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THE EXPRESSION OF THE SINGULAR/PLURAL OPPOSITION IN THE EAST AND SOUTH-EAST SLAVIC NOUNS

1. The grammatical category of number is the primary and most stable category of the Slavic noun. In effect it is the one which largely defines the status of the two other categories of the Slavic noun, gender and case. The unstable and variable status of the latter is particularly pronounced in the plural, the marked category of number which neutralizes some of the distinctions of gender and/or case that are extant in its unmarked counterpart, the singular. Thus, the singular admits in most Slavic languages as many as three or four genders (the feminine, neuter and masculine, and in the acc. sing. an animate vs. inanimate masculine), whereas the plural of the East Slavic languages admits only the animate vs. inanimate opposition (in the acc. of fem. and masc. nouns) which is in Polish reduced to an opposition between a masc. personal („virile“) and non-personal gender of all other nouns. A number of Slavic dialects (of Slovene, čakavian and South Russian) have lost in the plural the neuter establishing a dichotomy between the masculine and non-masculine. The three genders of the singular are abolished in the plural of Macedonian and Bulgarian, the two South Slavic languages which have also done away with the category of case. A partial syncretism of cases took place in a series of Slavic dialects (of Montenegro, čakavian, Slovak and southern Poland) in which the gen. pl. has merged with the locative, and especially in Serbo-Croatian which has conflated the dative, instrumental and locative in a single case.

It should be apparent that the concept of markedness with its corollary, the neutralization of certain grammatical distinctions, accounts automatically for the sharpening of oppositions in the categories in which they occur (in our case between the singular and the plural) and for the wide-spread phenomenon of linguistic asymmetry. Formulated originally

in the field of phonology¹, it has proven its explanatory power on all levels of language as well as for the historical development of a great number of phonological and morphological forms.

However, the plural itself is by no means as homogeneous and uniform as it may appear. In many of the above mentioned languages it splits up into several subsidiary categories that include: 1) a counted plural that divides in turn into a dual, a paucal and a general counted plural; 2) a collective plural; 3) a counted collective plural, and 4) an emotive (mostly pejorative) plural. These categories appear as if scattered in some of the modern Slavic languages: the dual is preserved in modern Slovene; the paucal (i. e. the nominal forms used after the numerals „two“, „three“ and „four“) is current in Serbo-Croatian and in East Slavic; the general counted plural (the so called „brojna forma“) is a feature of Macedonian and Bulgarian, while the emotive plural is grammatically expressed in the nom. plural of the Polish masc.-personal nouns that oppose the emotively neutral forms to pejorative counterparts (in such forms as *doktorzy/doktory*, *kretyni/kretyny*) and to the inherently pejorative nouns (such as *chamy* „boors“ and *zbiry* „thugs“)². It is worth noting that all of the four mentioned sub-categories appear to a greater or lesser extent in Macedonian and Bulgarian, that is, in those languages whose plurals have maximally reduced the categories of gender and case.

The existence of the sub-categories of the plural may serve as a reminder that the phenomenon of *asymmetry* is a pervasive though by no means the single or universal principle governing the relation of linguistic oppositions. The neutralization of the categories of gender and case is in the above discussed languages complemented and as it were balanced by the presence of categories that do not occur in the singular, and that sharpen the opposition between the singular and the plural no less than the process of neutralization, except that it involves a relation of *dissymmetry* (or *bipolar asymmetry*) in which category A is marked by a set of forms a, b, c..., which is in its counterpart B matched by a set x, y, z... An example of dissymmetry similar to that of the noun is provided by the Russian categories of tense in which the present tense carries the opposition of person (e. g., *splju*, *spiš'*, *spit*) while the past tense employs the opposition of gender (e. g., *spál*, *spalá*, *spálo*). The phenomenon of dissymmetry is no less attested in the field of phonology. Thus, the long vowels of čakavian carry the opposition of pitch, while the short vowels carry the opposition

¹ In phonology the law was, it seems, first formulated by Trubetzkoy (1949), p. XXIII, Jakobson affirmed it in his study of the Russian verb (1932); *SW* II (1971), 14–15.

² See Stankiewicz (1962), 7ff; repr. (1986).

of stress; the Polish velar consonants are opposed as plain vs. sharp (*k/k'*, *g/g'*) that are in the palatals matched by the feature strident vs. mellow (*č/č'*, *š/š'*, *ž/ž'*). It is further worth mentioning that the marked category of the plural is at times more differentiated than its unmarked counterpart, as is the case in Italian where the plural parallels the singular in the expression of gender but where it draws in addition a distinction between a simple and a collective plural; e. g., *i frutti, mobili, muri, ossi* vs. *le frutta, mobilia, mura, ossa*.³

It should finally be observed that the marked terms of a system are not as rigid or invariant as it is often assumed. The fact is that the markedness of a category may vary in time or according to the meaning of the forms in which it appears. Thus, the Slavic short adjective was historically unmarked with respect to its derived long form, whereas in most modern Slavic languages the short adjective is either marked (being used only as a predicate) or on the way to be lost. The singular is, as a rule, the unmarked category of number for, unlike the plural, it may refer to singular as well as to plural objects, but in most Slavic languages there is a plural which is clearly unmarked. It is the collective plural that designates totalities consisting of discrete, enumerable entities and that encompasses two semantically and formally different sets. One of them refers to ethnic and social groups and is marked in its base by the suffix *-an-*; e. g., the Russian forms *angličáne, dvorjáne, krestjáne, gráždane*, while the other set designates the young of animals and humans and is marked with the suffixes *-at/-et-* and in S.-Cr. with the suffix *-ād*; e. g., Russian *rebjáta, teljáta, volčenjáta*; S.-Cr. *jǎgnjād, pīlād, tēlād*. The singulars of these plurals are derivatives formed with „singulative“ suffixes that in Russian are *-in* for the first and *-onok* for the second set of forms; e. g., *angličánin, dvorjánin, krestjánin, gráždanín* and *reběnok, telěnok, volčěnok*; the S.-Cr. singulatives of *-ād* employ instead a variety of deminutive forms; e. g., sing. *jagnjić, pišće, tēlac* and in the simple plurals *jǎgānjci, pīlići, tēoci*.

