

Christian Stang's revolution in Slavic accentology

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1. Introduction

Nowadays it is widely felt that Christian Stang's *Slavonic Accentuation*, which appeared in 1957, revolutionized Slavic accentology. What is no longer generally realized is that initially Stang's monograph tended to be regarded as derivative and somewhat old-fashioned, and that years went by before it came to be perceived as epoch-making. The discrepancy between the initial reception of *Slavonic Accentuation* and its present exalted status is the subject of this contribution.

2. Testimonies to the revolutionary impact of *Slavonic Accentuation*

Two of the most productive accentologists active in the second half of the twentieth century have explicitly testified to the revolutionary significance of Stang's book:

- (1) “The publication of Stang's monograph on Slavic accentuation (1957) marked an era in the study of the subject. The importance of this book can hardly be overestimated” (Kortlandt 1975: ix).
- (2) “(...) появление книги Хр. Станга (...) знаменовало собой начало “революции” в славянской и балто-славянской акцентологии” (Dybo 1981: 3).

In the accentological literature of the eighties and nineties similar sentiments have been expressed quite frequently by others, e.g.:

- (3) “Stang's book caused a split between traditionalists, who went on developing the time-honoured approach, and revolutionaries, for whom much of the existing literature on the subject had overnight become irrelevant” (Vermeer 1984a: 331, cf. also 1992: 115).
- (4) “‘Slavonic Accentuation’ bildet einen Meilenstein in der Entwicklung der historischen Akzentologie” (Lehfeldt 1989: 29).
- (5) “During the last decades, remarkable progress has been made in the study of Slavic accentology. This period of rapid progress was initiated by C.S. Stang (1957)” (Verweij 1994: 498).

Several accentologists have claimed that their investigations are founded on a line of work originating with *Slavonic Accentuation*. About Andrej Zaliznjak's description of Common Slavic and early Russian accentuation the author himself has the following to say: “во всем существенном она непосредственно |241| опирается на работы X. Станга, В.М. Иллича-Свитыча и в особенности В.А. Дыбо” (Zaliznjak 1985: 3). Similarly, Wolfgang Hock states that his work “stützt sich auf die grundlegenden Erkenntnisse und Fortschritte, die mit und seit der Monographie STANGS (1957) auf dem Gebiet der slavischen Akzentologie zu verzeichnen sind” (1992: 7).

The epoch-making character of *Slavonic Accentuation* appears to be a fact readily admitted nowadays by scholars of different backgrounds. Yet, as we shall, see, the initial reception of Stang's monograph was quite different.

3. Early views of *Slavonic Accentuation*

André Vaillant welcomed *Slavonic Accentuation* in the following words:

“Christian S. Stang présente un exposé d'ensemble sur l'accentuation en slave commun et dans les langues slaves: *Slavonic Accentuation* (...). Il sera précieux à consulter pour le détail des faits d'accent et d'intonation dans les différents types flexionnels, nominaux et verbaux. Dans la théorie générale de l'accentuation slave, l'auteur adopte partiellement les vues de J. Kuryłowicz ([...] 1952 [...]), et nie en particulier que la loi de Saussure ait agi en slave” (Vaillant 1958a).

These sentiments are quite representative of early reactions to *Slavonic Accentuation*: Vaillant obviously does not feel that he is witnessing a revolution, whereas he stresses the context provided by Kuryłowicz's writings on accentology and the suitability of *Slavonic Accentuation* as a compendium (“... précieux à consulter ...”).

Early reviews of *Slavonic Accentuation* are few and most of them are uninformative, usually because their authors had a stake in specific conceptions of Slavic accentology.

Bulaxovskij, for instance, whose earliest work on accentological subjects antedates the beginning of the first world war and who was approaching the end of his active career when *Slavonic Accentuation* appeared, predictably argues that the novelties Stang contributes with respect to the “classical” approach of van Wijk and Lehr-Spławiński are unnecessary or indefensible (1958).

