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BALTIC ABSTRACT NOUNS WITH *-i-s* AND SLAVIC WITH *-bje* (IE **-iyo-*)

Abstract. Lithuanian abstract nouns of the type *plōnis* (gen. sg. *plōnio*) ‘thinness’ (← Lith. *plónas* ‘thin’) are a continuation of IE neuter adjectives with the suffix **-iyo-*. A syntactic analysis of Lithuanian neuter adjectives allows us to assume that the change **-iyo-* => *-i-* is the result of the following phonetic change: *plónas* ‘thin’ → neut. **plān-ija-* > (loss of /a/) **plānī-* > **plāni-* > masc. *plōnis* ‘thinness’. The presented explanation sheds light on, among other things, the emergence of masculine nouns of the type *dagys* ‘thistle’ / Latv. *dadzis* < **dagijas* (Est. *takijas*). The development of masculine adjectives with *-ijas* => *-is* / *-īs* is an analogical, not phonetic, process; its starting point was neuter adjectives. Furthermore, the formation of the Baltic declension in *-ē-* is based on analogy, in accordance with the model proposed by Kuryłowicz (1966; 1975).

Keywords: Baltic languages; noun abstracts; syntax; neuter adjectives.

Among Lithuanian abstract nouns with *-is*, *-io* we encounter both deadjectivals, e.g. *plōnis*, (gen.sg.) *plōnio* ‘thinness’ ← Lith. *plónas* ‘thin’; and deverbatives, e.g. *mōjis* ‘wagging’ ← *móti*, *mója* ‘to wave’, see Skardžius (1943 [1996], 63–66), Otrębski (1964, 65–68). A characteristic feature of this group is circumflex metatony, as in the examples given. Acute metatony is testified in the derivation of nouns with concrete meaning, e.g. *šiaūras* ‘biting (wind)’ → *šiaurys* (gen.sg. *šiaurio*) ‘north wind’. It has long been argued that the Lithuanian abstract nouns in *-i-s* are etymologically related to the Slavic abstracts with the suffix *-bje*, e.g. **pitbje* ‘drinking’ (: *pitb* ← *piti* ‘to drink’), *ostrbje* ‘blade’ (: *ostrb* ‘sharp’), which in turn evolved from the IE neuter adjectives in **-iyo-* (see Kuryłowicz 1968, 156; Vaillant 1974, 403). However, the formal difference between the Baltic and Slavic formations has not been given a satisfactory explanation. Therefore, the aim of this article is to explain how the change IE **-iyo-* > Balt. *-i-s* occurred. Let us start *ab ovo*, i.e. with the functions of neuter adjectives in Lithuanian.

1. Neuter adjectives in Lithuanian

a) Let us note that neuter adjectives in Lithuanian have no trace of a final nasal consonant, e.g. *Kaĩp gẽra* ‘How good!’, not **Kaĩp gẽrq*; *Tylù* ‘It is quiet’, not **Tylq*, etc. This makes us assume that, at least in the Eastern Baltic area, the neuter adjectives ended with **-ija-Ø*.

b) Neuter adjectives often have an abstract meaning, see the example (1):

- (1) *Darbas*_{Masc.} *sveika*_{Adj.Neutr} = *Darbas*_{Masc.} – *sveikata*_{Fem.Abstr} ‘Work (is) health.’ (Valeckienė 1998, 44; Ambrazas 2006, 143)

This is a feature inherited from the protolanguage, as is shown by examples in other old Indo-European languages, e.g. in Latin, see example (2) from Virgil:

- (2) *varium*_{Neutr} *et mutabile*_{Neutr} *semper femina*_{Fem.} ‘woman is ever a fickle and changeable thing.’ (Ambrazas 2006, 142)

c) Already in Old Lithuanian, neuter adjectives were used as nouns, see ex. (3):

- (3) *idant neischtiktumbei ant akmeninga* (BrB Lk 4,11) ‘ne forte offendes ad lapidem; das du nicht stoesset an einem stein’ (Ambrazas 2006, 143). ‘lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.’ (KJB) Lith. neut. *akmeninga* ‘stone’.

As Vytautas Ambrazas (*loc. cit.*) noticed, if the adjectives *gẽra* and *pikta* appeared as nouns in Old Lithuanian, the final vowel could undergo apocope, see example (4):

- (4) *Bet jeygu pikt darey, bijokis* (CHNT Rom 13,4) ‘But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid.’ (KJB)

d) The Lithuanian adjective has three grammatical genders, but the noun has only two (masculine and feminine). Thus, when a neuter adjective was substantivized, it passed into the class of masculines in accordance with the general tendency, e.g. Lith. *ežeras* ‘lake’: OCS *jezero*; Lith. *šienas* ‘hay’: OCS *sěno*, etc. This, in turn, allows us to assume the following development for the abstract nouns in question:

neutr. **plān-ija-* > (apocope of /a/) **plānī-* > **plāni-* > masc. *plōnis* ‘thinness’

The shortening **plānī-* > **plāni-* can be explained in two ways:

- a) Either it is a purely phonetic phenomenon;
- b) Or the nominative **plāni-s* has been created according to acc.sg. **plānī-n* > **plāni-n* → nom. *plōnis*.

The circumflex in *plōnis* ‘thinness’ is the result of accent retraction. In this simple and elegant way, it is possible to explain not only abstracts of the *plōnis* type, but also other puzzles in the historical morphology of the Baltic languages.

