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GK. *λέπω*, LITH. *lùpti*, RU. *lupít'* 'TO PEEL'

Abstract. The Balto-Slavic root **leup-* 'to peel' (Lith. *lùpti*, *lùpa*, Sl. **lupǫiti*) can be derived from the root **lep-* 'id.' (Gk. *λέπω*) by assuming an original paradigm pres. **lep-e/o-* : aor.-inf. **lp-*. The aorist-infinitive stem developed as follows: **lp-* > **ulp-* → **lup-* (after pres. **lep-*) → new full grade **leup-*.

Keywords: etymology, Greek, Lithuanian, Slavic, Proto-Indo-European

1. In this article I will defend a connection between Gk. *λέπω* 'to peel (off)' and Lith. *lùpti*, Ru. *lupít'* 'id.'. Before presenting my scenario (§4), I will briefly discuss the evidence as well as former attempts to etymologize these two word families.

2. Lith. *lùpti*, Sl. **lupǫiti*.

2.1. The Baltic evidence is centered around the primary verb Lith. *lùpti*, *lùpa*, Latv. *lupt*, *lupju* 'peel, bark, skin, strip off, scratch (off)'. In addition to a number of unremarkable derivatives with zero grade of the root (Lith. *lùpata* 'rag, clout', *lùpena* 'peel', *lupinėti* 'peel (iter.)', etc.) we have an *o*-grade iterative Lith. *laupýti*, *laũpo*, Latv. *lãupīt*, *-u* 'tear, pluck off, strip off' (whence the 'neo-primary' verb Lith. *laũpti*, *-ia* 'id.').¹

The primary verb Lith. *lùpti* has not been preserved in Slavic. Sl. **lupǫiti* AP *b* (Ru. *lupít'*, SCr. *lúpiti*, Cz. *loupiti*, etc.) is usually equated with Lith. *laupýti*, Latv. *lãupīt* (< iter. **loup-éje/o-*), but could also be denominative to the noun **loupo-* m. (Sl. **lûpъ* AP *c* 'shell, peel': SCr. dial. *lûp*, Slnv. *lûp*, Cz. *lup*, Ukr. *lup*, etc.). As in the case of Baltic, we have a number of transparent derivatives of **lupǫiti* of little interest for etymological purposes (**lupati*, **lupnoiti*, **lupina*, etc., see ÉSSJa XVI 177ff.).

¹ Dialectal forms like *luopýti* 'tear', *luðpti* 'id.', *lúopyti* 'beat', *lúopinti* 'id.' are probably secondary (*-uo-* enjoyed a certain productivity in the *u*-series of ablaut) and need not continue an old *ō*-grade **lōup-* (so e.g. Fraenkel 391).

None of the traditional *comparanda* of Lith. *lūpti* / Sl. **lupīti* is particularly attractive.² Ved. *lumpāti* ‘break’ is to be connected with Lat. *rumpō*, *-ere* ‘id.’ (LIV 510f.). Gk. *λῦπη* ‘sadness’, *λῦπρός* ‘sad’ are semantically remote and present a long *-ū-* that is incompatible with Lith. *lūpti*. Equally problematic from a semantic point of view (and formally ambiguous) are OIr. *lomm*, W. *llwm* ‘bare’, OIr. *lommar* ‘callow, bare’, MIr. *lommraim* ‘to strip, to peel’ (the meaning ‘peel’ seems secondary). The best candidates remain Gmc. **lauba-* ‘leaf’ (Go. *laufs*, ON *lauf*, etc.) and Alb. *lapë* ‘hard piece of meat or skin; peritoneum; leaf’ (< **loupó-*?), but there are better alternatives for both items (see below §2.2.2, §3.2).

2.2. On the other hand, there is some Balto-Slavic evidence that immediately invites comparison with Lith. *lūpti* / Sl. **lupīti*:

2.2.1. There is abundant material deriving from a root **l(a)usk-* ‘shell, peel, pod, scale’, with variants in *-zg-*, *-sp-*, *-st-*: Lith. *lūkštas*, *luskà*, *lūzgana*, Latv. *lāuskas*², *lāuskāt*², Ru. *luská*, *luzgá* (ORu. *luspa*, dial. *lusk*, *lústa*), *lúskát’*, *luščít’*, etc.³ The origin of these forms is unclear.⁴ Their ‘expressive’ character, in any case, renders them useless for determining the etymology of Lith. *lūpti*, Sl. **lupīti*.

