

# Is the inscription on the Ezerovo ring finally deciphered? Yes.

Alexandru Gheorghiu  
Researcher in Linguistics  
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## Abstract

A new translation and very probable accurate decipherment of the inscription on a gold ring found in 1912 in Ezerovo, near Plovdiv, Bulgaria, which is generally presumed to be a 5<sup>th</sup> century BC example of at least one dialect of the Thracian language, a Palaeo-Balkan Indo-European language which went extinct over a thousand years ago, though the exact century when the language ceased to be spoken is not yet known.

**Keywords:** Thracian, Palaeo-Balkan, Dacian, Ancient Greek, Proto-Albanian, Balto-Slavic, Indo-European, Proto-Indo-European, Etruscan, Pre-Greek, Artemis

## 1. Introduction

In 1912, in a place called Pärženaka in a village called Ezerovo (the village of Ezerovo takes its name from a lake in the area), near Plovdiv, Bulgaria, a gold ring inscribed with a text in Greek letters was found by happen-stance while a mould/burial mound was being excavated. The ring weighs 31.3 grams and the surface on which the letters are engraved (the last four letters are engraved on the other side) has an elliptical shape measuring 1.7 x 2 cm. In the same neighborhood besides the ring there were found other items considered to be belonging to a burial – a golden diadem, a small golden spoon, two triangular golden plates, a broken bronze vessel, a round bronze mirror and a broken bronze bracelet. Thus the golden ring was probably for the burial of a Thracian of means and status. The ring is considered to date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The language of the inscription is most likely Thracian, in the opinion of nearly all of the scholars of the past who have examined the inscription, and in my opinion as well. This conclusion is based on a number of factors, of which the most important are: 1) the inscription does not make sense in Greek; 2) the area where the ring was found was not an area where Greek speakers predominated at that time, and indeed Greek is thought to have been spoken natively by only relatively few in that area at that time; 3) it is not as likely to have been written in Paeonian or Illyrian or Macedonian (Greek dialect or not), because in the inscription we find *Rolis* (a variant of the well-attested Thracian and Daco-Getic anthroponym *Roles/Rholes*) as the first part of the inscription, a name not attested among Illyrians, Paeonians or Macedonians/Greeks, nor to my knowledge among any besides Thracians and Daco-Getians.

Few have found the previous translation attempts satisfactory; nor have I found them satisfactory; indeed, the only two translations before mine which I find noteworthy are: 1) the translation essayed by Dimitar Dechev, published in 1957; and 2) Vladimir Georgiev's translation, which dates back to the 1960s or 1950s. I find Vladimir Georgiev's translation to be more unlikely than Dechev's, and among the number of reasons for that determination is Georgiev's interpretation that Thracian "as" meant "I" in the inscription (referring here to the English pronoun "I"), which Georgiev extracted from "Rolistene/as/nerenea" in the inscription (the forward slashes indicate Georgiev's parsing, not any word-breaks found in the inscription; the inscription does not indicate any word-breaks). It's not that "as" is unlikely to have been the Thracian word for "I"(English)/"ego" (Latin)/"ich"(German), (etc., all from PIE *\*éǵh₂*, meaning "I"): that's likely enough, as seen in Old Prussian where "as" meant "I", deriving from PIE *\*éǵh₂*, the **gh** sound having been sibilized to **s**, and Thracian can be expected to have sibilized that gh there as well (though it's not certain that

Thracian actually did that in this particular word, since this pronoun is not yet attested in Thracian, Georgeiv's translation being too unlikely on this point of "as" from *Rolisteneas*, and his interpretations of the other elements are also unlikely); my problem with Georgiev's interpretation is that he extracts that "as" from *Rolisteneas*, which makes his interpretation of this "as" meaning "I" in the inscription very unlikely as will be seen.

I have therefore essayed my own translation, which has a high likelihood of being the first correct and accurate translation and decipherment of one of the two longest of the Thracian inscriptions discovered so far. If so, this provides us with the first advanced look at the Thracian language, beyond the short phrases translated before, and beyond the small number of glosses from ancient authors, and beyond anthroponyms, theonyms, toponyms, phytonyms (from the afore-mentioned ancient glosses), et al.

I agree with the order of the words and the sound-values of the letters which most past investigators have followed, and I agree with the reading direction, which is from left to right: **ΡΟΛΙΣΤΕΝΕΑΣ ΝΕΡΕΝΕΑ ΤΙΛΤΕΑΝ ΗΣΚΟ ΑΡΑ ΖΕΑ ΔΟΜΕΑΝ ΤΙΛΕΖΥΠΤΑ ΜΙΗ ΕΡΑ ΖΗΛΤΑ** (the letters on the ring itself are sometimes different from the letters indicated here, but the sound-values correspond to what is shown here). My parsing of the words is I think identical to Dechev's parsing; indeed it can be said that when it comes to parsing, we only perhaps disagree on the last word in the inscription. However, as will be seen, we disagree about the meanings of most of the words and elements thus parsed.

I agree with Dechev et al. that *Rolisteneas* in the inscription is a male Thracian anthroponym, and that we should parse it as *Rolisteneas*, not *Rolistene*, nor stopping at *Rolis*. I have not yet tracked down the name of the first person to recognize this *Rolisteneas* in the inscription, nor who was the first to end the parsing after the second S (*Rolisteneas*...); it may have been Dechev, but likely not. For anyone with a decent knowledge of Thracian anthroponyms, this was obvious; due to the known/attested Thracian names *Roles* and *Oroles* (and some other variants); as well as the -sthénēs/-sthénē (meaning "strong" in ancient Greek, from ancient Greek *σθένος*, *sthénos*, "strong") element from ancient Greek names (Alkisthénē, Androsthénēs, Kallisthénēs, Sthenélāos, et al.) being known to have been either adopted by Thracians, or perhaps Thracians had the word as well from Proto-Indo-European or from a Non-IE language of the area and time: the etymology of Greek *σθένος* (*sthénos*) is not agreed upon in the literature, with some preferring a Non-IE derivation.

Some interpreters--though agreeing about the Greek cognate/loanword *-sthenes*---prefer the parsing *Rolistene*, believing either, like Georgiev, 1) that *Rolistene* is a grammatical inflection of a proper name, as in Latin and Greek (see Georgiev's translation for this usage and interpretation), if Thracian had an inflection like that identical to Latin (though Thracian and Dacian may well have had that inflection, the inscription on the ring is almost certainly not an example of that usage); or 2) believing that *Rolistene* is a Thracian genitive form. I don't subscribe to either of those two interpretations; for the genitive interpretation some cite *Ebaroze*, extracted from the Kjolmen inscription: but there is no convincing reason to think that *Ebaroze* is the correct way to parse that portion of the Kjolmen inscription (found in the Preslav region, north of the Rhodope mountains, in Moesia, where the Thracian population was probably mostly of the Getean/Moesian/Daco-Getean kind, who spoke a dialect which had a number of differences compared to most Thracians of the Ezerovo area), which more likely should be connected to the SAS letters that occur next, so that the full name is *Ebaro Zesas*<sup>1</sup>; nor is there any evidence that *Dadaleme* found inscribed on some silver philliae is a name showing such a genitive (as I plan to detail in future versions of this paper or in a separate study; for now, the *Da Dale Me* inscriptions are discussed later in this work): *Dadaleme* very likely (most likely/more likely, in fact) represents a Thracian phrase *Da Dale Me*, not a name (see discussion of that later in this work). I do have to find more examples of the *-eas* ending in Thracian names; since I have not yet compiled a catalog of Thracian names, nor have I reviewed all of the attested Thracian names (nor have I undertaken an extensive review; I last did a rather extensive review of Thracian and Dacian names many years ago, and I had access to only a smaller number of them), I do not currently have another example of a

<sup>1</sup> See my translation of the entire Kjolmen Moesian inscription. My translation of that inscription was published on March 6th, 2022, on Zenodo. See also the Conclusion section of this paper where I discuss my translation of the Kjolmen inscription vis-a-vis my translation of the Ezerovo ring.

Thracian name ending with the adjectival suffix *-eas* (found in Greek and in Greek names) to include here. Yet Dacian names ending with *-eus* (*Decaeneus*; *Diurpaneus*) may be Romanizations of *-eas*; or *-eus* may be the Dacian version of the scarcely (?) attested Thracian *-eas* (or the Thracians living close to and among the Greeks may have adapted their native suffix so that it became identical to the Greek *-eas*). The name ending *-ais* (*Dekinais*, *Diernais*, etc.) is well-attested in Dacian, and I recall *-ais* in Thracian as well.

Second, I agree with a number of previous translators, including Dechev, that *Nerenea* likely was the genitive form of the name of the father of Rolisteneas or the genitive form of Rolisteneas' gens/family name; so that *Rolisteneas Nerenea* likely means "Rolisteneas, son of Nereneas", or "Rolisteneas of gens Nerenea". The Thracian name *\*Nerenea/\*Nereneas* has to my knowledge not yet been attested elsewhere, but it looks very likely to be a name with that very form, since there is a Proto-Indo-European root word *\*h<sub>2</sub>n<sup>ér</sup>*, which meant "man; power, force, vital energy", from whence comes ancient Greek *aner*, meaning "man", and Albanian *njeri* (from Old Albanian *njer*, from Proto-Albanian *\*nera*) meaning "man; human being", to name a few cognates. There is also a Latin gens name *Neria*, a Latin nomen *Nerius*, and a Latin name *Nero*, all three of which were traditionally believed by the Romans to mean "strong and sturdy", matching the meaning of the PIE etymon.

There is also a reminiscence of the ancient Greek name for a particular sea-god, *Nereus*, whose name is of unknown origin and unknown etymology. I think there's a chance that ancient Greek *Nereus* is akin to Etruscan *neri* (the attested Etruscan element *neri* =water, according to some interpreters of Etruscan inscriptions); or *Nereus* could derive from PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>n<sup>ér</sup>*, meaning "man", as in "the first man", which could have been a reference to a forgotten myth-cycle, perhaps also reflected in the name of another Greek sea-god, Proteus (this "forgotten" mythology about "the first man" being a sea-personage is actually encountered in the mythologies of peoples of various parts of the earth, and thus it is quite likely to be embodied in the name of Nereus). I know that some have already noticed the similarity to Etruscan *neri* (though I noticed that resemblance on my own, before I knew that anyone else had noticed that, though it was an easy thing to notice) but I may be the first to suggest an etymology involving the „first man“ mythology surrounding Proteus and other sea-deities.

## 2. The new translation

Here now is my translation, different from any previous translations (besides agreeing with many translators about the meanings of the elements *Rolisteneas* and *Nerenea* and *mie*, and agreeing with Dechev about the meaning of *domean*): **ΡΟΛΙΣΤΕΝΕΑΣ ΝΕΡΕΝΕΑ ΤΙΛΤΕΑΝ ΗΣΚΟ ΑΡΑ ΖΕΑ ΔΟΜΕΑΝ ΤΙΛΕΖΥΠΤΑ ΜΙΗ ΕΡΑ ΖΗΛΤΑ:**

*Rolisteneas Nerenea, tiltean*, = "*Rolisteneas Nerenea, fallen/buried (fallen in the sense of deceased)*"

*ēsko Ara-Zea Domean Tilezupta* = "*Petitions Ara-Zea, Lady of the Covered Breasts*"

*miē era-zēlta* = "*to make me again bloom*"

So the entire inscription reads: ***Rolisteneas Nerenea, fallen/buried, petitions Ara-Zea, lady of the covered breasts, to make me bloom again.***

The inscription is thus a religious/magical formula for the deceased, who is seeking either a resurrection on this earth; or reincarnation; or a good afterlife. The ancient Greek writer Herodotus detailed how the Getae (a northern group of Thracians) believed that they were immortal, meaning that they didn't believe that they actually died even though they corporeally died (see Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.94), so Herodotus furnishes some important proof there, but I recall some more proof from reference works on the Thracians, which I will detail in future versions of this paper.

The theonym *Ara-Zea* meant „Woods Goddess“ or „Bow Goddess“ (the bow used for shooting arrows) which in English would be „Goddess of the Woods“/“Goddess of the bow“, with *Ara* meaning „tree/woods/forest“ and/or a specific tree (with all meanings deriving from „to curve, turn, twist, bend“) in a language once spoken in Aetolia, as I have found, but the range across which this word was used cannot be

determined completely: we know that the word is not found in any surviving Ancient Greek or Roman manuscripts, and I have found indications that the word is Pre-Greek, and so likely entered Thracian from Pre-Greek: however, the word has very close cognates in Proto-Indo-European (see my detailed discussion of the *Ara* component further in this paper), which indicates that these Pre-Greeks must have been at the least in close contact with speakers of the Proto-Proto-Indo-European language: alternatively, one or more Pre-Greek languages split off from Proto-Proto-Indo-European (which can be called Eteo-Indo-European) at a time before Proto-Indo-European.

Though the theonym meant „Woods Goddess“ or „Bow Goddess“ not „Earth Goddess“, the inscription is asking Ara-Zea to make the fallen or buried (tiltean meant either „fallen“ or „buried“ or both) man bloom again, which indicates to me that this goddess had qualities that among the Greeks were more associated with Demeter rather than with Artemis (but the moon was often thought of as the abode of souls in the Greco-Roman world, so that likely has something to do with the Thracian conception of Bendis/Kottyto/Kotys/Artemis). So Ara-Zea could be thought of as a conceptual combination of an earth-goddess like Demeter and a goddess like Artemis (a goddess corresponding to Artemis has been attested as Bendis and also as Kotys/Kottuto among the Thracians), a conceptual combination already known and identified among the Greeks, Anatolians and Minoans (see the literature on the subject; of course, I'm not saying that the Thracians consciously combined Demeter and Artemis, which was not the case; nor am I saying that they consciously combined two Thracian goddesses; rather that the Thracians had at least one goddess, Ara Zea, who had qualities of both Demeter and Artemis, but those qualities were not taken from Greek religion, though some later Greek influence, and vice versa, is possible: but mostly the similarity is due to a common source, including Pre-Greek religion and mythology).

Of the Thracians, Herodotus in chapter 5.7 of *The Histories* says: "*They worship no gods but Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis. Their princes, however, unlike the rest of their countrymen, worship Hermes above all gods and swear only by him, claiming him for their ancestor.*"

In the immediate region where the gold ring was found, archaeological artifacts record that a cult of Apollo, the Kendreiseian Apollo (Kendriso Apollo; Kendreiseia was apparently an ancient name for Pulpudeva, which became the modern Plovdiv), was particularly important there. And the worship of Apollo in those days was usually accompanied by the worship of his sister, Artemis. In a scholarly source discussing the Thracians, I have found that Kendrisia<sup>2</sup> is considered to be the name of a Thracian goddess (I have also found sources saying that Kendreiseia was an ancient name for the town of Pulpudeva; the town was known by several different names in ancient times). And I have found sources which say that Kendriso (and Kendros) may be a Thracian name of Apollo. I could find no etymology given for this group of kindred attestations (Kendreiseia, Kendrisia, Kendriso, Kendros and even Kendrisi, the latter being the name of a Thracian tribe of the area), so I studied the forms and discovered the most likely etymology myself: the PIE root is **\*(s)kand-**, "to shine, gleam, glow", from which comes ancient Greek κάνδαρος (kándaros, "charcoal"), Albanian hënë ("moon"), Sanskrit चन्द्र (candrā, which as a noun meant "moon" and as an adjective meant "gleaming, shining"), Old Armenian խաւիղ (xand, "fiery emotion/passion"), Latin candeō ("to shine, gleam").

