On the development of diminutives in the Baltic languages

SAULIUS AMBRAZAS

The paper gives a diachronical survey of the Baltic diminutives in comparison with the corresponding forms in other Indo-European languages. The following strata of Baltic diminutives are distinguished: 1) diminutives with the determinative *-k- dating back to Proto-Indo-European; 2) derivatives with the determinatives *-l-,*-g- || -g', *-s- and the adjective suffix *-ino-, which acquired diminutive meaning in the separate Indo-European dialects at early stages of their formation; 3) derivatives with the determinative *-t-, the adjective suffixes *-ino-, *-ino and nomina attributiva suffixes *-jo-, *-ino- used to form diminutives in Baltic only.

The Baltic languages are characterized by a great abundance and variety of diminutives. Most of the suffixes of Baltic diminutives are ancient, with equivalents in other related languages. However, their distribution in the Baltic languages and their dialects as well as their use in other Indo-European language groups varies. The data of the Baltic languages in comparison with related languages help us to gain a better insight into the development of this derivative category.

Most suffixes by means of which the Baltic diminutives are formed originated from the root determinatives *-k-,*-l-,*-g-,*-s-,*-t-. Another group of suffixes was extracted from adjectives and nomina attributiva.

Derivatives with the determinative *-k-

There are several diminutive suffixes formed with this ancient determinative added to different nominal stems: i, i, u, a, e, o/e.
Diminutives with the suffix -ikas are common in Old Prussian, e.g. acc. sing. gannikan (Frewlein) III 105, madiikan (Gebetlein) 79, nom. sing. molidik (Kindlein) 113, stindicks (Ständlein) 59 and others (Ambrazas 1991:6-7).

There are only relics of this derivative type in Lithuanian. For instance, Gerulaitis and Stang (1933:25) recorded two diminutives with the suffix -ikas from the fisherman’s dialect in East Prussia: puodikas ‘small cup’, staldikas ‘small stable’. A few derivatives of this type are found in the 17th-19th century Lithuanian dictionaries of East Prussia: brolikas ‘brother’s son’, karlikas ‘the king of birds, a dwarf’, stirnikas ‘roe buck’, zandikas ‘small cheek’. At present they are very rare in the dialects, e.g. bernikas ‘young lad’ (Valkinkaim, Vaičiukas) ‘the very end’ (Mielagėnai, cf. also the derivatives with the compound suffix -ikus in the Zietela dialect: bernikutė ‘young lad’, paršikutė ‘piglet’ and others (Vidugiris 1969:151). However, diminutives with the suffix -ikas could formerly have been more common in the western part of Lithuania. This is attested by the suffix -ikė, by means of which in the greater part of Samogitia and in some West High Lithuanian dialects diminutives are not infrequently formed, e.g.: katikė ‘little cat’, mergikė ‘little girl’, lazdkė ‘short stick’ etc. (LKA III, Map No. 116, p. 131).

In Latvian, diminutives with the suffix -iko are rare as well. They can be found only in some Western dialects (mostly in Courland), e.g.: atůikis ‘little lamb’, ganišiks ‘little shepherd’ (Rūķe-Draživa 1959:30-305).

It thus seems more probable that diminutives with the suffix -iko were characteristic of the West Baltic languages.

This derivative type is quite common in Slavic (Bošković 1984:206-245) and probably in Tocharian (Ivanov 1958). Diminutives with -iko can be found in Greek, Indo-Iranian and some other Indo-European languages as well (Chantry 1933:385-386; 1966; Wackernagel, Debrunner 1954:311-318 and references).

Diminutives with the suffix -yka are recorded in the Zietela dialect, e.g. sesyka ‘sister’, ausyka ‘ear’, kalikyka ‘bitch’ etc. Some masculine gender derivatives have a corresponding suffix -ykas: liežykas ‘tongue’, brolykys ‘brother’ (Vidugiris 1969:149-150). The derivative brolikas, meaning ‘brother’s son’, is recorded in the Lithuanian dictionaries of East Prussia. The derivative dalikas, meaning ‘part’ in old writings, could be of diminutive origin too. Both derivatives have equivalents in Old Prussian: nom. pl. bratůkai (Brüder) III 89, deltikas (Artikel) 39, acc. sing. doltikas (Stück) 65.

In Latvian only two derivatives with the suffix -ika || -ikas are found: mātika || mātiçe ‘mother in law’, masiçe || maše ‘husband’s sister; sister’s daughter’ (Rūķe-Draživa 1959:298-300).

