

EARLY TREATMENTS OF PALATALIZATION IN THE DECLENSION OF LATVIAN NOUNS

The palatalization of final stem consonants is not a universal phenomenon in the declension of Latvian nouns. Certain classes of nouns undergo palatalization, while the remaining classes do not. Generally speaking, those noun classes which have *-i* in the accusative singular are of the palatalizing type, whereas those which have *-u* in the accusative singular are non-palatalizing. Nor do all palatalizing nouns palatalize in the same places: feminine nouns undergo the process in the genitive plural, but masculines palatalize in the genitive singular¹ and in all cases of the plural. Thus any successful characterization of the patterns involved will require that masculines be distinguished from feminines, and that within both genders the palatalizing groups be distinguished from the non-palatalizing groups. Once these basic principles have been established, there remains the rather more ad hoc² process of determining individual exceptions.

The first grammar of Latvian, J. G. Rehehusen's "Manuductio"³, was published in 1644, although much of it was no doubt composed as early as 1629. For Rehehusen, there are only two declensions, a masculine and a feminine⁴. The necessary subdivisions which would have enabled him to separate palatalizing from non-palatalizing nouns are not made. In choosing the nouns *Wihrsz* (*vīrs*) and *Szehwa* (*sieva*) as his examples, Rehehusen naturally provides paradigms without palatalization, and since these are intended to cover all nouns, one is tempted to assume that he was unaware of the phenomenon. When we read in his textual material such phrases as *Gkailohsz zällehsz* (*gailos cēlies*), *ar gkrahbäcklims* (*ar grābekliem*)

¹ Unless the genitive singular is in *-s*: cf. *akmens*, *rudens*, *zibens*, etc. Those speakers who have non-standard *-a* in this position have palatalization also: *akmeņa*, *rudēņa*, *zibeņa*. Those masculines which are declined in feminine paradigms have the feminine palatalization of the genitive plural only: cf. *benžu*, *ļaužu*.

² Although even among the exceptions, certain sub-regularities can be found: cf. *kuģis*, *puķe*, and, more recently, *stūris*.

³ Rehehusen J. G. *Manuductio ad linguam lettonicam facilis & certa monstrata a Joanne Georgo Rehehusen*. — Rigae, 1644. (Repr. A. Bielenstein. *Mag. XX*, St. 2 (1901), pp. 1—59.

⁴ Rehehusen, pp. 8—10.

and *ar szunnimsz (ar suniem)*⁵, the temptation grows. It comes then as something of a surprise to read, in the section "Patronymicorum formatio":

"Nominibus urbium & locorum propriis additur vel *nehcks* vel *eths* [sic!] prout euphonia fert... *Aiskraula* [sic!]/ Ascheradt. *Aiskraucklehts* ein Ascheradischer. Sed ultima syllaba *ehs* in plurali transit in *ehsche*. *Aiskraucklesche* / die Ascheradischen"⁶.

Thus, in respect of some nouns at least which are now deemed to end in *-tis*, palatalization has been explicitly noted. Somewhat erratically, no such comment is made in respect of the diminutive forms in *-ihts*⁷. It is hard to believe that Rehehusen could have been aware of the palatalization in one instance and unaware of it in the other. Perhaps the difference should be ascribed to careless inconsistency in presentation. Certainly Rehehusen lacked the fundamental framework of declensional types which would have made it possible for him to discuss palatalization systematically, but, even so, diminutives in *-itis* constitute a clearly defined group just as much as local nouns in *-ietis*, and the enigma remains. It is clear, however, that whatever limited observations Rehehusen may have made about certain masculines plural, he has not given any evidence of having recognized palatalization in the masculine genitive singular or at any point at all in the declension of feminine nouns. Rehehusen's contribution to the question is thus minimal.

