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βούλομαι

The standard handbooks do not give an adequate and sufficiently simple and direct account of the source and development of Greek βούλομαι and its relatives. The shape of the present stem must surely have led to that of other tenses.

We have a rich attestation: Beside βούλομαι we find Arcad. Cypr. Eretr. -ο-, Lesb. -ολλ-, Cret. -ωλ-; Thess. -ελλ-, Boeot. -ειλ-η, Heracl. δη-, Locr. Delph. δει-. And as a nominalization βουλή (→ βουλεύω) is matched by Doric, Arcad. βωλά, Lesb βόλλα.

From these forms we extract: for the *o*-grade, except for βόλο-, an antecedent **-ολσ-*; it is not possible to specify the exact chronology of each. The *e*-grade forms lead us directly to a pre-form **g^wel-s-*. Frisk derived these sigmatic formations from a **σ*-aorist subjunctive with voluntative-prospective value, which became or yielded a present indicative (Wackernagel). The difficulty with that hypothesis is that no real motivation for this complex change is produced.

I claim instead that no such change is necessary. The stem **g^wel-s-* is simply the *s*-desiderative (which also yielded futures) seen in ὄψομαι and Latin *quaesō* (: *quaerō*) and also in the Old Irish subjunctive; the addition of this old desiderative /irrealis was a natural extension of the lexical semantics of the base.

The nominalization βουλή etc. is simply a verbal noun formed by the same rule as that which produced πνοή etc.

The *o*-grade presents above reflect conflation with other *o*-grades now to be mentioned. The attribution of the clear προ-βέβουλα 'I prefer' A 113 to an old perfect βέβουλα with active intransitive value seems likely to be correct; but I am not at all convinced that this paradigm would have imparted *o*-vocalism to the present system. Likewise I consider the suggestion that a finite *o*-vocalism could be taken from the naun in -ή a very weak argument; the rule deriving these *o*-grade substantives from verb bases lived on in Greek for a long time.

On the other hand, it is reasonable to see a part of the ancestry of βόλο- in a thematic present; an original root-aorist subjunctive seems less likely and motivated. On balance, then, I see these *o*-grade presents as likely vestiges equivalent to Latin *lūdō*; cf. my discussion *IF* 93, 1988, 121.