

## SOME FIRST NAMES IN OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC<sup>[\*]</sup>

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*Abstract:* The contribution deals with Old Church Slavonic first names of Slavonic origin. They are usually compounds formed by a no longer productive joining of two lexical bases. These names have their own morphological, word-formative, semantic, and etymological peculiarities. Some of them constitute the basis in the formation of toponyms; they are homonyms of the names identical with them. The compound first names are not only interesting from the linguistic perspective, they, in addition, provide valuable historical information that serves as a means for assigning their bearers to a certain social stratum. The bearers of compound first names were high-born people, whereas persons lower in the social hierarchy possessed simple first names, often originating from the shortening of compound first names.

*Keywords:* onomastics; Slavonic; compounding; etymology

The documents originating in the oldest period of Church Slavonic literature, in the period of the early stages of the translation activities of the Slavonic apostles and their disciples, contain a considerable number of names of different origin. They occurred as far back as the Cyrillo-Methodian period; since then they have mostly survived in younger transcripts. In particular, this concerns the so-called Moravian-Pannonian Legends (the Life of Constantine and the Life of Methodius), the Old Church Slavonic Legend of St Wenceslas, the Life of St Ludmila (both versions), and the Gospels (the Ostromir Gospel, and the Assemani Gospel).

The toponyms, hydronyms and ethnonyms recorded in the Old Church Slavonic documents are largely of non-Slavonic origin, with ambiguous interpretation, and their analysis would go far beyond the limits of this work. For this reason, the present paper deals with the Church Slavonic first names only because it is above all they that contain certain morphological, word-formative, semantic and etymological peculiarities. In the following list the names are arranged in alphabetical order. We provide a brief outline of the information about the name's bearer, about the document where the name occurs, its possible equivalents in modern Slavonic languages as well as some other data related mostly to the word-formation and semantics of the name. The material, including the etymological analyses, is principally taken from the *Etymological Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic Language (Etymologický slovník jazyka staroslověnského, ESJS)*, which is in turn based upon the material of the *Old Church Slavonic Dictionary (Slovník jazyka staroslověnského, SJS)*. In the case where etymological analyses are questionable or undecided, we provide our insights on the possible origin of the names chosen.

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**Boljeslavъ**, -a, is the name of the Czech prince Boleslav I, who killed his brother Wenceslas (Václav). It is mentioned in the Old Church Slavonic Legend of St Wenceslas. It consists of the adverb *bolje* ‘more’ and *-slavъ* ‘famous’. It is used in modern Slavonic languages (in Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Serbian-Croatian, Russian *Boleslav*, and Polish *Bolesław*). It means ‘more famous’ (ESJS, vol. 2: 73); the name of *Vęšteslavъ*, Václav, has the same meaning (cf. below).

**Borivoi**, -ja was the first Přemyslid. His name occurs in the Life of St Ludmila (an Old East Slavonic text). The name is probably of Proto-Slavonic origin, and it continues to be used in old and modern Czech language (*Bořivoj*), in Slovak (*Borivoj*, probably from Czech), and there is also the Polish older and rarer form *Borzywój* (SK, vol. 1: 331), and in Serbian, Croatian *Borivoj*. The compound consists of the imperative of the verb ‘to beat, to fight, to defeat’ as its first part, and the noun *vojъ* ‘formation of soldiers’ as the second part, together ‘thrash, defeat troops’ (ESJS, vol. 2: 73, 74; ESSJa, vol. 2: 204). Thus, *Borivoi* is ‘the one who thrashes, defeats troops’.

**Čbsta**, -y is the name of the Czech prince Wenceslas’ killer, occurring in the Old Church Slavonic Legend of St Wenceslas also in the form of *Časta*, *Čista*, *Tista*. It is supposed to be an informal version of the original compound that has not survived in the written form, though the existence of which is reflected by a large number of the Old Czech compound first names with the noun *\*čbstъ* ‘honour’ as the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> part, cf. *Čsti-*, *Cti-*, *Sti-bor*, -rad, -mir, -slav, or Old Czech *Svěcest*, *Necta*. The use of the informal form may in this case express a disparaging attitude to the person who committed a crime (ESJS, vol. 2: 119).

