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THE ORIGIN OF OLD PRUSSIAN *DŪRAI*

Senosios prūsų kalbos žodžio *dūrai* kilmė

Schlage nicht die Augen nieder!
(Simon Dach)

ANNOTATION

The Old Prussian adjective *dūrai* ‘shy’ is traditionally connected with the Slavic family of **durb* (Russian дурь ‘stupidity’) and **durьnъ* (Russian дурной, Polish *durny* ‘silly, stupid’). But the formal and semantic relationships between these two lexical families still remain obscure. The aim of this paper is to elucidate the origin of Old Prussian *dūrai* and particularly to motivate its derivation from a root ‘to sting, to prick’ reflected by Lithuanian *dūrti*. It can be suggested that this derivation is based on a phraseological expression *nudūrti akis į žemę* ‘to look down to the ground’ used as a sign of psychological difficulty.

KEYWORDS: Old Prussian, Lithuanian, Slavic, Indo-European, etymology, phraseology.

ANOTACIJA

Senosios prūsų kalbos būdvardis *dūrai* ‘drovus’ tradiciškai siejamas su slavų žodžių **durb* (rus. дурь ‘kvailumas’) ir **durьnъ* (rus. дурной, lenk. *durny* ‘kvailas’) šeima. Tačiau formalūs ir semantiniai santykiai tarp šių dviejų leksinių šeimų vis dar lieka neišskūs. Šio straipsnio tikslas yra išsiaiškinti senosios prūsų kalbos žodžio *dūrai* kilmę ir ypač motyvuoti jo derivaciją iš šaknies, kurią atspindi liet. *dūrti* ‘įgelti, (į)durti’. Galima teigti, kad šis vedinys yra pagrįstas frazeologine išraiška *nudūrti akis į žemę* ‘žiūrėti žemyn’, vartojama psichologiniam sunkumui žymėti.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Senoji prūsų kalba, lietuvių kalba, slavų kalbos, indoeuropiečių prokalbė, etimologija, frazeologija.

1. OLD PRUSSIAN *DŪRAI*

In the Old Prussian *Enchiridion* (1561), we find an isolated instance of an adjective *dūrai* corresponding to German *schew* ‘shy’ (III 93₁₉, Modern German *scheu*):

(1) *Enchiridion* III 93₁₉

(German) *Jr Vater reitzet ewre Kinder nicht zu zorn / das sie nicht **schew** werden, Sondern ziehet sie auff in der zucht vnd vermanunge zu dem HERRN.*

(Old Prussian) *Jous Tawai ni tenfeiti ioūfans malnikans prei nertien / kai ftai ni **dūrai** poštānai / Schlait poauginneiti ftans / en Kanxtifku preiſtan Rikijan.*

‘And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, lest they become discouraged, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.’

The text is obviously based on *Ephesians* 6, 4, but the subordinate clause is a secondary addition, adopted from the parallel passage of *Colossians* 3, 21¹. The Old Prussian adjective *dūrai* renders German *scheu* ‘shy, fearful’. A few lines earlier (III 93₁₆), there is another Old Prussian adjective *būrai* translating German *ſchüchter* ‘shy, timid’ in reference to women:

(2) *Enchiridion* III 93₁₆

(German) *So jr wolthut / vnd nicht ſo **ſchüchter** ſeyt.*

(Old Prussian) *ikai ious labban ſeggēti / bhe ni tiſt **būrai** aſti.*

‘if you do well and are not frightened.’

It is commonly recognized that the Old Prussian *būrai* is a scribal error for **dūrai*. The text is directly based on *1Peter* 3, 6².

The Old Prussian form *dūrai* can be understood either as a nominative plural (masculine in III 93₁₉, mistakenly in III 93₁₆) or alternatively as an adverb in *-ai*, which is sometimes used to render uninflected predicative adjectives of the German original. It must be based on an adjective **dūras*. A Lithuanian equivalent *dūras* was mentioned by Jonas Jablonskis (1860–1930) with the meaning *tylus, nekalbus* ‘silent, taciturn’ (LKŽ II 897). The LKŽ also mentions an abstract noun *dūras* glossed *kvailumas* ‘stupidity’ (LKŽ II 897, from the dialects of Nočia and Valkininkai) and a few verbs like *dūrėti* glossed *laukti*,

¹ German *auff das sie nicht schew werden* (Luther 1545), Latin *ut non pusillo animo fiant* (Vulgata).

