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Etymological Analysis
of the Mythonym OPr. *Patollo*

Abstract

Referring to etymological analysis, the author of this article presents a new hypothesis concerning the origin of the Old Prussian (OPr.) mythological name *Patollo* 'a deity of the dead' found in "Prussian Chronicle" ("Preussische Chronik") written by the Dominican priest, Simon Grunau.

It is to be assumed that the form *patollum*, earlier recorded in the fragment of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis facta coram Summo pontifice per dominum Andream plebanum in Danczk" (1418), was erroneously ascribed to theonyms by Grunau.

The analysis refers to the description of derivatives and semantic development of this mythonym. While summing up the research results, one may conclude that a mythological name such as OPr. *Patollo* belongs to lexemes of Latin origin. More precisely, this mythonym is derived from a Medieval Latin (MLat.) adverb *patulo* 'in many places; openly, clearly, in public', which in the course of history was changed to MLat. *patollu* 'ditto', that is, a metathetical form with transposed medial/final vocalic elements of the second and last syllables.

Thus, the fragment of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis..." "expulsi (!) sunt gentes seruientes demonibus colentes patollum Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata" is to be translated in a well-formed and fluent way, i.e., banished are the peoples who worship demons and idolise Natrimpe and other ignominious phantoms in public.

The Old Prussian mythologeme *Patollo* is a a pseudomythologeme invented by Grunau.

1. Introduction. The first known mention of the OPr. mythonym *Patollo* in historical sources

It has been stated[1] that the OPr. mythonym *Patollo* was first mentioned by the Bishop of Warmia in his letter to the Pope "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis facta coram Summo pontifice per dominum Andream plebanum in Danczk" (1418): "expulsi (!)[2] sunt gentes seruientes demonibus colentes **patollum** Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata"[3] (Bender, 1865a, p. 24), i.e. banished are the peoples who worship demons and idolise **Patoll**, Natrimpe and other ignominious phantoms in public (cf. BRMŠ I, p. 477).

It is to be emphasized that information on the culture of Old Prussians, mentioned in "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", the copy of the lost manuscript (Fol. C № 14.153 (71)) from the Königsberg City Archive (Stadtarchiv Königsberg),[4] was presented very blithely by its unknown scribe. On the basis of there being so many orthographical discrepancies in the document (see footnote 2), some researchers tried to provide corrected variants[5] of the text:

[1] See BRMŠ I, p. 477; Vėlius, 1987, p. 254; Balys, 2000, pp. 183, 196.

[2] However, Joseph Bender (1865a, p. 24) used the note of exclamation to point out the grammatical mistake made by the scribe of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", i.e. MLat. *expulsi* (**masc**.), a passive form of *participium perfecti*, was not in agreement regarding gender with its syntactical unit MLat. *gentes* (nom. pl.; **fem**.).

Given the typology of the indicated grammatical discrepancy of the text, one can state that the scribe of the manuscript did not know Latin grammar in detail. This fact is of particular importance. It is to be assumed that the text of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…" includes not only grammatical mistakes, but also distorted mythonyms. It was evidently for that reason that Voigt (1832, p. 557) presented corrected forms of the Prussian theonyms, i.e. *Patrimpe* ← *Natrimpe* (see also Kregždys, 2020, pp. 296–297).

[3] Cf. the same fragment containing a sentence with a grammatical mistake: "expulsi (!) sunt gentes seruientes demonibus colentes patollum Natrimpe et alia ignominioso fantasmata" (Bender, 1865b, p. 695).

[4] For more details, see Voigt, 1832, pp. 587–588; Bender, 1865a, p. 24; see also Mierzyński, 1896, p. 145; Kregždys, 2020, pp. 127, 294.

[5] It should be noted that researchers presented the title of the manuscript diversely, e.g., J. Voigt (1832, p. 587) indicated the form *Warmiensis*, while Antoni Mierzyński (1896, pp. 144–145) referred a formation *Varmiensis* (see also BRMŠ I, p. 476).

"Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", to quote Alexander Brückner (1904, p. 47), is the most ancient written source containing the information about Old Prussian deities, except the theonym OPr. *Curche*, mentioned in the Christburg Treaty 1249 (for more details, see Kregždys, 2012, pp. 73–130).

(1) Johannes Voigt (1832, pp. 587–588) changed the syntagma *patollum Natrimpe* to **Pacu**llum, **P**atrimpe and added two commas, one after *demonibus* and the other after the corrected **Pacu**llum, cf. "sunt gentes servientes demonibus, colentes **Pacu**llum, **P**atrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata"[6] (see also Kregždys, 2019, p. 40).

(2) The above hypothesis of *Pacullum*, *Patrimpe* reconstruction was regarded somewhat sceptically by J. Bender (1865a, pp. 22, 24) who presented his own explication of the possible interpretation of the text – he created a deity of feminine gender *Patrimpe*: "Ceterum Patrimpe, uxor Patulli summi dei, mater deorum" (Bender, 1865a, p. 22), i.e., 'Moreover, Patrimpe, a wife of the supreme god Patull, was the mother of the gods'.

(3) The fragment of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", cited in Wilhelm Mannhardt's (1936, p. 154) work practically agrees with the one presented in J. Bender's (1865a, p. 24) PhD thesis – and only one comma is added, after *demonibus*: "sunt gentes seruientes demonibus, colentes patollum Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata".

(4) A. Mierzyński (1896, p. 145) also published a modified text. He added three commas, after *gentes*, *demonibus*, and *sic.*, and the ending *-um* changed to *-u*: "sunt gentes, servientes demonibus, colentes patoll**u (sic.),** Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata".

Brückner (1918, p. 145; 1922, p. 167)[7] and Łowmiański (1989, p. 89) used the data presented by Mierzyński. It is to be assumed that incomplete/defective forms of the text were replaced with the complete alternatives, presented in J. Bender's PhD thesis (see point **(2)** above), i.e., MLat. *patoll**u*** → MLat. *patoll**um*** (see also Kregždys, 2019, p. 41).

True, different graphical discrepancies and alternative markings of vowels and consonants are frequently found in the texts of Medieval Latin, for example, a change from *t* to *c*, used by Voigt (see point **(1)** above) and Brückner (1918, p. 145, 1980, p. 211):[8] sub. MLat. *po**c**ulum* 'a beaker' ↔ sub. MLat. *po**t**ulum*

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[6] Cf. Wer *patollū* für *pikułas* schrieb (Brückner, 1922, p. 167).

[7] It should be noted that Brückner (1980, p. 211) included the lexeme *patollum* in the layer of proper names, evidently, on the basis of the interpretation, presented by Voigt (1832, p. 587): colentes **P**atollu Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata.

[8] Cf. the statement of Brückner (1980, p. 211): "zamiast P**atollu** P**acollu** czytać należy", i.e. it should be pronounced *Pacollu* instead of *Patollu*.

'ditto' (LMILPe). However, one cannot totally ignore evident orthographical mistakes which are also found in the copies of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis...", for example, the name of the Christian God has been recorded with the first minuscule, i.e. *christum* (see Voigt, 1832, p. 588; Mierzyński, 1896, p. 145). The neglection (evidently, ignorance) of grammatical rules suggests that the scribe of the manuscript had to be a smatterer, not a lettered scholar or member of clergy (see footnote 2).

