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THE ISLAND NAME *KRK*, CROATIA, IN ITS MEDITERRANEAN AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT*

Krk is one of the two largest islands in the Adriatic archipelago of Croatia, along with Cres. Its name has been discussed most recently by Dubravka Ivšić Majić (*Voprosy Onomastiki* 16.1, 2019) in the context of an analysis of the survival of the pre-Slavic names of islands presently in Croatia that are recorded in medieval sources, which is based in part on her doctoral dissertation. However, *Krk* has apparently never been discussed in the wider perspective that is attempted here. The purposes of this article are (1) to examine a moderately large range of similar names in or adjacent to the Mediterranean (understood broadly to include the Ægean, Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Seas), and (2) to try to form a view about the possible origin and significance of the name and its etymon, along with their possible relation to certain other names and lexical words in languages of the Mediterranean, notably Ancient Greek, and Insular Celtic. Particular attention is paid to the geology, geomorphology and cultural significances of the places bearing names of this type. It is tentatively concluded that the names originally referred to striking geological features invested with cultural significance because of some exceptional additional characteristic, such as the mysterious appearance or disappearance of pure water. Certainty is not possible about the language of original formulation, but the range of variation in the name-types and their apparent dialectology are considered. Greek is the medium of transmission for the majority of the names analysed. A brief footnote glance is taken at superficially comparable names and lexical items even further from the epicentre of the phenomena considered here.

Key words: *Krk*, toponymy, etymology, geography, geology, rocks, caves, springs, Croatia, Greek-speaking lands in Antiquity.

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1. Introduction

Much has been written about a widespread European toponymic element **kar-*, alternating with **kal-*, purportedly borrowed either as a lexical element or in toponyms from a pre-Indo-European stratum in Europe, and/or to have been a lexical element of an early-Indo-European substrate language in Europe. It is said to have meant ‘rock,’ or some close semantic and geomorphological relative. This element, characterized as a “root,” has been claimed especially in the toponymy of many countries around and near the Mediterranean Sea. Such claims include, first, those made by [Alessio, 1935–1936]; then for example by [Dauzat, 1946, 80ff.; Rostaing, 1950, 23–24]; [Dauzat & Rostaing, 1978], in numerous entries such as *Carcassonne*, *Carnac*, *Carolles*, *Charavines*, *Charce* [Tovar, 1977, 19–20] (*pace* [Kitson, 1996, 99–100; also Kitson, 1997, 193]) correctly questions the non-IE status of at least some of Tovar’s material; [Nicolaisen, 1982, 39, with a question mark; Boisson, 1990, 29]; [Nègre, 1990, 33–34], root 1 036, **car* ‘gros gravier’; [Perono Cacciafoco, 2008; 2015]; among many others. A phonologically identical and semantically relevant analogue of the element occupies a confident place in Pokorny’s IE dictionary [Pokorny, 1959, 531–532], with the sense ‘hard, strong, firm,’ and Pokorny also gives a reduplicated form **karkar-* with the same basic sense. With alternating aspiration of the initial consonant, this has also been posited for Proto-Nostratic (element 268 in [Bomhard & Kerns, 1994, 425–426], with other references there).

Some indiscriminate claims have been made for its validity and distribution, but many authors seem to have accepted it as part of the toponymic heritage of ancient Europe, whether it was itself IE or not. The purpose of this article is to analyse a very restricted group of mutually resembling names that might be thought to contain it, or at least to share its consonantal frame, and to consider what if anything might link them linguistically, geologically, historically and culturally. The article might be thought of as a contribution to an ongoing debate about **kar-/ *kal-*, but it should not be regarded as an endorsement of any more embracing theory about this rather Protean element or “root”.¹ We shall examine the name of the Croatian island of Krk as a point of departure, travel via mainland Croatia, Turkey and Greece, return to Croatia, and visit the British Isles, before landing cautiously on the beaches of Etruscan and Latin Italy and even more cautiously scanning wider horizons.

2. Ancient names of Krk island and their derivatives

The name of Krk continues to defy etymological analysis. Seventy years ago, Petar Skok [1950, 21] dismissed the related city-name (on which see below) briefly: “Vjerojatno predindoeuropskoga podrijetla” <probably of pre-Indo-European origin>.

¹ On the elasticity and potential ambiguity of the “root,” see for example [Morvan, 1996, section 8; Nouvel, 1978].

Dubravka Ivšić Majić [2019a, 130] offers no further etymological comment.² However, she presents enough evidence from ancient sources [Ivšić, 2013, 148–150; Ivšić Majić, 2019a, 130], to enable us to establish the name-form(s) current in antiquity. That evidence has now been interrogated afresh and is reproduced here in summary form.³

CURICTA, the island Krk:

- Curicta* Caesar, *Civil war* 3.10.5⁴
 Κουρίκτα Ptolemy, *Geography* 2.16.13
Curricus *Ravenna Cosmography* 5.24, var. *curticus* (MS. C (Basel))
Ins. Curica *Tabula Peutingeriana* (at top right in adjacent image)⁵



Fragment of *Tabula Peutingeriana*
 [Tabula Peutingeriana online]

Derived adjectival forms:

- ille Illyrico, hic *Curictico* litore castra possuissent Florus, *Epitome of Roman history* 2.13
 Κυρικτική Strabo, *Geography* 2.5.20
 νῆσοι <...> αἱ τε Ἀψύρτιδες καὶ Κυρικτικὴ καὶ Strabo, *Geography* 7.5.5
 Λιβυρνίδες

² On the general methodological problems of identifying pre-Slavic names in Croatia, see [Ivšić Majić, 2019b]. On the ancient mentions of the name *Krk* in brief, see also [Manenica, 2015, 92–93; Zelić, 1991].

³ The majority of the ancient attestations in this article are taken from Ivšić (Majić)'s work, and their spellings have been checked against the sources in the editions cited in the reference list. A few extra attestations have been added, mainly thanks to ToposText [<https://topostext.org/the-places>], consulted frequently. For the general history of the naming of this island and some possible derivative terms, including discussion of some problems of transmission, see [Skok, 1972/2, 202].

⁴ The editions of the primary sources cited in this article are listed in Appendix 1.

