

On the Etymologies of Kypros, kyparissos, kypeiron, kypros, sappheiros, kardamon, kardamomon, et al: a work demonstrating an aspect of ancient Eurasian languages which is not so well-known; though it is a phenomenon found in languages throughout the globe

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September-December 2020*

Abstract

In ancient languages in numerous parts of the world, as has been observed for over a century, there are often found clusters of words, etymologically linked, which derive from an older notion of "pointy, projecting; spear; lump; mound; mountain; tooth, horn, thorn". Linked with that notion and arguably as old as the nouns and adjectives, are etymologically linked verbs with meanings of "to cut, to scratch, to chop, to hollow out, scoop out, excavate, strike, hit, injure, slay". Less known is the fact that from the meaning of "tooth", there often develops the meaning of "cube", "four", "white", "gleaming", "lustrous", "translucent", "shiny", "precious stone", "gemstone/gem", "stone", "rock", "glass", "pearl" (and other like materials and qualities and objects). And even less known are the connections to fire (not yet discussed in this version), developments from "stinging/biting" to "burning" and then to "fire"; from "tooth" to "gnawing"/"consuming/eating" and then to the analogy with the consuming behavior of fire; and the development from "pointy; spear; to strike" to "lightning bolt" will also be discussed in an upcoming version. And there are more semantic developments which are discussed in this work, with many new etymological theories. First I discuss the etymologies of *Κύπρος*, *κυπάρισσος*, *κύπειρον*, *κάππαρις* and *κύπρος*, then from there I discuss words involving parallel forms and cognate forms.

1. The cluster to which *Κύπρος* belongs

After finding alternative theories too unlikely, and after careful research and analysis of the evidence, I have found that, without need for further doubt, the name of the island of *Κύπρος* meant "mountainous", "sharp-peaked", referring to the very mountainous and craggy terrain

of the island. The word derives from a root *κύπ* which meant "pointy; peak; eminence; projecting; mound; lump; tooth", from which further semantics developed. This root word *κύπ* cannot be considered strictly Indo-European nor strictly Non-Indo-European, as I will soon detail.

The word *κυπάρισσος* (=the cypress tree, and the source of the English word "cypress" and the source for the word for cypress tree in most modern European languages) derives from the pointed, long spear-like shape of cypress trees; also referenced, simultaneously, is the trimmed, pruned, cut appearance of nearly all kinds of cypress trees, and the pine-needle like foliage of the trees. Such kinds of names are common for such kinds of trees: *pine* in English derives from a root meaning "pointy"; *brad* (fir tree; pine tree) in Romanian derives from a root meaning "pointy"; and many more which I'll detail in my next version.

The word *κύπεριον* (=Cyperus longus) derives from the very pungent taste of the fresh rhizome of the *Cyperus longus*, which was and is harvested for use as a spice known in English as *galingale*. The word *pungent* itself derives from Latin *pungō* ("prick, puncture, sting"), from Proto-Italic **pungō*, from Proto-Indo-European **pewǵ-*, "to prick, punch".

The word *κάπαρις* (the caper plant, *Capparis spinosa*) derives from the thorns/spines of the caper plant; from the sexual arousal it was often believed to induce in the ancient world; and probably also from the radiant purple/violet color of its long stamens: that last reference possible because it is extremely likely that *κάπ-* and *κύπ-* also had the meaning of "tooth" in two or more ancient Eastern Mediterranean languages, just as *sap-* had that meaning in some languages of the Near East (in Akkadian, and probably also in Punic/Phoenician, and perhaps in additional Semitic languages). And from the meaning of "tooth" in Akkadian, as in Sumerian and other languages (including, I'm sure, Proto-Indo-European) developed the meaning of "white, bright, radiant, lustrous, gleaming". And it's very likely that the same semantic development occurred in the source language of *κάπαρις*.

Whether the name *Κύπρος* was a double-reference also referring to copper, which the island was famous for since the Bronze Age (and the island was the major source for copper in that part of the world), is not known, but it is very possible and likely, especially since at least four Sumerian words for copper (*kubar*, *kabar*, *zabar*, *zubar*) derive from words which originally meant "tooth; anything pointy" (*ku/kug*; *ka/kag*; *za/zag*; *zu/zug*) prefixed to a Sumerian morpheme *bar*. I'm sure, from the existence of the kindred forms (*κυπάρισσος*, *κύπειρον*, *κάπαρις*) which I have discussed above, that there is no need to suppose any borrowing from Sumerian for *Κύπρος*: even the meaning of "copper", if that name had that double-meaning, does not require any Sumerian or Akkadian influence on the Pre-Greek language which was the source of *Κύπρος*.

