

EAST BALTIC “FATHER-IN-LAW” AND “MOTHER-IN-LAW”

Rytų baltų „uošvis“ ir „uošvė“

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ANNOTATION

The present contribution studies the Baltic kinship terminology, focusing on terms related to “parents-in-law”. Among them, one term is not transparent from the point of view of internal structure, nor etymology: Lithuanian m. *uošvis* ‘father-in-law, husband’s father’, f. *uošvė* ‘mother-in-law, husband’s mother’ and Latvian m. *uōsis*, f. *uōse* id. A new etymology operates with an East Baltic innovation, which assumes the primary determinative compound extended by the suffix **-iio-/*-iīā-*. The first component would be represented by the IE kinship term **h₂eu_h₂o-* ‘maternal grandfather’, continuing in Baltic in its derivative ‘maternal uncle’. For the second component, there would be two alternative possibilities: 1) Proto-Baltic **suešru-* ‘mother-in-law’ + *-ā*; 2) Proto-Baltic **šeīuā* ‘wife’.

KEYWORDS: Indo-European, Baltic, kinship terminology, determinative compound.

ANOTACIJA

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojami baltiški giminystės ryšių pavadinimai, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant terminams, susijusiems su „uošviais“. Vienas iš jų nėra skaidrus nei vidinės formos, nei etimologijos požiūriu: lietuvių vyriškosios giminės daiktavardis *uošvis* ‘vyro tėvas’, moteriškosios giminės daiktavardis *uošvė* ‘vyro motina’ ir latvių vyriškosios giminės daiktavardis *uōsis*, moteriškosios giminės daiktavardis *uōse* ‘t. p.’. Naujoji etimologija remiasi rytų baltų inovacija, kuri daro prielaidą, kad pirminis determinatyvinis dūrinys išplėstas priesaga **-iio-/*-iīā-*. Numatoma, kad pirmąjį komponentą reprezentuos ide. giminystės terminas **h₂eu_h₂o-* ‘motinos senelis’, vartojamas baltų kalbose kaip vedinys ‘motinos dėdė’. Antrajam komponentui paaiškinti numatomos dvi alternatyvios galimybės: 1) protobaltų **suešru-* ‘uošvė’ + *-ā*; 2) protobaltų **šeīuā* ‘žmona’.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: indoeuropiečių, baltų, giminystės terminija, determinatyvinis dūrinys.

1. The Baltic terminology devoted to “parents-in-law” is relatively rich. Let us summarise it.

1.1. Lithuanian *šešuras* m. ‘husband’s father, father-in-law; wife’s father, father-in-law’, in Old Lithuanian also ‘brother-in-law’, all from Proto-Lithuanian **sešuras* < Proto-Baltic **suešura-* < PIE **suek_ur-o-* ‘husband’s father’; cf. Vedic *śvaśura-* (**svaśura-*), Avestan *x^vasura-*, Persian *xusur*; Armenian *skesowr* (f.); Greek *ἐκυγός*; Albanian *vjehërr*; Old Latin *socerus* (**sukuro-*), Latin *socer*, *-erī*; Old High German *swehur* (**swehura-*); Church Slavonic *svekrъrъ* ‘husband’s father’. The feminine counterpart appears in Vedic *śvaśrū-*, Persian *xusrū*; Latin *socrus*, *-ūs*, Welsh *chwegr*; Gothic *swaihro*, Old High German *swigar*;

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Old Church Slavonic *svekry*, *-bve* ‘husband’s mother, mother-in-law’ < PIE **suekru-h₂* < **suekūr-h₂* (Schneider NIL 672–675; ALEW 1024; Smoczyński 2018: 520; EWAhd VIII 1564–1566).

1.2. There is no apparent feminine counterpart to Lithuanian *šėšuras* ‘father-in-law’ in Baltic, but Simas Karaliūnas (1999: 86–88) tried to demonstrate that such a lexeme really existed, identifying it in Lithuanian *švašvā* ‘daughter; sister’, deriving it from **švešva* < **svešva* < Proto-Baltic **sueśruā* = **sueśru+ā*¹ and assuming the semantic shift. The loss of *-r-* is perhaps comparable to its loss in Latvian *āpsis*, *āpšis* ‘badger’ vs Lithuanian *opšrỹs* id. < **āpš-r-iō-* (see Klingenschmitt 2008: 426).

