Frederik KORTLANDT
*Leiden University*

## THE EARLY CHRONOLOGY OF LONG VOWELS
## IN BALTO-SLAVIC

As Ferdinand de Saussure observed at the end of the 19th century, "à part deux ou trois cas spéciaux (allongement du nominatif, allongement de l'aoriste sigmatique, etc.), l'alternance *e − ē* n'est pas indo-européenne" (1894, 428), and in these few cases we do not find an acute tone in Balto-Slavic. The original distribution has been obscured by various types of metatony and analogy.

A few years later, Jakob Wackernagel pointed out that Sanskrit *vṛddhi* is found in three categories with seven subdivisions (1896, 66–68):

(1)  Secondary nominal derivation.
(2)  Roots with a full grade vowel,
    (a) in monosyllabic nouns, e.g. *–hārd–* 'heart',
    (b) before primary suffixes, e.g. *hā́rdi* 'heart',
    (c) in the singular of some root presents, e.g. *mārṣṭi* 'wipes',
    (d) in the active forms of the sigmatic aorist, e.g. *ajaiṣam* 'I won'.
(3)  Final syllables of nominal stems, e.g.
    (a) nom. sg. *sákhā* 'friend',
    (b) loc. sg. *agnā́* 'fire'.

He concludes that *vṛddhi* is a variety ("Spielart") of the full grade which arose phonetically in monosyllabic word forms, for which he refers to parallels in Germanic and Afghan. The third category is best explained as phonetic lengthening before word-final resonants (cf. Kortlandt 1975, 85).

Most 20th century scholars "accept the existence of an archaic layer of PIE formations characterized by apophonic or invariant lengthened grade" (Villanueva 2011, 7) such as Narten presents (Vedic *stáuti* 'praises') and causatives (Latin *sōpīre* 'put to sleep'), heteroclitics (Hittite *šēḫur* 'urine' < *$sēH_2ur$*), s-stem nouns (Greek γῆρας 'old age'), *vṛddhi* derivatives (OHG *swāgur* 'brother-in-law'), thematic nouns (OHG *āz* 'food') and *ā*-stem nouns (Greek κώμη 'village'). In Balto-Slavic Villanueva finds evidence for Narten presents, causatives and desideratives, lengthened grade iteratives,

root nouns, "Narten nouns" and *vṛddhi* derivatives with an acute tone (2011, 21–32). He acknowledges that we do not find an acute tone in word-final position (Lith. *akmuõ*, *duktẽ*) and in monosyllables (Latvian *sàls*, *gùovs*, Lith. *duõs*, SCr. *dònijeh* 'I brought'), for which he assumes a type of metatony. Thus, he effectively agrees with the present author on the data identified by Saussure and Wackernagel as representing original lengthened grade vowels, albeit at the cost of introducing an additional rule of metatony. In the following I shall not give a detailed account of the many differences between the two of us (for which I refer to a forthcoming article by Tijmen P r o n k) but rather focus the attention on the methodological issues underlying these differences. It appears that there are two basic issues where I find myself in disagreement with the majority of my 20th century colleagues.

Firstly, my approach is reductionist in the sense that the number of possible reconstructions must be kept to a minimum. Thus, I reconstruct two, not three PIE velar series, viz. palatovelars and labiovelars, as found in Circassian (e.g. K u i p e r s 1960, 18), Ubykh (V o g t 1963, 13), and in Salish and Wakashan languages. There are two reasons for this. First, the alleged plain velar series is largely in complementary distribution with these two series and can be derived from them (cf. M e i l l e t 1894; S t e e n s l a n d 1973). Second, there are many dozens of examples of alternation between the plain velars and the other two series. As far as I know, these two points have never been properly addressed by proponents of the theory that the proto-language had three original velar series. In a similar vein I reject the reconstruction of a PIE phoneme *$*a$ (cf. L u b o t s k y 1989), long vowels *$*ā$, *$*ī$, *$*ū$, semivowels *$*y$, *$*w$, and phonemically distinct syllabic resonants and laryngeals. The great merit of the laryngeal theory is precisely that it renders such reconstructions superfluous and therefore incorrect. Thus, I derive both Latin *sine* and Toch. B *snai* 'without' from PIE *$*snH_1i$ and attribute the syllabification to the separate languages.

