

Old Novgorodian *Nevide*, Russian *nevidal'* : Greek *ἀίδηλος*

Vyacheslav V. Ivanov

Among the interesting discoveries of the last two decades connected with the study of the dialect of the Novgorodian birch-bark documents, one may single out the proper name **Nevid-e** (Nom. Sg. Masc.), attested in a text of the XIIth c.¹ The name belongs to an archaic non-productive type of Slavic composition in personal names with a negation **ne-** as its first element, followed by a verbal stem; cf. the Polish tripartite compounds **Nie-z-da**, **Nie-zna-wuj**, **Nie-da-był**, and the old Balto-Slavic type preserved in Old Prussian **Ne-quithe**, **Ne-moc**.² In his study of the document, Zaliznjak compared the proper name with the noun attested in Slovene **nevid** “infusorium”, Serbo-Croatian **nevid** “the smallest flying insect”³; cf. also the adverb **nevidom** “imperceptibly”, Old Russian/Church Slavonic **nevidimo** “imperceptibly”⁴ (Daniil Zatočnik’s Prayer), “in an unknown way” (1st Novgorod Chronicle, yr. 6600 and 6702); the adjective **nevidimŭ** = Greek *ἀόρατος* (XIth c. translation of Gregory the Theologian),⁵ **nevidomŭ** “invisible” (Cyrill of Turov),

¹ Birch-bark document N 663, Janin, Zaliznjak 1993, pp. 53, 334, cf. Zaliznjak 1991. The ending **-e** of masculine thematic stems (probably cognate to the Proto-Slavic Vocative ***-e**) is a characteristic feature of this dialect, separating it from the rest of the older Slavic languages; on the various explanations, see Zaliznjak 1995.

² Milewski 1969, pp. 118, 135, 138, 200, 203, 204. The Novgorodian personal name **Nesda**, historically identical to Polish **Nie-z-da** < ***Ne-sŭ-da**, is known from the chronicle; from this were derived a possessive ***Nes(ŭ)dičevŭ** > **Nesdicevee** (birch-bark document from Staraja Rusa, N 22, Janin, Zaliznjak 1993, pp. 110-11, 334) and **Nes(ŭ)diničŭ** (Ivanov 1995, p. 9, with references).

³ For the latter, compare the American English colloquialism **no-see-um** ‘gnat, midge, punkie’ (AHD³ 1237, s.v.).

⁴ Zaliznjak 1991, p. 507.

⁵ Budilovich 1875, p. 365; Sreznevskij 1895/1958, p. 360. The Glagolitic original was written in the Macedonian Dialect of Old Church Slavonic: Durnovo 1969, p. 36.

nevidimŭ “invisible” (Tale of Boris and Gleb, XIVth c.),⁶ **slovo nevidimoje** “invisible word” (Svjatoslav’s Collection, 1073 A.D.); **nevidi/ěma sila** “invisible power” (1st Novgorod Chronicle, yr. 6767 and 6888); as a poetic archaism the short adjective **nevidím** (with archaic final stress) is used in the final part of Alexander Blok’s “Twelve” (in relation to Christ, as in the Old Russian texts cited above). In Russian fairy tales the expression **šapka nevidímka** designates a miraculous cap that renders its owner invisible.⁷

In his comment on the Novgorodian name and its Slavic cognates, Zaliznjak also mentioned the traditional etymology of the Greek name of Hades in terms of Indo-European ***ǵ-wid-** “unseen”. For quite some time, this was considered to be a kind of popular etymology, which competed with Thieme’s derivation from ***som wid-** (based on a comparison with Old Indian **sam gam-** in contexts relating to the underworld). But in a recent article, Beekes has pointed out that this explanation can be valid only in connection with the Realm of the Dead, and cannot be applied to the name of a god. Thus a return to the traditional etymology is advisable.⁸

