

Proto-Indo-European verb and Slavic etymology

Summary

In Balto-Slavic, the large scope of stem variation within the verbal system inherited from Proto-Indo-European was reduced, on the paradigmatic level, to few apophonic verbs and nasal presents, but the former variety left traces in the lexicon, as alternate stems of an original paradigm gave rise to new paradigms, formally independent and semantically distinguished from each other. Bearing in mind this process may be helpful in solving etymological dilemmas and reconsidering problematic etymologies. This possibility is illustrated here by four instances of an etymological connection reestablishable, in Slavic, between apparently unrelated verbal stems if taking into account the Proto-Indo-European verb morphonology.

1) CSI **mesti, metq* ‘to sweep’ and **męsti, męto* < **mesti, męto* (nasal-infixed present), cf. SCr *v(j)etròmetina* ‘windy spot’, *vetar mete* ‘the wind sweeps’, Russ (*veter*) *metët* ‘it snows’ as compared to Russ dial. *vetromjat* ‘hole in (the wall of) a log (cabin)’

2) **u-vędnqti* ‘to wither’, originally **‘to dehydrate’* ~ Russ. *udit* ‘to ripen, i.e. to swell with sap (of grain)’ < Common Slavic **qđiti* or **uđiti* < PIE **uend-* / **und-* (or **oud-*), based on a nasal-infixed present as reflected in OInd *unátti* ‘springs, wets, bathes’, 3.pl. *undánti*, cf. OPruss *unds*, Lith. *vanduõ* ‘water’, Latin *unda* ‘wave’, ultimately to Sl *voda*, Heth *wātar*, *wetas*, Gk *hýdōr*, OInd *udán*, *udnás*, etc. ‘water’, perhaps also OInd *ódman-* ‘flood, flooding’, Av *aoda-* ‘spring, well’. Alternatively **u-v-ęd-* < **ęd-* beside **qđ-* in **qđiti* ‘to smoke (meat)’ < **H₂e-n-d-* as nasal-infixed variant of **H₂ed-* in Gk *ázesthai* ‘to dry, wither’, Heth *hādu*.

3) **vęzati* ‘to tie, bind’, **vęzti* ‘to embroider’, **qza* ‘string’, **qže* ‘rope’ < **ue-n-gh-* / **u-n-gh-*, to the samprasarana root **ueg(h)-* / *ug(h)* ‘to weave’ in OIr *-fighter*, *fáig*.

4) SCr *vidati* ‘to heal’, originally **‘to take the disease, wound, etc. out of the body’* ~ *vāditi* (also Mac, Bulg) ‘to take out, away (also of contusion, fever, spell)’ < CSI **v-yd-* / **vad-* < PIE **uH₂d-* / **ueH₂d-* in Lat *vādō*, *-ēre* ‘to go’, *vādāre* ‘to wade’, OIsl *vaða* id., etc., originally ‘to go taking one self’s feet out of the water’.

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