OPr. *Patollo* (the name, not so much of a being inhabiting hell but of a god, i.e. a theonym or supposed deity of the dead respectively *ein got der todtin*), was mentioned for the first time by Simon Grunau (c. 1470–c. 1530), a Dominican priest from Tolkemit (Tolkmicko near Frauenburg [Frombork]), in "Prussian Chronicle" (i.e. *Preussische Chronik*):[9] "Der götthin woren 3, **Patollo**, Patrimpo, Perkuno" (Grunau, 1876, p. 62), i.e. 'There were three gods: **Patollo**, Patrimpo, Perkuno'. Variants of the name (i.e. possible case forms), include OPr. *Patolli*, *Patollen* (see Grunau, 1876, pp. 78, 342, 348).

Grunau presented OPr. *Patollo* as a deathly pale old man with a white beard and a shroud wrapped around his head (a white headdress similar to a turban). In front of his image, stowed into the hollow of a huge, evergreen oak tree, which grew in the main holy place of the Old Prussians (*Rickoyto*), were placed his tokens – the skulls of a human, a horse and a cow. Old Prussians used to donate valuables to him (see Grunau, 1876, pp. 62, 78; see also Mannhardt, 1936, pp. 195–197; Vėlius, 1987, p. 254).

The identification of the genesis of a religious-mythological model of Old Prussians and the most archaic reminiscences of the Proto-Baltic religious-mythological model were believed to have been related to a triad[10] of gods: *Patollo, Patrimpo* (the god of youth, fertility and good fortune, and was portrayed as a joyous youth wearing a wreath of ears of corn on his head; his image was placed in front of a pot filled with live grass snakes), *Perkuno* (the god of natural phenomena and justice, and was portrayed as a stern

[9] See Grunau, 1876, pp. 62–63, 78, 80, 94–**95**, 261, 348.
[10] Triads of deities were commonly found throughout the ancient world, and in particular in the religious traditions of Egypt and Ancient Greece, cf. *Osiris* (husband) ↔ *Isis* (wife) ↔ *Horus* (son) / *Apollo* (an Olympian god, son of Zeus and Leto, brother of Artemis; god of the sun, culture and music) ↔ *Artemis* (the virgin goddess of the chase) ↔ *Leto* (patroness of the fruitful earth) (for more details, see Pinch, 2002, p. 146; Larson, 2007, pp. 90, 112; Woodard, 2009, p. 302; Remler, 2010, p. 63; Quirke, 2015, p. 144).

middle-aged man with a crown of flames; in front of his image burnt a sacred flame, which was kept going day and night).[11]

2. Etymological analysis of the mythonyms OPr. *Patollo*

There are two basic ways to conduct the etymological analysis of the lexeme:

(1) The origin of OPr. *Patollo*, to quote Kazimieras Būga (1959, p. 79), should be related to $\ŏ$ stem prefixal derivatives, i.e. pref. OPr. **pa-* 'under' (← prep. OPr. *po* 'ditto' I 7_{16}, II 7_{16} etc.) + sub. OPr. *talus* 'floor, dirt floor' E 207 → (theonym) OPr. *Patuls, which presupposed the protosememe 'the god of underworld' (see also PEŽ III, pp. 297–298, IV, p. 182; Toporov, 1972, p. 299). Such a conception was criticised by Vytautas Mažiulis. He indicated the same $i̯ŏ$ stem also to be reflected in OPr. *Patollo* (see PEŽ III, p. 233), given the typology of the indicated morphological type of the East Baltic with $i̯ŏ$ stem forms (cf. sub. Lith. **pa**$i̯$**žuõlis** 'a kind of mushroom found under oaks').

(2) According to Mažiulis, the etymology of the word is to be justified by reconstructed verbal root OPr. **tal-* (↔ OPr. *talītvei 'to calm; to put to silence'), which presupposes $\ŏ$ stem form, i.e. OPr. **Patal**as** 'the one, who calms, puts to silence' (see PEŽ III, pp. 233–234).

Due to the morphological discrepancy of the reconstructed OPr. *Patuls 'the god of underworld' and the questionable status of Mažiulis' hypothesis that the protoform of the mythonym is reconstructed using a non-attested lexeme verb. OPr. *talītvei 'to calm; to put to silence', both these assumptions raise doubts (PEŽ III, pp. 233–234).