**Dragomira**, -y, a Czech princess, a wife of the prince Bořivoj I. The name is recorded in the Church Slavonic Legend of St Wenceslas. It is a feminine derivative from the masculine name known as far back as the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The Proto-Slavonic form may be reconstructed in accordance with the contemporary form used in Slavonic languages as *\*Dorgomir*. The first part of the compound comes from the adjective *\*dorgъ* ‘dear, rare’, the second part is usually interpreted from Proto-Slavonic *\*měrъ* representing a continuation of the Indo-European adjective *\*mēro-/mēri-* ‘great, famous’, from which e.g. Old High German *mārī* ‘a piece of news’ and German *Märchen* ‘fairy tale’ are derived. The name *Dragomira* would mean ‘rare and famous’ in this interpretation. Miklosich (1860: 77ff.) suggests a relationship with Indo-European *\*mēro-*. It is less probable in this case that Proto-Slavonic *\*měrъ* was borrowed from Germanic languages as Hirt (1898: 4) and Milewski – Schmidt (1957: 291) already pointed out. Differently Svoboda (1964: 81), who is convinced about the original Proto-Slavonic element *\*mirъ* ‘peace, world’. Kopečný (1974: 45), Knappová (1985: 217) and ESJS (vol. 3: 145) are of the same opinion. In this interpretation, *Dragomira* would be ‘a woman whose peace is dear to her heart’. The name occurs in Czech and Slovak as *Drahomira*, in Polish as *Drogomira*, and in Bulgarian and Serbian-Croatian as *Dragomira*.

**Gněvisa**, -y, the unique, probably informally abbreviated first name of one of the killers of the prince Wenceslas. It is recorded in the Legend of St Wenceslas and also in its later editions. The name consists of the noun *gněvъ* ‘anger’, extended with the expressive suffixes *-isa*, *-ysa* (cf. the variant *Gněvysa*) or *-sa* (recorded only as the possessive adjective *Gněvesei* (*Gněvъsii*) *dvorъ*). The suffixes probably come from Proto-Slavonic *\*-bъsa*, as stated by Sławski (SK 1975, vol. 2: 32, ESJS, vol. 3: 182). The rare form of *Gněvъka* (once in the Minej Old East Slavonic manuscript of the Legend of St Wenceslas) is considered to be

a scribal clerical error (-s- replaced with -k-); however, considering the possessive adjective with -s-, one may not rule out that it is a diminutive noun with *-bka* having a depreciatory meaning.

**Gorazdbъ**, *-a* is the name of Methodius' disciple and the designated successor in the office of Moravian archbishop; recorded in the document dating back to the Cyrillo-Methodian period, in the so-called Moravian-Pannonian Legend, in an Old East Slavonic transcript of the original Old Church Slavonic text. Proto-Slavonic *\*Gorazdbъ* occurs in the Polish, Slovak and Czech languages as a name; it is in the base of some toponyms, cf. e.g. Czech *Horažďovice*, Slovak *Gorazdov* or Polish *Gorazdów*. The name is derived from the Proto-Slavonic appellative *\*gorazdbъ* 'eloquent, skilful, agile, etc.', the origin of which is unclear. Miklosich (1867: 90), Jungmann (1835–1839, vol. 1: 727) and Berneker (1908–1914, vol. 1, 329ff.) consider the appellative a loanword from Gothic *\*ga-razds* 'eloquent, competent'. The most serious drawback of this semantically persuasive interpretation is the lack of attestation of the Gothic word. – The interpretation of Iljinskij (1916: 4, 8) and Brückner (1910: 307) is connected with the meaning 'to speak', too; they derive the word from the Proto-Slavonic root *\*gor-* 'to speak'. In this Slavonic interpretation, the suffix *-azdbъ* (< *-azditi*) is questionable. – Proto-Slavonic *gorazdbъ* is connected with *gromazditi* 'to collect, to accumulate' (from Indo-European *\*ger-/gor-* 'to collect, to fold') in the third interpretation (Stender-Petersen 1922, vol. 5: 675–677; Kiparsky 1934: 28). However, the compound assumes a quite complex semantic development: 'the one who catches, who collects' → 'expeditious, bright' → 'skilful, capable' (ESJS, vol. 3: 190).

