Greek στωμύλος ‘chatty’
An anomalous ō-grade (and some anomalous o-grades)

Brent Vine
University of California, Los Angeles
vine@humnet.ucla.edu

Abstract

Gk. στωμύλος ‘chatty’ (Old Com.+ ) belongs with στόμα ‘mouth’; yet the serious formal problem with the -ω-, often acknowledged, remains without explanation. Part of the conundrum: despite the connection with στόμα (a synchronic n-stem and historically a men-stem), an n-stem or men-stem basis for στωμύλος is not workable. Two different solutions, however, can be proposed, on the basis of hitherto neglected Greek data; these point to the existence of forms that can support analyses in terms of ṛddhi (Solution #1) or in terms of a different type of morphological lengthened grade (Solution #2). These analyses, in turn, may shed light on the anomalous o-grade of Gk. στόμα itself, with broader implications for the study of PIE nominal morphology.

Keywords


1 Introductory

The Greek adjective στωμύλος ‘wordy, talkative, chatty, fluent’ is well attested beginning in Old Comedy (5th c. BCE+), along with a series of derivatives (also Old Com.+ ), such as an abstract στωμυλία/-ίη ‘loquaciousness’, a denominative verb στωμύλλω ‘be talkative, chatter’ (cf. στωμύλματα ‘chatter; chatterbox’), and comic coinages like στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδης ‘gossip-collector’. The traditional etymology,1 still almost universally accepted, connects the word with Gk. στόμα

1 See, e.g., GEW and DELG s.v. στωμύλος, IEW s.v. stomen-.

© BRENT VINE, 2019 | DOI:10.1163/22125892-00701003
This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the CC-BY-NC 4.0 License.
‘mouth’ (Myc. +), which itself, according to most analyses, has cognates in Anatolian, Avestan, Germanic, and Celtic; some of these forms will be reviewed below. Sometimes added is Gk. στόμαχος ‘throat, gullet, etc.’, to which we return briefly later.

The connection between στῳμύλος and στόμα is semantically attractive (at least in a general way); but there is a serious formal problem with the -ω- of στῳμύλος, as often acknowledged—thus Chantraine, on στωμύλος: “cf. στόμα; mais l’ō long est embarrassant” (1933:250); and similarly de Lamberterie: “le rattachement à στόμα ‘bouche’ vient tout de suite à l’esprit, mais la relation entre le terme de base et son prétendu dérivé est des plus obscures, car on est bien en peine de justifier l’apophonie σ/ω” (1990:704). Most recently, the difficulty has been acknowledged by Kölligan (2017:52, n. 41: “Evtl. zu στόμα, aber mit unklarem /ω/”), citing Chantraine.

2 Previous accounts

The problem, despite its severity, is often ignored: even the best modern treatments of στόμα and cognates3 omit consideration of στῳμύλος entirely. When the form is mentioned at all, there is sometimes little more than a descriptive characterization: thus for Wennerberg (1972:27), στωμύλος is built “aus der Dehnstufe der Wurzel”—an uninformative observation that says nothing about the source or type of the lengthened grade. Only slightly more informative is the perfunctory identification of the relationship between στόμα and στῳμύλος as one involving “vr̥ddhi” (Debrunner 1954:104): but this is of limited value unless the derivational path from the source form to the lengthened-grade outcome is specified. (As we will see in more detail below, στόμα itself—contrary to the implication of Debrunner’s phrasing—cannot serve as a regular source for a vr̥ddhi derivation resulting in στῳμύλος.)

More detailed attempts to explain the anomalous ὀ-grade of στῳμύλος have not been successful.

---

2 Gk. στόμα is ordinarily labeled “Hom.+”; but the Myc. boonomy to-ma-ko /Stomargos/ ‘White-Mouth’ is a phrasal determinative compound that implies an accusative of respect /stoma/ (Meissner and Tribulato 2002:315). On the phonological variant tu-ma-ko /Stumargos/ (cf. Arc. στυμέων = Att. dimin. στόμιον), see recently García Ramón 2018:37.

2.1 **Darms**

According to Darms (1978:329), the prominent appearance of στωμύλος (and its derivatives) in the relatively low-register contexts of Attic comedy suggests that its -ω- results from “expressive lengthening”, which could have been supported by the constraint in Greek against (in his formulation) three consecutive short syllables. The prominence of στωμύλος and derivatives in such contexts is certainly of interest, as we will see below; but this in itself does not justify an appeal to the notoriously ill-defined notion of “expressive lengthening”, which has no regular behavior in Greek and which would therefore amount to a purely speculative account of στωμύλος with little explanatory value. As for a constraint in Greek against “three consecutive short syllables”: this cannot provide the support Darms seeks, since the famous “Tribrach Law” in question actually refers to sequences of *non-final* tribrachs; thus an original *στομύλο-* would not in fact have been problematic in this respect.  

