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*RIVISTA DI LINGUISTICA STORICA
E DI LETTERATURA COMPARATA*



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*... perché i re granchi
D'oppugnar l'abbicì non fur mai stanchi.*

Giacomo Leopardi

La rivista si propone di concretizzare, in un numero annuale, ricerche che spaziano nell'ambito della Linguistica storica e della Letteratura comparata senza preclusioni geografiche e temporali, secondo una rigorosa impostazione di analisi testuale e semantica svolta su testi in lingua originale. Essa intende proseguire il magistero e l'attività di studio di Enrica Salvaneschi, classicista e titolare della cattedra di Letterature comparate dell'Università degli Studi di Genova. L'idea di unire linguistica e letteratura, classicità e modernità, va incontro sia a esigenze di tipo scientifico (interdisciplinarietà) sia alla necessità di ricucire uno strappo immotivato tra le varie materie.

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Albanian *bythë* f. ‘backside, bottom’

Giulio IMBERCIADORI*

The aim of this paper is to shed new light on the etymology of the Albanian body part name *bythë* f. (def. *bytha*, pl. *bythë*) ‘backside, bottom’, which lacks a convincing explanation.

The paper is structured as follows: (i) section 1 discusses the attestations and meanings of *bythë* in the Albanian literature and lexicography; (ii) section 2 critically reviews the previous explanations of the Albanian word and finds none of them to be compelling; (iii) section 3 proposes a new etymology of Alb. *bythë*, namely, a connection with the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root **b^heu_h-* ‘(be[come]) hollow’; (iv) section 4 discusses the details of this connection as well as the morphology of the other derivatives of PIE **b^heu_h-*; (v) section 5 concludes the paper.

1. *Philological survey*¹

1.1. In the Gheg speaking area, *bythë* is attested since Franciscus Blanchus’ (or Bardhi’s) *Dictionarium Latino Epiroticum* (1635), where the definite form *bytha* translates both Lat. *culus* ‘ass’ (f. 16.27) and Lat. *podex* ‘anus’ (f. 101.2)². On f. 110.27, the syntagm *me u ndēm m bythë*

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¹ See also the discussion by Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *BÝTH|Ë -a*, in Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, Olav HACKSTEIN et al., *DPEWA*, URL <https://www.dpwa.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary/?lemmaid=24641>, last access: August 20, 2024.

² See Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *Dictionarium latino-epiroticum per R. D. Franciscum Blanchum*, (Romae 1635). *Botim kritik dhe konkordanca leksikore*, Shkodra: Botime Françeskane, 2008,

(literally ‘to stretch oneself in [the] ass’) is employed as a translation of Lat. *procumbere* ‘fall down, prostrate’³.

The second attestation of Alb. *bythë* occurs in the short Albanian-Turkish lexicon composed in Northern Albania (probably in Shkodra or Bushat) by the Osman dervish Evliya Çelebi (1662): see the entry no. 38 *të qifsha të bythë* ‘I fuck you [literally optative] in [the] ass’⁴.

In Old Gheg, *bythë* is also attested five times in Francesco Maria da Lecce’s *Dittionario Italiano-Albanese* (1702), in which it translates It. ‘culo; ano; podice [ass; anus]’ (f. 68r no. 3218) and It. ‘culo [ass]’ (f. 124v no. 5936). On f. 67v no. 3205, the syntagm *bytha e gjilpanësë* is employed metaphorically to gloss It. *cruna dell’ago* ‘eye of the needle’ and is given as a synonym of Alb. *bira e gjilpanësë* ‘id.’ (where Alb. *birë* means ‘hole’). Da Lecce is the first author to attest to the following divergent meanings of Alb. *bythë*: ‘pianta d’albero o erba [sole of a tree or grass]’ (f. 188v no. 9006) and ‘tronco d’albero [trunk of a tree]’ (f. 255r no. 12290) – in the latter case, *bythë* is given as a synonym of Alb. *trup*, literally ‘body’⁵. As the following discussion will show, these divergent meanings are best explained if one assumes that Alb. *bythë* developed a metaphorical semantics ‘bottom / lower part [literally ass] of a tree’. In some dialects, the latter semantics could be metonymically extended to denote the whole trunk.

Finally, the following Gheg-oriented dictionaries from the 19th and 20th century basically confirm the synchronic picture sketched above on the basis of Old Gheg – see the glosses (i) ‘ano; culo, deretano [anus; ass, backside]’ in Rossi⁶ (1866), (ii) ‘deretano, falda, pendio [backside,

pp. 128-129, 298-299, 580; Kolë ASHTA, *Leksiku historik i gjuhës shqipe*, vol. 3, Shkodra: Volaj, 2000, p. 108.

³ See DEMIRAJ, *ibid.*, pp. 316-317, 580.

⁴ See Robert ELSIE, *Das albanische Lexikon des Evliya Çelebi, 1662, und was ein Derwisch auf der Durchreise alles wissen muß*, in «Südost-Forschungen» 57 (1998), pp. 97, 101; Fatos DIBRA, *The Albanian Lexicon of Evliya Çelebi’s Seyahatname in the Context of Old Albanian*, in Bardhyl DEMIRAJ (ed.), *Altalbanische Schriftkultur – aus der Perspektive der historischen Lexikographie und der Philologie der Gegenwart. Akten der 6. Deutsch-Albanischen Kulturwissenschaftlichen Tagung (27. September 2019, Buçimas bei Pogradec, Albanien)*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2020, p. 302.

⁵ On the occurrences of *bythë* in da Lecce, see Gëzim GURGA, *À Francesco Maria da Lecce: Dittionario Italiano-Albanese (1702). Botim kritik me hyrje dhe fjalësin shqip*, Shkodra: Botime Françeskane, 2009, pp. 230, 231, 343, 469, 601, 649.

⁶ Francesco ROSSI, *Vocabolario italiano-epirotico*, Roma: Propaganda Fide, 1866, pp. 31, 150, 164, 751.

lower part, slope]' in Jung⁷ (1895), (iii) 'κῶλος; κάτω μέρος, πάτος; ρίζα [sic] [ass; lower part, bottom; root]' in Kristoforidhi⁸ (1904), and (iv) 'deretano; falda; tronco di pianta [backside; lower part; trunk of a plant]' in the Bashkimi's dictionary (1908)⁹.

1.2. As for Tosk, *bythë* is first attested in Ibrahim Nezim Frakulla (or Berati), specifically in his poetic work *Divan* (1736)¹⁰: see 47.2 *bythën e ti [...] e zbuloi* 'he uncovered his ass'.

In the 18th century, *bythë* also occurs in Theodōros Anastasios Kabbaliōtēs' *Πρωτοπειρία παρὰ τοῦ σοφολογιωτάτου* (1770). In particular, in the trilingual word list included in this work (f. 33.10) *bythë* translates both Mod.Gk. κῶλος 'ass' and South Rum. *curu* 'id.'¹¹.

According to Çabej¹², South Tosk attests to a variant *bithë*, which has been borrowed in Aromanian as *bis* 'ass'¹³. A form *bithë* (pl. *bithë ~ bithëra*) with the meaning 'ass' is further mentioned by Sasse¹⁴ for the Tosk dialect spoken in Greece (Arvanitic). Note that the unrounding *y > i* is regular in Southern Tosk (and Arbëresh, see §1.3 below)¹⁵.

