

ON THE ORIGIN OF GOTHIC *ULBANDUS* 'CAMEL'

Great are the merits of Bojan Čop in Hittite lexicography and etymology. Glancing merely at volume 3 of the *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, the latest to leave my workshop, his ideas have either provided the etyma or pointed the way to the interpretation of such important items as *halkuessar*, *halluwa-*, *halzai-*, *hattalkesna-*, *hazzila-*, *huek-* (both verbs!), and *hu(wa)nhuessar*. May the small token of homage that follows be worthy of his endeavors!

The Semitic word for 'camel', exemplified by Hebrew *gāmāl*, makes its Greek debut as *κάμηλος* in Aeschylus (*Hiketides* 285); via Latin *camēlus* it has conquered the modern west. In the other direction it appears, with some apparent interference from the verb *krámate* 'stride', as Sanskrit *kramela-*, supplementing the old Vedic term *úštra-*, of Indo-Iranian attestation (cf. Avestan *Zaraθ-uštra-*, either 'Old-camel' or 'Camel-driver'). Unlike such relatively neat and short terms, the ungainliness of the beast is more picturesquely expressed by the designations for it in Germanic, Slavic, and Baltic. Starting with Gothic *ulbandus*, the Germanic attestations are ON *ulfalde*, OE *olfend*, OS *olbundeo*, and OHG *olbento*. The Slavic forms (OCS *velibodŭ*, Russian *verbljúd*, Polish *wielbłąd*) appear to have been folk-etymologically twisted in the direction of *velii* 'big, great', whereas the Baltic variants (OPr. *weloblundis*, misrendered as 'mule' by the Elbing Vocabulary [line 437]; Lith. *velbliúdas*) are patent borrowings from Slavic.

Received wisdom¹ presumes for *ulbandus* and company "same origin" as OE *elpend*, OHG *elafant*, i.e. 'elephant' borrowed from Latin *elephas* (*elephant-*) which in turn comes from Greek *ἐλέφας* (*ἐλέφαντ-*). A "transfer of meaning" ('elephant' > 'camel') is assumed, but the best parallel produced is a dialectal Arabic *bil* for 'camel', allegedly a variant of the old word for 'elephant' which ranges from Akk. *pīru* or *pīlu* 'elephant' to Old Persian *pīru-* 'ivory' to Aramaic and Persian *pīl*, Sanskrit (late) *pīlú-*, Arabic *fil*, and Old Norse *fill* 'elephant'². Even this is no parallel at all³, for the Ger-

1 E.g. W.P. Lehmann's recasting of S. Feist's *Gothic Etymological Dictionary* (Leiden, 1986), 375. In the same vein still C. Sandoz, *Latomus* 48 (1989), 753–764.

2 Also *πίρσας* 'elephant' (Hesychius), perhaps 'elephant cow' like Akk. *pīrāti* or Skt. *pillakā*.

3 Weaker still is the alleged derivation of Russian *slon* 'elephant' from Turkic *a(r)slan* 'lion'; Russian *Ruslán* is well taken as such in origin, but *slon* is better traced back to Austroasiatic words for 'elephant' (cf. T. Gamkrelidze and V.V. Ivanov, *Indoeuropejskij jazyk i indoeuropejcy* [Tbilisi, 1984], 524–525). Not so, however, Tocharian B *oñkolmo* (A *oñkalām*) 'elephant', whose source V.V. Ivanov (*Etimologija* 1980 [Moskva, 1982], 166) also surmised in Austroasiatic. In *oñkolmo* may lurk rather an Indo-European

