PRODUCTIVE SUFFIX ABLAUT IN BALTIC

1. ungurŷs ‘eel’

J. Otrébski, Lingua Posnaniensis 5, 1955, 26, has correctly observed that ungurŷs must have an initial vocalism which shows a quality resulting from assimilation (or „harmony“) to the second syllable. The pre-form would be *angurysis, which is matched by Old Prussian angur(g)is (as Fraenkel, LitEW 1163, writes it). On the other hand, Finnish ankerias seems to attest *angerjas, while Slavic *agorę repose on *angarjas. Clearly these are all derived from the etymon Lith. angis, Latv. uo-dze, OCS aţb, Lat. anguis, Gk. ἄγως, and the Old Irish word for ‘eel’ esc-ung.

However, Otrébski’s formulation for the development cannot be correct, and Fraenkel does nothing to correct it, while adducing some Latvian place-names of unclarified relationship. Otrébski posits *angarjas bzw. *angerjas > *angurysis. He continues: „Die Frage des Verhältnisses der früheren litauischen und preussischen Gestalt *angurjas zu den in anderen baltischen Sprachen noch auftretenden Gestalten *angarjas und *angerjas erfordert eine besondere Behandlung.“ That may be, but Otrébski’s chronological series will not lead to a solution.

We cannot simply derive a form with a u vocalism from an a/e pre-form. Moreover, because Slavic shows *a in the suffix this does not guarantee an *a for common Balto-Slavic. However, on grounds of the conservatism of Finnish and because of the maximum variety of vowel quality shown in the one form, *angerjas can be assumed as valid for an early Baltic shape. But at a very early period there must also have existed *angurjas in order to explain the Lithuanian and Old Prussian forms. Thus, the only Baltic chronology that will account for Otrébski’s facts is *angerjas ~ *angurjas (> *angurys) > ungurŷs.

The question now is how *angurjas arose. Otrébski speculates that the gu could be from the original labiovelar, as seen in Lat. anguilla. Of course, that cannot be so if we are to conserve any semblance of order in the development of Indo-European sounds. One may consider the possibility that he have here a sequence *ghũ in the final of the stem, especially in view of the often adduced źęćę₁. This would

₁ But apart from the fact that the interrelation of the etyma anguis (ἄγως), ęćę (Skt. áhti-), and eţęs is unclear, ęćę appears to contain if anything an IE palatal; and that would call for a Baltic reflex ź (followed by ų). For Balto-Slavic questions and literature on this etymon, see for example Sławski, Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego I. 572–3, s. v. jeź.
then call for a treatment parallel to ἐλαχύς, ἐλαφρός, Lat. leuis, Skt. rāghú- etc. But we then have no explanation why the stem of angis qāb appears to be truncated in relation to leĩgvas logo-ko. Therefore angis Lat. anguis Gk. ἰφις must represent *gʷh (and not *gʰ, as Otrębski writes). The u of *angurjas must therefore arise in the suffix, and not in the root or stem of the lod simplex.

The simplest solution is to regard ur as a normal Schwundstufe, particularly after a velar. Here the original *r would have syllabified both by Sievers law after the heavy syllable and in position between g and yod, if the formation is early enough. The pre-form, then, may be written *angʷ(h)rios. We may take the Latvian river name vogre < *angr-e as supporting such a form, but with a revalued syllabification. On the other hand, the Prussian river name Angerap (: ape) seems to support *angerias.

We are therefore led to reconstruct for Proto-Baltic an ablauting formation *angerias ~ *angurias < *angerias ~ angrias < *angʷh-(e)rio-. Lith. ungrūs results, as Otrębski has pointed out, from *angurias, which is a variant on the Proto-Baltic level.

The Slavic variant *angarjas may easily be an independent formation built on the old ablaut alternation seen in the suffix, much as *kotoro has been formed alongside Cz. koterý Slk. koterý = πότερος (*kʰo-tero-) : Ukr. kotryj Lith. katrás (*kʰo-tro-)

2. vāsara ‘summer, year’

The following relevant forms are attested: vāsara, vasara (Kurschat, Skardžius Daukš akc. 95) Latv. vasara; vasāris, Žem. vasēris adj.; pavāsaris, Žem. pavāseris ‘spring’. Other derivatives need not concern us here. Fraenkel LitEW 1206, referring to Skardžius Arch.Phil. K 7. 41, sees progressive assimilation *pavēseris > pavāseris and „Angleichung des e an a“ in vasara. This account is both ambiguous and insufficiently related to other such vocalic phenomena in Baltic.

Greek ἔχελως is called by Frisk (GEW 440) „dunkel“, is said to „recall“ the other names for the eel, and the crossing of the etyma ἔχες and anguis is called an old interpretation. A „Pelasgic“ solution would be ad hoc, because of the aspirate. I therefore see no likely solution other than a conflation, especially since that would also explain the absence of the nasal in ἰφις. One might envisage:

*angʰw-is > *eokʰw-is > ἰφις
*ēgh-is > *ekh-is > ἔχες
*angʷh-el- > *enkh-el- > ἔχελως

Obviously Latv. Engure, with its nasal, cannot be a simple ablauting relation to ungrūs, as Fraenkel states without elaboration.