As for the Tosk-based standard language, *bythë* has the meanings 'backside, ass; bottom; lower part of a tree, root' according to the

⁷ Giacomo JUNG, *Fjaluar i voghel Sccep e Ltinisct mbledhun prej P. Jak Junkut t'Scocniis Jezu, Shkodra: Sccepniis, 1895, p. 14.*

⁸ Konstandin KRISTOFORIDHI, *Fjalor Shqip-Greqisht. Hartuar së pari me alfabet greqisht dhe botuar në Athinë më 1904. Transkriptuar tani me alfabet shqip dhe përpunuar*, Tirana: Instituti i Historisë e i Filologjisë, 1961, p. 60.

⁹ Bashkimi (Association), *Fjaluar i rii i Shcypës, përbâam prëie Shocniët t'Bashkimit*, Shkodra: s.ed., 1908, p. 60.

¹⁰ See the edition by Genciana ABAZI-EGRO, *Nezim Berati (Frakulla). Divani Shqip. Edicioni tekstual kritik, hyrja, shënimet, fjalor dhe indeksi*, Tirana: Toena, 2009, p. 248.

¹¹ See Gustav MEYER, *Albanesische Studien IV. Das griechisch-südrumänisch-albanesische Wörterverzeichnis des Kavalliotis, herausgegeben und erklärt*, Wien: KAW, 1895, p. 75 no. 509.

¹² Eqrem ÇABEJ, *Studime etimologjike në fushë të shqipes*, vol. 2: A–B, Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Republikës së Shqipërisë, 1976, p. 411.

¹³ See also Tache PAPAHAĞI, *Dictionarul dialectului aromân – general și etimologic*, 2nd ed., București: Editura Academiei Române, 1974, p. 275.

¹⁴ Hans-Jürgen SASSE, *Arvanitika. Die albanischen Sprachreste in Griechenland*, Teil I, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1991, pp. 111, 113.

¹⁵ See Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *Eine diachronische Untersuchung des /y/-Phonems im Albanischen*, in «Historische Sprachforschung» 106 (1993), p. 95 with fn. 1. See further Joachim MATZINGER, *Der altalbanische Text Mbsuame e Krështerë (Dottrina Cristiana) des Lekë Matrënga von 1592. Eine Einführung in die albanische Sprachwissenschaft*, Dettelbach: Röhl, 2006, p. 150; Stefan SCHUMACHER and Joachim MATZINGER, *Die Verben des Altalbanischen: Belegwörterbuch, Vorgeschichte und Etymologie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013, p. 274.

*FEGjSh*¹⁶. Qesku¹⁷ further translates *bythë* as ‘ass, arse; buttock, backside; fundament; seat’ and marks it as vulgar in its first meaning.

1.3. In the Tosk dialects from Southern Italy (Arbëresh), *bythë* is attested since Nicolò Chetta’s *Leksiko liti, kthiellë arbërisht* (1763), where the definite form *bitha* – with the expected unrounding (§1.2) – occurs twice as a translation of It. *buco del culo* ‘anus’ and *culo* ‘ass’, respectively¹⁸. Within Chetta’s work, *bitha* also appears in the *Proverbi albanesi e siculo-albanesi*: see (i) *jë i ëmbël si bitha e karcavecit* ‘you are sweet [masc.] like the ass of the cucumber’ and (ii) *je si bitha që s’kë parë brekë* ‘you are like the ass that doesn’t have a pair of underpants’¹⁹.

For Modern Arbëresh, Giordano²⁰ reports a form *bythë* and glosses it as ‘deretano, natica; fondo di alcuni recipienti e degli alberi [backside, buttock; bottom of some vessels and of the trees]’. As for the internal vowel -y- instead of expected -i-, it is worth noting that Giordano’s dictionary consistently has -y- where one would expect -i- due to the unrounding in Southern Tosk – cf., e.g., *dy* ‘two’²¹ instead of *di* (thus Matrënga, see *DPEWA*²²).

1.4. Among the several inner-Albanian derivatives of *bythë*, I will mention here the following ones: (i) preposition Alb. *bythë* (+ gen.) ‘at the foot, at the base of’; (ii) prefixed verb Alb. *z-byth* ‘repulse, push away’, cf. It. *rin-culare* ‘move back’; (iii) substantive Alb. *byth-çe* f. ‘bottom of a cigar; lower part of a plant, roots’; (iv) possessive compound Alb. *bythë-jashtë* ‘naked’, literally ‘[having the] backside outside’; (v) Arb. *bythë-z* f. ‘eye of a needle’, with (originally diminutive)

¹⁶ *Bythë*, in Shkenca.org, *Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (me rreth 40.000 fjalë)*, URL <http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/>, last access: August 20, 2024. See also Stuart E. MANN, *A Historical Albanian-English Dictionary*, vol. 1: A–M, London – New York – Toronto: Longmans, 1948, p. 53.

¹⁷ Pavli QESKU, *Fjalor Shqip-Anglisht / Albanian-English Dictionary. Mbi 35 000 fjalë / over 35 000 entries*, Tirana: EDFA, 2004, p. 41.

¹⁸ See Giuseppina CERNIGLIA, *Nicolò Chetta. Leksiko liti, kthiellë arbërisht (1763)*, Palermo: Besa, 2008, pp. 74, 97.

¹⁹ Edition by Matteo MANDALÀ, *Nicolò Chetta: Testi letterari in albanese*, Caltanissetta: Sciascia, 2004, pp. 221, 222.

²⁰ Emanuele GIORDANO, *Fjalor i arbëreshëve të Italisë – Dizionario degli albanesi d’Italia*, 2nd ed., Bari: Castrovillari, 2000, p. 49.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²² Sergio NERI and Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *DY card.*, in DEMIRAJ, HACKSTEIN et al., URL <https://www.dpwa.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary/?lemmaid=17609>, last access: August 20, 2024.

suffix *-z(ë)*²³ and same semantic development as in OGheg *bytha e gjilpanësë* 'id.' (da Lecce, §1.1)²⁴.

A more detailed discussion deserves the Gheg form *mbyths* 'ass' (Peja), which translates Serb. *guzica* 'id.' in a folksong edited by Jokl²⁵. As this scholar correctly noted²⁶, Gheg *mbyths* 'ass' consists of a prefix *m-* (= Alb. *në* 'in') and a second member *-byths*, which represents the syncopated variant of a simplex *byth-ets* 'part of the pants that covers the backside'²⁷ – cf. St.-Alb. *byth-ece* f. '(woolly) covering put on the backside of the horses'. Accordingly, Gheg *m-byths* most likely arose through the univerbation of a prepositional phrase *në bythets* 'in [the] part of the pants that covers the backside' and originally meant '[what is] inside the part of the pants that covers the backside', whence 'backside, ass' itself. As for a structural parallel, cf., e.g., Alb. *n-gojë-z* f. 'bit of a horse' ~ *n-goje* f. 'id.', which presuppose an underlying phrase *në gojë* 'in [the] mouth' and originally meant '[what is] inside the mouth (of a horse)'²⁸.