2.2.2. Of more interest are some forms going back to a root **leub^h-*. We can distinguish several semantic groups: i) Lith. *lubà* AP 2/4 ‘plank (of the ceiling)’, pl. *lūbos* ‘ceiling’, Latv. *luba* ‘plank, board’ (also ‘bark’), OPr. *lubbo* Elb. 206 ‘plank (of the ceiling)’; Ru., Ukr. *páluba* ‘deck, loft’, Cz. *páluba* ‘deck, board’, Pol. *paluba* ‘covered wagon’; ii) Lith. *líoba* AP 1(3/4) ‘peel; bast’, *líobas* AP 3 ‘bast’, Latv. *luóba* ‘catch, prey’, *luobs* ‘peel’, *luóbīt*, *-u* ‘peel’, *luóbt*, *-ju* ‘id.’; Sl. **lūb^h* AP *c* ‘bast’ (Ru. *lub*, SCr. *lūb*, Cz. *lub*, etc.); iii) Sl. **lǫb^h* ‘skull’ (CS *lǫb^h*, Ru. *lob*, gen. *lba*, Pol. *leb*, gen. *lba*, etc.); iv) (?) Lith. *laūbti*, *-ia* ‘dig’, *laubėnė* ‘a type of orchid’.

Unlike Lith. *lūpti* / Sl. **lupīti* this family has reasonable cognates outside Balto-Slavic, first of all in Germanic: i) Go. *laufs*, ON *lauf*, OE *léaf*, OHG *luob* ‘leaf’; ii) Go. *lubja-leis* ‘who knows poisons’, ON *lýf* ‘medicinal herb’, OE *lybb* ‘medicine drug; poison’; iii) perhaps Go. *luftus*, OE *lyft*, etc. ‘air’ (dubious, cf. Stang 1972, 34).⁵ Outside Germanic we have Celtic material like OIr. *luib* ‘herb’, *lub-gort* ‘garden’ and, probably, Lat. *liber* ‘bark, book’ (< **lub^h-ro-*, although the absence of variants with *lub^o* remains puzzling). Finally, Gk. *όλοόφω* ‘peel’ may perhaps be included here as well (so e.g. Frisk II 382), in which case the root is to be reconstructed as **h₃leub^h-*.⁶

² E.g. Pokorny 690f., Fraenkel 392, Vasmer II 70, among others.

³ See ÉSSJa XVI, Derksen 2008 s.v. **luska*, **luskǫ*, **luzga*, **luspa*, **luskati*, **luščiti* for more Slavic material.

⁴ See ÉSSJa XVI 190f. for a survey of the different proposals, the best one probably being a *ske/o*-present **l(e)up-ske/o-*.

⁵ ON *laupr*, OE *léap* ‘wooden basket’ demand a root **leub-* and are best left aside.

⁶ Alb. dial. *labë* ‘bark’, which was traditionally included in this set, is probably a secondary variant of *lapë* (see Demiraj 1997, 229, with references).

The relationship between Lith. *lùpti* / Sl. **lupíti* and Lith. *lubà* / Sl. **lûbъ* has traditionally been framed in terms of parallel root enlargements **leu-p-*, **leu-b^h-* (as well as **leu-b-*, **leu-g-*, etc.) from the root **leu-* of Ved. *lunāti* 'cut', Gk. *λύω* 'loosen', etc.⁷ (*recte* **leuH-*, cf. LIV 417). Approaches involving mechanical segmentations of this sort, however, can nowadays be qualified as obsolete. In a different vein Beekes (1971) derives Lith. *lùpti*, *lubà*, Gk. *λέπω* and some other material from a European substratum word. This would explain the variation in root auslaut *°p-* ~ *°b^h-* and root vocalism *-e-* ~ *-u-*. Although I agree with Beekes that a connection between Lith. *lùpti* and Gk. *λέπω* has much to recommend it, recourse to a substratum word should only be adopted as a last resort. As a third alternative one could operate with two independent roots that were partially contaminated within Balto-Slavic, see below §5.2.⁸

