

**Thomas Olander**, *Proto-Slavic Inflectional Morphology: A Comparative Handbook*. [Brill's Studies in Indo-European Languages and Linguistics 14] Leiden: Brill, 2015. xiv, 411 pp.

**Reviewed by Iván Igartua**  
(University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU)

In recent times, there has been a strikingly regular sequence of works dealing with the diachrony of Slavic inflectional morphology, with a new monograph every ten years. In 1985, Peter Arumaa published the third volume of his *Urslavische Grammatik*, which was devoted to morphology (*Formenlehre*); in 1995, Oleg Poljakov's study of Balto-Slavic relations appeared, which contained a large section comparing Baltic and Slavic nominal inflection; and, in 2005, a book on the origin and evolution of Slavic nominal declension was published by the author of these lines. Now, exactly ten years after the previous study, Thomas Olander offers a new survey and analysis of Proto-Slavic inflectional morphology that takes into account, as one would expect, all the previous etymological proposals and integrates them into what he terms a 'comparative handbook'. Of course, there have been other similar book-length contributions to the issue during recent decades (e.g., Orr 2000 and Halla-aho 2006), but not all of them are considered reference or standard works in Olander's book for reasons he makes explicit on p. 36, reasons which have to do mainly with the absence of a systematic treatment of all the inflectional markers concerned (incidentally, this could not be said of Poljakov's study, but, nevertheless, although included in the bibliography, his work is not even mentioned).

Building on the preceding tradition, Olander has written a comprehensive, up-to-date and concise study of the main etymological proposals concerning Slavic inflectional morphology. The book thoroughly discusses the origin of all the nominal, pronominal and verbal morphemes, searching for their sources in Proto-Indo-European (PIE), Proto-Balto-Slavic (PBS) and finally Proto-Slavic (PS). This layering is systematically applied all throughout the monograph and can be considered one of its strengths. Another of its numerous merits is that it contains not just a wide catalogue of hypotheses and proposals but also a robust framework for analyzing inflectional endings on more solid grounds than has usually been done before. This includes, for instance, a detailed discussion of phonological developments, both general and specific (in final syllables), which are arranged in a quite rigid relative chronology (see Chapter 2: Phonological background, pp. 39–67).

The phonological changes affecting inflectional morphology are regularly referred to in the book's central chapters: Chapter 3 (pp. 68–295) is devoted to noun inflection, whereas Chapter 4 (pp. 296–365) discusses verb inflection. The huge contrast in extension between these two chapters is partly justified by the difference in the quantity of endings (more numerous and diverse in the case of nominal morphology) and by the choice of only those verbal affixes that realize what Booij (1996) calls 'contextual' inflection – person and number in verbs – as opposed to 'inherent' inflection – reflected in tense and aspect markers – for instance (accordingly, the reader will not find any proposals concerning the origin of those markers). The remarkably brief Chapter 5 (pp. 366–367) contains the conclusions, which summarize the main achievements and highlight again those etymological issues that still remain unresolved or are not satisfactorily accounted for in this study (in the author's words), namely the origin of the present second-person singular marker PS \**-si* or \**-sei* and the first-person plural marker *-mo* found in Serbo-Croatian, Slovene, Slovak and Ukrainian (p. 354 ff.). As pointed out by Villanueva Svensson (2015: 106), this can be deemed over-optimistic, as there are other endings whose origin still remains enigmatic (among them, the dual and plural *m*-cases and the Old Church Slavonic (OCS) pronominal genitive singular *togo*, *jego*, on which see below).

Another aspect of this work worth emphasizing is that it incorporates data from the Old Novgorod dialect and gives them due importance: from this perspective, the choice of the figure for the book's cover, which represents a birch bark letter from Novgorod, was clearly made with this idea in mind (even though – just a matter of taste – other specimens of the same textual corpus would probably have been more appropriate). The discovery in the early 1950s of the first birch bark letters written in a specific, highly differentiated form of Old Russian (also known as Old East Slavic) had a deep impact on studies focused on Russian historical grammar (for a recent example, see Nessel 2015 and its review in Igartua 2016), but its relevance for Slavic comparative grammar has been somewhat understated until recently. The undoubtedly archaic nature of the dialect from Old Novgorod is duly acknowledged in Olander's book, and this has straightforward implications for some of the etymological hypotheses developed here (even though not all scholars would probably agree with the far-reaching consequences of certain proposals).

The work is further characterized by a systematic and useful differentiation between Proto-Slavic, which is defined in terms of the relative chronology of linguistic changes as the "last stage of Slavic before the earliest innovation that is not shared by all Slavic dialects" (p. 26) and Common Slavic (CS), which refers to the "Slavic dialect continuum during the period after the dissolution of the Slavic proto-language (c. 600 AD) until the loss of the weak jers (c. 1220 AD)" (p. 29). Unlike many works that are also based on this crucial distinction, Olander's book includes the specific notation of reconstructed forms both for Proto-Slavic and Common

Slavic. Besides these central notions, he also makes use of ‘Classic Common Slavic’ (called ‘Classical’ on p. 30), a term that is potentially misleading unless used with quotation marks as in the list of abbreviations, symbols and conventions. This term is intended to capture the notion of a continuum comprising all the Slavic dialects with the exception of the Old Novgorod dialect, which in this manner is given a highly prominent status (see also above).

