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Perridon, H.C.B.

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HOW OLD IS THE VESTJYSK STØD?

by Harry Perridon — Amsterdam

In his comment on my paper on the origin of the vestjysk stød Kortlandt rejects Ringgaard’s theory that this stød was an innovation in the dialects of West and (parts of) South Jutland, while reiterating his view that the stops that in these dialects are preceded by the stød directly reflect the Proto-Germanic preglottalised stops that he assumes were the continuation of the Proto-Indo-European ejectives.

Ringgaard based his dating of the origin of the stød on two other changes that affected these dialects, viz.: (1) the loss of final unaccented vowels; and (2) the voicing of postvocalic voiceless obstruents.

The stops that were the reflexes of the voiceless geminates *pp, tt* and *kk* differed in pronunciation according to their position in the word or phrase, there being at least two allophones of each stop, one in word-final position and another in medial position. After the loss of final schwa the allophonic variation between medial and final stops became phonemic. For Ringgaard this change in the phonological status of the two varieties of the stops constituted a terminus ante quem for the emergence of the vestjysk stød, since the numerous minimal pairs in the present-day dialects are kept apart by the presence or absence of the stød, e.g. *drœg ‘drink-IMP’ ≠ drœʔg ‘drink-INF’; hat ‘hat-SG’ ≠ haʔt ‘hat-PL’; mœrk ‘dark-SG’ ≠ mœrʔk ‘dark-PL’* (or: ‘dark-DEF’). It is clear that there must have been a difference in pronunciation between the old and new final stops, but it is not obvious that it right from the start was the stød that made the difference. I will return to this matter in a moment, but first we will have a look at the change that Ringgaard considered to be a terminus post quem for the emergence of the vestjysk stød.

The stød only occurs after a (short) vowel or a voiced consonant (glide or fricative). This means that in words like *awʔtøn ‘evening’ (Dan. aften), kjøνʔt ‘bought’* (Dan. *købte*, Norw. *kopte*) or *brujʔt ‘used’* (Dan. *brugte*, Norw. *brukte*) the stød cannot be older than the the lenition of *p, t, k* or the change of *ft* to *wt*. Now Kortlandt (2009, 2) contends that this “argumentation does not hold because these
words evidently continue *keypta [käʔpta], *brükta [brũkta], cf. German *kaufen, brauchen." The facts tell, however, a completely different story. The verb *bruge ‘to use’ is a loanword from Middle Low German (brükten) which entered the language/dialects in the course of the 13th or 14th century, i.e. one or two centuries after an alleged change from non-geminated [ʔk] to [k] which Kortlandt (2009) suggests took place in the 12th century. It is moreover to be noticed that in the areas in which *k did not change into a voiced glide (j, w) or fricative (ɣ), but to a voiceless fricative (f) instead, the stød is conspicuously absent, see map 1 (compiled by Jysk Ordbog).¹

The preterite kjøvʔt ‘bought’ does not continue Old Norse keypta, but rather Old (West-) Danish kafte, with a voiceless fricative (f) which later developed into a w before a t in most Danish dialects, cf. awʔten ‘evening’ (Dan. aften, Sw. afton) gywʔt / giwt ‘to marry’ (Dan. gifte, Sw. gifta), see also Brøndum-Nielsen (1932, 133; 144-5) and Hansen (1971, 174-5). In the areas in SW Jutland that did not turn the fricative into a glide before t; the stød is, as expected, absent in the preterite of verbs like kjøv/kjøf ‘to buy’ or dov/døf ‘to baptize’: kjøft, døft, not **kjøfʔt or **døfʔt. The ending of the preterite –te (which later lost its vowel in the dialects of Jutland) stems from Common-Scandinavian –ið (3 sg), which later changed into –it : *kaupiðē ‘bought-3sg’ > *køpþi. The dental voiceless fricative ð changed at some point of time (probably at the end of the Viking Age)³ into t, which hence cannot be the ancient source of the stød in preterites like kjøvʔt, brøγʔt ‘brewed’ (Dan. bryggede, Sw. bryggde) or bløʔt ‘bled’ (Dan. blødte, Sw. blödde) either.

The only possible conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that Ringgaard was absolutely right in calling the stød an innovation.⁴ It

² The actual history of ft in the dialects is according to Brøndum-Nielsen (1932, 145) slightly more complicated: f changed into w before t in most Danish dialects; after a long vowel w turned into v (or ð) in most West-Danish dialects. Before t this new v became voiceless (f) in some dialects, e.g. in South-Jutlandic.
³ See Brøndum-Nielsen 1932, 127-131 for a lengthy discussion of this change in East Scandinavian.
Map 1. (Jysk Ordbog) The past tense of the verb *bruge* in Jutish dialects.