The fact that Rehehusen failed adequately to present what seems to have been known at the time about Latvian declensions is underlined by the appearance, not long after, of Einhorn's treatise against Rehehusen⁸. Five declensional types are distinguished: masculines in *-s* and *-ns*, feminines in *-a*, *-e* and *-s*. This classification, while far from satisfactory, nonetheless provides some framework for a more coherent discussion of palatalization. The major problem is that non-palatalizing nouns in *-s* are included in a single declension with palatalizing nouns in *-is*. The fact that this first masculine declension contains two distinct subgroups is conceded, since it is explicitly pointed out that nouns in *-is* have an accusative singular

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 34, 43, 45.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 11. "To proper names of cities and places is added either *nehcks* [-*nieks*] or *eths* [-*ietis*] as euphony requires. *Aiskraula*/'Ascheradt'. *Aiskraucklehts* 'an inhabitant of Ascheradt'. But the final syllable *ehs* [-*ietis*] passes in the plural to *ehsche* [-*ieši*]. *Aiskraucklesche*/'inhabitants of Ascheradt'".

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ No copy of Einhorn's work is known to have survived. Bound in with the Upsala copy of Rehehusen's "Manuductio", we have a hand-written extract "Declinationum Letticarum ex D. Einhornii contra Rehehusium tractatu(m) synopsis brevis". This material has been published by Bielenstein, as part of his reprint of Rehehusen (see note 3), and by A. Augstkalns as „Ieraksti Rehehuzena gramatikas (1644) Upsalas eksemplārā“ in „Filologu biedrības raksti“, 1936, s. 16, pp. 130–138.

in *-i*, but this distinction is not taken further: there is no mention of palatalization either in the genitive singular or in the plural. In the summary that has come down to us, there is no mention of Rehehusen's *Aizkrauklieši*, but in the absence of the work itself it is impossible to attach any significance to the omission.

The masculine declension in *-ns* is something of a mixture: the example taken is *suns*, but both *ackmins* (*akmens*) and *mirrons* (*mironis*) are listed under the same heading. The genitive singular is listed as *suns*, which suggests that the genitive singular palatalization has not been recognized. On the other hand, there is palatalization in the plural: the manuscript rather randomly has palatalization in the vocative, genitive and dative, while omitting it in the nominative and accusative. Whether the original or the copyist is at fault here, the omissions must surely be due to carelessness rather than to any belief that *-ns* nouns actually did behave like that. Thus as far as masculine nouns are concerned, one of the two palatalizing groups has been recognized, although only in the plural, while the other, even after Rehehusen's solitary insight, appears to have been missed.

It is in his treatment of feminines that Einhorn marks a clear advance over his predecessor. His three feminine declensions are of nouns in *-a*, *-e*, and *-s*, and he correctly shows palatalization in the genitive plural of the *-e* and *-s* types. Here we have *to Semmju* and, following Augstkalns' reading, *to Nackschu*, which, as far as they go, are correct statements, but from which it is difficult to derive any useful generalization. On the principle of *Semmju* one would presumably derive **Mahtju*, whereas from *Nackschu* hardly anything can be derived because we are not told what relationship is supposed to hold between the *t* of the other cases and the *sch* of the genitive plural. Does *sch* simply replace the final stem consonant in all instances? With hindsight, clearly not. But if *sch* is merely the transformation of stem final *t*, what transformations are there of other stem final consonants? This we are not told. We are not even told of any parallel between *Semmju* and *Nackschu* which might enable us to infer that these two results might stem from one single process. In current terminology, Einhorn's treatment of feminine palatalizations can be regarded as perhaps observationally adequate, but as both descriptively and (a fortiori) explanatorily inadequate. Further doubts as to the clarity of Einhorn's perception arise from his listing of the nouns *auss* and *acs* as belonging to the feminine *-s* declension. In standard modern Latvian at least, these two nouns are exceptional, in that they fail to undergo the expected palatalization, but no note or comment accompanies their listing, and we can only wonder at what their genitive plural was supposed to be⁹.

⁹ ME notes *aušu* without comment, and *aču* with the parenthesis „seltener“.

