# The Origins of the "Canaanite" Myth of Elkunirša and Ašertu Reconsidered

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The location of El's abode has engaged Ugaritologists for many years. Ostensibly, the Ugaritic texts provide a ready answer in the following recurring formula<sup>1</sup>:

idk l y/ttn pnm 'm il mbk nhrm qrb apq thmtm y/tgly dd il y/tbu qrš mlk ab šnm

Interpretations of this phrase, however, differ considerably, both with regard to each vocable and to its overall meaning<sup>2</sup>. Without entering into the complex philological issues involved, which are beyond my capacities, I will reproduce one of the recent renderings restored from multiple attestations of this phrase (Wyatt 1998: 84, 277; 2001: 164):

Then (s)he set her/his face towards El at the source of the rivers, amidst the springs of the two deeps. (S)he rolled back the tent of El and entered the pavilion of the King, Father of the Bright One.

All commentators seem to agree on the "mountainous and aqueous features" of El's abode, to use Pope's expression (1955: 73), but opinions differ radically with regard to its location. Whereas some prefer to limit its existence to the sphere of the mythical and imaginary (e.g. Cross 1973: 38), others would search for an actual location. Among the latter, the dominant tendency has been to limit the scope of the quest to the northern Levant, with Mons Casius (Ṣaphon), the Amanus, the Lebanon, and the Anti-Lebanon serving as the leading candidates<sup>3</sup>.

This "Ugaritocentric" view has never been seriously challenged, not even after the publication in the 1950's of a Hittite mythological text which clearly places the abode of Elkunirša (i. e. *El qône ereṣ*, "El, Creator of Earth") at the sources of the Mala River, i.e. the Euphrates<sup>4</sup>. This important extra-Ugaritic evidence has either been ignored or rejected on the grounds that such a location could not have been

<sup>1</sup> KTU 1.2 III 4-6; 1.3 V 5-8; 1.4 IV 21f.; 1.6 I 33f.; 1.17 VI 46-49; 1.100; 3.

<sup>2</sup> Naccache 1996: 250ff. quotes 16 different renderings of this passage.

<sup>3</sup> For the various views see Pope 1955 and Naccache 1996.

<sup>4</sup> CTH 342; Otten 1953a; 1953b (editio princeps); Goetze 1955: 519; Laroche 1968: 139-144; Hoffner 1965; 1975: 141f.; 1998: 90ff.; Beckman 1997a; Haas 2006: 213-216.

El's regular abode, but only some transient sojourn<sup>55</sup>. A notable exception was E. Lipiński's erudite study on the mythological traditions relating to various Near Eastern mountains (Lipiński 1971). Giving the Hittite evidence its due weight, Lipiński reached the conclusion that "El's abode and the Mountain of the Divine Assemby were outside Canaan", namely, in the eastern Anatolian mountains (ib.: 56f.). Before we continue to evaluate the significance of this conclusion, it is commendable to reproduce the relevant passage of the Elkunirša and Ašertu myth. The Storm-god (<sup>d</sup>U) is propositioned by the goddess Ašertu, but he refuses her advances and hurries to report the incident to Ašertu's oblivious husband:

## KUB 36.35 I

(4') ... <sup>d</sup>U-aš IŠME (5') [n=aš=kan šara] tijat n=aš ŠA <sup>l</sup>
<sup>7</sup>Mala ḫaršumnaš ar[aš] (6') [n=aš ANA] <sup>d</sup>Elkunirša ŠA <sup>d</sup>Ašertu <sup>LÜ</sup>MUTI=ŠU ar[aš] (7') [n=aš=kan ŠA] <sup>d</sup>Elkunirša <sup>GIŠ</sup>ZA.LAM.GAR-aš anda pait

The Storm-god heard, [he] got [up], and came to the headwaters<sup>6</sup> of the Mala River. [He] ca[me to] Elkunirša, the husband of Ašertu, [and he] entered the tent [of] Elkunirša.

That Elkunirša resides in a "tent" has been taken by some as an indication for a temporary stay outside his actual residence, but, as demonstrated by Lipiński, "tent" often means "home" in West Semitic texts<sup>7</sup>. In fact, the word *dd* in the above-quoted Ugaritic passage could also designate a "tent". Clearly, El(kunirša)'s abode was situated, according to both Hittite and Ugaritic sources, at the headwaters of the Euphrates in eastern Anatolia. The southern tributary of the Euphrates (Murat Su) rises from the northern slopes of the Ala dağ, north of Van, not far from the eastermost sources of the Tigris. Tales of many peoples are related to this "navel of rivers", including the Hurro-Hittite Kumarbi cycle<sup>9</sup>.

