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Frederik KORTLANDT
Leiden University

APRIORISTIC VERSUS EMPIRICAL LINGUISTICS: THE CASE OF BALTO-SLAVIC ACCENTUATION

Abstract. The reconstruction of Balto-Slavic accentuation requires a careful examination of the data rather than the postulation of ill-conceived ideas in need of numerous additional hypotheses in order to eliminate the counter-evidence.
Keywords: Balto-Slavic; historical accentology.

It is no secret that Miguel Villanueva Svensson is a staunch supporter of Jasanoff's views. As a result, his review (Villanueva Svensson 2018) of Jasanoff's book (2017) does not offer a balanced account. In order to redress the balance, I shall reconsider the review against the background of my own position in the debate. I have stated the main objections to Jasanoff's theory earlier (Kortlandt 2018a; 2018b).

"Vowel length is unproblematic" (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 145). On the contrary, vowel length is the major problem of Balto-Slavic accentuation (cf. Kortlandt 2015b). Since the PIE laryngeals were still segmental phonemes at the time of Hirt's law (stage 4.1 of Kortlandt 2011, 160), acute vowels from short vowel plus laryngeal did not originate before Late Balto-Slavic. Acute vowels from Winter's law (stage 4.3 of Kortlandt 2011, 161) cannot have originated earlier. There is evidence that the laryngeals were still regular consonants at the end of the Balto-Slavic period. In Slavic, loss of glottalization yielded long vowels before the rise of the new timbre distinctions (stage 7.13 of Kortlandt 2011, 168) and short vowels after that. Other long vowels preserved their length in stressed and posttonic syllables.

Jasanoff starts from a reconstructed system with "hyperlong" and "normal" long vowels for which there is no evidence whatsoever either in Germanic (cf. Boutkan 1995) or in Balto-Slavic and assumes that the latter category became acute by the insertion of a *stød*. Such a spontaneous rise of

glottalization is unattested anywhere in the world. Thus, his system is built on a combination of arbitrary assumptions that have no basis in reality and create a series of artificial problems as a result of his methodology, such as the need for additional awkward rules in the case of the dat. sg. *-*ōi*, inst. pl. *-*ōis*, and acc. pl. endings (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 147). Note that such reconstructions as **u̯ōrnā* 'crow' and **pīlnos* 'full' (*ibidem*) for **u̯orHnaH* and **pilHnos* are not only arbitrary but simply wrong. There never was a long vowel in these words. The metathesis of liquids and loss of the final laryngeal (Kortlandt 2011, 168) yielded **wraʔna* in South Slavic and Czecho-Slovak and **wroʔna* in Polish and Sorbian, later Czech *vrána*, Slovak *vrana*, Polish *wrona*, Upper Sorbian *wróna*. It is clear from this word that **oH* did not simply become **a* in West Slavic and that glottalization was preserved under the stress after the rise of the new timbre distinctions.

It is alleged that "Serbo-Croatian aorists like (1 sg.) *dònijeh* 'brought'" had final stress "because this was the accentual curve of aorists of mobile verbs" and that (im)mobility "was a prop[er]ty of the whole verb, not (as often assumed) of individual stems" (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 146). This is a mistake. The sigmatic aorist had fixed stress on the non-acute lengthened grade root vowel, accent type (b), while the present tense had mobile stress (c) on the analogy of the athematic presents (cf. Kortlandt 2019). The accent type was a property of the stem, not of the lexeme: S/Cr. *vȉti* 'to twist' has an acute infinitive (a) but a mobile present and *l*-participle (c), while *grȉsti* 'to bite' and *sjȅći* 'to cut' have an acute infinitive and *l*-participle (a) but a mobile present (c); such verbs as *pèći* 'to bake' have an end-stressed infinitive and *l*-participle (b) but a mobile present (c), while *lèći* 'to lie down' has an acute present (a) but an end-stressed infinitive and *l*-participle (b). It is clear that the lengthened grade root vowel of *dònijeh* was non-acute.

