The submerged genitive in Old Prussian

Daniel Petit
École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France

Abstract. This paper is devoted to the Old Prussian phrase ʃwaiäʃmu ʃupʃei buttan ‘to his own house’ (Enchiridion, III 87\(\text{c}\)). Far from being simply the result of a syntactic error, the genitive ʃupʃei ‘of oneself’ can be recognized as the reflex of an archaic syntactic pattern, the “submerged genitive”, which has left numerous traces in Baltic and other Indo-European languages (Slavic, Greek, Latin, Old High German).

Keywords: syntax, possessive, genitive, agreement

1 Introduction
The syntax of Old Prussian is notoriously difficult to analyze in any detail as a result of the fact that its most significant documents are word-for-word translations from German and provide us only limited access to the real use of the language. To overcome this difficulty, scholars generally attach particular importance to all those passages where non-trivial divergences can be observed between the German and the Old Prussian text, with the hope that these divergences may reveal linguistic features genuinely rooted in Old Prussian. Needless to say, this principle of analysis presents serious limitations, because it may happen that the diverging Old Prussian text simply shows a scribal mistake or misunderstanding, without any foundation in the language. This is not a reason for discouragement, however, at least not completely. A close examination of diverging micro-contexts can sometimes give us a glimpse of interesting features of Old Prussian syntax. The aim of this paper is to call attention to one
such feature, which can be called “the submerged genitive”. It is offered to Axel Holvoet in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Baltic linguistics.

2 Old Prussian

In the Old Prussian translation of Martin Luther’s *Enchiridion* (1561), we find the following passage:

(1) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 87\(g\) [1561]

| Old Prussian | German |
|--------------|--------|
| *kas* who. NOM.SG | *der* who. NOM.SG |
| *fwaïʃmu* 3.SG.POSS.DAT.SG | *feinem* 3.SG.POSS.DAT.SG |
| *fupfei* self. GEN.SG | *eigen* own. DAT.SG |
| *buttan* house. ACC.SG | *Hauʃe* house. DAT.SG |
| *labbai* well manage.PRS.3 | *wol* subj.PRS.3 |
| *perflallê* | *fürftehe* |

‘who manages his own house well’ (translation Schmalstieg 1974, 130)

As a rule, the syntax of the Old Prussian translation is very closely based on the corresponding syntax of the German original text. In particular, the case system of Old Prussian is largely calqued on the case system of German through basic equivalence rules equating the individual case forms of Old Prussian with those of German. The passage mentioned above represents an obvious exception to this principle: the German adjective *eigen* ‘own’, which should stand in the dative case according to the grammatical agreement required by the context (cf. Germ. *feinem...Hauʃe* ‘to his house’),\(^1\) is not rendered by a corresponding adjective in the dative in Old Prussian, but by a pronominal genitive *fupfei* (III 87\(g\)), literally ‘of oneself’. That this form must be analyzed as a genitive is supported by the fact that its ending -sei is abun-

\(^1\) Note that the Prussian text has a ‘mixed construction’ (*fwaïʃmu*..*buttan*..) due to an imperfect rendition of German *feinem...Hauʃe*, where the dative is better marked on the possessive than on the noun. On mixed constructions in Prussian, see Euler (1985), Zigmantavičiūtė & Zigmantavičiūtė (2000, 34–38), Petit (2007), Schmalstieg (2015, 297–301).
dantly attested in the Old Prussian corpus with the function of a pronominal genitive:

- **maifei** ‘of me’, cf. *fen maifei polligun* = Germ. *mit meines gleichen* ‘with my neighbor’ (III 68.4)
- **twaifei** ‘of you, your’, e.g. *twaifei Deiwas* = deines Gottes ‘of your God’ (III 27.13)
- **fwaifei** ‘of him, his’, cf. *fwaifei ālgas werts* = feines lohns werd ‘worthy of his hire’ (III 87.18)
- **tieffei** ‘of the…’, e.g. *tieffei Tāwas* = des Vaters ‘of the father’ (III 65.3)
- **šchiēfe** ‘of this…’, e.g. *šchiēfe kermenes* = diʃʒ Leibes ‘of this body’ (III 41.9)
- **tenneʃʃei** ‘of that…’, e.g. *tenneʃʃei pallaipʃans* = nach feinen Geboten ‘[following] his orders’ (III 39.8)

As a rule, the emphatic adjective *sups / subs* ‘self’ (Old Pr. *subas, apparently from PIE *subh-os*) agrees with the noun or the pronoun it contributes to emphasizing, in the nominative: *tans ſups* ‘he himself’ (III 57.15 = Germ. *er felbs*), *noūfon Rikijs Chrif tus ſups* ‘our Lord Christ himself’ (III 121.15-16 = Germ. *vnfer Herr Chrif tus felbs*), in the genitive: *prei tieffei ſupʃas etnīʃtin* ‘by his own grace’ (III 63.8 = Germ. *durch deʃʃelbigen gnade*), in the dative: *febbei ſupʃmu* ‘to himself’ (III 95.10 = Germ. *jm ſelbʃt*), *Chriʃto ſubban* ‘to Christ himself’ (III 95.10 = Germ. *Chriʃto ſelbs*), or in the accusative: *mijlis twaian Tawiʃen kai tien ſubban* ‘love your neighbor as yourself’ (III 97.16 = Germ. *Liebe deinen Neheʃten / als dich ſelbʃt*), *bhe ſtan Druwīngin Noe / ſubban Aʃman* ‘and the pious Noah being himself the eighth’ (III 119.13 = Germ. *vnd den gleubigen Noe

---

2 Cf. Trautmann (1910, 261–262 § 208, 264 § 211, 265 § 213), Rosinas (1988, 103). The origin of the pronominal ending -sei is disputed (< PIE *-sio* + particle -i according to Trautmann 1910, 262, more imprecisely Schmalstieg 1974, 125).

