

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

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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: but if Macedonian was a Greek dialect and this inscription was written in a Macedonian Greek dialect, then the inscription should be intelligibly Greek, but it is 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-Geteans. 4) There is no evidence that Paeonian was a Satem language, and the language in the inscription to me indicates a Satem language. 5) Neither Illyrian nor Paeonian nor a hypothetical non-Greek Macedonian language can be ruled out, but various archaeological evidence and other indications suggest a Thracian language, not Illyrian nor Paeonian, though so little is known of Illyrian and Paeonian.

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, Georgiev'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 or all 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 an ablative case inflection of a proper name, as in Latin and Greek (see Georgiev's translation for this usage and interpretation), if Thracian had an ablative inflection like that identical to Latin (though Thracian and Dacian may well have had that kind of ablative 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 phylia 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 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

<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.

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. My preferred theory is that Nereus derives from *\*ner* referring to the strength and power of the sea, of water: PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>n<sup>ér</sup>* is reconstructed as having meant „man; power, force, vital energy“.

## 2. The new translation

Here now is my translation, actually two translations because I have two theories regarding one of the words: my two translations are very 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:**

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

*ēsko Ara-Zea Domean Tilezupta* = "Petitions Ara-Zea/Arazea, Lady Carrying the Bow"

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

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

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

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

So the entire inscription reads either: 1) ***Rolisteneas Nerenea, fallen/buried, petitions Ara-Zea, lady carrying the bow, to make me bloom again*** ; or 2) ***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

ressurrection 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 *Arazea* very likely meant „Catcher, snatcher, grabber“ if the theonym represents one word, as is very likely/most likely. I don't think that the Hatti/Hattic word „araz“ („meaning „earth“) is a cognate unless Hatti „araz“ derives from „to enclose“ with the earth thought of as an enclosed space surrounded by the sea and sky; I don't think that *Arazea* or any part of *Arazea* derives from PIE *\*hier-* „earth“.

If the theonym represents a compound where *Zea*=“goddess“ (which would be from PIE *\*deiwā* and cognate with Latin *Dea* „goddess“ and Old Latin *Deivā*=“goddess“) then the name might have meant „Arrow Goddess or „Bright Goddess“ or „Woods Goddess“: but I think that more likely *Arazea* is not a compound, but instead one word, and so we are not necessarily dealing with a *Zea* meaning „goddess“ or a *Zea* word at all (another possibility would have been *Zea* meaning „grain“, cognate to Ancient Greek *Zeia*=“spelt“, from PIE *\*yewos*). I find that the meanings that the compounds necessitate (Arrow goddess, Bright goddess, Woods goddess, or even Bow goddess, of the bow used for arrows) are not as compelling or likely to be true as the meaning Catcher/Snatcher/Grabber.

*Arazea* is very likely cognate to the Arak- in the Aetolian toponym Arakynthos, which is considered to be a Pre-Greek toponym; in this toponym, I have found it very likely that Arak=“Grasping“, referring to how the mountain joins two regions of the local topography: this idea is seen in an alternative Greek name for the mountain: ζυγός (*Zygos*) from PIE *\*yewg-* , „to join, to tie together, to yoke“.

The geographical range across which this Arak- root is found stretches from at least Italy to Sumeria, and probably also to the lands of the Burusho and further, as I will detail later. In an inscription in Linear A (which I will detail further in this work) strongly indicates that the word was also found in a Pre-Greek Minoan language of Crete, and so is most likely from a root-word that was of Non-IE origin, as indicated also by the Sumerian evidence and the Burushaski evidence, and the word likely entered some branches of IE after the time when the Proto-Indo-European language was spoken (though I would not be surprised if one finds a cognate or several cognates in the Proto-Indo-European language: at least one likely PIE cognate will be discussed later in this work).

In Pliny's<sup>2</sup> *Naturalis historia* (written in Latin in the first century AD, the first 10 books were published AD 77) there is found, in a number of passages of the NH (= *Naturalis historia*), mention of *aracia* meaning “a variety of figs that are white figs“, a word which is of unknown etymology; it is likely from „to grasp, snatch“ as is the Ancient Greek word κάρπος, which means „fruit, grain, produce, harvest“: κάρπος derives from PIE *\*kerp-*, „to pluck; harvest“.

The theonym *Arazea* almost certainly entered Thracian from Pre-Indo-European considering the Minoan/Linear A cognate A-Ra-Ko=“bowl“ occurring on Linear A/Minoan inscription KO Zf 2: Khandia Mus. 1385, which is an inscription on a bronze mesomphalos bowl; the A-Ra-Ko syllabograms are the first 3 syllabograms of the inscription on the bowl, and due to Ancient Greek ἀράκη=“bowl“; ἄρακις=“bowl, a pan“, ἀράκτης=“bowl; a pan“ and ἄροκλον=“bowl; a pan“, which are all considered Pre-Greek, I'm sure that A-Ra-Ko=“bowl“ in this Minoan inscription, even if no one before me has stated that; most likely all these words derive from Arak/Arok=“to hold, grasp, grab“.

Though the theonym *Arazea* almost certainly did not mean „Earth“ nor „Earth goddess“, the inscription is asking *Arazea* to make the fallen or buried (*tiltean* meant either „fallen“ or „buried“ or possibly 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). Since *Arazea* very likely meant „Catcher, snatcher, grabber“, there may have been a double-entendre of „vagina, vulva“ as in the vagina/vulva of an Earth goddess/Moon goddess etc.: compare the English slang term „snatch“ applied to the vagina/vulva because of how it grips a penis tightly. If this „vagina, vulva“ extra meaning was actual, then I see that this goddess would have had a lot to do with birth and with re-birth, which fits the translation proposed here---yet this „vagina“ possibility has to be weighed against the virgin/maiden/asexual nature of the Huntress goddess in Ancient Greek beliefs, and most likely in Thracian beliefs as well; but regardless of her asexual nature, Artemis/the Huntress goddess was a

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2 The Roman/Latin form of his name was/is Plinius; his full name was Gaius Plinius Secundus. He was born AD 23 or 24, and died AD 79.

fertility goddess in many ways, from wild game and burgeoning forests and wild plant growth to her being a goddess (along with her nymphs) of water-springs/mineral water springs (see the paper *Artemis Thermia and Apollo Thermios*, by J.H. Croon, 1956; and there is more literature about Artemis being a goddess of water-springs) among the Greeks, Thracians and others. Indeed, I suspect that the Thracian epithet Germetitha applied to Artemis/Bendis (etc.) meant „Warm springs“, with Germe=“warm“ (from PIE \*g<sup>wh</sup>er-, “warm, hot”; compare Phrygian Γέρμη) and titha meaning not just „breasts“ but also a metaphor/poetic trope for „water-springs“: as babies get milk from the breast, humans and adult animals get water from the springs. It may be that the association goes back thousands of years, so that Titha actually meant „breasts“ and „water-springs“, not just as a metaphor or trope.

