

Ū-declension nouns confused with o-declension case endings or o-declension nouns influenced by the ū-declension? A study on the OCS nouns грѣхъ and домъ in the plural.

Abstract

The aims of this work are to explore and describe the linguistic process in which the ū- and the o-declensions influenced each other in Old Church Slavonic, and parallel case endings of both the ū- and o-declensions occurred in the same sources. The nouns грѣхъ ‘sin’ and домъ ‘house’ have been chosen in order to investigate the influence of the declensions on each other. This interplay of the two declensions has led to a disagreement among scholars about whether грѣхъ and домъ belonged to the ū- or the o-declension in OCS. This article aims to find an answer to this problem, describing the history and the linguistic situation in four cases in the plural.

Keywords: *Old Church Slavonic, grammar, linguistic changes, nouns, plural, the ū-declension, the o-declension, confusion of case endings, грѣхъ, домъ.*

1 Introduction

An enthralling process of linguistic changes took place more than 1000 years ago, having already started in the pre-writing period; a nominal declension was dying. This declension, the ū-declension, existed in the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) language², and it was inherited by Proto-Slavic (PS), Common Slavic (CS)³ and finally Old Church Slavonic (OCS). The ū-declension was, as one scholar puts it, “moving towards its demise” by the time of OCS

¹The OCS text has been written with the type *Altrussisch (TrueType) AltsysFontographer 4.1 04.07.1996*.

² PIE was a spoken language about 5.000 years ago. There are no written records relating to this period (Crystal 1987, 296-297).

³ In the post-PIE-period some scholars believe there was a Baltic-Slavic period before the common Slavic period (Townsend & Janda 1996, 39, Sokoljanskij 2004, 100).

(Gasparov2001, 77) and the result was that the ū-declension disappeared as an independent type of declension (Ekkert1959, 102) when the ū-stem class was completely absorbed by the o-stems (Nandriş 1965, 64). However, the ū-declension survived in for example the language of the Vikings in the period 750-1100 (Palm 2010, 432).

This process of linguistic change is often described by scholars as being mutual, as an interplay between the ū- and the o-declensions; sometimes this interplay is described more vividly as two declensions being “joined” (Černych 1962, 189), as having a “collision” (Kolesov 2005, 171) or even as “being at war” with each other (Kuznecov 2004, 72). For some time variations in the inflections occurred, being the result of the interplay of the ū- and o-declensions. This led to the occurrence of case endings of both the ū- and o-declensions for a specific noun in the same source. For example, the use of the genitive plural in *The Codex Suprasliensis*: **своими крѣвьми очистите се отъ грѣхъ** (page 235, pergament VIII:55) and **се кетъ пльть моя за выломимага въ оставькии грѣховъ** (page 167, pergament XXIV:43)⁴

This interplay of the two declensions has led to a disagreement among scholars concerning whether a particular noun belonged to the ū- or the o-declension in OCS. In order to investigate the influence of the declensions’ on each other, it is necessary to establish what words belonged to which declension in OCS. The problem is to decide if the noun belonged to the ū-declension, but was confused with the o-declension, and thus was found with the case endings of the o-declension, or if the noun belonged to the o-declension, but was influenced by the ū-declension. According to Ekkert, there are some criteria of the ū-declension in the Proto-Slavic:

- 1) the preservation of the old root + u, even if the case endings not are preserved,
- 2) the preservation of the case endings, characteristic of the ū-declension,
- 3) the preservation of the vowel sound in the form of –v- or –ov-

⁴‘wash away your sins with your blood’ and ‘this is my body which is given up for you’ [My translation, ACG The reference is to pages in the two volumes; the corresponding pages of the text are 108 and 353.

4) the corresponding noun belonging to the ū-declension in other European languages (Ekkert 1959, 103-105).

These criteria will be studied later in connection to the chosen nouns грѣхъ ‘sin’ and домъ ‘house’⁵. However, there is another interesting view: If there are no corresponding nouns in other languages, the inflection will only show the noun’s belonging to the ū-declension. One important criterion is the forming of the possessive adjectives, for example волловъ to волъ ‘ox’ (Arumaa 1985, 56-59).