The form Kendrisia is a theonym, and is best understood as a feminine adjectival epithet of the Thracian Artemis, an adjectival epithet which meant "shining; gleaming". The form Kendreiseia may be a toponym (= "(city) of Kendrisia and Kendriso") formed from the theonym adjective Kendrisia; or Kendreiseia may be the actual attested form of the theonym (rather than Kendrisia), and could have been used as a theonym and as a toponym; I am working on clarifying the attestations. The masculine adjective forms Kendros and Kendriso have the same meaning yet probably with a slight difference ("shining, beaming, burning") to emphasize the burning hot energy of the sun, instead of just the radiance of the moon. Thus it's most likely that in the very place where the gold ring was found, the cult of Apollo (Kendriso, Kendros) and Artemis (Kendreiseia or Kendrisia; also known there and elsewhere among the Thracians, I hypothesize, as Ara-Zea: as I will detail later in this work, Ara-Zea more likely meant „Goddess of the Woods“ or „Goddess of the Bow“

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<sup>2</sup>I found the form *Kendrisia* in Bruce M. Metzger's *The Problematic Thracian Version of the Gospels*. I will soon clarify whether *Kendrisia* is an alternative rendering of the possibly more accurate rendering *Kendreiseia*, or whether both forms are attested; and I will clarify whether or not the two forms have slightly different usage: the form *Kendrisia* may be exclusively a theonym; the form *Kendreiseia* may be a toponym; if only one form from those two is actually extant in ancient sources, I will find out whether the extant feminine form (if only one of them is attested) could be both a theonym and a toponym.

,the bow used for arrows, rather than „Goddess of the Earth“) was very important, so much so that the tribe of Thracians native to the locale were known as the Kendrisi, worshippers of the Thracian Artemis (who was associated with the moon and the wild woods, with nature, with wild animals and with the earth, as well as with the hunting of wild animals; with childbirth; and more) and her brother, the Thracian Apollo (associated with the sun and more). There will be more about the archaeological evidence in a future version of this paper; some of the archaeological evidence is in the form of images and/or inscriptions on ancient coins minted in the area.

Among the Greeks, Artemis had a rather long list of epithets/epicleses, including *Thērasia*, "the Huntress", an epithet attested on its own (without the name of Artemis appearing in the attestations), in Mycenaean Greek Linear B texts from Knossos in Crete as *Qe-ra-si-ja* (= *Khwerasia*, from PIE \**ghwer-*, "wild animal"); *Khwerasia* later became *Thērasia* in several dialects of ancient Greek, due to a well-known phonological shift in ancient Greek, where Mycenaean Greek *khw-* became/corresponds to ancient Greek *th-* in most dialects and in most situations, but in some dialects *khw-* shifted to *ph-*; and in some cases within the same dialect, *khw-* shifted to *th-* or *ph-* depending on the phonological situation of a particular word in the same dialect. Another of Artemis' many epicleses/epithets among the Greeks was *Chitone* ("wearing a chiton", which can also be translated as „the well-clothed/well-covered“, since this was emphasized by the Greeks and Thracians on purpose: the Thracian Bendis is always depicted with her body fully-covered by a chiton). For the explanation of *Tilezupta* as a Thracian epithet of Artemis, see the following paragraphs where that element is analysed in detail.

Now for my proposed etymologies and other evidence for my translation given above:

**Roli:** this is probably the same as the well-attested Thracian and Getic male anthroponym *Roles/Rholes* (and also attested as *Rolis?*), *Rolouzis* (attested as a Dacian name); whether the *Roli-* in this ring inscription comes from the form \**Rolis* or from a variation thereof is not clear, but what is clear is that in 2021 I found (without any reasonable doubt) the etymology of the *Roli-* in this inscription, and also most likely the etymology of the elsewhere-attested Thracian name *Rholes/Roles* and Dacian *Rolouzis*: all three meant "virile, potent, boisterous, strong-blooded" and those meanings derive from the meaning of "blood/rushing", which derives from the cluster of meanings "blood, sap, ichor, juice; to flow, to stream, to rush", which derive from Proto-Daco-Thracian \**hréyyō*, from PIE \**srew-*, "to flow, stream, rush"; from this PIE root-word also come quite a number of Ancient Greek words, including *ῥέω* (*rhéō*)="I flow, stream, rush, gush"; *ῥεῦμα* (*rheûma*)="stream, flow, current"; *ῥεῦσις* (*rheûsis*)="flowing"; *ῥύσις* (*rhûsis*)="flow; the course of a river or stream"; *ῥοή* (*rhoē*)="a river, a stream". Another Ancient Greek word which is thought to very likely derive from PIE \**srew-* "to flow" is Ancient Greek *ῥόα* (*rhóa*)="pomegranate fruit; pomegranate tree", because of the richness of the juice; but what previous researchers have not realized is that there is more to that derivation: not just because of the richness of the juice, but also because the word *ῥόα* (*rhóa*) and some of its kindred cognates developed the meaning "blood/red": and I am about to present my evidence for the existence of those meanings in *ῥόα* (*rhóa*) and some of its cognates (attested and unattested cognates) in Greek and Daco-Thracian: another word for "pomegranate" in Ancient Greek was/is *σίδη* (*sidē*): and that word is 100% cognate<sup>3</sup> to Ancient Greek *σίδηρος* (*sidēros*)="iron", both deriving from the older meanings "blood; liquid; sap; juice; water" from another root which meant "to flow" (not from PIE \**srew-*, but from a different root-word with the same meanings). The "iron" word comes from there because of the redness of iron likened to the redness of blood, and it is thought that the English word "iron" also comes from an earlier meaning of "blood", from another root-word of probably identical meanings. The Ancient Greek *σίδη* (*sidē*) also referred to a water plant, thought to probably be a water lily. The Ancient Greek *σίδη* (*sidē*) was also found in many interesting variant forms, which however are not of import to this current work, and so I advise the reader to look for those variants elsewhere. The datum that makes me certain that the *Roli-* seen on the ring inscription is derived from PIE \**srew-* "to flow, rush" is this gloss from Hesychius: in Hesychius we find a gloss of his saying that *ῥοιλιαῖς* (*roiliais*), *ῥοίδνας* (*roidnas*) and *ῥοιδμός* (*roidmos*) all meant "a rushing noise", and these forms are compared to *ῥοιζέω* (*roizeo*), which denoted both whistling and rushing

<sup>3</sup> That *σίδη* (*sidē*) and *σίδηρος* (*sidēros*) are surely cognates has been noticed before, I am not the first to say this, and this idea of them being cognates is without any real contenders, and there is no data that indicates otherwise.



noises: it was used for the rushing of a stream/river <sup>4</sup>; *ῥοιζήτωρ* = "one who moves with a rushing sound", and you can check Ancient Greek dictionaries for more *ῥοιζ*- words meaning "a rushing sound". So, there is no other etymology for those words I quoted from Hesychius' gloss, and I'm sure they (*ῥοιλιαῖς/roiliais*, *ῥοιδνας/roidnas* and *ῥοιδμός/roidmos*) all derive from PIE *\*srew-* "to flow, rush" (and *ῥοιζέω/roizeo* probably derives from there as well). The kinship of these "rushing noise" words to the "red/blood/juice/water; to flow, rush" words is further indicated with no doubt by the following Ancient Greek words: *ῥοῖδιον* = "small pomegranate"; *ῥοιδάριον* = "red rouge/red lipstick/a red cosmetic"; and Modern Greek *ρόδι* (*ródi*) and Romanian *rodie* both mean "pomegranate": compare these forms to *ῥοιδνας* (*roidnas*) and *ῥοιδμός* (*roidmos*), which I argue are all from the same root-word, PIE *\*srew-*, "to flow, rush". One semantic branch from PIE *\*srew-* led to "rushing sounds/rushing noises", while another branch led to "rivers, streams, water, juice, blood", and from the meaning "blood" developed the meaning of "things the color of blood" (pomegranates, red rouge, etc.). The form *ῥοιλιαῖς* (*roiliais*) shows clearly that the -L- sound can and did appear in some words derived from that root-word, and that brings us back to the *Roli-* seen in this inscription, and to the Thracian name *Rholes/Roles* attested elsewhere, and the Dacian name *Rolouzis*: I'm quite sure that time will show that all those derive from PIE *\*srew-* "to flow, rush" > "blood/rushing" > "virile-blooded/rushing", as does *Rha*, an ancient name for the Volga river (see Ptolemy's *Geography*, Book 5, Chapter 8), which derives from Scythian or Dacian (or from another IE language that was there at the time). *Rolisteneas* meant "(Of)Blood strong/mighty" = "(Of)Mighty/strong blood". Any translation that thinks "*Roli-*" is not the first part of a compound name which has at least the form *Rolistene* is absurd (and there are strangely many such completely wrong "translations" out there). And not only was it *Rolistene*, it was *Rolisteneas*, as I argue here, after Dechev et al. (not sure who was the first to say that). The Daco-Getic (and Thracian?) male names *Oroles*, *Orola* (both *Oroles* and *Orola* are attested as men's names) could also derive from PIE *\*srew-* or they could have a different etymology.

**steneas**: this is likely a loanword, from ancient Greek *σθένης* (*sthenes*)/*σθένος* (*sthenos*), meaning "strong", which the Greeks used for the termination of a number of their attested anthroponyms. Or alternatively, the Thracians had the word as well in an almost identical or identical form as the Greek. Beekes (2010) states that the etymology of Greek *σθένος* is unknown, though there are Indo-European etymologies proposed, which Beekes did not find convincing, so he chose to list the word as being of still undetermined and/or unknown origin. To me it seems quite likely that *σθένος* is cognate to another Ancient Greek word, *στενός* (= "narrow, tight") somehow, despite the „th“/“t“ difference, and despite the arguments that they cannot be derived from one root-word: I think they can be if one takes into consideration that one of them is likely a loanword from a Non-Greek language: and via different paths, both words may lead back to the same root-word. In such a way also, both *σθένος* and *στενός* may be cognate (as has been suggested in the literature) to English "stith" (= "strong, stiff, rigid"), which is from Proto-Germanic *\*stinþaz*. Likewise as a loanword, *σθένος* may derive via an unknown language from PIE *\*steyh<sub>2</sub>-*, "to stiffen", the source of English "stone", German "Stein", Proto-Slavic "stena" (= "conglomeration of stones"; "wall"; "rock"; "cliff"; ), and the likely source of Ancient Greek *στία* and *στίον* (which are probably directly from *\*steyh<sub>2</sub>-*, rather than being loanwords) both meaning "pebble; small stone". A derivation directly---as a native Greek word---from PIE *\*seǵh<sub>2</sub>-* "to hold, to overpower", suggested as far back as 1900, is unlikely because, though many Ancient Greek words are considered to derive from that root, none begin with st- nor with sth-, rather they begin with skh-, ekh-, iskh-, hek-, eks-, etc. It may be that *σθένος* is one of those words that, though having close cognates or close parallels in Indo-European, actually derives from a Non-IE language. If Non-IE, the likelihood that Thracian and Greek had the word as a Non-IE loanword in the same form and meaning increases; though even if from PIE, Thracian and Greek could have both had it inherited from PIE in nearly identical or even identical form and meaning; however, if the word is from PIE that becomes less likely. I have no problem considering the Thracian form to be a Greek loan.

**Nerenea**: the first part *Ner-* is from PIE *h<sub>2</sub>nér* (*masculine*), meaning "man; power, force, vital energy"; cognates include Albanian *njeri* (= *man*; *human being*), from Old Albanian *njer*, from Proto-Albanian *\*nera*;

<sup>4</sup> See any good Ancient Greek dictionary for the attestation(s) of that use.

and ancient Greek *aner* (=man). The Thracian *Ner-* is also cognate to the *Ner-* seen in the Roman nomen *Nerius* (*gens Neria*), and the Roman praenomen *Nero*: all of which Latin/Roman names (*Nerius*, *Neria*, *Nero*) were traditionally described as meaning *fortis ac strenuus*, "strong and sturdy", matching the meaning of the Proto-Indo-European etymology.

The second part of *Nerenea* shows the same element seen in Thracian *Esbenis* ("horseman"). The first part of Thracian *Esbenis*, namely *esb-*, is known to be from PIE \*h<sub>1</sub>ékʷos (*masculine*), meaning "horse, stallion": and just as the noun *esb-* has received the suffix *-en-* seen in *Esbenis*, likewise the noun *Ner-* has received the suffix *-en-* in *Nerenea*. The same *-en-* noun suffix is also seen in *Mezenai*, another Thracian term also meaning horseman/horserider/chevalier/cavalier (as *Esbenis* meant), but the *Mez-* in *Mezenai* derives from a different root, not from \*h<sub>1</sub>ékʷos (the certain etymology of *Mez-* is well-known in the literature on the Thracian language, and so I will not go into that in this paragraph; suffice it to say that there is no doubt about the etymology of *Mez-*). It's likely that after going more extensively through the Thracian and Dacian language material, I will find more examples of the *-en-* noun suffix.

The third and final part of *Nerenea*, the ending *-ea*, is the genitive suffix, which is in feminine form as we see in Latin *gens/gentes* names (note: the plural of *gens* is *gentes*). In Latin, the *gens* (family name) is always in feminine form: cf. Roman *gens* names such as *gens Aurelia*, *gens Nasennia*, *gens Neria* (noted above), *gens Valeria*: and many more, because all the Latin *gens* names have the feminine ending, even when the name itself has a "masculine" etymology. The Thracian *gens* name *Nerenea* is from the Thracian nomen \**Nereneas*. One can posit from *Esbenis* ("horseman") a Thracian nomen \**Esbeneas* (feminine \**Esbenea*) and a Thracian *gens* name \**Esbenea*. A form \**Nerenis* may have also existed in Thracian, but probably not as an anthroponym, but as a hypothetical word deriving from the same PIE root. I do not currently have more examples of Thracian or Dacian names ending with *-ea*, for reasons discussed above: I've just begun again reviewing the Thracian and Dacian name evidence after not having done an extended review of their names in several years.

**tiltean**: is interpreted by me as having meant "fallen", with the meaning of "deceased" (or else it meant „buried“); and since many among the Thracian people didn't believe in actual death, it makes sense that they would here, in this religious formula which is seeking a type of resurrection or life after death, use the term "fallen" instead of "dead". A number of the cognates for "tiltean" that I propose are found in Germanic, and they mean "to slant down, slant/fall towards the ground". This does not mean that Thracian was particularly close to the Germanic branch; rather, this may indicate linguistic interaction between Germanics and Thracians; it's possible that the root word for the cognates goes back to a Non-IE substratum language of Central Europe and the northern Balkans: but as I found more and more good cognates outside of Germanic, I came to the conclusion that this Thracian word *tiltean* derives from Proto-Indo-European, and may not have been found in any Non-IE language of the Mediterranean/Balkans/Central Europe. English "tilt" is one of the Germanic cognates; English "tilt" from Middle English "tilte", from Old English "tyltan" (=“to be unsteady”), from *tealt* "unsteady," from a Proto-Germanic word reconstructed by not sure which linguist as \**taltaz*. Cognates for the English and Old English words are given as including: Old Norse *tyllast* "to trip," Swedish *tulta* "to waddle," Norwegian *tylta* "to walk on tip-toe," Middle Dutch *touteren* "to swing"; also believed to be a cognate is Icelandic *tölt* (used to describe the ambling gait of certain horses; and so also meant an ambling place for horses). Meaning "to cause to lean, tip, slope" (1590s) recorded for „tilte“ is from sense of "push or fall over." Intransitive sense "to lean, tip" first recorded 1620s. As stated a few sentences above, these Germanic words have not yet been linked to any Proto-Indo-European root word, and the origin could be Non-IE. Cf. Etruscan *tle-* (found in Etruscan inscription TLE 890)<sup>5</sup>, which may have meant "defeated", perhaps from the earlier meaning of "knocked down or laid down" (in Etruscan inscription TLE 890, the meaning does not seem to be "killed", though the meaning "killed" could have developed from the earlier senses, and that meaning may have been employed elsewhere in Etruscan usage, though probably not in inscription TLE 890). And also Cf. Hurrian *til-*, "to destroy". The Etruscan and the Hurrian forms are possible cognates. A quite certain cognate is Latin *tilia*<sup>6</sup>, which meant „linden tree“, and is

<sup>5</sup> I found Etruscan *tle-* and Hurrian *til-* in Arnaud Fournet's *A Tentative Etymological Glossary of Etruscan*.

