

PREDICATIVE POSSESSION IN OLD CHURCH SLAVIC BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Three different encoding strategies for predicative possession were available in Old Church Slavic (OCS). The verb *iměti* ‘have’ was the most frequent and least semantically and syntactically restricted strategy. Two additional existential constructions were used to express predicative possession: 1) the dative predicative possessive construction (PPC): a dative possessor, a ‘be’ verb (may be null), and a nominative possessum (genitive under negation); and 2) the *u* + genitive PPC: a possessor in the “locative” prepositional phrase *u* ‘at/near’ + genitive, a ‘be’ verb (may be null), and a nominative possessum (genitive under negation). The dative PPC is well-attested with a number of fixed constructions and with a particular set of possessums, e.g. kinship relations and abstract possessums. The *u* + genitive PPC is only marginally attested for encoding predicative possession, appearing in a few contexts in order to emphasize the transient temporal nature of the possessor-possessum relationship.

[1] INTRODUCTION

Predicative or sentential possession is the encoding of possession on the level of the clause. In the majority of (Western) European languages, predicative possession is simply encoded by a ‘have’ verb. In English, for example, predicative possession is expressed with the verb *have*, e.g. *Jane has a book*. However, in many other languages (in and outside of Europe), another construction type is used, e.g. an existential construction with the verb ‘be’ and the possessor in an oblique noun phrase. Such was the case in Proto Indo-European (PIE), which used a ‘be’ verb and a dative possessor with the possessum in the nominative case controlling verb agreement (Meillet 1923, 9; Vondrák 1908, 363). This construction was carried over into several PIE daughter languages, e.g. *mihi est* in Latin. ‘Have’ verbs developed in the histories of the independent Indo-European languages: first in Greek, then elsewhere (Isačenko 1974, 44–45).

The earliest Slavic texts include 9th century translations of the first four books of the New Testament from Greek into OCS (a Bulgarian dialect of Late Proto-Slavic (LPS)). These texts provide evidence that there were three encoding options for

predicative possession in OCS, which are shown in (1)–(3). The most frequent construction in OCS is the verb *iměti* ‘have’ in (1). Two other constructions used in LPS were existential PPCs with the possessum in the nominative case controlling verb agreement. In the first of these constructions, shown in (2), the possessor was in the dative case. Another encoding strategy for predicative possession in OCS was the *u* + genitive prepositional construction shown in (3). *U* is a preposition meaning ‘at’ or ‘near’, and governs the genitive case.¹ Though some scholars (e.g. [Veenker 1967](#)) assume that this PPC developed only in Russian or East Slavic, textual evidence from not only East Slavic, but also OCS ([Xodova 1966](#); [Mirčev 1971](#)), Old Czech ([McAnallen Forthcoming](#)), Old Serbian and Croatian ([Vasilev 1973](#)), and Middle Bulgarian ([Mirčev 1971](#)), demonstrate that *u* + genitive was already used to encode predicative possession throughout the dialects of Late Proto-Slavic, though it was a peripheral construction that was restricted in its usage.

- (1) ašte biste imě-li věřo ěko zručno gorjušeno...
if COND.2PL have-PTCP.PL faith-ACC.SG as grain-ACC.SG mustard-ACC.SG
‘if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed’ (Lk 17:6)²
- (2) ašte bōdetŭ eter-u člověk-u 100 ovečŭ...
if be-FUT.3SG certain-DAT.SG person-DAT.SG 100 sheep-GEN.PL
‘if a man have an hundred sheep’ (Mt 18:12)³
- (3) ašte bōdetŭ ou eter-a člověk-a 100 ovečŭ...
if be-FUT.3SG at certain-GEN.SG person-GEN.SG 100 sheep-GEN.PL
‘if a man have an hundred sheep’ (Mt 18:12)⁴

Both NT Greek and Latin of the Vulgate employ a ‘have’ verb and a dative PPC, i.e. constructions parallel to (1) and (2) in OCS, for predicative possession. Greek and Latin, however, have no location-based encoding strategy comparable to *u* + genitive in (3).

In many areas of syntax, including predicative possession, OCS Bible translations preserve the source syntax of New Testament (NT) Greek quite faithfully. Consequently, examples of predicative possession that deviate from the NT Greek source syntax are not numerous. However, the fact that divergent examples occur and, perhaps more importantly, that certain consistencies arise among the divergences shows that the texts were not translated slavishly, and furthermore validates their

[1] [Stassen \(2009\)](#) puts both dative PPCs and location-based PPCs of the type *u* + genitive together under the category “Locational Possessives.” I understand the reason for this grouping for a large-scale typological survey, but find it necessary to analyze the two constructions separately in a fine-grained analysis of predicative possession within one language.

[2] *Codex Marianus*; ‘have’ verb also in Greek original, cf. (5a).

[3] *Codex Marianus*; non-PPC construction in Greek original, cf. (9a).

