

The Tweet

Original: *Sentiment heerst in onze tijd. Wie weent, wint. Daar is geen argument tegen opgewassen.*

English translation: *These days sentiment rules. Whoever weeps, wins. No argument can refute that.*

In conventional reconstructed PIE

** $\check{k}ér$ $h_3rēǵti$ $tóisu$ $yéh_2rsu$*

** k^wis k^wis $h_3réudh_xti$ $wikéti$*

** $yósmōi$ $méntis$ ne $h_2yeh_2yód^he$*

A possible phonetic representation of the above

**ce:r 'kre:ɟti 'tojsu 'jeɣrsu*

**kwis kwis 'krewdɣti wi'keti*

**'josmo:j 'mentis ne ɣye'ɣyowd^he*

** $\check{k}ér$*

Translating “sentiment” as “heart” was a fairly straightforward decision. The reconstruction of **kerd* for this meaning is uncontroversial, with widespread cognates - ranging from Hittite *ker*, *kard(i)* to Latin *cor*, *cordis* - sharing the same meaning.

The reconstruction of the final *-d*, however, is disputed. The nominative/accusative of this word was either ** $\check{k}ér$* (with assimilation of the *d*) or ** $\check{k}érd$* . We have followed NIL in reconstructing the former. Assuming the loss of the *d* has the advantage of explaining the lengthened *e*-grade.

The root noun in question is neuter in the branches where it is attested.

** $h_3rēǵ-ti$*

The root ** $h_3rēǵ$* is the most salient lexeme within the semantic domain of “to rule” or “to lead”. We follow LIV in reconstructing a Narten present (along with a nasal present with fewer reflexes). The stem is athematic and therefore takes the ending **-ti* without an intervening vowel.

In our phonetic representations of the laryngeals we follow Kümmel’s suggestions in IEP.

** $tói-su$*

We use a general deictic here to avoid potential difficulties in reconstructing a possessive adjective for “our”, as reflexes differ from branch to branch.

The form of the locative plural is reconstructed in accordance with MPIE. For the morphosyntax of this constituent, see discussion under the following word.

***yéh₂-r-su**

Various candidates present themselves in the semantic domain of “time”. They include:

- *h₂et-no- as in Latin *annus*, Gothic *athnam*
- *wet-(es-) as in Latin *vetus*, Greek *we-to-*, Sanskrit *vatsá* (calf of one year)
- *yeh₂-r- as in Gothic *jer*, Greek *hora*, Avestan *yare*

Of these, we picked the last, as the most semantically adequate etymon which satisfies the Mallory-Adams Principle.¹

The use of the locative in the temporal sense is robustly in evidence for early Indo-European languages.

We follow LPIE in reconstructing *h₂ in this root. As Kroonen indicates, evidence from Avestan suggests an originally heteroclitc noun, with the suffix -n- (rather than -r-) in the weak cases. In common with other acrostatic root nouns in PIE, this word showed o/e ablaut, and the locative, as a weak case, requires the e-grade.

***k^wis k^wis**

The stem *k^wo-/ *k^wi- was used as both an interrogative and as an indefinite in PIE. The exact distinction between the o- and i-stem forms is not clear, but Lundquist and Yates (MPIE) suggest that the i-stem was originally the nominal form, whereas the o-stem was adnominal.

The indefinite use of this lexeme is often combined with full reduplication (cf. Latin *quisquis*, Hittite *kuis kuis*), which seems to be appropriate here.

***h₃rewd-h_x-ti**

IE languages use various different lexemes for the semantic domain of “weep”. We have chosen for the root *h₃rewd-, attested in Vedic and Greek with the meaning “howl”. Another possibility was *b^hleh₁- (> Latin *fleo*), also meaning “howl”, but its cognates are less widespread.

The quality of the final laryngeal is unknown.

***wik-é-ti**

Another lexically straightforward choice, perhaps best known from Latin *vinco*. The Latin form uses the nasal infix, but we use the thematic form which is attested in two branches (Celtic and Germanic).

