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THE *ā*-STEM GENITIVE SINGULAR IN OLD PRUSSIAN

Prūsų kalbos *ā* kamieno vienaskaitos kilmininkas

Abstract. Root stress in the Old Prussian *ā*-stem gen. sg. *ālg-as* was taken from the homonymous *o*-stem gen. sg. *deiw-as* (Lith. *lángo*, Sl. **vôrna*). This analogy took place after the reshuffling of the Balto-Slavic *o*-stem gen. sg. **-ā* as **-ās* in the prehistory of Old Prussian. The shortening **-ās > -as* was most probably conditioned by the fact that this ending was always unstressed.

Keywords: Old Prussian; Baltic; Slavic; declensions; genitive; accent.

Anotacija. Prūsų kalbos *ā* kamieno vns. kilmininkas (pvz., *ālg-as*) pasižymi dviem nelauktais bruožais: i) trumpasis kamiengalio balsis *-ăs*; ii) šaknies kirtis mobiliosiose paradigmose. Šaknies kirtis perimtas iš homonimiško *o*-kamieno vns. kilmininko (pvz., *deiw-as*). Savo ruožtu, *o*-kamieno vns. kilmininkas yra kilęs iš baltų-slavų **-ā* (lie. *lángo*, sl. **vôrna*), pridedant **-s* iš kitų kamienų (visų pirma, iš *ā*-kamieno). Vakarų baltų *o*- ir *ā*-kamienų vns. kilm. **-ās* buvo sutrumpintas niekada nekirčiuotoje galūnėje.

Raktažodžiai: prūsų kalba; baltų kalbos; slavų kalbos; linksniuotės; kilmininkas; kirtis.

1. I owe to Prof. Stundžia my first (and, as it happened, only) formal introductions to Old Prussian and Lithuanian accentology. It is a pleasure to contribute to his *Festschrift* a paper that touches on both disciplines. The Old Prussian *ā*-stem genitive singular *-as* (e.g. *galwas*, *gennas* Ench., from *gallū* Ench. 'head', *genno* Elb. 'wife') is characterized by two unexpected features: the vowel is short; the stress is on the root in mobile paradigms. I give the basic arguments as recently reported by R i n k e v i č i u s (2009, 102–104):

   i) complete absence of the macron in *ā*-stem gen. sg. *-as* in the Enchiridion;

   ii) macron on the root in *ālg-as* x2 'salary' (Lith. *algà* AP 4 'id.');

   iii) vowel reduction in 2nd catechism gen. sg. *mens-es* (Ench. *mens-as*, nom. sg. *mensā* 'meat');

   iv) absence of the change **ā > *ū* after velars and labials in (e.g.) *ālg-as*. Also in the first compound member *galwas-dellīks* Ench. 'Hauptstück'.

Although taken in isolation from each other none of these facts is conclusive (as duly pointed out by Rinkevičius, *loc. cit.*), together they make a fairly strong case for a short-vowel ending with root accentuation (as is the *communis opinio*).

2. This strongly contrasts with the picture of the rest of Balto-Slavic. Lith. *galv-õs*, Latv. *gal̂v-as* and Sl. **golv-ý* clearly point to an ending with non-acute long vowel **-ās* and stress on the ending in mobile paradigms:[1]

i)   The long vowel of Bl.-Sl. **-ās* is of course expected from an Indo-European perspective, cf. Gk. ἡμέρ-ᾱς, OLat. *famili-ās*, Go. *gib-os*, etc.

ii) Lithuanian and Slavic have stress on the ending, which agrees with the final stress of the *i-*, *u-* and consonant-stem genitive singular (Lith. *mint-iẽs*, *sūn-aũs*, dial. *dukter-ès*; see S t a n g 1957, 87f. for the more complicated Slavic facts).

iii) The only problematic fact is the non-acute character of Bl.-Sl. **-ās*, which is only borne out by Lithuanian (Latvian and Slavic are ambiguous). The non-acute of *galv-õs* agrees with Gk. τιμ-ῆς (< PIE **-ah$_2$-as*), but not with OE *-e*, OS *-æ*, OHG *-a* (< Gmc. bimoric **-ōz* < PIE **-ah$_2$-s*). Since the issue is not of crucial importance for this article, I will not discuss it here. The scenario presented below (§5), at any rate, makes better sense if the ending inherited by Old Prussian was non-acute as well.