When we abandon the numerous a priori assumptions and preconceptions of Jasanoff's theory and base ourselves on the attested data of the Balto-Slavic languages themselves, it turns out that the origin of acuteness is actually quite simple. The Balto-Slavic acute continues the PIE laryngeals, which merged into a glottal stop, and the glottalic feature of the PIE "unaspirated voiced" obstruents (Winter's law). In Slavic, the acute vowels became short and were under various conditions lengthened in the daughter languages (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 172–174). In East Baltic, glottalization was largely preserved in Latvian and the Žemaitian dialects of Lithuanian, where new glottalization originated from apocope in final syllables.

Like Jasanoff's account of the Balto-Slavic acute, his theory of Balto-Slavic accentual mobility is based on a large number of a priori assumptions that require a multitude of additional presuppositions in order to dismiss the extensive counter-evidence. His two basic rules for Early Balto-Slavic are the following:

(1) Saussure-Pedersen's law: "the (PIE) accent was retracted from word internal short open syllables, yielding a new type of accent" on the initial syllable (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 149; cf. Jasanoff 2017, 122).
(2) Proto-Vasil'ev-Dolobko's law: "the initial 'left-marginal' accent of 'proto-mobile' paradigms was advanced to the end of the word (including enclitics) in word forms of more than three syllables" (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 150; cf. Jasanoff 2017, 128).

Both rules are modifications of classic laws of Slavic accentuation (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 159, 166; Olander 2009, 23, 130):

(1) Pedersen's law: the stress was retracted from inner syllables in accentually mobile paradigms, e.g. Lith. acc.sg. *dùkterį* 'daughter', *píemenį* 'shepherd', Greek θυγατέρα, ποιμένα.
(2) Dolobko's law: barytone forms of accentually mobile paradigms lost the stress to an enclitic particle, e. g. Slovene *lahkî* 'light' < **lьgъkъ-jь*, gen. sg. *lahkegà* < **lьgъka-jega*, dat. sg. *lahkemù* < **lьgъku-jemu*.

It has generally gone unnoticed that Pedersen's law is actually a continuation of a Proto-Indo-European process. Both the Late PIE "hysterokinetic" flexion of Greek πατήρ, πατέρα, πατρός 'father' and the Late PIE "amphikinetic" flexion of Greek δώτωρ, δώτορα, δώτορος 'giver' continue the Early PIE hysterodynamic flexion of Greek μήτηρ, μητέρα, μητρός 'mother' (cf. Beekes 1995, 175). The acrostatic flexion is reflected in Vedic *svásā*, *svásāram*, *svásur* 'sister'. Here it seems expedient to quote Alwin Kloekhorst's account of the developments in full (fn. 36 of Kloekhorst 2013, 121f.):

> "Since both the hysterokinetic and the amphikinetic paradigms are derived from the hysterodynamic paradigm, the question arises why a given noun would turn up as hysterokinetic or as amphikinetic. In my opinion, the following chronology applied. The first major morphological development that took place was the introduction of the full grade vowel in the root from the nominative to the accusative: **CéC-C*, **CC-éC-m*, **CC-C-és* > **CéC-C*, **CéC-oC-m*, **CC-C-és*. Only some specific (often-used) nouns resisted this regularization and remained as such. The second major

