Old Novgorodian Nevide, Russian nevidal’ : Greek ἀδηλος

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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” (Daniil Zatočnik’s Prayer), “in an unknown way” (1st Novgorod Chronicle, yr. 6600 and 6702); the adjective nevidim = Greek ἀόρατος (XIth c. translation of Gregory the Theologian),5 nevidomū “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-sū-da, is known from the chronicle; from this were derived a possessive *Nes(ū)dičevu > Nesdivee (birch-bark document from Staraja Rusa, N 22, Janin, Zaliznjak 1993, pp. 110-11, 334) and Nes(ū)diniču (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.).
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.
nevidimů “invisible” (Tale of Boris and Gleb, XIVth c.),\(^6\) slovo nevidimoje “invisible word” (Svjatoslav’s Collection, 1073 A.D.); nevidi/ëma 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 nevidimka 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 *ካ-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 èkaja 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 ἀδιηλός “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 *ካ-, i.e. with syllabic nasal from an old zero grade, were transformed into forms with the full grade *ne- of the

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\(^6\) 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).


\(^9\) On the semantic development see Chantraine 1979, p. 242; 1990, p. 31.
old negative particle.\textsuperscript{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: \textit{u-bogū} “beggar (not having his portion from god)” \textgreater \textit{ne-bogū}.\textsuperscript{11} The verbal stem (derived from an athematic verb) had the suffix *-\textit{ē}- in Slavic *\textit{vid-ē-}ti, Eastern Baltic (Lithuanian \textit{pa-vydēti}, Latvian \textit{pa-vidēt}), Latin \textit{vidēre} and Gothic \textit{witan}.\textsuperscript{12} Aspectual innovations in Balto-Slavic have led to a grammatical opposition between the suffixes *-\textit{ē}- and *-\textit{ā}- in stems of the same verb (Slavic *\textit{vid-ē-}ti : \textit{vida-}ti), and some of these *-\textit{ā}- stems may be quite old. In the form \textit{ānētλος}, a stem in *-\textit{ē}- is generally supposed on the basis of the parallel fut. \textit{eιδήσω},\textsuperscript{13} but a stem in *-\textit{ā}- comparable to Slavic *\textit{vidati} is not absolutely excluded for prehistoric Greek.\textsuperscript{14} But even if, in the end, the Russian form requires *-\textit{wid-ā-lo-} while the Greek one (in the absence of a pattern of verbal derivation in *-\textit{ā}- in Greek) requires *-\textit{wid-ē-lo-}, we may still be dealing with an essentially cognate structure in terms of its formation. Thus from the Indo-European *\textit{n-wid-ē/ā-lo-} that might be reconstructed as a proto-form for \textit{ānētλος}, one would have expected a Proto-Slavic *\textit{ne-wid-(ēlo-/ālo-)}, with the same combination \textit{ne-wid-} as in the other Slavic words enumerated above. The combination *-\textit{ēlo-} or *-\textit{ālo-} contains a suffix *-\textit{lo-} that is thought to continue a type of old Indo-European deverbative adjective or participle.\textsuperscript{15} The spread of this formation, which was attributed, at the time of the Pan-Illyrian fashion, to Illyrian influence,\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{10} Milewski 1969, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{11} Ivanov 1995, pp. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{13} Chantraine 1979, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{14} Despite e.g. Soph. \textit{Ajax} 608 (lyric) \textit{ānētλον} (in an interesting etymological figure \textit{ānētλον ‘Λιδάνω, see Stanford 1963, p. 137, ad loc.), a Dor. \textit{ānētλός} is actually attested, see LSJ s.v. \textit{ānētλός}.
\textsuperscript{15} Chantraine 1979, pp. 241-242; somewhat differently Solta 1970 (where the “Voluntary” in *-\textit{i-} is considered to be related; but see on this category the last part of the author’s “Comparative Notes ...”, in this volume).
\textsuperscript{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-
particples in modal and temporal functions; in Hittite, isolated forms like
paraganaula “those [mountains] that should be made high” may present traces
of a similar type.\(^\text{17}\) 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 -\(\lambda\omega\)-
jectives\(^\text{18}\) and may reflect an archaism.\(^\text{19}\)

It can be supposed that in prehistoric Greek there was a whole group of
suffixed forms derived from *\(\eta\)-\(\text{wid}-\). Besides \(\alpha\iota\delta\eta\lambda\circ\), another such form is
Mycenaean \(o\text{-}wi\text{-}de\text{-}ta\text{-}i\), which according to Vine’s hypothesis goes back to
*\(\eta\)-\(\text{wid-eto}\).\(^\text{20}\) 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 \(\alpha\iota\delta\eta\lambda\circ\).

According to Puhvel,\(^\text{21}\) Hittite \(\text{awiti} \) “lion” is connected to the same
type of Indo-European privative formation, as is Latin \(\text{invisus} \) “hated, hos-
tile” < *“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.\(^\text{22}\) As Propp has shown, the re-

\(^\text{18}\) Bally 1945/1997, p. 72, §§128-129; Lubotsky 1988, pp. 131-132, §3.11.
\(^\text{19}\) On the accentuation of privative compounds cf. Kuryłowicz 1968, pp. 66-68 , §65. In Russian, a
partial parallel is provided by another *-\(\text{lo}\)- formation \(\text{né-do-ros-}\)‘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. \(\text{ne-do-ros-}\)\(\text{-i}\), derived from a participle in
*-\(\text{lo}\)-).
\(^\text{22}\) 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.\textsuperscript{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”, βλοσυνρώπις) and her shield.\textsuperscript{24} The role of the opposition “invisible - visible”, established in studies of Greek mythology and ritual,\textsuperscript{25} is relevant also for Slavic and some other Indo-European traditions.\textsuperscript{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 *ɲ-wid-, make it probable that this compound with privative *ɲ- 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”\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{itemize}
  \item the text about Kešši), the verb \textit{munna}- “to hide, to conceal” expresses the idea of invisibility, cf. also \textit{šakuwa munnai}- “to hide one’s eyes”, CHD 3\textsuperscript{3} (1989), pp. 329-332.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Propp 1946, pp. 58-61; Ivanov 1973, pp. 155-158.
  \item \textsuperscript{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).
  \item \textsuperscript{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.
  \item \textsuperscript{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.
\end{itemize}
Homerian νησ < *ne-wid-s “unknowing”, 28 cf. Homerian ἄιστος (probably already in Myc. a-wi-to-do-to / Awistodotos/, MN.) “unseen” < *ŋ-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) *ŋ-/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.

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