⁵ See also [Marković, 2001, 429]; Ivšić takes this form to be for the town [Ivšić, 2013, 149].

An etymological stem [kurikt-] can be posited with confidence for the island-name. A deonymic adjectival form with the suffix [-ik-] is also clearly demonstrated. *Curricus* in the other manuscripts of the *Ravenna Cosmography* (A (Vatican) and B (Paris)), taken by 19th-c. editors Pinder and Parthey as the superior reading, could be due to a doubly divergent error for an otherwise consistent form with non-geminate [r] and medial [kt]. This probably also represents the adjectival form.⁶

CURICUM, the predecessor of the town now called *Krk* on the island Krk and giving the island its current name:

Κούρικον Ptolemy, *Geography* 2.16.13

a Sasonis ad *Curici* portum Caesar, *Civil war* 3.8

CURICI, CURICTAE, CURICTES, derived ethnonyms:

Curici Pliny, *Natural history* 3.23 (thus what appears to be the editorially preferred reading); also *//urici, turici* (alternative readings MS. A¹; otherwise *Culici* except A²)

Curictae (MS. d), variants including *Currietae* (MS. R), *Curittae* (MSS ADF¹), *corittae* (MS. a), *curitae* (MS. F²) *fn. 187*) Pliny, *Natural history* 3.25 (MS. readings here and above as per [Vittinghoff, 1977, 25, and

illic bellaci confisus gente *Curictum* Lucan, *Pharsalia* 4.406

...PATRONI SPLENDIDISSI<MA>E [CIL, 3, 3126] (found on Krk island)
CIVITATIS CURICTARUM...

There is presumably a relation between *Curicta* and *Curicum*, but its nature cannot be finally decided, because it is not known in what language either name is formulated. A straightforward inference [following e.g. Skok, 1917, 121] is that *Curicta* might be a suffixally derived form and that *Curic-* is therefore the base-form. That will be taken for granted in what follows because it appears to allow association with a recognizable toponymic pattern, to be fully discussed in due course. The name of the town (*Cūrĭcum* > early South Slavic **Kurku-* → Old Croatian **K̄rk̄b̄*) has come to be used as the name of the island, displacing any form derived from *Curict-*.

⁶ *Curieticus* > *curticus* perhaps by anticipatory haplography; then *curticus* > *curricus* with <rt> > <rr>, more likely for graphological than for phonological reasons, since such a form is unique in the record of the toponym. But compare some of the variant forms of the related ethnonym in certain MSS of Pliny's *Natural history*, set out below under CURICI. Subsequent confusion or conflation with the town-name CURICUM on the same island is also possible, of course.

3. The geology of Krk and some related names

One of the most striking geomorphological features of Krk island is the pair of parallel karstic⁷ limestone promontories at its southern end, swept bare by the bora (strong winter offshore north-easterly wind). Another is the Biserujka (Vitezićeva) cave in Rudine village, 6 km north-east of Dobrinj in the northern part of the island. This is a small but spectacular site, with stalactites and stalagmites in profusion. It is locally reputed to have been “discovered” only a hundred and fifty years ago, but there is nothing to show that it was not known in Antiquity. There is no evidence of early occupation, but it is reputed to be quite damply chilly at all times, and might only have been visited, rather than inhabited [see: http://www.spilja-biserujka.com.hr/spilja_biserujka_eng.html]. There is also a marine cave at Vrbnik on the island’s east coast which has received recent academic attention [Arko-Pijevac et al., 2001].⁸ At all events, it is clear that striking geological features are a significant aspect of Krk’s appearance, though that in itself does not distinguish it decisively from other Croatian islands nor from the adjacent Dalmatian coast. Nevertheless, the trail is worth pursuing.

4. Other possibly related names in Croatia

KURKUM, town in Liburnia:

Κουρκούμ, var. Κούρουμ

Ptolemy, *Geography* 2.16.9

It is not certain whether the name of this town, sometimes identified with modern Korenica, Croatia, is relevant to the material discussed above or to what follows, especially in view of its uncertain morphology and the variation in the text of Ptolemy. [Suić, 1981, 248] considers it to be related to the river-name *Krka* (see below), which is by no means impossible, but we leave the matter open temporarily: the medial cluster <-rk-> presents analytical difficulties to which we return in due course, and the final syllable is of uncertain status but is evidently not a Greek inflectional suffix. Formally it could be in part a minor blunder anticipating Κούρικον, the name of the city of Krk, which appears four sections below, but Ptolemy clearly differentiates Κουρκούμ, var. Κούρουμ, in Liburnia from Κούρικον; the pairs of coordinates he gives are clearly distinct.

⁷The now general geological term *karst* derives from the Slovenian place-name *Kras* (*Karst* in German), which has itself been associated with the **kar-* root [Kranjc, 2001].

⁸It seems to be agreed that in the Mediterranean there is “no evidence of any sealevel oscillation (greater than local tidal range. — *R. C.*) for the last 5000 years at least” [Morhange et al., 2001, 327]; compare e.g. [Lambeck et al., 2004]. If that is so, this cave must have been accessible in principle throughout historic times.

KRKA, river

We cannot leave Croatia without considering the relationship of the name of Krk to that of the major river Krka, which flows through deep gorges and down a string of waterfalls in limestone country on the mainland. Pseudo-Scylax (*Periplus* 21) records the river as Καταρβάτης ποταμός, which [Rendić-Miočević, 1989, 124; Suić, 1996, 232] agree on emending to Καταιβάτης ‘what is lowered down,’ obliquely suggesting the numerous waterfalls in the course of the river. The older speculation (as noted by [Rendić-Miočević, 1989, 125]), is that the form in the unique 13th-c. MS. of Pseudo-Scylax is corrupt for καταρράκτης ‘cataract, waterfall,’ for which a larger number of letters subject to transmission errors must be envisaged (but only two rather than one!), as [Ivšić, 2013, 196] correctly states. However, this level of error would not be hugely surprising in a manuscript dating from 16 centuries after the composition of the text. Despite the reservations of the Croatian scholars, the older conjecture, with the lexical word, as a masculine *a*-stem, used in apposition as a hydronym, is hardly outrageous in the light of what has made the Krka famous. The few known early records of the present hydronym are as follows:

<i>Korkóras</i>	Strabo, <i>Geography</i> 7.5.2
fluvius qui dicitur <i>Corcae</i>	<i>Ravenna Cosmography</i> 4.22
<i>Corca</i>	Paulinus II of Aquileia, <i>Carmen de regula fidei: Versus de Herico duce</i> 1.5

It is widely stated in the literature of the Krka National Park and elsewhere, in too many derivative web resources to cite, that the Greeks knew the river as *Kyrikos*.⁹ This appears to be mistaken. I can find no such reference in the literature of antiquity, and it is absent from Ivšić’s catalogue [Ivšić, 2013]. The supposed Greek form *Kyrikos* does not match the other known forms. It has perhaps been influenced by the familiar words *kyrios* ‘lord,’ *kyriakos* ‘lordly’ and even the given name and saint and martyr’s name familiar in the West as *Cyricus* (also *Cyriacus*). The river was known to the Romans as *Titius*, but more significantly for our purposes as *Corca*. *Corcoras*, which is also widely offered as the (or an alternative) “Roman” name of the river, is a mere transliteration of Strabo’s Greek form, whilst *Corcora* in the *Ravenna Cosmography* is in fact the name of the more southerly Croatian island of Korčula, as we shall confirm below.

The disparate cited forms suggest (i) a name whose consonantal structure mirrors that of the island-name and which is perpetuated in the modern Serbo-Croatian name, and (ii) an extended form similar to the base of the island name augmented or suffixed¹⁰ with /-r-/: note therefore that the river is recorded in both unaugmented and augmented forms. This name leads us forward into the next part of our exploration in two senses:

⁹To cite only one potentially influential instance: the Wikipedia entry for “Krka National Park” in English.

¹⁰Hereafter the term *augment(ed)* alone will be used.

first geologically, and second lexical-morphologically, as we shall see in due course. The Krka is associated not only with cascades and rocky gorges but also with caves. For example, at the foot of Topoljski slap waterfall east of Knin is a well-known long cave with a spring. Below Miljacka slap waterfall is the great Miljacka cave system with its five springs. This has never been inhabited, so far as is currently known. But some caves have been long known to humans, for example the Ozidana cave on the left bank of the Krka near the top of the gorge above Roški slap waterfall, inhabited since the Neolithic, and Jazinka cave, which has a slightly later period of human use, whether permanent or seasonal.¹¹

The sparse authentic ancient evidence appears to indicate decisively that the stem vowel of this river-name differed from that in the nesonym *Krk*. *Krk* has Latin <u>, representing a sound rendered <ou> in Ptolemy and <v> in Strabo, whilst *Krka* has a lower vowel represented by Greek omicron and Latin <o>. Clearly, we shall need to address the possibility that the two names, so similar in modern Serbo-Croatian, have distinct lexical sources.

5. Instances of names with <k-r-k> recorded in Antiquity which are clearly associated with caves, rocks or rocky places

There are a number of other toponyms recorded in Antiquity that have much in common phonologically with the base or consonantal frame of the ancient names of *Krk* and the *Krka*. These deserve exploration for what the places they denote have in common geographically, geologically and ecologically as well as linguistically. A significant number of these are found in Greek-language contexts, and some appear to have an affinity with Ancient Greek κόρυκος / *kōrykos* ‘leather sack, knapsack; punchbag used in training for *pankration* (Greek-style no-holds-barred unarmed fighting),’ which is the base of κορύκειον / *kōrykeion* ‘boxing gymnasium.’ The word is of unknown etymology. [Beekes & van Beek, 2010, 816] says it is “no doubt Pre-Greek”; like [Frisk, 1991, 2, 63–64], he rejects the connection with Latin *corium* ‘leather’ originally suggested by Walther Prellwitz, but compares instead the Hittite verb stem *kurk-* ‘to retain.’ Frisk notes the similarity of the word to two of the place-names considered below and tentatively suggests the word is of “Cilician” (*kilikisch*) origin. The relevance of this will also be considered below.

Some such names invite us to recall the phonological and morphological variation seen in the Greek and Roman names of the Krka river. The first two to be considered are caves with springs or streams such as we have seen in the Krka National Park.

¹¹ For a popular account of these caves in English, see [<https://www.total-croatia-news.com/travel/26541-krka-beyond-the-waterfalls-caves>].

CORYCUS and CORYCIAN CAVES

in Ionia, Cilicia, Phocis, Lycia and Crete

Commentaries on, and encyclopaedias of, classical Antiquity occasionally show some uncertainty about whether mentions of a place called Κώρυκος or *Corycus* relate to a promontory in Ionia, on the coast east of Chios island, or to a mountain in Cilicia, both in Asia Minor, i.e. mainland modern Turkey. There were genuinely two places with the same name, and in the discussion below some potential controversy about which place is meant by a particular author may have been glossed over. For the purposes of this article, I submit that it will not matter if a referential error has been made, because, to an important extent, what there is to say about both places overlaps. However, in the following table, an attempt has been made, guided to a large extent by ToposText [<https://topostext.org/the-places>],¹² to summarize current opinion about which place is referred to by which author before we proceed to a deeper linguistic and cultural analysis. The sources are given in approximate date order of the original text.¹³

Table 1

Ancient sources mentioning Corycus in Ionia and Cilicia

Ionia	Cilicia
<p><i>Homeric hymn to Apollo</i> 30 Euripides, <i>Bacchae</i> line 504 Thucydides, <i>Peloponnesian war</i> 8.14, 8.33, 8.34 Livy, <i>History of Rome</i> 36.43, 37.8, 12–13, 37.29 Strabo, <i>Geography</i> 14.1.32–33 Pausanias, <i>Description of Greece</i> 10.12.7 Stephanos of Byzantium, <i>Ethnica</i> K401, line 18</p>	<p>Cicero, <i>Letters</i> [ad Familiares] 12.13 (<i>Corycum</i>) Cicero, <i>Letters</i> [ad Atticum], 10.18 (<i>Korukaiioi</i>, ethnonym) Horace, <i>Satires</i> 2.4, line 68 Vergil, <i>Georgics</i> 4, line 127 [see e.g. Percell, 1981] Strabo, <i>Geography</i> 14.4.1, 14.5.5–6, 14.6.3 Pomponius Mela, <i>Chorographia</i> 1.72 Vergilian appendix, <i>Ciris</i> line 317 Seneca, <i>Natural questions</i> 3.11 Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural history</i> 4.20.2, 5.22.1, 13.20.1, 21.17.1, 37.60.1 Ptolemy, <i>Geography</i> 5.8.4 Shapur I, <i>Res gestae</i> trilingual inscription 25, Greek Κώρυκον πόλιν Oppian, <i>Halieutica</i> 3.1, 3.205 Alciphron, <i>Letters</i> 1.8 Solinus, <i>Polyhistor</i> 38.6 <i>Tabula Peutingerana</i> Stephanos of Byzantium, <i>Ethnica</i> K401.18 several mentions in the Suda <i>Encyclopedia</i>, e.g. at omicron.452 about the author Oppian</p>

¹² Editions consulted are listed at the end of the article.