2. Previous etymological proposals

2.1. Traditionally, Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' has been regarded as etymologically related to Alb. *vithe* f. 'loins, backside (of animals or

²³ See Joachim MATZINGER, *Die sekundären nominalen Wortbildungsmuster im Altalbanischen bei Gjon Buzuku. Ein Beitrag zur altalbanischen Lexikographie*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2016, pp. 251-258.

²⁴ On these forms, see Shkenca.org, *Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (me rreth 40.000 fjalë)*, URL <http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/>, s.v. respectively, last access: August 20, 2024; MANN, p. 53; GIORDANO, pp. 49, 564 (s.v. *zbyth-ënj*). See further ÇABEJ, pp. 410-411 and Kolec TOPALLI, *Fjalor etimologjik i gjuhës shqipe*, Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Republikës së Shqipërisë, 2017, pp. 283-284.

²⁵ See Norbert JOKL, *Vuks alban. Liedersammlung, herausgegeben und mit sprachwissenschaftlich-sachlichen Erläuterungen versehen*, in *Zbornik filoloških i lingvističkih studija. A. Beliću povodom 25-godišnice njegova naučnog rada posvećuju njegovi prijatelji i učenici*, Beograd: Cvijanović, 1921, pp. 82-86; Norbert JOKL, *Bibliographie der Jahre 1920 und 1921*, in «Indogermanisches Jahrbuch» 9 (1924), pp. 69-70.

²⁶ See JOKL, *Liedersammlung*, pp. 85-86; JOKL, *Bibliographie*, p. 70.

²⁷ On the attestation of this form and the involved suffix *-ets*, see especially JOKL, *Liedersammlung*, p. 85 (with references).

²⁸ See Alexandër XHUVANI and Eqrem ÇABEJ, *Parashtesat e gjuhës shqipe*, in Eqrem ÇABEJ (ed.), *Studime gjuhësore III*, Prishtina: Rilindja, 1976, p. 166; Shkenca.org, *Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (me rreth 40.000 fjalë)*, URL <http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/>, s.v. respectively, last access: August 20, 2024.

men)²⁹ and Alb. ²*ith* m. ‘back [*ana e prapme*]³⁰. This proposal was first advanced by Meyer³¹ and then fully developed by Barić³². In particular, Barić³³: (i) interprets Alb. *bythë* as a compound consisting of a prefix **bi-* (compared with Goth. *bi* ‘concerning, according to, at’) or **mbë-* (= OAlb. *mbë* ‘to, at’)³⁴ and a second member *-ith* ‘back’; (ii) explains the internal rounded vowel *-y-* through a labialization *i > y / P_*. Barić’s hypothesis is accepted by Tagliavini³⁵, Çabej³⁶, Demiraj³⁷, Luka³⁸, and Topalli³⁹, whereas it is not discussed in Euler’s article on the Albanian body part names⁴⁰.

As for the assumed labialization *i > y / P_*, one might mention the parallel of Alb. *pidh* ~ *pydh* m. ‘vagina’⁴¹. One might further refer to the treatments of this process by Ölberg⁴² and Schumacher⁴³, although the latter scholar actually limits the rounding environment to */ _P* rather than */ P_*. Be that as it may, Barić’s scenario encounters the following difficulties.

(i) Tracing *by-* in Alb. *bythë* back to a former sequence **mbV-* is unwarranted, as *bythë* is attested as such already in Bardhi and da Lecce (§1.1). In these authors, an initial simplification *mbV- > bV-* is either absent or exceedingly rare – e.g., both prepositions *mbë* ‘to, at’ and

²⁹ See *vithe*, in Shkenca.org, *Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (me rreth 40.000 fjalë)*, URL <http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/>, last access: August 20, 2024.

³⁰ See ²*ith*, *ibid*.

³¹ Gustav MEYER, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Albanesischen Sprache*, Straßburg: Trübner, 1891, p. 472 s.v. *vithë* (though without reference to *vithë* on p. 57 s.v. *bythë*, *bithë*).

³² Henrik BARIĆ, *Etimološki i gramatički prilozi*, in «Arhiv za arbansku starinu, jezik i etnologiju» 1, 1-2 (1923), pp. 141-142.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁴ On this preposition, see MATZINGER, *Mbsuame*, pp. 106, 156.

³⁵ Carlo TAGLIAVINI, *L'albanese di Dalmazia. Contributi alla conoscenza del dialetto ghego di Borgo Erizzo presso Zara*, Firenze: Olschki, 1937, pp. 91-92; Carlo TAGLIAVINI, *La stratificazione del lessico albanese. Elementi indoeuropei*, Bologna: Pàtron, 1965, p. 87.

³⁶ ÇABEJ, pp. 410-411; XHUVANI and ÇABEJ, p. 152.

³⁷ DEMIRAJ, *Eine diachronische Untersuchung*, p. 104.

³⁸ David LUKA, *Studime gjuhësore*, vol. 12, Shkodra: Fiorentia, 2010, p. 66 s.v. *përmbys*.

³⁹ TOPALLI, pp. 283-284.

⁴⁰ Wolfram EULER, *Körperteilnamen im Albanischen und ihre Herkunft*, in «Indogermanische Forschungen» 90 (1985), pp. 104-122.

⁴¹ See Hermann M. ÖLBERG, *Untersuchungen zum indogermanischen Wortschatz des Albanischen und zur diachronen Phonologie aufgrund des Vokalsystems* (posthumous edition by Bardhyl DEMIRAJ), Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2013, pp. 98-99.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 95-99.

⁴³ SCHUMACHER and MATZINGER, p. 274.

mbĩ 'on' are always spelled with initial *mb*⁴⁴. In those cases in which variants with *b*- occur, they always appear beside the original variants with *mb*- and are less frequent than these – cf., e.g., OGheg *mbrendë* 'inside' (7x, once *mbrenda*) vs. *brendë* (3x, once *prendë*) in Bardhi⁴⁵. As for *bythë* specifically, it consistently exhibits initial *b*- (never *mb*-) since the oldest attestations (§1). Gheg *mbyths* 'ass' is only an apparent counterexample, as this form actually consists of a prefix *m*- 'in' and a syncopated noun *byth-ets* 'part of the pants that covers the backside' (§1.4).

(ii) The existence of a prefix *b(V)*- in Albanian is uncertain. Xhuvani and Çabej⁴⁶ regard this prefix as non-productive and mention the following examples: (a) Alb. *bikër* f. 'tadpole' ~ *ikër* f. 'little eggs of fishes or other water animals'; (b) Alb. *burith* m. 'mole' ~ *urith* m. 'id.'; (c) Alb. *byr* m. 'mole' ~ *yr* / *ur* m. 'id.'⁴⁷; (d) Alb. *bushtër* f. 'she-dog' ~ *ushtër* f. 'ear of wheat', although these forms are evidently not related to each other on semantic grounds, and the former one (*bushtër*) is often interpreted as a (very old) Slavicism⁴⁸. Xhuvani and Çabej⁴⁹ further mention a case in which *bë*- seems to act as a verbal prefix, namely, Gheg (Malësia e madhe) *bë-doron* 'gift' ← *dorë* 'hand'⁵⁰. The latter example, however, is not particularly helpful, as *bythë* would be a nominal rather than a verbal compound according to the traditional explanation. In addition, since the precise semantics of the alleged prefix Alb. *b(V)*- cannot be determined⁵¹, it is unclear which meaning the presumed compound Alb. *b-ith-ë* would have had in origin – perhaps, '[body part] below the back', although no independent evidence for Alb. *b(V)*- with the meaning 'below' exists?

