



William R. Schmalstieg. **A Lithuanian Historical Syntax.**

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William R. Schmalstieg has written a pioneering work: *A Lithuanian Historical Syntax* (ALHS) is the first book devoted solely to the historical development of the syntax of the Lithuanian language to be written in English or, judging by the extensive list of references near the end of ALHS, in any language. This work will no doubt attract a wide variety of readers who will come to the work with a daunting array of expectations. Certainly, ALHS will not satisfy all of those expectations—what book could? Pioneering works are not always well-received, but Professor Schmalstieg's latest study merits enthusiastic welcome by both specialists and amateurs in a wide range of fields including all aspects of Lithuanian language study; Baltic linguistics and, in general, Indo-European (IE) linguistics; language typology; case grammar; general linguistics, especially diachronic or synchronic syntax; and many other areas. There is something for nearly everyone in ALHS.

The absence of any introductory statement about the purpose or goals of ALHS, or a guide to its organization or the linguistic theories which underlie its presentation of Lithuanian historical syntax may make it difficult for some readers to negotiate their way through some of the more complex arguments that Schmalstieg presents. The fact is that ALHS is not merely a standard reference book or an advanced textbook on Lithuanian historical syntax. It has elements of these types of works, and in places it comes very close to the style and organization of some of the more traditional descriptive and normative grammars whose information it distills and summarizes critically. But ALHS is also an attempt to use Lithuanian as a starting point for the reclamation and reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) syntax. In ALHS Schmalstieg argues persuasively for seeing in the historical development of Lithuanian syntax some of the keys to solving the problems of IE historical syntax and of the possible relationship between the IE languages and languages of other families.

The field of IE historical syntax is far from serene. The possibility of reconstructing syntax with the same methods that produce reliable results for phonology and morphology has been seriously questioned (see Winter 1984: especially 622-623). Even a cursory survey of current views of historical syntax is beyond the scope of this review, but the reader of ALMS will note that Schmalstieg is a firm proponent of the reconstructability of syntactic structures and of the utility of comparisons based on language typology. Schmalstieg relies on interpretations of linguistic sources and methods of argumentation, comparison and reconstruction which may run counter to some of the more rigorous theoretical constraints that some scholars have proposed (see, for instance, Vennemann 1984 on the use of language typology and Watkins 1976 and Winter 1984 on the use of the comparative method and selection of textual sources in the reconstruction of PIE syntax). But the informed reader will see in ALHS an important effort to present some of the phenomena of Lithuanian syntax—phenomena that are among the most interesting and difficult to explain in IE historical linguistics—within the context not only of the history of the Lithuanian language (of which the period of written texts is notoriously brief) but also of the earliest attested IE languages, including Sanskrit, Hittite, Greek and Tocharian.

Schmalstieg devotes the larger part of ALHS to analysis of Lithuanian syntactic data along the lines of the theories introduced in his previous book, *Indo-European Linguistics. A New Synthesis* (1980: especially Chapter 5). He presents a picture of the transformation of IE (among, one presumes, its earliest dialects) from "a mixed ergative language" — specifically a language with a nominative-accusative syntax (agent in nominative, patient in accusative) in the present tense, but an ergative syntax (patient in nominative, agent in genitive) in the preterite—to a language "almost completely nominativized in the course of its extant history . . ." (ALHS: 142). Much of the evidence for this transformation is seen in the syntax of Lithuanian participles.

Schmalstieg traces the reshaping of the PIE verbal system (including the development of the morphological markers of the participles and other forms), especially in the areas of tense and voice, through the re-interpretation of originally ergative and antipassive categories as, respectively, medio-passive (comprising the IE middle and passive voices) and active. Relicts of an earlier ergative syntax appear particularly in constructions with neuter passive participles without case

agreement (e.g., 34: "Senų miškai mylėta" — "Ancients [genitive plural] forests [nominative pl.] loved [neuter singular past passive participle]" = "The ancients loved the forests" [which is from Baranauskas's "Anykščių šilelis" ("The Forest of Anykščiai") from the 19th century, though the only reference given is to a 1955 article by Matthews]), and in the constructions with the neuter past passive participle of the verb *būti* 'to be' (e.g., 184: "Čia jo [gen. sing.] būta" — "he was here.") These constructions point to an earlier stage of IE syntax where the syntactic interplay of words was far less constrained by gender and number agreement, or by distinctions between active and passive, transitive and intransitive (that the verb "to be" can have a passive participle may come as a surprise to some readers not familiar with Lithuanian), and even the very notions of verb and noun which are deeply ingrained in the traditional views of IE languages. Schmalstieg's radical revision of the traditional views of IE syntax is a logical extension of his re-interpretation of IE phonology and morphology presented in *IE Linguistics* and summarized at the beginning of Chapter 29 of ALMS. In part, ALMS seems to be Schmalstieg's answer to criticism (Lehman 1981) that he neglected syntax in *IE Linguistics*, although readers who found the latter work unconvincing may not be easily won over by ALMS. It is just as likely, however, that the reader of ALMS will find the author's views refreshing and thought-provoking regardless of how convincing they ultimately are. In this sense, the very least that can be said about ALMS is something very great indeed: It is a seminal work of scholarship that will inspire other scholars and challenge their intellectual abilities as they attempt to defend or refute Schmalstieg's views.

