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## The Bright Ligurians\*

von

Giulio Imberciadori

**Zusammenfassung:** Für das Ethnonym lat. *Ligures* (~ gr. Λίγυρες) 'Ligurier' ist bisher keine befriedigende Deutung vorgeschlagen worden. In der vorliegenden Studie wird *Ligures* an die uridg. Wurzel *\*(s)leig-* 'schmieren, glatt machen' angeknüpft und auf eine ursprüngliche Bezeichnung 'die Hellen' zurückgeführt. Zugrunde liegt eine Possessivbildung *\*(s)lig-úes-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* 'hell, mit Helligkeit versehen', die von einem *s*-stämmigen Adjektivabstraktum *\*(s)léig-us-* n. 'Helle, Helligkeit' intern deriviert wurde. Seinerseits steht das Abstraktum in direktem Derivationsverhältnis mit dem in mehreren idg. Sprachzweigen fortgesetzten Adjektiv uridg. *\*(s)léig-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'glatt; gleich' (> aks. *slizūkū*, gr. λυγός, lit. *lygūs*). Semantisch ist das Benennungsmotiv 'die Hellen' unter Völkernamen gut bezeugt; und eine Bedeutung 'hell, klar' für das Adjektiv *\*(s)lig-úes-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* lässt sich auch durch weitere Evidenzen erhärten. Am Ende des Beitrags wird gezeigt, dass das für *Ligur-es* rekonstruierte Wortbildungssuffix *\*-us-* eine gewisse Produktivität unter Ethno-, Hydro- und Toponymen des antiken ligurischen Gebiets kannte.

**Abstract:** The ethnonym Lat. *Ligures* (~ Gr. Λίγυρες) 'Ligurians' has so far resisted to any satisfactory etymological explanation. In the present paper it is proposed to trace it back to the PIE root *\*(s)leig-* 'spread sth., smooth out' and to an original semantics 'the bright ones'. *Ligures* continues a possessive formation *\*(s)lig-úes-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* 'bright, provided with brightness', which has been internally derived from an adjectival *s*-abstract *\*(s)léig-us-* n. 'brightness'. The latter can be put in straightforward derivational relation with the adjective PIE *\*(s)léig-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'smooth(ed out); equal', which is independently attested in several IE branches (> OCS *slizūkū*, Gr. λυγός, Lith. *lygūs*). Semantically, the denomination 'the bright ones' is well attested among ethnonyms; and the primary semantics 'bright, hell' of the adjective *\*(s)lig-úes-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* is further supported by independent pieces of evidence. Finally, it can be shown that the morpheme *\*-us-* reconstructed for *Ligur-es* enjoyed some productivity among ethnonyms, hydronyms and toponyms of the ancient Ligurian region.

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## 1. Introductory remarks and ancient attestations

1.1. The Ligurians – according to Plutarch (Marius 19.4-5) they would have called themselves Ἀμβρωνες – were split in several tribes. These have been enumerated by Pliny the Elder, who defines them as *Ligures celeberrimi* (Nat. hist. 3.5.47).

1.1.1. The Ligurian tribes are localized by the ancient sources in a quite vast territory, spanning from the northwestern part of the Italian peninsula (approximately today's Piedmont and Liguria) to southeastern Gaul (approximately today's Provence and Savoy). Of great importance was the port of Genoa (Lat. *Genua*), which connected the inaccessible and mountainous hinterland with the more civilized coastline. Recurrently stressed by the ancient sources is the alleged relationship which would have existed between the core region of the Ligurians and the Iberian peninsula (cf. Thuc. 6.2 and see WHATMOUGH 1933: 147-53; KRAHE 1936: 250; PULGRAM 1957: 101-2, 107; UNTERMANN 2006: 1759-61 [sceptical]; Woudhuizen 2018: 76-7, fn. 72). According to Philistus of Syracuse (*apud* Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ant. 1.22.3), the Ligurians would have also been closely related to the Sicels – but this is unlikely (MARTZLOFF 2020: 316-8). From the 3rd century BC onwards the Ligurians alternated periods of military confrontations and truces with Rome. From these not always pacific contacts depends the somehow contradictory image of Ligurians which emerges from the ancient authors, sometimes praising their physical strength, virtue and rustic life (Str. 4.6.2, Verg. Aen. 10.185-197), but sometimes rather emphasizing their falseness and mendacity (Cato *apud* Servius ad Aen. 11.700, 715); cf. ANGELI BERTINELLI (2006).

1.1.2. Apart from some isolated toponyms in two major inscriptions – namely the “Sententia Minuciorum” (= CIL V 7749, 117 BC from Genoa) and the “Tabula alimentaria” (= CIL XI 1147, beginning of the 2nd century AD from Veleia [Piacenza]) – and some alleged Ligurian glosses in ancient authors, very little is known about the Ligurian language, assuming that such a language existed at all (cf. TIBILETTI BRUNO 1978: 187). Although the present paper will not deal with the complex question regarding the genetic affiliation of Ligurian within the Indo-European domain, it is likely that Ligurian ultimately exhibits some closer relation with the Celtic branch (cf. Κελτολίγυες in Str. 2.4.3; thus also GUIDO BORGHI, p. c.). A comprehensive discussion with further relevant literature – and divergent views – can be found in KRETSCHMER (1905: 108-28); WHATMOUGH (1933: 154-65); KRAHE (1936); GRENIER (1940: 161, 167); UNTERMANN (1958: 186-7, 2006: 1761-9); GLÜCK (1963); PISANI (1964: 280-92); TIBILETTI BRUNO (1978); PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI (1981: 9-28); TISCHLER (1984: 308-9) and Woudhuizen (2018: 77, fn. 72, 103-4, 2020: 49).

