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## ETYMOLOGIZING ‘UNETYMOLOGIZABLE’ GREEK DENDRONYMS

*This article offers for discussion new etymologies of four Greek tree-names usually classified as substratal or foreign. The aim of these new solutions is to determine donor-languages as old cultural languages from the Eastern Mediterranean, namely Semitic and Hurrian, but also North Caucasian.*

**Keywords:** *Dendronym, Cultural Term, Semitic, Hurrian, North Caucasian*

In the Greek lexicon there are many words which are without convincing etymologies and among tree-names this is more than typical. In the most recent *opus magnum* devoted to Greek etymology, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* by Robert Beekes (2010), they are usually ascribed to an unspecified pre-Greek non-Indo-European substratum or their foreign origin is proposed, but without any attempt to determine a donor-language. In this contribution four tree-names are analysed, and their probable sources are identified and discussed.

1. ἀμυγδάλεα [Eup.], Cyrene ἀμυσγάλα, -υλα “almond-tree / *Prunus Amygdalus*” // ἀμυχαλόεσσα [Il. xxiv 753] ±“rich in almonds”, but μυχθαλόεσσαν in scholias by Antimachus (*DELG* 76, 79: Terme étranger sans étymologie; FURNÉE (1972: 140, 320, 372); BEEKES (2010: 92): A typical substratal word; ROSÓŁ (2013: 160) rejects all Semitic etymologies including the present one -for this reason the additional arguments are offered).

Instead of an anonymous substratum it is possible to identify a Semitic source. In Semitic a designation of “almond(-tree)” is well-attested: \**tīqd-* > Akkadian *šiqdu(m)*, *šūqdu*, *siqdu*, Neo-Assyrian *duqdu*; Ugaritic *tqd*;

Phoenician pl. *šqdm*, Hebrew **שָׁדֵד** *šāqēd* “almond”, cf. also *māšuqādīm* “shaped like almond blossom; Jewish Aramaic *šigdā*, Syriac *šagedtā*, pl. *šegdē*, Mandaic *šigda*; Geez *səgd* “almond tree, nut tree”, FRONZAROLI (1968: 291), #5.41; *HAL* 1638; *DUL* 927–28; *DNWS* 1186; KRAHMALKOV (2000: 479); LESLAU (1987: 491); LÖW (1881: 374). For Phoenician and Hebrew (and their common ancestor) it is possible to reconstruct *nomen loci* \**mišqadat* > Hebrew \**mišqadā* “place planted with almond-trees”, cf. Hebrew *miqšā*, pl. *miqšā’ōt* “field of cucumbers”, Jewish Aramaic *məqāšyā*, Arabic *maqta’at* “field of cucumbers” (*HAL* 629) vs. Punic \**qš?* “cucumber”, reconstructed after the gloss of Dioscorides κισσου μεζρα = Apuleius *cissu mezra*, KRAHMALKOV (2000: 435). Postbiblical Hebrew *qiššūḏā*, pl. *qiššūḏīm* “musk melon”, Samaritanian *qāšuwwəṃ*, Akkadian *qiššū(m)*, pl. *qiššāte* “cucumber, melon, gourd”, Arabic *quttā’* & *qittā’*, Geez *qʷasāy* & *qʷasyā* id. LESLAU (1987: 447); *HAL* 1151; KLEIN (1987: 597); *CDA* 289. But these forms do not explain -λ- in all Greek variants. It is not necessary to suppose the *ad hoc* change \**d* > *l*, but it is easier to assume a contamination with the Canaanite Semitic \**dāqal*<sup>1</sup> (following the pattern *CáCaC*-, reconstructed by DOLGOPOLSKY (1999: 98)), continuing in Postbiblical Hebrew **דָּקָל** *déqel*, pl. **דָּקָלִים** *dəqālīm* “date-tree”, Official Aramaic pl. abs. *dqln* “palm tree, date palm”, Jewish Aramaic *dql* / *dyql?*, Syriac *deqlā*, Mandaic *dīqlā* / *ziqlā* “date-palm”, plus the gloss σοῦκλαι · φοινικοβάλανοι [Hesychius]; Arabic *daqal* id. is probably of Aramaic origin (*DRS* 303; *DNWS* 258); KLEIN (1987: 130), or better with the parallel formation \**midqalat* > \**midqalā* “place planted with date-palms”. With regard to these premises it is possible to conclude:

The form ἀμυγδᾶλέα may reflect a direct adaptation of hypothetical Phoenician-Hebrew \**midqalā* “place planted with date-palms” with a later semantic shift and expectable assimilation \**-dq-* > \**-dg-* and metathesis \**-dg-* > \**-gd-*.