When Elkurnirša hears about his wayward wife, he instructs the Storm-god to sleep<sup>10</sup> with her and to humiliate her. The latter complies and announces to a

shocked Ašertu that he had killed seventy-seven/eighty-eight of her children. The goddess appoints mourning women and laments her offspring for seven years. After a break of undetermined length, the story resumes with Ašertu enticing her husband to let her take revenge on the Storm-god. Elkunirša agrees and the couple goes to bed. The goddess IŠTAR, however, disguised as a bird<sup>11</sup>, overhears the conversation and flies across the steppe<sup>12</sup> to warn the Storm-god. His exact location is not indicated, but the flight from eastern Anatolia would have crossed the Syrian steppeland<sup>13</sup>. When she finds the Storm-god she warns him not to drink the wine that Ašertu will offer to him.

I have thus far intentionally refrained from employing the customary readings of the logograms in this text, i.e. Baal for <sup>d</sup>U and Anat, Astarte, or Anat-Astarte for <sup>d</sup>IŠTAR<sup>14</sup>. Such renderings would indeed imply an Ugaritic and/or Canaanite "reading" of the myth. But in fact, the phonetic complements attached to these logograms indicate that the scribe had other names in mind, namely, their Anatolian equivalents<sup>15</sup>. We cannot even be sure what the Ugaritic/Canaanite "reading" of IŠTAR would have been, since the story has no parallels within Ugaritic literature. Therefore, it is more prudent to adhere to the generic designations, the Storm-god and an IŠTAR-like goddess.

After a large gap, the Storm-god is being treated for injuries probably inflicted upon him by Ašertu and her proxies. The fragment is quite damaged, but apparently the wounded Storm-god had descended to the Dark Earth and IŠTAR is interceding on his behalf with the Netherworld Gods (*Anunnaki*). His treatment involves a purification ritual <sup>16</sup> performed by two conjurers (*hukmatalleš*), a man of

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Otten 1953b: 140; Pope 1955: 66.

<sup>6</sup> For *haršumna*-, "headwaters, wellspring, watery depths", see HED, H: 199. In the Kumarbi myth the god Ea is addressed as *hattannaš haršumnaš* EN-aš, "lord of wisdom (and) watery depths", obviously referring to the Mesopotamian cosmic water, the *apsū*. The equation of Ea and El is fully confirmed by the Karatepe bilingual, where Hieroglyphic Luwian Ea (*Iya*) corresponds to Phoenician *El qn 'rṣ* (Hawkins/Morpurgo Davies 1978: 118; LXXIII).

<sup>7</sup> Lipiński 1971: 57 with n. 217, citing an Ugaritic passage in which "their tents" ('hlhm) appears in parallelism with "their habitations" (mšknthm). See also Homan 2002.

<sup>8</sup> See refs. in del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 1996: 139, s.v. dd (II).

<sup>9</sup> Lipiński 1971; Haas 1980; Singer 2002.

<sup>10</sup> The *Glossenkeil* imperative *šaššumai*, which is a *hapax legomenon*, must be related to Hittite *šeš*- "to sleep (with)", as conveyed in early translations. Despite the fact that later translations

have preferred to interpret the term as a non-sexual humiliation ("threaten", "reprimand", "to make sorry", etc.; for refs. see CHD, Š/2: 310f.), I still feel that a vulgar sense (e.g. "lay her!") makes more sense in this context.

<sup>11</sup> For Hittite *ḥapupi*-, "owl", and its postulated West Semitic equivalent in this text, see Hoffner 1965: 12ff.; cf. also HED, H: 130f. Cf., however, Haas 2003: 486; 2006: 215, n. 2, who suggests "swallow".

<sup>12</sup> As observed by Hoffner 1965: 10, the rare Hittite word *ḫuripta*- (here in dative-locative plural) is a loan word from Akkadian *ḫuribtu*, "desert, steppe"; cf. also HED, H: 398f.; HEG 2: 301f.

<sup>13</sup> The Akkadian references to *ḫuribtu* (AHw: 359; CAD, Ḥ: 251) refer to the vast plains of northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Idrimi, for example, crossed the *ḫuribtu* on his journey from Emar to the Canaanite coast.

