Lithuanian aysus ‘dreary, gloomy, bitter’ and its cognates (IE. *āi- ‘burn, glow’ in Baltic)

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Abstract

The etymologies proposed until now for Lith. aysus are not satisfactory. The author suggests that aysus can be traced back to IE *āi-, represented also in Hittite. This root was variously expanded in Baltic, yielding *āi-t- (Lith. asītus etc.), *āi-x- (OPr. ennōs ‘fever’ etc.) and *āi-sk- (Lith. āiskus etc.).

E. Fraenkel compares Lith. aysus with a set of Lithuanian words aimán ‘woe is me’ (ai ‘oh, ah’ + mán ‘me’, dat. sing. of aš I), aima ‘moan, moaning’, aimanūtis (-ūna, -ūvo), ‘moan, grieve, mourn’. K. Büga’s approach to aysus is contradictory. On the one hand, he connected it with Latv. āisītā (-u, -īja) ‘grin, bare one’s teeth; banter, chaff’, on the other, he traced it back to the ancient root *ei-/oi- ‘burn, glow’, represented, according to K. Büga, by, e.g., Lith. iešmė ‘fire-wood for one heating, firing-charge’, aitrūs ‘bitter, tart; yielding much heat’. The first connection is hardly successful, because Latv. āisītā (-u, -īja) belongs to Latv. at-īesītā (-šu, -su) ‘show one’s teeth, snarl’, at-īesīt (-šu, -zu) ‘id.’, īesītā (-šu, -zu) ‘id.’ and evidently to Lith. įeštis (-is) ‘hull, pod, shell’ (< IE. *āi-ā(h)-)2. This would imply that Latv. -s- in āisītā and at-īesītā is secondary with regard to the original Latv. -z-

References


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Lith. *-i- (< IE -i̯(h)-) due to the variation between final tenuis and media. As final -s in aisús continues IE s, there can be no etymological identity of Lith. aisús and Latv. aisūs.

When discussing Būga's alternative assumption, it should be kept in mind that Lith. iemsė 'fire-wood for one heating, firing-charge' is usually compared with Av. aēsma- 'fire-wood', Oldn. ēdhā-, ēdhas- 'id.'5. Consequently, iemsė as well as aisús, if we connect them historically, would contain the root *eidh- resp. *aiddh-: (Oldn. īndhē 'kindles, sets on fire', Gr. αἰθω 'kindle, set fire to'). With reference to this it is noteworthy that V. Mažiulis takes a similar view in explaining OPr. ennys 'fever, das kalte Fieber' < *en-ais < *en-aisas: he compares it with Lith. iemsė and derives it from the Baltic root *aid- 'burn' < IE. *aiddh- 'id.' by means of the prefix en- 'in, into' and the suffix -sa-6. Preference should be given to this explanation over any other7 in view of the following facts: first, it is based on real evidence - graphemic and phonemic - and not on conjectures8 and, second, such parallels as Goth. heito 'fever': OE hēða 'hot weather', hētu 'heat', hāt 'hot', ON. heitr 'id.' and Alb. eth 'fever' < IE. *aiddhöst-: Lat. aestus 'heat, glowing fire', aeiēus 'warm, hot season, summer' make it plausible semantically. These semantic parallels, moreover, permit us to refer to a word like ais 'weather' (evidently 'hot weather')9 < *aisas in the so-called Narev Balts' vocabulary10, the more so that a similar meaning is attested, e.g., by Lith. aikštis 'fine, dry weather, hot weather, when the sun shines brightly11 built on an allomorph *-aisk- of this root. Semantic development from *būn, become heated' to *hot weather' can be observed, e.g., in Lith. kaisra 'glow, hot weather', a derivative of kaisi (stata) 'become heated'.

So, it seems most likely that the cognates of Lith. aisús 'dreary, gloomy, bitter' are Lith. iemsė 'fire-wood for one heating, firing charge', Pr. ennys

7A good review is given by V. Toporov (1979:52). V. Toporov is inclined to read ennys as *en-eis and to associate it with Germanic words for 'ice'.
8It is noteworthy that R. Trautmann was the first to read ennys as *en-aisis, Trautmann (1910:329).
9Zinkevičius (1985:68); Zinkevičius (1984:8). On this vocabulary in general see especially Schmid (1986). The graphemic analysis of the Polish part of this vocabulary does also not allow to date it back to the 16th-17th century, s. Popowska-Taborska (1990).
10Lkz (1968:36-37).