The word *σάπφειρος* (*sappheiros*; ="sapphire"), cognate with Hebrew *sappir* and Akkadian *sappu*, derives from a Near Eastern/Semitic variant *sap-*, which had the same meanings as Pre-Greek *κάπ-* and *κύπ-*, and which had identical semantic developments. Here in the case of the word *σάπφειρος*, the development was from "tooth" to "gleaming stone", seen in Sumerian and other languages. Note that by "Near Eastern" here I mean that *sap-* is native to Phoenicia, Canaan, Israel, parts of Syria and parts of Mesopotamia (where the Akkadians were); haven't yet found it in ancient Saudi Arabia or Ancient Egypt, but I haven't searched there yet. The meanings of Akkadian *sappu* included a pointed tuft of hair; a lance/spear; a bristle (from "pointy"); bowl ("that which is scooped out, hollowed out", from "to cut", a verb derived from or equally as old as the meaning of "pointed/sharp"), especially though bronze bowls and metal bowls (a double-reference, the second reference being to the radiance/lustrousness of the metal; if only metal/ceramic/glass bowls were named so, then the semantic "hollowed out, scooped out" was not involved in that usage).

My next etymology, for *κύπρος*, the Ancient Greek word for the *Lawsonia inermis* plant, will be controversial, since I think it is very likely that the word derives from the same Eastern Mediterranean *κύπ* meaning "pointed, projecting", referring to the spines at the end of the branchlets of mature *Lawsonia inermis* shrubs. This particular etymology will be controversial,

because this etymology also says that the Semitic root *K-P-R* meaning "to cover, hide, obscure" actually derives from such names given to the plant, which derive from the spikes on the plant.

So in this scenario, the *κύπρος* plant was named after those spikes, and likewise in all the instances where a Semitic language or Ancient Egyptian has such a word (*kopher*, *koper*, etc.) for the *Lawsonia inermis* and/or the henna processed from it; but since the henna dye/pigment was processed from those plants, which was painted and coated onto surfaces, long ago a verb meaning "to cover, hide, obscure" developed from the name of the plant. Though some will think I should not try to derive Semitic *K-P-R* in this way, I have found evidence from the works of experts on Hamito-Semitic and the Berber languages which actually indicates that I could be right, evidence that I will discuss in my next version.

2. Kardamomon and Kardamon

In my work published on December 18th/19th (depending on what part of the world) 2020, titled *On the Etymologies of Kinnabari, Kinnamomon, Kinawar et al.* (also available on Zenodo) I gave a tentative etymology for *ἄμωμον* and possibly also for *αμων*; so I refer the reader to that research paper. Here I will discuss my etymology for the first element in *κάρδαμον* (variant *καρδάνη*) and *καρδάμωμον*: *κάρδα* and *καρδά*: I hypothesize they derive from a word for "tooth/fang" in an as-yet unidentified Anatolian language, and the reference is to the pungent taste of the cress plants (recall the etymology of *pungent*, detailed above), not to any curliness of the leaves or other part of the cress plants.

Those forms are thus cognate to the first element seen in Cappadocian Greek *καρδζουλιέκ* meaning "panther, leopard", and probably cognate to Sanskrit *zaardula* ("tiger"), where *καρδζ*- I hypothesize is a word for "fang/tooth". This hypothesis is made even more likely by the fact that the Armenian and Akkadian and Sumerian parallels no doubt contain a word that meant "tooth, fang", and by the fact that I have found that even Proto-Germanic **krazjon-* (from which derives English *cress*, German *Kresse*, et al.) may contain a word **kras* which

had the same meaning of “fang, tooth”. I have found that *Kresse* in German is also a word for the gudgeon fish, the fish whose defining characteristics are the long barbels projecting from either side of its mouth, looking like fangs/tusks. So a meaning of “fang, tooth” for **kras* is much more likely than “curled” as is sometimes claimed.

