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OSSETICA

1. Iron. *stad*, Dig. *æstad, istad, stad*

This adjective with an ambiguous meaning is used in a limited number of contexts, cf. *stad fiw* 's m o k e d fat', *stad ærḱʼiag* 's m o k e d, d r i e d skin', *stad bægœny* 's e t t l e d, t h i c k beer'. It is clear that *stad* reflects Iran. **stāta-*, but further etymological analysis seems somewhat more complicated. V. I. ABAEV has recently explained *stad* as a past participle of Iran. **stā(y)-* 'to thicken', cf. Av. *stā(y)* 'mass, heap', Skt. *styā-* 'to thicken' and the like[1]. However, one should expect this participle to look like **stita-* in Iranian, and it is actually found in Pamir. *stid, sitid* 'thick, dense'. Thus, it is better not to support ABAEV'S conjecture.

The word in question could be identified with Iron. *stad*, Dig. *istad*, the past participle of Iron. *styn*, Dig. *istun* 'to stand, to stand up, to become'[2]. This equation seems to be obvious as far as the formal aspect is concerned; moreover, to prove it is semantically valid, it is possible to adduce evidence of a similar semantic development in other Indo-European languages.

It is a well-known fact that the words for fat as well as for any kind of settled liquid are often derived from verbs with such meanings as 'to put, to settle, to stand'. A fairly good example is Slav. **sadlo* 'fat' (Russ. *sálo* id.) derived from **saditi* 'to put, to seat' (Russ. *sadít'* id.). We could also mention Alb. *dhjamë, vjamë* 'fat' connected with *vë* 'to put'[3]. As regards settled liquids, it is possible to remind of Russ. *osádok* 'sediment' (to *sadít'*) or of E. settle, OE. setlan 'to settle' also belonging to the Indo-European root **sed-* 'to sit, to seat, to put etc.'

The meaning of the Ossetic verb is very close indeed to the above forms. To make it more evident we could adduce data connected with **stā-* in other Iranian languages, e.g. Sogd. *ʾwsty* 'to put' (< **awa-stā-ya-*),[4] Parth. *avištan-* id. and, finally, Av. *ava-staya-, ni-štaya-*id. Thus, the original meaning of the Os-

setic word for 'smoked' (fat) and 'settled' (beer) should be reconstructed as 'put, settled' and the word itself is likely to be derived from Iron. *styn*, Dig. *istun*.

2. Iron. *stæn*, Dig. *istæn*

This word is used to swear an oath, cf. *q₀yransystæn* '(I) swear on the Koran', *mæ fydystæn* '(I) swear by my father' and the like. One usually swears by one's parents or, very often, by farn.

Despite V. I. ABAEV's hypothesis[5], *stæn* has nothing in common with Slav. **istina* 'truth' as the correct etymology of the latter shows[6]. Nevertheless, ABAEV mentions as a possible cognate of *stæn* Sogd. *wi-stāw* 'oath'[7], although he qualifies this connection as "not clear". It seems, however, that this particular comparison is quite correct and the connection is clear since both Sogd. *wi-stāw* and Iron. *stæn*, Dig. *istæn* reflect different stems derived from Iran. **vi-stā-*. For the Ossetic word it is only natural to reconstruct **vi-stana-*.

The shift of meaning is very close to what we find in Latin. Lat. stāre 'to stand' (belonging to the same IE **steH-*) is known to mean 'to be faithful', cf. in fidē stāre 'to keep one's word' and also stāt 'it is decided, it is sure'. Similar meanings can be found in E. to stand, cf. to stand by X = 'to be faithful to X'.

3. Iron. *stær*, Dig. *æstær*

This interesting word denotes a special kind of foray made with the principal aim to steal and drive away the cattle. ABAEV gives a contradictory explanation of *stær*:[8] he compares it with the second part of Av. *aiwištara-* and translates it as 'devastator (of the country)' supposing that the morphological structure of *aiwištara-* is *aiwi-stara*. However, this point of view seems much less convincing than BARTHOLOMAE's translation and morphological analysis: *aiwištara-* is treated as *aiw-iš-tar-* and translated as 'lord of the country'.[9] ABAEV also compares *stær* with Afgh. *tāṛ* 'gang of robbers; band; spoil',[10] and it is very likely that his conjecture is right, but the attempt to relate both *stær* and *tāṛ* to Iran. **(s)tāyu-* 'thief' is untenable. It should be added that the equation *stær ~ tāṛ* implies *s* mobile in the root.