[4] *Codex Assemanianus* ([Xodova \(1966\)](#) brought this example to my attention); non-PPC construction in Greek original, cf. (9a).

relevance for studying early Slavic semantics and syntax. There is no doubt that NT Greek influenced early Slavic writing (Mrázek 1963, 243); in the domain of predicative possession, however, Greek influenced the frequency of Slavic constructions but did not dictate the full range of encoding strategies in OCS. In the cases where Slavic diverges from the Greek, it is possible to make some determination about the functional domains of the Slavic constructions as distinct from Greek. As I argue below, the motivations for the deviations can be attributed primarily to the different semantic range of the encoding strategies in OCS versus Greek. That is, OCS carved out the semantic space of predicative possession somewhat differently than NT Greek. Not only semantic, but also syntactic differences emerge in the OCS divergences from the Greek original. This is especially clear when Slavic uses a PPC where Greek does not, which consistently results in an increase in the number of arguments in the Slavic construction (two in OCS versus one in Greek). This is addressed in section [2.4] below.

[2] EXAMPLES OF PREDICATIVE POSSESSION IN OCS

The OCS Bible translations used in this analysis are the first four books of the New Testament from *Codex Marianus*. Examples from other codices—in particular other Glagolitic codices: *Assemanianus* and *Zographensis*, and the somewhat later OCS codices written in Cyrillic: the *Ostromir Gospel* and the *Savvina Kniga*—are used when they differ significantly from *Codex Marianus*. All texts are compared to the NT Greek source text.

The majority of PPCs in OCS match NT Greek. As (4) shows, there are dative PPCs in both Greek and OCS, and OCS *iměti* ‘have’ corresponds to Greek *ekho* in (5).⁵ Note that for examples in all the tables below, the relevant PPC is underlined, and the possessum is italicized where relevant. Passages not containing a PPC that correlate to passages containing a PPC are doubly underlined.

- (4) a. καὶ οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τέκνον καθότι ἦν ἡ
and NEG was-IMPF.3SG them-DAT.PL child because was-IMPF.3SG ART
Ἑλισάβετ στεῖρα καὶ ἀμφότεροι προβεβηκότες ἐν
Elisabeth-NOM.SG barren-NOM.SG and both advanced-PTCP in
ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτῶν ἦσαν
the-DAT.PL day-DAT.PL them-GEN.PL were-IMPF.3PL
- b. i ne bě ima čęda poneže bě elisavetĩ
and not was-AOR.3SG them-DAT.DU child for was-AOR.3SG Elisabeth
neplody i oba zamatorěvűša vĩ dñnexű svoixű
fruitless-NOM.SG and both advanced-NOM.DU in day-LOC.PL REFL.LOC.PL

[5] All subsequent OCS examples correspond to *Codex Marianus* unless indicated otherwise.

běašete

were-IMPF.3DU

‘And they did not have a child for Elisabeth was infertile and both were advanced in their days.’ [lit. ‘there was no child to them’] (Lk 1:7)

- (5) a. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος εἰ ἔχετε πίστιν ὡς
say-AOR.3SG and ART Lord if have-PRS.2PL faith-ACC.SG as
κόκκον σινάπεως ἐλέγετε ἅν τῇ
grain-ACC.SG mustard-GEN.SG say-IMPF.2PL PRT ART.DAT.SG
συκαμίνῳ ταύτῃ ἐκρίζωθῃτι καὶ φυτεύθῃτι
sycamine_tree-DAT.SG this-DAT.SG uproot-IMP.AOR and plant-IMP.AOR
ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ καὶ ὑπήκουσεν ἅν ὑμῖν
in ART.DAT.SG sea-DAT.SG and obey-AOR.3PL PRT you-DAT.2PL
- b. reče že gū ašte biste iměli věř
say-AOR.3SG thus Lord-NOM.SG if COND.2PL have-PTCP.PL faith-ACC.SG
ěko zrūno gorjušino glali biste oubo
as grain-ACC.SG mustard-ACC.SG speak-PTCP COND.2PL even
sūkamině sei vžderi se i vūsadi se
sycamine_tree-DAT.SG this-DAT.SG pluck-IMP REFL and plant-IMP REFL
vū more i poslousāla bi vasū
in sea-ACC.SG and obey-PTCP COND.3SG you-ACC.PL
‘The Lord said, “If you have faith as a grain of mustard, you would say to this sycamine tree: ‘pluck yourself and plant yourself in the sea,” and it would obey you.”’ (Lk 17:6)

Table 1 on page 159 gives all occurrences of PPCs in the Book of Luke for OCS *Codex Marianus* and NT Greek. Since NT Greek is the source language for the Bible text, the table is structured to display this directionality: from source text to translated text.

