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Edited by Robert Auty and Dimitri Obolensky

Excerpt

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THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE*

ROBERT AUTY

ORIGINS

Russian is today the native language of more than 150,000,000 persons in the Soviet Union. It is spoken from the borders of White Russia and the Ukraine to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Arctic Circle to the Black and Caspian Seas and the approaches to the Caucasus. In the Soviet borderlands – the Baltic republics, White Russia, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and central Asia – as well as in the various non-Russian enclaves of Siberia it is the second language of the great majority of the inhabitants.

The present extent and importance of the Russian language are the result of a long and gradual historical process which is discussed elsewhere in this work. It is closely related to the ten other Slavonic languages spoken in Europe today. Together with Ukrainian and White Russian it forms part of the East Slavonic sub-group; slightly farther afield lie the West Slavonic languages – Czech, Slovak, Polish, Sorbian – and the South Slavonic languages – Slovene, Serbo-Croat, Macedonian and Bulgarian. All these languages may be traced back to a single common ancestor which we call Common Slavonic. This was the language spoken by the Slavs when they were still a relatively unitary group of tribes living in a territory which, while we cannot identify it with precision, seems likely to have covered considerable parts of the present-day Ukraine and Poland. Until the sixth and seventh centuries, when the migrations of the Slavonic tribes into the territories which they now occupy were intensified, the Common Slavonic language must have known few dialectal differences. Indeed, even as late as AD 900 it is clear that the regional varieties of Slavonic were

*Russian words are stressed if they are part of the present-day language and the stress is therefore identifiable. Old Russian words are not stressed.

Square brackets enclose phonetic transcriptions according to the system of the International Phonetic Association. Oblique brackets / . . . / are occasionally used to indicate a phoneme as opposed to its various phonetic realizations.

I have used the 'philological' variant of the transliteration system except for names of persons and places, where I have used the normal system employed elsewhere in the book.

The following abbreviations are used: R Russian; OR Old Russian; WR White Russian; ocs Old Church Slavonic.

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mutually comprehensible to the extent that they were still regarded as a single language. The end of the Common Slavonic period, linguistically speaking, comes with the consolidation of Slavonic national states in the ninth and tenth centuries – Moravia, Bulgaria, Rus', Poland, Croatia, and the Serbian principalities of the Balkans. With the doubtful exception of certain inscriptions, the oldest written records of the Russian language date from the eleventh century. Nevertheless, it is possible, by employing the methods of comparative and historical linguistics, to gain a fairly clear impression of what the Russian language was like in the ninth and tenth centuries, when it was first emerging as a separate entity. No doubt it would be more correct to speak here not of 'Russian' but of 'East Slavonic'. The language spoken in the East Slavonic area from the beginning to the thirteenth or fourteenth century was the common ancestor of the three languages we know today as Russian, White Russian and Ukrainian. Nevertheless, it is convenient to use the familiar and conventionally accepted term 'Old Russian' rather than the neutral but cumbersome 'Old East Slavonic'.

Some other matters of terminology may be touched on here. Russian is still sometimes referred to as 'Great Russian', though 'Little Russian', a term used in tsarist times for Ukrainian, has now rightly fallen into disuse. These appellations, like that of 'West Russian' which was sometimes applied to White Russian, were an attempt to claim the speakers of all three languages for the Russian nation. Similarly, the use of the term 'Ruthenian' for the nationality and language of the Ukrainians of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire was designed to conceal their kinship with the Ukrainians or 'Little Russians' of Russia. 'White Russian' is the term that will be used in this book to translate *Р белорусский* *WR беларускі*. It is more natural in English than the various hybrids such as Belorussian, Byelorussian, Bielorrussian, which are preferred by some writers.