2 The ū-declension for nouns in OCS

Specialists in OCS agree that there were 5 types of stems: the feminine and masculine a-/ja- stems, the masculine and neuter o-/jo- stems, the masculine ū-stems, the feminine and masculine i-stems, and the consonant stems, i.e. the feminine ū-stems, the masculine and neuter n-stems, the neuter s-stems, the neuter nt-stems and the feminine and masculine r-stems. Thus, in OCS all ū-stem nouns were of the masculine gender and there were no soft stem nouns. But in PIE, from which the ū-declension was once inherited via the PS and CS into OCS, the nouns belonging to the ū-declension were of all three genders; masculine, feminine, neuter. In PIE the division of nouns into stems was older than the division into genders, and as a result of this ū-stem nouns of all genders spread into various Indo-European languages (Ekkert 1959, 101). As early as in the CS period the rearrangement of nouns began, a rearrangement according to the gender of the word, not stems. As a result of this process the earlier ū-declension nouns кор(ова), ябл(око), дървъ among others, fell out of this declension (Kolesov 2009, 152). In Latin there are examples of all three genders: exercitus ‘army’ (m), manus ‘hand’ (f), genu ‘knee’ (n). In the Gothic language there were also nouns of all three genders within the ū-stem declension: sunus ‘son’ (m), handus ‘hand’ (f) and faihu ‘money’ (n) (Nilsson and Svensson 1997, 39). But in the Viking language in the period 750-1100 all nouns belonging to the ū-declension were of masculine gender only (Palm 2010, 432).

⁵See below about the possible differences in the use of the two genitive plural forms according to A. Vostokov.

These masculine nouns have monosyllabic stems, to which suffixes are added. The bisyllabic ending –ove in the nominative plural has the non-terminal –ov- Modern Bulgarian and Macedonian use the –ov/-ev in forming the plural of the majority of monosyllabic masculine nouns (Lunt 1955, 46).

The universally accepted opinion is that the ū-stem class in OCS consisted only of a few masculine nouns, but various opinions have been voiced about the quantity, from only two nouns (Thorndahl 1974, 14) to a hundred nouns (Kolesov 2009:163). P. Arumaa states that the ū-stems do not – as the i-stems do – fit into clear groups (Arumaa 1985, 56). It is claimed that comparative evidence does not establish for certain which words belong to the ū-declension (Nandriš 1965, 47). In PS there was even a declension that was not inherited by OCS: the jū-declension. There are traces of this declension in OCS, for example the word конь ‘horse’ which is said to belong to the masculine jo-declension, but in PS belonged to the jū-declension. (Kolesov 2009, 152).

The ū-declension, consisting of a relatively small number of nouns in OCS, left traces in all Slavonic languages. One cannot help asking oneself the question Ekkert asked: how could the enormous influence this old type of ū-declension had in the history of Slavonic languages be explained taking into account the relatively small number of words belonging to it? (Ekkert1959, 102).

3 The nominative, genitive, instrumental and locative cases in the plural

Four cases in the plural are interesting when studying грѣхъ and домъ and the ū- and o-declensions: the nominative, the genitive, the instrumental and the locative. The dative plural must be excluded, since the -ъ- in the case ending -ъмъ later developed into –омъ, which is the case ending of the o-declension, and thus making them identical; the accusative plural, since the case endings of the two declensions are identical, and the vocative plural since this case does not occur in connection with the two chosen nouns.

The nominative case plural

In the nominative plural the case ending of the ū-declension in OCS was –ове, in comparison to the PIE ū-declension case ending which was –ōu-ēs. The case ending of the o-declension in OCS was –и in comparison to the PIE –ō-es> –ōs, ōi. The loss of final consonants and the monophthongization of diphthongs in –u- caused the PIE thematic vowel and endings to blend into PS monomorphemic endings (Schenker 1996, 123-124). This case ending –ове had a significant impact on the o-declension nouns. As one scholar puts it, in the clash between the ū- and the o-declensions the ending –ове, which in the 11th century was found only on nouns belonging to the ū-declension, was spread widely and was used on o-declension nouns denoting groups of people, i.e. грекове, жидове, or posts, i.e. попове, врачеве, some animals and birds, i.e. воробьеве, дятлове. But, as the scholar states, it was also still in use for the nouns that originally belonged to the ū-declension, i.e. сынове, домове (Kolesov 2009, 171). There is evidence that the ū-declension and the o-declension also merged into one in the ending itself; by contamination with the o-declension, –ове turned into –ови, i.e. –ov- from the ū-declension and the plural –i from the o-declension. According to Nandriș (1965, 65) the “N. pl. –ове appears as –ови, by contamination with the –и of the –o- declension: N.pl. сынови, волви”.

