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## THE HYPOTHESIS OF A POSTPOSITIONAL COMPENSATORY LENGTHENING (SO-CALLED VAN WIJK'S LAW) VS. THE RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF COMMON SLAVIC PHONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS – IN SEARCH OF INCONSISTENCIES<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** “Van Wijk’s law” is currently defined by its advocates as a lengthening of short or shortened medial and final vowels due to an assimilation of the postconsonantal \*j to them. In the present paper I am trying to demonstrate that this assumption is at variance with the relative chronology of Slavic, according to which the loss of yod after liquids and nasals must be dated before the rise of new timbre distinctions and before the shortening of final long vowels.

**Keywords:** Slavic; historical accentology; van Wijk’s law; vowel quantity; metathesis of liquids; rise of nasal vowels; *l’ epentheticum*.

A connection between the presence, in certain morphological categories of Common Slavic, of a post-consonantal yod and the neoacute metatony in the preceding syllable was first suggested by Aleksey A. Šachmatov in 1898 (cf. Fecht 2010, 10) and taken up in 1916 by the Dutch Slavist Nicolaas van Wijk. The mentioned authors, working within the framework of the metatonistic approach, did not try to explain in detail the phonetic mechanism of the change. They merely hinted that the loss of the yod brought about a shift of syllable boundary and certain modifications of the tonal curves of originally circumflex syllables, which eventually resulted in a metatony (van Wijk 1916, 369; cf. also idem 1921, 103–105; 1923, 102).

While the reconstruction of the neoacute tone in the respective categories has remained a lasting achievement of Slavic historical accentology, the

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abandonment of the metatonic approach, which has been taking place since the late 50s of the former century, has created the necessity of a modification of our understanding of the link existing between the presence of the yod and the rise of the neoacute in neighboring syllables. Starting from the views of Stang, according to whom the neoacute arose exclusively due to stress retractions (namely, from the yers and from internal long circumflex syllables), Ebeling (1967, 587) and subsequently Kortlandt (1975, 30) formulated the hypothesis of a sound law specifying the phonemic lengthening of the short vowel immediately following the disappearing postconsonantal yod. Thus, *\*vǎlja* > *\*vǒlja* > *\*vǒl̄a* (van Wijk's law) > *\*vol̄a* (Dybo's law) > *\*vǒl'a* (Stang's law). In this way, the phonetic conditions for a circumflex stress retraction, held to be responsible for the rise of neoacute according to the so-called Ivšić-Stang law, were created. A similar lengthening was postulated for syllables immediately following those of the clusters of the type *Cn* which were simplified in Proto-Slavic (or even earlier), e.g. in the present tense of Leskien's 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation (Kortlandt, l.c.)<sup>2</sup>. This hypothetical lengthening, labeled eventually "van Wijk's law", has been used mainly by representatives of the Leiden school to account for neoacute tonal reflexes encountered in principle in three categories: in the so-called *\*vǒl̄a*-type, in present tense stem forms like *\*mèlje-* and in comparatives of the type *\*gòrje* (cf. Vermeer 1984; Vermeer 1992, 129; Kortlandt 1994, 105, sect. 7.15; 2015); it was embraced by some other accentologists as well (e.g. Kolesov 1979, 135–137; Kapović 2015, 326, ftn. 1212). It is particularly important that the supposed change was dated to a relatively late period, namely after advanced stages of the so-called re-phonologization of early Slavic quantity<sup>3</sup> (e.g. after

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<sup>2</sup> Kortlandt has subsequently abandoned this part of his original version of "van Wijk's law" (2015, 66): "Moreover, original *\*-ingn-* developed into South Slavic *-ěn-* and North Slavic *-ęn-* around the same time [...]. It is therefore probable that the length of the thematic vowel in *ne*-presents is analogical after the corresponding *je*-presents". Nevertheless, a distribution of (recoverable) length which would be easily derivable from that postulated by "van Wijk's law" does exist within *ne*-presents in Central Slovak dialects as well as in Standard Slovak (*hynie* vs. *sekne*; i.e. diphthongized variants occur after single *n*, both original and resulting from a simplification of a cluster). In the Slovak systems in question the thematic vowel of *je*-presents is always short.

<sup>3</sup> This term is equivalent to "rise of new timbre distinctions" as used in Slavic historical phonology.

the shortening of word-final syllables). This chronology helped its advocates to avoid troubles connected with the absence of accent paradigms of the type \**stòlb*, gen. sg. †*stòla* or \**žèna*: early shortening of word-final nasal vowels in disyllabic word forms is taken to explain the absence of a neoacute stress retraction in forms like the acc. sg. \**ženŏ* vs. \**vòljq*. As can be seen, the hypothesis, engaging the neighboring syllable in the mechanism of change, differs markedly from the original metatonic formulation, thus making its verification / falsification much easier.

Criticism of this hypothesis can be multifarious. Its credibility is called into question above all by the atypical character of the phonetic process, namely the supposition that length was assigned to the following syllable. The overwhelming majority of known cases of compensatory lengthening provoked by loss of consonantal elements affect syllables / vowels preceding the simplified clusters (Langston 2007, 85–86). It is not very probable that the loss of yod took place simultaneously after all categories of consonants (velars, dentals, labials) and after resonants, although in this approach a chain of non-simultaneous simplifications is believed to result in the same, though typologically odd phonetic development. Similar reservations can be made with regard to the simplification \**Cn* > \**n*: loss of dentals before nasals dates probably as early as from the Balto-Slavic period, as it is undoubtedly shared with Baltic (cf. \**ēdmi* > Slavic \**ěmb* : Old Lithuanian *ēmi*, Latvian *ēmu* ‘I eat’), while labials were lost in this position as late as in prehistoric Slavic.