The Slavonic languages are one of the groups of languages which form the Indo-European family. Common Slavonic may be regarded as a sister-language of Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Hittite, and other ancient Indo-European languages. A particularly close relationship links the Slavonic with the Baltic languages, of which Lithuanian and Latvian are still spoken. One of the characteristic features of Indo-European was a complex system of inflections – nominal and verbal – which can be seen reflected in classical Greek and Latin, in Sanskrit, and in some other ancient Indo-European languages. It is noteworthy that Russian, like most of the other Slavonic languages, has preserved much of this grammatical structure to this day, whereas such languages as English, French or modern Greek have considerably simplified the inflectional system attested for their ancestor-languages a millennium or so ago. Russian, like most of the Slavonic and Baltic languages, has preserved a complex system of nominal declensions

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which still shows six of the eight Indo-European cases. The verbal conjugations have, it is true, been considerably simplified if we compare them with the system of the classical Greek or Latin verb: the complex system of forms expressing tenses, moods and voice has been greatly reduced. Here, however, the Slavonic languages have developed and systematized the category of aspect: in every verbal form the nature or duration of the action is specified by appropriate morphemes. In Russian the category of aspect has become more important than that of tense.

The Russian vocabulary has been greatly augmented and diversified in the course of the centuries. Alongside the basic Common Slavonic words which Russian shares with its sister-languages we find many strata of loan-words, reflecting the various cultural influences and historical vicissitudes that have affected the life of the Russian nation in different periods: in particular Greek, Norse, Turkic, Polish, French, German and English words have been assimilated. The purism which has caused some languages to reject foreign loans has found little or no expression in the formation of modern Russian.

A special factor in the development of the written and standard spoken forms of the Russian language is the influence of Old Church Slavonic, the earliest written form of Slavonic which came to Russia together with Christianity in the tenth century. This language, based on a Macedonian Slavonic dialect, was close to Russian but differed in many details of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. It was the earliest written language used by the Russians and came to be regarded as a higher, more solemn or 'literary' form of the vernacular. The Russian standard language of today results from the complex interplay of vernacular and Church Slavonic elements.

SOURCES

To study the history of the Russian language we must supplement the language of today, in its standard and dialectal variants, with the written records of the language which now extend over nearly a thousand years. The earliest preserved manuscript is the *Ostromir Codex*, a Russian Church Slavonic translation of the gospels copied in Novgorod in 1056–7. A number of other religious or learned texts are only a little younger. The spoken vernacular is more faithfully reflected in a number of secular texts, mostly legal documents, of which we have examples from the twelfth century onwards. Particularly numerous and linguistically interesting are the texts scratched on birch-bark which have been discovered during the excavations of medieval Novgorod by Soviet archaeologists since 1951. A full list of the manuscript sources up to the end of the fourteenth century is given by

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Kiparsky (1963).¹ The dualism of vernacular and Church Slavonic texts continued until the early nineteenth century when the Russian literary language became stabilized as a compromise between the two elements. Even in earlier periods the two variants of the language were not always clearly distinguished. Mutual influences were always at work, even at times when the functional differences between the two 'styles' were deliberately observed. This problem will be discussed at greater length below.

PHONOLOGY

In the eleventh century, the period from which we have the earliest Russian texts, the language must have possessed a system of vowel phonemes which may be tabulated as follows:

i	y	u
ь		ѣ
ě		
e		o
a		

Of the phonetic realization of these phonemes in speech we can of course have no certain knowledge, but certain probabilities can be established. *y* was no doubt already very similar to the modern Russian sound represented by the letter *ы*. *ѣ* and *ѣ*, conventionally known as the hard and soft jers, were very short vowels, the first no doubt to some extent labialized (with *u* quality), the second a non-labialized front vowel (with *i* quality). The quality of *ě*, the sound represented in the old Cyrillic alphabet by the letter *ѣ* and commonly known by the name of that letter *jat'*, cannot be established with certainty for the earliest period. The evidence of Finnish loan-words from proto-Russian (probably borrowed in the period between the seventh and ninth centuries) points to a very open front vowel: e.g. Finnish *määra* 'measure' < R *měra*. It must in the course of time have become more closed, for it merged, in the different East Slavonic dialects, with either *e* or *i*. In the eleventh century it was no doubt still distinct from both these vowels.

Old Church Slavonic, the language of the religious texts introduced to Russia with Christianity, reflects a sound system which was in certain respects more archaic, closer to Common Slavonic, than that of Old Russian. This included two vowels additional to those listed above, the nasal vowels *ę* and *ǫ*. These two sounds, no doubt pronounced in late Common Slavonic times rather similarly to the vowels in French *fin* and *bon*, were represented in the Cyrillic alphabet by the letters *ѣ* (*ę*) and

¹ See the Guide to further reading, p. 39.