3. Given the close agreement of the rest of Balto-Slavic, it seems obvious that the short vowel and root accentuation of Old Prussian *ālg-ăs* must rest on a specific innovation of this language. Probably the obviousness of this fact explains why this ending has received but little attention in the literature. In the case of Old Prussian one can always emphasize the uncertainty of our knowledge. This is probably the reasoning behind S c h m a l s t i e g's (1974, 56) phonematization of *ālgas* as /álgās/. It would be curious, however, if all the evidence at our disposal pointed in exactly the same direction ([álgăs]). Several authors have observed that the shortening of **-ās* to *-ăs*, whatever its nature, must have taken place before the change **ā > *ū* after velars and labials (e.g. M a ž i u l i s 2004, 39, 44; K o r t l a n d t 2009, 192; R i n k e v i č i u s 2015, 117). This seems self-evident to me, but the (probably related) root accentuation of *ālgas* is still in need of an explanation. J a s a n o f f (2017, 134)

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[1] I use the following conventions for Balto-Slavic and Baltic prosodic features: Ē̲ = acute, Ē = non-acute, Ė = stress in lexically accented word forms, È = initial syllable of enclinomena. I keep the traditional notation for Proto-Slavic.

mentions the possibility that it is an archaism, but he himself qualifies this as 'very uncertain'. In my view the agreement between Lith. *galv-õs* and Sl. **golv-ý* practically proves the ending accentuation of Bl.-Sl. **galu̯-ãs*.

The only extensive discussion known to me is due to v a n W i j k (1918, 67–80), whose solution has been accepted by authorities like E n d z e l ī n s (1943, 62; 1948, 123) and S t a n g (1966, 198). Van Wijk begins by arguing that in Old Prussian the genitive singular of *all* stems consisted of short stem vowel + *-s* and was regularly accented on the root, in blatant contrast with the rest of Balto-Slavic. To put it in Lithuanian terms, we would have *ā*-stem †*gálvăs*, *ē*-stem †*kătĕs*, *i*-stem †*miñtĭs*, *u*-stem †*sū́nŭs* for actually attested (and inherited) *galvõs*, *katẽs*, *mintiẽs*, *sūnaũs*. Van Wijk's explanation of this phenomenon is that the Old Prussian genitive singular was remade on the model of acc. sg. **-ăn* (< **-ān*), **-ĕn* (< **-ēn*), **-ĭn*, **-ŭn*, with inherited root accentuation (Lith. *gálvą*, *kãtę*, *miñtį*, *sū́nų*). The model was provided by the *o*-stems, where both short stem vowel and root stress were inherited: acc. sg. *-an* (< Bl.-Sl. **-an* < PIE **-om*), gen. sg. *-as* (< PIE **-oso*).

