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Implications of Macro-Areal Linguistics

While working on difficult etymologies of Balkan words, a repeating pattern can be observed regarding the geographical occurrence of formally and semantically similar words. Archaic terminology in the Balkans shows roots bearing widespread and deep-level connections with an intensive time depth.

We have tried to show this by means of the example of the widespread root **mand-*, as in *mandra*, as pointed out by Leschber (2011), which has cognates in Romance and Iberian languages, in German languages, in the Balkan languages, in Greek and Turkish, and in Sanskrit. See the Nostratic root **mand-* in Dolgopolsky (2008, pp. 1338–1339, No. 1318) **mAñ(V)* “herd, herd animals”, further attested in the Hamito-Semitic, Ugric and Altaic languages, and in Dravidian languages as *manda*, *mandi*, *mande* “herd, flock of sheep or goats, cattle herd, herd of buffaloes”. Bomhard (2008, p. 48) agrees with the findings on this reconstructed root.

**mokor-*

The Etymological Dictionary of the Slavic Languages (Трубачев, 1992, pp. 115–119) proposes an interrelationship between the Slavic **mogyla*, “tumulus”,

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and the Romanian word. Holzer (1998, p. 58) mentions the protoform Slavic *magŭlā*, which is phonetically closer to the Romanian *măgŭră* and Albanian *magullë*, and discusses the different views on possible loan histories. Vasmer (1921, p. 19) explains the Albanian word as a loan from Slavic. Forms with metathesis as Slavic **gomola/gomula* are regarded as secondary convergences to *magŭlā*. The Etymological Dictionary of the Slavic Languages suggests most scholars assume that this word is a loan in Slavic; according to Wagner (1931, p. 228) it is a loan from a pre-Indo-European substratum language. Since the word occurs in all three groups of Slavic (eastern, western and southern Slavic) it must have been adopted very early into Proto-Slavic, before 600 A. D., before the split of the Slavic languages in the Slavic homeland (see Stojanović, 2010, 2012). This allows interesting implications to be drawn about the extensions of this substratum language, since we can find cognates in the south-eastern European languages.

**magula*, in the Nostratic Dictionary of Dolgopolsky (2008, pp. 1307–1308, No. 1383), is described as having the meaning “top, head, hill”, in the Hamito-Semitic languages, in the Finno-Ugric languages and the Altaic languages; No. 1384a gives the meaning “top, head, hill(ock)”, and includes the Dravidian languages. In the Balkans we can find Romanian *măgŭră*, “high and isolated hill”, Albanian *măgŭlë*, *măgŭljë*, Greek *μαγούλα*, and Slavic **magŭlā*, all from the Balkan substratum **magŭla*, “small lump of land”.

We can find formally and semantically similar words in Berber, e.g., *magoura* in southern Moroccan. Similar words in Iberian languages are: *magurra*, *magurre*, *mogar*, “height” in south-western Spain, *moguer* and *mogar* in the local toponymy, and in Basque in the toponymy *magura*, *mokór*, *mukuru*, “mound, heap”, *magal*, “lower part or slope of a mountain”, and *mokar* and *mukur*, “small rise”, according to Lahovary (1951, p. 194). In Sardinia, *mógoru* and *mógore-ddu* refer to “height, hill, mountain” (Alessio, 1951, p. 244), and *mògoro*, *móguru* to “hillock”, *Mt. Maguri* (see Alessio, 1951, p. 248; Haarmann 2002, p. 158); similar names are found in the toponymy in Corsica.

In south-western France we can find *magaria*, “mound”, in the Italian toponymical system *màgolo*, and in the Tuscan dialect *màgolo* (Alessio, 1951, p. 250); in the southern Caucasus, in the Georgian language, we find *mag-ali*, “eminence, mountain” (min. 11 mountains/toponymy), *magori*, “haystack”; according to Lahovary (1951, p. 194) in north-eastern Caucasian languages *meqer*; and in Dravidian languages *mōggara* “mound”, cf. in South Dravidian *mōggara* and *mokkala*, “heap” (Lahovary, 1951, p. 194).

