Distribution and Semantics of the PIE Roots for ‘other’

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The Setup and Research Questions

The notion or concept of ‘the other’ may arise from the correlation of two deictic or anaphoric pronouns (Mendoza 1998: 102):

- OSC. *ǫvŭ … ǫvŭ* (‘one’… ‘other’) < **oi-no.*
- Grk. ὁ μέν … ὁ δέ (‘one’… ‘other’) < **so, *to.*
- Hitt. *kās… kās* (‘one’… ‘other’) < **k´o*; **k´i* (Goedegebuure, 2003).

But also based on nominal etymologies such as:

- Hitt. *damais,* ‘the following, other’.
- OIr. *a chele,* ‘other (of two)’.

However, in almost all historical languages we find the creation of specific pronouns to express the notion of ‘the other’, which raises the following research questions:

a) What is the distribution and lexical expression of the concept of ‘other’ from PIE to the ancient Indo-European languages?

b) What lexical changes have occurred in the transition to modern languages?

Methodology

The methodological cornerstone consists in the combination of:
1) Comparative Method (Meillet, 1925)
&
2) In further stages: Lexical typology or Colexification (François, 2008) based upon the model of Semantic Maps by Haspelmath (2003).

PIE Roots *$h_2$el-io

‘Displacement or distance from a point, with (or without) the notion of movement’ (Berenguer Sánchez 2000: 536)

Toch. A	*ālak* (m.), *ālyāk* (f.)	(pron.) ‘another’
Toch. B	*allek*	(adj.) ‘other’, ‘another’
Ved.	*áraṇa* (w/o **-yo*)	(adj.) ‘strange’, distant’
Gr.	ἄλλος	(adj.) ‘other’
Lat.	*alius*	(adj.) ‘other’
Osc.	*allo*	(pron. adj.), ‘whole’, ‘other’
Go.	*aljis*	(adj.) ‘someone else’, ‘other’
OHG	*eli-lenti*	(adj.) ‘banished, foreign’
OIr.	*aile / arail(l)*	(pron.) ‘other’, ‘another’
OW	*arall*	(pron.) ‘another’, ‘other’
Lep.	*alios*	(PN.) ‘second’ (?)
O.Gaul.	*Allo-broges / allos*	(PN)/ (pron.) ‘other’, ‘second’
Arm.	*ayl*	(pron.) ‘other’, ‘alien’, ‘foreign’

*$h_2$en-tero

‘Deictic notion of great distance, the so-called «*jener-deixis*»’ (Mendoza 1998: 103)

Ved.	*ántara*	(adj.) ‘distant’, ‘different’, ‘other’
Y. Aves.	*aṇtara*	(adj.) ‘other’, ‘second’
Osset.	*ændær*	(adj.) ‘other’
Go.	*anþar*	(pron. num.) ‘other (of two)’
Far.	*annar*	(pron. num.) ‘other (of two)’
ON.	*annarr*	(pron. num.) ‘other (of two)’
OHG	*andar*	(adj.) ‘other (of two)’
OSax.	*ōthar; athar; andar*	(pron. num.) ‘other (of two)’
OPru.	*antars; anters*	(num.) ‘second’, ‘other’
Lith.	*añtras*	(num.) ‘second’
Latv.	*ùotrs*	(num.) ‘second’, ‘other’

⚠ *$h_2$en-* also present in Ved. (adj.) *anyás* ‘distant’, ‘different’, ‘other’ with **-yo* suffix.

The colour-coding scheme for each branch is based on the IE-CoR project (https://iecor.clld.org/) .

Anaphoric or indefinite pronoun and the suffix **-tero*

Toch. B	*ketara*	(adj.) ‘other’, ‘another’
Skt.	*ítaras*	(adj.) ‘other’, ‘the other’
Gr.	ἕτερος (ion-att.), ἄτερος (dor.)	(pron.) ‘other’
Myc.	*a2-te-ro*	(adj.) ‘one (of two)’, ‘one’, ‘the other’
Lat.	*uter*	(adj.) ‘other’
OSC	*eterꝺ*	(pron.) ‘some’, ‘someone’
Alb.	*tjëter*	(adj.) ‘other’

Analysis and points of discussion

The tables show the distribution and occurrence of cognates in historical languages based on the root (or its formation process). In the first case, the root appears to be of greater antiquity, given its geographical distribution and its semantics (linked to the idea of otherness in a generic sense), whilst the second seems to have specialised in a binary oppositional sense for the Germanic and the ordinal number for the Baltic branch. The final table demonstrates that the derivational process involving the suffix **-tero* is younger than the two roots, as it reuses material already present in the languages and conveys the meaning of ‘other’.

This leads to the following points for discussion and further study:

1) Is there a semantic nuance amongst the cognates that convey the meaning ‘other’?
2) How has the suffix **-tero* become grammaticalised?
3) Has a lexical substitution taken place in the transition to modern languages and, if so, why?

To sum up and further steps

It seems that both roots express the idea of otherness in different ways:
1) **$h_2$el-io* : would **generally** refer to that which is **distant from oneself, resulting in the oppositional meaning of ‘other’ through a sense of displacement**. It is frequently **linked to the semantics of [alien], [strange] and [foreignness]** and, within certain celtic languages might be linked **to the meaning of ‘second’**.
What about the **anomaly represented by Osc. *allo*, ‘whole’?**

2) **$h_2$en-tero*: this **appears to be an specialsation of the «*jener-deixis*»**, as **‘other (of two)’** in the Germanic branch and overlaps with numerals in the Baltic languages. However, it also acquires the meaning of difference and strangeness in Vedic and Avestan.

Selected References

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