its original syntactic motivation toward a non-syntactic one, can be inferred not only from its “positive” distribution (i.e. the instances of its actual occurrence), but also from examples in which the DA is expected but does not occur, e.g. “i se uvěděvъ s(ve)topľkъ poslavъ dva varjaga i probodosta i mečъmъ vъ s(ъ)rdce,” (12d7-10); cf. also 13b7-10, as well as probably 47d15-22. The same inference can be drawn from “i se jako vъzrěvъ vidě přepodobъnaago theodosija vъ světě tomъ, posrědě manastyrja přědъ c(ъ)rkviju stojasča, *ručě že na n(e)bo vъzdvěvšju i m(o)l(i)tvu kъ b(og)u prilěžъno tvorjasča,*” (55d26-56a2; cf. also 66a6-12), in which the DA (with its dative subject omitted!) is clearly being used without syntactic motivation in order to vary the form of subordination in a series of coordinated participial clauses.

Statistics to which I refer in the following discussion are based on my entire corpus of data from the three texts under study. I excerpted all examples in which a DA was clearly intended, regardless of certain aberrations from its usual form. Examples are thus included in which the dative subject of the participle is omitted (16c1-12, 20d23-29, 55d26-56a2, 57d25-30, 59d20-32, 65d29-66a5, 66a6-12), and those rare examples in which the participle has a long (pronominal) adjectival ending (37c8-13, 45a10-17). Examples in which it is impossible (either because of abbreviation, corruption of the text, or the possibility of a governed interpretation) to determine whether or not a DA was intended were not included in the corpus (29a7-9, 33a15-17, 40d3-4, 42d31-43a7, 56a19-29, 56c10-18, 56d20-27, 58b25-58c1, 61c32-61d3, 65c16-20). Where more than one DA is subordinated to a single main clause, subordinate DA constructions are counted separately if they each have an expressed subject (in 59c14-28 “i blaženomu theodosiju načъnъšju gl(agol)ati

of examples in which it is not unambiguously clear whether the DA is to be construed as belonging to the preceding or following main clause, e.g.:

- 13 ang(e)li bo běša pojušče vь nei, oněmь mnjaščemь jako bratii polunoščnoje pěníje sьvьrьđajuščemь, i tako paky otidoša, (46d12-17)
- 14 i tako jedinoju vsja pretьrgnjaxu se, a ljudьmь zovuščemь küreleisonь, i bjaše množьstvo mnogo po vsemu gradu i po stěnamь, ... (25d27-32)

A qualitative difference from OCS is the existence of clear, if infrequent, examples in which a coordinating conjunction introduces a DA linking it with a preceding main clause ("main clause + conjunction + DA"; cf. ex. 9, also 11a7-14, 16c1-12, 23a5-9, 25d8-18, 29b20-24, 38b3-16, 43b21-24, 43c30-d1, 58b11-16, 62b27-c2, 66b5-14, perhaps also 46c10-17). Such examples are not attested in OCS.

There is also little doubt that examples in which a main clause is linked by a coordinating conjunction to a preceding DA ("DA + conjunction + main clause" or "conjunction + DA + conjunction + main clause"), e.g.:

- 15 vь siju noščь sědešči mi u c(ь)rkve i priidosta dvě unoši krasna, (22a15-17)
- 16 I ešče že suščemь vь c(ь)rkvi na s(vę)těi liturgii, knezju že i mitropolitu i bě čl(o)v(ě)кь tu xromь, (20a25-28)

are more prevalent than in OCS. It is impossible to give precise statistics, due to the large number of examples in which the bracketing of a sentence or period cannot be determined precisely. However, if we consider only those examples in which the DA clearly precedes its main clause and is immediately dependent upon it (i.e., it is not dependent upon some intervening subordinate or participial clause), and exclude from consideration all those in which the coordinating conjunction does not clearly link the two (e.g., those with the structure "conjunction + DA + main clause"), we find that the main clause is linked to a preceding DA by a coordinating conjunction in between one third and one half of examples. Some sections of connected text have an overwhelming preponderance of examples without a conjunction or with a conjunction, but for the *Skazanija* and the "Life of Theodosius"

in their entirety this was the approximate proportion obtained.³⁶ For OCS, in contrast, Stanislav's data contain only twelve certain examples of the structure "DA + coordinating conjunction + main clause," or "coordinating conjunction + DA + coordinating conjunction + main clause," with a similar number of possible though uncertain examples³⁷.