Despite the large number of constructions in OCS that match the NT Greek source text, divergences do occur. These divergences fall into one of the following three groups:

- A. Greek PPC → no PPC in OCS
- B. Greek PPC → different PPC in OCS
- C. No PPC in Greek → PPC in OCS

In sections [2.1]–[2.3] below I discuss examples from each of these three groups in turn.

PPC in source text	NT Greek	→	PPC in OCS Codex Marianus
'Have' PPC	77	→	67 Have (+1 ambig.)
		→	9 No PPC
Dative PPC	16 (+4 ambig.)	→	14 Dative (+4 ambig.)
		→	1 Have
		→	1 No PPC
No PPC	NA	→	7 Have
		→	2 Dative (+2 ambig.)
		→	1 u + gen. (+1 ambig.)

TABLE 1: Inventory of PPCs in the Book of Luke

[2.1] *Divergence Type A: Greek PPC → No PPC in OCS*

In divergence type A Greek uses a PPC, but Slavic does not. There are nine instances of this type of divergence in *Codex Marianus*. Five of the nine divergences in *Codex Marianus* are accounted for by one systematic replacement: the verb *trěbovati* 'need, require' in OCS for the construction 'have need' in NT Greek, as shown in example (6).

- (6) a. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς οὐ
and answer-PTCP ART Jesus-NOM.SG say-AOR.3SG to them-ACC.PL NEG
χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ
need-ACC.SG have-PRS.3PL the_ones-NOM.PL
ὑγιαίνοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλὰ οἱ
being_healthy-PTCP.NOM.PL doctor-GEN.SG but the_ones-NOM.PL
κακῶς ἔχοντες
ill-ADV have-PTCP.NOM.PL
'And answering Jesus said to them, "The one who are healthy do not
have need of a doctor, but rather the ones having illness."
- b. i otŭvēštavŭ isŭ reče kŭ nimŭ ne
and answering-PTCP Jesus said-AOR.3SG to them-DAT NEG
trěboujotŭ sŭdravii vrača nŭ
require-PRS.3PL healthy_ones-PTCP.NOM.PL doctor-ACC.SG but
boleščeŭ
sick_ones-PTCP.NOM.PL
'And in reply Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy that require a
doctor, but the sick.'" (Lk 5:31)

Another systematic replacement is exemplified by the second occurrence of ‘have’ in (6): OCS substitutes the verb *bolěti* ‘be ill’ for Greek *kakōs ekhein* ‘be ill/poor’ (lit. ‘have badly’) (also in Lk 7:2).

[2.2] *Divergence Type B: Greek PPC → Different PPC in OCS*

Group B is the least frequent divergence type in OCS. The single example from *Codex Marianus* is (7), where a Greek dative PPC is translated with the Slavic verb ‘have’.

- (7) a. εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς δότε αὐτοῖς
say-AOR.3SG and to them-ACC.PL give-IMP.AOR them-DAT.3PL
φαγεῖν ὑμεῖς οἱ δὲ εἶπαν οὐκ εἰσὶν
eat-INF.AOR you-2PL they-NOM.PL but say-AOR.3PL NEG be-PRS.3PL
ἡμῖν πλεῖον ἢ ἄρτοι πέντε καὶ ἰχθύες δύο εἰ μήτι
US-DAT.1PL more than loaf-NOM.PL 5 and fish-NOM.PL 2 if not
πορευθέντες ἡμεῖς ἀγοράσωμεν εἰς πάντα τὸν
go-PTCP.AOR.PL we-NOM.1PL buy-SBJV.AOR.1PL for all-ACC.SG ART.ACC.SG
λαὸν τοῦτον βρώματα
people-ACC.SG this-ACC.SG food-ACC.PL
‘He said to them, “Give them something to eat,” and they said, “We have
here no more than five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we are to go and
buy for all these people foods.”’ [lit. ‘to us there is no more than...’]
- b. reče že kŭ nimŭ dadite imŭ vy ěsti oni že
said-AOR thus to them-DAT give-IMP them you-PL eat-INF they but
rešę ne imamŭ sŭde vęšte pęti xľěbŭ i rybou
saying NEG have-1PL here more 5-GEN bread-GEN.PL and fish-GEN.DU
ďŭvojř ašę oubou ne my šĭďŭše vo vĭše ľjudi
two-GEN.DU if for NEG we going-PTCP in all-ACC people-ACC
sije koupimŭ brašŭna
these-ACC.PL buy-1PL food-ACC.PL
‘He said to them, “Give them something to eat,” and they said, “We have
here no more than five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we are to go and
buy for all these people foods.”’ (Lk 9:13)

[2.3] *Divergence Type C: No PPC in Greek → PPC in OCS*

In still other examples, OCS uses a PPC where Greek does not, corresponding to type C in the list above. In *Codex Marianus* there are ten cases of this type of divergence in the Book of Luke, most often when *iměti* ‘have’ in OCS is used to translate a non-PPC construction in Greek. This type of divergence is exemplified by (8).

