INDO-EUROPEAN AX: AXI: AXU. A STUDY IN ABLAUT AND IN WORDFORMATION

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Indo-European $a^x : a^x i : a^x u$.

A Study
in Ablaut and in Wordformation

by

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PREFACE.

The following work is intended to be suggestive, not final. In spite of all that has been written on ablaut, the last word has not been said. Many points have been cleared up, notably by Hirt's studies in ablaut. But there are other points which still need explanation.

Ablaut is not a problem, but a group of problems, perhaps originally unrelated problems. Each language and each period presents problems of its own. So that ablaut as we find it in any language is the result of psychological as well as of phonetic rules.

For example, the Goth said *þraih* because he said *þaih*, granting for the moment that *þaih* represents an original ablaut form. But even that is not certain. Of course, there must have been some starting point for such an ablaut as we see in *þeihan* : *þaih* or λείπω : λέλοιπα, λέγω : λόγος, etc.; but in a large number of words the qualitative ablaut (abtönung) *e* : *o* must be secondary, or analogical.

How much may be due to analogy it is impossible to say. For analogy often produces the same result as phonetic laws. It is even possible that all qualitative ablaut is analogical. That is, such a difference as Gk. λέγω : λόγος may have been originally accidental. As soon, however, as it was felt as a distinguishing mark, it would be seized upon as a formative principle.

Hence in judging of ablaut as we find it, we must remember that the forms that actually occur can, in many cases, not be referred to an IE. original. It is often unsafe, therefore, to assume phonetic changes in explaining the phenomena of ablaut. This is especially true in those cases where the original ablaut has been lost or where there is an apparent confusion of different

ablaut series. But it is also true in words that have remained true to their original series.

In preparing this little book I have freely used the various etymological dictionaries, comparative grammars, and works of collected etymologies, referring to them only for some special reason. Wherever etymologies are taken from periodicals, credit is given.

My first aim in collecting this material was to bring together words belonging to different ablaut series that might fairly be regarded as in some way related, such words, for example, as Skt. *sisarti* : *srávati*; Germ. *slēpan* : *slīpan* : *sleupan*, etc. But I soon discovered that it is impossible, in many cases, to draw a line between words that may be related and those which appear to be related because they have fallen together in meaning. My studies have led me more and more to doubt all connections that are based solely on synonymy.

In this collection, therefore, I have brought together many words simply because they are synonymous, in order to show how little dependence is to be placed on similarity in meaning. Such ·examples as Skt. *ájati* 'treibt', *ajás* 'bock', *ajá* 'ziege' : *éjati* 'bewegt sich', Gk. αἴξ 'ziege' will prevent our being so cocksure that Gk. φλέγω is directly related to OHG. *blikhan* or Lat. *ōs* to *austia*.

This collection could no doubt be increased almost indefinitely. It has been made in a comparatively short time and includes only the most striking examples. The most patent results are perhaps negative. But these lead to positive conclusions, which are given further on.

From § 137 on the material is arranged alphabetically in the following order: Vowels; *i*, *j*; *u̯*; nasals; liquids; labials; dentals; palatals: velars, pure and labialized; *s*. The basis of classification is the letter in which, if a vowel, otherwise after which, the difference in ablaut appears. E. g. Gk. ἐλθεῖν : ἤλυθον are found under *l*. Of course, a strict alphabetical arrangement could not be carried out. In many cases this had to give way to a grouping according to meaning or nearer relation.

The usual abbreviations for the languages, as OHG. = Old High German, are used and need no explanation. The well known periodicals and books of reference will be recognized under any abbreviation. Where references are given without

a name attached, they are to the author's productions. Of these I refer most frequently to Color-Names and their Congeners, Halle, 1902. It is perhaps needless to say that I owe much in material and in inspiration to Per Persson's Studien zur Lehre von der Wurzelerweiterung und Wurzelvariation.