Lithuanian aisús 'dreary, gloomy, bitter'. If, as is assumed, they are built on the IE root *aiddh- resp. *eiddh- 'burn, kindle', Lith. aitrūs 'bitter, tart; yielding much heat' cannot be associated with this word family, as was suggested by K. Būga, for *aitr- would have yielded *aistr-, not *aitr-. Consequently, aitrūs, closely associated with aisús, would point to the contrary.

I would like now to recall W. Prellwitz's insightful ideas on this matter which were overlooked by scholars and which would make it possible to explain aitrūs as well as aisús in a more satisfactory manner. W. Prellwitz saw in Lith. aitrūs a clear derivative of IE. *ai-/aī- 'burn, glow (brennen, leuchten)'. As aisús is closely related to aitrūs and as the latter comes only from *ai-/aī-/ (but not from IE. *aiddh-), W. Prellwitz argues it is not legitimate to derive aisús from *aiddh-ais (in the same way as, e.g., rūnas 'brownish' is from *raudūs-yos)12. W. Prellwitz suggests, further, that aisús may be built on the neuter form *āi(ī)s- 'burning, fire (Brand, Feuer)', as may also OCS. jasna 'clear, bright', compared with Lith. aisuskas 'distinct, clear, serene' by Miklosich in his comparative dictionary of the Slavonic languages13.

New material offered by other IE. languages would give certainty to these ideas, slightly modifying them at the same time.

A mediopassive verb ā- 'be warm, be hot' of the -hi conjugation is attested in Hittite texts: 3 p. sing. praeas. a-a-ri, 3 p. plur. praeas. a-a-an-ru, partic. a-a-an-ru- 'warm, hot'14. Hettitologists interpret the regular writing a-a (scriptio plena) as indicating *aia-15 and assume etymological identity with IE. *ai- 'burn, glow' < Proto-IE. *h₁a-st- (in Oldn. īndhē 'kindles, sets on fire', Gr. αἰθω, αἴδωμαι 'kindle, set fire to')16. The causative envu- 'make hot, fry' (< *ai-nu-) and particularly the inchoative apis- 'become hot (?)' (< *ai-es-) would make this interpretation plausible17. The existence of the verb *ai- 'burn, glow' in the Indo-European linguistic community is confirmed also by Lith. aitrūs which becomes transparent when we associate it with this root (*ai-tr-). In the Southern dialects (Old Indic, Greek) of the Indo-European language community, the affix *-dha- (a suffix or an enlargement) expressing
an (accomplished) state\textsuperscript{18}, was added to this root. The root morpheme *aith- 'burn, glow' is not pandialectal, and this circumstance might be also taken to indicate its later formation.

In the proto-Baltic dialectal area the root *āi- 'burn, glow' may have been enlarged with such affixes as -t-, -s- and -sk-:
- *āi-t-: Lith. aitrūs (acc. sing. aitrū) 'bitter, tart; yielding much heat', aitrū (acc. sing. aitrū) 'arid', aitrā (acc. sing. aitrā) 'ardour, ardency, fervency, passion; bitter taste' (Balt. *āit- + -r-);
- *āi-s-/ēi-s-: OP. ennoys 'fever' < *en-aisus, "Narev Baltic" ais 'weather' < *aisus, Lith. aisūs (acc. sing. aisiū) 'drearly, gloomy, bitter', ėisnē (acc. sing. ėisne) 'tree-wood for one heating, firing charge' (Balt. *ēis- + -s(t));
- *āi-sk-: Lith. ėiskūs 'distinct, clear, serene', ėiskūs (acc. sing. ėiskūt) 'seen, open, clear' (*ēisk- + -sk(t)-), ėiskūs (ēiskūt) 'fine, dry weather when the sun shines brightly' (ēisk- + -sk(t)). In the last examples ie. s became ī after i in the Lithuanian language, but in aisūs it remained unchanged (as it did, e.g., in pāsūsī 'thres off the awn′, vāsūsī 'fruit′, teisūsī 'right′, just′)\textsuperscript{19}. Lith. ėiskūs, ėiskūs, ėisnē and ėitrū with their acute accent indicate that the root *āi- (resp. Balt. *ēi-) originally had a long diphthong. The circumflex accent in ėiskūs, aisūs might have replaced an acute accent due to metathetic characteristic of the majority of the u stem adjectives\textsuperscript{20}. True, Pr. ennoys with its lengthened oy (\(\langle * āi < * āi\rangle\) under a falling tone would point to a circumflex accent (*en-aisus) as well as does Lith. ėiskūs. But metatony must be taken into consideration here, too\textsuperscript{21} (\(\langle * āis- \text{--} ėisk-\rangle\)).