A question in part is the actual representation of the phenomena predicted by the hypothesis in the linguistic material of the Slavic languages. I mean not only the expected long reflexes of post-neoacute syllables, but also the whole chains of transformations of the prosodic structure. The relevant facts are far from meeting the expectations of the proponents of “van Wijk’s law” – none of the three main categories in which the law is supposed to have operated (and its outcomes to have survived up to the historical period) shows the expected long reflexes in all the main languages with preserved (or recoverable) quantity. What is more, there exist entire categories which within the framework of this approach should display a prosodic structure quite different from what is actually attested (e.g. masculine or neuter noun classes in \**-jŏ-*, the latter not very robust, as well as oxytone adjectives in \**-jŏ-* / \**-jā-*, which according to this reconstruction should not have existed at all).

To reduce the amount of counterevidence consisting in the absence of sufficiently numerous instances of the reflexes of “van Wijk’s law” seen in the historical evidence, Kortlandt (1975, 18), drawing on the apparent absence of neo-circumflex metatony in Slovene present tense forms of the type *nôsi*, assumed that Stang’s retraction of stress from the internal circumflex syllables was simultaneous with a shortening of originally long syllables which were losing the stress (including, of course, those which were supposed to have been formerly lengthened by “van Wijk’s law”). However, such an assumption is not supported by available evidence, as length of the thematic morphemes *\*-i-* and *\*-a-* (*\*dávā[ŋ-]*), which were long “by etymology”, occurs in Slavic languages and dialects almost universally and much more systematically than length of the etymological *\*-e-* does. What is more, if we accept such a shortening, some of the apparent instances of “van Wijk’s length” must be regarded as unrelated to “van Wijk’s law”. A salient case in point is the Polish *wolâ*-type, presented for many years<sup>4</sup> as an instance of preservation of word-final length created precisely by “van Wijk’s law”. But the distribution of length between particular categories of feminine nouns in *\*-ja* as postulated by Stang (1957, 37) on the basis of a preliminary investigation of the Middle Polish evidence and supported in principle by more detailed insights (cf. also Fecht 2010, 132–138; Andersen 2014, 83–85) turns out to be practically the reverse of the predictions made on the basis of Kortlandt’s reformulation of the law:

<b>class</b>	<b>predictions</b>	<b>actual state</b>
a.p. <i>a</i>	<i>tęczâ</i> , acc. <i>tęczq</i>	<i>tęcza</i> , acc. <i>tęczę</i>
[a.p. <i>b</i>	nonexistent in Common Slavic <sup>5</sup>	rare, but assured]
a.p. <i>c</i>	<i>ziemiâ</i> ( <i>ziemia?</i> ), acc. <i>ziemiq</i>	<i>ziemia</i> , acc. <i>ziemię</i>
<i>*volja</i> -type	<i>wolâ</i> ( <i>wola?</i> ), <i>stróża</i>	<i>wolâ</i> , <i>stróżâ</i>

<sup>4</sup> Kortlandt (2015, 72) seems to have withdrawn this interpretation, as he accepts the traditional (but probably false) explanation endorsed also by Fecht (2010, 136–137): long endings of the *\*volja*-type were taken from the *rolâ* < *\*orlji* type.

<sup>5</sup> According to Kortlandt (2015, 74), the Slavic oxytones in *\*-ja* (*\*zemja*, *\*světja* etc.) are ancient Balto-Slavic *\*-ē*-stems, which in certain (or all?) case forms (e.g. in the nominative singular, cf. his *\*zemĕ*) lacked *\*j* before the vocalic endings and therefore were not subject to “van Wijk’s law”. However, the yod was regularly lost before *\*e* (and

Not long ago I realized that a more systematic analysis of the structure of certain categories for which “van Wijk’s lengthening” is assumed to have operated (structures  $*-eRjV-$ ,  $*-oRjV-$ ) allows us to develop a line of counter-argumentation, based on the absence of certain changes expected in the roots of the respective forms, which in fact demonstrates the inaccuracy of the concept of “van Wijk’s law” conceived as compensatory lengthening, at least with regard to vowels originally preceded by a postconsonantal yod.

The line of reasoning is very simple here: before the loss of the consonantal yod in forms like  $*volja$ ,  $*melje-$  (praes.) or  $*gorje$  we have to do with metathetic sequences ( $R$ -diphthongs)  $CoRC$ ,  $CeRC$  identical with typical Slavic metathetic sequences as known from different phonetic environments. However, a modification of the vowel of those diphthongs in South Slavic<sup>6</sup>, took place before the re-phonologization of quantity, i.e. before the rise of the vocalic pairs  $*a : *o$ ,  $*ě : *e$ . Only in such a chronological approach can the modification be explained as a trivial lengthening before tautosyllabic resonant, a phenomenon widespread in the languages of Europe and probably also of the world in general (cf. similar lengthenings, taking place on different phonetic substrates, in all the three main Baltic languages).<sup>7</sup> Thus, if the loss

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$*ē$ ) in Baltic, so the historical Baltic inflection is not probative for the Balto-Slavic state of affairs. On the contrary, if we assume that the yod did occur in all case endings (alternation  $*-jē-$  :  $*-jā-$ ), the loss of this inflectional type in Slavic (i.e. its full assimilation to the  $*-jā-$  type) is explained straightforwardly by uncontroversial sound changes ( $*jē > *jā$ ) and requires no additional assumptions to be made. Also the fifth declination of Latin, which is sometimes compared with the Baltic  $*-ē$ -stems, has  $-j-$  in all case endings.

<sup>6</sup> Broadly conceived, i.e. including Czech and Slovak.

