

HARVEY E. MAYER

BALTIC VIA GLOTTALIC INDO-EUROPEAN

It has become fashionable to claim that Slavic is an Italicized dialect of Prussian. Or an Iranized dialect of Prussian. Or an Iranized Italicized dialect of Prussian¹. You know what I think? I think Slavic is a Balticized variant of Albanian². Of course, by that I mean that in Indo-European times Pre-Slavic and Pre-Albanian were variants of the same dialect which started growing apart when Pre-Slavs migrated north from the Carpathians to Pre-Baltic territory while Pre-Albanians moved south from the Carpathians to the Balkans.

Baltic, in its origins, is much different from Slavic. And though Proto-Pre-Baltic and Proto-Pre-Slavic-Proto-Pre-Albanian shared an identical inventory of phonemes, they were still quite different. They were quite different because of different sequencing possibilities. Proto-Pre-Slavic-Proto-Pre-Albanian allowed both initial *sk-* and initial *ks-*. Proto-Pre-Baltic allowed only initial *sk-*. Proto-Pre-Slavic-Proto-Pre-Albanian had the means of restoring an initial laryngeal, *h-*, from initial *ks-*. Proto-Pre-Baltic did not³. Because of its beginnings, Baltic alone of satem dialects immediately merged the reflexes of assibilated Indo-European palatals *k̂*, *ĝ* with those of the ruki law. These joint reflexes were in immediate danger of merger with the reflexes of *s* elsewhere as even Lithuanian data show. Note Lithuanian *š* from palatal *k̂* in *širdis* 'heart', *š* from the ruki law in *viršùs* 'top', and *š* from *s* in *vāškas* 'wax' which arose through assimilation to the one-time palatal *k̂* (now *k*) in this word. Because of this merging of sibilants of different origins, Baltic alone developed insert velars *-k-*, *-g-* primarily before reflexes of the palatals *k̂*, *ĝ* and the ruki law to set them apart. These insert velars helped to maintain the integrity of the Baltic syllable so that it still reflects its original, agglutinative nature. This

¹ Мартынов В. В. Балто-славяно-иранские языковые отношения // Балто-славянские исследования. 1980. М.: Наука, 1981. С. 16–26.

² See Mayer H. E. 'Slavic, a Balticized Albanian?', 1988. To appear in „Lituanus“.

³ Mayer H. E. 'Tokharian and Baltic versus Slavic and Albanian', submitted to Lituanus. I phrase this as 'restoring aspiration in a new phoneme, h'. 1989.

caused Baltic to be conservative, that is, in an overall way, more conservative than Slavic and Albanian. A tracing of Baltic from Glottalic Indo-European shows how this critical limitation in sequencing possibilities arose in Pre-Baltic so that with only initial *sk-* possible, Baltic was bound to develop differently from other Indo-European languages including Slavic. Thus, since Slavic and Albanian arose from (a) less heavily glottalized Indo-European dialect(s), they were bound to be more subject to outside influences since their morphemes tended more to disintegrate. The original integrity of their syllables was not as rigidly maintained. Baltic, on the other hand, was going to resist outside influences more vigorously whether they came from Slavic or Germanic⁴. And only because it had started out more heavily glottalized.

Proto-Indo-European developed glottalic phonemes in reaction to excessive, mostly allophonic aspiration which was blurring the distinction between voiced and voiceless phonemes⁵. But whenever glottalization eliminated aspiration completely in a dialect, it, itself, vanished⁶. The elimination of aspiration by glottalization occurred in different dialects in different stages, at different times, and to different degrees. In Tokharian, glottalization reached its heaviest state late, that is, after aspiration had completely blurred all distinctions between voiced and voiceless phonemes. In Non-Anatolian, it eliminated the laryngeals which caused the final dissolution of Indo-European.

Heavy glottalization had an early start in Baltic⁷. Baltic evidence of this clearly suggests an early separation for Pre-Baltic dialects from other dialects, a separation that began at the end of Proto-Indo-European. Pre-Baltic reached this by not permitting the sequence initial *ks-*, a result of the influence of heavy glottalization.