It is possible that the suffix -iko entered the Baltic languages from Slavic, where /t/ stem nouns were widely used (Ambrazas 1991a:29-30). In Slavic (especially Eastern and Western) diminutives with the corresponding suffix -iks are also very productive (Bošković 1984:229-231). Some of them, such as *brat(r)iks ‘brother’ (cf. OPr. bratikai) are reconstructed for Proto-Slavic.

Diminutives with the suffix -uko, such as arki()/vkas ‘pony’, bern(ik)akas ‘lad’, bere(ik)akas ‘small birch’, are common almost everywhere in Lithuanian, except the very northern part of Samogitia (LKA III, Map No. 116, p. 130-131).

In Latvian this derivative type is productive only in some northern dialects (Rūķe-Draživa 1959:276-286, Map No. 3).

In Old Prussian only the derivative wounak (Bok) E 675 (cf. Lith. ož(i)ukas ‘goat’) is attested.

The particular diminutives with -uko found in the Slavic languages are not clearly opposed to other derivatives with -ko, cf. *domsik ‘little house’, *synuks ‘little son’ (Belić 1901:137; Slawski 1974:93-94). Sanskrit derivatives with this suffix (e.g. śisukah ‘baby’, śisus ‘child’) are formed by adding -ko to /t/ stem nouns in the same way as to nouns with other stems (Edgerton 1911; Wackernagel, Debrunner 1954:515-540).

The suffix -uko could thus become a distinct suffix in the Baltic languages. Diminutives with -uko were most commonly used in Eastern and Central Lithuania where hydronymy with -uko are widespread (Vanagas 1970:193-198, 418).
On the development of diminutives in the Baltic languages

*-ô-ko- || -e-ko-

In Lithuanian and Latvian dialects only single diminutives with this suffix have been recorded, e.g.: Latv. dial. brergaks ‘child’, suyaks, teljaks ‘rude cruel man’ (in proverbs, see Rūķe-Draživa 1959:124), Lith. kalvaka ‘hill’ Nestelm. Würt.; South High Lith. bernèk-šis ‘simple lad’, kirèk-šis ‘bad axe’, žmonèk-šè ‘bad wife’ and others (Urbitis 1965:285; Grinavickis 1991:230). Lith. lydèkàs, lydèkà, Latv. lièdès ‘pike’ (cf. Lith. lydès ‘pike’), Lith. melek-èlis ‘uvula’ (cf. Latv. mèle ‘tongue’) are likely to belong to this derivative type. They seem to be comparable to Skt. aśvakaḥ ‘pony’: aśvah ‘horse’, Gk. μείζονα ‘young girl’ (Gätiers 1955:48).

The data discussed here entitle us to assume that in Proto-Baltic diminutives were formed by means of the suffix *-ko- added to different nominal stems. Thus, derivatives with *-oko- are common in one dialect of Proto-Baltic, derivatives with *-uko- prevail in another dialect, while derivatives with *-ako- are frequent in a third one.

Diminutives with the suffix *-ko- || -k-, which formed a basis for the compound suffixes mentioned above, are very old, they are widespread in many Indo-European languages (Ewald 1924) and have equivalents in other Nostric (Boreal) languages (Illic-Svityc 1971:14). It is possible that initially this dative type had a broader individualizing meaning. cf. OCS kanykà ‘a particular stone’ : kany ‘stone’, Pol. koskà ‘kernel, dice’ : ksi ‘bones’, Lith. aškà, Slav. *kóza ‘he-goat’ : IE. *ag- ‘he-goat’, Avest. pasaka- ‘domestic animal’ : pasu- ‘animal’ (cf. Knobloch 1958; Otřebski 1967:219-220; Otrembskij 1968:135-136). This explains the fact that not only diminutives but also adjectives derived from nouns as well as nomina attributiva have been formed by means of *-ko- || -k-.

Other Baltic types of diminutives are more recent.

**DERIVATIVES WITH THE DETERMINATIVE *-l-

On the basis of the old root determinative *-l- the diminutive suffixes *-elò, *-elò, *-elò, *-ulò have been formed.

