

## POLABIAN ACCENTUATION

FREDERIK KORTLANDT

From a synchronic point of view, the accentuation of Late Polabian has been clarified by Trubetzkoy (1929) and Olesch (1973, 1974). The stress fell on the last full vowel of a word form, which was found either in the final or in the penultimate syllable. In the latter instance, the final syllable contained a reduced vowel. This rule was challenged by Kuryłowicz (1955), who maintained that the stress was fixed on the initial syllable of the word. The latter theory has the advantage of accounting for the absence of reduced vowels in initial syllables. It also explains the vocalization of weak jers in initial syllables, e.g. *\*koto* /kätü/ ‘who’, *\*xomelb* /xémil/ ‘hop’, *\*pösi* /pasai/ ‘dogs’, *\*töma* /t’ämä/ ‘darkness’ (transcription and translation according to Polański & Sehnert 1967). I therefore think that it is correct for an earlier stage of the language, which may conveniently be called Middle Polabian. The late rise of non-initial stress can be compared with the same development in Polish. It follows that the complicated chronology recently proposed by Micklesen (1986) cannot be maintained.

The major problem which remains is the origin of the Polabian reduced vowels and their relation to the prosodic system of Proto-Slavic. The solution to this problem can largely be deduced from Lehr-Splawiński’s detailed analysis (1963), in spite of the fact that his views on the accentual system of Proto-Slavic can no longer be maintained. It appears that, as a rule, the final syllable has reduced vocalism if the vowel of the preceding syllable is originally long or neoacute, whereas it has full vocalism if the vowel of the preceding syllable is originally short, acute, or circumflex. Thus, we find a reduced vowel in the final syllable of *\*gnězdo* /gñozdě/ ‘nest’, *\*sukno* /saukně/ ‘cloth’, *\*jědro* /jōdrě/ ‘kernel’, *\*myto* /moitě/ ‘reward’, *\*kridlo* /kraidlě/ ‘wing’, *\*usno* /vausně/ ‘leather’, gen.sg. *\*vina* /vainä/ ‘wine’, *\*melka* /mläkä/ ‘milk’, *\*pōt’a* /pōt’ä/ ‘road’, pl. *\*grěxy* /grěxě/ ‘sins’, *\*ključě* /kl’aucä/ ‘keys’, *\*usta* /vaustä/ ‘mouth’, *\*vorta* /vortä/ ‘door’, *\*mōka* /mōkä/ ‘meal’, *\*světja* /svečä/ ‘candle’, *\*pizda* /paizdä/ ‘ass’, *\*dyra* /darä/ ‘hole’, *\*trōba* /trōbä/ ‘hank’, *\*glista* /glaistä/ ‘earthworm’, *\*borzda* /bordzä/ ‘furrow’, *\*xorna* /xornä/ ‘food’, *\*luna* /launä/ ‘moon’, *\*dětę* /detä, detä/ ‘child’, *\*ōtōkō* /vōtāk/ ‘woof’, *\*volja* /vil’ä/ ‘will’, 3rd sg. *\*tęgne* /tägně/ ‘pulls’, *\*zavęže* /zoväžě/ ‘ties up’, *\*češe* /cisě/ ‘brushes’, *\*nosi* /nüsě/ ‘carries’, *\*xodi* /xüdü/ ‘goes’, def.adj. *\*bělōjb* /b’olě/, fem. *\*bělaja* /b’olä/ ‘white’, *\*skōpōjb* /skopě/ ‘Friday’, *\*kortōkōjb* /kort’ě/ ‘short’, also *\*devętōjb* /div’ōtě/ ‘ninth’, *\*desętōjb* /dišōtě/ ‘tenth’, further *\*golvōka* /gläfkä/ ‘distaff’, *\*dėvōka* /defkä/