It is to be assumed that the origin of the mythonym can be linked with the detailed analysis of the form *patollum*, recorded in "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…". It is conceivable that the researchers of the above-mentioned written source did not recognize the possible **graphical mistake**, made by the unknown scribe of the manuscript "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…",

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[11] For more details, see Balys, 2000, pp. 181, 183, 196, 338.

i.e. metathesis of the structural elements of the forms *patollum / patollu* (**α**) and/or the change of the endings between above-mentioned words and theonym OPr. *Natrimpe* (**β**):

(**α**) advb. MLat. ‡*patollu* ← advb. MLat. *patulo* 'in many places; openly, clearly, **in public**' (see Niermeyer, 1976, p. 776; see also Sleumer, 1926, p. 586) namely, metathesis of the structural elements -*u*-...-*o* → -*o*-...-*u*, i.e. a metathetical form with transposed medial/final vocalic elements of the second and last syllables can be presupposed;

(**β**) -*um* ↔ -*e* ← -*e* ↔ -*um*, i.e. primary construct **patolle Natrimpum* can be reconstructed (see Kregždys, 2019, p. 42).

Based on this analysis, one can make a cautious assumption about the possible usage of the distorted form of the primary advb. MLat. *patulo* 'in many places; openly, clearly, in public', which was erroneously ascribed to theonyms by Grunau (1876, pp. 62–63, 78, 80, 94–95, 261, 348). Therefore, the pseudomythologeme OPr. *Patollo* recorded by the said chronicler is an adverb, but not a substantive.

Thus, the reality, described by the 14th century author, was mystified and phantasmagoric images were created (see Figure 1). Based on this assumption, the grammatically corrected sequence of the lexemes can be reconstructed:

advb. MLat. *patulo*, *patule* 'in many places; openly, clearly, in public'
+ OPr. *Natrimpum acc. sg. (cf. n. p. *christum* [see subsection 0])
→ MLat. **colentes patule Natrimpum* 'they worship *Natrimpus* **in public**'
→ MLat. *colentes patollum Natrimpe* 'ditto'.

Therefore, one can make a tentative assumption about the reference of only one Old Prussian theonym *Natrimpe*, found in the analysed copy of the manuscript. The mythologeme recorded with a capital, was first not separated from the adverb (but not a mythologeme) with a comma, as it has been interpreted to the present time (see Korn, 1848, p. 578; PEŽ III, pp. 233–234).

On the basis of the presented etymological analysis of the lexeme *patollum / patollu* (see Figure 1), recorded in the copies of "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis...", the fragment "expulsi (!) sunt gentes seruientes demonibus colentes patollum Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata" is, evidently, to be translated in a well-formed and fluent way: banished are the peoples who worship demons and idolise Natrimpe and other ignominious phantoms **in public**.
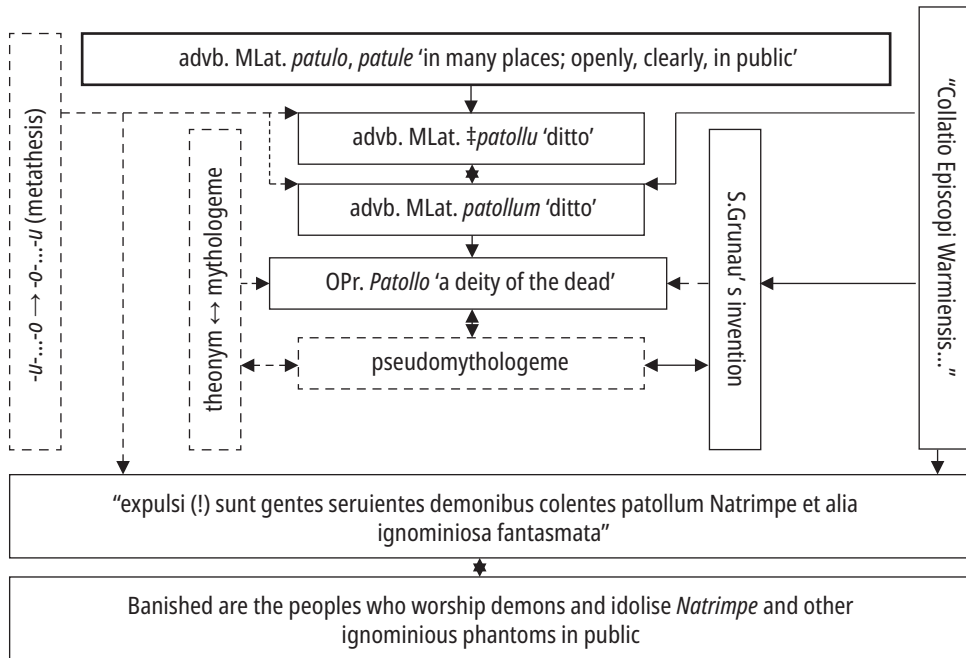
Figure 1. The sequence of the origin of OPr. *Patollo*

