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### **SOME LEXICAL PECULIARITIES OF CRETE'S ANCIENT POPULATION DIALECT**

After the Aegean archeology discovered the Minoan, one of the most ancient Mediterranean civilizations, numerous scientific works have been published on the origin and peculiarities of Aegean languages. Obviously, to Crete and its language environment, as well as to the processes of language transformation, assimilation or absorption in early times are given a special interest. Apparently, nowadays while discussing the language of ancient population of Crete two sources are referred upon: they are Linear A, Linear B documents and linguistic data in Greek of historic period. Linear A, as well as Crete hieroglyphical-pictographic and Phaestus disc inscriptions are not deciphered yet. As for Mycenaean documents made in Linear B, the language of which is beyond doubt, supposedly, Mycenaean syllabic signs and Mycenaean formatives themselves kept certain information on the language of the ancient Crete population. The mentioned materials are supplemented by so called Cretisms found by Greek authors in ancient Greek, which first of all are found in Crete Greeks' speech and their dialect.

In 80s of the twentieth century, R. A. Brown dedicated a profound monograph to the language of the Pre-Greek population of Crete wherein he was referring to data found in Greek sources.<sup>1</sup> Following this it became obvious that in the early times in Hesykhios and other sources the part of the Greek vocabulary was pointed out with the term "Cretan" and it was considered that these words were typical to the population of Crete. Obviously, by that period nobody was interested in such issues as when these "Cretan" words appeared in Greek, what etymology they had and to which language family they were connected.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown R. A., Evidence for Pre-Greek Speech on Crete from Greek Alphabetic Sources, Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, Amsterdam 1985.

The above-mentioned monograph of R. A. Brown revealed that out of 5 000 Pre-Greek words that were found by the famous Dutch specialist E. J. Furnée approximately 300 represent so called Cretisms. From 224 lemmata examined by R. A. Brown, two are found to be fictions; a further 26 lemmata corrupt; a little less than three quarter, that is 145 of the total lemmata are Greek. We found also 14 cognate pre-Indo-European words, 24 cognate pre-Greek ones and 9 place-names. From 250 place names examined by R. A. Brown, 59 have been found to be of Greek origin.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, it can be concluded, that in the language of the ancient Greek population of Crete there was some kind of layer, which was taking its roots from Minoan, or some other Pre-Greek source. This indicates on multi-layeredness of the Cretan dialect vocabulary and the Greek language at large, as well as on reflection of long process of formation of Mediterranean languages in it.

As it is known from the times of P. Kretschmer up to the present day the interpretation of Pre-Greek lingual material underwent many changes.<sup>3</sup> First it was supposed that the entire Pre-Greek lingual material had to be considered as Pre-Indo-European and not Indo-European or Semitic. Later after revealing Anatolian Indo-European languages this point of view was changed and the Pre-Greek language was considered to be of Indo-European origin and not of Greek origin. The decoding of Linear B resulted in numerous changes. It was revealed that Linear A and Linear B represented two different languages and that the first was neither Greek nor Indo-European. After the works of F. Schachermeyr<sup>4</sup> and J. Mellaart<sup>5</sup> the interpretation of pre-Greek material underwent a sudden change. Today almost no one argues that the greater part of the pre-Greek lingual material is explained on the basis of neither Indo-European nor Semitic languages. Furthermore, recently the almost forgotten Caucasian theory, that as far as I know the Greek scientific circles are not quite familiar with, again became popular. According to this theory a trace of Caucasian linguistic space has great significance in the pre-Greek language, and respectively in the language of the ancient Greek population of Crete.

I would like particularly to note the works of the representatives of the Georgian school of classical philology, at the head of which is Mr. Rismag

<sup>2</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 92-96.

<sup>3</sup> Kretschmer P., *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen 1896.

<sup>4</sup> Schachermeyr F., *Prahistorische Kulturen Griechenlands*, RE 22: 2, 1954, 1350-1548; *Das ägäische Neolithikum*, Lund 1964; *Die Minoische Kultur des alten Kreta*, Stuttgart 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Mellaart J., *End of the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Aegean*, AJA, 62, 1958, 9-33; *Earliest Civilizations of the Near East*, London 1965; *The Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages in the Near East and Anatolia*, Beirut 1966; *Catal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia*, London 1967.