<sup>14</sup> Otten 1953b: 144; Güterbock 1961: 155; Hoffner 1965: 6, n. 6; 1998: 90; but cf. Goetze 1955: 519, n. 3: "the pronunciation [of IŠTAR] remains problematic". For the relation between the two goddesses and their possible fusion at Ugarit, see Wyatt 1984.

<sup>15 &</sup>lt;sup>d</sup>U-an, <sup>d</sup>U-as, <sup>d</sup>U-ni must refer to *Tarhuna*, the Hittite name of the Storm-god. IŠTAR-iš may refer to *Anzili* (see Wilhelm 2002: 345).

<sup>16</sup> šaknuuanza in KUB 36.37 III 9' (Laroche 1968: 28) probably denotes "oily" (see Hoffner 1995; CHD, Š/1: 49), rather than "filthy with excrement" (Hoffner 1998: 91).

Amurru and a man of *Ana*[-<sup>17</sup>. Eventually, IŠTAR, with the help of the Mother Goddesses (DINGIR.MAḤ<sup>ḤI.A</sup>), succeeds in her efforts to rescue her purified and revitalized brother from the Netherworld.

The toponym Ana[- has not yet been identified<sup>18</sup>. There are a few rare placenames beginning with Ana[- in Syria<sup>19</sup>, but I think that the best candidate is the well-known city of (H)ana(t), capital of the land of Suhi on the Middle Euphrates<sup>20</sup>. The name is spelled Hana(t) in Old Babylonian texts<sup>21</sup> and Hana(t) in the Middle Assyrian and in the Emar texts<sup>22</sup> which are roughly contemporary with our reference. Perhaps in this context "the man of Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself, but rather to the broader meaning of "Hana(t)" does not refer to the city itself.

It is of interest to note in this context an Old Babylonian *kispum* ritual dated to Ammişaduqa, in which the kings of the Amorite dynasty of Ḥammurabi are invoked. The invocation opens with the general designation, "the dynasty of the Amorites, the dynasty of the Ḥaneans, the dynasty of Gutium, any other dynasty that is not recorded on this tablet ..."<sup>25</sup>. In some of the *kispum* rituals the royal ancestors and the Netherworld gods (*Anunnakū*) are jointly invoked to rescue a sick or a dying person (Tsukimoto 1985: 184). Could perhaps the *Anunnaki* and the "Amorite" and "Ḥanean" conjurers mentioned in our text be connected to some kind of *kispum*-like ritual aimed at reviving the injured Storm-god<sup>26</sup>?

Before reaching any conclusions regarding the origins of this myth, it might be expedient to mention in passing another Hittite myth that was initially considered to be of Canaanite origin. The poorly preserved story of IŠTAR and Mount Pišaiša

recounts the attempted rape of the goddess by the personified mountain, probably during her sleep<sup>27</sup>. In her fury the angry goddess threatens to kill the mountain. He begs forgiveness on his knees and tells her how the Storm-god defeated the Seagod. This motif was readily compared to Baal's victory over Yam, and therefore the myth was classified as Canaanite<sup>28</sup>, though a general resemblance to the defeat of Tiamat by Marduk was also noted (e.g. Jacobsen 1968).

The early 1990's brought the sensational discovery of a direct reference to the same mythologem in a Mari text, which pushed back its origins to the earliest Amorite expansion<sup>29</sup>. The story is related to the main cult centre of the Storm-god at Halab, whence it probably spread westwards, to Ugarit and beyond<sup>30</sup>, and southwards, to Canaan<sup>31</sup> and Egypt<sup>32</sup>. A parallel development was the realization that the primeval battle between the Storm-god and the Sea must have played a central role also in the Hurrian-Hittite Kumarbi Cycle (Houwink ten Cate 1992: 116f.). Consequently, the story of IŠTAR and Mount Pišaiša was reclassified with several other Hittite and Hurrian fragments as part of the "Song of the Sea", a previously unrecognized episode of the Kumarbi Cycle<sup>33</sup>. This widespread distribution of the mythologem raises the question of its origins and transmission. A north Syrian origin is possible<sup>34</sup>, but the basic plot is so rudimentary that it may have been invented independently in various cultures.

With this updated *Sitz im Leben* of the IŠTAR and Mount Pišaiša story in mind, it is now time to reconsider the origins of the only remaining "Canaanite"

<sup>17</sup> KUB 12.61 III<sup>1</sup> 7'-11'; Laroche 1968: 29.