2. The grammatical differentiation of the singular and plural is in a number of Slavic languages matched by a corresponding differentiation of their formal trappings. The differentiation of their forms is conspicuously expressed in the three East Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian), and in the three South-East (Balkan) Slavic languages (Serbian, Macedonian and Bulgarian), and is in both groups accomplished through similar morphological means, i. e., through the alternations of stress and the expansion of the plural endings with supportive, compounded suffixes. However, the extent and function of the two kinds of

³ A fuller discussion of the problem is given in Stankiewicz, 1999, 72–73.

means is in the respective languages reversed: the East Slavic languages make primary use of the alternations of stress assigning a subordinate role, or no role at all, to the compounded plural endings, whereas the South-East Slavic languages limit the scope and functions of the stress in rendering the opposition of number, but use a variety of compounded suffixes to strengthen the form of the plural endings. Since a similar expansion of the plural endings is encountered in several of the non-Slavic Balkan languages, it may well represent a phenomenon of diffusion typical of the languages of the „Balkan league“.

The significance of the stress alternations is in the East Slavic languages attested by their productivity (they involve stems of all three grammatical genders) and by their bi-polar, two-directional mobility which allows it to shift from the stem of the singular to the endings of the plural, and vice versa. The bi-polar singular vs. plural alternations of stress are shared to a large extent by all three relatively homogeneous East Slavic languages.

This is not the case in the South-East Slavic languages which differ from each other phonologically and morphologically. Macedonian lacks a mobile stress, and like Bulgarian, it is devoid of a system of cases. Serbo-Croatian has replaced the opposition of stress with one of pitch, though for morphophonemic and comparative purposes, it is convenient to treat the latter as one of stress by interpreting the rising pitch as a stress that falls on the following syllable of the word⁴. The falling pitch falls automatically on the first syllable of the word.

Given the stated diversity, it is not surprising that the stress alternations of the Bulgarian and the Serbo-Croatian nouns differ both from each other and, more profoundly, from those that are used in East Slavic. The movement of stress is in Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian (but for a few exceptions) unidirectional, i. e., from the stem to the endings, while its function in rendering the category of number is in either seriously constrained. In Serbo-Croatian it supports above all the oppositions of case, while in the stems in which it shifts in the plural to the endings it falls predominantly on those that are distinguished by their expanded suffixal form. The shift of stress has thus no autonomous value, yet by occurring in conjunction with the suffix it places increased emphasis on its form accentuating at the same time its difference from the singular. The progressive movement of the Bulgarian stress has, of course, no other function than to sup-

⁴ I discuss the matter in greater length in Stankiewicz (1993), 99–103. In citing the S.-Cr. forms I shall henceforth mark the reinterpreted rising pitch with a straight line in front of the accented syllable.

port the opposition of number but, as we shall see, this alternation is, at least in the neuter stems, largely automatic.

The shift of the stress to the endings of the plural is in the South-East Slavic languages of a secondary or ancillary importance in foregrounding the marked character of the plural, and with it, its formal difference from the singular. The primary device employed by these languages for this purpose is thus their resort to plural endings that are made up of more complex, compounded suffixes. It is a device that is shared by all three languages in question, though it appears in each of them in a somewhat different form and with somewhat different semantic connotations.

The differences between the East and South-East Slavic languages in the choice of the formal markers of the plural did not arise at random: they are largely a reflection of the grammatical and derivational developments that took place in their nominal systems.

The plurals of the East Slavic languages have lost the distinctions of gender, and with them, the formal distinctions associated with the original genders. The levelling of the genders led to an accentual overlap of the masculine with the neuter in the plural of the stem stressed (originally circumflex) stems, and to a uniform stem stress in the plural of the oxytonic neuter and the mostly feminine *-a* stems. The resulting bipolar mobility of the stress, from the stem to the endings and from the endings to the stem, brought about not only a new distribution of the stress, but a new utilization of the stress in marking the opposition of number rather than the original oppositions of case.

The South-East Slavic languages were hardly in a position of utilizing the stress in a similar way. Serbo-Croatian has preserved the gender distinctions of the plural and, like Bulgarian and Macedonian, it failed to acquire a regressive mobility of the stress. Yet, if like East Slavic, it strengthened the opposition of number, it attained it by the more complex morphological structure of its endings.

The distinction between the East and South-East Slavic languages in expressing the opposition of number may thus ultimately be defined, like that of their grammatical categories, as a problem of symmetry: in the East Slavic languages it is rendered in a bi-polar, dissymmetrical way by moving the stress from the stem to the endings and from the endings to the stem, while the South-East Slavic languages render it in a unipolar, asymmetrical way by emphasizing the marked category of the plural with correspondingly marked plural endings.

After this cursory survey of the means that sharpen the opposition of number in the East and South-East Slavic nouns, we may now consider more closely how it is expressed in the individual languages.

3. The East Slavic languages.

3.1. The compounded endings.

As stated above, the three East Slavic languages sharpen the singular/plural opposition of the nouns primarily by means of the alternations of stress and, secondarily, by expanding the form of the plural endings with prefinal suffixes.