² German *so jr wolthut vnd nicht so schüchter seid* (Luther 1545), Latin *beneficientes et non timentes ullam perturbationem* (Vulgata).

tūnoti tylint, nekalbant ‘to wait, to remain silent, without a word’ (LKŽ II 899, from Jonas Jablonskis), *dūrinti* glossed *kvailinti, mulkinti* ‘to make stupid’ (LKŽ II 901, from the dialects of Nemunaitis and Leipalingis) and especially *dūroti* glossed *būti paniurusiam, akis į žemę įbedus, niūrėti, niūroti* ‘to be discouraged, to look down to the ground, to get depressed’ (LKŽ II 905, from Antanas Juška 1897–1922). Other similar verbs are mentioned by Fraenkel (LEW I 113) from different lexicographical or dialectological sources.

2. THE SLAVIC LOANWORD

Since the 19th century, the adjective **dūras*, common to Old Prussian and Lithuanian, but absent from Latvian, was compared with Slavic **durь* (Russian дурь ‘stupidity’) and its derivative, the adjective **durьnъ* (Russian дурной, Polish *durny* ‘silly, stupid’). To this are traditionally added various forms from other Indo-European languages such as Greek θοῦρος ‘rushing, impetuous, furious’³. However, two problems have often been left aside: (1°) the distinction between genuine Baltic words and Slavic loanwords; (2°) the reconstruction of the verbal basis and the semantics of its derivatives.

To begin with, it is well known that the Slavic adjective **durьnъ* ‘silly, stupid, furious’, or one of its historical descendants, was borrowed in Baltic. The adjective *duřnas* ‘silly, stupid’ is already found in Old Lithuanian and unanimously recognized to be a loanword from Belarussian дурны́ or from Polish *durny*⁴. A variant is the Old Lithuanian noun *duřnius* ‘silly, stupid man’, adapted from Belarussian дўрань or Polish *dureń*. Both forms are mentioned by Konstantynas Sirvydas in the first Lithuanian dictionary (DTL³ ca 1643): *durnas* ‘silly, stupid’ (DTL³ 69 = Polish *głupi*, Latin *stultus*, etc.) and *durnius* ‘silly, stupid man’ (DTL³ 69 = Polish *głupiec*, Latin *stipes*, etc.). There is also a verb *durnavóti* ‘to be furious, to rage’ attested since Jonas Bretkūnas (16th century) and borrowed from Belarussian дурнава́ць. Already in the 16th century, Martynas Mažvydas (1570: 468₁₈) had a derivative *durnifte* ‘silliness, stupidity’ (= German *Torheit*). In more recent times, Friedrich Kurschat (1883: 99) has the adjective *duřnas* ‘furious, mad’ (= German *rasend, toll*), the abstract noun *durnỹstė* ‘fury, madness’ (= German *Tollheit, Verrücktheit*) and the verb *durnũju* ‘to rage’ (= German *rasen, toben*).

³ Cf. Berneker (1896: 288); Trautmann (1910: 325). See also Urbutis (2000).

⁴ Cf. Brückner (1877: 82); Skardžius (1931: 125). See also LEW I 113; SEJL 136.

Other forms of the same family are attested in Slavic, especially in Russian and Polish, which chiefly concern us here. In Polish, there are not only the adjective *durny* 'silly, stupid', the noun *dureń* 'silly, stupid man' and the verb *durnieć* 'to be silly, to act stupidly', but also, without the nasal suffix, the verb *durzyć* 'to mislead, to deceive', *durzyć się* 'to fall in love'. In Russian, we find дурной 'silly, stupid' and verbs like дурнѣть, дурнѣть 'to act stupidly', but also, without nasal, the noun дуряк 'silly, stupid man'.