There is another probable Slavic-Greek lexical and derivational correspondence that belongs to the same semantic sphere. From the stem **ne-vid-** the Russian noun **névidal’** “an unusual, unexpected or amazing thing; wonder, prodigy” was also derived. (The word is now rarely used, appearing mainly in archaic colloquial expressions like **ěkaja névidal’** “What a strange thing!”; cf. **vot névidal’** “Such an unusual thing!”, used ironically in Krylov’s fable “The Pike and The Cat”.) From a formal point of view, the stem **nevidal-** (on the basis of which **névidal’** has been derived as a noun in *-yo-) is an exact correspondent of the still enigmatic Ancient Greek **áιδηλος** “destructive, destroying, pestilent” < “invisible, terrible”.⁹ In Slavic (as also in Baltic) an innovation took place according to which most of the old compounds with Indo-European privative ***ǵ-**, i.e. with syllabic nasal from an old zero grade, were transformed into forms with the full grade ***ne-** of the

⁶ Sreznevskij 1860, p. 41; 1895/1958, p. 360; see also ib. on the noun **nevidenije** in the Mineja of yr. 1096.

⁷ A form built according to this model was used in the Russian translation of the title of H. G. Wells’ novel *The Invisible Man* (Russ. *Čelovek-nevidimka*).

⁸ Beekes 1998, pp. 17-19.

⁹ On the semantic development see Chantraine 1979, p. 242; 1990, p. 31.

old negative particle.¹⁰ This development can be reconstructed by comparing a few archaic forms in which the zero grade has been preserved as the result of a transformation: **u-bogũ** “beggar (not having his portion from god)” > **ne-bogũ**.¹¹ The verbal stem (derived from an athematic verb) had the suffix ***-ē-** in Slavic ***vid-ě-ti**, Eastern Baltic (Lithuanian **pa-vydėti**, Latvian **pa-vidēt**), Latin **vidēre** and Gothic **witan**.¹² Aspectual innovations in Balto-Slavic have led to a grammatical opposition between the suffixes ***-ē-** and ***-ā-** in stems of the same verb (Slavic ***vid-ē-ti** : **vida-ti**), and some of these ***-ā-** stems may be quite old. In the form *αἰδηλος*, a stem in ***-ē-** is generally supposed on the basis of the parallel fut. *εἰδήσω*,¹³ but a stem in ***-ā-** comparable to Slavic ***vidati** is not absolutely excluded for prehistoric Greek.¹⁴ But even if, in the end, the Russian form requires ***-wid-ā-lo-** while the Greek one (in the absence of a pattern of verbal derivation in ***-ā-** in Greek) requires ***-wid-ē-lo-**, we may still be dealing with an essentially cognate structure in terms of its formation. Thus from the Indo-European ***ṇ-wid-ē/ā-lo-** that might be reconstructed as a proto-form for *αἰδηλος*, one would have expected a Proto-Slavic ***ne-wid-(ēlo-/ālo-)**, with the same combination **ne-wid-** as in the other Slavic words enumerated above. The combination ***-ēlo-** or ***-ālo-** contains a suffix ***-lo-** that is thought to continue a type of old Indo-European deverbative adjective or participle.¹⁵ The spread of this formation, which was attributed, at the time of the Pan-Illyrian fashion, to Illyrian influence,¹⁶ can now be seen more clearly from the point of view of Indo-European dialectology. A group of Indo-European dialects that included Slavic, Tocharian and Armenian, as

¹⁰ Milewski 1969, p. 118.

¹¹ Ivanov 1995, pp. 9-10.

¹² Schmid 1963, p. 65; Jasanoff 1978, pp. 107ff.

¹³ Chantraine 1979, p. 242.

¹⁴ Despite e.g. Soph. *Ajax* 608 (lyric) *αἰδηλον* (in an interesting etymological figure *αἰδηλον* “Αἰδαν, see Stanford 1963, p. 137, ad loc.), a Dor. *αἰδᾶλος* is actually attested, see LSJ s.v. *αἰδηλος*.