**kuk-*

The Slavic **kuka* is evident in many Slavic languages (Трубачев, 1987, pp. 86–87, <http://etymolog.ruslang.ru/index.php?act=essja>). The Romanian *cúcă*, “high and isolated hill, hilltop” is without etymological explanation. The word is polysemantic in Romanian. It occurs in the toponymical system of Romania and Bulgaria (see, for example, Кираджиев, 1999, pp. 446–447).

In the Nostratic Dictionary of Dolgopolsky (2008, p. 461, No. 451) it is described with the meaning “thorn, point, summit”, and it occurs in the Hamito-Semitic and Finno-Ugric languages, in the latter with two semantic variants: (1) “sharp edge, hammer”, (2) “hill” as, e.g., in Bulgarian.

In the Balkans we find this polysemantic word in Romanian as *cúcă*, “hill”, *cucui*, “tuft of a bird, crest”, *ciúcă*, “summit, peak”, and *cioc*, “beak, hammer, mountain peak”, as well as in the Romanian and Bulgarian toponymy. In Bulgarian, *čuka*, “summit, peak, rocky hill, hammer”, and in Serbian *čuka*, “steep mountain”, are related to the Slavic **čukъ*.

Meyer-Lübke REW Nos. 2356 and 2359 mentions a Mediterranean **cūcco-* (see also Alessio, 1951, p. 249). Hubschmid (1960, p. 90) suggests this derives from an Eastern pre-Indo-European substratum (cf. Lahovary 1963, p. 169f) *kuk*.

Kukkuruta is “hill, peak” (Hubschmid, 1960) in the toponymy/oronyms in Northern Spain; in Basque *kukulu* is “head”, *kukur* “tuft, comb, crest”, *kukil* or *kuku-tz* “top”, *kukula* “summit, top of the tree”; in Sardinia *cuccuru* is “head, hillock, summit”, as seen in the mountain names *Monte Cucco*, *Monte Cuccu*, etc. The Logudorese *kúkkuru* is “summit”, and the Corsican *kukkulu* “mountain peak”; in south-western France/northern Provence, *kugul’un* is “summit”. In Sicily *cucca* is “head”, and in southern Italian dialects *cucuzzola* is “top of the head, hillock” etc., in northern Italy/southern Switzerland *kuk* or *kük* is “rock, steep rock”. Even in the German dialect in Switzerland, *gütsch* is “rock, steep rock”; in the Caucasus, *koka* is “top, point”; in the Iranian languages of the Caucasus region Tati/Talyši *čuk* is “hammer”; in the north-eastern Caucasus *kuk* is “top, summit” (according to Hubschmid, 1960), and in the Dravidian languages *kuk(k)* is “head”, and in Nostratic languages “top, summit, crown (of the head)” (Dolgopolsky, 2008, pp. 592–593, No. 608a).

The Romanian *mal* (Leschber, 2012) means (1) “mountain, hill” or (2) “shore, coast”, and occurs in many toponymical names. Its meaning in Meglenoromanian is “high heap”. In ancient times it is found in Dacian toponymy: *malva*, as in *Dacia Malvensis*. Loanwords from Romanian are the Bulgarian *mal*, “high,

steep banks” (dialects of Novo Selo, Vidinsko) or “shore, which was washed out by heavy rain or a torrent” (Razgrad dialect). Related to the Albanian *mal* “mountain”, pl. “mountain range” are several local toponyms – a Venetian river name in Carinthia, *Mal-ont-īna*, a South Illyrian toponym *Malontum*, an Illyrian toponym *Dimallum* and names such as *Malontum*, *Malontina*.