<sup>18</sup> Otten 1953b: 140; del Monte/Tischler 1978: 15.

<sup>19</sup> See Belmonte Marín 2001: 24. Anabi in a text from Emar and Ananiya in a text from Ugarit are otherwise unknown.

<sup>20</sup> The name of the city is homonymous with the name of the West Semitic goddess 'Anat (Fronzaroli 1977: 151). In some Mari texts the toponym is spelled with the divine determinative.

<sup>21</sup> Groneberg 1980: 90: Podany 2002: 248.

<sup>22</sup> Nashef 1982: 31; Bassetti 1996; Belmonte Marín 2001: 24f.; Singer 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Durand 1992: 113; 1993: 47; 1998: 417ff.

<sup>24</sup> Durand 1992: 125f.; 1997: 53f. I do not think that Amurru in this context refers to the Late Bronze Age geo-political entity on the Levantine coast. For the avatars of the term Amurru in the second millennium see, e.g., Singer 1991.

<sup>25</sup> BM 80328; Finkelstein 1966; Dalley 1984: 123; Tsukimoto 1985: 68f.

<sup>26</sup> Rather than a rite intended for the treatment of impotence, as suggested by Haas 1994: 173; cf. also Beckman 1997b: 569.

<sup>27</sup> CTH 350; Friedrich 1952-53: 147ff. (editio princeps); Otten 1953a: 36f.; 1953b: 147; Laroche 1968: 185f.; Wegner 1981: 68f.; Houwink ten Cate 1992: 116ff.; Haas 1994: 330, 463; 2006: 212f.; Rutherford 2001: 602.

<sup>28</sup> Otten 1953b: 147f., followed by most commentators. Note, however, that, notwithstanding the Ugaritic parallel, Güterbock (1946: 122) listed this text together with other myths of Hurrian origin.

<sup>29</sup> A.1968; Durand 1993, in conjunction with a new translation of the relevant Ugaritic passages by Bordreuil/Pardee 1993. See also Durand 2000: 83 (no. 934); Wyatt 2001: 100. A similar plot is found already in a late third millennium text from Ešnunna which recounts how the local Stormgod Tišpak slew a raging dragon (see Wyatt 2001: 99f., with refs.).

<sup>30</sup> For Greek parallels see Wyatt 2001: 109ff. (with refs. and biblio.) That some elements of the story betray a close resemblance to the Indo-European mythologem of dragon slaying has been pointed out by Wyatt 1988. See now Watkins 1995.

<sup>31</sup> For the same and similar mythologems along the Levantine coast, see Redford 1990. For the biblical echoes of *Yhwh*'s combat with the Sea, see, e.g., Day 1985; Kloos 1986.

<sup>32</sup> For the Egyptian story of Astarte and the Sea, see Helck 1983; Redford 1990: 833ff. The resemblance between the Egyptian myth and the Hittite myth of Hedammu was already noted by Siegelová 1971: 81. See also Houwink ten Cate 1992: 118ff.

<sup>33</sup> See now Rutherford 2001 for further fragments and a tentative ordering of the various "songs".

<sup>34</sup> Houwink ten Cate 1992: 119 assumes a common dependency on a North-Syrian forerunner, without however giving preference to an ultimately Mesopotamian, Hurrian or Northwest-Semitic origin.

myth from Boğazköy, Elkunirša and Ašertu<sup>35</sup>. Although it may contain some thematic<sup>36</sup> and stylistic<sup>37</sup> parallels with Ugaritic narrative poetry, this story as a whole is not found in the rich Ugaritic corpus<sup>38</sup>. One must reckon of course with the possibility that this or a similar story will turn up one day in one of the missing parts of the Baal Cycle or elsewhere, but there are other weighty arguments which militate against an automatic attribution of this myth to a specifically Ugaritic or Canaanite milieu.

Although widely cited as a distinct Canaanite indicator, the divine names in the text are of no immediate consequence. The goddess Ašertu/Ašera(t) is attested over a large part of the Semitic world<sup>39</sup>, and while the names of the Storm-god and of IŠTAR are concealed behind Anatolian logograms (see above), even the postulated "readings" as Hadad/Baal and Astarte/Anat do not limit the scope to coastal Levant. Finally, El's epithet, "Creator of the Earth" (*qône ereṣ*)<sup>40</sup>, is not found in Ugaritic<sup>41</sup>, but it appears in a wide range of first millennium Semitic inscriptions (Renz 1995: 198, with refs.) and in an expanded form in Genesis 14:18-22. In short, the four theonyms mentioned in the text are "at home" not only in Ugarit or Canaan, but also in other parts of the Amorite realm such as the Middle Euphrates<sup>42</sup>.