3. Gk. λέπω.

3.1. As in the case of Baltic, the Greek evidence is centered around the primary verb *λέπω* 'peel, bark' Hom.+ (aor. *ἔλεψα*, pass. aor. *λαπήναι*, perf. mid. *λέλεμμαι*, *λέλαμμαι*).⁹ Primary derivatives include *λέπος* 'rind, husk, scale', *λέπρα* 'leprosy', *λεπρός* 'scaly, scabby, rough; leprous', *λεπτός* 'peeled, husked' (also 'thin, fine, lean, weak' as well as 'subtle, refined'), *λοπός* 'peel' and some other. With *ō*-grade: *λόπη* 'covering, robe, mantle', *λῶπος* 'id.', *λόψ·χλαμύς* (Hsch.). Additional material of potential interest includes *όλόουφω* 'peel, bark' (Hsch.) and *όλόπτω* 'pluck out, tear out' (Call.+).

3.2. As for the etymology of *λέπω*, Beekes' assumption of a substrate word has already been mentioned. *Pace* Beekes (2010, 850), forms like *λόπη*, *λέπρα* cannot be taken as evidence of Pre-Greek origin, but display remarkably archaic Indo-European morphology (see Vine 1998, 686 [λόπη]; 2002, 336 [λέπρα]).

⁷ E.g. Pokorny 690f., more recently Lehmann (1986, 227f.), Mažiulis (1996, 85).

⁸ An anonymous reviewer suggests explaining the relationship between (Lith.) *lùpti* and *lubà* etc. as a case of voice variation in auslaut **leup-* ~ **leub-* (?) ~ **leub^h-*, parallel to cases like **steip-* (Lith. *stiēpti* 'stretch', Lat. *stipāre* 'compress') ~ **steib-* (Gk. *στίβω* 'tread on') ~ **steib^h-* (Gk. *στιφρός* 'firm'). Although such a possibility cannot in principle be excluded (as, indeed, parallel root enlargements or a substrate word), it entails operating with a poorly understood phenomenon that fully escapes our control. As far as our present case is concerned, I would like to stress the following facts: i) **leup-* (unlike **(h₃)leub^h-*) is attested with certainty only in Balto-Slavic; ii) the semantics of both roots is very close, but not identical (**leup-* means only 'to peel'; **(h₃)leub^h-* displays a wide range of meanings); iii) their morphological profile is also different (**leup-* behaves like a typical verbal root; **(h₃)leub^h-* presents almost exclusively nominal forms). Accordingly, I believe a scenario operating with known (controllable) processes and 'normal' roots should be given preference (see below §4).

⁹ The forms with *a*-vocalism *λαπήναι*, *λέλαμμαι* are almost certainly analogical, cf. Beekes (2010, 849).

Beekes further mentions the prothetic vowel of *όλούρω*, *όλόπτω* as an argument, but *όλούρω* probably belongs to a different root **(h₃)leub^h-*, whereas the *ό-* of *όλόπτω* may be due to contamination with *όλούρω* or, alternatively, may contain the preverb **h₂o* as in *κέλλω* ~ *ό-κέλλω* ‘drive (a ship to land)’.¹⁰

Most authors rightly assume that Gk. *λέπω* is inherited. Potential *comparanda*, however, are few and problematic (curiously, most of them are found in Balto-Slavic).¹¹ To begin with the material that is most easily dismissed, Gk. *λώπη* has frequently been equated with Lith. *lōpas* AP 2/4, Latv. *lāps* ‘rag, piece’¹² and/or with Lith. *lōpetà* AP 1/3, Latv. *lāpsta*, OPr. *lopto* ‘spade’, which in their turn cannot be separated from Slavic material like Ru. *lāpot’* ‘shoe of bark’ (: Pol. *lapcie* ‘id.’, etc.), *lapotók* ‘rag, piece’ (SCr. *lāpat* ‘id.’, etc.) and, with short vowel, OCS *lopata* ‘spade’ (: Ru. *lopata*, SCr. *lōpata*, Cz. *lopata*, etc.). This is of course phonologically impossible. The Baltic forms clearly point to *ā*-vocalism **lāp-*, almost certainly from **leh₂p-* (neo-ablaut **lāp-* for **lōp-* is in this case unlikely because there is no obvious derivational base for Lith. *lōpas*, *lōpetà* within Baltic). It follows that Sl. *lop-* must continue the zero grade **lap-* < **lh₂p-*.¹³

