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Names of plants of Mediterranean and Balkan origin in Burushaski

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ABSTRACT

After a brief overview of studies that correlate the Burushaski language with Indo-European, the article goes on to examine the close and specific semantic and phonological correspondence between eight plant names shared by Burushaski and the Indo-European languages of the Mediterranean and Southern Europe. On the strength of this correlation it is proposed that these plant names may point to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans as the original area of inhabitation of the Burushaski people.

KEYWORDS

plant names, Burushaski, Indo-European, Mediterranean, Balkans

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Names of plants of Mediterranean and Balkan origin in Burushaski

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1 Introduction

Burushaski is a language-isolate spoken by around 90,000 people (Berger 1990: 567) in the Karakoram area in North-West Pakistan. Its dialectal differentiation is minor. There are three very closely related dialects: Hunza and Nager with minimal differences, and the Yasin dialect, which exhibits some differential traits. The earliest, mostly sketchy, material for Burushaski is from the mid to late 19th century (e.g. Cunningham 1854, Hayward 1871, Biddulph 1880, Leitner 1889). The principal sources for Nager and Hunza Burushaski are Lorimer (1935-1938) and Berger (1998), and for Yasin Burushaski, Zarubin (1927), Berger (1974) and Tiffou-Morin (1989) and Tiffou-Pesot (1989). Edel'man-Klimov's (1970) analysis, revised and summarised in Edel'man (1997) is valuable in the quality of the grammatical description. Berger's (2008) synthesis is very important for the historical phonology and morphology of Burushaski and its internal reconstruction.

We have provided a full correlation of Burushaski with Indo-European, outside of Indic and Iranian. In our etymological analyses we have found consistent and systematic lexical, phonological and most importantly, extensive and fundamental grammatical correspondences (the latter are outlined in Čašule (2003b: 69-79) and significantly expanded in the Addendum (8.) to Čašule (2012b). The Burushaski numeral system is correlated with Indo-European in Čašule (2009b). The correspondences of Burushaski with the Phrygian language are analysed in Čašule (2004).

In an extensive analysis and comparison of the Burushaski shepherd vocabulary with Indo-European in Čašule (2009a) we identify some 30 pastoral terms that are of Indo-European (non-Indo-Iranian) origin in Burushaski, one third of which show direct and specific correspondences with the ancient Balkan substratal layer of shepherd terms in Albanian, Romanian and Aromanian. The correspondences (over 70 of them) in the core vocabulary of names of body parts and functions can be found in Čašule (2003a). The correspondence of the Burushaski kinship terms (32 terms) with Indo-European is analysed in Čašule (2013).

Čašule (2010) focuses on the original Burushaski Indo-European vocabulary (over 150 stems with many derivatives) that contains the reflexes of the Indo-European gutturals and correlations are established with various Indo-European branches.

On the basis of the analysis of over 500 etymologies (with over 1000 derivatives) and the highly significant correspondences in the grammatical and derivational system (noun stems, all nominal case endings and plural endings, the verbal system and prefixes, suffixes and endings, the complete non-finite verbal system, all of the adjectival suffixes, the entire system of demonstratives, personal pronouns, postpositions, adverbs, etc.), in Čašule (2012b) we conclude that Burushaski is

genetically related to Indo-European, more specifically with the North-Western Indo-European branch, and a language transformed typologically through contact with an agglutinative and ergative language (also Čašule 2010: 70).

Eric P. Hamp (R), in the review of Čašule (2012a), based on the full body of evidence, and in support of our work, states: “Burushaski is *at bottom* Indo-European [italics EH] – more correctly in relation to IE or IH, maybe (needs more proof) IB[uru]” and further conjectures: “I have wondered if Burushaski is a creolized derivative; now I ask (Čašule 2009a) is it a shepherd creole? (as in ancient Britain)” (also Hamp 2012 and 2013). Hamp (2013: 8-9) proposes an assured sister relationship between Burushaski and Indo-Hittite.

In this paper we examine the correspondences between names of plants deemed to be of Mediterranean or Balkan origin and retained in some of the Southern European Indo-European languages and in Burushaski.