‘girl’, \**lisõka* /laiskã/ ‘fox’, \**babõka* /bopkã/ ‘midwife’, \**dõtõka* /d’otkã/ ‘child’, also \**bratõja* /brot’ã/ ‘brothers’. There is a full vowel in the final syllable of \**rebro* /rebrü/ ‘rib’, \**teplo* /teplü/ ‘warm’, \**stõblo* /stãblü/ ‘stalk’, \**veslo* /veslü/ ‘oar’, \**greblo* /greblü/ ‘rake’, \**stegno* /stegnü/ ‘loin’, \**okõno* /vãknü/ ‘window’, \**jedõno* /janü/ ‘one’, gen.sg. \**põpõru* /paprai/ ‘pepper’, \**oklepõ* /viklip/ ‘truss’, \**otõtõdõ* /vittõd/ ‘thence’, \**otõkõdõ* /vitkõd/ ‘whence’, \**jesmy* /jismoi/ ‘we are’, \**červo* /crevü/ ‘intestines’, \**jaje* /jojü/ ‘egg’, \**lõtõ* /l’otü/ ‘year’, \**dõlo* /d’olü/ ‘work’, \**polje* /püli/ ‘field’, \**žito* /zaitü/ ‘grain’, \**svõtõ* /sjõtü/ ‘holiday’, \**jõgo* /jaid’ü/ ‘yoke’, \**pivo* /paivü/ ‘beer’, \**žõdlo* /zõdlü/ ‘sting’, \**nebo* /nebü/ ‘heaven’, \**kolo* /t’õlü/ ‘wheel’, \**sõno* /sõnü/ ‘hay’, \**proso* /prõsü/ ‘millet’, \**tõtõ* /t’ostü/ ‘dough’, \**bõrdo* /b’ordü/ ‘swingle’, \**ordlo* /rãdlü/ ‘hookplow’, \**jutro* /jautrü/ ‘morning’, \**šidlo* /saidlü/ ‘awl’, \**sadlo* /sodlü/ ‘fat’, adv. \**tixõmõ* /taixãm/ ‘gently’, gen.sg. \**nokte* /nüci/ ‘night’, \**sole* /süli/ ‘salt’, \**rõže* /rãzi/ ‘rye’, \**võse* /vasi/ ‘village’, \**jõčõmenõ* /jãcmin/ ‘barley’, \**sõršõnõ* /sarsin/ ‘hornet’, \**grebenõ* /gribin/ ‘comb’, \**jasõnõ* /josin/ ‘ash-tree’, \**stõpenõ* /stõpin/ ‘step’, \**cõrky* /cart’ai/, \**cõrkõnõ* /cart’õv/ ‘church’, \**õglõ* /võd’õl/ ‘coal’, \**ostrovõ* /vãstrüv/ ‘Wustrow’, \**õgorõ* /võd’õr/ ‘eel’, \**kolkõlõ* /klãt’õl/ ‘bell’, \**popelõ* /püpel/ ‘ash’, \**večõrõ* /vicer/ ‘evening’, \**vixõrõ* /vaixãr/ ‘whirlwind’, \**õzlõ* /võzãl/ ‘knot’, \**nogõtõ* /nüd’õt/ ‘nail’, \**olkõtõ* /lüt’õt/ ‘elbow’, \**otrokõ* /vãtrük/ ‘son’, \**kožõnõ* /t’üzãn/ ‘fur’, \**bõbõnõ* /bõbãn/ ‘drum’, \**jablõko* /jõpt’ü/ ‘apple’, \**radostõ* /rãdüst/ ‘wedding’, \**jablõnõ* /jõblün/ ‘apple-tree’, \**stepõnõ* /stipin/ ‘treadle’, \**krasõnõ* /krosãn/ ‘cross worn on a necklace’, adv. \**ljubo* /l’aibü/ ‘kindly’, \**mokro* /mükrü/ ‘wet’, \**čisto* /caistü/ ‘clean’, \**rano* /rãnü/ ‘early’, \**dõlgo* /dãud’ü/ ‘long’, \**krivo* /kraivü/ ‘awry’, \**põlno* /pãunü/ ‘full’, \**suxo* /sauxü/ ‘drily’, \**nizõko* /naist’ü/ ‘low’, \**tõtõbo* /tãst’ü/ ‘heavily’, \**pozõbõno* /püzñü/ ‘late’, \**zimõno* /zaimñü/ ‘cool’, \**lõgõko* /l’ãt’ü/ ‘lightly’, \**mimo* /maimü/ ‘past’, \**jama* /jõmo/ ‘hole’, \**vorna* /vornõl/ ‘crow’, \**korva* /korvo/ ‘cow’, \**glina* /glainõ/ ‘clay’, \**tõča* /tõco/ ‘cloud’, \**stõpa* /stõpo/ ‘mortar’, \**suka* /sauko/ ‘whore’, \**võlna* /vãunõl/ ‘wool’, \**mõra* /m’oro/ ‘measure’, \**čãsa* /cosõl/ ‘bowl’, \**šõuka* /st’auko/ ‘pike’, \**lipa* /laipo/ ‘linden’, \**ryba* /rãibo/ ‘fish’, \**rõpa* /repo/ ‘turnip’, \**muxa* /mauxõl/ ‘fly’, gen.sg. \**boga* /bügo/ ‘god’, \**syra* /sãro/ ‘cheese’, \**dõnja* /dãno/ ‘day’, adv. \**doma* /dümo/ ‘home’, loc.sg. \**mõtõtõ* /mestõl/ ‘place’, gen.sg. \**medu* /medai/ ‘honey’, \**võsku* /vãst’ai/ ‘wax’, \**solmy* /slãmoi/ ‘straw’, dat.sg. \**zemji* /zimai/ ‘earth’, acc.sg. \**glinõ* /glainõ/ ‘clay’, \**rõkõ* /rõkõ/ ‘hand’, nom.pl. \**põrdzi* /põrdzai/ ‘thresholds’, \**rodzi* /rüdza/ ‘horns’, \**bõdzi* /büdza/ ‘gods’, \**gory* /d’õrãi/ ‘mountains’, \**nogy* /nüd’ai/ ‘legs’, \**vornõ* /vornãi/ ‘crows’, \**korvy* /korvoi/ ‘cows’, \**golvy* /glãvoi/ ‘heads’, \**gnidy* /gnaidãi/ ‘nits’, \**vidly* /vaidlãi/ ‘fork’, \**pelvy* /plãvoi/ ‘chaff’, \**sestry* /sestrãi/ ‘sisters’, \**kozy* /t’õzãi/ ‘goats’, \**võrby* /varboi/ ‘willows’, \**berzy* /brezãi/ ‘birches’, \**jedly* /jadlãi/ ‘fir-trees’, \**lipy* /laipo/ ‘lindens’, \**žaby* /zoboi/ ‘frogs’, \**ryby* /rãibo/ ‘fish’, \**rõpy* /repo/ ‘turnips’, \**jõskry* /jãskrãi/ ‘sparks’, \**rõby* /rõboi/ ‘seams’, \**zõby* /zõboi/ ‘teeth’, \**kõlsy* /klãsãi/ ‘ears of grain’, \**gady* /godãi/ ‘snakes’, \**võlsy* /vlãsãi/ ‘hair’, \**cõpy* /cepõi/ ‘flail’, \**kvõtõ* /kjõtãi/ ‘flowers’,

