

## Early modal meanings of future grams in the history of Russian

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**Daniel Bunčić**

Universität zu Köln

daniel.buncic@uni-koeln.de

Modern Russian has three future grams, all of which can be classified as aspectual: *budu* ‘become’ as the future of *byti* ‘be’, *budu* ‘become’ + infinitive for imperfective verbs, and the original present form of perfective verbs. These forms can have several modal readings in Modern Russian, of which it is commonly assumed that they develop only after these grams have turned into real future tenses. I will show that despite their ‘aspectual’ origin modal elements were part of the meaning of Old East Slavic and Old Russian future grams from the very beginning.

The earliest modal uses include possibility and volition, whereas epistemic uses in the classical sense turn up only later. However, for a complete picture, syntactic modalities have to be taken into account as well, since the vast majority of early attestations of future grams in Old East Slavic and Old Russian futures occur both in the protasis and in the apodosis of conditional sentences as well as in purposive clauses. This provides the basis for a new look at the connection between future and modality.