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On Cretan-South Caucasian Toponymic Parallels

The linguistic problems of the Pre-Greek world have recently become topical again. Certainly, this was not caused by deciphering A-linear inscriptions or discovery of new Pre-Greek inscriptions. In our opinion, activation of the issue was facilitated by the fact that a new Etymological Dictionary of Greek made by a well-known Indo-European linguist Robert Beekes was published,¹ which made the opinion on peculiarities of alteration of sounds in Pre-Greek languages raised by E. Furnee in 1970 topical again.² After publication of this book, E. Furnee actively began searching the linguistic environment which may be close to the systems of the Pre-Greek linguistic environment defined by him. It is well-known, that he shared the opinion of Rismag Gordeziani and saw the most connection with the Kartvelian linguistic environment. Research in this direction brought R. Gordeziani and later, E. Furnee to nearly a similar conclusion that Pre-Greek and Kartvelian parallels are the result of not only the ancient Caucasian-Anatolian-Aegean relations, but they are more related to the migration which must have taken place in the III millennium B.C from the Caucasus to the West in two directions: to the South Black Sea Coast and the North Black Sea Coast, which caused introduction of a strong Kartvelian component to Aegean region.

The methodological problems related to this issue were widely discussed in the report presented by Rismag Gordeziani at the plenary

¹ Beekes R., *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill –Leiden-Boston 2010.

² Furnee E. J., *Vorgriechisch-kartvelisches. Studien zum ostmediterranen Substrat nebst einem Versuch zu einer neuen pelasgischen Theorie*, Louvain 1979.

session. In this case, I will limit myself to only one aspect of the issue, namely, Cretan-South Caucasian parallels in geographic names. According to R. Beekes, the Pre-Greek linguistic world demonstrates a clear unity and one of the best examples of this unity are geographic names of the Island of Crete, which have numerous parallels in the entire Aegean region – on islands, as well as in the Continental Greece and Anatolia. This issue is substantially accentuated by R. Brown in his well-known book.³ Unfortunately, both R. Brown and R. Beekes share the opinion of E. Furnee only to a certain extent, when they see a unified, non-Indo-European linguistic world in the Pre-Greek language, however they do not follow E. Furnee further and hardly say anything about linguistic parallels with the Caucasian linguistic world.

Mediterranea-Kartvelica by R. Gordeziani was published in three volumes (Tbilisi 2007-2008). It dedicates too much place not only to the parallels which are abundantly shown at the level of appellatives but also in geographic names. It is sufficient to review the part of the book of R. Gordeziani, where more than hundred parallels are shown and we will notice that significant place is dedicated to the names which are confirmed on the Island of Crete and which show parallels in the Aegean region, Anatolia and the Caucasus. I will provide statistical data:

Brown has reviewed about 257 Cretan toponyms. The researcher assumes that 150 of them are of Greek origin and 115 are of non-Greek origin. In case of non-Greek, certainly, it implies geographic names whose stem shows neither Greek nor Indo-European origin in general. In the opinion of Brown, in this case we mainly deal with Pre-Greek names. I would like to accentuate one circumstance: he successively reviews the names presented at different places of the Island of Crete and divides the island into four parts: western, western-central, eastern-central and eastern. According to Brown, 42 toponyms out of 63 toponyms are Greek on the Western Crete and 21 toponyms are non-Greek; 14 toponyms out of 30 toponyms are Greek, 15 toponyms are non-Greek and one toponym is of uncertain origin on the Western-central Crete; 36 toponyms out of 71 toponyms are Greek, 34 toponyms are non-Greek and one toponym is of uncertain origin on the Eastern-Central Crete; 55 toponyms out of 84

³ Brown R., Evidence For Pre-Greek Speech on Crete from Greek Alphabetic Sources, Amsterdam 1985, 97-215.

toponyms are Greek on the Eastern Crete and 29 toponyms are non-Greek; 3 regions are Greek and 6 regions are non-Greek out of the unidentified regions (their location is unknown by the present moment).

R. Gordeziani found parallels with the South Caucasian languages for too many toponyms presented by Brown, for example, parallels were found for 14 names out of 21 names of the Western Crete, for 12 names out of 15 names of the Western-Central Crete, for 20 names out of 34 names of the Eastern-Central Crete, for 13 names out of 29 names of the Eastern Crete and for 3 names out of 6 names of unidentified regions.⁴ Certainly, it is not excluded that some of these parallels are accidental. As it is known, geographic names of the world may show accidental coincidence as they are made of consonant-vowel combination.

