

Letas PALMAITIS

BORUSSICA 5: ROOT VOCALISM IN PRUSSIAN INFINITIVES

Pruss. *lemt-* / *limt-*

The form. There is different root vocalism in the infinitive form of the word „to break“ in I 5₁₇ (*lembtwei*) in comparison with the K II (*limtwei* 5₁₇) and in the K III (*limtwei* 31₁₇). J. Endzelīns explains *e* in *lembtwei* as „transferred out of the present form“ (APG § 6c). It is not clear why Endzelīns treats the optative-conditional form *lemlai* III 51₁₄ as that of the present stem, since it is infinitive-formed as *turrīlimai* III 113₂₃ or *pereīlai* III 49₁₈. Besides, only those zero-grade roots have the *e*-grade present in Baltic which have the zero-grade in the preterite (cf. Lith. *gēma* – *gimė*, *gēna* – *ginė*). However, the preterite form of *lembtwei* has the lengthened root-vocalism as seen in *limauts* III 75₃ thus pointing to the Baltic type with the high pitch in the root (cf. the same verb *lėmti* in Lithuanian: praes. *lėmia* – praet. *lėmė*). This fact confirms the idea that tautosyllabic units with the high pitch on their second component might have had occasionally reduced vocalism of the atoned first component (cf. *menentwei* I 5₇ [*mənəntʷei*]), since the writings *lembtwei*, *lemlai* render the infinitive stem *lim-* with the high pitch on *m* and with the reduced *i*: [*ləm̩tʷei*], [*ləm̩lai*].

The meaning. In the East-Baltic languages tautosyllabic roots with the lengthened grade in the preterite are usually transitive, often having intransitive counterparts with the zero-grade vocalism – cf. the Lithuanian high-pitch verb trans. *skėlti* „to split smth.“, praes. *skėlia* – praet. *skėlė*, but *skilti* „to become split“, praes. *skyla* < *skiñla*, praet. *skilo*. The analysis shows, however, the secondary origin of such counterparts: the regular counterpart *kėlti* „to raise“, *kėlia*, *kėlė* – *kilti* „to rise“, *kyla*, *kilo* corresponds to the non-diathetic and more archaic (labile) meaning of the single *kėlti* „1. to raise; 2. to rise“. There are also verbs in Lithuanian which have full-grade vocalism and are always labile, e. g. *virti* „to boil“, *vėrda*, *virė*; *svėrti* „to weigh“, *svėria*, *svėrė* – it is interesting that such verbs are labile also in English which is very rich in labile verbs. Georgy Klimov (1983, 1977) considers the existence of the

verbal lability in a language to be a relic of the pre-accusative „active“ (I call it fientive) grammatical structure and this corresponds to the classical conclusion of the Indo-European linguistics about the subordinate character of the category of transitivity in Indo-European as well as of the category of tense which was subjected to that of the „Aktionsart“ kind of „action“ (cf. Meillet 5.1, Krahe II § 43 A 3). The same vowel-gradation, which expresses transitivity / intransitivity in Baltic, is destined to express tense in Germanic though both cases are the result of the independent development of the original common Balto-Germanic verbal system with no tense and no transitivity. Labile verbs are relics of that system. Comparing such Germanic verbal forms as Goth. *steiga* „I ascend“ – *staig* „I ascended“ – *stigum* „we ascended“ with Baltic Lith. *steĩgia* „sets up“ – *staĩgiasi* „is in a hurry“ – Lith. *stĩgo(me)* „we lacked smth.“ reveals „the first class of the Germanic vowel-gradation“ in the Baltic verb. Here the cited Baltic verbs, while intransitive, do not show any connection between the full – zero vowel-gradation and the transitivity / intransitivity: they are manifestations of some „Aktionsart“ differences of the Baltic-Germanic epoch. These differences are seen in Germanic in forming tense-number oppositions and in Baltic (probably through the temporal stage as well – cf. Karaliūnas 1987 98, 99) in forming transitivity / intransitivity oppositions as *smeĩgia* „sticks smth. into smth.“ – *smĩgo* „sticked for itself in smth.“ with the newly constructed nasal present (cf. Germanic praeterito-presentia with the newly constructed preterite) *smiñga* „sticks for itself in smth.“. These comparisons show the former single paradigm of the labile Lith. *kėlia* „raises, ascends“ – intrans. *kĩlo* „rose“ with the newly constructed present *kỹla* „rises“ (cf. non-nasal correspondences Engl. trans. *raise* – intrans. *rise*, OHG. trans. *leiten* – O.Sax. intrans. *lithan* showing that a Baltic-like development has facultatively taken place in Germanic, too).

