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0. The initial diphthong of Lith. *úostas*, Latv. *uõsta* (*uõsta*) ‘port, harbour, (dial., arch.) mouth of a river’ is etymologically ambiguous. It may be regarded either as a direct reflex of **ō* (**eh₃*, **oH*) or as a special development of **au*. As a consequence, this etymon has been linked to Skt. *áś-* n. ‘mouth, face’, Lat. *ōs* ‘id.’, Hitt. *aiš* ‘mouth’, OIc. *óss* ‘mouth of a river’, as well as to Skt. *oṣṭha-* m. ‘(upper) lip’, OCS *usta* (NApl. n.) ‘mouth’, OPr. *austo* (Elb. Voc.) ‘id.’. This does not necessarily mean that we are facing a straightforward choice between two completely different etymologies. An attempt to trace all forms to a single PIE etymon was made by Pokorny (1959, 784–785), Fraenkel (I 26–27) and others, while the *Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture* suggests that the East Baltic forms under discussion and Lat. *ōstium* ‘entrance, door, mouth of a river’ represent a contamination of the two etyma mentioned above (EIEC 387). The aim of this paper is to clarify this confusing situation by taking into account the accentological aspects of the Balto-Slavic evidence.

1. Hitt. *aiš* n. ‘mouth’, Gsg. *iššāš*, probably continues a neuter *s*-stem. Eichner (1973, 84) suggested an original paradigm **h₃óh₁-es¹*, **h₃h₁-es-*, with loss of the initial laryngeal in the oblique cases. This analysis was in its essence accepted by various scholars, who have applied it to Skt. *áś-* n. (RV) ‘mouth, face’, Av. *ah-* n. ‘mouth’, Lat. *ōs* n. ‘mouth, face’, Mlr. *á²* ‘mouth’ and OIc. *óss* m. ‘mouth of a river’ (cf. KEWA I 181–182; Schrijver 1991, 55). Melchert (1994, 116), however, has argued that in view of the absence of initial *h-* the root must have been **h₁eh₃-* and that we should reconstruct **h₁éh₃-s*, **h₁h₃-és-*. In Hittite, the suffix was subsequently replaced by **-is-*. For our purposes the question which of these root structures underlies the pervasive *o*-vocalism reflected by the various languages is of no consequence, as any Balto-Slavic cognate with full grade of the root would be reflected as **HoH-(e)s⁻³*.

¹ Judging by the other reconstructions in Eichner’s article, the NAsg. **h₃óh₁-es* has *o*-grade, not **h₃óh₁- = *h₃éh₁-* (cf. Schrijver 1991, 55).

² In *fer há* ‘tooth’ (lit. ‘man of the mouth’).

³ My PIE reconstruction in the remaining sections will be **h₃eh₁-*. This is not to be taken as a dismissal of Melchert’s reconstruction.

2. Skt. *óṣṭha-* m. ‘(upper) lip’ (RV+) and LAV. *aošta(-ča)*, *aoštra-* NAdu. m. ‘both lips’ have mainly been connected with Balto-Slavic forms. Apart from the East Baltic material that will be discussed in the next section, these forms are OPr. *austo* (Elb. Voc.), *āustin* Asg. (Ench.) ‘mouth’ and a number of Slavic forms with a root **us-*, viz.

- *usta* NApl. n., cf. Ru. *ustá*, SCr. *ústa*, Čak. *(j)ũsta*, Cz. *ústa*, Slk. *ústa* ‘mouth’,
- *ustbje*, cf. Ru. *úst’e* ‘estuary, orifice’, Sln. *ústje*, Cz. *ústí*, Slk. *ústie* ‘estuary’
- *ustbna*, cf. OCS *ustbna*, SCr. *ùsna*, Sln. *ústna* ‘lip’,
- *uzda*, cf. OCS *uzda*, Ru. *uzdá*, SCr. *ùzda*, Čak. *ũzdà*, OCz. *úzda*, Cz. *uzda* ‘bridle’.

