

ON TWO NEO-PRUSSIAN SENTENCES:
"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME" AND "FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS"

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Klussis (1995: 67-68) reconstructs a corrected Old Prussian First Catechism with certain omissions and differences of word order from the original text, since apparently in Klussis' opinion German syntax influenced the Old Prussian text. Thus, for example, the definite article *Staei* «Die, the» is omitted in the title "The Ten Commandments". The word order is changed in the First Commandment, thus: *Tú ní tur turētwei kitans dēiwans* (Klussis (1995: 54). This word order would correspond better to that of Lith. *Neturėsi kitų dievų*. Another syntactic innovation is the use of the phrase *māise minItun* to replace *pray maian menifnan* «in remembrance of me» which, Klussis (1995: 66) writes, is a calque of German *zu meinem gedechtnis* and «...may be replaced with the Baltic "partitive" construction...» which is attested elsewhere in Baltic. But one wonders if this is necessarily a specifically Baltic partitive, because even in other Indo-European languages verbs of remembering can often take the object in the genitive case. Thus Latin: *vivōrum* (gen.) *meminī* «I remember the living» Old Indic: *yáthā máma* (gen.) *smárād asaú* «so that he may remember me»; Gk. *μνήσατο Αιγίσθοιο* (gen.) «he thought about Aigisthos»; Goth. *gamuneip þis waurdis* (gen.) «remember the word» etc. I have given a somewhat different explanation for the use of the genitive here, but, of course, a partitive explanation might be possible for other Indo-European languages as well (Schmalstieg 1995: 29-30). One might note also that apparently even Mažvydas and Vilentas were guilty of using a German calque, because in similar collocations in their Catechisms we encounter *ant atminima mana* (Ford 1971: 38, 40; Ford 1969: 332; Urbas 1996: 22). The new Rubšys Lithuanian translation (1998: 1669, 1798), however, has *mano atsiminimui* and the Bible Society translation (1972: 115, 229) has *man atsiminti*. But the motivation for the preposition plus oblique case noun sequence

comes from the New Testament, e.g., Luke 22:19; First Corinthians 11:24) - *in meam commemorationem*, εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, see Nestle 1971: 217, 445; Nestle 1981: 233, 460. In place of the expression *pray att werpsannan grekun* «for the remission of sins» Klussis (1995: 67) suggests *grėkamans atweřptun* «for the remission of sins» with an infinitive and a dative of goal. In similar passages Mažvydas and Vilentas used *ant atleidima greku* and *ant atleidima ghrieku* respectively (Ford 1971: 40; Ford 1969: 332; Urbas 1996: 22). The motivation for the preposition plus oblique case noun plus genitive plural noun sequence comes from Matthew 26: 28 - *in remissionem peccatorum*, εἰς ἀφῆσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, see Nestle 1971: 73; Nestle 1981: 76. On the other hand the new Rubšys Lithuanian translation (1998: 1600) and the Bible Society translation (1972: 43) both have *nuodėmėms atleisti*. Thus Klussis' corrections, which would presumably make the sequences under discussion more understandable to the Old Prussian native, have a more modern theological nuance and would probably have been welcomed by those Old Prussian Protestant reformers who may have been more sophisticated than Mažvydas and Vilentas. One wonders if in a similar vein Balticists should not undertake the correction of Mažvydas' and Vilentas' Catechisms in order to make them more harmonious with the norms of contemporary Christian theological thought.

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In many respects the Old Prussian catechisms were parallel to the Lithuanian sixteenth-century catechisms, so one encounters in Old Prussian many literal translations similar to those of the sixteenth-century Lithuanian catechisms. An attempt to modernize the translation of the Old Prussian catechisms is not consistent with the sixteenth-century norms.