

ALBANIAN *THIKĒ* 'KNIFE'

In the volume of essays *Languages and Areas: Studies presented to George V. Bobrinskoy* (Chicago 1967) 66--9, I struggled to find cognates and an Indo-European background for the obviously inherited Albanian *thikĕ*, which is the ordinary word for a knife. I was exploring, without finding anything anything conclusive, the possibilities of Indo-Iranian. It seemed to me then, and it still does, that Indo-Iranian assures us of an etymon **kikā* 'sand, gravel'; I preferred then, in consideration of *śitā-* = Lat. *catus* etc., to trace this to **kə-kā*, a zero-grade of **k̑ō-* (= **k'eH_o-*), rather than to **ki-kā*. I further discussed the problems and limitations of the Albanian vocalism and of a suffix in *-k-*.

Beside Skt. *śāṇa*, Mod.Pers. *sān*, Lat. *cōs* 'whetstone' and Skt. *śilā* 'crag', it seems best to regard **kikā* 'gravel' as **kə-kā*. But a much more direct solution for Alb. *thikĕ* now seems possible.

It is understandable that Gustav Meyer and Norbert Jokl never considered comparing Vedic (RV) *śikvan-*, *śikvas-*, (AV) *śikvā* since Grassmann glosses the first two 'stark, tüchtig'. However, Wackernagel (*AiG* II, 2, 903 §720b) glosses them 'schnittzend, beilführend'. We may then extract the base *śik-* with the approximate meaning 'sharp blade'.

In discussing this question with me my late colleague J.A.B. van Buitenen further called my attention to *śikhā* 'tuft of hair, crest, point, tip, border, knife-edge, arrow'¹. I suggest that we have here a direct comparison with the Albanian. The aspirate of *śikhā* may be analyzed like that of *pānthās*, *thiṣṭhātī*, *rātha-* (: Lat. *rota*); in fact, as in *pānthās*, we may have here a duplicate representation of the Indo-European laryngeal both in the aspirate consonant and in the long vowel. We may therefore reconstruct *śikhā* as *śik-H_a-*. This then would be a laryngeal-suffixed form with a base matching that of *śik-van-* *śik-vā-*.

In point of fact, this laryngeal-suffixed form may well have an exact correspondent in the feminine Alb. *thikĕ*. The normal reconstruction for the latter would be **kīkā* or **keikā*². If we choose the latter it may be re-expressed as **keikeH_a* schematically. Thus *śikhā* and *thikĕ* differ only by ablaut. The indic word would be an old ablauting noun **kik-(e)H_a*; the Albanian would represent a guna stem (perhaps by the same rule as was productive in Baltic and Slavic) **keikeH_a*, corresponding to Skt.

1 Note too Pāli *sikhara* 'peak, point or edge of a sword, crest', *sikhā* 'point, edge, crest'.

2 For **k* we may equally have **k^w*.

pánthā, Av. *pantā*. If we reason further, following the paradigm that *jáni/gnā-* once had, we arrive at a possible nominative **keik-H_a* and an oblique (e.g. genitive) **kik-eH_a-os*. Such paradigms would immediately account for the ablaut in the base seen in **kikā* and *keikā*, as well as the aspirate consonantism and the stem-class.

This leads us to a root **keik-* or **keik^W-*, hitherto unrecognized for Indo-European³.

Povzetek
ALBANSKO *THIKĒ* "NOŽ"

Albansko *thikē* "nož" se v prispevku primerja s sti. *śikhā* "čop las, greben, konica, rob, noževo rezilo, puščica" in oba leksema izvaja iz ievr. sklanjatvenega vzorca leksema z laringalnim sufiksom z verjetnim imenovalnikom ednine *k'eik-H_a* in s stranskosklonsko, npr. rodilniško obliko **k'ik-eH_a-os*. Albanski leksem z možnima izhodiščima **k'ikā* in **k'eikā* lahko predstavlja polno stopnjo *k'eik-eH_a*, staroindijski pa ničto **k'ik-(e)H_a-* in z aspiriranim soglasnikom in dolgim soglasnikom tako kot sti. *pánthās* kaže na dvojno zastopanost ievr. laringala. Primerjava odkriva novo ievr. osnovo **k'eik-* ali **k'eik^h-*, ki se ohranja tudi v ved. *śikvan-* *śikvas-* "stark, tüchtig" (Grassman), "schnitzend, beiführend" (Wackernagel).

3 See my discussion of the descendants of this etymon, *Lingua* 34, 1974, 229 ff.