

A likely translation of the Old Phrygian phrase “Tekiseton Dagoy” on an idol-shaped stele found in the territory of Nakoleia, as well of the Thagi- in Scythian Thagimasadas, the Scythian Neptune; and from a different but closely kindred root, the full etymology of the Dawon/Daon/Don/Dan in Poseidawon/Poseidon and the other variants

Alexandru Gheorghiu
August to October 12th, 2022
Updated version Dec. 21st 2022

1.

The idol-shaped stele with an Old Phrygian inscription was found in 2019 in the territory of Nakoleia in Turkey during archaeological surveys carried out under the supervision of Rahsan Tamsu Polat and Yusuf Polat, archaeologists. The stele was found on the southeastern side of the Eski Cami mound, a mound where a number of ancient ceramic artifacts/fragments of artifacts were found.

I refer the reader to the recent 2021 paper “An Idol-Shaped Stele with an Old Phrygian Inscription in the Territory of Nakoleia” by Rahşan Tamsü Polat, Yusuf Polat, and Alexander Lubotsky for further archaeological information/further information about the site, and for Lubotsky’s nearly complete decipherment/elucidation of the inscription.

Nearly complete, because of two words that were not translated: Tekiseton and Dagoy. For Tekiseton, Lubotsky concluded that most likely it is cognate to and corresponds to the Ancient Greek verb δεχέσθων (=“accept, receive”: δεχέσθων is the present middle/passive imperative third person plural form of the verb δέχομαι=“to accept, receive”; the form was δέκομαι in Aeolic, Cretan and Ionic), but he did not commit to whether it had the same meaning in Phrygian/Old Phrygian. I have come to the conclusion that he was correct in pointing to δεχέσθων and correct in not committing to its exact meaning in Phrygian/Old Phrygian/in this inscription, because my conclusion (which will be explained later

in this work) is that Tekiseton meant “take” in this Old Phrygian inscription, not “receive, accept”. The Proto-Indo-European root from which Ancient Greek δέχομαι derives is PIE *deǵ-, which meant “to take; to perceive”.

The second word that Lubotsky did not translate is Dagoy, a word which constitutes the last 5 letters of the inscription; from my findings, I believe that he correctly identified Dagoy as a distinct word (separating it from the preceding letters of the inscription, which pertain to a different word, Tekiseton, discussed above) and he correctly identified it as a noun, and he was probably correct in identifying it as most likely being a nominative plural noun.

According to my findings also, the Ancient Greek word that Lubotsky cited as being similar to Old Phrygian Dagoy and fitting it phonetically---I am speaking of the Ancient Greek word τᾶχύς, which means “swift, fast, quick, rapid” and from there developing the meanings “in a short time, soon”---is very likely a cognate, because my conclusion is that Dagoy meant “waters/springs/lakes”, a nominative plural¹ (when the verb is passive, the nominative is the thing or person receiving the action: δεχέσθων is the present middle/passive imperative third person plural form of the verb δέχομαι) from an unattested singular which meant “lake, spring of water, water” and possibly also “river, stream” (at least at some point in the Phrygian language’s history), from a root beginning with *d^h which meant “to flow” in turn from “employing force; force, strength”, a root which had the form *d^hVg^h – (V=“vowel undetermined”), and I posit that the Thagi- in Θαγιμασσαδας/Thagimasadas (the Scythian name of Poseidon/Neptune, according to Herodotus) is cognate as well, giving Thagimasadas the meaning “Great Water/Giant Water/Great Lake/Giant Lake”, since it is known from other Scythian terms/names that *masadas* means “great, big”: see how the Scythian name recorded in Ancient Greek as Οκταμασσαδης has been interpreted as meaning “Great through his words, possessing greatness through his words” (Rüdiger Schmitt 2003, celebrated Iranologist and linguist), with Οκτα representing Iranian *uxta-, “word”: see Avestan *uxta*, “spoken”, and *uxda*, “word” and *μασσαδης* representing Iranian *mazatā*-, “great.” Schmitt in fact concludes that the *masadas* in Thagimasadas represents Iranian *mazatā*-, “great”---I agree about that as can be seen, but I don’t think Schmitt says that Thagi/Thami- (Thami- from the variant Θαμιμασσαδας) meant “water; running water; to flow, to run” in Scythian, so whatever his translation of Thagi/Thami is, if he doesn’t interpret it as I do, then he is wrong² about the meanings in Scythian.

1 Lubotsky in his work on the inscription says that Dagoy is most likely a nominative plural noun.

2 I’m not sure what Schmitt (2003) says is the meaning of Thagi/Thami in Scythian because I haven’t read his work, instead I read a work which cites his etymology of Thagi/Thami

But the root Schmitt identified for Thagi/Thami may be accurate because he says that Thagi/Thami is cognate to Sanskrit त्वाङ् (*tvaṅ-*), “to create by putting into motion”, and “putting into motion” fits the meaning “employing force” and especially “employing force in order to run” quite well.