Equally predictably, Kuryłowicz (1958b), who had been developing his own quite personal conception of accentology since the early thirties and whose book *L'accentuation des langues indo-européennes* (1952), a large part of which was devoted to Slavic and Baltic, made such an impression that it was reissued in 1958, lucidly discusses the differences between the views put forward in *Slavonic Accentuation* and his own conception of Slavic accentology. He finds no reasons for changing his mind.

More eloquent testimony to the early impact of *Slavonic Accentuation* is contained in three surveys of recent literature that appeared in the early sixties.

The first of those is by Horálek (1961). It is interesting to see how Horálek's divides his attention among different investigators. Approximately half of his text (o.c.: 357-368) is devoted to the Praguians (Trubetzkoy and Jakobson) and to |242| schol-

ars Horálek regards as continuing the Praguians' work (in particular Isačenko, Martinet and van Wijk).¹ The choice is curious, because Trubetzkoy's and Jakobson's publications on Slavic historical accentology are few and inconclusive, a point readily conceded by Horálek himself, who observes "daß sie keine einheitliche Konzeption erhalten, daß sie öfters in wichtigen Fragen auseinandergehen, manchmal sich selbst widersprechen" (o.c.: 367).² Despite all this he concludes that they "im Grunde genommen aber doch den richtigen Weg weisen" (ibid.).

Kuryłowicz gets eight pages all by himself (o.c.: 368-375) and again Horálek's conclusions are worth quoting. While admitting that Kuryłowicz's publications leave many knotty problems unresolved he states: "weitere Forschungen werden jedoch von diesem Bilde ausgehen müssen" (o.c.: 375).

Stang is allotted just over a single page (o.c.: 376-377), in which he is depicted as a mere epigone of Kuryłowicz. In Horálek's words, *Slavonic Accentuation* "steht unter dem Einfluß der Arbeiten von Kuryłowicz. In vielem kann das Buch direkt als Ergänzung der Darstellungen K.'s aufgefaßt werden, manchmal auch nur als ihre Erweiterung und Popularisierung. Stang ist kein Sprachwissenschaftler, der sich selbst um die Bildung einer neuen Konzeption bemüht; er verläßt sich vor allem auf das Belegmaterial und verarbeitet es hauptsächlich klassifikationsmäßig" (o.c.: 376), and, slightly later: "Selbständig ist Stang nur in der Darstellung verschiedener Einzelheiten; wenn er von Kuryłowicz abweicht, vertritt er größtenteils traditionelle Anschauungen" (o.c.: 377).

Even in Horálek's eyes *Slavonic Accentuation* has some value: "Der größte Wert der Arbeit Stangs liegt u. E. in der übersichtlichen und klaren Darstellung, in der Zusammenfassung des Stoffes und in dem gut ausgesuchten Belegmaterial" (o.c.: 377). Horálek's perceptions of the value of *Slavonic Accentuation* strongly resemble Vaillant's.

A similar view recurs in Aitzetmüller's overview of recent contributions to Slavic accentology (1962). As in Horálek's case, the quantitative facts alone are eloquent. In the main body of Aitzetmüller's text (o.c.: 48-58) and excluding the footnotes, Kuryłowicz is mentioned ten times as often as Stang (forty vs. four times), with Vaillant coming in between (eighteen times). Aitzetmüller disagrees with Horálek's view of Stang as an epigone of Kuryłowicz; rather Stang should be regarded as standing "auf dem Boden der traditionellen Sprachwissenschaft" (o.c.: |243| 47). Contrary to Horálek, Aitzetmüller rejects most of what Kuryłowicz has to offer and reserves the word "bahnbrechend" for Vaillant's contributions to accentology, in particular his well-known 1936 article and the passages on accent in the first volumes of his *Grammaire comparée des langues slaves* (1950, 1958b). Aitzetmüller stresses the importance of

¹ Most of Van Wijk's numerous publications on Slavic accentology precede the rise of Prague School phonology and cannot have been intended by Horálek. However, Van Wijk was receptive to innovations and came to accept Trubetzkoy's and Jakobson's brain-child in all essential respects (see in particular Van Wijk 1939). Towards the end of his life he came to realize that accentologists working within a classical framework tended to reconstruct too large a number of tonal movements to be realistic from a Prague School point of view (see in particular Van Wijk 1942: 58, 62).

