

*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, 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. And there are more semantic developments, such as the development from "spike/tooth/fang" to "pungent taste/pungent/acrid/bitter/sour"; and the development from "to strike, hit" to "smell/aroma which hits the sense of smell" (a development first discussed in linguistics in the early or mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, maybe even further back); and in some cases, from "pungent/acrid" to "pungent smell". Many new etymological theories are presented in this work. First I discuss the etymologies of *Κύπρος, κypάρισσος, κypείρον, 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 upcoming versions.

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 *κάππαρις*.

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, 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 word for the moon, and it's very likely that this Hattic *Kap* meaning

"moon" derives from an older meaning of "white gleaming 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, Kinnamon, 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, Kinnamon, 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 *κοτῆς* (in Doric Greek meant “head”, from the well-known semantic cluster of “head, lump, protuberance, mound, an eminence, a projection; pointy”; in other Ancient Greek dialects meant “the occiput/the back of the head”, from the earlier meaning 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; a 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 alkaline 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 shepherd's 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, Herodotus' *Histories*<sup>1</sup>, *Zalmoxis* was stated to be the same as *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis*, a

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1 See Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.94: from which I quote (A.D. Godley English translation, 1920): "Their belief in their immortality is as follows: they believe that they do not die, but that one who perishes goes to the deity Salmoxis, or Gebeleizis, as some of them call him. Once every five years they choose one of their people by lot and send him as a messenger to Salmoxis, with instructions to report their needs; and this is how they send him: three lances are held by designated men; others seize the messenger to Salmoxis by his hands and feet, and swing and toss him up on to the spear-points. If he is killed by the

Geto-Dacian deity corresponding to the Greek Zeus. See also this quote from Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4:94: "Furthermore, when there is thunder and lightning these same Thracians shoot arrows skyward as a threat to the god..."--Herodotus is speaking of Zalmoxis when he refers to "the god"; see the entire excerpt in note #1.

Zalmoxis in most manuscripts appears as *Salmoxis*, but I will use *Zalmoxis* primarily in this article. The form "Zamolxis" found in later corrupted manuscripts (you can check the literature on the subject) I will ignore as no doubt being a scribal error, which is why I didn't mention that form in the three earlier versions of this work.

The etymology of the *Gebelei/Zebelei* in *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis*<sup>2</sup> 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* which had a similar semantic range to *kalm-/kelm-*. The semantic range of *\*g<sup>h</sup>eb/\*g<sup>h</sup>ab* (as well as of a variant *\*g<sup>h</sup>ib*, which however I don't expect to be the earlier form of the *Geb-/Zeb-* in *Gebelei/Zebelei*) was "pointy, projecting; lump; mound" and as a verb "to cut/chop/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 *zibsniēt*, "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/set of roots that I am describing now.

*Gebelei/Zebelei* are plural forms, meaning "lightning bolts". The singular forms were something

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toss, they believe that the god regards them with favor; but if he is not killed, they blame the messenger himself, considering him a bad man, and send another messenger in place of him. It is while the man still lives that they give him the message. Furthermore, when there is thunder and lightning these same Thracians shoot arrows skyward as a threat to the god, believing in no other god but their own."

2 Attested in at least one manuscript also as *Nebeleixis* as well, which is either a scribal error or a substitution of a word for "lightning bolt" with an Indo-European word for "sky", *Nebel-*, which would be from the same source as Hittite *nepis*, "sky, heaven".



like *gebela/zebela* or *gebelis/zebelis* or *gebel/zebel*. In Zalmoxis, *Zalmo-* seems like the singular form. 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>3</sup> translated *Zalmo-* as “the hide of an 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 *\*kelhz-*, “to stick, prick; stab”, the source of Ancient Greek *κᾶλλᾶμος* (“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 appended <sup>4</sup> 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 story of Zalmoxis being wrapped in a bear skin after birth may then

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3 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.

4 By which I mean, the Daco-Getians/Thracians did not necessarily forget the original meaning (if they did, then *Zalmo-* meaning “lightning bolt” was a Scythian loanword). They likely knew very well what it meant, and the word was probably part of their current vocabulary. But even if they knew exactly that it meant “lightning bolt”, that would not stop mystical and poetic and mythological additions, by which I mean an appended folk etymology that would have been incorporated later. There’s also the possibility that such an additional etymology was never appended by them, but instead first appeared where it is first seen, in Sorin Olteanu’s etymology.

derive from a biographical incident in the life of the mortal man later identified with the older Zalmoxis, who was the Daco-Thracian Zeus <sup>5</sup>.

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*. This matches Albanian mythology/folklore, where *Shurdh* (definite form *Shurdhi*) was the Albanian storm god/weather god/sky god: and the significance of that is: no one (literally no one) doubts that Albanian *Shurdh* is the same element seen in the second part of Thracian *Zibelthiurdos*, *Zbelthiurdos*, *Zbelsurdos*, *Sbelsurdos*; and the first parts of those theonyms (*Zibel*, *Zbel*, *Sbel*, *Svel*) are cognate to *Gebelei/Zebelei* found in the Daco-Getic *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis*. Add all the evidence together, plus more that I will add later.