¹³ These lists are lightly edited; there are other mentions and a few have been omitted.

The place in Ionia is mentioned by Livy (*History of Rome* 37.8, 12–13 & 29) and by Strabo (*Geography* 14.1.32–33), who report a promontory or mountain called *Corycus* or Κόρυκος, and probably imply the existence of a town by mentioning a derived ethnonym.

The place in Cilicia, now in Mersin province, Turkey, is at the site of the modern town of Kızkalesi, named in Turkish ‘maiden castle’ from the Crusader castle on an offshore island [see Coates, 2006, 22–23] (the ancient name also came down in the Turkish of the Ottoman period as *Korghoz* [see e.g. Bell, 1906]). The ancient place is mentioned by Pliny (*Natural history* 5.22.1 etc.), Pomponius Mela (*Chorographia* 1.71) and Stephanos of Byzantium (*Ethnica* K401.18; under Κόρυκος), with explicit reference in some cases to a port or naval base and/or a settlement here, e.g. Pliny (*Natural history* 5.1.22), Livy (*History of Rome* 37.13) and Stephanos (*Ethnica* K401.18).

Some 20 stadia (roughly 2.3 miles; 3.7 kilometres¹⁴) inland from the place in Cilicia is a feature named after it, the Corycian Cave (Κωρύκιον ἄντρον / *Kōrukion antron*; with two famous sinkholes now called in Turkish *Cennet ve Cehennem* ‘Heaven and Hell’). The place was famous as being the source of the best *crocus* (‘saffron’), according to Strabo.¹⁵ I paraphrase Strabo: he describes this cave as a great circular hollow completely surrounded by a high wall of rock. On the floor of the hollow, the ground is uneven and generally rocky, and it is full of shrubs, both evergreen and cultivated. In some parts saffron is cultivated. There is also a cave containing a large spring yielding a river of pure clear water, which immediately disappears underground, and after re-emerging enters the Mediterranean. Pomponius Mela (*Chorographia* 1.72) offers an extensive account of the same place (“too extraordinary to be easily describable,” in Romer’s translation [Romer, 1998, 55]). It was at the summit of the mountain above the site of the city of Corycus; Mela says simply that it was “above the town.” This rocky place also features in Greek mythology, e.g. in the works of Pindar (*Pythian Ode* 1) and by implication, though not by name, in Æschylus (“Cilician caves,” *Prometheus bound* line 350). It was the (again unnamed) supposed den of the monster Typhon or Typhoeus in (Pseudo-)Apollodorus (*Library* 1.6.3).

Beekes’s etymological dictionary [Beekes & van Beek, 2010, 816] has an entry for the place-name in Cilicia, stating that “[t]he structure of the word looks like Pre-Greek. It could represent **kāruk-*, for which see κῆρυξ (‘herald, messenger.’ — *R. C.*), but I see no way to connect ‘messenger’; neither does it belong to the ‘leather sack’.” (On κῆρυξ see also [Beekes, 2003], and further below.)

¹⁴ Assuming the Attic stadion of about 185 metres, following the discussion of Eratosthenes’s practice by Douglas Engels [1985]; but hardly a great deal further whichever incarnation of the stadion is used.

¹⁵ For the mentions in other Greek sources noted above (i.e. *Homeric hymn to Apollo*, Euripides’ *Bacchae*, and Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian war*), see [https://topostext.org/place/382266LKor]. Note also Pleiades ([Foss et al., 2012], under *Korykos M*).

There was another ancient Κώρυκος on the slopes of Parnassus in Phocis, Greece, namely the Κωρύκιον ἄντρον / *Kōrykion antron* mentioned by Herodotus (*Histories* 8.36). This cave was a major religious site. The mythology of the place derives the name from that of an eponymous nymph Corycia (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10.32.3). Pausanias comments on the extraordinary size of the cave (10.32.2–7). Like that in Cilicia, the cave of Parnassus is a copious source of running water. Of this, Strabo (*Geography* 9.3.1) writes: “The whole of Parnassus is considered sacred, because it has caves and other honoured and hallowed places. The most famous and beautiful of these is Korykion, a cave of the Nymphs bearing the same name as the one in Cilicia.” This establishes that writers in Antiquity viewed the places in Cilicia and Phocis as having the same name. That may carry the suggestion that they have a common linguistic origin, though that is not necessarily the way writers of the period would have understood it; the name of one may have been copied to the other, and if so we have no way of deciding which is the eponym.

A further *Korykos* (Κώρυκος) or *Olympos* has been identified in Lycia, near the modern town of Yazır (Livy, *History of Rome* 33.20; Strabo, *Geography* 14.3.8; Pomponius Mela, *Chorographia* 1.71; Solinus, *Polyhistor* 38.6; Eutropius, *Abridgement* 6.3).

A promontory in Crete, modern *Gramvousa*, also bore a similar name, Κώρυκος (Strabo, *Geography* 8.5.1, 17.3.22; Pliny, *Natural History* 4.20 (*Corycus*); Ptolemy, *Geography* 3.15.2 Description of the western side: *Korykos* headland and city).