² Note that Horálek's survey was too early to take account of Jakobson (1963).

Vaillant's laryngealist approach to Slavic accentology, in particular his assumption that the Balto-Slavic acute reflects Proto-Indo-European sequences containing laryngeals, whereas the circumflex continues the lengthened grade and length arisen as a consequence of early contractions (o.c.: 48-50).

Lunt's overview (1963) is devoted in large measure to factual issues raised by Kuryłowicz's conception, e.g. the central question whether or not Kuryłowicz is justified by the available facts in rejecting the possibility of prosodic contrasts in unstressed syllables. Although it is not Lunt's purpose to explicitly evaluate individual publications, he does observe that Stang "occupies a sort of middle ground" (o.c.: 83), which is in line with what we have seen so far. Lunt is however among the first commentators to point out that Stang does not merely compile existing knowledge and conflate earlier scholars' views, but adds new elements that are of potential significance: in a footnote, attention is drawn to the fact that Stang, alone among the accentologists whose work Lunt is reviewing, has adduced novel pertinent facts: "Stang has been able to add a new dimension to several of the problems of detail by citing data from accented manuscripts, chiefly East Slavic. [...] He is surely right in seeing a PSl. initial stress on 1 sg. pres. in some categories" (o.c.: 97n.).

We have to conclude that immediately upon its appearance, Stang's *Slavonic Accentuation* struck observers as basically conservative and consolidating.³

This is not as strange as it may seem now. At the time, the background against which any new accentological publication was viewed was provided primarily by Kuryłowicz's work, even in the case of scholars who rejected most of Kuryłowicz's results. And compared with Kuryłowicz's trail-blazing texts, *Slavonic Accentuation* looks timid and tradition-bound. It is only in hindsight that we can see that Kuryłowicz has inspired later accentological work only on a very limited scale, if at all. In contrast, *Slavonic Accentuation* has spawned two productive groups of investigators. First there is the Moscow group, whose most productive representative is V.A. Dybo. Second, there is the Dutch group, most eminent among whom is F.H.H. Kortlandt.

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4. The Moscow accentologists

When *Slavonic Accentuation* came to the attention of Vladimir Antonovič Dybo, he was just embarking on an ambitious attempt to establish once and for all the correctness of de Saussure's law for Slavic (Dybo 1981: 3). Dybo was forced to take a stand because Stang argues in great detail that the linguistic facts do not warrant the view that de Saussure's law took place in Slavic. Stang's reasoning convinced Dybo completely. His review of *Slavonic Accentuation* is not an orthodox review at all, but a regular ar-

³ It is not the place here for a complete account of the reception of *Slavonic Accentuation*, but to the best of my knowledge the reactions I have adduced are representative. In Nonnenmacher-Pribić (1961), the first version of which was finished before Stang's monograph appeared, one or two inconclusive references of the type "Stang, too, is opposed to de Saussure's law" have been added in the published version; Jakobson (1963) treats Stang (with four references) still largely as a scholar echoing and continuing Kuryłowicz's work, which is referred to sixteen times.

ticle in which he proceeds to reconcile Stang's view with the results of his own research (Dybo 1962b, published with a regrettable delay of several years).

An explicit evaluation by Dybo of *Slavonic Accentuation* surfaces in his review of Linda Sadnik's book *Slavische Akzentuation* (1959). In the first sentence, Dybo mentions Kuryłowicz and Stang in one breath, as follows: "После работ Е. Куриловича ([1952]) и Хр. Станга ([1957]) стало ясно, что балто-славянская акцентология стоит на пути основательного пересмотра традиционных положений и методов" (1960: 113). At first glance, it might seem that here again, Stang is being presented as a mere extension of Kuryłowicz, but this time the reverse turns out to be the case: after the first sentence, Kuryłowicz drops from view and in the main body of the text it is only with Stang's conceptions that Dybo is concerned.