2.2 **EDG**

Beekes (EDG s.v. στωμύλος) notes the comparison with στόμα, which in his version derives from a PIE source **"st(e)h₃-mn̥"**, and declares στωμύλος to have “full grade of the root (**steh₃-m**) and a suffix ***-ul-"**; but at the same time, the entry (somewhat incoherently) characterizes the overall etymology of στωμύλος as unknown. All of this raises more questions than it answers: even if the root analysis “**st(e)h₃-**” is correct for στόμα and related forms (more on this point in § 3.1), it is unclear how a derivative of a neuter men-stem could have been based on the apparently truncated men-stem basis **steh₃-m**, which renders this conception, once again, nothing more than a descriptive statement, in the manner of a Transponat, about the sequence “στωμ-”; nor is it clear what is meant by “a suffix ***-ul-"**, or how this could have been appended (and with what semantic value) to the truncated men-stem basis “**steh₃-m-"**.

2.3 **Rasmussen**

The most explicit account of Gk. στωμύλος is due to Rasmussen,⁶ for whom στωμύλος itself is fundamental to his analysis of στόμα and cognates, which can be summarized as follows:

---

⁴ See recently, and in great detail, Steriade 2018 (with earlier references).
⁵ Nor is it difficult to find other Greek /ulo-/ sequences with preceding light syllable; see Buck-Petersen 1945:372–375 (e.g., ἐπιστάφυλος ‘made of fine grapes’ [Od.+], ἐριθύλος ‘sloe’ [Theoc.], ἐρίθυλος ‘robin-redbreast’ [Schol.Ar.], etc.).

i. στόμα and related forms originally inflected as a neuter “o/a-acrostatic” noun, like *mór-i, dat. sg. *már-i-ej ‘sea’; for the original a-vocalism of the oblique stem, cf. Welsh safn ‘lower jaw’ and other Celtic forms pointing to *stam-n-.

ii. στωμύλος points to an original neuter *stóm-úl, with oblique stem-shapes (pre-consonantal) *stám-ún- and (prevocalic) *stám-un-, in other words a PIE yel/n-stem.

iii. Given, in Rasmussen’s view, a PIE rule that simplifies the sequence *-mu̯- to *-m-,7 the original paradigm would have developed to one with alternating (nom./acc.) *stóm-́ - (obl.) *stám-́; all of the forms related to στόμα can then be explained directly on the basis of the oblique stem (as with the Celtic *stam-n- forms) or via straightforward developments, as with στόμα itself (< *stóm-n-, with the root vocalism of the strong forms and the stem-formation of the weak forms).

iv. As for στωμύλος: this is “a vr̥ddhi adjective explainable from *stōm-ul-ós with accent retraction according to Wheeler’s Law” (1984:147).8 Certainly the Wheeler’s Law component of iv. is correct; but everything else is problematic. Some critique of Rasmussen’s conception (though without reference to στωμύλος) has been registered by Oettinger (2003:148, n. 18), and more could be added. Thus, on the probable non-existence of “o/a-acrostatic” inflection in the word for ‘sea’, see Vine 2011:264–265 (following Nussbaum). As for στωμύλος itself: apart from various open questions (exactly what sort of “vr̥ddhi adjective” was involved, and why would this have occurred at such a primordial stage, even before the development of the simplified “l/n-stem” paradigm that led to στόμα?), it is very improbable that a Greek adjective in -υλο- (a productive category) would preserve a precious relic of a PIE yel/n-stem—an extremely rare type of formation.9 In principle, a Greek -υλο- adjective is far more likely to involve inner-Greek productive -υλο- or (what amounts to almost the same thing) a formation in -υ-λο- based on a u-stem (as in ἡδύς ‘sweet’ → ἡδύλος ‘id.’/Ηδύλος, and other such -υλο- forms).10

---

7 As in Gk. μῶμαρ ‘blame’ if from *m[u̯]óH-mr̥ (cf. ἀμῡ́μων ‘blameless’, with *-muH-).
8 Elements of this approach were hinted at earlier, as for example in Frisk’s notice (GEW s.v. στωμύλος) on the comparison of στωμύλος with στόμα (“mit n : u-l- Wechsel?”; cf. also EDG on the alleged “suffix *-ul-”, §2.2), and Debrunner’s assumption of vr̥ddhi (§2 ad init.).
9 In his updated version, Rasmussen appendes (1989:245, n. 16) three additional examples of *-ulo- forms (two of them involving Greek -υλο- words) allegedly based on PIE yel/n-stems; but none is convincing: all are purely conjectural, and lack independent support for the yel/n-stems.
10 On derivational profiles for Gk. -υλο-, see Chantraine 1933:249–251.
2.4 De Lamberterie

Another detailed treatment of στῳμύλος (together with στόμα and related forms) has been provided by de Lamberterie (1990:2.704–714). The main points bearing on στῳμύλος can be summarized as follows:

i. De Lamberterie argues for the connection of στῳμύλος with the RV hapax stāmū- (vii.2.9b), an idea that goes back to Fick.11 According to de Lamberterie, the meaning of stāmū- in context is roughly ‘criant, implorant, gémissant’ or (as in his translation) substantivized ‘cri’:

\[ \text{esá stómo acikradad vṛ̥ṣā ta} \]
\[ \text{utá stāmūr maghavann akrapiṣṭa} \]

VII.2.9ab

Voici la louange qui a mugi à ton adresse (comme) un taureau, et le cri que (ton chantre) a poussé (vers toi) d’une voix forte (?), ô Généreux.