Though Mayrhofer (KEWA I 282–283, but cf. EWAia I 133) qualifies the etymological relationship between the Indo-Iranian and the Slavic forms as “ungesichert”, I find it fairly convincing. I propose a provisional reconstruction **h₃eus-t-* or **Hous-t-*.

3. Lith. *úostas* and Latv. *uõsta* (*uôsta*) ‘port, harbour’ are both attested with the meaning ‘mouth of a river, estuary’ in dialects and older texts (Būga 1921, 445 = 1959, 362; LKŽ XVII 496–497; ME IV 421–422). According to the LKŽ (*l.c.*), Lith. *úostas* 1 has variants *uõstas* 2 and *uostà* 2. Latv. *uosta* occurs with the accentuations *uõsta*, *uôsta*, *uôsta*² and *ùosta*² (ME *l.c.*). The two unambiguous variants are not limited to the area with a three-tone prosodic system. Thus, we find two accentual variants in West, Central as well as East Latvian. Though we must keep in mind that both *uôsta*² and *ùosta*² may reflect **ùosta*, the Latvian situation most likely reflects a widespread variation between *uõsta* and *uôsta*. The masculine variant *uosts* is only found with the accentuation *uõsts* in ME. On the whole, the East Baltic evidence clearly points to an acute root.

There are a few East Baltic forms with root vocalism *au* that have been connected with Lith. *úostas*, Latv. *uôsta*. First, there is Lith. *áuscïoti*⁴, Latv. *aũšât* ‘gossip, talk nonsense’ < **aust-i-oti*, which may be compared to OCS *ustiti* ‘persuade’. Here the original tone of the root cannot be established, as *métatonie rude* is common in this formation (cf. Derksen 1996, 339–341). Then there is Latv. *apaũši* (*apaû(k)ši*) ‘halter’. This compound is sometimes thought to contain the root of *àuss* ‘ear’, but perhaps more convincing is the hypothesis that it contains **aust-* ‘mouth’, cf. OCS *uzda*, Ru. *uzdá*, ‘bridle’ (Endzelin 1929, where also *aũšât* is mentioned). The broken tone of *apaû(k)ši* may be original or an instance of secondary broken tone (Young 2000, 201; Derksen 2001, 84–85). The sustained tone of *apaũši* may continue either a sustained or a falling tone.

⁴ The verb in the Lithuanian expression *áušyti* (*áušinti*) *būrną* ‘talk without necessity’ must probably be identified with *áušti*, Latv. *aũst* ‘cool’.

of Hirt's law. If we start from a post-Hirt form **(H)óHus-to*, the East Baltic accentual data could be explained along the lines sketched in section 4. It is the Slavic data that would present serious difficulties. PSl. **usta*, i.e. **ūstà*, belongs to accent paradigm (b), which is incompatible with a root **(H)oHu-*⁵.

In my dissertation (D e r k s e n 1996, 96–128, 229–232) I have argued that there was a class of oxytone neuter *o*-stems which did not become mobile and survived into the separate branches of Balto-Slavic. These nouns are characterized by the fact that their first syllable is closed by an obstruent, which prevented the Balto-Slavic retraction of the ictus from final open syllables. In Slavic, the oxytone neuters eventually joined paradigm (b). Roots containing a laryngeal were affected by the loss of laryngeals in pretonic syllables. In East Baltic, the oxytone paradigm disappeared when the stress was retracted from final **-à*. This retraction produced metatony. In Lithuanian, the root stress and metatonical circumflex or acute were often generalized. In Latvian, we find a considerable number of metatonical falling and sustained tones. In both languages the original tone of the root is often restored.

The apparently non-acute root of PSl. **ūstà* can only be attributed to the loss of laryngeals in pretonic syllables if we posit **(H)ouHs-tó* because, as we have seen, **(H)oHus-tó* would be affected by Hirt's law. If we restrict ourselves to the accentual data, this reconstruction would also be possible for East Baltic. In that case the Lithuanian variants *uõstas* 2 and *uostà* 2 could be regular instances of metatony, even though in Latvian the retraction from **-à* has not left any traces. The problem is, of course, that the root vocalism **uo* requires **oHu-*. Furthermore, the development of stressed **oHu* to **uo* probably preceded the East Baltic retraction of the stress from **-à* and prevocalic **i*. Here I must add that OPr. *āustin*, which in principle reflects a circumflex, is also in conflict with East Baltic **úostas, -ā*.