1.3. The feminine was replaced by the neologism *anýta* ‘husband’s mother, mother-in-law’, which was derived from the IE kinship term **h₂enH-* ‘grandmother’ > Old Prussian *ane* ‘Altmutter’ [Elbing Vocabulary 172], i.e. ‘grandmother’ (Mažiulis 2013: 57; Smoczyński 2018: 28 sees here a Germanism – see further); Old High Germanic *ano* ‘grandfather’, *ana* ‘grandmother’; Latin *anus*, *-ūs* ‘old woman; witch’; ?Messapic *ana* ‘lady’?; Greek ἀννίς μητρὸς ἧ πατρὸς μήτηρ [Hesychius], i.e. ‘father’s mother’, besides Thessalian ἄνω ‘grandmother’; Armenian *hani* id.; Hittite *hanna-* ‘grandmother’, Lycian *χanna* id.; probably also Avestan *niiākā-* id. and Common Slavic **vbnokv* ‘grandson’ < **h₂n-h₂en-ko-* (Pokorny 1959: 36–37; Kloekhorst 2008: 285; de Vaan 2008: 45; ALEW 41–42).

1.4. In Latvian, these kinship terms are derived from the terms ‘father’ and ‘mother’ respectively: *tēvuocis* ‘father-in-law; uncle’ vs *tēvs* ‘father’ (ME IV 177–178) and *mātica* ‘mother-in-law’ vs *māte* ‘mother’ (ME II 587–589).

1.5. There are alternative designations in Latvian, which are periphrastic: *vira / sievas tēvs / māte* ‘husband’s / wife’s father/mother’ (Buck 1949: 124, §§ 2.61+62).

1.6. Old Prussian *tisties* ‘sweir’ (= Schwiegervater), i.e. ‘father-in-law’ [Elbing Vocabulary 184], reflecting the protoform **tistīs*, was borrowed from Slavic – cf. Old Church Slavonic *tvstv* ‘father-in-law’ (Mažiulis 2013: 915; Komárková, ESJS XVII 1011–1012).

1.7. Besides these terms, which are transparent from the point of view of internal structure or etymology, there is still one designation of “parents-in-law” limited to East Baltic, which seems to be isolated not only within Baltic, but also within the Indo-European kinship terminology at all. Concretely, Lithuanian m. *úošvis*, *uošvỹs*, *-io* ‘father-in-law, husband’s father’, pl. *uošviaĩ* ‘parents-in-law’, f. *úošvė* ‘mother-in-law, husband’s mother’, corresponding to Latvian m. *uōsis*, pl. *uōši* and f. *uōse*, pl. *uōses* f. respectively, where the plurals mean ‘parents of son-in-law’ and ‘parents of daughter-in-law’. Cf. also Nehrung Curonian (Kurseniki) *uošvi*, *uošve* ‘parents-in-law’ (ME IV 421–422; ALEW 1154; Smoczyński 2018: 585–586).

2. Existing etymologies of Lithuanian *úošvis* / *úošvė* and Latvian *uōsis* / *uōse*

2.1. Josef Zubatý (1891: 249–250) tried to connect the Baltic forms with Sanskrit *āsiná-*, translated by Monier Williams (MW 157) as ‘aged (having reached old age)’, while Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton (2013: 126) translated it as ‘advanced (in years)’². It is perhaps a derivative of the verb *ás-* ‘to eat, consume’ (MW 112, 157); cf. Germanic **aldā-* ‘old’, *aldī-* ‘age’, vs Latin *altus* ‘high’, *ad-ultus* ‘full-grown, adult’, if these

¹ The *ā*-stem also appears in South Slavic: Bulgarian *svekárva*, Macedonian *svekrva*, Serbo-Croatian *svěkrva*, Slovenian *svěkrva*; plus Old Czech also *svekrva* ‘mother of husband’ (Vykypěl, ESJS XV 905).

² RV 1.27.13. *námo mahádb^hyo námo arb^hakéb^hyo námo yúvab^hyo náma āśinéb^hyaḥ*

„Reverence to the great ones and reverence to the small; reverence to the young and reverence to those advanced (in years).“

forms are derived from the verb of the type Latin *alō, -ere* ‘to nourish’, besides e.g. Greek ἄναλτος ‘insatiable’ etc. (de Vaan 2008: 35; Kroonen 2013: 20).

