

# SLAVIC \*KOMONJB AND ITS PROBABLE CELTIC SOURCE

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## 0. Introduction

The main purpose of the present study is to demonstrate that besides the traditional Balto-Slavic etymology of Slavic \**komonjb* “riding horse”, based on the Baltic designation of “bridle”, there is an alternative identifying in the Slavic word an adaptation of the syntagm “horse of road” > “riding horse”, expressed in a hypothetical Celtic source from Central Europe as \**epos* (? \**ekwos*) or \**markos* \**kammanios*, with the following ellipsis of the word for “horse”.

## 1. Attestation

Slavic \**komonjb* > Old Church Slavic *komonbъ* “equus, caballus” (1x Venc-Nik), Old and poetic Czech *komoň* “riding horse”; Old Russian *komonbъ*, *kumonbъ* “riding horse”, Russian (arch.) *kómoň*, dial. also *komáň*, *komán* id., Ukrainian (arch.) *komóň* id. (Trubačev, ESSJ 10.177-78; Valčáková 1996: 332-33 (ESJS 6); Machek 1968: 271-72).

## 2. Derivatives

2.1. Adjective: \**komonbъnъ(jbъ)* > Czech (arch.) *komonný* “(of) horse”, Old Polish *komonny*, *komunny* id., “of cavalry”, probably a loan from Russia; Russian (dial.) *komannój*, *kománnij* “healthy, living”, Old Ukrainian *komonnij*, Ukrainian *komónnij* “(of) horse” (ESSJ 10.178; Sławski 1958-65: 402-03).

2.2. *Nomen agentis*: \**komonbъnikъ* > Czech (arch.) *komonník* “rider, cavalier, knight”, Old Polish *komonik*, *kommonik*, *komonnik*, *komun(n)ik* “cavalry; rider, knight”, Ukrainian (arch.) *komonnýk* “rider, knight” (ESSJ 10.178; Sławski 1958-65: 402-03).

2.3. Collective: \**komonbъstvo* > Old Czech *komonstvo* “cavalry” > Slovak *komonstvo* id., Polish *komaństwo* “society” (Machek 1968: 271; Sławski 1958-65: 402-03).

## 3. Internal structure

In Slavic the suffix \*-*onjb* forms the words with expressive semantics (\**tixonjb* : \**tixъ*, \**květonjb* : \**kvěťъ*, \**žbronjb* : \**žbrq* – see Sławski 1974: 132) or hypocoristics (\**Radonjb* from the personal name of the type

\**Radoslavъ*, \**Radomilъ* etc. – see Svoboda 1964: 161). Slavic \**komonjb* is probably the only exception as a word with the neutral meaning.

#### 4. Traditional etymology

If the word \**komonjb* is really formed by the suffix \*-*onjb*, this suffix is analysable as \*-*on-* extended by the possessive suffix \*-*jb*. In this case the hypothetical unextended protoform \**komonъ* < \**komono-* would correspond with Lithuanian *kāmanos* “bridle with a bit” (formally the proto-Baltic pl. \**kamanās*, indicating the unattested sg. <sup>+</sup>*kamanā*). Hence Slavic \**komonjb* (\**komonjo-*) would mean “belonging to \**komono-*” or “characteristic by \**komono-*”. For the “riding horse” the “bridle with a bit” is undoubtedly characteristic enough. Other etymologies are discussed by Valčáková (ESJS 6.332-33), Trubačev (ESSJ 10.177-78) and Toporov (1980: 196).

#### 5. Alternative etymology

Although the preceding etymology is acceptable from the point of phonology, morphology and semantics, the exceptional rarity of the inexpressive function of the suffix \*-*onjb* legitimizes to seek any alternative solution. It is possible to think about adaptation and elliptic simplification of the Continental Celtic syntagm \*(*epos*/\**ekwos* or \**markos*) \**kammanios* “riding (horse)” corresponding to German *Reitpferd*, where the attribute represented a derivative of the word \**kamman* “step” (< \**kangsmān* < \**kngsmn*), reconstructed on the basis of Celtiberian (Botorrita A5) acc. sg. *kamanom* “road”; Old Irish *céimm* neut. “act of stepping towards, approaching; resorting to; step, pace, stride; degree; stage; dignity, rank; course” (DIL C 100.01), acc. pl. *inna cemmen* gl. ‘gresus’; Old Welsh *cemmein* gl. ‘in gradibus’ < \**kammanī*, Middle Welsh *camm* “step”, Welsh *cam*, pl. -*au* “stride, step”, Cornish *cam* “marche, pas”, Middle Breton *cam* “un pas”; cf. also Gallo-Latin (7<sup>th</sup> cent.) *camminus* “road, street” (LEIA C-54-55; Thurneysen 1946: 94, 210; de Bernardo Stempel 1999: 265; Holder 1896: 719; Schrijver 1995: 375; Falileyev 2000: 25; Delamarre 2001: 85) and its Romance continuants in Italian *cammino*, Engadin, Friuli *k’amin*, French *chemin*, Provençal, Catalanian *camí*, Spanish *camino*, Portuguese *caminho* “way, road” (Meyer-Lübke 1935: #1552).

