VANDALS, VENETI, WINDISCHER: THE PITFALLS OF AMATEUR HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS[1]

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1. Introduction: amateur linguistics

Twenty years ago Dwight Bolinger, discussing the work of amateur grammarians in the U.S., drew a striking analogy between linguistics and medicine. The ordinary person, he wrote (1980, 1),

> ... is in two minds about health. If a symptom can be suppressed by a pill, poultice, powder, or potion, he repairs to his medicine shelf. He will take [...] advice from quacks [or] have his spine adjusted by a chiropractor, [...]. But [...] when the real thing strikes, —tumor, gall stones, heart seizure, appendicitis— nothing can stop him on his way to the nearest practitioner with a bona fide MD degree. In language there are no licensed practitioners, but the woods are full of midwives, herbalists, colonic irrigationists, bone-setters, and general-purpose witchdoctors, some abysmally ignorant, others with a rich fund of practical knowledge [...]. [...] Sometimes their advice is sound. Sometimes it is worthless, but still it is sought because no one knows where else to turn.

I quote this at length because the analogy applies perfectly to my subject, historical linguistics. Here too—though more rarely than in the field of descriptive linguistics—people often make do with the services of amateurs. Here, however, there is one difference: although "licensed practitioners" do exist—scholars who spend their lives working on the reconstruction of language history—ordinary people for the most part do not know that they do exist and hence know nothing about their methods; and amateurs may thus become very popular. As in

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Bolinger's analogy, it is true that "sometimes their advice is sound. Sometimes it is worthless."[2] Following the analogy, we see that some folk remedies are nonsense: in parts of Britain, for example, a nylon stocking coated in goose grease and worn around the neck was not so long ago believed to cure the common cold; and so too some amateur attempts at historical language reconstruction have been without merit. On the other hand, folk medicine has often been proved sound: chewing the leaves of willow trees, for example, was a folk remedy with its basis in the fact that these leaves contain acetylsalicylic acid; and amateur historical linguists[3] may also be correct; much of what was written by medieval Slavic chroniclers, for instance, about the historical connections of the Slavic languages was close to the truth.

My main subject is a well-known attempt at amateur historical linguistics: the diachronic-linguistic portions of the writings of Jožko Šavli, Ivan Tomažič, and the late Matej Bor about the "Veneti theory": their popular hypothesis that the Veneti, who left inscriptions dating to 600–450 BC in what is now Northern Italy, "were the Proto-Slavic people" (Šavli, Bor, and Tomažič [henceforward ŠBT] 1996, 1). First, however, I discuss the methodological requirements for historical linguistics and exemplify my comments by discussing three other attempts at historical reconstruction.

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[2]   A straightforward example of the work of a non-professional descriptive linguist whose "advice" borders on the "worthless" is Carcas's *Grammar of Slovene* (1994), see my review (1994). An example of something not only worthless but even potentially dangerous from an educational point of view is Kazandzhiev's (1943) attempt at a demonstration that Bulgarian is more "advanced" than French, German, English, Italian, and Russian—a work whose effect may have been merely mollifying to uneducated Bulgarians, but which could have been used to stoke the flames of nationalism.

[3]   I refrain from labelling amateur historical linguistics as part of what Bugarski (1980) calls "folk linguistics"; his definition—"popular reactions to language, i.e., the various beliefs, values, attitudes, and judgments traditionally associated in language communities with particular languages"—excludes the kind of amateur reconstructions that I am discussing, because they are not "traditional." In most if not all other respects, however, the various manifestations that Bugarski describes are identical to what I describe; cf. his comment "in their effect they range from quite harmless to positively dangerous" (1980, 383).

My discussion of the "Veneti theory" is based on its latest version, ŠBT, i.e., the English translation of earlier German and Slovene versions.[4] In order to approach the theory as objectively as possible, something that I undertook to do in response to a request from Ivan Tomažič, I refrained until after writing this text from reading any of the published criticisms of the theory[5]—except for the review by Lencek (1990), which I did read ten years ago. His review was of Bor's contribution to the theory as first published in German and Slovene. I completed my analysis having no detailed recollection of, and before re-reading, Lencek's review. In section 7, I compare our conclusions.

I do not discuss the historical or the archeological aspects of the theory. I refrain from commenting on its onomastic components,[6] and do not discuss its graphological aspects—the interpretation of Venetic inscriptions—since those are not my field either.[7] Even though, to the non-specialist, the interpretations of these inscriptions' meanings sound very strange,[8] I therefore base my remarks on the premise that

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[4] ŠBT is a translation of Bor, Šavli, and Tomažič 1989 [BŠT] and (although this is not stated on the frontispiece) some later addenda, apparently by Tomažič. The German original (Šavli and Bor 1988) and its Slovene translation were followed by Tomažič 1990, Šavli, Bor and Tomažič 1991, and Tomažič 1995. My comments refer, except as noted, solely to ŠBT 171–420 (written by Matej Bor) and 474–81, 493–500 (written by Ivan Tomažič). The English translation differs in some respects from the Slovene original. I do not attempt to trace the source of these differences. In instances which are crucial for my argumentation, I contrast the Slovene original, and when the translation differs, I mention this (see, e.g., notes 34, 35, 41, 42 below); I have noted several inaccuracies and infelicities in the translation.

[5] Sources for these critiques are in Štih (1997, 38).

[6] But see footnote 49.

[7] On the Venetic language see Pellegrini and Prosdocimi 1967, later publications by Prosdocimi, such as 1988, and Lejeune 1974. The optimal inscription references are to be found in Pelligrini and Prosdocimi.

[8] Many indeed sound extremely trivial and hence unlikely to me: thus "KOI COTA AME TI KOSTOLER = Kdor čota, ome ti kostenico / He who limps sweeps away his rheumatism" (ŠBT 300), "PUPTNEI JEGO RACO JEKUPETARIS = Popotniku njega raco za na pot / To the traveller his duck for the journey" (ŠBT 252). Of course, these may be typologically acceptable—i.e., there may be indubitable prehistoric inscriptions in other

Bor's semantic readings and phonological transcriptions of Venetic are correct—except in section 5.4.6.[9] I also omit discussion of the extensions to the "Veneti theory" that involve Etruscan, Breton, Sanskrit, and other languages, except to say that, using as they do the kind of methodology described in 5.1., 5.2., and 5.4. below, they appear to be as successful, or unsuccessful, as the works therein described. Further, and very importantly, I refrain from discussing the equation made in the title of ŠBT, that the Veneti were the "early ancestors of the Slovenes," apart from the following remark: if Bor's theory is correct, then Venetic was Proto-Slavic; but this does not mean that its speakers were the ancestors of the Slovenes, just as the speakers of Late Latin were not the ancestors of all whose first language is Spanish today, such as the inhabitants of most South American countries; nor even—to restrict ourselves to Europe and pre-modern times—were the speakers of Late Latin the ancestors of all those whose first language was French in the, say, eleventh century AD, such as the very Germanic Norman invaders of England. I therefore concern myself with linguistic relationships only, and not with "ethnic" ones.

2. Some "prehistoric" examples

2.1. General

Throughout the Middle Ages, several beliefs about the Slavs and their languages were common; some were remarkably consistent with what we know nowadays; others were, simply, nonsense. As an example of the former we may cite the tradition that the ancestor of the Slavs had three sons, each the progenitor of a separate sub-group of Slavic tribes; the fact that the names allotted to these three worthy men ("Czech, Lech, Rus") ignored the South Slavs[10] does not negate the fact that the three-way division of the Slavs has remained undisputed since what I shall call the "prehistoric" times, i.e., the times before

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languages with similar messages—and I would be gladly instructed that this is so.

[9]   Thus I base my remarks also on the assumption that Bor's understanding of the alphabet (which differs from others') is correct; and that his reconstruction of word-boundaries is correct.

[10]   See Brtaň 1939, 61.

Dobrovský and Vostokov launched the serious study of historical Slavic linguistics; for other examples, see Priestly 1986.

Examples of the more "nonsensical" beliefs are legion; to name a few: The Polish historian Warszewski traced the Slavs' origins to the Sarmatians; Croatian historians preferred a Scandinavian origin for the Slavic peoples (Brtań 1939, 55). Even if now considered fanciful, such theories did at least contain a kernel of possibility. On the other hand, the theory that Adam and Eve spoke Slavic in the Garden of Eden, and that Greek and Latin were descended therefrom—a theory expounded by Wojciech Dębolecki and Andrij Kačić-Miošić (Brtań 1939, 79)— seems nowadays completely ludicrous.[11]

In our own times, amateurs have kept up this tradition. In a long postscript to his novel *Meč Areja*, the Ukrainian novelist Ivan Bilyk sets out his reasons for deriving the Ukrainians from the Huns (1972, 403– 37). Interestingly, he also finds connections between the Slavs and the Burgundians, and between the Slavs and the Vandals; this last link is examined in detail below. Also, he supports his arguments with several etymologies; these too are considered below.