*-elò-

The diminutive suffix -elò, -é is widely used in all Lithuanian dialects and in the written language from the 16th century onward. In most cases
diminutives with this suffix are formed from disyllabic nouns, e.g. kalmēlis ‘hill’: kāla ‘mountain’, tēvēlis ‘dad’: tēva ‘father’, vištēle ‘chicken’, vištē ‘hen’. In Samogitian and in some eastern regions of High Lithuanian (Ignalina, Švenčionys, Breslauja, Apsas, Lazintai) derivatives with -elis, -e are also formed from polysyllabic nouns, e.g.: vainikēlis ‘little wreath’: vainika ‘wreath’, dobilēlis ‘little clover’: dobilis ‘clover’, višoreikā ‘little needlewomans’: višoreika ‘dressmaker’ and so on (LKA III, Map No. 117, p. 131-132). However, derivatives with this suffix might not be old in some dialects of Lithuanian. For instance, hydronyms with -elis, -e are very infrequent in Samogitia and in part of West High Lithuanian (Vanagas 1970:113-124, 396).

In the Latvian dialects, this derivative type is much less common. It is most characteristic of the western and central parts of Courland and Semigalia. Besides, in these dialects derivatives of this type often have a palatalized consonant preceding the suffix (e.g.: s → š, z → ž). Some Latvian derivatives almost coincide with the Lithuanian ones, e.g.: maissēlis ‘little bag’: maiss ‘sack’ (cf. Lith. mašēlis, višēle ‘chicken’: viša ‘hen’ (cf. Lith. vištēle), ažēlis ‘little goat’: ažis (cf. Lith. ožēlis) etc. (Rūķe-Draviņa 1959:246-270). For this reason A. Bielenstein (1863:308-309) and A. Leskien (1891:481) assumed the Latvian diminutives with -elis, -e to have arisen under the influence of Lithuanian. J. Endzelins (1909:376; 1951:343) and V. Rūķe-Draviņa (1959:259-262) doubted the correctness of this view because this derivative type is spread not only near the Lithuanian border. Besides, the suffix -elis, -e is not preceded everywhere by a palatalized consonant (cf. sunelis ‘doggie’, maiseis ‘small bag’). No influence of the Lithuanian language can be discerned in such derivatives as caurumēlis ‘little hole’, cučēle ‘small cow’ etc.

In Old Prussian the kinship term patowelis (Stiffler) E 179 (cf. Lith. patēvis ‘stepfathers’) and the proper nouns Madelle, Janel, Katell as well as the place names Grabelle, Scadelle, Wribelle (Gerullis 1920:250; Trautmann 1923:175; Endzelins 1943:48) are formed by means of the corresponding suffix. Derivatives with a clearly diminutive meaning have not been found in Old Prussian. The diminutives with the suffix -*elio* are thus likely to have extended to some Baltic languages only.

*-*elio-

In a great part of the High Lithuanian dialect the suffix -elis (a variant of -elis) is widely used for the derivation of diminutives from polysyllabic nouns, e.g.: vainikēlis ‘little wreath’: vainika ‘wreath’, žuokēlis ‘young oak’: žuolas ‘oak’, lelijēlis ‘small lily’: lelijē ‘lily’ and so on (LKA III, Map No. 117).

In the Latvian dialects, diminutives with the suffix -elis, -e are exceedingly rare and they are usually formed from disyllabic nouns, e.g.: sunelis ‘doggie’, višēle ‘chicken’ (Rūķe-Draviņa 1959:270-271).

In some South High Lithuanian dialects, owing to the closed articulation of the vowel e, the diminutive suffix -elis is pronounced almost like -elis, e.g.: dunsēlēlis ‘cover’ (Šumskas, see LKA II 30-31). In the same dialects, derivatives with a short vowel e in the corresponding suffix have a different meaning and denote things or persons of larger size, e.g.: bernēlis ‘big lad’, kirēlis ‘big ax’, svetēlis ‘great guest’ (Grineveckis 1991-230). This leads us to the conclusion that the suffix -*elio* has originated from -*elio* due to the lengthening of the vowel e which became more closed in a stressed position.

**-*elio-*

Lithuanian derivatives with this suffix are often used alongside with the derivatives with -*elio* in the western part of Samogitia once inhabited by Curonians (Kursiai), e.g.: kranēlis ‘small bank’, niestēlis ‘small town’, vištēle ‘chicken’ and so on (LKA III, Map No. 117, p. 132). They have exact equivalents in Old Prussian, cf. Lith. puodēlis ‘small cup’ and OPr. podalis (Bosetop) E 351, as well as the proper nouns Petralle, Micalle, Wielkele and others (Trautmann 1925:176; Endzelins 1943:48). Very few diminutives with the suffix -ala || -ala are recorded in Latvian, e.g.: māma ‘mummy’, nakal’iga ‘night’, sārla ‘young rat’ (Rūķe-Draviņa 1959:276).