⁴ In 'Aspiration and Native Baltic Forms', *Lituanus*, 34, 2, 5–18, 1988, I say that Early Proto-Indo-European was originally agglutinative. Baltic, by being more agglutinative than Slavic or Albanian in nature, then, was staying truer to type. Also, it maintained better the unity of its original morphemes. It is this feature that kept Baltic more conservative than Slavic and Albanian.

⁵ This is visible, for example, in the word meaning 'drink' with Sanskrit *pibāti* 'he drinks' versus *pāti* 'drinks', and Latin *bibō* 'I drink' versus *pōtus* 'beverage', 'drinking' with the fluctuation *p/b*.

⁶ See 'Aspiration...' where I talk of R. Jakobson's phonological laws of implication and distinctive feature stratification which, applied here, show that glottalization implies aspiration but not vice versa in any given language.

⁷ In 'Tokharian...' I show graphically how glottalized Pre-Tokharian minus voiced stops compared with and contrasted to glottalized Pre-Baltic with voiced stops. Roughly, at this point both Pre-Tokharian and Pre-Baltic still had laryngeals which were necessary to keep glottalization alive.

This Pre-Baltic was not going to allow a sequence like initial *ks-* which might have led to a new aspirate, *h*.⁸ Lithuanian native words with initial *sk-* matching reflexes of initial *ks-* in Greek, Sanskrit, and Slavic indicate, at least, a pre-ruki law metathesis of *ks-*. (A post-ruki law one would have given *šk-* which we do not find.) Even if initial *sk-* in Baltic was original against reflexes of initial *ks-* metathesized from initial *sk-* in Sanskrit, Greek, and Slavic, the Pre-Baltic predisposition against forming this initial *ks-* must have been ancient. It must have been at least contemporary with Indo-European laryngeals. This is so because without that sort of phonemic aspiration, glottalization would surely have vanished. And glottalization determined the maintenance in initial position of only *sk-*, not *ks-*, in Pre-Baltic.⁹

This ancient opposition to initial stop plus fricative, that is, originally, no initial *ks-*, continued. It continued into the Baltic assibilation of Indo-European palatals *k̂*, *ĝ*. These were not allowed to pass through an affricate stage of *tś*, *dź*. In initial position palatals *k̂*, *ĝ* went to sibilants *ś*, *ź* (or, in Prussian and Latvian, possibly, to *s*, *z*) immediately.¹⁰ Elsewhere, under this pervasive influence, they did the same. Everywhere, the reflexes of palatals *k̂*, *ĝ* merged with the ruki law reflexes.

⁸ Glottalization (i.e., the distinctive feature checked/unchecked) and aspiration (i.e., the distinctive feature tense/lax) are mutually exclusive. Yet the point of articulation for both is, essentially, the same, that is, in the velar area. Therefore, a velar stop tends to act as glottalization to a preceding initial *s*. That is, it tends, by stopping the breath stream, to inhibit its aspiration. But an initial velar stop followed by *s*, a dental, sibilant fricative, which allows the breath stream to continue, tends to behave as aspiration. This encourages *s* to assimilate to *k* into a velar fricative, *x* (*h*). Also, the velar stop *k* in this environment is encouraged to assimilate into a velar fricative, *x* (*h*). So heavily glottalized Pre-Baltic was bound to prefer *sk-* to *ks-* as an initial sequence since *ks-* was far more likely than *sk-* to produce *h*. In initial position syllabic boundaries are less likely to keep the combination *ks* intact as they may do elsewhere: *-ks-* to *-k-* + *-s-*.

⁹ According to my interpretation of R. Jakobson's laws of implication and distinctive feature stratification (mentioned in 'Aspiration...', p. 8 with evidence supporting this interpretation) with respect to glottalization vis-à-vis aspiration, glottalization implies aspiration. Thus, if a language or dialect has glottalized phonemes, it must also have aspirated ones. Since in Glottalic Indo-European, aspiration concomitant with stops was only allophonic, the laryngeals, then, the remaining bearers of aspiration, were the only extant aspirated phonemes. Thus, as long as glottalization was operative, that is, existed in Pre-Baltic dialects of Indo-European, the laryngeals also had to have existed side by side with it.

