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A Note on the Balto-Slavic and Indo-European Background of the Proto-Slavic Adjective *svętъ 'Holy'

The linguistic, literary, cultural and religious significance of the Proto-Slavic\(^1\) lexeme *svętъ (yielding Old Church Slavic\(^2\) svętъ, Russian\(^1\) svjatόj, Polish święty and other familiar cognates) is perfectly well-known to anyone even superficially interested in the Slavic world, be it in the sphere of Slavia Orthodoxa and the Mediterranean region or anywhere else where the influence of Slavic\(^4\) heritage is noticeable. There is, likewise, no lack of clarity as regards the etymological source of the word, primarily because – as described in more detail in the ensuing paragraph – it demonstrates exact cognates in other branches of Indo-European\(^5\), and can be segmented into an independently known root and a productive adjective-forming suffix. The objective of the present brief study is, however, to enhance the standard analysis by providing a more fine-grained insight into the word-formation patterns and general morphological context that shaped this important Sl. term.

It is universally recognized\(^6\) that PSl. *svętъ ‘holy, saint’ has a perfect etymological match in the sister branch, Baltic\(^7\), namely in Lithuanian\(^8\) švenčias and Old Prussian\(^9\) swints, both ‘holy, saint’. As such, the word can be reconstructed as PBSl.

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\(^1\) Cetera: PSl.
\(^2\) Cetera: OCS.
\(^3\) Cetera: Ru.
\(^4\) Cetera: Sl.
\(^5\) Cetera: IE.
\(^7\) Cetera: Balt. The existence of a Proto-Balto-Slavic (cetera: PBSl.) language as a common ancestor of Sl. and Balt. is taken for granted here.
\(^8\) Cetera: Lith.
\(^9\) Cetera: OPr. It is disputed whether OPr. swints a real cognate inherited from Baltic (with a development of *-enC- to -inC-; thus e.g. W. SMOCZYŃSKI, Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego,
*śwentas*. Crucially, a precise cognate of this item is also found in Avestan spānta- ‘life-giving, holy’; together with the BSl. term, this enables the reconstruction of (at least dialectal) Proto-Indo-European *kvento*.

Within Sl., the sequence *svět-* presents itself as an indivisible unit (lexical morpheme); next to the adjective *světn* ‘holy, saint’, we find typical productive derivatives of the type *světiti* *svět’i* *světýt* ‘celebrate’ or *světyn’i* ‘holiness, temple’, all transparently obtained from the base *svět-* . This is not so, however, in Av., where the cognate spənta- is clearly segmentable into a root spən- (itself still directly represented by the root noun spān- ‘life, vital power’) and an adjectival suffix -ta- (< PIE *-tu-*) . The underlying PIE root, *kwen-*, is reconstructible for the proto-language with the approximate range of meanings ‘swell (with life); live; be vital, sacred’.  

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2 (manuscript), p. 1474, https://rromanes.org/pub/alii/Smoczyński W. Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego.pdf [22 VI 2017]) or a later borrowing from Pol. święty (thus e.g. W. Hock et al., Altitalisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, vol. II, Hamburg 2015, p. 1060). See also the discussion: R. Derksen, Etymological Dictionary of the Baltic Inherited Lexicon, Leiden–Boston 2015, p. 456 (with further references) . Cf. also the OPr. onomastic evidence showing the sequence -en-: Swent (hydronym), Swente-garben (toponym); at least this portion of the OPr. material is generally considered inherited. On the other hand, Latvian (cetera: Latv.) svēts ‘holy, saint’ is uncontroversially identifiable as a borrowing from East Slavic (cf. Ru. святой).