Table 1. The nominative case plural

	ū-declension	o-declension
PIE	-ōu-ēs	-ō-es>-ōs, ōi
Late PS	-ove	-i ₂
OCS	-ове	-и

The genitive case plural

The case ending of the ū-declension in the genitive plural in OCS was –овъ, in comparison to the PIE ū-declension case ending which was –ū-ns. The case ending of the o-declension in OCS was –ъ in comparison to the PIE –ō-ns (Schenker 1996,

124). It is interesting to note that the scholars do not agree on the importance of the ū-declension’s influence on the o-declension. Kryś’ko (2000: 27) holds the opinion that a considerable number of examples of the influence of the ū-declension’s case ending –ѡвѣ on the o-declension is found in the OCS sources. Lunt expresses the view that the o-declension nouns may originally have the ending –ѡвѣ/–евѣ beside the normal ending –ѣ/–ѣ “although such forms are rare” (1955, 46). Izotov (2007, 35) states that the ending –ѡвѣ penetrated the o-declension and the original case ending for masculine nouns type *рабѣ* and *доухѣ* in the genitive plural was ousted out.

There might be another reason for the prevailing of the ending –ѡвѣ in the genitive plural: when the fall of the jers took place the original ending –ѣ was “turned to a zero” and the ending –ѡвѣ was used instead (Gasparov 2001, 84). The ending –ѡв is still in use today in the genitive plural as a remnant from the ū-declension (Kuznecov 2004, 70). It is also true that even before the fall of the jers, the case endings of the nominative and accusative singular and the genitive plural of the o-declension were identical. For example, is this observation in the *Codex Suprasliensis* of the word form *длѣгѣ* in the accusative singular or in the genitive plural, or could it be an adjective? ...*хощеши бо се на пѣтъ отити длѣгѣ* (page 577, parchment XXXVII:145)⁶. Is there a preposition *отити отѣ* making it possible to interpret the form *длѣгѣ* as being in the genitive case plural?

There are also other illustrative sentences in the *Codex Suprasliensis*, showing the interaction between the two declensions. For example, *отѣ цвѣтовѣ въ цвѣты прѣходаша отѣ плодовѣ въ плоды прѣходаша* (page 319, parchment XXIX:81)⁷. The nouns belong to the o-declension and the genitive forms *цвѣтовѣ* and *плодовѣ* would normally have had the forms *цвѣтъ* and *плодъ*.

⁶‘because you want to walk away from the debts on the way’ [My translation, ACG.] The reference is to the page in the book; the corresponding page of the text is 558.

⁷‘passing from flowers to flowers, passing from fruits to fruits’ [My translation, ACG.] The reference is to the page in the book; the corresponding page of the text is 429.

Table 2. The genitive case plural

	ŭ- declension	o-declension
PIE	-ŭ-ns	-ō-ns
Late PS	-OVЪ	-Ъ
OCS	-ѠВЪ	-Ъ

The instrumental case plural

In the instrumental plural the case ending of the ŭ-declension in OCS was *-ъми*, in comparison to the PIE ŭ-declension case ending which was *-ŭ-mīs*. The case ending of the o-declension in OCS was *-ы* in comparison to the PIE *-ō-ōis>ōīs* (Schenker 1996, 124). The ending *-ъми* spread into the o-declension and, as Lunt (1955:46) puts it, occurred beside the normal ending *-ы*. One interesting piece of information is found in the *Codex Suprasliensis* about the word form *сѣинъ* in the sentence *кѣда сѣинъ ми вѣта не сѣтвористе на ѿ рода* (page 255, parchment XXVII:65)⁸: it has the form *сѣ сѣинъми* in the source the *UspenskijSbornik*⁹, i.e. there is a difference in the cases used.

Table 3. The instrumental case plural

	ŭ- declension	o-declension
PIE	-ŭ-mīs	-ō-ōis>ōīs
Late PS	-ъmī	-у
OCS	-ъми	-ы

The locative case plural

The case ending of the ŭ-declension in the nominative plural in OCS was *-ъхъ*; in comparison to the PIE ŭ-declension case ending which was *-ŭ-sū*. The case ending

⁸The reference is to the page in the book; the corresponding page of the text is 397.