<sup>6</sup> I have known of that etymology of *tilia* for over 10 years, but somehow forgot to think to include that word and etymology, and I also forgot about Latin *tellūs*.

already believed to come from an older *til-* which meant „broad, flat“ (cf. PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* = “ground, bottom”), because of the large, broad flat leaves of linden trees: and because the tree is very often broad-spreading. There is also Latin *tellūs* which meant „earth, ground“: quite likely the older meaning was „the broad flat expanse of the earth“, and the later meanings of „falling/tilting/falling to the ground/to be defeated/laid flat“ came later, but not much later: probably those additional meanings developed quite rapidly, many thousands of years ago. Further cognates include Old Prussian *talus* (=“floor”), Lithuanian *tiles* (=“floor of a boat”), Armenian *t’alem* (=“to bury”). Just like this translation buries all other translations. I don’t think that it’s more likely that „tiltean“ in this inscription meant „buried“, but that’s equally possible.

In 2022 I found two very likely additional cognates for *tiltean*: Ancient Greek *πτελέα* (*ptelēā*)=the elm tree, *Ulmus glabra* of the southern European subspecies (those found in Ancient Greece) about which I found this quote: „*Ulmus glabra* subspecies *glabra*: in the south of the species' range: broad leaves with short tapering base and acute lobes; trees often with a short, forked trunk and a low, broad crown.“ Therefore I posit that Ancient Greek *πτελέα* (*ptelēā*) is cognate to Latin *tilia* (=linden tree) and both are cognate to Thracian *tiltean*, and cognate to many or all of those words that I cited above. Because these elms remind people of weeping (as do the weeping willows) they were associated with graves and tombs; also because they spread broadly and provide good cover (they cover similarly to how tombs and graves cover the deceased); and maybe also because in some ancient languages, their words (or their neighbors’ words, like between Greeks and Thracians) for “earth” and “bury/buried” were similar for their words for elm tree (*telea/tilia/ptelea*, etc.): so *tiltean* may indeed have meant “buried” but it could also just as well have meant “fallen” for the reasons explained above. This etymology of *πτελέα* (*ptelēā*) is indicated by another Ancient Greek word that had no good etymology until I discovered one: the word *πέλας* (*ptélas*)=“wild boar”: this word is most likely from the meaning “earther”, which meant “digger in the earth”: a behavior that boars often engage in, looking for food: and PIE *\*pórkos* (pig/piglet) is already considered to have meant “digger” and to derive from PIE *\*perk-* “to dig”. So most likely *\*ptel/\*tel* was an Indo-European word for “earth; the flat expanse of the earth”, and Thracian *tiltean* derives from there and this translation is accurate.

"Tiltean" may have meant in this inscription merely in bad shape ("unsteady"), but not deceased; in which case, to make him bloom again would mean to bring him back to good health. If that is so, the ring inscription would have been for a person who was still living when the inscription was made. But why wouldn't he have just left out the word "tiltean" in that case? Why inscribe in gold that he is sick? I'd imagine that that would not be considered a propitious or wise thing to do. So I think the translation that I gave above is more likely, that the inscription was for the deceased *Rolisteneas Nerenea*.

**ěsko**: meant to "ask, petition"; there are many Indo-European cognates for this word, including English "ask", Lithuanian "ieškoti" (=to seek), Armenian "hayc" (=demand, request; seeking); Sanskrit "icchatī" (=to seek); all ultimately from Proto-Indo-European *\*h<sub>2</sub>ey<sub>s</sub>-*, “wish, desire”. Why hasn't anyone before me linked the "ěsko" in this inscription to this root that I'm linking it to? If I'm correct, it was a big oversight (and a key oversight) of previous translators, due to the un-obvious nature of this inscription.

**Ara Zea**: the *Ara* found in *Ara Zea* most likely meant either “bow (as in a bow used to shoot arrows)”, or it meant „tree/woods“; so *Ara Zea* meant either the „Bow goddess“ (which in English would be better translated as the „Goddess of the Bow“, reversing the Thracian word-order/syntax) if the first option is correct or „Woods Goddess“ („Goddess of the Woods“) if the latter option is correct. It’s also possible that in the language inscribed on the ring, „Ara“ meant both „bow“ and „tree/woods“, with both meanings coming from „ara“ meaning „to curve, bend, twist“, leading to „bow“ as well as to „tree“ (because most trees have curved/bending branches and curved roots, and many trees also have curved and/or bent trunks). The English word „bow“ is known to derive from PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ewg<sup>h</sup>-* „to bend; to curve, arch“.

Both „Bow Goddess“ and „Woods Goddess“ readings are based on my interpretation of the Aetolian oronym (oronym=mountain-name) *Αράκυνθος*. In the following paragraphs I will show why in the



Aetolian mountain-name, the portion *κυνθος* most likely meant „covered“, and I will show why *Αράκυνθος* most likely meant either „Tree covered“, or „Oak tree covered“ or „Cedar tree covered“ (but it is not likely that Ara=„chestnut tree“ for reasons that I will explain in this edition). In the inscription on the ring, I don't think that Ara referred to a specific tree: because it seems less likely that a Thracian Artemis would be referred to as „Goddess of the oak“ or „Goddess of the cedar“ (or of the chestnut tree); so in one or more languages of Aetolia, „Ara“ likely (but not definitely) referred to a specific tree; but in the language of the inscription on the ring, „Ara“ most likely meant either „bow“ or „tree/woods/forest“, not a specific tree.

So now to study the oronym *Αράκυνθος* and to study the specific mountain in Aetolia which bears that name: *Αράκυνθος* is a mountain in Aetolia which is still known by that name today in modern Aetolia (in Ancient Greece, more than one mountain was called *Αράκυνθος*, at least two: another one seems to have been in Attica): one Greek website describes the mountain *Αράκυνθος* of today (the one in Aetolia) like so: *“Arakynthos: Northwest of Varasova starts the relatively low Arakynthos Mountain. Its Northeast side is full of thick forests of various species of oak and chestnut, hosting numerous woodland birds and birds of prey. Although very close to cities, Arakynthos forest surprises us with its rich nature and wildlife.”* Another Greek website describes the mountain like this: *“Arakinthos or Zygos <sup>7</sup>, is a mountain of the Aetoloakarnania prefecture, south of Lake Trichonis and north of the Messolonghi Lagoon. It is 984 meters high. Arakinthos is located in the narrow gorge of Kleisoura through which the Messolonghi region is connected with the region of Agrinio. It is characterized by cedar forests, chestnut and oak trees, waterfalls, caves and a rich biodiversity of birds, reptiles, squirrels, turtles, deer, wild boars, foxes and wolves, composing a completely different landscape in such a small distance from the sea front of the municipality ICS Messolonghi.”* Another Greek website describes the Arakynthos mountain like this: *“With an altitude of 984 meters above the lagoon of Messolonghi it is the natural border between the sea and the lake Trichonida. Evergreen with oak trees, bushes, walnuts and an impressive oak forest, it offers shelter to wild pigs, deer, squirrels, tortoises, eagles and snakes.”*

Those three quotes show part of how I determined that the *Ara* in *Arakynthos* meant either „woods/tree“ or else referred to a specific tree (most likely the oak tree or the cedar tree), but the full story goes back to when I was trying to decipher the etymology of the Ancient Greek word *κολοκύνθη* (= *Citrullus colocynthis*): that was circa September of 2021. The *Citrullus colocynthis* is a very viny, melon-bearing plant native to the Mediterranean basin and Asia (especially Turkey), and Nubia. The melons are bitter, not sweet. The plant resembles a common watermelon vine, but bears small, hard fruits with a bitter pulp. The vine-like stems spread in all directions for a few meters looking for something over which to climb. I found that Hesychius glossed an Ancient Greek word *κυνθάνω*, which he says was equivalent in meaning to the well-known and well-attested Ancient Greek word *κεύθω*, which meant „to cover, hide, conceal“: so I discovered the previously-unknown etymology of *κολοκύνθη* one afternoon, after researching the *κολο-* part of the word as well: I determined that *κολο*=„vine, rope, snaky root“ and so on, from the earlier more general meaning „that which turns, curves, twists“, akin to or deriving either from PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>el-* „to turn“,

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7 *Zygos* (ζυγός in current Greek and Ancient Greek means „yoke“, with many additional meanings stemming from the concepts of „paired“, „joined“, „a cross-bar or strap joining two parts“, etc., additional meanings which are not relevant to this study) refers to the mountain being seen as the joining point of two different regions. See the quote: „Arakinthos is located in the narrow gorge of Kleisoura through which the Messolonghi region is connected with the region of Agrinio“. And see also the quote: „[Arakinthos] is the natural border between the sea and the lake Trichonida“. For another even clearer example of *Zygos* being used like this, see the *Zygos* mountain in Thessaly, which is named so because of a very important (very important to that region) mountain pass that joins two regions and allows for land travel through there without climbing any mountains. So this alternate name *Zygos* for *Arakynthos* does not refer to trees or to any specific tree. In Ancient Greek ζυγία means „field maple, *Acer campestre*, referring to the way the leaves of the field-maple grow in pairs from paired stems that shoot in opposite directions from the branch, and the point where the two stems join on the branch looks similar to a yoke. The field maple was named for the same quality in Romanian, where *jugastru* is the Romanian word for the field maple, deriving from unattested Latin *\*iugaster*= „field maple“, from Latin *iugum*=„yoke“. *Zygos* as an alternate name for *Arakinthos* does not refer to maple trees however, since the explanation „joining point of two regions“ is certain, and since maple trees are not found there in a number to attract attention, if they are found there at all. Nor do I expect that there were many maple trees there in ancient times.

from which Proto-Slavic \*kōlo = "wheel, circle" derives<sup>8</sup>, or from PIE **\*(s)kel-**, "to bend, crook" from which many Ancient Greek words are considered to derive; while the -κύνθη in κολοκύνθη is a form of the verb κυνθάνω="to cover, hide, conceal", as glossed by Hesychius: so my hypothesis, which I first published here in February 2022, is that κολοκύνθη="vine+covering", because: "The vine-like stems spread in all directions for a few meters looking for something over which to climb". For more evidence of that meaning of κολο- in a number of Ancient Greek words, see Ancient Greek σκολιός (= "curved, bent, twisted, tangled, winding"), Ancient Greek κῶλον (= "limb, leg, arm"), both considered to derive from PIE **\*(s)kel-**, "to bend, crook". The Ancient Greek word κολοιός (=jackdaw) may also derive from kolo- meaning "to curve, bend", in reference to the curved beaks of corvids<sup>9</sup>; there are more Ancient Greek words that I can cite for my interpretation of the κολο- found in κολοκύνθη, and I will discuss them another time.

After I interpreted κολοκύνθη in that way, I tried out my equation κύνθη="to cover" on the mountain name Κύνθος (=Mt. Cynthus on the island of Delos): Κύνθος could have referred to a snow-covered mountain or fog/mist/cloud-covered peak, or all of the above. When I applied this equation to the mountain name Βερέκυνθος, the result was even more extraordinary and convincing: Βερέκυνθος (=Berecynthus) is a mountain located at Malaxa, on the island of Crete: trypali limestone is the dominant rock of the Berecynthos/Malaxa mountain: the mountain is part of the mountain chain known in Greece today as the White Mountains (Lefka Ori) and the Bare Mountains (Μαδάρες): bare mountains because they have scant vegetation, and the White Mountains from the perpetual white or off-white color of their peaks, because the off-white of limestone during the summer and fall interchanges with the snow that covers the peaks until late in spring. So then I thought, what if Bere=white and/or snow? Well, there is PIE \*b<sup>h</sup>erHǵ = "bright, shining", so I think that Βερέκυνθος comes from Βερέ =white/snow+ κύνθος=covered.

Then I applied my equation to the Aetolian mountain Αράκυνθος, and I found those three quotes which I quoted above, and I found additional very strong evidence which I will describe in this paper: and I'm very sure that Αράκυνθος either meant "Tree-covered" or else meant "covered" by a specific tree which was called "Ara(os)" or "Arax(os)/Arakh(os)", something like that: from the nature of the additional evidence that I found, I'm sure that this Pre-Greek word Αρά\*\*\* (=Ara\*\*\*, which meant either "tree, woods" or a specific tree) derives from an earlier "ara-" that meant "to curve, turn, twist". And I suspect that the Αρά (=Ara) that is inscribed on the Ezerovo ring is either the same word (meaning "woods" if they are the same word, unless the goddess was associated strongly with a specific tree) or else a close cognate (deriving from the same root-word) that meant "bow": either scenario demonstrating that Ara-Zea=Artemis/Bendis/Kotus/Kottuto, Goddess of the Wild Woods/Goddess of the Bow and arrow and of the moon and the hunt. Just like in the case of my etymology of the Roli- in Rolisteneas, I found this new evidence long after I published my translation of the Ezerovo ring in November of 2020. It would be quite extraordinary and strange if this was all coincidence (consider all the evidence in this paper if you haven't read this entire work yet) : I'm sure that the answer is that my translation of the ring is correct.

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8 There are a number of Ancient Greek words that derive from PIE **\*k<sup>w</sup>el-** "to turn", but they all begin either with the t- sound or the p- sound, because PIE \*k<sup>w</sup>e- becomes T and/or P in the Greek branch of IE (PIE \*k<sup>w</sup>u becomes K in Greek, but we are not dealing with a \*k<sup>w</sup>u root here): so if these kolo- words that I am speaking of derive from **\*k<sup>w</sup>el-** they would have to be post-PIE loanwords (not sure how many centuries after PIE) from a language where \*k<sup>w</sup>e became K.

9 More about this next time. Alternatively, kolo- in some cases could have been used to denote the calls/cries of corvids, but kolo- as an onomatopoeia for the cries of corvids doesn't seem likely to me, nor have I found indications to that effect.

So now if Ἀράκυνθος meant "(X)"+"covered", what is the identity of X? Does X=A:"tree in general" or B: "forest, woods"; or C: "~a specific tree as-yet-unidentified for certain"? Did it mean all three A and B and C options in different usage in the same language (for example, in this unidentified Aetolian language, Ara may have meant: "oak tree"; "tree"; and "forest, woods", as is known to have happened in some languages, as I will detail later in this work) or did it have only a specific tree meaning in Aetolia, but had all three meanings in one or more adjacent languages? Did it mean option C, a specific tree, in an unidentified Aetolian language and at the same it meant option A and B in one or more dialects of Thracian? Those quotes from those Greek websites explain why I specify the oak, the cedar and the chestnut tree: all three of those trees are mentioned in the description of which trees are found growing on the slopes of Ἀράκυνθος in abundance. From the information I found, it rather seems that the oak trees are the most abundant on Arakynthos. But maybe the mountain was not named for the most abundant trees, but instead for a tree that was more rarely found in Greece, like the cedar tree: therefore when someone in the general area back then spoke of "Arakynthos", it may have indicated that mountain which has a lot of rare cedar trees growing on its slopes: and Arakynthos was also the name of one or two other such mountains or hills in the Ancient Greek world/Pre-Greek world.

A study of numerous Ancient Greek words beginning with *ara-* points very strongly to a word *ara/arax/arak/arach/rax*="curving, bending, turning; round", meanings which fit the oak tree and the juniper tree very well, as I will detail: and a word meaning "juniper" could easily have been transferred to the cedar, as I will detail in this work. Before I detail those Ancient Greek words beginning with *ara-* which indicate such a root-word "ara/arak/arakh/arax/rax="to turn, curve, bend, twist; round" in the Ancient Greek world, I will first detail more about why a word Ara (or Arax, Arakh, Arae, etc.) with a root meaning of "to twist, curve, turn, bend; round" is likely for the oak trees and the juniper trees and the cedar trees, but rather unlikely for the chestnut trees.

First, the oak trees: Very often, oak trees do not have very high, straight trunks, but instead shorter trunks, as well as curving/bending trunks: and such oaks with shorter trunks very often have very curved branches, and for such oak trees with shorter trunks, the most striking aspect of their appearance are those very curved branches.