1.2. As far as the Latin attestations of the name of the Ligurians are concerned, we dispose of following data: the ethnonym Lat. *Ligures* 'Ligurians' is

firstly attested in Cicero (*Ligures duri atque agrestes* in “De lege agraria” 2.95.11), whereas the toponym *Liguria* first appears in Columella (1st century BC – 1st century AD).<sup>1</sup> In addition, one finds: the adjectives *Liguscus* ‘Ligurian’ (Varro), *Ligusticus* id. (Cicero) and *Ligustinus* id. (since Livy, also a proper name). As a substantivized neuter the adjective *Ligusticus* yielded the phytonym *ligusticum* n. ‘lovage’ (Columella). The adjective *Ligustinus* also appears as name of a lake close to the river *Tartessus* (present day’s Guadalquivir, Spain) in Avienus’ “Ora Maritima” 281. For the previous attestations, see LEW I: 801; DELL: 638; TIBILETTI BRUNO (1978:179) and SCHEUNGRABER/GRÜNZWEIG (2014: 209-10).<sup>2</sup> With regard to the remote geographic localization of the Iberian *Ligustinus* lake, recall the supposed existence of some kind of relationship between the properly so called Ligurian region and the Iberian peninsula (see 1.1. above).

1.2.1. The items listed in 1.2. point to an underlying stem *\*ligus-* ‘Ligurian’, which in antevocalic position regularly underwent rhotacism to yield the attested ethnonym Lat. *Ligur-es* (cf. KRETSCHMER 1905: 121; BRÜCH 1914: 368; Woudhuizen 2018: 68).

1.3. On the other hand, the Greek ethnonym Λίγυες, pl. Λίγυες ‘Ligurians’ is attested from Herodotus 5.9;<sup>3</sup> one also finds Λιγυστικός ‘Ligurian’ (Sophocles [fragments]), Λιγυστική ‘Liguria’ (Strabo) and Λιγυστινός ‘Ligurian’ (Strabo); cf. TLG: 1084.

1.3.1. Pace KRETSCHMER (1905: 121, fn. 2) and WHATMOUGH (1933: 148, fn. 2), it is likely that Gr. Λίγυες actually represents the *lautgesetzlich* continuant of a borrowed ethnonym *\*Ligus-es* (thus also SERGIO NERI, p. c.). Of course, such an assumption implies that *\*Ligus-es* entered the Greek language before or at latest while the lenition process of intervocalic *\*-s- > \*-h- > Ø* was at work, viz. approximately during the Mycenaean period. In fact, the long-distance trading networks of the Mycenaeans are well-established not only for the Eastern but also for the Central and Western Mediterranean regions. Mycenaean presence is directly attested for insular, Southern and Central Italy, and indirect or mediated contacts even reached the Iberian peninsula and present-day Germany, as the fictile cup from Nienhagen or the bronze cup from Dohnsen show (see VAGNETTI 1996: 141-3, 152-9, 161-2). Therefore, the hypothesis that the ethnonym *\*Ligus-es* was absorbed directly or – more likely – indirectly into the Greek language sometime during the second half of the second millennium BCE does not seem too daring.

<sup>1</sup> From *Liguria* a *ligurium* n. was back formed, being a late attested denomination (Isidore of Seville) of a type of legume: cf. DELL: 638.

<sup>2</sup> The word family of *Ligures* is not treated by DE VAAN (EDLIL).

<sup>3</sup> Note that a homonym tribe Λίγυες is reported by Herodotus (7.72) for Paphlagonia (Woudhuizen 2018: 68, 76).

1.3.2. On the other hand, had Greek borrowed the ethnonym later, it would not be an easy task to find a plausible reason why forms with phonetic shape *\*Ligus-es* or even *Ligur-es* would have undergone an unmotivated *s-* or *r-*loss, leading them to join an otherwise unproductive class as that of the type *πίτρυς*, -*υος* 'pine' (cf. GG: 506; RISCH 1974: 75).

## 2. A new etymological proposal

2.1. The present article focuses on the etymology of the ethnonym *Ligures*, which has so far resisted to any satisfactory explanation – as noted by TISCHLER (1984: 309, fn. 10). Following previous attempts should be briefly discussed.<sup>4</sup>

2.1.1. WHATMOUGH (1933: 147, fn. 2) reports CONWAY's connection of the ethnonym *Ligures* with the Latin verb *ligurriō*, -*īre* 'lick, sponge; be lustful' (Plautus), since Ligurians would have been famous for their mendacious nature (see 1.1. above). This proposal, though, presents several problems. First, Lat. *ligurriō* does not mean 'lie', but rather 'lick' or 'be lustful' (cf. TLL VII:1396). Second, although the precise morphological formation of *ligurriō* – usually connected with *lingō* 'lick' (LEW I: 801; DELL: 360; EDLIL: 343) – remains obscure, it is very unlikely, if not formally impossible that it goes back to a former *us*-stem *\*ligus-* (cf. rhyming *minurriō* 'sing (of birds)' ← Gr. μινύρομαι id.). By contrast, we have seen in 1.2. that the ethnonym *Ligur-es* clearly points to former *\*Ligus-es*.