(iii) The major problem of connecting Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' with Alb. *ith* m. 'back' (and further with Alb. *vithe* f. 'loins, back-

⁴⁴ For Bardhi, see DEMIRAJ, *Dictionarium latino-epiroticum*, pp. 649-650, 650-651; for da Lecce, see GURGA, pp. 731, 732.

⁴⁵ See DEMIRAJ, *ibid.*, p. 651.

⁴⁶ XHUVANI and ÇABEJ, pp. 152-153.

⁴⁷ On the forms in (b) and (c), see further TOPALLI, p. 1532 s.v. *urith*.

⁴⁸ See Vladimir OREL, *Albanian Etymological Dictionary*, Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill, 1998, p. 44. As Marek Majer kindly points out to me, the Slavic origin remains uncertain, though.

⁴⁹ XHUVANI and ÇABEJ, p. 152.

⁵⁰ On this form, see TOPALLI, p. 402 s.v. *dorë*.

⁵¹ XHUVANI and ÇABEJ, p. 153.

side') lies in the vowel contrast *-y-* vs. *-i-*. Since the variant *bithë* only occurs in Tosk varieties that are characterized by the unrounding *y > i* (§1.2, §1.3), the original variant is clearly *bythë*. The latter is in fact attested not only in the whole Gheg speaking area (§1.1), but also in a large part of the Tosk speaking area (§1.2)⁵². In contrast, variants with *-y-* occur neither for Alb. *ith* m. 'back' nor for Alb. *vithe* f. 'loins, backside'⁵³. Accordingly, these items point to an internal vowel PALb. **-i-* which cannot be reconciled with the internal vowel PALb. **-y-* presupposed by Alb. *bythë*.

(iv) Note, finally, the gender mismatch between the supposed base Alb. *ith* m. 'back' and the *explanandum* Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom', which has not been commented on by the supporters of the traditional etymology.

2.2. Camaj⁵⁴ takes a position of skepticism concerning Barić's hypothesis sketched in §2.1. Alternatively, he segments the Albanian item as «*bi-thë*», thus taking this variant to be primary as against *bythë*. All the same, he does not discuss the etymology of «*bi-thë*».

2.3. Hamp⁵⁵ follows Barić in analyzing *-y-* of Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' as arisen through rounding in the context / *P_*. Unlike previous scholars, however, he connects (according to him primary) *bithë* etymologically with Alb. *pidh* m. 'vagina' – thus also Demiraj⁵⁶, though without further discussion of Alb. *bythë*. In particular, Hamp⁵⁷ regards *bithë* f. as a compound going back to a prefix **mbi-* 'on' («with *m-* removed as if were the familiar nasal prefix») and a second member **zd-* (i.e., the zero grade of the PIE root **sed-* 'sit').

Apart from the dubious assumption of an initial simplification **mbi- > bi-*, also this hypothesis fails to account for the fact that the primary variant is actually Alb. *bythë* (with *-y-*), see §2.2 above.

⁵² The Modern Arbëresh form *bythë* reported by Giordano has been discussed in §1.3.

⁵³ See Eqrem ÇABEJ, *Studime etimologjike në fushë të shqipës*, vol. 4: *Dh–J*, Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Republikës së Shqipërisë, 1996, p. 394; TOPALLI, pp. 664, 1576.

⁵⁴ Martin CAMAJ, *Albanische Wortbildung. Die Bildungsweise der älteren Nomina*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1966, p. 112 with fn. 170.

⁵⁵ Eric P. HAMP, *Albanian* drudhe 'piece, crumb', in «Indogermanische Forschungen» 84 (1979), p. 201 fn. 3; Eric P. HAMP, (Western) Indo-European **sel-* 'move', in «Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft» 41 (1982), pp. 54, 59 fn. 18.

⁵⁶ Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *Albanische Etymologien. Untersuchungen zum albanischen Erbwortschatz*, Amsterdam – Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997, p. 320.

⁵⁷ HAMP, *Albanian* drudhe, p. 201 fn. 3.

According to Orel⁵⁸, Hamp allegedly treated Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' also in another 1982 paper⁵⁹. There, however, I could not find any mention of the Albanian word.

2.4. In line with the previous scholarship, Orel⁶⁰ interprets Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' as a compound and posits a first member **mbë-* plus a second member *-vithe*. The internal vowel *-y-* would have arisen through contraction of an original sequence **-īui-*, as in Alb. *qytet* m. 'city' ← Lat. *cīvitās*, *-ātis* f. 'id.'.

Orel's hypothesis is exposed to the following objections. (i) If Alb. *bythë* had really exhibited an initial *#mb-* cluster, one would expect to find some traces of it in the Old Albanian literature (see §2.2). (ii) In order to generate the necessary sequence PALb. **-īui-* (> Alb. *-y-*), it would be safer to assume that *bythë* originally had a prefix **mbi-* rather than **mbë-* and to identify the former with the preposition (O)Alb. *mbi* 'on'. Then, the original meaning of *bythë* would have been 'on the loins / backside' *vel sim*. If this is correct, however, it becomes hard to explain how such an original meaning could have led to the attested semantics 'backside, ass, anus' of (O)Alb. *bythë*. (iii) The vowel mismatch in the *Auslaut* of Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' as against Alb. *vithe* f. 'loins, backside' remains unexplained.

2.5. Mann⁶¹ related Alb. *bythë* f. 'backside, bottom' to Att.Gk. βυθός (Ion. βυσσός) m. 'depth' and traced it back to PIE *«*busd-, *busdīō»*. Nevertheless, this proposal fails to account for both segments *-y-* and *th-* of Alb. *bythë*, as a pre-form Pre-PALb. **busdīā-* would have probably yielded Alb. **buzë vel sim*.⁶² Moreover, Gk. βυθός m. 'depth' is better regarded as a derivative of the PIE root **g^weh₂d^h-* 'dive' and thus as cognate with the Greek adjective βαθός 'deep'⁶³.

⁵⁸ OREL, p. 44.

⁵⁹ Namely, Eric P. HAMP, *The Indo-European Roots *bher- in the Light of Celtic and Albanian*, in «Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie» 39 (1982), pp. 211-212.

⁶⁰ OREL, p. 44.

⁶¹ Stuart E. MANN, *An Albanian Historical Grammar*, Hamburg: Buske, 1977, pp. 39, 60; Stuart E. Mann *apud* OREL, *ibid*.

⁶² On the development Pre-PALb. **-Vsd^(h)-* > **-Vd-* (without compensatory lengthening), see SCHUMACHER and MATZINGER, p. 261.