Since this is a book centered around Proto-Slavic inflectional morphology, other prehistorical issues – like, for example, the location of the Proto-Slavic homeland – are not really relevant to it (as briefly discussed on p. 31), but from this perspective it becomes a little hard to understand why the question of the Indo-European *Urheimat* deserves a whole paragraph on p. 23.

When it comes to the different etymological proposals for each morpheme, the author as a rule indicates when a particular reconstruction is more a matter of preference or personal taste than an objective fact. Thus he finds certain solutions and scenarios “unattractive” (pp. 191, 329), “more attractive” (pp. 336, 368) or “less attractive” (pp. 341, 348) than the alternative ones (note that this means that several proposals are not regarded as directly rejectable). The author himself tends to prefer phonetically-based explanations, when they are available, over analogical ones. Overall, he is quite right in restrictively applying analogy-based explanations and not using them as much as one would need them, but it is also true that at times the arguments invoked to discard analogy effects are probably not strong enough. To give just one example, on p. 104 it is claimed that an analogical replacement of the inherited *o*-stem nominative singular ending *\*-o* with the corresponding *u*-stem ending *\*-ъ* by analogy with the accusative forms is unlikely because of the “essential role of the opposition between the nominative and accusative singular forms in Slavic”. But even if it were so, this essential function did not prevent other forms, like CS *\*mati* ‘mother’ and *\*дъкти* or *\*дът’и* ‘daughter’ from developing secondarily a nominative-accusative syncretism in several languages (a syncretism that, by the way, was widespread – due to phonological factors – within the declensional system).

In any event, despite his general preference for phonological developments, Olander himself admits that some proposals are purely *ad hoc*, with no support from other examples (as in the case of the evolution from PBS *\*-asa* to PS *\*-aga* posited for the genitive singular of deictic pronouns; see OCS *togo*, p. 138). Other phonological hypotheses can be recalled here, like, for instance, the labialization of *j* to *ɥ* after *ō*, reflected in two endings, and the loss of word-final dentals after long vowels, which accounts only for the development of the nominative singular in *\*-ōn* > *\*-ū* and *\*-ēr* > *\*-ī* (Villanueva Svensson 2015: 109). For these endings, other phonological and even morphological explanations are also available, even though no single one is entirely satisfactory.

The main relatively novel hypothesis put forward by Olander is probably the phonological development whereby PS \*-a/ā turned into -a/ā in final syllables before fricatives (with or without a sonorant between the vowel and the fricative) and then into CS \*-ъ/-γ (in the Old Novgorod dialect -e/-ě), merging with the reflexes of PS \*u/ū in all the Slavic dialects with the exception of that from Old Novgorod, where a/ā merged with the reflexes of PS \*e/ē (pp. 56–57). This proposal, which combines ideas suggested before by different scholars, was already developed in Olander (2012: 331 ff.) and, although the author seems to be unaware of previous work along similar lines, also by Viredaz (2009). The new hypothesis has the obvious advantage of reducing the amount of analogical changes that must be posited to explain several nominal as well as verbal endings, even though, to account for the widely known North/South Slavic variation in the genitive singular of *iā*-stems, it still has to rely on analogy (the South Slavic ending -ę is held to originate in the accusative plural form). The sound change posited makes it possible to overcome the century-long discussion between the adherents of two different proposals, one envisaging a sound change \*-os > -ъ (directly reflected, for instance, in the ending of dative plural forms), and the other favoring a development \*-os > -o (as in the nominative-accusative singular \*slovoš ‘word’ > OCS *slovo*). In addition, since it provides a unified phonetic account for several morphemes (ranging from the *o*-stem nominative singular to different *ā*-stem case forms and even verbal endings), this hypothesis renders unnecessary many analogy-based explanations for nominal endings, although it still leaves unsolved some issues (like the absence of the expected final -e in the dative plural forms in the Old Novgorod dialect, see Olander 2012: 335). To sum up, in spite of remaining difficulties, the new proposal is undoubtedly attractive.

The second major proposal, also published before by the author (Olander 2010), is the hypothesis that word-final \*-m was lost in Proto-Slavic after short vowels, whereas both \*-m and \*-n were preserved after long vowels (p. 58). This has clear implications for verbal endings and explains certain contrasts (above all, the one in the aorist between 1SG -ъ < PIE \*-om and 3PL -q < PBS \*-an < PIE \*-ond/t). But it also entails difficulties: Hill (2013: 172, fn. 7) raises a serious objection when he points to the epenthetic *n* associated with the prepositions *sъ* and *vъ* (OCS *sъ n-jimb* ‘with him’, *vъ n-jemb* ‘in it’) stemming from etyma with \*-m that seem to support an early merger of \*-m and \*-n in Proto-Slavic (for other problems, see Villanueva Svensson 2015: 105).

