

DEAN S. WORTH  
(Bellino Drive, USA)

### AVVAKUM AS *A3* AND *JA*\*

0. The fate of South Slavic borrowings into Russian/Russian has generated a substantial literature,<sup>1</sup> without however tracing in any detail the processes by which South Slavisms were incorporated into, or eliminated from, the various genres of written Russian as these developed across time. As a minor contribution to our knowledge of this process, this preliminary study will examine the distribution of South Slavic *az* and East Slavic *ja* in the autobiography of the seventeenth-century archpriest Avvakum.<sup>2</sup>

Across the entire *Life* of Avvakum, East Slavic *ja* is three times as frequent as South Slavic *az* (*az* 69 = 24.6% : *ja* 212 = 75.4%). This is what one would expect, since the overall history of *az* across time was a deterioration from its predominant position in the religious literature of Kievan Rus' to the vestigial, citation-only relic of today. To move toward a useful localized view of *az* and *ja* in Avvakum's *Life*, however, we have to examine the distribution of these two forms. Two kinds of distribution seem to be relevant: (1) the distribution of *az* and *ja* in various phono-syntactic environments, and (2) the distribution of the results of (1) across the text of the *Life*.

**1. Phono-syntactic environments.** Syntactic structures carry phonological and rhythmic strictures along with them, conditioning the choice of phonetically variable tokens in different syntactic positions. In the case of *az* and *ja* (and, marginally, of the hybrid *jaz*), an earlier study showed

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\* This study is dedicated to the late Academician Pavle Ivić, in honor of his scholarship and in fond memory of those gentler days when we and our families and friends could walk and talk in the California mountains and desert, tour the splendid Serbian monasteries, and enjoy an informal meal in a Skadarlija restaurant.

<sup>1</sup> Hüttl-Folter 1983, Poroxova 1988; more recently, Worth 1999a, 1999b, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Pustozerskij sbornik* 1975.

that the choice between the South and East Slavic forms in the Laurentian Chronicle was conditioned not by the speech of educated city-dwellers vs. that of illiterate rustics, as per Kandaurova 1968, but by phonetic hiatus deletion on minor junctures vs. the optional preservation of hiatus on major boundaries (Worth 1985: 239-40).<sup>3</sup> In Avvakum's *Life* we find what looks like a similar but further evolved system, with both *az* and *ja* occurring on major junctures like sentence-initial position but with few exceptions only *ja* appearing on minor junctures such as following unstressed conjunctions and particles.

**1.1 Initial position.** This class includes what in the published edition are three typographically distinguished environments (Avvakum himself made no such distinctions):

(1) sentence-initial, e.g. *Az že ot izgnanija preselixsja* 13v12<sup>4</sup>, *Az že paki emu dal svjatuju vodu* 87.11 and *Ja uže i v tjrmu prosilsja* 29.04, *Ja evo otvel k dočeri svoej* 61.07;

(2) clause-initial, e.g. *I dondeže stroenie božie byst', az na vostok klanjalsja bogu* 58v06, *i priěxal k nei otec duxovnoj; az že iz dvora pošel* 97v11 and *Myšej mnogo u menja bylo, ja ix skufeju bil* 37.06, *nepravo xodim po istinně, -- ja knigu promenjal, otcovu zapověd' prestupil* 84.07;

(3) quotation-initial, e.g. *I ja otvěščal: „Az esm Avvakum, protopop“* 33v05 and *I ja ... govoril: „Ja, reku, pljuju na evo kormlju“* 78v10.

The statistics of the *az* : *ja* distinction in these initial environments, shown in Table 1, show no significant difference between the two pronominal variants:

**Table 1: *az* and *ja* in initial positions**

positions	<i>az</i>	<i>ja</i>
1a sentence-initial	46	48
1b clause-initial	5	11
1c question-initial	3	4
Total	54	63
% of total	46.2	53.8

<sup>3</sup> Specifically: *ja* and *jaz* occur overwhelmingly (95.7%) on clitic, conjunction, or word boundaries and only 4.3% on clause or sentence boundaries, while *az* occurs more equally, 49.3% on clitic, conjunction, or word boundaries and 50.7% on clause or sentence boundaries; in other words, *az* is at this stage the unmarked and *ja(z)* the marked (= distributionally more restricted) form. Cf. p. 3 below for the situation in Avvakum's *Life*.

<sup>4</sup> Verso is marked by the usual *v*, recto by the absence of any mark, as in 87.11 = folio 87 recto, line 11. All word-final back jers have been eliminated here and forms superscripted or under tilde resolved.