3 Old Pr. *sups / subs* (< PIE *subh-os*) is usually seen as derived from the PIE reflexive stem *sue-* enlarged by a “suffix” *-bʰo-*, i.e. *sue-bʰo-* put in the zero grade (full grade *sue-bʰ-o- → zero grade *su-bʰ-o*), cf. Stang (1966, 238). From a functional point of view, there is nothing against the assumption that a particle “self” derives from a reflexive stem, whose original meaning is likely to have been purely emphatic (“self”) rather than reflexive (“one-self”). But, from a morphological point of view, the shift to the zero grade *su-bʰ-o-* remains completely ad hoc: there is no evidence that the PIE reflexive particle *sue- was subject to ablaut. The formation of the word itself is questionable: is it derived by means of an obscure suffix *-bʰ-o-? or compound with a root *-bʰeh₂- (*bʰh₂-o*)? All this remains a matter of conjecture.
/felb Acht), even if the accusative is due to a mistranslation of the German text: effe Deiwan jubban ‘from God himself’ (III 65 \(_{11}\) = Germ. von Gott felbs).

Particularly frequent is the collocation stan jubban = den felben ‘the same’ (e.g. III 29 \(_{4}\)) with various equivalents in the German text = dasselbig (III 29\(_{14}\)), den felbigen (III 39\(_{12}\)), dasselbige (III 35\(_{14}\), 47\(_{2,3}\), 55\(_7\), 59\(_{2,3}\), 73\(_{10}\), 95\(_{21}\), 99\(_7\), cf. also III 99\(_{13-14}\), 117\(_1\), 125\(_1\), daffel (III 117\(_1\)), diefelbig (III 105\(_{28}\)), diefelbe (III 119\(_{21}\)), acc.pl. fans jubbans = Germ. den felben (III 37\(_6\)), diefelbig (III 85\(_{19}\)).

As far as grammatical agreement is concerned, the Old Prussian emphatic adjective sups or subs ‘self’ generally behaves like the corresponding adjectives of Lithuanian pàts and Latvian pats ‘self’, both of which agree with the noun or the pronoun to which they are linked. Instances from Old Lithuanian (Mažvydas, Daukša) are the following:

- **Nominative**: tu pats ‘yourself’ (MŽ 58\(_5\)); ghis pats ‘himself’ (MŽ 140\(_4\)); ius patis ‘yourselves’ (MŽ 9\(_{14}\)); tewss pats ‘the father himself’ (MŽ 62\(_{13}\)); pátis Wiefspatis Diewas ‘the Lord God himself’ (DP 23\(_{21}\) = Pol. fam Pan BÓg)
- **Genitive**: per tawa paties didighi Sušimilima ‘by your great charity’, lit. ‘by the great charity of yourself’ (MŽ 103\(_{20}\) = Germ. durch dieselbe deine grundlose Barmherzigkeit); per io paties tikranghi jəodi ‘by his own true word’, lit. ‘by the true word of himself’ (MŽ 140\(_{19}\) = Germ. durch seine eigene wort); núg própies Díewo ‘from God himself’ (DP 276\(_{12}\) = Pol. od jąmeogo Bogá)
- **Dative**: Tau pacžem ‘to yourself’ (MŽ 538\(_8\) = Lat. Tibi soli, Germ. an dir allein); patžem Diewu ‘to God himself’ (MŽ 115\(_7\) = Germ. Gott selbst); pacžam’ Wiefspati Diewuy ‘to the Lord God himself’ (DP 31\(_7\) = Pol. jāmumu Pánu Bogu)
- **Instrumental**: pacžiu dāiktu ‘through the thing itself’ (DP 292\(_4\) = Pol. jāma rzeczą); jú patimi Lútheriu ‘with Luther himself’ (DP 204\(_{30}\) = Pol. jāmym Luthrem)
- **Locative**: kuri e ėt pateme Jefiufe Chrifluře ‘that is in Jesus Christ himself’ (MŽ 30\(_{15}\) = Lat. quae est in Christo Iesu); iamé patimé ‘in himself’ (DP 45\(_{48}\) = Pol. w nim jąmym)
- **Accusative**: fugawa pati Welna ‘he deceived the devil himself’ (MŽ 91\(_8\), 282\(_2\), 296\(_{12}\)); inģ pāti prāgarą ‘into Hell itself’ (DP 147\(_{10}\) = Pol. do jąmeogo pieklá)
Instances from Old Latvian are the following:

- Nominative: *tu pats* ‘yourself’ (Elger 1621, 170); *winfch pats* ‘himself’ (JT 1685, Mk 4, 27); *Jefus pats* ‘Jesus himself’ (JT 1685, Lk 3, 23)
- Genitive: *winņa pafcha faime* ‘his own household’, lit. ‘the household of himself’ (JT 1685, Mt 10, 36); *no pafcha Zilweka Jsfahstifcchanas* ‘from the man himself’s interpretation’ (JT 1685, 2Peter 1, 20); *no pafcha Dibbena* ‘from the bottom itself, in-depth’ (MLG ca 1690, 90 = Germ. *gründlich*)
- Dative: *few pafcham* ‘to himself’ (JT 1685, Acts 21, 11); *Deewam pafcham* ‘to God himself’ (Manzel 1654, 20530-31)
- Accusative: *us pafchu leelu Pirkʃtu* ‘on the great toe itself’ (MLG ca 1690, 185 = Germ. *auf den großen Zeh*)

If we come back to Old Prussian, the agreement rule described above is generally respected. In two single instances, the adjective *subs* ‘self’ is left in the nominative, though its syntactic head stands in the accusative (ex. 2) or the dative (ex. 3):

(2) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 491 [1561]

Old Prussian

*Deiwas Emnes aft arwiʃkai*

God.GEN.SG name.NOM.SG be.PRS.3 really

*en fiʃ en Swints.*
in itself.ACC.SG self.NOM.SG holy.NOM.SG

German

*GOTTES Name iʃt zwar*

God.GEN.SG name.NOM.SG be.PRS.3.SG really

*an jhm felbs heylig*
in itself.DAT.SG self holy.NOM.SG

‘The name of God is really holy by itself.’