**Izbraslavъ**, *-a* is a Russian Church Slavonic reproduction of the son of St Wenceslas' name recorded as *Iz'-bręslavъ* (the Second Legend of St Wenceslas). Its equivalents can be found in West Slavonic languages, cf. Old Czech *Zbraslav*, *Braslav*, Old Polish *Zbroslaw*, *Zbraslaw*, *Broslaw* (here it is derived from Proto-Slavonic *\*Sъborslavъ*). There is also the rare Old Czech toponym *Izbraslav*, where the initial *Iz-* would correspond, in the same way as the Old East Slavonic *iz-*, to the original Proto-Slavonic form *\*jъz-*. – The second part of the name is connected with *slava* 'fame'. The first part of the word is usually connected with the root *\*bor-* coming from Proto-Slavonic *\*borti* 'to fight'. In accordance with this interpretation, *Izbraslavъ* was 'the one fighting for fame'. – The connection of the first part with *\*bъra-* in Proto-Slavonic *\*bъrati* 'to take, to collect' (< Indo-European *\*bher-* 'to take, to carry') is less persuasive (Miklosich 1860: 34). Apart from the fact that we would have to understand the Old Polish name as secondarily formed in accordance with the names with *-ro-*, the semantic interpretation of the word is poorer as well: one mostly fights for fame, while *Izbraslavъ* would mean 'the one collecting fame' (ESJS, vol. 5: 258).

**Izęslavъ**, *-a* is a Church Slavonic hypercorrect form of the Kievan prince's name *Izjaslav* (1024–1078) coming from the Old East Slavonic text of the Ostromir Gospels written in Novgorod in 1056–1057. This compound contains as the second part the stem *-slavъ* from *slava*, *slaviti*. The first part of the word consists of the prefix *iz-* and the root present in Old Church Slavonic *\*jęti* 'to take'. Svoboda (1964: 58, 80) assumes that the stem *-slavъ* had only a formal function when this and similar names were formed (ESJS, vol. 5: 259).

**Jaroslavъ**, *-a* is mentioned in the Novgorod Ostromir Gospels as the name of the Kievan prince Jaroslav I the Wise. It is a compound from *jaro-*, which comes from the adjective *jarъ* 'impetuous, strong', and of *-slavъ* coming from *slava*, *slaviti*. Therefore, *Jaroslavъ* would be 'noted for his strength'. Etymologists agree with this interpretation. *Jar-* meaning 'strong'

is also a part of another compound name present chiefly in Serbian and Croatian. Rječnik (vol. 4: 472) records *Jaroslav*, *Jeroslav* and also *Jarovít*, the bearer of which was the Slav “god”, named also \**Svętovitъ* (Polish *Jarowit* – *Świętowit*), living in a shrine on the territory of the Polabians. The first part of the name *Święto-* comes from Proto-Slavonic \**svętb* ‘strong’ (ESJS, vol. 5: 270). In modern Slavonic languages, the name occurs in Ukrainian and Russian (*Jarosláv*), Czech and Slovak (*Jaroslav*); in South Slavonic languages we can see also Bulgarian *Jaroslav*.

***Ljudъmila***, -y, the name of the wife of the Czech prince Bořivoj and St Wenceslas’ grandmother; she was killed around 920, and has been venerated a saint to the present day. The name is found in the Nikol’skij’s variant of the Legend of St Wenceslas and in the Old East Slavonic text of the Life of St Ludmila. It spread together with the legend about her from Czech Old Church Slavonic *Ljudъmila* to the other Slavonic languages, cf. e.g. Slovak *L’udmila*, Old Polish *Ludźmila*, Ukrainian *Ljudmýla*, Russian *Ljudmila*, with many variants and neologisms. In this compound of \**l’udъ* ‘people’ and the adjective \**milъ* ‘dear beloved?’ meaning ‘dear to the people’, the *i*-stem in the first part is a sign of antiquity (Milewski 1969: 201, ESJS, vol. 7: 433).