On the Slavic forms of *kʰo-t(e)-ro- see my note, Rocznik slawistyczny, 31, 1970.
We know that we must start from *uesr-. Lat. uēr and ON vār are not at all clear. Ernout-Meillet treats the putative uēr < *uēsr- to *uesr- as pure hypothesis. De Vries 644 is also distrustful of the connexion with *uesr, while noting the speculation that *uēsr was reshaped on the model of iēr ‘year’ and considering the Germanic-Italic agreement as significant. But Slavic is perfectly clear: Russ. Ukr. vesná, OBulg. vesna, SCr. vēsna, Slovene vēsna, Cz. vesna, Pol. wiosna all lead to *vesná. And the Slavic representative paired with Greek ἕξφ gives us all the information we need: We have two generalizations from the heteroclite *uesr (> *Fē(h)ξφ), *uesn-. Therefore vāsara must somehow be derived from *uesr.

There must have been a plural (or collective) to *uesr comparable to the inflexion that gave Greek ὅδωρ, etc. I presume this to have been *uesrHₐ. It is difficult to say precisely what such a form would have yielded in Baltic; it might a priori have been either *vesrā or *vesrēr.

In any event we begin to see that there is some evidence that there was a certain productivity in the ablaut of r-suffixes in Balto-Slavic. We find beside *k(o)terē and *kotro- also *k(o)torē; and now beside *anger-ias also *angr-ias ‘eel’. Now Fraenkel seems to assume that the earlier form for ‘summer’ in Baltic had a suffix in -er- and that the vowel assimilation started in the prefixed form. That is of course possible, but it would seem more natural for the changes to have taken place first in the simplex; and it would be preferable to find a formulation of greatest possible generality for the various instances of vowel adjustment that we find particularly in Baltic. Otrębski has formulated, as we have seen, the vowel assimilation phenomenon for Baltic as applying before suffixes in r and l particularly in the case of circumflected (etymologically falling) bases. This would of course suffice to derive vāsara from vāsara, but unless we take the base in the context of the compound in pa- there is no reasonable way of explaining why *uesr gave vas-, particularly since Slavic shows vesr-

It therefore seems more in conformity with developments we know to assume that just as *kakra- ~ *katera- gave also *katarē- so also *uesr- developed *ueser- and *uesar- by productive rules of suffix ablaut alternation. Then *vesara would give vāsara by Otrębski’s assimilation rule regardless of compounding with pa-. On the other hand, Žem. vasēris would represent a contamination of older *ueser- with the widespread vasar-

3. vākaras ‘evening’

A somewhat similar background would also explain Lith. vākaras Latv. vakars in relation to Slavic večerō. That is, *uekerōs first gave *vekaras by analogical suffix ablaut, and then *vekarēs became vākaras by Otrębski’s assimilation. Fraenkel LitEW 1187 actually posits this progression, citing Schmidt, Endzelin, and Skar-
džius, but without giving a motivation or detailed account for what is simply labelled „regressive Assimilation“.

It may, however, be objected that in the pre-form *uekeros the segment -er- was not a true suffix. It is true, as I have argued „Revue des études arménienes“ n. s. 3, 1966, 13—15, that Armenian gišer=Latin uesper=Welsh ucher=*uekeros continues an old compound or phrase whose precise IE shape cannot be recovered with the certainty we normally expect, but which may be schematised as *u(e)ik(s) + ksperos⁴. Thus the element -er- was originally a portion of the second element of the compound, and not a simple suffix.

On the other hand, as Goetze originally suggested, the final part of uesper seems to be best related to Avestan xšapar- and xšapan- xšaf-. The stem xšapar- is a neuter, but xšapan- is neuter only in collocation with azan- ‘day’; otherwise xšapan- is feminine, as is the simplex xšap- and its Vedic cognate ksap- ‘darkness, night’. This leads us to three observations which should be kept strictly separate, even though they are ultimately interrelated.

a.) *ueker- forms a new Balto-Slavic simplex which has the synchronic configuration of a word with an r-suffix. Therefore, it is easy envisage a fresh formation *vēkaras exactly parallel to *vesara, etc. This productivity in Baltic is thus synchronically independent of the historical origin of the segment -er-.

b.) *uekeros indeed seems to be a fresh adjectival formation as Fraenkel cites from Nieminen’s argument. On the other hand, this formation seems to be older than just Balto-Slavic; cf. ἐσπέρος, ἐσπέρα, etc. Either IE had a derived adjective from the compound *u(e)ik-ksperos, or an old phrase with a final genitive *uěiks + ksperós was revalued as an o-stem adjectival derivative. Thus there is in this sense an IE pedigree for Slavic věčerō and vākaras. There is no need to see some late (and widespread) derivative from a neuter věčer or *ueker.