2.1.2. Without further references (but probably following ALESSIO 1947), ANGELI BERTINELLI (2006) proposes ("possibly") to derive the ethnonyms Lat. *Ligures*, Gr. Λίγυες from "the Indo-European stem *\*lig* (sic), 'mud'". Apart from the question regarding the real existence and precise reconstruction of such a PIE root, the semantic connection does not seem appealing. As such, this proposal is therefore not very helpful.

2.1.3. Again without discussion, Woudhuizen (2018: 68, 2020:54-5) connects the Ligurian ethnonym with an alleged "Old Indo-European" root *\*leugh-* 'bind'. However, the formal mismatch between *-i-* in *Ligur-es* and *\*-u-* in the zero grade of the root *\*leugh-* casts doubt on this proposal too.

2.2. A new etymological path<sup>5</sup> can be identified, if one assumes that the stem *\*ligus-* presupposed by *Ligur-es* belongs to the root PIE *\*(s)leig-*. The morphological prehistory of this root and its derivatives will be treated in details else-

<sup>4</sup> On today untenable etymological proposals put forth by ancient authors, see KRAHE (1936: 250).

<sup>5</sup> Actually, the connection of the ethnonym *Ligures* with the adjective Gr. ληγύς 'clear (of sounds)' (see 2.2.3. below) has already been proposed by DEROU (1955: 120-1; followed by VAN WINDEKENS 1956: 211-3). However, these scholars operate in a framework completely different from the present one, namely relation to the ethnonym Λίβυες and Pre-Greek origin.

where (see IMBERCIADORI forthcoming). Nevertheless, it will be useful to recall the most important points here.

2.2.1. The semantics of PIE *\*(s)leǵ-* – with verbal descendants OIr. *-sligid*, *-slig* 'spread sth.; strike, hew' and OHG *slīhhan* 'snake, creep' – can be determined as 'spread sth., smooth out'; cf. the gloss 'schmieren, glatt machen' in LIV: 566-7.

2.2.2. Within Balto-Slavic PIE *\*(s)leǵ-* exhibits descendants with both *satem* and *centum* reflexes (see 2.2.3. below). This state of affairs can be explained by operating with incomplete Balto-Slavic satemization. The development called satemization is here understood (following LIPP 2009 I: 6-10) not as a depalatalization, but as a palatalization process – in particular, as a phonetically conditioned palatalization of PIE velars before front vowels. Consequently, it is assumed that the derivatives pointing to palatalized *\*ǵ* generalized the palatalized velar from allomorphs where such velar preceded a front vowel, whereas the derivatives pointing to non-palatalized *\*g* preserved the plain velar generalizing it from allomorphs where such velar did not precede a front vowel. Thus, the involved root can be reconstructed as PIE *\*(s)leǵ-* rather than *\*(s)leǵǵ-* (cf. LIV: 566-7, “*\*sleǵǵ-*”).

2.2.3. Among the derivatives of PIE *\*(s)leǵ-* the adjectives OCS *slīzŭ-kŭ* 'slippery; sticky', Gr. *λῆγός* 'clear (of sounds)' (< *\*sʰʰ*), and Lith. *lygùs* 'equal' are of particular interest for the present study.<sup>6</sup>

They enable the reconstruction of a proterokinetic (PK) *u*-adjective PIE *\*(s)léǵ-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'smooth(ed out); equal'. Under the assumptions of *einzel-sprachlich* innerparadigmatic levelings, incomplete Balto-Slavic satemization (see 2.2.2. above), and divergent applications of Winter's Law (following its most recent formulation by NERI 2017a: 212-4) the original paradigm *\*(s)léǵ-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* explains straightforwardly all these forms: (i) Gr. *λῆγ-ú-ς* 'clear (of sounds)', with regular generalization of the weak root-allomorph and the strong suffixal allomorph; (ii) Lith. *lyg-ù-s* 'equal' < PBalt. *\*līg-ù-* < Pre-Balt. *\*(s)lig-ù-*, with generalization of the non-palatalized velar from the original strong stem *\*(s)léǵ-u-* and application of Winter's Law in open unstressed syllable; (iii) OCS *slīz-ŭ-kŭ* 'slippery' < PSl. *\*slīzŭ-kŭ-* < *\*slīz-ŭ-* < Pre-PSl. *\*(s)līg-u-*, with generalization of the palatalized velar from the original weak stem *\*(s)lig-éu-* and non-application of Winter's Law in open stressed syllable – further, the inner-Slavic extension in *\*-kŭ-* < *\*-ko-* is regular (VAILLANT 1974: 459) and the semantic development 'smooth' → 'slippery' trivial.

<sup>6</sup> These three items have never been etymologically connected before: cf. IEW: 663-4; FRAENKEL (1962: 570-1); GEW II: 121-2; DELG: 639-40; VAILLANT (1974: 118, 460); EDG: 861; ALEW: 675-7; SES s. v. *slizek*. Only DE LAMBERTERIE (1990: 516-9) proposed a connection between Gr. *λῆγός* and OCS *slīzŭkŭ*.