There are oak trees that have high and straight trunks, and such oaks with high and straight trunks probably inspired the Romanian word *stejar* ("oak tree") and the Bulgarian words *stežer*, "pole, oak tree" and *stež* ("white oak") which are probably cognate to Serbo-Croatian/Slavo-Macedonian *stožer* ("pole; pillar"); *stožer* derives from Proto-Slavic *\*stogъ*, "stack, especially a haystack; rick", which probably derives from PIE *\*stegh-*, the root from which Ancient Greek *στόχος* "pillar; pillar of brick or wood" probably derives. The Romanian *stejar* and the Bulgarian *stežer* and *stež* have a different vowel evolution as compared to *stožer*, and I have not yet found such *stežer* and *stež* words for the oak tree in other Slavic languages: for the oak tree, Slavic languages instead primarily use words

derived from Proto-Slavic *\*dǫbъ*="oak tree"; "oak wood". If absent from other Slavic languages, the *stejar/stežer* and *stež* words then are likely from Daco-Thracian<sup>10</sup>, and quite surely cognate to Proto-Slavic *\*stogъ* and Ancient Greek *στόχος*, in which case they derive from a root-meaning of "pole, pillar; that which sticks up, rises up, etc.". Another possibility is that the root-meaning also included the meaning "penis", and the root-meaning of *stejar*, *stežer* and *stež* could have been "penis", referring to the fact that acorns look quite penis-like (in Latin *glans*=acorn and penis, as well as additional related meanings; and in Ancient Greek, *balanos*="acorn, oak tree; penis" as well as additional related meanings): acorns look like the heads of uncircumcised penises, or like the small (the smallness was probably a stylization/convention agreed upon for aesthetic reasons) unerect penises usually depicted in Greek and Roman statues of nude males. In the second edition of my work on the Moesian-Thracian inscription found near Kjolmen, I demonstrated that PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>eyǵ-* ("oak tree" and "goat") certainly derives from an older meaning "penis<pointed", as explained in that second edition; and I expect that PIE *\*g<sup>w</sup>elh<sub>2</sub>* ("acorn") has the same older meaning ("penis<pointed"), as does, I expect, PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>ǵos*="beech/oak/chestnut tree"<sup>11</sup>: the beech has very pointed and three-faceted (triangular) nuts, borne in a cupule that looks very much like the cupule that houses the chestnuts on a chestnut tree; while chestnuts are not so pointed, but they are borne in cupules that have sharp and numerous spines; and for the oak, the acorns are pointed and are of a penis-like appearance as noted above.

Now for some words for oak tree that derive from a root-word meaning „to twist, curve, turn, bend“: French *chêne* („oak tree; oak wood“) from Old French *chesne/chasine/chasne*, from Vulgar Latin *\*cassanus* (attested in Medieval Latin as *casnus*), from Gaulish *cassanos* („oak tree; oak wood“), from *\*cass-*“twist“ (compare Irish *cas*, „to twist“; Old Welsh *cas*, „cord; to twist“), from Proto-Celtic *\*cassos*, „curly, twisted, gnarled, woven“. From that Gaulish word *cassanos* and from at least one variant (*\*cassicu*) derive also words for oak tree found in Occitan, Franco-Provençal, Spanish, Galician and Aragonese.

Besides the words derived from Gaulish *cassanos* and *cassicu*, I have found other words for oak trees (and for specific kinds of oak trees) that most likely derive from the

<sup>10</sup> I have identified, in one of my other works on Zenodo, the following Daco-Thracian words (in at least three different dialects) for oak tree: *eixis*, *eizis*, *oxis*, all three from PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>eyǵ-s-* "oak tree", from the older meaning of "penis" (see my work on the Kjolmen Moesian-Thracian inscription for the evidence that the older meaning was "penis" as well as "something pointed"). In one of those works, I also identified (the title of the work begins: "On the Etymologies of Kypros...") a South Thracian word *thiurdos* for "oak tree", deriving either from PIE *\*ker-* "to weave; plait; rope, string", from a more basic meaning "to turn, twist, curve": see the etymology of Gaulish *cassanos* ("oak tree") discussed in this work. The Albanian word *thur* ("to plait, braid, interweave; to fence in, enclose") derives from *\*ker-*, as does Armenian/Old Armenian *sard* ("spider") and (according to a theory of mine) perhaps Old Armenian *sard* ("cedar of Lebanon"): formally, *thiurdos* is very similar to Albanian *thur*, and also contains a D after the R as seen in Armenian *sard*. An alternative theory of mine is that *thiurdos* (still meaning "oak tree") derives from PIE *\*ker-/\*kerh<sub>2</sub>-*, source of English "horn" and Latin *cornū* (=horn), and the "oak tree" meaning would derive from the pointed acorns. I find it more likely that *thiurdos* is cognate to Albanian *thur* and Armenian *sard*, and maybe also to Ancient Greek *thyrsus*. There likely were additional Daco-Thracian words for "oak tree" (there are a number of words for oak tree in Ancient Greek, and Daco-Thracian comprised a number of kindred languages and dialects), so the Romanian *stejar* and the Bulgarian examples may be from Daco-Thracian, rather than Slavic.

<sup>11</sup> Compare Proto-Celtic *\*bekkos*="beak, snout", which is of undetermined origin.



same notion of „curved, twisted, gnarled, bent“: Galician *carballo*, Old Galician and Old Portuguese *carvallo*, Portuguese *carvalho*, Asturian *carbayu*, Galician *carba*, Asturian *carba* („brushwood“), Sardinian *carba/carva* („tree branch“), et al. have all been theorized already<sup>12</sup> to likely derive (via Iberian and maybe also Sardinian substrate languages) from PIE *\*(s)kṛ-wós*, from which Latin *curvus* („bent, curved“) derives.

Considering the Gaulish word *cassanos* and the Iberian and Sardinian words *carba/garba*, it is very likely that in the ancient Balkans (including Aetolia), there was a word, or a number of words, for oak tree that also derived from the notion of „twisted, gnarled, curved, bent“, and the Ara- in Arakynthos very likely was such a word (though I will also show that the Ara- in Arakynthos could just as likely have meant „juniper tree“, later transferring to the foreign/imported cedar trees). And because many trees have very curved, gnarled, twisted and bent branches/trunks/roots, it’s also quite likely that there was at least one ancient Balkan word for „tree“ in general that derived from that notion, as may be the case for the Ara- in Arakynthos.

Now for the evidence that the Ara- in Arakynthos could have been a word for cedar tree/cedar trees in an unidentified language/groups of languages in Ancient Greece and perhaps in parts of Thrace and Illyria: as mentioned earlier, a word meaning “juniper” could easily have been transferred to the cedar: this may have happened in the case of the word κέδρος (*kédros*), which referred to both junipers and cedars: since it is probably correct that no species of cedar are native to the Greek mainland, the older meaning of κέδρος/*kédros* (if it wasn’t a loanword from Semitic) would have been “juniper tree”, only later referring also to cedar trees<sup>13</sup>; alternatively, the word was borrowed from a Semitic word beginning with *qatr-*, such as Arabic *qatrān*, “resin, tar” with the meaning of “resin” (and maybe, in some Semitic languages/dialects, the word meant only “cedar resin”, but despite Akkadian *qatrānu* being translated as “cedar resin” by one or more translators, it’s likely that in fact it only meant “resin”, and could be applied to the resin of any tree and even non-tree plants, and so on) was borrowed from the Near East and came to mean “cedar” and “juniper” in Ancient Greek after borrowing. The etymological possibilities of κέδρος will not be discussed in this work: what is important for the present discussion is that κέδρος referred to both the juniper and the cedar, and it is important to realize that a word originally meaning “juniper” could later also be used for cedar trees, since they share a number of similarities (both are evergreens and coniferous trees with aromatic wood, aromatic resin, etc.)

There were two words for juniper in Ancient Greek that I know of/remember at the moment: ἄρκευθος=*árkeuthos*=1) juniper 2) Phoenician cedar 3) Prickly cedar), and κέδρος (*kédros*)=1) juniper 2) cedar. The word *kédros* has already been discussed above, so now ἄρκευθος and its variant ἄργετος (a Cretan variant) will be analyzed: *árkeuthos* is, as has

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12 Pittau, Massimo (2013), *La lingua dei protosardi e quella dei baschi*. And: Coromines, Joan; Pascual, José A. (1983–1991), „garabato“ entry in *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, Madrid: Gredos.

13 That the older meaning of *kédros* was „juniper“ (if *kédros* is not a loanword from the Near East) has already been theorized by a number of sources.



been previously suggested<sup>14</sup>, cognate to the Ancient Greek word ἄρκυς (árkus)="net": the explanation is this: an explanation<sup>15</sup> which may be based mostly on an Armenian example that I will detail: árkeuthos derives from the meaning of "bending, pliable, flexible" because of juniper's flexible branches used in plaiting or weaving; the Old Armenian word *gi* ("juniper tree") probably derives from the same idea: Lidén derived that Old Armenian word from PIE \*weh<sub>1</sub>y- "to twist, wind, weave, plait": the root has alternatively been reconstructed as \*wītā (by Ačařean, who gives the root the meaning of "willow" indicating that he thought it may have a root meaning different from the meaning ascribed by numerous works); \*wey(H)-t- (Martirosyan); \*wīšo- or \*weyso- or \*woyso- from \*wey-s- ("to twist, wind around") (Lidén, Pokorny, Mallory/Adams). The Ancient Greek ἄρκευθος (árkeuthos) then probably derives from PIE h<sub>2</sub>erkʷ- "bend", as noted by Pokorny (1959), and is cognate to Ancient Greek ἄρκυς (árkus)="net" and cognate to Proto-Slavic \*orkyta="willow" and "sallow tree" and "broom (the tool)" (brooms end in bending, flexible plant matter, used for sweeping). Hesychius mentions a word ἄρκηλα="egg", which is likely from ark=round; so it's even possible perhaps that ἄρκευθος and its variant ἄργετος referred to the round berries of the juniper trees. And it may be that Arakynthos=Arkeuthos: like so: if Ara="round (berry)", and "Ar(k)"="round (berry)", and kyntos="covered", and keuthos="covered"---if this is the explanation, then Arakynthos="berry-covered", referring originally to the juniper tree, but later also to the cedar tree: and this would mean that the mountain was called "Juniper/Cedar", maybe in reference to some forgotten myth involving a juniper or cedar tree on that mountain.

The first part of Latin *iuniperus* (=juniper tree), according to a new etymology of mine which I publish here, probably derives from iuni="round berry" (from the earlier meaning of "round; curved; to turn, curve, bend") rather than from "flexible, bending" (I have not seen any linguist who has thought that the "iuni-" in *iuniperus* meant "flexible, bending", but someone may have published that before), because the suffix -perus looks to me like it is the same suffix seen in the Latin word *puerperus*, known to have meant "child-bearing", with the -perus in *puerperus* known to derive from the Latin word pariō, meaning "bear, give birth, beget, generate": Latin pariō is derived<sup>16</sup> from Proto-Italic \*parjō "to bear, to give birth", which derives in turn from PIE \*perh<sub>3</sub>- "to provide" (see the previous note). I think that the -perus in *iuniperus* is indeed the same perus found in *puerperus*: therefore, "iuni" likely meant "berry", and, if Latin *iuncus* ("rush (the plant)", "reed") is a cognate to "iuni" and if "iuni" meant "berry", then the meaning of "berry" comes from the earlier meaning of "round" (the berries of junipers are round; they are actually modified pinecones that look like round, blueberry-colored berries), because Latin *iuncus* very likely derives from the earlier meanings of "to twist, wind, weave, plait, bend", since rushes were used like that just as junipers were, and the English word "rush (the plant)" and its Germanic cognates derive from PIE \*resg-, "to weave, plait". The meaning of "round" for

14 See Beekes (2010), where he mentions that the linguist Lidén has said that arkeuthos and arkus are cognates.

15 See Pokorny, Julius (1959) *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern, München: Francke Verlag, page 67-68.

16 See Rix, Helmut, editor (2001), *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben* [*Lexicon of Indo-European Verbs*] (in German), 2nd edition, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag; and see De Vaan, Michiel (2008) *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages* (Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series; 7) Leiden, Boston: Brill.

“iuni” I derive from “to curve, turn, bend, twist”<sup>17</sup>, which would have been the root-meaning of the root-word from which the *iun-* in *iuncus* and the *iuni* part of *iuniperus* derive from according to my theory; that root-word has been reconstructed<sup>18</sup> as an acrostic *n*-stem PIE noun *\*h<sub>1</sub>óy-n-* ~ *\*h<sub>1</sub>éy-n-s*, with the Proto-Germanic *\*ainaz*/*\*jainjaz* deriving from PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>oy-n-yo-*, which probably began as a collective formation. From *\*h<sub>1</sub>óy-n-* would have derived PIE *\*yoy-ni-* leading to (with a suffix attached) Proto-Italic *\*joinikos*, the expected Proto-Italic form of Latin *iuncus*; *\*yoy-ni-* would have also been able to develop into the *iuni-* seen in *iuniperus*. Another cognate may be Hittite *ejan-*, “(a kind of) evergreen tree (yew?)”: scholars are still not sure about the meaning of Hittite *ejan-*, but as my quote indicates, they think the word referred to a kind of evergreen tree, possibly the yew tree: to which I add, possibly the juniper tree? Either meaning would fit my theory: because yew trees were also very well known for their flexible wood (see the meanings of PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-* from which English “yew” derives: the meanings of PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-* were: 1) yew tree 2) willow tree 3) grapes, vine<sup>19</sup>) and yew trees were preferred for making bows (for arrows) in many parts of the ancient world, therefore Hittite *ejan-* may have literally meant “bow” as in “the tree used for making bows”, and the “bow” meaning of *ejan-* would easily derive from “to curve, bend”; or *ejan-* meant “bending, flexible” referring to the wood of the tree; alternatively, Hittite *ejan-* referred to the round red berries of yew trees (they’re toxic). Middle Irish *ain* (“rushes, reeds”) may also be a cognate. So Latin *iuniperus* according to my theory meant “berry-bearing”<sup>20</sup> which makes great sense for the name/word for the juniper tree. A variant of PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-* (=yew tree; willow; grape, vine) is likely the source of *\*h<sub>1</sub>óy-n-* ~ *\*h<sub>1</sub>éy-n-s*, from which the *iuni-* in *iuniperus* and the *iun-* in *iuncus* could derive.

So now that all this has been detailed, one can see more clearly why it is very likely for a word for „cedar“ tree to derive from the root-meaning of „to curve, bend, round“: because the word Ara- (or Arax/Araxos/Arak/Arakos, Arae, etc.) would have had the earlier meaning of „juniper tree“, later also referring to the imported/foreign cedar trees; and the older meaning of „juniper tree“ would have referred either to the flexibility of the juniper used in plaiting/weaving, or to the round berries. So Arakynthos could have meant „Oak-covered“ or „Cedar-covered“ or „Tree-covered“, or even „Berry-covered(=Juniper/Cedar)“, but probably not „Chestnut tree-covered“, because, though

17 Whether Ancient Greek ἰυνξ (*iunx*)=“the wryneck bird, *Jynx torquilla*” derives from “to turn, twist, curve” is unclear: the bird is remarkable for two or three things: being able to turn its head all the way around (hence, “wryneck”), and letting out a loud type of bird-cry, as well as a loud hissing: when threatened, they twist their heads back and hiss. The previous etymologies derive its name from Ancient Greek *iúzō*, “shout, yell”: I have not had time to study whether it derives from there or from the hypothetical *\*iun*=“to turn, twist, curve”. Both are very likely. The advantage of the previous etymology is that I have not yet confirmed that there was a root-word *\*iun*=“to turn, twist, curve”, that’s still hypothetical.

18 See Kroonen, Guus (2013), “\*ainja-”, in *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic* (Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series; 11), Leiden, Boston: Brill; and Orel, Vladimir (2003), “\*jainjaz” in *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology*, Leiden: Brill. Neither Kroonen nor Orel state whether or not the root meaning was as I describe in my work; I may be the first to describe/identify/hypothesize those meanings: I cite these works for the reconstruction of the sonic/verbal form of the root-words.

19 Whether Hittite *ejan-* can derive from *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-*, I don’t currently know, because I have not checked on the sound-rules for a Hittite word deriving from *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-*.