The existence of a layer of obvious loanwords does not imply that every Baltic form should be considered to be borrowed from Slavic. On the contrary, one may assume that at least some forms might be inherited in Baltic. This is suggested by the fact that some of these forms do not refer to 'silliness, stupidity' in their core meaning, but convey a notion of 'discouragement, silence, sadness', which does not necessarily derive from this meaning. In Latvian, the adjective *duņns* is attested, as far as I know, since the 17th century, but its meaning may vary considerably. In the *Manuale Lettico-Germanicum* (ca 1690), we find the adjective *Durnis* 'silly, stupid' (MLG 114 = German *Thoricht, unweise*) and the abstract noun *Durniba* 'silliness, stupidity' (MLG 114 = German *Unweisheit, Aberwitz, Unsinnigkeit*, cf. also 501), with a meaning that clearly reveals the Slavic provenance. The *Lettisches Lexicon* (1758: 97) by Gotthard Stender gives in square brackets the adjective *durns* 'silly, stupid' (= German *doll, dwatsch Lit.*) with a similar meaning, but presented as derived from a Lithuanian source⁵. In the *Lettisches Wörterbuch* by Carl Christian Ulmann (1872), beside the recent Russian loanword *duraks* 'silly, stupid' (1872: 55 = German *ein Narr*), the adjective *durns* is rendered in German both as *dwatsch* 'silly, stupid' and as *benommen* 'confused, embarrassed'. The examples provided by Ulmann illustrate both meanings: *gālwa tāhda durna* 'my head is so stupid', *durns širgs* 'a rabid horse' (= German *ein Pferd, das den Koller hat*), *durna aita* 'a drowsy man' (= German *ein Schlafskopf*). In addition, Ulmann (1872: 55) presents a verb *durneht* 'to walk asleep, to stay seated, to lounge, to vegetate' (= German *schläfrig einhergehen, so sitzen, faulenzten, vegetieren*) and an abstract noun *durnums* 'torpor, numbness, stupidity, vertigo of sheeps' (= German *Benommenheit, Dwatschheit, Drehkrankheit der Schafe*). The ME (1923: I 519) has *duņns* 'sad, embarrassed, silly, isolated' (= German *traurig, benommen, dwatsch, wüst*) and the verb *durnēt* 'to go slowly, to be lazy, quiet, to keep silent, to be unfriendly, to be sick' (= German *trödeln, faulenzten, ruhig sein, schweigen, unfreundlich sein, sich krank zeigen*).

If one summarizes, the Baltic forms are associated with two different meanings, 'silly, stupid' on the one hand, 'discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad' on the

⁵ Cf. also Stender (1789: 55).

other hand. It is likely that the former meaning derives from a Slavic source: this is particularly evident for Baltic **durnas* ‘silly, stupid’, directly borrowed from Belarussian дурны́ or Polish *durny*. Once established in the Baltic languages, the Slavic loanword could develop its own family, without direct Slavic model, e.g. Lith. *durnỹstė*, Latv. *durnība* ‘silliness, stupidity’ with Baltic suffixes. The other meanings, however, are more difficult to account for, since they do not reflect semantic features already present in Slavic. Either do they represent an internal development that took place within the Baltic languages on the basis of the Slavic loanword or they suppose another source. In the former case, one would have to assume an evolution ‘silly, stupid’ > ‘discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad’, which does not sound impossible in itself, but would remain to be substantiated from a semantic point of view. It is probably preferable to think that there was in the Baltic languages a genuine lexical family **dur-/*dūr-* ‘discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad’, independent of the Slavic loanword, and this brings us back to the comparison with Old Prussian *dūrai* ‘shy’.

3. THE VERBAL BASIS

On the basis of the foregoing, one may assume in Baltic the blending of two lexical layers, a Baltic family ‘discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad’ and a Slavic loanword ‘silly, stupid’. The contamination between these two layers could take place in both directions. The Baltic family could adopt the meaning of the Slavic loanword (hence Lithuanian *dūras* ‘stupidity’, *dūrinti* ‘to make stupid’, formally deriving from the Baltic family, but semantically connected to the meaning ‘silly, stupid’) and, on the other hand, the Slavic loanword in Baltic could locally adopt the genuine meaning of the Baltic family (hence Latvian *duņš* not only ‘silly, stupid’, but also ‘sad, embarrassed, isolated’). If this analysis is correct, the Old Prussian adjective **dūras* ‘shy’, attested through the form *dūrai* in the *Enchiridion* (1561), is not isolated, but finds its place within a coherent lexical family, whose meaning was only locally disturbed by the pressure of the Slavic loanword. The question that remains open is the origin of this Baltic family.