The compounded plural endings occur now only in Russian⁵, where they involve the prefinal suffixes *-ov-* and *-oj-*. The two combine to yield a triple ending in the plural of *kúm* and *sýn* : *kumov'já*, *synov'já* (morphophonemically <*sin-ov-øj-á*>, <*kum-ov-øj-á*>)⁶. The first of these suffixes occurs now only in the plural of *xozjái*n: *xozjáeva* while the suffix *-oj-* (the reflex of the Common Slavic collective suffix *-bj-*) appears in at least a dozen masc. personal nouns; e. g., *déver'*, *drúg*, *knjaz'*, *múž*, *zját'*; nom. pl. *dever'já*, *druz'já*, *knjaz'já*, *muž'já*, *zjat'já*, and in about twice as many inanimate masculine and neuter nouns; e. g., *kámen'*, *kóren'*, *súk*, *zúb* : *derevo*, *peró*, *poléno* : nom. pl. *kamén'ja*, *korén'ja*, *súč'ja*, *zúb'ja*; *derév'ja*, *pér'ja*, *polén'ja*⁷. The position of some of the compounded plurals is unstable; contemporary Russian tends to use in their stead variants with non-compounded endings, such as *djádi*, *grózdi*, *klokí*, *kopylý*, *pruty* (in place of *djad'já*, *grózd'ja*, *klóč'ja*, *kopyl'ja*, *prút'ja*). The compounded endings appear to be best preserved in nouns whose meanings have diverged from those with the simpler forms, such as *kamén'ja* „stones“ vs. *kámni* „precious stones“, *korén'ja* „spices“ vs. *kórni* „roots“, *líst'ja* „leaves“ vs. *listý* „sheets“, *povód'ja* „reins“ vs. *póvody* „causes“, *zúb'ja* „gears“ vs. *zúby* „teeth“, *kolén'ja* „joints, links“ vs. *koléni* „knees“.

3.2. The accentual alternations.

The role of the accentual alternations in marking the singular/plural opposition was in East Slavic promoted by two major and partly related developments: the expansion of the progressive (stem ~ desinence) alternation between the singular and plural at the expense of the alternation between the direct and oblique cases of the plural, and by the regressive alternation (from the endings to the stem).

⁵ The suffix *-øj-* is used in all East Slavic languages to form neuter derivatives with a collective meaning (e. g. Russ. *dub'ě*, *durač'ě*, *soldatě*), but only in Russian does it function as a prefinal suffix of the plural.

⁶ The final ending of the gen. pl. of *synov'já*: *synovéj* <*sin-ov-øj-ø*> is a zero which vocalizes the zero of the preceding suffix.

⁷ For the difference in the accentuation of the masc. personal and non-personal nouns, see Stankiewicz (1993), 194.

The first alternation received additional support from the East Slavic replacement of the Common Slavic pitch with stress that enabled a number of the originally fixed (acute) stems to join the alternations that were originally the domain (as they still are in South-West Slavic) of the mobile (circumflex) stems. As a result, the progressive alternation between the singular and the plural is now shared by such historically acute stems, as *dým* (nom. pl. *dymý*), *čas*, *kráj*, *xléb*, *xlév*; *máslo* (nom. pl. *maslá*), *méstó*, *mýlo*, *stádo*, *čúdo* (nom. pl. *čudesá*), *ímja* (nom. pl. *imená*). The same process took place in a number of the originally acute stems of Ukrainian and Byelorussian. Of equal importance was the tendency to reduce the direct/oblique alternation in the plural of masculine and feminine stems or to replace it with a desinence stress throughout the plural. Among the East Slavic languages the alternation between the direct and oblique cases of the plural is best preserved in Russian where it appears in three types of stems: (1) in the feminine *-a* stems that alternate also in the singular (e. g., nom. pl. *nógi*, *rúki*, *bórody* : dat. and instr. pl. *nogám*, *-ámi*..., *borodám*, *-ámi*); (2) in masc. and fem. nouns and some *pluralia tantum* with the gen. pl. ending *-ěj* (e. g., nom. pl. *čérvi*, *čérti*, *gósti*, *lébedi*; *bróvi*, *dvéri*, *kósti*, *máteri*; *pléči*, *óči*, *úši* : gen. pl. *červěj*; dat. and instr. pl. *červjám*, *-ámi*, and (3) in a small group of masc. stems ending in the gen. pl. in *-o* or *-ov* (e. g., nom. pl. *bógi*, *grómy*, *vólki*, *vóry*, *větry*, *vólosy* : gen. pl. *bogóv*, *volos*; dat., instr. pl. *bogám*, *-ámi*). In the more innovating languages, Ukrainian and Byelorussian, the direct/oblique alternation is greatly reduced: it is either confined to a small number of nouns or to one or two cases of the plural (as a rule to the gen. and instr. pl. with the endings *-ěj* and *-mí*). Thus we find the accentual shift to the oblique cases of the plural only in such Ukrainian masc. and *-a* stems as *zúby*; *nóhy*, *rúky*, *stópy*, *ščáky* : gen. pl. *zubiv*; dat. and instr. pl. *zubám*, *-ámy*; *nohám*, *-ámy*, and the shift to the gen. and instr. pl. in the *dvéri*, *hrúdi*, *húsy*, *svýni*; *díty*, *ljúdy* : gen. and instr. pl. *dverěj*, *dvermý* ... *ditěj*, *dit'mý* (5) A similar development took place in Byelorussian where the shift from the direct to the oblique cases of the plural is found in the nouns (masc.) *zúby*, *dúxi*, *róhi*, *vúsy* and (fem.) *húby*, *nóhi*, *rúki*, *kúry*, *bróvy* with the shift to the gen. and instr. pl. limited to *dzéci*, *ljúdzi*, *dzvéry*, *pléčy* : gen. *dzjacěj*, instr. *dzjacmí*⁸.