So Arazea (I will henceforth write the theonym as Arazea rather than Ara-Zea, since Arazea is more likely) 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, Arazea, 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 and Pre-Thracian 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>3</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 (candrá, 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 Arazea) 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

<sup>3</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.

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*, an epithet which had the implied meaning "the Huntress" (from Ancient Greek *thēraō*="to hunt, chase"), 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*, „The Huntress“, 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: 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 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”; however most likely these Thracian forms do not derive from *\*hréγγō*, from PIE *\*srew-*, “to flow, stream, rush”, as do Ancient Greek *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".

Most likely the Thracian forms do not derive from PIE *\*sreu-* because I doubt that PIE *\*sr-* became *\*hr-* in Proto-Thracian: I doubt that because the name of the Thracian river Στρῦμών (*Strūmōn*) derives from Thracian, due to its location and due to the fact that it does not match Greek, where *\*sr-* became *\*hr-*: in the linguistic literature, that much is already established regarding Στρῦμών (*Strūmōn*). There is no need to force a derivation from *\*sreu-* for those Thracian forms *Roli-*, *Rholes/Roles*, *Rolouzis*: because in Ancient Greek, we find such forms as *ῥόχθος* (*rhókthos*)="roaring of the sea"; *ῥόθος* (*rhóthos*)="rushing noise"; "roar of waves"; "dash of oars"; "any confused, inarticulate sound"; "any rushing motion"; (in Boeotia) "a mountain path" (this surely derives from "sinuous, winding like a river<river<rushing, noisy"; *ῥάθαγος* "rushing noise"; *ῥυβδέω* "to slurp in"; *ῥοῖβδος* "any rushing noise or motion"; "whirring of wings"; "rushing of the wind"; *ῥοῖζος* "rush of wings, of the sea or of a stream"; "whistling or whizzing of an arrow or of a scourge"; "any whistling or piping sound"; "hissing of a serpent"; "rushing motion, rush, swing"; in Hesychius we find a gloss of his saying that *ῥοιλιαῖς* (*roiliais*), *ῥοιδνας* (*roidnas*) and *ῥοιδμός* (*roidmos*) all meant "a rushing noise", and these forms are cognate to *ῥοῖζος*/*ῥοιζέω* and *ῥοῖβδος*, words which denoted both whistling and rushing noises: *ῥοιζέω* 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 now we have *Roil*"rushing noise", attested in *ῥοιλιαῖς* (*roiliais*). But can I show an easy progression from "rushing noise/rushing motion" to "blood"? Yes, I can. Observe: PIE *\*kres*, "water-spring, surge, wave", source of Doric Greek κράνα and Aeolic Greek κράννα and Attic Greek κρήνη "(water-)spring, fountain, well; waters", Albanian *krua* "spring (of water)", Proto-Germanic *\*hraznō* "wave". Compare PIE *\*kréwh<sub>2</sub>s*, "blood (outside of the body, e.g., blood rushing/spilling out)", from PIE *\*krew<sub>h</sub>2-* "blood (outside of the body, e.g. blood rushing/spilling out)", which is, I posit, cognate to PIE *\*kres*, "water-spring, surge, wave", as I detail more in one of my other papers. See also Ancient Greek

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

κρούνισμα, “gush, stream”, κροῦμα “sound produced by striking stringed instruments with the plectron; also the sounds of wind instruments”. So then: I posit that Thracian Roli- is a Thracian form of Ancient Greek Roil- meaning “rushing noise; rushing motion” in Ancient Greek; and in the name Rolisteneas, I posit that Roli- means “blood”.

Ancient Greek ῥόα (*rhóa*)=“pomegranate fruit; pomegranate tree” is thought to very likely derive from PIE \**srew-* “to flow” 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*): another word for “pomegranate” in Ancient Greek was/is σίδη (*sidē*): and that word is very likely cognate <sup>5</sup> to Ancient Greek σίδηρος (*sidēros*)=“iron”, both likely 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 likely 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: another indication that there was a *sidē* in Ancient Greek/Pre-Greek that meant “water; to flow, rush”. 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 kinship of the “rushing noise” words (ῥοιλιαῖς, ῥοίδνας, ῥοιδμός, etc.) 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 ῥόδι (*ródi*) and Romanian *rodie* both mean “pomegranate”: compare these forms to ῥοίδνας (*roidnas*) meaning “a rushing noise” and ῥοιδμός (*roidmos*) also meaning “a rushing noise”.

One semantic branch 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 of this nature, 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 “to flow, rush”>“blood/rushing”>“virile-blooded/rushing”. *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 have a different etymology from *Rholies/Rolis*.

While *Rha*, an ancient name for the Volga river (see Ptolemy’s *Geography*, Book 5, Chapter 8) may have the same kind of origin as ῥάθαγος “rushing noise” and ῥοιδμός “rushing noise” etc. and so *Rha* could be a Thracian hydronym; or it may derive from PIE \**sreu-*, “to flow, rush”---but if from \**sreu-*, then it’s most likely not from Daco-Getic, but could be from Scythian.

**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

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5 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.

“Stein”, Proto-Slavic “stena” (=“conglomeration of stones”; ”wall”; “rock”; “cliff”; ), and the likely source of Ancient Greek στῆρα and στῆρον (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-* “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 σθένοϛ 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>n<sup>ér</sup>* (*masculine*), meaning "man; power, force, vital energy"; cognates include Albanian *njeri* (=man; human being), from Old Albanian *njer*, from Proto-Albanian *\*nera*; 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>ék<sup>wos</sup>* (*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>ék<sup>wos</sup>* (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. The genitive suffix *-ea* is at the same time an adjectival suffix.

**tiltean:** is interpreted by me as having most likely meant „buried“ though possibly instead "fallen", with the meaning of "deceased": since many among the Thracian people didn't believe in actual death, it would make 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". But more likely *tiltean* meant „buried“ and deriving from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* = “flat ground, bottom“, from where also derives Armenian *t'alem*=“to bury“---and I will discuss that high-likelihood first.

Besides Armenian *t'alem* (=“to bury“), another proposed cognate is Latin *tilia*<sup>6</sup>, which meant „linden tree“, and is already believed to come from an older *til-* which meant „broad, flat“ (cf. PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* = “flat ground, bottom“), because of the large, broad flat leaves of linden trees: and also 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 shift of meaning to „to bury/buried“ is attested in

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<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 in earlier versions of this work, and while I didn't forget about Latin *tellūs*, I have to admit that it took me some time (a number of months) to realize that Latin *tellus* is a very likely cognate to Thracian *tiltean*.

Armenian, where it had to have developed from „earth“ and/or „flat“, since the consensus is Armenian *t'alem* (=“to bury“) derives from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-*=“flat ground, bottom“.

If *tiltean* meant „fallen“ not „buried“, the meaning „the broad flat expanse of the earth“ could have led to „to go flat, to be laid flat“ in turn leading to „falling/tilting/falling to the ground/to be defeated“: probably those additional meanings developed quite rapidly, many thousands of years ago.