7.3. Subject non-identity. As can be seen from examples such as 13, there are similar difficulties in counting the number of examples of the DA with a subject identical to that of the main clause. If the DA in example 13 is construed as belonging to the preceding main clause, their subjects are different, while if it is construed as belonging to the following main clause their subjects are identical. If we eliminate from consideration four examples from the "Life of Theodosius" in which we cannot determine whether the DA and main clause have identical subjects – 43a7-16, 43b2-3 (daleče jemu suščju otъ grada), 46d13-16 (the DA beginning with "oněmъ mnjaščemъ ..."), and 46d22-26 – there remain 36 with like subjects out of a total of 238 examples, i.e. a proportion of 15%³⁸. In the two *Skazanija*, after eliminating one example (20d23-29) in which a like subject is probable but not certain, we have 5 with like subjects out of a total of 60 – a proportion of 8.3%³⁹. Overall, then, we have 41 out of 298 examples with like subjects, for a proportion of 13.8%.

As noted above, some researchers have either denied the existence of a subject non-identity condition in OES (Belorussov), or at least pointed to a broader use of the DA in OES in instances of subject identity. Gūldenstube, for example, states that the DA in the Primary Chronicle appears *just as* often [*"ebenso häufig,"* emphasis in original,

³⁶ Cf. the similar statistics given by Ferrand (1981:432-3) for non-absolute participial constructions in OES, including those with the structure "main clause + coordinating conjunction + participle," which is quite rare in OCS.

³⁷ As noted above, though, there are a larger number of non-absolute participial constructions of the type "participle + coordinating conjunction + main clause."

³⁸ There are several examples which I counted as having unlike subjects (31c12-20, 37c8-13 – the DA beginning "въsjakomu že хотjaščju ...," 55d15-22, 61d14-21) or like subjects (28d21-32, 64c19-25, 65a32-65b10), since that interpretation seemed to be clearly intended in the given context, though the opposite might also be maintained as a most unlikely alternative. Even if all of these examples were disregarded, the overall statistics for the remaining examples would not be significantly different (proportion with like subjects is still 14%). The several examples in which the DA cannot be considered to be subordinated to any main clause (examples 21-23) are grouped together with examples having unlike subjects.

³⁹ Yet even one of the 5 "certain" examples results clearly from corruption of the text (8v26-28: "i bystъ otъ dъvoju c(ěsar)ju i bratu suščju").

A. C.] with like subjects. Kuznecov 1963:445, S non-identity remained truth would seem to be tendency, though it was ignored entirely. The D so that it is not possible proportion of examples texts⁴⁰. However, just data, in which:

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7.4. General charact *Uspenskij sbornik*. If variety of contexts in th OCS. The two *Skazan* folia of text, while th across 41 1/2 folia. Th the entire Codex Supr

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⁴¹ Cf. Gūldenstube's of the DA in cases of sub pansion of usage, which w

A. C.] with like subjects (1923:242-4). Others (e.g. Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963:445, Stecenko 1977:127) have insisted that subject non-identity remained the rule throughout the pre-modern period. The truth would seem to be that subject non-identity remained a strong tendency, though it was by no means inviolable and could at times be ignored entirely. The DA in OES has not been systematically sampled, so that it is not possible to reach firm conclusions concerning the proportion of examples with like subjects across the full range of OES texts⁴⁰. However, just such a situation as is suggested by the available data, in which:

- a) the earliest Slavic texts show the fewest exceptions,
- b) more exceptions become possible in later (specifically East Slavic) texts,
- c) subject non-identity nevertheless remains a tendency throughout the history of the DA,

is what we would predict given our supposition of a long period of decadence characterized by:

- d) gradual loosening of the constraints which held in OCS (and Common Slavic), and
- e) tension between two or more definitions of the DA (cf. § 5.3, 7.4, 8)⁴¹.

Of course, much more data will have to be gathered from texts of various genres, centuries and geographical settings, before the developmental tendency suggested here (and its chronology) can be considered conclusively proven. It may turn out to be the case that a statistical shift can be shown only between OCS and OES, but not between East Slavic texts of various periods.