The distribution of hydronyms with -*elio-* shows that derivatives formed by means of this suffix might be inherited from Curonian (cf. Endzelin 1934:134; Vanagas 1970:84-90, 392).

Diminutives with the suffix -*elio* || -*elo* (< o|e + -*ko*) are also found in Slavic (cf. Lith. brotēlis, brotērēlis and Slav. *bratel’s* ‘(little) brother’, see Slawski 1974:108), Germanic, Italian (cf. Lith. parēlis and OHG farēli, Lat. porcūlus ‘little pig’, see Brugmann 1906:366; Meid 1967-87) and, apparently, Tocharian (Ivanov 1958:59-60).

Latin derivatives with the suffix -culus (< -*ko* + -*lo*) indicate that this derivative type became prevalent later than the diminutives with -*ko*,
The derivative mergūže ‘lass’ has its equivalent in OPr merguž (Mayth) GrA 88.

In some Latvian dialects diminutives with the suffix -už, usually derived from proper names, are used (e.g.: Ānuža, Karluža). They are seldom based on common names, e.g.: purtuža ‘small bath-house’, mātuža ‘bad mother’ (Rūķe-Dra Bain 1959: 313-315), cf. Lith. vaikūžas ‘urchin’ in Nesselmann’s dictionary.

The following derivative suffixes with the determinative *-g- occasionally yielding diminutives in Lithuanian dialects deserve mention: *-južas (piemenūžas ‘brat’, vaikūžas ‘urchin’), *-iuza (arkiuža ‘poor horse’), *-čas (vaikčzas ‘urchin’), *-čzas (vaikčzas ‘urchin’), *-iolas (vaik čzas ‘urchin’).

In Lithuanian the root determinant *-g- || *-g- gave rise to a number of compound suffixes (cf. -ėgas and -ėžas, -ėgis and -ėgis and the like) characteristic of nomin. agentis with a pejorative meaning (Amarbras, forthcoming, § 267-270). Some of them are derived from verbs and nouns are found in Slavic (Slawski 1974: 65-70). The Germanic diminutive suffix -k- is thought to have originated from the determinative *-g- as well, e.g.: ME hillock ‘hill’, MLG hoveke ‘small village’, also OHG gesin-k-lin ‘small toy’, MLG vogelk-en ‘birdie’ (Meid 1967: 214-218). Some diminutives with *-g- are also recorded in the Greek language, e.g.: λαίκς ‘small stone’, ροδάμης ‘crumb’ (Brugmann 1906: 609, 676).

**Derivatives with the Determinative *-s-**

Several suffixes arose on the basis of this determinative in the Baltic languages (especially in Lithuanian).


The following derivative suffixes are used in Lithuanian: *-ušas, *-čė tėtūšis ‘dad; granddad’ (cf. Latv. tētusis), brolšis ‘brother’s son’, motšė ‘mother’; *iušas (vaigšūšas ‘pilferer’), *išas (vaigšūšas ‘pilferer’), *išis (vaigišūšas ‘pilferer, pilcher’).


**Derivatives with the Determinative *-lo-**

In the South High Lithuanian dialect derivatives with this suffix are formed from various two-syllable nouns, e.g.: alūlas ‘beer’, arklūlas ‘pony’, dukrūlo ‘little daughter’ (Grinaiveckis 1991: 228). Some derivatives of this type, formed mostly from kinship terms, are used in other dialects too (Otrosbski 1934:152-153; Grinaiveckienė 1961:240; Vidugiris 1969:151; Senkus 1972:159).

In Latvian the rare diminutives with the suffix -ulis, -e are usually derived from proper names (e.g.: Jānulis, Ližulis) and from names of animals (e.g.: jērulis ‘lamb’, kāzulis ‘goat’). Some of them are based on kinship terms and have equivalents in Lithuanian, cf. Lith. tētūlis and Latv. tētūlis ‘dad’ (Rūķe-Dra Bain 1959: 271-275).

The existence of diminutives with *-ulo- in Old Prussian is suggested by such proper names as Maltu (cf. Lith. Matūlis : Matas, see Trautmann 1925: 176, Endzelins 1943:43).

Diminutives with *-ulo- (<u + *-lo- are attested in other Indo-European languages too, cf. Goth. magula ‘small boy’ (Meid 1967: 387), Gk. ἀγκρόλος ‘small bear’ (Schwyzer 1939:485).