11

ii. On this basis, de Lamberterie sets up an original u-stem adjective *stōm-ū- ‘sonore’, whence a derived adjective *στῳμυλός, which develops to στῳμύ-λος by Wheeler’s Law.

iii. De Lamberterie reconstructs a root *stem- ‘(faire) entendre’ on the basis of Gmc. *stemnō- ‘voice’ (Go. stibna, OHG stimna/stimma ‘Stimme’, etc.) and Anatolian words for ‘ear’ (Hitt. ištamin-, etc.), although he excludes the various ‘mouth’ words attested in Greek, Avestan, and Celtic.

iv. For the lengthened ō-grade of *stōm-ū-: this, he says, “se retrouve sinon dans *ōk-ū- ‘rapide’, qui peut s’expliquer autrement, du moins dans gr. μῶλυς ‘mou’, dérivé de *mel(H₂)- ‘écraser” (708).

On these points: u-stem *stōm-ū- as the basis for a form in Gk. -υλο- (ii.) is morphologically unproblematic (cf. ἡδύς → ἡδύλος, §2.3 ad fin.), and the reconstructed root shape *stem- (iii.) will concern us below (§3.1(ii.)). But points i. and (especially) iv. are problematic.

Ad i.: For RV stāmū-, it is instructive to compare the translation by Jamison: “This praise has bellowed (like) a bull to you, and (like) a thieving [?] (monkey) has screeched, o bounteous one.”12 In other words, as Jamison makes particularly clear in her online Commentary (ad loc.), she prefers connection of stāmū- with √stā ‘steal’ (so also Geldner), with reference to monkeys, “also known for their sharp cries”. Jamison reasonably concludes, however, that “it is impossible to be certain about the meaning and etymology of the hapax”.13 It is surely inade-

11 For bibliographical references, see Lamberterie 1990:2.705, n. 14 and KEWA 111.513 s.v. stāmū-.

12 Jamison and Brereton 2014:2.908.

13 Similarly Mayrhofer (EWAia II.759, s.v.): “Ohne gesicherte Übersetzung und Deutung".
visable, then, to build a semantic and morphological analysis of Gk. στωμύλος on the shaky foundation of such a Rig-Vedic hapax.14

Ad iv: Since, as de Lamb sererie himself admits, Gk. ὤκυς “peut s’expliquer autrement,”15 everything depends, for the lengthened ő-grade, on the comparison with Gk. μῶλυς ‘soft’—a word not attested until Nicander (2nd c. BCE). But this is not promising. De Lamb sererie’s extended treatment of μῶλυς (1990: [1.] 375–390) actually offers no explicit account of the lengthened grade, apart from vague comparison with the following two items:

a. Hom.+ μῶλυ ‘a fabulous herb (Hom.); garlic (post-Hom.):’ but this, despite de Lamb sererie’s apologia, is most plausibly taken as a “pre-Greek” word, as is usually thought.16

b. μῶλος in Hom. μῶλος ‘emarks turmoil of War’; but this involves either a poorly-understood “intensive” formation otherwise found in a few thematic nouns (Barnes 2009:8, assuming an original sense *‘milling of the Grinder’ and relationship with *melh₂- ‘grind’), or else a vr̥ddhi formation related to a gloss form μῶλος ‘toil’ (Weiss 2016:482–483), in both cases with no clear applicability to a u-stem adjective. (We return to Weiss’s account of the form later, with additional details.)

2.5 Wennerberg

Wennerberg (1972:27) connects στωμύλος not only with RV stāmū- but also with the Epic Skt. hapax (neut.) sthāman- (MBh. I.5116) ‘neighing (of a horse)’, observing unhelpfully once again (cf. § 2 ad init.) that this word arises “aus der Dehnstufe der Wurzel”. But Mayrhofer rightly regards the word as “problematisch” (KEWA III.528), in part because it is not entirely clear whether the word differs in origin from Ved. (neut.) sthāman- ‘location; strength’.17 Under these circumstances, the Epic Skt. word is best left aside.


15 The form is now often thought to be reduplicated; see, e.g., EDG s.v. for a reconstruction *h₂o-h₁k̑-ú-, assuming connection with PIE *h₂ek̑yo- ‘horse’ and regarded as “quite possible”. As noted by de Vaan (EDLIL s.v. ocior), reconstruction with *h₃ is also possible (*h₂ek₂- if the connection with ‘horse’ is abandoned. Formally similar (though not involving reduplication) is Dunkel’s conception *h₂o-h₁k̑-ú-, with an initial particle *h₂o (LIPP 2:335).

16 Note especially EDG s.v., comparing μῶλυζα ‘garlic’ (likely related to μῶλυ) with κόνυζα ‘variable species of inula or fleabane’ and ὀρυζα ‘rice’, all with “non-Greek suffix” (to which one may add μάνυζα ‘garlic’; Beekes 2014:61), leading to the conclusion about μῶλυ that “[a]ll proposed IE etymologies ... have to be rejected”.

17 As Wennerberg notes, Hiersche (1964:66–67) had likewise assumed the existence of two different “sthāman-” words, although he favored a different etymological background for the epic word.
But the important contribution of Wennerberg’s study is an attractive proposal\(^\text{18}\) that the words for ‘mouth’ and ‘ear’ belong with the root \(^*\text{temh}\text{1}^\text{-}^*\text{cut}^\text{'}\) (: Gk. τάμνω, Lat. temnō, Mlr. tamnǎid, etc.; LIV s.v.). If this is correct, the root in question is to be reconstructed as \(^*(s)\text{temh}\text{1}^\text{-}\) (with s-mobile), and its derivatives meaning ‘mouth’ and ‘ear’ originally meant ‘slit, opening’, whence ‘bodily (oral/aural) orifice’.

