THE BEGINNING OF GERMANIC PROSODY

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Early Germanic was a more counting language; even after stress was fixed on the root, it could fall on either mora of a bimoric complex. In the northern dialects, two boundary signals also existed, the prototypes of stød (correction) and its opposite.

Very little progress has been made in the study of Germanic prosody since 1877, the year in which Verner published his article. All we know for certain about Germanic stress is still only Verner's Law. My attempt to eliminate word stress and reconstruct sentence stress at that period was misunderstood by my critics as an attack on Verner's Law itself [1]. To go beyond Verner, we can retrace to facts of two types — accents in old manuscripts and prosodic phenomena in modern languages and dialects. The data obtained from such conscientious spellers as Orm and Notker are hard to interpret. Modern accents also pose numerous difficulties, but at least they can be observed in the pronunciation of native speakers, and they display sufficient variety to justify an attempt at a reconstruction. I have spent the time between the appearance of my earlier works on this subject [2] and the present studying West Germanic (WG) accentology. Below I will state my conclusions in dogmatic form; detailed arguments and references will be given elsewhere.

Prosodic units that go back to so-called syllable accents have been attested only in North Germanic: in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and in the Rhein-Limburg area. If we agree to view the glottal stop and preaspiration as analogues of stød, our map will include English, Icelandic, Faroese, and several additional dialects of Dutch and German, but its borders will not move more to the south. All other accents can be reconstructed only from the traces they left on vowels and consonants. However, if the place of ancient stress is partly deducible from the reflexes of diphthongs and triphthongs on the vast territory from Priesland to Lutzenau, the type of old stress and the number of the once relevant accents remain a matter of speculation. Combining the data supplied by Verner's Law and Akzentursprüngen (a process responsible for the variation in the 17-45 type), we can state that stress in Early Germanic remained movable within a bimoric complex long after it became fixed on the root. Some accent-like units most probably existed in North Germanic about two millennia ago, but it does not follow that they were present in the languages of the Germanic tribes south of Cologne.

To the extent one can judge by the situation in the Rhein-Limburg area, accents delimited certain types of bimoric bases and performed the function of boundary signals. The prosodies of the Swedish-Norwegian type (accents 1 and 2), governed as they are at present jointly by the number of syllables rule, could not be the prototypes of such accents. Accents 1 and 2 (with the exception of a few dialectal occurrences) do not depend on the phonetic basis, and therefore it is reasonable to assume that this independence is late. In Danish, stød and stød-like accents are connected with the basis and with the (actual) number of syllables in a word. In German and Dutch dialects, the appearance of correction and its opposite is also subject to the phonetic basis and the (original) number of syllables: apocopated words are accented differently from nonapocopated ones. In both areas, the basis is the older distributional factor, the only one that existed prior to apocope. Danish dialectologists regard stød as a late development. One of the implications of their theory is that Danish stød and WG correction are unrelated, which also makes the way on the chronology of stød untenable. The WG analogue of stød distinguishes between open and close vowels. According to the main Ripuarian pattern, correction occurs on the reflexes of the old open vowels /a/ e/ o/ and of the old diphthongs, insofar as they were smoothed. Words of this group are said to have spontaneous correction. The reflexes of /i/ u/ and nonmonothongized diphthongs are corrected when the word is dysyllabic or apocopated and when the postvocalic consonant is voiced. In dysyllabic and apocopated words whose root consists of a short vowel followed by a resonant and an obstruent, i.e., in words with diphthongal groups, correction is also possible only before a voiced obstruent, so in Hunde but not in Kante.

The vowels /i/ u/ do not belong with /a/ e/ o/ because in WG they were treated as diphthongal groups, namely, as /ij/ uw/ on a par with /an el or/, and so forth. Correction marked the end of the bimoric consonor basis. All the early Germanic languages show a more counting, and stress, as evidenced by Akzentursprüngen, could fall on either mora of a bimoric complex; correction separated the two parts of the word that served as the locus of shifting stress. In words with diphthongal groups, correction occurred only before a voiced obstruent because a voiceless obstruent marked the end of the prosodically active string by its voicelessness. Diphthongs were accented like diphthongal groups: when smoothed, they did not differ from the other long open vowels, and when preserved as units with two distinct elements, their order /ii/ uu/ can be analyzed.

In our classification of phonemes, we often try to discover whether Early Germanic obstruents were phonologically voiced/voiceless or strong/weak. It may well be that a distinctive feature is a more complex phenomenon than we think. If we treat distinctive features pragmatically ("what do they do in the system?"), rather than as mere classificatory labels, /p t k/, to give one example, can be strong from the point of view of syllable contact and voiceless in being able to delimit a certain type of basis. Later one of the functions can disappear and the voicelessness of strength will remain the only feature of /p t k/. Still later even this feature can become detrimental to the performance of the consonants' next role, and then aspiration (reinforced by the new circumstances) will assert itself, and so forth.

Diphthongal groups (including /13/ and /i/u/), as well as old monosyllables with a combinatorial
vernaculars, correction is phonetically weak, whereas the other words it occurs before voiceless, not before voiced, obstruents. In most of these vernaculars, correction is phonetically weak, whereas the extending accent is prominent. The riddle of the "mirror rule" will remain insoluble if we keep looking on correction as the only thinkable marker of old bimoric bases. However, we accept the possibility of other signals in East Jutland systems - [1] (two morae and apocope) or [1] (two morae and a pause) - the Riparian rule and the rule of the peripheral dialects from northern Limburg to Arzbach will emerge as equally probable. The unmarked signal has a blurred realization everywhere; in Riparian, the opposite of correction is "nothing," in Klevo, Arzbach, etc., the opposite of "extension" is a weak shadow of forceful correction.

It cannot be stated whether the two ancient boundary signals always or at least sometimes formed an equivalent opposition. In Danish, no-stød is never marked; yet as a theoretical possibility an opposition in which [1] and [1] were equal partners should not be ruled out. It is probable that Danish dialects no-stød is never marked because the marker of apocope and apocope on correption as the only extension in all the Early Germanic dialects, and there is no bridge from them to the accents registered in Old Indian, Ancient Greek, and Balto-Slavic. Especially unproductive is the discussion about dynamic stress versus musical stress, for these concepts have no foundation in either phonetics or phonology. Arzbach will emerge as an unacceptable approach in the root the Germanic languages, the most easily discernible period of the entire prosodic system. Frings carried his point too far when he insisted on the equal importance of correction and "extension" in West Franconian, but even less convincing is the thesis of Dutch dialectologists that "extension" is marked in Limburg because their pronunciation is in general smoother than German. Markedness is a functional concept and cannot be derived from the articulatory base.

The problem is, however, not the elimination of the root of this journal.