(3) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 7318 [1561]

Old Prussian

*Sta aft fias arwis kėrmens*

this.NOM.SG.NT be.PRS.3 the.NOM.SG.M true.NOM.SG.M body.NOM.SG.M

*bhe krawia Noʃʃou Rikijas […]*

and blood.NOM.SG.F 1.PL.GEN.PL Lord.GEN.SG
effect Christ from self implanted.

German

Es ist der ware Leib this be the true body.

and blood from Christ implanted self himself‘This the true body and blood of Our Lord […] implanted by Christ himself’

There are two possible explanations. In (2), it is possible that the nominative *fups* refers to the subject of the sentence *enmen* ‘name’, not to the reflexive pronoun *fien*. But this explanation cannot work for (3), where the subject is of neuter gender (*staₜₙ* ‘it’) or of mixed gender (*kermensₘ bhe krawiaᵣ* ‘the body and the blood’). An alternative explanation could be that the unexpected nominative *subs* is an imprecise rendition of the corresponding form in the German original *selbs* (Modern German *selbst*), used in both instances as an adverb without clear case marking. A more problematic instance is III 49₁₆, where the German adjective *felbs*, apparently used in reference to a dative (*von ihm*), is translated in Old Prussian by an obscure form *fubbai* (ex. 4):

(4) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 49₁₆ [1561]

Old Prussian

Deiwes rïks pereit labbai effeṭennan

German

Gottes Reich kombt wol

‘The kingdom of God comes from himself without our prayer.’
The form _subbai_ cannot be analyzed as an accusative (in reference to _tennan_ ‘him’) nor as a nominative (in reference to the masculine _rīks_ ‘kingdom’). The most likely explanation is that it is based on the understanding of German _ʃelbs_ as an adverb, rendered in Old Prussian by a form distinctively marked by the adverbial suffix _-ai_ (cf. _labbai_ ‘well’).

In the last-mentioned instances (ex. 2–4), an unmarked German form (_ʃelbs_) is either translated in Old Prussian by a nominative (_subs_) or understood as adverbial (_ʃubbai_). This cannot have been the case with _ʃupʃei_ (III 87), clearly marked as a genitive. Trautmann (1910, 210, § 112) describes its use as a “mixed construction” (Germ. _gemischte Konstruktion_ and adds (1910, 268 § 223) that “the passage is not necessarily to be recommended, since we expect _swaisei_ = Lith. _sawo_” (Germ. _die Stelle ist nicht unbedingt zu loben, da wir „swaisei“ = lit. „sawo“ erwarten). This qualification is too imprecise to be really useful to understand the syntax of _ʃupʃei_. A more accurate explanation is needed.

When dealing with Old Prussian, it is always necessary to start with the German substrate which constitutes the basis for the Old Prussian translation. Old Prussian _ʃupʃei_ renders the German adjective _eigen_ ‘own’, which, in this context, is not clearly case-marked: this could have been instrumental in the use of an unmarked form in Old Prussian, but can hardly account for the choice of a marked genitive. From a semantic point of view, the specificity of an adjective ‘own’ (Germ. _eigen_) is that it can be understood as the possessive form corresponding to the emphatic adjective ‘self’ (Germ. _selbst_). ‘Own’ means ‘of oneself’, just as ‘my’ means ‘of me’, ‘your’ ‘of you’, etc. The striking point is that ‘own’ semantically puts the emphasis on the possessor, but formally agrees with the possessee, exactly in the same way as a possessive adjective like ‘my’ or ‘your’ refers to the possessor, but formally agrees with the possessee.

| Basic form | I   | you | he, she | we | they | self |
|------------|-----|-----|---------|----|------|------|
| Possessive form | my | your | his, her | our | their | own |

The equivalence between German _eigen_ and Old Prussian _ʃupʃei_ appears in two other passages of the _Enchiridion_ (ex. 5–6):
(5) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 43\textsubscript{20} [1561]

Old Prussian

\begin{verbatim}
noʃtan kai as tennēʃmu
\end{verbatim}

German

\begin{verbatim}
Auff das ich fein
\end{verbatim}

\textit{‘so that I may be his own’} (translation W. R. Schmalstieg 1974, 130)

(6) Old Prussian *Enchiridion*, III 45\textsubscript{9} [1561]

Old Prussian

\begin{verbatim}
is ſupʃai isprefnā neggi ḣpartin
\end{verbatim}

German

\begin{verbatim}
aus eigener Vernunft noch Krafft
\end{verbatim}

\textit{‘(neither) from his own reason nor strength’}

Interestingly enough, however, two other instances of German \textit{eigen} are rendered directly by the adjective \textit{ſups / ſubs} \textit{‘self’} (ex. 7–8):

(7) Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 103\textsubscript{17} [1561]

Old Prussian

\begin{verbatim}
Beggi niaintonts aft ainontinreifan
\end{verbatim}

German

\begin{verbatim}
Denn niemandt hat jemal
\end{verbatim}

\textit{‘For nobody has ever hated his own flesh.’}
Old Prussian: *Enchiridion*, III 103,15 [1561]

Old Prussian

*Tīt turri diği ftaï wijrai*

so have,PRS,3 also the,NOM,PL men,NOM,PL

*fwaïns gannans milijt*

REFL,Poss,ACC,PL wives,ACC,PL love,INF

*kāïgi fwiïan ſubban kërmënen.*

like REFL,Poss,ACC,SG self,ACC,SG body,ACC,SG

German

*Alſo folle n auch die Menner*

so have,PRS,3,PL also the,NOM,PL men,NOM,PL

*jre Weiber lieben /

3,PL,Poss,ACC,PL wives,ACC,PL love,INF

*als jre eigene Leibe.*

like 3,PL,Poss,ACC,PL own,ACC,PL body,ACC,PL

‘Also men should love their wives just like their own body.’

