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## Marginalia to the Baltic verb

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### Abstract

This paper discusses two separate aspects of the Lithuanian verbal system: I. the Lithuanian 2nd singular present verbal ending and II. the Lithuanian preterit. In part I the author suggests that the Lith. 2nd sg. ending *-i* (reflexive *-iesi*) may derive from such forms as *\*es-si* which with the simplification of the geminate passed to Lith. *esi* 'you (sg.) are'. A second possible origin is in (Lith.) 2nd conjugation verbs (*minėti* type) in which an etymological Indo-European *\*mṇ-óy* > East Baltic *\*mṇ-ē* > *\*min-ie* > Lith. 2nd sg. *mini*. Other notions concerning the 2nd sg. ending are discussed. In part II the author reaffirms his notion that (at least for certain verbs, e.g., Lith. *vėsti*, *nėšti*) the preterit ending *\*-ē* (Lith. *-ė*) is to be connected with the Slavic aorist, e.g., *vede*, *nese*. The objection that one might expect *\*-ā* since the Baltic present tense thematic vowel is *-a* is shown to be invalid. The unification of the present tense thematic vowel as *-a* was introduced to keep the *\*je/o* and *\*e/o* stems apart. At least at an early date the *\*j-* suffix was not a preterit formant.

### I. THE LITHUANIAN 2ND SINGULAR PRESENT VERBAL ENDING

The Lith. 2nd sg. ending *-i* (reflexive *-iesi*) may derive from the thematic verbs. Thus the 2nd sg. *\*es-si* (with the expected simplification of the geminate) would have passed to Lith. *esi* 'you (sg.) are', and by reanalysis the ending would have appeared to be *-i* (Kazlauskas 1968:299).



I have proposed elsewhere (Schmalstieg 1980a:121-123) that the Indo-European suffix *\*-ē-* encountered in Slavic verbs of Leskien's class IVB (inf. stem *-ěti*) and Lithuanian 2nd conjugation verbs (inf. stem *-ėti*) is the result of an internal Indo-European monophthongization of the sequence *\*-oy-* in pre-consonantal position. In pre-vocalic position this same diphthong was not monophthongized; in word final position the presence or the absence of the monophthongization was originally conditioned by sentence sandhi. If the following word began with a consonant the monophthongization took place. If the following word began with a vowel the monophthongization did not take place. Thus a word final *\*-oy-* could be actualized as *\*-ē-* (if the following word began with a consonant) or could remain as *\*-oy-* (if the following word began with a vowel).

I propose then that related to an infinitive *\*mṇ-oy-tey* > *\*mṇ-ē-tey* (> Lith. *minėti* 'to mention') there existed the 2nd sg. and 3rd pres. *\*mṇ-óy*, not monophthongized preceding a word beginning with a vowel (similarly to the infinitive). I propose further that *\*mṇ-óy* was generalized and passed to East Baltic *\*mṇ-é₂* with the specific East Baltic (NOT Indo-European) monophthongization of diphthongs and then it passed to *\*min-ie* with the specific East Baltic diphthongization. This form is represented by Lith. 2nd sg. *mini* and 3rd pres. *min-i* (with loss of the final *\*-e*). In verbs of this class the final *-i* of the Lith. 2nd sg., which was originally part of the suffix, came to be identified with the *-i* deriving from the athematic verbal ending *\*-si* (as in *\*es-si*). The 2nd sg. pres. of this class of verbs may have had a zero ending *\*(min)-oy* such that the 2nd and 3rd pres. were distinguished only by accentuation.

On the other hand if for 2nd conjugation (*minėti* type) verbs the primary 2nd sg. ending *\*-si* had been added later to the original *\*mṇ-óy* generalized from the etymological pre-vocalic position, then the verb would have had the 2nd sg. present form *\*(mṇ)-oy-si* (cf. Goth. *mun-ai-s*) finally passing to *\*(min)-ie-si* which could have had the reflexive *\*(min)-ie-si-si*. The simplification of the word final sequence *\*-si-si* could have led to the creation of *(min)-ie-si* which was then reinterpreted as the reflexive, i.e., the form actually existing in contemporary Lithuanian. Perhaps then the non-reflexive form *min-i* arose as a back formation on this new reflexive.

