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Old Lithuanian

Morphology – Part 1: Overview, stem formation

Roadmap

- Outline of the morphological system
- Major morphological devices
- Derivation
- Compounding

Outline

- Lithuanian is a fusional synthetic language
- Retention of the main structural properties of PIE
- Consequent nominative-accusative alignment
- Nouns are remarkably conservative

Morphological devices

- Mainly suffixation, prefixation in the verb
- Retention of the nasal infix — opposition of the present tense to the other tenses, a distinguishing feature of inchoative verbs:
 - *tàpti* ‘to become’ : *taĩpa* PRS.3 ‘is/are becoming’ : *tãpo* PST.3
 - *krìsti* ‘to fall’ : *kriĩta* PRS.3 ‘is/are falling down’ : *krìto* PST.3
- Inherited nasal infix could become generalized in all stems:
 - *jùngti* : *jùngia* : *jùngé* ‘to yoke’

Morphological devices

- The majority of derived nouns and adjectives are suffixal derivatives or conversion derivatives (assigned to an inflection class):
 - 3 inherited categories of nouns derived from verbs: *nomina actionis*, *nomina agentis*, *nomina instrumenti*
 - 5 inherited categories of nouns derived from nouns: *nomina qualitatis*, *nomina collectiva*, *nomina feminina* (ending **-ā*, ousted by derivatives with **(j)ē*), *diminutives*, *nomina attributiva*

Morphological devices

- Nouns derived from verbs:
 - nomina actionis (-*ti-* and -*tu-* in the preliteral phase: *būtis* ‘existence, being’, *lietùs* ‘rain’), -*imas*, -*ymas*: *apgynìmas* ‘defence’, *nužadėjimas* ‘promise’
 - nomina agentis, -*toja-*, -*ėja-*: *išganýtojas* ‘salvator’; the ending -*jis* is even more common in Old Lithuanian: *išganýtojis*
 - nomina instrumenti, -*tuv-*: *koštùvas* ‘strainer’, *kultùvė* ‘masher, tamper’

Morphological devices

- Nouns derived from nouns:
 - nomina qualitatis, *-ýbė, -ỹstė*, parallel to *-ýba, -ỹsta*: *vyriausýbė* ‘authority’, *nevertýbė* ‘unworthiness’, *šelmỹstė* ‘roguery’, *razbajysta* ‘murder’
 - nomina collectiva, *-ija, -yna*: *šeimýna* ‘family’
 - diminutives, *-elis/-ėlis, -okas*; (*j*)*u*-stems retain the stem: *karalelius/karalėlius* (< *karalius*) ‘little king’, *saldõkus* ‘rather sweet’ (< *saldus*)
 - nomina attributiva, *-inink-/-inyk-*: *vietininkas, vietinykas* ‘governor’

Ablaut

- In Lithuanian, ablaut (apophony, vowel gradation) is an additional means, which covers the differences between allomorphs of the same morpheme, but not an internal inflexion
- Traditionally, Lithuanian distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative ablaut
- The inherited IE ablaut has retained an high vitality in Lithuanian. Ablaut is restricted to derivational processes in Lithuanian (*kélti* ‘to lift’ : *kálnas* ‘mountain’)

Ablaut

- August Schleicher (1856): 3 series of ablaut ascribed to Lithuanian: *e(a)*-, *i*- and *u*-series:

žélti

‘green:INF’

žālias

‘green:NOM.SG.M’

žėlé

‘green:PST.3’

žolė

‘grass:NOM.SG’

Compounding

- Relatively few compound words in Lithuanian, one of the oldest: *viešpatis* '(land)lord', *viešpatnì* 'landlady'
- In the compounds, the original distribution of the stem vowel is preserved in Old Lithuanian in most cases, but forms with the stem vowel sometimes dropped are also common:
 - A+N possessive compounds: *juodarañkis*, *juodrañkis* = *juod-a* + *rank-a* 'blackhanded'
 - N+N determinative compounds: *šónkaulis* = *šón-as* + *kául-as* 'rib, side bone'; *vórtinklas*, *vórtinklis*, *vóratinklas*, *vóratinklis* = *vor-as* + *tinkl-as* 'spider's web'