These examples show an incorrect use of the adjective *sups / subs* ‘self’ (emphasis on the referent) instead of ‘own’ (emphasis on the possessor of the referent). We are thus confronted with two different solutions to the same problem of translation: German *eigen* ‘own’ is rendered either by the genitive *ʃupʃeʃi* ‘of oneself’ (ex. 1, 5–6) or erroneously by the adjective *ʃups / ʃubs* ‘self’ (ex. 7–8). What these two solutions have in common is the impossibility of translating Germ. *eigen* directly: this suggests that Old Prussian did not have an adjective ‘own’.

3 Lithuanian and Latvian

In this respect it is interesting to note that the other Baltic languages encounter the same difficulty. In their oldest existing texts they lack an adjective ‘own’ and particularly in translated texts have to resort to different strategies to render it, in a way very much similar to Old Prussian. In Lithuanian a sequence like ‘my own body’ is routinely translated as *màno patiẽs kūnas* (‘the body of myself’), where the adjective ‘own’ is rendered by the genitive *patiẽs* ‘self*gen,sg*‘ agreeing with the possessive genitive *màno* ‘of me*gen,sg*‘. Since the possessive meaning is regularly conveyed in Lithuanian by possessive genitives (*màno* ‘of me’, *tàvo* ‘of you*sg*‘, *jò* ‘of him’, *jòs* ‘of her’, *màsu* ‘of us’, *jùsu* ‘of you*pl*‘, *jù* ‘of them’), the genitive *patiẽs*, fem. *pačiõs* ‘self*gen,sg*‘, pl.
pačių́ ‘self\textsubscript{GEN.PL}’ has an overt head in the genitive to agree with. There is ample evidence for this strategy already from the Old Lithuanian texts (ex. 9–12):

(9) Old Lithuanian: Martynas Mažvydas (MŽ), \textit{Forma Chrikštima}, 103\textsubscript{20} [1559]
\begin{verbatim}
per tawa paties didighi Suffimilima.
\end{verbatim}
through 2.SG.GEN.SG self.GEN.SG big.ACC.SG.DET charity.ACC.SG
‘by your own great charity’ (= Germ. \textit{durch dieselbe deine grundlose Barmhertzigkeit})

(10) Old Lithuanian: Martynas Mažvydas (MŽ), \textit{Forma Chrikštima}, 140\textsubscript{19} [1559]
\begin{verbatim}
Per io paties tikranghi fzodi
\end{verbatim}
through 3.SG.GEN.SG self.GEN.SG true.ACC.SG.DET word.ACC.SG
‘through his own true word’ (= Germ. \textit{durch seine eigene wort})

(11) Old Lithuanian: Martynas Mažvydas (MŽ), \textit{Catechismuſa Praſty Sʒadei}, 52\textsubscript{11} [1547]
\begin{verbatim}
mufu pacziu teiſibes
\end{verbatim}
1.PL.GEN.PL self.GEN.PL justice.NOM.PL
‘our own justice’ (= Pol. \textit{nasze sprawiedliwości})

(12) Old Lithuanian: Martynas Mažvydas (MŽ), \textit{Catechismuſa Praſty Sʒadei}, 36\textsubscript{10} [1547]
\begin{verbatim}
ijr iuffu pacziu Panas eſti dangufu
\end{verbatim}
also 2.PL.GEN.PL self.GEN.PL lord.NOM.SG be.PRS.3 heaven.LOC.PL
‘Your own Lord also is in heaven’ (= Lat. \textit{et vester ipsorum Dominus est in cœlis})

In Old Lithuanian, possessive genitives like \textit{māno}, \textit{tāvo} ‘of me, of you’ often compete with possessive adjectives like \textit{mānas}, \textit{tāvas} or \textit{manāsīs, tavā-sīs} ‘my, your’. The striking point is that even there the meaning ‘own’ can be rendered by the genitive \textit{patiēs}, fem. \textit{pačiōs} ‘self\textsubscript{GEN.SG}’, which, like the Old Prussian genitive \textit{fupfēi}, stands alone with no overt genitive to agree with. This
type is extremely rare, and I have been able to find only one instance of it in the Old Lithuanian corpus:

(13) Old Lithuanian: Mikalojus Daukša (DP), Postilla Catholicka, 514 [1599]

\[
\begin{align*}
&Jr & \text{tawā} & \text{pacziós} & \text{dūfziā} \\
&\text{and} & 2.\text{SG.Poss.Acc.SG} & \text{self.Gen.SG.F} & \text{soul.Acc.SG} \\
&\text{pērwirs} & \text{kalawias}. & \\
&\text{pierce.FUT.3} & \text{sword.NOM.SG} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘And a sword will pierce your own soul’ (= Pol. A twoia wľafna duſia przeniknie miecź)

The genitive pacziós ‘of oneself’ (feminine), translating the Polish emphatic adjective wľafna ‘own’, is linked to the possessive adjective tawā ‘your’ (acc. sg.). It agrees with a possessive genitive (‘of you’) which is not overtly expressed, but can be recovered from the deep structure of the possessive adjective (‘your’), thus providing an exact parallel to the Old Prussian structure swaiāʃmu ʃupʃei buttan ‘to his own house’ (III 87c). Interestingly enough, the same formulation is repeated in another passage, but with the possessive genitive:

(14) Old Lithuanian: Mikalojus Daukša (DP), Postilla Catholicka, 497 [1599]

\[
\begin{align*}
&Jr & \text{tāwo} & \text{paczios} & \text{dūfziā} \\
&\text{and} & 2.\text{SG.Gen.SG} & \text{self.Gen.SG} & \text{soul.Acc.SG} \\
&\text{pērwers} & \text{kalawies}. & \\
&\text{pierce.FUT.3} & \text{sword.NOM.SG} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘And a sword will pierce your own soul’ (= Pol. A twoię wľafna dufże przeniknie miecź)

It could be assumed that (14) represents a regular type of agreement of the emphatic adjective pacziós ‘self’ with the possessive genitive tāwo ‘of you’ (‘of

4 This passage is based on Luke 2, 35, for which we find the following equivalents in Latin: et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius (Vulgata), Polish: y dufʒe twą wľafną przeniknie miecź (Jakub Wujek 1599) and German: vnd es wird ein Schwert durch deine Seele dringen (Martin Luther 1545). Note that Latin has exactly the same syntactic structure as Old Lithuanian.
yourself’ = ‘own’) and that (13) has replaced the possessive genitive tāwo ‘you’ by the possessive adjective tawa ‘your’, resulting in an odd type of agreement (‘your of self’ = ‘of yourself’ rendering ‘your own’). Or it could be argued the other way around that (13) is the basic structure, just as it is in Old Prussian, whereas (14) has restored an overt form of agreement between the possessor and its emphatic adjective. As we shall see, there is evidence for the antiquity of (13).

As a rule, Latvian uses only possessive adjectives for the first and second person singular (mans, tavs ‘my, your’) and possessive genitives for the other persons (gen.sg. e.g. viņa ‘of him’, viņas ‘of her’, mūsu ‘of us’, jūsu ‘of you pl.’, etc.). When possessive genitives are used, the meaning ‘own’ is regularly rendered by the genitive paša ‘of (him)self’, pašas ‘of (her)self’, pašu ‘of themselves’, agreeing with these possessive genitives:

(15) Old Latvian: *Tas Jauns Testaments* (JT), Mt 10:36 [1685]

\[
\text{Un} \quad \text{tha} \quad \text{Zilweka} \quad \text{Eenaideeki} \quad \text{irr} \\
\text{and the.gen.sg} \quad \text{man.gen.sg} \quad \text{foes.nom.pl} \quad \text{be.prs.3} \\
\text{viņna} \quad \text{pašcha} \quad \text{Saimė.} \\
\text{3.sg.gen.sg} \quad \text{self.gen.sg} \quad \text{household.nom.sg} \\
\text{‘And the man’s foes are his own household.’}
\]

(16) Old Latvian: *Tas Jauns Testaments* (JT), Acts 3:12 [1685]

\[
\text{3aur} \quad \text{muhfu} \quad \text{pašchu} \quad \text{Spehku} \\
\text{by} \quad \text{1.pl.gen.pl} \quad \text{self.gen.pl} \quad \text{power.acc.sg} \\
\text{‘by our own power’}
\]

(17) Old Latvian: *Tas Jauns Testaments* (JT), 1Cor 7:35 [1685]

\[
\text{Un} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{fakku} \quad \text{es} \\
\text{and this.acc.sg} \quad \text{say.prs.1.sg} \quad \text{1.sg.nom.sg} \\
\text{par} \quad \text{juhfo} \quad \text{pašcho} \quad \text{Labbumu.} \\
\text{for} \quad \text{2.pl.gen.pl} \quad \text{self.gen.pl} \quad \text{good.acc.sg} \\
\text{‘And I say this for your own benefit.’}
\]

When the possessive adjectives mans, tavs ‘my, your’ (or the reflexive savs) are used, the meaning ‘own’ is likewise rendered by the genitive paša ‘of (him) self’, pašas ‘of (her) self’, exactly in the same way as (13) for Old Lithuanian and (1) for Old Prussian:
(18) Old Latvian: Lettische Geistliche Lieder vnd Psalmen (LGLP), 1, 75,17 [1685]

manna paʃcha Walfiiba
1.SG.POSS.NOM.SG self.GEN.SG kingdom.NOM.SG
‘my own power’

(19) Old Latvian: Georg Manzel, Das Hausʒ=Zucht=und Lehr=Buch JesuSyachs, 413 [1671]

taws paʃcha Gohds
2.SG.POSS.NOM.SG self.GEN.SG honor.NOM.SG
‘your own honor’

(20) Old Latvian: Georg Manzel, Das Hausʒ=Zucht=und Lehr=Buch JesuSyachs, 413 [1671]

taws paʃcha Kauns
2.SG.POSS.NOM.SG self.GEN.SG shame.NOM.SG
‘your own shame’

(21) Old Latvian: Alexander Johann Stender, Lustesspehle, 90,24 [1790]

fawai paʃcha muttei
REFL.POSS.DAT.SG.F self.GEN.SG mouth.DAT.SG.F
‘to his own mouth’

This construction is still regular in Modern Latvian:

(22) Modern Latvian

Tā ir mana paša vaina.
this.NOM.SG be.PRS.3 1.SG.POSS.NOM.SG self.GEN.SG fault.NOM.SG
‘This is my own fault.’

(23) Modern Latvian

Cilvēkam vajag dzīvot
man.DAT.SG necessary live.INF
savu paša dzīvi.
REFL.Poss.Acc.SG self.Gen.SG life.Acc.SG
‘The man has to live his own life.’

(24) Modern Latvian
Viņi jau manus pašas
3.PL.NOM.PL already 1.SG.Poss.Acc.PL self.Gen.SG.F
suņus tramda.
dogs.Acc.PL scare.PRS.3
‘They even scare my own dogs.’