- (8) a. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπός τις ἦν ὕδρωπικός
 and behold man-NOM.SG some-NOM.SG was-IMPF.3SG dropsical-NOM.SG
 ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ
 before him-GEN.SG
 ‘And behold, a dropsical man was before him.’
 b. i se čl~vku edinŭ imy vodŭnyi trǫdŭ bě
 and here person single has-PTCP water-ACC.SG illness-ACC.SG was-AOR
 přědŭ nimŭ
 before him-INS.SG
 ‘And behold, a man having a water illness was before him’ (Lk 14:2)

The predicate in the Greek example ‘was dropsical’ is translated into OCS using a PPC with *iměti*: ‘having water illness’.

This last example and the set of divergences in group C as a whole exhibit an important point: OCS readily uses *iměti* ‘have’ in multiple contexts, even in passages where it is not dictated by the Greek original. This clearly shows that *iměti* was not only a well-developed construction for expressing predicative possession in LPS, but that it was also the most semantically and syntactically flexible PPC in OCS.

In (9), a Greek non-PPC⁶ is consistently translated in OCS with a PPC, but not always with the same PPC. The rare *u* + genitive construction appears in OCS *Codex Assemanianus* (9b) and a dative PPC appears in OCS *Codex Marianus* (9c).

- (9) a. Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ ἐὰν γένηται
 What-ACC.SG you-DAT.2PL think-PRS.3SG if happen-SBJ.AOR.3SG
τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἑκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ πλανηθῇ
 ART.DAT.SG man-DAT.SG 100 sheep-NOM.PL and wander-SBJ.AOR.3SG
 ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐχὶ ἀφείς τὰ
 one-NOM.SG of them-GEN.3PL NEG leave-PTCP.AOR.NOM.SG ART.ACC.PL
 ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη
 ninety nine on ART.ACC.PL mountain-ACC.PL
 πορευθεῖς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανώμενον
 go-PTCP.AOR.NOM.SG seek-PRS.3SG ART.ACC.SG wandering_one-ACC.SG
 ‘What do you think: if there happen upon any man one hundred sheep
 and one of them wanders away, should he leave ninety nine in the moun-
 tains and go look for the one that wandered?’

[6] This interpretation of the Greek syntax is based on published translations and interlinears, e.g. in the PROIEL database <http://foni.uio.no:3000/>; that is, nominative ‘sheep’ is interpreted as the subject of the verb ‘happen/become’ and dative ‘man’ is its object, as opposed to the alternate interpretation with the verb ‘happen’ as the main verb with a complement clause consisting of the nominative ‘sheep’, dative ‘man’ and a zero copula, or: ‘if it happens that a man has a hundred sheep’.

- b. čto se vamŭ mŭnitŭ ašte bŏdetŭ ou etera
 what REFL you-DAT.PL think if be-FUT.3SG at certain-GEN.SG
člověka p oveci i zablŏditŭ edina otŭ
 person-GEN.SG 100 sheep-GEN.PL and lose-PRES.3SG one from
 nixŭ ne ostavitŭ li devęti dešetŭ i devęti na
 them-GEN NEG remain-INF Q 9-GEN.SG 10-GEN.PL and 9-GEN.SG in
 goraxŭ i šedŭ išetŭ zablŏždišeę
 mountain-LOC.PL and go-PTCP look-PRS.3SG lost-one-PTPL.GEN.SG
 ‘What do you think, if a certain man has one hundred sheep and one of
 them is lost, should he not leave ninety nine in the mountains, and go
 out to look for the lost one?’ [lit. ‘if by a certain man are one hundred
 sheep’]⁷
- c. ašte bŏdetŭ eter-u člověk-u 100 ovec
 if be-FUT.3SG certain-DAT.SG person-DAT.SG 100 sheep-GEN.PL
 ‘...if a man has 100 sheep...’ [lit. ‘if to a certain man are 100 sheep’]⁸ (Mt
 18:12)

These examples suggest that OCS consistently interprets this as a relevant context for predicative possession, even when predicative possession is not encoded in the Greek source text.

A frequently reoccurring sub-construction that falls within the realm of the dative PPC is the construction for designating an individual’s name. The dative PPC for naming is attested in OCS, Old Czech, Old Russian and also in NT Greek and Latin (McAnallen *Forthcoming*). Occasionally this construction is used in OCS when a different construction is used in NT Greek, thus falling into group C. Such an example is (10) where OCS uses the dative naming PPC, but Greek instead uses genitive αὐτοῦ for the pronominal “possessor” of the name.

- (10) a. Ἰωάννης ἐστὶν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ
 John-NOM.SG is-PRS.3SG ART.NOM.SG name-NOM.SG him-GEN
 ‘John is the name of him’
- b. ioanŭ estŭ ime emou
 John-NOM.SG is-PRS.3SG name-NOM.SG him-DAT.SG
 ‘He has the name John’ (Lk 1:63)

All type C divergences display contexts where predicative possession is appropriate in Slavic even when it is not formally encoded in the Greek original.

