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OLD PRUSSIAN VERB CLASSES

Since I published my analysis of the Old Prussian present tense formation (Kortlandt 1987), two articles on the same subject have come to my attention, viz. Ostrowski 1994 and Kaukienė 1998. It may be useful to compare our results. As it is clear that neither of the authors has read my work, there is no point in starting a discussion and I shall limit myself to indicating the differences which merit further consideration.

Following van Wijk (1918), I have classified the attested 1st pl. forms in the following way:

(1) athematic forms in *-mai*: *asmai*, *-skīmai*, *-ēimai*, *wīrstmai*, 2nd pl. *astai*, *wīrstai*;

(2) forms in *-āmai*, *-ūmai*: *waitiāmai*, *quoitāmai*, *lāikumai*, 2nd pl. *quoitēti*, ipv. *lāikutei*, 3rd pl. *peisāi*, *ettrāi*, *kelsāi* may also belong here (cf. Kortlandt 1987, 109), as does 3rd sg. *-bānda*;

(3) forms in *-ē(i)mai*: *billēmai*, *druwēmai*, *seggēmai*, *stallēmai*, *klausēmai*, *-paickēmai*, *-wackē(i)mai*, *waidleimai*, 2nd pl. *druwētei*, *seggēti*, *stallēti*, ipv. *billītei*, *seggītei*, *klausieiti*;

(4) forms in *-au(i)mai*: *dīnkau(i)mai*, 2nd pl. ipv. *dīnkauti*, *rikauite*;

(5) thematic forms in *-ammai*, *-emmai*: *-weckammai*, *giwammai*, *giwemmai*, *klantemmai*, *paikemmai*, *-prestemmai*, *wertemmai*;

(6) forms in *-imai*, viz.

(a) optative *turrīlimai*;

(b) perfect present *waidimai*, 2nd pl. *waiditi*;

(c) verbs in *-īt*: *kīrdimai*, *mēntimai*, *-nertimai*, *turrimai*, 2nd pl. *turriti*, ipv. *kīrdeiti*, *crixteiti*, *kirdijti*, *laukijti*, *milijti*;

(d) loan words: *griķimai*, *madlimai*, *schlūsimai*, *massimai*, *-schpāndimai*, 2nd pl. *schlūsiti*, ipv. *madliti*;

(e) simple verbs: *galbimai*, *girrimai*, *gunnimai*, *immimai*, *pīdimai*, *-rīpimai*, *-wērpimai*, 2nd pl. *immati*, ipv. *immaiti*, *rīpaiti*, *-wiērptei*;

(f) nasal presents: *-gaunimai*, *-stānimai*, *-sinnimai*, 2nd pl. *-sinnati*;

(g) forms in *-innimai*: *bebinnimai*, *brewinnimai*, *mukinnimai*, *-stattinnimai*, *tickinnimai*, 2nd pl. ipv. *-in(n)aiti*, *-in(n)eiti*.

Classes (3), (4), (5) are thematic, classes (6b), (6c), (6f), (6g) have an alternating present stem, and classes (2) and (6e) are heterogeneous. I have argued that the 2nd pl. imperatives in *-aiti*, *-eiti* represent the original present optative while the forms in *-(ī)tei*, *-ijti* reflect an original aorist subjunctive (Kortlandt 1982, 7), the corresponding 2nd sg. endings being *-ais*, *-eis* and *-(ī)s*. For the preterit, I start from the following classification (Kortlandt 1998a, 144):

- (i) *-migē*, *weddē*, *-traūki*;
- (ii) *bēi*;
- (iii) *-deirā*, *billā*-, *stallā*, *quoitā*, *-glabū*, *teikū*, *dīnkau*-, I/II *bela/byla*, *prowela*, I *lima*-, *dīnkowa*-, II *lymu*-, *dīnkau*-;
- (iv) *dai*, *driāudai*, *-stāi*, *widdai*, *-liei*-, *poūi*- (cf. Kortlandt 1998a, 147 and 1998b, 124f.), I/II *dai*-;
- (v) I *ymmi*-, II *ymmei*- < **imī*.

When we look at the infinitives and participles, it appears that the present stem gave rise to an *ā*-aorist in *laikūt*, (*per*)*bānda*-, EV. *maysotan*, Lith. *laikýti*, *bandýti*, *maišýti* (cf. Kortlandt 1989, 110). I therefore think that class (2) must be subdivided into (2a) athematic *ā*-presents such as *lāiku* and *perbānda* and (2b) thematic presents such as *peisāi*, *ettrāi*, *kelsāi*, also *signā*-, *maitā*-, and *waitiā*- in view of the participle acc.pl. *waitiaintins*. Class (6e) can be subdivided into a class (6e1) with the same present flexion as (6c) and perhaps (6d), e.g. *etwiērpt*, 3rd sg. *etwiērpei*, 1st pl. *etwērpimai*, ipv. *etwerpeis*, also 3rd sg. *perlānkei*, *perlānki*, 3rd pl. *gēide*, *giēidi*, probably also *pogalbton*, *galbimai*, *girtwei*, *girrimai*, *pokūnst*, (*po*)*kūnti*, ipv. *pokuntieis*, *tiēnstwei*, ipv. *tenseiti*, 2nd sg. *etwēre*, ipv. *etwerreis*, 3rd sg. *trinie*, *kniēipe*, *līse*, and a class (6e2) with the same present flexion as (6f) and perhaps (6g), viz. *īmt*, 1st sg. *imma*, 1st pl. *immimai*, 2nd pl. *immati*, ipv. *immais*, *immaiti*, also *pijst*, 3rd sg. *pīdai*, 1st pl. *pīdimai*, *serrīpimai*, ipv. *rīpaiti*, 3rd sg. *aupallai*, and probably *guntwei*, 1st pl. *gunnimai*. A first comparison with Trautman's (1910) classification now yields the following picture (regular 3rd person endings added):