Secondly, my reconstructions always refer to a specific stage in the development of a linguistic system. While the necessity of a strict chronological ordering is commonplace among philologists, there appears to be a general tendency for historical linguists to date prehistoric developments as far back in time as they possibly can. Clear examples are Grimm's law in Germanic, Saussure's law in Lithuanian, and Dybo's law in Slavic, all of which can be dated to no more than a few centuries before the beginnings of a written tradition. Another example is the frequent reconstruction of the acc. pl. ending

*-ons as *-ōns or *-ōs in spite of the Old High German distinction between -a < *-ons, -ā < *-āns and -o < *-ās. An extreme example is K a p o v i ć ' s reconstruction of paradigm (a) for Slavic *zvěrъ* 'beast' (2009a, 240) on the basis of the Serbo-Croatian dialectal form (Sandžak) *zvȅr* beside *zvȅre*, *zvjère*, gen. *zv(j)èreta*, also *zvére*, *zvijère*, *zv(j)èreta* and *zvîre*, *zvȉreta*, where the short vowel is the phonetic reflex of a falling circumflex in polysyllabic word forms, as in *vréme*, *vrijème*, *vrȅmena* 'time'. (Incidentally, I have reconstructed a laryngeal in *$\hat{g}^h ueH_1 r$- since 1976.) Another extreme example is K a p o v i ć ' s derivation of the Slavic 1st sg. pronouns *ja* (a) and *jazъ* (b) from two distinct PIE forms *$e\hat{g}$* and *$e\hat{g}Hóm$* (2009b, 65) in spite of the facts that there is no semantic difference and that the two forms never cooccur in the same Slavic dialect. V i l l a n u e v a reconstructs a long vowel in the word for 'liver' on the basis of Greek ἧπαρ in spite of the short vowel in Sanskrit *yákṛt* and Latin *iecur* (2011, 7), rejecting the simple analogy after κῆρ and ἧτορ 'heart'. He assumes Lith. *várna* 'crow' and *vìlkė* 'she-wolf' to be *vṛddhi* derivatives of *vaȓnas* 'raven' and *viȓkas* 'wolf' (2011, 30) though the former pair can hardly be separated from Latin *corvus*, *cornīx* and Greek κόραξ, κορώνη and the latter pair is identical with Sanskrit *vṛkas*, *vṛkī́s* (cf. K o r t l a n d t 2009, 7, 106, 131). And so on and so forth.

The attractiveness of projecting a variety of formations back in time lies in the freedom it allows the investigator to choose between different reconstructions in accordance with his theoretical preconceptions. The history of Indo-European reconstruction can to a large extent be seen as a gradual limitation of this freedom. The obvious identity between Latin *habēre* and German *haben* or between Latin *caput* and German *Kopf* could no longer be maintained after the discovery of Grimm's law. Many comparisons have become unacceptable as a result of the laryngeal theory. It is therefore advisable to be cautious when a new theory enlarges rather than restricts the number of possible reconstructions. A case in point is V i l l a n u e v a ' s statement that "the lack of direct cognates can be compensated by a recent finding of comparative grammar", viz. what he calls the "Narten derivational system" which "allows us to go a step beyond the limits of the comparative method" (2011, 21). As an example he adduces Vedic *sādád*- 'sitting' (allegedly from *sēd-nt*-), which is a nonce form, beside Old Irish *sáidid* 'thrusts' (rather than "sets, fixes", cf. T h u r n e y s e n 1946, 336, allegedly a causative *sōd-eie*- but more probably a denominative *sōd-ie*-), Latin *sēdēs* 'seat' (allegedly an *s*-stem but probably a root noun and possibly an *ē*-stem, cf. S c h r i j v e r 1991, 376) and Old Irish

*síd* 'peace', where the long vowel is secondary in view of Welsh *hedd*. This does not inspire great confidence in the methodology. I shall not discuss the putative evidence for Narten presents and causatives in Balto-Slavic here but only note that the theory does not explain the actual distribution of the attested reflexes. The alleged Narten desideratives Lith. *ieškóti* 'look for' and Hittite *ganešš-* 'recognize' must also be explained differently (cf. P r o n k 2011, 314; K l o e k h o r s t 2008, 435).