\**listy* /laistai/ 'leaves', \**kapjě* /kope/ 'drops', \**tqčě* /tqce/ 'clouds', \**grablě* /groble/ 'rake', \**sadjě* /sodze/ 'soot', \**qglě* /vqgle/ 'coals', \**gvozdě* /d'üzde/ 'nails', \**gostě* /d'üste/ 'guests', \**všši* /všsai/ 'lice', \**pěsni* /pesnai/ 'songs', \**dvbri* /dvarai/ 'door', \**sani* /sonai/ 'sledge', \**trōsti* /trāstai/ 'reed', \**děti* /detai/ 'children', \**ljudi* /l'audai/ 'people', \**mati* /motai/ 'mother', \**orky* /rāt'ai/ 'box', \**kamy* /komoī/ 'stone', \**golqbb* /d'ölqbb/ 'pigeon', \**skorupb* /st'ōraip/ 'shell', \**grušy* /grausai/, pl. \**grušvvy* /grausvoi/ 'pear(s)', \**čeljusb* /cil'aust/ 'chin', \**galqzb* /golqz/ 'branch', dual \**oči* /vicai/ 'eyes', \**uši* /vausai/ 'ears', \**rqcě* /rqce/ 'hands', \**nodzě* /nüdze/ 'feet', \**obě* /vibe/ 'both', further \**devętb* /divat/ 'nine', \**desętb* /disat/ 'ten', inf. \**kušat(i)* /t'ausot/ 'taste', \**kakat(i)* /kokot/ 'shit', \**krajat(i)* /krojot/ 'cut', aor. 3rd sg. \**xode* /xüdi/ 'went', \**reče* /rici/ 'said', preterit \**kradlb* /krodäl/ 'stole', \**jědlb* /jedäl/ 'ate', \**sčpalb* /sāpol/ 'slept', \**perdalb* /perdol/ 'sold'. Since acute and circumflex vowels were regularly shortened in Lechitic, I arrive at the following HYPOTHESIS: **vowels in final syllables were reduced if the vowel of the preceding syllable was long.** The reduction affected both short and long vowels, as is clear from the definite adjective, which has reduced endings. The stage of the language before the vowel reduction can be called Early Polabian.

