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## 2 THE PROTO-SLAVIC PROSODIC SYSTEM

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In his book *Slavonic accentuation*, Christian Stang (1957) has classified the prosodic features of Proto-Slavic, viz., vowel length, place of the stress and tone, into three accent paradigms (AP), which he called (a), (b) and (c). At the end of the book, he summarises the general characteristics of the three accent paradigms as follows:

- “a. Acute, which can occur on any syllable, and which keeps its stress constantly throughout the paradigm.
- b. Neo-acute, which can occur on any syllable, provided that other forms of the paradigm or the etymological group concerned have stress on the subsequent syllable, and provided also that no skipping of syllables ever takes place in the process concerned.
- c. Circumflex, which occurs on the first syllable when other forms of the paradigm have the stress on the last syllable.” (1957: 179).

The description given by Stang reflects the stage that can be reconstructed as the final stage of Proto-Slavic. It was later discovered that the three Proto-Slavic accent paradigms go back to an earlier system that had two accentuation patterns: a pattern with fixed stress on the stem, to which belong AP (a) and AP (b), and a pattern with mobile stress, which corresponds to AP (c). In AP (a), the stress remained on the stem, whereas in AP (b), a new mobile paradigm was created by a series of accent shifts. In the following sections, the properties and the historical development of the three accent paradigms will be discussed in more detail.

### 2.2 AP (A)

AP (a) has fixed stress and acute intonation on a stem syllable. The stressed syllable always reflects a heavy syllabic nucleus, which means that the stressed vowel is either a long vowel \**ē*, \**ō* or a short vowel or syllabic resonant followed by a laryngeal or tautosyllabic resonant (Vermeer 1992: 120). It was shown by Werner Winter that the reflexes of the PIE voiced unaspirated stops caused preceding vowels to become long and acute in Balto-Slavic. Kortlandt explains this phenomenon in terms of the glottalic theory: he sees the fact that the PIE voiced unaspirated stops yielded an acute in Balto-Slavic (whereas the PIE lengthened grade, conversely, is never reflected by an old acute) as comparative

evidence for Gamkrelidze and Ivanov's theory that the PIE stops *\*b*, *\*d*, *\*g* were in fact (pre-)glottalized (Gamkrelidze/Ivanov 1973). This development has been called Winter's law and has been reformulated by Kortlandt as the transfer of the laryngeal feature from a glottalic consonant to a preceding vowel (Kortlandt 1977: 2, 1978a, cf. Vermeer 1984: 335). Kortlandt supposed that in Balto-Slavic, the laryngeal part of these preglottalized stops merged with the reflex of the PIE laryngeals and yielded an acute intonation. Kortlandt, thus, states that the acute intonation of AP (a) was caused by the PIE laryngeals and glottalized stops only, rather than being a reflex of all types of PIE length: long vowels that resulted from a PIE lengthened grade and from contractions did not become acute (e.g., 1975: 22, 1978a: 110).

The view that AP (a) reflects the glottalization of the PIE voiced unaspirated stops *\*b*, *\*d*, *\*g* and of the laryngeals forms one of the most important theories of the Dutch accentological school. This view has not, however, been universally accepted. According to the traditional view, the Balto-Slavic acute intonation resulted from any long vowel: a sequence of a vowel and laryngeal yielded a plain long vowel which merged with the reflex of the PIE lengthened grade. The acute intonation developed at a later stage. Vermeer, however, concludes to "know of no good example of a lengthened grade that is continued as an acute. It is rather the case that in both Baltic and Slavic such instances of lengthened grade as can be found persistently refuse to have an acute." (1992: 125-126).

This work is written within the theoretical framework devised by Leiden accentologists and therefore, I regard the acute intonation of AP (a) to result from the laryngeals and glottalized stops of PIE. When the glottal stop developed from a separate phoneme into a feature of the preceding vowel, it yielded a contour that is comparable to the broken tone that is found in Latvian and dialects of Lithuanian (Kortlandt, e.g., 1985b: 122). The broken tone was lost by the end of Proto-Slavic at some point after the operation of Dybo's law (see below) and yielded a short rising tone.

In the modern Slavic languages, the words that belong to AP (a) are generally characterised by fixed stress on the stem. The stressed vowel is reflected as short. AP (a) can synchronically, by and large, be recognised by:

- in general, the reflex of fixed stress on the stem, e.g., R *plug*, Gsg. *plúga* 'plough'.
- in (all case forms of) Serbian/Croatian, this is reflected as a short falling accent: *plùg*, Gsg. *plùga*.
- in Slovene, short stem stress in monosyllabic forms and long rising stem stress in polysyllabic forms: *plùg*, Gsg. *plúga*.

