

Blažek, Václav

Indo-European "apple(s)"

Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. A, Řada jazykovědná. 1995, vol. 44, iss. A43, pp. [15]-20

ISBN 80-210-1192-0

ISSN 0231-7567

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/101014>

Access Date: 30. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

VÁCLAV BLAŽEK

INDO-EUROPEAN „APPLE(S)“

0. There are two different denotations of „apple“ in Indo-European languages attested in more than one branch: (1) *abōl- (*H₂ebōl-); (2) *mālo- (*meH₂lo-).

1.0. IE *abōl- has been usually demonstrated as an illustrative example of l-stem (Beekes 1990: 217 reconstructs the following paradigm: nom. *H₂éb-ōl, acc. H₂b-él-m, gen. *H₂b-l-ós); u-stem (n.) was used for a designation of the fruit while n-extension (f.) served to denote the tree how can document the following projections on the late pIE level:

	East Baltic	Old Prussian	Slavic	Celtic	Germanic
fruit	*ābōl(y)o-	woble		*ablu-	*ablu- /
		wabelcke	*āblu-ko-		*ablyo-
tree	*ābel-	wobalne	*ābol-ni-	*ab _l -na-	*abol(n)-

See Adams 1985: 79–82, supposing an original athematic root noun. On the other hand, Hamp 1979: 158–66 prefers the originality of u-stem. He reconstructs it also in Baltic, supposing a metathesis *ābul- < *āblu. Both the authors accept the explanation of the initial long vowels in Slavic and Baltic as the outcome of Winter's law.

1.1. Also the Oscan place name Abella from Campania described by Vergil (Aeneid 7.V.740) „...et quos moenia maliferae Abellæ...“ and analyzable as *abelnā- or the like, may be an Italic reflex of this etymon (but it may not – Adams l.c.). Cf. yet Latin nux avellana „hazelnut“ (Cato) and late Latin (7–8 cent. AD, Gloses) acer-abulus ≤ French érable „maple“ (Mann 1984–87: 1). On the other hand, all the Italic examples can be of Celtic origin (cf. Hamp 1979: 158 for Abella).

1.2. There are possible Paleo-Balkanian cognates in the following plant names: (Dioscorides Medicus 4, 182 RV) bryōnía leuké hoi dè mádon [=mālon ?]... hoi dè mélóthron..., Rhōmaíoi nótiām, hoi dè koukourbita érrátika, Dákoi

kinóúboila...and (Pseudo-Apuleius 67, 8) A Graecis dicitur brionia,...Itali vitis alba, alii coriaria, alii apiastellum ..., Bessi dinupula... and A Graecis dicitur botracion..., Romani apiastellum..., Bes[si] sinupyla. Thracian (Bessian) dinupula & sinupula „mélōthron, Bryonia alba, wild pumpkin“ and Dacian kinóúboila id. designate the same plant as Lithuanian šūn-obuolas, -obelė „buckthorn, crab-tree“, lit. „dog’s apple“ (Georgiev 1977: 14). Hamp 1979: 160–1 reconstructs the following development: *Θinupula ≤ *Θunipula ≤ *Θúnēpula ≤ *k^yun-ābōlo-. The unexpected „centum“ reflex in Dacian kin- represents perhaps the proto-Albanian rule which neutralized IE palatals before resonants (Hamp, KZ 76, 1960: 275–80).

1.3. A hypothetical continuant of IE *abōl- can be reflected also in Ossetin fātĕk’u „apple“. Abaev (Ėtimologija 1966[68]: 242) separates the suffix -tk’u/-ck’u known from more plant names as nymā-tk’u „Viburnum lantana“, mā-ck’u „Vaccinium vitis idaea“ and reconstructs the proper root *fal-. The loss of -l- has an analogy in mā-ck’u vs. Georgian marc’qu „straw- berry“, lit. „Erdbeere“. The dropping out of the expected initial vowel is not rare too, cf. e.g. nyx „forehead“ ≤ *anika-.

1.4. A derivation of Pashai (Dardic) wālī „apple“ from the same root is only speculative without any proof (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1984: 639).