Further cognates from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-*=“flat ground, bottom“ include Old Prussian *talus* (=“floor“), Lithuanian *tiles* (=“floor of a boat“). For the shift *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* to *Til-*, see the Delmato-Pannonian/Illyrian toponym *Tilurium*, most likely cognate<sup>7</sup> to Latin *tellūs* /*tellūris*, well as Latin *tilia* described above. The shift from *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* to *Til-* is also seen in some words derived from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* „to bear, carry, support, undergo, endure“ (see the discussion of *Tilezupta* later in this paper), including in probably in the *Tile-* of Thracian *Tilezupta*, if *Tilezupta* meant „Carrying/Bearing-the-bow“, as in a bow used for arrows (see the discussion of *Tilezupta* later in this paper).

In 2022 I found two very likely additional cognates for *tiltean*: Ancient Greek *πελέα* (*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 *πελέα* (*ptelēā*) and Armenian *թելի* (*t'eli*) (=“elm tree”)<sup>8</sup> are cognate to Latin *tilia* (=linden tree) and all three are cognate to Thracian *tiltean*, and cognate to many or all of those words that I cited above: *Ptel*=“broad, flat” in Ancient Greek, as does *t'el* in Old Armenian and *til-* in Latin *tilia*; and the *til(t)-* in Thracian *tiltean* had the older meaning “broad, flat, earth”, from which the later meanings “fallen” or “buried” (or both) developed. Because these elms remind people of weeping (as do the weeping willows) they were associated with graves and tombs; also because they spread broadly (like the earth) and provide good cover (they cover similarly to how tombs and graves cover the deceased); and maybe also because in some ancient languages of the Balkans and elsewhere, their words (or their neighbors' words, like between Greeks and Thracians) for “earth” and “bury/buried” were similar to 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 and in following paragraphs.

This etymology of *πελέα* (*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. See also (not cognates, but from a different with the same root-semantics) Ancient Greek *πλάτανος* (=planetree), *πλατάνιστος* (=“plane tree”), *πλάτυς* (=“wide, broad, flat level”): the plane-tree is a broad-spreading tree with large leaves as well. See also Ancient Greek *Πλάταια*, a toponym/city-name which may<sup>9</sup> preserve an old Indo-European name for the earth-goddess, from “broad, wide, flat”.

Some possible cognates for "tiltean" 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. 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 over" or "fall over." Intransitive sense "to lean, tip" first recorded 1620s. As stated a few sentences above,

<sup>7</sup> See Orsat Ligorio and Danilo Savic, „Illyrian and Slavic“, pg.27.

<sup>8</sup> In the previous version, though this certain Armenian cognate was in my notes, I forgot to include it in the work, just as I had forgotten to include the parallel examples *Platanos*, *Platanistos*, *Platus* and *Plataia*.

<sup>9</sup> See Burkert, Walter (1985 English translation and updated), *Greek Religion*, page 135.

these Germanic words have not yet been linked to any Proto-Indo-European root word, but could be somehow derived from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* “flat ground, bottom”, maybe as loans into Germanic. The existence of Etruscan TYLAP (tular) meaning “earth; land, ground, country; boundary-cippus” shows that cognates of PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* “flat ground, bottom” likely existed outside of PIE/IE, particularly in Etruscan and Pre-Greek.

Etruscan *tle-* (found in Etruscan inscription TLE 890 )<sup>10</sup>, 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.

"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*.

**ēsko**: 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 "ēsko" 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.

**Arazea**: as detailed in an earlier portion of this work, Arazea most likely meant „Catcher, Snatcher, Grabber“. I doubt that Araz- or Ara- meant „arrow“<sup>11</sup>, or „bright“ (which would in this case refer to the moon) or „tree/woods“<sup>12</sup>, and due to (from what I've seen) no attestation of Zea meaning „goddess“ in Thracian and due to the „Catcher, snatcher, grabber“ meanings being more likely in themselves and having much more likely cognates (as we shall see further in this paper), I don't think that we are dealing with any Zea word here. Nor do I think that Arazea is cognate to Hattic/Hatti „Araz“, which apparently means/or may mean „earth“<sup>13</sup> in Hatti: Hatti is a Non-Indo-European<sup>14</sup> language once spoken in Anatolia, before the Hittite and Luwian and other IE Anatolian languages replaced Hatti. Since the goddess on the ring is a Thracian

<sup>10</sup> I found Etruscan *tle-* and Hurrian *til-* in Arnaud Fournet's *A Tentative Etymological Glossary of Etruscan*. In that paper he argues that Etruscan *tle-* and Hurrian *til-* “to destroy” are cognates and that's from where I took that idea of those two words being cognate to each other.

<sup>11</sup> Compare Ara/Araz to Ptolemy's Arakia, which referred to an arrow-shaped island, Qeshm. I will discuss this Arakia found in Ptolemy later in this paper.

<sup>12</sup> I have found great evidence that the „Ara/Araz“ of Arazea does not derive from a word meaning „to curve, turn, bend, twist“, and so I mention the possibility that „Ara/Araz“ might have meant „bow“ only here in this note, but it's not likely enough to include among the likely scenarios. The English word „bow“ is known to derive from PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>ewg<sup>h</sup>-* „to bend; to curve, arch“, but the Persian word for „bow“, *taxš* (=crossbow; arrow), *taxša*, is thought to derive from the earlier meaning „arrow“ (*taxša*) from the earlier meanings „to run, flow, fly“ (<PIE *\*tek<sup>w</sup>-*), referring to the rapid flight of an arrow and to the rapidity with which some archers can shoot a series of arrows out („flowing out“). Supposing for a moment that „Ara“ meant „bow“, I don't think that in the language inscribed on the ring, „Ara“ would have meant both „bow“ and „tree/woods“, even though both meanings could easily from a hypothetical „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; though both „bow“ and „tree“ could develop from „to bend, curve, twist“, I think it's unlikely that „Ara“ would have meant both „bow“ and „woods“. Of course I mention „tree, woods“ because Artemis was very much a goddess of the woods.

<sup>13</sup> Though for all that is currently known, Hatti Araz („earth“) may derive from *\*Araz*=“to enclose“, as in the earth being an enclosed area surrounded by sea and sky. Or Hatti Araz may derive from “blooming, sprouting“, referring to the earth. Or from „flat“, or „wide“ or „long“ or „hard, firm“ or „dry“, among other possibilities.

<sup>14</sup> Though it may be related to PIE enough to be considered Indo-European. Arnaud Fournet argues that Hatti/Hattic is a sister/brother language to PIE, from what I saw in one of his works on Hattic/Hatti.

Artemis, a meaning of „earth“ for Arazea would not be quite right, albeit not far from the subject at hand.

Earlier I described some of the data and the proposed cognates for Arazea meaning „Catcher, snatcher, grabber“ (perhaps also with a double-entendre of „vagina, vulva“ as in the vagina/vulva of an Earth goddess/Moon goddess etc.: compare the English slang term „snatch“ applied to the vagina/vulva because of how it grips a penis tightly), and now I will begin to detail that data and those posited/proposed cognates.

