

*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*

*Alexandru Gheorghiu  
Researcher in Linguistics  
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## 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", "shiny metal", "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 chop" 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, κypάρισσος, 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 *κύπειρον* (= *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, kabbar, zubar, zubbar*) 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, κάππαρις*) 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" (and "gleaming metal"), 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).

In Hattic, *Kap* was the name of a moon-deity, and it's very likely that the Hattic *Kap* (the name of their moon deity) derives from an older meaning of "white glaming tooth", since words beginning with the K sound often denote pointedness/sharpness, and since we find these similar forms in that part of the world.

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 an upcoming version.

## 2. Kardamomon and Kardamon

In my work published on December 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> (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 *\*krasjon-* (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, καρδάμων, 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 *κοτῖς* ("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.

### 3. The root-words *kalm-/kelm-* and *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab/\*g<sup>h</sup>ib*

In Hittite, there are the following words: *kalmara* (considered to likely mean “mountain”, from the meaning of “projecting; an eminence; a mound” as well as “pointy”), *kalmi-* (meaning “log”, from the meaning of “that which is/was cut/chopped”), *kalmisana* (meaning “lightning bolt”, as well as “log”), *kalmus* (meaning “a crook: a long and sturdy wooden stick with a hook at one end, often with the point flared outwards, used by shepherds to manage and sometimes catch sheep; also can be used against predators”, from the meaning “pointy”, and from “wood that was chopped and cut into shape”), and probably more, but these examples suffice for two etymologies I am about to present.

The first is that the *Zalmo-* in the name of the Getic/Dacian deity *Zalmoxis* meant “lightning bolt”, and derives from an earlier *Kalmo-* which was sibilized (such sibilization is one of the key features of the Indo-European branch known as Daco-Thracian). In at least one classical source, *Zalmoxis* is another name for *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis*, a Geto-Dacian deity corresponding to the Greek Zeus. *Zalmoxis* also has a manuscript variant *Salmoxis*.

The etymology of the *Gebelei/Zebelei* in *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis* is the second etymology illustrated by those Hittite forms; however the *Geb-/Zeb-* in *Gebelei/Zebelei* derives from a root word *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab/\*g<sup>h</sup>ib* which had a similar semantic range to *kalm-/kelm-*. The semantic range of *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab/\*g<sup>h</sup>ib* was “pointy, projecting; lump; mound” and as a verb “to cut/strike”. Whether the meaning of “radiant, bright” developed in Dacian or Thracian is not clear, but such a meaning is observed in Lithuanian *žibeti (žibù)*, ‘to shine, to light’, and in

Latvian there is *zibsniet*, “shining”, and also *zibens*, “lightning”. The meanings “to shine, light” in those two Baltic languages developed either from the old meaning of “white gleaming tooth”, or after “to chop/to strike” led to lightning bolt/lightning (see the meaning of *zibens* in Latvian), which could have led to “shining, light”. Either way, I'm sure those Lithuanian and Latvian words (as well some additional Baltic words) are from the root I am describing now.

In Daco-Thracian, the meaning of “to strike, chop” led to “lightning-bolt” from the way lightning bolts split trees. This etymology is proven by a depiction from Thracian times of Zalmoxis wielding an ax.

A previous theory <sup>1</sup> translated *Zalmo-* as “the hide of animal” (in this case, a bear's hide), from PIE *\*kelmos*, “covering” from where Proto-Germanic *\*helmaz* (=helmet) is derived. PIE *\*kelmos*, “covering” is usually considered to derive from PIE *\*kel-*, “to cover”; however, it's clear from the Hittite examples that “to cover” would have been a semantic progression from an even earlier “to cut off, strip off (animal skin)”, because imagining that that they are two autonomous roots is much too unlikely. So PIE *\*kel-* at an even older stage meant “to cut/chop/strike”, and was akin to PIE *\*kelh₂-*, “to stick, prick; stab”, the source of Ancient Greek *κάλαμος* (“reed”), Proto-Balto-Slavic *sál'mā*?, “straw” (compare to *Zalmo-/Salmo-* in *Zalmoxis/Salmoxis*), et al..

