

The giant of words - Eric Partt Hamp (November 16, 1920 – February 17, 2019)

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Abstract: *It is my great pleasure to offer this small piece in recognition of the fine scholarship through which Eric Hamp has contributed to our language, linguistics and culture.*

In this contribution honoring Eric P. Hamp, I shall examine end description his contribution for linguistics. The topic of my paper is to examine some facts about Albanian and some Slavic or Romani languages.

Keywords: Eric Hamp, linguistics, word, Albanian language,

Interdiction: Eric Hamp, was a professor of linguistics for more than 40 years. He has taught at the University of Chicago. He was an expert in languages ranging from those with Indo-European roots like Albanian to Native American languages including Quileute and Ojibwa. Hamp's contributions to the field included over 3.000 publications, Friedman said. "Most of them very short but very important, very incisive. He could find some small detail in a language or a dialect and from that detail could reconstruct something with huge implications." Hamp's special interest in Albanian. When it was hard to get permission to travel to Albania, Hamp continued his research on the language by visiting villages in Greece and southern Italy where Albanian was spoken. Joseph said Hamp visited hundreds of such villages, compiling word lists, verb information and noun forms. "He had a grasp of outlying Albanian dialects gathered by field work," Joseph said. Hamp was an American linguist and he has particular interests in Celtic languages and Albanian.

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Hamp's contributions to understanding of the Albanian language was recognized in 2012 around the time of his 92nd birthday when Posta Shqiptare, the national postal service of Albania, issued a stamp in a series commemorating three foreign Albanologists. Hamp was the only living Albanologist recognized, according to the University of Chicago.

“He was a giant in our field,” said Brian Joseph, professor of linguistics at Ohio State University, who met Hamp early in his career and considered him one of his intellectual mentors. “He would be called an historical linguist,” Joseph said. “He was interested in the history of individual languages and the way languages change. “He had a remarkable command of dozens of languages and drew on that vast knowledge to develop ideas about the way languages changed in general ... and how various languages came to be the way they are.”

Former University of Chicago colleague Victor Friedman called Hamp “one of the greatest Indo-European linguists of the 20th and early 21st centuries ... a real master linguist.” Friedman started graduate school at the University of Chicago in 1970 and said Hamp was a mentor for him there. Friedman, the Andrew W. Mellon Distinguished Service professor emeritus in the humanities at U. of C., said some of Hamp's most significant contributions were in Celtic and Albanian linguistics — “Precisely because these are on the margins of Indo-European interests, and both of these branches contain precious remnants, precious data for reconstruction of Indo-European and the history of Indo-European languages.”

Graydon Megan said: Hamp was chair of the Department of Linguistics from 1966 to 1969, and was director for the Center for Balkan and Slavic Studies from 1965 to 1991, Silverstein said. The center sometimes drew visiting delegations of linguists, some from what was then the Soviet bloc. During their visits, the Hamps would entertain, and Margot Hamp would take them on a shopping trip to what was then the Marshall Field's department store for goods they couldn't get at home. “I suspect one of the reasons for the constant flow of delegations to the Slavic Center was actually Marshall Field's,” Silverstein said.

Hamp continued to publish conclusions from his work until about three years ago.

“Throughout his whole life, his focus was languages and his work,” his daughter said. “He felt he had this internal mission.”

Hamp (1992) gives us the most thorough account of Albanian numerals and their contribution to the reconstruction of Indo-European. He has argued quite rightly that the perfect etymology must be entirely consistent, but at the same time he recognizes the effects of language contact, e.g. he hypothesizes that Mandrica *gu* ‘2’ results from the influence of Bulgarian (*dy* > **dju* > **d’u* > *gu*) as does the generalization of *tri* for ‘3’ in both genders (also in Ukraine). He likewise notes the opposite effect in Villa Badesa, a Çam-speaking village in Italy, where the generalization of *tri* for both genders apparently serves to distinguish the Arbëresh from the Italian *tre* (cf. Hamp 1992:880), although Italian influence is seen in the vocalism elsewhere in that dialect and also resulted in the replacement of *dh* with *d* in *diét* ‘10’ (Hamp 1992:867-869; cf. also 871- 872, where *tri-* for *tre-* in ‘30’ in Sophikò Arvanitika is presumably due to Greek).