#### 6. External parallels

6.1. Closest cognate can be identified in a Lusitanian word COMAIAM, appearing in the inscription from Cabeço das Fráguas: OILAM · TREBOPALA · INDI · PORCOM · LAEBO · COMAIAM · ICCONA · LOIMINNA · OILAM · USSEAM · TREBARUNE · INDI · TAUROM IFADEM .. REUE TRE.. Witczak (2005: 68-70) refers to the following interpretation:

‘Ovem Trebopalae et porcum Laribus, equam Eponae Virgini, ovem anniculam Trebaroni et taurum futuentem Iovi’, i.e. “a sheep (acc. sg.) to Trebopala (dat. sg.) and a pig (acc. sg.) to La[h]es (dat. pl.), a mare (acc. sg.) to Icona (equine goddess?) virgin (dat. sg.), a yearly sheep to Trebaruna and a bull (acc. sg.) to Reuos (dat. sg.)”. The word COMAIAM designating an animal determined as a sacrifice for the goddess ICCONA so should be the acc. sg. of the *\*-iā* stems, according to Witczak ± “mare” with regard to a probable equine specialisation of ICCONA. Witczak (2005: 330-31) discussed two etymologies of *\*komaīā*: (i) comparison with Prussian *camnet* “horse” and Slavic *\*komonь* “horse”; (ii) comparison with Old Indic *māya-* “horse”, *māyī-* “mare”, prefixed by the ‘pejorative’ prefix *ka-*. The following solution modifies the variant (i): The hypothetical Lusitanian nom. sg. *\*komaīā* can reflect older *\*komanīā*. This change looks as a rule postulated *ad hoc*, but a similar tendency appears in Portuguese which could inherit it just from Lusitanian, its substratum, cf. the ancient city-name *Conimbriga* continuing in *Coimbra* today, or Latin *panis* “bread” > Portuguese *pão* etc. (Meyer-Lübke 1935: #6198).

6.2. Concerning Prussian *kamprūt* gl. ‘pferdt’ [Grunau G 6], *camnet* id. [Grunau A 41] = gl. ‘equus’ [Grunau F 41], there are two possible starting-points: (i) *\*kam(a)nētas*, exactly corresponding to the Lithuanian part. pret. pass. *kamanētas* from the verb *kamanēti* “to move”, itself from the noun *kāmanos* “bridle with a bit” (Toporov 1980: 191-96); (ii) *\*kamnitis* < *\*kamanītīs*, interpretable as a diminutive, implying a primary protoform *\*kamanīs* (Mažiulis 1993: 105 derives it further from the adj. *\*kamanja-*, formed from the noun *\*kamana-/ā-* “bridle”). The place-name *Camnitien* attested in Samland in 1333 (Gerullis 1922: 54) supports the solution (ii). In this case one of the hypothetical predecessors of the Prussian designations of “horse”, *\*kamanīs* or *\*kamanja-*, can represent an adaptation of Slavic *\*komonjь* “riding horse”.

## 7. Conclusion

If the preceding arguments are valid, it is possible to add this etymology to the scanty, but extraordinarily important group of Celto-Slavic parallels which cannot be explained as a common heritage. For apparent phonological and morphological reasons the Slavic data should be interpreted as Celtic loans. The classic examples of this type were analysed by Stalmaszczyk & Witczak (1995).

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### Abbreviations

- DIL** – *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, ed. by E. G. Quin et al. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy (Compact Edition) 1983 (repr. 1990; 1998).
- ESJS** – *Etymologický slovník jazyka staroslověnského*, ed. by Eva Havlová et al. Praha: Academia 1989–.
- ESSJ** – *Étimologičeskij slová slavjanskix jazykov*, ed. by Oleg N. Trubačev et al. Moskva: Nauka 1974–.
- LEIA** – *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien*, par Joseph Vendryes, Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies & Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 1959–.

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