- 1) The OLith. comparative neuter *-esni* (masc. *-esnis*, fem. *-esnē*) is related to Samogitian abstract nouns in *-esnis*, e.g. *rūpesnis* ‘care’ (Ambrazas 1993, 54–55, 89). Etymologically, the suffix *-esni* is a formation based on abstracts with the inherited suffix *-es-*. I will discuss the details of its development in another paper, but here I will add only that masc. *-esnis* and fem. *-esnē* were derived from the neuter form *-esni*. Therefore, in OLith. texts, we find e.g. loc. sg. *geresnime* alongside modern *geresniamė*. An analogy for such a scenario is provided by the development of the superlative in *-iaus-ias* instead of the expected **-iaus-is* (cf. def. *geras-is* ‘the good one’). Details in Ostrowski (2014).
- 2) The newly created *plōnis* type influenced old feminine abstracts in **-iyā* => *-ė*, e.g., *kūlē* ‘time of threshing grain; threshed grain’ (: *kūlti* ‘to thresh’), see Ostrowski (2023).
- 3) The OLith. *-i*-adjectives *daugi* ‘much’ and *didis* ‘large’ may be continuants of old neuters in **-ija-*. On *daugi* as a neuter adjective see Stang (1966, 260–261).
- 4) The presented hypothesis also sheds light on the development of masculine adjectives with **-ijas* > *-is* / *-ys*, as discussed below.

2. The origin of the type **dagijas* > Lith. *dagỹs* ‘thistle’ / Latv. *dadzis* (Est. *takijas*)

Perhaps the most popular explanation assumes the change: **dagijas* > **dagijs* > Lith. *dagỹs* ‘thistle’. A detailed review of the older hypothesis was given by Stang (1966, 188–197); see also Zinkevičius (1980, 217–218). However, at least two questions arise:

- a) Why did the thematic vowel not disappear in a number of Lithuanian dialects (and in the literary language) in other nouns, e.g., *geras vilkas*, but not **gers vilks*?

b) Why did Old Lithuanian preserve nouns in *-ijas*? Selected examples: *medijas* ‘hunter’ (Bretke), *prekijas* ‘merchant’ (Daukša, Chyliński), *galvijas* ‘cattle’ (Bretke, Daukša), *žuklijas* ‘fisherman’ (Daukša, Chyliński) and others, see Stang (1966, 190). The existence of such examples suggests that old adjectives in *-is* / *-ỹs* did not form through regular phonetic change but rather through morphological change (i.e., analogy). How did they come about? Note that the primary function of neuter adjectives is a predicative one, see ex. (1) above. Neuter adjectives can also be used predicatively with referentially used nouns, see example (5):

(5) *Toks darbas per sunku moteriai*. ‘Such work (as this) is too hard for a woman.’ (Veliuonà, Jurbarko raj.; Ambrazas 2006, 141)

For masculine and feminine adjectives, the predicative function is a secondary function (e.g. fem. *skani duona* ‘tasty bread’ → *duona skani* ‘bread is tasty’). On this basis, we can establish the morphological proportion:

predic. neutr. **-ija-Ø* : predic. masc. **-ija-s* = predic. neutr. **-ĩ-Ø* :
predic. masc. **-ĩ-s*

Thus, it can be assumed that the analogical change **-ijas* => *-ỹs* first spread among adjectives used predicatively. Then, on the pattern of masculines with 1-syllable ending **-ĩ-s*, analogous 1-syllable feminines arose, i.e. **-iyā* => **-jā*; see fem. *didė* ‘big’ alongside fem. def. *didžio-ji* ‘the big’, which implies the older **didjā* (Ostrowski 2023). The change **-jā* => *-ē* is not a PHONETIC process, but a MORPHONOLOGICAL one, which was described many years ago by Jerzy Kuryłowicz (1966; 1975). In short, because feminines were derived from masculines, e.g. *senis* ‘old man’ → *senė* ‘old woman’, a hard consonant was introduced into feminines, following the pattern of masculines. This in turn automatically caused a change from /a:/ to /e:/ because hard consonants could not occur in the sequence CjV_{back}. Schematically:

masc. *sen-is* /C/ → **sen’-ā* /C’/ => *sen-ē* /C/.

In other words, the change **sen’-ā* => *sen-ē* is only an EFFECT of the morphological analogy. That is why we have masc. *žalias* ‘green’ /C’/ : fem. *žalia* /C’/, but masc. *senis* : fem. *senė*, and not masc. *senis* : fem. **senia*.

BALTŲ *-i-s* IR SLAVŲ *-bje* (IDE. **-iyo-*) ABSTRAKTAI

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama abstraktų su priesaga *-i-s* kilmė. Išėjties taškas buvo bevardės giminės būdvardžiai su **-ija*, iš kurių išsirutuliojo dabartinė forma: **plān-ija-* > **plānī-* (/a/ iškritimas) > **plāni-* > masc. *plōnis*. Vyriškoji giminė *plōnis* atsirado po būdvardžio substantivizacijos, plg. paralelinį procesą: lie. *ežeras* : s. sl. *jezero*; lie. *šienas* : s. sl. *sěno* ir t. t. Siūloma hipotezė taip pat leidžia suprasti baltų daiktavardžių su galūnėmis *-īs* ir *-ē* raidą.

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