[7] *Codex Assemanianus*.

[8] *Codex Marianus*.

[2.4] *Syntax of PPC Divergences*

Divergences in the OCS translations of Greek passages reveal both semantic and syntactic information about predicative possession in Slavic. The semantic space carved out by each possessive construction is discussed in section [3], focusing in particular on the two existential types of encoding for predicative possession.

Here I will briefly summarize the syntactic significance of the divergences. But first I must introduce Khodova's idea of "semantic shifts" that facilitate concomitant syntactic reinterpretations (1966, 107). In particular for predicative possession she argues that the *u* + genitive PPC matches the general meaning of *iměti* 'have', which prompts a syntactic change whereby the *u* + genitive prepositional phrase becomes the oblique subject argument of the impersonal existential construction, paralleling the nominative possessor of *iměti*. The change in status from a canonical prepositional phrase to an oblique subject argument is syntactically important, since oblique subject arguments often exhibit control properties normally associated only with direct arguments and never with arguments in prepositional phrases (cf. Aikhenvald et al. 2001). For the present discussion, this change in status is most relevant when addressing divergence type C discussed in section [2.3] above. In most of the cases where a Greek non-PPC is translated with a Slavic PPC, the number of arguments in the construction simultaneously increases. Most frequently an OCS PPC with two arguments replaces a Greek copular or comitative construction with one argument. This suggests that Slavic has come to rely on two-argument constructions, such as PPCs, where one-argument constructions are sufficient in the Greek original. Examples are (8), (9), and (10) above and (11) and (12) in section [3.1] below.

[3] SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS OF PPCS IN EARLY SLAVIC BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

What can be inferred about predicative possession in LPS from early Slavic Bible translations? Some information about the semantic environments and pragmatics of the constructions can be gleaned from the texts by isolating each construction and analyzing both the contexts in which it occurs and, crucially, where it diverges from the Greek original. It will be shown that certain semantic consistencies arise from each encoding strategy for predicative possession.

[3.1] *U + genitive PPC*

The *u* + genitive construction—the rarest of the PPCs in the early Bible texts—always represents a deviation from the Greek original, since a location-based PPC was not available in Greek. The *u* + genitive PPC is often tied to its locative origin, appearing in passages where the sense of possession overlaps considerably with the locative meaning of the *u* preposition (*u* 'at/near'). In a discussion of *u* + genitive PPCs in OCS, Khodova (1966) describes this property of the *u* + genitive construction as follows:

The specific situation created by the correlation of lexical components [i.e. *u* + genitive and ‘be’ verb] results here in the possibility of adding to the locative sense the sense of possession, of ownership of the object situated in the proximity to the person. In some cases, designation of the person becomes designation of the owner and the locative sense disappears. (Xodova 1966, 106⁹)

This fact about the *u* + genitive PPC can make examples ambiguous and thus difficult to interpret. In (11) there is a strong locative reading for the *u* + genitive prepositional phrase (as opposed to an exclusively possessive reading); the NT Greek original uses the comitative preposition *παρ* ‘with’. In (12) there is a somewhat ambiguous dative PPC in NT Greek, which is translated in OCS *Savvina Kniga* using an *u* + genitive PPC with an ablative shading (12b); cf. OCS *Codex Marianus*, where the verb *vŭzĩmati* ‘take/get’ (12c) is used instead and (12d) where the *Ostromir Gospel* stays faithful to the Greek original by using a dative PPC.

- (11) a. ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ μένετε
 in same-DAT.3SG and ART.DAG.SG house-DAT.SG stay-IMP.2PL
 ἔσθοντες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ’ αὐτῶν
 eat-PTCP.NOM.PL and drink-PTCP.NOM.PL ART.ACC.PL with them-GEN.PL
 ἄξιος γὰρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ
 worthy-NOM.SG for ART.NOM.SG workman-NOM.SG ART.GEN.SG
 μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ μὴ μεταβαίνετε ἐξ οἰκίας εἰς
 pay-GEN.SG him-GEN.SG NEG move-IMP.2PL from house-GEN.SG to
 οἰκίαν
 house-ACC.SG
 ‘And stay in the same house, eating and drinking the things with them,
 for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house.’ [lit.
 ‘that which is among them’] (Lk 10:7)
- b. vŭ tomĩ že domou přebyvaite ědŏšte i
 in this-LOC.SG very house-LOC.SG remain-IMP eat-PTCP and
 pijŏšte ěže sŏtŭ ou nixŭ dostoinŭ
 drink-PTCP which-ACC.PL is-PRS.3PL by them-GEN.PL enough-NOM.SG
 bo estŭ dělatelj mĩzdy svoeje ne
 for is-PRS.3SG laborer-NOM.SG reward-GEN.SG REFL.GEN.SG NEG
 přexodite iz domou vŭ domŭ
 go-IMP from house-GEN.SG to house-ACC.SG
 ‘Stay in the same house, eating and drinking the things they have, for
 the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house.’¹⁰

[9] I thank an anonymous reviewer for assistance with the translation.