Formally and semantically similar words are seen for example in Basque, in the toponymy of the Catalan Pyrenees *mal-* (*malo*, *mals*) with the meaning “rock” (Badia i Margarit, 1949), not only related to Albanian and Romanian words, but also to the Basque *malda*, “mountain slope” and *malkar* “precipice”. Lahovary (1963, p. 360) writes that the Basque *mal*, *mala*, and *mall* mean “mountain, hill, cliff”.

Poghirc (1982, p. 316) underlines the Mediterranean parallels to the Romanian and Albanian forms, as well as a few Iberian and Ligurian toponyms, based on the reconstructed form **mello*, “hill”, related to the Gascon *malh*, “rock” in south-western France.

We can also find parallels in Celtic languages: Old Irish *mell*, “round object, hill, ball”, Middle Irish *mell*, “lump, hill”, frequently seen in the toponymic system of Britain, and in Slavic languages: Protoslav **moliti*, **molěti* (Berneker, 1908–1914b, p. 74; Pokorny, 1959, pp. 721–722). Rix (2001, pp. 433–434) relates these to the Indo-European **melh₃-*. Kurkina (Куркина, 1975) analyses the Slavic etymological nest, including the roots **mbl-*, **mil-*, **mol-* and **mal-*, “to overhang”. Beekes (2010, p. 223) relates the Ancient Greek *μολεῖν* (aorist) to the same Indo-European root **melh₃-*, “to come” (cf. in Pokorny 1959, pp. 721–722). Ancient Greek *προ-μολή* means “foothills of a mountain, river”.

In Baltic languages one can find the Latvian *mala*, “slope, riverside, lakeside, beach, border, area”; as in the toponym *Jurmala*, *jūr-mala* means literally “seashore”, the Lithuanian (obsolete) *malà* “country, landscape”, and *lýg-mala* “height of the edge”.

What is surprising is the occurrence of the Burushaski *mal*, “field”, and similar words in the North Caucasian languages, with the meaning “winter pasture, farmstead” (Bengtson, 2010, p. 79); in the NCED the North Caucasian words are related to the Proto-North Caucasian **malχwē* (795).

Lahovary (1963, p. 360) points to formally and semantically similar words in Dravidian languages. Burrow and Emeneau (1984, p. 420, Nr. 4742) list the Tamil *malai*, “hill, mountain”, the Malayalam *mala*, “mountain, raised land, hill-land”, the Telugu *mala*, “mountain” (see Burrow & Emeneau, 1984 for many more examples). The following words are Dravidian loans in Sanskrit:

malaya-, “mountain range on the east of Malabar, the western Ghâts; garden, celestial grove”, *māla*-, “forest or wood near a village”. Turner (1962–1966, p. 569, No. 9902) mentions the Sinhala *malaya*, “mountainous, wild”, and Dolgopolsky (2008, p. 1331, No. 1411) lists the Nostratic **mal*- “hill, mountain, something protruding” and the Indo-European **mel*-, “high bank, mountain”.

The Bulgarian *muga* and its cognates are seen from a global perspective by Leschber (Лешбер, 2013).

There are similar words in the Basque language: *mugil*, *mugull*, *murgil*, “bud, tip of a branch”, *mukolo*, “indurated spot under the skin, nub”, *mukurru*, “accumulation, peak, pile”, *murgil* (2), “flower bud”, *mugi* (1), “hill”, *muga*, “border, boundary, stone”, *mukolo*, “tumour” (cf. the root **muk*-/*mok*-, “hard, blunt”), *mugel*, “numbness”, *mukur*, “basis of a tree trunk”, *mukurru*, *mukuro*, “full”, *mokor* “clod of earth”.

There is also the Romance **mugus*, “mountain pine” and the Latin *Pinus mugo*, “mountain pine”, of Rhaetian origin.

In Italian: North Italian dialect *mugo*, “tree bud, tree fruit”, *mogo*, “bud, flower bud, tree bud, pine cone”, *mukka*, “blunt”, Italian Swiss dialects *múgo*, “(goat) without horns”.