Diminutives with *-lo- are likely to have originated from such augmentative derivations as Lith. didelis : didis ‘big’ (Schulze 1966:75-79). The latter, in their turn, could have arisen from the forms of the heterochrotic declension attested by Gk. μεγάλον- and Lat. magnus ‘big’, Hitt. ḫaštai and ḫaštai-‘bone’ (Benveniste 1935; Ivanov 1965:49).

In Baltic, the determinative *-lo- was used for the derivation of diminutives to a varying extent. In Lithuanian, diminutives with *-lo- became prevalent in the course of its independent development.

**Derivatives with the Determinative *-g-**

In Lithuanian, especially in folk songs, diminutives with the suffix -užis, e, e.g.: brolžis ‘small brother’, vaikūžis ‘small child’, girūžė ‘grove’ etc. (Urbitis 1965: 275) are widely used.
of Kašiadorys, Prienaite, Lazūnai and Zietela, e.g.: langūtas 'small window', vaikūtas 'small child', mergutė 'girl'.

The suffix *(i)utis, -ē is found in Samogitia and in part of the South and East High Lithuanian dialects, e.g.: langūtas 'small window', vaikūtas 'small child', slaugūtas 'small sledge' and the like (LKA III, Map No. 118, p. 133). In East High Lithuanian the derivative kelūta ‘small, rarely used road’ with the older suffix -utis is used alongside with the derivative kelūtē.

Very few diminutives with the suffixes -ūtas, -uta are found in Latvian, cf. Lith. aulinis and Latv. altis 'beer', Lith. rogūtēs and Latv. rūgutas 'sledge' (Rūže-Dražina 1959:243-244).

In Old Prussian the suffix -ut is recorded in the following derivatives having a concrete non-diminutive meaning: nagutis (Nagel) E 117, locutis (Bresme) 562, in the proper names: Brangut, Gurute, Ackute, Jagute etc. and in the place name Wungutkaym (Gerullis 1925:258; Trautmann 1925:182; Endzelins 1943:52).

Baltic diminutives with -ut are compared to the Slavic diminutives with -stis: *nogstis 'nail', lapstis 'patch', *palstis 'part of a carcass' (Belič 1901:183; Otremskij 1968:137; Martynov 1973:43-44). They denote concrete things without any clear diminutive implication.

In Lithuanian derivatives with the suffix -utas denoting concrete things are also found, e.g.: āžutus 'horse-hair' (cf. Slav. *ostis 'thistle', IE *os 'sharp'), degutus 'tar' (cf. Latv. deguts, Lith. dėgti 'to burn'), grūmutas 'cluster' (cf. grūm-ulas 'piece, clod'), kēkutas 'heap, company' (kēkē 'cluster'), kiaukutas 'shell' (cf. kiauk-las 'shell', Lat. caucum 'goebet etc.),' kriauskalai 'frog-spawn' (cf. kiauk-balai 'frog-spawn', kriausk-las 'mussel-shell, snail-shell, shell'), rūšutas 'nut' (cf. OPr bucco-reissi (Bucherker) E 593, Slav. *orčeks 'nut'). It should be pointed out that rūšutas has retained the nom. pl. form of the consonant declension rūšutes 'nuts' in some East Lithuanian dialects. The Old Czech forms dehet 'tar', gen. sing. dechle, lead us to the assumption that the derivative dehat could also have had the forms of the consonant t declension (Trautmann 1923:49-241).

The Sanskrit derivatives with the suffix -ut-originating from the determinative -ut have concrete non-diminutive meanings: Marut- 'the storm god', garmut- 'kind of grass', garut-mant 'winged', kapuc-chala 'hair on the back of the head', the latter is compared to Lat. kaput-, Ocfel. huf'd head' (Burrow 1950:165; Wackernagel, Debrunner 1954:483-485).

Thus, such derivatives as OPr nagutis, Slav. *nogstis, Lith. rūšutas

The determinative *-.s (>-š, cf. Ambrasas, forthcoming, § 274) was integrated into some Lithuanian suffixes: -ek-sis (see p. 4), -el-sė (būdėsė 'old slattern', trobelėšė 'shabby little hut'), -ok-snis (krūmokšnis 'small bush', upokšnis 'stream'), -(i)ok-sis (berniokšis 'short lad', upokšis 'stream'), -(i)ok-sis-tis, -ė (arkiokštės 'poor house', mergiokštė 'flapper; young girl'), -uk-sis (berniokšis 'urchin'), -iukšis, -ė (from -utis, -ė, e.g.: debesiukštis 'small cloud', vaikiukštis 'urchin', mergiukštė 'maiden'), -ys-tis, -ė, (from -utis, -ė, e.g.: buliokštė 'small potato', suniokštis 'poor small dog'), -aik-tis (from -aitis, e.g.: botagaiokštis 'bad whip', pagalaiokštis 'small stick').