- T1. **-ti* = (1) *-t*, (ii) *bēi*, (iv) *dai*;
- T2. **-a* = (5) *-a*, (i) *-ē*, *-i*;
- T3. **-auja* = (4) *-awie*, *-aui*, (iii) *-au*;
- T4. **-īja* = (6d) *-i*;
- T5. **-ā* = (2a) *-a*, *-u*, (iii) *-ā*, *-ū*;
- T6. **-āja* = (2b) *-āi*, (iii) **-ā*;
- T7. **-ēja* = (3) *-ē*;

T8. *-ia < *-eja = (6c) -ei, -i, (iv) -ai;

T9. *-ja = (6e1) -ei, -i, (iv) *lēi, *pōi;

T10. *-āi = (6e2) -ai, -a, (v) imī;

T10. *-āi = (6f) -nai, -na, (iv) -stāi;

T11. *-inā = (6g) -inai, -ina, (v) *-ī;

T12. -ā, -ē = (3) -ē, (iii) -ā.

There is no evidence for a preterit (v) *-ī beside (iii) -ā and (iv) -ai in classes (3) and (6d). A comparison with the whole corpus in Schmalstieg's (1970) classification yields the following result:

S1a. *-a = (2a) *tlāku*, (3) *aupaickēmai*, (5) *paikemmai*, *popaikā* (read *popāika*, cf. Van Wijk 1918, 135), *poprestemmai*, *senrīnka*, *enterpo*, *ertreppa*, *perweckammai*, *perweddā* (read -a), (6e) *podīngai*, *imma*, -*immai*, *līse*, *aupallai*, *pīdai*, (i) *weddē*, (iii) *lima-*, *prowela*, (v) *ymmi-*;

S1b. *-ē/a = (3) *billē*, *quoitē*, *stallē*, (5) *giwa*, (iii) *billā*, *quoitā*, *stallā*;

S1c. *-na = (6f) -*gaunai*, -*gaunimai*, *postānai*, (iv) *postāi*;

S1d. nasal infix + *-a = (5) *polīnka*, (i) *ismigē*;

S1e. vowel + *-ja = (iv) *lēi, *pōi;

S1f. consonant + *-ja = (3) *wargē*, (5) *kūra*, *wertemmai*, (6c) *mēntimai*, (6d) *massi*, *auschpāndimai*, (6e) *galbimai*, *gunnimai*, *giēidi*, *girrimai*, *kniēipe*, (po) *kūnti*, *erlāngi*, *serrīpimai*, *trinie*, *etwēre*, *etwiērpei*, (i) *pertraūki*, (iv) *driāudai*;

S1g. *-ina = (6g) -*inai*, -*ina*;

S1h. *-īja = (6c) *crixti-*;

S1i. *-auja = (4) -*awie*, -*ai*, (iii) -*auts*;

S2. *-ē/ī = (3) *budē*, *dergē*, *druwē*, *pallapse*, *milē*, *seggē*, *auschādē*, *paskulē*, *waidleimai*, *enwackē(i)mai*, *preiwackē*, (6c) *kīrdimai*, *kāimaluke*, *ernertimai*, *turrei*, *turri*, (6d) *grikimai*, (6e) *perlānkei*, (iv) *widdai*;

S3a. *-ī/ā = (2a) *perbānda*, (3) *klausēmai*, (5) (per) *klantemmai*, (iii) *endeirā*;

S3b. *-ā = (2a) *lāiku*, EV. *maysotan*, (2b) *dwigubbū*, *kelsāi*, *maitā*, *peisāi*, *ettrāi*, *waitiāmai*, *eb[s]ignā*, (6b) *bia* (cf. Kortlandt 1989, 110), (6f) *posinna*, -*sinnimai*, (iii) *poglabū*, *teikū*;

S4. *-ti = (1) *as-*, *dā-*, *ēi-*, *wīrst-*, (ii) *bēi*, (iv) *dai*;

S5. perfect present = (6b) 2nd sg. *waizei*, pl. *waidi-*;

S6. loan words = (6d) *madli*, *schlūsi*;

S7. unclear forms = (1) *etskī-*, (6e) *polijcki*.