The reduction of the stress alternation between the direct and oblique cases of the plural evolved in East Slavic in tandem with the expansion of the progressive alternation from the initial (historically circumflex) syllable of the stem to the medial, and, in colloquial Russian, to the

⁸ In Russian we find the same alternation in the forms *déti* : *detěj*; *ljúdi* : *ljuděj*.

final syllable of the stem, as in the masc. nouns *diréktor*, *proféssor*, *učitel'*; *inženér*, *oficér*, *šofér* : nom. pl. *direktorá ... šoferá*. But it is in Ukrainian where the shift of stress from the singular to the plural attained its maximal reach. For here the stress may shift to the plural not only from any of the last three syllables of the masculine and optionally the neuter stems (as in *jármárok*, *párubok*; *učýtel'*, *xozjájín*; *jačmín'*, *čolovík*; *dévevo*, *bolóto* : nom. pl. *jarmarký*, *xazjají*, *čoloviký*; *derevá*, *bolotá*), but also from any of the last three syllables of the *-a* stems, a phenomenon that is unique among the Slavic languages; e. g., *jáhídka*, *ričen'ka*, *týsjača*; *továryška*, *učýtel'ka*; *molýtva*, *koróva* : nom. pl. *jahidký ... učytel'ký*.

The Byelorussian alternation of the stress involves in a similar way the initial and final syllables of masc. stems (e. g., *bérah*, *hólub*, *kámen'*, *véčar*; *čabór*, *jačmén'*, *maróz* : nom. pl. *berahí ... marazý*); however, unlike Ukrainian, it precludes the shift in the *-a* stems and admits it only in a handful of neuter nouns; e. g., *póle*, *práva*; *rěšeta*, *vóblaka*, *vózera* and *něba*, *plémja*, *strémja*. In the plurals with two syllables in the stem, the stress shifts to its final syllable; e. g. *rašóty*, *abláki*; *njaběsy*, *pljaměny*.

The discussed developments of the East Slavic progressive alternation point up one basic fact: the gist of their innovations was to sharpen the opposition of number at the expense of the oppositions of case. This polarization of the singular and plural received a decisive boost when the same languages acquired the opposite alternation, the shift from the endings of the singular to the final syllable of the stem in the plural of mono- and polysyllabic neuter and *-a* stems⁹. Since the new alternation affected in the same way all three East Slavic languages, it will be sufficient to give examples only from Russian; e. g., (fem.) *bedá*, *ovcá*, *reká*, *sestrá*, *žená*; *kolbasá*, *dolgotá*, *veličiná* : nom. pl. *bědy ... kolbásy*; (neutr.) *gnězdó*, *oknó*, *pis'mó*, *vesló*, *dolotó*, *veretenó* : nom. pl. *gnězda ... veretěna*. The retraction of the stress to the last syllable of the stem in the *-a* and the neuter stems suggests that it arose by analogy with the forms that carried a zero ending in the gen. pl. from which the stress had retracted automatically to the last syllable of the stem. The reason the retraction did not similarly affect the oxytonic masc. *o-* and *io-* stems was no doubt due to the fact that the masc. stems had by that time replaced the zero of the gen. pl. with the endings *-ov* and *-ej* of the *o-* and *i-* stems. The same fact may account for the lack of the regressive alternation in the South Slavic masc. and neuter nouns, specifically in štokavian, where the

⁹ The preservation of the desinence stress in the plural of some fem. and neuter oxytonic stems is still observed in the works of some 19th century writers; see Bulaxovskij (1954), 168. However, the retraction of the oxytonic stress is attested as an accentual rule in the grammar by Vostokov (1831).

gen. pl. of such stems terminated in *-ā* or in *-ī*. For the S.-Cr. forms that retract the desinence stress in the gen. pl. to the stem, see below.

4. The South-East Slavic languages.

4.1. The accentual alternations of Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian.

The preservation of a case system in Serbo-Croatian and its lack in Bulgarian prompts us to discuss the patterns of their alternations apart.

4.1.1. Serbo-Croatian employs, like the East Slavic languages, the „forward“ (progressive) and „backward“ (regressive) alternations of stress. However, the distribution and functions of these alternations differ fundamentally from those used in East Slavic. The regressive alternation occurs mostly in the gen. pl., where it retracts primarily from the final to the penult syllable of the stem (in such forms as *jez'ik*, *ned'elja*, *kol'eno* : gen. pl. *j'ezikā*, *n'edēljā*, *k'olēnā*), and secondarily, from the ending to the thematic long vowel in stems in which the long vowel is followed by a vocalized zero, (as in *vr'ābācā*, *c'īgālā*, *vl'ākānā* vs. nom. sing. *vrābac*, *cīgl'a*, *vlākn'o*). The regressive alternation between the singular and the plural is a marginal phenomenon as it takes place only in a handful of monosyllabic masc. and neuter nouns with variants that allow a fixed stress on the ending); e. g., *konac*, *novac*, *lanac*, *tēlac*, *vēnac*; *sel'o*, *bedr'o*, *per'o*, *rebro*, *sedl'o* : pl. *kōnci*, *k'onaca*, *k'ōncima* ... *s'ela*, *s'ela*, *s'elima*.¹⁰

Far more productive is the progressive alternation which takes place in the circumflex (initially stressed) stems and which varies in its distribution according to gender and number. Its basic function is to support the oppositions of case both in the singular and in the plural. In the singular of the *-a* stems it opposes the stem stress of the accusative (sometimes also of the dative) to the desinence stress of the other cases, while in the masc. and *-i* stems it opposes the desinence stress of the locative to the stem stress of the other cases. In the plural it distinguishes the stem stress of the direct cases from the desinence stress of the oblique cases in all circumflex stems, except the neuters.

