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SLAVO-ROMANCE DIACHRONIC RESEARCH THEMES IN FRIULI

0. Friuli is a historical region, today part of North-East Italy, including a very small extension of Western Slovenia. The mother tongue of most of the inhabitants is Friulian (also Friulian and Friulian), also known as Eastern Rhaetian. Another language of the area is Slovene. The aim of this essay is to suggest to Slavists some research subjects of a domain, which so far has not been seriously investigated. This is the Slavo-Friulian language contact of past ages.

1. In Friuli the first Slavs probably came from the East together with the Langobardi in the 2nd half of the 6th century. They did not come as a politically organized unit, but we know that Langobardi lived with them already in Pannonia before they moved to Italy. This is supported by the fact that the duke of Benevento Raduald (first half of the 7th century), a Friulian Langobardus, was able to speak Slavic:
And when Raduald was told about it, he came quickly and spoke with these Slavs in their own language. And when they were, because of this, less inclined to fight... (Quod cum Raduald audisset, cito veniens, eisdem Slavis propria ilium lingua locutus est. Comme eos propter hoc se- mper ad bellum reddidisset, [...]. - Dianoasus: IV, 44).

2. We do not know any study about Slav-Lombard bilingualism. From the Dianoasian quotation however we can draw two conclusions. The first is that for non-Slavs it was not usual to speak Slavic. But we do not know if this was the case for the Friulian Langobardi, because the quoted episode happened in Southern Italy with, very likely, Slavs from the Eastern Adriatic shore. In any case the author, himself a Friulian Langobardus, felt the need to point out that Raduald spoke in their own language. The other conclusion is that the use of Slavic probably excited a kind of solidarity among the Slavs. Anyway, we think it could be interesting to identify among the Germanic elements Lombardisms in the Slavic lexicon. Because of our uncertain knowledge of the word lending language, a comparison with Friulian could help.

2. Other Slavs, which were organized in political units, soon followed the migration of the Langobardi, and so the ancestors of today’s Slovenes reached their present locality. The westernmost groups settled down in the mountains of Eastern Friuli, more exactly along the valleys of the rivers Lisuć (slov. Soča, it. Isonzo), Tor (slov. Ter, it. Torre) and Nadson (slov. Nadiža, it. Natisone), where their descendants still live.

3. The other Slovene inhabitants of today’s Friuli came one century later, in the second half of the 7th century, the age of Samo from Carinthia in the North (Corboanes 184:329). They came down along the river Fele (slov. Bega, it. Fella) until its confluence with the Tiliment (it. Tagliamento), which they followed up to its source. They spread in the valleys of all the tributaries, including the Rezia (it. Restia) with the homonymous area. This settlement has only survived in Rezia, whose community has been studied by many, well-known, Slavists.

3. The first subject which comes to question is to locate the original extension of the phenomena we know in the Rezia. It could also help in establishing how old they are. Some elements can be found in the local names and Friulian dialects of the High Tiliment and Fele.
III:iii. A characteristic feature of Carinthian dialects of Slovene is the postpalatal pronunciation of the /j/ (Ramovš 1936:119). The same can be said of some Friulian dialects of the area in question, e.g. in the valley called Cjánal di San Piero (it. Canale di S. Pietro), and I think it also applies to Austro-Bavarian Carinthian dialects. It could be interesting to find out more about its origin.

III:iv. Language contacts in diachrony are important for the definition of absolute chronology. That’s one good reason to define when the assimilation of the Slavs in High Ti- liment and Felt occurred.

IV:i. Some themes do not touch only one of the three immigration waves which we have mentioned, but rather all of them. One is the important process of christianization which for Central European Slavs began at that time.

There were two main centers from where the new religion was spreading in the Eastern Alps and their surroundings. South of the Drau/Drava river it was Aquileia, while to the north it was Salzburg. For linguists it is interesting to study the composition of the lexicon regarding Christianity. Many expressions, of course, are borrowed from Latin (and Greek).

