SKT. VRDH₂ ‘HURT, DAMAGE, CUT’ *

Abstract:

The present paper deals with the origin of the late Sanskrit root vr₇dh₂ ‘hurt, cut’, which is explained as extracted from the compound vy⁻vr₇dh₂ ‘be deprived of smth., be precluded from smth., lose’, with the subsequent simplification of the difficult sequence vy⁻ → vr⁻.

The late root vr₇dh₂, homonymous with vr₇dh₁ ‘grow, increase’, is registered in Dhātupāṭha (X 112, ‘chedana-pūraṇayoh’) and located by Sanskritists in the Epics and some classical texts (cf. BÖHTLINGK/ROTH PW VI, 790ff.). The meaning of this root is usually rendered, apparently after BÖHTLINGK (‘abschneiden’), as ‘cut’. The -ta-participle of vr₇dh₂ occurs in the Mahā-Bhārata (see OBERLIES 2003: 517, where this verb is translated as ‘cut, hurt’):

(Mbh. 12.74.8ab)

vrddham (v.l. viddham, dvidhā, crit.ed. *vvrddham) rāṣṭraṃ bhavati kṣatriyasya, brahma kṣatram yatra virudhyate ha
‘The kingdom of the Kṣatriya, where the Brahmaṇa is opposed to the Kṣatriya, becomes ruined.’

* I am much indebted to A. Lubotsky, N. Nicholas and T. Oberlies for valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I acknowledge grant 275-70-009 (VENI-project) received from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), and financial support from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung.
The same root is said to appear in a few nominal derivatives: vardhaka-, vardhaki(n)- ‘carpenter’ (Ep., Cl.), śmaśru-vardhaka- ‘barber’ [= ‘beard-cutter’] (Rām.) and nābhi-vardhana- ‘cutting of the navel-string’ (ManuSmṛ. 2.29).

The etymology of vrđh₂ has not received satisfactory explanation thus far (see Mayrhofer, KEWA III, 157; EWAia II, 521).¹ The meaning hardly allows for connection with vrđh₁ ‘grow, increase’.²

First let it be noted that the translation ‘cut’, which opens the list of meanings of vrđh₂, seems to belong to the periphery of its semantics. The Mbh. passage quoted above rather suggests the translation ‘hurt, damage, destroy, ruin’. A carpenter (vardhaka-, vardhaki(n)-, on the assumption that these nouns belong here) not only cuts, but also (or even predominantly) trims and joins (pieces of wood), creating new objects. In any case, the meanings ‘hurt, destroy’ (which are present, for instance, in vrddha-, attested in the Mbh.) and ‘do carpenter’s work’ can hardly be reconciled within one single lexeme. Cutting underlies the basic meaning of vardhana- in nābhi-vardhana-, but even here a possibility for an alternative interpretation remains open: ‘cutting of the navel-string’ suggests in fact its removal and destruction. Note also that chedana- in the Indian lexicographic description of the meaning of this root (‘chedana-pūranayoh’) refers not only to cutting, but also to splitting, breaking, destruction. Thus, vrđh₂ rather denotes hurting, damaging activities, usually violating the physical integrity of the object.

It seems that the editors of the Poona critical edition of the Mahā-Bhārata were on the right way towards the explanation of the origin of vrđh₂ when conjecturing ṣvyṛddham for vrṛddham. Specifically, vrđh₂ may originate in the compounded root vy-ṛdh, meaning ‘be deprived of smth., be precluded from smth., lose’.³

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1. Burrow’s (1979: 47) explanation of this root as an extension of Indo-European *wer- ‘to cut’ (unattested in Sanskrit but allegedly preserved in Pkt. nivvarai ‘cuts’) does not seem convincing.

2. Whitney’s (1885: 165) short remark concluding the lemma vrđh ‘grow’ (“Compare √ṛdh. The asserted √vrđh ‘cut’ (used only of the navel-string) rests on a too narrow foundation to be admitted; it is probably a specialized application of this root”) is unclear (this root = vrđh? rdh?) and lacks argumentation.