<sup>7</sup> In North Lechitic (Pomeranian, Polabian) the sequence  $*or$  is reflected as  $ar$ , whereas  $*er$  as well as the sequences containing  $l$  regularly underwent metathesis. A connection of this phenomenon with lengthening is disputable, as the assumption was made of a transitory stage  $*r$  (Rozwadowski 1923, 163; a criticism of this view is offered in Shevelov 1964, 409). The etymologically long vocalisms of the metathetic sequences decidedly cannot be considered as peripheral archaisms; their recent character is borne out by the absence of a regular change  $*ē > *ā$  in sequences of the type  $*ČeRC$ , which shows that the lengthening  $*e > *ē$  is posterior to the change  $*Čē > *Čā$ . Isolated cases like Slovak *član*, *žlaza* seem limited to the original  $*el$  (cf. Shevelov 1964, 402) and should be explained otherwise.

Lengthening affected the vocalisms  $*e$  and  $*o$  of  $o/eR$  diphthongs in continental Polish and in (Upper) Sorbian as well (cf. the Polish relationship *wrócić* vs. *prosić*), but also in that case the exact mechanism of change raises doubts similar to those provoked

of yod took place before this change, we would have to do with a lengthening of etymologically short vowels in endings, and therefore the inflectional structure of the “soft” stems should differ radically from what is actually attested (we would expect, e.g., nom. sg. \**jьgo* ‘yoke’, \**aje* ‘egg’, but \**ložě* ~ \**loža* ‘bed’, instr. sg. \**jьgomь*, \**ajemь*, but \**ložěmь* ~ \**ložamь*, acc. sg. \**stolь* ‘table’, but †*mъži* ‘man’, praes. \**bъde-*, \**kъpuje-*, but †*pišě-* ~ †*piša-* etc.). In other words, such a hypothesis (which, obviously, is being considered here only hypothetically) would be falsified by the very facts of segmental structure, among others those taken from Old Church Slavic texts.

On the contrary, if the lengthening had followed the re-phonologization (as assumed generally by its proponents, cf. Kortlandt 1994, 105, sec. 7.15), we would expect that in South Slavic instead of the attested (proto) forms \**volja*, \**melje-* and \**gorje* the unattested †*valja*, †*mělje-* and †*garje* should occur, as opposed to North Slavic \**volja*, \**melje-* and \**gorje*. The absence of such phenomena indicates that the loss of phonemic yod and the concomitant shift of syllable boundary (\**vol-ja* > \**vo-l'a*) must have preceded the re-phonologization of quantity<sup>8</sup>.

Detailed reconstruction of the particular stages of the West and South Slavic metathesis of liquids does not have any bearing on the argument,

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by the South Slavic lengthening. Nevertheless, a lengthening before tautosyllabic liquid remains the most plausible solution. It is unwarranted to assume that this lengthening was concomitant with metathesis (as follows e.g. from Kortlandt’s (1994, 104, sect. 7.12) argument).

If it were concomitant with metathesis or even posterior to it, and the timbre \**a* resulted from \**ā*, then a metathesis \**valjā* > \**vlājā* would be expected to have preceded the rise of new timbre distinctions (which would be in obvious conflict with the current concept of “van Wijk’s law”).

<sup>8</sup> To be exact, Kortlandt (1994, 102–103, 105) split the change into two subsequent stages: in the first, geminated soft consonants or *λ* *epentheticum* arose, in the second, which is dated after the re-phonologization of quantity, simplification of these geminated consonants caused lengthening. This unwarranted assumption, however, does not solve the problem, because it is still difficult to syllabify the reconstructed forms as \**vo-l'l'a*. For example in Polish, where certain geminates do exist word-initially even in native words (*ss-*, *ww-*, *zz-*), all intervocalic geminates are divided by the syllable boundary (*Odes-sa* in spite of *ssać* ‘to suck’). Recently Kortlandt (2015, 66–68) seems to have changed his mind, abandoning the stage of gemination at least with regard to soft resonants.

inasmuch as lengthening before tautosyllabic liquids remains the most credible mechanism responsible for transformation of the original short \**a* and \**e* into vowels potentially developed from their long quantitative counterparts. Nevertheless, let us note that certain arguments invoked to substantiate the multi-step mechanism seem to be fallacious<sup>9</sup>, whereas a simple metathetic formulation is corroborated not only by typological considerations (liquids are the category of consonants which is most prone to metathesis), but also by the apparent lack of significant distortions in realization of etymological tonal curves of metathetic sequences, hardly understandable in conditions of a transitory lengthening of the respective forms by one syllable. The interpretation of the spelling (*otr*) *zolta* found in the Sinaiticum (cf. KURZ 1966, 674, s.v. *zlato*)<sup>10</sup> is far from obvious, especially as the timbre *a* occurs in all the remaining cases of absence of metathesis in the South Slavic periphery (*al(ʋ)kati* etc., cf. e.g. Shevelov 1964, 406). One can imagine the irregular rise of an anaptyctic vowel (subsequently identified with one of the yers as early as before the re-phonologization of quantity), which made the form longer and thus blocked lengthening before tautosyllabic resonant.

