

LITH. *liekas*

Old Lithuanian uses *liekas* in the sense 'pirmas liėkas' for the ordinal '11th'. In the face of *antras liekas*, the ordinal '12th'<sup>1</sup>, the absence of an overt ordinal numeral word in this expression is noteworthy. Stang remarks (VGBS 280) "*liekas* 'der elfte' bedeutete also ursprünglich 'der überschüssige (über 10)'. In a sense that has the appearance of being etymologically true, but I think there are two grounds on which the explanation allows improvement.

1. We should always favour an explanation that involves minimum historical change. Instead of an account which alleges that the expression that in the 16th century meant '11th' or 'the first left (above the 10th, vel sim.)' earlier meant 'the left-over (...)', we would prefer to find that the expression has always carried the same meaning. After all, in a simple series such as the ordinals it is semantically unsatisfactory to find that the single ordinal '11th' has seriously altered its meaning in the face of all the others. I propose then that the antecedents of *vienioliktas* have for a very long time meant precisely '11th' or 'first left (after 10th...)' etc.

In other words, this means that we should not seek an earlier or original different meaning for the syntagm *liekas* if an alternative is open to us. It means rather that we must search for an explanation for the superficial shape that lacks the element *viena-* or *pirma-*.

2. I believe we actually possess sufficient evidence to provide such an explanation. Moreover, this explanation leads us to appreciate the archaic character of this Old Lithuanian structure.

There are two phrases attested that tend to point to the transitional status of the construction in Old Lithuanian. From three sources (see Palionis op. laud. 127, footnote 2) we glean the phrase *dešimtas liekas* in the sense 'vienuoliktas'. We must regard *dešimtas* here as the surface or undeleted realization of the underlying "(über) 10" in this numeral construction. This is not '10th left over' or the

<sup>1</sup> We also have as attested forms *trėcias liekas*, *kėtwirtas liekas*, *sekmasliekas*, *aszmasliekas*, as well as *liekas antras* and compounds of the form *antraliekas*. For the record see J. Palionis, Lietuvių literatūrinė kalba XVI–XVII a., 1967, 127, § 99, and Senn, Handbuch I, 219.

like; it is '10 (+ 1) left-th'. The presence of the one numeral implies the underlying presence of the other (*pirmas*) which we do not see. Now this analysis is confirmed by the unusual expression cited by Senn (loc. cit) from Bezenberger out of Bretkūnas, *Dwideschimta ir pirma lieka Menesio* 'on the 21st of the month'. Here *liekas* has been released (by rule simplification) from its constraint requiring only a simple underlying (1x) *dėšimt*. The two expressions may be compared:

*Dwideschimta ir pirma lieka* = *šĩmtas peñkiasdešimt ĩr penki*  
*dešimtas liekas* = *peñkiasdešimt penki*

That is, allowing for the contextual appearance of *ĩr* in complex expressions, these two phrases have identical underlying structures: (2x) 10 + 1 [*liēka-*]-th. To this underlying structure the adjective *liēka-* is added redundantly by rule. In the context of *liēka-* a simple 10 is normally deleted by rule. Then is Old Lithuanian in the context of *liēka-* (i.e. when 10 is not multiplied as in *Dwideschimta*) 1 is deleted by rule.

Thus, these two divergent expressions, where the addition of *liēka-* has been broadened and the deletion of 10 not carried out, prove to be highly instructive in showing us the underlying structure.

Now it is well known that the two rules whereby *liēka-* is redundantly added and 10 is deleted in the presence of *liēka-* are shared with common Germanic. These two closely linked rules must represent evidence of Sprachbund or areal diffusion. It remains for us to show the background of the rule which deletes 1.

I have called attention elsewhere<sup>2</sup> to the Old Irish construction which was first made clear by F. N. Robinson<sup>3</sup> wherein the numeral 1 is deleted in the context of noun + decade. Thus we have *bó ar fichit* [bo: ar ix'əd'] '21 cows' (with *bó* in the singular but *oén* '1' lacking), *kín ar fichit* [k'i:n ar ix'əd'] '21st quinion'. Compare with the latter *ind óenmad rann fichet* [iñ oenvəð rañ ix'əd] 'the 21st part' (where *óenmad* '1st' has not been deleted). I have suggested (loc. cit.) that such an original deletion rule explains the form of *šĩmtas centum* etc. and χιλιάς -άδος χιλία (collective), as opposed to ἑ-κατόν and *sa-hásram mille*. It appears that in *liekas* we have another instance of this Indo-European rule, preserved in this case as late as the 17th century.

The rule seems to have been that in complex numerals combined with a substantive the morpheme '1' was deleted in the surface structure. One may speculate whether this ultimately gave the opening in the later Indo-European languages for the development of '1' as an indefinite article with substantives.

<sup>2</sup> Glotta 46, 1968, 278.

<sup>3</sup> Revue celtique 26, 1905, 378-9. See now R. Thurneysen, A Grammar of Old Irish<sup>2</sup>, §§ 391, 396.