Subsequently the Moscow accentologists have developed a comprehensive view of the accentuation of Proto-Slavic. They have done so primarily by building on insights and practices that are prominent in *Slavonic Accentuation*:

- (1) Two thirds of the text of *Slavonic Accentuation* (pp. 56-167) is devoted to a detailed discussion of the role played by accent in inflexion. Stang reconstructs a system of three "accent types" or "accent paradigms". Dybo took Stang's conception of accent types as his starting point and elaborated it many respects, extending it to word formation and generalizing it to a simple rule of stress placement (see in particular Dybo 1968 and 1981).
- (2) Throughout *Slavonic Accentuation*, Stang pays considerable attention to the evidence provided by early accented texts written in the Cyrillic tradition. Although this had been done occasionally before, most earlier accentologists had tended to avoid the evidence of those texts as much as possible. To Stang, in contrast, it was "parfaitement clair que le traitement définitif de l'histoire de l'accentuation slave avec tous les problèmes connexes ne sera possible que quand les vieux textes accentués auront étudiés à fond" (Stang 1952: 5). The Moscow accentologists have paid considerable attention to accented Cyrillic texts, cf., e.g., the use made by Dybo of such material (e.g. 1969a, 1969b, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977a), Rimma Bulatova's work on Old Serbian sources (e.g. 1975), Andrej Zaliznjak's investigation of the fourteenth-century manuscript known as "Měřilo pravednoe" (1978, 1979, 1985b) and the same scholar's overview of Old Russian accentuation (1985a). Several others could be added.⁴ |245|
- (3) Among the problems Slavic accentology has to contend with is that of the rise of the neoacute. Traditionally the neoacute, which is absent from Baltic and hence must be due to a Slavic innovation, was attributed in large measure to various morphological developments. Details differed fundamentally among accentologists and there is no single issue in Slavic accentology about which consensus seemed so consistently to be so far out of reach. Stang revived an idea proposed long ago by Stjepan Ivšić (1911: 163-182) according to which the neoacute, far from being

⁴ See further, e.g., Bulatova (1979) and the bibliography in Zaliznjak (1985a).

the outcome of morphological developments, is due to a phonetic stress retraction from a long falling vowel to an immediately preceding syllable (*Slavonic Accentuation*: 157-173). Although the proposed retraction (nowadays widely known as “Stang’s law”) may have accounted for one problem, it left several formidable riddles unsolved: how did the place of the stress preceding the retraction originate? How is the system of three accentual paradigms that must have existed prior to the retraction related to the Baltic system of two types? A solution to both problems was proposed immediately after the appearance of *Slavonic Accentuation* by Dybo and Illič-Svityč, who argued in great detail and on the basis of highly divergent types of evidence that the place of the stress as reconstructed by Stang must itself have been due to a phonetic stress shift, this time a progressive one, and that before the stress shift took place, Proto-Slavic must have had the same two accentual paradigms as Proto-Baltic (see in particular Dybo 1962a, Illič-Svityč 1963: 157-161).⁵

5. The Dutch accentologists

The ideas contained in Dybo’s and Illič-Svityč’s early publications on Slavic accentuation were taken up in the middle of the sixties by Carl Ebeling, at the time professor of Slavic and Baltic linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. He tried to reconstruct the sequence of accentological developments linking Proto-Indo-European with the state of affairs as attested in Proto-Slavic and individual Slavic languages (Ebeling 1967). Relative chronology was very much in the air at the time, in particular among scholars with a Prague School background, cf., for instance, Mareš’s well-known series of publications on the subject (beginning with his 1956).⁶ However, accent had so far been neglected.