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*,

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5 I expect that there were, and there surely were, a number of differences between the Daco-Getic storm god/sky god and the Greek storm god/sky god, just as there were some differences between the conceptions of the Roman Jupiter and the Greek Zeus. But past the differences, the fact is that *Gebeleixis/Zebeleixis* and *Zalmoxis* were the Daco-Getic versions of the sky-god/storm-god.

“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>éb<sup>h</sup>-l̥ ~ g<sup>h</sup>b<sup>h</sup>-l-és, \*g<sup>h</sup>éb<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”.

I found some time ago that parallel to the *geb/gab/gib* set there was also a *kab-* set of words having the same semantics. Whether both sets go back to the same proto-forms is not yet known, but it doesn't seem to be necessary to derive them all from one form, since IE and PIE is full of parallel sets of very similar root-words.

In Latin, we find *caballus*, which had an earlier meaning of “work-horse/pack-horse, gelding/gelded horse”, only later shifting to simply “horse” (and in the Romance languages, *caballus* displaced *equus*, *equa*, the original Latin/Roman word for “horse”, which properly meant “horse”). It's unclear from what source did *caballus* arrive in Latin, whether the word “wandered” into Latin from another language, or inherited from PIE. More likely the word entered Old Latin or Proto-Latin from the direction of the east: southeast (Greece) or northeast (Illyrian, Moesia, Dacia, or maybe an ancient language of North-Eastern Italy).

In Ancient Greek, we find *καβᾶλλης* meaning “working horse; nag; old and useless horse”. In Persian, a *kaval*, is a “second class horse of mixed blood; slow clumsy horse”. In the Eastern Iranian language known as Khotanese (an IE language, of the Iranian branch, spoken from about 100 BC to 1000 AD) *kabä* meant “horse”. In Common Slavic, we find words for “mare (female horse)” which go back to Proto-Slavic *\*kobyła*, which would be from an earlier form beginning with *\*kab-* (the well-known A to O shift in Slavic). The meaning of “horse” in Khotanese and the meaning of “mare” in Slavic was no doubt a later development, just as in Latin the meaning shifted in time to simply (and etymologically incorrectly) “horse”. In Phrygian, I find claims that a word *kubela* has been found, which someone has translated as “horse”. More likely, the word meant “gelded horse, work-horse” in Phrygian, but the meaning could have shifted also to “horse” at some point before the language went extinct.

Most likely (and for me no doubt), considering some words that I am about to present, as well as considering the semantic range of *geb/gab/gib*, the older meaning of all those equine

terms was not “horse”, but instead “gelding”, “gelded”<sup>6</sup>, from a verb form of *kab* which meant “to cut/castrate”, derived from adjective and noun forms of *kab* which referred to “pointed” and “sharp”. I will now present words which demonstrate that.

In Latin *cabō* meant “castrated horse”. Hesychius records a Greek word *kabelos* which meant “castrated”. In Slavic we find<sup>7</sup> words derived from Proto-Slavic *\*kobylica* (from an earlier *\*kabuliko-*); the words mean: “a pole for carrying loads on the shoulder”, “beam of scales”, “trestle”, “saw-horse”, “wisp”, “scaffolding/supporting beams”. All these words as well as the source word *\*kobylica* derive I’m sure from the notion of “that which is cut/cut and shaped”. The semantic of “supporting post/supporting piece of wood” (which we see in some of these Slavic words) came later. With the usage of “work-horse/pack-horse”, the original meaning of “gelded horse” may have been reinforced by an analogy made between poles and posts which support loads and a horse used to support loads; but since gelded horses were used as work-horses/pack-horses, there is no requirement for an additional reinforcement.

In the Burushaki language, now located in Pakistan but formerly most likely found also much further west in parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Anatolia, where Burushaki speakers linguistically mingled especially with Indo-European people of the Aegean/Anatolian/Balkan area, we find *kabulek*, meaning “roof-posts” (from the meaning of “cut pieces of wood”), and *kabut* (meaning “white horse”). This word *kabut* in Burushaki meaning specifically “white horse” (not “work-horse” or gelded horse) preserves a very ancient semantic of *kab* coming from “white tooth”, and I’m also the first to notice that. And so the first to unravel the semantics as they actually were in this large cluster of words.

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6 The correct observation that the equine terms derive from an older meaning of “gelded” was first made by C.D. Buck in his 1949 work, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press (see page 16). I agree and have no doubt about that, and I have made more connections by applying that actual root-meaning, connections and cognates detailed in this work.

7 I found the words some time ago in Ilija Čašule's 2014 publication, *Evidence for a Burushaki-Phrygian connection. Acta Orientalia 2014: 75, 3-30*. Available as a free PDF download online. Čašule has not stated that these equine and/or wood-piece words come from an older adjective/noun meaning of “pointy; projecting; mound; tooth” and a verb meaning “to cut, chop”, both of which originate from my research; but he has shown that they are no doubt kindred to the Indo-European forms.