Gordeziani. His work "Pre-Greek and Kartvelian"<sup>6</sup> together with the researches of Dutch scientist E. J. Furnée<sup>7</sup> is considered to be one of the basic monographs of Caucasian-Kartvelian theory.

The studies of R. Gordeziani and E. J. Furnée differ from the works of other supporters of this theory as their approach to the material is differential and they consider that in Pre-Greek and Minoan, which is the ancient language of the Crete population, several linguistic layers can be distinguished. Among them are South-East Anatolian, which is related to the Chatal Huiuk culture diffusion in the Neolith Age and early Bronze Age and Caucasian that is Kartvelian, which is related to the migration of Kartvelian tribes to the west on the boundary of III-II millenniums B. C.

Nowadays several hundred formatives are revealed in the Pre-Greek linguistic material. Their Kartvelian origin does not raise any doubt in the certain scientific circles. R. Gordeziani's new monograph "Pre-Greek – Etruscan – Kartvelian. Interrelationship and its grounds" is to be published in the nearest future in which the whole available material will be gathered, analyzed and generalized taking into consideration the different modern linguistic and non-linguistic theories.

I will play the role of a mediator and give myself a right to consider several lexical formatives as the example of Cretan-Caucasian linguistic parallels.

It should be noted that during the last years the research of genetic classification of languages underwent significant transformation. As a result of a coordinated work of specialists of molecular genetics, archaeologists and linguists it was found out that mankind started to speak so called articulated language much more later in comparison with its age. This is connected with the appearance of Homo Sapiens Sapiens that is anatomically contemporary human being 100-150 000 years ago. Namely, this kind of human being disseminated the languages that we now speak from Africa to Eurasia and other continents. It is quite natural that against the background of the latest discoveries the question of common, so called Proto-language existence was raised in the contemporary science. Also there are attempts of its reconstruction. Though the major part of linguists are quite skeptic about the possibility of such a reconstruction. No one argues the fact that today's

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<sup>6</sup> Gordeziani R., Pre-Greek and Kartvelian, Tbilisi University Press, Tbilisi 1985; Gordesiani R., Zur Frage der ägäisch-kartwelischen Sprachparallelen, Wiss. Ztschr. der Fr.-Schiller-Univ., Jena 18, 1969 Hft. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Furnée E. J., Lexikalische Beziehungen zwischen Baskisch, Buruškaski, Kartwelisch und Vorgriechisch, Georgica, 5, 1982; Furnée E. J., Vorgriechisch-Kartvelisches. Studien zum ostmediterranen Substrat nebst einem Versuch zu einer neuen pelagischen Theorie, Leuven-Louvain 1979.

linguistic families rose from super-families that existed before and that those numerous characteristics and qualities that unite the languages of different families may not be the result of interference but the trace of linguistic processes that proceeds from super-families.

One of the famous representatives of molecular genetics Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza considers that all the languages proceed from one common language and that these languages have been gradually developed.<sup>8</sup> M. Ruhlen,<sup>9</sup> Greenberg, Antila as well as other researchers revealed certain regularity of this development, i. e. They have relatively conceived the way of the development of the simple structure languages (first consonants, then consonant-vocals, etc.) before they had generated into the families that we know.

The appearance of lingual families and groups existed through the entire history of humanity. Therefore it is rather difficult to determine where and when this or that language begins and ends its existence.

It's natural that against the background of the newest interdisciplinary studies we must consider the pre-Greek, in this case Cretan linguistic material, in a new way.

Today the concept of "lingual family" bears rather conditional sense. For distinguishing the linguistic families that are familiar to us it becomes necessary to determine more exact criteria since these languages themselves are considered to be common, certain stages of the proto-language development. Hence the family is considered as the system of the specific lingual facts that naturally relates to other families as well; however, a similar unity of its components is peculiar only for this family.

There must be only one criterion for the estimation during the research of Pre-Greek language: we should consider Pre-Greek linguistic material as a system that shows relation to another linguistic group as a system. At the same time we must determine whether the trace of hierarchy exists in these interrelations; which form is the primary and which is secondary.

It is interesting that recently Giulio M. Fachetti promoted the idea that in the specific period, in the XV century B. C. in particular, in Aegeida there existed a common language that he named Minoan. From the Minoan language derived Proto-Tyrrhenian in the XII century B. C., Philistinian in the XI century B. C. and Eteocretan in the VII century B. C. Proto-Tyrrhenian in the course of time put the basis for old Etruscan (VIII c.), new Etruscan (V c.), Rhaetan (VII c.) and Lemnian (VIII c.).