The form again. Quite different ways of forming Lithuanian, Latvian and Prussian infinitives [Lith. *-tie(s)* < „dat./loc.“ *i*-stem **-tei*, Latv. *-t* (not as with the generalized *-ies*, cf. Lith. *steĩgsis* but Latv. *stėĩgsies*) < „dat./loc.“ *i*-stem **-ti*, Pruss. „dat./loc.“ *u*-stem *-twei* < **-tũ-ei* and *-tun* < supine **-tu-n*] show absence of the Common-Baltic infinitive. Therefore, it is not excluded that in some Baltic dialect the paradigm of the above-mentioned type **kelia* – **kilo* developed its infinitive in accordance with the zero-grade form and that such infinitive was being used with a full-grade form after the latter had begun to be used independently with its own paradigm **kelia* – **kėlė*. This seems to be the situation with the Prussian infinitive *limtwei* beside the preterite *līmauts* < *līm-* < **lēm-*.

Pruss. *pallet-*

The preterite passive participle form *palletan* I 13₁₉ „shed“ corresponds to *praliten* II 13₁₉ in the II Catechism and to *pralieiton* III 75₁₁, *prolieiton* III 75₁₇, *proleiton* III 77₃ in the III Catechism. It is quite natural to expect the same grammatical form of the same verb in all the instances. V. Mažiulis supposes the root **lī-* with the regular reflection of the long *ī* as of the diphthongized ^e*ī* in the III Catechism. Therefore, he offers the single possible explanation for this instance in the I 13₁₉ as if the accent were retracted on the prefix *pa-* in *palletan*, the root vowel *ī* being regularly shortened *i* in the unstressed position and then rendered as *e* in a way so typical especially for the I and the II Catechisms (PKP II 298¹⁶⁶). This opinion may be backed by the Latv. *liēt* with the „broken“ pitch so typical for the Baltic movable accental paradigm. Nevertheless, at the same place in the II Catechism one has *praliten*, but not ^o*praletan* expected in the instance of the supposed retraction (it is hardly creditable the accent could be retracted on the prefix *pa-*, but not on the prefix *pra-*). Even the „synharmonism“ *i – e* in *praliten* (cp. with the *palletan*) shows the accent being on the root vowel which then must be undoubted *ī* < **ē* thus well corresponding to the *e* [*ē*] in the I Catechism. If so, the root can be only **lei-* and not **lī-*. Thus *ei* of the III Catechism demonstrates the real root diphthong and not the diphthongized *ī*. How could then the forms *palletan* I 13₁₉, *praliten* II 13₁₉ with the root vocalism *ē, ī* < **ē* appear?