<sup>1</sup> This word was proposed as a Semitic source for Greek δάκτυλος “date, i.e. fruit of the φοῖνιξ” [Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 342a10; Artemidorus, *Onirocriticon* 5.89] – see MUSS-ARNOLT (1892: 107f); LEWY (1895: 20); ROSÓL (2013: 35–36). On the basis of evidence of the syllabic scripts of the Aegean region there is a tempting possibility to shift the knowledge of this term to the 2nd mill. BC. In the Linear script B the sign # 01 𐀀 “*da*” corresponds to Cypriote 𐀀 or 𐀁 “*ta*” and further to the Linear A sign 𐀀 or 𐀁, see GODART (1979: 39); BARTONĚK (2003: 47, 68). Unfortunately the signs are too stylized to recognize their primary model. BEST & WOUTHUIZEN (1989: 105–06) connected this sign with a more realistic sign from the inscribed altar-stone from Mallia, depicting probably a **palm branch**. Accepting this identification, the sign “*da*” was formed via acrophonic principle on the basis of Semitic \**daqal*- “palm-tree”, see BLAŽEK (1998–99: 24).

Cyrene ἀμυσγέλα, -υλα is explainable through contamination of \**mišqa-dā* “place planted with almond-trees” and \**midqalā* “place planted with date-palms”, leading to a hypothetical hybrid \**mišqalā*.

Chronologically the oldest form is preserved in Homeric ἀμυχθαλόεσσα, where a donor-language of a Ugaritic type preserving the interdental realization of proto-Semitic \**ṯ* (*θ*) should be identified. The hypothetical starting point is reconstructible as (para-) Ugaritic \**mitqalat* and its-adoption may indeed be dated to the 2nd mill. BC.

It remains to explain the initial ᾱ- in all cited Greek forms with exception of μυχθαλόεσσαν. In the case of the words of hypothetical Phoenician-Hebrew origin it is possible to think about the definite article \**ha(n)*- common to all Canaanite languages, i.e. Phoenician (*h-mlkm* “the kings”, *ḥ-mmqm* “the place”, *amathēd* “the gift”), Hebrew (*ha- ššāmáyim* “the sky”), Moabite (*kl h- ḥm* “all the nation”), Ammonite (*h-krm* “the vineyard”) and Edomite (*h-mlk* “the king”). The article *in statu nascendi* probably appears in Ugaritic too: *tmḡyy hn ālpm ššwm hnd* “These two thousand horses must arrive here.” See KOGAN (2009: 260); *DUL* 343; KRAHMALKOV (2000: 154); SEGERT (1997: 178); STEINER (1997: 152–53). The corresponding article was also used in the North Arabian epigraphic languages as Thamudic B, Taymanitic, Safaitic *h*, Dadanitic *hn*, MACDONALD (2004: 517). In the case of the adj. ἀμυχθαλόεσσα the initial ᾱ- could represent an adaptation of the Semitic preformative \**ʔa-*, forming the elative of the Ugaritic and Arabic adjectives, e.g. Ugaritic *āliy* “very strong”: Akkadian *le’ū* “to prevail, *le’ū* “able”, *āgzr* “voracious”: Hebrew *√g-z-r* “to devour”, SEGERT (1984: 85, 178, 179); Arabic *ʔašarr* “worse”: *šarr* “bad”, besides the Hebrew adjectives as *ʔakzāb* “deceitful” or *ʔakzār* “cruel” with more general semantics, BROCKELMANN (1908: 372–73; *HAL* 45).