Ebeling entrusted his graduate students Wim Stokhof and Hein Steinhauer with the task of compiling a computerized dictionary of the accentuation of Slavic verbs. As their work proceeded, the participants came to feel that the factual foundations on which Slavic accentology rests are insufficiently solid. Accordingly they abandoned the idea of an accentological dictionary as premature, concentrating instead on the factual foundations (see in particular Stokhof 1973, Steinhauer 1973).⁷

Although the project failed to produce the intended dictionary, it did give rise to a number of unintended results even apart from Stokhof’s and Steinhauer’s publications. Most important of this was a period of intensive discussion of all kinds of accentological matters, in which a young mathematician who happened to be interested in Slavic languages and whose name was Frederik Kortlandt took a prominent part. In the years immediately preceding and following 1970, while the rest of the linguistic world was talking deep structures and tending to forget about the very existence of other languages than English, Amsterdam slavists, seemingly oblivious of

⁵ For further discussion see Vermeer (1984a: 337-346 and passim).

⁶ Cf. also the theoretical introduction to Ebeling (1963: 27-30).

⁷ I am indebted to Carl Ebeling and Hein Steinhauer for refreshing my recollections of this episode.

the real world, discussed accent and were busy learning Serbo-Croatian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and other languages with complex prosodic systems.

In the early seventies Kortlandt abandoned his earlier interest in phonemics and mathematical linguistics (see, e.g., Kortlandt 1972) and shifted his attention to historical accentology. His starting-point was three-fold:

- Ebeling’s 1967 article, with its attention for matters of relative chronology.
- Vaillant’s view that the Balto-Slavic acute is not so much a particular tonal movement as the presence of a glottal stop reflecting an earlier laryngeal, see in particular Vaillant (1936: 114-115).
- Illič-Svityč’s demonstration that the Balto-Slavic stress retraction known as Hirt’s law is sensitive to the place of the pretonic laryngeal the retraction is triggered by (1963: 78-82). If Illič-Svityč’s reformulation of Hirt’s law is accepted, it necessarily follows that the stress retraction must have taken place at a stage when the laryngeals (or perhaps the product of the merger of the three laryngeals), were (was) still (an) ordinary segmental phoneme(s) in Balto-Slavic. Illič-Svityč’s reformulation of Hirt’s law put a entirely new problem on the agenda of Slavic accentology, namely that of incorporating the elimination of the laryngeals into the reconstruction. The problem obviously cannot be ignored.

The earliest important result was a series of articles on Baltic and Slavic accentological subjects published in 1975 under the title of *Slavic Accentuation* (obviously intended as a tribute to Stang) and subtitled *A study in relative chronology*, reflecting Kortlandt’s reliance on considerations of relative chronology. For a brief introduction into the principal lines of the theory and some of its implications see Kortlandt (1978). Cf. also Kortlandt (1974, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1989a, 1989b).⁸

Several of Ebeling’s and Kortlandt’s students have also contributed to accentology, see in particular Arno Verweij’s work on the reflexes of the Proto-Slavic accent paradigms in Czech and Slovak (1991, 1994) and Rick Derksen’s recent book on metatony in Baltic (1996), cf. also, on various accentological issues, Vermeer (1979, 1984a, 1987).

Interest in the factual foundations of Slavic accentology has inspired work by several other Dutch slavists. Apart from Jan Paul Hinrichs’s work on Middle Bulgarian accented manuscripts (1985), attention has concentrated on the western [247] dialect areas of Serbo-Croatian (traditionally known as Čakavian and Kajkavian) and on Slovene. Most importantly, continuing Steinhauer’s work, several investigators have published novel dialect material on the basis of field-work in areas for which the data hitherto available were either absent or impossible to interpret (cf., e.g., Houtzagers 1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, Budovskaja and Houtzagers 1994, Houtzagers and Budovskaja 1996, Steenwijk 1992, 1996, Vermeer 1980, 1984b).