Some came directly from Romance languages. It is quite natural to look for this Romance origin in the two religious centers quoted above. Since in Noricum (a part of Salzburg and until 798 under the metropolitan authority of the patriarch of Aquileia – Corba- nese 1984:104) both processes of romanization and christianization were led by Aquileia, we shouldn’t expect any relevant differences in the language and the religious lexicon of the two episcopal seats.

IV:ii. Although we do not have any written evidence from Noricum’s and Pannonia’s Romance languages, the results of initial comparisons between West Slavic languages and Friulian (the main “Aquileian Romance” that survived) seem to confirm this hypothesis (Cadorini 1995). Such evidence is particularly meaningful, because Western Slavs did not live together with romanized population, so that lexical units may have reached them only through border contacts in the Danube area or through contacts with Alpine Slavs or Bavarians.

IV:iii. The comparison with Alpine Slavic could answer some open questions about the history of Friulian. Friulian developed its characteristic features very early, although the main theory rather poses the split with the rest of the Italo-Romance region only in the 10th century (V:iv). Our conviction comes from considering the system of tonic vowels. If we start from the most common Romance system, with seven vowels on four degrees of openness (ă, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā), we have first a reduction to three degrees (ă, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā), through the diaphonisation of the middle open pair (ă > ā; ā > ā; ā > ā).

This phonological change, which is paralleled only in far Castilian, is the first of a short but important series. Today (in the central dialects) usually the description of a system with ten vowels is adopted because, apart from the five original “weak” ones there are five “strong” ones (ă, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā, ā) (Francescato 1966:9-11). We must employ a phonological definition, because there do not exist phonetic studies of Friulian.

Francescato postulates that the diaphonisation of the middle open pair took place in the 5th century, because it might have preceded the Germanic settlements. In fact, the other important phonological changes might have been influenced by the stress of Germanic languages (Francescato 1966:134).

The phoneticist Jiří Hedánek is working on the hypothesis of a moraic character of “strong” vowels. We propose to describe them as vowels with an ascending tone, oppo- sed to the phonemes traditionally written as double vowels with or without an i in the middle (aia, eia, iia), which should bear a descending tone. This allows us to see the origins of the present vowel system as influenced by Slavic.

IV:iv. The classic position for “strong” vowels is at the end of a word preceding a former Romance voiced consonant, as in lat. clavem > frl. claf or lat. lapsus > frl. lâf. The point is to attribute the “strengthening” to a compensation because of the devoicing of the consonant or to ascribe the devoicing to the precedent strengthening. Fran Ramovš wrote that in old Friulian the continuation of Latin ĺ was so closed, that for a Slav it sounded like i in his own language (Ramovš 1936:40). The examples given by the Slovene dialectologist are all with voiced consonants and thus support the second hypothesis: slov. miza < ofrl. *mîsa < lat. mînna; slov. golida < ofrl. *golida. Most important is the village name slov. Kobarid < ofrl. *Cavorîd (in 1184 Cauroretum) frl. Cjaurî. Here we have the classic position and the borrowing happened before the 9th century because a > o (Ramovš 1936:39).

V:i. Today the Friulian ending for the nouns of the first Latin declension is -e/-a/-o, depending on individual dialects. In the past the area where the ending -a was used was larger, today the territory employing -e, as adopted by the koine, is growing. It suggests that in old Friulian it might have sounded like a mixed vowel, as it now does in French or Catalan. The etymologies (Ramovš 1936:24, 33) slov. Krani < lat. Carnia frl. Cjargne; slov. Oglej < lat. Aquileia > frl. Aciulé/Ale. Can be regarded as further proof of this.