As far as the semantics of Gr. ληγός, a more complex shift 'smooth' → 'bright, clear' and then 'bright, clear' → 'clear (of sounds)' has to be assumed. Fortunately, close parallels can be found for both steps of the proposed evolution: cf. (i) PGerm. \**glad-a-* 'smooth' > OHG *glat* 'smooth, slippery; bright', NHG *glatt* id. vs. ON *glæðr* 'bright', OE *glæð* id. (HEIDERMANNS 1993: 244-5); (ii) Gr. λαμπρός 'bright, clear' / 'clear of voice', Lat. *argūtus* id., NE *clear* id., It. *chiaro*, *cristallino* id. etc.

2.3. Based on the precedent assumptions, one may posit a morphosemantic derivation according to (1) in order to explain the stem \**ligus-* presupposed by *Ligur-es*:

(1) Morphosemantic derivation of *Ligures*

PK adjective \*(s)*léig-u-* / \*(s)*lig-éu-* 'smooth(ed out); equal' > OCS *slīzŭ-kŭ* 'slippery; sticky', Gr. ληγός 'clear (of sounds)', Lith. *lygūs* 'equal' (see 2.2.3. above);

→ (see 2.4. below) PK abstract \*(s)*léig-us* / \*(s)*lig-ŭés-* n. > \*(s)*lig-us* / \*(s)*lig-ŭés-* 'smoothness; equality' → 'brightness, clearness';

→ (see 2.5. below) hysterokinetic (HK) adjective \*(s)*lig-ŭés-* / \*(s)*lig-us-* 'bright, clear' > (generalization of the weak stem) \*(s)*lig-us-* > \**ligus-*, whose nom.pl.m./f. \**ligus-es* 'the bright ones' > *Ligur-es* 'Ligurians' (see 2.6. below).

2.4. The first morphological step involved in (1) is the derivation of an *us*-abstract from an *u*-adjective.

2.4.1. For such derivational process parallels do exist, since the formation of abstracts through suffixation of a morpheme \*-s- to adjectival stems ending in a vowel is a well attested one: (i) for the pattern *i*-adjective → *is*-abstract, cf. PK \**kéuk-i-* / \**kuk-éj-* 'shiny' > Ved. *śúci-* id. → \**kéuk-i-s-* 'shine' > Ved. *śócíṣ-* n. 'light, flame' (cf. RAU 2014: 338-9 and further PINAULT 2012: 406-7, 2014: 284); (ii) for the pattern *o*-adjective → *os*-abstract, cf. \**tṃh₁-nó-* 'cut' (resultative) → \**témh₁no-s-* 'cut, fenced area; temple' > gr. τέμενος, -ους n. id. (cf. NERI 2003: 81, fn. 197, 2017b: 115, fn. 116; NIKOLAEV 2003: 190, 191, fn. 41, 2017: 127-8; WIDMER 2004: 75).

2.4.2. In a parallel fashion, also examples for *u*-adjective → *us*-abstract are available: e. g., Ved. *tápu-* 'hot' → *tápu-ṣ-* n. 'heat' (RV), which could be in turn adjectivized with the secondary meaning 'hot' (cf. GRASSMANN 1875: 524; EWAia I: 625; MALZAHN 2014: 168);<sup>7</sup> on the derivational process *u*-adjective → *us*-abstract, see RAU (1998: 142-3, 2017: 388); RIEKEN (2013: 278); NUSSBAUM (2014: 223-4); HARDARSON (2014: 49); MALZAHN (2014: 167-8, 175) and MELCHERT (2014: 223).

The complex morpheme \**-u-s-* (← \**-u-* + \**-(e)s-*) – insightfully treated by MALZAHN (2014) building on OETTINGER (2000: 396) – inflected according to the

<sup>7</sup> A different account of the secondary adjectival meaning of Ved. *tápuṣ-* can be found in NUSSBAUM (2014: 223-4).



PK ablaut-class, thus yielding an alternation  $*R(\acute{e})-us / *R(\emptyset)-\acute{u}és-$  which could be further leveled to  $*R(\emptyset)-us / *R(\emptyset)-\acute{u}és-$  or even  $*R(\emptyset)-us-$ .

It may be interesting to note, incidentally, that the suffix alternation  $*-us / *-\acute{u}és-$  is parallel to the alternation  $*-uh_2 / *-\acute{u}éh_2-$  ( $\leftarrow *-u- + *-(e)h_2-$ ) assumed by HARDARSON (2018: 253-6) for the abstracts in  $*-uh_2-$  (type  $*h_1\acute{u}és-uh_2-$  /  $*h_1us-\acute{u}éh_2-$  'good quality' > OIr *feb\** id.), whereby the PK morpheme  $*-(e)h_2-$  would be isofunctional with the here involved suffix  $*-(e)s-$ .

2.4.3. Further support to the reconstruction of the *us*-abstract  $*(s)lég-us / *(s)lig-\acute{u}és-$  n. 'smoothness; equality' might come from Baltic, in particular from the adjective Lith. *lygustas* 'equal' (ALEW: 676). If one segments it as *lygus-ta-s*, it could be regarded as a possessive adjective in *-ta-* (< PIE  $*-tó-$ ) to a substantival base Lith.  $*lygús-$  'equality', which would regularly continue Pre-PBalt.  $*(s)lig-ús-$  < (cross-stem)  $*(s)lég-us / *(s)lig-\acute{u}és-$ . As argued in greater details in IMBERCIADORI (forthcoming), though, Lith. *lygustas* is more likely to represent a later formation and to be analyzed as *lyg-ustas* /*lyg-ústas*/ – thus exhibiting the mildly productive adjectival suffix Lith. *-ústas* (LESKIEN 1891: 582) with not explicitly spelled vowel length.