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Ѡ (*o*). Eleventh-century texts written in Russia frequently confuse *o* and *u*, *e* and *ja*, so that it is clear that these vowels had by then become denasalized. That the nasal vowels had existed in an earlier phase of Russian is attested by Finnish loan-words such as *kuontalo* ‘tow’ < *kōdēlb*, cf. Р кудѣль, and *suntio* ‘sexton’ < *sōd̄bja*, cf. Р судья ‘judge’. It is generally supposed that the process of denasalization was complete by the mid-tenth century. The chief evidence for this is provided by the Slavonic names of the Dnieper rapids which are listed in the treatise *De administrando imperio* composed in about 950 by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. One of these rapids is given as βερούτζη which the author says has the meaning ‘the boiling of the water’. There is little doubt that the East Slavonic word in question is the present participle *вручѣѣ* ‘boiling, seething’, which is a development of the Common Slavonic **vr̄otj-*. Another rapid is named by the Emperor as νεασήτ which must be an East Slavonic *nejasyt’*, deriving from Common Slavonic **nejesyť* ‘the insatiable one’. Thus, it is clear that the nasal vowels were not present in the Russian phonological system even in the tenth century. With the introduction of Old Church Slavonic to Rus’ at the end of that century the two letters indicating the nasals were brought in but were regarded by Russian speakers as no more than orthographical variants for the phonemes *u* and *a*. The letter for the back nasal Ѡ was used to a certain extent in the middle ages but was ultimately abandoned. Ѡ, the letter for the front nasal, eventually became the most frequent representation of *a*, and lives on in a modified form in the new Cyrillic letter я.

The jers, also known as reduced vowels and (especially in grammars written in Russia) as surds (*злукхе*), underwent various changes in all the Slavonic languages. Their development in Russian will be discussed below. It seems probable that they survived in Russian longer than they did in most other Slavonic languages. In the Russian of the eleventh century they were still present as individual phonemes, as they were in the earliest Old Church Slavonic.

The phonetic value of *jat’* in late Common Slavonic and in Old Russian cannot be established with certainty. It had developed from Indo-European *ē* and from the Indo-European diphthongs *ai* and *oi* (probably with an intervening monophthongal stage). It seems probable that in the late Common Slavonic stage it had become some kind of diphthong, perhaps *eä*. In Old Church Slavonic *ě* and *a* coalesced in a sound which was probably *ä*, the vowel heard in English *man*. In eleventh-century Old Russian the pronunciation of *jat’* probably varied regionally; some texts already show a tendency for this sound to merge with *e*.

In the course of the historical period the vowel system that has been described above was simplified by the disappearance of the phonemes *ь*, *ѣ* and *ě*. All the other vowels remained, though various phonetic processes

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brought about changes in their frequency and distribution. A further development of the greatest importance was a reduction or change in quality which affected all unstressed vowels, with the result that modern Russian has two different vowel systems, one for stressed and one for unstressed vowels.

A development which took place in the period before the appearance of the first texts, and which distinguished the East Slavonic languages from all other varieties of Slavonic, affected the Common Slavonic groups *ǣr*, *ǣl* when they were preceded and followed by consonants. These groups are conventionally designated *tǣrt*, *tǣlt*, where *t* represents any consonant. Common Slavonic short *ǣ* changed to *o* at the end of the prehistoric period; some scholars assume that this change had already taken place at an earlier stage of Common Slavonic and designate the groups in question as *tort* and *tolt*. In Russian these groups changed into *torot*, *tolot*. This treatment, with the development of an additional syllable, is known as pleophony (р полногласие). Other Slavonic languages, notably Old Church Slavonic, treated these groups in a different way, lengthening the vowel and reversing the order of vowel and liquid, to produce *trat* and *tlat*. Common Slavonic long *ǣ* remained in the Slavonic languages as *a*; quantity disappeared as a phonemically relevant feature. Thus Common Slavonic *gǣrdь*, *vǣrnь*, *gǣlvǣ*, *bǣltǣ* became р город 'town', ворон 'raven', голова 'head', болото 'swamp' as against OCS *gradь*, *vranь*, *glava*, *blato*. Common to both treatments is the tendency to abolish closed syllables: in the period before the disappearance of the weak jers all syllables in Slavonic languages ended with a vowel.

