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OLD PRUSSIAN *seggē, seggīt*

The Old Prussian verb 'to do' is assigned by Stang, VGBS 363, as belonging certainly to the *-ēi̯e/o-* class of verbs. The details of formation of attested present tense forms need not detain us here; the imperatives *seggītei, seggīta*, as well as *segeyti* are explained by Stang VGBS 440 as being formed on the model of *i*-presents to the infinitive *seggīt*. In Lithuanian this class of verbs makes deadejctivals, denominals, and intensive-iteratives. In Latvian we find, with a remodelled stem-forming vocalism (in which I follow Endzelins), a continuation of the old Indo-European causative; I am not including here the newly formed causatives/factitives in *-d-*, which look as if they may contain a contamination with an earlier sense of *dêju* 'lay eggs' (: *dedù*). In any event, our Old Prussian verb cannot be a causative in origin, as we shall see.

Regarding the origin of this verb, Pr. Skardžius (*Tremties metai* 1947, 424) has this to say: „*Segge:mai* 'darytume' šalia *seggit* 'daryti' yra nežinomos kilmės žodis". In the Prussian orthography the initial letter is ambiguous, but it could easily correspond to Lith. *ž*; cf. *-sinnat/žinóti, syrne/žirnis*, etc.

Since our sciance is founded on the set of notions that include the regularity of sound change, one often thinks of seeking etymologies by permuting phonological features while keeping the semantics moderately constant. We expect, however, not only that semantic change should have systematic aspects of its own sort, but that within a culture area semantic shifts that seem considerable or even surprising might be replicated in separate languages. It seems reasonable, then, to seek an analogue for OPruss. *seggē* in the background of Lith. *darýti* Latv. *darît*.

Benjamiņš Jēgers has recently dealt extensively (Verkannte Bedeutungsverwandtschaften baltischer Wörter, Göttingen 1966 = KZ 80, 6—162 and 291—307; Einige baltische und slavische Verwandte der Sippe von lit. *dìrti*, Studi baltici 10, 1969, 63—112; esp. VBBW 71—80 and StB 10, 65—70, the latter being a somewhat revised version of the former) with *darýti* and associated shapes. Since his treatment of these problems is so full and well documented, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to cite certain relevant passages from Jēgers: „Man sieht: das lit. *darýti* und lett. *darît* beziehen sich ausschließlich auf das Anfertigen von Holzgegenstän-

den oder Holzbauten" (StB 10, 67). „Für das lett. Sprachgefühl ist jedoch lett. *nuõdara* 'Abfall (vom Bast)' nicht von lett *darinât* 3. *kuoku* 'einen Baum beputzen, die Äste eines Baumes bekappen, abhacken' zu trennen... Dieses *darinât* 3. ist seinerseits nicht von *darinât* 1. 'eine gewohnheitsmäßige Tätigkeit ausüben, machen, bereiten' und somit von lett. *darît* 'tun, machen' zu trennen. Mit anderen Worten: auch lit. *darýti* und lett. *darît* 'tun, machen' gehören zu der Wurzel **der-*." (VBBW 72). Thus Jēgers proceeds to relate *darîjums* 'eine durch Rodung entstandene Wiese', Lith. *pradãrymas* 'pradirbta žemė, pradarbis', and *dirvà* 'Acker, Flur, Feld', Latv. *dìrva* 'Saatfeld', etc. (VBBW) 73. "Nicht als ein Fischereiausdruck hat lit. *darýti* die heutige Stellung erobert ..., sondern dadurch, daß es (genau wie das lett. *darît* auch) einmal auf das Roden und zum zweiten auf die Holzarbeitung angewandt wurde. Zwei Hauptbetätigungen des baltischen Siedlers ('roden' und 'zimmern') wurden mit éinem Wort bezeichnet..." (VBBW 75—6). „Wir können nunmehr folgende Bedeutungsentwicklung für unsere Sippe aufstellen: 'reißen' (lit. *dìrti*, lett. *dìrât*) ist zu 'roden' (lit. *pradãrymas*, lett. *darîjums* 'Rodung') und 'spalten' (lett. *darinât*, *derinêt*, lit. *darinéti*) geworden. Dieses hat sich weiter zu 'bauen, verfertigen, machen' (lit. *darýti*, lett. *darît*) entwickelt..." (VBBW 77).

We see thus from Jēgers' detailed exposition that for the early East Balts 'roden, zimmern, trim branches from trees' was a single lexeme, and that because of their cultural milieu this led naturally to a more generalized sense 'prepare, make, do'. Whether Lith. *dárbas*, *dìrbti* Latv. *dar̂bs*, *dir̂bt* really belongs in origin to this set, as Jēgers argues (VBBW) 78—9; StB 10, 90—104), I am not yet persuaded or ready to argue. If it did (with a nominalizing *-b-*?), it would have to be a vṛddhi formation because of the accent, and the verb would then in all likelihood be a back formation. Moreover, whereas in the Byzantine (-Slavic) culture area the notion of 'work' has been drawn from that of 'servitude, slavery', the area of central and northern Europe has drawn this term from the notion of 'pain, suffering'.

The observed development of *darýti/darît* immediately suggests an explanation for OPruss. *seggē*. If we interpret this Old Prussian stem as **žegēi̯e-*, i. e. **žeg-ei̯e/o-*, we are reminded of Liht. *žãgaras* 'branch, brushes, shrubbery', *žãgrė* 'plough' (derived from 'branch' both lexically and, no doubt, actually; cf. Slavic *soxà*, Goth. *hōha*, to Lith. *šakà*), etc. In fact, with *žãgaras* it is impossible to say that the earlier form was not **žeg(a)ras*, in view of the liquid suffix; see my article on suffix ablaut and associated assimilations in Baltistica.

I propose, then, that our Old Prussian verb originally meant 'trim branches' and perhaps 'clear land of trees and brush'; it would be a denominative verb, perhaps also with intensive-iterative force. It would point to a lost noun **žeg-* meaning either 'branch' or 'bush'; cf. Norwegian dial. *kage* 'low bush' but Swedish 'tree stump', OGH *kegil*, which is a diminutive of the form seen in Bavarian and Swab-

ian dialect *Kag* 'stump' (see Pokorny IEW 354, *$\acute{g}egh$-, $\acute{g}ogh$-). For further information on the German forms see now Kluge s. v. *Kegel* (20th ed.). The regional English *cag* 'stump' must be borrowed from some Scandinavian source, and *keg* (older and regional North English *cag*) 'small cask' is clearly from ONorse *kaggi*. But there is an inherited English representative of the etymon in *chag* 'broom, sarothamnus or genista', a dialect word.

We see then that we have an etymon attested directly only in Baltic and Germanic. This looks like a special North European word. We may perhaps now extract one further indication from this form: The Irish word for 'branch' (Middle Ir. *géc*, also OIr. *géscae*; Modern Ir. *géag*) has always been an embarassment with its voiced initial beside Welsh *cainc*, pl. (Mediaeval Welsh) *cangheu*. Is it possible that in early Keltic *$kanku$- crossed with a form *gag- < *$\acute{g}\partial gh$-?

In view of this and German *Kufe* (see Kluge, s. v.) one wonders whether the original root might not have been *$g^u\bar{o}gh$-/$g^u\partial gh$-, or *g^uVHgh-. If so, the Old Prussian vocalism seems to represent a re-formation.

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