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The Proto-Indo-European *Mediae*, Proto-Uralic Nasals from a Glottalic Perspective

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Elsewhere, I have pointed out the possibility that the Proto-Indo-European *mediae*, when envisioned as glottalized stops, can have developed from preglottalized nasals, i.e. $*d < *ʔn$, $*g < *ʔɣ$. This development is implied by the lexical distribution of the participial *no*-suffix, which originally only occurred in roots after $*d$, cf. Sanskrit *bhinná-* ‘split’, *-chinna-* ‘cut’, *tunná-* ‘struck’, Wakhi *zū-bōn* ‘burst’, *ra-sen* ‘broke’, Welsh *twnn* ‘broken’ < PIE $*bʰid-nó-$, $*skid-nó-$, $*tud-nó-$. Since this suffix is in complementary distribution with the more generic *to*-suffix, it can be hypothesized that the former developed from the latter through 1) assimilation of $*-ʔnto-$ > $*-ʔnno-$ and 2) buccalization of $*-ʔnno-$ > $*-dno-$, where $*d$ represents a doubly articulated stop consisting of a buccal and a glottal closure (Kroonen 2018).

It now appears that this reconstruction of pre-PIE preglottalized nasals can be brought in line with previous scholarship concerning the Indo-Uralic Hypothesis. In 1972, Bojan Čop presented a number of Indo-Uralic isoglosses in support of a regular sound correspondence between PIE $*g$ ($*ǵ$, $*gʷ$) and PU $*ɣ$. Recently, Martin Kümmel independently arrived at a similar conclusion in a discussion of the most promising lexical matches between Proto-Indo-European $*ie(ǵ)l-$ ‘ice’ and Proto-Uralic $*jä̃ne$ ‘id.’ (also cf. Collinder 1965: 124–125). Offering a diachronic typological perspective on the origin of the correspondence, Kümmel suggested that “we might suspect a Proto-Uralic change from implosives to nasals (or vice-versa?)” (2012: 305, see also this volume, 115–130). The sound correspondences can be observed in a small number of potential cognate sets:

PIU $*VnʔɣV-$: PIE $*ngʷni-$ ‘fire’ ≈ PU $*ä̃ɣ-$ ‘burn’¹
 PIU $*ʔnVkV-$: PIE $*deḱ-$ ‘perceive’ ≈ PU $*nä̃ki$ ‘see’

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1 The Uralic proto-form is based on Hungarian *ég* and Komi *ï̃i* only, and represents just one possible reconstruction.

PIU $*^?nV\eta gV$:- PIE $*dnǵ^h$ - ‘tongue’ \approx PU $*n\acute{i}(\eta)k\acute{c}imi$ ‘palate, gills’²

PIU $*jV^? \eta V$:- PIE $*ie(\acute{g})$ - ‘ice’ \approx PU $*j\ddot{a} \eta i$ ‘ice’

PIU $*pV^? nV$:- PIE $*ped$ - ‘step; fall’ \approx PU $*pane$ ‘put, place’³

Although the corpus of lexical similarities offered here is not by itself sufficiently large to substantiate the Indo-Uralic Hypothesis, typological parallels for linking the sound correspondences can be identified within a glottalic framework. A shift from PIU $*^? \acute{n}$, $*^? \eta$ to PIE $*d$, $*g$ would be paralleled, for instance, by a similar shift that has been suggested for Wambule, a Kiranti language spoken in eastern Nepal, where implosive d developed from $*^? n$ (Oppenort 2004). On the basis of this parallel, the Indo-Uralic sound correspondence can at least theoretically be accounted for by assuming that both the PIE *mediae* and the PU nasals derived from a series of PIU preglottalized nasals ($*^? \acute{n}$, $*^? \eta$), or even implosive nasals: While in Proto-Indo-European this series would have developed into glottalized stops, the preglottalization can simply have been lost in Proto-Uralic by a process of deplosivization.⁴

Within the Indo-European family, the reconstruction of preglottalized nasals is not actually *ad hoc*, as explained above, because it already accounts for another, seemingly unrelated problem, i.e. the lexical distribution of the *no*-participles. One may furthermore wonder whether the reconstruction of preglottalized nasals can offer an explanation for what has been a perennial question since the publication of Brugmann’s *Grundriss*, viz. that of the origin of the aberrant nasal of Skt. *viṃśatī*- ‘20’, ostensibly from PIE $*h_1 u \acute{i} n k m t i$.

