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τέρωνακα: AN INDO-EUROPEAN GHOST?

τέρωνακα: indoeuropietiškas žodis vaiduoklis?

ANNOTATION

This note aims to point out how Hesychian τέρωνακα ‘stalk of the cardoon’, despite the noteworthy closeness to other Indo-European forms, should be rather considered a simple misspelling for an original acc. sing. πτέρωνακα from Theophrastus’ *Historia Plantarum*. Nonetheless, the possibility that in Theophrastus’ text was actually attested τέρωναξ, the Greek adaptation of an Iranian phytonym, cannot be completely ruled out.

KEYWORDS: Indo-European etymology, Hesychius, textual criticism, Iranian languages.

ANOTACIJA

Šio teksto tikslas yra paaiškinti, kodėl Hesichijaus τέρωνακα ‘dygiojo artišoko stiebas’, nepaisant akivaizdaus panašumo į kitas indoeuropietiškas formas, turėtų būti laikomas paprasčiausia originalios vienaskaitos galininko formos πτέρωνακα iš Teofrasto veikalo *Historia Plantarum* rašybos klaida. Nepaisant to, nereikėtų atmesti galimybės, kad Teofrasto veikale iš tikrųjų buvo paliudyta forma τέρωναξ – iranėnų fitonimo adaptacija graikų kalboje.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: indoeuropietiška etimologija, Hesichijus, teksto kritika, iranėnų kalbos.

In Hesychius’ *Lexicon*, under the letter τ (545), there is a lemma

τέρωνακα· τῆς κάκτου τοῦ φυτοῦ καυλός ‘(lit.) stem of the plant of the cardoon’.

Alois Walde and Julius Pokorny (1927: 641) were the first to associate this *hapax* with Skt. *trṇa-* [n.] ‘grass, straw’, Go. *þaurnus* [m.] ‘thorn, ON *þorn* [m.]

‘id.’, OHG *dorn* [m.] ‘id.’, OCS *trъnъ* [m.] ‘id.’, etc. Semantically, the connection seemed straightforward due to the thorny nature of the cardoon plant, even if, on the formal side, it was necessary to assume quite an articulated development.

Hjalmar Frisk (1970: 881) tried to solve this problem hypothesizing that the phytonym τέρναξ resulted from the remodeling on δόναξ, -ακος [m.] ‘reed’ of an original *τέρνων / τέρνος, outcome of a full-grade form of **tḗnos* (or **tḗnom*) ‘thorn’.¹ On the other side, Pierre Chantraine (1968: 1107) and Robert Beekes (2010: 1470) opted to remain cautious about the actual Indo-European origin of this word.²

Nevertheless, a more likely solution to this little linguistic riddle has been pointed out by Peter A. Hansen and Ian C. Cunningham in their edition of the Hesychian text (2009: 30). The “origin” of this word should be, in fact, rather connected to the misspelling of an original acc. sing. πτέρνικα ‘thistle stem’ from Theophrastus’ *Historia Plantarum* (4th–3rd century BC; Thphr. *HP* 6.4.11):

“Ἐτερον δὲ καυλὸν ὀρθὸν ἀφίησιν, ὃν καλοῦσι πτέρνικα”

‘There is another kind which sends up an erect stem, called the *pternix*’.

The similarity of the two forms, the accusative case, together with the textual context, strongly argue in favor of considering τέρνακα a *monstrum* originating from πτέρνικα, a derivative of πτέρνη [f.] ‘heel’.³ The presence of πτέρνικα in this passage is, moreover, confirmed by Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (3rd century AD; 2.70e). The fact that this word is listed under the letter τ poses no problem since it is certainly possible that Hesychius (5th or 6th century AD), if not an earlier lexicographer utilized by him, found this word in a Theophrastus’ or Athenaeus’ already corrupted text (note how πτέρνικα is not elsewhere present in the *Lexicon*).

For the sake of completeness, an alternative scenario should, however, be taken into account. The suffixal extension -ακ- strongly resembles the one in *-aka of the Iranian languages and, moreover, traces of a hypothetical Iranian protoform **tṛn-aka-* are found in some Middle Iranian languages: cf. Khotan Saka *tarra-* ‘herb, grass’, Zor. Pahlavi *tlk* /*tarrak*/ ‘garden herbs’, and, then, Classical Persian *tarrah* ‘Schnittlauch’ (Bailey 1979: 123; Mayrhofer 1992: 664). The word is unfortunately not known in Avestan, where in the sequence *CRnV*

¹ Hypothesis accepted e.g. in Mallory & Adams 1997: 575.