2.6 **Local summary and preview**

The interim conclusion to be drawn is that no satisfactory explanation is available so far for the enigmatic -ω- of στωμύλος. In principle, however, two types of approaches are worth considering further:

i. an account based on a morphological vr̥ddhi formation—but one that is more explicit in various respects than vague assertions like that of Debrunner (§ 2 ad init.) and with a stronger morphological basis than Rasmussen’s vr̥ddhi analysis (§ 2.3), which operates with a questionable (and in any case otherwise undocumented, apart from inferences about the explanandum στωμύλος itself) PIE u̯el/n-stem;

ii. an account that appeals to some other type of morphological lengthened grade—but more principled than the vague comparison with obscure Greek forms containing poorly-understood lengthened ō-grades.

Following some additional preliminary background (§§ 3 and 4), I will propose two new solutions to the problem, one of each type (§§ 5 and 6); a choice between the two is not easy, although some criteria for evaluation may be available. The paper concludes (§ 7) with discussion of the implications of these solutions for the problematic o-grade of Gk. στόμα itself and ultimately its reconstructed PIE etymon.

3 **More on στόμα and related forms**

It will be helpful to review certain additional details about the analysis of Gk. στόμα and related forms. But there is no need to rehearse non-essential (and sometimes controversial) points, such as how best to interpret the root vocalism of Av. staman- ‘(dog’s) mouth’, or how to interpret the a-vocalism of the Celtic data (cf. § 2.3(i.)).

\(^{18}\) Accepted by both Oettinger and Melchert (see n. 3 above).
3.1 On the original root shape

We will accept Wennerberg’s conception (§2.5), as does Melchert, who added an additional argument (2007/8:184) based on the semantics of CLuv. ᾳ’-tummant- ‘gateway’ < *mouth aperture’. We may now comment briefly on two other approaches to the reconstruction of the root:

i. The previously popular *steh₃-mŋ (§2.2)19 is problematic for several reasons. As pointed out by Oettinger (2003:148), this creates difficulties for CLuv. -tummant- (which is not likely to have a background involving *h₃) and also excludes the Germanic material, with its e-grade forms in the word for ‘voice’ (§2.4(iii.)), also difficult to square with PIE *h₃.20 Nor is it attractive, more generally, to posit an obscure verbal root “*steh₃-”, with unknown meaning, as the basis for a term that appears to be a primary men-stem.

ii. De Lamberterie’s alleged verbal root “*stem-” (§2.4(iii.)) is a construct based on the words for ‘ear’ (in Anatolian) and ‘voice’ (in Germanic), unattractively separating these from Gk. στόμα (as well as the other ‘mouth’ words in Avestan and Celtic, despite the striking similarities between, for example, Hitt. ištamin- and Av. staman-) and (likewise unattractively) separating στόμα from στωμύλος.

3.2 Some essentials of Melchert’s analysis (2007/8:184–186)

It will be useful for further discussion of στωμύλος to recall the basic conclusions of Melchert’s analysis of Gk. στόμα and related forms, especially with reference to the o-grade material:

i. What appears descriptively to be a “plain n-stem” in Gk. στόμα and cognates actually goes back to an original neut. men-stem *stómh₁-mŋ. This form then underwent laryngeal loss (via the “Saussure-Hirt effect”), whence *stómmy; the resulting sequence, in turn, was subject to regular PIE degemination of *-mm- to [-m-].21 whence *stóm > Gk. στόμα.

ii. The PIE men-stem *stómh₁-mŋ reflects a rare o/e-acrostatic men-stem, for which Melchert compared Gk. πῶμα ‘lid, cover’ (: PIE *peh₂ ‘protect’).

iii. A hysterokinetic internal derivative *stomh₁-mén- (with o-grade after the neut. men-stem) accounts for Hitt. ištamin- ‘ear’.22

---

19 Adherents of this conception include (in addition to EDG s.vv. στόμα and στωμύλος) Hamp 1982, Melchert 1994:74 (following Oettinger 1982:235), Lubotsky 1997:56–57, and EDHIL s.v. (UZU)ištāman-/ištamin-.
20 The latter point has been noted also by Kroonen (EDPG s.v. *stimnō-).
21 For the *-mm- degemination, see Byrd 2015:44; similarly already Tremblay 1996:226, n. 87.
22 See Melchert for discussion of e-grade and zero-grade forms, left aside here.
4 Vṛddhi accounts and other lengthened grades: further discussion

For a vṛddhi analysis, it is evident that only patterns of the type “R(o) → R(ō)” will be of interest for the problem at hand; other vṛddhi patterns (such as R(ō) → R(e)-ō-, R(e)-o- → R(ē)-ō-, etc.) are not relevant.²³