### 2.3 AP (B)

At the last reconstructible stage of Proto-Slavic, the stress in AP (b) alternated between the final stem syllable and the first syllable of the ending. Stem-stressed forms in late Proto-Slavic have so-called neo-acute intonation. This neo-acute intonation is reflected as a short rising tone on light syllabic nuclei (i.e., syllables in which the vowel is the reflex of a PIE short vowel: PSl. \*o, \*e, \*ǫ, \*v) and as a long rising tone on heavy syllabic nuclei.

#### 2.3.1 DYBO'S LAW

The mobility of AP (b) was created only towards the very end of the Slavic linguistic unity. For the larger part of Proto-Slavic, AP (b) was characterized by stem stress, just as AP (a). The difference between the two paradigms was that, while AP (a) was characterised by acute intonation, AP (b) had a rising tone. As a result of an accent shift that was discovered by V.A. Dybo and V.M. Illič-Svityč and has become known as Dybo's law, rising vowels lost the stress (if possible) to the following syllable. When the newly stressed vowel was long, it received a falling tone. At this point, jers in word-final position had already lost their stressability and therefore could not receive the stress (Kortlandt 2002a: 15). The circumstance that only rising vowels underwent this change excludes AP (a) and AP (c) from Dybo's law.

#### 2.3.2 STANG'S LAW

Stang's law is an accent retraction that took place in a part of the word forms affected by Dybo's law, and therefore applied to words belonging to AP (b) only. According to Stang's law, a long falling tone in a final syllable (not counting final jers) lost the stress to the preceding syllable. The vowels that lost the stress according to Stang's law were the vowels that became stressed after Dybo's law and received a falling tone in those cases in which the vowel was long. The vowel that received the stress after Stang's retraction received a rising tone (Kortlandt 2002a: 17). This new rising tone is traditionally called neo-acute because it does not reflect an old acute nor a traditional circumflex (falling tone). The new rising tone merged with the short rising tone that developed after the acute tone of AP (a) was lost.<sup>7</sup> Stang's law has alternatively been called

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<sup>7</sup> The terms acute and neo-acute refer to "etymologically defined vowels carrying certain prosodic properties" (Vermeer 1992: 120). They are not synchronically identifiable in late

Ivšić's law, most notably by Georg Holzer, Mate Kapović and Ranko Matasović.<sup>8</sup> It has been regarded as the very last common Slavic accentual development (Kortlandt 2002a: 17).

Not only Stang's law, but also Dybo's law has been dated relatively late in Proto-Slavic. Kortlandt assigns Dybo's law to the 'young Proto-Slavic' period, which he dates from 600 to 750. Stang's law has been dated to the subsequent period 'late Proto-Slavic' between 750 and 900 (2003b: 4). The view that Dybo's law took place relatively late in Proto-Slavic is not shared by all scholars. Holzer, for example, dates Dybo's law quite early in the relative chronology of the development of Proto-Slavic (2005: 44-46, cf. Kortlandt 2007a: 15). However, as absolute dating for Dybo's law, Holzer suggests "um die Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts" (2005: 46), which more or less corresponds to the dating suggested by Kortlandt. Ranko Matasović dates Dybo's law at the earliest around the transition of the eighth to the ninth centuries ("najranije prijelazom 8. u 9. stoljeće") (2000: 135) because of the fact that Dybo's law also operated on the late Germanic loanwords as PSl. *\*korljъ* 'king' from Germanic *Karl*, which probably refers to the name of Charlemagne (or Charles Martel, cf. §5.3) and must therefore have been borrowed in the (second half of the) eighth century (cf. §5.3). In a more recent article, Matasović dates Dybo's law considerably earlier, namely "sometime during the sixth century", after the borrowing of the large majority of early loanwords from Germanic in the fourth and fifth centuries (2007: 117). The accentuation of PSl. *\*korljъ* is, however, best explained if the borrowing of the word preceded the operation (or rather phonemicization) of Dybo's law because it would be hard to explain how the word would otherwise have joined AP (b).

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Proto-Slavic: a short rising stressed vowel is called acute when it reflects a heavy syllabic nucleus, but as neo-acute when it reflects a light syllabic nucleus (ibid.).

<sup>8</sup> It is, however, confusing to refer to Stang's law as Ivšić's law because the term Ivšić's law comprises in fact several different stress retractions: the retraction otherwise known as Stang's law as well as the retractions from final and non-final jers to the previous syllable (Ivšić 1911: 169-177, 182-194). Kapović first suggested to use the term Ivšić's law for Stang's law (2005: 84 fn. 36), and he distinguishes between Ivšić's law (for Stang's law) and Ivšić's rule (for the retraction from weak jers) (2005: 82 fn. 30). Holzer distinguishes between the first Ivšić's law and the second Ivšić's law, the first Ivšić's law being "Stang's law" and the second Ivšić's law the retraction from (final and non-final) jers (Holzer 2005: 52-55, cf. Matasović 2008: 168). Kortlandt justifiably argues that these retractions are in fact three different developments, and that they should therefore also terminologically be separated (2007: 12-14, cf. 2002a: 15, 17).