⁹The observation is found on page 331 (parchment 198 lines 20-21) in the source *UspenskijSbornik*.

of the o-declension in OCS was -ѣхъ in comparison to the PIE -ōi-sŭ (Schenker 1996, 124)¹⁰. The suffix -ov may be used also in the locative plural, for example ροδονѣхъ instead of ροδѣхъ (Chodzko 1869, 51). Some scholars suggest that the locative form -οхъ would be the normal case ending for the o-declension, when the o-declension forms had prevailed, in the plural particularly in the dative and the locative cases (see for example Gasparov 2001, 86). However, it must be argued that the -o- in the locative plural form -οхъ is the development of the -ъ- into an -o-. This is also supported by some scholars (see for example Mirčev 1972, 57).

Table 4. The locative case plural

	ŭ-declension	o-declension
PIE	-ŭ-sŭ	-ōi-sŭ
Late PS	-u-xъ	-ě ₂ -xъ
OCS	-ѣхъ	-ѣхъ

4 The nouns грѣхъ and домъ

The influence the ŭ- and o- declensions had on each other makes it difficult to establish whether a particular noun in OCS belonged to the ŭ-declension, and later became confused with the o-declension and is therefore found with the case endings of the o-declension, or if the noun belonged to the o-declension and was influenced by the ŭ-declension and is therefore found with the case endings of the ŭ-declension in OCS sources.

Arumaa (1985, 57) claims that if there is no correspondence in other languages, the inflection of the word and this alone will show beyond doubt to what declension the noun belonged: “Für eine Anzahl von u-Stämmen fehlen auswärtige Entsprechungen und es sind dann die Flexion allein und verschiedene Ableitungen, die uns die alte Zugehörigkeit zu den u-Stämmen

¹⁰The Indo-European -s- in -sŭ changed into -x-, and the form in the locative plural into -ѣхъ (Chaburgaev 1974:192). In the Slavic languages the -s- changed into -x- after i, u, r and k if a vowel followed the -s. The phonetic development is called Pedersen’s law (Steenland 1985: 13 and 38). This explains the -x- in грѣхъ.

sichern lassen”. He also mentions another important criterion, which cannot be examined here: the construction of the possessive adjectives of the type **вѡловѣ** for the noun **вѡлъ** (Arumaa 1985, 56-59). These interesting criteria will meet with problems for a number of reasons. The most obvious problem is that not all languages are inflected languages, i.e. have different case endings. Therefore it can be difficult to compare corresponding nouns in other Slavic languages.

The reason for choosing the nouns **грѣхъ** and **домы** to illustrate these criteria was the disagreement among scholars about what declension of the ū- and o-declensions to which they belonged in the OCS and which declension influenced the other.

The scholars do not agree on the PIE origin of the word **грѣхъ**. Trubačev (1980, 114-115) writes that the word **грѣхъ** was a new word formation in the PS language, and that there are no corresponding words in other Indo-European languages¹¹. He continues that there might be a possible link with the Latin word *peccatum*, which has the same meaning as **грѣхъ**. The root of the word **грѣхъ** is *ghro-so (Preobraženskij 1958:202). Pokorny (<http://indo-european.info/pokorny-etymological-dictionary/g^wher.htm>) mentions the possible link with the PIE word *g^whrē- as in the OCS word *grěti*, to warm. Vasmer (1953, 307) also mentions this link to the word *greti*. He states that **грѣхъ** in OCS shows traces of the ū-declension but does not state which they are. Nandriš (1965, 65) states that **грѣхъ** is a probable ū-declension noun. Ivanova (2005, 130) is certain that **грѣхъ** belonged to the ū-declension. But several scholars express the view that **грѣхъ** instead belonged to the o-declension, for example Izotov (2007:35), Leskien (1909:118) and Chaburgaev (1974:170). In *Грамматика на старобългарския език* (Duridanov 1991, 139)

¹¹The origin of the word **грѣхъ** is as seen above not completely clear. However, the PIE period took place before the concepts of Christianity and the interpretation of **грѣхъ** as breaking the laws of God were formed. There might be another possibility: the word ‘gregs’ in PIE with the meaning ‘people joined together by a mutual interest’. After various phonetic changes the word is found in the Latin language as *grex*, *grēgis*, with the meaning herd of cattle or groups of people, for example in the phrase “*Scribere alqm sui gregis*”, to regard someone as one of one’s followers (Norstedts latin-svenska ordbok 2004:384). The original meaning of the word **грѣхъ** from the word ‘gregs’ could thus have been some kind of group culture, keeping the people together, which later developed into the concept of having broken this culture by actions or behaviour [ACG] .

