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The most important changes characterizing Slavic such as the many palatalizations and the vocalic opposition contrasting back and front vowels especially in endings are not independent developments, though some of them are perfectly compatible with the I.-E. character of the language, but are frankly due to an imitation of Altaic (more precisely, probably Proto-Turkic) speech habits where they can be explained by the agglutinative morphology. This latter was not imitated by the Slavs, though, as being entirely alien to an inflexional I.-E. idiom. Huns and Avars dominated the Slavs for the four critical centuries ca. 400-800 A.D.

In this talk we will proceed from the assumption, which I have tried to justify elsewhere, that there was indeed a Balto-Slavic language spoken in a dialect continuum in Eastern Europe, roughly from the shores of the Baltic to somewhere north of the Black Sea, still in the first half of the first millennium A.D.

I cannot, of course, supply a phonological system of Balto-Slavic any more than anybody else, but have to proceed from the one attributed to the parent tongue in [16], 31-64, with due allowance for some changes which may be assumed to have intervened in the formation of Balto-Slavic. [12], 51 and [10], 22, have characterized I.-E. by and large as a con-

sonantal type of language, and an inspection of the inventories given both by Szemerényi and Gamkrelidze-Ivanov would seem to bear out such a judgment. Thy type of I.-E. from which Blt.-Sl developed had at least three rows of velars (gutturals), whether we adopt those postulated by the former or the latter authors. In either case we arrive at about a dozen velars ([16], 64, [5], 34) and six to eight alveolars and labials; furthermore, there are spirants, of which the latter authors have three, all of the hissing sibilant kind, the former one, plus two nasals, liquids and glides each, for a total of 25-29 consonants, as opposed to the five cardinal vowels, long or short, plus diphthongs (none in Slavic any more than Altaic). There are no hushing sibilants or affricates in either I.-E. system.

It is of particular interest to us that although palatal(ized) consonants may be attributed at least to a part of Proto-I.-E., their reflexes in Slavic certainly show no palatalization, thus *prasg* 'pig' and *zima* 'winter' with *Satan*-I.E. *k', *g'h are not in any way to be considered palatalized in Proto-Slavic. No incentive seems, therefore, to have come for palatalization from the parent tongue, although many of its daughter idioms have undergone such a process, so that it cannot have been in conflict with its evolutionary tendencies. There is, of course, a physiologi-

cal foundation for such a tendency, and that is the broad adaptability of velars to the influence of ensuing as well as preceding vowels, because their acoustic locus is especially apt to adjust itself to its environment (I 3 1,67, 114, 124,133).

To this day, Lith. has e.g. kimštas 'stuffed' against O.C.S. čestъ, skýstas 'liquid' vs. čistъ, from the same root also Slavic č#stъ 'clearing', or, with the voiced counterpart, g#lti 'to prick' against Com.Sl. *žedle 'sting', or gela 'pain' against O.C.S. žalb. It is, therefore, in my opinion not enough to say that the velars simply were palatalized in Slavic, and that this feature distinguishes it from Baltic, but we have to find the cause of this difference, which cannot lie in the initial system. For the mere anticipation of the vowel articulation must originally have been the same in both branches, but eventually led to different phonemes in Slavic presumably many centuries before what palatalization there evolved in Baltic. There cannot have been many more "empty slots" in the South than in the North. The effect was both earlier and much stronger in Slavic, although it eventually also did percolate to the North, especially to Latvian.

However, EIt.-Sl. had already added to the stock of I.-E. spirants in the shape of a /š/, as a result of the change of /s/ following the so-called r-u-k-i formula, consisting in an adjustment of its upper formant to that of these sounds if they immediately preceded (I 10 1, 30). Also here the physiological/acoustic conditioning can be explained, but does not suffice for a statement of causality. Since it is a very old change and fell still within the period of EIt.-Sl. neighbourhood with Indo-Iranian tribes, which likewise carried it out, Burrows (I 2 1,79) excludes a coincidence in the change s > š, which means that the link is causal; it is significant that the more northern Baltic has

carried it out much less systematically, and not shared in the subsequent Slavic development š > x (ch) before back vowels. This also goes to show that the Slavs were much more sensitive to the division of vowels into back and front, and that the /š/ in Slavic became a palatal which was in some sort of harmony with its environment.

Again, the physiological mechanism is not far to seek. In his still unrivaled "Slavische Phonetik", Olaf Broch (I 1 1,59) states explicitly that the boundary line between /š/ and /x/ (ch) is fleeting, and that a small change in the position of the articulating organs can bring it about. If an ever greater part of the tongue tip is bent down from the area of the teeth and alveolae, he says, involving a bigger concentration of the bulk of the tongue in the posterior area, the /š/ will be seen to gradually change into the velar fricative. The question remains for us to be tackled as to why the Slavs should have carried out such a shift, which their Baltic cousins did not. It was carried out before back vowels, which apparently did not combine very well with palatals at a certain stage in the genesis of Slavic. This change, then, shows a strong degree of adaptation between the consonant and the tautosyllabically following vowel.