This is the system of alternations that Serbo-Croatian had inherited from Common Slavic and that is still alive in the Western (Croatian or Budmani) variant of the literary language. In the Eastern norm (the Serbian or Daničić variant) the masculine stems that form the plural with the prefinal suffix *-ov-/-ev-* replace the direct/oblique alternation with an alternation between the singular and the plural; e. g., *bōj*, *brōd*, *dōm*, *nōs*, *plōd*; *dūb*, *rād*, *sād*, *stān*, *vāl* : nom. pl. *boj'evi*, *brod'ovi*, *dom'ovi*, *nos'ovi*,

¹⁰ The two types of the S.-Cr. regressive alternation are discussed at greater length in Stankiewicz (1993), 120–22.

plod'ovi; dūb'ovi, rād'ovi, sād'ovi, stān'ovi, vāl'ovi : gen. and dat. pl. *boj'evā, -'evima ... dub'ōvā, -'ovima*. The original alternation between the direct and oblique cases is in the Eastern norm preserved only in one short-vowel stem *r'ōg* (pl. *r'ogovi, rogōv'ā, -ov'ima*) and in the long-vowel stems that are in everyday use; e. g. *d'ān, gr'ād, gl'ās, kr'ūg, k'ūm, s'in, sn'ēg, vl'āk, z'id* (nom. pl. *d'arovi*; gen. and dat. pl. *darōv'ā, darov'ima... z'idōvi, zidōv'ā, -ov'ima*). The combined use of the forward movement of the stress with the long, compounded plural endings imparts to the expression of the plural, as it were, a double weight deepening at the same time the characteristically South-East Slavic asymmetry between the singular and the plural. The difference between the Eastern (Serbian) and Western (Croatian) norm should justify, among other things, our treatment of the former as a representative of the South-East Slavic group of languages.

The combination of the progressive shift of stress with the compounded form of the endings marks also the plural of the neuter stems with the prefinal suffixes *-en-*, *-es-*, and sometimes *-et-*; e. g., *č'udo, k'olo, t'ēlo; 'ime, pl'eme, v'ime; b'ure* : nom.-acc. pl. *čudes'a ... vimen'a; buret'a*. It is of some interest that the neuters that form the plural with the short (non-compounded) endings have lost the alternation in some commonly used nouns (such as *m'ore, sl'ovo, t'ēlo*) preserving it in *b'rdo, p'olje, zv'ono, m'ěso, s'ěno, j'ezero* (: nom.-acc. pl. *brd'a ... jezer'a*)¹¹.

4.1.2. The Bulgarian accentual alternation is progressive and takes place in the neuter and in masculine stems that are mostly monosyllabic.

The neuter nouns shift the stress to the plural in all monosyllabic stems including the stems that form the plural with the prefinal suffixes *-en-* and *-es-*; e. g., *bláto, bljúdo, ljáto, sélo, tjálo; bréme, ime, rámo, čudo* : pl. *blatá... tjalá; bremená, imená, ramená, čudesá*. In the polysyllabic stems the stress shifts to the plural in a few simple stems (*ézero, koljáno, koríto, sírene*) and in derived nouns with the suffixes *-ál-*, *-íl-* and *-ív-*; e. g., *mastilo, točilo, čukálo, pomagálo, gorívo, pečivo* : pl. *mastilá... pečivá*. A number of the latter forms admit variants with a fixed stress on the stem.

Masculine nouns shift the stem stress to the plural in two kinds of forms: (a) in a small group of stems that form the plural with the endings *-á* or *-é*; e. g., *krák, líst, róg, bívol, gárk* : pl. *kraká ... bivólá, garčoljá* and

¹¹ The tendency to reduce the stem ~ desinence alternation in the S.-Cr. neuter stems with simple (non-compounded) plural endings is succinctly noted by Vaillant (1958, 348): „En serbo-croate, l'accent est fixe dans la majorité des paroxytones: *slōvo*, plur. *slōva, ťjelo*, plur. *ťjela*. Il est mobile dans certains seulement“.

cár, knjáz, kón, král, máž : pl. *caré ... mažé*, and (b) in the monosyllabic stems that form the plural with the prefinal suffix *-ov/-ev-*; e. g., *brjág, grád* „city“, *glás, kúm, mráz, nós, ród, vrát, zvjár* : pl. *bregové, gradové... zverové*. The shift to the plural is not obligatory, a number of the suffixed forms retain the stress on the stem (e. g., *dób, grád* „hail“, *krág, rid, trúd, tórg, víd, zíd* : pl. *dábove ... zídove*).

4.2. The South-East Slavic compounded endings.

The Serbian and Bulgarian use of the accentual shift in reinforcing the compounded structure of the plural endings is but a special and limited case of how the South-East Slavic languages render the asymmetry between the plural and the singular. The simpler and more wide-spread device in conveying their difference is the compounded structure of the endings themselves. The latter exhibit in each of the South-East Slavic languages a somewhat different form, and in a language like Serbo-Croatian, forms that vary from case to case.

4.2.1. The S.-Cr. dat.-instr.-loc. is the only case of the plural that, unlike the nominative and the genitive, lacks a distinct compounded ending. However, the disyllabic structure of its endings *-imal-ama* sets it, no less than the compounded endings, apart from the forms of the singular which does not admit endings of more than one syllable of morpheme.

The gen. pl. employs the compounded endings *-ø-ā* and *-ī-ū*. The phonological shape in which they appear has tended to obscure their morphological structure leading at times to the view that „any attempt to analyze their form [in particular the form of the *-ø-ā* ending] is in advance doomed to failure“¹². However, the vocalization of the thematic zero that takes place before the initial zero of the *-ø-ā* ending (in such gen. pl. forms as *otāc 'ā, vr 'ābācā; vl 'ākānā; metāl 'ā, k 'ūgālā* vs. nom. sing. *otac, vrābac; vlākn'o; metl'a, kūgl'a*) is incontrovertible proof that the first element of the ending consists of a zero. It is, in fact, the very zero that appears in the genitive plural of most Slavic languages (including neighboring čakavian) and to which Serbo-Croatian had attached the incremental ending *-ah* (from *-bh/-ḥh*) taken from the loc.-gen. of the *i-* and *u-* stems. The gen. pl. ending with the final *h* (or *k*) is still found in some modern štokavian dialects (e. g., in Montenegro).