Analogous changes affected the Common Slavonic groups *tert*, *telt*. Common Slavonic *bergь*, *merti*, *melkǣ*, *šelmь* (borrowed from Germanic *helm*) became р берег 'bank', (у)мереть 'to die', молоко 'milk', or шеломь 'helmet' as against OCS *brěgь*, *mrěti*, *mlěko*, *šlěmь*. The slightly aberrant treatment of the *telt* groups in Russian is no doubt due to the influence of the velar (back) *l* which, in the case of молоко, induced the velarization of both the surrounding vowels. In the case of шеломь *š*, still palatalized in Old Russian, no doubt caused the retention of the front vowel in the first syllable.

Phonetic changes of a similar character affected the Common Slavonic initial groups *ǣrt-*, *ǣlt-*, again giving rise to differences between Russian and Old Church Slavonic. While Common Slavonic *ǣrdlǣ*, *ǣlnь* become р рало 'plough', лань 'doe' and similarly OCS *ralo*, Church Slavonic *lani*, Common Slavonic *ǣrbь*, *ǣlkьtь* become OR роб 'slave', р локоть 'elbow', but OCS *rabь*, *lakьtь*. The different treatment of the two sets of words in Russian (which is paralleled in the West Slavonic languages) is generally explained as the result of differences of intonation in Common Slavonic times. *ǣrdlǣ*, *ǣlnь* are assumed to have had rising (acute) intonation against falling (circumflex) intonation in *ǣrbь*, *ǣlkьtь*. In Russian, as in the West

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Slavonic languages, these intonational differences were transmuted into differences of vowel quality. While there is some evidence in the intonational and quantitative characteristics of certain West and South Slavonic languages to make this theory a plausible one, the matter is complicated and other explanations are possible.

A very early change, but one which seems still to have been in progress in the early historical period, was that of an initial *e-* (*je-*) to *o-*. Thus a Common Slavonic *jezero*, preserved as such in Old Church Slavonic, becomes *р озеро* 'lake'. Norse and Greek names borrowed in the ninth and tenth centuries show this change: Old Norse *Helga* > *р О́льга*, Old Norse *Helgi* > *ор Ольгъ* > *р Олѣг*, Greek *Εὐδοκία* > *ор Овьдотѣя* > *р Авдотѣя*. This change is peculiar to the East Slavonic languages.

Important changes affected the jers in the period from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. In late Common Slavonic times these vowels must have been pronounced rather differently according to their position in the word. Those in 'weak' position disappeared in all the Slavonic languages, those in 'strong' position became full vowels. In Russian, as in the other East Slavonic languages, strong *ь* became *e* and strong *ѣ* became *o*. To determine whether a jer was strong or weak it is necessary to count the jers in successive syllables beginning with the end of the word. The odd jers are in weak position and disappear, while the even ones are in strong position and become 'vocalized'. Thus Common Slavonic *кѣто*, *дѣбъ* become *р кто* 'who', *дуб* 'oak'; Common Slavonic *сѣнъ*, *дѣнь* become *р сон* 'sleep', *день* 'day'; and Common Slavonic *дѣньсѣ* becomes *р* (archaic and poetic) *днесѣ* 'today'. The oldest preserved Old Church Slavonic texts, written in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, preserve the jers in their original positions to a very large extent, and so represent the Common Slavonic situation with relatively little change. In Russian, too, the eleventh-century texts, such as the Ostromir Gospels, write the jers in the great majority of cases. It seems likely that isolated jers were the first to disappear, perhaps first of all in final position, as we may deduce from the example, already quoted, of *νεασιήτ* ~ *неясытъ*, where the Greek spelling indicates the loss of the final vowel but is unable to represent the palatalization of the consonant *-t'*. Medial jers followed, and the Ostromir Codex shows examples such as *кто* and *книга*. The 'vocalization' of the strong jers seems to have been a slightly later process. Early thirteenth-century manuscripts confuse the letters *ь* and *e*, *ѣ* and *o*, which indicates that the jers had already merged with the appropriate full vowels by this date. This confusion is particularly characteristic of thirteenth-century texts from certain northern areas, in which we find, for example, *берьго* (= *берегъ*) and *отидето* (= *отидеть*) (Treaty between Smolensk and Riga, 1229). Thus it is reasonable to assume that the process of change extended over the greater part of the twelfth century.