2. ἐπίνεός [*Il.*], Attic (Delos) ἐπινεώς [*Lync.*] “wild fig-tree / *Ficus Caprificus*”, Mycenaean NL *e-ri-no-wo*, gen. *e-ri-no-wo-to* [*PY*] /*Erīnwos*, -otos/ (*DELG* 371; FURNÉE (1972: 376); AURA JORRO (1985: 24); BEEKES (2010: The word is Pre-Greek)

The most probable source of the Greek protoform \**erīnwo*- is Hurrian *er-imbī*- “cedar” (Laroche 1968, 459), which was also adapted in Hittite *irimpī*-, *erip(p)i*-, *irip(p)i*- “cedar(wood)”, KRONASSER (1966: 224–25); *HED* 1–2, 284–85; FRIEDRICH & KAMMENHUBER (1988: 92). The Hurrian word itself probably represents an adaptation of Akkadian *erēnu(m)*, *erinnu*, in Nuzi also *urīnu* “cedar-tree or forest” (*CDA* 77), extended by the Hurrian suffix *-pi*-, KRONASSER (1966: 244). Hebrew *ʔoren*, *ʔeren* “cedar, pine, laurel” is probably of Akkadian origin, ZIMMERN (1915: 53); *DRS* 33; *HAL* 90), while the Akkadian word itself is borrowed from Sumerian *eren* (*AHw.* 237).

Note: The semantic shift could be caused by the fact that the designation of “cedar” was already occupied by κέδρος [*Od.* v, 60] “cedar-tree”, cf. also κέδρον, τό (Attic according to Hesychius) = κεδρίς “juniper-berry” [*EM* 498.42; HSCH.], κεδρέλαιον “oil of cedar, extracted from cedar-resin” [*Aët.* 1.196], adj. κεδρίνος “of cedar” [*Jl.* 24.192], which already LEWY (1895: 34) connected with Akkadian *qatru* “smoky”. With respect to its derivative *qatrānu* “cedar resin” (*CDA* 286), borrowed in Syriac *qātrān*, Arabic *qatrān* / *qitrān* “pitch”, LESLAU (1987: 454), this solution can be rehabilitated in spite of skepticism of ROSÓL (2013: 178) who did not take in account such the form as Akkadian *qatrānu* “cedar resin”.

3. κερῦσός [Xenoph.] “bird-cherry / *Prunus avium*”, Mycenaean NM *ke-ra-so* [MY] /*Kerasō*/ (*DELG* 518; FURNÉE (1972: 346); BEEKES (2010: 677): Given its intervocalic -σ-, the form must be Anatolian or Pre-Greek).

A foreign origin is generally accepted. ROSÓL (2013: 179) correctly rejects the repeatedly cribbing comparison with the Akkadian ghost-word \**karšu* “Süßkirche” (for the last time BEEKES 2010!). A hypothetical donor-language might be a mediator between Greek κερῦσός and Akkadian *kami/e/aššaru(m)* “pear-tree” (*AHw.* 432; *CAD* 8, 122); cf. further Syriac *kūmatrā*, Arabic *kumatrā* (< Aramaic), *kummatrā* id., LÖW (1881: 208); ZIMMERN (1915: 54); *DRS* 1236. The loss of -m- in the process of borrowing has an analogy in Greek σήσαμον, Doric σᾶσαμον, Mycenaean [MY] pl. *sa-sa-ma*, also the Linear B syllable sign *sa*, maybe also Linear A [HT 23.a.4-5] *sa-sa-me*, MASSON (1967: 57–58); AURA JORRO (1993: 284); BARTONĚK (2003: 123, 492); BEEKES (2010: 1325); ROSÓL (2013: 91–93), with regard to their Semitic source represented by Akkadian *šamaššammū*, *šamšamū* “sesame”, originally *šaman-šammi* “oily plant” (*CDA* 351); Ugaritic *ššmn* “sesame” (*DUL* 847–48); Phoenician *ššmn* “sesame”, KRAHMALKOV (2000: 483); *DNWS* 1197; Hebrew epigr. pl. *šmšmyn* (*DNWS* 1169), Postbiblical Hebrew *šumšōm* “sesame”, with the ‘Aramaic’ pl. *šumšamīn*, DALMAN (1922: 429); KLEIN (1987: 668); Official Aramaic *šmšm* (*DNWS* 1169), Jewish Aramaic *šumšamā* & *šūšamā*, Syriac *šmušma* & *šemša*, Mandaic *šušma* “sesame”, DALMAN (1922: 429); DROWER (1963: 458); ZIMMERN (1915: 56: < Akkadian), Arabic *sāsim* & *simsim*, pl. *simāsīm* “sesame; coriander seed”; cf. also Hurrian *šumišumi* id., LAROCHE (1968: 458), Hittite *šapšama-* “an oil-producing plant and/or its seeds” (*CHD* 207), Armenian *šowšmay* “sesame”, HÜBSCHMANN (1897: 314: < Aramaic *šūšamā*); Coptic Sahidic *səmsim*, Bohairic *sasimēn* and Beja *simsum* id., VYCIHL (1983: 189). In the case of “sesame” a donor-language should be characterized by the assimilation \*-mš- > -š-, attested in Ugaritic, later Aramaic (Syriac) or Phoenician. In the case of κερῦσός “bird-cherry” the same change has to be expected, but only in a language, where Semitic \**t* > *š* and it is Phoenician or early Aramaic, cf. BROCKELMANN 1908: 134). Besides the change \*-mš- > -š- a metathesis \**k-(m)š-r-* > \**k-r-(m)š-r-* had

