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SHORTENING AND METATONY IN THE LITHUANIAN FUTURE

Daniel Petit has recently discussed the distribution of shortening and metatony of the acute tone in the 3rd person forms of the Lithuanian future tense (2002). He rejects the traditional view that shortening is regular in polysyllables and metatony in monosyllables and proposes that shortening affected stems with acute monophthongs while metatony affected stems with acute diphthongs. In fact, the latter distribution is evident from the 1st and 2nd sg. endings *-ù, -ì*, which represent earlier monophthongs (cf. Kortlandt 1977, 323–326), beside diphthongal *-aũ, -aĩ* and has never, to my knowledge, been questioned for polysyllabic word forms. It follows that the disagreement is limited to monosyllables with *ý, ū, ie, úo, é, ó* in the root. The difference between the pronominal forms masc. inst.sg. *tuõ*, nom.pl. *tiẽ*, acc.pl. *tuõs* and the corresponding adjectival forms *gerù, gerì, gerùs* supports the traditional view that metatony is regular in monosyllables and shortening in polysyllables. It remains to be explained how the shortening in monosyllabic roots and the spread of metatony to suffixal monophthongs in polysyllabic stems originated.

In the standard language, which is based on a western Aukštaitian dialect, shortening is limited to the high vowels *ý, ū* in a part of the monosyllabic roots. Sen n lists the following instances (1966, 231):

1. vocalic roots: shortening in *(at)gýti, (su)lýti, rýti, būti, džiúti, griúti, púti, žúti*, metatony in *výti, siúti*;

2. consonantal roots: shortening in *dýgti, plýšti, išvýsti, lúžti, rúgti, slúgti*, metatony in *výsti, (su)lýsti, (at)lýžti*.

All other verbs show metatony, which is also spreading in the category of consonantal roots listed here. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the high vowels *ý* and *ū* were shortened in monosyllables whereas *ie, úo, é, ó* were subject to metatony. This is in agreement with the shortening in the pronominal forms fem. nom.sg. *šì, jì* and 1st and 2nd person acc. pl. *mùs, jùs*.

Thus, the disagreement about the original distribution of shortening and metatony is now limited to monosyllabic verbs with *ie, úo, é, ó* in the root, for which Petit assumes shortening instead of metatony. This assumption deprives him of the possibility to explain the pervasive metatony in the polysyllabic verbs in *-ýti, -éti, -óti, -doti*, which make up the large majority of verbs in Lithuanian. The massive spread

of metatony cannot possibly be attributed to the influence of such verbs as *gyvénti* and *vadinti*. It requires a far more frequent model, which is found in simple root verbs like *dėti*, *jóti*, *dúoti*. This is in fact corroborated by the shortening instead of metatony in polysyllabic verbs in *-yti* in the southern and eastern Aukštaitian dialects, e.g. *darìs*, *rašìs*, *sakìs* (cf. Zinkevičius 1966, 361; Kortlandt 1985, 115). In the easternmost Aukštaitian dialects metatony was wholly eliminated and the shortening even spread analogically to circumflex roots and to the imperative and conditional moods (cf. Zinkevičius 1966, 362).

There remains a chronological problem because Leskien's shortening and metatony were comparatively recent developments (cf. Kortlandt 1977, 328), which leaves little time for the massive spread of metatony in polysyllabic verbs. I therefore think that the metatony in verbs in *-ėti*, *-óti*, *-úoti* is an older development which preceded Leskien's law (cf. already Kortlandt 1975, 86 and 1985, 115). It was analogical after the loss of the acute tone in *dēs*, *jōs*, *duōs*, *liēs* which resulted from the early Balto-Slavic loss of a laryngeal after a Proto-Indo-European long vowel in monosyllables. The same development gave rise to the circumflex tone of Latvian *sāls*, *gūovs* and Lithuanian *-dė* in *arklìdė*, *avìdė*, *alùdė*, *pelùdė*, *žvaigždė*, which was generalized in the nom.sg. form of the *ē*-stems (cf. Kortlandt 1985, 118–120). Contrary to Petit's statement (2002, 262), this analysis is not based on a comparison with Slavic but on the internal East Baltic evidence. Note that Latvian has preserved the acute tone in the pronominal forms *tiē* and *ši*.

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