2.2. Slavs and Vandals.

Already in the Polish history *Miersuae Chronicon*, of the late thirteenth century, the Slavs were stated to have descended from an ancestor called *Vandal* (Jagić 1910, 5); and throughout the following centuries the Vandal-Slav connection was maintained—for example: in the fifteenth-century history of Saxony, *Saxonia, De Saxonicae gentis vetusta origine* written by Albert Krainz of Rostock University (Borst 1960, 1057); in Bielski's *Kronika polska* of 1555, and in histories by many other authors (Brtań 1939, 55); in the titles of three seventeenth-century books on the Sorbian language: Georgius Ludovici's *Rudimenta grammaticae Sorabico-Vandalicae idiomatis Budissinatis* of 1673; Jacobus Ticinus's *Principiae linguae Wenedicae, quam aliqui Wandalicam vocant* of 1679; and Zacharias Bierling's *Didascalia seu Orthographia Vandalica. Das ist Wendische Schreib- und Leselehr* of 1689 (Olesch 1981, vii—viii); in the *Alt-Wenthen oder Ungarn Ordnungs-Büchlein* of the seventeenth century, which describes Austrian pilgrims to Aachen and contains quotations "in der wandalischen Sprach" (Luschin von Ebengreuth

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[11]   Very similar theories were propounded by other Europeans; see Calvet 1974: 17–20 for French, Italian, and German efforts.

1887, 92); and in the eighteenth century by the Russian Vasilii K. Trediakovskii (Smirdin 1849, 372): «И по истине именуются Славяне то Вандалы; то Далматы; то Сербы; то Болгары; то Расцы; то Горваты; то Чехи; то Ляхи; то Мосхи и Россы.».[12] Given the modern connotations of the word "Vandal," this association now seems a little unfortunate; but the tradition persisted. And the only basis for this tradition seems to have been the coincidence of the consonants /v, n, d/ in the word "Vandal" and the normal German word for "Slav," i.e., *Wend*. The confusion between "Wend" and "Vandal" even resulted in the absurd identification of the Vandals who invaded North Africa with the Vends, in a Baroque opera, Christian Heinrich Postel's *Genserich, König der afrikanischen Wenden, Rom und Karthagens Überwinder* (Angyal 1972, 269). The phonetic identification was, in effect, a strictly linguistic argument; and the linguistic field of etymology is what must be considered next. For the most recent attempt to link Slavs with Vandals—but not on the basis of the ethnonyms—, see 5.2.

3. The linguistic grounds

The coincidence of similar sounds occurring in different words has since antiquity given rise to an enormous amount of speculation.[13] If the words occurred in different languages but were semantically similar, then more or less reasonable speculations about interrelationship arose;[14] but there was also fanciful speculation when the semantic link was tenuous or non-existent. For instance, in a footnote to the passage quoted above, we can observe, further to Trediakovskii's explanation of the Slavs being (as he believed) called "Vandaly," his explanation that:

> Сии называются инако у Историков и Венеди, а сокращению Венди и Винди: но обое сие название

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[12] "And in truth the Slavs are called, severally, Vandals; Dalmatians; Serbs; Bulgars; Rascians; Croats; Czechs; Lyakhs; Moskhs and Russes."

[13] «На этом уровне *этимологические* толкования названий мест, стран и народов по *внешнему созвучию* оставалась средневековая историография ... в течение многих столетий» [Medieval historiography remained at this level of *etymological* explanation of the names of places, countries and peoples according to the *external coincidence of sound* for many centuries.] (Jagić 1910, 7).

[14] So Trediakovskii correctly notes the correspondences between "Teutonic" and "Slavonic" words such as *Esel, osel; Gans, hus'; Gast, host'*, and eighteen other pairs (Smirdin 1849, 371).

одну силу значит, тоесть народ недовольствующийся одним местом, но всегда далее и далее разсеивающийся. Вандал, есть человек удаляющийся вон с занято прежде места; а Венд идущий вон из прежнягож: ибо речь ВОН, по-Славенски говорится и ВКН, и ВЫН, и ВЕН.[15]

It is not hard to find similarly fanciful etymologies among other scholars. Thus, Boguchwał (in the thirteenth century) explained "Dalmatia" as being Slavic, from *dala mati (Jagić 1910, 6); Dębolecki supported his theory that Adam and Eve spoke Slavic by etymologies such as "Babylon" < bab'je lono, and "Amazon" < same żony (Brtań 1939, 79). Finally, the Carinthian Thomas Jaritz found traces of Slavic peoples from Kashmir to the Mosel valley in northwest Germany, and he based his ideas on the most spurious linguistic fancies; thus he explains Kashmir as Slavic "show peace" (/kaž mir/), and the city of Trier or Trèves as "tree village" (/drev ves/). He even explains the ethnonym "Deutsche" as Slavic, "give yet" /daite še/ (1853: 6, 9, 23).

Another interesting example is furnished by theories about the Croats, who at various times—and, usually, on the basis of nothing more than similarity between ethnonyms—were linked to prehistoric Germanic, Iranian, and Greek peoples (cf., respectively, hrvat- with the name given by the Germanic Bastarnae to the Carpathians, Harfada; with Iranic haurvata; and with Gk. khorobatéo; details in Pantelić 1997, 20–26.) Nor were the Slovenes immune: Marko Pohlin, for instance, derived Sklavoni from *saklavoni, and this in turn from *zakla- "slaughter"—an etymology which he supported by also deriving Moravi and Bojemi from the equally war-like roots *mor- and *boj- respectively (Brtań 1939, 130–31).[16]

These speculations did not, alas, come to an end with the development in the nineteenth century of a rational and logical

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[15] "These people are by Historians otherwise called *Veneds* abbreviated as *Vends* or *Vinds*; but both of these names bear the same force, namely a people not satisfied with one location, but for ever further and further diffusing. A *Vandal* is a man going further away *[von]* from a place earlier occupied; and a *Vend* is one leaving a former place: for the word VON in Slavic is said also as VAN, and VYN, and VEN."

[16] More examples in Štih 1997, including Davorin Trstenjak's correlation of Adam, Eve, and Cain with *ata, jeba*, and *kujon*.

approach to historical linguistic reconstruction. The Ukrainian Ivan Bilyk, quoted above, explains his ethnic linkages in precisely the way that I have been pillorying: thus, he agrees with his medieval predecessors that the Vandals and the Slavs were related because, he writes, «вени, вінули, вендлі, воні, венділи—одне сінонімічне гніздо»,[17] and he also makes the following links: (1) Gothic *svithiod* "Slavia" < *suava thiuda*; (2) *suava* <->[18] *svivi* which in turn > *Svevi* (an ethnic group recorded in Scandinavia), and <-> *scuavi* which <-> *scuifi* which not only <-> *skify* "Scythians" but also <-> *Scots*; and (3) the latter <-> *skoloti* (which appears in Herodotus), which in turn, losing its initial /s/, > *Celts*. In other words, *svithiod* <-> *kelt*. I think it fair to say that, if these etymologies are acceptable, then any ethnonym can be, eventually, linked to any other. And of course, even though any one of these hypotheses might happen to be correct, this kind of evidence is of the flimsiest, and must be considered unacceptable when not supported by other, independent evidence.

4. The comparative method

4.1. Basic principles

The nineteenth century saw enormous advances in what deservedly came to be called the science of linguistic reconstruction; true, many of its tenets had been worked out over preceding centuries on the basis of what had been very apparent when the obviously related languages of Europe were compared (see Pedersen 1931, Morpurgo-Davies 1975, Priestly 1986, Nichols 1996); but so much was achieved in the nineteenth century that we can talk of two clear consequences: first, although historical linguists of the twentieth century were able to clarify numerous details, they did not alter most of the fundamentals; and second, there is now virtually no disagreement among linguists about most of these fundamentals—they may not concur in assigning relative value to one or another tenet, and they may argue about the precise meaning of certain details, but this is all; and, given that synchronic linguists are not united about virtually anything fundamental, this unanimity among diachronic linguists is remarkable and cannot receive

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[17]   *"Vens, Vinuls, Vendls, Vons, Vendils—one synonymic nest."*

[18]   The symbol <-> means "has the same origin as."

enough emphasis.[19] To be trained in linguistics and to dispute the validity of the Comparative Method (CM) is the equivalent of being trained in geography and believing that the earth is flat.

The basic principles upon which the CM[20] of linguistic reconstruction is based are set out in table 1 (Thieme 1964, Hock 1991, 556–80, Priestly 1986, Nichols 1996). Points 1.d, 2.c, and 3.d.iii are commented on, explained and exemplified below.

Table 1: Fundamental principles of the comparative method

(1) Language relationship
- (a) that languages are related
- (b) that this relatedness presupposes a common proto-language
- (c) that between the proto-language and the modern interrelated languages there may have been a continuum for which we discriminate intermediate stages, i.e., that there are different degrees of interrelatedness
- (d) the relatedness is demonstrated primarily on the basis of grammatical relationship and secondarily on the basis of etymological relationship, though the two may be indiscriminable.

