

Issues in Balto-Slavic Accentology

FREDERIK KORTLANDT

After the very well-organized Leiden conference for which we must be grateful to Tijmen Pronk, it seems appropriate for me to review some of the papers, most of which have been published in this volume, as I did after the previous conferences in Zagreb and Copenhagen. The aim of this review is merely to point out some of the differences of opinion which require further debate.

Mislav Benić presents a detailed description of verbal accentuation in the dialect of Kukljica on the island of Ugljan. The dialect has no tonal distinctions but does have vowel quantity in stressed and pretonic syllables, with large-scale lengthening of short vowels under the stress. It has preserved the Common Slavic distinction between original pretonic long vowels, which were shortened as a result of the rise of the new timbre differences, and new pretonic long vowels which arose as a result of Dybo's law (cf. Kortlandt 2005: 126-128), e.g. *jazik* 'tongue' (with secondary lengthening of the stressed vowel) versus *nārōd* 'people'. It has also preserved the distinction between simplex verbs with mobile stress, e.g. *budīn* 'wake up', *gasīn* 'turn off', and compound verbs where the prefix lost the stress to the root in accordance with Dybo's law, e.g. *prebūdīn*, *ugāsīn* (ibidem, 127). Moreover, it has preserved the accentual mobility of the original nasal present in *ně znon* 'don't know' (cf. Kortlandt 1985) and the retracted stress of the original imperative in *vūci*, *cīdi* of *vūcēn* 'pull', *cidīn* 'filter' (cf. Kortlandt 1979: 53).

Miguel Carrasquer Vidal proposes a derivation of acute and circumflex tones from the syllable structure of the proto-language. His account involves tones on unstressed syllables, resyllabifications, analogical replacements, ad hoc rules for different stem formations and for different languages, secondary developments, unexplained exceptions for which he posits a PIE distinction between **i* and **j*, and structural ambiguity of the postvocalic ending **-ns*. He lists a number of Slavic *Auslautgesetze* in order to arrive at the correct output. Since I have discussed all of the issues elsewhere, I shall not return to the many points of disagreement here.

Vladimir Dybo compares the West Caucasian, Balto-Slavic and Japanese accent systems in terms of "dominant" and "recessive" morphemes expressed in syllables and contours. In my review of last year's conference in Copenhagen, I have shown how the class of dominant suffixes originated from several

retractions of the stress in Balto-Slavic. Unlike Japanese, where the extant accent systems go back to reductions of a system with a distinction between high and low tone in every syllable (cf. Kortlandt 1993), the systems attested in Balto-Slavic developed from a prosodic system which strongly resembles what we find in Vedic Sanskrit. In another contribution, Dybo subscribes to my analysis of the Old Prussian accentual system (1974), concentrating on the verb, the stem formation of which I have discussed elsewhere (1987).

Ronald Feldstein is primarily concerned with the more recent development of nominal accent patterns in West Slavic. He claims that the long vowels of Czech *kráva* ‘cow’ and *brázda* ‘furrow’ have retained length in stressed and pretonic position, respectively, while the short vowel of *strana* ‘side’ was taken from the acc.sg. form *stranu*. In fact, the long vowel of *kráva* resulted from recent lengthening of a short rising vowel (cf. Kortlandt 2005: 125, 2006a: 32), the long vowel of *brázda* became pretonic as a result of Dybo’s law, and the original pretonic long vowel of *strana* was regularly shortened when the new timbre distinctions arose (cf. Kortlandt 2005: 126, 2006a: 36f.). The short vowel of **kráva* was never lengthened in the oblique forms *krav*, *krávám*, *kravách*, *kravami*, Slovak *krava*, SCr. *kráva*, Polish *krowa* < **kròwa*, but Upper Sorbian *kruwa* < *krówa* with the same lengthening as in Czech *kráva*, *vůle*, *kůže*, which was clearly more recent than the rise of the new timbre distinctions. As a result, we find length in accent paradigm (b), absence of length in (c), and alternation between long and short vowels in (a). The original distribution was blurred by secondary lengthening before word-final voiced fricatives and resonants and by paradigmatic generalizations.

Georg Holzer defines “Urslavisch” as the last stage of prehistoric Slavic before the earliest dialectal differentiation. This corresponds to the end of my Early Middle Slavic and the beginning of my Late Middle Slavic period (e.g., 2005: 120, 2006a: 27). Holzer reconstructs the following prosodic characteristics for this stage (cf. now Holzer 2009):

(1) He posits the existence of “betonungslos” word forms, e.g. Ru. *storonu* ‘side’ in *ná storonu* and SCr. *pripovijest* ‘story’ in *nà pripovijest*. Unfortunately, he remains silent about the accentuation of these nouns when there is no preposition to take the accent (cf. Kortlandt 1978: 72-76 and 2006b: 36of. for discussion). He compares them with “betonungslos” word forms in Vedic Sanskrit, which are actually characterized by distinctive low tones (cf. Kortlandt 1986: 156). In order to simplify the discussion, I shall therefore assume that “betonungslos” stands for “having low tones only”.

(2) Holzer dates Meillet’s law “im Nachurslavischen” because of the pretonic lengthening in Ukr. *ratáj* ‘ploughman’. However, this accentuation is clearly secondary, cf. Ru. *rátaj*, Bulg. *rátaj*, Slovene *rátaj*, SCr. *râtár*, all pointing to fixed stress on the initial syllable. Similarly, the accent of Ru. *ramjáno* ‘very’