7.4. General characterization of the DA in the East Slavic texts of the *Uspenskij sbornik*. If anything, the DA is used more and in a broader variety of contexts in the oldest original East Slavic literary texts than in OCS. The two *Skazanija* contain 61 examples of the DA across 17 1/2 folia of text, while the "Life of Theodosius" contains 242 examples across 41 1/2 folia. This may be compared to a total of 632 examples in the entire Codex Suprasliensis, which contains by far the greatest con-

⁴⁰ Except that the apparent total absence of the DA in textual genres supposedly close to the vernacular has been noted often in the literature.

⁴¹ Cf. Gldenstbbe's (1923:244-5) similar conclusion that the widespread use of the DA in cases of subject identity in the Primary Chronicle represents an *expansion* of usage, which was originally limited to instances with unlike subjects.

centration of DA's among OCS manuscripts (cf. Stanislav 1934:93).

In fact, there would seem to be not only a quantitative, but also a qualitative difference between the use of the DA in OCS and early East Slavic. We have already noted a certain loosening of the "cardinal" constraints of subject non-identity and conjunctionless usage. The syntactic functions of the DA are also noticeably expanded from what is attested in OCS. For OCS Stanislav noted examples of temporal, causal, hypothetical (conditional), concessive, and consecutive meaning. While one can argue about the boundary line between these meanings and the proper designation for individual examples, it is clear that all except the last (which is attested incidentally in only eleven examples from eight textual locations, six of which are from *Suprasliensis*) are adverbial meanings closely related to temporal meaning, referring almost always to actions either temporally or logically anterior to the that of the main verb (cf. Berent 1974 passim on anteriority as a consistent feature of the meaning of the DA in OCS). In the original East Slavic texts of the *Uspenskij sbornik*, in contrast, alongside one clear example in consecutive meaning:

- 17 i tako ukrasi dobrě jako ne mogu sьkazati onogo uxyšrenija po dostojaniju do vьlně, jako mnogomъ prihodjaščetъ i otъ grьkь i otъ iněxъ že zemlě i gl(agola)ti, ... (24c30-d3)

there are DA constructions which represent manner clauses, unlike any examples encountered in OCS:

- 18 i oněmъ že stavьšetъ na poščьněmъ stanovišči, blaženyi že ne doida jako i zьrěimo ixъ tu že opočivaše, jedinomu bogu sьbljudajuščju i, (31a20-25)
- 19 Тьгда же о(ть)сѣ нашъ theodosii нарѣливъ сѣ d(u)xa s(ve)t(a)go, načatъ bl(a)godatiju b(o)žijeju podvizati sѣ, jako že vьseliti tomu vь drugoje město, pomagajušču tomu s(ve)tomu d(u)xi, ... (60c19-25)

Cf. also 52a20-25. Even more significantly, in twelve examples the DA clearly represents the complement of a verb of speaking, hearing, thinking or seeing (in seven of these instances the DA is introduced by *jako* and *jako že*), e.g.:

- 20 xulu bo nanosiši na rodъ svoi i ne trьplju bo slyšati otъ vьsěxъ ukarejemu ti suščju, (29c9-14)
- 21 jegda vidite vьsę blagaja umnožajuščae sę vь manastyri semъ,

vědite jako bl
30)

Cf. also 23a9-16, 29
46d3-7, 46d12-17, 56

- 22 i poklonenije
še glasъ xlo
imъ na kole
ščemъ, i ině
ščemъ, jako ž
d(u)xovъ,

in which the conjunc
if.' Other examples c
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60d30-61a13, 62b27-
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As illustrated abo
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main clause precede
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the role of a main cla

- 23 tače posylajet
lity tomu prit
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graphic break
onъ/onъ že p
- 24 ... Sicevo pr
mu theodosij
stijemъ i čist
podvigъmъ is
set off graphi
beginning and

25 Tože ... vь p

vědite *jako blizь vladyky n(e)b(e)sьnaago mi suščju*, (63d25-30)

Cf. also 23a9-16, 29b1-4, 30c19-24, 43d23-32, 45b4-7, 46c32-d3, 46d3-7, 46d12-17, 56b24-31, 57b7-15, as well as the similar example:

22 *i poklonenije tvorja, sědьšju že jemu jako že reče sja i se slyšaa-še glasъ xlorota vь peščerě otъ množьstva běsovъ, jako že se imъ na kolesnicaxъ ěduščemъ, drugyimъ že vь bubьny bijuščemъ, i iněmъ že vь sopěli sopusščemъ, i tako vsěmъ kličjuščemъ, jako že trjasti sja peščerě, otъ množьstva plišča zьlyixъ d(u)xovъ*, (38b3-16)

in which the conjunction *jako že* could perhaps best be translated 'as if.' Other examples can also be found in which the action of the DA is in no sense prior to that of the main clause: 58b11-16, 59d20-32, 60d30-61a13, 62b27-c2, 62c9-10. Such examples, as noted above, are quite rare in OCS.

