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## VAN WIJK'S LAW AND QUESTIONS OF RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY

**Abstract.** Babik rejects Van Wijk's law on the basis of such forms as \**volja* 'will', \**melje*– 'grind', \**gorje* 'worse' because he would expect metathesis in these words if \**j* was an ordinary consonant. Since the rise of geminates preceded the metathesis of liquids, the assumption is fallacious.

Babik thinks that in my view, the lengthening before tautosyllabic liquids was concomitant with the metathesis in *Ce/oRC* sequences. This is incorrect.

**Keywords:** Slavic; historical phonology; Van Wijk's law.

Van Wijk's law is the subject of an important paper by Zbigniew Babik in a recent issue of *Baltistica* (2017). Since it contains a number of misunderstandings about my position, I have to clarify my views here. Babik observes correctly that I have changed my opinion several times in the course of the years. I will therefore start from my present understanding of Van Wijk's law and its relative chronology, which is the following (cf. Kortlandt 2016, 468):

- C1. First palatalization of velars: \**k* > *č*, \**g* > *ž*, \**x* > *š*.
- C2. Spirantization of the voiced affricate \**ž* > *ž*.
- C3. Palatalization of dental fricatives: \**s* > *š*, \**z* > *ž* before \**j*, \**č*, \**ž*.
- C4a. Second palatalization of velars (a): \**k* > *č*, \**g* > *ž*, \**x* > *š*, also \**kn* > \**knj*, \**gn* > \**gnj*, \**kw* > \**kwj*, \**gw* > \**gwj*, perhaps also \**kl* > \**klj*, \**gl* > \**glj*.
- C4b. Second palatalization of velars (b): \**č* > *č*, \**ž* > *ž*, \**š* > *š*. This development did not reach the North Russian dialect of Novgorod and Pskov. It did not affect the clusters \**knj*, \**gnj*, \**klj*, \**glj*, nor \**kwj*, \**gwj* in West Slavic.
- C5. Rise of gemination: \**tj* > \**tj*, \**dj* > \**dj*, \**kt* > \**kt* before high front vowels, \**kt* > \**tt* elsewhere, also \**pt* > \**tt* (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 118), further \**lj* > \**lj*, \**nj* > \**nj*, \**pj* > \**plj*, \**bj* > \**blj*, \**mj*

- > \**ml*'*j*, perhaps \**tl* > \**ll* and \**dl* > \**ll* in South and East Slavic, also \**ngn* > \**nn* (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 108).
- C6a. Affrication: \**t'* > *ć*, \**d'* > *ǰ*.
- C6b. First simplification of palatals: \**ć* > *c*, \**ǰ* > *ɟ*, in South and East Slavic also \**ś* > *s*, \**ść* > *sc*, \**ǰǰ* > *zɟ*.
- C7. Simplification of geminates in Bulgarian: \**t't'* > \**śt'*, \**d'd'* > \**zd'*.
- C8. Spirantization of the voiced affricate \**ɟ* > *z*. This development did not reach Lechitic and a part of the Bulgarian dialects.
- C9a. Van Wijk's law: postconsonantal \**j* > \**b*, followed by assimilation of \**b* to the following vowel in posttonic syllables yielding a long vowel.
- C9b. Loss of gemination: \**t't'* > \**t'*, \**d'd'* > \**d'*, \**tt* > *t*, \**l'l'* > *l'*, \**ńń* > *ń*, \**ll* > *l*.
- C9c. Affrication: \**t'* > *ć*, \**d'* > *ǰ*. This development did not reach peripheral South Slavic dialects, including those of the Freising documents and the original glagolitic alphabet.
- C10. Merger of palatal fricatives: \**ś* > *š*, also \**ść* > *šč*, \**ǰǰ* > *žž*.
- C11. Merger of palatal clusters: \**šč* > *šč*, \**žž* > *žž*.
- C12. Second simplification of palatals: \**ć* > *c*, \**ǰ* > *ɟ* in West Slavic, and subsequently \**ɟ* > *z* in Czech and Sorbian, also \**ć* > *č* and \**ǰ* > *ž* > *ž* in East Slavic. The clusters *šč* and *žž* were reduced to *št* and *žd* in Bulgarian and the eastern dialects of Serbian/Croatian, and later in Czech and Slovak. Similarly, the clusters *sc* and *zɟ* became *st* and *zd* in a part of the Bulgarian dialects.

