

BATRAXΟΣ again

In discussing βάτραχος and its congeners, ŽA 26, 1976, 333—4, I arrived at three pre-forms: *βῆταχος *burthVko-, and *brutVkho-. I then speculated (334) that these might reflect two phonetic shapes, *bṛtakhos- and *bṛtVko-, but I did not venture to trace the development that this last claim would require. This claim in fact represents a lapse in good method, for which I apologize to my readers, who may have been too polite to castigate me. I hope now to repair this flaw by furnishing a principled train of reasoning. In the case of such isolated forms as the present lexeme we are not likely to reach the normally expected levels of certainty, but we may at least point in the direction of principled probability.

1. The Hesychian βρύτιχοι, to whatever degree it really existed, can be explained as a cross of an existing u-vocalism with the normal Greek forms in βρό/ά. . . . Therefore *búrt(h)Vk(h)o- is older.

2. The pre-form *βῆταχος must be assumed for common Greek. Let us further assume that this form was adapted by the incoming Greeks; the model would have been an autochthonous or preexisting word of the general form arrived at in (1).

3. This leads us to a pre-Greek reconstruction $\overset{\sim}{\overset{h}{búrtVko-}}$.

4. It seems best to choose *búrtVkho-, although we could arrive at the sequence -iVkh- by interior Greek phonotactic constraints in conformity with the output of Grassmann's Law. As we shall see, *búrtVkho — gives a better possibility of known Indo-European suffixation and canonical root shape.

5. If we treat *búrtVkho — as belonging to the language to which πύργος has been attributed¹, we may then reconstruct a plau-

¹ See A. J. van Windeken, *Le pélasque*, Louvain 1952, and the relevant works of V. I. Georgiev before and since, esp. *La toponymie ancienne de la péninsule balkanique et la thése méditerranéenne* (Linguistique Balkanique III, Sofia 1961 11—15 and 37—48); W. Merlingen, „Zum Vorgriechischen“, *Linguistique balkanique*, IV 1962, 25—55.

These accounts have generally claimed a sibilant outcome for the IE palatals (e. g. Merlingen *LB* IV 41 § 6), but the supporting examples offered lack compelling force. It seems to me that one of the very best items in favour of the whole Indo-European hypothesis for these recalcitrant Greek lexemes is πύργος. But the reconstruction for πύργος should be *bhṛǵh- with an original palatal, as I have argued for παρθένος in *Homenaje a Antonio Tovar*, Madrid 1972, 117 ff.

sible Indo-European **bhṛd-V-ko-*. It will be noted that I arrive, for the reasons set forth above and in ŽA 26, 333—4, at a Greek or Aegean pre-form and an IE reconstruction at variance with that proposed by van Windekkens, *op. cit.* 76—8².

As a speculative suggestion we may equate the base seen in **bhṛd-V-ko-* with that of φράζομαι. If that is so, it offers no more conclusive evidence to the prehistory of φράζομαι than the unresolved possibilities which I mooted ŽA 26, 1976, 30. The semantics there would putatively refer to the characteristic sound emitted by the frog, and documented so notably by Aristophanes. Whether such a characterization of the frog's croaking was in the nature of a joke or reflected folk belief would be in the realm of compounded speculation.

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A Bulgarian plant term *botrak* „limba broaștei“ is given by Al. Rosetti *Istoria limbii române*, 1978, 443, and is credited with derivation from Român. *broatec*. I do not find an entry ботрак in Български Етимологичен речник (Том. I, 1971) but Речник на Българския език (I, 1977, А—Б) shows (759) ботрак as a dialect form equated with ботурàк. The latter in turn is glossed „бял трън“. Now БЕР (I 70) shows бòтур 2 glossed as a dialect word „раст, cyclamen neapolitanum“ with the derivatives бòтурче, ботурàк 'раст, бял трън, xanthium spinosum'. The БЕР takes бòтур 2 „по всяка вероятност еднакво с ботур 1“, which latter ('пън, дънер') is given a pure Slavic IE etymology. It seems, at any rate, that ботрак is certified as 'бял трън'. Whether бòтур 2 and бòтур 1 are identical remains under adjudication, regardless of whether бòтур 1 is directly derived from IE. It seems further possible that бòтур 2 may be derived by back formation from бот(y)рàк.

Now within Romanian I am insufficiently the botanist or native to be able to tell whether *broasca-apei* and *limba-apei=broscărija* are the same, and are to be equated with *limba broaștei*. (I find these terms in *Dictionarul explicativ al limbii române*, București 1975). The point then remains to be settled whether *limba broaștei* describes бял трън.

If all of these are equivalent and if бòтур 2 is formed from бот(y)рàк, we may have one more Balkan attestation of our word. It would not be necessary to derive ботрак from Rom. *broatec*; indeed the word accent would be against it. Instead, we would have an ancient reflex to parallel βάτραχος or Ion. βάθραχος or βότραχος.