2 Overview of phonological correspondences between Burushaski and Indo-European

We reproduce the summary of phonological correspondences between Indo-European and Burushaski (Čašule 2010: 11-12):

IE *a* > Bur *a*; IE *e* > Bur *e*: Hz, Ng *i*; IE *e* (unstr.) > Bur *a*; IE *ē* > Bur *é*; IE *o* > Bur *ó*
IE *o* (unstr.) > Bur *a*, *u*; IE *ō* > Bur *oó*, *óo*; IE *i* > Bur *i*; IE *u* > Bur *u*
IE *ai*, *ei*, *oi*; *eu* > Bur *a*; IE *au*, *ou* > Bur *u*

PIE *h₁-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h₁e-* > Bur *he-*; PIE *h₁u_{er}-* > Bur *har-*: *-war-*: *her-*
PIE *h₂-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h₂e-* > Bur *ha-*; PIE *h₂ue-* > Bur *-we-*: *-wa-*
PIE *h_a-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h_ae-* > *h_aa-* > Bur *ha-*; PIE *h_a-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h_ae-* > *h_aa-* > Bur *ha-*
PIE *h₃-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h₃e-* > *h₃o-* > Bur *ho-*; PIE *h_x-* > Bur *h-*; PIE *h_{1/2}i* > Bur *i-*

IE *l*, *m*, *n*, *r* > Bur *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*; IE *u* > Bur *-w/-u*; IE *u-* > Bur *b-*, also *m-*; IE *i* > Bur *y/i*
IE *m* > Bur *-um*, *-am*; IE *n* > Bur *-un*, *-an*; IE *r* > Bur *-ur*, *-ar*; IE *l* > Bur *-ul*, *-al*

IE *p* > Bur *p*, *ph*, also *b-*; IE *b* > Bur *b*, also *m* (rare); IE *bh* > Bur *b*, also *m* (rare)
IE *t* > Bur *t*: *th* (rare): *t*, and *d-*; IE *d* > Bur *d*; IE *dh-* > Bur *d-*; IE *VdhV* > Bur *-t-*, *-t-*
IE *k* > Bur *k*: *kh*, *k*: *q*; IE *k^w* > Bur *k*; IE *k̂* > Bur *k*: *kh*, *k*: *q*
IE *g* > Bur *g*; IE *gh* > Bur *g*; IE *g^w* > Bur *g*; IE *g^h* > Bur *g*; IE *ĝ* > Bur *g*, *g*; IE *g̃h-* > Bur *g*, *g*
IE *s* > Bur *s* or *s*: *ś*, *ch*; IE *ks* > Bur *ś*

3 Plant names of (Eastern) Mediterranean and Balkan origin in Burushaski

The preeminent Burushaski scholar, Hermann Berger in his earliest work (1956) entertained the idea of a link between Burushaski and the languages of the Mediterranean, mainly in cultural words, i.e. plant names. In his letter of 2001 to the author he has indicated that he has rescinded

these findings, and many of the proposed words have subsequently been found also in Indo-Aryan¹, and are considered to be loanwords.

Nevertheless there are still a number of words which we would like to review that support Burushaski's connections with the Mediterranean.

One plant name that is still unresolved is the Burushaski word *phěso*², pl. *phěsomuç*, *phěsomiñ* x 'pear', y 'pear tree' (Sh *phěsoo*) (B 328), for which there appears to be a tentative Caucasian correspondence, Hinalugian *b'za* 'pear', with a possibility that Gk *apion* and Lat *pirum* (< **pisō*) 'a pear', may also be borrowings from an unidentified eastern language (Georgiev 1981: 343). However, Georgiev's explanation why the so-called pan-Mediterranean hypothesis does not hold true for this example is argued with the fact that since e.g. the Slavic *kruša* 'pear' is of eastern origin, as a consequence so must *phěso*. This conclusion certainly begs the question why we find no firmer traces of the distribution of *phěso* in other languages or in Burushaski's closer and more distant neighbours.

In an article specifically dedicated to the Indo-European "pear", Huld (2011) proposes that **A₁pisō* is an original Proto Indo-European form³ and that the Burushaski form is to be explained as a loanword from an unattested Old Indic form, even if not found anywhere in Indic and Iranian. Considering the extensive research on the possible Indo-European (e.g. Čašule 2012) or Indo-Hittite correlation of Burushaski (Hamp 2013) it could be that the term is a shared Mediterraneanism in Burushaski.

In this context we should point to the Burushaski generic term for 'fruit': *phamól*, x sg and pl, d.pl. *phamólinć* (in Sh *phamúl* 'dried fruit', Balti *phaxmul*) (B 322). The word is not found elsewhere in Indo-Aryan and it can be correlated with Lat *pomum* 'a fruit; a fruit-tree; an orchard fruit', OFrench *pommel*, dim. of *pome* 'apple', where *-el* goes back to IE *-(o)lo, secondary suffix forming

¹ For example Berger derives Bur *phaák* 'fig' from IA (T 9063, also Sh *phaág*) (B 320).