2.4.4. Even if unsupported by external evidence, it remains nonetheless possible – in view of the productivity of the involved derivational process (see 2.4.1., 2.4.2. above) – to posit the *us*-abstract  $*(s)lég-us / *(s)lig-\acute{u}és-$  n. as a theoretical, albeit not directly attested morphological bridge between the PK adjective  $*(s)lég-u-$  /  $*(s)lig-éu-$  (see 2.2.3. above) and the HK adjective  $*(s)lig-\acute{u}és-$  /  $*(s)lig-us-$  (> *Ligur-es*; see 2.5. below).

2.5. The second derivational step at work in the scenario under (1) consists in the creation of internally derived HK adjectives from underlying PK abstracts. An example of the pattern PK abstract → HK adjective involving an *s*-stem abstract in  $*-o/es-$  is Ved. *ápas-* n. 'work' → *ápás-* 'working' (cf. WIDMER 2004: 31, 65; SCHAFFNER 2011: 129-32; NUSSBAUM 2017: 239; LIPP 2019: 127, 129). As far as abstracts in  $*-us-$  are concerned, one might quote the following case: PK adjective  $*\acute{u}ét-u-$  /  $*ut-éu-$  'old' → PK abstract  $*\acute{u}ét-us / *ut-\acute{u}és-$  n. 'oldness' (i) → HK adjective  $*\acute{u}(e)t-\acute{u}és-$  /  $*\acute{u}(e)t-us-$  'old' > Lat. *vetus* id., (ii) → adjective  $*\acute{u}etus-o-$  'old' > OCS *vetŭxŭ* id., Lith. *vėtušas* id. (thus NERI 2017a: 188 with refs.; MALZAHN 2014: 172, 175).<sup>8</sup> For further examples of Vedic adjectival stems in  $-\acute{u}és-$  (*vanŭs-* 'eager', *jayŭs-* 'victorious', etc.), see AiGr: 490.

2.5.1. In any case, due to simplification of the paradigmatic ablaut alternations it became possible, basing on cases like just mentioned *ápas-* 'work' →

<sup>8</sup> Slightly different WEISS (2011: 349-50, 354), following NUSSBAUM (1986: 146, fn. 15), who does not reconstruct the HK adjectival step: he regards PK  $*\acute{u}ét-us / *ut-\acute{u}és-$  as an adnominal absolving the function both of an abstract and of an adjective ('oldness' / 'the old one'), and thus capable of leading directly to Lat. *vetus* 'old' (cf. also VINE 2009: 218; BALLES 2009: 9-10; PRÓSPER 2019: 482). Still differently HÖFLER (2017: 95, fn. 339): "NSg *uetus* [...] falscher Ersatz für "HK" *\*uetēs* bzw. *\*ueter* [...] 'Jahre habend'".

*apás-* 'working', to derive adjectives from substantives by means of a simple contrastive accent shift or Oxytonierung (cf. RAU 1998: 148-9; SCHAFFNER 2001: 586, fn. 6; NERI 2016: 30, HÖFLER 2017: 122). Under the latter assumption the derivation of the adjectival stem *\*(s)ligus-* (> *Ligur-es*) should be restated as abstract *\*(s)lig-us-* n. (barytone) → adjective *\*(s)lig-ús-* (oxytone).

2.5.2. As further alternative, if one is not willing to assume a final HK step in the morphological derivation, one might reckon with adjectivization of the underlying *us*-abstract PK *\*(s)léig-us-* / *\*(s)lig-ús-*: cf. the case of Ved. *tápuṣ-* n. 'heat; hot' in 2.4.2. and fn. 8. Besides, the conversion substantive → adjective is particularly well attested for property concept abstracts in predicative function (cf. PINAULT 2003: 180, 2012: 406 and HACKSTEIN 2010a: 75, 80, 2010b: 63-4).

2.6. As far as the semantics of the derivation under (1), one should note that HK adjectives – if no semantic shift of the intermediate abstract occurred – usually exhibited the same meaning as the adjective which stood at the beginning of the derivational chain (cf., among others, OETTINGER 2000: 396 with fn. 8; VINE 2013: 323, fn. 38; NUSSBAUM 2017: 239). Thus, two possible scenarios might be set up.

(i) Derivational chain PK adjective *\*(s)léig-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'smooth; equal' → PK abstract *\*(s)léig-us* / *\*(s)lig-ús-* n. 'smoothness; equality' → HK adjective *\*(s)lig-ús-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* 'X': based on the previous assumption, *\*(s)lig-ús-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* ought to be glossed as 'smooth; equal'. In a fashion parallel to the evolution seen for Gr. *λγύς* – where *\*(s)léig-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'smooth; equal' developed to 'bright, clear' and then specialized to 'clear of sounds' (see 2.2.3. above) –, it might be proposed that the same development 'smooth; equal' → 'bright, clear, shining' independently took place in the prehistory of that language which would have surfaced as "Ligurian".

(ii) However, it is also possible that not the HK adjective *\*(s)lig-ús-* / *\*(s)lig-us-*, but its derivational base PK abstract *\*(s)léig-us* / *\*(s)lig-ús-* n. 'smoothness; equality' underwent the semantic shift to 'brightness, clearness'. Only thereafter the HK adjective with meaning 'bright, clear' would have been derived from it (see (1) above). Some evidence in favor of the latter scenario will be discussed in 2.6.2. below.

