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OLD PRUSSIAN *kērdan* 'TIME'

The Old Prussian word *kērdan* (*kerdan*) 'time' occurs four times in the Enchiridion. Excerpts with each of these occurrences are repeated below:

53,14. Wissas Ackis giēidi notien Rikijs bhe tu dāse stēmans tennēison landan prei swaian *kerdan* — Aller Augen warten auff dich HErr und du gibst jnen jre Speyse zu seiner *zeit*. 'All eyes wait upon thee, Lord, and thou givest them their food on *time*.'

61,16. Stessepaggan laustineiti wans teinu pōstan warewingin rānkan Deiwas kai tans wans erlāngi prei swaian *kērdan* — So demütiget euch nun unter die gewaltige Handt Gottes das er euch erhōht zu *zeiner zeit*. 'So humble yourself now under the mighty hand of god so that he may raise you in his *time*'. The Catechism here refers to Peter 1:5 where the Greek expression is ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ 'in the last time'.

63,3. ickai ainonts ēnstan turīlai preiwaitiat stas segē stan en *kērdan* adder tussise pansdau — Und hat jemand's darein zu sprechen der thue es bey *zeit* oder schweige darnach. 'And if any one has anything to say, let him do it at this *time* or forever remain silent'.

69,25. Enstan *kērdan* perpīdai tennei malnijkikans prei Jesum — Zu der *zeit* brachten sie Kindlein zu JHESU. 'At that *time* they brought children unto Jesus'.

The word is usually connected with Lithuanian *keřdžius* 'shepherd, herdsman', OCS *črěda* 'order, series; herd', Russian *čeradá* 'series', Polish *trzoda* 'flock, herd', etc.¹

One does, however, occasionally notice vacillations of *e* and *a* after *k* in Old Prussian. Thus we find both *kelsāi* and *kaltzā* 'sounds, purports' and *key* as well as *kai* 'as'. One also notes the occasional substitution of orthographic voiced consonants for the voiceless counterparts, e. g. OP *boklusmans* 'obedient', cf. OP *po-*

¹ E. Fraenkel, Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg, 1955 ff., 242; M. Vasmer, Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg, 1953 ff., III, 320; R. Trautmann, Die altpreussischen Sprachdenkmäler, Göttingen, 1910, 356; J. Endzelīns, Senprūšu valoda, Rīgā, 1943, 192.

klusman, Lithuanian *paklusnùs* 'id.'. Likewise the Elbing Vocabulary has *agins* 'eyes' (cf. Lithuanian *akis*) and *accodis* 'vent' (=Lithuanian *akùtis*)².

The lack of aspiration in the Baltic voiceless stops may have led the Germanic speakers to interpret them as voiced on occasion. Or perhaps the lack of voicing in the voiceless stops was sometimes mistakenly equated with the delayed voicing typical of the Germanic voiced stops.

One might then suppose that *kērdan* is to be phonemicized as |kártaŋ|. Such a phonemicization would then fit exactly with Lithuanian *kařtas* in the sense of 'occurrence, event'. In the German original it would appear that *Zeit* here could be understood as a 'point of time' rather than 'an extent of time'. From the semantic point of view an etymological connection of *kērdan* (*kerdan*) with Lithuanian *kařtas* 'time' seems preferable to the traditional etymology which connects the word with Lithuanian *keřdžius* 'shepherd'. The stress of the initial element of the OP diphthong agrees also with the Lithuanian circumflex.

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² William R. Schmalstieg,—*Baltistica*, V(2), 1969, 166.