



VOLUME 40, NUMBER 2      Summer 1996

# SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL

Published by the American Association  
of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages  
AATSEEL of the U.S., Inc.

An earlier version of this review appeared in the Fall 1995 (39.3) issue of *SEEJ*. Unfortunately, several mistakes which should have been corrected appeared in the final review, resulting in a misrepresentation of both Dr. Corin's and Dr. Nuorluoto's ideas. The editorial staff regrets the confusion.

Juhani Nuorluoto. *Die Bezeichnung der konsonantischen Palatalität im Altkirchenslavischen: Eine graphematisch-phonologische Untersuchung zur Rekonstruktion und handschriftlichen Überlieferung*. Vorträge und Abhandlungen zur Slavistik, Band 24. Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1994. 138 pp. (paper)

Nuorluoto presents a unique model of original (Constantine's, henceforth proto-) OCS phonology and orthography. For proto-OCS he posits a comprehensive system of palatalization correlations (i.e. phonemically distinct palatalized vs. non-palatalized phonemes) for all consonants except *č ž š, j, c dz*, possibly *št' žd'*. In compensation he posits: 1) a single *jer* phoneme (resulting from merger of original *\*ī* and *\*ū*), the use of the letters <Ѣ> and <ѣ> being regulated by the palatalization value of the preceding consonant; 2) a single */i/* phoneme (from merger of *\*ī* and *\*ū*, with possible "quasi-phonemic" status for *y*), use of <Ѣ> (variant <ѣ>) and <ѣ> (later replaced by <Ѣѣ>) regulated by the palatalization value of the preceding consonant; 3) a single nasal vowel phoneme */ǫ/* (palatalization correlation indicated by <Ѣ>:<ѣ>); 4) */a/* (palatalized vs. nonpalatalized rendered by <Ѣ> vs. <ѣ>); and 5) */u/* (palatalization correlation only for *l' n' r':lnr*, indicated by <Ѣ>:<ѣ>). The author sees no palatalization correlation before */e/*, all consonants, including original *\*l' \*n' \*r'*, being pronounced hard (sic!) in this position.

This original phonology and orthography were modified following their introduction into Moravia. Nuorluoto's assumptions concerning ninth-century Bulgarian-Macedonian phonology also force him to posit a further "Pannonian" stage between Moravia and the assumed return of OCS to Bulgaria-Macedonia, characterized by palatalization relations similar to those found in Slovene and Serbo-Croatian.

The primary changes attributed to the Moravian phase include introduction of the digraph <Ѣѣ> to render traditional *y*. Due to the assumed lack of generalized palatalization of consonants before *i* in Czech, the graphic opposition <Ѣ>:<ѣ> could not properly express the necessary distinctions—presumably *n'i : ni : ny* (with *y* pronounced diphthongally). Nuorluoto assumes, however, the presence also of <Ѣ> in proto-Glagolitic, and this vitiates somewhat his argument for the necessity of an entirely new letter in Moravia. Another Moravian innovation is the introduction of a three-letter system for rendering nasal vowels <Ѣѣѣ>, reflecting the Czech-Moravian-Slovak-E. Slavic situation with a hard-soft opposition before *o*, but not before *e*. The introduction of a four-letter system <Ѣѣѣѣ> takes place in Pannonia, to allow expression of palatalization correlations before both *e* and *o*. The palatalization indicator <ѣ> is assumed to have been introduced in Pannonia.

On the basis of their graphic and orthographic features, Nuorluoto groups the OCS mss. into two groups—those which appear to go back to "Pannonian" archetypes (Zographensis, Marianus, Suprasliensis and several others), and those which go back to Moravian archetypes (Kiev Fragments, Psalterium Sinaiticum, Ohrid Fragments). It is worth remembering that the Moravian Mission lasted a mere twenty-two years, under conditions hardly conducive to controlled, systematic development, and with the Macedonian Slavic-speaking Constantine and, later, Methodius as guiding figures throughout. To assume a systematic adaptation of OCS in favor of Moravian linguistic reality during this period, much less two successive revisions, strains plausibility.

The primary difficulty with this approach emerges clearly from Nuorluoto's methodological statement: "Ich werde hier versuchen, eine phonologische Interpretation für den graphemischen Usus der Uraglogica darzulegen, die vorwiegend auf der Vermutung basiert, Kon-



stantin habe die Paarigkeit palatalisiert-nichtpalatalisiert im Konsonantismus berücksichtigen müssen" (16). In other words, Nuorluoto begins from a questionable assumption (except perhaps in regard to *u*), and reconstructs an unattested stage of Proto-Glagolitic in accordance with the assumption. By analyzing the OCS manuscript data in the light of this reconstructed Proto-Glagolitic, he infers first a Moravian, then a Pannonian stage. In all of this, the manuscript data are not used to corroborate the original assumption concerning Constantine's Slavic phonology (a comprehensive system of paired hard and soft consonants resulting from merger of paired front and non-front vowels except *e:o*), but rather as clues to the manner of its implementation in the script and orthography. The only (partial) exception is that manuscript data are invoked as a basis for the inference that no palatalization correlation existed in Proto-OCS before the vowel *e*, but rather that all consonants (incl. *\*l' \*n' \*r'*) were pronounced hard in this environment (the automatic softening of consonants before *e* in some Bulgarian dialects is seen as secondary!). Yet even here it is clear that the conclusion is predetermined by the author's conception of what was possible in Constantine's phonology.

Nuorluoto's assumptions concerning the dialectological basis of Constantine's Slavic phonology, while not implausible, are subject to doubts based on both chronological and geographic considerations. First, Nuorluoto assumes for certain processes an early date and pan-Bulgaro-Macedonian breadth which are less than likely, viz. merger of *b* and *ɮ*, *ɣ* and *q*, *ě* and *a*, dispalatalization of *\*l' \*n' \*r'/\_e*, especially since he is then forced to admit secondary reversal or redifferentiation in all of these cases for many dialects. The merger of *i* and *y* was of course *almost* pan-Bulgaro-Macedonian, but merger with preceding palatalization correlation certainly was not and the change of *y>ɮ* in Visoka makes it clear that the merger itself was a later development. Moreover, Nuorluoto's reconstruction is based on a typological situation characteristic specifically of some *eastern* Bulgarian (especially Rhodope) dialects. Yet it is well known that the so-called *jat*-line (more properly termed by Kočev the *jat*-belt—the primary isogloss bundle for intrasyllabic consonant-vowel interaction) today runs precisely through or near the Salonika area! One must question the wisdom of attributing to proto-OCS a phonemic structure manifesting an extreme development, and at so early a time, of tendencies characteristic of certain later archetypically eastern Bulgarian dialects (though admittedly the dialect geography of the transitional zone's southern periphery has changed considerably over the centuries).

While the previous comments have been in large part critical, they should not be taken as a wholesale refutation of each of the author's claims. Many, to be sure, are insufficiently supported, and the argumentation in places is less than coherent. This approach does, however, have the virtue of forcing the reader out of the easy habit of viewing OCS as virtually a form of Late Common Slavic with minimal concessions to the presumably "nacsent" developments later to characterize East South Slavic. Though in actuality what Nuorluoto does is to replace one bias with another, he nevertheless forces us to confront possibilities which in some cases have never been seriously considered.

Andrew R. Corin, University of California, Los Angeles