Apart from these morphosemantic details, the basic assumption of the present paper is that the Ligurians – or more likely one among the Ligurian tribes – would have chosen such adjective *\*(s)lig-ús-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* 'bright, clear, shining' to create an endonym for themselves. From this tribe, the ethnonym would have gradually spread to all other peoples which Romans and Greeks felt to be related to the "original" *Ligures* (on the last point, cf. GRENIER 1940: 168 and TIBILETTI BRUNO 1978: 193).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A similar process may have characterized the spread of the name Ἀμβρόνεις, which we know to have been the endonym of at least some Ligurian tribes (see 1.1. above).

2.6.1. If we turn to the question of the concrete plausibility of such a proposal, we observe that the Benennungsmotiv 'the clear, bright ones' is not isolated among people names. An immediate parallel is supplied by the Germanic tribe name latinized as *Scīrī* (cf. PGerm. \**skei-ri-* 'bright'), from the root \**skeiH-* 'be bright' (cf. IEW: 917-8; KRAUSE 1968: 181; HEIDERMANN 1993: 492; SITZMANN/GRÜNZWEIG 2008: 240-1).<sup>10</sup> With PINAULT (1989: 22) "il est relativement banal de s'appeler "les Blancs" [...] s'appeler "les Blancs" ou "les Brillants" fait référence à l'éclat de la gloire royale, selon une conception héritée": although PINAULT's statement refers to the ethnonymic designation of the Tocharians – in particular to A *ārśi* 'Agnean, speaker of Toch. A'<sup>11</sup> and B *kuśiññe* 'Koutchean, speaker of Toch. B' – it will nonetheless be valid also for the present investigation regarding the Ligurians. In this respect, one should not give too much importance to the feature of dark complexion attributed to the *Ligures* by Strabo 4.6.2 (cf. WHATMOUGH 1933: 149). An endonym based on the idea of brightness would have not referred necessarily to the actual skin color, but rather – and more importantly – to the symbolic values associated with the brightness itself. Seen in this perspective, the etymological connection between the ethnonym *Ligures* and the adjective Gr. *λγρός* becomes less "improbable" than what WHATMOUGH (1933: 148, fn. 2) apodictically stated.<sup>12</sup>

2.6.2. Two independent pieces of evidence for the semantics 'bright, hell' of the adjective \*(s)*lig-ues-* / \*(s)*lig-us-* (> *Ligur-es*) and for that 'brightness, clearness' (← 'smoothness; equality') of its derivational base \*(s)*lēig-us* / \*(s)*lig-ues-* n. should now be briefly discussed.

On the one hand, one finds the Latin item *ligustrum* n. 'privet' (Vergil), which might be segmented as *ligus-trum*. Interestingly enough, the privet exhibits white, clear flowers (cf. BRICKELL 2008 II: 1136) and is associated with the adjectives *albus* 'white' (Verg. Ecl. 2.18) and *cānus* id. (Mart. Ep. 9.26.3) in Latin poetical texts (as kindly remarked by NICOLÒ CAMPODONICO). Thus, an original denomination as \*(s)*lig-us-* '(the) white (one)' seems appropriate for this plant. According to LEW I: 801 and DELL: 638 the suffix *-tro-* can be explained as analogical to other Latin phytonyms like *apiastrum* 'lemon balm', *rāpistrum* 'wild rape' or *oleāster* 'wild olive'. Consequently, also Latin may have inherited an adjectival stem \*(s)*lig-us-* (< \*(s)*lig-ues-* / \*(s)*lig-us-*) with semantics 'bright, hell'.

<sup>10</sup> On further derivatives of \**skeiH-* in Germanic, see NERI (2016: 15 with fn. 29).

<sup>11</sup> The real meaning of A *ārśi*, though, should be regarded as uncertain (cf. ADAMS 2000: 5-6, 19-20, 2013: 57, 198).

<sup>12</sup> If the adjective \*(s)*lig-ues-* / \*(s)*lig-us-* originally exhibited the meaning 'smooth; equal' (see 2.6.i. above), one might also envisage the alternative scenario, whereby the Ligurians would have named themselves as 'the equal ones', with reference to the equal rights among them and/or towards the others – thus kindly Michael Weiss, per litteras.

On the other hand, one should recall the Iberian lake name *Ligust-īnus* (see 1.2. above). The sequence *ligust-* before the suffix *-īnus* likely goes back to a stem *\*ligus-tó-*, which might be glossed as 'provided with brightness, bright' – with possessive suffix *\*-tó-* (see 2.4.3. above). The denomination of a lake or river as 'bright, clear, shining' would be perfectly warranted: cf. cases like *Rednitz*, *Elbe*, *Glatt* (see ANREITER/HASLINGER/ROIDER 2000: 114-5; SCHAFFNER 2011: 135-40; OPFERMANN 2019: 447-8) or *Balaton* (SERGIO NERI, p. c.). Since the base *\*ligus-* in *\*ligus-tó-* ought to be regarded for morphological and semantic reasons as a substantive, the possessive formation *\*ligus-tó-* would point to the existence of a PK abstract *\*(s)léig-us* / *\*(s)lig-úés-* n. > *\*(s)lig-us-* 'brightness' – even more, *\*(s)ligus-tó-* (→ *Ligust-īnus*) would formally match one of the two possible forerunners cautiously postulated for Lith. *lygustas* 'equal' in 2.4.3. In any case, if the present analysis of *Ligustīnus* is correct, it becomes more likely that the semantic development 'smoothness; equality' → 'brightness, clearness' had already characterized the *us*-abstract *\*(s)léig-us* / *\*(s)lig-úés-*: the HK adjective *\*(s)lig-úés-* / *\*(s)lig-us-* (> *Ligur-es*) would have directly exhibited the meaning 'bright, hell'.