² We reproduce for easier reference Berger's (1998 I: 13) table of the phonological system of Hz Ng Burushaski, which is valid for the Yasin dialect as well (Ys Bur does not have the phoneme *ch* – see also Tiffou-Pesot (1989: 7-9):

	<i>a</i>					<i>ʃ</i>	<i>ʃ́</i>	<i>s</i>	
<i>e</i>	<i>o</i>		<i>qʰ</i>	<i>kʰ</i>	<i>.tʰ</i>	<i>tʰ</i>	<i>.ç</i>	<i>ç</i>	<i>ç̣</i>
<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>ɬ</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>ç</i>	<i>ḉ</i>	<i>ḉ̣</i>
			<i>ǵ</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>z</i>
			<i>ñ</i>		<i>n</i>				<i>m</i>

y b l r

Notes: 1. All five vowels can be long. 2. Retroflex consonants are marked with an underdot. 3. *w* and *y* are allophones of *u* and *i*. 4. *ç* = *ts* in Lorimer and *c* in Tiffou-Pesot (1989). 5. *ǵ* = *ɣ* is a voiced fricative velar /ɣ/. See Čašule (2010) on the extensive variation of *ǵ* and *g*. 6. *ñ* = [ɲ] or [ŋ] [nk]. 7. *y* is a retroflex. 8. A hyphen before a word indicates that it is used only with the pron. prefixes. For the internal variation and alternations see Čašule (2010: 5-19) (2003b: 24-29).

³ A further Indo-European fruit name of relevance is Bur *báalt*, dbl. pl. *báaltiso*, NH also *báaltinć*. The double plural might point to an older form **báaltis*. Berger (1956) gives parallels with developments from IE **ab(e)l-* 'apple' (IEW 1) (Wat 1), but also with Basque. We can segment the Burushaski word as **a-baal-to-is*, perhaps with initial metathesis **abaltis* > **baaltis-o*. The consensus at present appears to be that the word for 'apple' is most likely an IE development (linked to the nativity of the apple in the central European areas involved) (Trubačev 1974 : I, 44-47), rather than a PIE substratal word, which makes it very difficult to believe that the word 'travelled' from Burushaski to the Central European areas, but would rather point to a different process and sequence.

diminutives (in Latin in various adjectival suffixes), to which we have correlated the Bur nominal and adjectival suffix *-lo-*. There is also evidence of a historical diminutive suffix *-l-* e.g. in Burushaski words like *dambálum* 'slight ascent, easy ascent' (B 113) (*-um* is the main adjectival suffix), from IE **dhm̥bhos-* 'swelling, mound' or in *baḍalík* 'a small metal bowl (for drinking from)' (L 64) (B 29) or in plant names like *kamból* 'a peeled bough (or stem) of a *múndal* willow, 5 or 6 inches in diameter' (LW 150), comparable with Lith *kamblys* 'stem without leaves' (Trubačev 1974, XII: 46) or Bur *kakól* 'a wild rhubarb' (BYs 156), *pétal* 'petal of apricot' (BYs 169) etc.

The Latin word is of unknown etymology (Glare 1982: 1400; Ernout-Meillet 1959: 520 (possibly from a Mediterranean source?).⁴

A plant name that points to a Mediterranean source for Burushaski is *lilíóo*, pl. *lilíóomićin*, *lilíóomin*; Ng *lilóo* also in Sh *lilóo* 'violet' (B 266) (the older singular form could be **lilíóom*. Berger with a ? points to an uncertain (with *n > l*) connection with T 7563 (*níla* 'dark blue, dark green, black'). We can compare the Burushaski word with Gk *léirion*, Lat *lilium* 'lily' which have been derived from Egyptian *hrr-t*, also Coptic *hrēri*, *hlēli* 'lily' (Katičić 1976: 56), although Huld (1983: 88) has rightfully pointed out that similar words are found in many different languages: e.g. Basque *lili*, Estonian *lill* or Alb *lule* 'flower'. The Burushaski correspondence is however semantically very specific.

Consider also Bur *báardum* x sg and pl, dble pl. *báardumišo* 'red' (B 27), which can be compared to Arm *vard* 'rose', OIr **wrda*, noting that the Armenian word also belongs to a group of words considered of wider Mediterranean distribution and presumed to be common loans from an unattested language. (For discussion, see Katičić 1976: 55-56, who also notes Aramaic *vardā* 'rose'.)

We find evidence of a Southern European word in Burushaski in *tukóro* 'section of dry pumpkin, section of poppy capsule; slice of gourd' (L 358) (B 448). It can be compared with PSlavic **tyky* 'pumpkin' which is considered a cultural word into Slavic from Southern Europe. Some linguists propose a Pelasgian source. Other etymologies point to an autochthonous Slavic word from the verb **tykati* 'to push, press' (Gluhak 1993: 626-627, 618). The existence of the suffix *-ur* in plant names (Berger 1956: 15) justifies a segmentation *tuk-óro*.