The translation of *Zalmo-* as “hide (of a bear)” is not the older meaning, but it could have been a later Daco-Thracian folk etymology referencing either: a myth where baby Zalmoxis was wrapped in a bear's skin after birth (recalling myth's relating to the nativity of Zeus); or, the folk etymology may derive from a later Zalmoxis tradition mentioned by Herodotus, where Herodotus recounts a tradition that Zalmoxis may have been a mortal man who was believed to have overcome death/risen from the dead (Herodotus makes it clear that there were two traditions about Zalmoxis: one where he was always a god, and one where he was at first mortal). The

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1 The previous theory of a meaning of "hide (of a bear)" was published by the Thracologist Sorin Olteanu in the mid or late 2000s. I saw it on his website over 10 years ago. I do not know whether he published that article in a journal. I believe that he did. I do not have Sorin Olteanu's current email and so cannot find the name of the article, or when and where it was published. He longer has that website.

story of Zalmoxis being wrapped in a bear skin after birth may then derive from a biographical incident in the life of the mortal man later identified with the older Zalmoxis, who was simply the Daco-Thracian Zeus.

For me the question of the etymologies of Zalmo- and Gebelei-/Zebelei- is settled beyond 100%. While the etymology of the second element *-xis* was probably settled by Sorin Olteanu over 10 years prior to the year 2020, in a paper where he derives *-xis* from the same root as Old Iranian *xšaya* (=ruling), seen in Old Iranian *Xšaya-ršā* (“ruling men”), the Old Iranian/original form of the name which in Ancient Greek became *Ξέρξης* (=Xérxēs). I think Olteanu was right about *-xis*; and I’m right about *Zalmo-* meaning “lightning bolt/lightning”. Combining the two, we have *Zalmoxis*=“Lightning Lord”, “Lord of the Lightning Bolts”, which is also the translation of *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis*.

There is the question of whether Daco-Getic *-xis* was a Scythian loanword or a native Daco-Thracian word. The term’s absence in Thrace (excluding Getic lands to the north and northeast) could indicate a Scythian loan. *Zalmo-* meaning “lightning bolt” may have been a Scythian loan as well, with *Gebelei-/Zebelei-* being the native term, seen also in South Thracian *Zibelthiurdos*, *Zbelthiurdos*, *Zbelsurdos*, *Sbelsurdos* (etc.), which were names of the Thracian Zeus. *-Zelmis* is a common South Thracian name component, which likely referred to a sword or ax or spear, but possibly instead to “hide, skin” (the Thracian names *Ebryzelmis* and *Dizazelmis* could have meant “tough-skinned” perhaps, or “mighty-sword”/“mighty-ax”; *Ebry-* from PIE *\*abhro-* “strong, hard”, and *Diza* from the same root as Ancient Greek *teichos*, “wall”), since I recall that *zalmos* was glossed by Hesychius as meaning “animal hide”. But that is not the meaning of *Zalmo-* in *Zalmoxis*, though both meanings come from the same ancient root-word, as explained above.

Now to return to the root-word *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab/\*g<sup>h</sup>ib*, from where *Gebelei-/Zebelei-* derive : this form came in a few variants in Proto-Indo-European, deriving from Pre-Proto-IE. The cluster is the source of many Indo-European words, including PIE *\*g<sup>h</sup>ébh<sup>h</sup>-l̥ ~ g<sup>h</sup>b<sup>h</sup>-l-és*, *\*g<sup>h</sup>ébh<sup>h</sup>-ōl*,

meaning "head" in Proto-Indo-European, from the older meaning of "lump, mound, bulge, projection; an eminence". Latin *gibbus* ("hump/hunch" as a noun, "humped/hunched" as an adjective) in one way or another derives from the same cluster. A hypothetical PIE root-word *\*geyb<sup>h</sup>-*, "bowed, curved, crooked, skew", is sometimes suggested as the source of *gibbus*; if such a root-word existed, it would be probably be part of the cluster (despite the g in *\*geyb<sup>h</sup>-* not being aspirated in PIE, if that reconstruction is correct) via a semantic link far back where "mound", "bulge" led to "to bow, curve", then to "curved, crooked, skew"; remember that I am interested in tracing these words back even further than PIE.