A second point connected with vṛddhi arises from an additional problem with the analysis of στωμύλος that was noted by de Lamberterie (besides the basic problem of the root vocalism): “[on est bien en peine de justifier ...] pourquoi la finale -α < *-η du substantif, qui est ancienne ..., n’apparaît pas dans l’adjectif” (1990:2.704). This is not actually problematic at the level of Greek derivational patterns: derivatives of στόμα should be based on the synchronous oblique stem στοματ- (cf. dimin. στομάτιον, adj. στοματικός, etc.); but as it happens, -ματυλο- forms based on men-stems are not attested,²⁴ and (given the productivity of neut. men-stems in Greek) the absence of -ματυλο- forms is probably not an accidental gap. Thus, whatever the reason for this gap, the absence of a form like †στωμάτυλος is not in itself a problem.²⁵ Rather than a “synchronic Greek” derivation of that kind, στωμύλος should be based on a more ancient vṛddhi formation, such as one resulting in an o-stem in the first instance, which then served as the basis for the -υλο- formation (one of the regular patterns available for -υλο- forms, cf. Hom. + δεινός ‘terrible, fearful’ → post-Hom. Δεινύλος, Hom. + πηγός ‘solid; congealed’ [→ *πηγύλος] → Hom. + πηγυλίς ‘frozen; frost’, among other such forms). In that case, however, the absence of the nasal (which, as de Lamberterie noted, is assuredly old) is indeed problematic; in other words, an archaic vṛddhi formation related to στόμα should certainly appear as *στομνύλο- or *στομνενο- (there being no evidence for “suffix truncation” in vṛddhi derivatives). And for *στομνο- in particular, the derived -υλο- adjective should be *στωμνύλο-, without simplification of /-mn-/.

The conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is that a vṛddhi formation

---
²³ Convenient descriptive surveys of vṛddhi patterns may be found in Darms 1978, Nussbaum 2009.
²⁴ Not a single such form is to be found in Kretschmer-Locker 1944 or Buck-Petersen 1945.
²⁵ The absence of -ματυλο- forms might be ascribed, at least in part, to the constraint against non-final tribtrachs (see again Steriade 2018, n. 4 above), whence dispreferred sequences like †φονοματυλο- or even †φοτοματυλο-; but since most simplex deverbative men-stems in Greek (at least before the Hellenistic period) have a heavy root syllable (or other heavy syllable) preceding the men-stem suffix (cf. Gunkel 2011), this is not likely to be the whole story.
²⁶ Apart from episodic instances like νώνυμος ‘nameless’ (Od.), a later simplification of νώνυμος (Il.), there is no regular reduction of tautosyllabic /-mn-/; cf. πρύμνα/πρύμνη ‘ship’s stern; κρημνός ‘crag’, etc.
based on the prehistoric $n$-stem (of any kind, including men-stem) underlying Gk. στόμα is not workable.

A final preliminary point concerns lengthened grades of other types (i.e., non-ヴर्ध्धि lengthened grades). If στόμα is ultimately based on a neut. men-stem (§ 3.2(i.)), even a (rare) o/e-acrostic version (§ 3.2(ii.)), there is no basis for a lengthened ə-grade in such a paradigm, or in any of its regular derivatives.

5 Solution #1: a new ヴर्ध्धि account

It has occasionally been acknowledged but is generally neglected that some Greek data point to the existence of a form (or forms) related to στόμα (and στωμύλος) not based on an $n$-stem. These data are well-represented in 5th-century Greek, including the following:

i. dimin. στόμιον ‘mouth’ (various senses, including ‘bridle-bit’) (Aesch., Emped.+, vs. στομάτιον [§ 4])
ii. στομόδας ‘muzzle, gag’ (Hdt.), στομωμα ‘mouth’ (various senses) (Aesch. +)
iii. στομώδης ‘clear-voiced’ (Soph. +)
iv. στόμις m. ‘hard-mouthed horse’ (Aesch.)

v. εὐστομός ‘speaking nicely/propitiously [= being silent]’ (Hdt.), cf. εὐστομέω ‘sing sweetly, speak propitiously’ (Aesch. +); κακόστομος ‘foul-mouthed’ (Eur.), cf. κακοστομέω ‘revile’ (Soph.)
vi. στομοδόκος ‘στωμύλος’ (Pherecr.)

As pointed out by Georgacas and others, the range of material seen in these forms is consistent with a thematic basis *stom-o- (perhaps among other possible source forms, one of which will come under discussion below). Here we can add that στόμωχος (cf. § 1) is also consistent with thematic *stom-o-, given one standard derivational background for Gk. -αχος forms (Chantraine 1933: 403)— thus, e.g., νήπιος ‘child(ish)’ → νηπίαχος ‘id.’, etc.

I suggest, then, that beside *stóm-ŋ, there was a thematic by-form *stom-o- ‘mouth’ (in origin what might be called a *stómos form): thus ‘cutting’ > ‘slit’, cf.