In the continuing I’ll presentations tree studies by Eric Hamp:

1. ALBANIAN *THIKE* '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 *thike*, 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 **kika*. 'sand, ~ravel'; I preferred then, in consideration of *sita*= Lat. *catus* etc., to trace this to **ka-kli.*, a zero-grade of **ko-* (= **k'eH0 -*), rather than to **ki-ka.* I further discussed the problems and limitations of the Albanian vocalism and of a suffix in *-k*. Beside Skt. *sana*, Mod.Pers. *san*, Lat. *cos* 'whetstone' and Skt. *silli*. 'crag', it seems best to regard **kikli*. 'gravel' as **ka-kli.* But a much more direct solution for Alb. *thike* now seems possible. It is understandable that Gustav Meyer and Norbert Jokl never considered comparing Vedic (RV) *śfkvan-*, *śfkvas-*, (AV) *sikva* since Grassmann glosses the first two 'stark, tiichtig'. However, Wackernagel (*AiG* 11, 2, 903 §720b) glosses them 'schnitzend, beilfilhrend'. We may then extract the base *sik-* with the approximate meaning 'sharp blade'. In discussing this question with my late colleague J.A.B. van Buitenen further called my attention to *sfkha* 'tuft of hair, crest, point, tip, border, knife-edge, arrow' I suggest that we have here a direct comparison with the Albanian. The aspirate of *sfkha* may be analyzed like that

of *panthas*, *thf\$thati*, *ratha-* (: Lat. *rota*); in fact, as *inpanthas*, we may have here a duplicate representation of the Indo-European laryngel both in the aspirate consonant and in the long vowel. We may therefore reconstruct

sfkha as *sik-Ha-*. This then would be a laryngeal-suffixed form with a base matching that of *šfkvan-* *sik-va-*. In point of fact, this laryngeal-suffixed form may well have an exact correspondent in the feminine Alb. *thike*. The normal reconstruction for the latter would be **k'l'ka* or **keikli*.² If we choose the latter it may be re-expressed as **keikeHa* schematically. Thus *sfkha* and *thike* differ only by ablaut. The indic word would be an old ablauting noun **kik-(e)Ha*; the Albanian would represent aguna stem (perhaps by the same rule as was productive in Baltic and Slavic) **keikeHa*, corresponding to Skt. Note too PlIII *sikhara* 'peak, point or edge of a sword, crest', *sikha* 'point, edge, crest'.² For **k* we may equally have **kw*.

pantha, Av. *panta*. If we reason further, following the paradigm *thatjanilgna-* once had, we arrive at a possible nominative **keik-Ha* and an oblique (e.g. genitive) **AfkeHa-* *os*. Such paradigms would immediately account for the ablaut in the base seen in **kika* and *keika*, as well as the aspirate consonantism and the stem-class.

This leads us to a root **keik-* or **keikw-*, hitherto unrecognized for Indo-European.