It is likely that this construction was seen as extremely odd by the
German-speaking clergymen who wrote the first Latvian texts, since they had
in their language an adjective ‘own’ (Germ. eigen) regularly agreeing with
the possessee. This may explain why we find in Old Latvian instances where
Germ. eigen ‘own’ is erroneously rendered directly by pats ‘self’, used as an
adjective, exactly as we have seen for Old Prussian (ex. 7–8):

(25) Old Latvian: *Tas Jauns Testaments* (JT), Acts 27,19 [1685]
Un trefchā Deenā mehs
and third.LOC.SG day.LOC.SG 1.PL.NOM.PL
ar fawahm paʃcham Rohkahm
with REFL.Poss.DAT.PL self.DAT.PL hands.DAT.PL
iʃmettam tahi the.Gen.SG ship.Gen.SG tackles.Acc.PL
‘And on the third day we threw the ship’s tackles with our own hands’

Taken at face value, the prepositional phrase *ar fawahm paʃcham Rohkahm*
can be understood either as putting the emphasis on the possessee (‘with our
hands themselves’) or on the possessor (‘with our own hands’). Using *pats*
‘self’ in the meaning “own” was relatively harmless and had the advantage of
rendering the German adjective *eigen* in a straightforward way.

It follows from all of the foregoing that the Old Prussian construction
fwaiaʃmu fupfei buttan ‘to his own house’ (III 87,6) cannot be seen as an isolated
translation error, but reflects a real syntactic structure which has exact paral-
lels in the other Baltic languages. Common to them all is a type of agreement
whereby the genitive of ‘self’ agrees with a possessive genitive which is not overtly expressed in the context, but can be recovered from the deep structure of a corresponding possessive adjective.

| Language          | Surface Structure | Underlying Structure | Explanation               |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Old Prussian      | *fwaifei REF:GEN:SG | *swaiêfi REF:POSS:DAT:SG | ‘to his own house’         |
| Old Lithuanian    | *tawo 2:SG:GEN:SG | *tawa 2:SG:POSS:ACC:SG | ‘your own soul’            |
| Old Latvian       | *tawa of you 2:SG:GEN:SG | *taws your NOM:SG | ‘your own honor’           |

Following Adams (2015, 66), who pointed to a similar pattern in Tocharian, I propose calling this construction “the submerged genitive”. I am fully aware, however, that this denomination, with its metaphorical aftertaste, raises serious problems. The distinction between surface and underlying structures is not a cosmetic tool made necessary to understand the agreement of the genitive ‘self’ with an absent genitive underlingly contained in a possessive adjective. It has in fact far-reaching implications for important aspects of linguistic theory. To begin with, it is striking that the reconstructed underlying structure cannot be understood as a historical precursor to the surface structure. In Old Latvian, for example, there is no evidence that a possessive genitive like *tava ‘of you’ (= Lith. tâvo) has ever existed in the prehistory of the language and was at some

---

5 McCartney (1919), describing the corresponding Greek and Latin data, simply speaks of ‘implied agreement’.
point replaced by the possessive adjective *tavs* ‘your’. This is very unlikely. The same probably holds true for Old Prussian. In other words, the underlying structure is a pure fiction whose existence seems to be required by the syntactic structure, but has no legal basis in any sector of reality. It would equally be unsatisfactory to claim that the underlying structure represents a cognitive reality referring to what the speaker has in his brain, because, first, this reconstruction cannot be falsified nor verified, and, second, we are unable to explain the transformation of an underlying possessive genitive into a surface possessive adjective. Since I am not willing to admit the existence of ghosts, I prefer to claim that the source of the submerged genitive is based on language-internal analogy. As a matter of fact, in the three Baltic languages, possessive adjectives always show up in a linguistic system that also displays possessive genitives. In Latvian, for example, the structure *tavs paša gods* ‘your own honor’ (with the possessive adjective *tavs*) is supported by the parallel of *viņa paša gods* ‘his own honor’ (with the possessive genitive *viņa*). As a rule, the unusual agreement illustrated by Latvian *tavs paša gods* presupposes the parallelism of a regular agreement like *viņa paša gods*. Put another way, whenever we find the submerged genitive, we may expect to find in the language the coexistence of possessive genitives and possessive adjectives.

4 Other Indo-European Languages
The submerged genitive is not exclusive to the Baltic languages. It also occurs in a number of other Indo-European languages, which leads us to think that it might be fairly ancient and probably inherited from Proto-Indo-European. A necessary pre-condition for its emergence is, of course, that the language under consideration has possessive adjectives, which excludes languages (like Old Irish) that use only possessive genitives. Going further, it is necessary to distinguish languages where the meaning ‘own’ is rendered by a special adjective (like German *eigen*) [type 1] and languages where it is rendered by the genitive of ‘self’ (like Latvian *paša*) [type 2]. As a rule, we would expect a privative distribution between the two types with the result that a language that has an adjective ‘own’ does not use the submerged genitive, and vice versa; as we shall see, this rule is not completely mandatory, because there are languages (like Ancient Greek) where we observe a coexistence of the two types.