¹⁵ Chantraine 1979, pp. 241-242; somewhat differently Solta 1970 (where the “Voluntative” in ***-l-** is considered to be related; but see on this category the last part of the author’s “Comparative Notes ...”, in this volume).

¹⁶ Krahe 1947. Although Krahe’s hypothesis is unacceptable, the materials collected in this article remain useful for understanding the distribution of this type in different dialects.

also such Northern Anatolian languages as Lydian, made extensive use of *-l- participles in modal and temporal functions; in Hittite, isolated forms like **parganula** “those [mountains] that should be made high” may present traces of a similar type.¹⁷ Thus forms in *-l- in the other dialects, such as Greek, may belong to an older layer of derivation common to all the dialects, before this type became extremely productive in some of them.

An interesting problem is presented by the accentuation of the stem. In Slavic the stress is shifted to the initial privative element of a compound. In Greek the accent is as close to the beginning as possible. This accentuation (normal for compounds) differs from the usual oxytone pattern of the -λο- adjectives¹⁸ and may reflect an archaism.¹⁹

It can be supposed that in prehistoric Greek there was a whole group of suffixed forms derived from ***ḡ-wid-**. Besides *ἀίδηλος*, another such form is Mycenaean *o-wi-de-ta-i*, which according to Vine’s hypothesis goes back to ***ḡ-wid-eto-**.²⁰ As the context in which this word occurs in Mycenaean is mythological, it is necessary to return to the semantic side of the etymology of Hades and of *ἀίδηλος*.

According to Puhvel,²¹ Hittite **awiti** “lion” is connected to the same type of Indo-European privative formation, as is Latin **invisus** “hated, hostile” < “not to be countenanced”, where the idea of the evil eye is usually supposed. It has been established that the category of the invisible belongs to the universal features of mythological thought.²² As Propp has shown, the re-

¹⁷ Rosenkranz 1978, pp. 134-145; Ivanov 1981; differently on this form CHD P² (1995), p. 158, s.v.

¹⁸ Bally 1945/1997, p. 72, §§128-129; Lubotsky 1988, pp. 131-132, §3.11.

¹⁹ On the accentuation of privative compounds cf. Kuryłowicz 1968, pp. 66-68, §65. In Russian, a partial parallel is provided by another *-l-yo- formation **né-do-ros-l'** ‘young ignoramus, lazy/immature youngster’ < ‘not having grown up’, likewise with initial stress (and different from oxytone finite forms such as 3 Pers. Pl. Pret. **ne-do-ros-l-í**, derived from a participle in *-lo-).

²⁰ Vine 1998, pp. 33-35.

²¹ Puhvel 1984, pp. 247-248.

²² Riftin 1946; Ivanov 1973 (with references), see ib., p.158, on the Hittite myth of the hunter Kešši, of Hurrian origin, which shows a similar semantic structure. In Hittite (for example, in

lation between the world of the dead and that of living persons depends on their mutual invisibility.²³ This universal principle, according to which the dead and the god of their world are invisible, can also be applied to Greek ideas of the Netherworld, as seen for instance in the Orpheus myth, in the link between Hades and the cap that renders people invisible, as well as in the image of the Gorgon “with terrible eyes (< *vulture-eyed”, βλοσυρῶπις) and her shield.²⁴ The role of the opposition “invisible - visible”, established in studies of Greek mythology and ritual,²⁵ is relevant also for Slavic and some other Indo-European traditions.²⁶