6. It appears that the etymology which derives Lith. *úostas* and Latv. *uõsta* from a neuter **(H)oH-s-to* is less problematic than the one advocating a connection with OCS *usta* and OPr. *austo*. A reconstruction involving a root containing *u* is possible but I see no convincing way to reconcile the Baltic and the Slavic (and Old Prussian) accentological evidence, which deprives such a reconstruction of its main objective. If **(H)oH-s-to* is the correct proto-form, the closest relative of the East Baltic etymon under discussion would be Lat. *ōstium*. Mallory and Adams (EIEC 387) suggest that the initial vowel of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Latin forms, which they ultimately derive from **h_xoust-eh_a-* 'mouth, lip', has been influenced by **h_{1/4}óh₁os*⁶

⁵ There is also strong evidence for **ūzdà* (b) and **ūstìje* (b). In the case of **ustьna*, the South Slavic forms rather point to (a), which may be secondary.

⁶ Since in **h₃eh₁-e/os-* the medial laryngeal would be lost, thus yielding a circumflex, the paradigm of the Balto-Slavic word must have contained forms with zero grade of the suffix.

‘mouth’. For East Baltic, the weak point of this in itself plausible theory seems to be the fact that the latter noun has not survived. There is a possibility, however, that Lith. *úoksas* 1 ‘Öffnung, Hohlraum, Höhlung in einer Baumstamm, Bienenstock, -korb, Nest der Waldbienen, Flugloch im Bienenstock’ (F r a e n k e l II 1165) derives from an *s*-stem meaning ‘mouth, opening’. Its Latvian counterpart *uōksts* ‘die Vertiefung zwischen den Hüften, die Scham, (*uoksts*) ‘die vom Specht für die Brut im Baum gemachte Höhlung’ (ME IV 415) has a *t*-suffix⁷. With respect to Lat. *ōstium*⁸, it should be noted that the evidence of the Romance languages points to **ūstium*. This is usually attributed to *i*-umlaut (Von W a r t b u r g 1955, 439).

7. Theories which derive Skt. *ás-* ‘mouth’, *óṣṭha-* ‘lip’ and their respective cognates from a single PIE root usually involve loss of *u* after a lengthened grade. The relevant entry in Pokorny’s dictionary, for instance, is **ōus-* : **əus-* (1959, 784). These two shapes of the root are supposed to cover all forms. Even if we update Pokorny’s entry to **h₃ōh₁us-* : **h₃oh₁us-*⁹ (**h₃ēh₁us-* : **h₃eh₁us-*), the absence of *u* in Skt. *ás-*, Lat. *ōs* etc. cannot be accounted for. In a constellation **CēHu*, the medial laryngeal was possibly already lost in PIE times, but *u* would only drop before final *m* (cf. S c h r i j v e r 1991, 129). The closest approximation between the forms with and without *u* is **h₃eh₁-s-(t-)* vs. **h₃eh₁-s-t*. It is doubtful, however, whether such an analysis makes much sense. If we accept the fact that Lith. *úostas* and PSI. **ūstà* cannot be identified, it would be logical to derive **ūstà* and its cognates from a root without a medial laryngeal, e.g. **h₃eus-* or **h₂eus-*. In the latter case we might even consider a connection with the word for ‘ear’ (cf. EIEC 387).

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⁷ It is unclear if *ùoksts* or *uōksts* ‘Spürbiene, suchende Biene’ also belongs here. This word is perhaps more convincingly connected with *uōst*, *uō(k)stīt* (*uōkstīt*) ‘smell’.

⁸ The form *austium* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* I, 2219) is now generally regarded as an instance of hyperurbanization. Meyer-Lübke (1901, 357ff), however, proposed that the **ū* found in Romance arose from an original **au* in syntagms containing a preposition and was subsequently generalized.

⁹ Pokorny’s root shape **əus-*, which he uses to account for Skt. *óṣṭha-* etc., has become obsolete.

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