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A FEW REMARKS ON THE LITHUANIAN VOCATIVE

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I. The Basics.

All Lithuanian grammars will tell you Lithuanian has seven grammatical cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative, and vocative. No other living Indo-European language has preserved so many functioning cases, except, in some categories, Modern Latvian.

The nominative is also known as the Subject Case, the genitive is also called the Possessive, the dative is known as the Case of Indirect Object, the accusative's main function is that of the Direct Object, the instrumental often indicates the way, or means, and the locative, in the main, indicates, as its name says, the location, or place. Since most of these cases have a very long history, a history of several thousand years — going back to Early Proto-Indo-European, most of these cases, in the course of time, accrued all kinds of other functions. For example, five of the Lithuanian declensional cases can be used to express TIME: the nominative, the accusative, the instrumental, the locative and, in some special cases, even the genitive. Many of Lithuanian verbs require, or govern, various cases. Lithuanian prepositions can also govern several cases.

But the vocative stands totally apart. No prepositions govern it, it has no verbs to go with it. In that sense, it is really not a grammatical case, but a separate syntactic phrase, utterance, sentence. It can occur at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the sentence. We shall now give a few examples:

- (1) Antanai, kur tu dabar gyveni?
'Antanas/Tony, where do you live now?'
- (2) Mama, kur tu dabar eini?
'Mommy, where are you going now?'
- (3) Kur tu, Antanai, dabar gyveni?
'Where do you live now, Tony?'
- (4) Kur tu, mama, dabar eini?
'Where are you going now, Mom?'
- (5) Kur tu dabar gyveni, Antanai?
'Where do you now live, Tony?'
- (6) Kur tu dabar eini, mama?
'Where are you now going, Mother?'

Of course, there are minor, minute differences in all of these three versions, with certain emphasis being added by the sentence stress. For instance, the versions with the vocative in the middle will not be used as often as the ones with the vocative initially and/or finally.

In other words, the vocative has always had only one single function: that of address, calling someone or something.

Apparently, throughout the many centuries, even millennia, of linguistic change, the speakers of the various Indo-European languages felt no need to add to the sole function of the vocative. However, in most modern Indo-European languages, although the function of the vocative remained practically unchanged, its separate, distinct form disappeared, to be replaced by the basic case, the nominative. Only the sentence intonation was usually preserved. For example:

- (7) John is my older brother. (*John* is the Subject/Nominative).
 (8) John, where is your car? (*John is* in the Vocative/Nominative case).

Clearly, every native speaker of English will apply a different emphasis on 'John'. The listener will understand it as the case of address. In writing, the vocative is usually set off by a comma.

In Proto-Indo-European, the vocative case — so believe most of the Indo-Europeanists — had a distinct, separate form in most categories of the nouns. At the very beginning, some linguists believe, the vocative was the so-called pure stem.

Although Lithuanian is known for its very conservative and archaic structure, it has not preserved the vocative case system totally. What we have, in the present-day Modern Lithuanian, are only remnants of a much fuller system. I.e., a separate, distinct vocative case has been preserved in Lithuanian only in the nominal system: in the Lithuanian nouns, or substantives, and, here, only in the singular. In the plural of nouns as well as all the other declensional systems (i.e., those of the adjectives, numerals, pronouns, and the participles), the old Lithuanian vocative case, as in almost all other Indo-European languages, fell together with the nominative case.

For those readers of *Lituanus* who may never have seen the Lithuanian declensional system, we shall give here several examples from each of the five declensions. This way, they will be able to see how the vocative fits into this ancient declensional system.

Ist Declension / Singular: *vaikas* 'child', *vaikelis* 'little child', *arklys* 'horse'

Nom.	vaikas	vaikelis	arklys
Gen.	vaiko	vaikelio	arklio
Dat.	vaikui	vaikeliui	arkliui
Ace.	vaiką	vaikelį	arklį
Ins.	vaiku	vaikeliu	arkliu
Loc.	vaike	vaikelyje	arklyje
Voc.	vaike!	vaikeli!	arkly!

Notes: 1. The locative differs, here, only in the stress pattern: in the locative, the form *vaike* is stressed on the ending: *vaikè*, in the vocative, it is stressed on the root: *vaikè!* 2. this ending *-e*, in *vaikè!* is what the linguists call the pure *-e* stem. Cf. Latin: *Domine*, *Brute*, etc.

IIInd Declension: *mama* 'mother', *katė* 'cat', *marti* 'daughter-in-law.'

Nom.	mama	katė	marti
Gen.	mamos	katės	marčios
Dat.	mamai	katei	marčiai
Ace.	mamą	katę	marčią
Ins.	mama	kate	marčia
Loc.	mamoje	katėje	marčioje
Voc.	mama!	kate!	marti! (marčia!)