The same determinative *-.s is likely to be contained in the Old Prussian diminutive suffix -is-tian: eristian (Lam) E 681, gertistian (Kuchel) 765, prustian, i.e. *persistian (Ferkel) 686, wolostian, i.e. *weisstian (Czickel) 678, wersstian, i.e. *wersstian (Kalb) 674 (Endzelins 1943:53), most probably cemstian, i.e. *cemstian (Schoff) 678 (Mažulis 1981:41) switstand, i.e. swistian (Swin) E 682 (Karaliūnas 1992:19-20) belong here too. Corresponding derivatives are recorded in southern Lithuanian, in the region formerly inhabited by Sudovian tribes related to the Old Prussians, e.g.: črūčisiais 'lamb', kūmčiusis 'small stump', vaikiščiusis 'urchin', mergiščia 'teenage girl' (Būga 1958:305; 1995:229; Skardžius 1943:332, 767). They seem to have equivalents in Illyric as well (Specht 1938; Fraenkel 1941:92).

The determinative *-.s is likely to be contained in the Proto-Indo-European suffix *-isko- by means of which Greek diminutives were commonly formed (e.g.: ἄγγελωτος 'little fellow', σαμβαλλοσ 'small sandal', παιδίσσι 'girl'). In Baltic, Slavic and Germanic this suffix was used to form adjectives (e.g.: Lith. tėniskas, Latv. tēvska 'father's', OPr tawiskan (vatterlicher) III 411, OCS dětškis 'childish, childlike', Goth. manniskis 'human').

**DERIVATIVES WITH THE DETERMINATIVE *-.T**

Some Baltic diminutive suffixes have been formed with the determinative *-.t- attached to the stem u || ū.

Diminutives with the suffix *(i)utis, -ē are used in many Lithuanian dialects, mainly in the southern and southwestern part of Lithuania, e.g.: kelūtis 'small path', zuikūtis 'small hare', savųjūtis 'small handful', virviūtis 'small string'. An older form of this suffix -utas, -a is found in the regions

---

vogeš 'tiny' (Gätters 1955:50). The diminutive meaning can be discerned in all of them.
etc. seem to reflect an earlier state when derivatives with determinative *-t- had no diminutive meaning yet (cf. Mažiulis 1988:163-164; Smoczyński 1989:43-44).

Diminutives with the suffix *-ud- || -ūt- most probably arose in Baltic under the influence of the derivatives with the suffix *-itio- (see p. 13-14). This motivation has mainly affected Lithuanian, while Old Prussian has retained the older state.

The determinative *-t- has also been attached to some of the suffixes, cf. Lith. būbėtė ‘plain old woman’, vaikėtas and vaikėtis ‘urchin’, and the above-mentioned suffixes Lith. -ok-š-tis, Opr -is-tian (see p. 9).

The determinative *-t- itself may have been abstracted from the corresponding element of the heteroclitic declension (Ivanov 1965:48).

**DERIVATIVES WITH THE ADJECTIVE SUFFIX *-ino-**

*-*ino-

Alongside with the old derivatives with *-ino-, diminutives with the adjective suffix *-ino- arose in Baltic.

Latvian diminutives with the suffixes *-ino and *-ino- are distributed approximately in the same regions, only diminutives with *-ino- are rarer, e.g.: liepīns ‘small lime-tree’, darzīns ‘small garden’ (Rūķe-Draviņa 1959:200-201, Map No. 1).

Diminutives with the suffix -ynas and -inas were used side by side in the Lithuanian fishermen’s dialect of East Prussia. Derivatives with -inas, however, denoted somewhat larger objects than the corresponding derivatives with the suffix -ynas did (see p. 11), e.g.: višlinas ‘half-grown chicken which does not lay eggs yet’, žūsinas ‘young goose with feathers’, vaikinas ‘teenager’ (Gerulitis, Stang 1933:26-27). Diminutives of this type are included in the F. Kursaits’ dictionary too.