If these names have anything to do with *kōrykos* ‘punchbag,’ two scenarios might be envisaged. First, that the ‘sack’ word, applied as a metaphor for a cave, is the source of the place-name; second, that the place-name is the source, perhaps by the trope of metonymy, of the ‘sack’ word. Neither possibility is capable of proof or disproof, and an element of subjectivity enters into any consideration of whether origin in a trope is onomastically defensible; but to the present writer neither possibility seems compelling. A connection with the ‘sack’ word, though not to be summarily rejected, will therefore be discounted in what follows.

6. Formally similar names

In addition to those of the major sites of religious and cultural importance and the more culturally neutral ones just mentioned, we find other names with a striking, but not precise, similarity. Most striking of all is the ancient name of Corfu.

CORCYRA, KERKYRA, etc. (= CORFU)

These represent respectively the ancient and modern Greek names of Corfu in the Ionian Islands. *Corcyra* has the same consonantal framework seen in the names in Ionia,¹⁶ Cilicia, Phocis, Lycia and Crete, but shows omicron rather than omega

¹⁶ *Ionia* in Asia Minor and the *Ionian islands* in the Adriatic are not to be confused. They are etymologically distinct, as *Ἰωνία* and *Ἰόνια* respectively, and in Modern Greek the names still differ in stress position, though not in segmental phonology.

in the first syllable, lacks a vowel between /r/ and /k/, and has an apparent augment /-r-/. *Corcyra* (*Korkyra*) appeared in modern times in the Doric dialect form *Kerkyra* [Frisk, 1991, 1, 831] before this was replaced in wider international usage by *Corfu*.¹⁷ The phonological differences should make us wary of bringing this name into the discussion of Krk and the Corycian caves, but there are other onomastically relevant considerations. One of the most famous geographical features of Corfu is the Cave of Medea, the supposed marriage place of Jason and Medea (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.1153–1154). Presumably referencing this sprightly ancient tradition, however indirectly, the city's cathedral is dedicated to Our Lady of the Cave (ἡ Παναγία Σπηλιώτισσα / *hē Panagia Spēliōtissa*).¹⁸

The earliest reference to Corcyra is the Mycenaean Greek suffixed ethnic term *ko-ro-ku-ra-i-jo* ('man from Korkyra') written in Linear B script, c. 1300 BCE [Ventris & Chadwick, 1956/1973, 192–193; document 60, twice]. It should be recalled that Linear B/Mycenaean does not distinguish syllables that contain omicron in Classical Greek from those that contain omega [Ibid., 77].

According to Strabo (*Geography* 6.2.4), the Liburnians held Korkyra until 735 BCE, when they were forced out by Khersikrates, ruler of Corinth. Classical Liburnia was of variable extent, but certainly at some later point included Krk island (implied by Pliny the Elder's description of their territory, *Natural history* 3.25) and probably Korkum (above), if this truly was Korenica or somewhere reasonably close to that place. It may also have extended as far south as the island now known as *Korčula*.

KORČULA (Venetian and Italian *Curzola*)

The Croatian island of Korčula appears likely to have been settled from Corfu after the expulsion of the Liburnians from there, and distinguishingly named after it as Κόρκυρα ἡ μέλαινα / *Korkyra (hē) melaina* and the like 'Black Korkyra,' for reasons that have not been firmly established. Perhaps this was simply the name by which it was known to the Greeks, for geographical, cultural or nostalgic reasons, and not a translation of what the Liburnians called it.

Κέρκυρα μέλαινα	Pseudo-Scylax, <i>Periplus</i> 23; Apollonius Rhodius, <i>Argonautica</i> 4.557; Appian, <i>Civil wars</i> 2.6.40
Κόρκυρα ἡ μέλαινα	Ptolemy, <i>Geography</i> 2.16.9; Pseudo-Scymnos, <i>Periegesis</i> 23
ἡ Μέλαινα Κόρκυρα	Strabo, <i>Geography</i> 2.5.20; ἡ μέλαινα Κόρκυρα Strabo, <i>Geography</i> 7.5.5; Agathemerus, <i>Geography</i> 23

¹⁷ The name *Corfu* (*Corfū*) is an Italianized form of Byzantine Greek Κορυφῶ / *Koruphō* '(town) of the peaks,' alluding to the two peaks at the Old Fortress [Dawkins, 1933, 14–15]. The fact that it shares modern initial /kor-/ with the ancient name is coincidental, at least from the onomastic point of view, whether or not there may be some remote philological connection.

¹⁸ The cathedral is not on its original site. On the many other caves of Corfu, see [Speleo Corfu].

Corcyra Melaena	Pliny, <i>Natural history</i> 3.152 (adapted from the Greek)
Nigra Corcyra	Pomponius Mela, <i>Chorographia</i> 2.114 (translated from the Greek name); <i>Tabula Peutingeriana</i> ; <i>Maritime Itinerary</i> 520, 1
Corcora	<i>Ravenna Cosmography</i> 5.24

Ethnonym: Κορκυρηνοί (Appian, *Civil wars* 2.6.39).

Inscriptions: Κορκυραίων (and similar) on coins and elsewhere [see e.g. <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/2315?hs=1311-1318%2C1947-1957>].

The modern name preserves the non-Doric vowel of the original Ionian name, though the ostensibly earliest mention, in the *Periplus* of Pseudo-Scylax, in a very late manuscript, has <ε>. *Korčula* is best understood as showing palatalization of the second [k] before the front rounded upsilon or a phonetic descendant of this (such as the Venetian [ju] proposed by [Loma, 1999–2000, 103], in his discussion of the by-form Κίκερ in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio* (mid-10th c.), and by [Ligorio, 2015]), with dissimilation of [r ...r] to [r ... l]. Perhaps influence from the Romance diminutive *-ul-* suffix should also, or instead, be considered for the latter point. [Ivšić Majić, 2019a, 129–130] comments that the triple phonological relationship is not wholly clear between the Greek of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (τα Κούρκουρα, ἡ Κούρκρα as well as Κίκερ in [Loma, 1999–2000, 103]), the oldest Serbo-Croatian attestations (Old Serbian locative *Kr̃bkr̃ě*, nominative **Kr̃bkr̃er* [Skok, 1972/2, 203], *Krkar* [Brozović Rončević, 1998, 12, fn. 15]), and the Venetian and the modern Serbo-Croatian forms derived from it, though Skok, Loma, Ligorio and Ivšić Majić clearly take us strongly towards a solution.¹⁹

The name may simply commemorate the namers' old homeland of Corfu, but the local presence of significant caves may have had a role to play: Vela Spila (Serbo-Croatian 'big cave') above Vela Luka, and Jakas Cave near Zrnovo. Vela Spila has revealed archaeological evidence of millennia-long occupation, fully described by [Farbstein et al., 2012], who note that it is referred to in a local statute of the 15th c.