to be realized. In Semitic languages this phenomenon is relatively frequent (see BROCKELMANN 1908: 267–278): Hebrew *nāsak* “to bite”, Geez *nasa-ka* vs. Amhara *nakasa*, Syriac *nakaθ* or Arabic *dibs*, Syriac *deḥšā* vs. Akkadian *dišpu* “honey” etc.), fewer in Greek, LEJEUNE (1972: 138): δίφορος “charriot-board, on which two could stand; charriot; seat” vs. Syracusean [Sophron ap. EM] δρίφορος; 151: ἀριθμός [Od.] “number” vs. Ionic [Call. Cer. 86] ἀμιθρός). Finally, the third source of metathesis, a hypothetical language-mediator, could also be taken in account.

Note: Apparently it is a more wide-spread cultural term, designating various kinds of fruit also in the Caucasus:

Proto-North Caucasian *\*kurmāsV* / *\*kurmāzV* “a kind of fruit” > Proto-Nakh *\*kamiz*/*\*kamis* (/–*mus*) “grape” > Chechen *kems*, Ingush *koms*, Batsbi *kaniz* id.; Proto-Tsezian *\*kuš(š)VI-hi* (~ -*ū-*, -*i*) “peach” > Tsezi *kušuhi*, Ginukh *kušoḥi* (the word is a compound; for the second part cf. possibly Proto-Tsezian *\*hī* “pear”); Lak *kkurmuz* “quince” (Old Lak is probably the source of Avar dial., *germez* and Archi *gerbec* “quince”); Proto-Dargwa *\*kkimirsi* “quince” > Akusha *gimirhi*, Urakhi *gimirʔa*, Kaitag *ččimisi*, Kubachi *ččimite* id.; Proto-Lezghian *\*kumārš* / *\*kumārč* “quince” > Tabasaran *kumiš*, Agul *kuržam*, Tabasaran Dübek *kuččim*, Agul Burshak *kuršem*; Proto-West-Caucasian *\*mərəgʷəz*(~ *kkʷ*, *ž*) “a sort of plum or peach” > Abkhaz *a-mərəgʷəz* (Bzyb), attested only in compounds *a-mərəgʷəz-phʷa* “a sort of plum”, *a-mərəgʷəz-ɬama* “a sort of peach” (NCED 700).