N. Ostrowski (1994, 169–175) distinguishes between 1. athematic presents, 2. thematic presents (with seven subdivisions), and 3. unclear present stem forms:

- 1 *-ti = (1) *as-*, *dā-*, *ēi-*,
 2 1 *-ya = (1) *etskī-*, (2b) *waitiā-*, (3) *auschaudē*, *billē*, *budē*, *druwē*, *-wackē*, *klausē-*, *milē*, *pallapse*, *paskulē*, *quoutē*, *seggē*, *stallē*, (5) *klantemmai*, (6c) *ernerti-*, *kīrdi-*, *cixti-*, *turri*, (6d) *auschpāndi-*, *grīki-*, *madli*, *massi*, *schlūsi*, (6e) *erlāngi*, *giēidi*, *perlānkei*, *polycki*,
 2 2 -in- = (6g) *-mai*, *-ina*,
 2 3 * -āja = (2a) *lāiku*, *perbānda*, *ilāku*, (2b) *ettrāi*, *dwigubbū*, *kelsāi*, *mautā*, *peisāi*, (5) *giwa*, (6b) *bia*,
 2 4 * -auja = (4) *-awie*, *-ai*,
 2 5 * -a = (5) *perweddā* (read *-a*), *senrīnka*, *polīnka*, (6e) *aupallai*, *etwiērpei*, *umma*, *līse*,
 2 6 -n- = (6f) *-gaunai*, *postānai*,
 2 7 * -sta = (5) *poprestemmai*,
 3 heterogeneous (1) *wīrst-*, (3) *dergē*, *aupaickēmai*, *waidleimai*, *wargē*, (5) *enterpo*, *ertreppa*, *perweckammai*, *popaikā* (read *popāika*), *paikemmai*, *wertemmai*, (6a) *lemlai*, (6b) *waidimai*, (6c) *kāimaluke*, *mēntimai*, (6e) *galbimai*, *gēide*, *gīrrimai*, *gunnumai*, *knēipe*, *(po)kūnti*, *(per)pīdai*, *podungai*, *serrīpimai*, *trinie*, (6f) *posinna*, *-sinnumai*

A Kaukiene limits herself to *ē-* and *ī-* formations. She distinguishes between 1a *ī-/ē-/ā-* verbs, 1b *ī-/in-* verbs, 2 *ē-/i-* verbs, and 3 loan words, and lists the following present tense formations of these verbs (Kaukiene 1998, 30–36)

1a = (2b) *kelsāi*, (3) *klausē-*, *billē*, *budē*, *milē*, *wargē*, *dergē*, *druwē*, *quoutē*, *pallapse*, *aupaickē-*, *seggē*, *paskulē*, *stallē*, *auschaudē*, *-wackē*, (5) *giwa*, *klantemmai*, *popaikā* (read *popāika*), *paikemmai*, *perweckammai*, (6c) *kāimaluke*, (6e) *etwēre*, (iii) *billā*, *quoutā*, *stallā*,

1b = (6g) *isrankinna*, *swintina(i)*, *-s(ch)wāigstina*, *wartinna*,

2 = (6c) *kīrdi-*, *ernerti-*, *turei*, *turri*, (6d) *massi*, (6e) *erlāngi*,

3 = (6c) *cixti-*, (6d) *grīki-*, *madli*, *schlūsi*. I have included *cixti-* in class (6c) rather than (6d) because this verb seems to be well integrated into the language, as is clear from 1st sg *cixtia* and 1pv *cixteiti*, but admit that this choice is more or less arbitrary.

We may conclude that there is no consensus on the classification of Old Prussian verb forms. An extreme position is taken by Schmalstieg, who simply denies any independent value of the Prussian evidence: “it may well be madness which would lead anybody to believe that he could make anything out of Old Prussian orthography” (Schmalstieg 1970, 127). His classification is based “on a belief that the Old Prussian verbal system did not differ very much from that of the extant Baltic

languages” and is “determined by the corresponding classification of its Lithuanian cognate”, in spite of the fact that “there are many verbs in Lithuanian which could belong to any one of several conjugations” and that “there is no very good assurance that a verb belonging to one conjugation in Lithuanian would necessarily belong to a cognate conjugation in Old Prussian” (Schmalstieg 1970, 132). Thus, Schmalstieg really classifies Lithuanian verbs with Prussian cognates, totally disregarding the Prussian evidence as a matter of principle. The other extreme is represented by Trautmann’s classic handbook, where every form is taken seriously as a real piece of evidence for a linguistic category unless it can be proven to be a printer’s error. While Ostrowski largely follows Schmalstieg in his rejection of the orthographical evidence and his agnostic attitude toward much of the material and Kaukiene tries to steer a middle course between the orthographical and the comparative evidence, the present author agrees with Van Wijk’s opinion that we must first establish the linguistic system behind the Prussian texts before embarking upon a comparison with data from other languages. This approach leads to the conclusion that “the Old Prussian texts are an imperfect representation of a remarkably archaic variety of Balto-Slavic” (Kortlandt 1987, 110). It follows that Schmalstieg’s work is misguided because it is based on mistaken principles.

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