To begin with, whereas Polish, Czech and Russian have an adjective ‘own’ (Polish *własny*, Czech *vlastní*, Russian *собственный*) and thus belong to
type 1, we find a good example of type 2 in Lower Sorbian, where the genitive *samego* (from *sam* ‘self’) can be used to put the emphasis on the possessor, even if the possessor is expressed by a possessive adjective (ex. 26):

(26) Lower Sorbian: *Serbski Casnik*, 1926, 10

\[
\text{ze svojimi kniglami samego}
\]

with REFL.Poss.INSTR.PL books.INSTR.PL self.GEN.SG

‘with his own books’

This construction is certainly ancient in Sorbian and belongs to a broader system in which possessive adjectives can be developed by appositional genitives of whatever nature, as shown by the following Old Church Slavic example:

(27) Old Church Slavic: *Vita Simeonis* 5, 33

\[
\text{Držite nakazanie moe}
\]

preserve.IMPER.2.PL instruction.ACC.SG 1.SG.Poss.ACC.SG

отьца вашего

\[
\text{otьca vašego}
\]

father.GEN.SG 2.PL.Poss.GEN.SG

‘Preserve the instruction of me, your father’ (= Lat. *institutionem meam patris vestri*)

Example (27) can be due to the Latin pattern from which it is translated, but this cannot be the case with the Sorbian parallel (ex. 26). All this suggests that the submerged genitive is a genuine and probably ancient construction in Slavic. The antiquity of the submerged genitive is suggested by its occurrence in other Indo-European languages such as Latin (ex. 28):

(28) Latin: Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 9, 11

\[
\text{meo ipsius interitu}
\]

1.SG.Poss.ABL.SG self.GEN.SG death.ABL.SG

‘about my own death’
Ancient Greek (ex. 29):

(29) Homer, *Odyssey*, 22, 218

Σῶδ’ αὐτοῦ κράατι τείσεις.

2.SG.POSS.DAT.SG and self GEN.SG head DAT.SG pay FUT.2.SG

‘You will pay the price with your own head’

and especially Germanic, Gothic (ex. 30):

(30) Gothic, *Gal* 6, 4

iþ waurstw sein silbins

and action ACC.SG.NT 2.SG.POSS.ACC.SG.NT self GEN.SG

kiusai huarjizuh

test OPT.PRS.3.SG each NOM.SG

‘Each one should test their own actions’ (Greek τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐαυτοῦ δοκιμάζετο ἕκαστος)

Old Norse (ex. 31):

(31) Old Norse, *Konungs skuggsiá* 118, 10 (cf. Faarlund 2004, 90)

Lát taka lúðra mína

let IMP.2.SG take INF trumpet ACC.PL.MSC 1.SG.POSS.ACC.PL.MSC

sjalfs

self GEN.SG

‘Let them take my own trumpets!’

Old English (ex. 32):

(32) Old English, *Beowulf* 2147

Ac hē mē māðmas geaf /

and 3.SG.NOM.SG 1.SG.ACC.SG treasure ACC.PL.MSC give PST.3.SG

sunu Healfdienes on mīnne

son NOM.SG Healfdene GEN.SG on 1.SG.POSS.ACC.SG.MSC

sylfes dōm

self GEN.SG judgement ACC SG MSC
‘And he gave me treasures to choose, the son of Healfdene, on my own choice’

and Old High German (ex. 33):

(33) Old High German: *Isidor*, 4, 8 (cf. Grimm 1837, 356)

*Druthin*  

*nerrendo*  

*Christ*  

*Lord.NOM.SG*  

*Savior.NOM.SG*  

*Christ.NOM.SG*  

*sîneru*  

*selbes*  

*stimnu*  

*urchundida*  

3*SG.POSS.INSTR.SG*  

*self.GEN.SG*  

*voice.INSTR.SG*  

*witness.PST.3.SG*  

‘Jesus Christ the Lord our Savior witnessed with his own voice’  

(= Latin *Dominus Jesus Christus propria voce testatur*)

The Ancient Greek data are particularly interesting. There is in Ancient Greek an adjective that progressively acquired the meaning ‘own’, Gr. ἴδιος *ídios*, as in (34):

(34) Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 403–404

*Zeûs*  

*идіοиς*  

*νόμοις*  

*κρατίνων*  

*Zeus.*  

*own.DAT.PL*  

*laws.DAT.PL*  

*ruling.PART.NOM.SG*  

‘Zeus ruling by his own laws’

But, at the same time, the submerged genitive was preserved and grammaticalized for the reflexive function in Classical Greek, as in (35):

(35) Lysias, *On the Refusal of a Pension*, 24, 14

*Πιστεύετε*  

*τοίς*  

*ὑμετέροις*  

*Pisteúete*  

*toîs*  

*hümêtérois*  

*trust.IMPER.PRS.2.PL*  

*the.DAT.PL*  

*2.PL.POSS.DAT.PL*  

*αὐτῶν*  

*ὁφθαλμοῖς.*  

*autón*  

*opʰʰalmoîs.*  

*self.GEN.PL*  

*eye.DAT.PL*  

‘Trust your (own) eyes’
Ancient Greek thus shows that a language can possess both an adjective ‘own’ and the submerged genitive if they are distinguished by a secondary distribution (here emphasis vs. reflexivity). The use of ἴδιος idios in the general meaning ‘own, pertaining to oneself’ was late in Greek (its original meaning, the only attested in Homer, was ‘private, personal’) and certainly linked, as a drag-chain shift, to the evolution of the submerged genitive construction from the emphatic to the purely reflexive meaning.

In a well-known study based on Sorbian and other Slavic languages, Corbett (1987) has shown that the submerged genitive is a broader phenomenon which does not appear limited to the association of a possessive adjective with an expansion in the genitive. It also occurs with other types of possessive or relational adjectives, which are notoriously productive in Slavic and can likewise be developed by appositional genitives, as shown by (36):

(36) Old Church Slavic: Acts of the Apostles, 21, 8

въ домь Филиповь евангелиста
into house.ACC.SG Philip’s.ACC.SG evangelist.GEN.SG
‘into the house of Philip the Evangelist’, lit. ‘into Philip’s house of the evangelist’ (= Greek εἰς τὸν οἶκον Φιλίππου τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ)

This type has caused a lot of ink to flow, both on the Slavic side (e.g. Flier 1974, Huntley 1984, Corbett 1987, Eckhoff 2011, 49) and from an Indo-European perspective (e.g. McCartney 1919, Watkins 1967, Matasović 2011, Mendoza & Álvarez-Pedrosa 2011). For reasons of space, I cannot pursue consideration of this question in this paper, but it is clear that the submerged genitive cannot be simply dismissed as a mere syntactic error in the isolated Old Prussian example in which it survives, almost by accident.