In this conception, Van Wijk's law involves the rise of geminates at stage C5 and their simplification at stage C9. The Bulgarian reflexes *št*, *žd* of original \**tj*, \**dj* point to earlier palatalized geminates \**t't'*, \**d'd'* with dissimilation to \**śt'*, \**zd'* before affrication of \**t'*, \**d'* to \**ć*, \**ǰ*. Since we find the same reflex in the case of the cluster \**kt* before high front vowels, e.g. in OCS *noštъ* 'night', we may also reconstruct a geminate \**t't'* before affrication here. As this gemination is not conditioned by a following \**j*, we may also reconstruct a geminate \**tt* from \**kt* in other positions at this stage, e.g. in *letěti* 'to fly', Lith. *lėkti*, *lakstýti*. This eliminates the isolated character of the palatalized geminates. It is possible that gemination also affected the clusters \**lj* and \**nj*, for which we may reconstruct \**l'l'* and \**ńń* on a par with \**t't'* and \**d'd'*. The corresponding development of the labials was the rise of an epenthetic \**l'*, yielding clusters \**pl'*, \**bl'*, \**ml'*. It appears that \**j* was not lost after the geminates but vocalized and assimilated to the following vowel. Since the vocalization of \**j* is more easily understood after a cluster than after a single consonant, I now think that Van Wijk's law preceded the loss of geminates

and reformulate the law as  $*j > *b$ , followed by contraction with the following vowel in posttonic syllables (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 170). It is possible that the clusters  $*tl$  and  $*dl$  yielded a geminate  $*ll$  except in West Slavic and North Russian. For OCS *kaměnb* ‘of stone’, ORu. *kamjanyj* it is reasonable to reconstruct  $*kamenno-$  with a geminate  $*nn$  and early degemination to  $*ēn$  in South and West Slavic and  $*ēn$  in East Slavic (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 108). In Slovene and Serbian/Croatian the suffix was largely replaced by  $*en$  on the analogy of *zēlen* and *stūden* (cf. Vaillant 1974, 459 on *vodēnica* replacing *voděnica* ‘water mill’ and Rigler 1964).

Babik rejects Van Wijk’s law on the basis of such forms as  $*volja$  ‘will’,  $*melje-$  ‘grind’,  $*gorje$  ‘worse’ because he would expect metathesis in these words if  $*j$  was an ordinary consonant. He concludes that there was no phoneme /j/ after liquids and nasals  $*r$ ,  $*l$ ,  $*n$ ,  $*m$  but only palatalized resonants at the time of the metathesis, which preceded the rise of the new timbre distinctions /i, ě, a, u, y ~ ъ, e, o, ѳ/, which in its turn preceded Van Wijk’s law, so that the latter could not be a consequence of the loss of  $*j$ . This reasoning is based on the assumption that  $*j$  was a regular consonant and that there was no gemination. Since the rise of geminates preceded the metathesis of liquids (e.g. Kortlandt 2011, 165–168), the assumption is fallacious. After the umlaut of back vowels after a preceding  $*j$ , the monophthongization of diphthongs, and the rise of prothetic  $*j$  before and after front vowels (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 164–166), the phonemes /j/ and /i/ were in complementary distribution (as they are in modern Spanish). The vocalization of postconsonantal  $*j > *b$  followed by the assimilation of  $*b$  to the following vowel in posttonic syllables was a logical consequence of these developments. New  $*j$  originated at a later stage (cf. Kortlandt 2011: 255–258).

Babik thinks (2017, 232) that in my view, the lengthening before tautosyllabic liquids was concomitant with the metathesis in *Ce/oRC* sequences. This is incorrect. Elsewhere I have tentatively reconstructed the following chain of events (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 252):

- (1) lengthening before tautosyllabic liquids in South Slavic,
- (2) word-initial metathesis,
- (3) lengthening before tautosyllabic liquids in Czecho-Slovak,
- (4) loss of  $*t$  and  $*d$  before  $*l$  in South and East Slavic,
- (5) non-initial metathesis in South Slavic and Czecho-Slovak,
- (6) rise of the new timbre distinctions,
- (7) lengthening under the stress before tautosyllabic liquids in Polish and Sorbian,

- (8) non-initial metathesis in Polish and Sorbian,  
 (9) Dybo's law.

The rise of gemination preceded all of these developments while Van Wijk's law must be dated after the rise of the new timbre distinctions and before the contractions in posttonic syllables (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 168–170).

Our main source of information about posttonic quantity in Slavic is the Slovene neo-circumflex (cf. Kortlandt 2012). Long vowels from Van Wijk's law are reflected in *je*-presents and *ja*-stem nouns of accent paradigm (a), but not in accent paradigm (b), where the long vowel was shortened when the accent was retracted to the stem in accordance with Stang's law, e.g. Slovene (a) *māžem* 'I smear', *rēžem* 'I cut', *krāja* 'theft', *prēja* 'yarn', (b) *pīšem* 'I write', *čǣšem* 'I comb', *vólja* 'will', *súša* 'drought'. Babik objects that in the present tense "length of the thematic morphemes \*-i- and \*-a-" occurs almost universally (2017, 230). This is because length is regular in the other accentuation types, e.g. (a) *vīdim* 'I see', *dēlam* 'I work', (c) *klečīm* 'I kneel', *kopām* 'I dig', but (b) *mótīm* 'I disturb', *stópam* 'I step', with shortening as a result of Stang's law. In the *ja*-stem nouns, long endings are limited to the Lechitic languages, where we have e.g. Slovincian *vùolâ* and *vùola*, *vùonja*, *roláu* and *rùola*, *cažáu* 'weight' and *cenjáu* 'shadow', *sušáu* 'drought' and *močáu* 'moisture', Old Polish *wolâ*, *woniâ*, *rolâ*, *suszâ*. This is because after Dybo's law the loss of distinctive tone in these languages yielded a merger of the paradigms of *\*volâ* < *\*vòlja* 'will' and *\*roljà* < *\*orl̥ja* 'plowland', after contraction *\*rolâ* in Slovincian *roláu*, as a result of which most nouns of the former type adopted the accentuation of the latter (cf. Fecht 2010, 136f.), and similarly Old Polish *łodziâ* 'boat', *sędziâ* 'judge' < *\*-bjâ*. The converse development took place in some Russian dialects, where the long vowel of *\*volâ* was evidently shortened to *\*-à* before Stang's law (cf. Fecht 2010, 143f.). The word then joined accent paradigm (b) or (c) and could even become enclitic, e.g. *dóvoli*, *ná volju*, while *nevólja* received medial stress as a result of Dybo's law (cf. in this connection Kortlandt 2013).