Other traditionally adduced material is at least compatible with Gk. *λέπω* from a formal point of view. Within Balto-Slavic we have two distinct word families: i) Lith. *lāpas* AP 2, Latv. *lāpa* ‘leaf’; Ru. *lepén’*, Slvn. *lépen*, etc. ‘id.’¹⁴ (but note material like Lith. *lōpetà* AP 1/3 ‘paw’, Latv. *lāpata* ‘rag, piece’, Ru. *lépest* ‘rag, piece, petal’, which semantically rather agree with **leh₂p-*); ii) Lith. *lēpti*, *lempa* ‘become spoilt’, *lep(n)ūs* ‘squeamish, pampered’, *lēpnas* ‘id.’, Latv. *lept*, *lērēns*, etc. (cf. Gk. *λεπτός* for the semantics). Outside Balto-Slavic the best candidates are Alb. *lapë* ‘hard piece of meat or skin; peritoneum; leaf’ (: Lith. *lāpas*, see Demiraj 1997, 233, with references) and Lat. *lepōs* ‘charm’, *lepidus* ‘charming’ (cf. Lith. *lēpti*, *lep(n)ūs*, Gk. *λεπτός*).

4. To summarize the results achieved so far, in Balto-Slavic we have a well-established root **leup-* ‘to peel’ with a zero-grade primary verb Lith. *lūpti*, *lūpa*. This root lacks clear cognates outside Balto-Slavic. Greek presents a verbal root

¹⁰ See Dunkel (1994, 33), with references, on the Indo-European preverb **h₂o*.

¹¹ E.g. Pokorny 678, Frisk II 107, Fraenkel 340, Vasmer II 14, 31.

¹² The circumflex intonation of Lith. *lōpas* must be secondary, cf. denom. Lith. *lōpyti*, Latv. *lāpīt* ‘patch’.

¹³ See Beekes (1988) for the development **RHT-* > **RVT-* in some Indo-European languages and Darden (1990) for some potential examples in Balto-Slavic (including OCS *lopata*). The issue cannot be discussed at length within the limits of this article. If Lith. *lōpas*, Ru. *lāpot’*, etc. are inherited, one could posit a connection with the root **leh₂p-* of Lith. *lōpà* AP 1/2, Latv. *lāpa* (beside *lēpa*), Sl. **lāpa* AP *a* (Ru. *lāpa*, SCr. *lāpa*, etc.) ‘paw’, Go. *lofa*, ON *lófi* ‘palm of the hand’ (on which see now Kroonen 2011, 309f.).

¹⁴ See ÉSSJa XIV 119ff. for more material.

*lep- 'to peel' which looks inherited on internal grounds. The evidence for *lep- in other branches is inconclusive.

4.1. Considering their agreement in meaning, it seems attractive to posit a connection between Gk. λέπω and Lith. lùpti. The idea is not new. Brugmann (1897, 107, 454) already proposed that the zero grade *l̥p- developed into *lup- within the parent language, a possibility favorably referred to by Walde (1906, 335) or Boisacq (1916, 592). Later this approach was given up and by now it seems to be entirely forgotten. The only exception known to me is Beekes' assumption of a substrate word, which, however, can hardly be regarded as a satisfactory solution.

4.2. Brugmann's proposal is of course unacceptable in the way it was presented (there can be no question of an Indo-European development *l̥p- > *lup-). Matters look different if we recall that the root *leup- is limited to Balto-Slavic. In what follows I will argue that a process similar, but not identical to that of Brugmann took place in this branch alone. As my point of departure I take two well-known developments in the Indo-European languages:

- i) First, the position of the anaptyctic vowel developing from the Indo-European syllabic resonants can be adapted to the position of the full grade (schematically: *TR̥T- > *TVRT- → *TRVT- after *TRET-), e.g. Go. *fruma* 'first' for **furma* after **promo-* (ON *framr*, Gk. *πρόμος*), Lith. inf. *brìsti*, pret. *brido* after pres. *brėda/breñda* 'wade' (root **b^hred^h-*), etc.
- ii) Second, the position of the full-grade vowel can be adapted to that of the anaptyctic vowel developing from the Indo-European syllabic resonants (schematically: *TRET- → *TERT- after *TVRT- < *TR̥T-), e.g. Go. sg. *kann* after pl. *kunnum* 'know' (root **ġneh₃-*), Lith. pres. *peřšasi* after inf. *piřštis*, pret. *piřšosi* 'woo' (root **prek-*), etc.