***Mъstina***, -y is the name of a killed member of St Wenceslas’ retinue mentioned in the legends about Wenceslas. The name may have been created either with the suffix *-ina* from the noun *mъstъ* ‘revenge, punishment’ or as an expressive derivative of the compound names of the types of *Mstibor*, *Mstihněv*, *Mstislav*, etc. (for example ESSJa, vol. 21: 169, ESJS, vol. 4: 519). – Less convincing is the assumption that *Mъsti-* in *Mъstina* reflects a zero-grade of the Indo-European root \**med-* ‘to measure, to conclude’ (Pokorny 1949–1969, vol. 1: 705).

***Ostromirъ***, -a is the name of the Novgorod governor for whom the Ostromir Gospels were written. It is a rare name, in the other Slavonic languages recorded only as a derivative in toponyms (e.g. Czech *Ostroměř*). It is a compound from \**ostrъ* ‘impetuous, sharp, rough’ and \**mirъ* from \**měrbъ* (< Indo-European \**mēro-/mēri-* ‘great, famous’), with the hitherto assumed meaning \*‘famous for his impetuosity, roughness, sharpness’. However, the adjective \**ostrъ* may also be understood as ‘resolute, firm’ (ESJS, vol. 10: 600).

***Rastislavъ***, -a, in Russian Church Slavonic also *Rostislavъ*, is the name of the Great Moravian prince who invited Cyril and Methodius from the Byzantine Empire to Moravia. The name is recorded in the Moravian-Pannonian legends, in the ceremonial address in honour of Cyril and Methodius as well as the Croatian-Glagolitic officium of Sts Cyril and Methodius in accordance with the Roman rite from the Ljubljana breviary. The form *Rasticъ* is once recorded in the Middle-Bulgarian treatise of the monk Chrabr dealing with the Slavonic script. The name is commonly used in modern Slavonic languages (Macedonian *Rastislav*, *Rostislav*, Croatian *Ràstislav*, Slovak *Rastislav*, Czech *Rostislav*, Polish *Rościsław*, Ukrainian *Rostysláv*, Russian *Rostisláv*). Sorbian uses only the short form *Rost* m. The feminine variant is found as a maiden name in Serbian, Croatian, Slovak, Czech, and Polish. – The name *Rastislavъ* is a compound consisting of the imperative of the verb *rasti* ‘to grow’ and *-slavъ* with the meaning ‘let the fame grow, increase the fame’. The semantic motivation of the name is similar as e.g. in *Boljeslavъ*. – The form *Rasticъ* is probably a hypocoristic form from *Rastislavъ* with the diminutive suffix *-icъ*. Only little probable is Leeming’s (1998: 16–20) assumption concerning the origin of the name from Iranian languages (cf. Ossetian *rast-* ‘right, fair, etc.’), originally as the short form *Rasticъ*. The compound *Rastislavъ* is then said

to originate only later, its first part being reinterpreted as a reflex of Proto Slavonic *\*orst-* ‘to grow’ (ESJS, vol. 13: 752).

**Retko**, *-a* (or *Retkь* (?), the nominative was not recorded) is the name of the scribe of the Codex Suprasliensis, recorded once in the codex. The Old-Croatian form *Retk* and Old-Polish form *Rethko*, *Rethco*, *Retk* probably come from Church Slavonic. Nimčuk (1995: 1, 43–44) mentions the Old Ukrainian hydronym *Retovъ* and the Ukrainian hydronyms *Retyk*, *Ret’*. The equivalents of the personal name *Retko* are not used in modern Slavonic languages. Old Church Slavonic *Retko*, *Retkь* was probably formed by shortening of the compound *\*Retislavъ*, *\*Retimirъ*, the first part of which relates to the Old Church Slavonic noun *retъ* ‘eagerness, rivalry, quarrel’ (Georgiev 1983: 212–213; Račeva 2003: 165–166, ESJS, vol. 13: 762). – Less probable is Zaimov and Kapaldo’s (1982–1983: 5) interpretation of the name *Retko* as a diminutive from *\*Rato* (< *ratъ* ‘war, fight’, *ratiti se* ‘to struggle, to fight’); the latter is attested e.g. in the Old Russian name *Ratiborъ* or in the Czech toponym *Ratiboř*. The interpretation may be taken into consideration only if we assume that the same change took place in this word as e.g. in *trava* > *trěva*.