Van Wijk's scenario has a certain attractiveness to it, but has to face serious problems as well. To begin with his claim that the Old Prussian genitive singular *always* consisted of short stem vowel + *-s*, this is certain for *o*-stem *-as*, *ā*-stem *-as*, and *ē*-stem *-is* (< **-īs* < **-ēs*, *vel sim.*), which can easily be analogical to the *ā*-stems. The *i*-stem genitive singular is not attested with certainty. The best candidate is gen. sg. *etnīstis* x2 'Gnade', *nieteīstis* x1 'Ungnade' (for **nietnīstis*, *vel sim.*), cf. acc. sg. *etnīstin* x16, *etnīstan* x1 (see e.g. M a ž i u l i s 2013, 191–193), but we cannot be completely certain that this was an *i*-stem and not a *ja*- or *ē*-stem. The *u*-stems are limited to the word for 'son'. In the Enchiridion this word inflects as an *o*-stem (nom sg. *soūns*, gen. sg. *soūnas*). The First Catechism has *sunos* x1 and the Second *sounons* x1, usually corrected to **sounous*. I leave it to the reader to decide whether this is enough to establish gen. sg. *-ĭs*, *-ŭs* for Old Prussian. The consonant-stems, on the other hand, offer firm evidence *against* van Wijk's proposal. The gen. sg. *kermenes* 'body' is attested five times with unreduced *-es* and without macron on the root vowel, contrast nom. sg. *kērmens* x2, acc. sg. *kērmenen* x1, *kērmenan* x1, *kērmnen* x1, *kermenen* x1, *kermnen* x1. This almost certainly implies gen. sg. /*kermen-és*/. If one nevertheless assumes gen. sg. *-ĭs*, *-ŭs* for the *i*- and *u*-stems, a late analogy with the *o*-, *ā*- and *ē*-stem genitive singular endings seems more likely than van Wijk's global rebuilding of this ending on the model of the *o*-stems.

As for van Wijk's concrete scenario, it crucially depends on two questionable assumptions: i) a very early shortening *ā*-stem acc. sg. **-ān* >

-ăn; ii) the idea that the *o*-stem gen. sg. *-as* goes back to PIE *-oso*. Even if, for argument's sake, both assumptions are accepted, one may legitimate wonder whether the pattern of the *o*-stems was enough to motivate van Wijk's analogy. Clearly a fresh approach to the Old Prussian *ā*-stem genitive is needed.

4. Our first step will be to revisit van Wijk's derivation of the *o*-stem gen. sg. *-as* from PIE *-oso*, which I can only qualify as obsolete. The East Baltic and Slavic *o*-stem genitive singular continues the PIE ablative singular (Lith. *mìšk-o* AP 4, Latv. *tȩ̃v-a*, Sl. *vôrn-a* AP *c* < Bl.-Sl. *-ā* < PIE *-oh₂ad*). The null hypothesis is that this was a Balto-Slavic innovation. There is no trace of the PIE *o*-stem gen. sg. *-osi̯o* in the nominal system of these languages. The pronominal inflection was more complicated. East Baltic has trivially extended the nominal ending (Lith. *tõ*, *šìto*, *kõ*, etc.). Slavic has an ending *-ogo* (OCS, ORu. *togo*, *jego*, etc.) that is completely obscure, but the interrogative pronoun OCS, ORu. *česo* has preserved a pronominal genitive singular ending of PIE pedigree, cf. Go. *h̜is*, Gk. τοῦ, Hom. τέο.

Old Prussian seems to follow its own way. The *o*-stem nominal genitive singular was *-ăs* (*deiw-as*, *grīk-as*, etc.). In the pronouns we have a different ending *stesse*, *stessei*, *steise*, *steisei*; note also *maisei*, *twaisei/twaise*, *swaisei/swaise* in the possessive pronouns. It is hard to say what exactly lies behind these forms, but they are evidently remindful of the PIE endings *-eso*, *-osi̯o*. The issue does not seem to be related to the central topic of this article and will not be further discussed here. As for nominal *-as*, there are two main approaches: i) this ending is unrelated to the East Baltic and Slavic ending and continues PIE *-os(i̯)o* (*vel sim.*); ii) it is an Old Prussian innovation arrived at by adding *-s* from the other stems to the inherited, Balto-Slavic ending *-ā* (see O l a n d e r 2015, 134–136 for references and discussion). In my view only the second option is defensible (see below for the details). The first one creates extraordinary problems from a cladistic point of view. I shall here limit myself to observe that replacement of the genitive with the ablative is not otherwise found among the Indo-European languages and, therefore, cannot be considered a trivial development. It will also be well to remember that OPr. *-as* cannot directly stem from the well-established *-osi̯o* and that the comparative evidence points to a pronominal ending *-eso* (OCS, *česo*, Go. *h̜is*, *dag-is*), not "*-oso*". The evidence probably includes Old Prussian itself (*stesse*, etc.)!