(2) Grammatical relationship
- (a) that grammatical forms in different languages are interrelated
- (b) that a systematic connection between grammatical forms in one language and grammatical forms in another is an essential component of the proof of relatedness
- (c) that this systematic connection supposes structural paradigmaticity, i.e., the occurrence in the two languages of the same grammatical paradigms or partial paradigms with specific etymologically-related fillers
- (a) that words in different languages are interrelated (term: "cognates").

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[19] In passing, I note that this unanimity relates to relatively 'short-range' comparisons with restricted time-depth; when it comes to reconstructing back before Proto-Indo-European, for instance, then linguists disagree about both methods and results (Pulgram 1995, Ross and Durie 1996, 9). However, the reconstructions discussed in this article are of the relatively short range kind.

[20] As described here, this is a normal, if restricted, meaning of the term. It is sometimes completely misunderstood and misapplied, see Ross and Durie 1996, 4–6. Ross and Durie themselves use the term in a less restricted sense than I do; the algorithm set out in table 2 comprises the first three steps of what they describe, which amounts to analyzing and itemizing the whole phonological history of a family of languages.

(3) Etymological relationship

    (a)   that, similarly to 2.a, words in different languages are interrelated (term: "cognates," which are the optimum case)

    (b)   that the degree of interrelationship between languages corresponds in some way with the number of cognates that can be listed

    (c)   that a systematic listing of cognates is a necessary part of the proof of the interrelationship, and an unsystematic listing is not

and, given that the cognates correspond to each other both in their sounds and in their meanings

    (d)   phonetically

        (i)   that a correspondence between non-identical sounds in the same phonological environment (proto-environment) implies one or more sound-changes from a reconstructed proto-form

        (ii)   that the implied sound-changes should be plausible physiologically and typologically

        (iii) that correspondences between sounds should conform to the principle of complementarity and contrast at the reconstructed level

    (e)   semantically

        (i)   that correspondence between words with different meanings implies one or more semantic changes

        (ii)   that the implied semantic changes should be plausible typologically

        (iii) that semantic similarity is most likely when the words belong to "basic vocabulary"

and further,

    (f)   that correspondences should occur regularly, and that exceptions to this regularity should be explicable by recourse to typologically familiar phenomena such as the following:

        (i)   words which are not inherited from the parent language through normal evolution, but are borrowed from other languages or dialects may be aberrant

        (ii)   words may be aberrant under the influence of "grammatical analogy"

        (iii) certain sound-changes may not have diffused throughout the vocabulary

        (iv) words exhibiting phonetic symbolism and onomatopoeia may be aberrant.

4.2. Phonetic and grammatical evidence

Often point 1.d is overlooked, and it is suggested that sufficient phonetic evidence linked by semantics may prove relatedness. Dell Hymes accurately summarizes:

> ... sound correspondences, "phonetic laws," one of the great achievements of mature Indo-European scholarship, have sometimes been taken as a prerequisite to heuristics

and initial discovery [i.e., of linguistic relatedness]... Thus Sapir has been attacked ... for the weight he gave to grammatical evidence of relationship, yet in so doing he was but following Indo-European tradition... The vocabulary evidence of Celtic connection with Indo-European, for example, was suspect until analysis revealed traces of the Indo-European inflections as well (1963, 87).[21]

Yet Franz Bopp used grammatical evidence (verbs) where phonetic data were almost identical.[22] As Nichols has shown (1996, 45–48), this emphasis on the primacy of grammatical evidence was already foreshadowed in Sir William Jones's pronouncement of 1786, and repeated by the leading Indo-Europeanist of the first half of the twentieth century, Antoine Meillet, e.g., "Grammatical correspondences are proof, and only they are rigorous proof ..." (1921, 91).[23] I accept that this is indeed the case.

4.3. Structural paradigmaticity

Point 2.c requires that the two languages have (to use terminology from European languages) similar conjugations or declensions with, playing identical roles in each, words or endings that are related. So, when we see that Lat. and Gk. and Skt.[24] have the same kind of noun-declensions with (as can be shown separately) related endings for the nominative and the accusative (table 2) the resemblance is so close,[25] and the possibility that these languages systematically share

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[21] Celtic's Indo-European place was clarified, on lexical and (faulty) phonological evidence, later than that of other branch languages in the family. Much of the verb grammar that served to "unlock" Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin was learnt slowly.

[22] See further Salmons and Joseph 1998.

[23] Jones had to, sensibly, rely heavily on phonological identities. Meillet's understanding is complex, uses total attestations, and exploits hidden and indirect correspondences; for instance, Gk. and Vedic nouns, genders, and inflexions are correlated with Armenian pluralia tantum.

[24] Abbreviations used: Bsq. = Basque; Gk. = Greek; Gmn. = German; IE = Indo-European; Lat. = Latin; Lith. = Lithuanian; Mac. = Macedonian; OCS = Old Church Slavic; PIE = Proto-Indo-European; PSlc. = Proto-Slavic; Russ. = Russian; Scan. = Scandinavian; Sln. = Slovene; Skt. = Sanskrit; Ven. = Venetic.

[25] See Hamp 1984.

obviously related endings in these functions *by chance* is so remote, that relatedness is assured. Similarly, the possibility that English and German could accidentally share the same system of comparison for one word (table 3) has been calculated as 0.000000125, or one in eight million (Nichols 1996, 50).

Table 2: Partial noun paradigms in Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit

		Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Latin	nom.	-us	-a	-um
	acc.	-um	-am	-um
Greek	nom.	-os	-a	-on
	acc.	-on	-an	-on
Sanskrit	nom.	-as	-a	-u
	acc.	-am	-am	-u

Table 3: Two degrees of comparison in English and German

English	good	better
German	gut	besser

4.4. Contrast and complementarity

Point 3.d.iii can be exemplified as follows. If we compare the Rožansko and Dolenjsko dialects of Sln.—pretending that these were the only two dialects in existence, and that we had no evidence of earlier stages of the Sln. language—, we find for example the following likely cognates (table 4):[26]

When we inspect this incidence of /q/, /k/ and /č/, we find three sets of correspondences (table 5), with (A) in cognate sets ## 1, 2, 3; (B) in ## 4, 5, 6; and (C) in the remainder, ## 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. These data exemplify both contrast and proto-complementarity, which may be obscured by later disruptions; the reasoning goes as follows.

- A and C are in contrast: the consonants occur before identical other consonants or vowels (compare ##1 & 7, 2 & 8, 3, & 9);

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[26]   I use "q" for the glottal stop and simplify the phonology by omitting representation of length, stress and pitch.

- B and C are in contrast: the consonants occur before identical other consonants or vowels (compare ## 4 & 10, 5 & 11, 6, & 12); whereas

- A and B are in complementarity, for B occurs only before the front vowels /e/ (##4, 5) and /i/ (#6), and A never occurs before those vowels.

Table 4: Sample cognates in Rožansko and Dolenjsko

	Rož.	Dol.	meaning
1.	qrawa	krava	'cow'
2.	qaša	kaša	'porridge'
3.	qura	kura	'hen'
4.	roče	roke	'hand, nom. pl.'
5.	čebər	kebər	'beetle'
6.	čidat	kidat	'to shovel'
7.	čriəwə	črevo	'intestine'
8.	čaqat	čakat	'to wait'
9.	čudən	čudən	'bad, strange'
10.	qače	kače	'snake, nom. pl.'
11.	čewə	čelo	'forehead'
12.	čihat	kihat	'to sneeze'

Table 5: Rožansko-Dolenjsko correspondences

	Rož.	Dol.
A	q	k
B	č	k
C	č	č

- The contrast between set A and set C means that each must derive from a different proto-phoneme. We guess that set A derive from an earlier /k/ (among other reasons, because /k/ is more common than the glottal stop, and because in other languages glottal stops are known to derive from /k/, but the reverse has not been observed). And it is not difficult to guess that set C derives from an earlier */č/.

- The complementarity between sets A and B implies that they both derive from the same proto-phoneme. We have already supposed,

for A, that this was */k/, and this presents no difficulty, for the palatalization of /k/ to /č/ is known in other languages. We therefore reconstruct the earlier Sln. as having a phoneme /k/ which changed to /č/ before the vowels /i/ and /e/ in the Rožansko dialects.

For another example of contrast and complementarity, see 5.3.