Hesychius notes a word ἄρακος that meant “hawk/falcon”, and he says that this ἄρακος meaning “hawk, falcon” is a Tyrrhenian (Tyrrhenian includes the Etruscans) word. And „arac“ is believed by a number of Etruscanists to be an Etruscan word that meant „hawk, falcon“. Words for birds of prey very often come from the meanings of “snatcher”, “thief”, “grasper”, “grabber”, “taker”, “raptor”. The evidence that I present in this paper shows that ἄρακος=“hawk, falcon” most likely comes from Arak=“to grasp, grab”. This ἄρακος meaning “hawk/falcon” is identical in sonic-form and spelling to the ἄρακος word that meant *Lathyrus annuus*, a species of vetch: I have considered other possibilities as well as seen some suggestions from others, but most likely the vetch word ἄρακος referred to how the vines of the vetch grasp and grab and twine around nearby objects and nearby things.

Note also the similarity of ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) to Ancient Greek ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx), Doric ἰάραξ (hiárax), Ionic ἱρηξ (írēx), words which Beekes (2010) derives 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”, “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 are confirmed to derive from the notions of “pursuer, chaser, hunter”, I don’t remember; I will look for such examples soon. I don’t think that ἄρακος (hawk, falcon) is cognate to ἱέρᾱξ (hiérāx), Doric ἰάραξ (hiárax), Ionic ἱρηξ (írēx), but it is a closely parallel example.

In Ancient Greek words beginning with Arakh/Arak refer to vetches and to *Lathyrus* vetches: it may be that all the plants referred to with Arak/Arakh are plants that are all known these days to be toxic to humans and animals when a certain amount is exceeded, causing a disease called lathyrism. But was that known before modern times, or was that discovered only more recently? In any case, people of Ancient Greece, Thrace and Illyria (etc.) ate the peas of a number of these vetches so much that I doubt that the words would mean “toxic; poisonous; harmful”.

So think the correct explanation for these words is that Arak/Arakh/Arax=“to grasp, grab” referring to the vines’ behavior. Besides ἄρακος=*Lathyrus annuus*, a species of vetch; see also ἄραχος=the wild vetch, *Vicia sibthorpii*; and ἀράχιδνα=*Lathyrus amphicarpos*, another species of vetch; and ἄραξ (=arax/araks) is a synonym for *Lathyrus annuus*, mentioned above.

Further indications of the “grasper, grabber” etymology are a number of “bowl” and “bowl, pan” words in Ancient Greek beginning with Arak/Arok/Arae: see see ἀράη=“bowl”, as well as ἀράκη=“bowl”; see also ἄρακις=“bowl, a pan”, ἀράκτης=“bowl; a pan” and ἄροκλον=“bowl; a pan”. The best and most economical explanation is that in these words Arak/Arok/Arae=“to hold (in the sense of to contain)”, from “to grasp, grab”.

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 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; though it would not surprise me to find such a word in Thessaly as well among the Aeolian Greeks there.

ἄριμος according to Hesychius and Strabo is a Tyrrhenian word that meant „monkey“: though the word is Arimos not Arakos or even Arae, it may be that the word Arimos derives from „to grasp“ referring to how monkeys snatch things and the way they grasp and climb trees and tree branches;

compare how Kapi in Sanskrit means „monkey“ and also „elephant“ and I posit (if no one before me has done so) that this Kapi derives from „to grasp; grab; snatch“ for obvious reasons applying to monkeys and applying to elephants because of the adroit and powerful way that an elephant trunk is so often used by the elephant to grasp things; the application of the word kapi to the Indian gooseberry likely derives from a reference to the snatching/grabbing of the sought-after fruits, as we saw with aracia referring to a type of figs. If this interpretation is correct, Kapi would be identical with forms such as PIE \*keh<sub>2</sub>p / \*kap, „to snatch; seize; grab; grasp“ and PIE \*g<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>1</sub>b<sup>h</sup>- / \*g<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>1</sub>b<sup>h</sup>- / \*g<sup>h</sup>ab<sup>h</sup>- / \*g<sup>h</sup>eHb<sup>(h)</sup>-, „to grab, take“; compare Latin capys/capus=“bird of prey“; Albanian gabonjë „griffon vulture; eagle“; Russian кóбчик (kóbčik) referring to the red-footed falcon; Proto-Germanic \*habukaz „hawk“ (with the initial H sound from earlier K, the usual Germanic sound-rule there).

So deriving ἄριμος (monkey) from „to grasp, grab, snatch“ seems more likely than to posit that the word derives from a potential \*Ar=“tree“ (in turn from \*Ar=“to sprout“), even though I think all monkeys (in contrast to a number of apes) dwell mostly in trees. And much less likely---because I’ve seen no evidence for Ar=“to curve, turn, bend“ in Italy and Greece---arimos could derive from a reference to their curved tails, with either Arimos meaning „curved“ or Ar=“curved“ and Im=“tail“. Of course, arimos may be a foreign word adopted by the Etruscans, which would not necessarily mean that the root-word was not „to grasp, to grab“, because of the following Sumerian data and Burushaski data:

The sonic similarity between ἄρακος (“hawk; falcon”) and Sumerian *arak* (“stork” and similar birds such as the heron) and *arig* (“stork” and similar birds such as the heron) is quite certainly not a coincidence, as indicated by the fact that Akkadian laqlaqu meant “stork” as well as being a designation of the vulva. Why? Storks don’t have pouches like pelicans do, and the Akkadian word applied to storks: as does its descendants and cognates in various Semitic languages. The explanation is because laqlaq- either 1) had the root-meaning “to snatch”, from “to grasp tightly” and in English “snatch” is slang for a vulva for the same reasons. Or 2) laqlaq- may have meant something else originally but came to mean “to snatch, to grasp tightly”. I choose option 1. The Sumerian arak/arig (=“stork”) has no etymology, but the most prevalent stork in Sumeria was the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) which is nearly all black and in no way could have been named “white”, though in northern Iraq the white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*: mostly white but with some black/dark grey) migrates for breeding. Still, they were exposed so much to black storks, I don’t think that the root-meaning was “white”: the root-meaning I think was “snatcher” from the earlier sense “tightly grasping”. See for example how \*čapl’a (=heron) in Slavic comes from the meaning “grabber”, akin to PIE \*keh<sub>2</sub>p / \*kap, “to grab, seize, grasp”, from whence (as noted earlier with some examples) come a number of words for hawks, falcons, eagles, various birds of prey/raptors. So compare the set Tyrrhenian ἄρακος (“hawk; falcon”) ~ Sumerian arak/arig (“stork”, “heron”) ~ Akkadian laqlaqu (“stork; vulva”) to the set Latin capys (“bird of prey”) ~ Slavic \*čapl’a (“heron”) ~ Ancient Greek κῆπος (“vulva; any enclosure, especially a garden, orchard, plantation”): the Ancient Greek word is considered to be from PIE \*keh<sub>2</sub>p / \*kap, “to grab, seize, grasp”, or from a supposed \*keh<sub>2</sub>po, “land, garden”: but if such a root as \*keh<sub>2</sub>po, “land, garden” existed, it would have to be from “to grasp, grab” in order to explain the meanings “vulva; vagina” and “enclosure for the Olympic games”. “Grasp, grab” is known to easily lead to “to enclose” because a hand grasping something encloses what it grasps, especially a smaller object or the handle of a larger object.