### 3. Further toponyms, ethnonyms ad hydronyms in *\*-us-*

As a final remark, I would like to observe that *us*-stems like the one underlying *Ligur-es* – which are otherwise quite rarely attested in the PIE languages – seem to have enjoyed some productivity in the geographic area associated by the ancient sources with the Ligurian tribes (see 1.1 above).

3.1. Among place and river names, the following ones can be quoted.

3.1.1. A famous example is *Segusiō*, *-ōnis* – today's Susa in the Italian region Piedmont (PECS: 819-20). *Segusiō* represents the endocentric individualization in *\*-on-* of a genitival derivative in *\*-iō-*, ultimately going back to the *us*-abstract *\*séǵh-us-* 'victory' (> OE *sigor* m. id., OHG *sigu* m. id.), for whose reconstruction cf. NUSSBAUM (1998: 529-32); HARDARSON (2014: 50 with fn. 18); MALZAHN (2014: 172) and SCHAFFNER (2019: 171, fn. 53). PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI (1981: 72) add further toponyms and ethnonyms based on the above mentioned *us*-stem, e. g. *Segus-terō* (> *Sisteron*, in today's Provence) or *Sigus-iavī* (tribe of the Gallia Lugdunensis). On the concurrent neuter abstract *\*séǵh-o/es-* is instead built the widespread place name *Seges-ta* (PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI 1981: 72; for a different morphological analysis, see WOUTHUIZEN 2020: 48, 55).

3.1.2. Much less well-known than *Segusiō* is the toponym dat.-loc.pl. *Berusetis* – an unidentified place close to Piacenza (Northern Italy) attested in the "Tabula alimentaria" (VI.65) from Veleia (cf. PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI 1981: 17-9; CRINITI 1991, 2018 and 1.1. above). PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI (1981: 38) cautiously connect *Berusetis* to Latin *berula* 'watercress' (kind of

plant), probably of Celtic origin (root *\*b<sup>h</sup>er<sub>u</sub>-* 'spring, seethe': cf. EDP-C: 63; LIV: 81). However, *-s-* in *Berusetis* would remain unexplained. Alternatively, one might surmise a connection with the lexical family of Lat. *veru*, *-ūs* n. 'spit, spear', Umb. acc.pl.n. *berva* 'spits', and OIr. *bir* 'spit' (on these forms, see IEW: 479; WEISS 1993: 111-20; UNTERMANN 2000: 145; NERI 2003: 251-2, forthcoming fn. 5; EDLIL: 668; EDP-C: 62). Lat. *veru*, Umb. *berva*, etc. point to an acrostatic (AS) abstract *\*g<sup>w</sup>ór-u* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-u-* n., which might be glossed as 'sharpness' → (concretized) 'spit, pole, reed'. Consequently, a derivational chain according to (2) could be posited:

(2) Morphosemantic derivation of *Berusetis*

AS abstract *\*g<sup>w</sup>ór-u* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-u-* n. 'sharpness' > Lat. *veru*, *-ūs* n. 'spit, spear', Umb. acc.pl.n. *berva* 'spits', OIr. *bir* 'spit';

→ PK adjective *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-u-* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-éu-* 'sharp';<sup>13</sup>

→ (see 2.4. above) PK *us*-abstract *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-us* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-úés-* n. 'sharpness' (see immediately below);

→ (see 2.5. above) HK adjective *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-úés-* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-us-* 'sharp' > PGr. pl. *\*g<sup>w</sup>ar-úéh-* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-uh-* 'sharp, pointed (objects)' > (cross-stem) nom.pl. *\*g<sup>w</sup>ar-úh-es* > Gr. βαρύες δένδρα 'trees' (Hesychius).<sup>14</sup>

PK *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-us* 'sharpness' → 'reed' – or its thematized continuer *\*g<sup>w</sup>er-us-o-* / *eh<sub>2</sub>-* id. – was then enlarged through the suffix *-ēto-* (type Lat. *cann-ētum* 'reed thicket'), which built collectives to phytonymic bases (cf. NERI 2017b: 73, forthcoming fn. 12; WEISS 2020: 293). The result was the attested stem *Berus-eto-* / *Berus-ēto-* 'place of the reeds' – for the phonetic development PIE *\*g<sup>w</sup>-* > *b-* in the geographic area of ancient Liguria, cf. PISANI (1964: 292); PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI (1981: 23) and WOUTHUIZEN (2018: 103).