Judging from the comparison between Old Prussian *dūrai* and Lithuanian *dūras*, the genuine Baltic form seems to be an adjective **dūras*. There is no reason to think that the Baltic languages have inherited an adjective corresponding to the Slavic form **durъnъ*. Wherever we find it in Baltic, it can be suspected to be a Slavic loanword, even if it was locally hybridized with the Baltic family. It follows that the only form that can be ascribed to Common Baltic is **dūras*. All other forms are either derived from this basic form or borrowed from Slavic.

As far as we can judge, the meaning of **dūras* was ‘discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad’, describing a state of mind that combines psychological difficulty and social withdrawal. The meaning of Old Prussian *dūrai* ‘shy’ fits well with this semantic reconstruction.

The origin of the Baltic adjective **dūras* is unclear, but two assumptions have been routinely repeated since the 19th century. First, it is traditionally assumed that Baltic **dūras* belongs to the same family as Slavic **durǫnъ*. This assumption requires a detailed discussion, which has not been conducted so far. The second assumption is that all forms derive from a verb **dūr-ti-* ‘to sting, to prick, to stick, to stab’ reflected by Lithuanian *dūrti*, Latvian *duīt* ‘to sting’ and indirectly by Russian дыра ‘hole’⁶. These two assumptions are repeated by Toporov (PJ I 391–392) and Mažiulis (PKEŽ¹ 1988: I 239–240; ²2013: 149), but it must be emphasized that they entail two complementary requirements: (a) we have to bridge the semantic divergence between Baltic **dūras* and Slavic **durǫnъ*; (b) we have to explain how both forms can go back to a verb meaning ‘to sting, to prick’ both formally and semantically.

At this stage, the psychological meaning of this root seems to follow a clear-cut distribution: ‘silly, stupid’ in Slavic vs. ‘discouraged, embarrassed, silent, shy’ in Baltic. But there is a Slavic form that could present a meaning very close to the Baltic family. At the end of the 19th century, the Slovenian dictionary published by Maks Pleteršnik (*Slovensko-Nemški Slovar* 1894: 195) mentions an adjective *dūr* ‘shy, wild’ (= German *fcheu, wild, menschenscheu*)⁷, whose meaning is identical to that of the Old Prussian adjective *dūrai*. More remote, but certainly related, is the Slovenian verb *duríti* ‘to make hateful, to fill with disgust; to despise’ (= German *verhafst, ekelhaft machen, verabfcheuen, verachten*), which is also found in Serbo-Croatian *dūriti se* ‘to be angry, to fill with disgust’. It has also been noted that some Russian dialects have preserved the same word дѹр ‘shy, fearful’⁸. The Slavic root **dur-* means ‘shy’, hence ‘to be disgusted, to despise’ (probably calqued from German *scheu* → *verabscheuen*). It is strongly reminiscent of the meaning observed in Baltic. However, the forms themselves cannot be equated directly, since Slavic **dur-* supposes PIE **d^(h)our-* whereas Baltic **dūr-* can only go back to PIE **d^(h)uHr-*, **d^(h)urH-*, or **d^(h)rH-*.

⁶ Cf. EDSIL 132. But EDSIL 126 suggests that Slavic **durǫ* and Old Prussian *dūrai* might be analyzed as **d^(h)ou-ro-* from a root **d^(h)eu-* ‘to run’ (cf. Sanskrit *dhāvati*, Greek θέω ‘to run’), which is semantically unconvincing.

⁷ Cf. EDSIL 132. According to Pleteršnik (and Cigale 1860: 1355), the source of the Slovenian adjective seems to have been the writings of the Slovenian bishop Matevž Raviknar (1776–1845).

⁸ See Urbutis (2000: 229).

We are thus facing a greater challenge than expected. It seems to be the case that Slavic possessed two main representatives of a stem **dur-*, an adjective **durь* ‘shy’ (Slovenian *dúr*, Russian dial. дѹр) and a noun **durь* ‘silliness, stupidity’ (Russian дѹръ), the latter being the source of the adjective **durьnъ* ‘silly, stupid’ (Russian дурной, Polish *durny*). The semantic complexity of the stem **dur-* does not constitute a demarcation line between Baltic and Slavic, it is already internal in Slavic. In addition, we must note that the formal equation is not perfect, since the Slavic forms suppose **d^(h)our-*, whereas the Baltic forms are based on a zero grade, whatever its precise reconstruction might be.