10 Cf. R. Trautmann, Baltisch-slavisches Wörterbuch, Göttingen 1923, p. 311 (śuenta- ‘heilig’).

11 Cetera: Av.


13 Cetera: PIE.

14 Actually, PSl. *světn* could, in accordance with regular sound laws, go back to both PIE *kwen-to- and PIE *kvo-to- . However, since Lith., OPr. and Av. all point towards the former, it is natural to assume that the PSl. formation is historically identical. (On OPr. svintis vide fn. 9) The geographically and cladistically closest reflex of *kvo-C-* is Gothic hunslo ‘offering’ < *kvo-slo- (assuming this etymological analysis is correct). Incidentally, in the word *kwen-to-* the presence of the apophonnic full-grade (i.e. the vowel *-e- in the root) is somewhat unexpected, since in PIE adjectives built by means of the suffix *-to-* usually selected the zero-grade (i.e. vocally reduced) form of the root; hence, a pre-form like *kvo-to-* would in fact have been easier to motivate than the actually reconstructible *kwen-to- . Some parallels for *-to-adjjectives taking the full-grade in the root (and likewise associated with the so-called ‘Caland System’, vide below) can be pointed out, however. Compare, for example, Proto-Germanic (cetera: PGmc.) *blauþa- ‘weak, timid’ – Old English błeða ‘id.’, Old High German (cetera: OHG) bļodi ‘id.’, etc. – pointing to a pre-form like *bhlēð-um-to- or *bhlōw-to- , likewise with a full vowel in the root in spite of suffixification with *-to- (contrast Gr. φλάορος ‘petty, bad’ < *bhlōρ-um-ro- or *bhlōw-ro- , where the same root occurs with a different Caland suffix).

15 Sl. verbs are cited in the infinitive, 1st and 3rd singular present.

It should be noted, however, that the Av. adjective *spəṇ-ta- demonstrates certain further interesting properties beyond the mere possibility of a historical analysis along the lines described above. Namely, even at the synchronic level the word forms certain derivatives not from the actual stem of the adjective (*spəṇ-ta- < *ḱwento-), but rather directly from the root (*spən- < *ḱwen-), as though “bypassing” the adjective-forming suffix (-ta- < *-to-). Thus, the abstract noun in -ah- (< PIE *-es-) has the shape *spān-ah- ‘life-giving knowledge’ rather than making use of the adjective stem *spəṇta-. Even the (essentially inflectional and not derivational) forms of the comparative and superlative of the adjective are built in this same fashion, i.e. directly from the root: cpv. *span-iiah- ‘more life-giving, holier’, superl. *spən-išta- ‘most life-giving, holiest’ (using the regular cpv. and superl. suffixes -iiah- < PIE *-yos- and -išta- < PIE *-išt,o-, respectively).

The situation described above is, however, nothing particularly unusual in Av. or other archaic Indo-European languages such as Vedic Sanskrit or Ancient Greek. The practice of reaching for the root directly and omitting adjective-forming suffixes in the formation of derivatives and some inflectional forms (such as the cpv. and superl.) – in particular in quality adjectives denoting property-concepts and states – is part of the so-called ‘Caland System’, a set of synchronically anomalous morphological peculiarities reconstructible for PIE and still observed in the most conservative daughter languages (especially in Greek

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17 Cetera: abstr.
18 On the meanings/glosses of the Av. items presented in this paragraph cf. the comments and references in fn. 12.
19 Contrast the situation in Sl., as described in the preceding paragraph.
20 Cetera: cpv.
21 Cetera: superl.
22 This is, again, at variance with the situation in Sl., where the cpv. and superl. are of course formed fully regularly from the stem *svęt-; cf. OCS cpv. svętěi.
23 Cetera: IE.
24 Cetera: Ved.
25 Cetera: Gr.
27 Cetera: CS. The term derives from the surname of Dutch Iranist Willem Caland, who pointed out certain elements of the pattern toward the end of the 19th century; however, the modern term has a significantly broader meaning and scope than what Caland described. For further details see the references in fn. 28.
as well as the Indo-Iranian branch). The essence of the phenomenon involves suffix alternations precisely of the type described above for Av. *span-ta- vs. *spān-ah-, *span-īiah-, *span-īstā-, where the positive adjective suffix -ta- (< PIE *-to-) is omitted from the derived/inflected forms; other adjective suffixes frequently found to be circumvented in a similar fashion in CS-driven alternations include *-ro-, *-u-, *-mo-, *-no-, *-e/ont- and a number of others^{28} (cf. e.g. Gr. κῦδ-ρό-ς ‘wonderful, glorious’ vs. cpv. κῦδ-ίων ‘more wonderful, more glorious’, not making use of the stem κῦδ-ρο-). In some cases, the effect of the CS can even be described synchronically as suffix substitution rather than deletion; in particular, an element *-i^{29} steps in for adjective-forming suffixes in first members of compounds^{30} (cf. Av. dərəz-ra- ‘firm’, compound dərəz-i-raθa- ‘having a firm chariot’; Gr. κῦδ-ρό-ς ‘wonderful’, derivative κῦδ-ι-άνειρα ‘making men wonderful’). Two representative examples illustrating CS-related alternations are provided below in Table 1 (spanning several Indo-European languages) and Table 2 (within a single language, here Gr.). In both instances, it is evident how the suffix used to form the positive of the adjective (*-ro-, *-u-, *-o/ent- etc.) is absent, i.e. “deleted” respectively “substituted” in the derived/inflected forms, even though the latter could be expected to be synchronic derivatives from the positive adjective:

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-ro-</td>
<td>*bʰr̥ǵʰ-ro-</td>
<td>Toch. B pärkare</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-u-</td>
<td>*bʰr̥ǵʰ-u-</td>
<td>Hitt. parkuš</td>
<td>‘tall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-o/ent-</td>
<td>*bʰr̥ǵʰ-o/ent-</td>
<td>Ved. bʰhánt-</td>
<td>‘tall, great’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpv. *-yos-</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-yos-</td>
<td>Av. barəziiah-</td>
<td>‘taller’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


^{29} This element may quite likely be identified with an abstract noun in *-*i-, replacing the corresponding positive adjective stem due to certain independently motivated morphological rules of PIE. For details see the references in fn. 28, as well as: Th. LINDBERG, *Indogermanische Grammatik*, vol. IV, Wortbildungskunde (Derivationsmorphologie), pars 1.1, *Komposition*, Heidelberg 2011, p. 68–70.

^{30} Cetera FCM (= First Compound Member).

^{31} Hitt. = Hittite; Toch. = Tocharian; SCM = Second Compound Member; stat. = stative verb.
A Note on the Balto-Slavic and Indo-European Background…

Table 1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>superl. *-isth₂-o-</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-isth₂-o-</td>
<td>Av. barzišta-</td>
<td>'tallest'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *-es-</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-es-</td>
<td>Av. barzah-</td>
<td>'height'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCM *-i-</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-i-</td>
<td>Av. barzi-caxra-</td>
<td>'having tall wheels'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM *-es-</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-es-</td>
<td>Ved. dvi-bárhas-</td>
<td>lit. ‘double-great’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stat. *-eh₁(ye-)</td>
<td>*bʰerǵʰ-eh₁(ye-)</td>
<td>⇒ Hittite parkēsš₂³</td>
<td>'become great'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

CS reflexes of *kewhd- ‘wonderful, glorious’ in Gr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-ro-</td>
<td>κῡδ-ρό-ς</td>
<td>'glorious'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-no-</td>
<td>κῡδ-νό-ς</td>
<td>'glorious'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpv. *-yos-</td>
<td>κῡδ-ιων</td>
<td>'more glorious’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superl. *-isth₂-o-</td>
<td>κῡδ-ιστος</td>
<td>'most glorious’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *-es-</td>
<td>κῡδ-ος-εος</td>
<td>'glory'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCM *-i-</td>
<td>κῡδ-ι-άνειρα</td>
<td>'making men glorious'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCM *-es-</td>
<td>ἐπι-κῡδ-ής</td>
<td>'distinguished in glory’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accordingly, the Av. forms discussed above, when transposed into PIE phonological shape, can be analyzed as a Caland adjective in *-to- (*ḱwen-to-) with a set of suffix-omitting offshoots (cpv. *ḱwen-yos-, derived abstr. *ḱwen-es- as well as – in a sense – the root noun abstr. *ḱwen-)³².