¹ Described in the *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European world*. Simplified, a cognate can be considered Proto-Indo-European if it is attested in Anatolian and one other branch of Indo-European, or in at least one European and one Asian branch. The name we have given the principle is our own.

***yósmōi**

The pronoun refers to the entire previous sentence. The relative pronoun is short for “this, namely: the fact that whoever weeps, wins”, and is therefore neuter. The dative syntax is dictated by the choice of the verb (see discussion there).

The unusual pronominal dative ending is analogous to the oblique forms of the **so-/to-* demonstrative and is attested for this lexeme in Vedic.

Some authorities reconstruct an initial laryngeal of unknown quality, but this is not certain.

***mén-ti-s**

This etymon is widespread in branches of IE. The *ti*-stems were proterokinetic, so the nominative form required here can be reconstructed simply as *méntis*.

***ne**

The negation **ne* is unproblematically attested in various branches of Indo-European.

***h₂yeh₂yóud^he**

Various possible approaches to reconstructing this final section in PIE were discussed: *no reason is greater than this*, *no reason surpasses this*, and so forth. Unfortunately verbs for “surpassing” in early IE are often secondary (Latin *superare*, Greek *huperballein* etc) and consequently not reconstructable.

In order to avoid reusing **weyk-*, we eventually went for the semantic domain of “fight”, interpreted in the metaphorical sense of “compete”. The root **h_xyewd^h-* is the best candidate for this meaning. Although some branches, such as Latin (*iubeo*), seem to point to a more basic meaning such as “to set in motion”, the use of this root with reference to conflict is firmly attested and satisfies Mallory-Adams Principle (occurring in Greek, Sanskrit, Avestan and Balto-Slavic). Compare Greek *husmine* and Sanskrit *yudhyate* (“fight”).

The expression *is opgewassen* in the Dutch original is reminiscent of the PIE stative perfect, which we might loosely translate as “is in the state of having competed”. The point of the aphorism - as we interpret it - is not that no argument is currently in the process of competing with sentiment, but rather that, as a general fact, no argument subsists in the state of having successfully competed with it.

The verb presents a number of further morphosyntactic difficulties:

- The initial laryngeal is unclear. Willi² suggests a link to the root of Latin *ius* (**h_xyew-os-*), for which de De Vaan reconstructs **h₂*. For this reason we have reconstructed **h₂*, although this is uncertain.
- Authorities disagree on whether roots with initial #HC- reduplicate as HeHC- or HCeHC-. Thus, for instance, the perfect of the root **h₁lewd^h* is reconstructed **h₁eh₁lowd^h-* by LIV but

² <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41289052>

**h₁leh₁lowd^h*- by Kortlandt (p. 253). Given that the Vedic form is *ruruhur* and the Greek is *eilelouthe*, both with reduplication of the whole cluster, it seems preferable to choose for the more parsimonious reconstruction in line with the attested reflexes.

- Tying in with the former point, one might wonder about the correct syllabification of the consonant cluster after the reduplication: is it **h₂ye_h2-yóud^he* or **h₂ye-h₂yóud^he*? Since the cluster **-h₂y* occurs word-initially in this root, the second syllabification is clearly preferable.
- LIV regards this particular perfect as secondary, but there is no obvious reason not to reconstruct a productive PIE form. It is attested as Vedic *yuyódha* (again with reduplication of the sonorant).
- This root takes the accusative in Sanskrit, the dative in Latin (*iubeo*). Whether an accusative or a dative object should be reconstructed depends to some extent on the semantic evolution one wishes to postulate, relative to the basic meaning of “put in motion, cause to move”:
 - cause *x* to move > fight *x*
 - cause *x* to move against *y* > fight *y*

The latter semantic development seems more plausible to us.

References

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MPiE = Lundquist, Jesse, and Anthony Yates. 2018. ‘The Morphology of Proto-Indo-European’. In *Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics*, edited by Jared Klein, Brian Joseph, and Matthias Fritz, 3:2079–2195. Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft, Band 41.3. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

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