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<sup>8</sup> Cavalli-Sforza L. L., *Genes, Peoples and Languages*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Ruhlen M., *The Origin of Language, Tracing the Evolution of the Mother Tongue*, 1994.

Giulio M. Facchetti says nothing about what preceded Minoan; whether it was an isolated language or a member of a bigger family. One part of the scientists consider that Minoan reflected those common Eurasian linguistic characteristics which on the one hand chronologically lead us sufficiently far and on the other hand Minoan was related to Caucasian, the emergence of which in Aegeida is not supposed earlier than on the boundary of III-II millenniums B. C.<sup>10</sup>

Modern researchers have more or less agreed that in the Caucasus there exist three large groups of families of Caucasian languages which should have been formed in the third millennium B. C. Probably the south-east Anatolian migrations as well as the migration from Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium B. C. resulted in disintegration of possible unity of Caucasian languages and occurrence of three different linguistic families. In the south of Caucasus the group of Kartvelian languages was originated that some scientists consider to be allied to Hattic i. e. Proto-Hittite languages. The South Caucasian linguistic elements had presumably to be entered into the Pre-Greek from Caucasia as a result of the migration of Kartvelian tribes to Aegeida in the boundary of the third and the second millenniums.

It is natural that the question is raised why we declare that so called Kartvelisms of Pre-Greek entered Aegeida from Kartvelian world and not vice versa? As it is known, Georgian, Svan, Zan languages derived from common Kartvelian language and from Zan itself derived Megrelian and Chan. The research showed that Kartvelian elements of Pre-Greek show the linguistic state that appears at Zan level after the differentiation of Kartvelian languages. To this fact there is only one explanation: Georgian elements entered Aegeida from Caucasus and not vice versa.

In the frame of an article there is no possibility for detailed discussion concerning the Georgian elements of pre-Greek language. Now I will dwell on several so called Cretan words and their Georgian parallels.

I will particularly dwell on the name of a settlement on Crete **Κύταιον** (Ptolemaios, "Geogr.", 3, 15. 6), which was known from Linear B (Ku-ta-i-jo (KN As 1517. 7), Ku-ta-si-jo (KN Dw 1237), Ku-ta-to, Ku-ta-ito (Knx 90)). It is situated on the north coast of Crete between Panormos and Pantomatrimon (which is contemporary Stavromenos) near the contemporary village Paleokastro.

In pre-Greek there were some terms with the stem *κυτ(α)-*. E. g. *κύταρον· ζωμήρσις* – "spoon" (Hesychios k 4746), *κύτταρος* – "honeycomb cell" (Ar., Arist.), "pod of the water-bean" *Nelumbium speciosum* (Thphr., Hesychios),

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<sup>10</sup> Facchetti G. M., Qualche osservazione sulla lingua minoica, in: Kadmos, Zeitschrift für vor- und frühgriechische Epigraphik, Band XL, Heft 1, 2001, 34.

"acorn-cup" (Thphr., Hesykhios), metaphorically "vault of heaven" (Ar., Peace, 199), κύτινος – "calyx of the pomegranate flower" (Thphr.), κυττοί· τὸ δεκτικὸν χώρημα, καθὼς ποτήριον. ἢ εἶδος ἄνθους Διονυσιακοῦ (Hesykhios k 4749). Also the noun κύτος – "hollow of shield, hold of ship, vessel, jar, hollow container" is probably a conflation of this pre-Greek stem and an inherited stem \*κυτεσ- derived from κύω / κυέω. Therefore the researchers come to the conclusion that Pre-Greek root "κυτ(α)-" had the meaning of something that has put entrails out, cavity, covering, receptacle, peel.

A. Fick and later R. A. Brown noticed that the Cretan toponym Κύταιον might have a connection with Medea's fatherland, Colchian Κυταία. The researchers also draw parallels with Κύτωρος and Κυτίσωρος of Paflagonia, Μασσίκυτος of Lycia and Κότα of Halikarnassos.<sup>11</sup>

Rismag Gordeziani puts forward additional arguments to prove the connection between Cretan and Colchian toponyms.<sup>12</sup>

Greek sources concerning Colchis often refer Kutaisi as Κύταια. We have to compare the Pre-Greek "κυτ-" to the Kartvelian "kut-". Root "kut-" is organically connected to the Kartvelian languages which is proved by the following two facts: First, in every Kartvelian language it has a regular corresponding form: Kutaisi in Georgian, Kute in Megrelian, Kutäsh in Svan language etc. Secondly the above-mentioned root "kut-" is encountered in various Georgian toponyms: Kutauri, Kutureti, etc.