For the sake of completeness, let us consider a scenario (among others Rozwadowski 1923, 160–166) according to which the first stage of the change consisted in the development of an anaptyctic vowel (thus, \*-*eRC-* > \*-*eRəC-* ~ \*-*eR,C-*). Provided that this stage was indeed Common Slavic, the further development in various areas of Slavic linguistic territory can be reconstructed in the following way: an assimilation of the timbre of the reduced / anaptyctic vowel to the preceding vowel yields the East Slavic pleophony, in Polish and Sorbian the anaptyctic vowels are identified with yers and metathesized, while in South Slavic, in which the absence of inorganic yers in metathetic sequences is borne out by Old Church Slavic texts (*krava*, not †*kʋrava*), the loss of this vowel brings about a lengthening of the vowel of

<sup>9</sup> E.g. the allegedly justified vocalization of the yers in the syllables preceding syllables containing \*-*o/eR-*diphthongs in Polish, thus the organic character of forms like \**Podʋgordʋje* > *Podęgodzie* (place name), \**kʋnorzʋ* > \**kienróz* > *kiernoz* ‘boar’ in spite of the absence of \**ʋdordʋjʋ* > †*sedrowy* ‘healthy’ etc., cf. Shevelov 1964, 412–414).

<sup>10</sup> This phenomenon is comparable to the history of the Polish place (and person) name *Ko(ł)drqb-* < \**Ko(ł)d(ʋ)rqb-* < \**kold(ʋ)rqb-* (cf. Rymut 2003, 40, s.v. *Kodrqb* (1) and (2), ib. 68, s.v. *Ko(ł)drqb*) as against \**kolda* and Czech *Kladruby* ~ *Kladěruby*, Serbo-Croat *Kladorub*, Ukrainian *Kolodoruby* (cf. Šmilauer 1970, 91).

the metathetic sequence (also in this scenario it seems reasonable to date this development back before the re-phonologization of quantity). If so, at the first developmental stage the form *\*valjā* would result in *\*val<sub>3</sub>jā*, separating the yod from the liquid. The rise of the phonetic shape *\*volja* (and not, e.g., *\*vol<sub>3</sub>ja*) would imply the restoration of a closed syllable, which would run against the general developmental tendency to open syllables. The point is, however, that there is not a substantial difference between the supposition that no anaptyctic vowel developed before yod, and the assumption that it did exist, but disappeared there earlier than in other environments: both remain ad hoc hypotheses. In fact, these are merely different varieties of the hypothesis which assumes that the development of *\*-o/eR-*diphthongs before yod differed from that observed in other environments, which in turn remains unsupported by general typological tendencies<sup>11</sup>.

One might object to the above argument that the respective forms were syllabified in a different way, i.e. the entire clusters formed the onset of the following syllable (*\*vo-lja*). According to certain theoreticians (cf. Kuryłowicz 1948, 81–82, 84–85), syllabic onsets of internal syllables are bound to be paralleled by onsets of initial syllables. We otherwise know that both *\*lj-* and *\*rj-* were quite common in the reconstructed Common Slavic lexicon (*\*ljubъ*, *\*rjuti* etc.). This does not imply, however, that all initial clusters can function as syllabic onsets word-internally; suffice it to compare the situation in contemporary Standard Polish, where initial clusters *lj-* (and *rj-*) do exist in borrowed words (*Riazań*, *liana* etc.), whereas word-internally they are divided between two syllables (/fol-ja/ in spite of /lja-na/). What speaks against a syllabification *\*vo-lja* in Common Slavic is above all the treatment of the diphthong *\*au* before yod, where it becomes regularly monophthongized (the present tense in *\*-aujē-* > *-uje-*, some common Balto-Slavic lexemes like *\*struja* ‘stream; jet of liquid’ : Baltic *\*srauīā*, the monophthongization observed in specifically Slavic, but de-etymologized words like *\*bruja*), just like in every other closed syllable.

Moreover, it is not entirely clear whether the metathesis of liquids or the East Slavic pleophony had anything to do with syllabification. To describe accurately the conditions in which the discussed changes took place, it is

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<sup>11</sup> To make things clear, let us state that the property of the yod consisting in making the preceding consonant close the syllable can in itself be considered as a typological tendency, though certainly not as a linguistic universal.



sufficient to state that only sequences immediately followed by a consonantal (non-syllabic) element were subject to them. The exact conditioning of the change remains more or less unclear. The only exception is the position before the reconstructed yod, which however is absent as early as in the earliest records of Slavic and therefore its existence at the time when the changes started is by no means ascertained. It is often repeated that these changes are manifestations of the so-called law of open syllables (i.e. a general tendency to remove closed syllables from the system). But certain syllables closed by liquids do seem to have been preserved throughout the entire Common Slavic period at least in some parts of the Slavic-speaking territory. According to some authors (e.g. Stieber 1989, 33–36), East Slavic *er, or, ol* (as in Russian *verx, torg, volk, stolp* etc.) are direct continuations of the diphthongs of the type *\*bR ~ \*bR*, with subsequent general “vocalization” of their yers which were always treated as strong in these phonetic environments. Interestingly, these sequences did not behave as syllabic sonants anymore when followed by yod (*\*kvrjъ* ‘shrub’ > *\*kvr’b*, not †*krjъ*).

Another phenomenon to be interpreted along a similar line of thought is the complete absence of nasal vowels immediately followed by yod, which probably had been lost before synchronous nasal vowels came into being (*\*konjъ* > *\*kon’b*, not †*krjъ*, *\*zemja* > *\*zem’a ~ \*zemla*, not †*zēja* etc.)<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, in the respective forms both the vowel and the nasal consonant of these diphthongs appear untouched. If the nasal articulation accompanying the closure had been lost and the vocalic part of the diphthongs had become nasalized, the original character of the nasal stop (viz. dental vs. labial) could not be restored regardless of the possible developments in future<sup>13</sup>, especially in isolated, unmotivated words. It follows that the loss of phonemic yod preceded the rise of phonetic nasal vowels. But, as noticed above, “van Wijk’s law” is dated after the re-phonologization of quantity, and after the shortening of etymologically long vowels. Otherwise vowels lengthened according to “van Wijk’s law” must have been shortened together with other etymologically long vowels. Now, nasal vowels appear to behave in the

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Bethin (1998, 202): „there is no form *\*kɔ̃.ja* from *\*kon+i+a*, indicating that the nasal was not in the syllable coda before the glide or that the nasal plus glide sequence became a palatal nasal before changes in V+N sequences took place”.

