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The representation of middle event types in Old Lithuanian

The middle voice as we know it from classical Indo-European languages, such as Sanskrit or Ancient Greek, vanished in the majority of the daughter languages whose written attestation begins considerably later. Nevertheless, the event types expressed by means of the middle voice do not cease to exist with the loss of a morphosyntactic category: new ways of coding those situation types developed. Thus the question arises as to whether these new systems cover the same semantic range formerly represented by the middle voice. In this paper we will take a closer look at the development of middle semantics from Proto-Indo-European to the Baltic language family with a focus on Old Lithuanian.

The framework for this undertaking is laid out in Suzanne Kemmer's study *The Middle Voice* in which she defines a number of middle event types and their reflexive counterparts based on a typological background. Using this model, the functions of the middle voice in Hittite, Homeric Greek and Vedic Sanskrit were compared in order to reconstruct the semantic spectrum of the middle diathesis in Proto-Indo-European. During this process Kemmer's categorizations were adjusted in order to apply them to the needs of historic corpora since some middle and reflexive situation types are difficult to distinguish from each other, as Kemmer mentions herself. In addition, some criteria for the distinction can hardly be held up due to the limited material available.

This paper, however, is focused on the Old Lithuanian reflexive verbs and their ability to represent middle event types. For this purpose, the evidence collected for my MA thesis will be supplemented by more data from the Old Lithuanian corpus. When evaluating the examples, it will be important to keep in mind that the majority of the Old Lithuanian literature consists of translations from German, Polish and Latin, with only a few exceptions. Another problem that we might face would be the genre of the texts in the corpus: although the number of catechisms and bible translations is abundant, the reflexive contexts they deliver might be limited. Comparing the functions of the Old Lithuanian reflexive to those previously reconstructed for the middle voice of the proto-language will show how middle semantics are represented in a non-middle voice system, as well as if and to what extent the range of functions became broader or narrower.