28 Actually Aesch., Emped.+, thus potentially attested from the early 5th century.
29 Arc. στωμέν (n. 2 above).
30 Darms (1978:329) refers to this material as involving "avoidance" or "circumvention" (Umgehung) of the $n$-stem, perhaps thinking of patterns whereby men-stems can appear in the guise of ə-stems, as in first compound members, of the type στέρμα ‘sowing, seed’ (Hom., cf. Myc. pe-mo, pe-ma) → σπερματολόγος ‘picking up seeds’ (Epicharmus), but also σπερμόλογος (Aristoph. +). While this can in principle apply to some items (such as στομόδακς, vi. above), the non-$n$-stem data are too extensive to be accounted for in this way.
τόμος ‘slice’),\textsuperscript{31} all but ousted by (*\textit{stóm-n}> στόμα in the basic meaning ‘mouth’, but marginally surviving in the above non-\textit{n}-stem forms. It was this thematic *\textit{stom-o}– that served as the basis for a \textit{vr̥ddhi} derivative *\textit{stōm-o}-, which can perhaps be most plausibly identified as the type ‘\textit{X}’ (noun) → ‘\textit{X-like}’ (Nussbaum 2009); as Nussbaum observes, a viable semantic pathway would be ‘belONGING to \textit{X}’ – ‘having the features of \textit{X}’, which in turn would naturally include both "dismissive" terms and diminutives. The resulting \textit{vr̥ddhi} form *\textit{stōmo}- ‘like a mouth’ would then be further characterized by the expressive adjective suffix -\textit{υλό}- (which prominently includes "dismissives" and diminutives), whence *\textit{στωμυλός} ‘mouth-like, like nothing but a mouth, pure mouth’ = ‘running off at the mouth, talkative, chatty’, and then \textit{στωμύλος} by Wheeler’s Law (cf. δεινός → Δεινύλος, etc., §4 above). In terms of semantics, Darms (1978:329) was right to question a "literal" \textit{vr̥ddhi} sense like ‘zum Mund gehörig’; but the version just described—similar in spirit to Rasmussen’s evocative comparison (1989:245, n.16) with Eng. \textit{mouthy}—fits well with the expressive value of Gk. -\textit{υλό-} and the prominence of \textit{στωμύλος} and derivatives in comic usage, the importance of which Darms had noted himself (§2.1).

Darms’s other reason for rejecting a \textit{vr̥ddhi} analysis based on a form like *\textit{stōmo}- was simply the relative rarity of this type of formation in Greek. But this is not a strong counterargument, especially given the existence of at least one or two other examples of essentially the same type: cf. κόος ‘a hollow, chasm’ (Hsch.) vs. κώος (also κώς) ‘cave, den; prison’ (Strabo, Stephanus of Byzantium, Hsch.), i.e., *κουH-o ‘a hollow\textsuperscript{32} → *κουH-o- ‘hollow-like (thing)’ (Nussbaum 2009). More recently, Weiss (2016:482–483) has proposed (cf. §2.4 above, ad fin.) that Hom. μώλος ‘turmoil (esp. of war)’ originally meant *’struggle’ and reflects a \textit{vr̥ddhi} formation *\textit{molo}- ‘of toil’ (subsequently substantivized), based on a *\textit{molo-} ‘toil’ seen in the gloss form μόλος· πόνος· μάχη· φρύαγμα (Hsch.), to a root *\textit{(H)mel(H)}- (also attested in Lat. \textit{molestus} ‘tiresome’ and Gk. μόλις ‘hardly’, with a further derivative of the \textit{vr̥ddhi} formation in Lat. \textit{mōlēs} ‘large mass; struggle’ and its denominate \textit{mōlēri} ‘strive’).

In this scenario, there would be little possibility of connecting \textit{στωμύλος} with RV \textit{stāmū-} (§ 2.4.(i.)); but given (as already discussed) the uncertainties attending such a hapax, this would not be a serious loss.

\textsuperscript{31} Recently on “τόμος forms” and related material: Nussbaum 2017.
6 Solution #2: a different type of lengthened grade

The isolated and non-derivable nature of the sequence στωμ- (in στωμύλος) suggests, in principle, a fairly deep archaism; one could thus conjecture that another source could be an animate root noun *stómh₁-s, with inflection and formal renewals similar to those seen in *dóm-s ‘house’.33

nom. *stómh₁-s > *stóm ~ *dóm
acc. *stómh₁-m > *stóm *dóm (→ Gk. δῶμα; Nussbaum 2008)
gen. *stémh₁-s → *stήm₁-és *dém-s → *dm(m)-és (etc.)

The idea that a root noun might underlie στόμα has been tentatively suggested, based in part on the non-n-stem forms surveyed above (§ 5), though without reference to στωμύλος itself.34 To be sure, the precise derivational pattern “root noun → -υλο- form” lacks unequivocal examples; but the variety of derivational bases underlying -υλο- forms makes it difficult to exclude this possibility.