The connection of Pre-Greek "κυτ(α)-" and Kartvelian root "kut-" becomes evident if we compare their meanings. In Georgian we have a word "kututo" (< \*kutkut-) that means eyelid. Root "kut-" is confirmed in the dialect forms as well "kutna, gamokutna" that means taking out the core from pumpkin. What is more important according to some interpretations, Kutaisi has a meaning of "free space amongst the mountains". Hence Pre-Greek "κυτ(α)-" and Kartvelian root "kut-" has a meaning of something having hollow, container, peel.

I will dwell on one more toponym: Larisa. According to Strabo: καὶ ἐν τῇ Κρήτῃ πόλις ἣ νῦν εἰς Ἱεράπυτταν συνοικισθεῖσα, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πεδῖον νῦν Λαρισαῖον καλεῖται (10, 440).

**Λάρισα** is one of the former names of Γόρτυν. This name is very much associated with the Pelasgians and is found in several parts of Thessaly, Attica, Argolis, Elis, the Troad, Aiolis and Lydia as well as Crete. It may well be connected with the Etruscan word Lar-, Lars-, Larθ- ("Lord"). Indeed, the

<sup>11</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 132-133, 206, 274.

<sup>12</sup> Gordeziani R., op. cit., 117-118.

ending corresponds to an archaic Etruscan genitive-adjectival formation, thus \*Lar-is-a is "the Lord of city".<sup>13</sup>

Some researchers while determining the etymology of this term connect it with the meaning of stone. But it needs to undergo certain phonetic manipulations. R. Gordeziani considers that the term "λαρίεθος" which had a meaning of "reed dwelling" (small building) enables the determination of etymology of "Larisa": φλόϊνον στεγάστριον (H). Here "-εθ" is obviously a suffix. As for the root "λαρι-" is it probably means reed, rush. Pre-Greek "λαρ-" may be connected to similar Georgian root. Georgian "lel-", "ler-", "leli". It goes back to the time of Georgian-Zan unity. Georgian-Zan "\*lel-tsem" is derived from this root (Georgian. lertsam-, leltam-; Megrelian. larcham-, larchem-. The Georgian "Lari" is probably originated from this root which means a long stick from which probably is originated dialectical "Lari" which has a meaning of "wattled dwelling". It should be noted that this root is quite often referred to in Georgian toponymics. E. g.: "lelovani", "leliani", "lelobi", "lara", etc. The question arises: maybe we have to do with similar Pre-Greek root variation in the Greek toponyms "Λέρος", "Λέλος" (in Rhodes), "Λέρνα" (in Argos), etc.<sup>14</sup>

In the language of the ancient Greek population of Crete we come across the term **καμάν** (καμάν· τὸν ἀγρόν· Κρήτες – H), etymology of which is not determined and which is found in the Mycenaean documents with "ka-ma" form. It means "agricultural holding" and is considered as borrowed from Minoan language.

The researches suppose that this word shows a nasalized form of a pre-Greek word from which Greek κῆπος (Doric κᾶπος) is derived. This word was adopted as \*kapa in the Germanic group where, after going through the proto-Germanic sound-shift, it gave rise to huoba (OHG), Hufe, Hube (N. German), hof (O. English). The same form gave rise to Albanian kopshti (with suffix -shti); further a form with a prenasalized plosive appears in Latin campus.<sup>15</sup>

It will also be noticed that when borrowed by Indo-European languages the stem ending varies between -a (Cretan, Germanic) and -o (Greek, Latin). This is another indication of its pre-Greek origin. Thus we have here pre-Indo-European root \*kap-a/o – \*kamp-a/o – \*kam-a/o adopted by certain Indo-European groups from the speech of an early Neolithic farming population, possibly inhabiting central and southeastern Europe.

<sup>13</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 158-159, 192, 275.

<sup>14</sup> Gordeziani R., op. cit., 118.

<sup>15</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 66, 271.

