

Initial *u in Baltic and Slavic

What is the reflex of IE word-initial *u in Baltic and Slavic? The reliable material is relatively small:

- (1) Ru. *vy-* 'out', Cz. *vy-*, *vý-*, Po. *wy-*, Skt. *ud-*, OP. *ud-*, Gr. *ὕσ-τιξ*, Goth. *ūt*, ON. *út*.
- (2) Ru. *výdra* 'otter', SCr. *vǐdra*, Sl. *vǐdra*, *vidra*, Cz. *vydra*, Lith. *údra*, Latv. *údr(i)s*, Skt. *udráh*, Av. *udra-*, Gr. *ὕδρος*, *ὕδρᾱ*, ON. *otr*, OHG. *ottar*.
- (3) Ru. *výknut'* 'to get used', SCr. *vǐknuti*, Lith. *jùnkti*, Latv. *jákt*, Skt. *úcyati*, Arm. *usanim*, OIr. *do-uccim*.
- (4) Ru. *vysókiĭ* 'high', *výše* (comp.), SCr. *visok*, *vǐše*, Sl. *visòk*, *vǐše*, Cz. *vysoký*, *výše*, Gr. *ὕψηλός*, OHG. *ūf*.
- (5) Ru. *vyp*, *vyp'* 'bittern', Lith. *ūpas*, Latv. *ūpis*, ON. *úfr*, OHG. *ūfo*.
- (6) Lith. *vanduõ* 'water', Latv. *údens*, Skt. *udakám*, Gr. *ὕδωρ*, Lat. *unda*, Goth. *watō*, Ru. *vodá*.
- (7) Ru. *vopít'* 'to howl', SCr. *vàpiti*, *ùpiti*, Sl. *vpiti*, Cz. *úpěti*, Lith. *ùpas*, Latv. *ūpēt*, *ūpuót*, Av. *ufyeimi*.
- (8) Ru. *vorčát'* 'to grumble', SCr. *vǐčati*, Sl. *vǐčati*, Cz. *vrčeti*, Lith. *urkti*, *urgėti*, Latv. *urkt*, *urdzēt*, Lat. *urcāre*.
- (9) Ru. *v(o)z-* 'up', SCr. *uz-*, Sl. *vz-*, Cz. *vz-*, Lith. *už*, *ūž*, Latv. *uz-*, *ūz-*, Arm. *z-*.
- (10) Ru. *voš'* 'louse', SCr. *váš*, *úš*, Sl. *ùš*, *úš*, Cz. *veš*, Lith. *utis*, *utė*, Latv. *uts*, *ute*.
- (11) Lith. *usnàs* 'sonchus (thistle)', Latv. *usne*, Skt. *usnáh*.
- (12) Lith. *ùpė* 'river', Latv. *upe*, Skt. *ápah*.

The Slavic words under (1)–(5) have fixed stress on the initial syllable, which shows the old acute intonation. The only exception is Ru. *vysókiĭ* etc., which is a derivative of the noun *vys'*. The latter has fixed stress on the root, whereas the old acute intonation is attested in the comparative. The Slavic words under (7)–(9) are

never stressed on the initial syllable, cf. Ru. *vopít*, *vorčít*. The only exceptions are Ru. *vózdux* and *vózrast*, which are Church Slavic loan-words¹). Ru. *voš'* etc. belongs to the mobile type, as the Old Russian nom. acc. pl. *voši* and inst. pl. *vošmi* show (cf. Kolesov 1972: 85, 87). Since Illič-Svityč's monograph on Baltic and Slavic accentuation (1963), it can no longer be doubted that Balto-Slavic mobilia continue IE oxytona. Thus, the Slavic evidence unambiguously points to the conclusion that IE word-initial **u* yields acute *vy-* under the stress and *vz-* pretonically.

The Baltic evidence is not so easy to evaluate. Lith. *údra* has fixed stress on the initial syllable, in agreement with the Slavic (and Greek) material. The original accentuation of the Latvian cognate cannot be determined. It is generally assumed that the broken intonation in the latter language points to original accentual mobility (cf. Stang 1966: 141), but this rule can be made plausible only for those words where the acute intonation goes back to a laryngeal which followed the vowel or diphthong of the first syllable. Lith. *jùnkti* belongs to a flexion class which has fixed stress on the root. The initial *j* was most probably taken from the prefix *ap(i)-* (cf. Vaillant 1950: 184). Lith. *vanduo* looks like a perfect contamination of Lat. *unda* and Goth. *watō*, except for the acute intonation of the initial syllable. As de Saussure pointed out in 1894, "l'intonation ne s'explique que par la forme autrefois concurrente *ūd-en-*" (1922: 505). The Žemaitian evidence shows that the word had originally fixed stress on the initial syllable (cf. Stang 1966: 295), which agrees with the Greek accentuation. Here again, the broken intonation in Latvian cannot be adduced as evidence for original accentual mobility.