⁶³ See Martin PETERS, *Ein tiefes Problem*, in Heiner EICHNER and Hans Christian LUSCHÜTZKY (eds.), *Compositiones indogermanicae in memoriam Jochem Schindler*, Praha: Enigma, 1999, pp. 451-453; Sergio NERI, *Wetter. Etymologie und Lautgesetz*, Perugia: Culture Territori Linguaggi, 2017, p. 268, URL http://www.cltl.unipg.it/issues/CTL_14.pdf, last access: August 20, 2024.

2.6. Finally, a different position has been taken by Schmidt⁶⁴, who only mentions the meaning ‘bottom of a tree, root’ for Alb. *bythë* and takes the latter to be from PIE **b^huh₂-kō-* («**bhūxo-*») ← PIE root **b^hueh₂-* ‘be(come), grow’. This hypothesis, however, is weakened by the fact that the meaning ‘bottom of a tree, root’ developed only secondarily from the primary semantics of Alb. *bythë*, which rather was ‘backside, ass, anus’ – see §1.1 above and further Çabej⁶⁵.

Later on, Schmidt’s etymology has been criticized by Vasmer⁶⁶ on formal grounds. Yet, Vasmer’s claim that a pre-form «**bhūkō-*» should have led to Alb. «**büs(ε)*» instead of *bythë* can be no longer upheld⁶⁷.

3. *An alternative root connection*

3.1. Alb. *bythë* f. points to a pre-form PALb. **byt^sa* f. < Pre-PALb. **būcā-* < PIE **b^(h)uh_xkēh₂-*. Following the morphological segmentation assumed by Schmidt⁶⁸ and Camaj⁶⁹ (see §2.6, §2.2), it is possible to analyze PIE **b^(h)uh_xkēh₂-* as (i) a zero-graded root morpheme **b^(h)uh_x-* plus (ii) a suffixal morpheme **-kēh₂-*.

From a semantic point of view, section 1 showed that in the Old Albanian lexicographical works by Bardhi, da Lecce, and Chetta the primary meaning of *bythë* f. varies between ‘backside, ass’ on the one hand and ‘anus’ on the other hand. In the following, I will argue the latter meaning ‘anus’ to be original and the coexisting meaning ‘backside, ass’ (⇒ ‘lower part of a tree, root, etc.’) to have developed from ‘anus’ through a metonymic shift (*pars pro toto*).

Note that the meaning ‘anus’ also accounts for the metaphorical semantics ‘eye of a needle’ – i.e., ‘hole of a needle’ –, which is attested once for *bythë* in Old Gheg (da Lecce, §1.1) and is further exhibited by the Tosk derivative *bythë-z* f. (Arbëresh, §1.4).

⁶⁴ Manfred E. SCHMIDT, *Albanesische Etymologien*, in «Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung» 50, 3-4 (1922), p. 236.

⁶⁵ See also ÇABEJ, *Studime*, vol. 2, p. 410.

⁶⁶ See Max VASMER, *Nachtrag zu den albanesischen Etymologien*, in «Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung» 50, 3-4 (1922), p. 247.

⁶⁷ On the development PIE **k̑* > Alb. *th* (not *s*), see, e.g., SCHUMACHER and MATZINGER, p. 237.

⁶⁸ SCHMIDT, p. 236.

⁶⁹ CAMAJ, p. 112.

3.2. Interestingly, there is independent evidence (see §3.3 below) suggesting that PIE had a root **b^heu_xh-* with the meaning '(be[come]) hollow' *vel sim.* That such a root could build derivatives with the semantics 'hollow, hole' is obvious – cf., e.g., PIE **kéu_xh-* 'be(come) hollow' → Gk. κύαρ n. 'hole; eye of a needle; orifice of the ear'⁷⁰. By further pursuing this line of reasoning, one may surmise that one of these lexemes for 'hollow, hole' eventually developed a specialized meaning 'anus' (⇒ 'ass, backside, etc.'), argued to be the primary semantics of Alb. *bythë* in §3.1 above. As a parallel, cf. PSlav. **dupa/ũ* f./m. 'hole, cavity', which yielded (i) words with the meaning 'hole, cavity, lair' (Slov. *dúpa* f. 'id.', Czech *doupa* f. 'id.', LSorb. *dupa* f. 'id.', etc.) beside (ii) words with the meaning 'anus, ass; vagina' (Pol. *dupa* f. 'id.', Russ. dial. *dúpa* f. 'anus', Maced. dial. *dup* m. 'anus', etc.)⁷¹. The latter semantics clearly developed from original 'hole', which could be specialized to 'vagina' on the one side or to 'anus' on the other side – whence *qua* metonymy 'ass'⁷².

3.3. The existence of a PIE root **b^heu_xh-* '(be[come]) hollow' has been proposed by Borghi and Ronzitti⁷³ and Borghi⁷⁴ on the basis of the following evidence.

(i) Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. 'hole; head of a fountain; darkness (m.); time' is only attested in the grammatical and lexicographical literature⁷⁵. Apart from 'time', the other meanings 'hole', 'head of a fountain', and

⁷⁰ See Robert S. P. BEEKES, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 2 vols., Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010, p. 793; κύαρ, in Maria PANTELIA, *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*, URL <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/lexica.jsp>, last access: August 20, 2024.

⁷¹ See Rick DERKSEN, *Etymological Dictionary of the Slavic Inherited Lexicon*, Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2008, pp. 124-125; Franciszek SŁAWSKI et al. (eds.), *Słownik Prasłowiański*, vol. 5: *dręgati–dъranъ*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984, pp. 95-97.

⁷² On the semantic variation between 'anus; ass' and 'vagina', which seems to be typologically widespread, see, most recently, Marek MAJER, *Polabian <Waspéisede> 'go) backwards' and the type of Common Slavic vъspěti*, forthcoming, pp. 2-3, with further references.

⁷³ Guido BORGHİ and Rosa RONZITTI, *Sanscrito bhūka- 'bucu': italiano buco 'id.' (con un'Appendice su latino fauces)*, in «Quaderni di Semantica» 26, 1 (2005), p. 153-180.

⁷⁴ Guido BORGHİ, *Note aggiuntive sulla comparazione di antico indiano b^hūkā- „bucu“ e italiano buco „id.“*, in Rosa RONZITTI, Guido BORGHİ and Luca Busetto (eds.), *Atti del terzo, quarto, quinto incontro genovese di Studi Vedici e Pāṇiniani (Genova, 26 luglio 2004; 27 luglio 2005; 29 giugno 2006)*, Milano: Qu.A.S.A.R., 2006, pp. 53-116.

⁷⁵ See Manfred MAYRHOFER, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, vol. 3, Heidelberg: Winter, 2001, pp. 370-371; Monier MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special References to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1872, p. 764b.

‘darkness’ can be derived from an original semantics ‘hollow ($\Rightarrow$ dark) object’. Borghi and Ronzitti⁷⁶ thus set up an underlying adjective PIE **b^huh_x-kó-* ‘hollow’ and explain Skt. *bhūka-* with the meaning ‘time’ as a parallel formation in **-ko-* belonging to the distinct root PIE **b^hueh₂-* ‘be(come), grow’.