⁸ The list is selective; for a complete list of Kortlandt’s publications see <http://www.kortlandt.nl/>

The relationship between the Muscovites and the Dutch is not quite symmetrical. Ebeling's 1967 article, which marks the beginning of the Dutch school, took the earliest accentological publications by Dybo and Illič-Svityč already for granted. Accordingly the Dutch school can be regarded as an early offshoot of the Moscow school.

The two groups of investigators, though ultimately interested in the same object of research and though both starting from *Slavonic Accentuation*, have tended to concentrate on different types of problems and use widely divergent methods. As a consequence their results are to a considerable extent complementary. The principal differences are the following:

- The Dutch investigators are interested primarily in reconstructing sequences of developments, whereas the Muscovites have tended to reconstruct synchronic states.
- Whereas the Muscovites have preferred investigating problems involving the place of the stress, the Dutch have concentrated on vowel quantity.

More detailed discussion of the differences falls outside the scope of this contribution. Although it goes without saying that they are by no means absolute it is no accident that the recent abandonment by Dybo, Zamjatina and Nikolaev (1993, in particular pp. 72-73) of several key components of the Moscow conception is a reaction to problems encountered in the investigation of rules of stress placement, whereas, conversely, the Dutch reject the modifications now introduced by Dybo and his co-workers because they make it “impossible to explain the rise of distinctive vowel quantity in pretonic syllables in Slavic” (Verweij 1994: 558).

6. Stang's “Conclusions”

On page p. 179 of *Slavonic Accentuation* Stang lists his conclusions:

“These investigations have led me to the following conclusions:

1. De Saussure's law did not operate in Slavonic.
2. The neo-acute is not due to metatony but to a retraction of the stress from a semi-vowel or from a non-initial vowel with falling intonation.
3. The neo-circumflex did not belong to the proto-Slavonic period.
4. We find 3 proto-Slavonic intonations:
 - a. Acute, which can occur on any syllable, and which keeps its stress constantly throughout the paradigm.
 - b. Neo-acute, which can occur on any syllable, provided that other forms of the [248] paradigm or the etymological group concerned have stress on the subsequent syllable, and provided also that no skipping of syllables ever takes place in the process concerned.
 - c. Circumflex, which occurs on the first syllable when other forms of the paradigm have the stress on the last syllable.
5. All – nominal and verbal – paradigms could be:
 - a. immobile with α) the stress on the first syllable or β) the stress on a medial syllable. The stress was retracted from a circumflex vowel in a medial syllable and – in verbs – analogically from *-e/-o-*. The new ictus syllable received neo-acute.
 - b. mobile with stress in some forms on the first syllable, in others on the last, skipping the medial syllables. In the verbs few traces of mobility survive. In most forms stress has analogically been transferred to the last syllable.

6. The mobile nominal paradigms of Slavonic are closely related to those we find in Baltic. The immobile type with the stress on the last stem syllable, which in some cases coalesced with the ending, has disappeared in Lithuanian.

7. In the Slavonic paradigms:

Acute intonation was characteristic of the paradigms with constant root stress. Neo-acute was characteristic of paradigms with recessive stress in certain forms. Circumflex was characteristic of paradigms with mobile stress.”

It is important to be aware of the status of these conclusions and it is essential to realize that they are not Stang’s discoveries.

ad 1. Before Stang, De Saussure’s law was explicitly rejected by Kuryłowicz, an indebtedness Stang recognizes explicitly and joyfully (see *Slavonic Accentuation*: 15).⁹

ad 2. The idea that the neo-acute is not due to a morphologically inspired change of falling to rising tone (“metatony”) had been proposed prior to Stang by several other scholars, e.g. Ivšić (1911).

ad 3. The insight that the neo-circumflex did not belong to the proto-Slavonic period and is due to a local innovation is also to be found in Bubrix (1925, in particular 177-178).

