

## Martinet's rule of laryngeal hardening - a reappraisal

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In a note on the relation between Latin *senex* 'old person' and *senātus* 'senate', André Martinet, more than fifty years ago, suggested a regular sound change  $*-h_2s > *-ks$ , so that e.g. *senex* would go back to  $*senah_2s$ . While the phonetic side of the matter seems quite unproblematic and important functional points may be made in favor of the idea, it has not altogether had a good press. After Watkins' early acceptance in 'Evidence for Laryngeals' (1965:181) and Cowgill's rejection in the same work (1965:176f), the theory is, e.g., left unmentioned in the handbooks by Meier-Brügger (2003) and Fortson (2004) and in Kümmel's monumental work on the typology of consonant change (2007), and while Mayrhofer was generally positive with some modification in an article of 1987, it is passed over in silence in his other treatments of the laryngeal theory, including the most recent (2004 and 2006). Lindeman (1997:154) and Schrijver (1991) tend to reject the idea, Sihler (1995:167) mentions it in passing as an example of suggestions suffering "from demerits too serious to ignore", and finally Pinault (2001:102) analyzes *senex* as  $*seni-k-$ , introducing an ill-defined secondary suffix  $*-k-$ .

In the present paper it will be argued that Martinet's idea deserves a revival. The arguments forwarded against it may be dealt with by straightforward analogical explanations, while, on the other hand, there is considerable advantage to be gained on the morphological level.

The positive examples, of which some are well-known, others based on new analyses, are mainly found in the following morphological categories:

- 1) Nouns in  $*-āks$  (and analogical  $*-āks$ )  $< *-ah_2s$ , besides Lat. *senex* e.g. cases like *culex* 'gnat'  $< *uhlāh_2s$ . The function of these formations is that of singulatives based on collectives in  $*-ah_2$ .
- 2) Nouns of the type  $vrkīh$  of which the Latin feminine agent noun suffix  $-trīx$  with analogical long vowel is an example. Again we are dealing with singulatives, this time based on collectives in  $*-ih_2$ .
- 3) Animate root nouns based on root segments ending in a consonantal laryngeal. Beside the group of Slavic nouns of the type *ključ*  $< *kléyh_2s$  'key' treated by Rasmussen 1988, there is quite a number of additional examples like Gk.  $πλάζ$   $< nom. *plāh_2s$  'table, plain; flat land' beside Lat. *palam* 'openly' from the corresponding accusative.
- 4) Sigmatic aorists derived from roots in a final laryngeal (2.sg.  $*-Vhs-s > *-Vks$ , 3.sg.  $*-V-hs-t > *-V-ks-t$ ). This would be the origin of the Armenian 'weak' aorist in  $-c^c$ , e.g. *elic*  $< *e-pleh_1-s-t$  'he filled' (cf. Gk. *s-aor. ἕπλησα*, and for the phonetics the development of  $*-s > -c^c$  in the numeral *vec* 'six').

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