While the (ostensibly) non-nasal variants such as Avestan *vīśaiti*, Lat. *vīginti* and OIr. *fiche* etc. can be explained from the traditional glottalic proto-form $*d u i - d k m t i$ - by dissimilation to $*? u i ? k m t i$ - (Lubotsky 1994), the nasal of the Sanskrit form is yet to be accounted for. It must demonstrably be of Proto-Indo-Iranian age, at any rate, in view of the Ossetic form *insæj* (Hübschmann 1887: 104; Brugmann 1911, vol. 2: 31).

By reverting to a deeper reconstructive state, it is possible to assume that in the stage prior to the buccalization of the preglottalized nasals, the Pre-PIE

2 This is a rather weak comparison in view of the evidence for $*^? \eta$ being restricted to Mari. It can theoretically be saved by reconstructing the Uralic word as an obscured compound $*n\acute{i}(\eta)kV$ ‘?’ + $*\acute{c}imi$ ‘scales, fish skin’ (Ante Aikio, p.c.), perhaps within dissimilation of the first nasal.

3 The PIE and PU semantics can only be unified by reconstructing a meaning “put down”. However, this step requires an additional, unverifiable assumption.

4 Such a development is documented for varieties of the Sui language in southern China (Wei and Edmondson 2008).

form $*^?nui-^?nkmti-$ developed into $*^?nui-nkmti-$ by dissimilation of the second glottal stop, and then into $*^?ui-nkmti-$ by dissimilation of the first nasal. The resulting $*h_1uin(kmti)-$ would have regularly developed into Skt. *viṃśatī-*.

It is relevant from this perspective, that some Germanic forms, too, can be derived from the same nasalized form that appears to underlie Skt. *viṃśatī-*. Old Norse *tottogu*, *tuttugu* and *tyttugu*, whose *-tt-* presupposed Proto-Germanic $*-nt-$, can similarly be projected back into Proto-Indo-European as part of the sequence $*-ndek-$ (Schmidt 1970: 128). Indeed, the variant *tyttugu* together with Old Norwegian *tuittugu* (Hægstad 1915: 23) may simply continue PGM. $*twin-tegunþ < *duin-dekmt-$, where $*dekmt-$ represents the usual Germanic replacement of PIE $^-(h_1)kmti-$. In conclusion, this variant, too, can be derived from PIE $*h_1uin(h_1)kmti-$, although an additional explanation is required for the restoration of the initial dental.

Given the wider dialectal distribution of traces of a nasal, it is actually not inconceivable either that Lat. *vīginti* similarly continues a nasalized form $*h_1uin(kmti)-$. This view was explicitly rejected by Thurneysen, who views the nasal of Skt. *viṃśatī-* as a secondary, analogical intrusion from $*saptāśati < *septm(kmti)$ and $*navāśati < *neun(kmti)$ (1883: 312). Instead, Thurneysen argues that *vīginti* similarly acquired its voiced *g* analogically from the corresponding cardinals $*septm-(h_1)kmt-tmH-o-$ and $*neun-(h_1)kmt-tmH-o-$, where *g* would have been regularly voiced between two nasals. The analogy becomes redundant, however, by assuming that the inherited form was $*h_1uin(kmti)-$, and that in the resulting $*vīnginti$ the first nasal was lost due to dissimilation.

Summing up, in this brief investigation I hope to have shown how the possibility of deriving PIE $*d$, $*g$ from earlier $*^?(n)$, $*^?ŋ$ also opens potential new inroads into the internal reconstruction of the Indo-European proto-language. Firstly, it offers an alternative way to integrate seemingly unrelated problems within Indo-European, namely that of the distribution of the *no*-participles and origin of the nasal element of the numeral '20'. Secondly, the reconstruction of such a series facilitates a more realistic phonetic interpretation of previously identified lexical similarities between Proto-Indo-European and Proto-Uralic.

However, an important remaining question is whether the lexical material displaying the correspondence of Proto-Uralic nasals and Proto-Indo-European *mediae* actually substantiates the Indo-Uralic Hypothesis or that it rather reflects borrowing from Pre-Proto-Indo-European into Proto-Uralic. Future studies will have to address this question, but regardless of the answer, we are left with a small corpus of words suggesting that the PIE *mediae* developed from a series of some sort of prestopped, presumably preglottalized nasals.

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