R. Gordeziani assumes that Pre-Greek "καμάν" should be connected to Georgian "kana" (< \*field) that goes back to the time of Georgian-Zan unity. And here a question is put forward about the possibility of connection of this term to Georgian term "kamiri" which means uncultivated field.

While talking about the so-called Cretisms of Minoan vocabulary and Greek language we cannot avoid the word **λαβύρινθος**. This word is found in the Linear B: da-pu<sub>2</sub>-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja (KN Gg 702, Oa 745 + 7374) and is understood as the "Queen of Labyrinth". Mycenaean "da-" which is encountered in Linear B in the place of the traditional "la-" creates the specific complexity here.

In order to solve this problem the linguists draw the parallel between Minoan and Hattic-Hettite. Particularly they compare Hattic "tabarna" ("king, ruler") with Hettite "labarna" ("king, ruler"). Here "ta-" (dental) and "la-" (labial) substitute each other (see also Nesite "tapar" – "to rule"). E. J. Furnée associates this Hattic word with Lydian term "labrys-λάβρυς" ("the dual poleaxe") since it represents the symbol of royal power and the labyrinth is the dwelling place of royal dynasty (cf. Armenian "tapar", Persian "tabar", Russian "topor"). The formation of this term is associated with Carian Labraunda, as well as with the cult of Zeus of Labraunda.<sup>16</sup>

In order to determine the meaning of Minoan word "λαβύρινθος" we have to remember the Greek tradition according to which "Λαβύρινθος" was a word borrowed from Pre-Greek language and which meant something impassable, building having complicated structure, plan. For this very reason in Mediterranean, particularly in Egypt, Italy and Greece the Greeks referred to such architectural buildings as labyrinths. Therefore the initial semantics of this word was not associated with poleaxe and royal power but to a tangled and mysterious building. The essence of the Cretan mythical labyrinth was the same.

According to Georgian researcher R. Gordeziani, the Pre-Greek "λαβύρινθος" may be connected to common Kartvelian root "bur-" which has the following meanings: "to wrap, to darken, to tangle" (Georgian / Zan / Svan "bur-"). The words originated from this root often indicate a dark, tangled or locked place.

The researchers suppose that in substrate Anatolian, as well as in Aegean languages, there was a lateral in the pronunciation of which we could notice both dental and labial component (e. g. "tl"). It is known that such consonants are familiar to the Caucasian languages and it has been reconstructed in the common Kartvelian as well. In the Kartvelian languages, before the stem

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<sup>16</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 208, 274.



"bur-" could be found this lateral "tl" sound, which in one language gave us "la-" and in the other "sa-" or "da". Consequently, in the west Kartvelian, in Svan language we had a form "labura" and in the east Kartvelian, in Georgian – "sabor-", "daburul-" and "daburvil-".

According to Hesykhios, the ancient Greek population of Crete used the term "ἀμυρτόν" (ἀμυρτόν· ἱμάτιον· Κρήτες). E. J. Furnée associated this word with the term "βύρσα" ("skin", "fur"). Neither of the terms has the determined etymology. According to R. A. Brown the fact that the term "βύρσα"-s Attic form "βύρρα" is not found in the Attic dialect clearly indicates its non-Greek origin.<sup>17</sup> R. Gordeziani supposes that "βύρσα" can also be associated with the above-discussed common Kartvelian root "bur-" – the Georgian "burtkl-" which goes back to the time of Georgian-Zan unity (Megrelian "burtku-" – "soft").<sup>18</sup>

It won't be exaggeration to say that a question of ethnic origin of Pre-Greek population, and respectively the issue of so-called Cretisms of the Greek language and of the ancient Cretans dialect is rather tangled and unsolved.

With the present article I tried to reveal the different pre-Greek lexical units of Cretan dialect in connection to Caucasian, and particularly Kartvelian, that is, Georgian world. I will specially note that this is a rather complicated and vexed question that needs to undergo serious research in the future. It also should be noted that the existence of such parallels between Greek and Kartvelian languages once again indicates to the millenniums of historical and cultural relationships that existed between Aegeida and Caucasus, Greece and Georgia in particular.

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<sup>17</sup> Brown R. A., op. cit., 29.

<sup>18</sup> Gordeziani R., *Kaukasische Elemente des Minoischen*, in: Λεκτά, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, Logos, Tbilisi 2000, 120.