The simplest way to explain Pr. ennoys 'fever' would be to view it as a deverbative (\(< * āi-s, -as, o stem, or *en-aisus, o stem\))\textsuperscript{22}. Lith. dial. ėisterėtis (ējū) 'become slightly bitter'\textsuperscript{23} would indicate such a possibility, if it is derived from an original *disti- (sa - or stis) 'become bitter' with the suffix -terėtis (in a similar manner as, e.g., spūčterėtis (ējū, -ia) 'become fringed a little, fray a little' or srėstėterėtis (ējū, -ia) 'eat with a spoon

\textsuperscript{18}Benveniste (1955:218-219).
\textsuperscript{19}On the distribution of s and ī after ī and u in Lithuanian s. Karaliūnas (1966:113-126) (on ėisūs p. 121); Hamps (1967:7-11); Andersen (1968:190).
\textsuperscript{20}Būga (1924:94-95) [= Būga 1959:424-425].
\textsuperscript{21}Cf. Būga (1924:141).
\textsuperscript{23}LKŽ (1968:40).

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a little, sup a little' - from spūri (spūra, -sta) 'become fringed, fray' and srėkti (srėkša) 'eat with a spoon, ladle out, sup'). On the other hand, it is also likely that OP. ennoys is derived with a prefix en- 'in, into' from an original adjective *aisa- 'hot' (o stem) (derivationally cf. Lith. jkarūs (jlimak) 'climax': kārūsas 'hot'), which would correspond to Lith. aisiūs 'drearly, gloomy, bitter' (u-stem).

As to the meaning of Lith. aitrūs and aisūs, the following parallels show that the meanings 'bitter, tart', 'hot' and 'burn, glow' are closely related and that the former comes from the latter, cf. Lower Sorbian jery, dial. jery 'bitter, tart, sour': Serbo-Croatian jara 'heat of an oven', jarići 'heat, burn, incandesce', jarići se 'burn, heat'; OCS. gorūs 'bitter, tart': OCS. gorūtis 'burn'; Ir. goirt 'bitter, sour, salt' (< *gor-ti-): Ir. gorum 'heat, burn'. Lith. aisiūs has a nuance of gloom, sadness and sorrow\textsuperscript{24}; in this respect cf. Lith. gailūs 'bitter, tart, sharp, crabbed; sad, plaintive, sorrowful, mournful'.

One more step may be taken in finding cognates. As its a coloration is spreading but secondary, J. Puhvel derives Hitt. asara- esara- 'white, bright' from *esara- (with anaptyxis) and compares it with OCS. jasne 'clear, bright' \(< *\langle j\rangle\text{esn} < *\langle\text{ais}\rangle\text{no} \text{as well as with Lith. ėiskūs}\)\textsuperscript{25}. This Hittite word has a suffix -ro matching other Indo-European colour adjectives and initial e-/coming from *ai- (as, e.g., in Hitt. ekt- 'ekt- '(catch-') net' < *ai-t-; inan- 'sickness, illness, disease, ailment' < *aino-). It is also noteworthy that as an alternative, J. Puhvel assumes connection of Hitt. iskuunaḥh-, if it meant 'proclaim', with Lith. ėiskūs, ėiskūs 'clear, obvious', seeing a denominative verb in it (semasiologically cf. Lat. dé-clārāre 'proclaim': clārēs 'bright, clear')\textsuperscript{26}. J. Puhvel contents himself with discovering equivalents in cognate languages.

Despite the fact that the root morpheme *ais-/isk- seems to be attested in Hittite, too, the possibility should not be neglected that Hitt. asara-, esara- 'white, bright' < *esra- has the suffix -ro- added to a stem *ai- (not necessarily to *aisk-) which would well match ais- in Lith. aisiūs, OP. ennoys and possibly "Narev Baltic" ais. That is to say, Hitt. asara-, esara- would represent IE. *āi- 'burn, glow' found also in Hitt. ā- 'be warm, be hot'.

\textsuperscript{24}Cf. aisiūs 'rēwamy, rēwūlyw, amārus, lamentābilis', aisiāi adv. 'karčiai, rēwūny, amāre' in the first Lithuanian dictionary (about 1620), Pakalenka, ed. (1979:493).
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