Vaillant states simply, in regard to the etymology of Slavic *gъrdъ (OCS гръдъ ‘arrogant’, Ru. г´ордыъ ‘proud’), “inexpliqué” (1950–77 IV 263). Indeed, previous attempts at etymologies remain unconvincing, among them a proposed connection with Lat. gurdus ‘тупой, глупый’ (Vasmer I 440); Brückner’s connection between *gъrdъ and *gъrbъ, rejected on semantic grounds by ESSJa (VII 207); and Pokorny’s attempt to relate *gъrdъ to the set of Balto-Slavic *grūdiō ‘I stamp’, Slavic grustь ‘sorrow, grief’, kruda ‘clod of earth’ (IEW 460f.: ghrēu- : ghrəu- : ghrū- ‘scharf darüber reiben, zerreiben’), rejected by ESSJa this time on phonetic grounds (*grud- cannot serve as the basis of *gurd-). ESSJa (loc. cit.) also rejects proposed connections with Lat. grossus ‘fat’, Lat. grandis ‘large’, and Gk. βρένθος ‘arrogance’. Since the semantics of *gъ̑rdъ in South Slavic reflects the (negative) range “terrible, ugly, repulsive,” alongside “proud, haughty” elsewhere, ESSJa (loc. cit.) finds in *gъrdъ an “expressive-innovative” element, and proposes (comparing Lith. gurdūs ‘feeble, weak’, Latv. gu ē āds ‘weary’, Gr. βραδύς [*gυρδυς] ‘slow’) a semantic development: “застывший > малоподвижный > чопорный, гордый,” but this seems no more convincing than the other proposals.

Since the closely-related meanings “proud” and “haughty, arrogant” are found in Old Church Slavic and are the basic meanings of *gъrdъ across East and West Slavic (see ESSJa, loc. cit.), it seems natural to start from this semantic set and seek an appropriate formal comparandum. One possibility which has thus far been overlooked, undoubtedly because the phonetic correspondences are less than obvious, is a connection with the Baltic root *gъ̯r- ‘praise’ (Lith. girti, past participle/adjective pagirtas, Latv. dziŗt, OPr. girtwei), IEW 478 *gᩢer(ə)- ‘die Stimme erheben, bes. loben, preisen...’, Mallo ry-Adam s 449 *gъurh - ‘praise’, also found in Slavic *žerti (OCS žъро, žrēti) in the meaning of “sacrifice” (< “honor the gods [in time of sacrifice] vocally [in word or song]”: Māžiulis 374 [s. v. girtwei]).

In this light, Slavic *gъrdъ may be seen as referring to the sentiment of self-esteem that one feels upon receiving praise: one is proud, “praised.” This basic sense of “praised, proud” can easily acquire the more negative sense of overweening pride,

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1 Ost en-Sack en 1911, 419 is undoubtedly right in suggesting that these are in fact two distinct bases, with the South Slavic forms belonging to the family of grustь ‘sorrow, grief’.
as it has in East and West Slavic where, alongside “proud,” recurrent meanings are “haughty, arrogant.” The reflexive forms of *gír- in Baltic, Lith. gírtis, Latv. dzírtiēs (= lielīties) ‘to boast, brag, swagger’, literally “praise oneself,” approach this sense of “superbus” and thereby provide additional support for a comparison of *gír- with the Slavic adjective in question. The same semantic extension of a base “praise” is found in other derivations: Lith. pagyra ‘praise’, but pagyrę puodas, pagyrę maišas ‘braggart’ (LKŽe), pagyrūnas ‘boaster, swaggerer, braggart’. Indeed the Russian deadjectival reflexive verb гордиться ‘be proud of, pride oneself on’ can also take on the same sense of “boast, strut, swagger”: D a l’ I 933: гордиться “быть гордым, кичиться, зазнаваться, чваниться, спесивиться, хвалиться чем–либо, тщеславиться.”

Turning now to the phonetics of the proposed equation Slavic *gъ̑rdъ : Lith. (pa)gírtas, there are two structure points that require comment: Baltic *gír- shows an -i- vocalism, while Slavic *gъ̑rdъ has -u-; and (pa)gírtas shows a regular -t- participial formation, while *gъ̑rdъ presents a -d- suffix of uncertain origin.

The -ur- of Slavic gъ̑rdъ is in fact the expected Balto-Slavic outcome of a syllabic liquid after an Indo-European labiovelar (V a i l l a n t 1950-77 I 171ff.); the -ur-reflex is found for example in Slavic *gъrdlo ‘throat’ ≅ Lith. gurklỹs, from a root formally similar to the “praise” base: *gʷer(h)₃- ‘swallow’ (M a l l o r y-A d a m s 175; Slavic *žerti of OCS po-žrěti ‘swallow’, Lith. gérti ‘drink’), with the reduced grade -i- of a regular ablaut series introduced in Lith. gírtas ‘drunk’ (homonymous with “praised”). In our case, gъ̑rdъ, semantically isolated from its original base (Slavic has introduced the denominals *xvaliti, *slaviti for “praise”), preserves the original phonetic development unaffected by a regular ablaut series (as does the Old Indic cognate gūrtá- ‘pleasant’: M a ž i u l i s 374: OInd. gūr-tāḥ ‘malonus’ < *“pagirt(in)as” = Balt. *gēr-tas “pagirtas, gelobt” > Lith. gírtas ‘id.’). Baltic *gír-, on the other hand, shows a refashioned reduced grade of an ablaut series in which the connection with the full grade (cf. Lith. geras ‘good’, from the same base: M a ž i u l i s 374: “gut, tüchtig < *giriamas, pagírtas”) was still felt.