[10] Xodova (1966, 107).

- (12) a. καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί πόθεν
 and say-PRS.3PL him-DAT.SG ART.NOM.PL disciple-NOM.PL whence
 ἡμῖν ἐν ἐρημίᾳ ἄρτοι τοσοῦτοι ὥστε
 us-DAT.PL in desert-DAT.SG loaf-NOM..PL many-NOM.PL so_that
 χορτάσαι ὄχλον τοσοῦτον
 satisfy-INF.AOR crowd-ACC.SG great-ACC.SG
 ‘And the disciples said to him, “Whence in the desert have we so many loaves so as to satisfy a crowd so great?” [lit. ‘are there to us’]
- b. i glše emou oučenici ego otŭ kŭde ou
 and said him-DAT.SG disciple-NOM.PL his-GEN.SG from where by
nasŭ vŭ poustě městě xlěbŭ toliko jako
 us-GEN.PL in empty-LOC.SG place-LOC.SG loaf-GEN.PL so_many as
 nasytiti narodŭ kolikŭ
 satisfy-INF crowd-ACC.SG such-ACC.SG
 ‘And his disciples said to him, “whence in the desert have we so many loaves so as to feed such a crowd?” [lit. ‘are there among us’]
- c. ...otŭ kŏdě vŭzimemŭ na poustě městě xlěby
 from where take-PRS.1PL on empty-LOC.SG place-LOC.SG loaf-ACC.PL
 nasytiti toliko naroda
 satisfy-INF so_many crowd-GEN.SG
 ‘...“whence in the desert can we get enough loaves to satisfy such a crowd?”’¹¹
- d. ...otŭkŏdou namŭ vŭ poustě městě xlěbŭ
 from_where us-DAT.PL in empty-LOC.SG place-LOC.SG bread-GEN.PL
toliko...
 so_many
 ‘...“whence in the desert have we so many loaves?”...’ [lit. ‘to us are so many loaves’]¹² (Mt 15:33)

Owing to its origin the the *u* + genitive construction exhibits a restricted semantic range for its possessor and possessum arguments, with the possessor always human and the possessum typically a concrete inanimate object. Possessor and possessum arguments for all *u* + genitive PPCs in OCS Bible translations are in Table 2 on page 166.¹³

The path of grammaticalization of this construction: location > location/possession > possession, is clear from Khodova’s explanation (and is addressed in multiple cross-linguistic studies on the grammaticalization of the location type of predicative possession, cf. Heine (1997) and references therein). But perhaps more could

[11] Codex Marianus.

[12] Ostromir Gospel.

[13] Highly ambiguous examples discussed by Xodova (1966) and Mirčev (1971) are not included in the count.

Possessors	Possessums
personal pronouns	100 sheep (Mt 18:12, OCS <i>Assemanianus</i>)
a certain person (Mt 18:12, OCS <i>Assemanianus</i>)	a lot of bread (Mt 15:33, OCS <i>Savvina Kniga</i>)
	relative pronoun ‘which’ referring to things to eat and drink (Lk 10:7, OCS <i>Marianus, Zographensis</i>)
	peace (Jn 17:5)

TABLE 2: Semantics of possessors and possessums: *u* + genitive PPC

be said of the contexts in which the construction occurs in LPS. After all, only four clear examples of *u* + genitive PPCs appear in the Slavic Bible texts, with the remaining examples too ambiguous to be used in making any determination about the semantic domain of the construction.

The possessors in the examples are all human, two of which are pronominal. The possessums are: ‘100 sheep’, ‘a lot of bread’, a relative pronoun referencing ‘things to eat and drink’, and ‘peace’. All examples aside from ‘peace’ are alienable: food/provisions and livestock. But perhaps more importantly all of these examples are temporary, even fleeting, indications of possession.¹⁴ A particularly suitable passage for exhibiting this point is Matthew 18:12 (9), where the translator of OCS *Codex Assemanianus* reinterprets the non-PPC in Greek as a case of possession in Slavic, and uses the marginal *u* + genitive encoding option. The ‘sheep’ are by their very nature as mortal creatures impermanent possessions and in (9) their transitory nature is further reinforced by the focus on the stray sheep who may or may not return to the flock.