This class of verbs could have furnished the model according to which the old 2nd sg. athematic *dedi* 'you put' developed the reflexive form *dediesi* (with restoration of the root final *-d* on the basis of the 1st sg. *dedù*, because

an original *\*ded-si* would have developed into *\*desi*). For another possible explanation see Schmalstieg (1974:150).

It is clear that the Lithuanian 3rd person finite verbal form presents a stem on which all the forms of the dual and plural are based. This feature then explains the dual (1st) *miniva*, (2nd) *minita* and plural (1st) *minime*, (2nd) *minite* all of which are based on the 3rd person present *mini*. The present conjugation of this verb must be analogical since it shows zero-grade vocalism both in the root and the suffix.

Stang (1942:226) notes that in North-West Samogitian the 2nd sg. ending of the thematic verbs and the *i*-verbs ends in *-i* rather than *-ę* which one would expect phonetically from an etymological final *-i*. The reflexive ends in *-īs*. According to Stang this shows that the etymological ending here was not *\*-ie*, but rather *\*-ī*, which was originally from the *i*-verbs. The ending *\*-ī* had its origin in *\*-iī*, an ending which was created on analogy with the ending *\*-ei* or *\*-ai*. In Stang's view 3rd pres. *\*suke(ti)*: 2nd pres. *\*sukēi* = 3rd pres. *turi(ti)*: 2nd pres. *x*, or if it took place after the generalization of the thematic vowel, *\*suka(ti)*: *\*sukai* = *turi(ti)*: *x*. See also Endzelins (1951:para. 596b).

I suspect rather that the N. W. Samogitian ending in question was originally *\*-i*, and was later analogically lengthened to *\*-ī* in the reflexive *\*-īs* (at a time when the 1st pl. was still *\*-ma* vs. reflexive *\*-mās* and the 2nd pl. was still *\*-te* vs. reflexive *\*-tēs*). Then at a still later date the new ending *-i* was remodeled on the reflexive *\*-īs*.

Old Latvian 2nd sg. pres. forms such as *esīg* 'you are', *dzirdīg* 'do you hear' (written *essieg* and *dzirrdieg* respectively) which have the added particle *-g* (cf. Lith. *gi*) if they do indeed have a long vowel as Endzelins (1951: para. 587) suggests, have this by analogy with other forms of the verb. The Latvian particle *-g*, with its Lithuanian counterparts *-gi*, *-gu* functions as an enclitic just like the reflexive particle, thus, e.g., Lith. 2nd sg. pres. *esie-gu* 'you (sg.) are' (Endzelins 1971:para. 329). Latvian also had various kinds of lengthened vowels in the reflexive depending upon various analogical remodeling processes, thus Endzelins (1951:para. 598) quotes 1st pl. reflexive endings *-miēs*, *-mēs*, *-mās*, and (1951:para. 708) *-mīs*; (1951:para. 599) 2nd pl. reflexive endings *-tiēs*, *-tēs*, *-tās* and (1951:para. 708) *-tīs*. In my view all of these derive from some kind of inner Baltic or Latvian analogical lengthening.

