Greek and Italic share a same Indo-European substratum?

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Greek and Italic have developed from their common Proto-Indo-European (PIE) ancestor in distinct ways, resulting in two languages that exhibit very different features, in particular regarding phonology and Wortbildung. Moreover, the Greek lexicon has long been recognised for its huge proportion of non-inherited words, among which it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between substrata and loan words. Several of the languages that contributed to shaping the Greek lexicon are Indo-European. Among the Indo-European contributors to the non-inherited Greek lexicon, we tentatively identify a language that shares phonetic and morphological features with substratic elements attested in Italic, and possibly articulatory properties of Latin itself. We shall review five phonetic features of this language: (i) voiceless reflexes of PIE voiced aspirated stops; (ii) the anticipation of nasals resembling *lex-unda* in Latin but generalised to labial stops, such that VCnV > VnGV with lenition of the consonant; (iii) a velarised /h/ (viz. *pínguis*) which can trigger an anaptyctic -o- or -u-; (iv) apparent voice alternations that follow similar patterns to the Verner law in Germanian; (v) the metathesis of -r-, such that CVrC > CrVC. Our study also unveils morphological peculiarities of this language: (a) the frequent use of elsewhere poorly attested labial morphs, leading to nouns of the form *CoC-Po- and adjectives of the form *CoC-Po-; (b) the frequent occurrence of a prefix *egh²s-(cf. Lat. ex-, Gr. ἐξ-) reflected as a simple *s-; (c) the frequent occurrence of action nouns built with the well-known *CoC-no- pattern.

(i) The connection between non-inherited Lat. rūtillus ‘red’ and the etymology Rūtūt ‘Rutulians’ is consensual, as is their derivation from PIE *h₂ru₂dh²r̥- ‘red’ > Com. It. *rītūlō- ‘id.’ (Szemerényi, 1991:670). Inherited counterparts are Lat. rūbēr ‘red’ (< Com. It. *rubrō-) and Gr. ἐρυθρός ‘red’. As we shall see, this non-inherited correspondence PIE *dʰ ~ Lat. t reflects a substratic treatment of all voiced aspirated consonants as voiceless consonants.

(ii) The case for PIE *h₂bʰ > *p is illustrated by Gr. πύνδαξ [m.] ‘bottom of a jar’ reflecting * pundón -bottom’ < PIE *bʰudʰ-no- ‘bottom’. More interestingly, this word is the result of a treatment akin to lex-unda in Latin (Meiser, 1998:121), i.e. *T-n- > Lat. -nd- (with voicing; T = *t, *d or *dʰ). The inherited Latin reflex of PIE *bʰudʰ-no-, namely fundus ‘bottom’, provides a parallel for a derivation of the form PIE *bʰudʰ-no- > *put-no- > *pundón-, hence Gr. πύνδαξ. Contrarily to the lex-unda, this treatment applies in our substratum language to any stop, as illustrated by Gr. τύμβος ‘tomb’ from a substratic *túmbo- < PIE *dʰubʰ-no- m. ‘depth’, derived from PIE *dʰubʰ-no- ‘deep’ based on the same PIE root *dʰebʰ- as above. A cognate of this substratic *túmbo- would be Gaul. *dubno- ‘underworld’ attested in compounds such as the PN Dubno-rix.

(iii) Several non-inherited Greek words seem to contain anaptyctic vowels -o- or -u-, especially next to an l. It could reflect a velarised articulation /l/ when the l is the first consonant in a consonant cluster, as is precisely the case in Latin. Let us consider for example σκόλοψ [m.] ‘pointed pole, palisade, prickle’ < *skóɫap- < *skółp- < PIE *(s)kó̅l-p- < *(s)kó̅l(h₂)-p- (with ‘Saussure-effect’) from a PIE root *(s)kellh₂- ‘to chop (wood)’ (Rix et al. 2001:322) and with a known although poorly attested labial morph.² Σκόλοψ can be related to the Hesychian glosses σκόλοφον· θρανίον ‘bench’ and σκόλυψαι· ἱλοῦσα, ἵλοδοσά ‘cut short, mutilate’ < *skóɫap- < PIE *(s)kó̅l-p-

(iv) Gr. κολοῦσαι ‘mutilated’ is formally and semantically close to this series. We assume a substratum form *(s)kōl(h₂)bʰes < PIE *(s)kol(p)-o- < *(s)koll(h₂)-p-ō-. It exhibits two striking differences with previous forms: the labial morph is voiced and the stress is word-final. We interpret it as the outcome of a Verner-like treatment, i.e. a lenition of all voiceless stops in pre-tonic positions.³ Also Gr. καλλίδη [f.] ‘hut, cabin’ (var. καλλιδός, κολοῦσει [m.]), which is difficult to separate from PIE *kēl̥- ‘to cover’ (cf. Lat. oc-cūl-ĕrĕ ‘hide’ < PIE *kēl̥-e/o-), points to a substratic adjective *kōl̥bó- ‘covered’ < PIE *k̥l̥-bʰ-o- ‘id.’ that exhibits this Verner-like effect. Next to this adjective existed a feminine PIE substantive *k̥l̥b-eh₃, ‘covering’ reflected in our substratum language, with a fortition in post-tonic position, as *k̥l̥b̥ppa (maybe *k̥l̥b̥ppa). It has been borrowed in Proto-Romance as