manic words for ‘camel’ are no stray dialectal semantic deviates but engrained across early Germanic before the intrusion of the Greco-Latin word for ‘elephant’. One would have to assume instead that some remote proto-designation existed from which evolved semantically ‘elephant’ on the one hand, ‘camel’ on the other. But the earliest attainable meaning of *ἐλέφαντ-* is rather ‘ivory’: *e-re-pa-(te-)* is well attested as an ornamental material in Mycenaean Greek, but the beast itself was unknown in Europe, being mentioned first for Ethiopia and Libya by Herodotus (3.114, 4.191), and described for India by Aristotle (*Hist. Anim.* 2). Syro-Phoenician sources of Euphratic ivory were accessible to the Greeks earlier than the animal made a mental imprint, even as in Italy Punic mediation produced the *ebur* (from a Hamitic term seen in Egypt. *3bw* ‘elephant’ and ‘ivory’)⁴ way before the *Luca bos* or *bos Luca* that was militarily introduced to Italy ahead of Hannibal by Pyrrhus in 280 b.c.e. and later described in lumbering detail by Lucretius (5:1301–2). Clearly, therefore, *ἐλέφαντ-* entered Greek as a term for ivory, rather than as a zoonym; only later did metonymy include the animal source of the product⁵.

Additionally, the discovery of *lahpa-* as the Hittite term for ‘ivory’ (matching Akk. *šinnu* at Ugarit)⁶ has clarified the sources of *ἐλέφαντ-*. It did not stop Gamkrelidze and Ivanov from Indo-European etymologizing (still drawing in *ulbandus*, etc.)⁷, and may have led Laroche⁸ to overstress similarities to the Semitic terms for ‘ox’

compound ‘snake-handed’ (cf. Lucretius 2:538 *anguimanos elephantos*, 5:1301 *boves Lucas ... anguimanos*), made up of cognates of Lat. *anguis* and *palma* (OIr. *lām* ‘hand’), i.e. **angh^wi-p^lAmōn*. This makes more sense than A.J. Van Windekens’ **anq-olmō(n)* ‘bent-being’ (i.e. with curved trunk; *Le tokharien* 1 [Louvain, 1976], 337) or J.E. Rasmussen’s **h₂mp^hi-k^w]h₁mah₂* (allegedly elephant as ‘servant’, similar in form and meaning to Gk. *ἀμφίπολος*; *Tocharian and Indo-European Studies* 2 [1988] 166–183; *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 21 [1988], 92). Cf. J. Puhvel, *HS* 106.

- 4 Also in the Hebrew hapax *šen-ha-bbīm* ‘tooth of elephants’ (usually simply *šēn* ‘tooth’ or *qarnōt šēn* ‘horns of tooth’ for ‘ivory’). On the increasingly dubious relevance of Skt. *ibha-* ‘elephant’ see M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (Heidelberg, 1988), 194.
- 5 In languages closer to elephant habitats the distinction was clearer from the start: Vedic for ‘elephant’ was *mṛgō hastīn-* ‘beast with hand’, and ‘ivory’ was Skt. *hastidantam*. Sumerian had *am.si* ‘elephant’ (*am* sign seemingly made up of *gud* + *kur* ‘mountain ox’, *si* ‘horn’; thus ‘horned mountain ox’) and *ka+ud am.si* ‘ivory’ (literally ‘tooth of elephant’, like Akk. *šinnu* [pīri]). In modern languages such derivation has reasserted itself (e.g. German *elfenbein*, Danish *filsten*).
- 6 See *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* 3.1 (1980), 12–13; J. Tischler, *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar* 2 (1990), 14–15. J.-C. Billigmeier (*A Linguistic Happening in Memory of Ben Schwartz* [Louvain, 1988], 321–331) suggested that Lat. *Luca bos* is in reality *lucabos*, a late Asianic (“neo-Hittite”, perhaps Lycian) survival of *lahpa-* (presumably meaning ‘elephant’ in addition to ‘ivory’), and that *bos Luca* was a Roman folk interpretation. This hunch puts a lot of faith in Pyrrhus’ Hellenistic army employing eastern mahouts who instantly taught their exotic term for ‘elephant’ to the Italic natives under battle conditions. More probably *bos Luca* is a genuine “nativism”, like Sumerian *am.si* (see fn. 5); cf. R. Arena, *Rivista di filologia* 116 (1988), 185–197.
- 7 Loc.cit. in fn. 3. Lehmann (see fn. 1) erroneously claims that Th. von Grienberger (*SÖAW* 142/8 [1900], 225) denied an early relationship of *ulbandus* and *elephant-*; G. did exactly the opposite, postulating an Indo-European prototype of both.