In 45/54 (83.3%) of the occurrences of *az* in initial position, *az* is followed by the clitic *že*, while not a single occurrence of *ja* has this appendage. Whether the *že* of *az že* is a specific marker of topic-shifting is an interesting question but one that cannot be taken up here.<sup>5</sup>

**1.2 Non-initial positions** are of two types. In the first, *ja* or, much less often, *az* occurs after unstressed conjunctions (typically but not only *a* and *i*), or after a variety of weakly-stressed adverbs, conjunctions, and particles such as *da*, *gdě*, *kak*, *čto*, *egda*, *ešče*, and once after a presumably fully-stressed *zavtra*. Exx.: *a ja emu govorju* 17.07, *I ja paki pozavelsja* 18.11, *gdě ja duxovnye děla dělal* 20v08, *A se i sam ja ubojalsja* 52v03, *Byl-de ja na Rezani* 67.09, *tak i ja kreščusja* 70v04, *a zav"tra ja tak že umru* 90.05 and *I az molix ego* 16.08, *I az emu otvěščal* 103.09, *Egda az v popěx byl* 14.08.<sup>6</sup>

The second type of non-initial position, less common than the first, finds *ja* or, rarely, *az* in VS word order, or positioned after a prepositional phrase, e.g. *Siděl ja tut četyre neděli* 26.09, *Vzjal ja kadilo* 86.03, *vo tmě načal ja pravilo poklonnoe* 95.13<sup>7</sup> and *xošču glagolati az* 4.05, *I načax az dějstvovat'* 85v03 and *Potom i na Rus' ja vyvez eja* 97.09.

The statistics of *az* : *ja* distribution in these two types of non-initial position, adduced in Table 2 below, differ radically from those in Table 1; in initial position, *az* and *ja* patterned more or less identically, but here, *ja* is overwhelmingly the anaphor of choice:

**Table 2: *az* and *ja* in non-initial position**

positions	<i>az</i>	<i>ja</i>
2a after <i>a</i> , <i>i</i> et al.	10	128
2b in VS order	5	21
Total	15	149
% of total	9.1	90.9

Tables 1 and 2 show that, for Avvakum, *az* and *ja* form a typical Jakobsonian asymmetric opposition, in which the unmarked member *ja* occurs equally freely in both initial and non-initial environments, while

<sup>5</sup> Song 1997 finds that *že* marks both topic shifts and register.

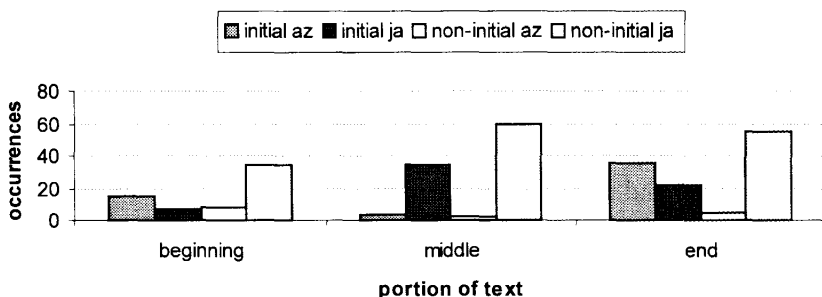
<sup>6</sup> *az* occurs, if rarely, after *i*, but never after *a*, which can be explained — if such a small number of exx. deserves explanation at all — by the high front articulation of *i*, very close to hiatus-deleting *j*.

<sup>7</sup> In a few exx. the verb is followed by an unstressed particle, e.g. „*Znaju su ja pustosvjatov tēx!*“ 27.0ž, „*Protopop, vědaju-de ja tvoe čistoe ... žitie*“ 74v15; such exx. overlap with those in the first type of non-initial position just above, e.g. *Byl-de ja na Rezani* 67.09.

the marked member *az* is restricted essentially to initial position. The semantic correlates of this asymmetrical relation are of course equally asymmetric: *az* appears in a stylistically narrow range (solemn, incipital, topic-shifting), while *ja* shows no such restrictions. Compared to the Laurentian Chronicle (see f.n. 3), the markedness relations have here been reversed.

**2. Distribution of the *az* : *ja* opposition across the *Life*.** The relative frequency of the *az* : *ja* opposition in both initial and non-initial positions differs from one part of Avvakum's *Life* to another, and in ways which are not always easy to explain. This differing relative frequency itself suggests that the *Life* consists of three sections, which we shall none too inventively term the Beginning (folia 4-34), the Middle (folia 35-74), and the End (folia 75-115).<sup>8</sup> Roughly speaking, the Beginning and End show a substantial number of *az* occurrences, while the slightly longer Middle section is almost devoid of them. These distributionally determined sections do not correlate, at least in any obvious way, with the content of the *Life*, but they do correlate quite closely with the quire structure of the manuscript: the border between the Beginning and the Middle sections falls at the beginning of quire 5 (folio 35), and that between the Middle and the End, at the beginning of quire 10 (folio 75). The distribution of *az* and *ja* in initial and non-initial positions is most easily examined graphically, as in Chart 1 below:

Chart 1: types across text



The same data can be presented in tabular form, as in Table 3 below, from which one can derive a number of

<sup>8</sup> Except for a late isolated occurrence of non-initial *ja* at 115.07, the opposition *az* : *ja* is not manifested after F109.