The -d- of Slavic gъ̑rdъ vis-à-vis the -t- participle of Baltic is less amenable to explanation. V a i l l a n t 1950–77 IV 489 points to a number of Slavic adjectives in

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2 For a discussion of theories of -iR- and -uR- reflexes of Balto-Slavic syllabic resonants—the “alternation theory” of Baudouin de Courtenay, Mikkola, and Endzelin on the one hand, and the “phonetic environment theory” of Fortunatov, Vaillant, and Kuryłowicz on the other – see S h e v e l o v 1964, 86–90, who argues in favor of the latter.

3 Thus promoting word-play such as “Girts — nepagirts” (LKŽe, s. v. pagirti).

4 Another well-known example of this sort is found in the various Balto-Slavic outcomes of IE *gʰen- ‘strike’: Slavic inf. gъnati ‘drive cattle’ (also OPr. guntwei) : full-grade present ženǫ, but Lith. inf. giñti ‘drive cattle’, which shows regularized reduced grade introduced from the ablaut series -i- ~ -e- ~ -o-.
among them *gₜərdə, of various obscure origins. It is also possible that the Slavic -d- element is identical to the one found in the Baltic word for “hear” (Lith. girdėti (girdi), Latv. dzirdēt, Latv. dzirde ‘hearing’), which Fränkel I 153 links to the “praise” root (but we then must account for metatony in the circumflex base of “hear”). Торогов 1979 248 likewise notes a -d- element in the Celtic word for “bard,” traceable to the “praise” root: “Значение ‘петь’, ‘славить’ имплицитно содержится в др.-ирл. bard, кимр. bardd (*gʷr̥-d/h/o-s), галльск.–латинск. bardus ‘бард’, ‘певец’.” Finally, Малорь-Адамс 436 tentatively suggests a phrase: *gʷr̥h₁-dheh₁ ‘put praise’ on the basis of Av. garəm dā-, OInd. girəm dā ‘give praise’. One of these possibilities may conceivably account for the -d- element in *gₜərdə.

Be that as it may, there is one incontrovertible parallel to our (pa)girtas : *gₜərdə equation, which also shows a Baltic t and a Slavic d: the adjectival (resp. participial) pair Lith. tvirtas ‘strong, firm’ (cf. tvērti ‘seize, snatch; fence, enclose’), Latv. tvīrīs ‘firm, solid’ (cf. tveřt ‘seize, grasp’): Slavic *tvərdə (Ru. твёрдый) ‘hard, firm’, where the Slavic form is (like *gₜərdə) isolated both in formation and meaning: there is no directly corresponding verb, as there is in Baltic. The parallelism continues through derived forms: OCS tvr’dyni ‘Bollwerk, Befestigung’, ORu. tvr’dynja ‘Gefängnis, Festung, Schutz’ (glosses cited after Holzer 1989 150): *gvr’dyni in OCS grv’dyni, Ru. гродыня ‘arrogance’.

Holzer 1989 (150f.) includes Slavic tvvərdə in the material he uses to demonstrate a set of otherwise unexpected sound correspondences in (Balto-)Slavic, which allegedly reflect borrowings from an unknown, perhaps Cimmerian, adstratum. In the language of this adstratum, Indo-European voiced aspirated stops were devoiced and voiceless stops merge with voiced, which do not change. Additionally, TeRT clusters result in an acute TiRT. Slavic tvvərdə represents, then, according to Holzer, an adstratum *tvǔrdo- from IE *dhuęrdo- ‘provided with doors or gates’ (although Holzer does not mention it, the acute of the root is not demonstrable in Slavic, which has a mobile accent paradigm). He also sees the Baltic cognates, Lith. tvirtas, Latv. tvīrīs, as products of this adstratum, although formed with a different suffix: *tvǔrto- < IE *dhuęrdo-, with the same meaning. He thus treats at least the Baltic forms as independently derived words with original full grade, rather than participial forms of a verb (the latter is found in Lith. tvērtas ‘ergriffen’: Fränkel II 1155).

While this approach is intriguing, and for some of the material even persuasive, in these cases it means dismissing regular ablaut alternations in which the -t- participle shows reduced grade, which seems too radical a step. Also, this approach would presumably not account for Slavic gₜərdə, with its -u- vocalism. We are left with the more traditional possibilities for -t- vis-à-vis -d- presented above, and the fact of
*tvěrdъ : tvirtas, formally parallel to *gъ̑rdъ : (pa)girtas. Slavic *gъ̑rdъ ‘proud’ in this view represents a semantic and formal isolate in comparison with the Baltic *gi̯r~ base, a situation which is not a typical (recall Slavic *rǫka ‘hand’ : Lith. rankà : riňkti ‘gather’).

SLAVŲ *gъ̑rdъ : LIE. (pa)girtas

Santrauka

Sl. *gъ̑rdъ gali būti aiškinamas kaip priesagos -d- vedinys iš šaknies, baltų kalbose reiškiančios ‘girti’ (lie. girti, la. džīrt, pr. girtwei).

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Steven YOUNG
Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
University of Maryland Baltimore County
1000 Hilltop Circle
Baltimore, MD 21250 USA
[young@umbc.edu]