Toporov (1961:62 and 1962:50) wrote that the East Baltic 2nd sg. ending

could be derived from \*-ěi, cf. Old Irish *beri* < \*berěi. In this case the Slavic thematic inflection could be a result of a contamination of the etymological thematic inflection with the ending with \*-ěi. Similarly the Old Prussian endings *-sei*, *-sai* might be the result of a contamination. Rejecting such an extreme formulation Stang (1966:421) quoted the ending *-s* (in his view a secondary ending) in *immais* 'take' (an imperative derived from an old optative). Kazlauskas (1968:297) wrote that linguists who consider that the Old Prussian 2nd sg. ending *-sei* developed because of the influence of the 2nd sg. of the thematic verbs have not taken into consideration the fact that in Old Prussian there are no thematic verbal forms like those in *-ei* in Lithuanian. Such forms as Old Prussian *tūlninai* 'increase', *sātuinei* 'satisfy' and *turei* 'have' are rather 3rd person forms used in the meaning of the 2nd person, a phenomenon which most likely developed in translation because of the influence of the original. Kazlauskas agrees with Stang that the only inherited thematic 2nd sg. form is \**giwasi* 'you live', *giwassi* (2x), *gīwasi* (1x), since in Kazlauskas' view the forms *seggēsei* 'do' and *drūwēse* 'believe' may have been created on the basis of the 3rd person. Not believing very strongly in the accuracy of the Old Prussian orthography, I personally would phonemicize these two forms as /segāsi/ and /druwīsi/ respectively, thereby bringing them into line with the other 2nd singular endings mentioned above. Kazlauskas (1968:297) finds the ending *-si* also in the verb *quoitilaisi* 'that you might want' (apparently a 2nd sg. optative, according to Trautmann 1910:413).

Ivanov (1981:45-46) quotes the entire phrases in which the verbs *giwasi*, etc. occur: (*kai*) ... *ilgi giwassi nosemien* '(auff das) du lange lebest im land, (so that) you live a long time on the earth' (Trautmann 1910:25); (*kai*) ... *ilga giwasi nosemmien* '(Das) ... lange lebest auff Erden' (Trautmann 1910:59); *Sen Alkīniskwai turei tou tien nostan pomaitat kuilgimai giwassi* 'mit kummer solstu dich darauff nehren dein lebenslang, with sorrow will you nourish yourself on it as long as you live' (Trautmann 1910:65). Ivanov writes further (1981:46) that the grammatical interpretation of these passages remains debatable and refers to Trautmann (1910:339) who considered the first two occurrences to be 2nd sg. conjunctives and to Endzelīns (1943:104) who had suggested that the forms might reflect a reflexive form similar to Russian *živětsja*.

In Old Prussian one encounters the 2nd sg. ending *-sai* (8x), *-sei* (10x), *-se* (7x), *-si* (8x) (Kazlauskas 1968:296). One might connect the Old

Prussian forms *-sai* (and perhaps its orthographic variant *-sei*) with the 2nd sg. middle endings represented by Gk. *-sai* and Old Indic *-se*, but more likely, if the orthographic evidence means anything, it reflects the use of the Baltic particle *-ai* added to final *-s*.

Hilmarsson (1978:23) suggests that a 2nd sg. reflexive \**vedes-si* would have passed to \**vede-si* leading to its identity with the 3rd singular. A reanalysis of the 2nd sg. \**vedesi* led to a new 2nd sg. \**vede* also identical with the 3rd singular. The 2nd sg. \**vede* was reinforced with the *-i* derived in athematic verbs such as *es-i* and a 2nd sg. \**ved-ei* was created which passed to \**vedē* > \**vedie* > \**vedī*. The reason for the creation of a new 2nd singular is according to Hilmarsson: "Identity of 2nd and 3rd person singular is usually not tolerated in any language." This statement is rather surprising in view of the many counter-examples. Cf. the aorist tense forms represented in those Slavic languages which have retained that tense, e.g., in Bulgarian: 1st sg. *pisach* 'I wrote', 2nd sg. *pisa*, 3rd sg. *pisa*, 1st pl. *pisachme*, 2nd pl. *pisachte*, 3rd pl. *pisacha*. Note modern French 1st sg. *je suis*, 2nd sg. *tu es* = /ε/, 3rd sg. *il est* = /ε/, 1st pl. *nous sommes*, 2nd pl. *vous êtes*, 3rd pl. *ils sont*. In the French and the Bulgarian paradigms the only two similar forms are indeed the 2nd and 3rd singular. Cf. also the Hittite preterit conjugation where the 2nd and 3rd sg. often coincide: 2nd/3rd sg. *da-a-aš* 'took' and the Old Indic 2nd/3rd sg. precativ *bhūyās* (Toporov 1962:69).

