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SOME CELTO-SLAVIC ETYMOLOGIES

This paper is based on the research which led to the publication of my "Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic" (EDPC).¹ Its aim is to examine the exclusive Celto-Slavic lexical isoglosses, and to propose a few new etymologies, in which the Celtic-Slavic correspondences play an important role.

Celtic and (Balto-)Slavic quite certainly belonged to different dialect areas of Indo-European; therefore, it is not surprising that there are rather few exclusive lexical isoglosses connecting these two branches. However, the following words should be mentioned:

1. PCelt. *ēskyo- 'moon' (EDPC 118f., OIr. *éscæ*, *éscā*, *éisce* [io n, later m])² can be derived from PIE *h₁eysk- 'shine, glitter' (IEW 16f.); the immediate cognates of this Celtic etymon are found in Balto-Slavic, cf. OCS *iskra* 'spark', Cz. *jiskra* 'id.', Pol. dial. *skra* 'id.', Croat. *iskra* 'id.', Lith. *áiškus* 'bright', Russ. *jáska* 'bright star'. In OIr., *éscæ* replaced the earlier word for moon, *lúan* (Lat. *lūna*, Russ. *luná*). Its Baltic and Slavic cognates are usually derived from PIE *h₂eysk-, but on meagre evidence. Actually, it is equally possible to reconstruct an ablauting root *h₁eysk- > PCelt. *ēsk-, *h₁isk- > OCS *iskra*, *h₁oysk- > Russ. *jáska*, Lith. *áiškus* (the acute may be the result of a secondary BSl. vřddhi).

2. PCelt. *fitu- 'food' (EDPC 131, cf. OIr. *ith* [u n] 'grain', W *it*, MBret. *et*, MoBret. *ed* [m]) is from PIE *peyH-tu- 'food' (IEW 793f.); again, we find the immediate cognates in Balto-Slavic, cf. OCS *pišta* 'food, bliss', Russ. *píščā* 'food', Cz. *píce* 'fodder', Sln. *píča* 'food, fodder', Lith. *piētūs* 'dinner'. The accentuation of Croat. *pītati* 'feed' shows that this was a laryngeal root in PIE; shortening in Celtic might be the result of Dybo's law (the circumflex in Lithuanian can be the result of the loss of laryngeal after *y by Pinault's rule).

¹ Throughout this paper, the same language glosses will be used as in EDPC.

² For a more thorough exposition of this etymology see Matasović 2009a.

3. PCelt. *lūtu- ‘anger, power’ (EDPC 250, cf. OIr. *lúth* [u m] ‘power of motion, vigour’, W: MW *llid* [m] ‘anger’, Gaul. *Lutu-marus* = OIr. *lúthmár* ‘powerful’) can be derived from PIE *lewH-to- ‘angry’ (IEW 691). The only clear cognate is found in Slavic, cf. OCS *ljutъ* ‘angry, fierce’, Russ. *ljútyj* ‘ferocious, cruel, fierce’, Cz. *lítý* ‘fierce’, Po. *luty* ‘id.’, Croat. *ljút* ‘id.’; although the semantics of the connection are fine, the IE part of this etymology is somewhat speculative: the Celtic forms must be from *luHtu-, while OCS *ljutъ* must represent *lewHto-, with the secondary loss of the acute intonation by Meillet’s law (cf. the circumflex in Croat. *ljút*).

4. PCelt. *ruxtu- ‘noise’ (MÍr. *rucht* [ʔ u], EDPC 317f.) can be derived from PIE *(H)rewk- ‘cry, make noise’ (IEW 867) and compared to Latv. *rùkt*, OCS *rykati* ‘roar, bellow’, Croat. *rikati* ‘id.’, Cz. *ryknout* ‘id.’, Russ. *rykát* ‘id.’. However, the gender and stem formation of MÍr. *rucht* are uncertain, and the word is not very well attested, so this etymology is quite problematic. OCS *rykati* represents a Balto-Slavic vřdđhi formation; words with similar meaning with the voiced stop adduced by IEW (p. 867, e. g. Lat. *rūgio*, Gr. *órygma*, Russ. *rugát*, etc.) probably belong to another root, also onomatopoeitic. Of course, with onomatopoeitic roots, the possibility of chance resemblance cannot be excluded.

