

ON FALSE EQUATIONS FOR OPRUSS. *seggīt*

When I wrote some three years ago on OPruss. *seggīt*, proposing a relation to *darýti* in meaning and *žāgaras* in form (Baltistica VII (1971) 43–5) I mentioned the opinion of P. Skardžius that the origin of this verb was unknown. My lamented colleague J. Kazlauskas pointed out to me (per litt.) that R. Trautmann had connected *seggīt* with Lith. *sėgti* 'to button, clasp, pin', Skt. *sajate* etc. (Altpreuss. Sprachdenkmäler 423) and that J. Endzelīns followed Trautmann in „Senprūšu valoda“ 245. There was not the opportunity to incorporate in my article my reasons for regarding the opinion of Skardžius as correct. The purpose of this note is to set forth those reasons.

Trautmann, apart from adducing Skt. *sájati* 'haftet', also (416–17) mentions s. v. *sagis*, equated with *sāgas* (see s. v. *sagà* in Fraenkel LEW), the claimed cognate set *sėgti* 'heften', *sagýti*, OIr. *suanem*. Endzelīns further cites Skt. *sajate*, Lith. *sėgti*. Fraenkel LEW 770 adds *seggīt* only as a seeming afterthought at the end of his entry *sėgti*.

If, moreover, we inspect in Pokorny IEW 887–8 the entry **seg-* we find that only Indo-Iranian and Baltic show an abundant set of forms within their own groups. This in itself makes the formal judgments difficult. The Slavic connexions which are mentioned are vague. The claimed Celtic and Germanic equations are very uncertain indeed. Even the Indic cognates are ambiguous; on grounds of their evidence the pre-form could be **s(e)ng-* or *-g-* as well as the shape with which Pokorny heads his entry. OPruss. *sagis*, but not *seggīt*, is mentioned in this entry. So much for the formal phonological aspect.

In addition to all those doubts, the semantic connexions claimed in the above comparisons seem to me both unclear and unconvincing.

Let us inspect at closer range the attested Indic forms. The root traditionally cited as *saj*, *sañj* 'hang' has a present *sájati* attested from the Veda on, with a middle *sajate* that appears later. The aorist *ásakthās* is attested in Veda and the Brāhmaṇas, and other nasal forms later. From Veda on we have the participle *saktá-*. The perfect appears largely with nasal forms. As derivative stems, the passive occurs as *sajyáte* from *Brāhmaṇa* on (*sajjate*, Epic and later), and the causative *sañjayati*

sajjayati from the Epic on. Nominal formations are recorded: *-saj* (Vedic), *-saja* (Rig Veda), *saṅga* (Vedic on), *-sañjana* (Brāhmana on), *sakti-* (Vedic on). Note both *saktavya* and *sañktavya*, for example in the Classical period. On the semantic side we may note that Rig Veda shows compounds with *ā* 'fest anfügen' and *ni* 'sich etwas anhängen'.

Certainly the present *sájati* would lead me to expect a full-grade vowel underlying *á*; *ásakthās* also looks like a non-nasal root. Yet the causative, the perfect and at least some noun formations appear synchronically to bear witness to a root containing a nasal. There is no doubt that the most basic and conservative attestations we have point strongly in the direction of a non-nasal root; therefore Pokorny's heading is certainly reasonable. But, unfortunately for purposes of etymology and comparison, the co-occurrence of a nasal root is not ruled out. Moreover, it is difficult to say whether the Skt. *j* goes back to **g'* (levelled to *g* or *k* in some instances) or rather to **g* with the palatalization product generalized as we know from certain other etyma. Again, *saktá-* *sakti-* and *saṅga-* are good indicators that we have to do with earlier **g* and not **g'*; but from some of these forms **g'* is certainly not excluded. In other words, we could easily see here the conflation of two original roots, e. g. **seg-* and **seng'-*.

Part of the ambiguity appears to be resolved by the valuable testimony from Old Persian: *frāhanjati* (sic) 'hangs out', as it is cited, seems clearly to point to **g* (palatalized). Though the reference works repeatedly cite this form, the form actually attested is *frāhajam* (DB II 78) with the internal nasal, of course, quite indeterminate and in the realm of speculation by the well known nature of the Old Persian script¹.

Thus we should prefer the pure velar to the IE palatal. Moreover, if OCS *prisešti*, Russ. *sjagat'* 'berühren', Pol. *sięnać* and OCS *prisęga*, Pol. *przysięga* 'Eid' are in fact related, as Fraenkel loc. cit. believes, we have further evidence for a nasal-bearing root. The Slavic verbs for 'reach etc.' are well and fully listed by Vasmer, REW III 62 s.v. *sjagát'*; there he reconstructs **segti segtati* and compares the various above forms, simply quoting earlier compilations. There is simply nothing conclusive here, neither in the morphology nor in the semantics.

OIr. *suainem* 'rope, cord, string' (a masc. *n-* stem) has often been cited in this grouping, under the assumption that it derives from **sogn-*. It should be noted, ho-

¹ It has also been claimed (H. W. Bailey, BSOAS XV (1953) 537; R. E. Emmerick, Saka Grammatical Studies, Oxford, 1968, 5; H. W. Bailey, Prolexis to the Book of Zambasta, Cambridge, 1967, 376) that Khotanese Saka *ajs-* 'follow closely, pursue' is related to OPers. *haj-*. Emmerick, op. cit., 121, also lists Khot. Saka *vahaj-* 'accompany' as derived from **ava-hag-* and compares Skt. *sájati*. If in fact these are all related, we have further confirmation on the original velar **g*, but no further evidence for a nasal in the root.

wever, that the diphthong in the first syllable of this word is completely ambiguous. I see no way of using this form as contributory evidence.

In summary, we find the well defined Baltic set surrounding *sègti*; and an Indo-Iranian pair of uncertain relation or source **seg-* and **seng-* 'hang' and 'attach'. The relation of Slavic **seg-* 'reach, grasp' is unclear. OIr. *suainem* 'rope, string' is morphologically complex and highly ambiguous.

OPruss. *seggīt* is, as is well known, phonetically ambiguous. Semantically, the above groups offer no compelling connexion.

It is on grounds of the failure of the above sets of words to offer a likely solution for *seggīt* that I was led to look elsewhere. A solution, if tenable, that draws on material and parallels found within the same language family is always preferable to one that casts about for distant, let alone semantically strained, connexions.