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## A BALTIC KEY TO THE ETYMOLOGY OF GERMANIC \**aikô* “OAK”

1. The common Germanic denotation of “oak” is \**aikô* f., continuing in Old Icelandic *eik* (consonant stem); the early Scandinavian form is preserved in common Lappish \**âjkkę* > Norwegian Lappish (*h*)*ai'kâ*, South Lappish *haajke*, Inari *hajkka*, Koltta *ajkk* “Quercus” > Finnish *aikki*, *aihki* “Pinus procera” (Thomson 1870, 129; SKES 8; Lehtiranta 1989, 12–13, #34); further Norwegian *eik*, Swedish *ek*, Danish *eg* “oak“, Old English *âc* “oak, ship”, English *oak*, Old Frisian, Old Saxon *ēk*, Dutch *EEK*, *eik*, Old High German *eih(ha)* “oak” and *ferēh-eih* gl. “ilex”, German *Eiche* “oak”.

2. There are some promising cognates, e.g. Latin *aesculus* f. “mountain oak” < \**aigsklo* or metathesized from \**aikslo* < \**aig(e)slo* (Walde & Hofmann I 20), Greek αἰγίλωψ “sp. of oak”\* (Theophrast.), cf. λώψ · χλαμύς (Hesych.), besides λώπη “Hülle, Mantel“, λοπός “Schale, Rinde, Schuppe” etc., maybe also αἰγανέη “Wurfspiess” (Hom.) and κραταίγος “Weissdorn / Crataegus oxyacantha” (Theophrast.) where the first component corresponds to κρατός “hart” (Frisk I 30–32; II 8; Pokorny 13).

3. From the point of view of semantics not too convincing seems the existing etymology based on the following comparanda (Falk & Torp 1960, 182): Old Icelandic *eikenn* “wild, wütend”, Norwegian *eikjen* “zänkisch”, Old English *âcol* “erregt, bestürzt” or Old Indic *éjati* “stirs, moves” (Pokorny 13 differentiates \**aig*-<sub>1</sub> “verstimmt, unwirscht, krank” from \**aig*-<sub>3</sub> “(sich) heftig bewegen, schwingen, vibrieren”).

4. The etymology of Common Slavic \**dobъ* “oak” proposed by Falk (1966, 265–285) offers an inspiring solution. Falk speculates about an exact counterpart of the Slavic tree-name in Lithuanian, where he expects the form <sup>+</sup>*duñbas*, in reality *dumbė* = *duobė* “Grube, Loch” (LKŽ II<sup>2</sup> 835), the derivative of the verb *dumbù* : *dùbti* “sich höhlen, hohl werden” (WLS I 135, 139; Fraenkel 108). Falk’s etymology implies the primary semantics “[tree] with hollows”.

\* Otherwise Oettinger (1997, 103, fn. 20) who proposes for Greek αἰγίλωψ the primary meaning “Windhafer, Gerstenkorn am Auge” (cf. αἰγίλωψ · πόα τις ἐμφορῆς στάχυϊ. καὶ τὸ περὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν πάθος quoted by Hesychius), identifying here the stem \**aiig-* compatible with the Balto-Slavic-Latin isogloss “oats”.

5. For the Germanic oak-name *\*aik-* and its relatives an analogous semantic motivation can be proposed, cf. Lithuanian *áiz̃a* “Riss”, Latvian *aīza* “Riss, Spalte”, besides *īeza* “Spalte” (Fraenkel 4). Old Prussian *eyswo* “Wunde” (EV 159) probably represents a borrowing from Slavic *\*ězva* “scar, wound”, also “pit, hole, hollow” (Trubačev VI 56–57), which reflects the *u*-extension of the same root *\*aiĝ-*.

6. If the present etymology is correct, not only Slavic *\*dqbъ*, but also the oak-names derived from the root *\*aiĝ-* attested in Germanic and probably in Latin and Greek reflect the primary semantic motivation “[tree] with hollows” or “crack-barked [tree]” (= Greek αἰγίλωψ\* ?) or sim.

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