

FOUR OLD PRUSSIAN ETYMOLOGIES

1. In the Elbing Vocabulary the word for 'Knecht' (no. 191) is usually transcribed as *gewineis* and is thought to stand for *gewinējas* or *gewinējis*¹. It is usually stated that the word is derived from the verb attested in the Enchiridion as *gewinna* 'works'. This latter verb is variously derived from German *gewinnan* 'to gain, to earn' or as a causative **gavint* derived from a root similar to that found in Lithuanian *gáuti* 'to get'². Another possibility is that *gewinna* is derived from **geiwina* and is to be connected with Latvian *dziēvāt* 'to live; to work'³. Any one of these etymologies seems to me to be plausible, but I should like to suggest even another possibility for the Old Prussian counterpart of 'Knecht'. In the facsimile edition of the Elbing Vocabulary prepared by V. Mažiulis one may note that the single letter *w* as it is found, for example, in the word *Towis* 'father' (no. 169) or *Jūcvrowe* 'maid' (no. 193) is scarcely distinguishable from the sequence *lb* as found in *Elboge* 'elbow' (no. 110)⁴. Could Holczwesscher have made a mistake in transcription? According to Mažiulis, Holczwesscher apparently did not understand Old Prussian⁵. Thus the word should perhaps be transcribed *gelbineis* which might have been phonemicized as (*gelbinējas*) or (*gelbinējis*). The word would then mean 'helper' and would be related to Lithuanian *gelbinėti* 'to help'⁶.

¹ A. Bezzenberger, Review of Erich Berneker's, — Die preußische Sprache, BB XXIII (1897), 299.

² E. Berneker, Die preußische Sprache, Straßburg, 1896, 135.

³ J. Endzelīns, Senprūšu valoda, Rīgā, 1943, 177.

⁴ Prūsų kalbos paminklai, Vilnius, 1966, 63, 61; G. H. F. Nesselmann, Thesaurus linguae prussicae, Berlin, 1873, 46 suggests a similar conclusion, but says that since the root with orthographic *e* is not elsewhere attested in Old Prussian which has *galbton* 'to help', etc. the word is to be read *gewineis*. I would argue that given the frequent vacillation between orthographic *e* and *a*, the word *galbton* may be read (gelbtun) or conversely even *gelbineis* could be read (galbinē[j]as).

⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁶ See Lietuvių kalbos žodynas, III, Vilnius, 1956, 213.

2. Most authorities seem to agree that the OP word written as *mulgeno* should be corrected *musgeno*⁷. Endzelīns says: „Atgādina skr. *majjan-*, av. *mazga-*, sensl. *moždan̄* tp., *mozḡ* ‘smadzenes’ u. c. Valdes Vrgl Wrtb II 369, bet kâ skaidrojams *-u-*? Ar po. *mózg* ‘smadzenes’ ietekmi? Piedēkļa ziņa sal. *strigeno*“⁸. As I have pointed out elsewhere, orthographic *u* in Old Prussian frequently merely denotes a phonemic (*a*) after a labialized consonant⁹. One can assume that Old Prussian consonants followed by non-front vowels were slightly labialized, particularly labial and velar consonants. Thus there is no problem to the orthographic *-u-*. The word should be phonemicized as (*mazgenā*). (It seems most likely that orthographic *o* stands for the phonemes (*ǎ*) as Michael Burwell and James Marchand pointed out at the Pennsylvania State University Conference on Baltic Linguistics (papers to be published by the Pennsylvania State University Press.) With the proposed phonemicization Endzelīns’ query as to how to explain the *-u-* is solved.

3. In the catechisms we find the word *quaits* ‘will’ (*quāits* III), the accusative case of which is either *quāitan* or *quāitin*. The same root is represented in the particle *quoi* which translates German *will*. It is also found in the following verbal forms: (3 person indicative) *quoitā*, *quoitē* ‘wants’, (1 plural indicative) *quoitamai*, (2 plural indicative) *quoitēti*, (2 singular optative) *quoitīlasi*, (3 optative) *quoitīlai*, *quoitilai*, *quoitīlai*, (2 plural optative) *quoitīlaiti*, *quoitīlaiti*. With the prefix *po-* (= *|pa-|*) we encounter the forms *poquoitēts*, *poquoitīton* and *poquoitīuns*. The words *labbaiquoitīsnan* (acc.) ‘Wollust’ and *niquāitings* ‘unwilling’ and *poquoitīsnau* (final *-u* to be corrected to *-n*) are also cognate. This word is usually derived from an Indo-European root which is also found in Skt. *kēta-ḥ* ‘will, desire’, Latin *invitō* ‘I invite’, Lithuanian *kviēsti* ‘to invite’¹⁰.

It seems to me that there is good reason to interpret the first three letters *qua-*, *quā-*, *quo-* as representing phonemic (*ka-*). The reason for the orthographic *-u-* and *-o-* in these various words may well be the incorrect interpretation of labialization on the part of the German scribes. A similar misinterpretation is

⁷ See E. Berneker, op. cit., 235; E. Fraenkel, Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Göttingen, 1955, 427; R. Trautmann, Die altpreußischen Sprachdenkmäler, Göttingen, 1910, 380.

⁸ Op. cit., 212.

⁹ Review of Christian Stang’s Vergleichende Grammatik der Baltischen Sprachen, Language, XXXIV (1968), Baltimore, 388–398; Labialization in Old Prussian, Essays in Honor of Boris Unbegaun, New York, 1968, 195–200.