Note further that a root noun can appear with various parallel formations, thereby incorporating most of the morphological variety actually in play:

i. root noun (*stóm) + men-stem (*stómh₁-mṇ): cf. *bʰóř (Gk. φώρ, Lat. für ‘thief’) + *bʰér-mṇ (Ved. bhárman-)/*bʰér-mṇ (RV bhárman-, OCS brēme ‘burden’)

ii. root noun (*stóm) + “τόμος form” (*stómh₁-o-): cf. *dóm ‘house’ + *dóm-o- (Ved. dáma-, Gk. δῶμας, Lat. domus; Nussbaum 2017:236)

iii. root noun (*stóm) + u-stem (RV stāmû- ??): cf. *dóm ‘house’ + *dom-u- (at least Vedic, Slavic, Armenian),36 *dm-o- (Hom. δμῶς ‘slave, captive’)

In a more general way, στωμύλος in this conception (root noun *stóm → *stőm-ulo-) would be formally similar to Lat. hūmānus ‘human’, if this reflects a

---

33 On the inflection of *dóm-s, see recently Weiss 2017.
34 Cf. Schwyczer (1939:524, n. 5) on δῶμα and στόμα ("phonetisch für *dώμ *στόμ (?)?"), Georgacas (1958:183) citing Schwyczer, and Wennerberg (1972:26, n. 18, with a further reference) developing Georgacas ("Es ist also erlaubt, für das Indogermanische die Stammformen *stom-, *stomen-, *stomo- usw. ‘Mund’ zu rekonstruieren").
35 Although the OCS form is itself ambiguous, other Slavic comparanda (e.g. BCSM brēme) point to acute intonation for Proto-Slavic, thus supporting the é-grade.
37 Differently on this u-stem: Widmer 2008, especially 624, n. 20 (interpreting the form as secondarily derived from a locative formant).
derived adjective based on a root noun *hōm (: Gk. χθών) ‘earth’ > *hūm,\(^{38}\) whence (with productive *-āno-) adjectival *hūm-āno-.\(^{39}\)

A choice between the two solutions just advanced is not entirely straightforward. On one hand, the root-noun hypothesis has the capability of incorporating the u-stem RV stāmű-; yet this is not a significant advantage, given the difficulties attending that form, as well as the overall rarity of u-stems beside root nouns. On the other side of the ledger, it is generally simpler to arrive at a reconstructed o-stem, on the basis of material like that in § 5, rather than a root noun (a recessive category), even if that basis is technically possible. One might thus, on these grounds, give the nod to the vr̥ddhi analysis in § 5. Still, the more general result is that we have progressed from the rather desperate situation described at the outset to one in which two different solutions for the background of Gk. στωμύλος appear to have some plausibility.

7 Implications for Gk. στέμα and related forms (and other o-grade neut. men-stems)

Recall that according to Melchert (§ 3.2(ii.)), Gk. στέμα and cognates descend from a rare o/e-acrostatic neut. men-stem, comparable to Gk. πῶμα ‘lid, cover’ (: *peh₂ - ‘protect’). Yet this seems questionable: neut. men-stems are resolutely proterokinetic, and there is hardly any other evidence for an inflectional construct identifiable as an “o/e-acrostatic neut. men-stem”.

Given the comparison with Gk. πῶμα (as well as the facts that Greek preserves both men-stems and o-vocalism well), it is instructive to consider other cases of o-grade men-stems in Greek (including, descriptively, “ō-grade” examples, as in πῶμα). In general, these fall into three types:

i. etymologically obscure forms (e.g., σῶμα ‘body’)\(^{40}\)

ii. forms with o-vocalism from *h₃ (e.g., ὑμα ‘eye’ < *h₃ékʷ-mη, πῶμα ‘drink’ < *péh₃-mη)

iii. deverbatives with secondary o-grade—for example, with o-grade imported from an iterative-causative in R(o)-éjε/o- (e.g., ὀδημα ‘swelling’ ← ὀδῆξα ‘be swollen’; LIV s.v. *h₂ejd-)

What, then, of πῶμα itself? While one cannot absolutely rule out the idea of an isolated o/e-acrostatic form (as a representative of a rare type), the o-grade

---

\(^{38}\) For the phonology, cf. *bʰōr > Lat. für (i. above).

\(^{39}\) See on this derivational possibility Weiss 2011:289, n. 122.

\(^{40}\) There is no shortage of theories; several are surveyed in EDG s.v., together with the assertion that “there is no convincing etymology.”
is also conceivably secondary, essentially after the pattern of iii. (i.e., with secondary o-grade based on some related “legitimate” o-grade form). Thus, despite the lack of *-i- in *pōh₂-mn- ‘protection’, the form might have been influenced by the o-grade in the parallel hysterokinetic derivative *pōh₂-mén- (> Gk. ποι-μήν ‘shepherd’), a vocalism that itself has been plausibly explained (Oettinger 2009:345) as remodeled after *pōh₂-u- (> Gk. πῶ ‘flock, herd’), an original acrostatic neuter for which o/e-inflection is regular. Alternatively, there could have been an o-grade verbal form in the mix, such as an iterative/causative *pōh₂(f)-éi̯e/o- (of the type οἶδμα ← οἰδέω, iii. above),41 or possibly an o-grade perfect, as has in fact been suggested.42

There is really only one other serious candidate in the literature for a PIE o/e-acrostatic neut. men-stem, namely Lat. unguen ‘ointment’ and cognates.43 But the *h₂-o- interpretation (followed, for example, by LIV s.v. *h₂-engw-) depends crucially on Janda’s analysis of Gk. δῑθύραμβος ‘type of lyric poetry; festival name; epithet of Dionysus’ as (originally) *‘die (Doppel-) Türe salbend/preisend’ vel sim. (2000:282–287). Janda’s theory is undeniably clever and is in some ways attractive; but the Greek word is at least as likely to be a “pre-Greek” item (so, unanimously, the Greek etymological dictionaries: see DELG, GEW, and EDG s.v.), as Beekes has plausibly argued in some detail (2014:136–137), on the basis of the following considerations:

a. Gk. δῑθύραμβος is only one of a series of other Greek (and possibly pre-Greek) words in -αμβος and -υμβος, some also with religious/ceremonial senses: ἰαμβος ‘iamb; iambic trimeter’, θρίαμβος ‘hymn to Dionysus’, ιθυμβος ‘Bacchic dance and song’, σήραμβος· εἶδος κανθάρου Hsch.; cf. also καράμβας· ῥάβδον ποιμενικὴν Hsch. Janda offers strained attempts to integrate ιαμβος and θρίαμβος with δῑθύραμβος, but does not mention ιθυμβος.