Another PIE root-word, *\*glemb<sup>h</sup>-*, is another variant with an identical semantic range to *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab/\*g<sup>h</sup>ib*; from PIE *glemb<sup>h</sup>-* derive Old Church Slavonic *glqbŭ*, "trunk, stump", Ancient Greek *γλάφω*, *gláphō*, "I scrape up" (from the idea of "cutting/sharp/pointed" which is found paired with "lump, mound, bulge" in ancient and current languages), Proto-Albanian *\*glamba*, "thorn".

The *zib-* in Thracian *zibuthides* (from a gloss by Hesychius, who said it meant "the nobles" of the Thracians) derives from this cluster, but whether *zibuth-* referred to sharp pointed spears or arrows (cf. *zibunna/sibunna*, "spear") borne by the nobility, or to the shine of metal armor and ornaments is as yet unclear. The meaning of "shine, bright", as detailed earlier, could have developed from the old meaning of "tooth" (the white/gleaming enamel on teeth) and strengthened by the meaning of "lightning bolt"; could possibly even have developed from the meaning of "lightning bolt".

In future versions I will add more to this section.

#### 4. The etymology of Salamander and Salamis

Now that I have detailed the meanings of the root *kalm-/kelm-/kolm-* and its sibilized form in Daco-Getic *Zalmoxis* (with an attested manuscript variant *Salmoxis*), I can now detail my hypothesis regarding the actual etymology of Ancient Greek *σαλαμάνδρα*, referring to the "fire

salamander”, *Salamandra salamandra*.

I hypothesize that *σαῶμα-* meant “fire”, from the older meaning “biting, stinging, burning”, and *σαῶμα-* derives from PIE *ḱl̥h₂mos*, zero-grade variant of PIE *ḱolh₂mos*, from *ḱelh₂-*, “to stick, prick; stab”, which is also the source of the *Zalmo-/Salmo-* in *Zalmoxis/Salmoxis*. The sibilization means that the word originates either from Thracian, Illyrian or a Pre-Greek IE or Semi-IE language. The element *ἀνδρᾶ* meant “to strike; slay; kill” from the adjectival meanings of “sharp, pointy” (and the nouns referred to pointed objects/things, or scooped out/cut things). See my work, *On the Etymologies of Kinnabari, Kinnamon, Kinawar et al.*, where the details of the *ἀνδρᾶ* forms and semantics are described. Combine the two, and salamander and *σαῶμαἀνδρᾶ* meant “Fire-Slayer”, a reference to the ancient belief that salamanders could exude a substance that could prevent them from getting seriously injured by fire, and also the belief that their ooze could put out flames.

My interpretation of *σαῶμα-* is further backed up by my interpretation of Σαλαμίς (Salamis), the Ancient Greek name for the island situated off the coast of Attica in the Saronic Gulf: a significant part of Salamis Island is rocky and mountainous. On the southern part of the island a pine forest is located, which is unusual for western Attica. That pine forest, at least in modern times, and likely also in ancient, is prone to fires. The name of the island derives from the craggy mountains and the pine trees, from the meaning of “pointy”, from PIE *\*ḱolh₂mos* which was sibilized in an as-yet unidentified language.

An alternative derivation from a Semitic *Š-L-M* (“whole, safe, intact”) is highly unlikely due to lack of ancient Semitic derivations for other toponyms in that part of the world. A suggestion from some decades back<sup>2</sup> that Salamis meant “place amid salt water” (*sal-* translated as “salt”, *-amis* as “amid”) is also not the correct etymology. Both of those previous suggestions came from a lack of knowledge of all the linguistic information that I have presented in this paper, which is to be expected from such etymologies from several decades back.

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<sup>2</sup> Bell, Robert E. (1988), *Place Names in Classical Mythology*.

## 5. Cybele and Kug-ba-u

Now I will discuss my etymology of Sumerian *Kug-ba-u2*.

In Sumerian, *u2* usually meant “plant”, and so *u2* in Sumerian and Akkadian became the unenunciated superscript notation to indicate that the term discussed in writing refers to a plant, since Sumerian had many homonyms which were pronounced the same, so they needed to be distinguished in writing in some other way. So it's very likely that when reading *Kug-ba-u2* out loud, the morpheme *u2* was not supposed to be pronounced, but simply indicated that *Kug-ba* had to do with a plant.