2.2. Charles Bally (1903: 325), followed by Frederik Muller (1926: 524), Giacomo Devoto (1934/1935: 58–64) and others, speculated about a connection of Lithuanian *úošvis* and Latvian *uōsis* with Latin *uxor* ‘wife’ [Naevius+], reconstructing the primary root **ōyk̑-*. Cf. also Alois Walde and Johann Hofmann (1954: 850).

2.3. Jarl Charpentier (1909: 242, fn. 3) tried to connect Lithuanian *úošvis* with Armenian *owstr* ‘son’. But already Oswald Szemerényi (1977: 19) demonstrated that Armenian *owstr* ‘son’ originated from **unstr* and, further, from **ūn(u)-str*, with the extension added according to the semantic counterpart *dowstr* ‘daughter’.

2.4. André Vaillant (1958: 116) judged that the Proto-Baltic feminine **ōšvī* < **ōk̑ūī* was the primary form, deriving it from the meaning ‘fast, swift’, attested e.g. in Vedic *āsú-*, Greek ὀκύς, Latin (comp.) *ōcior*. His effort to explain the semantic motivation on the basis of the semantic chain ‘fast’ → ‘diligent, industrious’ → ‘mother-in-law’ remains rather unconvincing.

2.5. Bojan Čop (1974: 97–98) compared the East Baltic kinship term with Fenno-Ugric **ewkkz* ‘old woman; grandmother’ > Old Finnish *euhto*, Finnish *eukko* ‘alte Frau, Greisin, Frau; Mutter, Großmutter (väterlicherseits, mütterlicherseits); Mansi So. *ēk^wa*, KU *ēk^wə*, P *jēk*, Tj *jūkā* ‘Frau’, Old Hungarian *ik(e), ük* ‘Großmutter’, *ükanya* ‘Urgroßmutter’, *ükapa* ‘Urgroßvater’ (UEW I 76). B. Čop saw in this comparison a common heritage from the Indo-Uralic protolanguage.

2.6. O. Szemerényi (1977: 66) derived the East Baltic kinship term from Proto-Baltic **ōšvijās* < **ō-sweijos*, interpreting it as ‘der zu den eigenen Sippenangehörigen hinzukommende’, formed by the particle **ō* ‘near to’, while the second member should correspond to Old High German *swīo* ‘brother-in-law’. In the Baltic, there is the most exact counterpart in Old Prussian *swais* ‘suus’, while the Lithuanian cognate is rather different: *savęs, sevęs* gen. ‘sui’ (Pokorny 1959: 882). Finally, abstracting from other circumstances, this solution does not explain Lithuanian *-š-*.

2.7. Gerd Klingenschmitt (2008: 410) introduced probably the strangest solution, reconstructing the Pre-Baltic starting-point **oh₁-p̑ū-ijō-* with the primary semantics ‘der zu der Kleinvieh (Ziegen und Schafe) (als Mitgift oder als Kaufpreis) herbeibringenden (Braut) Gehörige (Vater)’.

3. New etymology

None of these etymological attempts is convincing enough to be accepted without question. That is why it is legitimate to seek a new etymology. The following solution is based purely on the Baltic material. Proceeding from the premise that the analysed kinship terms represent a determinative compound with the accented component in the first place, while the compound is extended by the suffix **-ijō-/*-ijā-* (Larsson 2002: 204–227), it is necessary to determine both the components.

3.1. The first member is derivable from Proto-Baltic **aū-* with regard to the fact that this diphthong has two reflexes in East Baltic. Besides the standard continuant *au*, it may be changed into *uo*, cf. Lithuanian *úogis & uōgis* ‘shoot of a plant, sprout, growth’, derived from the verb *áugti* ‘to grow’ (Smoczyński 2018: 1564). If it were the case, the best candidate for the etymological identification of Proto-Baltic **aū-* is one of the best documented Indo-European representatives of the kinship terminology, whose semantic dispersion should be demonstrated.

Baltic: Lithuanian *avýnas* ‘uncle, mother’s brother’ (ibid.: 79: derived from unattested **aūas* or **aūis*, extended by the suffix **-īna-*), Old Prussian *awis* ‘O^eme’ [Elbing Vocabulary 177], i.e. ‘mother’s brother’ (**aūas* or **aūias*).