Stang (1970:144) posited a conjugation 1. \**mēgstuo*, 2. \**mēgstai*, 3. *mēgsta*. The 2nd sg. form is assumed because of one occurrence of the form *mēgstais*, one occurrence of *mekstais* and four occurrences of *mekstaisi*, all of which are reflexive forms encountered in Bible translations by Bretkūnas. Perhaps the 2nd sg. reflexive *rupinai* 'you (sg.) take care of', also occurring in Bretkūnas' works, could also be considered as supporting evidence. The sentence in which this verb occurs is: *be tawes ner ne wieno Diwio, kuris rupinai* wissu 'except for thee there is no God who (i.e., you) takes care of everything.' The verb *rupinai*, however, could be a perfectly regular preterit tense. Although Bretkūnas probably knew Lithuanian very well, he may not have been a native speaker of Lithuanian. In fact Falkenhahn (1941:201) wrote that the elementary grammatical mistakes made by Bretkūnas show that it was not his native language. Falkenhahn suggests further that Bretkūnas spoke German at home and Old Prussian with relatives on his mother's side.

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ences has suggested to me that the forms in question contain the emphatic particle *ai*, a particle which is very common in Lithuanian dialects. The particle *-ai-* is added directly to the iterative preterite suffix *-dav-* in some dialects and there is no agreement with the subject in person or number. Note the following Lithuanian dialect examples: *mūdu su vīru dainuodavai* 'my husband and I used to sing'; *tóks vīrūks niēka būdavai* 'I never used to be such a fellow' (Grinaveckienė 1962:164; Specht 1935:196; Schmalstieg 1980b:85).

## II. THE LITHUANIAN PRETERIT

Stang (1966:379) has proposed that preterits of the type *\*degā* 'burned', *\*kepā* 'baked', *\*tekā* 'ran' replaced the thematic aorists *\*dege*, *\*kepe*, *\*teke*. Beside *\*degā*, *\*kepā* which were intransitive there existed the transitive *\*degē*, *\*kepē* which replaced the sigmatic aorist for *dėgti* and *kėpti*.

I have suggested, however, a somewhat different view of the origin of the preterit of certain primary *\*e/o-* stem verbs among which are (Lith.) *nėšti* 'to carry', *vėžti* 'to transport', *vėsti* 'to lead', *mėsti* 'to throw', *dėgti* 'to burn', *kėpti* 'to bake', *lėsti* 'to pick up by pecking'. The 3rd sg. aorist forms of the Slavic cognates of these verbs are respectively *nes-e*, *vez-e*, *ved-e*, *met-e*, *žvėž-e*, *pe-če* (no cognate for *lėsti*). For such verbs I propose then an early Baltic thematic aorist: (1st sg.) *\*neš-am*, (2nd sg.) *\*neš-e(s)*, (3rd) *\*neš-e(t)*. The unification of the aorist thematic vowel gave then (1st sg.) *neš-em*, etc. These old thematic aorists existed side by side with the early *\*-ā-* preterit: (1st sg.) *\*pīrk-ā-m*, (2nd sg.) *\*pīrk-ā-(s)*, (3rd) *\*pīrk-ā-(t)*. When the long diphthongs were shortened the 1st sg. *\*pīrk-ā-m* > *\*pīrk-a-m*, such that short *\*-a-* of the 1st sg. contrasted with *\*-ā-* elsewhere in the conjugation. Therefore *\*pīrk-a-m* : *\*pīrk-ā-(t)* :: *\*neš-e-m* : *x* and *x* = *\*neš-ē-(t)*. The unification of the quality of the thematic vowel as *\*-e-* in *\*neš-e-m* was also a result of the analogy with *\*pīrk-a-m* : *\*pīrk-ā-(t)* which maintained the same vowel quality (but NOT quantity) throughout the conjugation.