4. ὄρχνη [Od. vii 115] “pear-tree”, [Od. vii 120] “pear”, ὄρχνη [Theoc.] “pear-tree / *Pirus communis*”, ὄρχνια ἄπιον [Hsch.], cf. κόρχναι · ὄρχναι [Hsch.], FURNÉE (1972: 131, 279); DELG 773; BEEKES (2010: 1045) agrees with Furnée that the word is Pre-Greek, apparently a wide-spread cultural term. Similar designations of sweet fruits appear in Semitic, here concretely of “fresh dates”: Akkadian *uḥinnum*, *uḥinnu(m)*, *uḥe(n)num* “fresh / unripened date(s)” > Jewish Aramaic *ḏāhēnā* “nicht voll gereifte Dattel” (> Arabic *ḏahān* “bunch of green dates”), Syriac *hēnā* “an unripe fruit, especially fig”, CAD U/W 44–47; CDA 419; DRS 15; DALMAN (1922: 8); ZIMMERN (1915: 54); LÖW (1881: 121), and in East Caucasian, here directly “pear”: Avar-Andi *\*hinhV* “pear” > Avar *gēni*, Chadakolob *gēni*, Andi *hīhī*, Chamalal *hīhʷ*, Tindi *hīha*, Karata *hīhī*, Bagvalal *hīha*, Godoberi *hīhu*; Avar > Tsez, Ginukh, Bezhta *geni* “pear”; Proto-Tsezian *\*hī* “pear” > Bezhta *hī* (Xaidakov), Gunzib *hī* id.; Proto-Nakh: *\*bat-mava* > Chechen *batmava* “peach”, Ingush *batmava* “apricot”, all reconstructed as East Caucasian *\*γōnʷV* “pear” (NCED 475). Naturally, the language-donor could be some third language, where the designation of the corresponding fruit is not attested thanks to our limited knowledge, e.g. Hurrian or Hattic or a Pre-Greek language of the Linear Script A from Crete.

It remains to explain the prenasalization in Greek ὄρχνη, ὄρχνια, ὄρχναι. In the Greek loans of Semitic origin there is a tendency to dissimilate gemi-

nates of the type  $C_1-C_2C_2-C_3 > C_1-nC_2-C_3$  or  $C_1-mC_2-C_3$ , if  $C_2$  is a labial, e.g. Hebrew *lappīd* “torch; lightning” vs. Greek λαμπάς, -άδος “torch” or Hebrew *qubbaṣat* “cup, beaker, goblet” vs. Greek κύμβή id. (Rosól 2013: 53, 57). Sometimes the gemination is not directly attested in forms which are at our disposal, e.g. Akkadian *mēdelu*<sup>2</sup> “bar, bolt (of a door)”, Syriac *madlā* “cross beams” ( $\sqrt{2-d-l}$  “to close, lock” - see DRS 9) vs. Greek μάνδαλος “iron peg, bolt-pin”, see ROSÓL (2013: 68) with older literature, but may be hidden in the morphological structures, e.g. the gemination of the second radical in the verbal present stems and its derivatives in Akkadian<sup>3</sup>, on Semitic and wider Afroasiatic parallel formations see LIPÍŃSKI (1997: 382–87) or the internal nominal plural characterized by gemination of the second radical: Akkadian *zikru* “man” : pl. *zikkarū*, *ṣahru* / *ṣeḥru* “small” : pl. *ṣahḥarū* / *ṣeḥḥerūtu*, *ebru* “friend” : pl. *ebbarūtu*; Hebrew *ṣāqēb* “heel” : pl. *ṣiqqəb*, *miqdāš* “sanctuary” : *miqqədāš*, *qešet* “bow” : pl. *qaššəṯōt*; Arabic *bāhil* “free (man)”, pl. *buhhal* (LIPÍŃSKI 1997: 245–46). Maybe this mechanism for forming the plural is responsible for the prenasalization in Greek ὄγγυνη, etc.

Note: Unripe dates are usually green, like pears.

#### ABBREVIATIONS:

HSCH. Hesychius, HT Hagia Triada, MY Mycenae, NL *nomen loci*, NM *nomen mulieris*, PY Pylos.

Abbreviations of the Greek authors and their works follow HENRY G. LIDDELL, ROBERT SCOTT & HENRY S. JONES: *A Greek–English Lexicon*, Oxford: University Press 1996  
<<http://www.tlg.uci.edu/ljs/#eid=1&context=ljs>>

The phytonyms recorded by Apuleius and Dioscorides are cited according to KRAHMALOV 2000.

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ARTEMIDORI *Oneirocritica*, REISKE, JOHANN J., REIFF, JOHANN G. [EDS.]. Leibzig: Crusius 1805.