Since a thorough application of the CM involves repeating what is exemplified here for all the sounds of two languages and a large portion of their vocabulary, it can be seen that the procedure for applying it to all the possible cognate sets in the two languages is a long and arduous one. Nevertheless, it works; if it does not work absolutely perfectly, at least it works so well that—given enough suitable data—its results are always generally acceptable. Indeed, this is not just a matter of mutual trust among comparativists, for it has been proved to work: on at least three occasions, the method has been applied to modern languages whose parent language is attested, and the results of the application of the method have been a close approximation of the phonology of that language.[27]

5. Four attempts to show linguistic relationship

5.0. Introduction

In the following four sections I contrast selected examples from four attempts at demonstrating genetic relationship among languages. Lest I prejudge the issue, I label all the examples given for proposed sets of correspondences as "cognates," since (in their authors' eyes) these words are indeed related. To the extent that I conclude that these attempts are, at best, not proven, it is to be understood that many of the "cognates" are in fact not cognate.

5.1. The theory that Basque and Slavic are related

Among the many attempts to find a language that might be related to Basque, I will examine that made by Johann Topolovšek in 1894.[28] This is the first part of a two-volume putative demonstration of

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[27]   Hall (1950) with Romance group (see also Pulgram 1995); Southworth (1958) with Indic; and Priestly (1972) with South-East Slavic.

[28]   Topolovšek studied linguistics under Miklosich, but did not complete his studies (Štih 1997, 31).

the relationship of Bsq. to Slavic;[29] the second part, which was to be a description of Bsq. grammar, was never published. Since grammatical relationship is an essential part of the proof of relatedness, the lacuna is significant. This first part is an exceedingly painstaking listing of correspondences between every Bsq. phoneme and various Slavic phonemes (table 6).

The first example summarizes Topolovšek's data for Bsq. /s/ (written "z"): he lists fifteen cognates for /s : c/, including Bsq. *zapata* 'shoe' : Sln. *copata* "clog," and Bsq. *beruezu-rra* "shinbone" : Russ. *berco* "shinbone"; these are followed by a line reading "u.s.w. u.s.w. u.s.w.," meaning presumably that there are many more such. Similarly, there are over thirty-six cognates for /s : z/, including Bsq. *zori* "ripe" : Sln. *zoriti* "to ripen," Bsq. *azaba* "sheaf" : Sln. *zaveza* "binding." These examples are semantically very plausible; phonologically, however, we see Topolovšek implicitly admitting that his correspondences are dubious, for he furnishes two of them with arbitrarily reconstructed earlier forms to make them appear more likely. He gives the Russ. *berco* with an earlier form *beruéco* (a reconstruction unique to him[30]) which makes the correspondence with Bsq. /beruesu-/ more acceptable. Similarly, he posits a metathesis in the earlier history of Bsq. /asaba/ < */abaza/, so that the similarity to Sln. *zaveza* is much closer. It goes without saying that recourse to strategies like these, without any supporting evidence, renders his whole enterprise fanciful; for with such strategies almost any phonetic similarity can be arranged.

Lack of space precludes details of all his other examples and their meanings. Four further points may, however, be made using these few examples. First, there is no mention of any grammatical evidence of

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[29]   Specifically, Topolovšek tried to show one of two things (it is unclear): either that Bsq. was a Slavic language, and closer to Sln. than to any other; or, that Bsq. was an IE language more closely related to Slavic than to any other IE language, and sharing more similarities with Sln. than any other Slavic language.

[30]   There were few if any attempts to explain the etymology of this Russ. word before Topolovšek's time; now, its derivation from *bedr'ce is normally accepted (Shanskii 1965, 100). It is fair to criticize Topolovšek, however, for he cites a pre-Russ. form with a diphthong unknown to Slavic, /-ue/.

relationship. Second, the semantic correspondences are generally very plausible: normally, the Bsq. and the Slavic words have identical

Table 6: Examples from Topolovšek (1894)

(1) List of correspondences with Basque "z" /s/ and a Slavic consonant			
s : c	15+	zapata : copata; beruezu-rra : berco < *berueco (155–56)	
s : z	36+	zori : zori; azaba <* abaza : zaveza (159–62)	
s : d	12+	zor : dolg; erosi < erozi : posoditi (166–67)	
s : g	6	en-drez-era : doroga; jauzi : igra (167)	
s : č	16+	zeden : červ; ezetu : močiti (175–76)	
s : ž	20+	zapo : žaba; arazi : pod-ložen (182–84)	
(2) List of correspondences with Basque "tz" /c/ and a Slavic consonant			
c : c	22+	abatza : stu-pica; aitzi : lice (157–58)	
c : z	8	matzus-ta : mozulj; tzaka < *kaza : s-kaza (162)	
c : č	23+	amar-ratza : raček; ohitza : običaj (180–82)	
c : š	3	unhatz-e : z-anaš-ati se (185)	

meanings. Third, however, the phonological correspondences are all too often extremely far-fetched: not only does the author resort to arbitrary metatheses (on this table, not only for *azaba* but also for *tzaka*), but posits very unlikely combinations of sound-change. Thus the cognate words *jauzi : igra* have so little in common phonetically—even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that the correspondence between /s/ and /g/ is regular—that the reconstructed proto-form for "to play" will require details of at least four more sound-changes to accommodate the other non-equivalent correspondences: vocalic /au : i/ and /i : a/, and consonantal /j : Ø/ and /Ø : r/. From these two points it is clear that Topolovšek sacrifices phonological plausibility on the altar of semantic verisimilitude. —Fourth, we can see clearly that Bsq. *zor-* corresponds to Sln. *zor-* ("ripe") while Bsq. *zor-* corresponds to Sln. *dolg* ("debt"): immediately we note the necessity for an explanation why the proto-forms for "ripe" and "debt" result in homonyms in one language but in quite different words in another—something which is indeed quite possible, but which can not be accepted on trust, and demands an explanation.

In sum: Topolovšek observes tenets 1.a - 1.c but omits 1.d and all of 2, the evidence of grammatical relationship. With respect to

etymological relationship, he follows 3.a - 3.c and 3.e but pays no attention to 3.d (or, incidentally, 3.f). His presentation of data is outstanding; but he does not reconstruct any proto-phonemes—indeed, given that so many of his correspondences occur in positions of contrast, he would have to reconstruct a system of sounds that typologically would be uniquely large. Methodologically, Topolovšek fails to apply the CM satisfactorily.

5.2. The theory that Scandinavian and Slovene are closely related

I now consider the attempt by Franc Jeza (1967)[31] to demonstrate that Scandinavian—and specifically Old Norse—is closely related to Sln. Jeza's point of departure is that all languages (and peoples) are the result of language mixture, and there were no such things as proto-languages; that the Slavic languages are a mixture of Nordic, Baltic, Sarmatian, Dacian, and perhaps other languages, in different measures; that Sln. is based above all on Old Norse; and that the Slovenes emigrated from Scandinavia 2000 years ago, where they had been a sub-group of the Vandals (1967, 245–49). Given this rejection of the underlying basis for applications of the CM, it is perhaps unfair to subject Jeza's methodology to a test. Nevertheless, he does present words in (Scan./Sln.) pairs, and is thus basing a theory of relatedness on phonological similarities; and in addition, his methods are of instructive interest. He does not mention grammatical similarities; the book is a discursive account of phonetic similarities in various semantic domains, and the ethnogenetic parallels he sees in them. He does not provide lists of correspondences: these have to be teased out from the pairs of words which he cites (table 7).

Semantically, Jeza's word-pairs are even more plausible than Topolovšek's: in almost every instance, the Scand. and the Sln. word have an identical meaning; this is true of all the examples on table 7, except for *kupa* "hollow log" vs. *čupa* "boat," which would indeed involve an acceptable semantic shift. It can, however, immediately be seen, just from these examples, that Jeza's data are far from phonetically plausible. (And some pairs are so far apart phonetically that one

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[31] I am indebted to Miran Komac for bringing this to my attention and furnishing me with a copy of the text. Jeza, who had a degree in ethnology but not in linguistics, was a "political emigrant" with a specific agenda, see Štih 1997: 32–33, 36–37.

wonders at Jeza's audacity in citing them—e.g., "postrv : aure," 62). He seldom comments on this, but on page after carefree page lists hundreds of word-pairs with phonetic inconsistencies which are never related to any systematic framework and which seldom receive comment.

Table 7: Examples from Jeza (1967)

(1) List of correspondences with Scand. /s/ and a Sln. consonant	
s : s	besök : obisk; drysse : trositi; sael : vesel (13)
s : z	sen : pozen (13); sats : zajec (62)
s : š	hus : hiša (60)
s : ž	sag : žaga (83)
s : ∅	smula : malo (62)
(2) List of correspondences with Scand. /k/ and a Sln. consonant	
k: k	köpa : kupiti (13); kraakare : krokar (61);
	räka : rak; kupa : kipeti (62)
k : s	vik : ves *[village]* (13); kane : sani (82)
k : č	kupa : čupa (56)
k: g	kar : gare; pugge : pokati (82)

When he does admit that the phonetic connection is far-fetched, it comes as rather a surprise; thus, having found no similarity between the Scand. and the Sln. words for 'oak' (*ek* vs. *hrast*)—something he expected, given the religious importance of the tree in both cultures—he adds, "Značilno pa je, da si je slovenščina še ohranila skandinavsko besedo za hrastov plod, četudi precej spremenjeno in komaj če prepoznavno (eklut — želod), najbrž po prilagoditvi *ek* v *že*, (1967, 47)." It is, scientifically speaking, cheating to "explain" the correspondence between /ek/ and /že/ by stating no more than that the former was "adapted" or "adjusted" to the latter shape. And yet this is among the better of Jeza's explanations for his array of phonetically inconsistent correspondences. Other equations approach the laughable, e.g., the semantically bizarre: "Sicer pa je tudi beseda hlev najbrž skandinavska in pride verjetno iz hlé (zadrževati se kje) ali hleypa (pognati, teči). Njen smisel je: zavetje, kamor so se pasoče se živali zatekle ob slabem vremenu ali ponoči" (1967, 67).