We are thus left with the geographical setting as the potentially most reliable diagnostic element of the myth, the one which may potentially lead us to its original setting<sup>43</sup>. None of the preserved toponyms are situated on the Levantine coast. On the contrary, the few geographical landmarks point towards inner Syria and beyond: the abode of Elkunirša at the source of the Euphrates, IŠTAR's crossing of the steppe in search of the Storm-god, and, most importantly, the joint appearance of the "Man of Amurru" and the "Man of Ana[t]" in the ritual performed for the healing of the Storm-god<sup>44</sup>. It is not easy to associate this broad geographical orbit with a specific ethno-cultural group, but, in any case, the restricted designation "Canaanite" should probably be given up in favour of a more general one, such as "West Semitic", "Amorite", or simply "Syrian". To be sure, such a designation does not exclude Ugarit, whose ethnic and cultural roots were deeply entrenched in the Amorite society<sup>45</sup>. It would, however, open up the perspective to a much broader cultural koinē consisting of an intricate fusion of Semitic and Hurrian elements<sup>46</sup>. In sum, the small group of myths initially christened "Canaanite" cannot be easily distinguished from the large group of "imported myths" in Hittite literature<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> The designation "Canaanite" introduced by Otten has been followed universally in Hittitological and general literature, e.g., Goetze 1955: 519; Güterbock 1961: 155; Hoffner 1990: 69; Beckman 1997b: 569. Haas 2006: 213 refers to it as "ein palästinisch-kanaanäischer Mythos".

<sup>36</sup> Such as the killing of Ašertu's sons and the Storm-god's descent to the Netherworld.

<sup>37</sup> Such as the numerical ascension "seventy-seven, eighty-eight" (Otten 1953b: 133) and the so-called *parallelismus membrorum* (Hoffner 1965: 11ff.: 1998: 90; *contra* Otten 1953a: 37).

<sup>38</sup> As already stated by the editor, Otten 1953b: 139. Though acknowledging its absence from the Ugaritic corpus, Hoffner 1998: 90 claims that "the characters and plot leave no doubt that it was an authentic 'Canaanite' myth."

<sup>39</sup> Astour 1973: 34 (with refs.). For this goddess see, e.g., Wiggins 1993; Watson 1993: 51f.; Wyatt 1999: 543f.

<sup>40</sup> The theonym is also attested in the offering list KUB 36.38, 8 as <sup>d</sup>Kunirša, with El replaced by the divine determinative DINGIR. The alleged phonetic difficulties in the Hittite spelling of the Semitic epithet were discussed by Otten 1953b: 136. In view of the less than rigorous Hittite writing of foreign names, I would not attach too much significance to the spelling with -u-(representing an -o-), which allegedly indicates the Canaanite shift ā>ō. Since this shift is not found in Ugaritic, Otten sought for a more southerly, i.e. Canaanite, origin of the myth. But even if one would accept a Canaanite origin for the epithet, this would not necessarily suggest the same for the myth itself, which, as claimed here, evinces closer affinities to a northern Syro-Mesopotamian milieu.

<sup>41</sup> Though a somewhat similar expression may occur in a Hurrian ritual text from Ugarit (KTU 1.128); see Dijkstra 1993; 1995: 56f.

<sup>42</sup> Anat may originate from the homonymous city of (Ḥ)anat (Fronzaroli 1977: 151). For "Astarte of Mari", see Lambert 1985: 535ff. El is somewhat more elusive at Mari, but one text designates him as the builder of the city, and he is probably to be equated with Enki/Ea (Lambert, ib.:

<sup>537</sup>f.), as is the case in the Karatepe inscription. Hadad's/Baal's primary residence is Ḥalab (Klengel 1965).

<sup>43</sup> In his *editio princeps* Otten (1953b: 139f.) discussed the geographical indications in the text, but most of them were still unclear at the time. The equation of the Mala River with the Euphrates became evident only a few years later with the discovery of the Ḥattušili I bilingual (Otten 1958: 83, n. 28). The derivation of Hittite *ḫuripta-* from Akkadian *ḫuribtu*, "steppe, desert", was subsequently recognized by Hoffner (1965: 10, n. 34). Last but not least, the restoration of the toponym *Ana*[t] and its significance has been first put forward in this article. With only "the man of Amurru" and an inexact localization of the Mala River, Otten (1953: 140, 145) opted to limit the orbit of the myth to the "syrisch-kanaanäische Gebiet".