³² Although surfacing in clearly attested Caland sets relatively rarely, root nouns are probably what diachronically underlies most CS-related phenomena (that is to say, the synchronically unmotivated, arbitrary alternations observed in early IE languages likely reflect the morphologization of erstwhile productive suffixation applied to root nouns; the ensuing loss of most of such root nouns led to the creation of the CS as a peculiar, synchronically unobvious pattern). For details – ultimately, however, amounting to a story more complicated than the one presented in the previous sentence – cf. especially J. Rau, *Indo-European Nominal Morphology…*, p. 127–131.
It is now time to return to the point of departure, i.e. the prehistory of PSl. *svętъ, and to verify if the above contextualization of its Av. cognate – in particular its crystal-clear participation in the inherited set of morphological alternations known as the Caland System – helps achieve a more insightful analysis. It must be emphasized that, traditionally, the CS has not been considered overly relevant for the study of the late-attested and largely innovative BSl. branch. However, recent research, expanding on earlier scholars’ studies and excursuses dispersed in the existing literature, suggests a quite significant survival of various kinds of CS-related phenomena in BSl., both as lexicalized archaisms and as living morphological processes. In principle, therefore, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that BSl. might have inherited some CS-related behavior in the family of words under discussion, given that its Caland status is directly visible in another branch.

As is evident from the discussion of the available material at the outset of this study, the CS status of the root in question in BSl. is not demonstrable in any direct fashion in the nominal domain. However, it is possible that it can be established on the basis of data from the verbal sphere, coming from Balt. The key formation is the Latv. verb svinēt svin svinẽja ‘celebrate, venerate’. Though obviously cognate with the family of Lith. šveñtas and PSl. *svętъ (this inherited adjective itself is lost in Latv.), from a formal point of view the item is rather curious, since it appears to be lacking the (originally suffixal) element -t-. This recalls the overall situation in Av., and would conform to a Caland pattern. The verb belongs to the Balt. conjugation in short *-ị- with an infinitive stem in *-ẹ̄- (type Lith. minėti mini minėjo ‘mention’). This verbal type, at least under the most persuasive of the many existing interpretations, ultimately goes back to PIE zero-grade root athematic middles (3. sg. *-or)⁴⁸, a verbal formation closely associated with the CS⁴⁹. It can be pro-

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³⁴ Beyond the references provided in fn. 33, cf. the examples provided in Table 4 and Table 5 towards the end of this paper.

³⁵ The Baltistic aspect of the present topic (treated below in a rather condensed way) will be dealt with in greater depth in a forthcoming study.

³⁶ Latv. and Lith. verbs are cited in the infinitive, 3rd present and 3rd preterite form.

³⁷ Cf. fn. 9.


³⁹ Cf. J. Rau, Notes on state-oriented verbal roots…; J. Jasanoff, Hittite…, p. 157 (especially fn. 350). Numerous adjectives participating in Caland alternations display a root athematic middle (sometimes reflected as a BSl. verb in *-ị-).
visionally concluded that a trace of a Caland relationship is preserved in the BSL. languages between the adj. seen in PSl. *śwêta, Lith. ̄śveintas 'holy, saint' on the one hand and Latv. svinêt svin svinêja 'celebrate' on the other hand. Put differently, for the PBSL. period one could reconstruct not only the adjective *śwenta- ‘holy, saint’, but the inherited root *śwen- as a whole, with the aforementioned adjective still being perceived as a morphologically transparent formation (*śwen-ta-) and with other derivatives being formed directly from the root.

However, the shape of the root as it appears in the Latv. form under discussion is somewhat peculiar, displaying the shape svin- (as though from PIE *kwên-) in antevocalic position (infinitive svin-êt, 3rd singular present svin < *svin-i, etc.). The apophonous zero-grade, i.e. the reduction of the vowel in the root, is fully expected in an athematic middle in PIE (cf. *bʰudʰ- or from the root *bʰewdʰ- ‘be vigilant, observe’, *lip- or from the root *leyp- ‘stick’ etc.\textsuperscript{40}). However, the zero-grade from the root *kwen- would have been *kun- in antevocalic position (*kun-V-, expected to yield BSL. *šun-V-) and *kwên- in anteconsonantal position (*kwen-C-, expected to yield BSL. *śvin-C-). Since the original paradigm of a root athematic middle would have involved both vowel-initial and consonant-initial morphemes added to the stem, the latter would have alternated between the allomorphs *kun- and *kwên- (e.g. 3rd singular *kun-or vs. 1st plural *kwên-medʰh₃). Evidently, the latter shape (*kwen-) got generalized in BSL. in this paradigm, ultimately leading to Latv. svin-, which now looks deceptively “out of place” in view of the fact that all morphemes appearing to the right are vowel-initial in the modern language\textsuperscript{41}.