<sup>13</sup> I mean thereby a dissolution of synchronous nasal vowels into vowels and separate nasal stops, as seen e.g. in the history of (Old) Polish (cf. Dejna 1973, 191–196).

same way as other long vowels with regard to their inclination to positional shortenings: they are shortened word-finally and in syllables not immediately followed by the short varieties of word stress as well as before internal (old) acute syllables, whereas posttonic nasal vowels (especially those following old acute syllables) often retain their etymological length. This suggests that nasal vowels functioned as long vowels as early as before the period of Common Slavic positional shortenings and eventually became subject to them.

Those who are inclined to think that a positionally conditioned palatalization of *\*r*, *\*l* (or *\*n*, *\*m*) before yod could block the metathesis of liquids (or the rise of nasal vowels) should not forget that the yod was not the only “natural” palatal consonant in the sound system of Late Common Slavic. Along with it, there existed palatal affricates and spirants resulting from the first palatalization of velars. We are entitled to suppose that these sounds had approximately the same place of articulation as the yod, and consequently they should have had a very similar palatalizing effect on preceding consonants<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, as is well known to Slavists, sequences followed by *\*č*, *\*š*, *\*ž* are metathesized (or monophthongized to nasal vowels) just like *\*-o/eR(N)-*diphthongs occurring in any other favorable environments (*\*polšiti*, *\*lqčiti* etc.).

Since the loss of yod was probably not simultaneous after all kinds of consonants, the reasoning presented above suggests only non-existence of phonemic yod after liquids and nasal stops, but does not give direct indications for the situation in other environments. Nevertheless, it follows from typological considerations that the category of consonants most prone to palatalization are velars. Palatalization of velars by the immediately following yod can be considered as a common Balto-Slavic innovation, as is borne out by the striking similarity of the morphonological structure of certain types of derivatives. If the diminutive suffix *-ukas* (= Slavic *-vkv*) is attached to a root ending in a velar stop, the latter becomes obligatorily palatalized in the derivative (Lithuanian *vil̃kas* ‘wolf’ : *vilkiukas*, not †*vilkukas*, *rāgas*

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<sup>14</sup> Russian or Polish have such prepalatal consonants, which largely influence the articulation of preceding consonants. In Polish, *n* (including its secondary variety that developed from Old Polish synchronous nasal vowels) is phonemically palatalized before *ć* and *ź* (*\*bqde* > /*beŋže*/), although this pronunciation is nowadays considered as regressing (Osowicka-Kondratowicz, Serowik 2007, 77). In Russian, both *č* and the geminate *šč* (*u*) palatalize phonemically the preceding *n* (cf. Korytowska 2000, 113).

‘horn’ : *ragiùkas*, not †*ragùkas*<sup>15</sup>; Polish *wilk* : *wilczek*, not †*wilkiek*, *róg* : *rozek*, not †*rogiek*). This innovation is best explained as euphonic long-distance dissimilation<sup>16</sup>, which however implies the concomitant existence of a correlation of palatality, at least on velars<sup>17</sup>. Thus, it is difficult to assume the presence of the yod in this position after the Common Slavic re-phonologization of quantity. A relatively early loss of the yod after dental spirants \*s and \*z is suggested, in their turn, by their uniform development: in all the Slavic languages they merged with the hushing spirants originated from the 1<sup>st</sup> palatalization. Thus, we are left with yod retained exclusively after the dental stops \*t<sup>18</sup> and \*d and perhaps after labials as well. Nevertheless, one is entitled to suppose that the loss of yod after \*p and \*b should not have been very remote in time from that after \*m, cf. parallelisms of the development of primary or secondary yod after palatalized labials in various languages and dialects.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Otrębski 1965, 281.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. a remote parallel from Lithuanian dialects, described e.g. by Hasiuk (1970), which has in common that it helps to avoid the sequence *k ... k* by dissimilating it to *k ... t*. Traces of a similar phenomenon are recoverable in Slavic (\**rěkvta*, Polish *łakta*, \**rąkta*, place name *Wilkta* > *Wilchta* related to the river name *Wilka*, cf. Bańkowski 2014, 26, s.v. *rąkta*).

<sup>17</sup> According to some authors, the correlation of palatality is a common Balto-Slavic innovation (e.g. Kuryłowicz 1956, 235–240; Bednarczuk 2007, 46–47, with further references). The fact that the yod following the diphthong \**au* (Slavic \*-*uj-*, not †-*ov-*, Lithuanian -*auja-*, not †-*avia-*, at least in unmotivated morphemes) did not disappear at an early date can certainly be viewed as an argument against this supposition.

<sup>18</sup> As known, the cluster \**kt* is simplified to \**t* before non-front vowels in prehistoric Slavic, whereas before front vowels it yields the same outcome as the cluster \**tj* does. This peculiar development must, of course, be decomposed into several consecutive stages, the most probable scenario being in my opinion the following: \**kt̥* (where *t̥* is a moderately palatalized dental stop) > \**ḳt̥* > \**t̥t̥* > \**t̥t̥* > \**t̥* (otherwise, but quite unconvincingly Shevelov 1964, 191: \**ḳti* > \**ṭti* > \**ṭji*). In other words, in this case the degemination of a palatal geminate is particularly plausible. Interestingly enough, this development does not cause lengthening of the following vowel. A case in point is the prosody of the noun \**dvkti -ere* ‘daughter’; the medial *-e-* of its oblique cases forms is short wherever these forms co-exist with the old nominative in *-i* within a paradigm (cf. Snój 2004, 541 for a survey of Serbo-Croat dialectal forms). On the contrary, if the word adopts the \*-*ā*-inflection, this *e* is often long (e.g. Old Polish *córa* or Czech / Slovak *dcéra*, cf. Sławski 1984, 157–158).