Source: Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis.

It is to be emphasized that advb. MLat. *patulo*, *patule* 'in many places; openly, clearly, **in public**', evidently, was used because of the necessity of ritual classification when identifying such a form of worship, i.e. to amplify the significance of the ceremony, that it was performed in public (see BRMŠ I, p. 589), but not at home (see also Kregždys, 2019, p. 42).

It should be noted that the lexical inheritance of Western Balts of OPr. *Patollo* is usually based on a parallel comparison of the cognate toponyms of Prussia, cf.: "Patolus ist vielleicht in den ON *Patollen* oder *Potollen* noch 1465 bekannt gewesen" (Balys, 2000, p. 257; see also Usener, 1896, p. 96). In other words, Patolus, evidently, was known already in the year 1465, cf. of top. *Patollen* or *Potollen*. In 1398 the personal names OPr. *Patulle*, *Patolle*, and, in 1407, *Patol* (see Trautmann, 1974, p. 75), were also in use.

Considering the phenomenon of **devocalization**, which was characteristic of Germanic chroniclers (cf. top. OPr. *Podollen* ↔ *Potollen* (see further)), one can make a cautious assumption about the genesis of the onyms of presently

obscure origin[12] – all variants with voiceless consonants presuppose secondary status of the lexemes, cf. top. OPr. *Po**d**lauken* 1370 ↔ *Pa**t**lawken* 1405 (see Gerullis, 1922, p. 127). Given the typology of the indicated morphophonetic changes in the word structure, one can state that the authentic, or primary, structure of onyms should primarily be reconstructed in accordance with the forms of voiced consonants. It is to be assumed that the origin of the above-mentioned onyms should be linked with sub. OPr. *po**d**alis* 'a cheap cup' E 351 (← *'**a cup**' [see PEŽ III, p. 302]), that is, the protoform with sememe *'potter; **potter's craft**' is to be reconstructed:

> p. n. OPr. **Pādalīs* 'a cup → (*antonomasia*) the one who makes pots of clay', cf. p. n. Lith. *Po**d**ehl* (= **Puo**d**elis*) ↔ p. n. Lith. *Puodȳs* 'ditto', *Puõdžius* etc. (LPŽe; Butkus, 1995, p. 358), also cf. p. n. Lith. *Kirv**ē**lis* '**the one who hews firewood**' (see Butkus, 1995, p. 264) ← sub. Lith. *kirvis* 'an axe etc.' + suff. (dem.) *-eli̯ŏ-* (for more details, see Skardžius, 1996, pp. 176–177)
> → (germanized: -*d*- → -*t*-; *-īs* → -*e*) p. n. OPr. *Patolle* *'**potter**'
> → top. OPr. *Po**d**ollen* ↔ *Potollen* *'**Puodžiai**, i.e. a village of potters etc.', cf. top. Lith. *Puõdžiai* (LATŽ, p. 251), top. Latv. *Puôds*, *Puôdi* etc. (LVV III, pp. 422–436).[13]