The analogical approach to OPr. *-as* is vastly superior, at least from a Balto-Slavic perspective, but two important questions remain: i) why was the vowel of *-as* short?; ii) what was the motivation to add *-s*? I will address

the second question first. As I hope to show, it actually holds the key to understand the *ā*-stem gen. sg. *ālg-as* as well.

5. As I thought experiment I propose to start not from the Old Prussian facts, but from the West Baltic *o*- and *ā*-stem singular paradigms as they most probably looked like after the merger of Baltic *ā and *ō in West Baltic *ā:

	o-stem singular		*ā*-stem singular	
	Baltic	**West Baltic**	**West Baltic**	**Baltic**
Nom.	**u̯árn-əs*	**u̯árn-əs*	**galu̯-ā́*	**galu̯-ā́*
Acc.	**u̯àrn-an*	**u̯árn-an*	**gálu̯-ān*	**gàlu̯-ān*
Gen.	**u̯àrn-ā*	**u̯árn-ā*	**galu̯-ā́s*	**galu̯-ā́s*
Dat.	**u̯àrn-ōi̯*	**u̯árn-āi̯*	**gálu̯-āi̯*	**gàlu̯-āi̯*
Instr.	**u̯àrn-ō*	**u̯árn-ā*	**gálu̯-ān*	**gàlu̯-ān*
Loc.	**u̯arn-ái̯*	**u̯arn-ái̯*	**galu̯-ái̯*	**galu̯-ái̯*

I will not insist here on the potentially controversial reconstructions included in this table, which probably include the assumption of full-fledged enclinomena for Proto-Baltic, the *o*-stem nom. sg. *-*əs* (not *-*as*), the *o*-stem gen. sg. *-*ā* (not *-*ō*), and the *ā*-stem loc. sg. *-*ai̯* (not *-*āi̯* or *-*āi̯*). If other options are preferred, they will not essentially affect the scenario that follows. The point to stress is that regular sound change led to different paradigmatic pressures in West Baltic and East Baltic.

It is evident that both paradigms were now '*ă̄*-paradigms'. Some cases were identical (dat. sg. *-*āi̯*), identical except for tone (loc. sg. *-*ai̯*/*-*ái̯*), or else very close to each other, especially in informal speech (instr. sg. *-*ā(n)*, acc. sg. *-*ă̄n*). The *o*-stem genitive singular, I submit, was 'clarified' through the addition of *-*s* from the other stems, especially the *ā*-stems. The analogy was certainly not unavoidable, but, in my view, not particularly remarkable in view of the paradigms we can assume for early West Baltic. It can be formalized as a proportion *ā*-stem dat. sg. *-*āi̯* : gen. sg. *-*ās* = *o*-stem *-*āi̯* : gen. sg. X, where X = *-*ās*, but this is probably not necessary for the analogy to work.

An important detail is that the stress position of **u̯árn-ā* (cf. Lith. *láng-o*, Sl. *vôrn-a) was not affected when *-*s* was added, yielding **u̯árn-ās*. At this point, however, the *o*- and *ā*-stem genitive singular endings were identical. This, I submit, led the *ā*-stems to adopt the accentuation of the *o*-stems, i.e. **algā́s* → *álgās after **u̯árn-ās*. Schematically (analogical forms in boldface):