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1. The interchange $a^x : a^xi$ and $a^x : a^xu$ in apparently related words has long been noticed[1]). In part this is no doubt due to phonetic development. This is certainly the case in Skt. *gāúṣ* : *gắm*, OHG. *kuo*; Skt. *dyáúṣ* : *dyắm*, Gk. Ζῆν, Lat. *diem*; and probably also in Skt. *rắy-as* : *rắm*, Lat. *rem* (cf. Brugmann, Kurze vgl. Gram. 88). But to assume that every base *xắ^xi* or *xắ^xu* with derivatives in which *i* or *u* does not appear has lost this final *i* or *u* phonetically is not warranted by the facts. And to connect such words as Gk. σμīκρός : OHG. *smāhi* simply because they are synonymous is building on a very uncertain foundation. In the last case I should deny all relationship unless it can be shown that both words may be referred to a base *smēi-*, or else that one of the words was changed by analogy from its original form. For synonymy alone is insufficient evidence of relationship.

2. This is a point that can not be too strongly emphasized. It would be easy to multiply examples to prove any phonetic change we might assume if similarity in meaning were sufficient proof. That this is not the case I have shown elsewhere[2]).

How easily any particular meaning may develop is seen in the fact that so many different words are synonymous. Thus we find the meaning 'swell' in the following: Skt. *tanóti* 'dehnt sich', Lith. *tìnti* 'schwellen', *tanùs* 'geschwollen', OHG. *donēn* 'sich ausdehnen, aufschwellen', OE. *þindan* 'swell'. — Skt. *taviti* 'ist stark', *túmra-s* 'feist, strotzend', Lat. *tumeo* 'swell', Lith. *tvìnti* 'anschwellen, steigen'. — OS. *thrimman* 'schwellen', MHG. *drinden*

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1) For the literature on the subject see Noreen, Urgerm. Lautlehre 212; Brugmann, Grdr. I², 205.

2) See "How are Words Related?" IF. XVIII, 1 ff. In this article, pp. 8—16, I had used some of the same examples as are given by Schroeder, PBB. XXIX, 489 ff., but my conclusions are diametrically opposed to his.

'schwellend dringen, anschwellen', OE. *þrintan* 'swell'. — OE. *a-þrūten*, ON. *þrútenn* 'swollen', *þrútna* 'swell, rise'. — MHG. *būs* 'aufgeblasenheit, schwellende fülle', Russ. *buchnuti* 'schwellen'. — MHG. *briustern* 'anschwellen'. — OHG. *blājan* 'blähen', *blāsa* 'blase'; Gk. φλίω, φλιδάω 'fließe über, strotze', φλοιδάω 'aufschwellen'; φλέω 'fließe über, strotze', φλύω 'fließe über'. — Ir. *bolgaim* 'schwelle', OHG. *belgan* 'aufschwellen'. — Skt. *pīyatē* 'schwillt, strotzt', MHG. *veiz* 'feist, fett'. — Gk. βρύω 'strotze'. — Skt. *çváyati* 'schwillt an, wird stark'. — OHG. *quellan* 'quellen; schwellen', OE. *collen* 'swollen'. — Lat. *glisco* 'grow up, swell up'. — MHG. *strotzen*. — OHG. *swellan* 'schwellen'. — Gk. cφαραγέω 'strotze'. — Gk. cφριγάω 'strotze, schwelle'. — Gk. οἰδέω 'schwelle'.

This list might easily be increased. In fact, if we should take every expression that had ever been used to signify 'swell', it would make a surprisingly large list. Words with an entirely different development of meaning would be found here. There would be found such expressions as 'stretch, extend; stick out; rise, grow; blow up, inflate; burst out, overflow; press, cram, etc.'. Synonymy in this case would be the result of converging lines of development. And so it is in many cases.

The reason of this is simple. The signification of a word depends upon its use. For instance, if the members of a community wish to refer to a protuberance on a tree, they will use such words as 'bunch, hump, lump, knob, knot, swelling, outgrowth, etc.'. These words would all be synonymous when used in that sense. Such descriptive terms might become fixed terms for 'knot' in various communities. We should find then in seven or more communities as many different words for 'knot', each going back to a descriptive term. And the several descriptive terms might be derived from quite different primary meanings.

3. In many cases we find synonymous words going back to the same primary meaning and apparently to the same base. And yet the secondary meaning may have developed independently in the different languages. For example, the meaning 'wrinkle' may grow out of 'contract'. If we find this development of meaning in several different languages, it is not because it originated in an IE. 'contract' : 'wrinkle', though such a development doubtless was found in the earliest times; but because this change of meaning is so natural that any community might