<sup>44</sup> In view of Elkunirša's residence in a tent, Baal's whereabouts in the "steppes", and the postulated generic meaning of Amurru and Ana[t], one may even be tempted to discern a certain "(semi-)nomadic" colouring of the story, but this tentative impression should not be overemphasized. For the religion of the nomadic groups in Syria, see, e.g., Hutter 1996.

<sup>45</sup> For Ugarit's Amorite roots see, e.g., Singer 1999: 609ff., with refs. to further literature on various historical and cultural aspects. Feliu 2003: 302 (following G. del Olmo Lete) distinguishes between a Coastal 'Semitic' pantheon (headed by El and Aširat) and a Hinterland 'Semitic' pantheon (headed by Dagan and Šalaš), with the two traditions merging in Ugarit.

<sup>46</sup> Note that the fragments of Elkunirša and Ašertu come from the same lot of tablets as those belonging to the Ullikummi myth (Otten 1953b: 145). As demonstrated by Haas 1980, some of the Hurrian myths in the Kumarbi Cycle were originally set in an eastern location and secondarily transposed to the Levantine coast; cf. also Singer 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Note that Laroche (1968 and CTH) refrained from an ethno-cultural inner-division of his category "Mythologie d'origine étrangère". For the difficulties in defining original, adopted and imported Hittite literature see, e.g., Singer 1995.

Precisely where and when these myths were adopted and adapted to Hittite tastes remains to be investigated<sup>48</sup>.

I dedicate this paper to a friend and colleague whose contribution to Hittitology includes not only his own research, but also his immeasurable assistance provided to numerous scholars, directly and through his *Konkordanz der hethitischen Texte*.

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## The Origin of the Surname Košak

Marko Snoj (Ljubljana)

1 According to the Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Slovenia there are 568 individuals with the surname *Košak* living in Slovenia and the name ranks 492<sup>nd</sup> in frequency<sup>1</sup>. The majority of those who go by this name – nearly half of them – reside in the Central Slovene region, followed by the South-East, as well as a few individuals in the Drava, Sava, Littoral Karst, Upper Carniolan, Carinthian, and Mura regions. There are no Košaks in the Inner Carniolan Karst and Gorica regions<sup>2</sup>.

1.1 In Standard Slovene pronunciation the surname is characterized by long-rising stress in the second syllable in all case forms and derivatives, thus *Košák*, gen. *Košáka*, adj. *Košákov*<sup>3</sup>.

1.2 The surname, which is undoubtedly of Slovene origin, originates in central Slovenia, probably from Lower Carniola<sup>4</sup>. Its meaning is opaque to modern speakers of Slovene. My first step in the etymological analysis of the surname was to query the honoree, who, in his e-mail to me on 25 October 2005 was kind enough to respond that according to an unverified family legend his ancestors had purchased a homestead around the periphery of which *koščaki* (dial. *košaki*) 'wild walnuts' grew, after which the homestead was called and as a result its residents adopted it as a surname. The word *koščák* in Slovene means 'a nut with a very hard shell and nutmeat that is difficult to remove', i.e., 'a wild variety of *Juglans regia*, Persian walnut'. The Croatian equivalent is Kajkavian *košćak* 'walnut'. The presumed

<sup>1</sup> This article was translated from Slovene by Marc L. Greenberg (University of Kansas).

<sup>2</sup> Source: http://www.stat.si/imena.asp as of 7 January 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Slovenski pravopis (781).

<sup>4</sup> To judge by the number of telephones, the majority of people with the surname *Košak* in the Central Slovene region live in Ljubljana, suggesting relatively late settlement. In the rural environment the most frequent occurrence is in Lower Carniola. As it is quite widespread elsewhere, too, it seems likely that it did not originate in one place, but, rather, cropped up in several locations in a parallel fashion.

<sup>5</sup> Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika II (1975: 449). Pleteršnik I (445) cites the meaning 'die Steinnuß, der Steinnußbaum'.

<sup>6</sup> Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika V (1898-1903: 383), cites Kajk. *košćak* for Kastav (near Rijeka), where the term is used to refer to the same type of nut as in nearby Grobnik *košćuh*. In