V:ii. Further more Friulian can give some new materials for the study of Alpine Slavic: for example the etymology frl. surcit (socrit, slov. sîtk) ‘hiding place, recess’ < alpsl. *škrti, which documents a lexical item already known elsewhere (cz. skryt ‘hiding place, recess’) and, at the same time, the velar pronunciation of s (preserved in Alpin Slavic up to the 10th century – Ramovš 1936:35, 46-47). In modern Slovene we should expect *škrt (but Marchetti 1952:59).

V:iii. “The Italian towns are empty of dwellers and the devastated farmlands are devoid of peasants; the fields are white with the fleshless bones of the dead. So I think that the number of the survivors is lower than the number of the victims of Mars...” (Instant Italides spoliatì civibus urbìs / Ac desolati dempits cultiorìbus agri / Campi cessorum sic- catis ossibus albert / Iam puto tot vivi non sunt, quot Marte perempti / Illorum... – Salomo, Waldramnus 1889: vv. 85-89). So writes Salomon III, bishop of Constance (Corbanese 1984:332) in describing Northern Italy in the early 10th century. The passage has been quoted here to introduce the last wave of organized Slavic settlers in Friuli, who came after the Hungarian raids at the end of the 10th century. They were invited by the Aquileian patriarch, who was also count of Friuli and needed to repopulate the huge abandoned areas.

Traditionally, historians connect this information with the Slavic villages in the plains, which can also be found in the territory of Treviso, beyond the Western border of Friuli. It is probable that the settlements were especially dense in the Vastata Hungarorum, a triangle between Palme (it. Palmanova), Codroipo (it. Codroipo) and Tisane (it. Longana), measuring nearly 30 kilometers in diameter.

V:iv. But can we really be sure that all those colonists actually came by invitation of the patriarch? The historians did base the identification on toponymy, but, as it has already been said, Slavic names of villages can also be found outside Friuli. A detailed study of the neighboring toponymy outside the territory under control of the patriarch and off the plains could yield new information on the matter. In any case toponymic analysis of Friuli could throw further light on the geographical origin and the chronology of Slavic plain settlements.
VI.II: Another open question is the process of assimilation, which resulted in the total disappearance of Slavs from the plains. At present, they continue to live only in the territory of Gorice (st. Gorizia, slov. Gorica). For the others we do not have any chronological, sociological or linguistic studies. We could show, for instance, that those colonies took part in certain phonological changes, which occurred in a larger area after the settlement. It would mean, that these settlements were still in contact with other Slavs.

VI.IV: Related to the above is another question. Nowadays, linguists explain the high level of autonomy of Friulian inside the Italo-Romance group through sociopolitical reasons. After Friuli became part of the German Empire in 952, the contacts with the Italian upper and middle classes were not enough to spread the innovations by the main centers of the peninsula into local linguistic behavior (Francescato/Salimbreni 1976:92).

As we have already seen, this chronological boundary concerning the linguistic development coincides with the age of Hungarian raids and the subsequent repopulating of the plains. Conclusive evidence to find the reasons for the split between Friulian and the rest of the Italo-Romance area may come directly from a study on the density and the distribution of the Slavic settlements, which are unlikely to have formed a continuous front, but which could have had some contacts with North Italian Idioms also for the lower classes. The density of the Slavic presence in the Vastata Hungarorum, for example, is demonstrated in the rich ethnolinguistic evidence, not only in the villages having names with Slavic origins, but also in those with Latin or Germanic names. This reasoning also complements with the definition of Mērēt < lat. meleterium (st. Meleto di Capitolo) as a Slavic village in a document of 1031 (“in villa selavorum” – Desmin 1977:146).

V.V: How strong this presence has been can be documented by the Slavisms in Friulian which might be connected with this migration. One way is to compare Friulian dialects of the concerned areas with others elsewhere. Certain sectors of the lexicon could be revealing. The relationship with the repopulating, for instance, is evident in the following cases. An abandoned piece of land is called a pasuto, a string of uncultivated land beside a hedge is a ranice (“ranizze” – Marchetti 1952:58). Marchet (it. Marchetti) supports the etymology from slov. orancica ‘field’, but we rather look to the archaism gráncia ‘boundary’. If our supposition is correct in assuming the stress to be *ranice, which Marchet does not note, the new etymology needs to explain the change. But it is more probable from the semantic point of view. We have a parallel in the slov. meja ‘1. border; 2. belt between two plots of land’. We can not affirm this, but such situations could also give new material for the history of the surrounding Slavic languages.