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In certain cases the treatment of the jers seems not to have followed the regular pattern. These exceptions can for the most part be explained by analogy, by the desire to avoid difficult consonant groups, or by the influence of Church Slavonic, in which (especially in singing) the jers continued to be pronounced, though probably as *e* and *o*. It is sometimes claimed that a jer under the stress was more likely to be vocalized, even though isolated, than one in unstressed position. However, the majority of cases of this kind can be explained in other ways. Analogy affected in particular certain noun-paradigms where the regular treatment of the jers brought about discrepancies. Thus *сънѣмъ* (nom. sing.) regularly gave *ОР СНЕМЪ* 'assembly' but *сънѣма* (gen. sing.) became *сонма*. The regularity of the paradigm was restored by the acceptance of *сонм* as the nominative form. *чьсть* develops regularly to *честь* 'honour' but the genitive *чьсти* appears in Old Russian as *чти*. The modern language has brought in the analogical form *чѣсти*. It must be assumed that the 'regular' and 'irregular' forms existed side by side for a certain period before the paradigm became fixed; and there are many examples of such doublets in Old Russian, e.g. *жерца/жреца* < *жьръца* ~ *жьръць* > *жрец* 'priest'.

The tendency to avoid complex consonant groups is apparent in such forms as *пѣстрый* < *пѣстрый* 'variegated', *стекло* < *стѣкло* 'glass' (we still find the alternative *скло* in Pushkin) and the place-name *Псков*, where Old Russian still has the alternative *Плесковѣ* (cf. the German form of the name *Pleskau*) from *Пльсковѣ*.

Church Slavonic influence is responsible for such forms as *собор* 'cathedral' side by side with *сбор* 'collection' < *съборъ*, *восток* 'east' < *въстокъ* and for all instances of the prefix *воз-*, where the jer was invariably isolated.

Cases where stress has been adduced as the influence preventing the disappearance of a jer are *доска* 'board' < *дѣска* and *тѣща* 'mother-in-law' < *тъща*. In the former case however it is more likely that the form is analogical, influenced by the genitive plural *досок* < *дѣскъ*; and in the latter case it was no doubt the analogy with *тестъ* 'father-in-law' < *тѣсть* that was decisive.

Despite the workings of analogy that have been illustrated above many paradigms still show the results of the changes in the jers in the varying forms of their stem. Alternations of the type *сон/сна* and *день/дня* came to be regarded as regular, to such an extent that some other nouns in which there had never been a jer were assimilated to the same pattern. This is the case with *ров* gen. *рва* 'ditch' formerly *рова* and *лѣд* gen. *льда* 'ice' formerly *леда*.

In a number of words a jer was followed by *j* + vowel, as in the nom. sing. masc. of adjectives such as Common Slavonic *новѣъ* 'new' or in words such as *мѣю* 'I wash', *пѣю* 'I drink', *ѣѣа* 'neck'. Here the jers

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generally developed regularly, so that we find *OR* *HOBOИ* 'new', *пью* 'I drink'. When an isolated jer of this kind was under the stress it was vocalized, so that we have *Р* *МОЮ* 'I wash', *шея* 'neck'. In its treatment of these 'tense' jers, as they are generally called, Russian differs both from Old Church Slavonic and from the other East Slavonic languages. In Old Church Slavonic tense *ъ* develops to *у* and tense *ь* to *и*, so that we have OCS *новѹжь*, *тужѹ*, *пѹжѹ*, *шѹжа*. A similar development took place in Ukrainian and White Russian, producing Ukrainian *новий*, *мию*, *п'ю*, *шия* and White Russian *новы*, *мью*, *п'ю*, *шыя*. One consequence of the different development of these groups in Old Church Slavonic and Russian is that a number of verbal nouns in *-ье* have alternative forms, sometimes leading to semantic distinction. The vernacular Russian *жѹтьѹ* 'life', *бытьѹ* 'existence' stand in the modern language side by side with the Church Slavonic *житіѹ* 'life of a saint', *бытіѹ* 'being', 'the Book of Genesis'.