More generally, the DA tends to participate in sentences or periods of greater complexity than is normal in OCS. This complexity makes it difficult at times to parse DA constructions unambiguously, and, as we have already seen, occasionally makes it difficult to discern whether or not they obey the "canonical" constraints of lack of conjunction and subject non-identity.

As illustrated above, in some examples it is unclear which clause should be considered the DA's main clause, and whether in fact the main clause precedes or follows the DA. In several instances the question seems to be irrelevant, as the DA is clearly being utilized in the role of a main clause, even advancing the plot-line of a story:

23 *tače posylajetъ (knjazь) kь blaženomu (theodosiju), ašče poveděti tomu priti vь manastyрь svoi, ili ni, onomu že poveděvьšiu tomu priti ...* (59b12-18, followed by four dots and a major graphic break in the text; the DA stands in place of expected: *i onъ/onъ že povedě tomu priti* or similar)

24 *... Sicevo pr(ě)p(o)d(o)bьnomu i přěblaženomu o(tь)cju našemu theodosiju, pasuščju stado svoje, sь vьsěkyimъ bl(a)gočьstijemъ i čistotoju, i ješče že i žitije svoe sь vьzdbьržanijemъ i podvigьmъ ispravljajuščju ...* (57d15-24; this section of text is set off graphically by punctuation and initial letters at both the beginning and end; there is no main or matrix clause!)

25 *Tože ... vь malo lětъ sьzьdana bystь c(ь)rky, i manastyрь*

съграженъ, i tu že vьsěmъ přěšdъšemъ, vъ onomъ že městě
jako že reče se, malu ixъ ostavъšju, imъ že obyčaj usypajuščiju
bratiju tu pogrěbati, (66b5-17)

Cf. also 22d4-10, 35d21-27, 47b16-25, and possibly several others. These last examples suggest that yet a further definition of the DA competed in OES with those mentioned above. Here even the communicative motivation of the construction (viz. backgrounding) is eliminated, leaving only stylistic considerations as a conditioning factor. In other words, under this most innovative interpretation the DA represents merely a stylistically marked alternative to a finite main clause, available to authors at their discretion in appropriate (presumably bookish or literary) contexts.

8. Conclusions. The difficulties inherent in studying the DA, due in large part to its almost total disappearance from the Slavic vernaculars and limited distribution even in older texts (limited in terms of the genres in which it is attested), are indeed formidable, so much so that it is tempting to avoid the problem by concluding that this was not an autochthonous Slavic construction. Nevertheless, we can go a long way toward establishing the DA's original meanings or functions, its distribution, and even the process of its decadence, at least in OCS and OES. Originally a syntactically defined and in part syntactically motivated construction – the participial transform of a clause whose subject differed from that of the main clause – the DA in the historical period came to be interpreted more and more as a backgrounding device which could be used regardless of subject non-identity, and especially in a literary or otherwise elevated context. Secondary consequences of this reinterpretation were an increase in the number and variety of examples in which the DA was accompanied by conjunctions, both subordinating and coordinating, and an expansion of the subordinating functions which the DA was able to express. Finally, and perhaps in part due to the increased use of the DA especially with coordinating conjunctions, it became possible to eliminate even communicative considerations from the motivation of the DA, thus allowing it to become merely a stylistically marked alternate form of a main clause. As early as the Uspenskij sbornik, all three of these interpretations had become possible, and they remained in competition, as best we can tell at this time, throughout the history of the construction. While the DA became ever more and more a bookish device, ever less a feature of colloquial usage, its decadence was reflected in those written genres of which it

was characteristic not only of the vernacular, but quite the contrary, of the written language. The constraints on its use in OCS.

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was characteristic not by an ever more restricted distribution and frequency, but quite the opposite – by a gradual loosening of the original constraints on its use which had existed in Late Common Slavic and OCS.

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