The next treatment is that of the so-called Būchner fragments¹⁰. There are five declensions, with masculine nouns being grouped into the first, third and fifth. As in Einhorn, the first declension is of masculines in *-s*, which do not undergo palatalization at any point, but again as in Einhorn nouns in *-is*, which ought to have palatalization, are included. Their status as a sub-group is recognized in a note: "Nomina in IS habent in Acc. Sing. I, ut *breedis*"¹¹, but no further remarks are added, with the result that, except in the accusative singular, *-is* nouns are declined just like ordinary *-s* nouns. The picture becomes even more confused when we move to the third declension, which is not defined in any way, but is exemplified simply by the paradigm of *soġis*¹². Now there is no obvious reason for separating *soġis* from *-is* nouns like *breedis* which are included in the first declension, and the third declension of the Būchner fragments would appear to be utterly superfluous. Nonetheless, it would in theory have provided the author with the opportunity of considering at least some *-is* nouns on their own without the confusing influence of the simple *-s* nouns, but the choice of *soġis* as the paradigm example effectively removes any such hope of pinning down the palatalizations of these *-is* nouns, since *soġis* maintains the same, albeit palatal, consonant throughout. The fifth declension, that of *Leddus*, is not pertinent to our discussion. Thus, as far as masculines are concerned, the Būchner fragments mark a step backwards from Einhorn, and are even less informative than Rehehusen.

Feminines are treated in the second and fourth declensions. The second declension includes both feminines in *-a* and feminines in *-e*, although in separate paradigms. This too is retrograde in comparison with Einhorn, but even more retrograde is the genitive plural of *Mate*, cited as *Mato*¹³, without comment or explanation. Slight amends are made in the fourth declension, that of feminines in *-s*, where *Aws* is shown as having the genitive plural *Awjo*¹⁴. But again there is no comment or explanation, and since the author clearly intends a stem *Aw-* with an ending *-jo*, there is no way of avoiding such forms as **Nakt-jo* from *Nakts* or **Sird-jo* from *Sirds*. As with Einhorn, the author of the Būchner fragments has not come to grips with the nature of the process; he has simply been content to list one of its

¹⁰ See Arbuzovs L. 17. *gs. latviešu gramatika bij. Kurzemes hercogu bibliotekā Pēterpilī. — FBR, 1925, s. 5, pp. 106–125. Additional information and a discussion of the authorship can be found in Draviņš K. Latviešu gramatikas materiāli Mārtiņa Bichnera albumā. — In: In honorem Endzelīni. Chicago: Čikāgas Baltu Filologu Kopa, 1960, pp. 107–113. For ease of reference, we shall cite the original Album pages as ordered and numbered by Arbuzovs, although this ordering has been challenged by Draviņš.*

¹¹ Arbuzovs, p. 10. "Nouns in *-is* have an accusative singular in *-i*: cf. *breedis*".

¹² *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

various manifestations, without providing any further guidance. In respect of palatalizations he contributes nothing.

1685 was a vintage year for Latvian grammars. Three separate works bear this date, but there is no external evidence which would allow us to place them confidently in chronological order. We take them here in the order which best demonstrates the progressive improvements in the understanding and exposition of palatalization in the declension of nouns. Other internal evidence also suggests that, in terms of influence one upon the other and of increasing refinement of approach, the ordering adopted here is likely to be the actual chronological ordering¹⁵. The three works in question are those of Langius, which remained unpublished until 1936¹⁶, Dreszell¹⁷ and Adolphi¹⁸.

Surprisingly, in view of the quite convincing demonstration to the contrary by Einhorn, Langius reverts to Rehehusen's position that there are only two declensions: one for masculines and one for feminines, explicitly rejecting proposals for additional types¹⁹. Thus he has destroyed the framework of declensional types which is necessary for any systematic observations on the occurrence of palatalizations. It comes therefore as no surprise that *Ackmins* (*akmens*) is attributed to the same nonpalatalizing declension as *draugs*: in fact the treatment is as inadequate as one would expect from the attempt to combine all types into one²⁰. Then, with no comment or explanation whatsoever, in his treatment of the adjectival declension, we are offered the forms of *Balts Puckihts* (*balts puķītis* -sic!)²¹ with palatalization of *t* to *š* in all cases of the plural, but an unpalatalized form *Balta Puckihta* (*balta puķīta*) in the genitive singular. If Langius knew that he was here dealing with a much more widespread phenomenon, or if he knew under what circumstances changes of this kind took place, he has not let the reader into the secret, and we can conclude only that, in his treatment of masculines, there is no evidence at all of any theoretical appreciation of palatalization.

His feminines are no better, although he does give separate paradigms within the one declension for nouns in *-a* and nouns in *-e*. With respect to the genitive plu-

¹⁵ See Fennell, Trevor G. The Emergence of a Latvian Grammatical Tradition: Noun Morphology. — Journal of Baltic Studies, Spring 1977, 8 (1), p. 52 and p. 62, N 10.