Moreover, it is evidently incorrect to consider the dialectal Slavic  $\lambda$  *epentheticum* as a direct continuation of the pre-Slavic yod. Otherwise nasal vowels would have arisen before it (*\*zemja* > *\*zemla* > *\*zenla* > †*zɛla* > †*zɛl'a*). It appears necessary to assume a stepwise evolution which restored the cluster *\*Pj* (*\*Pj̇* > *\*P'* > *\*Pj̇* > *\*Pλ* > *Pl*). Such a development is by no means unparalleled (cf. Bednarczuk 2007, 52–56). In Early Old Polish (the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries), soft labials are always spelled with the single letters <*b*>, <*p*>, <*m*>, <*w*>, <*v*> or <*u*>, although the yod, which occurred at least<sup>19</sup> intervocally, word-initially, word-finally and antecorsonantically, is normally spelled as <*i*>, <*y*>, <*j*> or <*g*> even in the earliest written records (e.g. middle 12<sup>th</sup> century <*Rayzco*>, today *Rajsko*, < *\*Rajьsko*). At this earliest stage, no device to mark the phonological palatality of consonants was used. This situation clearly shows that at that time the soft labials were single consonants and not clusters of the type *Pj* ~ *Pj̇*. It is important to note that “new” soft labials (developed before *\*e*, *\*ě*, *\*ɛ*, *\*i*, *\*b* and soft sonants) behaved in the same way as old *Pj*-clusters did. The so-called “yodization” (Polish “jotowanie”) starts in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, probably imitating the parallel Old Czech usage, but it becomes more regular as late as in the second half of the next century. In northern dialects of Polish the full-fledged spirant /j/, often with further evolution into other palatal spirants (ȳ, ś, ź), developed after the earlier palatal *p'*, *b'*, *v'*, *f*, while *m'* > *mj* eventually shifted to *mn'* (cf. Rospond 1953; Furdal 1955, 7–8; Cyran 1960, 121–129; Zduńska 1965, 14–43; Dejna 1973, 120–121; Rembiszewska 2002, 51–60)<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> The existence of a postconsonantal yod in Early Old Polish is doubtful. Nonetheless, I would reckon at least with a cluster *-rj-*, as suggested by historical and contemporary forms of the toponymes *Przerja* (along with *Przeryja*) < *\*Perr̥ja* or *Czartorja* (spelled *Czartoria*, along with *Czartoryja*) < *\*Črtor̥ja*. Cf. also the pair *Maria* /*marja*/ : *Maryja* ‘Mary’. The Old Polish variant *Mařa* (cf. Kamińska 1965, 203, s.v. *Świętomarza*), which is apparently at variance with this supposition, may have been borrowed from (Early) Old Czech.

<sup>20</sup> To illustrate the fate of soft labials in Mazovia, it may be instructive to trace down the history of the name of a left tributary of the Liwiec river (South-Eastern Mazovia, today Węgrów district). In an unpublished manuscript from 1477 the form <*Wartopnyk*> occurs (cf. Bilut 1995, 183, s.v. †*\*Wartopnik*). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the form *Jartopnik* was reported from the same area (Bilut l.c.). On Polish maps dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we find *Wartopnik* (sometimes corrected mistakenly to *Wiatopnik*; this is the name of a forest near the village Dębianka), also written down by a

Jan Hus' orthography (<ǫ[e]> instead of the older <py[e]> <pi[e]>) suggests that he perceived labials followed by the (old and new) etymological short \*ě as single sounds. In spite of this, in Czech, Moravian and in the contiguous Slovak dialects of Záhorie these sounds eventually developed into the clusters *pj*, *bj*, *vj*, spelled <peǝ>, <běǝ>, <věǝ> (*mj* was further changed to *mň* <měǝ>). In many East Slovak dialects, \*Pě developed into *Pe*, whereas \*Pě is continued as *Pja* (*pe(j)c* 'five' <\*pětv, but *pjatek* 'Friday' <\*pětvkǝ, cf. Krajčovič 1988, 33); the yod seems to have come from \*p', as it is absent after other types of consonants (e.g. \*sě > *śa*, \*tě > *ca* etc., unlike in the respective forms of Standard Slovak). A similar development is found in some Central Slovak dialects of Orava (Trstená) and Liptov (e.g. Važec), where a secondary yod develops between labials (or velars) and *ä* (<\*ě), whereas after other consonants a simple *ä* occurs (cf. Stieber 1932, 9–10).

As is known, in Standard Ukrainian as well as in many dialects of that language (including Ukrainian-like dialects of South-Western Byelorussia) labials palatalized by \*ě eventually dissolved into asynchronous labial and palatal components (Ševel'ov 2002, 638–641). These sequences are nowadays spelled <м'(я)>, <б'(я)>, <п'(я)>, <в'(я)>. In some dialectal forms, even a kind of epenthetic *l'* arose in these positions (e.g. *žerebl'a* <\*žerbę 'foal', cf. Ziłyński 1932, 58–62), although no original yod can