7. Formal aspects of the names

The phonological structure of the names considered so far appears to point in the direction of some long-standing, but quite limited, variation. We have: [k] — *omega or omicron* — [r] — *vowel or zero* — [k] (+ *an augment* [r]) + *inflectional elements*.

¹⁹ Greek Κίκερ and Old Serbian *Kakr̃b* are particularly problematic [Loma, 1999–2000, 103]. [Skok, 1972/2, 203] says the base-form which interests us is “zacijselo mediteranskog podrijetla” <probably of Mediterranean origin>. He notes that the Pelješac peninsula also formerly bore the name *Krkar* in medieval/early-modern documents from Dubrovnik.

The linguistic, or dialectal, distribution of the variant forms is as follows:

Table 2

Geographical distribution, omega versus omicron

Omega, a digraph <ou>, or [u]	<i>Krk</i> [+ all related forms], <i>Kurkum</i> , all the names in Greek lands
Omicron or [o]	<i>Krka</i> , <i>Corfu</i> , <i>Korčula</i> Perhaps <i>Coreca</i> (see footnote 25; if the local folk-etymology can be trusted)

Table 3

Geographical distribution, second vowel versus zero

Second vowel	<i>Krk</i> [+ all related forms], all the Greek names
No second vowel	<i>Kurkum</i> , variably <i>Krka</i> , <i>Corfu</i> , <i>Korčula</i>

Table 4

Geographical distribution, augmentless versus augmented

Augmentless	<i>Krk</i> (+ all related forms), <i>Kurkum</i> , <i>Krka</i> , all the Greek names
With augment /-r-/	Variably <i>Krka</i> , <i>Corfu</i> , <i>Korčula</i> To be noted: two non-European names mentioned in footnote 25

Kurkum appears to be anomalous, leading to the suspicion that its similarity to the other names is coincidental or linguistically conditioned in some undiscovered way. But otherwise we can say that the *Krka* river, *Corfu* and its derivative *Korčula* stand out. This may indicate a separate south Adriatic dialect instantiation of all the three variables: first-vowel quality, second-vowel syncope and /-r-/augmentation, in the first case perhaps because of the phonological properties of some unidentified substrate language.

In addition to the phonologically close congruity (though not identity) of the names, and the relatively consistent regional distribution of their variants, there appears to be a semasiological congruity involving denotation of caves, rock features and springs. This should encourage us to analyse in greater geographical breadth and greater linguistic depth.

8. Celtic

In the Celtic languages there are lexical words which not only show at least superficial phonological similarity to the material considered above, but also show similar patterns of relatively minor, though not satisfactorily explained, variation. These include:

Goidelic: Old Irish *crec*, Modern Irish *creig*, *carraig* (both feminine class 2 nouns), Manx *creg*, Scottish Gaelic *creag*, *carraig*, all meaning ‘rock.’

Brittonic: Modern Welsh *craig*, *carreg* and cognates in Cornish and Breton, all meaning ‘rock.’

James [2014–2019] analyses the relations among some of the Celtic forms as follows: Brittonic **cre:g* (a feminine noun) is perhaps for PIE **kr[s]-* (zero-grade of **kar-*), which appears suffixed in early Celtic as **cr-* + *-acjā-* > West Brittonic **cracjā-* > Old Welsh *creic* > Middle Welsh *creig* > Welsh *craig*.²⁰ The Goidelic strand involves early Celtic **cracjā-* evidenced as Middle Irish *craicc* > Modern Irish *creig*, Scottish Gaelic *craig*, adopted into Scots as *craig*. James also envisages a differently suffixed early Celtic **cr-* + *-acā-* > South-West British **cracā-* (adopted ultimately as Middle English *cragge* > ‘crag’) > Cornish **crak* (‘sandstone’ in place-names [cf. Padel, 1985, 68]), Middle Breton *cragg*. Old Irish *crec* > Irish and Scottish Gaelic *creag* and Manx *creg* represent a differently vocalized form.²¹ A disyllabic form is required to account for the phonologically distinct Middle and Modern Welsh feminine noun *carreg* (attested in Old Welsh as *carrecc*), corresponding to Old Irish *carrac* > Middle Irish *carraic* > Modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic *carraig*, ‘rock,’ found anglicized in place-names as *carrick* (e.g. *Carrickfergus*), which is also the Manx orthographic form of the lexical item. The suffix appears to be **-ikā* in British and **-akā* in Goidelic, though there is some evidence from generalized former oblique inflected forms in Irish that **-ikā* was previously known in Goidelic (see [James, 2014–2019, 64], under **carreg*).

James justifies his view that the Celtic words mentioned are originally suffixal by comparing them with other semantically related forms such as **carr-* ‘rock,’ **carn-* ‘cairn, heap of stones.’²² This is what might justify the inclusion of these words in a discussion of the putative root **kar-/kal-*. In this article I remain agnostic about any original internal morphology of these Celtic words and their relation to **kar-/kal-*, and concentrate entirely on their phonological (consonantal) structure.

9. Towards a resolution

The upshot of this discussion is that we can identify an expression in Celtic whose Proto-Celtic consonantal structure was the same as that found in the Mediterranean material we have analysed. It testifies to a consonantal structure **k-r-k-*, vocalized in variable, but by no means random, ways. There is no direct evidence from

²⁰ It is traditional in Celtic studies to use <c> for /k/ even in reconstructed forms.

²¹ One or other of these bases is borrowed into English toponymy in the toponyms *Crayke* (Yorkshire) and *Creake* (Norfolk), and the hydronym *Crake* (Lancashire). See [Watts, 2004, 166–167; Ekwall, 1928, 102] respectively.

²² Note Northumbrian Old English *carr* ‘rock,’ also in toponyms, which is not of Germanic origin; [Holthausen, 1934, 44] compares some of the Celtic words just mentioned.

the Mediterranean forms that the second [k] is suffixal, but the Celtic evidence might be taken as pointing in that direction.