20 Alternatively, *iuni-* could have had the root-meaning of „pointed“, in which case *iuniperus* meant „needle/spine-bearing“, which also fits. And there are words for rush plants (and many words for reed plants) that derive from „pointed“. And „needle/spine-bearing“ works for yew trees as well as for juniper trees. Of course, we’re talking about types of pine needles, not necessarily actually sharp-pointed, but having that appearance more or less.

chestnuts are contained in round cupules (one cupule contains one to seven nuts according to the different species/varieties/cultivars), those cupules are very spiny (and the spines are very sharp-pointed), and I would expect some words for the chestnut tree to derive from „spiny“, but not from „round“: the chestnuts themselves are not round, though those spiny cupules are: but those spines on the cupules steal the attention away from the roundness of the cupules. My theory, which I first publish here, is that Ancient Greek κάστανά =“chestnut tree“ derives from a stem kast- that meant „something pointed; sharp; to cut“: from this stem would also derive (according to my theory) Ancient Doric Greek κάστον=“wood“, in one of at least three ways (if not from a combination): A) from the earlier meaning of “that which is cut, chopped”; B) from a word for a specific tree, such as the oak, developing the additional meaning of “wood” (as often happened in IE languages), and the “oak” word would derive from “pointed” because of the pointed acorns; C) or from this semantic development: “wood<branch/tree<shoot/sprout<something pointed” (with “wood” being the newest meaning, “something pointed” being the oldest), which however doesn’t seem as likely as options A and B. There is also Sanskrit kāṣṭha=“wood”, already thought to probably be cognate to κάστον (and κάστον is already thought to perhaps be cognate to κάστανά, but no one has identified/described the root-meaning that I am describing). Armenian kask=“chestnut tree” is most likely another cognate. I am looking for/trying to reconstruct a root-word that would fit all those words, so the PIE root-word cannot be \*kés- “to cut”, from where the Latin verb castrō (=to prune; dock; amputate; castrate) derives, because initial PIE \*k becomes ś in Sanskrit (see Sanskrit śastra=“sword, dagger” and śastrām-, śāstram-, “cutting tool, knife, weapon”) and becomes s in Armenian. The hypothetical ancient (PIE or non-IE<sup>21</sup>) root-word \*ǵhasto-“branch ~ spear, sharp spine” (also reconstructed as \*ǵhasdʰo-) would not work either, because initial PIE \*ǵh would yield initial Kh- in Ancient Greek, H in Sanskrit, and Dz and Z in Armenian. Most likely then the root-word began with k or with kw, not with k̄. Compare also Albanian kashtë=“straw” and Sardinian castia=“straw(?)”, which could both be from kast=“pointed”. There are quite more possible cognates, such as the kustum- in Sanskrit kustumbari and the Costo- in Costoboci: for more about those and other possible cognates, see my work on kustumbari available on Zenodo (though it needs an update, which is upcoming). Though the root-word and source language(s) of κάστανά =“chestnut tree” and κάστον=“wood” are not clear, the root-meaning of “spiky/spiny” for κάστανά is extremely likely, and the three different scenarios that I described for the development of the “wood” meaning in Ancient Doric Greek κάστον are also very likely. As noted earlier, PIE \*bʰeh₂ǵos (from which derives at least one word for chestnut tree, Albanian “bung” which means both oak tree and chestnut tree) most likely had the earlier meaning of “pointed”. And the root-word (whether PIE or Non-IE or Eteo-IE) from which κάστανά derives was most likely a variant of \*ǵhasto-“branch ~ spear, sharp spine”, a variant which began with the K sound, instead of ǵh.

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21 more recent linguistic works conclude that \*ǵhast(o)/\*ǵhasdʰ(o)- was not a PIE root, but instead most of the various words once thought to derive from that root are now thought to derive from unattested non-IE words which were cognates of each other but had varying sonic form, explaining the irregular phonetic variation in the presumably cognate attested descendant words. See Lubotsky, Alexander (2004), „Avestan siiazd-, Sanskrit sedh-, Latin cēdere“; De Vaan, Michiel (2008); Kroonen, Guus (2013).

So all this evidence that I have detailed indicates that the Ara in Arakynthos (if it didn't mean „berry“, as noted earlier) most likely meant either: A) „woods/forest“ in general; B) „tree“ in general C) „oak tree“ specifically; D) junipers and cedar trees; or E) both A and C; or F) A, B and C; or G) both D and A; or H) both D and B; or I) the meanings D, A and B all present in one language (and the options get even more numerous and complicated if we factor in the „berry“ meaning). Words for „oak tree“ sometimes lead to words that mean „woods/forest“ and also „tree“: see Proto-Slavic \*dǫbrava=“oak wood, oak grove” and also “forest in general/woods in general”, deriving from Proto-Slavic \*dǫbъ (=oak tree); another example is Ottoman Turkish *meşe* (=forest) which derives from a Persian word that meant “oak tree”. In Ancient Greek δρῦς (*drûs*) meant “tree; timber; oak”; and I recall other examples as well. And since juniper/cedar words often come from „bending/flexible“, they could have had a cognate meaning „tree in general>woods/forest“, with „tree“ deriving from „to twist, turn, bend, curve“, referring to the branches and trunks and roots of many trees. Note that I do not expect that Ara\*\*=“pointed“, so if Ara/arax/arak/arakh/arae meant „oak tree“, the word would most likely derive from „to curve, turn, bend“, as does Gaulish *cassanos*, and probably also Iberian *carba*.

Earlier I mentioned that I will discuss numerous Ancient Greek words beginning with *ara-* which point to a root-word *ara*=“curving, bending, turning”, and which provide good reason to believe that my interpretation of the *Αρά* in *Αράκυνθος* is correct; the first such word that I will discuss is ἄρακος=*Lathyrus annuus*, a species of vetch : this ἄρακος word very likely comes from *Ar*=“to curve, turn, twist”: either because the vetch plant is vine-like: it twists, turns and curves, bends; or because the vetch plant is very stringy-looking and slender. The English word „vetch“ (=the vetch plants) derives from Latin *vicia* (=the vetch plants), and Latin *vicia*, according to the already established and correct etymology, derives from PIE \*weyk- “to curve, bend” or alternatively from PIE \*weh<sub>1</sub>y “to twist, wind, weave”. Besides ἄρακος=*Lathyrus annuus*, there is also ἄραχος=the wild vetch, *Vicia sibthorpii*; ἀράχιδνα=*Lathyrus amphicarpos*, another species of vetch; and ἄραξ (=arax/araks) is a synonym for *Lathyrus annuus*, mentioned above. The stringy/slender explanation is indicated not only by the appearance of vetch plants and by the etymology of Latin *vicia*, but also by Galician *brenza*=1) “twine (strong thread)”, 2) “vetch”, and this Galician word comes from a word of Celtic origin whose semantic range is just like Ancient Greek ἀραιός=“thin, narrow, slight, slender”<sup>22</sup>, which, since it has no established etymology, may derive from the earlier meaning of “string, thread”, in turn from the earlier meaning of “to turn, curve, bend, twist”. This is made likely by the fact that ἀραιός also meant “flank, belly”, and there is no established etymology for the word having these meanings either. That word is a variant/inflection of ἀραιά=“belly”, of undetermined etymology. I think these two belly (and flank) words come from “to curve, bulge; round”.

<sup>22</sup> Further meanings were: „infrequent“, „scanty“, „few and far between“, „not dense, of loose texture, porous“, „with intervals, intermittent“. I suspect that all these meanings come from „thin“: for example, thin hair as opposed to dense; thus the „thin“ meaning led to „scant“, „sparse“, „few“, “intermittent“, and voila, there we have all those meanings explained as coming from „thin, slender“; and the meanings „thin, slender“ I think came from the earlier meaning of „string, thread“, from the earlier meaning of „to turn, twist, curve“. Compare the semantics of that Celtic word from which Galician *brenza* derives, and the semantics of its descendant words; and also the semantic development of parallel examples in Indo-European languages and other languages. And consider the other meanings of ἀραιός: „flank, belly“, and such similarity to those words for „bowl“, etc.



Alternatively, all these vetch words derive from a reference to the often round-shaped leguminous fruits: whether from round fruits or twisting vines or from “stringy/string-like”, all three of those derivations fit my theory. The “round shape” etymology could also explain Ancient Greek ῥάξ (genitive ῥάγος)/ ῥώξ (genitive ῥωγός) which meant “grape”, “berry”, “fingertips” (because fingertips have that bulge on the underside, so this is a reference to the balls of the fingertips, maybe not to the actual tips: unless the root-meaning was not “round” but rather “pointed”, since grape clusters slim down to a narrow tip); alternatively, those Ancient Greek grape words could be from a reference to the twisting vine<sup>23</sup>, only later shifting to the grapes; or from a reference to the way grape clusters were harvested sometimes, with a hooked blade/knife/cutting tool (see the etymology of the French-derived English word “grape”), and such a lost word for a hooked-blade tool would likely also derive from “to curve, bend” (or from “pointed/sharp; to cut”); or the Ancient Greek grape words could derive from a meaning of “juicy”<sup>24</sup>; or from a meaning of “sweet”<sup>25</sup>. Given the strong evidence for the viny or alternatively the stringy etymology for the vetch words, and the good-enough possibility for the “round leguminous fruit” etymology, I do not think that the vetch words derive from ἀρᾶσσω, “to beat, strike”, which would be a reference to mashing legumes in order to make paste from them: I have not seen anyone posit such an etymology, but I mention it here to be thorough: in many of its conjugations, the word ἀρᾶσσω takes the form ἀράξ- with various suffixes and ἀραχθ- with various suffixes; nor do I think that ῥάξ and ῥώξ derive from the meaning of “crushed”, though grapes are crushed and stomped on to make wine. I have not seen anyone posit such an etymology for those grape words, but I mention that to be thorough. The meanings of PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>eyHw-* (=yew tree; willow; grape, vine), a root which for sure had the root-meaning of “to turn, curve, bend, twist; round”, shows that the theory that ῥάξ and ῥώξ derive from the meaning of “round” is very likely, given also the similar forms in Ancient Greek that very likely derive from “to turn, curve, bend, twist; round”.

The Illyrian toponym *Ragusa* very likely derives from a reference to the curve of the land-mass on which much of Ragusa is situated, and/or to the curve of the bay where Ragusa is located.

Compare ἀραιά=“belly” and ἀραιός=“belly, flank” to a gloss from Hesychius, where he says that ἀράη=“bowl”, as well as ἀράκη=“bowl”; see also ἄρακις=“bowl, a round/circular pan”, ἀράκης=“bowl; a round/circular pan” and ἄροκλον=“bowl; a round/circular pan”. Athenaeus of Naucratis says that “ἀράκη=bowl” is an Aeolian word: I will have to check whether Athenaeus was referring to the Aeolian Greek tribe/dialect (a

23 See Persian *raz*=“vine“, usually cited as a likely cognate, but it has no etymology, just as ῥάξ and ῥώξ do not have a definite etymology, only various theories, none of which have ruled out the others.

24 Two works (one by Vladimir Orel) have proposed that ῥάξ and ῥώξ derive from a PIE *\*sróh<sub>2</sub>gs*=“berry”: if such a word existed, I notice that it looks a lot like PIE *\*srew-* “to flow” (neither Orel nor the other works noticed that similarity; but quite likely there was no such word as *\*sróh<sub>2</sub>gs*=“berry”).

25 I expect that the meaning „sweet“ has sometimes developed from the older meaning of „pointed“, as is known to be the case for many words having to do with kinds of taste: words that mean „sour“, „acid“, „bitter“, „pungent“, „spicy“ and „hot“. That is indeed the etymology of „spicy“, „bitter“, „acid“, „pungent“, and no doubt also of the PIE root from which „sour“ derives. The „sweet“ explanation would include grapes as well as probably peas (sweet peas) and from there pea-like legumes even if they aren’t as sweet, just because they look similar.



Greek tribe and dialect that originated from Thessaly), or to the inhabitants of the Aeolian islands off the northern coast of Sicily, inhabited largely by Tyrrhenians in ancient times.

Both scenarios are likely: that “ἀράκη=bowl” was Aeolian Greek or Tyrrhenian, since Hesychius notes a word ἄρακος that meant “hawk/falcon”, and he says that this ἄρακος meaning “hawk, falcon” is a Tyrrhenian word<sup>26</sup>; though it would not surprise me to find such a word in Thessaly as well. This ἄρακος meaning “hawk/falcon” is identical in sonic-form and spelling to the ἄρακος word that meant *Lathyrus annuus*, a species of vetch. It’s very likely, as I will show, that the ἄρακος word meaning “hawk/falcon” derives from the way hawks/falcons so often circle in the sky, so ἄρακ- in this instance means “circle”, from a root-word meaning of “to curve, twist, bend; circle; round”: this word for a hawk/falcon could have been further established/popularized by the curved beaks, curved talons, and even the curved wing-tip feathers of many hawks/falcons: but no further element was needed to establish the usage, I think. See Ancient Greek κίρκος=1) “circle, ring” 2) “a type of hawk or falcon” (explanation: because they often circle in the sky) 3) “rower” (explanation: because of the circular movement of rowing, or perhaps more likely because many rowers were forced to row and were held in place by circular irons attached to them) 4) “a type of wolf” (explanation: this meaning is attested in Oppian’s *Cynegetica* 3.304, where he is writing of a type of wolf who is swifter than others and who is called κίρκος as well as being called by another bird of prey name, so obviously this swift type of wolf is likened to a hawk/falcon and other swift birds of prey) 5) “a type of stone” (explanation: little doubt that a type of stone with circular patterns on it is being referred to, such as the ocean jasper or the Dalmatian stone, or a number of others) 6) “hē toū aigeírou blástēsis”=“sprouting of the black poplar”: likely a reference to the curved long catkins that grow on black poplars: in any case, compare the word κίρκος ranging from hawk to the plant kingdom to the word ἄρακος ranging from the hawk to the plant kingdom. And this etymology gives us a clearer picture of why Circe (Κίρκη) was called Circe/ Κίρκη: because the circular flying behavior of hawks and falcons and other birds of prey probably caused superstitious dread in many/some ancient people at various times (but not for all people), and so we find that such birds were sometimes associated with sorcery in ancient Greece and elsewhere; also an analogy was made with the circling flying, and the circles and binding spells (binding was often thought of as an engirdling ring) of the sorcerers and wizards. There were other aspects of such birds of prey that made them sources of such beliefs, but that is outside the scope of this work.

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26 And „arac“ is believed by a number of Etruscanists to be an Etruscan word that meant „hawk“. And „arim“ is a word believed by a number of Etruscanists to be an Etruscan word that meant „monkey“: if so, „arim“ could well derive from Ar=“tree“, since I think all monkeys (in contrast to a number of apes) dwell mostly in trees; or, less likely, it could derive from a reference to their curved tails (maybe „im“ meant „tail“: Ar+im). Of course, it may be a foreign word adopted by the Etruscans, or it may have meant something else, not „monkey“ (have not yet researched that Etruscan word myself, so it may be misidentified: or it may be correctly defined).

Besides the example of κίρκος<sup>27</sup>, I have found much additional evidence in support of such a derivation for ἄρακος="hawk, falcon". So I do not assume that the ἄρακος that meant „hawk/falcon“ and the ἄρακος that meant “vetch” and the ἀράκη that means “bowl; a round circular pan” come from different root-words: very likely all three come from one root-word, which has the root-meaning that I described earlier: observe these following words which show examples of words for various birds, including raptors, crows, vultures and other kinds, which derive from a root-meaning of “curved”: Old Armenian *angl* means “vulture” as well as “the handles of a pot or basket” (which are curved), and derives from PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>enk-* “to curve, bend”. Ancient Greek κορώνη which had a number of meanings including “crow” (the curved beak, plus they sometimes circle in the sky as well) and “a type of sea-bird, perhaps the shearwater bird” (the tip of the shearwater bird’s upper beak is curved like a hawk’s beak); all meanings of κορώνη are known to derive from PIE *\*(s)ker-*, “to turn ,bend”.