In Burushaski, I propose that cognates include hargin (“dragon”; “lamia”), hargal (“the convolvulus/bindweed”), and in an Indo-Aryan language a hargin word applies to a large constrictor snake---I will detail these Burushaski words more next time, but I’ve studied them well and they derive from “to grasp tightly”, and are most likely cognate to the Sumerian and Tyrrhenian and Ancient Greek words that I’m discussing, as well as probably to Thracian Arazea. I’m sure they do not derive from any “silver; bright; white” meaning<sup>15</sup>: there is no word in Burushaski with the forms Harg-/Arg-/Herg (etc.) that means “silver; bright; white; gold” or

15 The „silver; bright; white“ etymology from PIE \*h<sub>2</sub>erǵ- is proposed by Ilija Casule, based on a Phrygian word for dragon which I think is in fact not a cognate to the Burushaski words.

anything like that : all the attested examples have instead the element of a coiling, entwining, grasping thing, because that is in fact what Harg- meant in Burushaski.

After considering a number of possibilities, I posit that Ancient Greek ἀράχνη (arachne)=”spider” and ἀράχνης (arachnes)=”spider”, as well as Latin *araneus/aranea* (=”spider”),<sup>16</sup> derive from the earlier meanings “catcher, grabber” referring to the predatory nature of spiders, as well as deriving from the meanings “to hold, to cling, to grasp” referring to how spiders stick to many surfaces and to their webs. Also possible is a reference to making a tight, firm web, from “to grasp tightly; tight; firm”.

The application of ἀράχνη to the plant *Heracleum sphondylium* (hogweed, etc.) derives from, I’m sure, the rashes caused by the phototoxic sap of *Heracleum sphondylium* looking like rashes caused by spider-bites: the phototoxic sap of the *Heracleum sphondylium* produces phytophotodermatitis (burns and rashes) when contaminated skin is exposed to sunlight. Care therefore needs to be used when cutting or trimming it, to prevent 'trimmers rash'. *Heracleum sphondylium* looks very very much like the larger *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (giant hogweed), the sap of which is much more potently toxic: the sap of *Heracleum mantegazzianum* is more potently phototoxic and causes [phytophotodermatitis](#) in humans, resulting in blisters and scars. These serious reactions are due to the [furanocoumarin](#) derivatives in the leaves, roots, stems, flowers, and seeds of the plant. Consequently, the giant hogweed is considered to be a noxious weed in many jurisdictions. The hogweed was known in Ancient Greece and the giant hogweed was known at least to some of the ancestors of the Greeks who probably came from Southern Russia. The hogweed, if not the giant hogweed as well, would also have been known to the Pre-Greeks.

Evidence that rashes caused by the hogweed plants were likened to spider-bites can be seen in the Romance languages if not elsewhere as well: the Latin word *aranea* led in the Romance languages (see Romanian *râie*, French *rogne*, Italian *rogna*, Spanish *roña* etc.<sup>17</sup>) to words that mean “rash, scabies, scab, mange, itch”.

The usage of ἀράχνη (arachne) applied to a type of sun-dial is probably simply a reference to a segmented round sun-dial looking a like a segmented round spider-web.

Ancient Greek ἀραιός meant “flank, belly” and ἀραιά=”belly”: these words fit easily as well since the older meaning was probably “the part of the body that holds the organs” and/or “stomach”, both from “to hold; grasp; grab”.

The Ancient Greek word ἀραιός=”thin, narrow, slight, slender, infrequent, scanty, few and far between; not dense, of loose texture, porous; with intervals, intermittent” can fit easily as well since the older meaning from the attested meanings was very likely “thin, narrow”, and those meanings easily from “pressed close”, from the same root-meaning as “to grasp tightly”.

Ancient Greek ῥάξ (genitive ῥάγος)/ ῥώξ (genitive ῥωγός ) which meant “grape”, “berry, “fingertips” (fingertips are grape-like in shape) might come from the older meaning “grapevine” (see Persian *raz*=”vine” and a number of linguistic sources posit Persian *raz* “vine” as a cognate to the Greek grape words) in turn from “to grasp, grab, cling”; or from “to snatch, grab” referring to the picking and harvesting of grapes. But this one may well derive from a different root-word and may not be a cognate. There are many possibilities<sup>18</sup>

16 Compare also Ancient Greek ἀρᾶσσω=”to smite, dash in pieces, beat”, and ῥᾶσσω=”to strike, dash in pieces, beat”.

17 The Romanian word *râie* is inherited directly from Latin *aranea*, while the other Romance examples are from a blend of *aranea* with Latin *rodere* („to gnaw”).

18 Perhaps from “sweet” in turn from perhaps “tooth/pointed”, e.g. something very munchable for the mouth. 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 derive either from “to curve, bend” or from “pointed/sharp; to cut” or from “to grasp, grab”; or the Ancient Greek grape words could derive from a meaning of “juicy”: 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”). I do not think that the vetch nor the grape words derive from ἀρᾶσσω, “to beat, strike”, which

for ῥάξ/ ῥώξ. But the two posited derivations from “to grasp, grab” are very likely given the forms of the Ancient Greek vetch words described earlier, which included the form ἄραξ (= *Lathyrus annuus*).

The Ancient Greek word ἄρκευθος=árkeuthos=1) juniper 2) Phoenician cedar 3) Prickly cedar); the word has a variant ἄργετος (a Cretan variant); ἄρκευθος is, as has been previously suggested<sup>19</sup>, cognate to the Ancient Greek word ἄρκυς (árkus)=“net”: the explanation is this: an explanation<sup>20</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<sup>21</sup>. The Ancient Greek ἄρκευθος 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 very likely is from “to hold” since an egg holds an unhatched creature. Note that Arkeuthis=“juniper-berry”, while Arkeuthos=“juniper tree”, yet another reason why I don't think that Arkeuthos derives from “berry” or “round”. Though one might say that the older-meaning of Arkeuthos (if the older meaning was berry/round) was forgotten, and so later the word Arkeuthis was coined to refer to the berries. But there are no indications from other lexical items or from PIE roots that Ark=“berry; round”: even the ἄρκηλα=“egg” example more likely derives from “to hold”, while PIE \*h<sub>1</sub>órǵʰis, “testicle” is an unlikely source even if Arkeuthos was from a Non-Greek language. So it's much more likely that the Ark-/Arg- in Arkeuthos/Arkeuthis/Argetos derive from a root meaning “to twist, turn, bend” cognate to ἄρκυς (árkus)=“net”. But the source may not be \*h<sub>2</sub>erkʷ- “bend” as Pokorny suggested in 1959: the source may be the same as the source of the Arak-/Arakh/Ara- words that means “to grasp, grab” since the older meaning was probably “to grasp tightly” and the meaning “to bend, twist”<sup>22</sup> often comes from “to make tight”, akin to “to grasp tight”: that may also be the case for PIE \*h<sub>2</sub>erkʷ- “bend” which might be from Proto-PIE “to make tight (by bending a string/cord around; by weaving); to grasp tight”.