1.5. The most wide-spread Iranian name of „apple“ can be reconstructed as *amarnā-. It is diffused esp. among East Iranian languages: Sogdian ʿmn̄k [*amarna-ka-] „apple-tree“ (Erdal 1993: 32–3), Parachi āmaṛ, Yidgha āmuno, Pashto maṛā „apple“, maṛaGūne pl. „the bitter apple“, lit. „apple-like“, māṇū „a fruit like sloe“, Munjan āmén^yg^{ya}, Waxi mūr, Shugni mūn, dial. Bajui mūn m. „apple“, f. „apple-tree“ (cf. Burushaski bālt „apple“ [class x] vs. „apple-tree“ [class y]), Roshani māwn, Xufi, Bartangi, Oroshori mōwn, Sarikoli mon, Yazghulami main, Wanji mayn, Zeba men, Ishkashimi mend, Sanglichī mēḷ ≤ *amarnti-, Ormuri milīz, milīc ≤ *(a)mṛnāči „apple“ (Morgenstierne 1927: 45; Id. 1974: 44; Efimov 1986: 100; Steblin-Kamenskij 1982: 103; Ėdel’man 1986: 181). Shina phala-manra „apple“ (Morgenstierne 1927: 45 ≤ Tomaschek) is probably composited from Indo-Aryan and Iranian components resp.

1.6. The East Iranian origin is very probable for Turkic *alimla, attested beginning 10 cent. AD in Old Uyghur alimla, similarly by Mahmūd of Kāshgar (11 cent. AD) alimla & almila, Khalaj alimla & alumla, Salar alima etc., Chuvash omla, ulma (≤ *alma ≥ Hungarian alma) ≥ Udmurt ulmo, umo, Komi ulmo, Mari olma „apple“ (Joki 1964: 18). Mongolian alima(n) id. is probably borrowed from Turkic (cf. Salar ālima). On the other hand, it can reflect a more archaic form yet before the supposed assimilation *alimna ≥ *alimla. The hypothetical source of Turkic and Mongolian „apple“ was apparently some Scythian dialect where the development *amarnā- ≥ *amalnā- or *amḷnā- was quite regular (Erdal 1993: 27–36). The Fenno-Volgaic forms as Finnish omena, omen(n)us, olma (only in Lönnrots dictionary), Wotic euna, Estonian õun, uvin,

ubin „apple“, omin „Pferdapfel“, Livonian umār „apple“, Mordvinian (Ērzya) umař „id., fruit, berry“ (contaminated with mař „berry“ ?), umarina „apple-tree“ (Joki 1964: 10) suggest much more archaic borrowing of the Iranian word „apple“ very near to reconstructed protoform *amarnā- ≤ *amṛnā-. Comparing this reconstruction with West Indo-European *abl₁-nā/i- „apple-tree“, we get the forms differing only in b/m. The change *b ≥ *m caused by the following nasal suffix looks quite naturally (Paxalina 1983: 68; Erdal 1993: 33). The name of the fruit corresponding with the West Indo-European *ablu- can be seen in Modern Persian amrūd „pear“, Pehlevi urmōd, Yidgha ābrūo (Steblin-Kamenskij 1982: 107–8; Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1984: 642) and perhaps „Kafir“ amlūkey „sloe“ (Tomaschek 1880: 791).

1.6. Palaic samluwa- and Hittite samluwanza- (= ^{GIS}HAŠHUR-lu- wa-an-za) denote „apple“. Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1984: 639 try to demonstrate the connection of the Anatolian *samlu- and West Indo-European *ablu- via s-mobile (cf. Hittite sankui- „claw“ vs. Latin unguis) and the change *-ml- ≥ *-mbl- ≥ *-bl-. Probably more promising is their comparison of the Anatolian forms with Hattic ša-a-wa^a-at „apple“ and Kartvelian *waš₁- id., suggesting the local origin (p. 641). This point of view is in a good agreement with the hypothetical relationship of Anatolian *samlu- and Greek hēlon. brabyron, kokkymelon. Furnée reconstructs here *wēlon (Furnée 1972: 246) but the original protoform *swēlon or *swālon is also possible, cf. Greek hēdūs vs. Latin suādus „sweet“. There is also Badaxshi (Tajik dialect from Pamir) samlū „walnut“ (Tomaschek 1880: 790). But it is compatible with the (Greek-)Anatolian isogloss only as Indo-Aryanism (Iranian *s- signalizes *k^y-).

2.1. The second IE name of „apple“ is attested safely only in Greek (Hom., Att.) mēlon. cf. pl. mēla „cheeks“, (Dor., Aeol.) mālon.