² I also reject the dissimilation proposed by van Windekkens, *Contributions à l'étude de l'onomastique pélasgique*, Louvain 1954, 55 footnote 5, since that would assume a sequence of obstruents (aspirate and tenuis) which violates the canonical constraint of the IE root shape.

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There is one further Romanian word which seems relevant to our discussion, *broască*, *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* reconstructs this as derived from a Lat. **brosca*. Obviously we do not know whether such a form existed in Latin, and because of the initial *br-* the word cannot be originally Latin in the first place. Here the normally trustworthy Rosetti ILR₂ 112 introduces a puzzling complexity for us. He credits *broască*, on the authority of Graur (*Romania* 55, 469 ff.), to a development which does not violate the rule Lat. *ü* > Romanian *u*. But in any event I find for Latin only a *bruscum* „maple knot“, attested in Pliny NH XVI 16, 27 § 68, which EM₃ 136 recognises as foreign, perhaps from Celtic. Certainly we do not expect a Balkanism in Pliny. On the other hand, the presence of *broască*, its semantics („frog“) and its vocalism all go well together with *broatec* ‘tree frog’, on which see ILR₂ 233. Moreover, as has been observed ever since Stier and Camarda over a century ago³, an exact parallelism is seen in Albanian *breshkë* ‘tortoise’ and *bretëk* ‘frog’. It was Thumb who argued systematically (IF 26, 12) for the Greek origin of *bretëk*, first proposed by Stier but then long abandoned for a claimed Latin origin⁴, an empty claim since no attested Latin source is known. However, Çabej is finally doubtful (316) of a Greek origin for *bretëk* since he is troubled by the vocalism *e* which he thinks can come only from a long *ō*. Indeed, Thumb’s account is flawed by his assumption of a half length in βρόταχος. Yet there is really no difficulty here. We know that Greek *o* was a close mid vowel at an early date.

It is reasonable to assume that the proto-Albanian long vowels were tense as in Latin, and particularly so *ō* since it fell in with Latin *ō* : *tērmet* < *terrae mōtu-*. Now it is not necessary to assume that it was length that gave the outcome *e* in Albanian; the crucial feature was the close quality that is associated with tenseness⁵. Thus Greek *ō* may be assumed to have fallen in with Latin and IE *ō*. There is then no need to seek a back-formation from the plural, as does Çabej (316–17). We must then derive *bretëk* and *broatec* equally from precisely the form seen in Greek βρόταχος or from some Balkan intermediary of like vocalism.

I agree completely with Çabej’s support (315) of Stier’s association of *breshkë/broască* with *bretëk/broatec*; this position has also been supported by Densusianu, La Piana, and Jokl (orally to Çabej).

³ See E. Çabej’s ample account, *Studime etimologjike në fushë të shqipes* II A-B Tirane 1976) 314–15 and 315–17.

⁴ In this connexion Çabej refers to Rosetti, but note that ILR₃ 233 places *broatec* firmly in the Greek component of Romanian.

⁵ I shall present elsewhere at length the chronological development of the Albanian vowel system. For a similar argument based on close [o] regardless of length see my article „The British end of the spectrum of Romania“, in M. Suñer ed., *Contemporary studies in Romance Linguistics*, Washington: Georgetown U. Press, 1978, pp. 172–5.

It seems to have been Gustav Meyer (*Etym. Wb. d. alb. Sprache* 47) who confused the issue by introducing a late Latin *bruscus* from Du Cange, whereupon Meyer-Lübke REW 1329 further intruded other Romance irrelevancies. Others then followed suite up to Alessio in 1954; Çabej (314) has assembled all these references conveniently. Thus we may remove the unexplained intrusion which clutters Rosetti's normally explicit end encyclopaedic text.

We arrive in this fashion at an „autochthonous“ Albanian-Romanian **brōskā*. If Du Cange's lone mention, taken from a glossary of Papias, of *bruscus* as a sort of frog- *a rubeta-* has any relevance to our **brōskā* it must be as a pseudo-Latinisation of some folk form of our word betraying a Balkan origin for Papias's source?), and by no means as an attestation of a source, or variant thereof, for **brōskā*.

Now **brōskā* cannot be taken directly from Greek, as can *bretēk/broatec*; yet the two seem related, especially by their initial syllables. On the other hand Albanian cannot have inherited **sk* as a simple cluster directly from Indo-European, since such a cluster normally gives a result such as *h* in Albanian. Therefore a pre-form **brōt-skā* vel. sim. would be perfectly reasonable. Such a form might have been generated autochthonously in the Balkans by removing the apparent *-k-* suffix from the successor to $\beta\beta\delta\tau\chi\gamma\varsigma$ and by adding to the resulting „base“ **brōt-* a native suffix in *-sk-*. This is all very speculative, but it affords at least a principled way of accounting both for the shared form of *breshkē/broască* and for the meaning of *broască*.

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If the above reasoning is correct all these forms go back ultimately to Greek and Pre-Greek sources.

University of Chicago.

E. Hamp.