The Baltic forms mentioned under (7)–(9) show both long and short reflexes of initial **u*. The expected intonation on the long reflex is attested in Latv. *úpis*, *úpsis* (cf. Būga 1959: 672). It is interesting that Lith. *urkti* belongs to the mobile accentuation type whereas *urgėti* has an acute root vowel in the present tense *ùrga* (cf. Žodynas 1972: 877). The Baltic words under (10)–(12) have a short initial vowel. They show accentual mobility, except for Lith. *ùpė*, where the initial accentuation resulted from the retraction of

¹) It can be argued that these are not loan-words and that the *o* regularly developed under the stress, as in *sóxnut'*. In that case the initial syllable received the stress as a result of the retraction in mobile nouns after Illič-Svityč's law (cf. Kortlandt 1975: 28). This development is definitely posterior to the one discussed here.

the ictus from a prevocalic *i²). Thus, the material supports the hypothesis that IE word-initial *u yields Lith. *ú*-, Latv. *ú*- under the stress and in both languages *u*- pretonically.

The agreement between Baltic and Slavic makes it likely that this is a common innovation. Indeed, the long initial vowel in OPr. *ūlint* 'kämpfen' (III 123, 21) must probably be explained the same way. How did the development come about? Vaillant suggests secondary *v̥ddhi* in Lith. *údra*, Slavic *vydra* with subsequent introduction of the acute long vowel into the masculine words in Baltic (1958: 180). This assumption is arbitrary because it explains nothing beyond this single word. Moreover, it cannot account for the acute intonation of the root in Lith. *vanduoð*, not to speak of the other items adduced above. It is not even obvious that *v̥ddhi* entails an acute long vowel in Balto-Slavic because the normal reflex of a lengthened vowel is not acute, e.g. Ru. *žará*, *travá*, SCr. *žára*, *tráva*, aor. 1st sg. Posavian *zaklě* (with neo-acute indicating earlier circumflex), Lith. *rėkti* and the final vowel of *vanduoð*. Georgiev comes closer to the truth when he states that "indēōvropējskite kratki načalni glasni sa bili udālženi v praslavjanski pod udarenie s akutova intonacija" (1964: 15). This rule meets with several difficulties. First of all, the acute intonation cannot have existed before the lengthening. Second, the development is common to Baltic and Slavic. Third, it can be demonstrated for initial *u only. The only reliable example for *i is Ru. *inój* 'other', SCr. *in*, Cz. *jíný*, Lith. *inas*, *ýnas*, *vienas*, Latv. *viēns*, Gr. *oivós*. On the other hand, the rule cannot be disproved for *i, cf. especially Po. *imię* next to *miano* and Cz. *jehla* next to Slk. *ihla*. Mathiassen rejects the assumption of a special "Anlautdehnung" but does not offer anything new (1974: 225).

In my book on Slavic accentuation (1975), I put forward the thesis that the Balto-Slavic acute intonation is historically connected with the IE laryngeals. If we assume that stressed initial *u received a prothetic laryngeal in Balto-Slavic, the subsequent evolution regularly produces the attested forms. The development is analogous to the rise of prothetic *h* before an initial *u in Greek, e.g. *ἕβρις*, *ἕργος*, *ἕδωρ*, *ἕψηλος*. It is not improbable that in Balto-Slavic it affected initial *i as well. If Hamp is right that Lith. *ugnīs* and Slavic *ognь* go back to IE **ngni-*, Skt. *agnih*, and Cz. *výheň* to

²) The divergent conditions of metatony in Latvian and Lithuanian show that the retraction of the stress from a prevocalic *i is much more recent than the development of initial *u discussed here (cf. Kortlandt 1975: 25).

a derivative of this stem (1970: 77), the rise of the prothetic laryngeal must be dated after the loss of the syllabic resonants, which is in turn posterior to Hirt's law (cf. Kortlandt 1975: 52). Thus, the development belongs to the last stage of the Balto-Slavic period³).

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³) The difficulty with Lith. *ugnīs*, Slavic *ognь* is that both the Baltic and the Slavic material point to original barytonesis (cf. Illič-Svityč 1963: 147), which is in conflict with the Sanskrit evidence. I think that the Balto-Slavic accentuation was taken from the cognate Lith. *anglīs*, Slavic *oglb*, for which original barytonesis is established in both Lithuanian and Čakavian. The other Slavic languages generalized accentual mobility in the latter word, e.g. Cz. *uhel*, Po. *węgiel*.