5. PCelt. *slowgo- ‘troop, army’ (EDPC 346) is reconstructed on the basis of OIr. *slúag*, *slóg* [o m] ‘troop, army’, W: MW *llu* [m] ‘id.’, OBret. *mor-lu* ‘great army’, *-lu* (in toponyms), OCo. *luu listri* gl. classis, MCo. *lu*, and the Gaul. ethnonym *Catu-slugi*. The comparison with the Balto-Slavic forms (OCS *sluga* ‘servant’, Croat. *slúga* ‘id.’, Russ. *slugá* ‘id.’, Cz. *sluha* ‘id.’, Lith. *slaugà* ‘servitude’) allows us to reconstruct PIE *slow^(h)o- ‘retinue’ (IEW 965); the Balto-Slavic words look like a collective formation from an original thematic adjective *slow^(h)o-, but the underlying verbal root is unknown.

6. PCelt. *talskV- ‘fragment, piece’ (EDPC 367, cf. W *talch* [p] ‘oatmeal, groats, fragments’, OCo. *talch* gl. *furfures*) can be derived from a PIE root *telk- ‘strike, hit’ (IEW 1062). We find clear cognates only in Slavic, cf. OCS *tlěšti* ‘strike, hit, pound’, Croat. *túci* ‘id.’, Cz. *tlouci* ‘id.’, Russ. *tolóč* ‘id.’ < *telk- / *tǎlk-. The same root may be attested in PCelt. *telmi- ‘sling, snare’ (OIr. *tailm*, etc.). In Celtic, we must assume the PIE zero-grade *tlk- and derive W *talch* from PCelt. *talskV- from earlier *talxsko- < PIE *tlk-skǝ- (like W *arch*- from < *parxsko- < *prk-skǝ-). In Slavic, we have the zero-grade in the present tense, and the e-grade in the aorist/infinitive (OCS inf. *tlěšti*, 3sg. pres. *tlěčěť*).

7. PCelt. *krissu- ‘belt’ (EDPC 225) is reflected in OIr. *cris* [u m], OW *guecrissou* [pl.], MW *crys* ‘shirt’, MBret. *crés* ‘shirt’, MoBret. *kres* [m] ‘id.’, and OCo. *kreis* gl. *camisia*. It has been related to Russ. *čéres* ‘leather

belt', and derived from PIE *kerd^h- (EIEC 224), or, more probably, *kert- (roots with an aspirated and a voiceless stop are extremely rare in PIE). In Slavic, this word is attested only in East and West Slavic, cf. also Ukr. *čéres* 'belt', Po. *trzos* 'money-belt'.³ The PCelt. form would be from the zero-grade of the root with the suffix *-tu-, and PIE *krt-tu- would regularly have yielded PCelt. *krissu-. The Slavic forms could be from *kert-so-, which means that the word formations in Slavic and Celtic are not identical. Both could be parallel derivations from the root *kert- 'to cut' (Lith. *kertù*, *kiřsti*, etc.).

8. PCelt. *kat-yo- 'throw' (EDPC 195–6), reflected as OIr. *caithid*, *-caithi* 'throws, uses, consumes', Gaul. *cateia* 'projectile' (Servius, *Aen.* VII, 741). The OIr. verb has many meanings, but it is probable that 'throw' is the original one. The PCelt. root *kat- can be compared to ORuss. *kotitjsja* 'roll', Russ. *katít* 'rush', *katát'sja* 'roll, drive', Cz. *kotiti* 'roll, turn'. This would imply a PIE root *keh₂t- / *kh₂t-, with Celtic preserving the zero-grade of the root. In Slavic, we have the full grade in Russ. *katít*, and the zero-grade in Cz. *kotiti*. Taken together, these facts probably point to an athematic present *keh₂t-mi / *kh₂t-mes, so we are presumably dealing with an archaic formation, the reflexes of which were accidentally preserved only in Celtic and Slavic.

