

Re: AS gebúr; bauer; neighbour

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 - *Date:* Wed, 12 Mar 2008 01:35:03 +0100
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Brian M. Scott skreiv:

On Tue, 11 Mar 2008 10:51:07 -0700 (PDT), <Craoibhin66@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in
<news:afe93d6f-5514-469e-a65b-f3c6d85668f7@xx>
in sci.lang:

On Mar 11, 7:03 pm, Dunaan Vukoti <dusan.vuko...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Could anyone of the sci.lang big "mentors" explain the relation between Serbian word naseobina (settlement) and English inhabitancy? In addition, what the words neighbour, Ger. Bauer and Serb. seljak (peasant) have in common?

<Seljak> is obviously a derivative of <selo> 'soil, hamlet, village', which is cognate with OIc <salr> 'room, hall'. So far as I know, the root is restricted to Gmc. and (Balto-)Slavic.

[...]

You take no interest in the answer anyway. But let it be known that the -o- in naseobina is related to l, so the stem word there is -sel-, which occurs in Russian as -sel- and in Polish as -siedl-.

Two different roots, I think: the one with /d/ probably does go with PGmc. *setlaz, German <siedeln>, etc., as you suggest:

So, the stem is probably a very old borrowing from

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Germanic into Slavic, and related to German siedeln.

This is rather messy, apparently. Bjorvand and Lindeman mention ON/OIc <salr> "hall" m. and <sel> n. "cottage", OE <sele> and <sæl> n., etc., find a common meaning "room, single building", and tell that it's not possible to sort out if it's an original i-, a- or s-stem. They cite Balt. <sala> f. "village" and Lat. <solum> "soil" as cognates, leading back to IE *sel- "settlement", but prefer to take Slav. <selo> < *sed-lo-. They recount, but reject, the objection that the semantic connection between the Germanic and Baltic words is thin. For some reason they don't mention any semantic problem with Lat. <solum>.

Could this be an old neuter singular/femine collective pair? Bjorvand (1994) doesn't touch this word, but trying to follow his example, I think that a neuter *sal(j)a- "dwelling" could yield a non-individualizing collective feminine plural *sal(j)az. This would logically mean "village" in the same way as <engjar> fpl. "grassland" is derived from <engi> ns. "piece of land". (The feminine plural of <sel>, <seljar>, is known from toponyms, as are many other feminine plurals of neuters.) The dominant forms of this feminine plural are equal to the masculine and might in turn have yielded an analogous masculine <salr>. This is not as far-fetched as it may sound, since it happened to several words, e.g. <óss> "rivermouth", which has been a masculine in Ins. Scand. and W. Norw. for a long time. (Bjorvand, BTW, takes Lat. <o:ra> f. "rim, coast" as a creation from the collective feminine plural of <o:s> "mouth".) Baltic has lost the neuter and would have replaced the old neuter singulars with secondary feminines.

The neuter *sal(j)a- could possibly be derived from *sel- "take". I think one would need a verbal noun *sVI- "taking" > "farmland", perhaps surviving in Lat. <solum>, and take the a-stems as derivations meaning something like "house on farmland". But now I'm far out.

It would be nice to have Slavic <selo> fit into all this, and I suppose it can be done, but I don't know how. Also the often-but-never-well explained ON <sæll> "good, happy, (by implication of its negations:) well off" is a tempting target, but the long vowel is a problem.

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Trond Engen
- doing seldom right

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