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## AN UNORTHODOX VIEW OF THE 1.P.SG. SUBJUNCTIVE (OPTATIVE) IN LITHUANIAN

During the symposium devoted to the memory of Jonas Kazlauskas (in Vilnius, November 1992) I gave a short talk on the enigmatic form in *-čiau*, *-čia*, *-čio* etc. As is well known, this form has been much debated in contributions to Lithuanian historical morphology, and many attempts at an explanation (among others by Kazlauskas himself /1968, p. 385 ff./) have been presented. It may seem strange to speak of an unorthodox view in this connection since many proposals already made might deserve such a characterization. However, the one presented below seems to have the appearance of a really unorthodox and rather bold one which I only hesitatingly propose as kind of a not too serious experiment. I can see many weak points in my solution, but would be glad if my contribution could stimulate a renewed discussion on the issue.

In this rather brief note I will abstain from a survey of previous interpretations and just state that the form in question is regarded unexplained by many scholars of Lithuanian historical linguistics whence I will proceed directly to the discussion of a possible new interpretation.

If the original form is reconstructed as *\*-tjā* in the way many (if not all) scholars do (among them Stang 1966, p. 432) – or rather *\*-tijā* (TM, see below), I would suggest that we have to do with the infinitive in *\*-ti* + *\*jā*. The reconstruction of an infinitive in *\*-ti* is relatively unproblematic (see, for example, Endzelin 1922, p. 709, paragraph 713). The development from *\*-tijā* > *-čia/-čio* can adequately be accounted for through the parallel found in the genitive sg. of *-iio*-stems, e.g. *giminaičio* : *giminaitis* (see Stang 1966, p. 188), or – by way of alternative – from a possibly shortened infinitive variant in *-t* (i.e. *\*-tjā*). In the element *\*-jā* (on the basis of which both *-čia* and *-čio* can be explained) I am tempted to see some case form (old neuter pl. nom./acc.?) of the pronoun stem *\*yo/e-* which could also be present in

we assumed for the Lithuanian form (see, for instance, Endzelin 1922, p. 684 f.); second, also in the case of the Latvian debitive we could have to do with the combination of *jā* with an infinitive, cf. the form *jābūt* which could be an archaism. The basis for debitive forms from other verbs than *būt* «to be» is no longer transparent; it is definitely not the infinitive, but these formations may be the result of a secondary development. In comparison with the Lithuanian form the *jā*-element here seems to be «proclitic»; this might, however, in a way be illusive. It can fairly well be motivated in old syntax without representing a real proclitic. The motivation for the enclitic position of *jā* in Lithuanian seems more difficult to account for in a satisfying way. Anyway, *enclisis* seems to have been quite a normal device in Baltic (verb) morphology. Further, we do know that a clitic like the reflexive particle is used both proclitically and enclitically. Something of the same might have been the case also with the *jā*-element even though its distribution is different from that of the reflexive particle. Finally, the Latvian debitive is construed with a logical subject in the dative. The same may originally have been the case also with the 1. p. sg. subjunctive in Lithuanian if our assumption of an infinitival basis for this formation is correct.

In conclusion, then, I hold that there is a possibility that the 1. p. sg. subjunctive in Lithuanian and the Latvian debitive may have made use of ultimately the same morphological elements, i.e. the combination of a \**yo*-pronoun and an infinitive, for the fulfilment of modal functions. These functions – that of the subjunctive in Lithuanian and the debitive in Latvian – may be felt to be rather distant from one another on the surface, but they might point to a common «deep structure» from which the two surface representations could have developed. I am well aware that my attempt at – as it seems – a new interpretation is rather speculative and farfetched, but if it can lead to a somewhat new approach towards the solution of an enigma, above all in Lithuanian historical morphology which may have an interesting parallel in Latvian, and stimulate a new debate, the aim and goal of my little note will have been obtained. In the system of moods in Old Prussian I do

the Latvian debitive in *jā-* and further in the conjunction Latvian *ja* «if». The element in question is likely to have cognates also in the enclitic pronoun utilized to form the pronominal or long/definitive form of adjectives in Baltic.

One of the main functions of the Lithuanian optative/subjunctive is that of expressing a *hypothetical condition*. From Slavic (Russian etc.) we know that conditional clauses can be expressed through an infinitive plus a conjunction with the meaning «if». If we assume that the same could have been the case in Baltic, the *\*jā* could reflect an original(ly enclitic) conjunction «if» in locutions of this type. As time went on, the *if*-function of the *jā*-element could have been obscured which might have led to its reinterpretation as a finite mood marker which was also conveyed to and repeated in the main clause. At this stage the introduction of a new *if*-marker in the shape of *jei-* – equally likely to be derived from a pronominal stem in *\*y- / (j)* – became necessary. An alternative hypothesis might be that this pronominal element did not have the meaning of a conditional conjunction, but that its function was *deictic* or *emphatic*.

In any case the question arises why the «ending» *-\*tjā* was specialized to the 1. p. sg. I have no good answer to this problem (an attractive motivation is mentioned by Ford 1970, p. 126, who has chosen another point of departure than I), but the (quite numerous) investigators who assume that *\*tjā* reflects a (verbal) noun, are facing exactly the same problem, and I do think that my assumption of an infinitive has some advantages (namely the fact that we do have evidence that the infinitive could be used in conditional clauses) compared to the theories which works with a verbal noun of another kind (Stang, Ford and others). Our form has probably been combined with a logical subject in the dative case – even though I am unable to find any direct evidence in support of this assumption.

Above I mentioned the *Latvian debitive*. I do not mean to say that the Latvian debitive and the Lithuanian (1. sg.) subjunctive are formally and genetically identical – their functions seem too different for that – but, still, there could be a link in more than one sense. First, the *jā*-element is likely to be derived from the same pronominal stem which

not find possible parallels to the above formations in Lithuanian and Latvian.

#### REFERENCES

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