In view of the semasiological range of the descendants of these Celtic and Mediterranean forms, in each case having to do with rocky places, whether stones or caves, and with some important springs, the near-coincidence of their phonological forms should not simply be ignored. There is a *prima facie* case founded in geography and geology that some or all of these words and names are related; though if we accept that, the exact nature of the relationship still needs to be determined.

In the Mediterranean area we find several instances of names associated with rocks, rocky islands, rocky places or notably caves which differ essentially in the quality of the vowel of the first syllable and in whether or not they carry an augment of the form /-Vr/. With allowance only for the last very specific point, the names exist without derivational affixes and un-compounded. The variation seen in these names can be characterized as follows: [k] — *omega or omicron* — [r] — *vowel or zero* — [k] (+ *an augment [r]*) + *inflectional elements*.

[Beekes & van Beek, 2010, xxxi] note that, in the vocabulary which they identify as borrowed into Greek from what they cautiously and non-tendentiously call Pre-Greek (i.e. a source-set which is not necessarily a single language [cf. *Ibid.*, xli]), there are certain recurrent features, among which is variation in attested spellings between omicron and omega. This is also seen in the first syllable of the names presented as evidence above. Given that there is a strong probability, based on geographical distribution and historical testimony, that Greek is the language of transmission of all these ancient names (whatever their ultimate origin), we may conclude that this variation is no barrier to their having a common origin.

The names may well therefore be either copied from one fountainhead or a small number of them, or formed using comparable (perhaps dialectally or sociolectally varying) linguistic material, whether in some unknown widespread language or using a toponymic element drawn into a range of attested languages from such an unknown source.

My specific proposal therefore is that *Krk* and the other names discussed here derive from an element which was used to name (and probably originally to describe) places with specific remarkable geological properties. It is not a problem that such an element might denote either a deep cave or prominent exposed rock features, since both together are regular occurrences in karstic limestone scenery and comparably rocky places everywhere (beyond the examples so far discussed: Gibraltar, Cheddar Gorge (Somerset, England), Carlsbad Caverns (New Mexico, USA), Uluru/Ayers Rock (Australia) and many places in Saharan Africa such as Jabal al-Ṭārif (Nag Hammadi [Naj' Hammādi], Egypt) and Tadrārt Akākūs (Libya) – but it is hardly necessary to go on). Such remarkable places were often held to have divine or supernatural causes, indwellings or associations, through providing shelter and often by mysteriously delivering water, and the traditions attaching to the caves in Parnassus and Cilicia are clearly consistent with this idea. That might apply in others among these cases.

The Mediterranean names may either be copied from one of an earlier name or group of names, or be named using linguistic material from a widespread unidentifiable substrate language or a toponymic element drawn from such a substrate.²³

Afternote 1: Latin *crocus*

It would be perverse to ignore completely the consonantal similarity between these names and the word *crocus*, given that saffron, deriving from the crocus flower, was one of the products explicitly mentioned in connection with Cilician Corycus.²⁴ But it cannot be easily accommodated in the onymic etymological framework suggested here, and its similarity seems coincidental. Its source, Greek *krókon*, *krókos*, seems agreed to be a borrowing from Semitic; compare Hebrew *karkôm*, Aramaic *kûrkâmā*, Arabic *kurkum*, all meaning ‘saffron’ ([Walde & Hofmann, 1982/1, 150], under *cancamum*), but perhaps, in Greek, it is rather from a cognate of these, or from the distant source of all of them.

Afternote 2: Latin *carcer*

We may also stop to ponder the Latin word *carcer* ‘prison,’ whose etymology has not been satisfactorily established, and which does not appear to have generally

²³ It remains provoking that there are a number of toponyms beyond the core area so far considered that share the consonantal structure we have been examining. I list some here without further comment:

Coreca (locally *Corica*): a locality near well-known caves in the municipality of Amantea (Calabria, Italy) [see <http://www.enzodeimedici.it/attivita-di-ricerca/grotte-di-coreca-amantea-cosenza>]. The traditional local story is that this was settled in Antiquity by Corinthians, who named it Κόρακας / *Kórakas*, understood to mean ‘place of crows’ (Greek κόραξ / *kórax*), because it reminded them of their native Corinth and its many crows (cf. Modern Greek κόρυκος / *kórukos* ‘rook’). The unstressed high vowel of the local pronunciation (in the second syllable) suggests otherwise.

Karkor: an unidentified place east of the river Jordan where Gideon overwhelmed the remnants of the army of Zeba and Zalmunnah (Bible: Judges 8:10); perhaps to be identified with *Qarqar*, the site of the battle in 853 BCE at which the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III defeated a huge army including Jews and Damascenes. This place is itself customarily identified with Tell Qarqur in north-western Syria. Most Bible translations take *Karkor* as a place-name, offering no etymology, but in the Vulgate it is understood as having to do with the concept of ‘rest’ and it is incorporated into the verb form *requiescebant* ‘rested’ [see <https://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/karkor.html>].

Karkaar: a range of mountains in Puntland State of Somalia, giving its name to one of Puntland’s regions lying southwards from it; a prominent peak north of the low Karkaar range, near Cape Guardafui, is often rendered *Karkoor*.

Other lexical words:

Mycenean *karuke*, Greek κῆρυξ / *kēruks* ‘herald,’ which [Beekes, 2003, 112–115] confidently suggests is of non-IE origin, but compare Old Indian *kāru-* ‘singer, poet,’ as noted by an anonymous reviewer, to whom my thanks go for the reminder.

Greek κόρυξ / *koruks* glossed νεανίσκος / *neaniskos* ‘young man’ by Hesychius [Beekes, 2003, 113].

It appears necessary to conclude that last two lexical word(-group)s are, despite their consonantal frame, unrelated to the names discussed above because they are vocally or semantically too divergent.