So what was the Proto-form? Was it *\*keb<sup>h</sup>-*? Is the Sumerian word *kab*, meaning “shepherd's stick/staff” a cognate as well? I also have a hypothesis that the *Kav-* in *Kav-Kas* (=Caucas, the Caucasus mountain range) likely derives from an ancient word *Kab*, which meant “mountain; projection; tooth”.

The English word *jab* is of unknown etymology: attested 1813, “to thrust or strike with a point,” a Scottish variant of *job* “to strike, pierce, thrust,” from Middle English *jobben* “to jab, thrust, peck” (c. 1500), a word of unknown origin, perhaps imitative, perhaps not. Either way, even if imitative, it shows another example of such a semantic for such a form in Indo-European. English *gavel* and its Nordic cognates most likely derive from the *gab/geb/gib* cluster as well, noting also the Old European linkage of hammers with lightning bolts and the weather god.

#### 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 a well-attested manuscript variant *Salmoxis*), I can now detail my hypothesis regarding the actual etymology of Ancient Greek *σαλαμᾶνδρα*, referring to the “fire salamander”, *Salamandra salamandra*.

I hypothesize that *σαλαμ-* meant “fire”, from the older meaning “biting, stinging, burning”, and *σαλαμ-* derives from PIE *ǵl̥h₂mos*, zero-grade variant of PIE *ǵl̥h₂mos*, from *ǵl̥h₂-*, “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 *ᾶνδρα* 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 *ᾶνδρα* forms and semantics are described. Combine the two, and salamander and *σαλαμᾶνδρα* 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 *σαλλᾶμ-* 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 large 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 *\*kólh₂mos* 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>8</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.

## 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

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<sup>8</sup> Bell, Robert E. (1988), *Place Names in Classical Mythology*.

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-uz* 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-/Kom-* 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 word/term or even the name of a deity in their own Phrygian language, a word/term or theonym which would have been cognate to Daco-Thracian *Gebel-*, found in *Gebeleixis*. But *Gebel-/Gabel-/Kebel-/Kabel-/Kubel-/Kubil-* 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 and as seen in the Hittite examples from the semantically parallel root *Kalm-/Kelm-*.

*Matar Kubileya* is attested in Phrygian <sup>9</sup>, showing a form different from the Classical *Kybele/Kybebe*. *Matar*=mother, obviously. But the exact translation of *Kubileya*, a translation of all the meanings it carried in Phrygian, is not yet known. I have essayed a further elucidation here. I don't think that *Kubileya* meant "mare" as Čašule stated in his 2014 work which I mentioned in an earlier note. In Slavic that particular meaning developed, but there's no reason to believe that meaning developed in Phrygian. I note the absence of horses and mares in the Cybele cult (unless I've missed indications of that), where instead of equines we find panthers and lions as the animals closely associated with Cybele. It is believed though that *kubela* (not *Kubileya*) meant "work-horse/gelded horse" in Phrygian, perhaps shifting to "horse" as well, at some point.

Alternatively to the mountain suggestion for *Kubil-/Kybel-* <sup>10</sup>, *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 *boł* , "a kind of plant"; *bołboj* "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).

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<sup>9</sup> Burkert (1985), citing C.H. E. Haspels' *The Highlands of Phrygia*, gives the attested form as *Matar Kubileya* as I've rendered it in this paper. I first saw that in 2002 when I read Walter Burkert's book *Greek Religion*, in the English translation, which is actually a revised 1985 edition with new material from Burkert. See page 178, and note 18 on page 420. In that note, there is also mention of a form *Kybalas* found on Italian lokroi of the seventh century BC, long before the Romans were known to have imported the Kybele deity. It is not known how *Kybalas* is related to *Kybele* and *Kubileya*, but the early Italian attestation is likely a cognate/variant. Čašule in his 2014 work on Burushaski and Phrygian renders the form as *Matar Kubeleya*, which I haven't been able to verify/vet yet.

<sup>10</sup> Recalling that Sumerian *Kug* fits the semantic range where a meaning of "mountain" was potentially or actually there, at least sometimes, in Sumerian or in Proto-Sumerian.

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 the Kav-Kas name of that mountain range near Anatolia (the Caucasus mountain range), could derive, as I noted earlier, 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.

It's also possible that a “lightning bolt” meaning would have been understood in Phrygian for *Kubileya/Kybele*; in this connection, note that among the Hittites and Hurrians *Kubaba/Kumbaba/Kombaba* became the consort of Teshub, the Hurrian (and imported into Hittite) storm-god. So let us not assume that Matar Kubileya/Matar Kubeleya meant “Mother of the Mares”, which I've found no evidence for, besides a supposed translation of Phrygian *kubela* meaning “horse” (rather than “gelded horse”, as I suspect; and there's no evidence that I know of that either *kubela* or *kubileya/kubeleya* meant “mare” in Phrygian).

Email: alexandru.gheorghiu.323@gmail.com