The compounded ending *-ī-ū* is phonologically realized as *-ijū* with an *i* that was shortened before the following long vowel (like the long *ū* of *'ūho* which yielded *uvo* via *'uo*). It is possible that the ending arose historically under the influence of the original gen.-loc. ending of *tr'iju, četir'iju* but synchronically it is certainly simpler to interpret it as a com-

¹² See Svane, (1958), 80.

pound of the gen. pl. endings *-ī* and *-ū*. The collective meaning that adheres to the nouns using this ending (e. g., *gost'ijū, kokoš'ijū, nokt'ijū, prst'ijū, oč'ijū, uš'ijū, vaš'ijū*) would seem to support the idea that their ending was also historically kindred to the ending *-ī* of the gen. pl. (in such forms as *gost'ī, kokoš'ī ... uš'ī, vaš'ī*) with which the forms ending in *-ijū* are often in free variation.

The compounded endings with the prefinal suffix *-ov/-ev-* typical of the masculine monosyllabic stems were discussed above. It is interesting to note that the dat.-instr.-loc. plural of a noun like *d'ūb* comprises as many as three syllables in its ending (*dūbo'vima*).

4.2.2. Macedonian constructs its plural forms with the help of several compounded suffixes, almost all of them used with the masculine and neuter. The prefinal masculine suffixes are *-ov/-ev (-i)*, *-išt(-a)*, *-øj (-el-a)* and *-ov-øc(-i)*; the prefinal neuter suffixes are *-øj (-el-a)* and the compounded *-in-øj(-a)*. The suffix *-øj (-el-a)* does also occur with some feminine nouns.

The suffix *-ov/-ev-* is the primary plural formant of masc. monosyllabic and some vowel plus zero stems; e. g., *čir, glas, groš, jaz, mraz, ključ, koš, nož, rod, prišt, sad; ogan, veter* : pl. *glasovi ... vetrovi*. In a few monosyllabic stems the plural ending is *-i*; e. g., *zabi, maži, unuci, gosti, Grci, Vlasi*. The prefinal suffixes *-išt-* and *-øj-* function mostly as free or stylistic variants of the suffix *-ov/-ev-*, though in some forms they convey their original meaning as collective plurals. Some grammarians (e. g., Koneski) are inclined to view most plurals with the *-išt-* and *-øj-* suffixes as collective, whereas others (e. g., Usikova) treat them as plain plurals. In a number of cases the plurals with *-išt(-a)* and/or *-øj(-e)* have precedence over the plurals with *-ov(-i)* or the simple *-i*; e. g., *dolišta, drumišta, dvorišta/dvorje, zidišta/zidje, rodišta/rodje; kamenje/kamni, korenje/korni*, while in other cases they have semantically drifted apart (e. g., *gradišta* „big cities“ / *gradovi* „towns“, *krajevi* „ends“ / *kraišta* „regions“, *ridišta* „big hills“ / *ridovi* „hills“).

The collective meaning is paramount, on the other hand, in the compounded suffix *-ov-øc(-i)* which is used with masculine nouns that designate social groups (kinship terms, family names) and physical or moral shortcomings. The collective meaning of these plurals is concomitant with an emotive coloring that is implicit in the second component of the suffix, an original diminutive, but stems above all from the emotive quality of the stems with which it occurs. These are either affectionate (thanks to their inherent meaning or their diminutive suffixes), or pejorative (marked as such by their suffixed or compounded form). Examples of the affectionate forms are the kinship terms *dedo, striko, tatko, vujčo* : pl. *dedovci...*

vujčevci, while the pejorative meaning is transparent in such forms as *driplo*, *grbe*, *gotovan*, *neranimajko* : pl. *driplovci* ... *neranimajkovci*.

The plural of the neuter stems, both mono- and polysyllabic, is formed primarily with the simple ending *-a*. In some monosyllabic stems it occurs as a variant of the suffixes *-øj* (*-el-a*) or *-in-øj* (*-a*), while other stems favor the use of the latter, compounded suffix. The plurals with the suffix *-øj* (*-el-o*) vacillate, like the corresponding masculine forms, between a collective and simple plural; e. g., pl. *krila/krilje* or *krilja*, *peral/perje* or *perja*, *zrna/zrnje*. At times the variants give rise to semantically differentiated forms, as in *drva* „a mass of firewood“ vs. *drvja* „trees“ (the simple plural) and *drvje* (the collective plural).

The suffix *-in-øj* (*-a*), (pronounced *-iña*), is highly productive. It occurs as a variant of the ending *-a* in *cveće*, *polje*, *dete* : pl. *cvećal/cvećinja*, *polja/polinja*, *deca/dećinja* and it applies to all stems that end in the singular in *-e*; e. g., *ime*, *pleme*, *vreme*, *grne*; *jagnje*, *kuće*, *pile*, *prase*, *tele*, *vrapče*; *gezve*, *kebapče*, *magare*, *more* : pl. *iminja* ... *jagninja* ... *morinja*. Its productivity is attested by its use with such recent loanwords, as *bombe*, *kliše* : pl. *bombinja*, *klišinja*¹³.

The feminine nouns form most of their plurals with the simple ending *-i*. The ending *-øj* (*-e*) is limited to a small group of stems including *gora*, *livada*, *niva*, *rabota*; *godina*, *krivina*, *planina* : pl. *gorje*, *livadje* ... *godinje*, *planinje*.

4.2.3. The Bulgarian compounded plural endings resemble those of Macedonian but exhibit some features that are their own. Most of them make up the plural of masculine nouns; except for the compounded South Slavic endings with the suffix they all carry a collective meaning; most collective plurals divide into personal and non-personal forms that are marked by different suffixes; the meaning of the collective personal nouns (except for the family names such as *Nikolovci*, *Miladinovci*) is complex in the sense that their collective meaning is concomitant with emotive, positive or negative, connotations. A more adequate designation of such plurals should be collective-emotive.