The verbal basis of these forms has traditionally been identified as the verb **dūr-ti-* ‘to sting, to prick’, which is preserved only in Baltic (Lithuanian *dūr̃ti*, Latvian *duīt* ‘to sting’), but the semantic link between this notion and the two main meanings of its putative derivatives, ‘shy’ and ‘silly, stupid’, is not altogether clear. Outside of Baltic, the primary meaning ‘to sting, to prick’ survives in Russian дыра́ ‘hole’, but there is another word for ‘hole’ in Slavic with a slightly different form (Belarussian дзяра́, Ukrainian ді́ра, Czech *džura*, Polish *dziura* ‘hole’). Taken at face value, it seems that Slavic had two different stems **dyr-* in Russian дыра́ (< PIE **d^(h)ūr-*), **d’ur-* in Polish *dziura*, etc. (< PIE **d^(h)eur-*); it is difficult to go beyond this basic statement and to determine the original distribution between these two ablaut grades. The formal problem is compounded by the widespread idea that most of the forms cited above with the meaning ‘to sting, to prick’ are cognate with the well-known PIE root **der-* ‘to tear, to flay’ (Greek δέρω ‘to flay’, Gothic *dis-tairan* ‘to tear apart’), which survives in Old Church Slavic дѣрати, Russian драть and Lithuanian *dīrti* (pres. *derù*) or *dīrti* (pres. *diriù*), Latvian *dīrāt*⁹. This view is probably ill-founded, but, as it plays a crucial role in the etymology of Lith. *dūr̃ti*, it has to be seriously assessed.

Traditionally, Lithuanian *dīrti* (pres. *derù*), *dīrti* (pres. *diriù*), and Old Church Slavic держ, дѣрати ‘to tear’ are derived from PIE **der-*, and the verb Lithuanian *dūr̃ti*, Latvian *duīt* ‘to sting’ is traced back to an alternative zero grade of the same root¹⁰. This analysis is problematic. The acute tone of the Baltic forms (Lithuanian *dūr̃ti*, Latvian *duīt*) points to a *seṭ* root, which is at odds with the derivation from PIE **der-*. At PIE level, the root **der-* is clearly *aniṭ* (cf. Greek νεόδατος ‘newly stripped off’, Sanskrit *dṛtá-* < PIE **dṛ-to-*); the *seṭ* variant **derH-* sometimes mentioned in the literature (cf. SEJL 115) is certainly an

⁹ See e.g. BSW 52; SEJL 136. See also Urbutis (2000: 229).

¹⁰ See e.g. Jēgers (1969); Smoczyński (2001: 148); Karulis (2001: 243). An agnostic position is presented in EDBIL 147. It is not necessary to reopen the debate about the distribution of *ir* and *ur* as diverging reflexes of PIE zero grades in Balto-Slavic.

illusion. To begin with, the acute tone of the Lithuanian infinitive *dĩrti* (pres. *dirĩu*) is secondary in comparison with the circumflex tone of *dĩrti* (pres. *derũ*) and cannot be used *prima facie* as piece of evidence of a PIE *seṭ* root. Similarly, the nasal infix form in Sanskrit *dhṛnáti* ‘he tears’, Young Avestan *dərənənti* ‘they tear’ does not necessarily suppose PIE **dṛ-né/n-H-*, but can reflect the secondary expansion of the *nā*-formation. The evidence for PIE **derH-* is thus based on shaky ground and turns out to be completely unreliable.