2.2. Albanian mollë „apple“ (cf. pl. [in some context] molla „cheeks“, mollihtë „apple orchard“) is presumably Doracism (Huld, KZ 95, 1981: 303; Markey 1988: 52). Accepting it, the initial protoform could be *malno-. This conclusion indicates a similar archetype for proto-Greek, cf. Hom. stēlē vs. Dor. stālā, Aeol. stālā „stele“ ≤ *stalnā (Chantraine 1977: 1055). Erdal 1993: 34 sees in the hypothetical proto-Greek *malno- a counterpart to Iranian forms and explains it as a borrowing from Scythian *amalnā- or sim.

2.3. Similarly Latin mālum n. „apple“ (Plautus), mālus f. „apple-tree“ (Varro), māla „cheekbone“ is borrowed from Doric mālon, while the later mēlum (Petronius) has an origin in Ion.-Attic dialects (Walde & Hofmann 1954: 18–9, 64). An interesting fusion of Romance (malum or mela) and Celtic (Gaulish avallo) appears in Occitanian amelanco and Northern Italian (Tridente-Venetian-Istrian) àmolo „plum“ (Hamp 1979: 51).

2.4. Frequently compared Tocharian A malañ, B meli reflect either *molo- or *mēlo- but not *mālo- which have given **mālañ/**māli. The correct

meaning is only „nose“, never „checks“. That is why it cannot be a cognate (Adams 1985: 82)!

2.5. The apparent similarity of Hittite *mahla-* „branch of grapevine“, Palaic *mahlanza-* and Greek *mālon* & *mēlon* „apple“ is not so strong not only for semantics but also for the different internal structure, accepting the reconstruction above (2.2.). The comparison with Lydian *mōlax.eīdos oīnou.apō toū mōlou hōs tinés. Lydoi tōn oīnon* (Hsch.) (Tischler 1990: 89–90) looks better.

2.6. Latvian *mālābols* „a kind of apple (serinka)“ represents probably a compound of the otherwise unattested **māl-* and the usual *ābols* (Karulis 1987: 135). Formally similar compounds appear in Greek *mēlápion* „a kind of apple“, lit. „apple“ & „pear“ and Shina (Tomaschek) *phala-manra* „apple“, cf. Old Indic *phāla-* „fruit“ & Iranian **amarnā* „apple“ (see 1.5.).

2.7. Yatviangian *alm* „apple“ is probably of Turkic origin (Orel & Xelimskij 1987: 123). Crimean Tatars live in Polish–Lithuanian borderland till the present time. Cf. also (isolated) Finnish *olma id.* – see 1.5.

Conclusions:

(1) The oldest and probably only denotation of „apple“ in IE with a wider distribution is **abVI-*. One of possible archetypes **abul-* is in a good agreement with Semitic **'abul-* & **'ubal-* denoting various kinds of fruits and cultural trees or plants: Arabic *'ubullat-* „fruits verts de l'arak, figues sèches comprimées en masse“, *'abal-* „frais, vert, fourrage“, Tigre *'obäl* „tamarisc“, Amhara *'abalo* „plante dont on se sert pour parfumer les vases à lait“ (D. Cohen, *Dictionnaire des racines Sémitiques*. Paris & Le Haye: Mouton 1970, 3–4). In spite of the semantic difference (but cf. Akkadian *šerkum* „a string of (dried) fruit, normally figs, less often apples“ – see Markey 1988: 54) both the terms can be connected. A cultural character gives at least an undirect evidence for a borrowing from some Near Eastern source (Semitic ?) into Indo–European languages.

(2) The compound attested in Latvian *mālābols* can represent a key to the solution of the connection of the terms 1. & 2. The second component *ābols* means „apple“. It would be natural to expect that the first component expresses some quality, cf. e.g. Greek *glukúmālon, -mēlon* „sweet apple“. The question of the meaning of Latvian **māl-* is open. A connection with *māls* „clay“, Lithuanian *mólis id., muólas* „slime“ is semantically more than problematic (Karulis 1987: 135). The Russian equivalent 'serinka' is apparently derived from 'seryj' „grey“. It is well-known that just colors frequently represent a semantic motivation in a terminology describing „mud, marsh, clay“ etc., cf. Lithuanian *bālas* „white“ : *bal,* „swamp, pool“ or *báltas* „white“ : Slavic **bolto* „mud“ etc. There is really a related color term in Baltic: Lithuanian *moliūgas* & *mólinas* „fallow, yellowish“ (Fraenkel 1962: 463). A similar color term appears also in Greek **mālós/*mallos*, cf. *mālós* 'epith. of a goat' (Theoc. Ep. 1.5.), explained as „white“ (Hsch.), *mallopárauos leukopáreios*, acc. *mal-*

