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Pluperfect and Aspect Choice in Old and Middle East Slavic

The diachrony of early Slavic aspect has been extensively studied by Björn Wiemer, Björn Hansen, Jaap Kamphuis, Ekaterina Mishina, or Hanne Eckhoff, however its co-occurrence with compound tenses, including Pluperfect, has not been so far highlighted. I address the status of Pluperfect in Old East Slavic with regard to its co-occurrence with verbs of different aspectual status and show that this tense can be used, on a par with Aorist and Active Past Participle, as an additional contextual criterion for the Perfective status of a verb. In the earliest period Pluperfect reluctantly combines with the Imperfective aspect and much more often with Perfective or unmarked verbs. This phenomenon can be explained by predominantly result-oriented (resultative or antiresultative) semantics of Old East Slavic examples. The Imperfective verbs, attested in the earliest texts with the livresque form of Pluperfect (žьdati 'wait', stojati 'stand', dьržati 'hold') can be partly explained in some contexts by the Old Church Slavonic influence. Moreover, as it is the case with Old East Slavic Aorist and Active past participle, there exist exceptions where Imperfective verbs are regularly allowed in the context of Pluperfect, for example, in the context of temporal adverbials that yield the interpretation of extended state, smoothing out the contradiction between the meaning of the tense and the meaning of the aspect.

i jako iznemogoša golodomъ, stojali bo *bjaxu* 6 ned(ěľ), slušajuče ľstьbě ixъ, i na prazdъnikъ s(vja)t(a)go Nikolы vylězъše iz goroda, isěkoša vsja (Novgorod I Chronicle) 'And as [the Novgorodians] became weakened by starving, because they *had been stayed* there for six weeks, believing to their lies, on St. Nicholas' day [the besieged Yugorians] exited the fortress and massacred them all'

With the course of the latter development of Old East Slavic into medieval East Slavic languages (Middle Russian, Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian resp. Ruthenian / Prosta Mova literary norm), the aspectual scope of Pluperfect expands and it becomes more readily available also in the context of imperfective verbs, mainly conveying modal semantics (as xotěti 'want'); these contexts are more productive in (Early) Modern Ukrainian and Belarusian than in Russian. The expansion of the aspectual scope of Pluperfect is mirrored by grammaticalization of its semantics outside the (anti)resultative domain.