I think, it is due to the late morphonemic alternation *-e/-ei* (unstressed), *-ē/-ēi* (stressed). The latter came into being because of the assimilation of *i* in the diphthongs *āi, ēi* with the circumflexal length on their first component: *pallapsaei* I 5₁ [*palapsāi*] < **palāpsāi* < **palāipsāi*, *semo* E 15 [*zēmó*] < **zēmó* < **zēimó* – the same must have taken place in the case of the metatonical circumflex in stems with dropped endings **-ēja, *-ējā* > **-ēi* > *-ē, -ēi* (stressed), *-e, -ei* (unstressed) with the occasional generalization on the cases with the original high pitch in ultima (if not metatonized as in Lithuanian *garbė* – cf. the super-corrected nom. sing. fem. *giwei* III 75₂₁ „life“ with the shortened *i* pointing to the stressed termination: *giwēi* = *giwē* – for the oxytone form cf. Latvian *dzīve* with the broken pitch on *ī*) – cf. also the Prussian *turrei* III 63₁₆ < **-ēja* having nothing in common with the parallel derivate (cf. Lith. *dūlēja / dūljja*) *turri* III 27₁₃ < **turija* (the Prussian *turri* is not any correspondence to the Lithuanian form *tūri*, since short vowels could not be preserved at the end of the word; the only correspondence to the Lithuanian *tūri* in

Prussian is the form *tur* of the First Catechism¹); the alternation of the unstressed (short) *-a/-ai*, *-e/-ei* seems to be the latest result of the accent retraction, analogy etc. (cf. *etwerpe* / *etwiērpei*, *swintina* / *swintinai* III etc.). The sonantal verb pr. **lei-* must have had the present form **lei-ǰ-a* corresponding to the Lith. *lėja*, *liėja* which after the reduction of the short final vowels must have produced the form **lei* of the 3rd person singular in Prussian of the Catechisms.

Thus the Prussian participles *palletan* I 13₁₉, *praliten* II 13₁₉ have the root vocalism *ē*, *ī* < **ē* because they were constructed according to an innovative infinitive **palētwei* (I suppose the high pitch in accordance with Lith. *lėjo*, *lėjo* < **lėj-*) corresponding to the shorter variant (without *-i*) of the present-preterite form **palēi* / **palē*.

References

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¹ As for the forms of the 3rd and the 1st persons praes. *billē* III 619, *bille* III 59₁₂, *billā* III 378, *billa* III 103₄ = praet. *billai* III 1059, *billa* III 1019, *billē* III 93₁₄, they correspond to the 1st pl. praes. *billēmai*, the inf. *billitwei*, the praet. part. act. *billiuns*, the praet. part. pass. *billiton* in the Third Catechism. The latter three forms, supported with the forms *billē* and *billēmai*, point to the *ēja*-stem with the infinitive **bilētvei* > *billitwei* and with the present form **bilēja* (after the reduction of the short endings) > **bilēi* = **bilē*. These are also the forms of the preterite, the same reduction having taken place also in the preterite in the suffixal as well as in the root thematic verbs because of the coincidence of the temporal endings. The long ending of the 1st person singular in the present **-ō* > **-ā* > **-a* coincided with the 3rd person preterite **-ā* > *-a* as well as with the 3rd person present of the *ā*-stems **-ā* > *-a* on the one hand, and it was generalized in the 3rd and then the 2nd person in the present on the other hand with the subsequent generalization of the *-a* also in the 2nd and the 1st persons in the preterite. The relic of the temporally different verbal forms remained represented only by the infixal and similar verbs with the strongly different temporal stems (those stems which differed from each other in the root vocalism began to level it) but this could not stop the spread of the participial temporal forms ousting the definite personal forms. As for the verb *billitwei*, its forms recorded with the letter *a* point to the single fact that the Prussian *l* was palatal since the neutralization of *a* and *e* after the palatal consonants took place in Prussian similarly to Lithuanian. Such forms do not point to any *ā*-stem verb ^o*bilātwei* in Prussian similar to Lithuanian *bylōti*. The single recorded verb is **bilētwei*, clearly represented also in the plural *billēmai* III 131₁₅ [*billēmai* = *billēimai* (cf. the writing *waitaintins* III 87₁₂!)] < **bilējamai*. The occasional form *billi* III 107₂₃ is the *ija*-stem (Kluisis 40) counterpart as in Lithuanian *dūlėja* / *dūlyja*.