In Romanian: *múgur* (*mogor*), “bud of a plant, small pathological outgrowth, small tumour”, *mugurós*, “with many buds”, *a mugura*, *a înmugurí*, “to bud”, linked to the Modern Greek *μοῦγκρος*.

In Bulgarian: *mùga*, “swelling, bump”, Bulgarian dialect *mugàrište*, “rise, hill”, *mùgerica*, “a mound of earth around the stem of a plant”, *mùgerička*, “hillock in the field”, related to *mùga* and *magule* (Български етимологичен речник, p. 299);

In Albanian: *mugull*, “outgrowth, bud, tendril”.

According to Lahovary (1954–1955, p. 338), we can find parallels in “a Caucasian dialect (without exact source)” *mugo*, *moyo*, “acorn”, the Dravidian root *mug*-, “to end”, derivative *mugatu*, “restricted”, the South Dravidian *mugul*, “bud” and *mugula/mukula*, “bud that opens”, the Tamil *mugul*, “an emerging fruit” and *mug*-, “to cover; which is not yet open”, the Kannada *mugul*, “bud, sprout” and *mugul*, *mugaḷu*, “bud, bud that opens”, and the Tulu *muguru*, “sprout, bud”, as well as the Tamil *mokkul*, “flower bud”, the Kannada *mugul* and *moggu*, the Tulu *muguru*, the Kui *mogo*, and the Telugu *mogga*, “flower bud”.

Dravidian loans in Sanskrit are *mukula*-, *mukura*- and *mudgara*-, “bud”, and in Prakrit *moggara*, “bud”.

Formally and semantically similar words in other language families are the Uralic **muk-* and the Finnish *mukula* and *mukura*, “hump”, the Chermisian *mugel*, “hump”, the Yakut *mugur*, “blunt”, the Mongolian *muqur*, “blunt, blunt horns”, the Tuvanian and Yakut *mugur*, “blunt”, the Manchu (Tungusic) *mokto*, “blunt”, *mokso* “to break”, the Palaeosiberian **moq-/ muq-*, “to cut”, the Ainu *mukara*, “axe”, and perhaps in Dyirbal, an Australian language the formally and semantically similar word *mugulnba*, “round”.

Etymologically difficult words in the Balkans can therefore reveal links with words in the Iberian, Basque, and Sardinian languages and protolanguages, as well as languages across the Romance language area, including the mountain dialects, e.g., in the Alps. Links are also revealed within the Balkans, in Asia Minor in the case of *mandra*, in Caucasian languages (with both the southern and north-eastern Caucasian linguistic groups involved), and almost as a rule in the non-Indo-European Dravidian languages. The underlying linguistic substratal layer seems to have existed or to have been spread over a very large area.

Basque is not seen as a Nostratic language, but according to Starostin, Nikolayev and Ruhlen as part of the highly archaic Dene-Caucasian macro-family. The lexical parallels in such distant language groups cannot be explained as mere coincidences. Attempts to suffocate in polemics the urgently required debate over deep-level language relationships (which are numerous) are not helpful in establishing clearly the origin of etymologically difficult Balkan words.

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Implikacje językoznawstwa makroarealnego

Na przykładzie niektórych bałkańskich słów o skomplikowanej etymologii autorka dokonuje próby pokazania możliwości i potencjału badawczego perspektywy makroarealnej. W każdym wypadku daje ona głębszy wgląd w historię, rozwój językowy i kulturowy tego regionu.

Słowa kluczowe: językoznawstwo historyczne; etymologia; geolingwistyka

Implications of Macro-Areal Linguistics

Using the examples of some Balkan words with a difficult etymology, we attempt to show the possibilities for and implications of applying a macro-areal linguistic perspective to establish a wider view of the linguistic and cultural history of a region.

Keywords: historical linguistics; etymology; geolinguistics

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