	Early West Baltic		1st analogical change		2nd analogical change	
	o-stem	**ā-stem**	**o-stem**	**ā-stem**	**o-stem**	**ā-stem**
Nom.	*u̯árn-əs	*galu̯-ā́	*u̯árn-əs	*galu̯-ā́	*u̯árn-əs	*galu̯-ā́
Acc.	*u̯árn-an	*gálu̯-ān	*u̯árn-an	*gálu̯-ān	*u̯árn-an	*gálu̯-ān
Gen.	*u̯árn-ā	*galu̯-ā́s	***u̯árn-ās**	*galu̯-ā́s	*u̯árn-ās	***gálu̯-ās**
Dat.	*u̯árn-āi̯	*gálu̯-āi̯	*u̯árn-āi̯	*gálu̯-āi̯	*u̯árn-āi̯	*gálu̯-āi̯
Instr.	*u̯árn-ā	*gálu̯-ān	*u̯árn-ā	*gálu̯-ān	*u̯árn-ā	*gálu̯-ān
Loc.	*u̯arn-ái̯	*galu̯-ái̯	*u̯arn-ái̯	*galu̯-ái̯	*u̯arn-ái̯	*galu̯-ái̯

Needless to say, we cannot be certain that other analogical changes did not affect other endings. This scenario, in any case, explains two important facts of Old Prussian nominal inflection: the -s of the o-stem genitive singular ending *deiw-as*; the root accentuation of the ā-stem genitive singular *ālg-as*.

6. The final question that remains is the short vowel of *deiw-as* and *ālg-as*. As noted above (§3), this question has already been answered: OPr. gen. sg. -ăs must reflect an early shortening of *-ās in unstressed position, before the change *ā > *ū after velars and labials. There is no other option, even though it is hard to be more precise (although it is clear that different types of shortening and weakening of vowels in final position took place in Old Prussian, the details are far from being fully understood).

In the particular case of the o- and ā-stem gen. sg. *-ās > *-as, it is noteworthy that the same early shortening *-ā- > *-a- is found in two other nominal endings that were *always* unstressed: the ā-stem acc. sg. *-ān > -an, and the o- and ā-stem acc. pl. -ans (< Bl.-Sl. *-ōns, *-āns). I would like to stress that the acc. sg. *-ān > -an can hardly be analogical (the only conceivable models are the genitive singular and the accusative plural, none of which look very appealing). The short vowel of the accusative plural is traditionally explained as due to Osthoff's law. Elsewhere I have argued that Osthoff's law took place in East Baltic (cf. Villanueva Svensson 2020). There is no proof that it ever took place in West Baltic.

Not all endings, however, experienced this early shortening. The ā-stem nom. sg. *spigsn-ā*, *mens-ā*, *widdew-ū* clearly has a stressed long vowel. Spellings like *deiwūtisku* suggest that unstressed *-ā̰ had not been shortened before the change *ā > *ū after velars and labials, but the length could easily have been analogically restored after mobile paradigms. The evidence of the o- and ā-stem dative singular is more difficult to evaluate. In my view it most probably displayed variation between -u and -ai (cf. Stang 1966, 72f., 198f.).

This seems to imply preservation of the length of *-āi̯* before the change **ā > **ū* after velars and labials in an ending that was always unaccented (cf. Lith. *lángui*, *gálvai*, Sl. **vôrn-u*, **gôlvě*). This, however, can probably not be regarded as completely certain, especially in view of the case syncretism that has taken place in Old Prussian. The genitive plural *-an*, *-on*, finally, is also problematic (see R i n k e v i č i u s 2015, 109f. for discussion).

The matter, like Old Prussian *Auslautgesetze* in general terms, clearly deserves a more detailed study than can be attempted here. I doubt, however, that the short vowel of *deiw-as* and *ālg-as* can be explained in any other way than through an early regular shortening.

7. The conclusions of this article are easily stated. Root stress in the Old Prussian *ā*-stem gen. sg. *ālg-as* was taken from the homonymous *o*-stem gen. sg. *deiw-as*, where it was inherited (Lith. *lángo*, Sl. **vôrna*). This analogy must have been more or less concomitant with the reshuffling of the Balto-Slavic *o*-stem gen. sg. **-ā* as **-ās* in the prehistory of Old Prussian. The shortening **-ās > -as* of the *o-* and *ā*-stem genitive singular was most probably conditioned by the fact that this ending was always unstressed.

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