VI.I: So far we have spoken about Slavs without any closer ethnic definition. This is due to the fact that we do not know any study about this topic. Traditionally, historians write about Slavs coming from the other regions under the patriarch’s rule, without being more precise. Thus they could be Slovenes as well as Croatians. For the Vastata Hungarorum, the Slovene hypothesis seems to be strengthened by the village of Belgrád (it. Belgrado), where the element -grad < -grad corresponds to the local castle, as in the Slovene meaning of the expression, and not with the Croatian ‘town’. Further studies should make this point clear.

VI.II: The communities in the Natisone basin (II.II.), although they have always been in contact with the other Slovenes, show some peculiarities. After Venice conquered most of Friuli (1420), they received great autonomy and preserved a lot of archaic cultural elements. This golden age ended exactly two centuries ago with Napoleon in 1797, but they are still known as Benečani ‘the Venetians’.

VI.III: Also of great interest is the fact that the church in that area enjoyed a peculiar position regarding the language policy. It cultivated the local dialects and formed a common literary variant. At this point, we may note that the “Starogorski rokopi” (1492-1498 – more in the interesting work of Dapila (1995)) was written exactly in that area. We must also take account of the political life and the needs of the administration, due to the autonomy already stated.

This literary variant, which probably does not even have a name, is still alive. In fact, until the 80’s the Italian state bodies did everything they could to forbid the use of the official Slovene language in this region, as everywhere else in the rest of the province of Udine (it. Udine). That is the reason why the local press, now also in the Tor and Režiž valleys, have to use this variant to be understood by the Benečani. We know at least three reviews which use it, together with Italian and official Slovene: “Novi Matajur”, “Dorn”, “Enig dart”.

The point is that the codification of this language occurred in a different way than what we know for official Slovene. It preserved a lot of loan words not only from Friulian and Italian (Venetian), but also from German (Austro-Bavarian), together with other elements which today have disappeared from Slovene’s writing. In the neighbouring republic, in many cases, they are alive only in spoken variants.

VII.I: There are, of course, some open questions, which are difficult to connect with a single wave of immigration or with a certain period. Here we will introduce two morphosyntactic topics.

VII.II: Friulian is one of the few Romance languages which does not have an existential phrase equivalent to English ‘there is, there are’. Another one is Romanian, which of course has also been influenced by Slavic languages. Then the nearest examples are in the Hiberoromance group.

The Slavic influence may be proposed, because in old Friulian the phrase is documented. Thus Friulian has been the only idiom in the Italo-Romance group to loose it.

VII.III: Another point is that the reflexive pronoun clitic for all plural persons and for the third singular is si. Anyway, the other two persons are different (mi, ti) and all the persons of the stressed pronoun have their own form. The phenomenon is not recorded in all the dialects and can be found in Venetian dialects.

IX: All the points we have listed above have one thing in common: so far they have not been studied, or so only superficially. For many years an etymology was understood as a territorial claim. Also the chauvinism of the middle and upper “Italian” classes did not help scientific research in this field, and if not directly, at least through the absolute ignorance of everything Slavic and Slovene, it caused in the other communities of Friuli. On the cultural map of the region, educated people have an empty space marked: “Hic sunt Scalavones”.