From the point of view of semantic mythological reconstruction, it may be possible to suggest that in Proto-Indo-European there could have been a verbal formula that expressed the idea of invisibility. The Slavic and Greek words, together with their possible Hittite and Latin cognates traceable to Indo-European ***ṛ-wid-**, make it probable that this compound with privative ***ṛ-** had precisely this function in Indo-European. The same form is also attested in most of the ancient Germanic languages and in Celtic, but with a semantic change characteristic of this root involving a shift from “seeing” to “knowledge”²⁷: Gothic **un-wita** “ignorant”, Old High German **un-wizzi** “ignorance”, Old Saxon **un-witi**, Old Irish **ainb** “not knowing”. In this particular meaning another form of the initial privative element appears in Greek:

the text about Kešši), the verb **munnai-** “to hide, to conceal” expresses the idea of invisibility, cf. also **šakuwa munnai-** “to hide one’s eyes”, CHD 3³ (1989), pp. 329-332.

²³ Propp 1946, pp. 58-61; Ivanov 1973, pp. 155-158.

²⁴ Gernet 1982, p. 215; Vernant 1986, p. 77; 1989, p. 124; cf. Sergent 1998, pp. 185, 187. On the etymology of the Gorgon’s epithet βλοσυρός, reconstructed as ***g^wlturos** (cf. Latin **vultur**), see Leumann 1959, p. 189 (more cautious attitude in Chantraine 1990, pp. 181-182) and the typological remarks in Ivanov 1973, pp. 164-173.

²⁵ Gernet 1982, pp. 227-238; Golosovker 1987, pp. 27-28, 51-61 (the manuscript, written in the 1930s-1950s by this great philosopher and classical scholar who was persecuted by the Soviet regime, was published posthumously in fragments).

²⁶ On the Celtic myths about Balor and Yspaddaden Penkawr, see Dillon 1948, p. 60. On the use of these motifs by Joyce: Rigars 1948; Smecke 1969; Tymoczko 1994, pp. 34-35.

²⁷ One might think of the change of values of the invisibility as a mythological feature, and of ignorance as a rational one pointing to the rise of logical thinking.

Homeric $\nu\eta\iota\varsigma$ < ***ne-wid-s** “unknowing”,²⁸ cf. Homeric $\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (probably already in Myc. *a-wi-to-do-to* /Awistodotos/, MN.) “unseen” < ***ṅ-wid-to-s**. The semantic split was accompanied by a formal differentiation between the two possible forms of the privative element, which again reminds us of formal parallels in Proto-Slavic. In both of these Indo-European dialects, different ablaut variants of the privative element are represented. But the direction of the morphological drift in Slavic was the opposite of that which occurred in Greek. In Slavic most of the old privative compounds generalized the full-grade form ***ne-**, while in Greek there are only traces of the latter, and the form with the syllabic sonant (or prevocalic consonant) ***ṅ-/n-** was generalized. A similar differentiation may be visible in the tendency to use the zero grade in Northern Anatolian (Hittite **ammiyant-** “small”, probably **aššiw-ant-** “beggar”²⁹; Palaic **ūmmaya-** “immature”³⁰) as opposed to the clear dominance of forms with an initial **ni-** in Southern Anatolian: Cuneiform Luwian (CL) < **ni-waralli-** “alien, hostile” (: **waralli-** “one’s own”), Hieroglyphic Luwian (HL) **na-wa+ra/i-li-**; HL ^{INFANS}**ni-muw-iza-** “child” (: CL **mūwa-** “might, power”). In several cases comparable forms with **ni-** are known from Hittite also: CL **ni-wallant-** “ineffectual, good-for-nothing” (: **wallant-** “fit, capable”), Hit. **newalant-**; CL (<) **ni-walli-** “innocent”, Hit. **niwalla-**.³¹ If these words are Luwian borrowings, they would not contradict the Hittite tendency for zero grade of the first element. Otherwise, one could suggest the possibility that Hittite preserved both forms while Luwian had only the **e**-grade. Tocharian has mostly forms with zero grade. Thus for Indo-European it is necessary to reconstruct both types, while their separate development characterizes whole groups of Indo-European dialects.