morphological development that took place was the introduction of the accusative stem in the nominative. Nouns that had undergone the first development as well thus became amphikinetic: **CéC-C*, **CéC-oC-m*, **CC-C-és* > **CéC-ōC*, **CéC-oC-m*, **CC-C-és*. Nouns that had not undergone the first development, but did participate in the second one, became hysterokinetic: **CC-éC*, **CC-éC-m*, **CC-C-és*. Nouns that resisted the second development as well, remained hysterodynamic, **CéC-C*, **CC-éC-m*, **CC-C-és*. This scenario explains the semantic development of **peh2-ter-*. This noun originally was a verbal abstract of the verb **peh2-* and therefore meant 'protector', which was also used to refer to the father of a family. Its inflection was hysterodynamic, **péh₂-tr*, **ph₂-tér-m*, **ph₂-tr-és*. Like most other hysterodynamic nouns, **peh₂-ter-* participated in the development by which the full grade of the root spread from the nominative to the accusative stem, yielding **péh₂-tr*, **péh₂-tor-m*, **ph₂-tr-és*. However, in its specific semantic usage as the designator of the father of a family it resisted the regularization and kept its original inflection, **péh₂-tr*, **ph₂-tér-m*, **ph₂-tr-és*. This difference can be explained by the fact that syntactically a 'protector' is especially used as an actor (= nominative), whereas a 'father' is used in all kinds of functions (cases). When the second development as described above took place, namely introduction of the accusative stem in the nominative form, the paradigmatic split was complete: the word for 'protector' had become amphikinetic, **péh₂-tōr*, **péh₂-tor-m*, **ph₂-tr-és* (reflected in e. g. Skt. *pātár-*), whereas the word for 'father' had become hysterokinetic, **ph₂-tḗr*, **ph₂-tér-m*, **ph₂-tr-és* (reflected in e. g. Skt. *pitár-*)."

It will be clear that the retraction of the stress in Lith. *dùkterį* and *píemenį* (Pedersen's law) is simply a continuation of the development of the "amphikinetic" flexion, e. g. in Vedic *pánthās*, *pánthām*, *pathás* 'path' and *ātmā́*, *ātmā́nam*, *tmánā*, *tmáne* 'soul'. This is not a phonetic law but an analogical development. Contrary to Jasanoff's a priori statement, it did not give rise to a new type of accent, which is an artefact of his theory for which there is no evidence whatsoever. When Pedersen's law operated again at a much more recent stage in Slavic, it did give rise to a new type of accent, viz. a distinctive Low tone on the initial syllable, e. g. in **nâ vodǫ* 'onto the water', **pròdālъ* 'sold' (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 166). This never happened in Baltic, where distinctive tone originated with the rise of metatony in the East Baltic languages (cf. Kortlandt 2012).

Dolobko's law (stage 7.2 of Kortlandt 2011, 166) was a corollary of the second occurrence of Pedersen's law in Slavic. When the initial syllable of a word form received a distinctive Low tone, a following enclitic particle with a High tone automatically became the accented syllable of the phrase.

This never happened in Baltic, where Lithuanian does not present "evidence of accent loss to enclitics" (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 145), on the contrary. The original accentuation of the illative was that of the accusative (cf. Seržants 2004; Kortlandt 2005), while the final stress of *miškañ* < *miškanà* (4) 'into the forest' was taken from the locative (inessive). The acute in the adessive *dievíep* 'near God' and the allative *galóp* 'to the end' is a result of the apocope of the unaccented final **-i*.

There is no evidence for Jasanoff's extraordinary hypothesis that word forms of more than three syllables behaved differently from shorter word forms, which appears to be an artefact of his methodology. It is complemented by numerous analogical developments in order to account for the counter-evidence. It seems to me that the critique presented in the review (Villanueva Svensson 2018, 152–158) suffices to invalidate the theory in a conclusive way.

After this negative assessment it is appropriate to turn to Thomas Olander's review (2018) of Jasanoff's book, especially because the latter appears to be modeled after Olander's book (2009). One gets the impression that Jasanoff has tried to find an alternative for Olander's "mobility law" and built his theory around it. Like Jasanoff's two basic accent rules, Olander's "mobility law" is an a priori construction that is not supported by the evidence (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 87–101; 2010, 341–357). The big difference is Olander's extensive knowledge of the scholarly literature and the relevant material. He mentions a number of gaps in Jasanoff's bibliography, including Fecht (2010) and Andersen (2014). Unfortunately, he does not mention my reactions to these publications (Kortlandt 2015a; 2016, respectively). He mentions Yamazaki (2016) but not my part of the discussion (Kortlandt 2014; 2017). He mentions Jasanoff (1983) but not my invited reaction to that article (Kortlandt 1983). He claims that Meillet's law is a sound law, not an analogical process. In my view, the PIE laryngeals were lost in pretonic syllables in Early Slavic (stage 5.3 of Kortlandt 2011, 163), after which the laryngeals were analogically eliminated from the barytone forms of mobile paradigms (Meillet's law). The correctness of this view is proven by the combination of an acute root vowel (a) with mobile accentuation (c) in the word for 'mother' in Russian and Croatian, e. g. Čakavian (Novi) *màt*, *màter-* with fixed stress except in the oblique plural cases *materán*, *materàmi*, *materàh* (cf. Jurišić 1973, 116).