My second variant of this theory proposes also a unification of the quality of the thematic aorist vowel, again a result of the analogy with *\*pīrk-a-m* : *\*pīrk-ā-(t)*. When the 1st sg. ending *-u* and the 2nd sg. ending *-i* were added the result was: (1st sg.) *\*neš-eu*, (2nd sg.) *\*neš-ei*, (3rd sg.) *\*neš-e(t)*. When the 1st sg. ending *-u* and the 2nd sg. ending *-i* were used with

verbs of the type *\*pīrk-ā-m* the resulting conjugation was: (1st sg.) *pīrkau* (< *\*pīrk-ā-u*), (2nd sg.) *pīrkai* (< *\*pīrk-ā-i*), (3rd) *pīrk-o* (< *\*pīrk-ā-(t)*). The proportion was then: *pīrk-a-u* (*pīrk-a-i*) : *neš-e-u* (*neš-e-i*) :: *\*pīrk-ā-(t)* : *x* and *x* = *\*neš-ē-(t)*, thus contemporary Lithuanian, 1st sg. *neš-iaū*, 2nd sg. *neš-eī*, 3rd person *nėš-ė* (Schmalstieg 1961; 1965; 1974:160).

Michelini (1977:254) writes that the *\*ī* of the iterative-causative presents was extended at an early date to a position before the suffixes used to form other tenses, giving a preterit stem *\*-iā-*, e.g., for the Lith. *matyti* type verb. There was then a preterit formation for verbs of the type of Lith. (*mat*)-*yti* 'to see', e.g., sg. (1) *\*mačiaū* < *\*mat-jāu*, (2) *mat-eī* < *\*mat-jāi*, (3) *\*mat-jā*, pl. (1) *\*mat-jāme*, (2) *\*mat-jāte*, etc. One would have expected the Lith. 3rd pret. to be *\*mačo*, pl. (1) *\*mačome*, (2) *\*mačote*, but because of the identity of the formation of the 1st person *mač-iaū* and *neš-iaū* and perhaps the 2nd person *mat-eī* and *neš-eī*, the preterit of verbs of the (*mat*)-*yti* type was fully assimilated to that of verbs of the *nėšti* type, giving the attested *mačiaū*, *mateī*, *mātėme*, *mātėte*.

Since the suffix *\*-j-* marked transitivity in the Baltic verb one might suspect that at a late date it was transferred to the preterit giving originally the conjugation: (1st sg.) *gér-iau* 'I drank' (< *\*-jāu*), (2nd sg.) *\*gér-iai* (< *\*-jāi*), 3rd sg. *\*gér-iā(t)* (< *\*-jā(t)*). This conjugation was then also assimilated to that *\*-ē-* (> Lith. *-ė-*) conjugation which derived from the thematic aorist. Thus the attested *gér-iau*, *gér-ei*, *gér-ė*, etc. was created.

Michelini (1990:845), objecting to my theory of the origin of the Baltic preterit in *\*-ē-*, writes that it is difficult to prove why the short vowel of the (thematic aorist) suffix could be lengthened and why the lengthening of the thematic vowel did not give *ā* (Lith. *o*) which would be expected on the basis of the *ā* in the thematic present. The lengthening of the thematic aorist suffix would seem to be no problem; as I have explained above, it took place when the old *\*-ā-* suffix was shortened in the 1st sg. either as *\*-ām* to *\*-am* or as *\*-āu* to *\*-au*. To this day the 1st sg. preterit form *neš-iaū* 'I carried' is of phonologically ambiguous origin, since phonologically it could derive from *\*neš-eu* just as well as from *\*neš-ēu*. Similarly the Lith. 2nd sg. *neš-eī* could derive phonologically from *\*neš-ei* just as well as from *\*neš-ēi*.

The neutralization of the contrast between *\*(C)je* and *\*(C)e* in the present tense led to the introduction of the thematic vowel *-a-* throughout the paradigm, so that there could be a contrast between *\*(C)ja* and *\*(C)a*, thus Lith. *ruošia* 'prepares' vs. *nėša* 'carries'. But originally there was

no \*-je/o- stem thematic aorist contrasting with the etymological \*-e/o- thematic aorist so the original aorist \*-e did not have to be replaced by \*-a as was necessary in the present tense. The generalization of the \*-e- thematic vocalism in the thematic aorist provided an additional means for some classes of verbs to distinguish between the preterit and the present in the 1st dual and plural: preterit \*neš-e-va, \*neš-e-me > \*neš-ē-va, \*neš-ē-me vs. present neš-a-va, neš-a-me.

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