In an ancient depiction of the Sumerian goddess *Kug-ba-u2*, she is shown holding what the best current scholarship says is a pomegranate fruit (not a pod of *Papaver somnifera*, because it has been demonstrated that there there is no evidence that the Sumerians had knowledge of *Papaver somnifera*, let alone any proof that they used it much if they knew of it). No one it seems doubts that *Kug* in *Kug-ba-u2* is the Sumerian word for “gem”/“precious stone”, derived from an older meaning of “tooth”. Yes, I'm sure that that is the same *Kug*, since there is no superscript notation to tell us otherwise. And I have a translation and an etymology for *Kug-ba* : the term in this instance meant “pomegranate seed/pip”, which looks like a little ruby gem (the seed with the ruby red fruit tissue around it; the pip of the pomegranate). The Sumerian morpheme *ba* is probably a semantic variant of the Sumerian word *ba* which meant “portion, piece, bit”. In this instance, Sumerian *ba* is very reminiscent of PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ab<sup>h</sup>-* “bean”. And alternatively, the *ba* in *Kug-ba* does not derive from *ba* meaning “portion, piece, bit”, but is instead akin to or parallel to PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ab<sup>h</sup>-*. Or PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ab<sup>h</sup>-* “bean” is actually akin to Sumerian *ba* meaning “portion, piece, bit”, and the two options are actually from one etymon.

The known Sumerian words for pomegranate (*nurmu*, and variants thereof) contain the form *Nur* which in Akkadian had the same semantic range as *Kug*.

My etymology has a good explanation for why Sumerian *Kug-ba* became *Kubaba* and

*Kumbaba* when adopted by Hurrians and Hittites: *baba* is a duplication of *ba*, and *baba* meant “pip, bean, seed” in those languages I expect, just like Proto-Italic *\*fafā* (“bean”) from PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ab<sup>h</sup>-*, source also of Proto-Slavic *bobъ*, “bean”. Sumerian *Kug* became *Kum-* in the forms *Kumbaba*, *Kombaba*, *Kombebe* due either to purely phonological reasons or because *kumb/komb* in their language was the equivalent of Sumerian *Kug*. If so, then *kumb/komb* are very similar to PIE *\*ǵómb<sup>h</sup>os*, “tooth, peg”. In those languages, *kumb/komb* may even have meant “hill” and “mountain”, explaining why, among the Phrygians, Cybele/Kybele was often worshipped on mountains, and also in Ancient Greece, where she was exported.

The Phrygian form *Kybele* derives from *Kubaba/Kug-Ba* (note the attested intermediary *Kybebe*, one sound away from *Kybele*), but the L sound is strange. I think it's likely the L sound appeared due to Phrygians identifying the ancient Sumerian *Kubaba/Kug-Ba* with a term or even a deity in their own Phrygian language, a term which was likely cognate to Daco-Thracian *Gebelei-*. But *Gebelei-/Kebelei/Kebelya/Kabelya* among the Phrygians may not have meant “lightning bolt”, but instead could have meant “mountain”, since the root-word also had that semantic sometimes, as described earlier.

Alternatively, *bele* could have been a Phrygian word for “fruit/bud”, deriving from PIE *b<sup>h</sup>leh<sub>3</sub>-* “to bloom, flower” (cf. Old Armenian *bot* , “a kind of plant”; *botboj* “shoot, sprout, bud”, both already derived from PIE *b<sup>h</sup>leh<sub>3</sub>-* “to bloom, flower”). In which case, *bele* (fruit, bud) would have been switched in Phrygian for *baba* (bean, pip). Perhaps even both options are true, since there is evidence that both kinds of words could have been found in Anatolia back then. The first part of Kav-Kas (the Caucasus mountains) could derive I think (after studying the evidence and other etymologies suggested) from an ancient word *Kab*, meaning “mountain”/“projection”/“anything pointy”/“tooth”. Both options could be true if at first *bele* was switched for *baba*, and then some time afterwards, the association with “mountain” was made. The B to L sound-shift could also have been a phonological sound-shift, not involving an identification with Phrygian words.

Email: [alexandru.gheorghiu.323@gmail.com](mailto:alexandru.gheorghiu.323@gmail.com)