If we consider the fact that majority of reviewed names cover the area of Crete-Anatolia-South Caucasus, we can say that this is mainly the area from where South-Caucasian tribes must have come from Caucasus to the Aegean region, in the opinion of R. Gordeziani and E. Furnee. In this case, one circumstance draws our attention: the names for which parallels are found cover nearly entire Crete which means that if this is the result of migration, it must have been essential and it is not excluded that creation of geographic names is related to this migration.

Another circumstance is interesting: which regions of the Caucasus connection is observed with? In fact, geographic names which show parallels are not accumulated in one region and cover the entire South Caucasus which makes us think that this was not the result of movement of a small group of emigrants only.

In order to make more evident how deep the connections between geographic names are and that they are not limited to phonetic resemblance only, I would like to focus on several essential toponyms:

Etymology of the name "Krhvth/Krhvta" caused controversies as early as in the antique period. The Jewish *kaptor* and Egyptian *keftiu*, as well as the name *k'rētīm*,⁵ mentioned in respect to philistines in the *Old Testament* were associated with it. In the contemporary science it is considered that it must belong to Minoan linguistic environment. In the opinion of R. Gordeziani, we can distinguish the stem *kr-* and suffix element – *thin* in

⁴ Gordeziani R., *Mediterranean-Kartvelian Relations* (vols. I-IV), Tbilisi 2007, II, 316-355.

⁵ Gordeziani R., 2007, II, 338.

the name of Crete, whose addition to the stem *kar- has caused syncope of the vowel and this stem may be related to the Aegean stems denominating "stone", "rock", "door, gate", which show a clear connection with Kartvelian languages, according to the assumption of R. Gordeziani. The initial point must be common Kartvelian stem *kar- (Georgian *kar-i* "door", *me-kar-e/ me-kr-e* "door-keeper"; Svanetian *li-kr-e* "to open"), which is found in Kartvelian languages in the form of full-step allomorph *kar-* and zero-step allomorph *kr-* and *kr-et/kr-eṭ* is considered to be the archaic form of its genitive case. In the opinion of R. Gordeziani, if we take the location of the island into consideration, it must be real to see the formative of the semantics of "doors", "the opened" in the name of one hundred city of Crete.

Assumingly, the same root is observed in the geographic name *Καρνησόπολις* confirmed on the Eastern-Central Crete. It is reviewed as a composite, as *πόλις* is clearly a Greek formative, which was attached to the initial name **Καρνασσος*/**Καρνησσος*. The suffix containing *σος* and the stem *Καρν-* widespread in the Mediterranean region are distinguished here: *Καρναλις* (Asia Minor), *Καρνία* (Ionia), *Ἀλικαρνασσός* (Asia Minor). Majority of researchers consider this stem to be Pre-Greek. According to the assumption of R. Gordeziani, it must have been obtained as a result of extension of the root "kar-" by suffix "n". Some scientists associate it with the stem *carn-* "heap of stones, stone hill" saved in Celtic, for which R. Gordeziani finds reliable parallels in Kartvelian languages, however he does not exclude that sometimes, in particular, in case of *Ἀλικαρνασσός*, the stem *kar-/karn-* may have the meaning of gate. The Georgian *qari* is intensively presented in the Georgian toponyms: *Qldeqari*, *Qareltqari*, *Tašisqari* etc.

According to Hesychius, the second name of *Καρνησόπολις* is *Λύττος*. (κ 840 *Καρνησόπολις*· *Λύκτος* ἢ *Κρητική* οὕτως *εκαλείτο*). Brown considers *Λύττος* as a Pre-Greek name and considers **Λύκτος* as its early form. Stephanus of Byzantium informs us of the settlement *Lyktos/Lyttos* on Crete: "*Λύκτος*· city of Crete ... as it is [located] high and the height is called *Λύττους*. In this name the stem **λυκ-* must be the initial point which is found in many geographic names of the Mediterranean region (Brown, 1985, 161 ff.), including *Λύκαστος*. R. Gordeziani associates this stem with the Georgian stem *lix-* which is confirmed in the name *Likhi Mountain* and is often found in the plural form: *Lixt-Imereti*,

Lixt Ikit. Likhi is used to denominate a high object in dialects of the Georgian language.