The Aetolian oronym (oronym=mountain-name) *Αράκυνθος* refers to a 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: the exact location of the Arakynthos in Attica is as yet unknown). One Greek website has this information: “*Arakinthos or Zygos, 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.*”

would be a reference to mashing legumes in order to make paste from them and mashing grapes to make wine: I have not seen anyone posit such an etymology, but I mention it here to be thorough: in many of its conjugations, the word ἄρᾶσσω takes the form ἄράξ- 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 probably 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 possible, but I find no Ancient Greek evidence for that. An older meaning rag/rax=“to sprout” doesn't seem to be indicated, nor “stem, post” as seen with the etymology of staphule.

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

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

21 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 \*wīlā (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); \*wīso- or \*weyso- or \*woyso- from \*wey-s- (“to twist, wind around”) (Lidén, Pokorny, Mallory/Adams).

22 Sometimes the meanings „to bend, twist“ come from the opposite: „soft, pliable, weak“, even „wet; liquid“ as opposed to „dry; hard“.

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.

For another example of vetch and pea words deriving from “to grasp, to grab”, I posit that Romanian *mazăre* (peas), one of consensus Paleobalkan words in Romanian, derives from a root meaning “to grasp, to grab” referring to the pea vines, and from such a root I posit also derives Albanian *modhullë* (with the variants *modull*, *modullë*, *motull*, *motullë*, *modhnë*, *modhël*, *modhëz*) meaning “vetch; vetchling; yellow vetchling” and Albanian *modhë* meaning “brome (plants of the genus *Bromus*); ryegrass (plants of the genus *Lolium*)” and the dialectal meanings “vetchling, vetch”. I posit that the *Bromus* and *Lolium* meanings come from the way the spikes/spines on those plants cling/grab on to people and animals passing through them/among them. Compare how in Hungarian *ragadvány* refers to plants with hooked hairs/spines/spikes that cling to animal fur and human clothing, deriving from *ragad* = “to seize, grasp, grip; to stick, cling”. The Dacian/Thracian words *Mizela*, *Mizila*, *Mozula*, *Mouzula* referring to “thyme” I posit originally referred more to the wild thyme: one of the names for the wild thyme in Ancient Greek was ζυγίς (*zugís*), from ζυγόν = “yoke; joined together; to grasp two things together” named so because the leaves are in opposite complementary pairs, yoked together, so to speak. For an identical semantic, 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 Latin *\*iugaster* = „field maple“, from Latin *iugum* = “yoke“. So in Dacian/Thracian, *Mizela*, *Mizila*, *Mozula*, *Mouzula* meant “grasped together”, from “to grasp tightly, to grab”. No other etymology posited for any of these terms was able to explain all the attested semantics in a compelling way.

I posit that Κότυς and Kottyto, theonyms which among some Greeks and Thracians referred to an Artemis type goddess, meant “Catcher, grasper, grabber” as well: see Ancient Greek κοτύλη = “a small vessel, cup, a bowl”; κοττίς meaning “head” among the Dorians, which I posit is from earlier “bowl” from “to hold, grab, grasp”. I posit that Ancient Greek κότταβος (the game of cottabus) is from either “to have the disks and/or pans fall so that get caught in the basin”, in turn from “to catch”; or from the pans that are hit in the game, since we saw Arak-/Arok- words meaning “pan” earlier, so that Kott- in Kottabos could have referred to the pans that struck, or to the basins that catch them. I posit that Ancient Greek κόττος (“cube; dice; a single die”) comes from “to grasp/hand” since dice are grasped and shaken then thrown; and in Latin *manus* (“hand”) refers to a stake (stake here means “that which is laid down as a wager” in a game of dice) in dice-playing. There are some additional Ancient Greek words which may derive from this root, such as Ancient Greek κόττυφος/κόσσυκος/κόσσυφος/κόψιχος, “blackbird”, which may be from “snatcher”, like many bird words derive.

Before me, there is at least one linguist<sup>23</sup> who realized that Old Greek *κότυς* / *kotys* (anchor) is from Thracian and cognate to Thracian Κότυς and Kottyto, and also cognate to Slavic

\*koty="anchor" and to Slavic \*kòtъ="cat"---but he did not explain the root-meanings, he did not explain how the "anchor" meaning is related to the "cat" meaning, nor did he explain how Kotys and Kottyto fit in: I think it happened like this: Kotys and Kottyto mean "Catcher, snatcher, grabber" and so does Latin cattus ("cat") and Slavic \*kòtъ="cat" (and this meaning should go back to where ever these cat terms originate from---some say domestic-type cats originate from the Hurrian/Iraq area/the Syrian area (cf. Syrian *qattu*="cat", Arabic *qitt*="cat, tomcat") ; others says from Egypt; and there is at least one North African cognate, Nubian kadi="cat"; and yet domestic cats have been found in Central and Eastern Europe further back than in Egypt<sup>24</sup>: "We confirmed the appearance of domestic cats in Poland during the Roman period [0-375 AD] using a combination of zooarchaeological, genetic, and absolute dating, pushing back their arrival by a millennium," the study authors wrote in their *Antiquity* paper. "We later demonstrated that cats bearing the mitochondrial DNA haplotypes of the Near Eastern wildcat were already present in Central Europe in the Early Neolithic [12,000 years ago], indicating that their dispersal into Central Europe was more complex than previously thought." Before this new study, the oldest example of Near Eastern wildcat DNA found in Central Europe came from a specimen recovered in Romania, which was dated to 7,700 BC, or a bit less than 10,000 years ago. Other finds in Central Europe produced wildcat DNA that could be dated back to about 3,000 BC. But the new research shows these animals would have been descended from wildcats that arrived before the Neolithic officially began in 10,000 BC.

The meaning "anchor" seen for Greek kotys is most likely from the earlier meaning "cat" as I will detail, because many/most anchors have those two prongs sticking up like a cat's ears and shaped a lot like a cat's ears: for many anchors, very much looking like a cat's ears/cat's head (no one has deduced this in modern times besides me, but that's the origin of the association), while other anchors not so much. This resemblance of many anchors to a cat's head/ears is encountered in English ("Cathead" in English sailor-talk refers to the beam from which the anchor is lowered and the beam to which the anchor is fastened when brought back up, and a Cat's Head/Lion's head was often sculpted on the anchor-holding the beam for that reason, as I deduced<sup>25</sup>), Slavic (see \*koty="anchor", certainly cognate to \*kòtъ="cat", as is often argued, though no one before me in modern times has figured out the connection), Romanian (see *cătușă*="cat; anchor" both from Latin *cattus*, but the meaning „anchor" is not attested in Latin), and in German (see Middle Low German *katt*="small anchor" and *katt* also means "cat" in some Germanic languages, rather than *Katze/Kater/Kätzin* in standard German) and perhaps/most likely in another languages as well.