If a reduced vowel in a final syllable can be taken as evidence for an Early Polabian long vowel in the preceding syllable, there is a class of long vowels in open syllables which appear to have originated from a retraction of the stress from short vowels in final syllables: \**voda* /vādä/ 'water', \**smola* /smölä/ 'resin', \**zemja* /zim'äl/ 'earth', \**noga* /nügäl/ 'foot', \**stbdza* /stadzä/ 'path', \**kosa* /t'ösäl/ 'scythe', \**osa* /väsäl/ 'wasp', \**medja* /midzäl/ 'balk', \**žena* /zenäl/ 'woman', \**tbma* /t'ämäl/ 'darkness', \**blbxa* /bläxäl/ 'flea', \**bčcela* /celäl/ 'bee', \**vbčera* /ceräl/ 'yesterday', \**duša* /dausäl/ 'soul', \**golva* /gläväl/ 'head', \**serda* /sredäl/ 'middle', \**zima* /zaimäl/ 'winter', \**rřka* /rřkäl/ 'hand', \**pęta* /p'ętäl/ 'heel', \**gręda* /gr'ędäl/ 'beam', \**rřka* /rekäl/ 'river', \**stęna* /st'onäl/ 'wall', \**borda* /brödäl/ 'chin', pl. \**červa* /creväl/ 'intestines', \**jaja* /jojäl/ 'eggs', \**językb* /jęzëk/ 'tongue', \**čelvěkb* /cläväk/ 'man', \**životb* /zaivät/ 'life, body', adv. \**vysokb* /voisëk/ 'above', \**širokb* /sarëk/ 'widely', \**glqbokb* /glqbëk/ 'deeply', \**dalekb* /dolëk/ 'far', \**verteno* /vritenë/ 'spindle', \**rešeto* /risetë/ 'sieve', gen.sg. \**života* /zaivätäl/ 'life', pl. \**zvenesa* /zvenesäl/ 'fellies', \**slovesa* /slüvesäl/ 'words', \**očesa* /vicesäl/ 'eyes', inf. \**tčkat(i)* /tākät/ 'weave', preterit \**zbręlb* /zar'äl/ 'saw'. The trisyllabic word forms show that the stress was not yet retracted to the initial syllable at this stage. The stress was not retracted from long vowels: gen.pl. \**bogovb* /büd'üv/ 'gods', inst.sg. \**podb zemjejb* /püd zimä/ 'under the earth', inf. \**ubost(i)* /aibüst/ 'stab', \**perpekt(i)* /prepict/ 'roast', \**pervezt(i)* /privist/ 'drive over', further \**pętb desętb* /pętdišt/ 'fifty', \**šestb desętb* /sistdišt/ 'sixty'. The stage of the language before the retraction of the stress can be identified as the westernmost dialect of Proto-Slavic and may be called pre-Polabian.

It is clear from the material that the retraction of the stress was anterior to the loss of weak jers in initial syllables. Since the reflex of the newly stressed

vowels merged with the reflex of the Proto-Slavic neo-acute vowels, it is reasonable to date the retraction to the time of disintegration of the proto-language. Weak jers in initial syllables were lost when they remained pretonic after the retraction of the stress, e.g. *\*bъčela* /celä/ ‘bee’, *\*sъrebro* /srebrü/ ‘silver’.