Our next task will be to see whether a development *l̥p- > *ulp- → *lup- (after *lep-) → new full grade *leup- can be properly grounded.

4.3. Although attested with certainty only in Greek, this language offers important information to reconstruct the *averbo* of *lep-. The crucial form is the seemingly archaic *λώπη* 'covering, robe, mantle', which belongs to a small group of *eh₂*-stem collectives with *ō*-grade of the root together with Gk. *κώμη* 'village; district' (< **kōm-eh₂*), **ώδη* → *έδωδή* 'nourishment' (< **h₁ód-eh₂*), *λώγη-καλάμη, και συναγωγή σίτου* Hsch. (< **lōġ-eh₂*) and some others (on which see Vine 1998). As argued in Villanueva Svensson (2012/2013, 48ff., following a suggestion of Katz *apud* Vine 1998, 697⁴⁴) nouns of the type *κώμη* were derivationally dependent on Narten presents or 'Narten-roots' (cf. pres. **h₁éd-/h₁éd-* 'eat' [LIV 230]; impf. **lėġ-t* 'gathered' > Lat. *lėgī*, Alb. *mb-lodhi*, TA impf. *lyāk* [cf. Jasanoff 1998, 306f.]). Accordingly, Gk. *λώπη* is best understood as an old derivative demanding a Narten present **lėp-ti/lėp-ŋti* 'peel(s)' (indirectly continued in Gk. λέπω) as its derivational base.

These considerations put **lep-* in line with roots like **b^her-* ‘bear’, **leġ-* ‘gather’, **h₁ed-* ‘eat’ or **nem-* ‘deal out’ – ‘present roots’ that made an athematic or thematized root present as their primary verbal formation and normally lacked an aorist or a perfect in their paradigm.¹⁵ In two recent articles (Villanueva Svensson 2011a, 2011b) I have argued that in Balto-Slavic active-transitive verbs of this type typically surface as full-grade thematic or *je/o-* presents paired with a zero-grade aorist and infinitive stem, e.g. IE **g^{wh}én-ti/*g^{wh}n-énti* ‘beat, kill’ → Bl.-Sl. pres. **gen-e-* : inf. **gun-tei-*, aor. **gun-ā-* → OCS *gъnati, ženō* ‘chase, persecute’, Lith. *giñti, gēna* ‘drive, chase’. Few cases are as clear as this one. The Balto-Slavic ablauting paradigm is frequently preserved in only one of both branches (e.g. IE **b^hér-e-ti* → Bl.-Sl. **ber-e-* : **bir-* → OCS *bъrati, berō* ‘gather, take’, Lith. *beřti, bēria* ‘strew, scatter’) or must be reconstructed from the presence of parallel verbs with different root vocalisms (e.g. IE **kólH-e(i)/*kélH-řs* → Bl.-Sl. **kol-e-* : **kul-* → OCS *klati, koljō* ‘stab, sting’, Lith. *kálti, kāla* ‘forge’, *kùlti, kùlia* ‘thresh, beat’). As the last example shows, on occasion the zero grade was generalized (this, incidentally, probably accounts for a large number of the *tudáti*-presents of Balto-Slavic). There is no reason to suppose that processes along these lines did not take place already within Balto-Slavic.

4.4. Turning back to Lith. *lùpti*, Sl. **lupīti*, we can start from a (post-)Indo-European thematic present **lép-e-ti* ‘peels’. As the preceding discussion has shown, at some point in the evolution of Balto-Slavic it naturally came to be paired with a zero-grade aorist-infinitive stem **lp-* (inf. **lp-tei-*, aor. **lp-ā-*). Matters became more complicated when **lp-* gave **ulp-* by regular sound change, thus producing an irregular paradigm pres. **lep-e/o-* : aor.-inf. **ulp-*.¹⁶ For whatever reason, regularizing strategies like generalizing the full grade of the present stem were not chosen in this particular case. Instead, **ulp-* was metathesized into **lup-* after the full grade **lep-*, with a ‘morphological’ zero grade in the right position of the root. The resulting paradigm pres. **lep-e/o-* : aor.-inf. **lup-* was not isolated (cf. **gen-e-* : **gun-*, etc.), but was still unstable. Unlike roots ending in a resonant, the allomorph **lup-* was limited to the primary verb and lacked support in other derivatives. The problem was solved by generalizing the weak stem **lup-* through

¹⁵ I cannot here argue at length for the correctness of these views (see Villanueva Svensson 2011a, 317ff. for a brief justification). The extra present formations of *λέπω* (aor. *ἔλεψα*, perf. *λέλεμμαι*) are easily understood innovations.