**Spytigněvъ**, *-a*, a Czech prince, St. Wenceslas’ uncle. The name is recorded in Nikol’ský’s text of St Wenceslas and the so-called prologue legend about him; nowadays it is rare and hardly ever used in the Czech language; it also existed in Old Polish (*Spycigniew*), where it was borrowed from Czech. The most frequent interpretations consider this compound to be formed from the adverb *spyti* ‘groundlessly, needlessly’, and the noun *gněvъ* ‘anger’. Thus, *Spytigněvъ* would be ‘the one being groundlessly angry’. Miklosich (1860: 101) refuses this semantic interpretation. However, his suggested forms *spyti* ‘citus; rapid’ or ‘pulcher; beautiful’ do not correspond to the real meaning of the adverb *spyti*. – The name may be interpreted in another way. Its first part is probably an imperative from (*s*)*pytati* ‘to examine, to inquire’ (< *\*pytati*). The word-formation type “verb + substantive” was particularly productive in the old compound names; the verb has usually the form of the old imperative ending with *-i* in all thematic verbs. The name *Spytigněvъ* would mean ‘examine, consider anger’. This interpretation is also supported by the explanation of the alternative form *Spytavъgněvъ*, where the first part of the word *spytavъ* corresponds to the past participle active form of the same verb *spytati* meaning ‘the one who examined, weighed anger’, a prudent person who was not angry without any reason (Valčáková 2006: 464–466; ESJS, vol. 14: 866, 867).

**Stanъ**, *-a* is recorded twice in the Cyrillic addition to the Glagolic text of the Assemani Gospel dated to the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century. Most probably it is a name of the scribe. It can be found in Bulgarian, Serbian, Macedonian, and Old Polish as *Stan*, as well as *Stano* in Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Old Polish; it is an informal form of the name *Stanislav* found in the other Slavonic languages. Most often the name is connected with the first part of the old Slavonic compound *\*Stanislavъ* consisting of an imperative of the verb *\*stati* and the nominal adjective *\*-slavъ*, meaning ‘become famous’ (Nikonov 1988: 122; Stankovska 1992: 260; Knappová 2006: 257, ESJS, vol. 16: 874, 875).

**Svetoplъkъ**, *-a* is recorded in the abbreviated form *Stoplъkъ* in the ceremonial address in honour of Sts Cyril and Methodius, in the Moravian-Pannonian legends and in first Old Church Slavonic Legend of St Wenceslas. It is a compound of the Proto-Slavonic adjective *\*svetъ* ‘strong’ (from there ‘strong in the good’, ‘holy’) and the noun *\*plъkъ* ‘crowd, for-

mation, troops'. The name with the meaning of 'strong in regiments (i.e. in the military people)' continues e.g. in Czech *Svatopluk*, Slovak *Svätopluk*, Polish *Świętopelk*, Russian *Syjatopolk*, and it is commonly used in these languages (Knappová 1985: 177; ESJS, vol. 15: 910).

*Věšteslavъ*, *-a* is the name of the Czech prince Wenceslas recorded in the Wenceslas legend (also with the soft yer at the end). The first part of the compound is *věšte* 'more', a comparative form of the adverb *много*, the second part is the adjective *-slavъ* 'famous' from *slava*, *slaviti*. The meaning of the word is 'more famous' (ESJS, vol. 18: 1059). We can find the name in most Slavonic languages, cf. Czech and Slovak *Václav*, Russian *Vjačeslav*, *Vaclav*, Polish *Wacław*, Serbian *Večeslav*, Croatian *Venceslav*; there is also German *Wenzslaus*, English *Wenceslas* from the Latinised form *Venceslaus*, Lithuanian *Vaclovas* etc.

*Vladimirъ*, *-a* is recorded as *Volodimirъ* in the Ostromir Gospels; it is the name of the famous Kievan prince who lived at the turn of the first millennium. The second part of this word is interpreted in different ways, similarly as e.g. Dragomira (q.v.). In this case, more probable is the Proto-Slavonic word *\*mirъ* 'world'. *Vladimirъ* was invited 'to rule the world', when he was baptized. The meaning of the name is 'the one who rules the world'. The name is popular in Slavonic languages, cf. Czech and Slovak *Vladimír*, Polish *Włodzimierz*, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Russian, and Ukrainian *Vladimir* (ESJS, vol. 18: 1066).