After the retraction of the stress from final syllables there were three classes of Early Polabian nominal paradigms: (a) nouns with a short stem vowel, (b) nouns with a long stem vowel, and (c) nouns with an alternation between a short stem vowel in originally stem-stressed forms and a long stem vowel in newly stem-stressed forms. As in Czech, where we find similar accent classes with a quite different distribution, several types of leveling took place. The short stem vowel of the nom.sg. form was generalized in gen.sg. *\*vola* /vålo/ ‘ox’, pl. *\*pъsi* /pasai/ ‘dogs’, *\*sъsy* /såsâi/ ‘teats’, *\*nožě* /nüze/ ‘knives’, *\*oni* /vinai/ ‘they’, but not in sg. *\*ona* /vånä/ ‘she’, pl. *\*voly* /vålě/ ‘oxen’, *\*pъsy* /p’âsě/ ‘dogs’. The quantitative alternation was extended to nouns with a regular short stem vowel in the case of *\*berza* /brezä/, pl. *\*berzy* /brezâi/ ‘birch(es)’, *\*děva* /devä/ ‘girl’, *\*kolda* /klädä/ ‘barrel’, *\*slina* /slainä/ ‘spit’, *\*solma* /slâmä/ beside /slåmo/ ‘straw’, *\*metъla* /metlä/ ‘broom’, *\*sestra* /sesträ/, pl. *\*sestry* /sestrâi/ ‘sister(s)’, *\*ovъca* /vicä/, pl. *\*ovъcě* /vice/ ‘sheep’, *\*jъstъba* /jâzbä/ ‘playhouse’, further *\*ordlo* /rådlü/ ‘hookplow’, *\*zъrno* /zörnü/ ‘kernel’, *\*jablъko* /jopt’ü/ ‘apple’, *\*rebro* /rebrü/ ‘rib’, *\*okъno* /våknü/ ‘window’, pl. *\*ordla* /rådlä/, *\*zъrna* /zörnä/, *\*jablъka* /jopkä/, *\*rebra* /rebrä/, *\*okъna* /våknä/ beside /våkno/. The long stem vowel was generalized in the definite adjective and in the present tense of the verb: *\*starъjъ* /storě/, *\*staraja* /storä/, *\*staroje* /storä/ ‘old’, *\*stariji* /storě/ ‘parents’, *\*malъjъ* /molě/ ‘small’, *\*prostъjъ* /pröstě/ ‘mad’, *\*xromъjъ* /xrümě/ ‘lame’, *\*bosъjъ* /böse/ ‘barefoot’, *\*šestъjъ* /sestě/ ‘sixth’, 3rd sg. *\*slyši* /slâisě/ ‘hears’, *\*plače* /plocě/ ‘cries’, *\*poje* /püjě/ ‘sings’, *\*zove* /züvě/ ‘calls’, *\*peče* /picě/ ‘bakes’, *\*zvoni* /züně/ ‘rings’, *\*doji* /düjě/ ‘milks’, *\*zvъni* /zvaně/ ‘sounds’. The analogy affected even inf. *\*plakat(i)* /plokät/ ‘cry’, but not *\*kušat(i)* /t’ausot/ ‘taste’, cf. preterit *\*plakalъ* /plokol/, *\*kušalъ* /t’ausol/. On the other hand, the infinitive adopted the vocalism of the preterit in *\*sъpat(i)* /sâpot/ beside /sâpät/ ‘sleep’, *\*sъpalъ* /sâpol/ ‘slept’. The preterit appears to have generalized the reflex of accentual mobility, e.g. *\*kъsilъ* /kqsäl/ ‘bit’, *\*naidlъ* /nodâl/ ‘found’, inf. *\*kъsit(i)* /kqsět/, *\*nait(i)* /noit/.