All in all, we have only eight etymons that can be considered as exclusive lexical isoglosses between Celtic and Balto-Slavic. This is, admittedly, not much, which only confirms that Celtic and Balto-Slavic belonged to different IE dialects.⁴ All of the adduced cognates are preserved only in Celtic and Balto-Slavic by pure chance, and we may safely assume that reflexes of the respective PIE roots once existed at least in some other European branches of Indo-European, but were lost due to lexical replacement.

However, we should also note that there are some new etymologies, first proposed in EDPC, where Slavic material helps elucidate the origin of Celtic forms:

1. PCelt. *obnu- 'fear' (EDPC 295, cf. OIr. *omun* [u m],⁵ MW *ofuyn* (GPC *ofn*) [m], MBret. *oun*, MoBret. *ovn* [m], Co. *own*, and Gaul. personal name *Ex-obnus* < *eks-obno- 'fearless' = OIr. *essamin*) has not been ety-

³ According to Vasmer, s. v. *čéres*, one Russian dialect has a variant *čérez*, with the unexplained -z.

⁴ This claim is rather undisputed in Indo-European linguistics, cf., e.g., Porzig 1954, Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1985. Other allegedly exclusive lexical isoglosses between Celtic and Balto-Slavic, adduced by Porzig (1954: 202f.) are based on false etymologies, or parallel independent innovations.

⁵ OIr. *omun* is also attested with the long first vowel, *ómun* > Mir. *úamun*. The source of the vacillation is unclear to me (short vowel by analogy with *essamin* 'fearless'?).

mologically explained in a satisfactory manner so far. In EDPC I proposed a connection with Croat. *jéza* ‘fear, terror’, OCS *jędza* ‘disease’, Pol. *jędza* ‘witch’, Cz. dial. *jaza* ‘evil old woman’, cf. also Lith. *ėngti* ‘to strangle’, ON *ekki* ‘convulsive sobbing’, OE *inca* ‘doubt, complaint’ (Orel 2003: 84). Russ. mythological creature *jagá*, *jagá-bába* (a kind of witch) represents the same noun without the progressive palatalization. The Slavic forms presuppose Early PS. *endzā or *indzā, and can be derived from PIE *h₁eng^{w-}, with the nasal infix from the verbal base (present stem), cf. also Lith. *ėngti* (the acute is regular because of Winter’s law). The PIE root would be *h₁e-g^{w-}. PCelt. *obno- or *obnu- can be from PIE *h₁og^wno- or *h₁og^wnu-.

2. PCelt. *frāno- ‘mane’ (EDPC 306) can be reconstructed on the basis of MoIr. *rón* [o m], MÍr. *róinne*, *ruáinne* [io m] ‘a single hair’, MW *raun* [m] (GPC *rhawn*), MBret. *reun* [m], and MoCo. *rün*, if one assumes the regular loss of word-initial PIE *p- > PCelt. *f-. This PCelt. etymon can then be connected to PS. *pormy ‘lock (of hair)’, Croat. *prāmen*, Cz. *pramen*, Pol. *promień* < PIE *porH-men. PCelt. *frāno- would be derivable regularly from *prHno- or *prHmno- (the development of PIE *-mn- in Celtic is uncertain; all instances of *-mn- in PCelt. are from earlier *-bn-, cf. *obnu- ‘fear’ > OIr. *omun* above).