paroúan & maloparaúan „white and chestnut“ (about mare) and málouros leukouros & malourís leukókerkos (Hsch.) or mēlís & malís „yellow pigment“ etc.; also the place name Mēlínē designating ‘earth characterized by grey clay used by painters and physicians’ (Chantraine 1968: 694) (cf. Baltic!). The preceding arguments allow to identify in Proto-Greek *mālo-/*malno- some light color, most probably „yellow“ or „white“ describing a sort of apples. It is possible to imagine a development

*abVI mālom/malnom „[a sort of] yellowish fruit [apples ?]“

≥ *māloin/malnom „apple“

comparable with Latin mālum sacrum ≥ Basque şagarr „apple“ (Markey 1988: 63–4, fn. 5).

From this point of view, Hittite mahla- „branch of grapevine“ can represent originally also some sort of grape characterized by its color, esp. with regard to a distinction of vine according to color.

REFERENCES:

- ADAMS, D.Q. 1985: The Indo-European Word for ‘apple’ Again. *Indogermanische Forschungen* 90: 79–82.
- BEEKES, R. 1990: *Vergelijkende taalwetenschap*. Utrecht: Aula.
- CHANTRAINE, P. 1968 & 1977: *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, III & IV, I. Paris: Klincksieck.
- ÉDEL'MAN, D.I. 1986: *Sravnitel'naja grammatika vostočnoiranskix jazykov*. Fonologija. Moskva: Nauka.
- EFIMOV, V.A. 1986: *Jazyk ormuri v sinxronnom i istoričeskom osveščeenii*. Moskva: Nauka.
- ERDAL, M. 1993: Around Turkic ‘Apple’. *JIES* 21: 27–36.
- FRAENKEL, E. 1962–65: *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- FURNÉE, E. 1972: *Die wichtigsten konsonantischen Erscheinungen*. The Hague–Paris: Mouton.
- GAMKRELIDZE, T. & Ivanov, V. 1984: *Indoevropskij jazyk i indoevropejcy*. Tbilisi: Izd. Tbilisskogo universiteta.
- GEORGIEV, V.I. 1977: *Trakite i texnjat ezik*. Sofija: Izd. na Bălgarskata akademija na naukite.
- HAMP, E. 1979: The North European word for ‘apple’. *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 37: 158–166.
- JIES Journal of Indo-European Studies*.
- JOKI, A. 1964: Der wandernde Apfel. *Studia orientalia* 28.
- KARULIS, K. 1987: K jatvjažskomu slovariku. *Balto-slavjanskije issledovanija* 1985: 134–140.
- MANN, S. 1984–87: *An Indo-European Comparative Dictionary*. Hamburg: Busche.
- MARKEY, T.L. 1988: Eurasian ‘Apple’ as Arboreal Unit and Item of Culture. *JIES* 16: 49–66.
- MORGENSTIERNE, G. 1927: *An etymological vocabulary of Pashto*. Oslo: Dybwad.
- MORGENSTIERNE, G. 1974: *Etymological Vocabulary of the Shugni Group*. Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- OREL, V. & XELIMSKIJ, E. 1987: Nabljudenija nad baltijskim jazykom pol'sko-jatvjažskogo slovarika. *Balto-slavjanskije issledovanija* 1985: 121–134.
- PAXALINA, T.N. 1983: *Issledovanie po sravnitel'no-istoričeskoj fonetike pamiorskix jazykov*. Moskva: Nauka.
- STEBLIN-KAMENSKIJ, I.M. 1982: *Očerki po istorii pamiorskix jazykov*. Moskva: Nauka.
- TISCHLER, J. 1990: *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*. Lief. 5–6. Innsbruck.

- TOMASCHEK, W. 1880:** Centralasiatische Studien, II. Die Pamir-Dialekte. Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien 96: 735–900.
- WALDE, A. & HOFMANN, J.B. 1954:** Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, II. Heidelberg: Winter.