The earlier explanation of the origin of p. n. OPr. *Patolle* ↔ top. OPr. *Potollen*, supported by the idea of a sacral connotation,[14] is essentially fallacious, for the names of the chthonic (= underworld) deities were **not** in use for naming humans because of **taboo**,[15] cf. the very late **nick**name Lith. *Vélnias* 'the one who is similar to **devil**; who is angry, evil etc.' (see Butkus, 1995, p. 440), Gk. Ἅιδης 'the god of underworld' (Pape I, p. 17), used only to designate a chtonic

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[12] See Būga, 1959, p. 79; Toporov, 1972, p. 299; PEŽ III, pp. 233–234.

[13] Special attention is to be focussed on top. Lith. *Pãtulė* k. (a village in the district of Upyna-Šilalė (LATŽ, p. 233)), **not** related with Grunau's pseudomythologeme *Patollo*, as it is a cognate of top. Lith. *Patalė* (a grange in the district of Pakalniai-Utena (LATŽ, p. 232)). The last one should be linked with sub. Lith. *pãtalas* 'something trampled down, lodged etc.' (LKŽe).

[14] Cf. "den heidnischen Götternamen Patols, Patollus" (see Blažienė 2005, p. 214), i.e. the heathen theonyms Patols, Patollus.

[15] Its neglection presupposes the emergence of *a priori* fallacious word origin theories, cf. erroneous interpretation of the etymology of p. n. Lith. *Velniškáitis* ← sub. Lith. *Velinas, velnias* 'a devil', presented by Zigmas Zinkevičius (2008, p. 554). The authors of LPŽe stated the opposite and interpreted the form as the secondary variant of p. n. Lith. *Vilniškáitis* (← top. Lith. *Vìlnius* 'a capital of Lithuania').

god, but not a human (see LGPN III.B, p. 17, LGPN V.A, pp. 11–12, LGPN V.B, p. 13; see also Bechtel, 1917; Zgusta, 1964; Kamptz, 1982).

3. Conclusions

To summarize the outcomes of the research into the West Baltic quasi mythonym *Patollo*, the following main conclusions are proposed:

(1) An adverb MLat. *patollu* 'in many places; openly, clearly', i.e. a metathetical form with transposed medial/final vocalic elements of the second and last syllables (cf. primary advb. MLat. *patulo* 'ditto'), mentioned in "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", was erroneously ascribed to theonyms by Grunau.

(2) OPr. *Patollo* 'a deity of the dead', described by Grunau, is a pseudomythologeme.

(3) The fragment "expulsi (!) sunt gentes seruientes demonibus colentes patollum Natrimpe et alia ignominiosa fantasmata", presented in "Collatio Episcopi Warmiensis…", is to be interpreted in a well-formed and fluent way, i.e. banished are the peoples who worship demons and idolise Natrimpe and other ignominious phantoms in public.

(4) Given the different origin of p. n. OPr. *Patulle*, *Patolle* 1398, *Patol* 1407 / top. OPr. *Potollen* 1351/82, *Pottollen* 1465, *Patollen* 1483, *Podollen* and pseudomythologeme *Patollo*, these lexemes are not to be interpreted as cognates.

Abbreviations

acc. – accusative

advb. – adverb

E – Elbing Vocabulary

fem. – feminine

Gk. – Greek

Latv. – Latvian

Lith. – Lithuanian

masc. – masculine

MLat. – Medieval Latin

nom. – nominative

OPr. – Old Prussian

pl. – plural

p. n. – personal name

pref. – prefix

prep. – preposition

sg. – singular

sub. – substantive

top. – toponym

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