The formal details cannot be discussed here in their entirety\textsuperscript{42}, but it can be concluded that Latv. svinêt svin svinêja may continue a root athematic middle *kun-or (stem alternating with *kwên-C-, cf. 1st plural *kwên-medʰh₃), with a meaning approximating ‘be in a state of celebration’ or similar. The development of *kun-or (plural *kwên-medʰh₃) to Latv. svinêt svin svinêja is roughly parallel to that of PIE

\textsuperscript{40} Vide: J. Jasanoff, Hittite..., passim.

\textsuperscript{41} The presence of the anteconsonantal type of reflex in this verb is noted by other authors as well, though the motivation for it is hardly addressed. W. Smoczyński (Słownik etymologiczny..., p. 1338) writes: Latv. svinêt, svinu ‘celebrate a holiday’ shows the introduction of *śvin-C into the antevocalic position (Lot. svinêt, svinu ‘święcić święto’ pokazuje wprowadzenie *śvin-C w pozycję antewokaliczną), citing cases like Lith. ištviróti ‘endure’ alongside tvirtas ‘hard, durable’ as a purported parallel (showing the allomorph tvir- both before a vowel and before a consonant). However, this correlation is less than perfect. Lith. tvirtas is built on the zero-grade *tvryh- of the PIE root *twerh- ‘hold’. The root ends in a laryngeal, i.e. it is consonant-final; accordingly, the shape *tvryh- phonologically yields Lith. tvir- in both anteconsonantal and antevocalic position. Besides, if the derivative ištviróti ištvirója ištvirója ‘endure’ is not overly ancient (as is very likely), its root shape has ample support in the tvir- of tvirtas and other derivatives. On the other hand, Latv. svinêt stands isolated, with no detectable cases of *kwên-C- anywhere in all of BSL. (Such formations from the root in question are found elsewhere in IE, however; vide fn. 13). No morphological explanation is offered in: R. Derksen, Etymological Dictionary of the Baltic..., p. 456; except for the mere statement that [i]nterestingly, the zero grade of the root may be present in Latv. svinêt ‘celebrate’.

\textsuperscript{42} Vide: fn. 35.
*myn-or ‘think, have in mind’ to Latv. minēt min minēja ‘mention’ (= Lith. minēti mini minėjo, = PSl. *mynēti *myn ‘*mynitb)\textsuperscript{43}. This indicates the survival of the root *kwen- in BSl. outside of the lexicalized adjective *kwen-to- ‘vital, holy’, and together with the Av. evidence it makes it possible to claim an important Caland configuration for this root, as presented in Table 3 below\textsuperscript{44}:

### Table 3

CS-like reflexes of *kwen- ‘vital, prosperous, holy’ in Av. and BSl.\textsuperscript{45}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-to-</td>
<td>*kwen-to-</td>
<td>Av. spəṇta-, Lith. šveñtas, PSl. *svęťb</td>
<td>‘life-giving’, ‘holy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpv. *-yos-</td>
<td>*kwen-yos-</td>
<td>Av. spaniiah-</td>
<td>‘more life-giving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *-es-</td>
<td>*kwen-es-</td>
<td>Av. spānah-</td>
<td>‘life-giving knowledge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid. *-or</td>
<td>*śvin-or (~ *kwen-medʰh₂)</td>
<td>Latv. svinēt svin svinẽja</td>
<td>‘celebrate, venerate’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This strongly recalls other reconstructible Caland sets including BSl. material, as exemplified below Table 4 and Table 5\textsuperscript{46}:

### Table 4

CS-like reflexes of *dʰeb\textsuperscript{ḥl} - ‘heavy,’thick\textsuperscript{47}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-elo-</td>
<td>*dʰeb\textsuperscript{ḥl}-elo-</td>
<td>PSl. *debelb</td>
<td>‘thick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. *-ro-</td>
<td>*dʰob\textsuperscript{ḥl}-ro-</td>
<td>PGmc. *dapr</td>
<td>‘heavy’\textsuperscript{48}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{43} Again, cf. fn. 38 for references on the formal details.