3. For the meaning and syntax of this compound, see Oertel 1926: 130f.; Gonda 1951: 26; Kulikov 2001: 276f.; see also Krick 1982: 540, fn. 1469 on the opposition vyṛddhi- = samṛddhi- (= “Dis-” = “Reintegration”).
The simplification of the difficult sequence $vyṛ\rightarrow vyṛ$ is attested already in late Vedic, noticed for the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa by Debrunner (1957 [AiG, Nachtr. zu Bd. I]: 149), who groups this form with other instances of the loss of $y$, such as $tryenū$ / $tryenū$ ‘an drei Seiten bunt’ (Wackernagel [AiG I], 267f., §232a). Debrunner apparently noticed only those attestations of $vyṛ$ ($\leftarrow vyṛ$) which crept into editions, as is the case with three forms in the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa listed below. In fact, however, $v[y]ṛdh$ occurs in some other late Vedic and post-Vedic texts as well, attested among variant readings in manuscripts or even as the only reading.

In the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa, $vyṛ$ appears instead of $vyṛ$ in the -ya-present $v[y]ṛdhya-te$ (2x: PB 6.7.14, 15) and in the -ta-participle $v[y]ṛddha$- (PB 6.9.26), cf.:

(PB 6.7.15)

*yadi pratihartavacchidyate, paśubhir yajamāno vr̥dhya-te*

‘If the Pratihartar is hurt, the sacrificer is deprived of his cattle.’

All other occurrences of $vi + vr̥hyā-te$ in the PB (9x: PB 9.8.16; 9.9.13; 16.5.2; 6.1; 8.7; 131.2; 18.11.1-3), as well as the second attestation of the -ta-participle ($vyṛddha$- v PB 6.9.23), have the regular $vyṛ$.

A few occurrences of $vr̥$-forms appear in the Sūtras. The -ya-present $v[y]ṛdhya-te$ occurs in VaikhṛŚS 1.19:19.16, as one of the variant readings (ms. T reads vā vr̥dhya; other attested readings are (vā) $vyṛdhya$, vāpyadhyate, vāpyṛṛdhya). The -ta-participle $v[y]ṛddha$- is attested, among variant readings, in ĀpDhŚ 1.28.4 (ativyapahāro v[y]ṛddho bhavati; mss. have vyṛṛddho, vṛddho and viruddho). VaitŚ 8.3 has the correct $vyṛ$ in $vyṛṛddhi$- ‘mishap’ in all mss. (ādhānād vyṛṛddhiś ced ...), but its quotation in the comm. on KātyŚŚ 4.11.1 has a $vyṛ$-form instead (ādhānād vr̥ṛddhiḥāni ced ...) (see ed. Garbe, p. 64, crit. notes ad loc.). Finally, $vr̥ddha$ (loc.sg. of $v[y]ṛddhi$-) appears in SVB 3.9.5, in ed. Burnell, for which ed. Sharma (qualifying ed. Burnell as “full of misprints”) reads $vyṛṛddha$, with no variant readings.

4. See also Kulikov 2001: 272, fn. 836.
5. Note that all the three forms are found in book 6.
The substitution \( vyΩ° \) ➔ \( vy° \) was not the only way to deal with the sequence \( vyr^- \). At MānŚ S 1.6.5.1, several mss. have \( vyadhyamāna- \) for \( vyrdhyamāna- \). Another possibility is attested in ĀpDhS 1.28.4 \( virud-dho \) (mentioned above). Finally, a variety of solutions are exhibited by the mss. of the Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa quoted in ed. RAGHU VIRA/LOKESH CHANDRA. We find in mss. (by order of appearance in text):

\[
\begin{align*}
vyiriddhyante & (JB 2.221:7) \\
virudhyante & (JB 2.221:9) \\
viridhyante & (JB 2.225:6) \\
virddhi- & (JB 3.4:6) \\
viriddhi- & (JB 3.4.6) \\
viriddhi- & (JB 3.4:9) \\
viriddhi-, viruddhi- & (JB 3.4:11) \\
viraddh[aj]-, viriddh[aj]- & (JB 3.279:1)
\end{align*}
\]