On the other hand, the *seṭ* character of Lithuanian *dĩrti*, Latvian *duĩt* ‘to sting’ can hardly be explained as secondary: it is firmly established in all forms of the lexical family and is supported by various laryngeal-induced phenomena such as the acute tone of the vowel (Lithuanian *dũr-*, Latvian *duĩ-* + consonant) or its compensatory lengthening (Lithuanian *dũr-* or with metatony *dũĩ-*, Latvian *dũr-* + vowel). The constant *seṭ* character of the family rules out the possibility that it derives from PIE **der-* ‘to tear, to flay’. A more serious option, proposed by the ALEW (I 249–250), is to derive Lithuanian *dĩrti*, Latvian *duĩt* ‘to sting’ from a different PIE root **dʰuṛh₁-* ‘to damage, to hurt’ (cf. Hittite *duuarnizi* ‘he breaks’, Sanskrit *dhũrvati* ‘he damages’)¹¹. This analysis has the advantage of solving the problem of the *seṭ* character of the root. Lithuanian *dĩrti*, Latvian *duĩt* could routinely be traced back to the zero grade **dʰurh₁-*. In addition, this analysis would make it possible to save the ancient comparison between Latvian *dũre* ‘fist’ and Celtic **durno-* ‘fist, hand’ (Old Irish *dorn*, Middle Welsh *dwrn*, Breton *dourn* ‘fist’), which shows the antiquity of the vowel *u*; the semantic evolution (‘to sting’ → ‘fist’) is trivial and paralleled by the case of Latin *pungō* ‘to sting’ → *pugnus* ‘fist’. A variant **dʰeuṛh₁-*, probably a secondary full grade to **dʰurh₁-*, would nicely explain some of the Slavic forms (cf. Belarussian *дзюра́*, Ukrainian *дю́ра*, Czech *džura*, Polish *dziura* ‘hole’), and the secondary ablaut grade **dʰouṛh₁-* could be directly reflected by Slavic **durb* ‘silliness, stupidity’. The basic form would be the zero grade **dʰurh₁-*, still preserved in the Baltic verb (Lithuanian *dĩrti*) and extended to its derivative (Lithuanian *dũras*, Old Prussian *dũrai*).

From a formal point of view, the relationship between a verb **dũr-ti-* and an adjective **dũr-as* in Baltic is certainly secondary, reproducing the ablaut grade of the verb in the adjective without any change, whereas that between **dũr-ti-* and **douros* in Slavic follows an ablaut pattern that appears to be more widespread, cf. the model of Balto-Slavic **roudos* ‘red’ (Lithuanian *raũdas*, Russian *рудѡй* <

¹¹ Cf. IEW 277; LIV ¹140; EDHIL 905–908. Sanskrit *dhũrvati* ‘he damages’ belongs to a *seṭ* root (cf. the verbal adjective *dhũrta-*), but the thematic variant *dhvāratī* (< PIE **dʰuṛh₁-e/o-*) was analyzed as *añiṭ*, which gave rise to a secondary verbal adjective *dhrutá-* (from **dhurtá-*). A different reconstruction is proposed in the LIV ¹140.

PIE **h₁rouḏ^h-o-* = Gothic *rauþs*, Rural Latin *rūfus*) vs. **rudē-ti-* ‘to be red’ (Lithuanian *rudėti*, Old Church Slavic рѣдѣти < PIE **h₁rud^h-eh₁-* = Latin *rubēre*): the pressure of this type is responsible for the creation of a secondary *o*-grade **douros* (as if PIE **d^hourh₁-o-*) instead of PIE **d^huorh₁-o-* (PIE root **d^huerh₁-*). The Slavic abstract noun **durb* reflected by Russian дѣръ ‘stupidity’ and the derivative **durbnъ* ‘stupid, silly’ is certainly a secondary formation (as if from PIE **d^hourh₁-i-*), parallel to instances such as Old Church Slavic зѣлъ ‘the evil’ (= Greek κακία) from зѣлъ ‘bad, evil’ (= Greek πονηρός, κακός).

The problem is with the semantics of the lexical family. The derivation of the meanings ‘silly, stupid’ and ‘shy, discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad’ from the basic meaning ‘to sting’ remains unmotivated at this point. For some of these forms, other comparisons were made since the 19th century, but what they have in common is a lot of imprecisions in their phonological or morphological formulation. To begin with, the Greek adjective θοῦρος ‘rushing, impetuous, furious’ is often compared with Old Prussian *dūrai* ‘shy’ and Russian дурной ‘silly, stupid’, but it should probably be left aside, since it is not likely to reflect a PIE form **d^hourh₁-o-*, but more reasonably belongs to the verb θρώσκω, aorist ἔθορον ‘to spring, to leap up’, which supposes a different root **d^herh₃-*: we have a zero grade **d^hrh₃-* in θρώσκω, ἔθορον and an *o*-grade **d^hor(h₃)-uō-* (with Saussure’s effect) in **θορ-φος* > θοῦρος (with the Ionic Greek compensatory lengthening resulting from the fall of the digamma).