Latvian *dēngti* (“to run, hurry”) and Latvian *diegt* (“walk briskly”) may be cognates of Ancient Greek τᾶχϋς , but per Fraenkel³ they may not be cognates.

The semantic set “to run, to move swiftly, fast; to flow; water; river; lake; water-spring/fountain” is very well-known in the languages of the world and in linguistics, so I will not spend time in this version demonstrating that. Any reader who doesn’t know of that can readily verify that after some research.

About 630 meters west of the Eski Cami mound, there was a source and a lake called Ma Baş (see Polut, Polut, Lubotsky: 2021 in the section “Evaluation and Conclusion”): a source and a lake, as phrased by Polut & Polut 2021, indicates two water sources, therefore Dagoy=“waters”. The lake dried up in the 1980s when DSI (State Hydraulic Works) opened new canals. Approximately 13.5 km northwest of the Eski Cami mound there is also an ancient sanctuary of Zeus Limnenos: Zeus Limnenos=Zeus of the Lake, since rains from the sky kept the lake from drying out: λίμνη /*límne* =“lake, pond, marsh, sea” in Ancient Greek. In 1979, 59 votive steles were found at that sanctuary, with inscriptions saying that they were for/to Zeus Limnenos.

In the ancient world and in the middle ages as well as in more recent times, boundary stones were often used to demarcate the allowed use of a water-source.

I believe that this idol-shaped stele was, as Lubotsky determined from the inscription (cf. the word *termos* in the inscription, which Lubotsky concludes meant “terminus-stone; boundary-stone”), a boundary-stone. And based on my conclusion that Dagoy=“waters/springs/lakes” in Old Phrygian and Lubotsky’s conclusion that Tekiseton in the inscription corresponds in some way to the Ancient Greek verb δεχέσθων (present middle/passive imperative third person plural form of the verb δέχομαι=“to accept, receive” from PIE **deǵ-*, “to take, perceive”) I conclude that the inscription is indicating that the boundary-stone marks the border allowing access to the lake and source: those who lived outside the terminus were not allowed to take water from the lake and source.

without detailing so much what he meant. The cognates Schmitt cites though may be valid: at least Vedic Sanskrit त्वाङ् (*tvaṅ-*) or त्वाङ् (*tvaṅ-*), “to create by putting into motion” seems like a valid cognate. But maybe not Avestan *θβāšā*, “firmament”, which he also cites as a cognate.

3 Fraenkel, Ernst (1955, 1962–1965), “*dēngti*”, in *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, volume I, Heidelberg-Göttingen: Carl Winter and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pages 88-89.

The boundary-stone bears the name of Atas, a Phrygian god. This was to show that the inscription on the stone is a commandment from Atas, and the violator would be punished by Atas (as well as by the locals, if caught). The first two lines (Atas/iman meu termos) on the inscription were translated by Lubotsky as: “Atas...my monument is a boundary-stone” (Atas=the Phrygian deity Atas; Iman=the well-known Phrygia word Iman=“monument”; meu=“my”; termos=“terminus/boundary-stone”): that may need to be adjusted to “Atas...my monument is the boundary” because my conclusion is that the third and last line of the inscription says: “take from the waters”.

Combining Lubotsky’s translation of the first two lines with my translation of the 3rd line---using his comparisons for *tekiseton* and *dagoy*, δεχέσθων and τᾶχύς, the latter meaning “swift, fast, quick”, which I link with a theoretical Scythian Thagi=“Lake, water”---we get:

Atas	Atas
Iman meu termos	My monument is the boundary
Tekiseton dagoy	(To) take (from the) waters/springs/lakes

In Ancient Greek δεχέσθων=“accept, receive”. I argue that in Phrygian/Old Phrygian *tekiseton*=“take”, since the PIE root of δεχέσθων, PIE *deḱ-, meant “to take; to percieve”. This translation makes so much sense, combined with the indications that I have assembled in this work, that I think that is what the Old Phrygian inscription is saying.

If Dagoy meant “waters” (or more specifically, “water-springs, lakes”, while the Phrygian word βέδου meant “water”) from a root that meant “to employ force/to run” which led to “to flow”, then the Phrygian name *Daguvas* (G-293) of hitherto unknown meaning (cited by Lubotsky in the work on the Nakoleia stele inscription as being similar to Dagoy) can be explained as meaning “Swift, powerful”, maybe even/also “smart”.

And the *Dages* in the short *Per Basti Dages* inscription (HP-101) on a spindle-whorl found in Çamönü in Turkey can be explained as meaning “spindle-whorl”, deriving from “to run”, because a spindle-whorl spins fast (it runs) and it makes the spindle go faster. The entire inscription “Per Basti Dages” most likely (because the probability is so high that Dages=“spindle whorl” from a root meaning “employing force; to run; fast”) meant “For Basti (this) spindle-whorl”, with Basti being an anthroponym.