²⁸ Chantraine 1990, p. 750, with a survey of theories about the long vowel of the first syllable; on the accent cf. Kuryłowicz 1968, p. 106, §118, p. 261, §332.

²⁹ Starke’s objections (1990, pp. 448-454) are not valid if the word was borrowed from Hittite into Luwian (cf. already Meriggi 1957, p. 65, fn. 2; Ivanov 1995, p. 8). The semantic development is presumed to be similar to the Slavic word for “beggar” cited above.

³⁰ C. Reiss apud Melchert 1994, p. 214; Vine 1998, p. 35, fn. 80.

³¹ Starke 1990, p. 452; Melchert 1993, pp. 159-160, 257 (with references).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Brent Vine for several important suggestions, incorporated into the final version of this paper.

References

- AHD³: *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*³
(Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).
- Bally, Charles. 1945. *Manuel d'accentuation grecque*. Berne: A. Francke (repr. Georg Éditeur, 1997).
- Beekes, Robert S. P. 1998. Hades and Elysion. *Mír Curad: Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins* (ed. J. Jasanoff et al.), 17-28. Innsbruck (IBS 92).
- Budilovič, A. 1875. *XIII Slov grigorija Bogoslova v drevneslavjanskem perevode po rukopisi Imperatorskoj publičnoj Biblioteki, XI v.* [13 Words by Gregory the Theologian according to the Manuscript of The Emperor's Public library, XIth c.]. St. Petersburg.
- Chantraine, Pierre. 1979. *La formation des noms en grec ancien*. Paris: Klincksieck (nouveau tirage; 1 éd. 1933).
- Chantraine, Pierre. 1990. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots. A-K*. Paris: Klincksieck (nouveau tirage).
- CHD: *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, ed. Hans G. Güterbock and Harry A. Hoffner. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Durnovo, Nikolaj N. 1969. *Vvedenie v istoriju russkogo jazyka*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Gernet, Louis. 1982. *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique. Champs*. Paris: Flammarion (1 éd. 1968).
- Golosovker, Jakov E. 1987. *Logika mifa [The Logic of Myth]*. Moscow: Nauka, glavnaia redakcija vostočnoj literatury.
- Ivanov, Vjačeslav V. 1973. Kategorija "vidimogo" i "nevidimogo" v tekste [The Category of the "Visible" and the "Invisible" in a Text]. *Structure of Texts and Semiotics of Culture*. (ed. J. van der Eng and M. Grygar), 151-176. The Hague-Paris: Mouton.

- Ivanov, Vjačeslav V. 1981. Proisxoždenie slavjanskix glagol'nyx form na 1 [The Origin of Slavic Verbal Forms in I]. *Sovetskoe slavjanovedenie* 6.91-102.
- Ivanov, Vjačeslav V. 1995. Tipologija lišitel'nosti (karitivnosti) [The Typology of Caritivity]. In Vjačeslav V. Ivanov, Tatjana N. Mološnaja, Arina V. Golovačeva, Tatjana N. Svešnikova, *Ètjudy po tipologii grammatičeskix kategorij v slavjanskix i balkanskix jazykax*, 5-59. Moscow: Indrik.
- Janin, Valentin L., and Andrej A. Zaliznjak. 1993. *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste (iz raskopok 1984-1989)* [Novgorodian Birch-bark Documents (from the 1984-1989 Excavations)]. Moscow: Nauka Press.
- Jasanoff, Jay H. 1978. *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*. Innsbruck (IBS 23).
- Krahe, Hans. 1947. Das Suffix **-alo-** in Illyrischen Eigennamen. *Revue des études indo-européennes* 2/1-2.159-169.
- Kuryłowicz, Jerzy. 1968. *Indogermanische Grammatik*, Bd.2. Akzent, Ablaut. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
- Leumann, Manu. 1959. *Homerische Wörter. Kleine Schriften*. Zürich-Stuttgart.
- Lubotsky, Alexander M. 1988. *The System of Nominal Accentuation in Sanskrit and Proto-Indo-European*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Melchert, H. Craig. 1993. *Cuneiform Luvian Lexicon*. *Lexica Anatolica*, vol. 2. Chapel Hill, N.C.
- Melchert, H. Craig. 1994. *Anatolian Historical Phonology*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Meriggi, Piero. 1957. Testi Luvii. *Athenaeum* XXXV/I-II.56-77.
- Milewski, Tadeusz. 1969. *Indoeuropejskie imiona osobowe*. Polska Akademia Nauk/Oddział w Krakowie, Prace Komisji językoznawstwa 18. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład narodowy Imiennia Osolińskich. Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk.
- Propp, Vladimir Ja. 1946. *Istoričeskie korni volšebnoj skazki* [The Historical Origins of The Fairy Tale]. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta.
- Puhvel, Jaan. 1984. *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, vol. 1/2. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter.