We do not think that we can improve the situation with a couple of loan words. The examples given here are merely intended to show the wide range of possibilities for useful research and do not want to prove everything with one single etymology. We think that there is a lot of work yet to do and we need Slavists to do it.
ZUR TYPOLOGISCHEN STELLEN DES OBSORBI-
SCHEN INNERHALB DER WESTSLAVISCHEN SPRACHEN:
DAS VERBALSYSTEM

0. Ältere Arbeiten zur Stellung der beiden sorbischen Sprachen innerhalb der westslavi-
schen Sprachen sind stets historisch ausgerichtet und untersuchen, wie ihre Ausgliede-
 rung aus den westslavischen Sprachen vor sich gegangen ist und welche westslavischen
Sprachen in dieser Hinsicht engere Beziehungen zueinander haben (vgl. z. B. Pet 1976,

Ziel des vorliegenden Aufsatzes ist dagegen ein synchroner Vergleich zwischen der
modernen obersorbischen Standardsprache und den anderen westslavischen Standard-
 sprachen. Als Methode soll dabei der strukturalistische typologische Ansatz von Vladimir
Škalička dienen (eine repräsentative Auswahl seiner Arbeiten bietet Škalička 1979).

1.1 Škalička geht von fünf Sprachtypen1 aus (dem flektierenden, agglutinierenden, isolie-
renden, introflektiven und polysynthetischen oder inkorporierenden), welche z. T. bereits
auf Wilhelm v. Humboldt zurückgehen und von Škalička im Rahmen des in den dreißiger
Jahren herrschenden strukturalistischen Paradigmas neu definiert wurden. Die Typen
bewegen sich auf dem Verhältnis zwischen den Einheiten Morphem und Wort auf der Aus-
drucksseite und Sem (bzw. nach moder nerer Terminologie Gramm) auf der Inhalts-
seite. Im Gegensatz zur typologischen Tradition des 19. Jhdts. betrachtet Škalička diese
Typen nicht als Gruppen von Sprachen, sondern als idealtypische Konstrukte, welche in
der einzeilischen Präsentation Realität nicht erreicht werden, ja nicht erreicht werden können (vgl.
Škalička Kritik (1935:10) an H. Winkler; zur allgemeinen Problematik vgl. Ineichen
(1918ff., 46ff., 98ff.)). Die Merkmale dieser idealtypischen Konstrukte sollten mög-
liehst in implikativer Beziehung zueinander stehen, d. h. kommt ein Element A in einer
Sprache vor, so sollte dieses einem Element B „günstig“ oder „ungünstig“ sein, die Typo-
lologie sollte im Prinzip in der Luge sein, wie Škalička sagt, wahrscheinliche, unwahr-
scheinliche und unmögliche Sprachen voraussagen zu können (Škalička 1966:157). Eine
Einzelsprache kommt also den verschiedenen Idealtypen mehr oder minder nahe, und zugleich enthält jede natürliche Sprache Elemente aus verschiedenen, ja allen Typen. In
Škalička Formulierung: „Dans toute langue il y a une lutte entre ces différents types.“
(Škalička 1946–1948:14). Die Untersuchung einer Einzelsprache im Rahmen der Ska-
lička-Typologie sollte also Antworten auf die Frage nach der Annäherung an einen be-
stimmten Sprachtyp geben und auf diejenige nach dem Verhältnis der verschiedenen
Sprachtypen in ihr, beide sind dann auch anwendbar im Sprachvergleich.

1.2 Die Frage muß gestellt werden, ob sich die Škalička-Typologie mit den genannten
fünf Sprachtypen eignet für den Vergleich von nahe verwandten Sprachen (kritisch dazu
1967:1828). Daran lassen sich zwei Antworten geben: Vom theoretischen Standpunkt
aus läßt die gemeinsame Herkunft der slavischen Sprachen voraussetzen, daß von einer

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1 In seinen letzten Lebensjahren modifizierte Škalička seine Typologie durch die Aufnahme zweier
Poppers (1998:50), daß die Einarbeitung dieser aus einem ganz andersartigen typologischen Ansatz
stammenden Typen das Bild der Skalicka-Typologie nur stören kann, da dieser damit das gleichmäßige
grundlegende Kriterium verlor geht.