**Table 3: Distribution of types across *Life***

	initial <i>az</i>	initial <i>ja</i>	non-initial <i>az</i>	non-initial <i>ja</i>
Beginning	15 = 23.4%	7 = 10.9%	8 = 12.5%	34 = 53.1%
Middle	4 = 4.0%	34 = 34.0%	2 = 2.0%	60 = 60.0%
End	35 = 29.9%	22 = 18.8%	5 = 4.3%	55 = 47.0%

not uninteresting generalizations about the Beginning, Middle and End of the *Life*, namely:

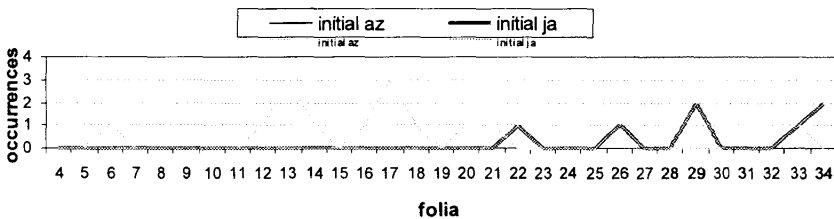
(a) In their overall proportions of *az* : *ja*, the Beginning and End are nearly alike (Beginning *az* : *ja* = 23 : 41 = 35.9% : 64.1%, End *az* : *ja* = 40 : 77 = 34.2% : 65.8%), and contrast strongly with the Middle, in which East Slavic *ja* predominates (*az* : *ja* = 6 : 94 = 6.0% : 94.0%);

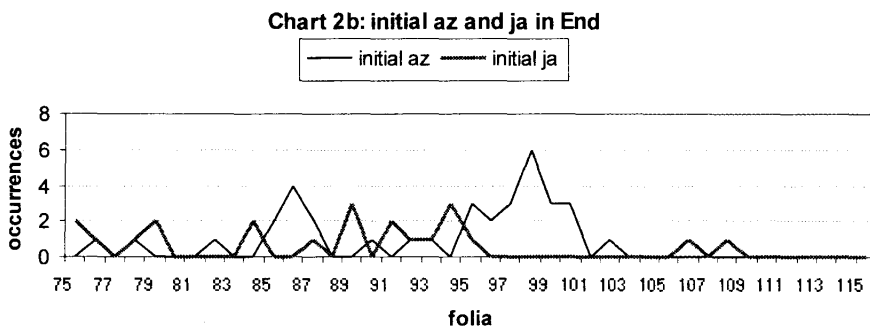
(b) In initial position, the Beginning and the End again contrast with the Middle, this time because of B's and E's preference for South Slavic *az*, while M shows a strong predominance of *ja* (B *az* : *ja* = 15 : 7 = 68.2% : 31.8%, E *az* : *ja* = 35 : 22 = 61.4% : 38.6%, M *az* : *ja* = 4 : 34 = 10.5% : 89.5%);

(c) In non-initial position, all on the other hand, all three text portions prefer *ja* over *az*, rather more strongly in M than in B and E, although the differences are not great (B *az* : *ja* = 8 : 34 = 19.0% : 81.0%, M *az* : *ja* = 2 : 60 = 3.2% : 96.8%, E *az* : *ja* = 5 : 55 = 8.3% : 91.7%).

(d) Although, as shown in (a), B and E are nearly alike in their overall proportions of *az* and *ja*, (b) and (c) show that they differ in the role played by initial vs. non-initial position, which strongly determines the choice of *az* in B and E, while the role of these positions is much attenuated in M's preference for *ja*. As we are about to see, B and E differ in other ways as well.

**3. Textological speculation.** (a) and (b) above have shown that the Beginning and End of the *Life* show almost equal overall preference for South Slavic *az* over East Slavic *ja*. However, if we look at the distribution of initial *az* and *ja* internally to B and E, we notice both similarities and a striking difference, shown graphically in Charts 2a and 2b below:

**Chart 2a: Initial *az* and *ja* in Beginning**



Comparison of Charts 2a and 2b reveals that:

(e) In both B and E *az* and *ja* are unequally distributed across the text portions;

(f) B and E are to an extent mirror images of each other, B having nearly all its *az* occurrences toward the end of its first half (i.e., in its second quarter), while E has, but less clearly, most of its *az* occurrences in the beginning of its second half (i.e., in its third quarter);

(g) B and E differ in that the former shows hardly any textual overlap between initial *az* and *ja*, whereas E shows substantial overlap in its second quarter.

The mirror image distribution shown in (f) suggests that the textual function of the marked member *az* is primarily delimitative; specifically, it is incipital in B and closural in E. Since, however, there are no obvious contentual correlates to the distribution of initial *az* and *ja*, we can only speculate that the sections favoring *az* were written later than those favoring *ja*, perhaps when Avvakum was in northern exile, not too long before his death. The facts noted in (g) would then be explained by the assumption that B's first half (FF4-20) was written entirely as an added introduction, while the overlap of *az* and *ja* in the second quarter of E suggests that Avvakum was copying from an earlier text during this second quarter (FF85-95) and began his new, final section only at F95. This is, of course, pure speculation, and only a more detailed philological examination of the text will show whether or not it is in fact a reasonable view of the composition of Akkakum's *Life*.

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