¹⁰ R. Trautmann, op. cit., 412; A. Fick, Etymologische Beiträge, KZ XX (1872), 161–163; A. Bezenberger, Review of Reinhold Trautmann’s Die altpreußischen Sprachdenkmäler, KZ XXXIV (1911), 309 f.; A. Walde, Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen, Berlin and Leipzig, 1930, 475.

found in the relative pronouns *quai* and *quoi*, forms which Trautmann considers to be the nominative plural masculine of *kas*¹¹. The exact interpretation of the relatives *quai* and *quoi* remains in doubt, but it would certainly seem odd to find a relative pronoun with initial **kv-* or **kʷ-* in a satəm language. The first two phonemes of this word are (*ka-*).

Thus the word *poquoitēts* is probably a nominative singular masculine of a present passive participle and is to be phonemicized (*pakaitēt[a]s*). If one establishes an infinitive **(kaitēt)* for the verb in question it can then be related to Lithuanian *káitėti* in the meaning 'to lack, to be wanting; to worry'¹². The semantic development from 'to lack' to 'to wish' can be seen in the several meanings of the English word *want*. The root is also attested in Latvian *kaitēt* 'to be harmful', cf. the idiomatic expressions quoted in the *Latviešu-krievu vārdnīca*, Rīgā, 1953, 254: „*kas tev kaiš (kait)?* 'čto s toboj'; *kas tam nekaiš (nekait)* 'ему жаловаться не приходится; чего ему нехватает!'“

The usual interpretation of the macron is that it denotes a long vowel. I suggest that for Abel Will this may have denoted what he heard as a long vowel, but that indeed in Old Prussian it may have been merely a stressed vowel. Thus the third person indicative form *quoitā* should probably be phonemicized (*kaitá*) which would correspond exactly to Latvian *kait* and perhaps the third person form *quoitē* should be phonemicized as either (*kait'á*) or (*kait'é*) which would correspond exactly to Latvian *kaiš*. In other words the present stem may have been either an **e/o*-stem or **je/o*-stem in Latvian and Old Prussian. Likewise the 1st plural indicative *quoitāmai* could quite possibly have been phonemicized (*kaitáme*) and the 2nd plural indicative *quoitēti* could well have been phonemicized either (*kait'áte*) or (*kait'éte*).

The further development of this root into a modal particle *quoi* = (*kai*) is paralleled by the development of Slavic *xotěti*, *xŏtěti* 'to wish' into modern Bulgarian *šte*, or Greek *thélō+ná* 'I wish that' into contemporary Greek *thá*¹³. One might also note that in the Göttingen manuscript of Simon Grunau's Vocabulary we find the cognate *kayat thu* glossed as 'Wo wiltu hin'¹⁴.

It is then clearly plausible to suggest that the Old Prussian past passive participle, masculine plural nominative *ankaitītai*, *enkaitītai* 'tempted' is also cognate and probably to be phonemicized (*enkaitētai*). In this regard one should also note that etymological (*ē*) is frequently rendered by orthographic *ī*, *ij*. This could be explained as representing an innovating phonemic system as I have done

¹¹ Op. cit., 353.

¹² Lietuvių kalbos žodynas, V, Vilnius, 1959, 78.

¹³ D. C. Swanson, Vocabulary of Modern Spoken Greek, Athens, 1957, 47.

¹⁴ See V. Mažiulis, op. cit., 251.

elsewhere¹⁵. Another possibility, however, is that it is a simple scribal error resulting from the incorrect interpretation of the tenseness of the long (*ē*).

4. Word no. 214 in the Elbing Vocabulary is *accodis* which is glossed as 'rochloch' and explained as 'a hole in the wall for the elimination of smoke'. Endzelins reconstructs the word as **atkōdis* and calls attention to the fact that *t* could have been assimilated to the following *k* as in Latvian dialects and to the fact that in the Elbing Vocabulary *t* and *c* are not infrequently confused¹⁶. The prefix is then **at-* and the root **kōd-*; this latter is connected with Old Church Slavic *ka-diti* 'to burn incense', Czech *čad* 'smoke', Slovenian *čád* 'smoke, soot', Greek *kodomeúō* 'I roast barley'¹⁷. Still another possibility is to consider the word a borrowing from Polish with the element *kod* from Polish *chod*¹⁸.

I suggest that *accodis* is to be phonemicized (*akutis*). Evidence for the rendering of phonemic (*u*) by orthographic *o* is found, e. g. in *prosnan* 'face', cf. Lithuanian *prusnà* 'snout'. The confusion of voiced and unvoiced consonants seems rare, but this is also attested in the word *agins* 'eyes' where the voiced consonant is written mistakenly for the unvoiced (*k*). The word *accodis* (*akutis*) is then a diminutive of the word *ackis* (*akis*) 'eye' and is to be interpreted as denoting 'small eye, eyelet'. The derivation can be compared to that of Slavic *okъno* 'window' or to that of English *window* < Old Norse *vindauga* < *vindr* 'wind' plus *auga* 'eye'¹⁹.

The Pennsylvania State University

¹⁵ The Phonemes of the Old Prussian Enchiridion, *Word*, XX (1964), 211–221.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 140.

¹⁷ R. Trautmann, *op. cit.*, 298.

¹⁸ W. Pierson, Nachtrag zu den 'litauischen Aequivalenten', *Altpreußische Monatsschrift*, VIII (1871), 362.

¹⁹ Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Springfield, Mass., 1966, 2620.