We are thus left with the Balto-Slavic data. As already said, it is likely that, even if they are separated by their ablaut, Slavic **dur-* (from **d^hourh₁-*) and Baltic **dūr-* (from **d^hurh₁-*) belong to the same family. We have seen that the semantic difference is not coextensive with the formal difference, since Slovenian *dúr* belongs to Slavic **dur-*, but has the meaning ‘shy’, which seems to connect it directly with Baltic **dūras*.

The meaning of Old Prussian *dūrai* and Lithuanian *dūras* ‘shy, silent, taciturn’ is likely to derive from a verb **dūr-* ‘to remain silent, to be embarrassed, to look down to the ground’. This is suggested by the various verbs associated with this meaning, such as Lith. *dūrėti* ‘to wait, to remain silent, without a word’ and *dúroti* ‘to be discouraged, to look down to the ground, to get depressed’. In Latvian, this meaning spread to the Slavic loanword and its family, as shown by Latvian *dušns* ‘sad, embarrassed, silly, isolated’, *durnēt* ‘to go slowly, to be lazy, quiet, to keep silent, to be unfriendly, to be sick’. The source of this meaning was mentioned in passing by Fraenkel (LEW I 90 and 113), but was clearly seen by Mažiulis (PKEŽ¹1988: I 239; ²2013: 149). There is in Lithuanian a phrase *nudūrti akis į žemę* ‘to look down to the ground’ (literally: ‘to stick down one’s eyes to the ground’):

(3) Lithuanian dialect of Darbėnai (LKŽ II 913)

Nusigandęs nudūrė akis į žemę ir tylėjo.

‘Scared, he kept (stuck) his eyes down to the ground and kept silent.’

In the Lithuanian dialect of Kretinga, the phraseological expression *akis nudūrties* is attested with the meaning ‘to look down to the ground’;

(4) Lithuanian dialect of Kretinga (Aleksandravičius 2007: 86)

Ākis i žēmę nudūrēs.

‘He kept (stuck) his eyes down to the ground.’

The LKŽ II 912 mentions a variant *įdūrti akis į žemę*, literally ‘to look toward (into) the ground’, with an example by Žemaitė (19th century):

(5) Žemaitė (LKŽ II 912)

Ėjo akis įdūręs į žemę.

‘He went keeping (sticking) his eyes down toward the ground.’

Significantly enough, the verb *dūroti* ‘to be discouraged, to look down to the ground, to get depressed’ (LKŽ II 905: *būti paniurusiam, akis į žemę įbedus, niūrėti, niūroti*) is illustrated in the LKŽ by an example from Jonas Jablonskis which clearly reflects the same context:

(6) Jonas Jablonskis (LKŽ II 905)

Dūronas žemyn akis įdūręs, pasikvempęs dūro, t. y. mislyja, rymo.

‘The gloomy man, keeping his eyes to the ground, thinking over, gets depressed, i.e. remains pensive, worried.’

In Jacob Brodowski’s dictionary (18th century, Drotvinas 2009: 948_{30–36}), the Latin phrase *oculos demittere* and its German equivalent *die Augen niederschlagen* are rendered in Lithuanian by *Akkis nuleifti*, *Akkis žemyn nukreipti*, or *Nunerti Akkis*.

The same expression is preserved in Latvian:

(7) Gustav Brasche (1875: 544)

niederfchlagen: die Augen –, azis nodurt

‘to keep the eyes down’

Looking down to the ground as a sign of awkwardness or discouragement is a very widespread cultural attitude, as shown, e.g., by the similar use of *κύπτω* in Ancient Greek, *demittere oculos* in Latin, *die Augen niederschlagen* in German, *spuścić oczy* in Polish, *опустить глаза* or *потупиться* in Russian or *spùstiti oči* in Serbo-Croatian, all meaning ‘to look down’ and used in the same contexts of psychological distress (expressing shyness, embarrassment, sadness, despondency, discouragement, etc.). This image is not proper to Balto-Slavic,

but the semantic derivation [to sting] > [to lock one's gaze upon] is more specific. It can be assumed that the phraseological expression reflected by Lith. *nu-/į-dūrėti akis į žemę* 'to look down to the ground' constituted the basis for the Baltic adjective **dūras* 'sad, embarrassed, silent'.