Stassen (2009, 19) describes temporary possession as focused on exerting control over an object for some period of time, where ownership is less of a concern than having access to to a commodity or having it available to make use of. Stassen (2009, 25) identifies ‘have’ and comitative or ‘with’ PPCs as regularly originating in impermanent possession, but it also seems quite probable that this is a common origin for location-based PPCs as well. After all, location (at least for humans with respect to objects) frequently changes and is thus inherently impermanent, and so a PPC stemming from a locative existential phrase would seem to naturally encode temporary possession before expanding to encode possession more generally. This accounts for the appearance of ‘peace’ as the possessum in the last *u* + genitive PPC from John 17:5 in Table 2. In the passage, emphasis is placed on the transitory na-

[14] An anonymous reviewer was instrumental in helping me hone in on this analysis.

ture of the ‘peace’ and the fact that it did not previously exist and could quite easily cease to exist again in the future.

[3.2] *Dative PPC*

Occasionally examples using the existential PPC types (dative PPC for Slavic, Greek, and Latin, *u* + genitive PPC for Slavic) do not unambiguously express predicative possession. Mrázek (1963, 244) asserts that the existential dative (and consequently the existential *u* + genitive) construction is sensitive to the number of elements in the construction, whereas the number of constituents is typically not a concern with the verb ‘have’. Specifically, Mrázek does not count four-constituent dative existential constructions as PPCs, preferring to interpret them as a copular construction with an external possessor. One such example is from the Book of Luke 6:6: *I rōka desnaa emou bē souxa* ‘he had a crippled right hand’ / ‘his right hand was crippled’ (lit. ‘and hand.NOM right.NOM him.DAT was crippled.NOM’). In most cases I agree that these constructions are not examples of predicative possession and that the dative noun or pronoun is more felicitously interpreted as an external possessor. However, there are exceptions to this generalization, in particular when a change in word order can promote a predicative possessive reading (cf. McAnallen Forthcoming).

In contrast to the *u* + genitive PPC discussed above in section [3.1], the dative PPC is typically not found with transient and concrete alienable possessions in OCS. This may be a result of the different formal encoding of the construction. Instead of being a location-based construction, the meaning of the dative PPC often overlaps with the recipient (or goal) reading associated with the Slavic dative case. Therefore, several dative + ‘be’ constructions can be interpreted in multiple ways: as a PPC, as a construction where the dative argument is either literally or metaphorically affected by the nominative argument, as a construction where there is some directed purpose or intention to the dative argument, or as a mixture of these senses.

It is instructive to look at examples where the dative PPC occurs in Slavic in order to more precisely determine its range of usage. Table 3 on page 168 lists the possessors and possessums for dative PPC constructions in OCS (which largely coincide with Greek). Dative PPC examples are more numerous than *u* + genitive (sixteen unambiguous dative PPCs appear in the Book of Luke), therefore ambiguous cases are excluded in the table and fewer details about book and verse are provided. A tally of each semantic type is given after the possessors and possessums for the Book of Luke (possessums are counted as a unit, e.g. ‘joy and gladness’ counts as one abstract possessum). Examples are from the Book of Luke unless otherwise indicated.

The overwhelming majority of possessors are pronominal. Bauer (2000) reports this same tendency for *mihi est* dative PPCs in Latin (non-biblical) texts. All of the possessums in dative PPCs are either human, animate, abstract entities, or places. The most concrete possessums in Table 3 are places and sheep. But note that the

Possessors	Possessums
personal pronouns (most frequent by far): 11/16	kinship relations: child, son, daughter, sister: 4/16
relative pronouns: 3/16	debtors (Lk 7:41): 1/16
demonstrative pronouns: 1/16	abstract states and concepts, e.g. joy, gladness, thanks, care, praise, worship, compassion: 5/16
creditor (Lk 7:41): 1/16	places, e.g. room in an inn (Lk 2:7), storehouse, barn (Lk 12:24): 2/16
a certain person (Mt 18:12)	names (fixed construction): 4/16
	sheep (Mt 18:12)

TABLE 3: Semantics of possessors and possessums: dative PPC

example with sheep is the same example (Matthew 18:12) for which *Codex Assemanianus* uses an *u* + genitive instead of the dative PPC (9).

Thus it can be concluded that the dative PPC in OCS is used primarily with possessums that are kinship relations and abstract states and concepts, and is avoided with concrete, countable possessums.¹⁵ A particularly suitable passage for exhibiting this point is Luke 9:13, example (7), which contains a dative PPC in both the Greek and Latin texts, but neither the OCS *Codex Marianus* nor *Zographensis* use a dative in this passage.¹⁶ OCS avoided the dative PPC, defaulting to *iměti* ‘have’. The reason for this appears to be that OCS resists using the dative PPC in instances where possession is temporary and the possessed item is concrete and alienable.