And

> ... bi bilo seveda naravnost čudno, čebi tudi znameniti slovenski kozolec ne bil skandinavskega izvora... [Narečna] beseda kozoc pa je najbrž sestavljenka iz nordijskih besed kot (koča) in saate (izg. sote—pokrita senena kopica), ali ... [knjižna oblika] kozolec iz besed kot - saate - löe (tudi löe pomeni norveški kozolec) (1967, 68–69).

He thus proposes that either *kozoc* < /kot + sote/ "hut - haypile," or *kozolec* < /kot + sote + löe/ "hut - haypile - hay-protector." He does not relate these co-ordinate derivations to any (Scand. or Slavic?) derivational system; he does not explain the phonetic changes involved (/kotsote/ > /kozoc/, /kotsotelöe/ > /kozolɔc/; and he does not explain why the second alternative would require a repetition of the morphemes for "structure" and "hay."

In sum: Jeza observes very few of the tenets of the CM: namely, just 1.a, 3.a, 3.b, and 3.e. Methodologically, we have seen that Topolovšek fails to apply the CM satisfactorily; but Jeza has a great deal to learn from Topolovšek.

5.3. A demonstration of the relationship among the South and the East Slavic languages

My doctoral dissertation (1972) was a test of the CM: I reconstructed a partial phonology—relevant to initial open syllables only—from the three standard East Slavic languages, and named this "Proto-East-Slavic"; I reconstructed the same partial phonology from the then four standard South Slavic languages, and named this "Proto-South-Slavic"; I then reconstructed a partial phonology for the "parent language" from my two "proto" constructs. The final system, which I named "Proto-South-East Slavic," was compared with the phonology of OCS. The test was successful: the comparison was perfect in all but a few particulars.

To briefly exemplify my methodology, I present (table 8; Priestly 1972, 134–35) some of the consonantal correspondences between Sln. and Mac., omitting Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian to save time and space. Here, the column headed "incidence" provides the number of cognate sets from my data in which the correspondence occurred; viz., I had eighty sets of words with /k : k/, thirty-seven with /g : g/, and so on.

We can note that correspondence-sets ##07, 08 and 09 are in complementary distribution; for I found that #08 occurs **only** before /ǝr-r/ — namely, in *črn : crn* "black", *črpati : crpe* "to draw water," and *črljen : crven* "red"; whereas #07, #09 **never** occur in this environment. Moreover, #07 and #09 are in contrast, and are therefore derived from contrasting proto-consonants. Consequently #08 may be complementary to either; #09 is chosen for two reasons.[32] As for correspondence-set 10, this is a 'hapax legomenon' and is relegated to the "residue"—a store of anomalies for subsequent analysis.

Table 8: Examples from Priestly (1972)

		Sln.	Mac.	incidence	reconstruction
Stops					
	04.	k	k	80	*k
	05.	g	g	37	*g
Fricatives and affricates					
	06.	h	∅	8	*h
	07.	c	c	7	*c
	08.	č	c	3	
	09.	č	č	31	*č
	10.	č	ḱ	1	

Inspecting my work twenty-eight years after the event, I find some inaccuracies (for instance, in the transcription of Sln. vowels—not however to the extent that the reconstructed phonology would have been different) but no faults in the methodology. Given the nature of the test, I was not interested in grammatical relationship. I explicitly observed all of the principles set out in table 1, except for 3.e, which I had indeed observed in my data-collection, but which is not demonstrated in the dissertation and has to be taken on trust.

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[32] Namely, a physiological one (*/č/ > /c/ in Mac. is articulatorily more likely than */c/ > /č/ in Sln.) and a geographic one (Mac. is the only one of the four South Slavic languages to have /c/ in this set of words, and is situated in the middle rather than on the periphery, hence is more likely to show the innovation).

5.4. The theory that Venetic and Slavic are related

5.4.1. Introduction

Finally, I come to the object of this paper: an assessment of Matej Bor's linguistic evidence for the "Veneti theory." First, the basic premise again. Šavli formulates the premise more succinctly than Bor, without misstating Bor's position,[33] as follows:

> The Slovene language belongs to the West Slavic languages; that is, to the Proto-Slavic Veneti. It retained the Proto-Slavic foundation for a very long time. As can be seen from the Brižinski Spomeniki..., it was not substantially different from [...] Proto-Slavic. The South Slavic language group, on the other hand, developed in its new homeland in the Balkans. The Slovene language distinguishes itself from the South Slavic languages through preservation of Proto-Slavic characteristics[34] (ŠBT 89).

5.4.2. The grammatical evidence

Let us begin, however, with what is the most striking deficiency in both Topolovšek and Jeza—the lack of any attention to grammatical relatedness. Bor, in contrast, does pay attention to this very essential matter, indeed very properly devotes his first two chapters (ŠBT 172–83) to it and entitles the first one "The key to the Venetic language." This key, found in what are known as the Ateste tablets, is a cornerstone of his theory; cf. "the Ateste tablets not only confirm [that the Veneti were the Proto-Slavs] but also provide unambiguous proof thereof" (332), and his final paragraph (337), which ends with the sentences, "anyone wanting to approach the Venetic language will not be able to ignore the Ateste tablets. **Their Slavic morphology cannot be removed or doubted or refuted** [emphasis in English version]."[35] And Ivan Tomažič comes back to the same subject in his comments at the end of the book

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[33] Cf. Bor: "... the Veneti were Proto-Slavs... The Slovene language has its roots deep in the Venetic language" (ŠBT 332).

[34] The Sln. version of the first-cited sentence differs: "Slovenščina ... pripada zahodnoslovanski skupini, ki je nasledila praslovanske Venete" (BŠT 106).

[35] Not emphasized in the Sln. version, "Slovanskega oblikoslovja na njih ni mogoče izbrisati, zanikati ne ovreči" (BŠT 426).

(ŠBT 474–76). This looks very promising; but the promise is unfortunately not fulfilled. It will be recalled that what is required is "structural paradigmaticity" (table 1, 2.c). Bor presents what he believes to be items formed with the root /jek/ "to cry, weep": in the order they occur on tablet Es 24, and in his transcription, "jekaje, jekah, jekab, jekat, jekais, jekar, jekaš, jekap, jekan, jekam, jekal, jekak, jekaj, jekad, jekav" (177). He explicitly calls this tablet a "grammar tablet," written as instruction for scribes in a school which formed part of a shrine to a goddess (181); its "playful" educational use, he argues, explains the repetition of words formed on a verbal root. The forms, in the order they occur and as he defines them, are:

> the gerund; the aorist, 1st singular; a nominal derivative; the infinitive; an iterative form, present, 2nd singular; a nominal derivative; the normal present, 2nd singular; an unknown form, perhaps a derivative; the past passive participle, masculine nominative singular; the normal present, 1st person singular; the past 'l'-participle, masculine nominative singular; a nominal derivative; the imperative, 2nd singular; a nominal derivative; and the past gerund (178–83).

This is, therefore, a random ordering of eleven forms from the verbal conjugation and four or five nominal derivations. Whether it could have had any educational use is hard to say, but that is beside the point, which is: this set of forms does **not** provide Bor with a complete paradigm, and not even a complete sub-section of any paradigm; and, what is much more important, the **meanings** of the forms—the ascription of each to a specific morphological role—cannot be inferred from the context. He is at liberty, then, to interpret EKAŠ as /jekaš/ "you weep" and EKAIS as /jekaiš/ "you frequently weep";—there is no way of judging the accuracy of his hypotheses (for each interpretation is a hypothesis).[36] Even if we assume that this listing is some kind of educational task—"parse the following forms!"—which will explain the random ordering, there is no confirmation that the grammatical interpretations proposed by Bor are the correct ones. He does, true, list other presumed imperative forms (186) and infinitival forms (183, 187,

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[36]   And, incidentally, he does not explain the differences in the endings of these two words.

etc.), but there is no confirmation of, for example, a present-tense paradigm. The grammatical requirement for relatedness is not met.