*Voitěchъ*, *-a* is the name of the second bishop of Prague, a member of the Slavník dynasty. It was preserved in the Prayer to the Holy Trinity regarded as a document of Czech origin, but it is recorded only in the Old East Slavonic transcripts. The first part of this compound name is the noun *voi* 'troops', the second part is a form of the sigmatic aorist *těchъ* 'he comforted' – *Voitěchъ* was the one 'who comforted troops' (see ESJS, vol. 18: 1074). The name is often used in Slavonic languages, cf. Czech *Vojtěch*, Slovak *Vojtech*, Polish *Wojciech*, Serbian, Croatian *Vojteh*, Bulgarian and Russian *Vojtech*.

*Vratislavъ*, *-a* is the name of the prince from the Přemyslid dynasty, Spytihněv's brother. It can also be found in various editions of the Wenceslas Legend and in the Old East Slavonic text of the Life of St Ludmila. It is another compound among the ones that contain *-slavъ* from *slaviti*, *slava* as its second part. The first part consists of the imperative of the Proto-Slavonic verb *\*vortiti* 'to come back', 'come back famous'. *Vratislavъ* is the one who 'gets back the fame' (ESJS, vol. 18: 1083).

Although compounding is not a very productive word-forming device in Slavonic languages as it is e.g. in Old Indian or Germanic languages, Slavs preserved the formation of first names by means of compounding as an Indo-European cultural inheritance. The names formed by connecting two lexical bases were created in the period when no surnames existed. They expressed the naming stimuli, which are in the most of their modern continuations faintly obvious, and described the bearer's mental and physical qualities, and his/her relationship towards other people and the surroundings.

Verbal compounds are frequent; the verbal form is used as the first part of the compound name. As the names as a whole express wishes, appeals, longing for positive qualities, the verbal part is often in the form of imperative (*Borivoi*, *Rastislavъ*, *Spytigněvъ*, *Vladimirъ*, *Vratislavъ*). As concerns the bases, we often have to take into account the form that may

fundamentally influence the etymological interpretation of the word (*Spytigněvъ*). The nominal forms quite often express the object of the wish or appeal. Usually the object of the wish related to fame (*Boljeslavъ, Izbraslavъ, Izęslavъ, Jaroslavъ, Rastislavъ, Vęšteslavъ, Vratislavъ*). The names *Borivoi, Voitěchъ* and *Svętoplъkъ* relate to fighting and to troops.

In the course of time, a shift in the understanding of the word occurs in some bases of the compounds; e.g. the original adjective base *jar-* ‘hard, strong, etc.’ in *Jaroslavъ* is now understood as the noun *jaro* ‘spring’; quantitative Proto-Slavonic comparative *\*vętje* ‘more’, which is apparent in the Old Church Slavonic form of the name Wenceslas (*Vęšteslavъ*), is veiled in Old Czech and the modern Czech form of the name *Věnceslav*, and the first part of the name is understood as a genitive singular or nominative plural form of *věnc* ‘garland’. The Old Church Slavonic first names also provide important historical information used as a means of assigning the name bearer to a certain social group. The ancient way of formation of the first names related mostly to names of nobility (e.g. Church Slavonic proper nouns *Borivoi*, a Czech prince, Old Church Slavonic *Dragomira*, a Czech princess, Church Slavonic *Izęslavъ, Jaroslavъ*, Kievan princes, Old Church Slavonic *Rastislavъ*, a Great Moravian prince, etc.). Simple forms of the names are usually shortened compounds or consist of one of their parts, and they relate to persons of a lower rank in the society (*Mbstina*, a member of the prince’s retinue, *Stanъ, Retъko*, scribes), or to the people who reduced themselves to the lower level as a result of their behaviour (*Čbsta, Gněvisa*, killers). Some other names rank among different onymic fields (e.g. *Izbraslavъ* is a first name and a toponym); they are homonyms.

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