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dialectologist, probably in the 60s, as *vjartopník*, and *Jartownik* (meadow near the village Starowola). These facts suggest that the original form was \*v'artopn'ik <\*vbrtopnikǝ, derived from the Common Slavic term \*vbrtopǝ (or \*vbrtpǝ?), attested in meanings related to hydrography in various Slavic idioms (cf. G o ł ą b 1992, 258; B i j a k 2013, 47). The peculiar development of the soft sonant (the sonant itself becomes depalatalized before the hard dental, while the preceding consonant does not, contrary to what is observed e.g. in Standard Polish) is expected in that area. The fact that a single <W-> (and not †<Wi-> or †<Wy->) was used can be interpreted as proof of the monophonematic character of the initial soft labial as late as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, after the 15<sup>th</sup> century this sound dissolved into clearly asynchronous labial and palatal components, eventually yielding the cluster *vj-*. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the latest this initial cluster became indistinguishable from similar clusters encountered at junctures (*vj-*). As a regular sound change *vj-* > *j-* can hardly be postulated for that dialectal area (cf. R e m b i s z e w s k a 2002, 55–57; her dot 570 is Starowola mentioned above), the coexistence of *vjart-* and *jart-* in time and space is likely to have resulted from a misinterpretation of the prepositional phrase *w Wiartopniku* [(*vvjartopńiku* >) *vjartopńiku*] 'in Wiartopnik' as *w Jartopniku* 'in Jartopnik', which gave rise to *Jartopnik*.

be reconstructed in them at a Common Slavic depth. This sketchy survey of parallel phenomena, taken exclusively from North Slavic languages and dialects (cf. also Kalnyn' 1961, 54–56)<sup>21</sup>, clearly indicates that the evolution  $P > Pl'$  seen from a typological perspective hardly presents a real problem.

It should be stressed that even the proponents of “van Wijk’s law” are compelled to assume such a temporary opening of the syllable. If the cluster  $Pj$  is not simplified in one way or another, there is no motivation for the lengthening of the following syllable<sup>22</sup>.

I am of the opinion that the discussed sound law should be abandoned. Moreover, the same holds for any attempts at reducing the mentioned accentual phenomena to a single denominator. The situation seems to be most clear with the comparative, where the (short) neoacute is confined to a few suppletive roots with short radical vowel and a resonant in the coda, while the remaining adjectives with short radical vowel, e.g. *\*novъ* or *\*ostrъ*, form the comparative by inserting the morpheme *\*-ě- ~ \*-a-* before the suffix (e.g. *\*novějbъ*). In some roots ending in an obstruent we find a *métatonie rude* in the comparative in *\*-j-* (*\*môldъ : \*môldje*)<sup>23</sup>, which leads us to suspect an

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<sup>21</sup> In Serbo-Croat, a new *l' epentheticum* developed after secondarily yodized labials (e.g. *grôblje /grôbl'e/ < \*grobje*). Thanks to the research made by Kalnyn' (1961, 111, 112, 121) we can be confident that the rise of a *l' epentheticum* was a recurrent phenomenon in the history of the South Slavic dialects as well. For example, in some Štokavian dialects (Crmnica in Montenegro) a secondary *l'* developed at morphemic junctures after labials from the word-initial yod in prefixed forms (*obl'āviti < ob-jāviti*). In some Jekavian idioms (e.g. in Piva) a soft *l'* arose after labials from the secondarily developed yod (*pl'esma < pjesma < \*pěsN-*). In certain Bulgarian dialects (e.g. Sofia, Lom), *j* shifted to *l'* even after consonants other than labials (*cvell'e, perl'a*).

<sup>22</sup> Sometimes it is supposed that a geminate like *m'm'* is a good starting point for all the Slavic languages, including those with the epenthetic *l'*. But this would require four additional sound laws (*\*m'm' > ml'*, *\*o'v' > vl'*, *\*b'b' > bl'*, *\*p'p' > pl'*, at least the two latter appearing to me highly improbable). Moreover, let us notice that even in the systems where Kortlandt was able to find typological parallels for the development *tj > t't'* (Ukrainian, Byelorussian), secondarily “yodized” labials are not geminated (cf. e.g. Bednarczuk 2007, 93–94, with further references).

<sup>23</sup> The traditional reconstruction of the old acute in this category remains unchallenged (cf. Babik 2002, 67–68). Recently Kortlandt (2015, 72) reconstructs the neoacute tone in the comparative in *\*-jes-*, taking the unexpected Serbo-Croat short vowels to have been generalized from respective determinate forms (*mlâje* for an older *\*mlâje < \*mlâje* after *mlâji*). This is surprisingly confusing, because the latter should not

underlying old acute in the comparative of the type \**gorje* as well. However, any dissolution of the phonetic “substrate” necessary for the acute realization of the tone (\*-VR-*i*V- > \*-V-RV-) must eventually have brought about a kind of metatony. The rise of the short neoacute was, along with that of the short circumflex, one of the two existing theoretical possibilities here. Taking into account that the short circumflex would be expected above all in case of a dissolution of old circumflex diphthongs, a metatony of the old (Balto-Slavic) acute into the Common Slavic short neoacute becomes a very attractive solution<sup>24</sup>. A similar explanation can be advanced for the \**vòlja* type, although a point of departure consisting in formations in \*-*ja* characterized by acute lengthened grade vowel is less obvious than for the previous case. In this category long endings are encountered in principle only in Polish (and Pomeranian)<sup>25</sup> and can be suspected to have originated in the course of the separate development of Polish, perhaps in a purely phonetic way (e.g. conditioned by the neighborhood of neoacute syllables)<sup>26</sup>.

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have differed prosodically from other determinate oxytone adjectives which, as is generally known, retain the etymological length of their radical neoacute syllable (*mùdrī*, *krâtkī* etc.).

<sup>24</sup> This solution was suggested to me by Rafał Szep tyń ski, who also investigates it in a separate paper (2015).