It is also possible that a reflexion of the old phrase with genitive and final accent lives on in věčerá, which Fraenkel remarks matches the Lithuanian allative vakaróp.

c.) Quite apart from the new formation whereby the final portion became freshly productive as a Baltic suffix, we recall that the noun in -ar- in Avestan was neuter and that the root noun (and some of its derivatives) was feminine. There seems to be a precious relic of this in South Slavic. Although I have just insisted that the formation věčerō must be old, it is noteworthy, as Nieminen has observed, that SCR. věče is neuter. In Vuk’s Srpski Rječnik we find the double entry věče neuter and věčer -ri feminine; he also gives the phrase dobăr věče masculine ‘good eve-

⁴ A vocalism *uiker- derived from *uiik(ksp)er- would, as I have pointed out, account easily for the variant věčerá, instead of the dubious zero-grade discussed by Fraenkel. In any event, a zero-grade relation in ūkas is very doubtful and unclear.
ning'. Thus in věče, and in jičě Vuk jičě(r)(a) 'yesterday', we find an archaic formation mirroring in stem and in gender the Avestan xšapar-.

Moreover, věčer věčeri feminine is not isolated. Fraenkel cites from Nieminen's argument the Slovene phrase, 'Bog vam daj dobro večer 'Gott gebe euch guten Abend', neutral'. But if we consult Pleteršnik's dictionary, s. v., we find in addition to večer masculine (dober večer, sveti večer, živi večer, etc.) another entry večer feminine, attested at least from the 15th century. Here is where the phrase Bog vam daj dobro večer is given; clearly a feminine accusative. There is also cited the phrase kakor daleč je jutro do večeri. There can be no doubt that we have here a South Slavic feminine. This seems to be a strong candidate for the survival in gender of xšap- and xšapan- alongside the neuter xšapar-. The occurrence as an i-stem would be the normal Balto-Slavic resolution of an old consonantstem.

Therefore Slavic gives us besides večer m., a pair of transformed stems večer-n. and večer ƒ. These must go back to *uekeros, *uekVr-, and *ueker- respectively. The neuter could originate in something like *uekur, oblique *uekr-, and the oblique forms like those of mater- etc. would later have been refashioned to *ueker-.

Thus we see indirectly in the gender variants in Slavic a basis for ablaut productivity in the suffix in Baltic. On this basis it is not difficult to see how an original *ueker-as could have formed a fresh ablaut variant *uekar-as; perhaps the latter was even re-shaped from an extinct neuter *uekar.

4. ašarā 'tear'

It is well known that Lith. ašara ašarā Latv. asara must be related to Skt. ášru-, Av. asru-, and Toch. A ākār pl. akrūna. I have tried to explain the absence of *d- in these forms in the Festschrift for George Lane, p. 153, and I have attempted earlier, PBB (Tübingen) 81, 1960, 263 ff., to give a reasoned account of the forms of the IE etymon underlying these words. We must have *dākru- ~ dākur- from a pre-IE *drukru(-r). By a sandhi loss there then developed a dialectal *ākru-, and this must be the ancestor of the Baltic words. Beyond that, there is no motivation within IE for the development of a vowel between *k > š and r.

A further anomaly, however, is the stem class. In Lithuanian we might easily expect to find the preservation of an old u-stem, as with medus, OPruss. meddo. Thus we might hope to find *aš(t)ru-. Of course, this could have clashed with aš(t)rūs, and in any case the details of development escape us in part at least for the present. But we may hazard a speculation. If the (collective) plural *ašrua underwent metathesis, a form *ašurā could have resulted. Then either by the ablaut productivity discussed above for vāsara and vākaras or by the assimilation for circumflexed stems with apparent r-suffix specified by Otrębski a form *ašurā would easily give ašarā.
However, to judge by the form *aszeromis cited from Chylinski by Stang VGBS 33, it may be that *ašurā was first remodelled to ašerā by productive suffix ablaut and later became ašarā by Otrębski’s assimilation.

5. vēdaras ‘entrails, sausage’

Besides the above form we find Tverččius vēderas, and Latv. shows both vēdars and vēðers, while OPrussian attests weders. One might look for an original vēdaras, with vēderas produced by assimilation; in fact, Stang VGBS 33 lists this etymon along with vāsara, āšara, etc. Skardžius has discussed it Arch.Phil. 7. 40ff. But strictly it must be regarded separately for the time being.

Note that we have here not a circumflexed base, but an old acuted long. This is, moreover, of unclear exact relation to the zero-grade seen in Skt. udāra-, Av. udara-; the Hesychius form δδερος is of course too problematic to yield any criteria for us. It appears that we have independent thematizations, with zero-grade generalized in Indo-Iranian and Dehnstufe in Baltic. This would point to an old ablauting noun; perhaps a neuter r-stem?

In light of this background it seems best to suppose provisionally that vēdar- and vēder- represent two different suffix ablaut developments from a pre-form whose exact shape we cannot now recover. As pure hypothesis, an r-stem from which the thematization would have been derived would have had a nominative *uēdōr or *uēdir (< *-r), an accusative *uēdar- or -ir, a genitive *udr-, a locative plural *udir-, and a locative singular *uder-.

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