Another idea that may strike one as quite novel in Slavic linguistics (even in a broader Indo-European perspective) is the suggestion (due to Henning Andersen and positively valued on p. 270) that in Pre-Proto-Balto-Slavic and Pre-Proto-Germanic \*m was the phonological continuant of \*b<sup>h</sup><sub>1</sub> (in forms like the dative-instrumental dual and the dative and instrumental plural). The parallels adduced

for a posttonic development  $*b_{hi} > *m$  include examples like Italian *Giàcomo* and Old French *Jacmes* (both from Latin *Iacobus*) or Spanish *cañamo* ‘hemp’, from Hispano-Latin *cannabum*.

The overview of etymological proposals on which the book is built is practically exhaustive. Even marginal suggestions are mentioned and frequently discussed in detail, and only occasionally may some idea have passed unnoticed by the author. This is the case of the subsection dealing with the final  $*-tu$  (OCS  $-t\bar{v}$ ) in 3SG and 3PL verbal forms (§4.9, especially pp. 328–329). The hypothesis of a deictic origin of this element (proposed by Filipp F. Fortunatov) is duly addressed here, and some of its aspects are criticized: for example, the fact that  $-t\bar{v}$  is found not only in the singular but also in the plural, which weakens the likelihood of a demonstrative origin. In any event, some dialectal data could have been cited that point to an apparent differentiation between the singular form, showing this element, and the plural one, with no trace of it. This would be more consistent with the scenario envisaged by Fortunatov, as implied by Borkovskij & Kuznecov (2004 [1963]: 301) in their diachronic analysis of this distinction between 3SG and 3PL forms in the northern Olonec dialect of Russian, in which the 3PL differs from the 3SG in having a palatalized, perhaps older ending  $-t'$ .

Olander’s book analyzes Proto-Slavic and Common Slavic inflectional morphology. Consequently, it is primarily concerned with the (archaic) morphological data that can shed light on older stages of the evolution of the Slavic languages. However, sometimes the author considers it appropriate to provide additional historical information on inflectional innovations (albeit usually without any explanation). Thus, on p. 113, when dealing with the accusative singular form of non-neuter consonant stems, he includes the OCS form *d̆v̆šterv* ‘daughter’, but also *d̆v̆štere* (attested in several earlier manuscripts; see Scholvin 1877 and Meillet 1897), which was probably an innovation influenced by the genitive singular (for different proposals concerning the origin of this new accusative singular, see Kryś’ko 1994: 146–152; Igartua 2005: 543 ff., 576–586; Igartua 2009).

Whenever he finds it necessary to support his own reconstructive proposals, the author resorts to linguistic typology. He does likewise in the case of his principal etymological innovation (see above), citing Iranian parallels (for further details, see Olander 2012: 336). In general, he seems to defend a balanced use of typology, usually based on a previous analysis of internal data. Somewhat surprisingly, though, when discussing the accusative plural morphemes, he appears to uncritically assume the traditional approach, i.e., that PIE  $*-ns$  (from an earlier  $*-ms$ ) consists of an accusative marker  $*-m$  and a plural marker  $*-s$ . This alleged affix ordering has been regarded with skepticism (e.g., by Debrunner & Wackernagel 1975 [1929/1930]: 59–61, 208–209, 276, cited by Olander on pp. 240–241) because it is not in line with the general principles guiding the relative order of number and

case markers. But this typological obstacle (implied by Greenberg's Universal No. 39) is not even referred to, in spite of the fact that there have been specific attempts to overcome it (see, for instance, Shields 2010).

As for the technical side, this book is admirably edited and almost free of errors and typos. In fact, the only error of some significance affects the bibliography: here, the first volume (from 1906) of Václav Vondrák's *Vergleichende slavische Grammatik* is misattributed to the Spanish Indo-Europeanist Francisco Villar. As a last note, even though the work deals mainly with inflectional endings (for which no semantic glosses are in theory needed), it would have been desirable to include the meaning – translated into English – of at least some of the words analyzed (nouns and verbs), since not all of them are necessarily known to readers, who may be Slavists but also Indo-Europeanists of a broader profile or historical linguists with different areas of expertise.

All in all, this comparative handbook of Proto-Slavic inflectional morphology is a great contribution to the field. It not only surveys all the most important hypotheses on the origin of Slavic nominal, pronominal and verbal inflectional suffixes; it also structures the morphological material and the theories that try to explain it by tracing links among endings that do not always seem to be clearly related to each other. And all this is accomplished by applying rules derived from a rather rigid relative chronology of sound changes. In some cases, the author proposes new etymological solutions within a research area in which it would appear that almost everything has already been said, thereby demonstrating that there is still room for innovative explanations. For all these reasons, it would be no exaggeration to assert that Olander's book is, if not the definitive work on Proto-Slavic inflectional morphology, then certainly a major contribution that approximates this ideal very closely.

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### Reviewer's address

Iván Igartua  
 Slavic Linguistics, Department of Classical Studies, Faculty of Arts  
 University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)  
 01006 VITORIA-GASTEIZ  
 Spain  
 ivan.igartua@ehu.es