There are a number of other known examples of this phenomenon, but I want to add here one example from my own theories as well: Hesychius mentions βείρακες, a plural word meaning “hawks, falcons”; he also mentions βείριξ meaning “deer”, βειρόν meaning “shaggy, hairy, thick with leaves, such as a bushy region, a dense copse/woods” and βειρακή meaning “rapacious, thievish”: these four are the only known words in the Ancient Greek vocabulary that begin with βειρ-, and there are none that have the long E instead of the short E seen/heard in βειρ-. In another work of mine, also available on Zenodo, I derived βείρακες from a hypothetical βειρ- meaning “curved, bent, twisting” referring to the circling flights<sup>28</sup> and the curved beaks of hawks/falcons; I derived βείριξ from the same root-word, referring to the curved antlers of deer; I derived βειρόν from the same root-word, with “curved, bent, twisting” leading to “shaggy curly hair”>“shaggy hair/hairy” and “curved, bent, twisting” leading to “a bush/bushy region/copse with many twisting and tangled branches and leaves on those twisting and tangled branches”; and I derived βειρακή meaning “rapacious, thievish” from the \*βείραξ word that meant “hawk, falcon”, which itself derives from \*βειρ-“to curve, twist, bend”---according to my theory, which accounts very well for all four of the words glossed by Hesychius: even the semantic development from “to curve, curl” to “shaggy, hairy, furry” is well-established as having happened even in Proto-Indo-European times in at least one example that I know of, and already noted in the standard PIE works: see PIE *\*gow-no-s* (“furry, shaggy”) as well as PIE *\*gow-ro-s* (“lock of hair”) deriving from PIE *\*gew*, “to curve, bend, arch, vault”.

There are other bird words which are already known to derive from the idea of “to curve, turn, twist, bend” (sometimes even in reference to the twisting flights of many birds), but I have given enough examples for this work. Now I will address the similarity of ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) to Ancient Greek ἱέραξ (hiérāx), Doric ἰάραξ (hiārax), Ionic ἰρηξ

27 I reject any theory that derives Κίρκος from an onomatopoeic term meant to imitate the cries of hawks/falcons: I don’t know if any linguist has posited that, but I wouldn’t be surprised if someone has. Even the word κρέξ referring to a long-legged crane or a crane-like bird is likely not onomatopoeic: it seems to me like it could derive from “crossed” or “bent” or “crooked”, referring to how such birds often bend/cross their long slender legs. If κρέξ is onomatopoeic, then it has no relation to Κίρκος.

28 It seems that I had forgotten to talk about the circling flight behavior as the primary etymological source for these words: even though that occurred to me years ago as well as during the time of formulating my theory and writing my notes.

(ἴρῆξ), which also mean “hawk, falcon” and are themselves of unclear/unestablished etymology. I have not found any work that says that ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) is cognate to Ancient Greek ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx), Doric ἱᾱράξ (hiārax), Ionic ἴρηξ (írēx): and my own current opinion is that they are not: and I have no preference about whether the etymology of ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx), Doric ἱᾱράξ (hiārax), and Ionic ἴρηξ (írēx) involves a meaning of “curved” (if deriving from “curved”, it would most likely be a reference to the circling behavior of hawks/falcons in the sky). Beekes (2010) derives ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx), Doric ἱᾱράξ (hiārax), Ionic ἴρηξ (írēx) ultimately from PIE \*weyh<sub>1</sub>, “to chase, pursue, hunt”; but as Beekes details, that derivation is not a smooth one due to a number of factors which he describes (see Beekes 2010). Leaving aside linguistic problems and addressing only the semantics: semantically Beekes’ etymology of hiérāx (and its variants) is very possible, since words for birds of prey often do come from the meanings of “snatcher”<sup>29</sup>, “thief”, “grasper”, “grabber”, “taker”, “raptor”, etc., which are similar but of course not identical to the notions of “chasing, pursuing, hunting” (whether there are any words for birds of prey in any language which derive from the notions of “pursuer, chaser, hunter”, I don’t remember; I will look for such examples soon though). While ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx) and its variants may derive from PIE \*weyh<sub>1</sub>, “to chase, pursue, hunt”, I have not seen anyone claim that ἄρακος derives from PIE \*weyh<sub>1</sub>, nor do I think it does: and if hiérāx derives from PIE \*weyh<sub>1</sub>, “to chase, pursue, hunt” it would not impact the etymology of ἄρακος any more than it would impact the etymology of κίρκος = “hawk, falcon”.

Given the evidence discussed above, I find it most likely that ἄρακος derives from the meaning of “circler”, not from “grasper”, “snatcher”, “taker”, “hunter”, etc.<sup>30</sup>; nor do I think that ἄρακος refers to the cries/sounds of the hawks/falcons, though many words for hawks/falcons do refer to their cries/sounds<sup>31</sup>. So I don’t expect that ἄρακος (hawk, falcon)

29 See my Beirakes discussion however where I argue that in the case of βειρακή the meanings “rapacious, thievish” were not primary but instead developed from the Beriakes/\*βείραξ word that meant “hawks, falcons/hawk, falcon” which in turn actually derived from Beir=“to curve, bend”: referring to the circling flight behavior, and secondarily, tertiarily, etc., maybe also to the curved beaks, talons, and many of the wing feathers and tail feathers. And I described those other Hesychius glosses on which I base my theory.

30 When I was first formulating my theory about ἄρακος (hawk, falcon), the biggest competitor at the time was the seeming possibility that ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) could derive from a root-word meaning “to snatch, grab, take, steal”, since I knew that a number of words for hawk/falcon/bird of prey derive from that notion in various languages. But quite a number of words for hawk/falcon deriving from “circling; to turn, curve, bend” as well. While many others derive from an onomatopoeic word that imitates their cries. If someone wants to, they can publish a work arguing that ἄρακος in the sense of “hawk, falcon” derives from “snatcher”, from a root-word meaning “to hold”: and they can argue that ἀράκη in the sense of “bowl” (and those other bowl words mentioned earlier) derives from “that which holds/contains” (but that meaning really does not fit the meaning “a round pan” seen in ἀράκτης, ἄρακις, ἄροκλον etc., a meaning which clearly and very strongly indicates “circular”: nor is it likely for the meaning of “bowl” to shift to “a flat round pan”) and they can argue that ἀραιά in the sense of “belly” derives from the older meaning of “bag” that later shifted to “stomach, belly”, and that the bag meaning comes from “that which holds”. I’m not arguing that, and I don’t think that is the case. No one has mentioned this idea to me; no one has emailed me about any of this yet. I’m offering material for those who want to try a different angle to see whether it leads to anything: just be sure to cite my work, no plagiarism: plagiarism will not do you good.

31 Some words for hawks/falcons/eagles (and other birds of bird of prey with a sharp-sounding call) might derive from a root that meant „sharp/pointed“, referring to the sharp quality of the sound; and/or some words for birds with a sharp point on their beaks (and sharp talons) could derive from „sharp/pointed“; and since eagles, hawks and falcons and many other birds of prey have very sharp vision, that also could lead to some words for such birds deriving from „sharp/pointed“. In my second edition of the work on the Kjolmen inscription, I described my theory that Ancient Greek αἰγυπίος (vulture) derives from a meaning of „sharp-faced“ or „penis-looking“, since vulture heads and necks

and ἄρακος (vetch) are homonyms with different etymologies, given the words ἀράκη=bowl, ἀραιά="belly", and given the evidence of κίρκος and all the other data cited<sup>32</sup>.

The Ancient Greek word ἀρίς="bow-drill", "auger", and has no etymology, and no Indo-European etymology. I'm pretty sure that it is from *ar*="to turn, curve, twist". And so is, I'm pretty sure, Ancient Greek ἄρον=the plant *Arum italicum*: plants of that sort were also called δρακόντιον (= "little dragon/little snake") in Ancient Greek, because the prominent spadix that sticks out of the flower was likened to a snake. That ἀρίς and ἄρον have the same etymology is shown by the fact that one of the definitions of ἀρίς was δρακόντιον μικρά, a plant related to *Arum italicum* which has the prominent spadix sticking out of the flower as well. So in other words Aron/Aris was a lost Pre-Greek word for snake/dragon (no doubt one of several or more), deriving from "to turn, twist, curve, bend".

In another recent work of mine<sup>33</sup> I published an etymology of Ancient Greek ἀράχνη (arachne) and ἀράχνης (arachnes) where I posited that arachne and arachnes are a combination of ara+chne(s) (alternatively, of ar+achne(s)), with ara/ar="to revolve, spin", while chne/achne="spike; something pointed": see the meanings of Ancient Greek ἄχνη = "anything exuded out", which I'm sure is from an earlier set of meanings „to issue out;

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are reminiscent of a penis. It could also have meant „sharp-eyed“, referring to their vision, especially since in Ancient Macedonian Greek, αἰγίτοψ meant „eagle“. In my second edition of the work on the Kjolmen inscription, I explained how all those meanings are probably a folk-etymology reworking of PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>rgi-pth<sub>2</sub>-yó-s*, which probably meant "straight-flying" (if not "circular-flying"), but likely the original meaning was lost and the words were reshaped to fit what they imagined that word meant, reshaped so that Arg- became Aig- and the second element reshaped to be like the Greek word ΟΨ (=face, appearance, eye): in that work I showed that certainly Aig meant "pointed" in Ancient Greek. I do not expect that ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) derives from "pointed", nor from "to snatch", nor from "to dart, spring" nor from any onomatopoeic rendering of their cries. There's too much evidence pointing to the "circling" etymology.

32 In this note I will describe an alternative theory for ἄρακος (hawk, falcon): note the similarity of ἄρακος to PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>érō*="eagle/large bird", and to PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er*, "to rise, spring"; so perhaps PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>érō*="eagle/large bird" derives from PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er*, "to rise, spring": because this semantic progression seems possible: "to rise/spring" leading to one or more words that came to mean "to rise into the air; to spring into the air", later developing into "to fly/to be up on high" (PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er*- is the root-word that ὄρος (óros), the Ancient Greek word for "mountain; hill; mountain-chain" is known to derive from); see how even the laryngeal sound is identical in both roots: *\*h<sub>3</sub>*. And ἄρακος in the meaning of "hawk, falcon" could derive from either PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>érō*="eagle/large bird" via an unknown language or from PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er*, "to rise, spring", via an unknown language, later being picked up by at least some Ancient Greeks, then later in Hellenistic times it appears in a Hesychius gloss as a Tyrrhenian word. Even if supposing such an etymology, ἄρακος in the meaning of "hawk, falcon" could still be a cognate to *ara*="tree" or "oak tree" or "cedar" if any of those meanings for *ara* ("tree", "oak tree", "cedar") developed from PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er*, "to rise, spring", instead of from a root-word that meant "curved". The Latin word *arbor* (tree) is considered by most linguists to derive from PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>erd<sup>h</sup>-*, "upright, high; to increase, grow", and PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>erd<sup>h</sup>-* is a combination of PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>er* (see above) and PIE *\*(é)-d<sup>h</sup>(h<sub>1</sub>)eti*, a suffix which forms resultative verbs. It's also possible that ἄρακος derives from a Non-IE ἄρα(κ)- stem that meant "to snatch, grasp, take, seize", in which case it would probably not be cognate to any words for tree nor to any words for any specific tree; and if ἄρακος derives from an onomatopoeic "ἄρακ" used to imitate somehow the calls/cries of hawks/falcons, then again it would not be a cognate to the tree words. But the chances are pretty good that ἄρακος in the meaning of "hawk, falcon" is a cognate to the Ara- in Arakynthos, one way or another, just as the ἄρακος word that means "vetch" is very likely a cognate to the Ara- in Arakynthos, one way or another. The sonic similarity between ἄρακος ("hawk; falcon") and Sumerian *arak* ("stork") is very likely to be a coincidence; for example, the Sumerian *arak* word likely denotes "white" (compare PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>erǵ*="white, argent, glittering" or some other quality seen in storks but not in hawks/falcons (there are a number of white feathers on most hawks/falcons, but few of them are mostly white). The Armenian word for stork, *aragil*, is usually considered to be a cognate of Sumerian *arak*=stork. To return to PIE *\*h<sub>3</sub>érō*="eagle/large bird", it may even derive from a Pre-PIE word or PIE substrate word that meant "circle; to curve, turn" referring to how eagles often circle in the sky.



radiate out; project out; a beam; a ray; something pointed, for example a spike“, from Ach=“pointed; sprouting; protruding; issuing out; radiating out“. And the two words together in this scenario---ar(a)+(a)chne(s)---made a new word that meant “a spindle”<sup>34</sup>, the spider being thus likened to a spindle used to spin out thread. I think that Ach- with those meanings described above was a Pre-Greek word, and it’s quite likely the source of the name Ἀχιλλεύς (Achilleus/Achilles): the name could have meant “Spear-man”, “Radiant”, “Striker” or “Slayer”, and could also have suggested all of those meanings at once. And I think that the river name Ἀχελώϊος/Ἀχελῷος derives from there as well, because that river name probably meant „white“ (see this quote about the same river Achelous: „Its waters are of a whitish yellow or cream colour, whence it derives a later name of *Aspropotamo* or the White river, and to which Dionysius Periegetes probably alludes in the epithet ἀργυροδίνης“=argurodines) , and „white“ would be referring to the white waters of the most famous of the rivers that were called by that name, the one that is the longest river in Greece. The meaning „white“ developed from the meanings „bright, radiant“.

The ἄχνη word is akin to the Ancient Greek words χνοάω, χνόη, χνόος, κνέφαλλον (“plucked wool, wool that is torn off”, probably from the “exuded”, “emanated” meaning), κνάω (=“to scratch, scrape” because things that are prickly and pointed---like the nettle plant---cause scratching and scraping), Κνήμις (=a range of mountains forming the boundary between Phokis and Lokris), κνηκός (=“pale yellow, tawny“), and PIE \*knh<sub>2</sub>ónks (=“honey“; if correct, the root-meaning was „golden; bright; radiant“ which is usually part of the same semantic range as „pointed; spike; ray; beam“<sup>35</sup>), and probably also κνήμη=“shin, tibia”<sup>36</sup>. For the word ἄχνη (=“something that is exuded out, emanated out”) used in a compound, see Ancient Greek ἀλοσάχνη (=“sea-foam”), where ἀλοσ=“sea” and ἄχνη=“exuded out”: thus meaning “sea-foam”, exuded by the sea. I was also considering that ἀράχνη (arachne) and ἀράχνης (arachnes) could have meant “thread-exuded”, since words for “thread, string” are known to often come from a root-word meaning “to turn, curve, twist”: so maybe ar(a) in ἀράχνη (arachne) and ἀράχνης (arachnes) meant “thread”.

Since the time when I published the last version of that paper (the last version so far, but not the final version), I have found that for sure arachne/arachnes meant “spindle”, however most likely (or quite likely) the portion “achne(s)/chne(s)” did not mean “spike” in the case of ἀράχνη (arachne) and ἀράχνης (arachnes). I found that ἀράχνη besides meaning “spider” (and “spider web/web”<sup>37</sup>) was

33 The title of this other work begins, „On the Etymologies of Kinnabari...“ and is also available on Zenodo.

34 See that other work of mine for an explanation of why „rotating-stick“/“rotating-spike(d-stick)“ is a good word for a spindle: or else, if needed, do some research about spindles. Besides the fact that spindles are usually pointed, words that mean „stick“ often derive from a root that meant „spike“ and/or from a root that meant „to project out/issue out/something long and narrow“.

35 Of course, there are a number of possibilities for the root-meaning of PIE \*knh<sub>2</sub>ónks=honey, such as: a root-meaning of “to flow, trickle, ooze”: but sometimes words meaning “to flow, trickle, ooze” come from the earlier meaning “to run, move, to be aroused” which often come the earlier meaning of “pricked”, from the earlier meaning of “pointed”. Likewise, in a previous note I explained how it’s likely that words meaning “sweet” can derive from “pointed”.

36 Words for „tibia“ often come from a root that meant „something long/pointed“, and so I suspect the Κνήμη does not derive from a supposed PIE \*kónh<sub>2</sub>m which seems like i’s based on few supposed cognates. My new etymology is supported by Κνήμις, the name of that mountain range, and those other words with Kn- in Ancient Greek that I cite above; in any case, PIE \*kónh<sub>2</sub>m would probably derive from the same semantic and would likely be a cognate to the word-set that I am describing.