And *cătușă* also means in Romanian: "handcuff/manacle", "mousetrap" and "trap, snare". Either the meaning "cat" led to "mousetrap": from comparing a mousetrap to a cat for obvious reasons (they both nab mice and put an end to them) and then the meaning "mousetrap" led to "trap, snare" and the meanings "trap, snare" led to "handcuff/manacle". I am probably first to correctly describe these semantic progressions. But there is an additional possibility: *Cattus/catta* actually mean "catcher", and this led to "trap, snare" and to "mousetrap" and to "handcuff/manacle".

Herodotus identified Pasht, an Egyptian cat-headed goddess, with Artemis.

And what about Mendis/Bendis, another Thracian name for Artemis? From those two variants, I think Mendis is older and is cognate to Latin *manus* ("hand") and to Proto-Germanic \**mundō* meaning "hand; protection, security". I posit that Mendis also meant "Catcher, snatcher, grabber".

<sup>24</sup> [Wild Twist in the Story of Cat Domestication | Ancient Origins \(ancient-origins.net\)](http://ancient-origins.net)

<sup>25</sup> A second "cat head" was associated with a ship's anchor-cable and [windlass](#). This was a square pin thrust into one of the handspike holes of a ship's windlass. When at anchor, the anchor rope (called a cable or [catfall](#)) was secured to this with a smaller rope tie called a [seizing](#). The English term for this pin was 'Norman'. In German, however, it was called a *Kattenkopf* (cat-head), and in this case it may be a reference to the traditional way the top was notched and chamfered off so that in cross section, it resembled the ears of a cat.

A previous etymology from another linguist decades ago, that Bendis meant “binder” referring to hunting nets: that suggestion is not compelling since hunting nets don’t “bind” the animal really, but the way of making a net does involve some binding, so maybe Bendis meant “Net/Netter”, but I prefer my Mendis=“Catcher, Snatcher, Grabber” theory.

In Ptolemy’s *Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις*<sup>26</sup> (book 6, chapter 4), written in Ancient Greek around 150 AD in Roman empire times, we find *Arakia* referring to an arrow-shaped island in the Persian Gulf, nowadays known as Qeshm: yet in that area of the island, no such toponym *Arakia* is known outside of Greco-Roman writings, so perhaps *Arakia* was a name given to the island by certain people from the Italy of Roman times, and from the Romans passed into the Greek of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*. But *Arakia* may be instead be from the Persian Gulf area, and cognate to Sumerian Arak/Arig=“stork, heron; grabber, snatcher, grasper”. Maybe in that part of the world, there was a word for a spear or arrow that meant “catcher”, because spears and arrow were so often used for hunting. Or maybe *Arakia* meant “Hunter” (from “Catcher”) and the island because of its arrow/spear shape was associated with a mythological hunter: maybe the giant hunter Orion.

I have found a figure in Romanian folklore and in Italian folklore whose name is so close to this *Arazea* 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>27</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>28</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* likely derives from Daco-Thracian or was influenced by Daco-Thracian *Arazea*. 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.

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26 *Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις* literally means „Guide to Drawing the earth“. The work is usually known as the *Geographia*, using the Latin name, and in English it’s often called the *Geography*. The work is considered to have been written around AD 150.

27 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 *ὠδή* (*ōidē*, “ode”), or from the name of *Hērā* (in Greek: *Ἥρα*) combined with the same *ὠδή*, with *Hērā* of course referring to the wife of *Zeus*. The *Hērō-* element in *Hērōdotus* derives from *Hērā* as well.

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

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, *Arazea* bears many similarities to Phrygian *Cybele* (the Phrygians used to live next to the Thracians) and to the Artemis of Ephesus in North-Western Anatolia; her function as earth goddess, like *Demeter* and *Gaia*, may be 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 Demeter which in essence is identical to the inscription on the Ezerovo ring, which instead petitions *Arazea* (=Artemis, Bendis) to do the same thing requested of Demeter in the "Da Dale Me" inscription.

**Domean:** meant "lady/mistress", either from 1) an older meaning of "of the household/of the home", from PIE *\*dóm-*, "house, home", from whence derive Latin *domus* (=home) and Slavic *domo* (=home). Or 2) from an older meaning „master“, from PIE *\*demh₂-*, „to tame, domesticate, subdue“. Likewise for Latin *domina* and *dominus*, either root/option is considered likely.

**Tilezupta:** my primary and most likely theory is that Tilezupta meant „Carrying/Bearing the Bow“, with „bow“ being the bow used for shooting arrows: Tile=“bearing, carrying“ and deriving from PIE *\*telh₂-* „to bear, to carry, to undergo, to endure“, and Zupta deriving from PIE *\*gewp-*, „to curve, bend, arch“, or from PIE *\*kewp-* „to curve, bend, arch“, showing the well-known tendency for Thracian to not only satemize (palatovelars becoming fricatives and affricates) but in this case more specifically showing palatalization of PIE initial *\*g-* or *\*k-*, and then the palatalized sound was sibilized: under what conditions did an initial PIE *g/k* ---or any PIE *g/k*---become palatalized and then sibilized in Thracian? I hope to be able to determine that if I can find additional high-certainty examples of that in Thracian.

A close cognate or semi-cognate (semi-cognate if from a kindred, variant root) of Thracian Zupta if it means „bow used to shoot arrows“ is Ancient Greek κύπτω (“to bend forward, to stoop down, to bow”), which is of unknown etymology, as is Ancient Greek κῦφος (“bent forward, stooping, hunchbacked; curved, round”): I’m not sure if a shift from initial PIE *\*g-* to *\*k-* in Ancient Greek is attested, but I know that that is not the usual, expected sound-shift for initial PIE *\*g-* to Ancient Greek. But what if the form κύπτω is from a Pre-Greek language (according to Beekes, the variation "κυφ-/κυπ-" points to a Pre-Greek origin) or a neighboring dialect/language (Ancient Macedonian, Phrygian, Paeonian) for which such a sound-shift was regular? Or, alternatively, what if κύπτω is from PIE *\*kewp-*, “to curve, bend, arch”? PIE *\*kewp-* is posited as the source for Proto-Germanic *\*hūbō*, “a covering for the head; hood; cowl”; for Latin *cūpa*, “tub, cask, tun, vat”; for Sanskrit कूप (kūpa) “well; cave; hole” and for Ancient Greek κύπη /*kūrē* “hut, hole; ship”, *κύπελλον* and *κυπελλίς* “drinking cup, goblet” and is posited as the source for some other words as well.