3. PCelt. *gissā ‘taboo, prohibition’ (EDPC 158) can be reconstructed on the basis of MÍr. *geis* [ʔi f]. Although these words have been derived from PIE *g^hed- ‘seize, take’ (IEW 437f., cf. Lat. *prae-hendo*, Gr. *khandánō*, see Hamp 1981), the semantic development (‘taking’ > ‘prohibition, taboo’) is somewhat difficult. Moreover, it is by no means certain that the original formation was an ī-stem. If an ā-stem is original in Irish, we might reconstruct PCelt. *gissā (> OIr. *gess by lowering), and derive this word from PIE *g^hid^h-teh₂ ‘what is desired’ (cf. PIE *g^heyd^h- > Lith. *geidžiù* ‘desire’, OCS *žьdati* ‘wait’, Russ. *ždat* ‘id.’, OCz. *ždáti* ‘id.’, cf. also OHG *gīt* ‘greed, desire’, IEW 426).

4. PCelt. *wesnālā ‘swallow’ can be reconstructed from OIr. *fannall* [ā f] gl. *hirundo*, OW *guennol* gl. *hirundo*, MW *gwennawl* [f], OBret. *guennol* gl. *herundo*, MBret. *guennel*, MoBret. *gwennel* [f], and Co. *gwennol*. McCone (2005: 3) included OIr. *fannall* and MW *gwennawl* ‘swallow’ in a group of ‘obviously related words... that not only lack obvious cognates elsewhere in Indo-European but also have a distinctly non-Indo-European look’. However, a PIE etymology seems probable, if one starts from the PIE word for ‘spring’ (*wesr/n- ‘spring’, IEW 1174, cf. Lat. *uēr*, Gr. *éar*, OCS *vesna*, Lith. *vasarà* ‘summer’). The a-vocalism in Irish requires an explanation. We should probably assume an assimilation (*e...ā > *a...ā), which is trivial. The stem *wesn- was generalised in Celtic, and the suffix *-ālo- was added to it. It is the same denominal suffix used for deriving adjectives

tives as, e.g., in W *misol* ‘monthly’ (from *mis* ‘month’), *saethol* ‘sagittal’ (from *saeth* ‘arrow’), etc. This suffix is less productive in Goidelic, but cf., e.g., OIr. *mebul*, *mebal* ‘shame’, *búal* ‘water’ (De Bernardo Stempel 1999: 224ff.). The stem *wesnā- is attested in Slavic (OCS *vesna*, Cz. *vesna*, Po. *wiosna*, Russ. *vesná*). Within Slavic, the meaning ‘spring’ is attested only in East and West Slavic languages, but cf. Slov. dial. *věsna* ‘a kind of fairy’ (Snoj 2003: 815). The semantic development in Celtic is rather clear: swallows are often conceived as ‘messengers of spring’, so ‘swallow’ is a spring-bird. This tradition about swallows was widely known in Antiquity, and is mentioned by many classical authors, e. g. Horace (Epistolae 1.7.13), Ovid (Fasti 2.853), etc. It is also much alive in the Slavic folklore (cf. the Croatian proverb *Jedna lasta ne čini proljeće* ‘One swallow does not make a spring’; similar proverbs exist in many other languages as well).

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Keltsko-slavenske etimologije

Sažetak

Ovaj je rad rezultat istraživanja koja su dovela do objavljivanja "Etimološkog rječnika prakeltskoga" (*Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, Leiden 2009), u kojem je sustavno istražen leksik prakeltskoga jezika, a osobito onaj dio toga leksika koji je naslijeđen iz indoeuropskoga. Prikupljena baza podataka omogućuje nam da izdvojimo ekskluzivne leksičke izoglose koje povezuju keltske i slavenske jezike. Pokazuje se da je takvih riječi vrlo malo, te da se većinom radi o riječima koje su slučajno očuvane upravo u te dvije grane indoeuropskih jezika, što ne može biti argumentom za njihovu dijalekatsku povezanost. Međutim, u radu se iznose i neke nove etimologije, u kojima upravo podatci iz slavenskih jezika pružaju vrijedne spoznaje za pravilnu rekonstrukciju prakeltskoga etimona i njegove povijesti.

Ključne riječi: keltski, slavenski, etimologija, leksičke izoglose, keltsko-slavenske izoglose

Key words: Celtic, Slavic, etymology, lexical isoglosses, Celto-Slavic isoglosses