### 2.3.3 THE VOLJA-TYPE

There is a group of disyllabic feminine *jā*-stems in Slavic, which have fixed stem stress throughout the paradigm, but “behave in other respects as if they go with type (b)” (Vermeer 1992: 122). The fixed stress of these feminine *jā*-stems can be explained by assuming that Stang’s law applied in all case forms. The final syllable of the disyllabic feminine *jā*-stems regularly received the stress as a result of Dybo’s law. The newly stressed final vowel was long in all case forms and thus received a falling tone. This resulted in the operation of Stang’s law in the entire paradigm and, as a consequence, in fixed stem stress. The vowel in the final syllable in this group of disyllabic feminine *jā*-stems had become long because of Van Wijk’s law: when the phoneme /j/ as the final element of a consonant cluster disappeared, the following vowel was lengthened, e.g., PSl. *\*vòlja* > *\*vòlā* (Vermeer 1992: 129, cf. also Kortlandt 2002a: 14). This is the reason why these words had a long falling vowel in the second syllable, and why Stang’s law applied in all case forms. From a synchronic late Proto-Slavic point of view, one can therefore also include these words under AP (a) (Kortlandt 2008a: 4), but historically, words of this type belong to AP (b). These words will be classified under AP (b) in this work because their borrowing into Proto-Slavic can be dated before the above-mentioned stress shifts.

Accent paradigm (b) can by and large be recognised by:

- in general: accentual mobility, without the traces of the falling tone that belong to AP (c).
- in West Slavic, reflexes of long vowels and diphthongs are retained as long: P *trąba*, Cz. *trouba*, Slk. *trúba* ‘trumpet’.
- in the feminine *ā*-stems, stem-stressed forms are absent: all case forms have end stress (except for the *volja*-type *jā*-stems) (Vermeer 2001b: 22-23).

## 2.4 AP (C)

AP (c) has mobile accent. The stress alternates between the initial and the final syllable of the word. Forms with initial stress have a falling tone. As opposed to the mobility of AP (b), the mobility of AP (c) can be traced to Balto-Slavic times (Stang 1957: 179).

In the modern Slavic languages, AP (c) can, on the whole, be recognised as follows:

- The stem vowel is always reflected as short in West Slavic: P *ręka*, Cz. *ruka*, in contrast to AP (b) where the reflexes of long vowels are retained in West Slavic.

- In Serbian/Croatian, the stressed vowel is always long in monosyllabic case forms (*vôz* ‘train’, *grâd* ‘town’). In disyllabic case forms, the stressed vowel is short on light syllabic nuclei but long on heavy syllabic nuclei (*vôza* vs. *grâda*) and in polysyllabic case forms, it is always short (*vôzovi*, *grâdovi*).
- In Slovene, the stem vowel in monosyllabic forms is always long and has a falling tone. In di- and polysyllabic forms, length can no longer be established because of the progressive shift from falling vowels: falling vowels in Slovene lost the stress to the following syllable and received a long falling tone, e.g., *\*grâdu* > *\*gradû* (Vermeer 2001b: 23-24).

## 2.5 AP (D)?

Some scholars, for example those of the Moscow Accentological School, distinguish yet another accent paradigm, which has been labelled AP (d). This supposed accent paradigm only contains (originally barytone) masculine *o*-stems with a non-acute root.<sup>9</sup> Evidence for AP (d) has mainly been found in dialects of Croatian because the words that supposedly belong to AP (d) are stressed according to AP (c) in most other Slavic systems. Croatian dialectal evidence seems to indicate that the AP (d) nouns were accented according to AP (c) in the NAsg. only (viz. with a long falling tone on the root), but in the oblique cases according to AP (b) (viz. with the stress on the ending). It has therefore been argued by Illič-Svityč that the merger of the barytone masculine *o*-stems with a non-acute root with AP (c) was only partial and included the NAsg. case forms only (1963: 119 = 1979: 103-104). This would have resulted in a separate accent paradigm in Proto-Slavic. It is, however, questionable whether the existence of a fourth accent paradigm in Proto-Slavic can be substantiated (Vermeer 2001a: 131-161, Langston 2007). Kortlandt explains the spread of the final stress in the oblique case forms from the stress pattern of the *u*-stems, which had final stress in the genitive singular (2007b: 231-232).

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<sup>9</sup> According to Holzer also neuter *s*-stems (2005: 40).