¹³ The development of the initial component of *-in-øj-a* has not been satisfactorily explained. I believe that the *-in-* stems from the suffix *-en-* in such forms as *plemena*, *vremena* from which it had spread to the nouns with the plural suffix *-et-* yielding the hypothetical: **prasena*, **telena* (in place of the original *praseta*, *teleta*) and the contemporary *prasinja*, *telinja*. The change of the original *e* to *i* could have arisen by analogy with the collective plurals of those feminine stems that terminated in the singular in *-ina*, such as *godina*, *padina* : pl. *godinje*, *padinje*. At the same time it is worth noting the striking resemblance of the Macedonian suffix with the Albanian prefinal suffix *-inj*.

In addition to the masculine nouns, we find the use of the prefinal suffixes *-es-*, *-en-*, *-et-* in the plural of neuter nouns such as *vremená*, *čudesá*, *praséta*, the cognates of the Common Slavic imparisyllabic (consonantal) stems. With the loss of the Bulgarian case system, the suffixes that were originally a part of the singular inflection of such nouns, were transformed into prefinal suffixes of the plural. But within the overall pattern of the plural they are a marginal forms, except for a few neuter stems and loanwords to which they had lent the suffix *-et-*; e. g., *moré*, *polé*; *koljé*, *perdé* : pl. *moréta*, *poléta*; *koljéta*, *perdéta*.

The compounded endings forming the plural of masculine nouns are *-ov(-e)*, *-išt(-a)*, *-øj(-á)*, *-øj(-é)* and *-ov-øc(-i)*.

The suffix *-ov-/-ev-* was discussed above. It is the only prefinal suffix that lacks a collective meaning. Its only function is to strengthen the plural ending of monosyllabic stems, especially when they combine with the final stress.

The suffix *-išt(-a)* has a collective meaning that it confers upon inanimate nouns. As such it serves to distinguish the collective plural of masculine nouns from those with the simple plurals ending in *-i* or *-ove*; e. g., *dólišta*, *g'úlišta*, *kátišta*, *trápišta*, *xáništa* (vs. *dólove ... xánove*). Some forms in *-išta* have a distinctive negative coloring (e. g., *drumišta* „lousy roads“ vs. *drúmove* or *drúmi* „roads“), while some have evolved into simple plurals (*kráišta*, *kárišta*, *pátišta*, *sáništa*).

The suffix *-øj-á* occurs with a small number of mono- and polysyllabic stems. In some forms it is preceded by the formants *-ol'-*, *-or-* or *-ur'-* (as in *gračoljá*, *vlašonjá*, *ženurjá*). Its collective meaning is concurrently pejorative, as in the forms *garčól/garčoljá* (vs. simple pl. *gárci*), *turčá* (vs. *túrci*), *graždanjá* (vs. *gráždani*); *daskoljá*, *majstorjá*, *oficerjá* and in the single feminine form *ženurjá* (vs. *žení*). The collective suffix *-øj-* is the underlying form of the ending; it has left a trace in the palatalization of the final consonants of the stem (as in *gerčá*, *turčá*, *daskaljá*) and in the shift of the stem stress to the ending (comparable to the shift of stress in the Russian collective plurals *muž'já*, *synov'já*).

The suffix *-øj(-é)* has the same formation as *-øj-á* but reflects a collective singular that has acquired the function of a plural (cf. the similar development in Macedonian). It is used as the collective plural of a few masculine nouns: *caré*, *knjazé*, *koné*, *kralé*, *máže*, *cigané*. The original palatalization was lost before the front vowel *-e* of the ending.

The compounded ending *-ov-øc(-i)* is, as in Macedonian, highly productive and occurs with the same collective-emotive function. The description of this suffix was given under Macedonian (in 4.2.2), so we shall forgo the citing of Bulgarian examples.

The foregoing remarks suggest the following conclusions. The singular/plural opposition, the primary grammatical opposition of the Slavic noun, is in two groups of Slavic languages, those of the East and South-East, supported by two types of formal devices: the alternations of stress and the use of complex, compounded plural endings. The two types of devices are employed both in the East and in the South-East Slavic languages, but their role is in each of them reversed: the East Slavic languages resort rarely or not at all to the use of compounded plurals, while the South-East Slavic languages (especially Macedonian and Bulgarian that lack or limit the alternations of stress) make maximal use of the expanded plural endings. The use and expansion of the two types of devices was promoted and facilitated by a series of processes peculiar to the languages in question: in the East Slavic languages it was connected with the neutralization of the plural genders and the consequent levelling of the progressive (stem to the endings) alternations in the masculine and neuter nouns, and of the regressive (endings to the stem) alternations in the neuter and the mostly feminine *-a* stems. The formation of the complex suffixes in the plural of the South-East Slavic nouns had two principal sources: the South Slavic formant *-ov-* in the plural of monosyllabic stems, and a set of suffixes for the expression of the collective plural, the marked counterpart of the simple plural. The latter category is sometimes (especially in Macedonian) in a state of flux, but the suffixes that render it remain in use as formal props of the plural endings. And it should not come as a surprise that the two languages in which the counted plural received its maximal expansion are precisely those languages whose plurals have relinquished the expression of gender and case.

From what it has been said, it should be clear that the deepening of the distinction between the singular and plural by either the alternations of stress or through the expansion of the plural endings was achieved in the East and the South-East Slavic languages through the use of indigenous means and according to the possibilities inherent in their grammatical structures. On the other hand, we cannot overlook the fact that the South-East Slavic process of compounding the plural endings is matched by a similar treatment of the plural endings in the non-Slavic languages of the Balkan league. The phenomenon of diffusion in marking the expression of the plural must therefore be seen in the proper light: it was not the result of borrowing or of imitating a foreign model, but a process of development that was formed in the individual languages but was reinforced through geographic contact and centuries of bi- or multilingualism cultivated through repeated periods of migrations and resettlements.