While other works on the historical syntax of a single language tend to be organized chronologically (e.g., Traugott 1972) or around types of sentences or syntagma, usually presented in order of increasing complexity (e.g., Visser 1963-73, Stecenko 1972 or the series *Sravnitel'no—istoriceskij sintaksis vostočnoslavjanskix jazykov. [Comparative-historical syntax of the East Slavic languages.]* 1968-73), ALMS is organized mainly according to morphological categories. As in case grammar, the verb is seen as the cornerstone of syntactic relations. For this reason, no one section of ALMS is devoted to the development of finite verb forms; instead, every section tacitly demonstrates the centrality of the verb. Of the forty-seven chapters of the book, the first twenty-eight (pages 1-127) focus on the various kinds of participles in Lithuanian and their many syntactic uses. Each type of participle, except for the "gerunds" (indeclinable adverbial participles), are given their own chapters, and there are chapters or sections of chapters on the attributive, resultative, adverbial, appositional and predicative uses of participles, as well as their use in indirect speech and, in general, in the nominative, accusative and dative cases.) Chapters 29 through 40 (128-272) are devoted to the usage of nouns in the nominative, genitive, dative, instrumental, simple locative, illative, adessive and allative cases. The treatment of the genitive and dative is split into separate chapters on their adnominal and adverbial (NB not adverbial) uses, while the accusative is divided according to its adverbial and independent functions. A discussion of prepositions comprises Chapter 41 (273-298), and adjectives are the focus of Chapter 42 (299-309). Chapters 43 through 47 (310-327) present certain aspects of word order, namely, Anatolian and Lithuanian Word Order, Functional Sentence Perspective, Position of the Adjective, Position of the Adverb (NB an adverbial word, not a noun in an adverbial case) and Conclusions about Word Order. This is followed by five pages of "Footnotes", an extensive list of References (14 pages), a comprehensive, 63-page Word List (with an explanatory note) keyed to the examples given in the main text, and a list of abbreviations used.

The only drawback to this verb-centered approach of ALMS is that, in making the treatment of verbs decentralized (albeit pervasive), Schmalstieg relinquishes the chance to give a unified presentation of verbal syntax which a reader familiar with the traditional approaches to historical syntax might expect. The treatment of certain forms, such as the infinitive and the finite verb forms, is diffused across several chapters. Some sentence types (such as sentences which consist of a finite verb alone or with adverbs, or simple-subject verb or verb-complement sentences) seem to get slighted.

Throughout *A Lithuanian Historical Syntax* Schmalstieg uses a wealth of examples drawn from earlier texts (including the catechisms of Vilentas, Mažvydas and Daukša, Klein's Grammar and *Compendium Lituanico-Germanicum*, Bretkūnas's Bible, Postilla and Hymnal, Sirvydas's *Punktay sakimu*, and other works) as well as folk songs and sayings, beside examples from the Academy Grammar and Dictionary and other recent sources, including a fair amount of material from dialects. The opening section presents a picture of a language in which verbs play their most significant role in the guise of participles. Chapters 1-28 on the syntax of participles constitute a critical summary of Vytautas Ambrazas's *Lietuvių kalbos dalyvių istorinė sintaksė (A Historical Syntax of Lithuanian Participles)* (1979), into which Schmalstieg genitive direct object, the sequence denoting that the action of the verb is temporally limited" (169) is not elaborated upon further (although three examples of this usage are given from the Academy Grammar). Does this usage represent an extension of the partitive meaning of genitive to time? If so, what is the syntactic significance of a typically verbal trait—tense or time—being marked in an adjacent noun? Also, the reader occasionally finds rather authoritative assertions given without any reference or documentation, as in the opening sentences of the chapter on the adverbial genitive (160):

The Indo-European genitive case was originally probably some kind of locative case from which the notion of belonging developed. It is from this 'notion of belonging' that the agentive notion developed (the action belongs to X).

Nor is the word "notion" defined in terms of any current syntactic models.

Some minor problems arise in the examples. The original spelling of the older texts is maintained, and, although one eventually becomes acclimated to its irregularities and idiosyncrasies, sometimes older forms creep beyond the examples to appear in the text beside normalized forms in present-day orthography for no apparent reason (for example, 249: *wadinti* and *a/got*; beside *daryti*, *turėti*, etc.). Schmalstieg pursues the admirable practice of giving English glosses for all the examples, as well as translations whenever the glosses do not scan as English sentences. But sometimes the

translations are uneven or inconsistent. Occasionally they are not sentences when the Lithuanian originals are. (e.g., 104: buvęs with two different glosses and yet another translation; 125: for "Ir vilkui pasenusiam dantys išlaksto" we have "Even when the wolf becomes old his teeth fall out" instead of "When even the wolf etc."; 172: for "ir nėra weisdeghima ant personu yemimp" the non-English "and there does not exist respect of persons with him" is given as a translation; 322: "Pasidarė nebegeiai", which is glossed as "became no-longer-well", is translated as "No longer began (to feel) well.") The source of examples drawn from modern Lithuanian is not always clear (for example, 126, sentences k, l, m and n: are they drawn from the last-mentioned reference, however distant; are they overheard utterances of native speakers; or are they utterances constructed by the author?).

Finally the reader should note that beginning with section 42.9 (page 307) the system of marking examples with letters which had been in use through section 42.8 is dropped, and all further examples through the last chapter (page 327) are numbered instead. Also, pages 47 and 48 are reversed, i.e., the text on page 46 continues first on 48, then on 47.

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