¹⁶ To be sure, the conditions determining the double vocalization of the syllabic resonants in Balto-Slavic remain unclear (I doubt the more or less prevailing view that *u*-vocalism is regular only after labiovelars actually suffices to explain the data; so most recently Kortlandt 2007, with references). It is thus not absolutely certain that **lp-* (> **əlp-*) should have given **ulp-* rather than **ilp-*. If the last option is chosen, *u*-vocalism could have been favored by derivatives of the root **(h₃)leub^h-* and/or by verbs like Lith. *skùsti, skùta* ‘shave; scrape, peel, scale’.

the whole verb, giving rise to a paradigm inf. **lup-tei-*, pres. **lup-e-*, aor. **lup-ā-* 'to peel', directly continued in Lith. *lùpti*, *lùpa*, *lùpo*. At this point (late) Balto-Slavic possessed a primary verbal root **lup-* that was naturally reinterpreted as the zero grade of a root **leup-*, whence derivatives like Lith. *laupýti*, Sl. **lupíti*, **lûpъ*.

5. This scenario, I believe, provides a reasonable bridge between Gk. λέπω and Lith. *lùpti*, Sl. **lupíti*. There remain just a couple of issues to comment on.

5.1. As observed above (§3.2), it is noteworthy that most potential *comparanda* of Gk. λέπω are found in Balto-Slavic, where they cluster around two well-defined families: i) 'leaf' (Lith. *lāpas*, Ru. *lepén'*, etc.), ii) 'spoilt, squeamish, etc.' (Lith. *lèpti*, *lep(n)ùs*, etc.).¹⁷ If the traditional etymology is correct, these forms are fully compatible with our scenario. Once the primary verb 'to peel' was remade as **lup-* (: **leup-*), it was only expected that older derivatives of the root **lep-* survived only with a secondary and lexicalized meaning.

5.2. As suggested above (§2.2.2), the roots **leup-* and **(h₃)leub^h-* seem to have been partially contaminated in Balto-Slavic. Lith. *lùbena* 'peel', for instance, is basically a variant of the more common *lùpena*. Derksen (2008, 292) considers Sl. **luspati* a cross of **luskati* and **lupati*. More examples of semantic and formal contamination of Bl.-Sl. **leup-* and **leub-* can be read in Urbutis (1989, 50ff.). Similar processes may well have taken place in prehistory. Thus, it is possible that derivatives like **(h₃)loub^h-o-* (Sl. **lûbъ* 'bast', Gmc. **lauba-* 'leaf') supported the creation of the Balto-Slavic root **leup-*.

Corresponding semantically to Sl. **lûbъ* 'bast' Baltic presents forms going back to **lōbā-*, **lōbo-* (Lith. *lúoba*, *lúobas*). The traditional derivation from **lōub-* (e.g. Fraenkel 388) implies an unmotivated *ō*-grade that is unsupported by comparative evidence. In principle it would seem better to operate with a secondary ablaut grade *-uo-* beside inherited *-au-*, *-u-*, but there is no obvious derivational base for *lúoba(s)* within Baltic. A possible way out may be provided by Gk. *λώπη* 'covering, robe, mantle' (< **lōp-eh₂*), which has already played a major role in our scenario. It seems worth considering the possibility (but only the possibility) that Lith. *lúoba*, Latv. *luōba* represent a cross of inherited **lōpā* (Gk. *λώπη*) and **loubos* (Sl. **lûbъ*).

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¹⁷ Lith. *lèpti*, *leĩmpallèpsta* 'become spoilt' is most probably denominative to an adjective **lepos* (*vel sim.*) and not a parallel offshoot of the primary verb of the root **lep-*.

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