As described earlier, my interpretation of Dagoy fits well the common use of boundary-stones to mark the limit of access to a water-source; and the stele was found near two water sources and also rather close to a sanctuary of Zeus of the

Lake. My interpretation fits the preceding word Tekiseton, since Tekiseton could easily have meant “take”. My interpretation of Dagoy fits Ancient Greek τᾶχῦς and fits the Thagi- in Thagimasadas (and fits at least one of the cognates of Thagi- suggested by Schmitt in 2003), the Scythian name of Neptune, which had not been compellingly deciphered before this work: my interpretation of Thagimasadas is compelling and likely to be correct. And my interpretation fits “Per Basti Dages” so well, that really cannot be a coincidence. There are no other Dag- forms cited by Lubotsky, so I am not cherry-picking. I have explained them all.

This translation of this Old Phrygian inscription that I present in this work is by far most likely correct, and if correct, then once again we see that Phrygian was very close to Greek, but still quite distinct.

2. The full etymology of Poseidon, after Nilsson and Janda

Linear B *Po-se-da-o* and *Po-se-da-wo-ne* correspond to Ποσειδάων (*Poseidaōn*) and Ποσειδάφονος (*Poseidawonos*) in [Mycenean Greek](#); in Homeric Greek [the name](#) appears as Ποσειδάων (*Poseidaōn*); in Aeolic as Ποτειδάων (*Poteidaōn*); and in Doric as Ποτειδάν (*Poteidan*), Ποτειδάων (*Poteidaōn*), and Ποτειδᾶς (*Poteidas*). The form Ποτειδάφων (*Poteidawon*) appears in Corinth. A cult title of Poseidon in Linear B is *E-ne-si-da-o-ne*, "earth-shaker".

One theory breaks the name down into an element meaning "husband" or "lord" (Greek πόσις (*posis*), from [PIE](#) **pótis*) and another element meaning "earth", [*δᾱ*], which is Doric for γῆ (*gē*), producing something like lord or spouse of *Da*, i.e. of the earth; this would link him with [Demeter](#), "Earth-mother". [Walter Burkert stated in the 1980s \(the updated version of his work was written in the 1980s\)](#) that the second element beginning with *δᾱ*- “remains hopelessly ambiguous” and he finds a "husband of Earth" reading "quite impossible to prove." According to Robert S. P. Beekes in *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, "there is no indication that *δᾱ* means 'earth'" in the Poseidon names, although the root *da* appears in the Linear B inscription *E-ne-si-da-o-ne*, "earth-shaker".

Another, more plausible, theory (from Martin Nilsson and Michael Janda) interprets the second element as related to the (presumed) Doric word **δᾱφον* (*dāwon*), "water", from a Proto-Indo-European **dah₂*- "water" or **d^henh₂*- "to run, flow", Sanskrit दन् *dā^h-nu*- "fluid, drop, dew" and names of rivers such as Danube (<**Danuvius*) or [Don](#). This would make **Posei-dawōn* into the master of waters.

My contribution to the etymology of Ποσειδῶν and its variants consists of stating/detailing/clarifying that the *δᾱ*-/*δῶν* root found in Poseidon and its variants derives from a root (either **dah₂*- "water" or **d^henh₂*- "to run, flow", or another variant) that originally meant “force; strength; employing force/strength”, from which came “to

run” and then “to flow”, but Poseidon as god of earthquakes shows that the older meanings “force; strength; employing force, strength” were known for some time before being forgotten. Another contribution to the etymology of Poseidon is my stating that the root from which Ancient Greek τᾶχϋς and Phrygian Dagoy, Dages, Daguvas and Scythian Thagi-/Thami derive is a kindred root: both of the roots are from word-initial **d^h*=”force, strength” in many PIE roots, including PIE **d^héǵ^hōm* (which I posit is from “hard, firm”), PIE **d^heh₁*- “to put, place; to do”, PIE **d^hreg^h*- “to run, pull, drag”, PIE **d^her* , “to support, to hold”, PIE **d^herǵ^h* , “strong, robust; bind fast; be firm”; PIE **d^hewǵ^h*- “to be strong, have force; to produce, to produce something useful” and more roots which I will detail in other works and in the next version of this work.

I posit that Ancient Greek/Messapic/Thracian δᾶ/Da/De=”earth” are from “hard, firm”, as well as “full of virtue; power; productiveness”. While Ancient Greek γῆ (*gē*) “earth” I posit is from “hard, firm, thick” and is a distinct root, likely Non-IE (see Ancient Greek κῆτος, “whale; sea monster; big fish” which I posit is from κῆτ=“thick>big/massive” and cognate to γῆ (*gē*), “earth”, and maybe also to Basque “ke”=”smoke” (<**thick*), as I detail with additional evidence in another work) but has kindred forms in PIE such as PIE **gem*, “to compress, make firm” and PIE **gel*, “to compress; make firm; make into a ball

First edition completed October 12th, 2022

Second edition completed Dec. 21st 2022

Alexandru Gheorghiu