- Riftin, A. P. 1946. *Kategorii vidimogo i nevidimogo mira v jazyke* [Categories of the Visible and Invisible World in Language]. Učenyje Zapiski Leningradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, serija filologičeskix nauk, vyp. 10.
- Rigars, I. A. 1948. Irish Myth and the Plot of Ulysses. ELH 15.
- Rosenkranz, Bernhard. 1978. *Vergleichende Untersuchungen der altanatolischen Sprachen*. Trends in Linguistics, State-of-the-Art Reports 8. The Hague-Paris: Mouton.
- Schmid, Wolfgang. 1963. *Studien zum baltischen und indogermanischen Verbum*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Sergent, Bernard. 1998. *Les trois fonctions indo-européennes en Grèce ancienne, I. De Mycènes aux tragiques*. Paris: Economica.
- Smecke, G. 1969. *Funktion und Bedeutung der Parodie in Joyces Ulysse*. Inaugural-Dissertation. Köln: Universität.
- Solta, Georg R. 1970. Der hethitische Imperative der 1. Person Singular und das idg. I-Formans als quasi-desideratives Element. Indogermanische Forschungen 75.44-84.
- Sreznevskij, Izmail I. 1860. *Skazanie o sovjatyx Borise i Glebe. Sil'vestrovskij spisok XIV v.* [The Tale of Saints Boris and Gleb. The Sil'vestr text of the XIVth c.]. St. Petersburg.
- Sreznevskij, Izmail I. 1895. *Materialy dlja slovarja drevne-russkogo jazyka po pis'mennym pamjatnikam*, t. 2. St. Petersburg: Tipografija Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk (repr. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannyx i nacional'nyx slovarej).
- Stanford, W. B. 1963. *Sophocles, Ajax*. London: Macmillan & Co.
- Starke, Frank. 1990. *Untersuchungen zur Stammbildung des keilschriftluwischen Nomens*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz (StBoT 31).
- Tymoczko, Maria. 1994. *The Irish Ulysses*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Vernant, Jean-Pierre. 1986. *La mort dans les yeux*. Paris: Hachette.
- Vernant, Jean-Pierre. 1989. *L'individu, la mort, l'amour. Soi-même et l'autre en Grèce ancienne*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Vine, Brent. 1998. *Aeolic ὄρπετον and Deberbative *-etó- in Greek and Indo-European*. Innsbruck: IBS (Votr. u. kleinere Schriften 71).
- Zaloznjak, Andrej A. 1991. Ob odnoj berestjanoj gramote XII veka [On a Birch-bark Document of the XIIth c.]. *Words are Physicians for the Ailing*

Mind. Festschrift Andrzej Bogusławski (ed. M. Grocowski and D. Weiss). Munich: Otto Sagner.

Zaliznjak, Andrej A. 1995. *Drevnenovgorodskij dialekt* [*The Old Novgorodian Dialect*]. Moscow: Škola "Jazyki russkoj kul'tury".