The vestjysk stød is indicated by means of a double quotation mark: “

does not continue a Proto-Germanic preglottalisation, nor does it replace an earlier preaspiration, which Jurij Kusmenko in his recent book on possible Saami influences on the Scandinavian languages suggests characterised the tense stops in gemination and in post-sonorant position (Kusmenko 2008, 133-8). It is hardly likely, to say the least, that a voiceless fricative (ʃ) could turn into a voiced glide (w),
when followed by a preaspirated stop, e.g.: *gif'te > *giw'te ‘marry-INF’ (Dan. giftie), after which the preaspirated stop would change into its preglottalised counterpart: *giw'te > giwʔte > giwʔt (>gywʔt).

Ringgaard assumed that the lenition of postvocalic obstruents (Dan. klusilsvækkelse) preceded the loss of final schwa in West-Jutlandic, and, hence, that the vestjysk stød could have emerged in the interval between the two changes. Until the second half of the fourteenth century, however, there are hardly any signs of the weakening of tense obstruents in the written sources. In the oldest extant manuscript of the Provincial Law of Jutland (Jyske Lov), Codex Holmiensis 37, for example, not a single case of lenition of postvocalic p, t, k can be found.

Loss of final schwa, on the other hand, is rather frequent in this manuscript from around 1280, e.g.: sald ‘sold’ instead of saldae; understand ‘understand-INF’ against understandæ in other mss. of Jyske Lov, such as NkS 295 8º; fyllægh ‘follow-INF’ cf. fullughæ in NkS 295 8º; hald ‘hold-INF’ – halde in the same text; wist ‘knew’ – wistæ in other mss. An interesting form is dop‘baptized’ instead of dopæ in another ms. of Jyske Lov, viz. AM 286 fol., dated to the beginning of the 14th century. It shows that the final unstressed vowel in the preterites of the –te class of weak verbs was lost before the tense stop of the stem (dop- ‘baptize-’) was weakened to a glide (dow-), and, hence, before the vestjysk stød could develop between that voiced consonant and following stop. Since the preterite and the past participle are kept apart in the modern dialects by means of the presence (døvʔt) or absence (døvt) of this stød, it has to be assumed that it replaced an earlier feature that upheld the distinction between the two forms. As I argued in my previous paper on this subject (Perridon 2006), it is not unlikely that this distinctive feature was [aspiration]. It is not uncommon that released final tense stops are aspirated, especially before a pause. In German all stops are aspirated in this position (Auslautverhärtung, see Iverson & Salmons (2007) for a recent discussion of this phenomenon), in Danish released stops are regularly aspirated before a pause (Hansen 1956, 50). Brøndum-Nielsen (1932, 95) assumes that tenues in wordfinal position in the 13th and 14th c. “were pronounced with a more or less strong aspiration [...] which possibly shows up in written forms with an added h like køph (Dan. køb) ‘buy-NOUN’, borth (Dan. bort) ‘away’ and is connected with the fact that stops were lenited
later in final position than intervocally.” This is in complete agreement with Ringgaard (1960), who claimed that all final non-pre-glottalized stops were aspirated in the West-Jutlandic dialects he investigated. I therefore suggest (again) the following scenario for the emergence of the vestjysk stød:

1. There was allophonic variation between the aspirated reflexes of original \( pp, tt, kk \) and postconsonantal \( p, t, k \) in wordfinal position, and the unaspirated ones in medial position, e.g. \( dop\ddot{t} - dopte \)
2. Before \( t \) and \( s, p \) changed into a voiceless bilabial or labiodental fricative: \( dop\ddot{t} - dopfe \)
3. After the loss of final schwa the allophonic variation between aspirated and unaspirated stops became phonemic: \( dop\dddot{t} - dopft \)
4. Stops were lenited after long vowels to glides; before \( s \) and \( t, f \) became a glide (\( w \)) after both long and short vowels: \( dow\dddot{t} - dowt \)
5. The non-aspirated stops in medial and final position were preglottalized: \( dow\dddot{t} - dow\dddot{t}t \)
6. In some dialects final aspiration of non-preglottalized stops was given up, in others it became optional for all stops.

References


5 “Medens i Udlyd Teneus kan antages at have været udalt med en mere eller mindre kraftig Aspiration (jf. nuværende Stok : Stokke, Hat : Hæte osv.), et Forhold, der muligvis kommer til Udtryk i Skriftformer med tilføjel h som koph Køb, borth bort og staar i Forbindelse med Klusilsvækkelsens senere Indtræden i Udlyd end i intervokalisk Stilling...”