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### \**uel-* AND \**uelH*

V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov have offered<sup>1</sup> highly interesting evidence from the mythological sector in support of the root \**vel-*. The purpose of this note is to suggest that two originally separate roots have by phonological accident and chance semantic adjacency merged to form a continuum that has the resultant appearance of presenting but a single root.

The authors present excellent contextual semantics to support the basic equation of Slavic *Veles* (*Volos*), Lith. *velnias*, Latv. *velns*, Lasicki's *Vielona*, Old Latv. *Vels*, and perhaps Skt. *Valá-*. The function of this divinity as an opponent of the god of thunder leads naturally to 'devil' and to 'death'. The semantics seen in *vēlinēs*, Latv. *Velu laiks* and *veļa kauls* forms an easy transition to the literal sense of 'death, the dead'. If Toch. A *wlāñkät*, B *ylaiñikte* 'Indra' is derived from \**wel(ā)-w(e)nakt-* (p. 24), we may have here a petrified phrase \*'Lord Vel-'. All these forms seem to point strongly to an old divine name \**uel-*. It is not, however, clear to me that the root 'rule' (24–5) is the same IE root.

Ivanov and Toporov also allude (21–2) to another set of words for '(the) dead', largely attested in Germanic (OIcel. *valr*, OE *wæl* etc.). Toch. A *wäl-* 'die' and Luwian *ulant-* 'the dead' (22) also appear to belong here, but are ambiguous. In connexion with these latter I would call attention to my analysis presented in IF 77(1972) 162, where I reconstruct a set root \**uelH-* 'mutilate, injure'<sup>2</sup>. It will therefore be seen that we cannot be sure of the membership of the Toch. A *wäl-* and Luw. *ulant-* in this set without knowing in what sense they came to mean 'die'.

Because Tocharian alone seems to represent all three of the attested semantic areas in closely comparable formations (*wlāñkät* 'Indra'; *walu walunt-* 'the dead', *wlalune* 'death'; *wäl lānt* 'ruler') the argument that we have here at least three originally separate roots is strengthened.

<sup>1</sup> *Baltistica* 9 (1973) 15–27.

<sup>2</sup> As I mention there, a connexion of Lith. *vēlēs*, *vēlēs* (and *vēlinēs*) is not at all clear or certain.

It is of course possible that the \**yel*- seen in the divine names and also in the Lithuanian terms for souls of the dead is ultimately to be connected with \**uelH*- 'lacerate, injure' or the root 'to rule' (but surely not with both). But in order to do this we would first need a precise account of the semantics and structural formation rules of the suffixes in -s-, -n-, etc. I do not see that the material presently available permits this.

## SMULKMENOS

### XXIII

K. Būga dar 1912 m. atkreipė kalbininkų dėmesį, kad *pēlūs* 'pelai' Daukšos postilėje buvo moteriškosios giminės daiktavardis<sup>1</sup>, plg. i. pl. *tomis pēlumis* 86<sub>17</sub>. Kartu jis nurodė, jog dabartinėse tarmėse, kurios išlaikė seniasias *u* kamieno daugiskaitos formas, *pēlūs* jau yra tapęs vyriškosios giminės žodžiu. J. Kazlauskas taip pat tvirtino, kad dabartinėse tarmėse *u* kamieno moteriškosios giminės daiktavardžiai yra visai išnykę, kad senuosiouose raštuose vienintelis toks esąs užfiksotas *pēlūs*<sup>2</sup>. Tačiau iš tikrųjų, pasirodo, šis daiktavardis dar ir dabar rytų aukštaičių panevėžiškių tarmės plote vienur kitur tebéra moteriškosios giminės. Taip man prieš 15 metų yra teigę studentai, kilę iš Ramýgalos apylinkių. Kad Žeimėlio šnektoje (Pakrúojo raj.) *pēlūs* tebéra moteriškosios giminės daiktavardis, ne kartą yra tvirtinęs geriausias šios šnekto žinovas mokyt. J. Šliavas.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Būga, Lituania – ИОРЯС XVII 1 36 (=RR I 371).

<sup>2</sup> J. Kazlauskas, Lietuvių kalbos istorinė gramatika, Vilnius, 1968, 138, 218.