5. The compounded endings of the non-Slavic Balkan languages.

The non-Slavic Balkan languages that parallel the South-East Slavic languages in the use of compounded plural endings are Modern Greek, Rumanian, Arumanian and Albanian.

In what follows I shall give a list of the plural suffixes used in each of these languages with examples illustrating their variety and occurrence.

5.1. Modern Greek uses the prefinal suffix *-d/-ad-* in the plural of masculine and feminine nouns and *-t/-at-* in the plural of neuter nouns. In speaking of the plurals with simple endings as opposed to those with compounded endings, Greek grammarians tend to ignore their morphological difference labelling the first type „parisyllabic“ and the second type „imparisyllabic“.

Masculine and feminine nouns with the *-d/-ad-* suffix are *pápas* „priest“, *pappús* „grandfather“, *lekés* „stain“ : pl. *papádes*, *pappúdes*, *lekédes*, and *mamá* „mommy“, *nené* „grandmother“, *adelfē* „sister“ : pl. *mamádes*, *nenédes*, *adelfádes*.

Neuter nouns with the *-t/-at-* suffix are *dásē* „woodland“, *prósōpo* „face“ : pl. *dásēta*, *prósōpata* (or *prósōpa*).

5.2. The prefinal suffix of the Rumanian plural is *-ur-(i)*, (usually pronounced *-ur'*), a cognate of the Latin plural *-or-a* (of neuter nouns such as *tempus* : *tempora*). The origin of the suffix is reflected in some of its properties: it does not occur with animate nouns; some masculine nouns switch in the plural to the feminine gender, i. e., the gender that has absorbed many of the original neuters (e. g., *colț* „corner“ : *colțuri*, *piept* „breast“ : *piepturi*, *vreme* „time“ : *vremuri*; *câmp* „field“ : *câmpuri*); some plurals in *-uri* carry a collective meaning (e. g., *lapte* „milk“ : *lapturi* „milk products“, *carne* „meat“ : *carnuri* „meat products“, *vin* „wine“ : *vinuri* „sorts of wine“). Some plurals with *-uri* differ from the meaning of their base forms; e. g., *ochiu* „eye“ vs. *ochiuri* „sunny-side-ups (eggs)“, *nimic* „nothing“ vs. *nimicuri* „trifles“, *frig* „cold“ vs. *friguri* „shivers“. The ending *-uri* is used overwhelmingly with inanimate nouns; e. g., (masc.) *loc* „place“, *lucru* „thing“, *timp* „time“; (fem.) *iarbă* „grass“, *lână* „wool“, *lipsă* „lack“, *marfă* „ware“, *treabă* „business“ : pl. *locuri*, *timpuri*; *ierburi* ... *treburi*.

5.3. The basic compounded ending of the Arumanian plurals is, like that of Rumanian, *-ur-i* (usually pronounced *-ur'*). The nouns using this suffix are all feminine and terminate in the singular in *-a* or *-e*; e. g., *kasa* „house“, *lumina* „light“, *hone* „inn“, *g'ole* „pond“ : pl. *kasuri* ... *g'oluri*. Where the language differs from Rumanian is in its use of two more compounded endings: *-adz-i* and *-ən'-i* that occur both with masculine and feminine nouns. The first ending is used with fem. and masc. stems that

end in a stressed vowel (e g., *bahcé* „garden“, *mantá* „coat“; *kasabá* „town“, *vujvodá* „voyvoda, captain“ : pl. *bahčadzi ... vujvodadzi*, the second ending is used only with four masc. kinship terms: *táte* „father“, *lále* „uncle“, *pápu* „grandfather“ and *stripápu* „greatgrandfather“ : pl. *tatán'í*, *laláni*, *papáni*.

5.4. Albanian employs as many as five prefinal suffixes in the plural of masculine nouns and one suffix in the plural of feminine and neuter nouns. The masc. nouns employ the suffixes: 1) *-n/-ar(-o)*, 2) *-en/-er(-e)*, 3) *-eń/-iń (-ø)*, 4) *-ar-iń- (-ø)*, 5) *-ler/-liar(-e)*; the other two genders use only the first suffix *n/-ur(-a)*. Several of the forms involve dialectal or historical variants: *-n* is the older and dialectal variant used in Gheg, while *-r* is the variant used in Tosk; the second pair is apparently an older variant of the first. A similar relationship might have existed between the suffix *-enʒ-* and *-in' (-ø)* whose zero ending goes back to the original ending *-i* that accounts for the palatalization of the preceding *n'* (in the standard transcription written as *nj*). The fourth suffix *-er-iń(-ø)* is clearly a compound of 2) and 3), whereas *-ler/-liar* are the front and back variants of the Turkish plural ending. The following examples should illustrate the use of each of the suffixes: 1) (fem.) *luftə* „battle, war“ : *luftna/luftəra*; *kishə* „church“ : *kishəra*; (neutr.) *đjathə* „cheese“ : *đjathna/đjathəra*; *shtəpi* „house“ : *shtəpira*; 2) (masc.) *mbret* „king“ : *mbretən/mbretəri*; *prift* „priest“ : *priftən/priftər*; 3) *bari* „shepherd“ : *bariń*; *shkop* „stick“ : *shkopiń*; *zanatci* „artisan“ : *zanatciń*, *lumə* „river“ : *lumeń*; 4) *zot* „mister“ : *zotəriń*; *prind* „parent“ : *prindəriń*; *gisht* „finger“ : *gishtəriń*; 5) *bej* „bey“ : *bejlerə*; *baba* „father“ : *baballarə*; *pasha* „pasha“ : *pashallarə*.

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