Yet another way to transform \( vyr^- \) is found in the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa. In GB 2.1.16, mss. twice read \( vivΩdhyate \) (for which ed. GAASTRA conjectures \( +vyΩdhyate \)), cf.:

\[
\text{(GB 2.1.16:153.12-13)}
\]

\[
\text{indriyena vā eṣa viryenā vivΩdhyate [ed. } +vyΩdhyate \text{], yasya pitā piśamahah somaṁ na pibati}
\]

‘The one whose father (and) grandfather does not drink soma is deprived of power and energy.’

Most likely, the sequence \( vyΩ° \) was first simplified to \( vy° \); then the preverb was secondarily restored.

For convenience, the variant readings attested in texts are summarized below:

\[
\begin{align*}
vyr° & \rightarrow vy° \\
vya° & \\
viri° & \\
vyiri° & \\
viru° & 
\end{align*}
\]

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6. Cf. TS 2.2.1.4 \( nēndriyēṇa vīryēṇa vyΩdhyate \) ‘... he is not deprived of power and energy’. On this passage and the meaning of \( indriyāṁ vīryāṁ \), see GONDA 1987: 117f.
To sum up, we find ten variants, substituting for the original \( \text{vy}\text{rd}(d)h \), which suggest both phonetic processes (vocalisation \( \text{r} \rightarrow \text{ri}, \text{ru}, \text{ra}, \text{a} \) and/or \( \text{y} \rightarrow \text{i}, \text{yi} \)) and semantic adaptation of the resulting sequences to the existing roots or compounds (\( \text{vrdh} \) ‘grow, increase’, \( \text{v}-\text{rudh} \) ‘obstruct; be opposed’).

The character of this irregular variation clearly points to the phonetic, rather than graphic, nature of the phenomenon in question. Facing the difficulties in pronouncing the sequence \( \text{vy}\text{rd} \), the copyists may have tried different ways to resolve it. Most of these solutions had little chance to survive, being clearly awkward and ungrammatical (cf. \( \text{vyi}, \text{vi}, \text{vru} \)). By contrast, the \( \text{v} \) variants could at least be considered morphologically acceptable, being formally identical with the derivatives of the homonymous root \( \text{v}\text{rdh} \). Thus, the root \( \text{v}\text{rdh} \) could be extracted from such forms as \( \text{v[y]}\text{rdhyate}, \text{v[y]}\text{ddha-} \) and \( \text{v[y]}\text{ddhi-} \), the latter two of which are homonymous with the corresponding derivatives of \( \text{v}\text{rdh} \), \( \text{vdhha-} \) ‘grown, increased’, and \( \text{vddhi-} \) ‘growth, increase’.

The semantics of some derivatives of \( \text{v}\text{rdh} \) can be directly traced to the meaning ‘deprive of smth.’ (\( \text{v}\text{dhi-}\text{vardhana-} \) ‘depriving of the navel-string’; \( \text{v}\text{dhi-}\text{vardhaka-} \) ‘barber’ = ‘the one who deprives of beard’). As for the semantic change ‘deprive of smth.’ → ‘hurt, destroy, ruin; cut (away)’, it could be supported by the influence of two phonologically similar verbal roots denoting hurting activities, \( \text{vadh} \) ‘slay, kill’ and \( \text{vyadh} \) ‘pierce’ (cf. esp. the zero grade derivatives such as the -\( \text{ya}\)-present \( \text{vadh}\text{yati} \) ‘pierces’ and -\( \text{ta}\)-participle \( \text{vaddha-} \) ‘pierced’); these verbal roots may also be responsible for the rise of the ‘carpenter’-derivatives. Another form that might have contributed to the establishing of this new verbal root is \( \text{vadhrí-} \) (RV +) ‘eunuch’, which could easily be associated with the sense of \( \text{vy-}\text{rdh} \) ‘deprive of [manly force / membrum virile]’.
### Abbreviations

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### REFERENCES

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Secondary Literature