²⁴ We cannot know whether *Crocus sativus* might first have been grown there because the established place-name suggested its suitability as a cultivation site according to some notion of prognostic etymology current in Antiquity; or whether the plant taxonym and the place-name share an origin which goes back beyond the limits of currently achievable reliable reconstruction.

accepted secure Indo-European connections. [Walde, 1910, 130] suggests that it may be related to Old English *hearg* ‘pile of stones; shrine’ [see also Walde & Hofmann, 1982/1, 166]. If Walde’s view is accepted, the key unifying notions are ‘stone’ and ‘enclosure.’ [de Vaan, 2008, 92] suggests that “[i]t seems best to connect *carcer* with other IE words for ‘circle, round object,’ <...> although not all of these have a good IE etymology,” falling back on a rather vague possible connection between potential senses ‘ring’ and ‘enclosure.’ However, *carcer* also responds well to the consonantal frame of the extended form of the etymon or base of the names we have been examining, **korkur-*. What might have happened if some such form had passed through Etruscan to Latin? Etruscan had no (mid-)low back round vowel [Bonfante & Bonfante, 2002, 79], but had a low non-round /a/ available to substitute for a (mid-)low rounded vowel in a borrowed word. In all lexical and onomastic borrowings from Etruscan where the form of the Etruscan etymon is actually recorded, Latin /o/ derives from Etruscan <u> (*Cortona* < *curtun*, *Cosa* < *cusi* (though Etruscan *cosia* is also recorded), *Horta* < *hurta*, *persona* < *phersu*, *Populonia* < *pupluna*, *Porsena* < *pursena*, *Roma* < *ruma*). It is therefore not beyond the bounds of possibility that the lower Greek vowels <o> and <ω> could be identified with the lower Etruscan, and hence Latin, /a/. However, in attested borrowings from Greek having etymological omega or omicron, Etruscan generally substitutes <u>:

with omega: *Adonis* > *Atunis*;

all with omicron: *Polyxena* > *Phulsphna*, *Odysseus* > *Uthuze*, *Orpheus* > *Urphe*, *Orestes* > *Urusthe*.

The only possible instances of <a> are in *Athrpa* for *Atropos* and *Ermania* for *Hermione* (both with omicron). It would not be unreasonable to expect the unstressed epsilon, [ǔ] or [y], of the second syllable of a form like **korkyra* to appear as <e> in Etruscan, which also had no central or front rounded vowels.²⁵

Whether or not the word is mediated by Etruscan, this leads us to conclude that *carcer* does not directly represent the lineage of the place-names under discussion. But the symbolic and actual connection between rocky caves and prisons should not need emphasizing. The actors in Plato’s famous allegory about ignorance (*Republic*, book VII) were prisoners in a cave. The *Orecchio di Dionisio* cave at Syracuse, Sicily, was used as a prison, at least in legend, by the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius I. Latin *cavea* gives French (and therefore English) *cage*. There is a cave on Gozo, Malta, known as *il-Habs* ‘The Prison.’ Zhazi Cave near Chongqing, China, was from 1938 a clandestine prison for revolutionaries used by the Kuomintang regime. The relation between caves, dungeons and prisons is a topos of literature, computer games, entertainment of all sorts and tourism (note the “Prison Cave of Dracula” in Budapest, and even the Scorpion Prison Cave set (8876) of LEGO®). Examples do not need multiplying. We could reasonably continue to suspect, with all due caution, that the origin of *carcer*

²⁵ On the very simple vowel phonology of Etruscan, see [Bonfante & Bonfante, 2002, 79].

is to be found in the etymological penumbra of *Korkyra* and the like, but the detail of the relationship remains to be demonstrated, just as an alternative Indo-European etymology does.

Appendix: primary sources

The editions of the primary sources cited in the article are listed here. Please note that some of the references are to superseded editions, but since little is at stake beyond the bare confirmation of a mention and an identification, I have chosen, wherever practicable, to cite those that are easily accessible. Only in Pliny's *Natural history* are there potentially troublesome issues of manuscript spelling variation to address, and any such textual matters are dealt with in the body of the article.

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²⁶ But using Karl Müller's [1855] paragraph numbering (see below).

²⁷ See also [Suić, 1996a] and notes at [Pseudo Scylax, *Periplous*].

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ABBREVIATIONS

IE	Indo-European
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
var.	variant

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НАЗВАНИЕ ОСТРОВА КРК (ХОРВАТИЯ) В СРЕДИЗЕМНОМОРСКОМ И ОБЩЕЕВРОПЕЙСКОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ

Наряду с островом Црес Крк является одним из крупнейших островов Адриатического архипелага Хорватии. В последнее время его название обсуждалось в статье Дубравки Ившич Майич (Вопросы ономастики. 2019. Т. 16. № 1. С. 121–139), отчасти основанной на ее докторской диссертации, в контексте анализа средневековых источников, содержащих дославянские названия островов, которые ныне принадлежат Хорватии.

Однако название *Крк*, кажется, никогда не обсуждалось в более широкой перспективе. Попытка такого анализа предлагается в данной статье. Ее цель заключается в том, чтобы: 1) рассмотреть весьма многочисленный набор сходных названий, зафиксированных в Средиземноморском бассейне (понимаемом широко и включающем бассейны Эгейского, Адриатического и Тирренского морей) — непосредственно в нем или в прилегающих ареалах; 2) попытаться сформировать представление о его возможном происхождении и этимологическом значении, учитывая возможные связи всей рассматриваемой группы названий с ономастическими данными и апеллятивной лексикой языков Средиземноморского бассейна, в частности древнегреческого языка, а также с островными кельтскими языками. Особое внимание уделяется геологии, геоморфологии и культурному значению мест, носящих данный тип имени. В статье делается предварительный вывод о том, что рассматриваемые названия могли быть связаны с необычными геологическими особенностями, которые наделялись особой культурной значимостью из-за некоторых дополнительных исключительных характеристик (например, загадочное появление или исчезновение питьевой воды). Хотя надежно установить язык, к которому восходят рассматриваемые названия, не представляется возможным, в статье рассматриваются варианты характеристики ономастических прототипов и их возможная диалектная атрибуция. Для большинства названий данной группы языком-посредником должен был быть греческий. Кратко рассматривается связь данной группы названий с лексическими единицами, имеющими поверхностное сходство с интересующей автора группой названий, но отличающимися более широким географическим распределением.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: остров Крк, топонимия, этимология, география, геология, скалы, пещеры, родники, Хорватия, ареал греческого языка в Античности.

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