ad 4/5/7. It is important to keep in mind that in principle there is nothing inherently new about this (cf., for instance, my discussion of Van Wijk’s [249] conception of accent types, Vermeer 1988: 166-170). What is new is the high degree to which Stang’s integrates the factual details into a coherent conception in which verbal and nominal paradigms are seen to be subject to exactly the same rules. In this a pivotal role is played by the accentuation of the present tense of the verb (the very detail Lunt picked out as particularly significant in his review, cf. above, section 3), or, to quote Dybo: “Решающее значение имело открытие Хр. Стангом морфологической подвижности ударения в глаголе, которое показало единство общего плана строения акцентной системы имени и глагола” (1977b: 594-595). Starting from factual material adduced by Vasil’ev (1929: 47-50), but never before taken very seriously by accentologists, Stang argues that what looks like a paradigm with fixed stress on the ending was in origin a mobile paradigm, with stem stress in the first person singular (*Slavonic Accentuation*: 109-112).¹⁰

ad 6. The insight that the mobile nominal paradigms of Slavic are in principle identical to those found in Baltic is to be found in the work of several earlier accentologists, e.g. Sedláček and Meillet, as has repeatedly been argued by Dybo (e.g. 1977b: 594). Stang’s assumption of an “immobile type with the stress on the last stem syllable”

⁹ Terje Mathiasen writes me (letter of October 29, 1996) that Stang in his lectures depicted his own role in digging the grave of de Saussure’s law by means of a biblical formulation adapted from Joshua 6 and which I think can best be translated as: “And I followed and blew with the trumpet”, cf. the presentation of the point in *Slavonic Accentuation*: 14-15, where Stang stresses his complete agreement with Kuryłowicz. A person reading *Slavonic Accentuation* for the first time can hardly help to be struck by the calculated effectiveness of this passage, which comes as a complete surprise after a lengthy discussion of points where Stang’s views are diametrically opposed to Kuryłowicz’s.

¹⁰ For some further discussion see Vermeer (1984a: 346-347 with footnote).

ble”, which has disappeared in Lithuanian, has proved unattractive to later investigators.

Most of Stang’s conclusions are not new, but it is not difficult to understand how this could give rise to revolutionary consequences nevertheless.

To begin with, it has to be realized that most of the insights sanctioned by Stang in his conclusions, though old, were minority views that had been more or less forgotten or were generally regarded as cranky or, at best, lacking in substance. This holds as much for Kuryłowicz’s idea that de Saussure’s law did not operate in Slavic as for Ivšić’s assumption that the neoacute is due to a phonetic stress retraction as for Burchich’s view that the neocircumflex is not a Common Slavic phenomenon. Stang showed that not only did all these views deserve a hearing, but that they are actually better founded than the prevailing ones.

A further important point consisted in the fact that in all this, Stang was guided by the conviction that there is nothing about accentological phenomena which could justify a radical departure from traditional neogrammarian methodology. Though at first sight conservative, this was in reality a remarkable innovation because both the representatives of the “classical” approach (Belić, Lehr-Splawiński, van Wijk and others) and Kuryłowicz regularly took striking liberties with traditional methodological standards.

Finally, Stang saved his fellow-accentologists the immense trouble of having to search the accentological literature for worth-while insights.

7. Conclusions.

The early reviewers were right: in *Slavonic Accentuation* Stang is not interested in elaborating novel views. What he does is return to neogrammarian values and investigate [250] which of the many accentological ideas present in the available literature survive that and by surviving it can contribute to a new synthesis.

- *Slavonic Accentuation* implied the programme of entirely redoing Slavic accentology on the basis of strict neogrammarian principles.
- *Slavonic Accentuation*, by proposing an important innovation on the basis of hitherto dormant factual material, encouraged a renewed attention for the factual side of the subject.
- *Slavonic Accentuation* freed beginning investigators of the gruelling task of having to grope for an independent point of view by digging through the literature themselves and in the process becoming tainted by the loose values of “classical” accentology.

The revolutionary character of Stang’s return to old values could hardly have been appreciated in the late fifties because nobody could have predicted at the time that such a patently conservative approach would turn out to be so fruitful.

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