At present, diminutives with the suffix -inas, -a are most common in the western part of Samogitia, approximately between Klaipėda and Silutė (LKA III, Map No. 119, p. 135). They sometimes are also found in other districts far from this region, e.g.: musinas ‘large fly’ (Dusetos, Subačius), porsinas ‘young pig’ (not only in Grūšlaukis, Pilkiai, Vainutas but also in Akmenė, Šatės, Liudvinavas, Piliškių, Paezerėlių, Alvitas). Besides, the derivative mōtina ‘mother’, which has lost its diminutive meaning, as well as mergina ‘single woman’, vaikinas ‘lad, teenager, child, son’ are widely used in many dialects.

The suffix -inas, denoting males, is likely to have originated from diminutives (Schulze 1966:77; Rūķe-Draviņa 1959:201-204). They are very common in Lithuanian and have equivalents in Latvian and Old Prussian, cf. Lith. āvinas and Latv. avīns, āvens ‘ram’, Opr. avins (Ster) E 679, Lith. kūtinas and Latv. katīns ‘cat’, Lith. žūsinas and Latv. zūsins ‘gander’, Lith. pilīnas and Latv. pilīns ‘drake’ (Endzelins 1951:310).

The above-mentioned facts entitle us to assume the diminutives with the suffix *-ino- to be of Proto-Baltic origin.

*-*ino-

Diminutives containing this suffix (a later variant of the suffix *-ino-, see Ambras 1991a:16) are very productive in Latvian, e.g.: dēliņš ‘little son’,
in the Baltic languages it was used for the derivation of diminutives, which, owing to ancient contacts between the Baltic and Slavic languages, entered the South Slavic languages, cf. Lith. viltis and South Slav. vitić 'small wolf cub' (Ambrasas 1991a:18-20).

\(-*\)-ito- || -oit-ito-

This suffix is an apophonic variant of *-*ito-, cf. Lith. vòkis, Latv. vācitis and Lith. vòkietis, Latv. vācietis 'German'. At first, it was used for the derivation of nomina attributiva, e.g.: Lith. laukiniétis 'resident of the countryside', giminiétis 'relative', pasalietis 'stranger', Latv. jaunietis 'young man', tautietis 'bridegroom'; Lith. giminiatis 'relative', jaunatis 'young man', laukiniatis 'resident of the countryside', Latv. tautaitis 'bridegroom'.

The diminutives with the suffix -aitis, -e are widely used in Lithuanian (in the written language - from the 16th century), e.g.: asilaitis 'donkey', nasišaitis 'orphan', mergyaitis 'girl', tarnaaitis 'maid servant'. There are plenty of derivatives with the suffix -a(iltis), -e in the first collection of Lithuanian folk songs published by L. Reza in the 19th century. These facts show that this derivative type was formed long before the beginning of the Lithuanian written language.

The derivative tarneitē 'maid servant' with the suffix -eitē recorded in old Lithuanian writings can also be connected with the diminutives.

\(-*\)-ait-

A number of diminutives are formed by means of this suffix in the East High Lithuanian dialect, e.g.: mergiôté 'girl, farmhand', kumelíté 'young mare', kojóté 'foot' (Skardžius 1943:352; Urbutis 1965:280-281).

Only one derivative kuaité: kuće 'bitch' (Ružė-Dravić 1959:244) seems to be made by means of the suffix -ait in Latvian.

The diminutives with *-ait- can be related to such Lithuanian nomina attributiva as qòsítis 'jug': qòsitos 'having an ear', barzdítis 'someone with a beard': barzdotos 'bearded', gyslitis 'plantain': gysdotos 'veiny', cf. also hydronyms Ijóttis, Margvőtė and the like (Vanagas 1970:190).
On the development of diminutives in the Baltic languages

Very few Lithuanian diminutives with this suffix are derived in a similar way: vaikėtis ‘urchin’ (Kabeliai), virstētis ‘young crow’ Knyga Nobažn. 2345, cf. eglėtis ‘home made cloth woven in herringbone pattern’ : eglėtas ‘having the appearance of fur needles’.


Lithuanian diminutives bernuolis ‘boy’, drauguolis ‘friend; man’, merguolė ‘grown up, single girl; teenager’ are used side by side with nomina attributiva having an identical suffix: jaunuolis ‘young man’, gudruolia ‘clever person’, kartuolė ‘very bitter mushroom’, snieguolė ‘snowflake’ etc.

In Latvian, diminutives with the suffix -ēns, -a usually denote young animals, e.g.: viļņs ‘young duck’, kaķēns ‘young cat’, but in some dialects (especially in the western part of Courland) they have other diminutive meanings, e.g.: puķēnis ‘little boy’, uzolēns ‘small oak’, mātēna ‘mummy’ (Rūķe-Draņģa 1959:217-230).