3.1.3. Not a toponym, but a hydronym is *Varusa*, located by the “Tabula Peutingeriana” at the east of *Augusta Taurinorum* (today's Turin). If its identification with the today's river *Versa* – a right tributary of the Po – is correct (cf. OL S.V. *Varusa* and HOLDER *apud* PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI 1981: 78), *Varusa* would have exhibited initial accentuation, pointing to the short quantity of its internal *-u-*.<sup>15</sup> The likely segmentation *Var-us-a* thus presupposes the existence

<sup>13</sup> The derivational pattern AS abstract → PK adjective is well-known: cf., among others, PETERS (1999: 453-4); RAU (2009: 173, fn. 132 with refs.); KIM (2014: 130, 2019: 183-4). That YAv. *grav-a-* 'stick, staff' continues either the thematized PK adjective *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-u-* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-éu-* 'sharp' or a possessive derivative with Schwebeablaut *\*g<sup>w</sup>reū-ó-* 'provided with sharpness' is unlikely (cf. WEISS 1993: 114-5).

<sup>14</sup> Differently WEISS (1993: 115-8), who traces back Gr. βαρύες – through generalization of the weak stem *\*g<sup>w</sup>r-ú-* at the expense of the strong one *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-ou-* – to an “animatizing internal derivative [of AS *\*g<sup>w</sup>ór-u* / *\*g<sup>w</sup>ér-u-*] with amphikinetic inflection *\*g<sup>w</sup>erōus*” (p. 118); sceptical NERI (2003: 252, fn. 819).

<sup>15</sup> This was not the case for the apparently rhyming hydronym *Padūsa*, one of the branches which the river Po (*Padus*) formed in its estuary: cf. *consedere auium, piscosoue āmnē Pādūsaē* (Verg. Aen. 11.457) and Servius' commentary *ad loc.*

of an old *us*-stem *\*uar-us-*. While PETRACCO SICARDI/CAPRINI (1981: 78, 77) tentatively connect *Varusa* with PIE *\*uer-* 'humid' (> Ved. *vār-* 'water'), SERGIO NERI (p.c.) puts forth an attractive derivation from the adjective *\*urh<sub>1</sub>-us-ó-* 'provided with width, wide' ← abstract *\*urh<sub>1</sub>-us-* 'width' ← adjective *\*urh<sub>1</sub>-ú-* 'wide' (> ai. *urú-* id., gr. *εὐρύς* id., etc.).

3.2. Among personal or people names containing the morpheme *\*-us-*, the following may be quoted.

3.2.1. On the one hand, the ethnonym *Nerusiī* is referred by the ancient sources to a Ligurian tribe of the Maritime Alps (cf. TIBILETTI BRUNO 1978: 193 with fn. 114 and refs.). Attractive is an etymological connection with the lexical family of PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>né-* / *\*h<sub>2</sub>nr'-* m. '(strong) man', although the latter does not exhibit traces of *u*-suffixation in the other Indo-European branches (cf. NIL: 332-5). Alternatively, SERGIO NERI (p.c.) suggests derivation from the adverb PIE *\*ner* 'lower, below' (DUNKEL 2014: 554-8) – the *Nerusiī* would have been 'the ones living lower', with suffix *\*-usio-* imported from the hypothetical anthonymic ethnonym *\*Berg-usiī* (see immediately below).

3.2.2. Finally, mention should be made of the continental Celtic goddess name *Bergusia*, attested epigraphically in today eastern Burgundy. Again, we should start from a genitival derivative *\*b<sup>h</sup>érǵ<sup>h</sup>-us-iǵeh<sub>2</sub>-* to an unattested *us*-abstract Pre-PCelt. *\*b<sup>h</sup>érǵ<sup>h</sup>-us-* 'highness'. Derivationally, the latter form would nicely join the PK *u*-adjective *\*b<sup>h</sup>érǵ<sup>h</sup>-u-* / *\*b<sup>h</sup>ǵ<sup>h</sup>-éu-* 'high' presupposed by Hitt. *parku-* id., Arm. *barjr* id., etc. (cf. MONAGHAN 2004: 44 and NIL: 31, with TP *\*b<sup>h</sup>erǵ<sup>h</sup>-us-ih<sub>2</sub>-*).

#### 4. Conclusion

The ethnonym Lat. *Ligures* ~ Gr. *Λίγυες* can be traced back to a HK adjective *\*(s)lig-ǵés-* / *\*(s)lig-ús-* 'bright, hell', ultimately belonging to the PIE root *\*(s)leǵ-* 'spread sth., smooth out'. Morphologically, the reconstruction of an intermediate abstract in *\*-us-* enables to put the HK adjective *\*(s)lig-ǵés-* / *\*(s)lig-ús-* in straightforward derivational relation with the well attested PK adjective PIE *\*(s)léǵ-u-* / *\*(s)lig-éu-* 'smooth(ed) out, equal' (> OCS *slǐžŭ-kŭ* 'slippery; sticky', Gr. *λίγυς* 'clear (of sounds)', Lith. *lygūs* 'equal'). Semantically, the Benennungsmotiv 'the bright, clear ones' is well paralleled among ancient ethnonyms – all the more so because independent evidence for the meaning 'bright, hell' of the adjective *\*(s)lig-ǵés-* / *\*(s)lig-ús-* and that 'brightness, clearness' of its derivational base PK *\*(s)léǵ-us* / *\*(s)lig-ǵés-* n. can be adduced: cf. the phytonym Lat. *ligus-trum* and the lake name *Ligus-tīnus*. Finally, the morpheme *\*-us-* exhibited by the ethnonym *\*Ligus-es* (> *Ligur-es*) was fairly widespread in the geographic context traditionally associated with the Ligurians.



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