37 And from the meaning „spider-web“/“web“ developed the meaning of „thin lines“ attested at least once in Ancient Greek for arachne/arachnes.



also another name for the σφονδύλιον (=sphondulion) plant, which is *Heraclea sphondylium*: the plant was called *sphondulion* because it reminded numerous ancient people of the vertebrae bones: σφόνδυλος in Ancient Greek meant “vertebrae”, but especially the cervical vertebrae (cervical vertebrae=the vertebrae of the neck): σφόνδυλος also meant “joint” (e.g. the joint where the human arm or the neck meets the body: many body joints are rotating joints), tambour (a small circular drum) and the whorl of a spindle, as well as the whorl of a flower. The Ancient Greek word σφόνδυλος derives (as I theorize, if no one else has before me) from a root *sphond-* that meant “to turn, curve, twist, spin, revolve, rotate; circle; circular”<sup>38</sup>, explaining all the attested meanings. The fact that ἀράχνη was also used to refer to *Heraclea sphondylium* proves (for me, and eventually for all) that ἀράχνη also used to mean “the cervical vertebrae; vertebrae”, and proves that the root-meaning of the *Ara-* seen in ἀράχνη was “to turn, curve, twist, bend” later leading to “to spin, revolve, rotate”: the Latin word *vertebrae* derives from Latin *vertō*, from PIE *\*wértti*=“to be turning around”. So ἀράχνη had the older meanings of “vertebrae” and “spindle”: the meaning of “vertebrae” led to the meaning of the plant *Heraclea sphondylium*, while the meaning “spindle” led to “spider”, the spider spinning webs being likened to a spindle used to spin out thread from fibers. Further and definitive proof is found in the fact that ἀράχνη was also a word for a sun-dial, because the shadow rotates along the disk as the sun moves across the sky.

So ἀράχνη and ἀράχνης did not refer to the bent legs, nor to the way a spider sticks to a surface as if hanging on by hooks ( in Proto-Slavic the word for spider means something like “on hooks” or “with hooks”, meaning that the spider sticks to various surfaces as if hanging on by hooks). The meaning of “bent legs” would have also fit the *\*ar-* root meaning “to curve, turn, bend”, and so would have a reference to hooks, since hooks are curved/bent. But it’s quite clear that the reference was to a spindle.

Now the question remains whether this ἀράχνη / ἀράχνης word for spindle represents a verb meaning *Ar(a)*=“to rotate, revolve, spin” made into a noun via a presumably/seemingly Pre-Greek suffix “-chne”; or whether it was a compound of *Ar(a)*=“to spin, revolve, rotate” + (a)chne=“spike”: but would a word for “vertebrae” include a word for “spike” in its etymology? Yes, under two circumstances: 1) if the meaning of vertebrae came from an earlier meaning of spindle (which is not so likely but possible); or 2) if, and it’s quite possible, the “spike” meaning was part of the etymology of the vertebrae meaning which existed in ἀράχνη and ἀράχνης, since the vertebrae can be thought of as rotating knobs/pegs of bone, and the “achne/chne” root was actually a potential producer of words meaning “knob, peg” as it was of potentially producing words meaning “spike”. It appears to be more likely that both the spindle and vertebrae meanings developed directly from the *\*ar(a)* root, with no “spike” or “knob” necessary. In the sun-dial meaning, “spike/something pointed” could have referred to the pointed shadow as it moved along the sun-dial. One bit of evidence that leans towards the scenario that excludes the spike/knob element is the fact that Hesychius recorded that ἀράχνης referred also to a type of legume plant, which indicates a derivation directly from \*ar(a), “to turn, curve, twist”, without the “spike/knob” component. But it is not

<sup>38</sup> And see also the Ancient Greek word σφένδαμνος=“maple tree”, and/or a specific species of maple (*Acer monspessulanum*). The word had no good etymology yet, so I developed the etymology that sphend=“to turn, revolve”, referring to the how the winged seeds (called wingnuts, spinning jennies, etc.) rotate as they fall from the branches. The Ancient Macedonian Greek term κλινότροχος=“the sycamore, *Acer pseudo-platanus*“, I etymologize like so: klino=“buttocks” (see Ancient Greek klino=“seat“; „that with which one sits/on which one sits“, so that led to „buttocks“) and trokhos=spinning (see Ancient Greek τροχάϊος=spinning, and τροχός=wheel), and if you look at the wingnuts of that tree, they look like a human buttocks with the thighs attached (but the legs stop above the knees). Too much for coincidence. They look just like that.

known exactly what species of legume was referred to, so the “spike/knob” element is not ruled out yet.

The “spindle” etymology of ἀράχνη and ἀράχνης, now for certain, may also explain the meaning and etymology of Ariadne (the Cretan princess from the Theseus myth who was also, it seems, a goddess of weaving in Ancient Greece/Crete; the Etruscan version of Ariadne was called Areatha; a goddess of weaving whose name actually meant “spindle” is quite likely), which may derive from Aria (=to spin, revolve, rotate)+dne (=which would be a noun-making suffix, as yet unidentified by linguists of Ancient Greek and Pre-Greek); another possibility is that Ariadne derives from Ari=“to spin, revolve, rotate” + adne (=spike, something pointed, protruding): in my paper on the etymologies of Cinnabar and Coriander I found a giant amount of evidence that Adne/Atha/Anthra/Andra likely meant “spike; something pointed”, evidence which I will not describe in this version, but which can be seen in my paper on Coriander, Ariadne, and more.

In that paper on the etymology Coriander I first published the theory that that component Ara/ari (in Ariadne) possibly meaning “to spin, revolve” would have come from an earlier arā=“to turn, curve, twist”. The actual existence of such a root-word in ancient times is quite certain: Ancient Greek arao (=“to plough”) and Ancient Greek ἄρουρᾶ (ároura), meaning “cultivated land; cultivated field; ground; earth” both derive from the Proto-Indo-European root *\*h<sub>2</sub>erh<sub>3</sub>-*, meaning “to plough”: given the evidence I’ve assembled, I’m quite sure that that PIE root *\*h<sub>2</sub>erh<sub>3</sub>-*, meaning “to plough”, came from an earlier meaning of “to turn (the earth)” <“to turn, curve, twist”, since the action of ploughing is to turn up the earth/soil/dirt. So this would mean that those Ara-/Ari- forms (including the potential word Ara=“tree, woods”) that I described above derive from a root-word whose sonic form, going further back in time, was more like *\*h<sub>2</sub>erh<sub>3</sub>-*.

The PIE root-word *\*h<sub>1</sub>er-* meaning “earth” may derive from an earlier “to cover”, from an earlier “to arch over”, from an earlier “to curve, vault, bend, turn”: if so, that PIE root and words derived from it would also be cognate to the Ara=“tree” word, but they would be more distant cognates. In the original language/languages where Ara=tree, I don’t think that Ara would also have meant “earth” in that language/those languages: quite likely that “earth” meaning for Ara would not have developed/would not have been passed on in those languages. But in languages where the word Ara (=tree) was a loanword (this may have been the case in Thracian and some Ancient Greek dialects), they could have had both ara=tree and era/ara=earth: and that could be why the Goddess of the Woods is being invoked in a Thracian inscription to make a man bloom again: because the homonym words caused an Artemis goddess to be combined with a Demeter goddess; but it’s very possible and even more likely that in the ancient Balkans, from time immemorial, there was a goddess that had aspects and qualities that later came to be associated, among the Greeks, with two different goddesses: but even among the Greeks there is much indication that a goddess having qualities of both was part of the religion of some Ancient Greeks. If PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>er-* derives from an earlier “to cover<arch over<to curve, bend, vault”, it would explain why the Armenian word for earth (erkir) is so similar to the Armenian word for sky (erkink’).

Words that derive from PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>er-*, “earth” include Albanian "varr" which means "grave" (not the adjective „grave“; but as in a gravesite; in Albanian, initial "v" sound was added to many PIE inherited words that began with the A sound: Albanian "varr" is from Proto-Albanian \*arr-); English "earth" and Dutch

"aard/aerde/erde" from Proto-Germanic \*erbō (=erthō), meaning "earth"; Messapian/Messapic "aran" (=field); ancient Greek \*ἔρα (\*éra) in ἔραζε (éraze, "on the ground"), which in Doric Greek was ἔρασδε (érasde, "on the earth"). And there are also some non-Indo-European words which seem to fit, such as Hattic "araz" which meant "earth".

Those Ancient Greek words that I discussed earlier, the ones including words meaning types of vetch plants; belly; bowl; a round/circular pan; the circling hawks/falcons---all those and the other evidence I presented make me quite certain that the correct etymology of the Aetolian Ara- in Arakynthos (not to be confused with Anatolian) and the Thracian Ara="tree/forest" or „bow (for arrows)“ would be an etymology deriving them from „to curve, turn, twist“<sup>39</sup>.

So I really have no doubt now that Ara-Zea is an actual ancient Balkan theonym referring to a goddess corresponding to Artemis and embodying qualities of Demeter as well. Besides the evidence I've found for Ara, the Zea word meaning "goddess" is expected (or even already attested?) in Thracian. The PIE root for Thracian Zea (if it meant "goddess") is PIE \**dyéws*, meaning "sky; heaven", which according to some PIE source books (Watkins et al.) may derive from a verb which meant 'to shine, be radiant'.

It's quite interesting that the evidence that I found for Ara=tree/woods (or =a specific tree: the oak tree or the juniper/cedar tree) was found in an oronym from the part of Greece known as Aetolia: the Aetolian country has a level and fruitful coastal region, but an unproductive and mountainous interior. The mountains contained many wild beasts, and acquired fame in Greek mythology as the scene of the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. The perfect place where a Pre-Greek theonym for Artemis could have thrived. Tribes known as [Curetes](#) and Leleges originally inhabited the country, but at an early period [Greeks](#) from [Elis](#), led by the mythical [eponym Aetolus](#), set up colonies. Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions that Curetes was the old name of the Aetolians and Leleges the old name of the [Locrians](#). The mountain tribes of Aetolia were the Ophioneis, the Apodotoi, the Agraeis, the Aperantoi and the Eurytians.

The primitive lifestyle of those tribes made an impression on ancient historians. [Polybius](#) doubted their Greek heritage, while Livy reports that they spoke a language similar to the Macedonians. Thucydides claims that Eurytians spoke a very difficult language and ate their food completely raw. They were semi-barbaric, warlike and predatory. They worshiped [Apollo](#) as god of tame nature and Artemis as goddess of wilderness. They also worshiped [Athena](#), not as goddess of wisdom, but emphasizing the element of war – i.e. a goddess that was a female counterbalance to the god [Ares](#). They called Apollo and Artemis "Laphrios gods," i.e. patrons of the spoils and loot of war. In addition, they worshiped Hercules, the river Achelous and Bacchus. In Thermos, an area north of Trichonis lake,

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<sup>39</sup> One should be aware also that far far back, before PIE mostly, the semantic group „to turn, curve, twist, bend; round; circle“ is often part of a semantic group cognate to words meaning „to bulge out, round out, swell, puff out, radiate out, to radiate rays/branches/appendages“ which, in my paper on the etymology of Cinnabar, I demonstrated is often linked to the semantic cluster of „to curve, turn, twist“: this is a summary of how and why those semantics are so often linked: because the semantic of „to curve, turn, twist“ usually includes the semantic of „circle“ and „round“, and the semantic of „circle/round“ usually is linked to the semantic of „to bulge out, swell out, round out, puff out“: and also because the sun and moon are round/circular objects that optically radiate rays of light, from time immemorial the semantic of „round, circle“ is linked to the semantic of „to radiate; to issue rays, branches, appendages“ (the evidence for this and the detailed discussion can be read in my paper on the etymology of Cinnabar). So the sun and/or moon radiating rays was likened to a tree radiating branches. So whether Ara=tree comes from the curving and turning of braches trunks and roots, or alternatively from the notion of radiating branches, either kind of root-word could ultimately derive from one even older root-word that branched along two, three, four paths, and so on: a root-word whose semantic range included both sets of meanings, which are part of one super-set. It is interesting to note that the root-word could also have given rise to words that meant „sun“ and words that meant „moon“, since both sun and moon are circular radiant/radiating objects. But I don't think that Ara-Zea meant „moon goddess“: but some reminiscence of that semantic was very likely present as you go further back in time. Also present as you go further back in time is the semantic of „arrow“ and „spear“, since words for „arrow“ and „spear“ are often from a semantic set that includes „to radiate; issue out; shoot out; a ray; a beam (because rays and beams are pointed streams of light)“, a likening of sun-beams/moon-beams/light-beams to arrows and spears: this is also demonstrated and detailed in my paper on the etymology of Cinnabar, Koriandron, Kotys, Kottyto, and more.

there was after the 7th century a shrine of Apollo "Thermios," which became a significant religious center during the time of the [Aetolian League](#).

In time, I'm sure the theonym Ara-Zea will be verified, as more and more new discoveries of ancient inscriptions (and other ancient writings) come to light.

Until then, I have found a figure in Romanian folklore and in Italian folklore whose name is so close to this Ara-Zea found on the ring, a folklore figure which is accepted as having absorbed much of the pre-Christian beliefs and some of the rituals regarding Artemis/Diana. I'm referring to the folklore survival of a supernatural woman named *Arada* in Romanian and *Aradia* in Italian; probably some linguists assume (have not yet identified which linguists, if any, believe/assume that) that both names derive from *Herodias* (*Herodias* is the Greek feminine form of Greek *Ἡρώδης*=*Hērōidēs*, which became "Herod" in English <sup>40</sup>), mentioned in the New Testament (in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Mark); however, *Erodiade* is the usual form of Herodias in Italian, while *Irodiada* is the form of Herodias in Romanian; and deriving the Romanian form *Arada* from *Herodiade* or *Herodias* (if any linguists actually do so) is an assumption which has not been demonstrated to be true or that it fits the evidence well or the phonological evolution well. The historian/mythographer/anthropologist/folklorist Mircea Eliade considered *Arada* of Romanian folklore to be a metamorphosis of the earlier Diana/Artemis <sup>41</sup>(Diana being the Roman version, Artemis the Greek version), owing rather little or not much conceptually to Herodiade/Herodias, with whom Diana/Artemis was blended in the Middle Ages; while a derivation of the name *Arada* from Herodiade/Herodias does not seem phonologically sound; it seems in fact very debatable; I do not know what conclusion Eliade came to regarding the supposed (by whom?) derivation of *Arada* from Herodiade/Herodias.

The actual situation seems to be that *Erodiade* (Italian) and *Irodiada* (Romanian) became identified with and possibly code-names (in the dangerous climate of the times) for the earlier *Arada* (Romanian) and *Aradia* (Italian), explaining why both pairs are attested. The identification started from the similar names, and then from there at some point those pagan goddesses were linked conceptually to the historical/New Testament figure, due to the subversive role and reputation both of those female figures acquired in Christianity, and due to some other resemblances between the two which I intend to describe in an upcoming version of this paper. The Romanian form *Arada* most likely derives from Daco-Thracian. The Italian *Aradia* form probably derives from Etruscan, since much of the Italian traditions about *Aradia* may derive from Tuscany: the Etruscans quite likely (combining all the genetic, linguistic and historical evidence) migrated from Western Anatolia/the Aegean, where their kin the Lemnians were found on the island of Lemnos, where a Thracian tribe known as the *Sinti* also dwelt at some point.

Artemis was probably often identified with the Anatolian Cybele, both of them being the goddess of wild animals and nature; both being forms of the earth goddess. Artemis was also the goddess of the hunt, of maidens, was invoked for a safe and successful childbirth, and more. One well-known name for the Thracian Artemis is *Bendis*; *Kotys*/*Kottyto* was another Thracian equivalent of Artemis. We can expect she had more names among the Thracians, names not known yet, especially since the Thracians were not so unified. And obviously the equivalent goddess had distinct names among the various Pre-greek tribes and peoples. Here in this inscription, Ara Zea bears many similarities to Phrygian *Cybele* (the Phrygians used to live next to the Thracians) and to the Artemis of Ephesus in NorthWestern Anatolia; her function as earth goddess, like *Demeter* and *Gaia*, is emphasized in this inscription (yet the moon was often believed to be the abode of the souls of the deceased in the Greco-Roman world; so petitioning a goddess who is both a forest-goddess and a moon-goddess to make him bloom again probably has something to do with that). Indeed, another of the several known Thracian inscriptions reads "Da, dale me": with "Da" referring to Demeter; and that "Da Dale Me" inscription is, as I will further detail a bit further in this essay, an invocation/petition to

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<sup>40</sup> The name *Erodis*/*Irodis* (in Greek *Ἡρώδης*=*Hērōidēs*) itself has a Greek etymology, either deriving from the Greek word *ἥρως* (= *hērōs*) combined with the Greek word *ὀδή* (*ōidē*, "ode"), or from the name of *Hērā* (in Greek: *Ἥρα*) combined with the same *ὀδή*, with *Hērā* of course referring to the wife of Zeus. The *Hērō-* element in *Hērōdotus* derives from *Hērā* as well.