грѣхъ is said to belong to the o-declension; it is given as the example of the o-declension paradigm.

There is even greater disagreement when it comes to the noun домъ and to what declension it belonged. On the one hand there are scholars claiming it belonged to the ū-declension, such as Leskien (1909, 118), Gasparov (2001, 77), Mirčev (1972, 77), Nandriş (1965, 64) and Ivanova (2005, 130). On the other hand there are scholars claiming it belonged to the o-declension, Izotov (2007, 35), Krys'ko (2000, 34) and Charburgaev (1974, 176), for example. Vasmer (1953, 361) believes it to be an old ū-declension noun, and Kuznecov (2004, 38) even uses домъ as the illustration of the ū-declension. Ivanova (2005, 130-131) states that there are other Indo-European parallels showing the old ū-declension. Scholars not expressing the view that домъ originally belonged to the ū-declension, agree that the noun is seen with the typical case endings of the ū-declension, thus interpreting this as the influence the ū-declension had on the o-declension nouns.

Trubačev and Pokorny (Trubačev 1978, 73 and http://indoeuropean.info/pokorny-etymological-dictionary/dem-_demə.htm November 25, 2013) state that the word домъ belonged to both the ū- the o-declensions as PIE *domu-s and *domo-s. Preobraženskij (1958, 228) states that the PIE root of the word is *dema (long -a), to build., and Vasmer (1953, 361) that in the Avestan language the root was dam-. Another suggestion is the ablaut variant of this verb, namely *domHos, which expressed what was built and became the base for dama- in the Vedish language, domos in the Greek language, domus in the Latin language and dom in the Russian language (Wikander 2007, 169). One scholar claims that it would be a misunderstanding to consider the word домъ belonging to the ū-declension, as a result of an uncritical usage of the facts of the Latin language. He goes on to say that the noun in PIE was *dōmōs, and thus passed into PS with the thematic vowel -ō, not -ū. Even in Latin домъ belonged to the o-declension, which is seen in the genitive singular domi and the dative singular domo (Charburgaev 1974, 176). But even if the word домъ in Latin sometimes is seen with the case endings of the second

declension (the o-declension), is it clear from grammars on Latin that the word does belong to the IV declension (ŭ) and was of feminine gender.

5 грѣхъ and домъ in eight OCS sources

The case endings of грѣхъ and домъ in the plural were studied in the following eight OCS sources: AGL = *the Archangelsk Gospel Lectionary of 1092*, CS = *the Codex Suprasliensis*, MG = *the Marianus Gospel*, OGL = *the Ostromir Gospel Lectionary of 1056-1057*, OT = *the OCS translation of the Old Testament*, PS = *the Patericon from Sinai*, VGL = *the Vatican Gospel Lectionary* and ZG = *the Zograph Gospel*.

5.1 грѣхъ

The following picture of грѣхъ is the outcome of this study on OCS sources:

- In the nominative, instrumental and locative cases plural all of the occurrences belonged to the o-declension.
- In the genitive case plural there was considerable confusion between the two declensions.

Table 5. Results for the noun грѣхъ

Source:	N.,decl.		G.,decl.		I.,decl.		L.,decl.		Total:		
	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	Σ
AGL	0	8	4	1	0	1	0	1	4	11	15
CS	0	6	3	8	0	2	0	0	3	16	19
MG	0	8	2	1	0	0	0	3	2	12	14
OGL	0	5	3	1	0	0	0	2	3	8	11
OT	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	5
PS	0	2	0	8	0	0	0	3	0	13	13
VGL	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	8	9
ZG	0	9	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	13	14
In total	0	43	14	23	0	4	0	16	14	86	100

The conclusion of the study is that when грѣхъ is found with the case endings of the ŭ-declension, this is a result of the influence the ŭ-declension had on the o-declension, i.e. the word belonged to the o-declension in OCS.