b. Gk. δῑθύραμβος aligns well formally with a well-attested pre-Greek suffixal element -υρ-: cf. nominal material like ζέφυρος ‘[N]W wind’, λάθυρος ‘kind of bean’, μαυκυρόν· τὸ χλιαρόν Hsch., σάτυρος ‘satyr’; verbal forms such as ὀνυρίζεται· ὀδύρεται Hsch., ψιθυρίζω ‘whisper, mutter’; and a series of toponyms, such as Τέγυρα (in Boeotia) and others.

c. Gk. δῑθύραμβος embodies, descriptively, a type of consonantal variation (-αμβος- ~ -αμφος-, cf. ΔΙΘΥΡΑΜΦΟΣ in a 5th-c. Attic vase)44 that is potentially symptomatic of pre-Greek status, although simple error or aspirate assimilation is admittedly difficult to exclude.

---

41 Cf. LIV s.v. *peh₂(f)- n. 4 on the possible existence of *poh₂-éje/o- in Iranian.
42 Cf. van Beek 2016:438, n. 72 on perf. *pe-poh₂s- and πῶμα.
43 Reconstructed as a plain n-stem *h₂óngʷ by Stüber (2000), but see Melchert 2007/8:186–187 for the reinterpretation as a men-stem.
44 SEG 16 (1959) no. 40; this form is not mentioned by Janda.
Note further that a necessary consequence of the *h₂o- claim is the assumption that the Italic thematic verb Lat. *unguere, U. umtu 'anoint' would have its o-grade based on the corresponding noun (Lat. *unguen, U. *umen). But this is a primary verb, and one would normally expect influence of this kind to go in the other direction—cf. again Gk. οἶδαμα ← οἰδέω (iii. above). If, then, the Italic verb *ongʷ-e/o- is basic (rather than the n-stem noun), its o-grade could be explained in one of two ways. First, if one makes the assumption of PIE initial *h₂-, this could point to an o-grade present (a so-called "molō-verb"); but no other evidence speaks in favor of that possibility. Secondly, some other factor would account for the o-grade of all of the forms in question, the obvious candidate being root-initial *h₃-, the traditional explanation.46

The upshot of these considerations for PIE *stómh₁-mn̥ is that, rather than reflecting a rare o/e-acrostatic neut. men-stem, the o-grade might better be explained via influence from one or both of the formations described above, namely a “τῶμας form” *stómh₁-o- or a root noun *stóm/*stém-, the latter perhaps in the adjusted form *stóm/*stém- (cf. Gk. ποicaid /ποδός ‘foot’ < *pód-/ *péd-).47 In other words, *stómh₁-mn̥ ← *stómh₁-o- (or ← *stóm-) would be comparable to *poh₂i-mén ← *póh₂i-u- (above), thereby striking a blow against the already questionable notion of “o/e-acrostatic neut. men-stems”.

In a still broader perspective: this is a time when the classic “Erlangen model” of athematic nominal accent and ablaut is undergoing serious reevaluation, in more than one respect. Thus, most recently, Kloekhorst 2018 proposes a new conception of the pre-PIE background of the traditional system. But there is growing skepticism about the robustness of some of the traditional accent/ablaut classes themselves,49 and there are new approaches to the nature and assignment of accent in PIE, such as the so-called “compositional” approach.50 Thus it remains important—indeed, it is now especially important—to continue to circumscribe as accurately as possible the descriptive foundations of PIE nominal categories.

45 So Janda 2000:284, followed by LIV s.v. *h₂engʷ-.
46 Cf. Melchert’s properly agnostic notation “*h₂θengʷ-”.
47 Cf. Melchert’s own assumption that the hysterokinetic derivative *stómh₁-mén- owes its o-grade vocalism to *stómh₁-mn̥ (§ 3.2(iii.)).
48 A standard version of the theory is described in Fortson 2010:119–122.
49 Thus, for example, the proterokinetic category has come under particular fire, as in the reanalysis by Kümmel (2014), demonstrating connections between suffix ablaut and phonological structure.
50 See Kiparsky 2010; a recent study in that framework, with typological grounding and detailed application to Anatolian, is Yates 2017.
Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 37th East Coast Indo-European Conference (University of Michigan, June 2018). I am deeply grateful for comments and suggestions received at that time, and also for helpful critique from two anonymous IEL referees and from Ron Kim. The usual disclaimers apply.

References


Nussbaum, Alan J. 2008. Remarks on one or more Greek words: actually just epic δῶ 'dwelling'. Paper presented at the 27th East Coast Indo-European Conference (University of Georgia).