(ii) Lat. *faucēs*, -ium pl.f. ‘throat’ is attested from Plautus on and only occurs as a *plurale tantum* until Horace (abl.sg. *faucē* in *Epod.* 14.4). The nom.sg. *faux* is explicitly deemed to be ungrammatical by Varro *Ling.* 10.78⁷⁷. Although a connection between Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. ‘hole’ and Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’ has long been proposed⁷⁸, the Latin item is customarily regarded as etymologically obscure⁷⁹. Borghi and Ronzitti⁸⁰ and Borghi⁸¹ propose to derive Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’ from PIE **b^houh_x-ek-* (more precisely «**b^hō_{2/4}h_{2/4}-ēk-*») under the assumption that this pre-form regularly underwent Thurneysen-Havet’s Law⁸² in the prehistory of Latin. An original meaning ‘hole, cavity, opening’ would of course be a suitable source for a word for ‘throat’ – cf., e.g., Gk. *χάρος* n. ‘throat, mouth’ ~ *χάσμα* n. ‘gaping hole, abyss’ ~ *χάσκω* ‘gape, yawn’⁸³.

(iii) It. *buco* m. ‘hole, opening, hollow’ and It. *buca* f. ‘id.’ point to the Vulgar Latin pre-forms **būkus* m. ‘hole, hollow’ and **būka* f. ‘id.’, respectively. These have been traditionally deemed to be etymological-

⁷⁶ BORGI and RONZITTI, especially p. 154.

⁷⁷ See Wolfgang DE MELO, *Varro: De Lingua Latina*, vol. 2: *Commentary*, Oxford: OUP, 2019, p. 1243.

⁷⁸ See the references in Alois WALDE and Johann B. HOFMANN, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, Heidelberg: Winter, 1938, p. 470.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*; Alfred ERNOUT and Antoine MEILLET, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: histoire des mots*, 4th ed., Paris: Klincksieck, 2001, p. 222; Michiel A. C. DE VAAN, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages*, Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2008, p. 207.

⁸⁰ BORGI and RONZITTI, pp. 170-173.

⁸¹ BORGI, pp. 53, 55.

⁸² I.e.: Pre-Plt. **o_[-stress] > a / _\$uV* – see Brent VINE, *On ‘Thurneysen-Havet’s Law’ in Latin and Italic*, in «Historische Sprachforschung» 119 (2006), pp. 211-249; Michael L. WEISS, *Outline of the Historical and Comparative Grammar of Latin*, 2nd ed., Ann Arbor – New York: Beech Stave, 2020, p. 152.

⁸³ See Carl D. BUCK, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages. A Contribution to the History of Ideas*, Chicago: University Press, 1949, pp. 233-234; Reiner LIPP, *Die indogermanischen und einzelsprachlichen Palatale im Indoiranischen*, vol. 1, Heidelberg: Winter, 2009, pp. 70-72; BEEKES, p. 1616.

ly unclear⁸⁴. Borghi and Ronzitti⁸⁵ and Borghi⁸⁶ trace VLat. **būkus/a* m./f. 'hole, hollow' back to PIE **b^huh_x-ko-* (> Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. 'hole') and argue the Vulgar Latin base **būko-* to be a loanword from Celtic or a closely related Indo-European language in which the development PIE **b^h-* > **b-* was regular.

3.4. Independently of how one evaluates the etymology of VLat. **būkus/a* m./f. 'hole, hollow', I take both Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. 'hole' and Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. 'throat' as strong enough evidence supporting the reconstruction of a PIE root **b^heu_x-* '(be[come]) hollow'. Since the assumption of a semantic development 'hollow, hole' ⇒ 'anus' is straightforward, I argue OAlb. *bythë* f. 'anus; ass, backside' to be a further derivative of the PIE root at hand.

In the reminder of this paper, I will address this new connection in more detail and I will also discuss the morphology of the other derivatives of PIE **b^heu_x-*.

4. The PIE root **b^heu_x-* '(be[come]) hollow' and its derivatives

4.1. Morphologically, OAlb. *bythë* f. 'anus; ass, backside' is most closely comparable with Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. 'hole'. While the latter goes back to a (substantivized) adjective PIE **b^huh_x-kó-* 'hollow', OAlb. *bythë* f. continues a feminine substantivization in **-h₂-* derived from a structurally parallel adjective PIE **b^huh_x-kó-* 'hollow': cf. PIE **b^huh_x-keh₂-* f. 'hollow, hole' > Pre-PAlb. **būcā-* 'anus' > PAlb. **byr^śa* > (O)Alb. *bythë* f. 'anus; ass, backside; bottom of a tree, root'.

For the assumed coexistence of the suffix variants PIE **-ko-* ~ **-kó-*, cf. cases like Ved. *babhru-ká-* 'brownish' (AVP) ~ *babhlu-śá-* 'id.' (YV), Ved. *yuva-śá-* 'young' (RV) ~ Skt. *yuva-ka-* m. 'young man' (*Śāktānandatarāṅgīṇī*), etc.⁸⁷. Since the suffix *-ka-* – unlike the suffix

⁸⁴ See, most recently, Franco CREVATIN and Max PFISTER, **bok(k)-/*būk(k)-/*pūk-* 'pun-gere; perforare', in *Lessico Etimologico Italiano*, vol. 6: *birrus-brac(c)hiolum*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999, especially pp. 517-540; BORGI and RONZITTI, pp. 157-161. Feminine *buca* is taken to be back-formed to masculine *buco* by Gerhard ROHLFS, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti*, vol. 2: *Morfologia*, Torino: Einaudi, 1966, p. 63.

⁸⁵ BORGI and RONZITTI, pp. 168-169.

⁸⁶ BORGI, e.g. pp. 61-62.

⁸⁷ On these forms, see MONIER-WILLIAMS, pp. 721c, 855c; Manfred MAYRHOFER, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, vol. 2, Heidelberg: Winter, 1996, p. 210. On the PIE suffixes **-ko-* and **-kó-*, see generally Jacob WACKERNAGEL and Albert DEBRUNNER, *Altin-*

śa- – became increasingly productive in Indic⁸⁸, it is even possible that Skt. *bhūka-* represents a later reshaping of an older form **bhūśa-*, which would perfectly match – except for the stem final vowel – Alb. *bythë*. This would be comparable with a pair like Ved. *yuvaśa-* ‘young’ beside Skt. *yuvaka-* m. ‘young men’ (see above), although one should note that in the latter case the base *yuva(n)-* ‘young’ was still transparent at the synchronic level.

Note further that the PIE suffix **-ko-* has securely been inherited in Albanian, as it underlies the productive diminutive suffix Pre-PAlb. **-ća-* > PAlb. **-t̥t̥* > Alb. *-th*⁸⁹.

4.2. As for Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’, I follow Borghi and Ronzitti⁹⁰ in analyzing this form as a derivative in **-ek-*⁹¹. Remarkably, this suffix occurs frequently in Latin among names of (embarrassing) body parts or related referents – see Lat. *panticēs* pl.m. ‘guts, bowels’, *pōdex* m. ‘anus’, *famex* m. ‘bruise, contusion’, etc.⁹². The attested gen.pl. *fauc-ium* does not ensure the existence of an old *i*-stem, since the gen.pl.-ending *-ium* notoriously underwent analogical spread from the *i*-stems to the consonant stems in Latin⁹³.