The main city of the pre-historic Crete – Κνωσός is called the seat of Minos in *The Odyssey* (XIX, 178-179). Ko-no-so mentioned in B-linear documents a number of times must be this city. Later it is found in the form of Κνωσσός. Despite a number of attempts, its etymology is unidentified. In the opinion of Brown, this name is explained neither on the basis of Greek nor any other Indo-European language and belongs to the Pre-Greek Minoan language. It is considered that similar to Carian names Αλωσσός, Πιδωσσός, suffix –ωσσ should be distinguished here. In this case, κν- complex would remain, so, in the opinion of R. Gordeziani, it is more logical to review Κνωσ- element as an entire stem. If we consider that Knossos represented a marine gate of Crete, it is justified to search for a respective meaning in the name. In this regard, R. Gordeziani associates it with Georgian-Zanian *κonc- [cape] (Georgian *κonc-i “cape”; Megrelian *κonc-i “edge”) as the location of the Minoan capital fully corresponds to the meaning of cape. R. Gordeziani considers the development of *κonc → *κonc → *kons → knos absolutely allowable.⁶

We think that Ἰδαΐδη located on the Western-Central Crete is an interesting name. Brown associates the woody highlands as well as a Greek adjective ἰδη – “woody place” with it.⁷ Some scientists assume in the anlaut of the stem.⁸ R. Gordeziani considers that restoration of ƒ before the stem is not justified, as neither A-linear nor B-linear documents confirm such name with “w” in the anlaut which would be equivalent to the stem in the formative of Ἰδαΐδη. It is also noteworthy that the trace of ƒ is not seen when using this name in the epos of Homer. In the opinion of R. Gordeziani, wide dissemination of the stem in Mediterranean geographic names seems to suggest its Indo-European origin (WKE, 47 ff.; Brown, 1985, 130 ff.). In this case it may be assumed common Kartvelian *tq (Georgian tq; Megrelian tq; Svanetic tq-n [forest]; Laz. tka-š-i kotume [forest hen] would acquire the form of *tq in Paleo-Kartvelian as a result of adding a prosthetic sound i- or prefix si- or l'i-. There were two possibilities of introduction of tq complex in Greek: a) tq would turn into

⁶ Gordeziani R., 2007, II, 195 ff.

⁷ Brown R., 1985, 130.

⁸ Brown R., 1985, 131.

kt complex; b) q would be lost. Accordingly, ite → ide could have become the basis of formatives interesting for us.

The name of the city located at the northern bank of Crete – Κύταιον – which is mentioned in antique sources a number of times arises interest. As it seems, this city had already existed on the Island of Crete in Mycenaean epoch, which is proved by multiple references to it in B-linear documents. It is assumed that forms: ku-ta-i-jo (KN As 1517), ku-ta-i-si-[jo] (KN X 7891), ku-ta-i-to (KN C 902, Xd 146), ku-ta-si-jo (KN Dr 1237, 1394), ku-ta-to (KN [Ce59]), De 1648, Df 119, Dk 1072, 1074) denominate this city. R. Brown considers the geographic name Κύταιονς to be Pre-Greek and suggest that it must be related to the place of birth of Kolkhi Medea – Κυταία.⁹ Κύταια/Κυταία has been mentioned by various authors as the main city of legendary as well as historic Colchis since the Hellenic epoch. We find several options of this name in sources: Κύτα, Κύτη, Κυταίος, Κυταίς, Κυτηίς etc. This geographic name appears in Greek sources from the Hellenic epoch which may suggest that it is of a comparatively later origin. However, as it seems, the name of location of Aeëtes was not created in the Hellenic epoch. Assumingly, this is suggested by the name of the son of Phrixus – Κυτίσωρο“, which is already known to Herodotus and the names of cities located in Anatolia: Κύτωρος (Paphlagonia),¹⁰ Μασσί-κυτος (Lycia) and possibly, Κότα (Caria).¹¹ Κυταία must be connected with the Georgian Kutaisi which is confirmed by consistent equivalents in all three Kartvelian languages: Georgian Kutaisi, Megrelian Kuteši, Svanetian Kutaši,¹² which allows R. Gordeziani to assume that this settlement or residence existed in the period of circulation of the common Kartvelian language. Etymology of the toponym is noteworthy. In the opinion of R. Gordeziani, in this case the stem reflects the Pre-Greek stem κυτ- and the Kartvelian stem *kut-.¹³ The same stem seems to be contained in the word κύτινος – “pistil of pomegranate flower“. It is noteworthy that in the Etymological Dictionary of Beekes this term (κύτινο) is absolutely

⁹ Brown R., 1985, 132.

¹⁰ Interestingly, Homer mentions Κύτωρος among cities of Paphlagonia which had been associated with the name of Kvitisoros as early as in the antique period (Strabo, XII, 3, 10).

