Notes on Slovene and Slavic Etymology

The notes which follow find aspects of F. Bezlaj's *Etimološki slovar slovenskega jezika* to criticize. I hope this will not be taken adversely. On the other side of the balance we have an enormous debt of gratitude which we owe Bezlaj for the fact that he has given us the first major step in the production of a modern etymological inventory of the Slovene language and the scholarly exploration of the history of its lexicon. The critical nature of these notes is meant to point rather to the directions we may and must follow in the future, in my modest opinion; and which we may, thanks to the enormous aid that Bezlaj's work offers us, whereby we stand on his shoulders. Moreover, we must always remember that in the difficult days when Bezlaj was compiling much of his work there were many publications that were simply not available across borders in the world.

The principal themes of the following notes are the first-order contribution of Slovene evidence to the comparison and history of the Slavic languages; their place in and contribution to the history of the Indo-European languages; the importance of Indo-European evidence to the solution of Slavic problems; the clarity and illumination that comes from an insistence on the absolute regularity, in principle, of linguistic change; and the cumulative nature of scholarship.

1 **kJma I, II, and Krma III**

F. Bezlaj, *Etimološki slovar slovenskega jezika* II K–O, 1982, 95–6, agrees with received opinion in tracing k>jma 'pabulum' and its clear Slavic cognates to IE *(s)ker- ‘rezati’ with the suffixal formation *-mo-, -mā. This attribution must be roughly correct, but the specification offered for the aggregate derivation is imprecise to a degree that today we must exert ourselves to avoid.

Czech *krmě* is of course not precisely *-mā. Serbo-Croatian k>jme -ta ‘svinja’, collect. k>r+mād is yet another formation. The semantics here also requires fuller specification. One might think of pork as the preferred food or meat in Northern Europe, as I have argued in the *Festschrift for Marija Gimbutas* (1987) and in *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 41, 1986, 257–8. But the prevalence of expressions with *krmiti* (also in Czech) for ‘fatten’ (esp. for slaughter) and for feeding pigs leads one to suspect that the formation of k>rme is based on feeding the pig, as in k>r+māča and in k>mēk, rather than in the pig as potential food.

On the other hand the IE comparisons are flawed. Lithuanian šerto, šeriu etc. cannot be related to Lat. cêna, k>jma, and *(s)ker-; with its initial *k’, however, it may be related to Albanian thiher, thjerr(e) ‘ervum lens’, which I have analyzed (*Bulletin Shkencor, Seria e shkencave shoqërore /Univ. Luigj Gurakuqi* / 27 /47/ 1/1994, 89–90). Russ. Ukr. Br. k>r+m, OPol. k>r+m and Slovak k>r+m are not directly the expected *kor-mō-s, which is functionally equivalent to Lat. cêna. Here *k>r+m must be contaminated with *k>r+mā the well formed IE ancestor of k>jma I, Scr. k>r+mā, Bulg. k>r+mā, Mak. k>rma,¹ Ukr. k>r+m, and Slovak k>rma.

¹ Mak. k>rma appears to be a misprint.
We recover here in *krma I an interesting addition to the examples I have ad-

*krma II ‘puppis’ (Bezlaj 96) is accorded an account, with references to earlier
literature. But despite the rich citation of Slovene derivatives no explication of the
morphology is actually supplied; Etimologija ni razčiščena. At least this morphology
is discussed by this writer in KZ 96, 171–7, esp. 171 and 176.

The toponym *Krma III is referred to pre-Roman origins – often a counsel of
despair – with the mention of Albanian *karmë ‘cliff, wall’. I have, however, derived
karmë from *kar-p-na, an old collective. The Lautgesetz involved here is purely Al-
badian, and imposes thereby a severe constraint on the presumed source.

We have here, then, three different formations. The lexeme *krma II could have
kermens), and Études Celtiques 9 (1960) 139–40 (139, Welsh cryf < *kṛ(p)mo-).

2 kāšelj

The Slovene evidence on this interesting etymon is very important, and the ac-
count of F. Bezlaj ESSJ II (1982) 22–3 does not bring this out sufficiently. It is of
course correct that the Proto-Slavic form must be reconstructed *kāši-jo- vel sim, as
Bezlaj does. However the cited Church Slavonic kāšelj shows a written internal jer.
It is therefore important to note the Slovene 18th century attestations which include
kashl. Of course the question of precise (morpho)phonemic status enters here, as
well as that of the phonetics of 16th century kashel. But the native testimony is it-
self a valuable datum.

The Indo-European account, and the setting within the IE dialects, for this
item is deficient. For a fuller accounting see E. P. Hamp, in Ezikovedski proučvani-

3 ōgenj

As with kāšelj the Slovene testimony for ōgenj is rich and important (ESSJ II,
1982, 243). We note especially the 17th century ōghgn, a highly valuable form to be
placed alongside the Church Slavonic ogiš.

However the Indo-European account which follows the recital of Slavic cog-
nates is not at all acceptable, and the appeal to linguistic tabu is simply a confession
of failure to find any principled solution. On the whole question I would refer the
interested reader to my discussion and analysis in T. F. Magner and W. R. Schmals-
tieg eds., Baltic Linguistics, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press,
1970, 75–9. On the exact background of višenj ‘forge, hearth’ I have now (Rocznik
slawistyczny 49, 1, 13–14) revised my view and formulation as follows: Cz. výhň,
SCr výganj, Slov. višenj < *vignonj < (by Winter’s lengthening) *uognjo- < (by dis-
similation or perceptual misassignment) *uognjo- < *ugni-o-.

The question of vatra has no part in this discussion, and I have dealt with that
etymon elsewhere, esp. Opuscula slavica et linguistica: Festschrift für Alexander Is-
4 ōglje

As with the last item, the Slovene testimony for ōglje is highly valuable and rich in its variety and citation of variants (ibid. 243–4). The 18th century form ogl is particularly interesting, and the range of attested suffixation is instructive. But again the comparative Indo-European account is deficient.

My 1970 essay mentioned under ōgenj deals also with ōglje and kindred forms, and the reader is again referred to that. The etymon of ōgel ‘angulus’ is also mentioned there, but that is not part of the main focus there. However that discussion does deal with the Albanian loan from Slavic for which Bezlaj simply cites and reproduces Pisančič’s uninformed confusion.

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