As has been noted above, the phonemes /e/ and /ě/ must have been still distinct in the earliest Russian. It may well be that the original distinction was simply one of quantity /æ/~/æ:/; but it seems probable that this was reinterpreted as a qualitative difference /æ/~/e/. The phonetic realization of the closed variant may have differed in different dialectal areas. This would explain the fact that *ě* changed in some North Russian dialects and in Ukrainian to *i*, while in the South Russian dialects and in White Russian it coalesced with *e*. In the standard language of today, based on the dialect of Moscow, the reflex of original *ě* is *e*. A few apparent exceptions can be explained by sporadic causes.

Another change which probably took place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was the transformation of *e* to *o*. This occurred when *e* was stressed and was either in final position or followed by a hard consonant. This change is not expressed in normal Russian orthographical practice; though occasionally the 'o' pronunciation is indicated by adding a diaeresis to the *e*, thus *весѣльѹй* 'gay', *сѣла* 'villages'. The change affected not only original *e* but also *e* < *ь*, e.g. *осѣл* 'ass'. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century texts there are a number of examples of orthographic *o* for *ě* in unstressed syllables, e.g. *сѣкажѹмь* 'we shall say'. The fact that Ukrainian still shows many cases of this kind has led some scholars to believe that the change originally affected *e* in all syllables but was later restricted, in Russian and White Russian, to stressed syllables. Moreover, the great majority of the early Russian examples, and all the Ukrainian ones, are of *e* preceded by *š*, *ž*, *č*, *šć* or *j*. It is therefore assumed that the change took place initially after these sounds and was later extended, in Russian and White Russian but not in Ukrainian, to every stressed *e*. Nevertheless, the Russian language today shows numerous examples of stressed *e*. They can be explained in various ways. The change *e* > *o* seems to have been completed at a time when *e* and *ě* were still separate phonemes: words containing

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stressed *ě* remained unaffected by the change. Thus we have лес < лѣсъ 'forest' and пѣна < пѣна 'foam'. Church Slavonic words were unaffected by the change and retained their original pronunciation, e.g. крест 'cross', жѣртѣ 'sacrifice'. This situation gave rise to some doublets, e.g. нѣбо 'heaven' but нѣбо 'palate'. In some cases an originally soft consonant following the stressed *e* was later hardened, after completion of the change of *e* to *o*. Thus the stressed vowel in конѣц 'end', венѣц 'garland' reminds us that *c* was soft until the sixteenth century. The *e* of пѣрвый 'first', верх 'summit' was retained because the originally soft *r* was only hardened in the eighteenth century. Stressed *e* is also found in a number of foreign loan-words, e.g. склеп 'vault' from Polish, билѣт 'ticket' from German, etc., and in the prefixes не- and без-.

Analogy has further modified the state of affairs that has just been outlined. The plural of звездá < звѣзда 'star' is звезды by analogy with such words as сестрá ~ сѣстры. In verbal forms such as несе́те 'you bear', иде́те 'you go' the change to *o* has taken place despite the following soft consonant, by analogy with other forms, in the paradigm such as несе́т 'he bears', иде́м 'we go'.

The most far-reaching changes in the Russian vowel system were the result of the reductions of unstressed syllables which are collectively known as *akan'je* ('*a* pronunciation'). In modern standard Russian the system of vowels in stressed syllables is as follows:

i (y) u
e o
a

In unstressed syllables however only the following vowel system appears:

i u
a

That is to say, unstressed *a* and *o* appear as [a] or its allophones [ʌ] and [ə], while unstressed *e* appears as [i]. This state of affairs is the result of modifications of unstressed syllables which took place, in all probability, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in the dialects of south and central Russia. The North Russian dialects were not affected by these changes and are to this day characterized by *okan'je* ('*o* pronunciation'). White Russian also shows *akan'je*, but not Ukrainian. In modern standard Russian unstressed *o* appears as [a] or [ʌ] in immediately pretonic position and in initial position but as [ə] in all other positions. Thus we have [gəra'da] 'towns', [ˈgorət] 'town', [atxa'dʲit] 'to go away', [gərədaˈvoj] 'urban'. Unstressed *e* appears as [i] in standard Muscovite pronunciation, and this pronunciation is now the most widespread, though at one time [e] or [eʲ] were also common. Thus we have [ʂi'stra] 'sister', [ʂi'lo] 'village'. Unstressed /'a/ or /ja/ are also generally pronounced [i] in an