¹¹ Brown R., 1985, 132.

¹² Ониаи А., Сарджвеладзе З., Против извращения вопросов грузинской топонимики, Matsne, 3, 1971; Gordeziani R., 2007, III, 471-473.

¹³ Gordeziani R., 2007, III, 471 ff.

certainly attributed to the Pre-Greek vocabulary and lexical formatives containing a similar stem are mentioned: *κύταρον* "spoon, ladle", *κύτταρος* "honeycomb, husk of Egyptian beans", *κύδαρος* "little ship", *κυττοί* "nests, boxes". According to Hesychius, *κύστεροι*= ἄγγεῖα τῶν μελισσῶν ("honeycomb").¹⁴ On the basis of analysis of various formatives, Brown arrives at a conclusion that the stem *κυτ-* *μυστ* *ἡέ* *τῆς* *μεανιγ* *οφ* *α* *σηρολλω* receptacle". R. Gordeziani also assumes that the stem **kut-* shows connection with the root confirmed in the Georgian *kut-n-a* and has the meaning of a hollow item, cavity, husk, pistil.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that **kurt-/ḳut-* was recently restored at the common Kartvelian level by Heinz Fähnrich – Georgian *kurd -/ kut -*, for example, *kut-n-a/ga-mo-kut-n-a* "to core a pumpkin", *kurd-i* [thief], i.e. "the one who takes everything away"; Megrelian *kwirt-i* [thief], Svanetian *kwit, kwt-* [thief].¹⁶ This made the connection between the Pre-Greek *κυτ-* and the common Kartvelian stem and accordingly, connection between *Κύταιον* and Kutaisi clearer.

As already mentioned, when considering the toponym *Κύταιος* Brown mentions that Kolkhi Medea was born in the city of a similar name. This resemblance had been suggested earlier a number of times. I think that in this case connection is rather extensive, as it can be based on arguments substantiated by several circumstances:

1. The origin of the Cretan geographic name is clearly connected with the Minoan environment. Accordingly, we should assume that it had existed before Achaeans entered Crete. As for the Kartvelian toponym, as we have already mentioned it is one of the ancient toponyms which is restored at the common Kartvelian level. Accordingly, the fact that it is Kartvelian is undisputed and it is absolutely logical to connect the existence not only of the geographic name but of this stem in general in Pre-Greek to the migration assumed by the hypothesis of Gordeziani-Furnee;
2. According to the Greek Mythology, the Island of Crete is the place where Minos, the son of Zeus and Europa, the "First European", was the king. The antique sources unanimously mention Pasiphae, the sister of Aeëtes as his wife. The name Pasiphae means "wide-shining". If we consider this semantics, it can be organically connected with Helios and

¹⁴ Beekes R. S. P., 2010, 809-810.

¹⁵ Gordeziani R., Pre-Greek and Kartvelian, Tbilisi 1985, 117.

¹⁶ Kartvelisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heinz Fähnrich, Brill. Leiden-Boston 2007, 472-473.

the universe of his descendants. Therefore, the analogy of the name of the ancient "city" of Colchis with the name of the place on the Island of Crete – Κύταλον, can to a certain extent be related to the mythological tradition connected with Pasiphae;

3. The fact that this name (Κύταλον) was introduced in the Island of Crete, one of the significant centers of the Pre-Greek linguistic world rather early is also confirmed by the fact that the stem of this name is widely spread in the lexis which is generally attributed to the Pre-Greek and which shows such an organic connection with the Kartvelian linguistic world.

4. Naturally, if such parallels were limited to only one-two examples, we could talk about certain contingency but it is significant that Cretan-Kartvelian parallels demonstrate a systemic nature in the aspect interesting for us. As already mentioned the names for which parallels are found are not accumulated in one region and cover the entire island. This suggests that existence of these parallels is caused not by borrowing a separate geographic name only, but it must have been created from within the Pre-Greek language.

Abstract

The Pre-Greek linguistic world demonstrates a clear unity and one of the best examples of this unity are geographic names of the Island of Crete, which have numerous parallels in the entire Aegean region – on islands, as well as in the Continental Greece and Anatolia. This issue is substantially accentuated by R. Brown in his well-known book *Evidence For Pre-Greek Speech on Crete from Greek Alphabetic Sources* (Amsterdam 1985). He successively reviews the names presented at different places of the Island of Crete and divides the island into four parts: western, western-central, eastern-central and eastern.

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