¹⁶ Langius J. Lettisch-Deutsches Lexikon... Sampt einer kurtzen Grammatica... The manuscript, which is held in Heidelberg, has been published by E. Blese. Nīcas un Bārtas mācītāja Jāņa Langija 1685. gada latviski-vāciskā vārdnīca ar īsu latviešu gramatiku... — Rīgā, 1936.

¹⁷ Dreszell G. Gantz kurtze Anleitung zur Lettischen Sprache. — Riga, 1685.

¹⁸ Adolphi H. Erster Versuch einer kurtz-verfasseten Anleitung zur Lettischen Sprache... — Mitau, 1685.

¹⁹ Blese, op. cit., pp. 366–368, and p. 439.

²⁰ ibid., pp. 366–367.

²¹ ibid., p. 370.

ral, however, the distinction turns out to be not particularly helpful, for like all his predecessors except Einhorn, he gives here the unpalatalized form *Mahto*²². He thus fails to recognize any regular palatalization in feminines, but does draw attention to what he terms "Anomala":

"Hier finden sich etl. Anomala, welche von diesen abweichen und den Genitiv: Singularis und Pluralis numeri ändern, alss *Širds* "das Hertz", in Gen. Sing: *Širdis*, und in plurali *Širscho*. *Kruhts* "die brust", in Gen. Sing: *kruhscha* und in plurali *kruscho*. *Nackts* "die Nacht" in Gen. Sing. *Nacktis*, in Plurali *Nackšchu* etc."²³

It is strange that Langius was able to point to the genitive plural of feminines in *-s* while neglecting the parallel phenomenon for feminines in *-e*, already pointed out by Einhorn, and the value of the remark is somewhat diminished by the use of examples with only the dentals *t* and *d*, but it is nonetheless the first attempt at a generalization, and therefore, in spite of its vagueness, of some significance.

The second of the 1685 grammars is Dreszell's "Gantz kurtze Anleitung zur Lettischen Sprache". He has five noun declensions: of interest to us are the second (feminines in *-a* and *-e*), third (masculines in *-is*) and fourth (feminines in *-s*). Masculines in *-ns* are not distinguished from simple masculines in *-s* (first declension) and no mention is made of their palatalization. Masculines in *-is*, however, receive an extended discussion for the first time. The paradigm given is that of *šohgis*, which by virtue of the ubiquitous *ġ* teaches us nothing, but in detailed notes to the paradigm some particularly revealing observations are made:²⁴

"NOTA (1) Die Wörter auf *dis/sis/tis/zis* machen den Genitivum auf *šcha*, alss *Breedis... Breescha*, *Ahssis... Ahšcha*, *Leitis... Leišcha*, *Lahzis... Lahzšcha*.

NOTA (2) Die auf *bis/mis/pis* und *wis* machen den Genitivum durch oder mit einem *j*: als: *Dambis/Dambja...*

NOTA (4) Die auf *lis/nis/ris* machen im Genitivo sing. und gantzen plurali aus einem schlechten einen gestrichenen Buchstaben: als *Brahlis... Brahļa*, *Šunnis... Šuņņa*, *Wahweris... Wahweŗa*, etc."

²² *ibid.*, p. 368.

²³ *ibid.* "Here are found a few irregulars which depart from the above patterns, and change the genitive singular and plural, e. g., *Širds* „heart“: gen. sing. *Širdis*, and in the plural *Širscho*. *Kruhts* „breast“: gen. sing. *kruhscha*, and in the plural *kruscho*. *Nackts* „night“: gen. sing. *Nacktis*, and in the plural *Nackšchu* etc."

²⁴ Dreszell, pp. 8–10. "N. B. (1) Words in *-dis*, *-sis*, *-tis*, *-zis* form their genitive in *-šcha*, e. g. *Breedis... Breescha*, *Ahssis... Ahšcha*, *Leitis... Leišcha*, *Lahzis... Lahzšcha*. N. B. (2) Words in *-bis*, *-mis*, *-pis* and *-wis* form their genitive with the aid of *j*: e. g. *Dambis/Dambja...* N. B. (4) Words in *-lis*, *-nis*, *-ris*, in the genitive singular and the entire plural, add a diacritic to the plain consonant: e. g. *Brahlis... Brahļa*, *Šunnis... Šuņņa*, *Wahweris... Wahweŗa*, etc."