Now, the linguistic evidence proves that the notion of robbery is frequently motivated by verbs denoting tearing (off) or rubbing. The Ossetic language itself provides some fairly good examples if one thinks of Iron. *stīǧyn,* Dig. *sťeǧun* 'to tear off, to peel; to rob' or of Iron. *tona*, Dig. *tonaw* 'plunder' borrowed from Turk. *tona-* 'to tear off, to rob', *tonaw* 'plunder'. Similar cases can be found anywhere, e. g. in Baltic Lett. *lupt* 'to tear off' and *laupīt* 'to rob'

are derivational variants. The same shift is possible for the verbs meaning 'to rub' but then it is natural to reconstruct *'to tear (off)' as an intermediate stage[11].

It is, therefore, possible to derive *stær* from Iron. *stæryn*, Dig. *æstærun* 'to lick, to lap'. The meaning of the Ossetic verb is obviously due to the secondary development as other Iranian parallels show, cf. Pam. *(a)star-, ster-* 'to rub',[12] Pers. *säturdan* 'to clean, to scrape' etc.[13] The source is definitely IE *(s)ter-* 'to rub'.

4. Iron. *sūl*

Iron. *sūl* denotes a basket or some other receptacle where a new swarm is temporarily transferred from the beehive. The word is characterized as not clear[14].

For *sūl* one could reconstruct an earlier form *saurya-*. Two etymological possibilities for the latter can be suggested. First of all, *sūl* < *saurya-* could be related to Iron. *sūryn*, Dig. *sorun* 'to drive away' derived from *saura-: *sur-* (cf. Sak. *hasura-* 'game, bag, prey'[15]). The semantic motivation seems to be fairly clear since *sūl* is the receptacle into which the swarm is transferred or driven. There is, however, another explanation: *sūl* can be treated as an original name for cavity, cf. then Av. *sūra-* 'lacuna', Pers. *aūrāx* 'hole' and the like derived from IE *k̑euə-* (Lat. cavus 'hollow' etc.) The choice between the above explanations does not seem easy.

5. Iron., Dig. *lasyn*

Osset. *lasyn* 'to convey, to draw etc.' is a matter of some difficulty because of the initial *l-*. ABAEV believes that *l-* is due to dissimilation here and compares *lasyn* with inchoative *nas-* (to *nam-* 'to take') in Yagn. *nās-*, Afgh. *nas-*, Pamir. *nas-* 'to take, to grasp'.[16] To support this etymology it is necessary to adduce a very interesting meaning of *lasyn*, namely 'to curdle, to coagulate, to turn sour'. Now, this type of meanings is usually derived from the verbs denoting 'to catch' or 'to grasp', cf. Iron, *axsyn* 'to curdle, to coagulate; to catch, to grasp' (related to Slav. *sęgti* 'to grasp', as ANIKIN has recently shown[17]). The same semantic mechanism makes the English to say 'the river caught' when its surface is covered with ice. The original idea is of small particles (of milk etc.) "catching" one another. We can therefore reconstruct the meaning 'to catch' for *lasyn*, and it is much easier then to compare it with Iranian *nas-* as far as the meaning is concerned.

NOTES

[1] V. I. ABAEV: *Istoriko-etimologičeskij slovar'osetinskogo jazyka.* Vol. 3. Leningrad 1979, p. 143.

[2] The same root is found in Osset. (Iron.) *stajyn*, (Dig.) *stajun*, *æstajun* 'to get tired'. The corresponding participle is Iron. *stad*, Dig. *stad*, *æstad* 'tired'.

[3] Other examples see in: V. E. OREL: *Albanica parerga.* In: IF 90 (1985) (in print).

[4] I. GERSHEVITCH: *A Grammar of Manichean Sogdian,* Oxford 1961, § 215.

[5] V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 148.

[8] O. N. TRUBAČEV (ed.) *Etimologičeskij slovar' slav'anskix jazykov.* Vol. 8. Moscow 1981, p. 246-247 (to Lat. iste).

[7] I. GERSHEVITCH, Op. cit., § 216.

[8] V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 149.

[9] CHR. BARTHOLOMAE: *Altiranisches Wörterbuch.* Straßburg 1904, p. 96, 683.

[10] V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 149.

[11] For the detailed description cf Ž. Ž. VARBOT: *Proslav'anskaja morfonologija, slovoobrazovanije i etimologija.* Moscow 1984, p. 34-38.

[12] Cf. G. MORGENSTIERNE: *Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages.* II.: *Iranian Pamir Languages.* Oslo 1938, p. 236, 248f.

[13] V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 150.

[14] V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 168.

[15] H. W. BAILEY: *Khotanese Buddhist Texts.* London 1951, p. 363; V. I. ABAEV, Op. cit., p. 172 (*hasura-* < **fra-sura-*).

[16] V. I. ABAEV: *Istoriko-etimologičeskij slovar' osetinskogo jazyka.* Vol. 2. Leningrad 1973, p. 15.

[17] A.E.ANIKIN: *Opyt semantičeskogo analiza praslav'anskoj omonimii na indojevropejskom fone.* Moscow 1984, p. 20f.