5.4.3. The phonological evidence: some correspondence-sets

Turning to the phonetic side of his correspondences, inspection of his data quickly shows one very striking fact: many of his transcriptions of the Ven. inscriptions—which, as stated above, I take as my starting point here, ignoring any possible doubts as to their accuracy—are often extraordinarily close to Modern Sln. For instance, O PATE SPEŠ TI TIKOAOJI is interpreted as "Ob petlji speš ti tkaje" (254), and BUG OŠA SO VIŠAD as "Bog ošel to visoto" (236). This means that his theory rests on the premise that, relatively speaking, very little phonological change has occurred between the date of the inscriptions and our own times—i.e., about 2500 years. This is theoretically possible—some language-groups, such as the Turkic, have apparently exhibited very few sound-changes over time. What it means, for my immediate purposes, is that most of the sound correspondences that can be derived from the data are of a straightforward one-to-one nature: /k : k/, /d : d/, and so on. And this in turn means that the phonological reconstruction (comprising in this instance the reconstruction of sound-changes) is relatively straightforward. However, there are instances where Bor's data provide sets of differing correspondences, and two are presented in table 9.[37]

If Ven. was, as Bor claims, PSlc., then a large part of the task of the CM is already done: we obviously do not have to reconstruct the proto-language's phonology, nor do we have to distinguish (table 1, 3.d) between "complementarity" and "contrast." Thus, since there was a single proto-phoneme /h/ (and this appears to be so on Bor's alphabet table, ŠBT 189, but see further below), the three consonantal correspondences (table 9, part 1) /h : k/, /h : g/ and /h : h/ must be in complementarity. In other words, in reconstructing the sound-changes involved in the development from Ven. (PSlc.) to Sln., it is necessary to show that */h/ changed to /k/ under some circumstances, to /g/ under some different circumstances, and remained unchanged as /h/ in a

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[37]   Another set of unexplained correspondences: (Ven. : Slavic) š : š (207, 241, 242, 252); s : š (207, 250, 251, 302); s : s (passim).

third set of circumstances;[38] the three sets of circumstances must be accurately specified, in phonological terms; and the changes are assumed to have taken place "regularly."[39]

Similarly, Bor's alphabet table shows, quite explicitly, one letter for "C." There are three different Sln. reflexes for Ven. */c/, namely /c/, /k/ and /č/ (table 9, part 2); and again, Bor's hypothesis is not substantiated unless the different phonological environments for the changes */c/ > /k/ and */c/ > /č/ can be specified—and these must be different from each other and from the environments in which */c/ remained unchanged as /c/.

Table 9 : Examples from Bor (ŠBT 1996)

(1) List of correspondences with Ven. /h/ and a Sln. (or other) consonant		
h : k	2	hator : kateri (230), ho : ko (278)
h : g	3	hibnah : OCS. gibnahъ [(230), hosti : gostje (278), han : ogenj (230)
h : h	9	haji : haji (217), kuhur : kohar (221), stiha : utihne (278), lahan : lahen (226), hibnah : OCS. gibnahъ (230) *and five others*
(2) List of correspondences with Ven. /c/ and a Sln. (or other) consonant		
c : c	2	detic : detec (248), raco : raco (254)
c : k	1	canta : OCS. sъkątati (310)
c : č	3	carikoj : črkar (268), nico : uniči (268), cuta : čota (300)
note also: volaicos — "volai [plus ...] cos or kos" (267)		

Nowhere in Bor's treatise can I find any attempt at an explanation for the changes required by the data in table 9. Moreover, inspection of these data show that hypotheses about phonologically-limited sound-changes will be difficult to devise. For instance, */h/ > /k/ initially before the vowel /o/ in *ho : ko* "when" but */h/ > /g/ initially before the vowel /o/ in *hosti : gostje* "guests." A similar puzzle: */h/ > /g/

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[38]   This is assuming that Ven. "H" was [x], i.e., Sln. "h" (as Bor believes, see p. 190). If it was [h], then a third sound-change must be posited.

[39]   I.e., principle 3.f on table 1 must be observed.

before the Ven. vowel /a/ in *han: ogenj* "fire," but remains unchanged before Ven. /a/ in *haji : haji* "rest" and *lahan: lahen* "light." Note also that the syllable /han/ is identical in the reconstructed words for "fire" and "light," but has different reflexes in Sln. Similarly, */c/ changes to /k/ initially before /a/ in *canta : sъkqtati* "was interred," and changes to /č/ initially before /a/ in *carikoj : črkar* "scribe." All of these instances, where one proto-phoneme has different reflexes in identical phonological environments, are ones which—were we reconstructing a putative proto-language for two putative "daughter-languages," Ven. and Sln.—would, as a first hypothesis, be labelled "contrast" and the different correspondences would be ascribed to different proto-phonemes.

There is one argument which can be made to salvage Bor's position. Looking again, for example, at the correspondences with Ven. /h/, we might suggest that the third one, /h : h/, is the regular one, and that the first two are "irregular," on the basis of their less frequent incidence. After all, /h : h/ occurs in nine different pairs, /h : g/ occurs in only three, and /h : k/ occurs in just two. However, there are two counter-arguments. First, if there is a single aberrant correspondence, it is normal (as in the example /č : ḱ/ from Priestly 1972 above) to expect this to be potentially "irregular"; but if there are two or more, their evidence is not dismissed so lightly—as Meillet once wrote, "two witnesses are considered sufficient, in historical reconstruction as in a court of law." Second, even if we propose to consider these five instances "irregular," it is not sufficient merely to label them in this way: an explanation for the irregularity has to be found—normally, from the limited array of explanations which language historians have established through painstaking work for over two hundred years (see 3.f). Nowhere does Bor attempt these explanations—which is hardly surprising, for he does not admit to an awareness that anything needs to be explained.

5.4.4. The phonological evidence: other argumentation

From time to time Bor does mention sound-changes, but this is, alas, in terms so naive as to suggest that he could not have reliably reconstructed a phonological history of any language. For example,

- "The word *jekak*, which was also indigenous to us, was changed to *jekač*, probably because of the two k's" (179). What he is

proposing is dissimilation, a process which does sometimes occur; but Bor does not cite typological evidence to support his suggestion that /kak/ should dissimilate to /kač/ rather than to any other form.

- He states that the (supposed) Ven. verbal derivative *jekad* has Sln. reflex *jekot* (179): he is thus hypothesizing, in this environment, the change /-ad/ > /-ot/. But he does not (a) explain either the vowel-change /a/ > /o/ or the final devoicing /d/ > /t/ (and final devoicing is not a regular feature of his other correspondences). Neither does he (b) explain the origin of the Sln. suffix in *divjad, suhljad* (which he cites in the same paragraph). Further (c), he equates Ven. VIŠAD with Sln. *visoto* (again with -ad- > -ot-), but also ZIJAD with *zijad* or (on the following line) *zijat*, without the vowel change -a- > -o- (236).

- "The western and, above all, the Mediterranean proto-Slavs lived, thought, and spoke faster, resulting very early in the so-called 'modern' vowel-reduction as well as other changes: ... 'akanje' ..., very strong diphthongization; betatism (the change of v to b); the prefix **vi** instead of **iz** ...; the velar **h** instead of **g**, which our western dialects have preserved since those far off days when the Venetic culture was at its height" (182). There are statements here which would disgrace a student in an introductory linguistics course. How can speaking faster result in the change of /g/ to /h/ (a stop to a fricative) and also /v/ to /b/ (a fricative to a stop)? How in particular can speaking faster lead to the use of the prefix /vi/ instead of /iz/?[40]

- Vowel-elision is referred to frequently (see the quotation above), and is a feature of many correspondences (such as Ven. PŠIRS : Sln. /poširis/ (184), Ven. T : Sln. /tu/ (185), Ven. K : Sln. /ko/ (245); Ven. "**na** sometimes only **n**" (274); Ven. S : Sln. /se/ (298)). "**ki (k)** — who; Slov. *ki*. Ven. **k**, because the silent vowel was at times left out. We are therefore allowed to read **k**

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[40]   In fact, two of these phenomena (/vi/ for /iz/ and /h/ for /g/)—if they had been true for all Sln. dialects—would have supported Bor's labelling Sln. as West Slavic.

without **i**, just as is still done in various Sln. dialects" (184).[41]
"**bga** — of god; Slov. *Boga.* . . . Interestingly in OCS the **o** is also
often left out: *Bga, bže...*"[42] (ŠBT 185). This small sample
illustrates the freedom with which Bor can utilize this
reasoning to produce interpretations for the incriptions. When
he finds the string KOS, he segments it as KO S and explains it
as *ko si* ("as you are") (214); when he has to explain KS, on
another occasion, he reads this as KI SI "who you are" (218).
This is convenient, but that is not sufficient reason to criticize
Bor. What **must** be criticized is the fact that absolutely nowhere
does he state which vowels are elided under which conditions.
The examples I cite show elision of /o/, of /u/, of /i/, of /e/ and
of /a/—thus, any vowel may be affected; we must assume that
there was not wholesale elision—so what were the limits
thereupon?[43]

- Two OCS forms are cited in table 9; indeed, OCS forms occur
relatively frequently. In principle there is nothing wrong: if
Ven., *qua* PSlc., had a form which does not occur in Modern
Sln., there is every reason to search for it in a related Slavic
language. Unfortunately, however, at least one citation raises
more problems than it solves, namely the cited OCS form
sъkątati "to bury." The Ven. forms corresponding to the root of
this word, according to Bor, are **kantaj** (186), **kante** (202),
kantamn (274), all with the /-an-/ which corresponds to the
OCS nasal vowel. So far, so good; this allows us to set up the
correspondence Ven. /-an-/ : OCS ǫ. This suggests that Ven.,

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[41] Note that the original Sln. version is shorter: "... venet. **k**, ker se
polglasnik dostikrat ni pisal. Torej je mogoče brati **k** (brez **i**)" (BŠT 208).
The term "silent vowel" in the English (used also elsewhere) is thus a
misleading mistranslation.