¹ This root is duplicated in the Liv₂ (Rix et al., 2001) as *kellh₂ ‘chop wood’ (p. 350) and *skellh- ‘id.’ (p. 553).
² On the same root, cf. Lat. (inherited) skalpō ‘scratch, carve’ < Com. It. *skālāp-e/o- < PIE *sklāp-p-e/o-.
³ According to Pokorny (1959:926), Com. Gymc. *yalbè ‘half’ (> Go. halbs, ON halluc) reflects, with the standard Verner effect, a Pre-Proto-Gmc. *kōlp- ‘cut (into two pieces)’ < PIE *(s)koll(h₂)-p-ō-, which we pose as an indirect source for Gr. κολοῦσαι.
*kalāppa ~ *kalā́ffia, reflected by Provencal caloufo ‘nut hull’ and Old Occit. caloupe ‘nutshell; boat’, hence Fr. (dialectal) chaloupe ‘nutshell; boat hull’. A proterocinetic PIE adjective *kēl-u-s (NOM), *kēl-eq-s (GEN), *kēl-u-hi, (INSTR) ‘hidden, covered (vel. sim.)’ could produce, via a desinuative cvi-like construction based on the instrumental, a PIE form *kēl-u-hi,bh(u)-ó- ‘being covered’. Substantivisation via barytonesis would then lead to a substratic *kalāppa~ *kalāffo- ‘covering’ that could be the source of Gr. χέλιφος [secondary n.] ‘fruit shell, eggshell’. This shows that we are dealing with a centum language, as PIE *k is reflected by a substratic *k.

Other examples of this Verner-like treatment can be found in words derived from PIE root *dʰeubh₂- ‘sink in(to), go deep’ (Kümmel, 2014, s.v.). We analyse Lat. Tibēris, -is [m.] ‘the river Tiber’ < Com. It. *Tūbris as reflecting PIE *dʰeubh₂-ri- ‘ravine’ (cf. Szemerényi, 1991:675-681). Another example is non-inherited Lat. tūbus (and Proto-Romance *tūfus) < Com. It. *tūfo- ‘underground pipe (for conducting water)’ (Meyer-Lübke, 1935:746) from a substratic *tūppa~ *tūffo- ‘id.’.

(v) Another phenomenon typical of our substratic language is the metathesis of -r-, such that CvrC becomes CrVC. For example, we explain the Gr. verb στρεβείν ‘twist’ (“Pre-Greek” according to Beekes, 2010:1413) as related to the PIE root *terk₂- ‘turn oneself’ (Rix et al. 2001:635) inherited as Lat. torqueō ‘turn, twist’ from a PIE causative stem *torkʷ-ej-e-o-. Apart from the metathesis of the -r-, this form exhibits a spurious *- which can hardly be accounted for as an s-mobile. It could be a reflex of a preverb *s- *es *eks- < PIE *egʰ-, with a treatment which parallels Vulgar Latin developments (cf. It. scorrere ‘flow’ < Lat. ex-currere ‘run’). We therefore posit a Post-PIE form *eks-terkʷ-e-o- > *(e)strekʷ-e-o- borrowed as Com. Gr. *στρεβω- > Gr. στρέψω. The Verner-like fortition of *-kʷ- as *χʷ- > *ϕ rather than *χʷ- > *π is the same as in Gr. χέλιφος explained above. A lenited counterpart is found in Gr. στρεβλός ‘turned, twisted’ < Com. Gr. *στρέβλον-λό- from a substratum form *(e)s-tregʷ-ló- < Post-PIE *eks-trekʷ-ló-. The extended lex-unda seen in point (ii) also explains Gr. στρούμμος ‘spinning-top (Ξ 413); whirlwind’, which reflects a substratum form *(e)stróng-o- < *(e)strókʷ-no- following the PIE *COC-no pattern. Note that the labiovelar is warranted by non-inherited Gr. στρογγύλος ‘round, spherical’, which we analyse as a reflex of Com. Gr. *στρογγύλλον-λό- ‘id.’ (with paroxytonesis due to Wheeler’s law), derived in Com. Gr. (or in the substrate) from the same thematic stem *(e)stróng-o-.

We have unveiled a consistent system of phonetic and morphological common points between one of the IE layers in the non-inherited Greek lexicon and substratic words and influences in Latin and Romance. We conclude with the widespread PIE word *gʰórd-o- ‘fence, enclosure’ which acquired the meaning ‘town’ for example in OCS gradon ‘town’ (cf. also the Phryg. city name Gordion). With the well-known characterising suffix *-on-, we would expect a development *gʰórdon > *körtôn (cf. point (i)) > *krótôn (cf. point (v)), which correctly matches the name of the town Końton ‘Crotone’ located in Calabria, Southern Italy. Based on this formal, semantic and geographic match, we suggest the name ‘Crotonean’ for the IE substratic language reconstructed here.

REFERENCES
Kümmel, M. (2014), Addenda und Corrigenda zu LIV². Published online at the following URL: http://www.indogermanistik.uni-jena.de/dokumente/PDF/liv2add.pdf.

4 Lat. tūbus and Proto-Romance *tūbus ~ *tūfus < Com. It. *tūfo- (Meyer-Lübke, 1935:746) reflecting a source word *tuPo-derived from zero-grade PIE *dʰubh₂-o- [m.] ‘ravine’ from PIE *dʰubh₂-o- ‘deep.’ This PIE formation would have been inherited as Com. It. *tūfo- and would appear as Lat. *tūbus.

5 It is generally accepted that Gr. στρέψω is akin to the Myc. Gr. κυστρεπτo-ν ‘global sum’, probably for *ξυν-στρεφείν (cf. Gr. συκοστρεφείν ‘density, condensation, gathering, group’). Therefore, an etymology for Gr. στρέψω based on the PIE root *trep- ‘turn’ is unlikely, as are ad hoc reconstructions of the form PIE *strebo- or *streg-o- (pace Rix et al., 2001:603 and Kümmel 2001, 2014).

6 On the Italic side, it corresponds to Szemerényi’s “Siculo-Ausonian” substrate.