[3.3] *Iměti* ‘have’

The semantics and pragmatics of *iměti* ‘have’ in Slavic are harder to pin down, since it was the most frequent, perhaps even default, construction by the latest period of LPS. This apparent default status of *iměti* is likely due as much to its syntactic flexibility as to its wide semantic range. That is, *iměti* was the only Late Proto-Slavic PPC used in non-finite contexts, such as participles and infinitives. *Iměti* was also more often relied upon in constructions with more complex object phrases, e.g. nouns plus infinitives, such as: ‘have something to say to you’, ‘has the power to forgive sins’, and ‘had nothing to set before him’. Additionally, as LPS and OCS were pro-drop languages, there is often no overt subject with *iměti*. This syntactic flexibility of *iměti* is unknown for the existential PPC types in early Slavic.

[15] Note that dative external possessors in most modern Slavic languages also tend to prefer the same types of “possessums” as their predicative possessive counterparts, e.g. kinship relations and other inalienable relations (cf. Cienki 1993 and references therein).

[16] This passage is missing from *Codex Assemanianus* and the *Ostromir Gospel*.

Furthermore, the verb *iměti* had a monopoly on a number of frequently occurring fixed expressions in the early biblical language, just as the dative PPC had a monopoly on the naming construction in (10). Such expressions include ‘have power’ and ‘if ye have ears to hear, then hear’. These expressions functioned much like the syntactic flexibility of *iměti* in that they both reinforce and are reinforced by the prevalence of *iměti* in OCS.

[3.4] *Summary of semantic range of Slavic PPCs*

While there was some semantic overlap for the three different PPCs in LPS, their usage was not equivalent. *Iměti* had clearly gained primary status, with both semantic and syntactic flexibility not attested for either the dative or *u* + genitive PPCs. The dative construction was often used for a possessive meaning that overlapped with the role of recipient or goal and the *u* + genitive PPC was often used in contexts where possession had a strong locative sense.

The rise of ‘have’ as the primary construction for predicative possession was not only a trend in early Slavic, but also in the histories of other Indo-European languages. Kulneff-Eriksson (1999) reports that *ekho* increases in frequency over time, gradually taking over the territory of the older *esti moi* construction. This trend continues into *koinē* Greek of the New Testament where *ekho* is far more frequent than the dative.

The situation was much the same in the history of Latin, according to Bauer (2000) and Löfstedt (1963). *Habeo* increased in frequency at the expense of the older PIE dative PPC. Bauer (2000, 186) writes, “...the use of *mihi est* became more restricted over time as the occurrence of concrete nominative nouns in that context decreased. Whereas at first only concrete nouns seemed to be no longer used in *mihi est* constructions—with the exception of a few poetic archaisms—abstract nouns in the later period also became less frequent.”

Isačenko (1974) argues that PPC types represent broader language types, i.e. ‘have’ vs. ‘be’ languages. European languages—especially Western and Central European languages—have typically shifted to become ‘have’ languages in their histories. It then seems that the rise of *iměti* in Slavic in prehistoric times must be at least partially attributable to areal pressures. A separate but related question is the influence of the source texts on PPCs in the early Slavic Bible texts. The source texts were likely influential in determining the frequency of the different PPCs, perhaps causing *iměti* to be over-represented in the texts (in comparison to its status in the Slavic vernaculars). Nevertheless, it is clear that *iměti* was the dominant construction for predicative possession in OCS, based on its syntactic and semantic flexibility as well as its usage independent of NT Greek and Latin usage.

[4] CONCLUSION

Old Church Slavic employed three encoding strategies for predicative possession. The verb *iměti* ‘have’ was the most frequently used and least syntactically and semantically restricted strategy by the time of OCS; the dative PPC was prominent in a number of fixed expressions, e.g. the naming construction, and with kinship relations and abstract possessums; and the peripheral *u* + genitive PPC appeared when the focus was on impermanent possession. The *u* + genitive encoding strategy was in fact the germ of a potential PPC: its frequency too low and semantic range too restricted to be called a full-fledged PPC in OCS. Its marginal status in Late Proto-Slavic is certainly one of the reasons why it was not more successful as a PPC outside of East Slavic where this peripheral native Slavic construction expanded as a result of contact influences ([McAnallen Forthcoming](#)).

The language of the Bible is strictly codified, making the study of syntactic and semantic nuances of Biblical examples in the domain of predicative possession a highly philological problem. However, using a multi-pronged methodological approach that is sensitive to both textual and contextual factors, I have been able to use Bible translations to make a number of conclusions about the syntax and pragmatics of predicative possession in Old Church Slavic, and by extension Late Proto-Slavic. In this analysis, I have considered the textual traditions that Slavic inherited from Greek, which nevertheless retain inherently Slavic characteristics. There are a few “quirks” in the Slavic translations that deviate from the original Greek or Latin usage, and which reveal the native Slavic system of constructions for expressing predicative possession. In piecing together information about these quirks—the few instances where Slavic diverges from the source language—it is possible to make some determination about the semantics, and occasionally syntax (e.g. where OCS replaces a single argument non-PPC with a two-argument PPC), of different constructions for predicative possession in early Slavic, in contrast to the Greek system.

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