[42] Again, the Sln. original is different, and includes the following: "... je,
sodeč po mnogih primerih, možno, da so nenaglašeni **o** občutil kot
polglasnik ..." (BŠT 208). Note also that Bor appears not to know the
reason for the OCS abbreviation; this was *not* a phonological one.

[43] Another unanswered question: if the elision was—as in much of modern
Sln.—a feature of elliptical (colloquial) speech and did not occur in
deliberate (formal) speech, why was it featured in writing, which
normally (and especially on burial inscriptions, as the one quoted from
p. 214) reflects formal varieties?

like OCS, had nasal vowels—a very likely assumption, given that Ven-PSlc. pre-dates OCS, and that comparisons with other IE languages conclusively show that PSl. must have had nasal vowels. The reading /kant/ suggests that the Ven. nasal vowel was written as "vowel + nasal"—another reasonable assumption. But why, then, do we not find any "vowel + nasal" spellings in the other instances where PSlc. is known (from IE evidence) to have nasal vowels? For instance, KUTS ("corner," 203), TO ("here," 235) and POTEI ("path," 279) should all have them; and, e.g., MOLDONKEO (288) and KOSTENASTO (298) are, according to Bor, instrumental singular forms, but have no sign of any kind of nasal ending. Simply: either Ven. had nasal vowel phonemes, and would have shown them regularly in writing; or it did not. It is virtually impossible that it had a nasal vowel in one etymologically-expected word, and not in other such.

5.4.5. Further criticisms

There are other instances where Bor's lack of the most basic linguistic training is sadly evident. Two such are:

- It is unclear what the Ven. word for "fire" was. Cf. on the one hand: "v han—into the fire; ... In the Slovene dialects this word is pronounced in a variety of ways: *ogn, ohn, ohan, han.* The most informative for us are the *gon* or *hon* from the Slov. dialect in Friuli, ... where the first **o** is not used, and are therefore closest to the original Venetic word *han*" (230), and on the other "v ougon—into the fire; Slov. *v ogenj*" (305). If there were two Ven. words for "fire," which is quite possible, Bor should state as much; but then, surely, /han/ can not be the source of at least one form which he associates with it, viz., *ogn*.

- "RUTUBA — grave, mound; OCS *r ъ t*—ridge; Slov. *rt*—spit of land. Suffix -**uba**, comp. with Slov. *poguba, obljuba,* etc." (310). To consider the /-ub-/ in *poguba* or *obljuba* a suffix shows a complete lack of understanding of the nature of language. Did Bor not know the Sln. words *pogubiti, obljubiti?*

5.4.6. Variation

My last major criticism concerns those of Bor's explana-tions that are based on another hypothesis, that (to put it in linguistic terminology) there was not a one-to-one correspondence between Ven. graphemes and phonemes. Let us assume that he is correct.[44] He posits "uncertainty" about several letters and groups of sounds that they represent; let us look at one, already mentioned in a quotation from p. 182 as "betatism" and explained as the change of /v/ to /b/. This is described further:

> ... the Veneti were rather uncertain about the pronunciation of several of the letters, as is the case today with the Slovenes in the coastal area of the Adriatic (Primorksa). They easily confuse **v** with **b** (betatism); e.g. **vog** instead of **bog** (190).

This is, simply, a mistake. What Bor refers to here is the change of /v/ before front vowels and /l/ in some (not all) western dialects, some of which have /β/ and some /b/ in these positions (Ramovš 1924: 158). This is not confusion of /v/ with /b/; it is simply a conditioned (i.e., environmentally limited) sound-change. Of course, speakers of these dialects may get confused when reading literary Sln., for their own dialect may have /člebèk/ while the text in front of them has "človek"; but this does not mean that if they were producing original inscriptions that they would not know when to write the grapheme for "b" and when to write the grapheme for "v." Bor, however, has two graphemes labelled "B, V" on his alphabet table (189), and whenever one occurs, he is more or less at liberty to interpret it as he pleases. In fact, he does so in a very confusing way: on some occasions he interprets one of these letters as "B" and explains it as a /b/ (e.g., 217, 235, 248); on others, he labels it a "B" and then explains it as a /v/ (e.g., 214, 281). Similarly, he interprets one of the letters as a "V" and then explains it either as a /v/ (e.g., 222, 228, 250) or as a /b/ (e.g., 220, 228, 235, 259). Having explicitly stated that either letter could stand for either sound, this approach shows an annoying lack of consistency, and suggests two things: either he, too, was confused; and/or he did attach a specific reading to a specific grapheme as the normal rule, but allowed

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[44] If the writing system was original with the Veneti, this is unlikely; if they inherited it from others, it is not.

arbitrary exceptions. So when he provides the reading "**VIVOI** read **bivoj** — live, living" (259) he clearly assumes that the letter represented a /v/.

To return to linguistic solid ground: there are, I suggest, three logical possibilities.

1. that there were two separate phonemes /v/, /b/, which were clearly distinguished in the writing system. If this was the case, then Bor is clearly a very long way from the truth.

2. that there was a single phoneme with [v] and [b] occurring in some kind of (sociolinguistic) variation. The corollary of this: the pre-Ven. contrast between /b/ and /v/[45] had been lost in Ven. Let us consider two roots: (1) "to fight," which began with a /v/ in cognates (Lith. *vyti*, Lat. *venari*, Skt. *véti*, Šanskij 1968: 141–42); and (2) "to fear," in which cognates had /b/ (Lith. *bijóti*, Old High German *biben*, Skt. *bhayate*, Shanskii 1965: 183). The IE. contrast /v : b/ was therefore, under this hypothesis, lost in Ven. We thus find the following progression (table 10):[46]

Table 10: The /v : b/ contrast

pre-Venetic	voj- "fight"	boj- "fear"
Venetic	----------b/voj "fight, fear"--------	
Slovene	voj- "fight"	boj- "fear"

However, once a phonemic contrast is lost, it is not regained. The fact that a post-Ven. language like Sln. distinguishes the two phonemes /v/ and /b/ means, in effect, that Ven. could not have had a merger of these sounds. This alternative has to be ruled out. Actually, Bor transcribes words with the roots used in table 10 as if they were in phonemic contrast: "**se le boj**" ("have fear," 248), "**viabaitsa**" ("duke"; Slov. *vojvoda*, 281). It does indeed appear that he does not know what he is doing.

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45   Or, as it is usually labelled, /u̯/, i.e., a labial glide of some kind, perhaps [w]. I will refer to it as "v" for the sake of simplicity.

46   I omit OCS from this progression, for Bor views it as a kind of Balkan cousin of both Ven. and Sln.

3. that Ven. had two separate phonemes /v/ and /b/, but the scribes were confused as to which letter represented which sound. In spite of his statements, this does **not** seem to be Bor's position, or he would not provide readings like the ones quoted above. This could however have been the actual case for Ven. Here, however, we have to note that Bor assumes "confusion" in seven other instances: I/J, T/T', Š/S, S/Z/Ž, T/D, and G/H. This is the most acceptable of the three alternatives; but **if** this amount of "confusion" is permitted, then many different readings can be produced for many of the inscriptions—and a very large number of Bor's interpretations become suspect. If the remainder of his reconstruction were unobjectionable, each one of these problematic interpretations could be dispassionately considered. But it is not, and they can not.

These three possibilities are ones that someone with a basic understanding of linguistics would have considered. Bor does not consider them. Clearly he is himself uncertain as to whether the second or the third was what obtained. His description lacks consistency and reliability.

Another brief but telling example of Bor's lack of elementary understanding of the way that languages work when it comes to sounds and alphabets: "Even the plosive **k** was often confused with **h**, a habit which we encounter today in the Slovene language, when in certain cases an **h** is written and pronounced instead of **k**; e.g., *h komu* ("to whom," 190–91). Of course, "h" is indeed written instead of "k" in "certain cases"—before words beginning with velar consonants—but this is not an instance of "confusion"; it merely represents in written form the sound change, known in other Slavic languages, of /k/ > /h/ in this phonological situation. To extrapolate a general confusion of two graphemes betrays alarming linguistic illiteracy.