Nor is this the only example of its kind. The three Slavic palatalizations, for which we will follow the traditional order, show the same sensibility, only to front vowels, in the case of the third even extending to preceding /i/, with due allowance for the labialized character of the following one which prevented it. We notice that the first is carried out in a true neogrammarian spirit all over the Slavic territory, while the second and the third seem to fade in the Far North of the Slavic world, as becomes more and more

clear from the birch-bark writs of the Novgorod and Pskov area (91, 118).

Another sound which is susceptible to the effects of its vocalic environment is the /l/, which in Slavic split into two phonemes /l/ and /l'/. The first with a hard allophone [l], the second palatal and due to a merger of l + j. It is important to realize that say lists 'leaf' differs by this consonant and not by the vowel from the second syllable of vol' i 'to the will'. I make a special point of this, because there is a teaching of an alleged Slavic synharmony of the syllable about, according to which entire syllables in Proto-Slavic were either hard or soft (labio-velarized vs. palatalized), so that their symbols can precede the notation of the whole syllable. How does this theory account for such facts? Are there different degrees of syllabic harmony, greater in /l' i/ than in /l i/ with its neutral phoneme? Besides, under the auspices of this theory we are always treated to theoretical examples like say ta - t'a, ny - ni, which, if put together, would yield Japanese rather than Slavic words. Slavic remained true to the I.-E. type in that, however much it may have opened its syllables at the coda, it permitted very respectable sequences ("clusters") at their beginning, where no reduction occurred; do we have say in ra-zdru-ši-ti 'to destroy' a labio-velarized syllable zdru- as against a palatalized zdra- in razdrašiti 'to solve'? The great Dutch slavist N. van Wijk (I 18 1, 45) explicitly mentions cases like O.C.S. bragъ 'shore', where there is absolutely no reason to attribute even a mere phonetic palatalization to the initial /b/, while fully admitting, of course, that the effect of front vowels also on directly preceding non-velars must have been stronger in Proto-Slavic than in the other I.-E. languages, without changing their phonemic status.

The palatal consonants arose from palatalizations, as in the case

of velars, or sequences of alveolars plus /j/, and for this, I might add, there was no ready pattern in I.-E., all these moves were Slavic innovations which set off that idiom from Baltic and were essential in constituting Slavic as such. With the different results of some of these sequences we cannot concern ourselves here, suffice it to say that the results were at first all palatal in all subgroups, including the /št/, /zd/ of O.C.S., and the question now remains as to where this strong effect of front vowels and /j/ has come from. About this, van Wijk says (181) that we do not know whence such a strong effect of vowels on preceding consonants has come; Roman Jakobson (18) in a way answered this question by placing Slavic within a wider Eurasian setting, and in his turn, P. Ivić (171, 51) has taken up this suggestion, but would like to know when, where, and under what historical circumstances such an influence has taken place.

The answer to Ivić's very pertinent question can presumably be supplied by a reference to the historical circumstances under which the Slavs lived in the critical period, roughly from 400 to 800 A.D. A first answer has been supplied by Scheleniker (14), who believes, though, in the synharmony of the Slavic syllable, but i.a. correctly appreciates the importance of the change *ū > /y/ (for which there was no "case vide"), as well as of the progressive (Altaic) direction of the third palatalization. Again in the case of the former change, it cannot be sufficiently stressed that the term "delabialization" explains absolutely nothing, but is a mere label.

In the period in question, the Slavs were dominated by various Altaic tribes, foremost the Avars, whose empire came to an abrupt end shortly before 800, but before that by Huns (who also roped in the Slavs for military service, cf. 151, p. 230) Bulgars and Khazars. This was not a matter of mere neighborhood or some -stratum, but certainly at least in

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the case of the Avars an interpenetration affecting the Slavic anthropological type and - most importantly - involving the language of command under which these "qalāb" (I111, 225, 238; 'slaves' later 'border guards') of the Avars were sent into battle for their masters all over the borders of their vast empire, which as a result brought about a largely unitary lingua franca - Slavic.

We can proceed from the assumption that all those peoples were Turkic (thus Abaev in I1, 141), however, the picture would not be changed in its overall outlines if they had been Mongols in view of their languages' phonetic nearness at that time (I11, 91). Now the morphological structure of these languages is dominated by agglutination, one of whose consequences is that the vowels of the morphemes attached to the stem must share its back vs. front character. This results in vocalic oppositions ā : a, y (Slavic value) : i, e : ö, u : u, plus an /e/ about which there is some argument. The consonants of these morphemes underwent a strong assimilatory effect of the vowels, which comes to the fore in the oldest, Runic, alphabet of the Old Turkic inscriptions in the Orkhon and Yenisei valleys of the VIII. c., where we find two letters each representing b - b', g - g', d - d', k - k', l - l', n - n', r - r', s - s', t - t' etc. There is a respectable array of sibilants and affricates s, z, š, ž, č, dž (I11, 78), which should in my opinion make it clear where the model which the Slavs sought to imitate came from.

However, I still maintain that the imitation was not absolute and was limited to the phonetic inventory plus phonotactic rules, but extended neither to the agglutinative nature of the Altaic languages nor affected Indo-European syllable structure in the initial part, nor introduced a synharmonism of the syllable. The correlation of palatalization constitutes a later development.