In Lithuanian, diminutives with the corresponding suffix -ēnas are very rare. They are used only in some High (especially East) Lithuanian dialects and denote either little ones of animals or have a pejorative meaning, cf. gynatēnas ‘snake’s child’ (Tverecius), kalēnas ‘big kitten’, arklēnas ‘young bad horse’, bernēnas ‘teenager, weak lad’ (Dusetos), botalēnas ‘small bad whip’ (Tauragnai).

On the other hand, in High Lithuanian diminutives with -enas are especially widely used as nomina attributiva to denote people according to their origin or place of residence and have no diminutive meaning, e.g.: anykščėnas ‘resident of Anykščiai’, kupišknėnas ‘resident of Kupiškis’ etc. (LKA III Map No. 110, p. 116). Such use dates back to the 16th-17th centuries. Kinship terms with this suffix, such as brokēnas || brokėnas ‘brother’s son’, seserėnas ‘sister’s son’, are also very old and have equivalents in Latvian and in the Slavic languages, cf. brāļēns ‘brother’s son’, Slav. bratrči ‘ib.’, Latv. māšēns ‘sister’s child’, Slav. sestrēns ‘ib.’ (Endzelins 1951: 303-304; Rūķe-Draņģa 1959:226, 228-229, Slawski 1974:128-129). In Baltic and Slavic, nomina attributiva with -ēno- can also have other meanings, e.g.: Lith. balēnas ‘cabbage’, pelēnas ‘mice hawk’, varnēnas ‘starling’; Latv. raibēns ‘speckled young calf’, Slav. moldēns ‘young lad’.

Thus, the suffix *-ēno-, characteristic of nomina attributiva since ancient times, was used for the derivation of diminutives in some Eastern Baltic dialects only. This suffix is likely to have originated from consonantal declension forms with *-ēn expanded by the thematic vowel o, cf. Lith. kēnas, Slav. kolēno (< *kolę) ‘knee’ and Gk. κολήν ‘shoulder bone’ (Trubat 1959:161).

Conclusions

On the basis of the data discussed above the following chronological strata of diminutives can be established:

1. The oldest derivatives are those with the determinative *-k which formed a basis for the category of diminutives in Proto-Indo-European.

2. In several Indo-European dialects during the oldest period of their development diminutives were formed by means of the determinatives *-l-, *-g- || *-g-, *-s- and the adjective suffix *-ino-.

3. The following affixes were used to form diminutives in Baltic: the determinative *-l-, the adjective suffix *-ino-, *-ino- and the suffixes *-io- and *-eno- which came from nomina attributiva.

References


— (1991a), Baltų ir slavų kalbų vardažodžių daryba (senosios benedykšės ir skrybės), Baltistica 27 (1), 15-34.


Bielenstein, A. (1863), Die lettische Sprache nach ihren Formen erläuert und vergleichend dargestellt, Bd. 1, Berlin.


Chantraine, P. (1933), La formation des noms en grec ancien, Paris: Champion.


Endzelin, J. (1943), Senprušu valoda, Rīga: Universitātes apgāds.

— (1951), Latviešu valodas gramatika, Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība.


On the development of diminutives in the Baltic languages

Gerullis, J., Stangas, Chr. (1933), Lietuvių tvarų tarmė Prūsųose, Kaunas: Švietimo ministerija.


Grinasveckis, V. (1991), Lietuvių tarmės (Fonetika, morfolojių), Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginės institutas.


— (1965), Obščinoeuropejska, praslavjanska i anatolijska jazykovye sistemy, Moskva: Nauka.


Martynov, V. V. (1973), Praslavjanskaja i balto-slavjanskaj derivacijom imen, Minsk: Navuka i technika.


— (1967), Beiträge zur indogermanischen Wortbildungslehre, Kuhns Zeitschrift 81, 217-224.
Otremski,J. (1968), [Rev.]: Stang Ch. S., Vergleichende Grammatik der bulischen Sprachen, Voprosy jazykoznanija 1, 135-149.


Skardžius, P. (1943), Lietuvių kalbos žodžių daryba, Vilnius: Lietuvos mokslų akademija.


---

On the development of diminutives in the Baltic languages


Lietuvos mokslų akademija
Lietuvių kalbos institutas
Antakalnio 6
LT-2055 Vilnius

Saulius Ambrasas