Pre-Slavic **aujjo-* > Common Slavic **ujb* ‘mother’s brother’ > Old Church Slavonic *ui*, gen. *uja* ‘uncle’, Bulgarian (*v*)*újčo*, Macedonian *vujko*, *vujčo*, Serbo-Croatian *ùjac*, Slovenian *ùjec*, dial. *ùj*; Slovak *ujec*, coll. *ujo*, Old Czech *ujec*, Upper & Lower Sorbian *wuj*, Polabian *vaujã* / *vojjã*, Kašubian *uj*, Old Polish (*w*)*uj*, Polish *wuj*; Old Russian (*v*)*ui*, Belorussian dial., Ukrainian dial. *vuj* (Vykyppěl, ESJS XVII 1019).

Proto-Germanic **awan-* ‘grandfather’ > Old Norse *afi* id., *ái* ‘great grandfather’, and **awōn-* > Gothic *awo* ‘grandmother’, plus West Germanic **awa-χaima-* > Old English *ēam* ‘uncle (mother’s brother)’, Middle English *ēm* / *eim* / *yem* ‘uncle, nephew’, Old Frisian *ēm* ‘brother of mother, uncle’; Middle Low German *ōm* / *oem* / *ohm* / *ōme* / *ōhē(i)m*, *ōhem* ‘Oheim, Onkel, Mutterbruder, Schwestersohn, Vetter, Cousin’, Middle Dutch *oom* / *ome* / *oome* / *ohem* ‘Mutterbruder, Vaterbruder, Verwandter (Großvater, Schwager)’; Old High German *ōheim* ‘mother’s brother, avunculus’, Middle High German *oeheim* ‘Mutterbruder, Oheim, Schwestersohn, Neffe, Verwandter’, German *Oheim* ‘uncle’ (Schuhmann, EWAhd VI 1147–1150).

Celtic **auā-* > Gaulish *αοα* ‘granddaughter’ (stele of Cavaillon; see Delamarre 2018: 60: feminine to non-attested **auos*); Goidelic **aujjo-* > Ogam Irish gen.sg. *avi*, Old Irish. *áue*, *úa*, *ó* ‘grandson, descendant’, besides the *vrd^hi*-formation **aujjo-* in Middle Welsh (12th cent.+) *w̄yr* ‘grandson, grandchild’ (GPC); Brittonic **auon-tir/tro-* ‘maternal uncle’ > Middle Welsh (14th cent.+) *ewythy*r, Welsh *ewythr*, Old Cornish *euitor*, Cornish *ewnter*, (Middle) Breton *eontr*; Celtic **altr-auon-* > Middle Irish *altra* ‘foster-father’, Old Cornish *altrou* ‘stepfather’, Middle Breton *autrou* ‘lord’ etc.; Goidelic **auon-er-* > Middle Irish *amnair* ‘mother’s brother, maternal uncle, avunculus’ (Schuhmann, EWAhd VI 1149).

Italic **auo-* > Latin *avus* ‘grandfather’, with derivatives as *avia* ‘grandmother’, *avunculus* ‘maternal uncle’ (demin. **auon-kele-*) [all Plautus+], *avitus* ‘belonging to a grandfather, ancestral’ [Cicero+] (Szemerényi 1977: 53; de Vaan 2008: 66).

Armenian *haw* ‘grandfather, ancestor’, rare ‘uncle’ (Olsen 1999 185: **h₂eu_ho-*; Martirosyan 2009: 399–400).

Anatolian: Hittite *huhḫa-* ‘grandfather’ < **h₂uh₂ó-*; Cuneiform Luwian *hūḫa-* id., Hieroglyphic Luwian *huha-* id., Lycian *χyga-* id. < **h₂éy_ho-* (Kloekhorst 2008: 352–353). Tocharian B gen.sg. *āwi*, implying nom.sg. *āwe** ‘grandfather’ (Adams 2013: 61: **h₂eu_ho-*).

The primary meaning of the Indo-European kinship term **h₂eu_ho-* was probably ‘maternal grandfather’. Its derivative **h₂eu_hjo-* could probably designate both ‘maternal uncle’ and ‘grandchild’.

3.2. For the second member of the hypothetical compound, there are two candidates.

3.2.1. One possibility is represented by the Lithuanian word *švašvā* ‘daughter; sister’, if it is derivable from **švešva* < **svešva* < Proto-Baltic **suešruā* and the primary meaning was the feminine to Lithuanian *šēšuras* ‘father-in-law’ (cf. § 1.2., following Karaliūnas 1999: 86–88). For the hypothetical determinative compound, the following maximal reconstruction may be proposed: **áũ-suešrujĩā* ‘mother-in-law belonging to the house of the maternal grandfather’. It is expectable that this complex compound was simplified to **áũ-suešujĩā*, via regressive assimilation to **áušuešujĩā* and via haplology to **áušujĩā*, leading to the real forms: Lithuanian *úošvė*, Latvian *uōse* ‘mother-in-law, husband’s mother’. The masculine counterpart would be formed analogically.