\textsuperscript{44} An alternative hypothesis could also be proposed, namely that Latv. svinēt svin svinẽja is a later creation, roughly from PBSl. or later times (though hardly Latv.-internal), formed at a stage when the descendant of the root *kwen- still participated in CS alternations like the ones seen at work in Av. Thus, a new verbal creation built to *kwen-to-, *kwen-yos- and possible other derivatives would have been able to “reach” for the root directly, bypassing the Caland suffixes. Still, in order for the stem *śvin- to be inferred, one would expect at least some members of that hypothetical CS set to be of the structure *śvin- C-.

\textsuperscript{45} Mid. = middle verb.

\textsuperscript{46} For more details on the facts and analyses presented briefly in the tables below, vide fn. 33.

\textsuperscript{47} Interestingly, the root illustrated in this table is of “North Indo-European” (= Balto-Slavic and Germanic) scope only, which would confirm the prolonged robustness of Caland processes in these branches.

\textsuperscript{48} OHG tapfer ‘strong’, Old Norse dappr ‘sad’.
A Note on the Balto-Slavic and Indo-European Background…

Table 4 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *‑lo‑</td>
<td>*dʰobʰ‑lo‑49</td>
<td>Latv. dabls</td>
<td>‘strong’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpv. *‑yos‑</td>
<td>*dʰebʰ‑yos‑</td>
<td>PSl. *deb‑hš‑</td>
<td>‘thicker’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *‑es‑</td>
<td>*dʰebʰ‑es‑</td>
<td>→ Latv. depsis</td>
<td>‘fat child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid. *‑or</td>
<td>7*dʰebʰ‑or</td>
<td>PSl. *debēti *debitš 50</td>
<td>‘sit, remain’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

CS-like reflexes of *delh₁‑ ‘long’ 51

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>PIE transposition</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Gloss of reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj. *‑gʰo‑</td>
<td>*dlh₁,gʰo‑</td>
<td>Ved. dirghā-, PSl. *dolgь</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. *‑to‑</td>
<td>*dlh₁‑to‑</td>
<td>OAlb. glatē</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpv. *‑yos‑</td>
<td>*dl(e)h₁‑yos‑</td>
<td>PSl. *dol‑iš‑</td>
<td>‘longer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *‑i‑</td>
<td>*dolh₁‑i‑</td>
<td>→ Gr. δολιχός</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstr. *‑u‑</td>
<td>*dolh₁‑u‑</td>
<td>→ Hitt. daluki‑</td>
<td>‘long’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caus. *‑eye‑</td>
<td>*d(o)lh₁‑eye‑</td>
<td>⇒ PSl. *‑doliti</td>
<td>‘lengthen’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This, in turn, would imply that at least in BSl. times, the item *śwenta‑ (ultimately to become the familiar PSl. *svętъ) was not yet “frozen” or independently lexicalized as an indivisible lexeme meaning ‘holy’, but rather was couched in a Caland system of alternations centered around the root inherited from PIE *ḱwen‑.

The match with the usually cited exact cognate – Av. spəṇta‑ – of course still stands, but both BSl. *śwenta‑ and Av. spəṇta‑ first of all need to be analyzed in their own, language- or branch-internal contexts, as well as against the general background of Caland System morphology.

49 Aslo → PSl. *dobl’b, Latv. dabļš ‘id.’

50 Formal match, uncertain in view of the semantic gap.

51 Caus. = causative verb; OAlb. = Old Albanian.
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Abstract. The standard etymological explanation of the Proto-Slavic adjective *světъ ‘holy, saint’ – a word of extreme literary, cultural and religious importance in the Slavic world – concentrates on the formal match with Lithuanian švėtis ‘id.’ and Avestan spoṣta- ‘life-giving, holy’ (PIE *kwen-to-, from the root *kwen-). This article highlights the verbal formation seen in Latvian svinēt
svin svinějo 'celebrate, venerate', generally recognized as another reflex of the root *ńwen- in Balto-
Slavic, but without due attention to the formal implications. It is argued that both in Av. and in BSl.
the adjective spənta-/svętъ behaves as an item participating in the so-called 'Caland System' (a set
of arbitrary morphological alternations reconstructible for Proto-Indo-European).

Keywords: saint, etymology, Proto-Slavic, Proto-Indo-European, Caland System

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