5.4.5. Bor's analysis: conclusion

In short, Bor—most unfortunately, considering the dedication and hard work that he devoted to the task—shows that he is extraordinarily naive and uninformed. He could, of course, have been naive and yet applied some measure of systematicity to his work; but here too he fails, for he is also inconsistent in his explanations. By beginning with the premise that Ven. was PSlc., he avoids having to apply most of the steps of the CM. Looking at table 1, sections 2–3, we

can see that he understands 2.a but misunderstands 2.b and is quite ignorant of 2.c; and that he understands 3.a and 3.b, but, while he does not have to concern himself with 3.e, he completely disregards 3.c, 3.d and 3.f.

Looking now at Lencek's review of 1990, we see that my conclusions repeat, confirm, and extend some of what he wrote. He considers, especially, Bor's interpretations of the inscriptions; his suggestions about Ven. phonology; his treatment of the grammatical evidence; and the need for a rigorous methodology. I consider the last two points. I am more critical of Bor's grammatical interpretation of the Ateste tablet than is Lencek. When it comes to methodology, Lencek very neatly terms Bor's approach "the juxtapositional method," for Bor does no more than simply juxtapose forms in the two languages which appear related. Lencek writes that it "bypasses the crucial screening of apparent similarities which is required before establishing lexical identity and real sound correspondence" (1990, 81). I agree absolutely: a real sound correspondence is not simply one that appears as if it could be such, but one that is demonstrated through principles 3.c, 3.d, and 3.e on table 1.

6. Windischer

I now turn, very briefly, to another example of the results of amateur linguistics: a major component of the Austrian Carinthian construct popular for most of the twentieth century and known as the "vindišarska teorija/Windischentheorie." (The fact that the root /vind~vend/, the Gmn. morpheme for "Slav," is involved, is a coincidence).[47] This set of beliefs was not historically constant, but the common and fundamental linguistic belief was that Carinthian Sln. dialects were extremely different from Standard Sln.—so different, indeed, that they were what was termed a "language mixture" of Sln. and Gmn. This was based on several premises: (1) that there were differences between Carinthian Sln. and Standard Sln.; (2) that Carinthian Slovenes could not understand Standard Sln.; (3) that Carinthian Slovenes could learn Gmn. more easily than Standard Sln.;

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[47]   The existence of this medieval Gmn. morpheme with this meaning in no way justifies, or fails to justify, the "Veneti theory"; it is, simply, too far removed, chronologically, to be indicative one way or another.

(4) that it was "natural" for Carinthian Sln. to be assimilated to Gmn.; and (5) that this assimilation would result in a "mixed language." Of these premises, (1) was indubitable; (2) and (3) were both partly true, when they were interpreted in a specific way and given certain limited circumstances; (4) as described was a fantasy; and (5) *appeared* true, given the acoustic similarity of Carinthian Sln. and Carinthian Gmn., and given also the large-scale borrowing of Gmn. words into Carinthian Sln.. Germanophone linguists did give it some credibility, but it was a historian who most perfectly formulated the whole "theory." Based on some partial truths, a fantasy, and something that appeared true, the final construct was very close to being complete nonsense. This "theory" had nothing to do with the CM; but it did suppose a special kind of linguistic relationship. As a kind of linguistic theory, it may—given its partial foundation on real observed data—be characterized as less fanciful than the language-relationship theories of Topolovšek, Jeza, and Bor. For details, see Priestly (1996, 1997).

7. Conclusion

In this article I have examined Topolovšek's work, Jeza's work, and the linguistic component of the "Veneti theory." In all three instances what is involved is application, or non-application, of the methods of historical reconstruction which are summarized in the term "Comparative Method." This method is difficult to apply and even trained linguists may not always limit themselves rigorously to the correct methodology. For example, the respected linguist Morris Swadesh was shown to have over-reached himself in his 1960 reconstruction of the Amerindian Macro-Mixtecan by Callaghan and Miller, who showed that English could, using Swadesh's methods, be "proved" to be part of the Macro-Mixtecan family:

> The fact that American English forms fit Swadesh's Macro-Mixtecan reconstructions at least as well as many forms cited for member languages casts considerable doubt on the validity of Swadesh's method, ... Indeed, it should serve as a warning to all of us who do historical linguistics that we must adhere to valid techniques if we wish our results to have meaning. Otherwise we can "prove" that any language is related to any other... (Callaghan and Miller 1962, 285).

If professional linguists may not always apply the CM properly, I suggest that it is foolhardy for amateur linguists to use this method without first being trained in its methodology. Both Topolovšek and Jeza are seen to deserve the epithet "amateur linguist"; the latter is even less competent than the former.

As for Bor's attempt to prove linguistic relatedness between Ven. and Sln., it is, to put it simply, unsound in the extreme with regard to both theory and method. He admires the exercise of "imagination" among experts (173), a sentiment with which I agree; but the exercise of imagination without fundamental theoretical and methodological prerequisites can lead to invalid conclusions, and Bor's conclusions are expressed so naively and explained so ineptly that it is all too easy to deride them.[48] And here it must be recalled that my examination of Bor's reconstruction was based on the premise that he had made no mistakes in his interpretations of the graphemics, of the word-boundaries, or of the meanings of the inscriptions. Since his understanding of historical reconstruction is so very faulty, it seems improbable that he made no errors in these three other respects. I do not judge the archeological or any other non-linguistic evidence for the "Veneti" theory;[49] if the non-

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[48]   Ivan Tomažič does not claim to be a linguist, but he too makes some linguistic claims. For example, "The likeness of the Slovene and Sanskrit languages could have originated only in the time before the settlement of Indo-Europeans in India; that is, in the earliest period of the Indo-European era, indicating that the Indo-European language at that time was very closely linked to the Slavic, or even that the Proto-Slavic was the principal element in the formation of [the] Indo-European languages" (ŠBT 511–12). This statement follows a listing of just 63 similar words in Skt. and Sln. and the juxtaposition of two similar-sounding sentences. Before **any** conclusions can be drawn from such a listing, the distinction must be made between what is similar because it is mostly or completely unchanged since PIE, and what is similar because the two languages have made similar innovations in the PIE forms. The latter evidence shows some kind of close connection; the former evidence shows only that the two languages are IE, and are related either closely or distantly. This distinction was pointed out by Brugmann in the 1880s.

[49]   I have not mentioned the onomastic evidence, presented in particular by Jožko Šavli (ŠBT 13–47 and elsewhere). I agree with the great majority of linguists, who consider onomastic evidence to be much less reliable than, and always secondary to, other linguistic evidence. "Generally, the etymologies of proper names are uncertain because of the two pieces of data

linguistic evidence is as unreliable as the linguistic evidence, then the theory as a whole can in no way be accepted as anything more than fanciful, either.

This does not mean that the linguistic aspects of theory are necessarily incorrect (although I personally find them very improbable), merely that Bor has not only failed to prove them; with his extraordinarily inexpert exposition, he has, unfortunately, made them sound ridiculous.

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whose value is established by agreement with the facts of other languages, meaning and phonological form, we can utilize only one: phonological form" (Meillet 1967, 57–58).

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POVZETEK

VANDALI, VENETI IN VINDIŠARJI: PASTI AMATERSKEGA ZGODOVINSKEGA JEZIKOSLOVJA

Amatersko delo v zgodovinskem jezikoslovju utegne biti uspešno, a vsak tak poskus lahko ustrezno oceni le strokovna analiza. Pričujoča razprava proučuje tri rekonstrukcije, pri čemer uporablja metodo, ki se za tu obravnavana obdobja zdi sprejemljiva vsem zgodovinskim jezikoslovcem, tj. primerjalno metodo. Najprej so razloženi principi primerjalne metode. Nato so podani primeri postopkov za rekonstrukcijo fonološke strukture prajezika in fonološke spremembe, do katerih je prišlo med prajezikom in njegovimi "hčerinskimi" jeziki. Nazadnje se primerjalna metoda preizkuša na Topolovškovem opisu baskovsko-slovenskih odnosov; Jezovem opisu razmerja med skandinavščino in slovenščino; in Borovem opisu razmerja med venetščino in slovenščino. Poudarja se, kako bistvenega pomena je dokazovanje sistemskih slovničnih razmerij. Avtor pride do zaključka, da noben od omenjenih opisov ne upošteva načel primerjalne metode. Borov opis, ki je glavni predmet razprave, se ocenjuje kot izjemno nezanesljiv: očitno je, da Boru manjka znanje v rabi primerjalne metode in da zelo slabo razume osnove jezikoslovja. Avtor tudi opozarja na dejstvo, da jezikovna povezanost ni v nujni korelaciji z etnično povezanostjo.