<sup>2</sup> Written in many variants: *me-e-di-lu*, *me-di-lum*, *me-di-lu*, *me-dil*, *mi-dī-lum*, *mi-dī-lu*, *mi-dil*, but also *min<sub>i</sub>-dil* (CAD 10, 2–3). The geminate appears directly in some derivatives of the primary verb *edēlu* „to lock“, e.g. *eddēlu* „locks“, *iddil* „will lock“, *uddulu* „are closed“ (CAD 4, 25–26).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the primary verb *edēlu* “to lock”: *eddēlu* “locks”, *iddil* “will lock”, *uddulu* “are closed” (CAD 4, 25–26).

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### RESUMÉ

In the article four Greek dendronyms are etymologized. The following solutions are discussed:

1. ἀμυγδαλέα „almond-tree“ < Phoenician-Hebrew \**midqalā* „place planted with date-palms“ with a later semantic shift; Cyrene ἀμυσγέλα, -υλα „almond-tree“ < Phoenician-Hebrew \**mišqalā* „place planted with almond-trees“ with *-l-* after \**midqalā*; ἀμυθαλόεσσα [Il.] „rich in almonds“ < (para-)Ugaritic \**miṯqalat* with *-l-* after \**midqalā*.
2. ἐρίνεός [Il.], Attic (Delos) ἐρίνεός „wild fig-tree“, Mycenaean [NL] *e-ri-no-wo*, gen. *e-ri-no-wo-to* [PY] /*Erīnwos,-otos*/ < Hurrian *erimbi-* „cedar“ < Akkadian *erēnu*, *erinnu* „cedar-tree or forest“ < Sumerian *eren*.
3. κερᾶσός [XENOPH.] „bird-cherry“, Mycenaean NM *ke-ra-so* [MY] /*Kerasō*/ < Semitic: Akkadian *kami/e/aššaru(m)* „pear-tree“ (the loss of *-m-* in *-mš-* and change \**ṭ* > *š* are typical e.g. for Phoenician) or North Caucasian \**ḱurmāšV* / \**ḱurmāšV* „a kind of fruit“.
4. ὄγχνη [Od.], ὄχνη [Theoc.] „pear-tree“, ὄγχνη · ἄπιον [Hsch.], cf. κόγχνηι · ὄγχνηι [Hsch.] < Semitic: Akkadian *uḫinnum*, *uḫinnu(m)*, *uḫe(n)num* „fresh date(s)“, Jewish Aramaic *ʾāhēnā* „unripe dates“ or East Caucasian \**γōnʷV* „pear“.

### SHRNUTÍ

V článku jsou etymologizována čtyři řecká dendronyma. Jsou diskutována následující řešení:

1. ἀμυγδαλέα „mandloň“ < fénicko-hebrejské \**midqalā* „místo osázené datlovými palmami“ s pozdějším sémantickým posunem; kyrenajské ἀμυσγέλα, -υλα „mandloň“ < fénicko-hebrejské \**mišqalā* „místo osázené mandloněmi“ s *-l-* podle \**midqalā*; ἀμυθαλόεσσα [Il.] „bohatý mandloněmi“ < (para-)ugaritské \**miṯqalat* s *-l-* podle \**midqalā*.
2. ἐρίνεός [Il.], attické (Delos) ἐρίνεός „divoký fíkovník“, mykénské místní jméno *e-ri-no-wo*, gen. *e-ri-no-wo-to* [PY] /*Erīnwos,-otos*/ < hurritské *erimbi-* „cedr“ < akkadské *erēnu*, *erinnu* „cedr či cedrový les“ < sumerské *eren*.

3. κερᾶσός [Xenoph.] „střemcha hroznovitá“, mykénské ženské jméno *ke-ra-so* [MY] / *Kerasō* / < semitské: akkadské *kami/e/aššaru(m)* „hrušeň“ (ztráta *-m-* v *-mš-* a změna \**ṭ* > *š* jsou typické např. pro feničtinu) nebo severokavkazské \**kurmäšV* / \**kurmäžV* „druh ovoce“.

4. ὄγγυνη [Od.], ὄγγη [Theoc.] „hrušeň“, ὄγγυια · ἄπιον [Hsch.], sr. κόγγυαι · ὄγγυαι [Hsch.] < semitské: akkadské *uḫuinnum*, *uḫinnu(m)*, *uḫe(n)num* „čerstvé datle“, judeo-araméjské *’āhēnā* „nezralé datle“ či východokavkazské \**γōnʷV* „hruška“.

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