Since there are examples of both ū-declension and o-declension forms in the genitive case plural, it is possible to find an explanation for the variety in the genitive by looking into the statement made on page 92 in the wordlist of the book *the Ostromir Gospel Lectionary* (1845, reprinted in 2007). It is claimed that the form грѣхъ is used after prepositions, and грѣховъ is used after nouns. 37 observations of the genitive plural form were made in the sources. The form грѣхъ was used after prepositions (11 observations), and there were no observations of the form грѣховъ after prepositions. 15 observations of the form грѣховъ were made following a noun and one possible observation after грѣхъ. But there were 10 other observations of грѣхъ following verbs or being in negative constructions. So, yes, it seems that the claim is correct, the form грѣхъ is used after prepositions, and грѣховъ is used after nouns, but it is not the whole truth – грѣхъ is also used after verbs or in negative constructions.

The use of forms in the genitive plural from both the ū-declension and o-declension in the same source might have a practical explanation: the evident risk of confusing the accusative object in the sentence. Take for example the following sentence: и проповѣдатисѧ въ имя юго. покаание въ ѡпоущеникѣ грѣховъ. въ всѣхъ языцѣхъ from LUKE XXIV:47. The translation is: “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations”. But if грѣховъ had been written грѣхъ, it might have been possible – at least grammatically – to mistake the accusative object ‘repentance and remissions’ for ‘sins’. Of 14 observations of грѣховъ at least 9 entail potential risks of misunderstanding the accusative object.

5.2 Домъ

The interesting picture of домъ is the result of this study on OCS sources:

- In the nominative case plural all three occurrences belonged to the ū-declension.
- In the genitive case plural there was no confusion at all between the two declensions; all six observations belonged to the ū-declension.

- In the instrumental and locative cases plural there were no observations.

Table 6. Results for the noun домъ

Source:	N.,decl.		G.,decl.		I.,decl.		L.,decl.		Total:		
	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	-ŭ-	-o-	Σ
AGL	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
CS	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
MG	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2
OGL	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
OT	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
PS	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
VGL	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
ZG	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
In total	3	0	6	0	0	0	5	0	14	0	14

An examination of the claim that грѣхъ is used after prepositions, and грѣховъ is used after nouns was presented above. There is no possibility of making such an examination of the word домъ in the genitive plural: all six observations belonged to the ū-declension, even after prepositions, nouns, verbs and in negative constructions, thus giving reason to believe that the suggestion for the use of long and short forms in the genitive (forms belonging to the ū- or o-declension) in OCS cannot generally explain the occurrence of the parallel genitive forms in the plural.

In the introduction some criteria of the ū-declension were mentioned for establishing the declension of a particular noun. According to Ekkert, these criteria were common for the ū-stems in the PS period:

- 1) the preservation of the old root + u, even if the case endings are not preserved,
- 2) the preservation of the case endings, characteristic of the ū-declension,
- 3) the preservation of the vowel sound in the form of -v- or -ov-
- 4) the corresponding noun belonging to the ū-declension in other European languages (Ekkert 1959:103-105).

Conclusions

To sum up, did the nouns грѣхъ and домъ belong to the ū-declension and were they influenced by the o-declension, or did they belong to the o-declension and were they influenced by the ū-declension considering Ekkert’s criteria and the facts found in this article? The noun грѣхъ did not have preservation of the old root + u, it did not have the characteristic case endings except in the genitive plural, where it had been influenced by the ū-declension. There were not corresponding words in other Indo-European languages. The conclusion must be that грѣхъ belonged to the o-declension and was influenced by the ū-declension. The noun домъ did have preservation of the old root + u, it did have the characteristic case endings and showed no signs of o-declension case endings. There were corresponding words in other Indo-European languages, belonging to the ū-declension. The conclusion must be that домъ belonged to the ū-declension and was not influenced by the o-declension.

Despite the scholars’ views that the ū-declension was moving towards its demise during OCS and was eventually absorbed by the o-declension, it did not quite die. To say it in Vaillant’s (1958, 120) words: “Il est donc sûr que le type en –u-, en train de disparaître dès le vieux slave, avait tenu une place important dans la langue»¹². The ū-declension is still there in modern grammar, in the case endings, telling us about a period when it was a flourishing noun declension.

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¹²Hence, it is clear that the u-declension, moving towards its demise in OCS, once played an important role in the language [My translation, ACG].

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