<sup>25</sup> It is sometimes supposed that length can be inferred for the endings of this inflectional category from certain Slovene and Kajkavian prosodic phenomena as well. The reasoning is circular in this case, as it is entirely based on the unwarranted assumption that the neocircumflex metatony found in the radical syllable of some nouns in \*-*ja* is due precisely to their formerly long endings, which however show up in these dialects as indifferent with respect to quantity (there are no quantitative oppositions outside stressed syllables in them). A closer look at the data (cf. Kapović 2015, 326–329) indicates that archaic (unclear, unmotivated or de-etymologized) lexemes as a rule show expected reflexes of the old acute whereas unexpected reflexes of the neocircumflex are limited chiefly to few relatively recent derivatives. Some of them seem rather to have been subject to regular metatony caused by the loss of a weak yer in the suffix (\*-*lji* or \*-*lja* in feminine agent nouns? Cf. F. Sławski 1974, 106). In most other cases, the neocircumflex tone may have been taken from related lexemes, e.g. from present tense stems of motivating verbs (*pâša* after *pâse*, *krâja* after *krâde* etc.).

<sup>26</sup> It has been maintained that the inflection of the \**vòlja*-type is due to some early contractions (recently Andersen 2014). This would be possible, but only as an irregular sound change, as the sequence \*-*vja* found in the gen. sg. or nom. and acc. pl. of the nominal derivatives in \*-*vje* is contracted only dialectally (mainly in West Slavic).

A somewhat different situation characterizes the present tense of Leskien's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> verb classes, where the oxytonesis of the 1<sup>st</sup> pers. sg. in \*-ǫ quite unambiguously points to the original stress placement on the thematic vowel and its subsequent retraction to the radical syllable as the source of the neoacute. However, the assumption that the stress was retracted not only from long internal circumflex syllables, but also from short ones, would require an explanation for quite numerous instances of stress placement on internal short syllables. When we restrict the retraction to long syllables (and perhaps diphthongs) only, we may consider various scenarios – either a purely morphological (analogical) change starting from the regular retraction in the 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. pl. (from a diphthong or from a long nasal vowel), the neoacute of which spread to the 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg., 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pers. pl. and du., or a phonetic rise of length in some present tense forms in \*-ne- in consequence of a compensation after the loss of labials, subsequently extended to all oxytone verbs in -n-, or the creation of a mobility pattern (oxytonesis in the 1<sup>st</sup> sg.: radical neoacute in the remaining persons) in verbs in \*-i-, subsequently imitated by other oxytone present tense forms. Attention should be drawn once more to the current reconstruction of the same stress pattern (*b*) for some very frequently used verbs which never contained a yod before the thematic vowel (for ex. \*može-, \*jǫde-) and therefore call for a special explanation for the assumed stress retraction.

Before closing my remarks, let me try to answer the question of why the argumentation developed above has not, to the best of my knowledge, been noticed / explored so far. It seems that the reason lies, at least in part, in the adoption of a notational convention which must be regarded as anachronistic (i.e. containing elements that never co-existed in time). This notation is due to the lasting tradition of Slavic studies, more precisely to a compromise between the oldest Slavic written evidence and the desire to mark the presence, in the protoforms, of certain morphological units which were eventually lost. However, the very notation \**volja* suggests a determined (and, most probably, erroneous) concept of relative chronology, namely, the persistence of a phonemic yod as late as after the re-phonologization of quantity.

But all this does not explain satisfactorily why otherwise experienced scholars see a subtle difference between the notations, let us say, \**korva* on the one hand and \**volja* on the other, i.e. they fail to regard the reconstructed



yod as a consonantal element<sup>27</sup>. Now, it appears that this is an almost inevitable side effect of Slavistic training, in the course of which a Slavist explicitly or implicitly learns that the diphthongs *\*o/eR* are not metathesized before yod. They may be influenced by the co-existence and practical equality of the notations *\*volja* and *\*vola ~ \*voļa* as well, which is rather unparalleled in case of some other types of root-final consonants<sup>28</sup>.

To sum up, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings the notational convention involving the postconsonantal *\*-j-* should be avoided by Slavists whenever possible.

## POSTPOZICINIO KOMPENSACINIO PAILGĖJIMO HIPOTEZĖ (VAD. VAN WIJKO DĒSNIS) VS. BENDROSIOS SLAVŲ KALBOS FONOLOGINIŲ PAKITIMŲ SANTYKINĖ CHRONOLOGIJA – NENUOSEKLUMŲ BEIEŠKANT

### *Santrauka*

„Van Wijko dėsnis“ jo šalininkų šiuo metu apibrėžiamas kaip sutrumpėjusių žodžio vidurio ir galo balsių pailgėjimas dėl asimiliacijos su postkonsonantiniu *\*j*. Šiame straipsnyje bandoma parodyti, kad šis teiginys neatitinka slavų kalbų santykinės chronologijos, pagal kurią joto netekimas po sklandžiųjų ir nosinių sonantų turi būti datuojamas anksčiau už naujų tembrinių skirtumų atsiradimą ir ilgųjų žodžio galo balsių sutrumpėjimą.

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<sup>27</sup> As for myself, I have been made aware of that quite recently by Szeptyński, after over twenty-years experience with Slavic historical linguistics.

Nobody will maintain that both *j* and *ɥ* have the same effect on preceding consonants. It is a known fact that *j* / *j* often palatalizes preceding consonants and is subsequently lost after palatals thus arisen. For example, the fact that Latin *seniorem* yielded French *seigneur* can be explained by the assumption that its *\*j*, which has left no trace in the historical spelling of the word, no longer existed when the nasal closure after nasalized vowels was lost. However, as long as the yod persists as a separate phoneme, it should be expected to exhibit basic properties of a consonant.

<sup>28</sup> For example, notations like *\*duxja* or *\*nosja* are much less frequent.

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