There is also Bur *kúrpan* 'gentian' (L 237) (B 248), which corresponds closely to Rom *curpen*, *curpañ* 'a climber plant' and Alb *kulpër*, *kurpën*, *kurper* 'Clematis; wild climber plant', which is considered to be of substratal, Paleobalkan origin (Neroznak 1978: 205).

Perhaps the most convincing example of a plant name of (Eastern) Mediterranean origin is Bur *khukhunmoóro* Ng 'a plant', *heṭ khukhunmoóro* or *das khukhunmoóro* 'a type of vetch (*Oxytropis* spec. aff. *O. mollis* Royle ex Bentham - 'eine Fahnenwicke) fed to sheep', *asilí khukhunmoóro* 'Cicer songaricum Stephan ex DC. = eine Kichererbsenart (a type of chick-pea)' (B 257). In the first instance we can compare this cultural word with Gk (dial.) *kukumára* 'a southern tree, a decorative oak with grape-like flowers and fruits, *Arbutus unedo*', *kukunára* 'gall-nut', borrowed into Blg *kukumár* 'a type of oak, *Rubus*', *kukumár* 'a type of tall mushroom', Mcd dial. *kukumára* 'cob of maize' (dial. also *kukumór*, *kokomár*) (BER III:103-104). These Balkan words can be correlated further perhaps with Gk *kykyon* (<**kwik-* ?) 'cucumber', Lat *cucumis*, gen. *cucumeris* (found throughout the Romance languages: Itl *cocomero*; from Lat > OHG *kukumer*, all: 'cucumber'. It is considered to be a 'Pelasgian', i.e. Southern European plant name which was later dispersed widely (G 626-627).

⁴ For a discussion of other cultural words of Mediterranean and Ancient Balkan origin, see Čašule 1998: 9-19.

The Burushaski word clearly belongs to this set and displays the same wide use as in Greek and in the Balkans — the examples given by Berger show that it is used in the names of various different plants, apart from its independent use. The phonological correspondence between Greek, Latin and Burushaski is remarkable. Nevertheless, the retention of *-n-* in Burushaski which can be traced to the Greek development (< Pelasgian) may point that there was another (additional, original ?) source for this cultural word.

Within the Balkan connection we should also mention Bur *asqúr*, ‘blossom, flower; smallpox rash, smallpox’, also *askúr* only in the meaning ‘flower’ (L 26-27) (B 22), which can be compared closely to *askúron* ‘a type of plant’, a Paleobalkan word found in Hesychius without an ethnonym, and defined by Frisk (apud Neroznak 1978: 180) as ‘Art Johanniskraut, Hypericum’ and correlated with Alb *shkurre* ‘bushes, undergrowth’, *shkorre* ‘place overgrown with bushes’, also PSlavic **kъrъ* ‘bush, shrub’, possibly from IE **(s)ker-* ‘to cut’ (IEW 573). Note from the same stem also PSlavic **korъ* / **korъ* ‘measles’, e.g. Polish *kur*, dial. *kor* ‘measles’ (Trubačev 1974: XI: 126-127) (see also Čašule 1998: 13-14, and on the Burushaski derivations from the productive Indo-European stem **(s)ker-*, Čašule 2010: 23-24).

4 Conclusion

Burushaski has a significant number of plant names that originate from the Eastern Mediterranean or Balkan area, that are shared with some of the Indo-European languages. This matches the very close correlation of the Burushaski shepherd vocabulary with the Balkans (Čašule 2009a). Whether we accept the theory of Indo-European origin or correlation with Indo-Hittite or not, we can propose that these cultural words may point to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans as a probable previous (original) area of inhabitation of the Burushaski people.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS OF LANGUAGES

Alb	Albanian	Arm	Armenian
Blg	Bulgarian	Bur	Burushaski
Gk	Greek	IB(uru)	Indo-Burushaski
IE	Indo-European	IH	Indo-Hittite
Itl	Italian	Lat	Latin
Lith	Lithuanian	Mcd	Macedonian
OFrench	Old French	OHG	Old High German
OIrn	Old Iranian	PSlavic	Proto-Slavic
Rom	Romanian	Sh	Shina

ABBREVIATIONS OF SOURCES CITED

B	Berger, H. (1998)	BYs	Berger, H. (1974)
G	Gluhak, A. (1993)	IEW	Pokorny, Julius. (1959)
L	Lorimer, D. L. (1938)	LW	Lorimer, D. L. (1962)
T	Turner, Ralph L. (1966)	Wat	Watkins, Calvert (2000)

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