Notes:

1. There are only two nouns with the *-ti*: *marti*, as above, and *pati* 'wife, spouse'. In some dialects of Lithuanian, either one or the other vocative form of *marti* may be used.
2. The vocative of *mama* is *māma!* — stress on the first syllable.
3. Nouns like *katė*, have a different *-e* and a different stress: *kāte!*

IIIrd Declension: *aikis* 'eye' /femine/, *vagis* 'thief' /masculine/.

Nom.	akis	vagis
Gen.	akies	vagies
Dat.	akiai	vagiui
Ace.	akį	vagį
Ins.	akimi	vagiu
Loc.	akyje	vagyje
Voc.	akie!	vagie!

The vocative forms here, in — *ie*, could be considered as very ancient, very archaic forms, since they do go back to Proto-Indo-European diphthong *ei*. Which is a full grade of the PIE ablaut, or apophony. We shall not go into technical complexities of the PIE ablaut here.

IVth Declension: *sūnus* 'son', *profesorius* 'profesor'

Nom.	sūnus	profesorius
Gen.	sūnaus	profesorius
Dat.	sūnui	profesoriumi
Ace.	sūnų	profesoriumų
Ins.	sūnumi	profesoriumi
Loc.	sūnuje	profesoriume
Voc.	sūnau!	profesorium!

Just like *-ie*, in the 3rd declension, so in the 4th declension the *-au*, from PIE *-ou*, is a very archaic feature.

Vth Declension: *piemuo* 'shepherd', *duktė* 'daughter', *sesuo* 'sister'

Nom.	piemuo	duktė	sesuo
Gen.	piemens	dukters	sesers
Dat.	piemeniui	dukteriai	seseriai
Ace.	piemenį	dukterį	seserį
Ins.	piemeniu	dukterimi	seseria
Loc.	piemenyje	dukteryje	seseryje
Voc.	piemenie!	dukterie!	seserie!

Since the Lithuanian fifth declension represents, as it were, some of the very archaic consonantal stems, we have here rather complicated surface forms. In other words, we have here the remnants of the ancient consonantal stems, plus the ending *-ie*.

Linguists disagree on the precise explanation of the development of this vocative case, but one thing is demonstrably clear: the vocative of the fifth declension is much more archaic than the nominative case.

One might note another fact here: the formal vocative forms such as *dukterie!* and *seserie!* are hardly ever used in everyday speech. Usually, they are replaced either with the diminutive *dukrele!*, or a form such as *dukra!* Same thing could be said about the word "sesuo": in practice, either the diminutive *sesute!*, or *sesele!*, or the shortened form *sese!* are used.

NB. The diminutive *sesele*, no longer in its diminutive application, also developed two more meanings: a) sister/nun; b) nurse.

II. The Exceptions.

Throughout centuries, or even millennia, of development, certain changes appeared in the vocative case of Lithuanian. Namely, the generic nouns of the first declension, in *-as*, retained the old inherited vocative ending in *-e*, but certain proper nouns of this declension changed this inherited ending into a new ending in *-ai*. For example:

<i>Generic nouns</i>	<i>Proper nouns/ Names</i>
<i>Nominative: Vocative</i>	<i>Nominative: Vocative</i>
ponas: pone 'Mister'	Jonas: Jonai 'John'
vilkas: vilke 'wolf'	Vilkas: Vilkai 'Wolf/ name'
liūtas: liūte 'lion'	Liūtas: Liūtai 'Leon', 'Leo'
vanagas: vanage 'hawk'	Vanagas: Vanagai 'Hawk'/name'

For many years, this was a riddle for linguists. Nobody could explain how this might have happened. Only around the middle of the 20th century this riddle was explained by the late professor Antanas Salys: this new ending *-ai* comes from the extension of certain pronouns, such as *jisai* 'he', *jinai* 'she', etc.

Similar changes occurred with the derivative nouns of the first declension in *-ojas*, and *-ėjas*: instead of the ancient Vocative ending *-e*, these nouns borrowed their vocative ending from the IVth declension, thus: *-au*. Examples: *teisėjas*: *teisėjau* 'judge', *mokytojas*: *mokytojau* 'teacher', *rašytojas*: *rašytojau* 'writer, author'.

What linguists cannot answer is why these particular stems borrowed their new vocative from another declension. Many of them believe it was done for the so-called euphonic reasons: it made it easier to pronounce.

NB. In some dialects, even the diminutive *Dievulis* 'dear Lord' has this type of vocative case, namely *Dievuliau!* Although the normal *Dievuli!* is also used.

A really special case is the vocative of the ancient noun *velnias* 'devil'. The following forms have been noted in various Lithuanian dialects: *velne!* *velny!* *velniau!* *velnie!* As of now /Fall, 1994/, it is not clear which of these four forms will win in the end.

Features like the vocative case make Lithuanian archaic because some of the forms we discussed are inherited directly from Proto-Indo-European.