The hypothesis formulated above does not account for the origin of reduced vowels in medial syllables. After the shortening of acute and circumflex vowels in Lechitic, long vowels were limited to final and penultimate syllables, while the initial syllable of polysyllabic word forms always had short vocalism. It appears that vowels in medial syllables of trisyllabic word forms were reduced if the vowel of the initial syllable was stressed, e.g. *\*kameny* /komänâi/ ‘oven’, *\*moždženě* /müzděne/ ‘brains’, *\*jagody* /jod’ädâi/ ‘berries’, *\*sliveně* /slaivēne/, *\*sliveny* /slaivēnâi/ ‘plums’, gen.sg. *\*sěkarja* /sekär’o/ ‘mower’, adv. *\*napoly* /nopälâi/ ‘halfway’, also *\*četvero* /citvârü/ ‘four’, *\*pętero* /pätârü/ ‘five’, *\*šestero*

/sistärü/ ‘six’, \**na gordě* /no gārde/ ‘at the castle, in court’, \**na světě* /no svāte/ ‘in the world’, \**v̄ xoldě* /v̄ā xlāde/ ‘in the cool’, \**perd̄o gord̄omb* /prid gārdām/ ‘before the court’, \**s̄o toboj̄o* /s̄ā tāb̄o/ ‘with you’, \**za soboj̄o* /zo s̄āb̄o/ ‘behind oneself’. The vowel of the medial syllable was restored in \**skorupi* /st’ōraipai/ ‘shells’, \**s̄br̄šeně* /sarsine/ ‘hornets’, \**ormeni* /rāminai/ ‘shoulders’. Since stressed vowels were probably somewhat longer than pretonic vowels, it is possible that the quantitative difference was phonemicized when the stress was fixed on the initial syllable of the word. If this is correct, the above hypothesis explains vowel reduction in both final and non-final syllables.

There was no vowel reduction in trisyllabic word forms with a stressed short vowel in the medial syllable, e.g. dual \**kolěni* /t’ül’onai/ ‘knees’, acc.sg. \**oxot̄o* /v̄āx̄öt̄o/ ‘health’, \**prolēto* /prül’otü/ ‘spring’, \**želězo* /zil’ozü/ ‘iron’, \**gr̄bm̄ělo* /gram’olü/ ‘thundered’. The reflex of this pattern was apparently generalized in the preterit of prefixed verbs, e.g. \**ulučil̄o* /ailaucāl/, inf. \**ulučit̄(i)* /ailaucēt/ ‘hit upon’, \**upustil̄o* /aipautāl/ ‘dropped’, \**položil̄o* /pölüzāl/ ‘put’, \**zabl̄ođil̄o* /zobl̄ođāl/ ‘went astray’. Most trisyllabic and all longer word forms have a reduced vowel in the final syllable, which points to a generalization of the pattern with a long vowel in the penultimate syllable, e.g. \**malina* /molainā/ ‘raspberry’, \**južina* /jauzainā/ ‘dinner’, \**matica* /motaicā/ ‘queen bee’, \**samica* /somaicā/ ‘female’, \**p̄b̄šenica* /pasinaicā/ ‘wheat’, \**ješčerica* /vistāraicā/ ‘lizard’, \**jalovica* /jolüvaicā/ ‘heifer’, \**oranoje* /v̄āronā/ ‘plowed’, \**udělanoje* /aid’ālonā/ ‘done’, also pl. \**języky* /j̄oz̄āit’ě/ ‘tongues’, \**zajęcě* /zoj̄ęcā/ ‘hares’, \**po děl̄u* /pü d’olě/ ‘after work’, \**v̄o gostě* /v̄ā d’üstā/ ‘on a visit’, cf. \**dělo* /d’olü/ ‘work’, \**gostě* /d’üste/ ‘guests’.

Thus, I arrive at the following relative chronology of accentual developments:

- (1) Retraction of the stress from short vowels in final syllables and lengthening of newly stressed short vowels in open syllables.
- (2) Loss of weak jers.
- (3) Fixation of the stress on the initial syllable and rephonemicization of vowel quantity.
- (4) Reduction of vowels in syllables following a long vowel and loss of distinctive quantity in full vowels.
- (5) Fixation of the stress on the last full vowel of a word form.

It is of course possible that the reduction of vowels in final syllables preceded the fixation of the stress on the initial syllable and the reduction of vowels in medial syllables. In any case, it must have been preceded by the loss of vowel quantity in unstressed final syllables, which can be dated after the early retraction of the stress.

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