It remains to explain the meaning of the Slavic forms 'silly, stupid'. Starting from a verbal root **d^hurh₁-* 'to sting', the meaning 'discouraged, embarrassed, silent, sad' can easily be accounted for, as already said, via the phraseological expression mentioned above (cf. Lith. *nudūrėti akis į žemę* 'to look down to the ground'), and it is likely that this phraseological expression is also the semantic source of the Slavic forms with the meaning 'silly, stupid'. Staring blankly at the ground with an empty look can equally be interpreted as a sign of stupidity or even foolishness: the gestural depiction of a distressed spirit staring to nowhere provides the link between a feeling of psychological depression and an expression of stupidity.

4. CONCLUSION

Far from being an isolated word, the Old Prussian adjective *dūrai* 'shy' belongs to a wide lexical family attested both in Baltic and in Slavic. It is based on the concrete image of a man looking down to the ground – an attitude that can be interpreted either as a sign of psychological distress or as a sign of stupidity. No matter to what extent this analysis can be deemed valid in every detail, it can give us a telling illustration of the fact that phraseology should always be taken into serious consideration when seeking for the etymology of lexical families, because semantic change often boils down to the crystallization of phraseological micro-contexts.

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Senosios prūsų kalbos žodžio *dūrai* kilmė

SANTRAUKA

Tradiciškai senosios prūsų kalbos būdvardis *dūrai* ‘baikštus’ (= vok. *scheu*) yra lyginamas su slavų abstrakčiuoju daiktavardžiu **durb* (rus. дѣръ ‘kvailumas’) ir jo būdvardiniu derivatu **durbnъ* (rus. дурной, lenk. *durny* ‘kvailas, beprotis’). Tačiau tiek formos, kiek ir semantinis, santykis tarp abiejų šių leksinių šeimų vis dar lieka neaiškus. Atsižvelgiant į baltiškas formas reikėtų pirmiausia atskirti baltiškos kilmės žodžius nuo slaviškų skolinių (liet. *duřnas*). Iš pirmojo žvilgsnio atrodo, kad reikšmę ‘baikštus’ turi tik baltų kalbos (s. pr. *dūrai*, liet. *dūras*) o reikšmę ‘kvailas, beprotis’ – tik slavų kalbos (rus. дѣръ ir kt.). Tačiau slovėnų *dūr* ‘baikštus’ (XIX a.) rodo, kad reikšmę ‘baikštus’ galėjo turėti ir slavų kalbos, taigi leksinės šeimos polisemija būdinga jau baltų-slavų prokalbei. Fonetiniu atžvilgiu baltų formas galima kildinti iš nulinio laipsnio (**dūr-*), o slavų formas – iš *o*-laipsnio (**dour-*). Visos formos dažniausiai laikomos giminiškomis su veiksmazodžiu **dūr-ti-* (liet. *dūrti*, lat. *duřt*), bet jų semantinė derivacija dar lieka nemotyvuota. Veiksmazodis **dūr-ti-* (liet. *dūrti*, lat. *duřt*) greičiausiai kildintinas ne iš ide. šaknies **der-* kaip dažnai manoma (plg. gr. δέρω ‘perplėšti’, got. *dis-tairan*, s. sl. дѣрати, rus. драть, liet. *diřti* / *derù* arba *dĩrti* / *diriù*, latv. *dĩrāt*), bet iš ide. šaknies **d^hurh₁-* (plg. het. *duřarnizi* ‘sudaužo’, vedų *dhūrvati* ‘gadina’). Semantiniu atžvilgiu santykį tarp ‘durti’ ir ‘baikštus’ / ‘kvailas’ galima motyvuoti remiantis lietuvių frazeologizmu *nudūrti akis į žemę*, kuriuo išreiškiama sunki psichologinė būsena.

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