<sup>41</sup> Eliade, Mircea (February 1975). "Some Observations on European Witchcraft" in *History of Religions*, Volume 14, Number 3. Page 160-161.



Demeter which in essence is identical to the inscription on the Ezerovo ring, which instead petitions *Ara Zea* (=Artemis, Bendis) to do the same thing requested of Demeter in the "Da Dale Me" inscription.

**Domean:** meant "lady" (literally, "lady of the household", from an older meaning of "of the household/of the home"), cognate to Latin *domina* (=lady; literally, "lady of the household"); and Latin *domus* (=home) and Slavic *domo* (=home). From PIE *\*dóm-*, "house, home".

**Tilezupta:** meant "Breasts + Covered" ("Covered Breasts"), referring to her maidenhood/virginity/sanctity. In one ancient Greek mythical tradition, a male personage named *Actaeon* caught a sight of *Artemis* nude while she was bathing; for that invasion, he was transformed into a deer, a deer which was chased down and killed by *Artemis*' hunting dogs. Thracian depictions of *Bendis* always show her well-cloaked and well-clothed. One of the epithets of *Artemis* among the Greeks was *Chitone*, covered by a chiton (an ancient Greek style of tunic, worn also by ancient Romans and some others). This interpretation of *Tilezupta* is one of the very many first such interpretations/original interpretations that my new translation shows.

Thracian *tile-* (breasts) is cognate to Albanian *tul* (=piece of soft flesh without bones, etc.) and to ancient Greek *τύλη, túlē* (=swelling; hump of a camel; cushion). In 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC Attic Greek, the pronunciation of *τύλη, túlē* is said to have been *tý.le:* (this is rendered in IPA). There are some more cognates; all deriving from PIE *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-* ("swollen, lump"), in turn from PIE *\*tewh<sub>2</sub>-*, "to swell, to crowd, to be strong". One of the additional cognates is Proto-Slavic *\*tǫlb*, the meaning of which has been reconstructed as "back of the neck, nape"; this Proto-Slavic word is the source of words with similar meanings ("back of the neck; nape; back of the head"; "back" "rear") in many Slavic languages; since in some Slavic languages the meaning is "back" and/or "rear", I wonder whether the older meaning was actually "buttocks" in Proto-Slavic, or in an earlier stage than Proto-Slavic (the meaning older than "buttocks" would have been "bulge/fleshy bulge"). The Thracian and ancient Greek usage most likely sometimes extended to the buttocks (especially the buttocks of many women) as well as to breasts. In the gold ring inscription, the breasts are referred to primarily, given the more important linkage of breasts to nurturing and fertility. Note also how the *Artemis* of Ephesus has her breasts covered by a garment which is covered with gourds of vegetables and/or fruits and/or bulls' testicles. But the Thracian *Artemis*' buttocks was very likely included as well in the epithet.

Thracian *zupta* is cognate to Sanskrit *gupta* ("secret"), from PIE *\*geup-*, "to cover". Other cognates may be Bulgarian *župa* (tomb), Polish *zupa* and Ukrainian *župa* (salt mine), and Old Slavonic *župište* (tomb). The Proto-Slavic *\*župa* would derive from an earlier *\*gheu-p-/\*geu-p*. The Slavic forms could derive from an earlier meaning of "arching over", progressing to "covering over". The change of the initial G sound (and also the aspirated G) to an initial sibilant Z sound happened often in Thracian, which often shows the "satem" sound-shift, and Thracian was largely a satem language; but I don't think it was that close to Baltic or Slavic; somewhat close, but not that close. Thracian was likely closer to Proto-Albanian. I do not believe that the *-ypta* in *Tilezypta* has anything to do with the name of the (adopted) Thracian goddess *Ipta/Epta*. Such a reading would be a totally different translation, and there's no guarantee that a viable translation can be made from that angle. The goddess *Ipta* (variant *Epta*) was likely of Western Anatolian origin, and little is known about that goddess.

**miē** : is cognate to Latin *mē*, English *me*, Ancient Greek *μέ* (*mé*), *ἐμέ* (*emé*, "me"), Sanskrit *मि* (*mā*, "me"). A very common Indo-European form and a very basic Indo-European form, from PIE *\*(e)me-*, *\*(e)me-n-* ("me").

**era** : is cognate to Latin *re-* and the meaning here was: "again". The Latin prefix *rē-* is from Proto-Italic *\*wre* ("again"), which has a parallel in Umbrian *re-*, but its further etymology is uncertain (cf. recent editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*). While it carries a general sense of "back" or "backwards", its precise sense is not always clear, and its great productivity in classical Latin has the tendency to obscure its original meaning. Calvert Watkins proposes a metathesis of Proto-Indo-European *\*wert-* ("to turn"), while de

Vaan suggests Proto-Indo-European *\*ure-* ("back"), which is related to Proto-Slavic *\*rakъ* in the sense of "looking backwards."

**zēlta**: derives from PIE *\*ǵʰelh<sub>3</sub>-*, "to bloom, flourish, become green; green; yellow; gold". This shows an aspirated hard G becoming the sibilant Z again. The Proto-Slavic *\*zolto* (=gold, yellow) also derives from PIE *\*ǵʰelh<sub>3</sub>-* by way of Proto-Indo-European *\*ǵʰólh<sub>3</sub>tom* ("gold"), as does English *gold*. The Latvian and Lithuanian cognates are in this case closer to Thracian: Latvian *zēlts* ("gold"; "golden") and Lithuanian *zelt* ('to bloom; become green; make green'). Latvian, Lithuanian and Slavic show the sibilization which occurred so often in Daco-Thracian as well. And in Latvian, we find the verb *zelt* which means "to bloom; become green; make green". My interpretation also gives new significance to the fact that the inscription was inscribed on a gold ring.

Compare the occurrence of *zēlta* in this inscription with the occurrence of *dale* and *dele* in two other Thracian inscriptions: "Da Dale Me" (= "Demeter, make me bloom" my own translation; instead of "Demeter protect me" as a previous scholar hypothesized) and "Euzie dele Mezenai" ("Horseman, make Euzie bloom/Horseman makes Euzie bloom", my own translation; instead of "Horseman, protect Euzie" or "Horseman protects Euzie". The Horseman in Thracian mythology was an important savior god to them, who was in time replaced by Christ and St. George after Christianity came). In these two inscriptions, *dale* and *dele* mean "to sprout, rise, bloom", from Proto-Indo-European *\*dʰelh<sub>1</sub>-*, cognate to Ancient Greek θάλλω (*thállō*, "to grow, bloom, thrive"), Welsh *deillio* ("to emanate, derive) and to Albanian *dal* ("to go out, come out, exit"), as well as more cognates. So those two inscriptions, I think, back up my new translation of the inscription on the Ezerovo ring. The components *miēerazēlta* may alternatively be parsed as *miēe* ("me") and *ra-zēlta* ("again-bloom").

I have not yet read Dechev's 1957 monograph, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste* (published under the name of D. Detschew (Germanized form of Dechev); Vienna, 1957; written in German), which is unavailable in Los Angeles libraries (perhaps a university library around here may have a copy, but likely not; I've checked some) and unavailable online. From looking at his translation, Dechev seems to have been relying a lot on the supposition that *era zēlta* or *era+zēlta* (there's no word break in the inscription; the last four letters *-ēlta* continue on the other side of the ring, but that's not an actual definite word-break: a word-break in this context refers to specific points or lines that ancient scribes often used to indicate word-breaks) in the inscription meant "ground+delivered", in other words "delivered to the ground", a euphemism for "buried". Dechev's interpretation of *era* would be cognate to ancient Greek ἔραζε (*érase*), "to the ground". Note that I still have not yet found Dechev's book, but I think his interpretation is that *era zēlta* was two words, just as I think it was two words; but he thinks *era* meant "earth" and *zēlta* was a verb which meant "delivered to/sent to". However, it's unclear what PIE root he would derive such a *zēlta* from, as he imagined back then. It doesn't seem as if he was saying that *era zēlta* is a past-tense verb derived from a noun *era* or *eraz* meaning "earth", acquiring an unexplained suffix *-ēlta* or *-zēlta*: that would indeed be highly unlikely. I think Dechev actually realized that, and what he meant was that *era* and *zēlta* are two words, with his hypothetical meanings described a few sentences above. I think I know which PIE root Dechev intended as the source of *zēlta* in his interpretation, and if so the semantic link between them is very weak, and so his interpretation is very unlikely. When I verify which root (if any) Dechev intended as the source of his *zēlta*, I will analyze his hypothesis in more detail.

I have a different interpretation of *era* and *zēlta* (*zēlta* derives from PIE *\*ǵʰelh<sub>3</sub>-*, and had the same meanings as Latvian "zelt", which also derives from that root; and many words for gold derive from that root, suggesting a direct link to the golden ring), and my translation makes good sense as a whole. The *era* in *era zēlta* did not mean "earth" and is not linked to ancient Greek ἔραζε. In Georgiev's translation, very different from Dechev's, *era zēlta* does not have anything to do with "buried" or "delivered to the ground", so it shouldn't be assumed that most palaeolinguists accept Dechev's interpretation.

A big problem with Dechev's translation, as many people have noticed, is why was all this trouble taken to record that a woman from Azaea (no such place-name has been found, by the way) named Tilezupta (Dechev doesn't try to explain the supposed "name" Tilezupta, which is not attested as an anthroponym) is the one who took charge of the burial of Rolisteneas? Do we have support for that idea from Balkanic traditions, where a woman who was, it seems, not part of the family (in Dechev's translation, she is

described as a woman from Arazea; Dechev believed that Arazea is an unattested toponym; I don't think it is a toponym, nor do I think it is a gens name: notice for example that the order is *Arazea domean Tilezupta*, not *Tilezupta Arazea*) officiates/takes ritual charge of the burial and of the sending off of the deceased (especially a deceased man) to the other world or to the earth? Do we have support from that in the inscriptions of any cultures? Dechev's translation sounds like a wrong translation. I don't think the ring records who took charge of the burial or of the sending off of Rolisteneas. I think it records a religious magical invocation meant to protect and help the deceased Rolisteneas. Georgiev's completely different translation is not convincing either.

The inscription may have been done by a hired Thracian poet <sup>42</sup>, since this parsing (identical to Dechev's parsing) and translation of the inscription shows a pronounced flowing metrical rhythm, as well as showing rhyme/assonance: *steneas/nerenea/tiltean/arazea/domean*; *tiltean/domean*; further assonance in the series of **-tea(n)/-ta/-ta** terminations: *Rolisteneas Nerenea tiltean/ěsko Ara Zea domean Tilezupta/ miě era zělta*"; the alliteration in *zea* and *zupta* and *zělta* and other alliterations elsewhere; and the recurring *til*-element in *tiltean* and *tilezupta*, even though the meanings of the two occurrences are I'm sure different (as discussed above), having different meanings and different etymologies. But I believe *tiltean* and *tilezupta* were chosen specifically so that *Tilezupta* can counteract *tiltean*. A type of verbal magic common in anthropological studies.

Linguistically, note the harmony between the adjectives *tiltean* ("fallen") and *domean* ("of the home"): *domean* is also a noun (which came to be equivalent to Latin *domina* and English *lady*; further discoveries regarding the Thracian language should clarify why we see *domean* instead of *domea*, not that *domea* suggests itself as "more likely" or more expected than *domean*: the sentence suggests that there is probably a Thracian grammatical rule here which required the 'n' at the end of the word *domean*, or if not a grammatical rule, an etymological/morphological one, since the older meaning was "of the home") and yet also an adjective, since it originally meant "of the home"; and the *-steneas* name element is actually an adjective ("strong"), as is *Nerenea* (the name *Nerenea* quite likely meant "virile, potent"; see the cognates, including the Latin cognates). Even the noun *Zea* may be seen in an adjectival way, considering the likely PIE etymology of *Zea*: according to some linguistic sources (Watkins et al.) on Proto-Indo-European, the source was a verb which meant "to shine; be radiant", in which case *Zea* can be described as a feminine adjective ("the radiant one"), as well as a feminine noun. The Thracian adjective suffix *-ea* is nearly identical to Latin *-ia* seen in gens names (*Neria*, etc.) and to an adjective suffix found as far back in Greek as Mycenaean Greek, where it was represented as *-(~)i-ja (=i-ya)* (cf. Mycenaean Greek *Potnija*, *Qerasija* et al.) or *-(~)e-ja (=e-ja)* (cf. Mycenaean Greek *Ipemedēja* et al.).

The harmony between the verbs *zupta* (covered) and *zělta* (to bloom), both ending in *-ta*, is also suggestive. And the verb contained in *tiltean* we can reconstruct as *\*tiltea* or *\*tilte* or *\*tilta*, among other possibilities, or all of those depending on the grammar of the phrase. So, *\*tilta*, *zupta* and *zělta*, three Thracian verbs? With *ěsko* being a verb of a different class. Of course, Thracian would have had a great diversity of verb forms, but it looks like verbs ending with *-ta*, for whatever reason (etymological etc.), were one category.

## Conclusion

Future discoveries of examples of the Thracian language will hopefully clarify whether this new translation that I present here is correct. The way all these elements came together tells me that this translation is actually correct, and such a correct translation was possible because the language of the inscription is a fairly conservative Indo-European language. My translation does not contradict any of the basic assumptions about Thracian. Nor does it show that Thracian was distant from Balto-Slavic and/or Albanian. It shows a

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<sup>42</sup> This aligns with the Greek traditions of the Thracians having many singers/bards (cf. Orpheus, Eumolpus, et al.) albeit most of them may have been only oral bards, though we can expect that quite a number of Thracian and Dacian poems were written down but have since been lost over the centuries.

language which bears many similarities to both Proto-Albanian and the earlier stages of Balto-Slavic, as well as to some other branches of Indo-European.

In this inscription on the gold ring, we see what is probably a Thracian verb *ēsko* meaning „to petition“; in my translation of the inscription found near Kjolmen, I identified a verb *aigekoa* (=“led“), past-tense of *aigeko*=“to lead“/“I lead“. The language uncovered from my translation of the inscription on the Moesian stone reveals a language very reminiscent of the language uncovered from this South Thracian ring, and both seem very Thracian. In both inscriptions, we also see what I’m sure is a Thracian tradition: using the first letter of a word to mark the end of a line, so that when the next line begins it is clear from where the next line continues: on the ring we see that in the case of *zēlta*, the Z is on the front of the ring, while the rest of the word is on the reverse; in the Moesian inscription, the first line makes two direction changes, creating three segments of one line: the last letter of the first segment, N, is the first letter of the word that continues in the next segment: combining them, we get the word *Nēn*; and the last letter of the second segment, A, is the first letter of a word that continues in the next segment, the third and final segment of that stream of text: combining them, we get *Aigekoa*. So even in the manner of writing, we see strong indications that we are dealing with two groups of people that were very close to one another.

## References

instead of references, I have included footnotes throughout the text which cite some additional sources that are not named in the body of the essay.

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I will be updating this work a number of times within the year of 2022, so you can check for another update soon. I recommend that the reader searches on Zenodo for my other publications as well, to get a better sense of my rate of accuracy when it comes to etymologies: my rate of accuracy is quite high, and appears to be higher than that of say, Beekes. In other words, this guy really knows what he’s doing. To make sure a publication is actually mine, you can check one of my blogs where I note each new publication: <https://fresh-philosophies.blogspot.com/> .  
Email: [alexandru.gheorghiu.323@gmail.com](mailto:alexandru.gheorghiu.323@gmail.com)