As Olander (2018, 100) points out, "Hirt's law did not affect words like PIE *$g^{w}ih_{3}\mu ó$- 'alive' and *$suhnú$- 'son', which have mobile accentuation in Balto-Slavic". In the former instance I reconstruct *$g^{w}H_{3}iuos$ with metathesis of *-Hi- > *-iH- before a consonant (cf. Winter 1965; Lubotsky 2011). In the case of *$suHnus$ we expect initial stress in all nom. and acc. forms as well as the gen. sg. and dat. sg. forms but final stress in all other oblique case forms, so that either initial stress or accentual mobility could easily be generalized (cf. Illič-Svityč 1963, 75f.; Ebeling 1967, 582). The fixed stress of Vedic *sūnús* is clearly secondary. The retracted stress of Russian dat. pl. *détjam* 'children' < *$dětъmь$, *ljúdjam* 'people', loc. pl. *détjax*, *ljúdjax* < *-$ъxь$ is phonetically regular, as is clear from Slovene *dánəs* 'today' < *$dьnьsь$, gen. pl. *ọ́vəc* 'sheep' < *$ovьcь$, Bulgarian *dójde* 'comes' < (Stang) *do-$ьdê$ < (Dybo) *do-$ìdē$ (Kortlandt 2009, 101) because pretonic vowels were shortened before Dybo's law (cf. also Kortlandt 1985) and pretonic weak jers could no longer receive the accent.

The most peculiar a priori assumption of the approach initiated by Olander and followed by Jasanoff is that PIE accentual mobility had been totally eliminated before the earliest Balto-Slavic developments. Not a word is spent on the question of how and why this process took place, nor on the question of why the new mobility should arise. This is at variance with the comparative method. "There is an unmistakable relationship between the Balto-Slavonic and the Greek and Vedic mobility with regard to which cases are end-stressed, and which are barytonised" (Stang 1957, 175). As Meillet pointed out a long time ago (1916, 74): "les faits baltiques et slaves ne sauraient s'expliquer par un développement récent, tandis que, en revanche, l'état de choses védique et l'état de choses grec s'expliquent bien en partant d'un état pareil en gros à l'état slave" (cf. already Boyer, Meillet 1894). Olander (2018, 99) even calls it "methodologically unsound" that Stang "simply considers Balto-Slavic accentual mobility to be an archaism". In fact, there are traces of PIE accentual mobility in Baltic and Slavic nominal and verbal paradigms and participles (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 129–138, 167–179, 275–281, 297–300). The reconstruction of Balto-Slavic accentuation requires a careful examination of the data rather than the postulation of ill-conceived ideas in need of numerous additional hypotheses in order to eliminate the counter-evidence.

APRIORISTINĖ IR EMPIRINĖ KALBOTYRA: BALTŲ-SLAVŲ KIRČIAVIMO ATVEJIS

Santrauka

Baltų-slavų kirčiavimo rekonstrukcija reikalauja kruopštaus duomenų tyrimo, o ne ydingų idėjų postulavimo kuriant daugybę papildomų hipotezių kontrargumentams atmesti.

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Frederik KORTLANDT
Cobetstraat 24
NL-2313 KC Leiden
The Netherlands
[*f.kortlandt@hum.leidenuniv.nl*]