5 Conclusion
The Old Prussian translation of Martin Luther’s Enchiridion (1561) is often regarded as a corrupted text deeply distorted by the translation process and the desperate plight of its philological transmission. In spite of this, the syntactic structures of the Old Prussian language may be revealed in some cases by isolated micro-contexts which prima facie look like mere translation errors,
but testify to actual syntactic usages, some of great antiquity, thus providing interesting insights into the historical syntax of the Baltic languages. The ‘submerged genitive’, which surfaces as an isolated holdover from an archaic structure, is a good example of the type of evidence that the Old Prussian *Enchiridion* can bring us, provided it is analyzed carefully by a combination of strict philological methods and more general linguistic insights.

**Abbreviations and primary sources**

| Author               | Year | Title                                                | Edition/Location                   |
|----------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Daničić, Đuro        | 1858 | *Srbska sintaksa*                                    | Beograd                           |
| DP                   |      | Daukša, Mikalojus. 1599. *Postilla Catholicka*       | Vilnius                           |
| Elger, Georgius       | 1621 | *Geistliche Catholische Gesänge*                     | Braunsberg                        |
| JT                   |      | *Tas Jauns Testaments*                              | Rīga, 1685                        |
| LGLP                 |      | *Lettische Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen*            | Rīga, 1685                        |
| Luther, Martin        | 1545 | *Biblia*                                             | Wittenberg                        |
| Manzel, Georg.       | 1654 | *Langgewünschte Lettische Postill*                   | Rīga                              |
| Manzel, Georg.       | 1671 | *Das Haufʒ=Zucht=und Lehr=Buch Jefus Syrachs*        | Rīga                              |
| MLG                  |      | *Manuale Lettico-Germanicum*, ca 1690. T.G. Fennell, ed. | Rīga, 2001                       |
| MŽ                   |      | *Mažvydas, Martynas. 1547–1570. Rinktiniai raštai*  | Guido Michelini, ed.              |
|                      |      |                                                      | 2000. Vilnius.                    |
| Stender, Aleksandrs  | 1790 | *Lustesspēle no zemnieka, kas par mužnieku tapa pārvērsts* | Rīga                              |
| Wujek, Jakub.        | 1599 | *Biblia*                                             | Kraków                            |

**References**

Adams, Douglas Q. 2015. *Tocharian B: A Grammar of Syntax and Word-Formation*. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck.

Corbett, Greville G. 1987. The Morphology/Syntax interface: Evidence from possessive adjectives in Slavonic. *Language* 63/2, 299–345.

Delbrück, Berthold. 1893. *Vergleichende Syntax der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Strassburg: Trübner.

Eckhoff, Hanne M. 2011. *Old Russian Possessive Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter Mouton.

Eckhoff, Hanne M., Sturla Berg-Olsen. 2002. Adnominal genitives and denominal adjectives in Latvian and Old Russian—a typological and historical approach. *Balto-Slavjanskie Issledovanija* 15, 175–193.

Euler, Wolfram. 1985. Zur Frage der Mischkonstruktionen im Altpreußischen. *Grammatische Kategorien, Funktion und Geschichte, Akten der VII. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, Berlin, 20–25. Februar 1983*. Bernfried Schlerath & Veronica Rittner, ed. Wiesbaden, Reichert, 170–180.
Faarlund, Jan T. 2004. *The Syntax of Old Norse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flier, Michael. 1974. *Aspects of Nominal Determination in Old Church Slavic*. The Hague: Mouton.

Grimm, Jacob. 1837. *Deutsche Grammatik* IV. Göttingen: Dieterich.

Huntley, David. 1984. The distribution of the denominative adjective and the abnominal genitive in Old Church Slavonic. *Historical Syntax*. Jacek Fisiak, ed. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. 217–236.

Matasović, Ranko. 2011. Slavic possessive genitives and adjectives from the historical point of view. *The Grammar of Possessivity in South Slavic Languages: Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives*. Motoki Nomachi, ed. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University. 1–12.

McCartney, Eugene. 1919. Greek and Latin constructions in implied agreement. *Classical Philology* 14/3, 185–200.

Mendoza, Julia, Juan Antonio Álvarez-Pedrosa. 2011. Genitive and Possessive Adjectives in Ancient Indo-European Languages. *A Greek Man in the Iberian Street, Papers in Linguistics and Epigraphy in Honour of Javier de Hoz*. Eugenio R. Luján & Juan L. García Alonso, eds. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck. 365–380.

Rosinas, Albertas. 1988. *Baltų kalbų įvardžiai*. [Baltic pronouns]. Vilnius: Mokslas.

Schmalstieg, William R. 1974. *An Old Prussian Grammar*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Schmalstieg, William R. 2015. *Studies in Old Prussian. A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature in the Field from 1975 until 2005*. Vilnius: Vaga.

Stang, Christian S. 1966. *Vergleichende Grammatik der baltischen Sprachen*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Trautmann, Reinhold. 1910. *Die altpreußischen Sprachdenkmäler*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Wackernagel, Jacob. 1953. *Genetiv und Adjektiv. Kleine Schriften* II. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. 1346–1373.

Watkins, Calvert. 1967. *Remarks on the genitive. To Honor Roman Jakobson III*. The Hague: Mouton. 2191–2198.

Zigmantavičiūtė, Alvira, Jurgita Zigmantavičiūtė. 2000. Datyvo bei genetyvo formos ir vartojimas prūsų Katechizmuose. [Forms and use of dative and genitive in Prussian catechisms]. *Vakaryų balų kalbos ir kultūros reliktai* 3. Audronė Kaukienė, red. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla. 31–38.

Submitted: 16 November 2020