3.2.2. The alternative candidate for the second component could be a predecessor of Latvian *siēva* ‘wife’ (ME III 861; Karulis 1992: 179), reflecting Baltic protoform **šejuā* with regard to external cognates: Germanic **χīwa-* > Gothic *heiwa-frauja* ‘master of the house’, Old Norse pl. *hý-býli* ‘homestead’, Old English adj. *hīw-cund* ‘domestic’, Middle High German adj. *hīe* ‘household member’; **χīwan-* > Old High German *hī(w)o* ‘husband’, besides *hī(w)a* ‘wife, uxor’, Old Saxon *hīwa* id.; **χīwōnō* > Old Norse pl. *hjún*, *hjón* ‘married couple, household’, Old English pl. *hīwan* id., Old Saxon *hī(w)un* ‘married couple’, Old

High German *hīūn*, *hī(w)ôn* id. etc. (Pokorny 1959: 540; EWAhd IV 1077–1082; Kroonen 2013: 227).

Italic **keiui-* > Old Latin *ceivis* [XII Tables], Latin *cīvis* ‘citizen’ [Plautus+], while Oscan *ceus* id. has been taken as the Latin loan (de Vaan 2008: 116).

Indo-Aryan: Vedic adj. *śéva-* ‘dear, precious’ and *śéva-* ‘dear (as a friend)’, maybe connected with *śívá-* ‘auspicious, propitious, gracious, favourable, benign, kind, benevolent, friendly, dear’ (EWAI II 654–655, 640).

Taking into account Baltic **šeiuā* as the second member of the hypothetical determinative Baltic compound **áū-šeiuīā* ‘wife belonging to the house of the maternal grandfather’, it is necessary to explain the process of its shortening. The first step would be monophthongisation of the diphthong **ei* > Lithuanian and Latvian *ie* → *i*. It has an analogy in the Lithuanian teens of the type *vienúolika* ‘11’, *dvýlika* ‘12’, *trylika* ‘13’, *keturiólíka* ‘14’, *penkiólíka* ‘15’. Here, the second component represents nom.-acc.pl. *lieká*, formed from nom.sg. in Lithuanian *liēkas* ‘odd, not forming a pair; remaining, unnecessary, useless’, Latvian *lieks* ‘untrue, false; additional, spare (about a wheel, a horse); without pair, odd; exceeding’ (Stang 1966: 188, 280; Smoczyński 2018: 696), all from the verb attested in Lithuanian *liekù*, *likti* ‘to stay; abandon’, Latvian *lieku*, *likt* ‘to let’ (see Kümmel, LIV 2001 [1998]: 406–408: **leik^u-*). In Latvian, this tendency is documented in some dialects: *vin* vs *viēn* ‘only’ and *viēnpacmit* vs *viēnpadsmīt* ‘11’ or *lils* vs *liēls* ‘big’ (Endzelin 1922: 98; ME II 470). The second step would consist of syncopation of unstressed *i*, similarly to the dialectal variants *vienúol’ka*, *dvýl’ka* or *dvýlka*, *tryl’ka* or *trylka* (Smoczyński 2018: 704). The same process may be identified in the development of the literary Lithuanian language: *kélnės* f. pl. ‘trousers, pants’, syncopated form of Old Lithuanian *kēlinės*, representing the derivative with the suffix *-in-* from *kēlis* ‘knee’ (ibid.: 1566–1567). Similarly, Old Lithuanian *vēlinas* ‘devil’ vs later *vėlnas*, today *vėlnias* (ibid.: 1629).

4. Conclusion

The result of this study is a new etymology of the isolated East Baltic kinship term represented by Lithuanian m. *úošvis* ‘father-in-law, husband’s father’, f. *úošvė* ‘mother-in-law, husband’s mother’ and Latvian m. *uōsis*, f. *uōse* id. The new solution presupposes the East Baltic innovation, which should be the determinative compound consisting of two components, plus the appurtenance suffix **-iio-/*-iīā*: (i) **áū-suešruiīā* ‘mother-in-law belonging to the house of the maternal grandfather’ or (ii) **áū-šeiuīā* ‘wife belonging to the house of the maternal grandfather’.

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