It is also pointed out that *g* and *k* remain unaltered²⁵. Here for the first time we have an attempted tabulation of the consonantal transformations, as well as the first mention of palatalization in the genitive singular of *-is* masculines, and the first explicit generalization about their plurals.

The obvious weakness in Dreszell's formulation is that the eight consonants mentioned in his Notes (1) and (2) undergo modification in the genitive singular only, whereas the three consonants mentioned in Note (4) are modified throughout the plural as well. It can hardly be the case that Dreszell here meant what he wrote, particularly after Rehehusen's *Aizkrauklieši* and the rather exotic *Balti Puckihšchi* of Langius. The fault almost certainly is the result of careless presentation, but, whatever the reason, Notes (1) and (2) are inadequate and misleading.

Dreszell is also the first to point out the existence of exceptions, but he provides no examples:²⁶

“Die Wörter so bey allen diesen reguln iergend excipiret werden / wird der geneigte Leser dismahl ex usu lernen...”

After making such major progress with respect to masculines, Dreszell is particularly disappointing when it comes to feminines. In his second declension we read, without comment, the same genitive plural *Mahto*²⁷ as in Büchner and Langius, while in the fourth declension, that of feminines in *-s*, the forms *Ahwo* and *Ahwjo* are given as alternative, with no discussion at all of what other words, with other stem final consonants, might do in this position.

It is interesting to note at this point that most of the elements of a complete description of palatalization in the declension of nouns are now available. The actual transformations of consonants have by and large been spelt out by Dreszell, Einhorn has drawn attention to the genitive plural of feminine nouns in *-e* and *-s*, as well as to the plural of nouns in *-ns*, and Dreszell has mutatis mutandis touched on the various essential points of palatalization in *-is* masculines, and has even noted the existence of exceptions. The task now is not so much that of discovering anything new as that of bringing together the various pieces of information and of presenting them in a systematic manner. To a large extent this is achieved in the third of the 1685 grammars, Adolphi's "Erster Versuch einer kurtz-verfasseten Anleitung zur Lettischen Sprache", although even here a few gaps remain.

The first declension of interest is Adolphi's second, which is that of masculines in *-is*. Paradigms of *Brahlis*, *Wehsis* and *Lahzis* are given with palatalization in the

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 10. "Words which in some respect or other are excepted from all these rules will be learnt from usage by the interested reader".

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 8.

genitive singular and the whole of the plural²⁸. A table of consonant modifications is also given²⁹, but, improving on Dreszell, Adolphi requires all the modifications to apply in all the appropriate environments. He even mentions alternative forms for the dative singular of the type *Brahlam*, which, while not now recognized as standard, can certainly still be heard. He does not mention any exceptions to the palatalization rules in this declension.

Feminines in *-e* are treated in Adolphi's fifth declension. Here the genitive plural of *Mahte* is (at last) *Mahšchu*, and that of *Mehle* is *Mehju*. Consonantal modification is explicitly limited to the genitive plural, and a table of correspondences, similar to that provided for masculines in *-is*, appended. The exception *Mutte/Muttu* is pointed out³⁰.

Feminines in *-s* are treated in the sixth declension. *Aws* is given the genitive plural *Awju*, *Auśś* has *Auśchu* (not now standard, but still heard), *Śirds* has *Śirschu* and *Pirts* has *Pirśchu*. Again the modifications are explicitly limited to the genitive plural, and again a table of correspondences, although this time [lacking one or two consonants (*l : ʎ, n : ŋ*), is appended. The exceptions *Uts/Uttu* and *Sohśś/Sohśu* are noted³¹.

The major gap in this treatment is its failure to comment on nouns in *-ns* of the *akmens* type; the number of exceptions recognized is also very limited. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that Adolphi's treatment of palatalization is in every way superior to the treatments which preceded it, and only in minor respects inferior to those which up to the present day have followed it. The hard work has been done, and later grammarians have only small details to tidy up.

²⁸ Adolphi, pp. 22–23.

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 31–32.