Povzetek

2. ALBANSKO THIKE "NOŽ"

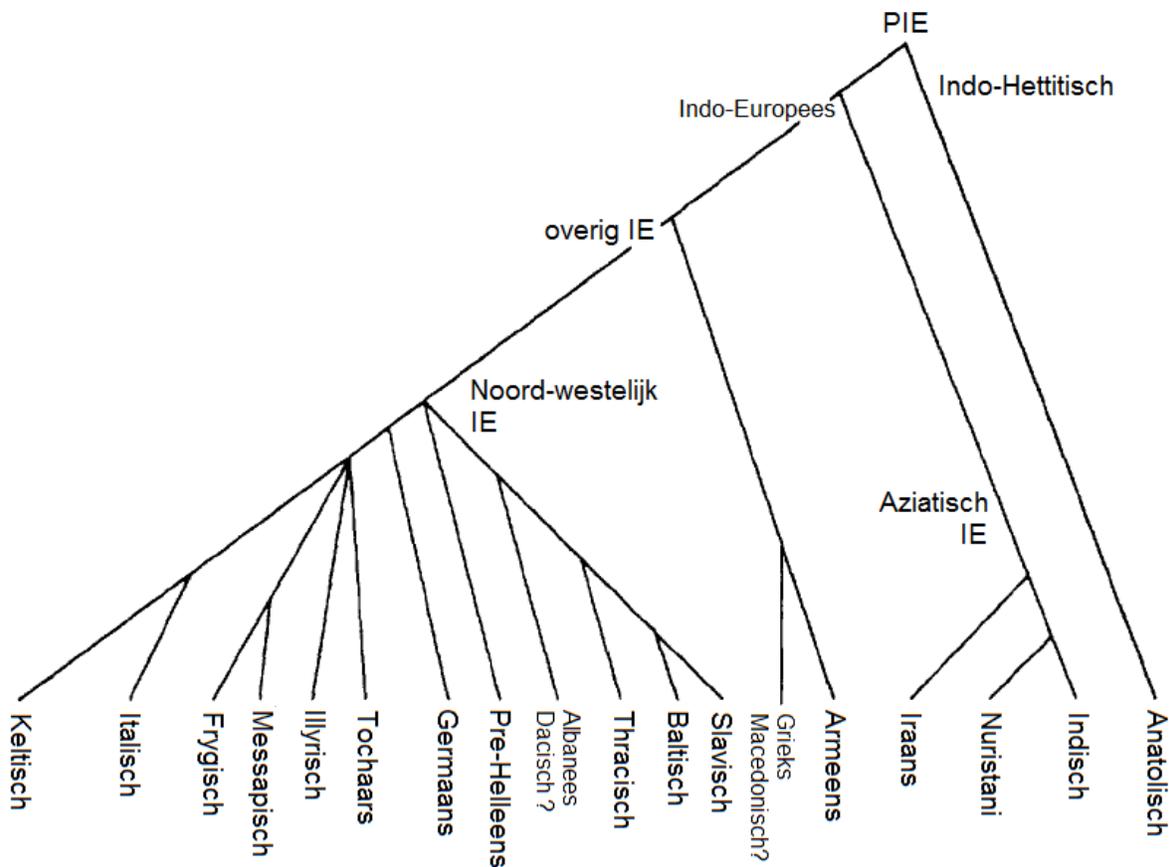
Albansko *thike* "nož" se v prispevku primerja s sti. *sikha* "čop las, greben, konica, rob, noževo rezilo, puščica" in oba leksema izvaja iz ievr. sklanjatvenega vzorca leksema z laringalnim sufiksom z verjetnim imenovalnikom ednine *k'eik-Ha* in s stranskosklonsko, npr. rodilniško obliko *'k'ik-eHa-os*. Albanski leksem z možnima izhodiščima **k'l'ka* in *'k'eika* lahko predstavlja polno stopnjo *k'eik-eHa*, staroindijski pa ničto **k'ik(e)Ha-* in z aspiriranim soglasnikom in dolgim soglasnikom tako kot sti. *panthas* kaže na dvojno zastopanost ievr. laringala Primerjava odkriva novo ievr. osnovo *'k'eik-* ali *'k'eikl-*, ki se ohranja tudi v ved. *šfkvan-* *š{kvas}* "stark, tiichtig" (Grassman), "schnitzend, beilfiihrend" (Wackemagel).

3. A MORPHOLOGICAL LAW

We are familiar in historical linguistics with the notion of Lautgesetz. Non-trivial cases of semantic 'laws' are rather less frequently observed, and certainly less abundantly and explicitly described; some carefully studied changes in kin-terms (e.g. E~vpb~ -6 'woman's father-(mother-)in-law' > rrsv&po~ -6; **bhrtiter-* > *cppdq~/cpphrwp*, &&A@~) provide good

illustrations. I discuss elsewhere the way in which early Greek has transformed a semantics of the land, i.e. of the Indo-European homeland,' into an Aegean semantics of the sea; e.g. *aovro~* 'sea' to Skt. *printti-* Slavic *p@b* 'road', Lat. *pont-* 'bridge < road-crossing (of a stream)' (Hamp 1974 : 231, and 1980a: 192), and *byp& k&t&la rreiv* 'to sail the watery roads i.e. ways'. We might say here that a whole segment of the Greek lexicon and discourse structure added, or acquired, the feature [+MARITIME]. Syntactic laws are less commonly considered in this framework and are less compactly illustrated, but are nonetheless valid and interesting. The attempts to demonstrate SOV > VSO developments belong to such investigations but have been less than successful in their exact and conclusive formulation. Less ambitious would be the statement that for all Indo-European NPs with Adj(unct)s (excepting Quantifiers vel sim.) the resulting order for Lithuanian is Adj + N, whereas for Albanian it is N + Adj.' As we know, **mxī* 'sea' (> Lat. *mare*, OIr. *mu+*" gen. sg. *mara*, Welsh *lret on mor*, Slavic *more*, OE *mere*, *mer(i)sc*) was an areally local borrowed North and West Eurasian term; see Hamp 1979: 162-3.

Eric Hamp proposed his original model of the Indo-European disintegration, including the relic idioms, based on specific isoglosses in phonology, morphology and lexicon.



As can be seen from the foregoing, which builds on insights skillfully elucidated by Eric Hamp, numerals are a locus of both transmitted archaisms and diffused sociocultural practice. The use of Italian in Albanian helps illuminate the use of Greek in Romani, while Turkic calques and copies illuminate different stages of contact with Slavic. Taken together, they both enrich our understanding of the history of Europe and caution us against mechanistic approaches to language that fail to take social relations into account.

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