As I have shown elsewhere (2010, 125–137), the ablaut patterns in the Vedic aorist support Wackernagel's theory and are at variance with the postulates of the Narten system. On the one hand we find a full, not lengthened grade vowel in the 1st sg. sigmatic aorist injunctive *jeṣam* 'conquer', *stoṣam* 'praise' (cf. also K o r t l a n d t 2007, 110). On the other hand we find lengthened grade vocalism in the 3rd sg. root aorist, e.g. Toch. B *śem* 'came' < *$g^w\bar{e}m$-, Latin *vēnit*, Gothic *qem-* (cf. K o r t l a n d t 2011, 420), Greek ἔσβη '(the fire) went out' < *$g^w\bar{e}s$-, Vedic *āraik* 'left' < *$l\bar{e}ik^w$-, also Lith. *ė̃mė*, OCS *jętъ* 'took'. I therefore reject the idea of a Narten system and the loose reconstructions which are based on its assumptions. For similar reasons I reject Eichner's law, which is another device lacking a proper foundation but simplifying the task of the historical linguist because it widens the range of possible reconstructions at no cost (cf. K o r t l a n d t 2010, 365–368). Like the Narten system, Eichner's law plays a major part in V i l l a n u e v a's reconstructions (e.g. 2011, 7, 16, 27). While V i l l a n u e v a easily dismisses root nouns without an acute tone (2011, 12–14; cf. K o r t l a n d t 2009, 55), he is eager to adduce possible reflexes of an acute as actual reflexes of an original long vowel (2011, 27–32). These include Slavic iteratives with a shortened falling circumflex (e.g. SCr. *ùmirati*, *pòvraćati*; cf. K o r t l a n d t 2011, 322), clearly recent formations (e.g. Lith. *kýboti*), iteratives with a metatonical "acute" (e.g. Latvian *nẽsât*, *tẽkât*, *lẽkât*, *mẽtât*, cf. D e r k s e n 1996, 335–343), forms with zero grade *u*-vocalism (Slavic *myšь* 'mouse', *nyně* 'now'), and nouns with a metatonical "acute" (e.g. Lith. *núoma*, Latvian *nuõma*, *ruõta*, also *siẽva* 'wife', cf. already T r a u t m a n n 1923, 301). All these examples are quite irrelevant for a reconstruction of the original state of affairs.

# BALTŲ IR SLAVŲ KALBŲ ILGŲJŲ BALSIŲ ANKSTYVOJI CHRONOLOGIJA

*Santrauka*

Projektuoti įvairias formas į praeitį yra patogu, kadangi tyrėjui suteikiama laisvė rinktis skirtingas rekonstrukcijas priklausomai nuo išankstinių teorinių įsitikinimų. Indoeuropiečių prokalbės rekonstrukcijos raida nemaža dalimi gali būti interpretuojama kaip palaipsnis šios laisvės apribojimas. Dėl to rekomenduojama atsargiau vertinti naujas teorijas, kurios ne tiek apriboja, kiek praplečia galimų rekonstrukcijų skaičių.

## REFERENCES

Derksen, Rick 1996, *Metatony in Baltic*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Kapović, Mate 2009a, Rising mobility in Slavic *i*-stems, in Rosemarie Lühr, Sabine Ziegler (Hrsg.), *Protolanguage and prehistory. Akten der XII. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, vom 11. bis 15. Oktober 2004 in Krakau*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 236–243.

Kapović, Mate 2009b, The accent of Slavic *ja(zъ)* 'I', in Thomas Olander, Jenny Helena Larsson (eds.), *Stressing the past: Papers on Baltic and Slavic accentology*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 53–73.

Kloekhorst, Alwin 2008, *Etymological dictionary of the Hittite inherited lexicon*, Leiden: Brill.

Kortlandt, Frederik 1975, *Slavic accentuation: A study in relative chronology*, Lisse: Peter de Ridder.

Kortlandt, Frederik 2007, *Italo-Celtic origins and prehistoric development of the Irish language*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Kortlandt, Frederik 2009, *Baltica & Balto-Slavica*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Kortlandt, Frederik 2010, *Studies in Germanic, Indo-European and Indo-Uralic*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Kortlandt, Frederik 2011, *Selected writings on Slavic and general linguistics*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.

Kuipers, Aert H. 1960, *Phoneme and morpheme in Kabardian*, 's-Gravenhage: Mouton.

Lubotsky, Alexander 1989, Against a Proto-Indo-European phoneme *\*a*, in Theo Vennemann (ed.), *The new sound of Indo-European*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 53–66.

Meillet, Antoine 1894, De quelques difficultés de la théorie des gutturales indo-européennes, *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 8, 277–304.

Pronk, Tijmen 2011, On the development of initial *\*Hu*, *\*Hi* and the rise of initial acute diphthongs in Baltic and Slavic, in Tijmen Pronk, Rick Derksen (eds.), *Accent matters: Papers on Balto-Slavic accentology*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 309–321.

Saussure, Ferdinand de 1894, À propos de l'accentuation lituanienne, *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 8, 425–446.

Schrijver, Peter 1991, *The reflexes of the Proto-Indo-European laryngeals in Latin*, Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi.

Steensland, Lars 1973, *Die Distribution der urindogermanischen sogenannten Gutturale*, PhD Dissertation, Uppsala.

Thurneysen, Rudolf 1946, *A grammar of Old Irish*, Dublin: DIAS.

Trautmann, Reinhold 1923, *Baltisch-Slavisches Wörterbuch*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Villanueva Svensson, Miguel 2011, Indo-European long vowels in Balto-Slavic, *Baltistica* 46(1), 5–38.

Vogt, Hans 1963, *Dictionnaire de la langue oubykh*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Wackernagel, Jakob 1896, *Altindische Grammatik* 1: *Lautlehre*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

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