² More bibliography at Lloyd, et al. 1998: s. v. *dorn*¹.

³ Seemingly on the model of other phytonyms in -τξ such as ἄρπιξ / ἄπριξ ‘type of thornbush’, etc. Cf. Rigobianco 2021: 18 for a case of modeling of phytonyms after lexical connections in Ancient Greek.

the resonants *rn* are preserved without any assimilation (cf. *varānā-* ‘animal wool’ < **(h₂)ulh₁-neh₂-*).

Considering this information (as well as the fact that *πέρωνια* itself is not elsewhere attested), one might certainly also conceive that in *Historia Plantarum* 6.4.11 was originally reported *τέρνακα*, a Greek adaptation of some Old Persian or Median form outcome of PIr. **tṛn-aka-*.⁴ The Hesychian *Lexicon* would, thus, be the sole witness of the correct lesson.

To conclude, the reconstruction of Core Proto-Indo-European **tṛnos* / **tṛnom* ‘thorn’ does not change drastically after the reflections hereby provided: it is simply no longer required to somehow assume an unsorted full-grade Greek formation.

PIE **tṛnos* [m.] / **tṛnom* [n.] ‘thorn’

PIIr. **tṛnam* [n.] ‘thorn; blade of grass’ (borrowed into Proto-Uralic, cf. **tarna* in Holopainen 2019: 273–274)

PNur. (Strand 2011)

Western and Northeastern Katë *tâ'i* ‘thorn; bramble’

Southeastern Katë *tâñ'i* ‘id.’

PIAr. **tṛnam*

Skt. *tṛṇa-* [n.] ‘grass, herb’, etc.

PIr. **tṛn-(aka-)*

Khotan Saka *tarra-* ‘herb, grass’, etc.

BSl. **tírnas* [m.] ‘thorn’

PSl. **tǫrnъ* [m.] ‘id.’ (Derksen 2008: 505)

OCS *trъnъ* ‘ἄκανθα’, etc.

PGm. **þurna-* [m.] ‘thorn, briar’ (Kroonen 2013: 552–553)

Go. *þaurnus* [m.] ‘thorn’ (< **þurnu-*), ON *þorn* [m.] ‘id.’, etc.

⁴ OP *kārataka-* ‘traveler; foreign mercenary’ ~ Gr. *κάρδαξ, -κος* ‘Persian term for foreign mercenaries’ (Hinz 1975: 148) would be a good analogous case. The preservation of the cluster *rn* and the velar suffix is confirmed by Elamite transcriptions of Old Persian and Median words and anthroponyms: cf., among others, *ši-ra-bar-na* / *šīra-farnah-* /, i.e. ‘whose Fortune is beautiful’ (Hinz 1975: 76) for the *rn* cluster and *ši-ra-ak-qa* / *šīrakā* / (Hinz 1975: 77) for the velar suffix.

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τέρωνα: indoeuropietiškas žodis vaiduoklis?

SANTRAUKA

Graikų kalbos žodis τέρωνα (gal.) ‘dygiojo artišoko stiebas’, Hesichijaus *hapax*, anksčiau buvo įvairiai siejamas su indoeuropiečių prokalbės pamatinio šaknies balsių kaitos laipsnio variantu **tṛnos* / **tṛnom* ‘spyglys’, paliudytu indoiranėnų, slavų ir germanų kalbose. Šio palyginimo reikėtų atsisakyti, nes tikėtina, kad τέρωνα reikėtų sieti su tekstu, kuriame buvo padaryta πτέρωνα (gal.) ‘usnies stiebas’ (vedinys iš Teofrasto πτέρωνη ‘kulnas’) rašybos klaida. Vis dėlto, negalima atmesti galimybės, kad Teofrasto tekste originali forma buvo τέρωνα – iranėnų fitonimo, kilusio iš iranėnų prokalbės žodžio **tṛn-aka-* ‘žolė’ (kurio pėdsakai randami kai kuriose vidurio iranėnų kalbose), adaptacija graikų kalboje. Tai reikštų, kad Hesichijus buvo vienintelis originalios formos liudininkas.

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