With respect to its morphological prehistory, I explain Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’ starting from a *tomós* adjective PIE **b^houh_x-ó-* ‘hollow’, which after the loss of its internal laryngeal regularly developed to Pre-PIt. **b^houó-* > (Thurneysen-Havet’s Law, §3.3.ii) **b^hauó-* > PIIt. **βauo-* ‘id.’ – cf. the development of the structurally and semantically parallel adjective PIE **kouh_x-ó-* ‘hollow’ > Pre-PIt. **kouó-* > (Thurneysen-Havet’s Law) **kauó-* > Lat. *cavus* ‘id.’⁹⁴. Remarkably, the reconstruction of PIIt. **βauo-* ‘hollow’ may be independently supported by Lat. *favus* m. ‘honeycomb’, which could directly continue this Pro-

dische Grammatik, vol. 2.2: *Die Nominalsuffixe*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954, pp. 515-540 (suffix *-ka-*), 920-921 (suffix *-śa-*); Hans KRAHE and Wolfgang MEID, *Germanische Sprachwissenschaft*, vol. 3: *Wortbildungslehre*, 7th ed., Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969, pp. 188-189.

⁸⁸ See WACKERNAGEL and DEBRUNNER, pp. 515, 535.

⁸⁹ See XHUVANI and ÇABEJ, p. 283; MATZINGER, *Wortbildungsmuster*, pp. 247-250.

⁹⁰ BORCHI and RONZITTI, pp. 172-173.

⁹¹ On this suffix, see, most recently, WEISS, pp. 326-327.

⁹² See *ibid.*, p. 326.

⁹³ See Gerhard MEISER, *Historische Laut- und Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache*, 2nd ed., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998, pp. 140-141.

⁹⁴ See VINE, pp. 235-237.

to-Italic form⁹⁵. Note that a denomination of the honeycomb as 'hollow (object)' is plausible, since the surface of honeycombs is characterized by countless holes or cavities (the cells), in which the bees store their brood, the honey, and pollen. Moreover, Albanian may provide parallels for this *Benennungsmotiv*, as both Alb. *huall* m. 'honeycomb' and OGheg *fyell* m. 'id.' likely meant 'holey, full of holes' *vel sim.* in origin⁹⁶.

At any rate, I surmise that PIt. **βauo-* 'hollow' served as the derivational base of an individualizing / substantivizing *ek*-formation PIt. **βau-ek-* 'the hollow one', whose nom.pl. **βau-ek-es* 'the hollow [body parts]' regularly led to Pre-Lat. **fauek-ēs* > Lat. nom.pl. *fauc-ēs* 'throat' – for the Pre-Latin syncope after **u*, see Pre-Lat. **kau-eto-* > Lat. *cautus* 'careful', Pre-Lat. **lau-eto-* > Lat. *lautus* 'elegant, sumptuous', etc.⁹⁷. A structurally comparable derivation – involving the suffix **-et-* rather than **-ek-* – was proposed by Vine in order to account for the Latin hapax *dautia* pl.n. 'hospitality gifts' (Paul. Fest.): i.e., PIE **dough₃-ó-* 'bestowing' > PIt. **dauo-* 'id.' → individualizing / substantivizing *et*-derivative PIt. **dau-et-* 'bestowal' → **dau-et-ijo-* 'id.' > (syncope) Lat. *dautia* pl.n. 'hospitality gifts'⁹⁸. For a parallel with the *ek*-suffix, one may mention Lat. *rāmex* m. 'sg. hernia, varicocele; pl. bronchi, lungs', a body part name like *faucēs*: cf. Pre-Lat. **rāmo-* 'branch' → Pre-Lat. nom.pl. **rām-ek-ēs* 'the branch-shaped [body parts]' > Lat. nom.pl. *rāmic-ēs* m. 'bronchi, lungs'⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ I am grateful to Sergio Neri for having called this analysis to my attention. For a different explanation of Lat. *favus*, see, most recently, Massimo POETTO, *Per l'etimo del latino favus. Una rivalutazione*, in Marco TRIZZINO (ed.), *AINIFMATOΣ ANOIFMA / IL VARCO DELLA SFINGE. Nuove etimologie nell'odierno orizzonte linguistico-etnografico. Miscellanea di studi etimologici ed etnografici in memoria di Remo Bracchi*, Roma: LAS, 2020, pp. 131-140, with further references.

⁹⁶ See the discussion in: Giulio IMBERCIADORI and Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, *HÚALL* -i, in DEMIRAJ, HACKSTEIN et al., URL <https://www.dpwa.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary/?lemmaid=22374>, last access: August 20, 2024; Giulio IMBERCIADORI and Bardhyl DEMIRAJ, **FYELL*² -i, in DEMIRAJ, HACKSTEIN et al., URL <https://www.dpwa.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary/?lemmaid=28509>, last access: August 20, 2024.

⁹⁷ See VINE, pp. 225, 239, 244; WEISS, p. 467.

⁹⁸ See VINE, p. 238, with references. For a different analysis of Lat. *dautia*, see, most recently, María Blanca PRÓSPER, *What became of "Sabine I"? An Overlooked Proto-Italic Sound Law*, in «Journal of Indo-European Studies» 47, 3-4 (2019), pp. 461-465.

⁹⁹ See WEISS, p. 326.

In this connection, it should be noted that most Latin *ek*-derivatives – including the body part names – are masculine, see *panticēs* ‘guts’, *pōdex* ‘anus’, *rāmicēs* ‘bronchi, lungs’, etc. In contrast, Lat. *faucēs* ‘throat’ is feminine. A possible explanation for this mismatch is that the feminine gender of Lat. *faucēs* arose by analogy to the feminine gender of the synonym Lat. *gula* f. ‘throat’.

The expected nom.sg. Plt. **βau-ek-s* (~ nom.pl. **βau-ek-es*) ought to have yielded Lat. **favex* in place of attested *faux*. Consequently, it is likely that the sg.-stem Lat. *fauk-* was back-formed to the more frequent pl.-stem Lat. *fauk-*, after the latter had undergone syncope of its internal *e*-vowel. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the sg.-stem Lat. *fauk-* is attested much later than the corresponding pl.-stem (§3.3.ii)¹⁰⁰.

Finally, it is worth recalling that it is typologically not uncommon for words with the meaning ‘throat’ to be *pluralia tantum* or, in any case, to be frequently employed in the plural – cf., e.g., (i) OIsl. *kverkr* pl.f. ‘throat’¹⁰¹, (ii) YAv. *garəman-* pl.m. ‘throat’¹⁰² and (iii) Gk. sg.f. *σφαγή* ‘slaughter’ ~ pl.f. *σφαγαί* ‘throat’, literally ‘spot(s) where the victim is struck’¹⁰³. In the case of Lat. *faucēs*, the plural number may be explained through the assumption that Plt. **βau-ek-es* ‘the hollow [body parts]’ originally denoted not only the oral, but also the nasal cavity (thus Sergio Neri, p.c.).

4.3. While building on a proposal by Alinei¹⁰⁴, Borghi¹⁰⁵ cautiously argued also PGerm. **būka-* m. ‘belly’ (> OIsl. *búkr* m. ‘id.’, OE *būc* m. ‘id.’, OHG *būh* m. ‘id.’, etc.)¹⁰⁶ to belong to the present root PIE **b^heu_h-* ‘(be[come]) hollow’ and to continue Pre-PGerm. **b^huh_xg⁽ⁿ⁾o-*.