(Akk. *alpu*, etc.), but it established a likely term for ‘ivory’ in the Syrian-Anatolian-Helladic orbit of the latter half of the second millennium, one that has no plausible Indo-European origin or connection with ‘camel’ words such as Gothic *ulbandus*.

What then of the latter? Otto Schrader⁹ had a thought on *ulbandus* which deserves to be quoted: “An einem Zusammenhang mit lateinisch *elephantus* ist schwerlich zu denken. Vielleicht gehört got. *ulbandus* wie andere undeutbare Kulturwörter dieser Sprache (z.B. *peikabagms* ‘Dattelpalme’, *smakka* ‘Feige’, *baírabagms* ‘Maulbeerbaum’) zu dem Sprachgut, das die Goten nach ihrer Ankunft am Schwarzen Meer von ihren Beutezügen in Kleinasien heimbrachten”.

This suggestion may have been an inspired one, for it appears that Hittite supplies what may be either a borrowing source or a cognate for *ulbandus*. There is the word *huwalpant-* which means ‘humpback’, as in the teratology lists of birth omnia (*KBo* XIII 34 IV 3–4 *takku SAL-za hāsi n-as* [...] *huwalpanza* ‘if a woman gives birth and [the baby] [is] a humpback...’). There is further the derived noun *hu(wa)lpanzina-*, *hulpanzana-* ‘hump, protuberance, embossment’, both in an anatomical sense (*KBo* XIII 31 I 6) and referring to metal ornamentation (e.g. *KUB* XLII 69 Vs. 25–26 *ĜÍR URU* *Hatta arahzan[da... [...]] 30 hulpanzanas GUŠ[KIN* ‘swords of Hatti, all around thirty embossments of gold’; these were of the type of the Homeric *ξίφος* [or *φάσγανον*] *ἀργυρόηλον* ‘silver-studded sword’). From a denominative verb *hulpanzinai-* ‘emboss’ there exist both Hittite and Luwian-type passive participles, e.g. *KBo* II 1 I 38 1 *URUDUĜÍR TA GUŠKIN hūwal<pa>zinan* ‘one bronze dagger embossed with gold’; *KBo* XX 47, 11–12 *nu-za LUGAL-us ... [hu]lpanzinanda wasiyazi* ‘the king dons embossed regalia’; *KUB* XII 1 IV 34 *GU]ŠKIN hulpanzinaines* ‘[shoes] embossed with gold’¹⁰.

The external similarities of *hu(wa)lpant-* and *ulband-* require little comment. The Gothic *u-*stem is unexpected; considering the Luwian elements such as the participle *hulpanzinaima-*, one would have looked for an *i-* stem **hu(wa)lpanti-* as perhaps underlying the derivative *hulpanzina-*. The camel being called ‘humpback’ is self-explanatory. As Indo-European reconstruction can serve **Hw̥lb(h)o-* related etymologically to Skt. *ūlbam*, Lat. *volba* ‘uterus, womb’, and perhaps to Hittite *huelpi-* ‘newborn’. The question whether *ulbandus* is a borrowing from Anatolian into early Germanic or cognate Indo-European remains open; perhaps the typically Anatolian *-nt-* suffix tends to tilt the balance in favor of borrowing, thus giving Schrader’s intuition its full due.

8 *Revue de philologie* 39 (1965), 56–59; cf. E. Masson, *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec* (Paris, 1967), 80–83.

9 *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1917–29), 1:553.

10 For full data, see J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary* 3 (Berlin, 1991), 424–426.

Povzetek
IZVOR GOTSKEGA *ULBANDUS* 'KAMELA'

Slovanska in germanska beseda za kamelo (npr. gotsko *ulbandus* in starocerkvenoslovansko *velibōdŭ*) se navadno povezuje z besedo elefant 'slon' (grško *ἐλέφαντ*). Ta povezava je sporna: *ἐλέφαντ* spada k hetitskemu *lahpa-* 'slonova kost', vtem ko je sorodnik besede *ulbandus* hetitsko *huwalpant-* 'grbavec' in njegove izpeljanke s pomenom 'grba' ali 'izboklina'.