Compare my theoretical Thracian Zupta (“bow used for arrows”) vis-a-vis Ancient Greek κύπτω (“to bend forward, to stoop down, to bow”) to English bow (as in a bow used for arrows) vis-a-vis English bow (as in “to bend oneself”, with the common more derived sense “to bend oneself as a gesture of respect or deference”): both of these English “bow” words are cognates, both deriving from PIE *\*bʰewgʰ-* “to bend, curve, arch”.

To further see how close the variants *\*gewp-* and *\*kewp-* were, compare Ancient Greek κύπη “hut, hole; ship” to Ancient Greek γύπη=“hole in the earth”; “vulture’s nest” and Ancient Greek γύψ /*γυψ*=“vulture” (from “curved” referring to curved beak and curved neck of vultures), the genitive form of which was *γυπός*. The Ancient Greek κῦφος (“bent forward, stooping,

hunchbacked; curved, round”) bears an aspirated P sound (the sound -φ-), and may require an additional variant or else the sound-shift happened in an unidentified language.

For the sound shift *\*telh<sub>2</sub>--→Til-*, compare *Tiltean* for which I posit the *Til-* portion to be from the homonymous (and probably cognate/kindred) PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* “flat ground, bottom”, a sound shift which, as one may recall from my discussion of *Tiltean*’s etymology above, is supported by the Delmato-Pannonian/Illyrian toponym *Tilurium*, because *Tilurium* is most likely cognate<sup>29</sup> to Latin *tellus*, “earth, ground, soil; land” with later semantic developments: “country, district” and “the Earth, the globe, the world”, the genitive of *tellus* is *telluris*, so similar to *Tilurium*. Latin *tellus* is from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>-* “flat ground, bottom”. For the sound shift *\*telh<sub>2</sub>--→Til-*, compare also Proto-Balto-Slavic *\*tīlʔta* “bridge”, from PIE *\*telh<sub>2</sub>*, “to bear, carry”.

My alternative theory (which I no longer favor for reasons that I will detail in this edition) is that *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).

In this scenario, Thracian *tile-* (breasts) is cognate to Albanian *tul* (=piece of soft flesh without bones, etc.) and to ancient Greek *τόλη, tūlē* (=swelling; hump of a camel; cushion). In 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC Attic Greek, the pronunciation of *τόλη, tūlē* is said to have been *tý.lē:* (this is rendered in IPA). Albanian *tul* and Ancient Greek *τόλη, tūlē* derive, along with some other cognates, 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 of Albanian *tul* and Ancient Greek *τόλη, tūlē* is Proto-Slavic *\*tǫlb*, the meaning of which has been reconstructed by some 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”, and since the PIE root *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-* means „swollen, lump“, the older meaning at the source of „back“/“rear“ was actually “buttocks” in Proto-Slavic, or in an earlier stage than Proto-Slavic: and the meaning older than “buttocks” would have been “bulge/fleshy bulge”, with „bulge“ referring also the back of the head. Likewise, there is a bulge at the bottom of the back of the neck: unless „back of the neck, nape“ come from „back, rear“ in turn from „buttocks; back of the head“.

If Thracian (like Albanian and Ancient Greek and Proto-Slavic) indeed had such a word (not necessarily with the form *Tile-* in Thracian, since I now think that *Tile-* in the ring inscription more likely meant „carrying, bearing“) from PIE *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-*, „swollen, lump“, then quite likely in Thracian the word sometimes extended to the buttocks (especially the buttocks of many women) as well as to women’s breasts (in Ancient Greek, no doubt *τόλη, tūlē* was sometimes applied to both women’s breasts and buttocks, even though those meanings are not attested). If *Tile-* in *Tilzupta* is from *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-*, „swollen, lump“, then 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, if *Tile-* derives from *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-*, „swollen, lump“, but for some time now I’ve come to the conclusion that a shift of *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-* to *Til-* in Thracian is not so likely, even though the pronunciation of Ancient Greek *τόλη, tūlē* shifted to *Til-* by the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD in Medieval Greek, and even though we know so little about what would be the Thracian outcome/development of PIE *\*túh<sub>2</sub>-lo-*.

If Thracian *zupta* meant „covered“, then the closest cognates that I recall now (at least semantically) would be Sanskrit *गुप्तं guptá*, “hidden, secret; guarded, protected” and Sanskrit *गोपु / goptṛ*, „one who conceals; guardian“ both from PIE *\*gewp/\*geup-*, “to curve, bend, arch”. Other close cognates if Thracian *zupta* meant „covered“ may be Bulgarian *župa* (tomb), Polish *zupa*

<sup>29</sup> See Orsat Ligorio and Danilo Savic’s paper, „Illyrian and Slavic“ (a paper which does not actually argue that Illyrian was very similar to Slavic), 2022, pg. 27 for the source of my statement that *Tilurium* is most likely cognate to Latin *tellus/telluris*.

(mine), Ukrainian *župa* (salt mine), Old Slavonic *župište* (tomb). Ancient Greek γύπη="hole in the earth; cave". Albanian *gop* "cunt". The Slavic forms meaning „tomb, mine“ could derive from an earlier meaning of "arching over", and the meaning „tomb“ may come from „arching over“ leading to „covering“; otherwise from „arching over“ without the meaning „covering“ developing in Slavic. The Thracian *zupta*, whether it meant „bow (used for shooting arrows)“ or „covered“ is closer in form to the Ancient Greek and Slavic cognates than to the Albanian cognate: *gop*, „cunt“.

**miē** : is cognate to Latin *mē* , English *me*, Ancient Greek μέ (mé), ἐμέ (emé, “me”), Sanskrit मा (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 *\*ǵʰelh₃-*, "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 *\*ǵʰelh₃-* by way of Proto-Indo-European *\*ǵʰólh₃tom* (“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 *\*dʰelh₁-*, 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 ἐραζε (*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 Arazea (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>30</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/ēsko Arazea domean Tilezupta/ miē era zēlta*"; the alliteration in *zea* and *zupta* and *zēlta* 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" or „buried“) and *domean* ("of the home" or alternatively „tamer“, „subduer“): *domean* is also a noun and yet also an adjective, since it originally meant "of the home" or „tamer, subduer“; 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 *Arazea* may be seen in an adjectival way, since „Catcher“ is descriptive besides being a noun; while if the word was *Zea* (goddess), 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* (= *-iya*) (cf. Mycenaean Greek *Potnija*, *Qerasija* et al.) or *-(~)e-ja* (= *-eja*) (cf. Mycenaean Greek *Ipemedēja* et al.).

The harmony between the forms *zupta* (a noun if it meant „bow used for arrows“; and a verbal adjective---an adjective deived from a verb---if it meant „covered“) and the verb *zēlta* (=to bloom, sprout), both ending in *-ta*, is also suggestive of intentional word-play/poetry. And the verb contained in *tiltean* we

<sup>30</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.

can reconstruct as \*tiltea or \*tilte or \*tilta, among other possibilities, or all of those depending on the grammar of the phrase. So, \*tilta and zēlta, two Thracian verbs? With ēsko 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 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.

## Literature/Bibliography/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 work.

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