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Stem vowels in Proto-Uralic words of Indo-Iranian origin

In Uralic linguistics, the study of non-initial-syllable vowels (stem-vowels) has always been in the background, and many aspects of their development has been poorly understood until recently (see Kallio 2012 for a survey of recent developments). Because of this, the study of the substitution of non-initial-syllable vowels in various Indo-European loanword layers in the Uralic languages has also been more poorly understood than the substitution of the initial-syllable vowels. However, the study of Germanic and Baltic loans in Finnic has shown that in many cases the substitution is not based on simple phonetic similarity, but sometimes other factors, such as acquisition of loanwords to a certain Uralic stem-type plays a more significant role (see Junttila 2015 for stem-vowels in Baltic loans of Finnic).

This seems to be true of the Indo-Iranian borrowings also. While some loans show a neat match between PU and PII stem vowels, such as PU *šata ‘hundred’ ← PII *čata- id., in many of the loans the chosen stem-type is more difficult to understand. This issue is complicated by recent research which has reshaped some of our ideas of Uralic stem-vowels. Aikio’s (2015) new reconstruction influences also the stem-vowels of some well-known PII loans, such as PU *šarwi ‘horn’, instead of traditional reconstruction *šorwa-, from PII *črwa-.

In this presentation the substitution of the stem-vowels in the earliest Indo-Iranian borrowings in Proto-Uralic will be critically evaluated. The expected results of the research are that it is possible to establish regular substitution patterns and that the choice of stem-type is not arbitrary.

References

- Aikio, Ante 2015: The Finnic ‘secondary e-stems’ and Proto-Uralic vocalism. *JSFOu* 95. 26–66.
- Junttila, Santeri 2015: *Tiedon kumuloituminen ja trendit lainasanatutkimuksessa. Kantasuomen balttilaislainojen tutkimushistoria*. Doctoral dissertation: Helsinki.
- Kallio, Petri 2012: The non-initial-syllable vowel reductions from Proto-Uralic to Proto-Finnic, in Tiina Hyytiäinen, Lotta Jalava, Janne Saarikivi, Erika Sandman (eds.): *Per Urales ad Orientem*. MSFOu 264, Helsinki. 163–175.