¹⁰⁰ See further BORGHI and RONZITTI, pp. 172-173 and BORGHI, p. 53 fn. 2, with a different explanation of the singular Lat. *faux*.

¹⁰¹ See Walter BAETKE, *Wörterbuch zur altnordischen Prosaliteratur*, 2nd ed., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965, p. 350.

¹⁰² See Christian BARTHOLOMAE, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Straßburg: Trübner, 1904, pp. 515-516.

¹⁰³ See σφαγή-ή in PANTELIA, URL <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/lexica.jsp>, last access: August 20, 2024.

¹⁰⁴ Mario ALINEI, *Riflessioni su una versione laringale e ‘debole’ della Teoria della Continuità dal Paleolitico (in margine ad alcuni lavori di Borghi, Dell’Aquila, Iannàccaro e Ronzitti)*, in «Quaderni di Semantica» 28, 1 (2007), p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ BORGHI, pp. 54, 55 («eventualmente»).

¹⁰⁶ See Albert L. LLOYD, Otto SPRINGER, Rosemarie LÜHR, and Karen K. PURDY, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen*, vol. 2: *bī-izzo*, Göttingen – Zürich: Vandenhoeck

PGerm. **būka*- m. 'belly' lacks a convincing etymology. In *EWahd* (with further references)¹⁰⁷, PGerm. **būka*- m. is traced back to a PIE root **b^heu-* 'swell'. Although this connection is semantically attractive (cf. PDE *belly* < OE *belig* m. 'bag' ← PIE root *(s)*b^helǵ^h-* 'swell')¹⁰⁸, the formal side of this proposal is weak: in order to account for the long *-ū- of PGerm. **būka*-, *EWahd*¹⁰⁹ reckons with a «lautsymbolisch» lengthening, which is far from compelling.

If PGerm. **būka*- m. 'belly' really belongs to PIE **b^heu_x-* '(be[come]) hollow', its forerunner Pre-PGerm. **b^huh_x-g⁽ⁿ⁾-o-* could of course be analyzed as a thematic derivative built on a velar extension of the PIE root **b^heu_x-*¹¹⁰. Alternatively, Pre-PGerm. **b^huh_x-g⁽ⁿ⁾-o-* could be interpreted as the thematized continuant of an individualizing / substantivizing formation in *-g- derived from the zero-grade of PIE **b^heu_x-* '(be[come]) hollow': i.e., PIE **b^huh_x-g-* 'the hollow one' >> Pre-PGerm. **b^huh_x-g-o-* 'id.' > PGerm. **būka*- m. 'belly'. As for the assumption of individualizing / substantivizing derivatives in *-g-, see PIE **pelh₂-* 'be(come) flat' → **pelh₂-g-* 'the flat one' >> (thematization) **pelh₂-g-o-* 'id.' > Gk. πέλαιος m. 'see'¹¹¹. Semantically, a development 'the hollow one' ⇒ 'cavity (of the body)' ⇒ 'belly' would be unproblematic – see, e.g., Gk. κοῖλος 'hollow' → κοιλ-ία f. 'belly, abdomen'¹¹².

Notwithstanding this, the etymology of PGerm. **būka*- m. 'belly' remains ambiguous. Since lexemes for 'belly' can also be derived from roots with the meaning 'swell' (see above), one could alternatively analyze PGerm. **būka*- as an individualizing / substantivizing derivative in *-g- that did not belong to PIE **b^heu_x-* '(be[come]) hollow', but rather to PIE **b^hueh₂-* 'be(come), grow'. That the latter root could eventually

& Ruprecht, 1998, p. 420. PGerm. **būka*- is not treated by Guus KROONEN, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic*, Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ LLOYD et al., pp. 419-420.

¹⁰⁸ See NERI, pp. 325-327; *ibid.*, pp. 420-421; KROONEN, p. 49.

¹⁰⁹ LLOYD et al., p. 420.

¹¹⁰ See the discussion in BORGHI, p. 54.

¹¹¹ Thus Sergio NERI, *Zu alb. bathë 'Ackerbohne' und gr. phakós 'Linse': Substratwörter oder indogermanische Erbe?*, in Bardhyl DEMIRAJ (ed.), *The Albanian Language Area and its Surroundings from Late Antiquity to the High Middle Ages. Proceedings of the 7th German-Albanian Cultural Studies Conference (21.-22. April 2023, Hubmersberg/Pommelsbrunn)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2024, p. 195 fn. 26 with further discussion.

¹¹² See BUCK, p. 253; κοιλ-ία in PANTELIA, URL <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/lex-ica.jsp>, last access: August 20, 2024.

develop a meaning ‘swell, thrive’ is in fact well known – see *in nuce* Pokorny¹¹³ (with reference to Ved. *bhūri-* ‘much, abundant, great’) and most recently Neri¹¹⁴ (with reference to Alb. *bathë* f. ‘broad bean’).

5. Summary and conclusion

The results of the present paper can be summarized as follows.

(i) I proposed that the primary meaning of Alb. *bythë* f. is ‘anus’. This meaning already occurs in Old Albanian, especially in Bardhi, da Lecce, and Chetta. There, it coexists with the semantics ‘ass, backside, bottom’ (⇒ ‘lower part of a tree, root, etc.’), which I argued to be secondary and, specifically, to have arisen from ‘anus’ though a metonymic shift (*pars pro toto*).

(ii) I connected OAlb. *bythë* f. ‘anus; ass, backside’ with the PIE root **b^heu_x-* ‘(be[come]) hollow’, which has been independently reconstructed on the basis of Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. ‘hole’, Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’, and – possibly – VLat. **būkus/a* m./f. ‘hole, hollow’. This led me to the assumption that OAlb. *bythë* f. originally meant ‘hole’, whence ‘anus’.

(iii) I traced OAlb. *bythë* f. ‘anus; ass, backside’ back to an *h*₂-substantivization PIE **b^huh_x-keh₂-* f. ‘hollow, hole’, which presupposes an adjective PIE **b^huh_x-kó-* ‘hollow’. Accordingly, the Albanian form is most closely comparable with Skt. *bhūka-* m./n. ‘hole’, which goes back to a (substantivized) adjective PIE **b^huh_x-kó-* ‘hollow’. I further argued Lat. *faucēs* pl.f. ‘throat’ < Plt. **βau-ek-es* ‘the hollow [body parts]’ to continue an inner-Italic formation in **-ek-* derived from an adjective Plt. **βauo-* ‘hollow’. The latter in turn points to a *tomós* type pre-form PIE **b^hou_x-ó-* ‘id.’, which potentially also underlies Lat. *favus* m. ‘honeycomb’.

(iv) Finally, I left it open whether PGerm. **būka-* m. ‘belly’ also belongs to the root at hand, since this Germanic word can be alternatively connected with a different PIE root, namely, **b^hueh₂-* ‘be(come), grow’.

¹¹³ Julius POKORNY, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, Bern – München: Francke, 1959, p. 146.

¹¹⁴ NERI, *Zu alb. bathë*, especially p. 191.