Babik's statement that the distribution of length in *ja*-stem nouns is "practically the reverse of the predictions made on the basis of Kortlandt's reformulation of the law" (2017, 230) is a gross misrepresentation of the truth. I do not predict (a) *\*\*tęczâ* for Polish *tęcza* 'rainbow' because this accent paradigm was not subject to Van Wijk's law and long vowels in unstressed endings were shortened on the analogy of the regular *a*-stems. I do not predict that type (b) is "nonexistent in Common Slavic" but, on the contrary, that this is precisely the *volja*-type, where Old Polish *wolâ* took its long vowel from the *rolâ*-type, as is clear from Slovincian regular *vùola* beside

*vùolâ*. I do not predict (c) *\*\*ziemiâ* for Polish *ziemia* ‘earth’ but maintain that this is a Balto-Slavic *ē*-stem, not only because of Prussian *semmē* and Lithuanian *žėmė* (2) but also because it belongs to accent paradigm (b) in Old Russian, Kajkavian and Old Slovene, which is incompatible with an original *ja*-stem (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 64). Similarly mistaken is Babik’s remark about the *jo*-stems (2017, 229) because endings which did not occur under the stress were shortened in the whole Slavic territory, e.g. gen. sg. *\*kòṇa*, dat. sg. *\*kòṇu*, nom. pl. *\*kòṇi* ‘horse’, dat. sg. *\*žèně* ‘woman’, *\*póti* ‘way’.

Babik sticks to the outdated idea of *métatonie rude* in the comparative (2017, 240f.). In fact, the comparative in *\*-je* has neo-acute tone in Czech (b) *hůře* ‘worse’, *méně* ‘less’, Russian dial. *bôle* ‘more’, *molôže* ‘younger’ as a result of the successive operations of Van Wijk’s, Dybo’s and Stang’s laws. The short vowel of Čakavian (c) *mläjě*, *drăžě* (Fecht 2010, 117) was evidently taken from the definite adjective, e.g. *mläjī*, Štokavian *mlăđī*. Babik finds this “surprisingly confusing” because he expects a long vowel on the basis of (b) *mûdrī* ‘wise’ and *krătī* ‘short’. He is evidently unaware of the fact that the comparative is not part of the paradigm of the adjective. The accentuation type of a word depends on the category to which it belongs, not on the lexeme, cf. Serbian/Croatian *vîti* ‘to twist’, which has an acute infinitive (a) but a mobile present and *l*-participle (c), or *grîsti* ‘to bite’ and *sjěci* ‘to cut’, which have an acute infinitive and *l*-participle (a) but a mobile present (c), or such verbs as *pěci* ‘to bake’, which have an end-stressed infinitive and *l*-participle (b) but a mobile present (c), or *lěci* ‘to lie down’, which has an acute present (a) but an end-stressed infinitive and *l*-participle (b). Babik’s suggestion (2017, 241) that the neo-circumflex tone of Slovene *pâša* ‘pasture’ and *krâja* ‘theft’ may have been taken from the related present tense forms *pâse* and *krâde* is quite unacceptable. I conclude that Babik’s criticism of Van Wijk’s law is entirely misguided.

## VAN WIJKO DĖSNIS IR SANTYKINĖS CHRONOLOGIJS KLAUSIMAI

### Santrauka

Z. Babikas atmeta van Wjko dėsni, remdamasis tokiomis formomis kaip *volja* ‘valia’, *\*melje-* ‘malti’, *\*gorje* ‘blogiau’, nes, jo manymu, šiuose žodžiuose būtų lauktina metatezė, jei *\*j* būtų įprastas priebalsis. Kadangi geminatos atsiradusios anksčiau už sklandžiųjų sonantų metatezė, šis teiginys yra klaidingas.

Babikas mano, kad aš ilginimą prieš tautosilabinius sklandžiuosius sonantus laikau vienalaikiu su metateze *Ce/oRC* tipo junginiuose. Tai nėra tiesa.

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