¹⁰ Note Lithuanian *stirna*, Latvian *stīrna* 'deer' borrowed from Proto-Slavic **tsīrnā* (for which we have Slavic evidence for only **tsirnā*) 'chamois'. Initial *ts-* there (an early Slavic reflex of initial *k-*; see Mayer, Tokharian... for its relative chronology) was immediately metathesized to initial *st-* in Baltic which followed the previously established pattern of any initial *ks-* to initial *sk-*, that is, of initial stop plus fricative (or sibilant) to initial fricative (or sibilant) plus stop.

Slavic, like Albanian, shows none of this. Like Albanian, Slavic separates the reflexes of the palatals \hat{k} , \hat{g} from those of the ruki law. Of all the satem dialects of Indo-European, I repeat, only Baltic does not do this.

Ancient similarities between Baltic, Slavic, and Albanian are deceptive. As Indo-European dialects between those which had first deaspirated voiceless consonants¹¹ and those which had first deaspirated voiced ones¹², Pre-Baltic and Pre-Slavic-Pre-Albanian via accommodation to both types happened, in parallel fashion, to have developed both deaspirated voiceless and deaspirated voiced consonants. In this way, they ended up with the same inventory of phonemes. But they had separate sequencing rules.

Because of these, not Baltic, but Albanian and Slavic show initial *h-* from initial *ks-*. Because of these, Albanian and Slavic show *s* alternating with *h* while Baltic, like Tokharian, does not even have *h* in native forms.¹³

We also find that Albanian shows closer lexical ties to Slavic than to Baltic.¹⁴ We also find that Albanian, like Slavic, shows more cases of palatal \hat{k} , \hat{g} to velar

¹¹ Those are Pre-Indic, Pre-Greek, Pre-Italic, and Pre-Celtic. Irish has *b* from *g*^{“w} (I mark glottalized stops with “.) versus *g* from *g(h)*^w. Only aspiration could have prevented the reflex of *g(h)*^w from merging with that of *g*^{“w}. Since no matching examples exist with reflexes of *k*^{“w} and *k(h)*^w, we may conclude that aspiration continued in Pre-Celtic voiced consonants while it had been discontinued in voiceless ones. Descendants of the other dialects show far more reflexes of aspirated voiced stops rather than of aspirated voiceless ones which indicates an early loss of the latter only. (There, aspirated voiceless stops were sporadically recreated later.) See Mayer, Tokharian...

¹² Those are Pre-Iranian, Pre-Armenian, Pre-Hittite, and Pre-Germanic. Iranian has *f*, Θ , *x* from *p*, *t*, *k* plus laryngeal which is, at least, a sign of longer maintenance of stop plus aspiration of some kind. Hittite has medial *-pp-*, *-tt-*, *-kk-* which indicate a tense, and, therefore, aspirated pronunciation. Neither language matches these phenomena extensively, if at all, in voiced counterparts. Descendants of the other dialects give ample signs of former aspiration in voiceless consonants unparalleled by the same in voiced ones. All this allows us to conclude that aspiration in voiced consonants here disappeared sooner, most likely, in Indo-European times. See Mayer, Tokharian...

¹³ Windekens A. J. Van. *Le Tokharien confronté avec les autres langues indo-européennes*, 1. Louvain: Centre international de dialectologie Générale, 1976. P. 68–126.

¹⁴ Native Albanian-Slavic cognate root comparisons minus Baltic outnumber native Albanian-Baltic ones minus Slavic, at least, by 23 to 19, and, at most, by 29 to 19. If the 6 conditional Albanian-Slavic-minus-Baltic ones prove correct, then Albanian-Slavic comparisons of this kind outnumber Albanian-Baltic ones by approximately 1/3. See Mayer H. E. *Prussian, an Aboriginal \check{a} -Language*, 1987. To appear in *Lituanus*. Also see Фасмер М. *Этимологический словарь русского языка* М.: Прогресс, 1964–1973 and Fraenkel E. *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962–1965.

k, *g* than do Baltic and other satem Indo-European dialects.¹⁵ But the tracing of Baltic from Glottalic Indo-European shows the essential, primary difference between Baltic versus Albanian and Slavic. Baltic, from the start, was more heavily glottalized. And this shows up in its different drifts of developments.

¹⁵ This is generally known about Albanian. As for Slavic in this regard, see Shevelov G. Y. *A Prehistory of Slavic: The Phonology of Common Slavic*, 139–49. New York-Morningside Heights: Columbia University Press, 1965.