In Ancient Greek, the gudgeon was known as *κωβῖός*, of previously unknown etymology. I hypothesize that *κωβ-* is another ancient Aegean word which meant “tooth, tusk, horn”, and which is kindred to or derived from PIE **ǵómbʰos*, which meant “tooth; row of teeth; peg”. Furnée compared the word *κωβῖός* to Akkadian *kuppū* (“a type of fish”) which is likely from a parallel form *kup-* (see how close *kup-* is to *κύπ*) meaning “tooth, fang, pointed”, but I haven’t studied that particular word in Akkadian yet.

In Romanian, I found out (I didn’t know until after I had already formed my hypothesis, so it was another realization of a scientific deduction/prediction from the evidence) that the word for the gudgeon fish is *porcușor*, which means “little pig”, and which is also the word for “little pig”. The reference is to the two barbels along the gudgeon fish’s mouth, which are very reminiscent of boar’s tusks.

Now I will discuss the Armenian, Persian, Hittite, Akkadian, and Sumerian parallels and cognates (only the Hittite example is actually a cognate, the rest are from a parallel root) of Ancient Greek *κάρδαμον* : the Armenian examples, *kotem*, *kotim* and *kotimn* (all referring to garden cress) are I hypothesize cognate to another Armenian word, *kotor* (also of previously unknown etymology and unknown origin) which in Old Armenian meant “morsel, part, fragment, slice, bit, piece, lump”. The origin is a root *kott-/koss-* “tooth; pointed; sharp”, which I detailed in my paper *On the Etymologies of Kinnabari, Kinnamomon, Kinawar et al.*, from which I excerpt most of the information in the next paragraph. This *kott-/koss-* root-word is parallel to but not identical with the root-word seen in *κάρδαμον*, *καρδάνη*, *καρδάμωμον*, *καρδζουλιέκ*, and Proto-Germanic **krasjon-*.

The Armenian words *kotem*, *kotim*, *kotimn* and *kotor* are cognate to Ancient Greek *κόττειν* ("to hit"), *κότταβος/κόσσαβος* (an Ancient Greek game where wine-lees were thrown to hit targets), *κόττος* (a "cube"; probably originally a small cube like those used in playing dice, which look like teeth), *κοτύλη* (small vessel, cup; hollow of the hand; socket of a joint; cymbals; all of which meanings derive from "hollowed out", from "scooped out/cut out", which also applies to the cymbals, the way they are concave like bowls; the word "cymbal" derives from an Ancient Greek word for "bowl") and *κοττίς* ("back of the head", from the earlier meaning, I think, of "protuberance", which links to tooth; also meaning a type of hairstyle involving tufted hair above the forehead which also often extended down over part of the forehead; this meaning also fits due to the semantics of a pointy tuft of hair; the hairstyle can also be described as not involving a tuft of hair, but rather like a Roman Caesar hair style, involving fangs/points of hair coming down onto the forehead). Also most likely akin to a name of a Thracian goddess whom the Greeks identified with Artemis: *Kotys*, *Kottyto*, from the meaning of "to strike with a pointed sharp object", referring to her shooting of arrows. And also cognate to the Romanian word *cotor* (of previously unknown etymology and unknown origin) pronounced identically/or nearly identically to the Armenian word *kotor* (the C in Romanian *cotor* is the K sound) and meaning "lump; cut off small piece; bud of a plant" and kindred meanings, all of which are part of the semantics derived from the root meaning of *kott/koss-*, "pointy, sharp; projecting lump", from which developed "to cut/strike/slay".

The Akkadian forms *kuttimmu*, *kutīmu*, *kuddimmu*, *kudimmu*, *kudimēru*, *kudimeranu* for cress are from variants of the same ancient root word *kott/koss-/kutt-/kut-/kudd-/kud-*, as are Classical Persian *kōdim/kūdim*. In Sumerian, *kud* and *kid* both meant "to cut", and *kud* is only one sound away from *kug*, one of the Sumerian words for "tooth".

The Hittite form *karšani* (an unidentified plant, but believed to be some type of alcalic plant that likes acidic soil) is from a different root, most likely the same root as that found in the first parts of *κάρδαμον* (variant *καρδάνη*), *καρδάμωμον*, *καρδζουλιέκ* and Proto-Germanic **krasjon-*, all with the meanings that I've explained in this paper.

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