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THE MONOGRAM *KAPO* IN THE MYCENAEAN TEXTS

The best method to understand individual elements of Mycenaean texts is to examine the context in which they appear.

I have been led to re-examine the interpretation of the monogram *KAPO*, which bears number *127 in the Wingspread Convention, by its precise and homogeneous contexts (which are all lists of *tu-we-a*).

The four documents PY An 616; Un 249, 267, 592 have in common the following points:

1. They are the only ones in which appear the ideograms *127 (= *KAPO*) and *157 (which is of doubtful interpretation);

2. They enumerate all or part of the following list of items:

ko-ri-a₂-da-na *123

ku-pa-ro₂ *123

*13 = *ME*

*127 = *KAPO*

*131 = *VINum*

*145 = *LANA*

*157;

3. They show these items in quantities of consistent proportions. These were presumably the proportions in which these products¹ (Myc. *tu-we-a*, Gr. *θύεα*) were usually employed by the perfumers of Pylos. The basic raw materials of the perfumers of Mycenaean Pylos² were on the one hand oil (see the tablet Fr 1184 where in a context relating to transactions of oil are listed two *a-re-pa-zo-o*: *ko-ka-ro* and *e-u-me-de*), and on the other hand several substances which were combined with the oil to give it scent. These sub-

¹ The homogeneous nature of these four documents is obvious in the 'tableau' prepared by Lejeune, REG 1959, 142.

² We know some of these perfumers (= Myc. *a-re-pa-zo-o*, Gr. *ἀλειφαζόοι*) by name, *ko-ka-ro* (Fg 374); *e-u-me-de* (Ea 812 and 820); *tu-we-ta* (Un 267. 2) and *pi-ra-jo* (Un 249. 1).

stances, whether liquid or solid, were probably indicated by the name *tu-we-a*, "spices for the preparation of perfumes" (see the tablet Un 267. 1—4: *o-do-ke, a-ko-so-ta | tu-we-ta, a-re-pa-zo-o | tu-we-a, a-re-pa-te/ze-so-me-no*, that is "A. gave to T. the perfumer *tu-we-a* to boil in the ointment").

The meaning of τὸ θύος in Mycenaean seems therefore to be different from that found in Homer and later ("sacrifice of burnt offerings"). It follows that *KAPO* must be the name of one of the 'aromata' used by the *a-re-pa-zo-o* of Pylos for the preparation of perfumes. The question is, which one?

Ventris and Chadwick considered the problem of the correct order of the two signs of the monogram *127 *KAPO* or *POKA*³ and, tending towards the former alternative, they interpreted *KAPO* as Gr. καρπός, 'fruit?'⁴. The same authors proposed a comparison between *KAPO* and *ka-po*, shown in KN F 841. 5, a tablet by an unknown scribe, in the *ka-po e-* sequence, in a context of *NI* (= 'figs'), *GRAnum + PE* and *OLIVa*⁵. Ventris and Chadwick extended *ka-po e-* to read *ka-po, e-[ra-wa* (in F 841. 6 *e-ra-wa* is shown) and they translated the expression as "fruits of the olive?"⁶. But both this extension and the comparison between *ka-po* and the monogram *KAPO* remain extremely hypothetical⁷.

The interpretation of *KAPO* as Gr. καρπός⁸ seems to me to be unsatisfactory since it is not sufficiently specific for the contexts, which require *KAPO* to signify a particular item belonging to the category of 'aromata' and used in the synthesis of perfumes.

Gallavotti⁹ proposed to interpret the monogram *KAPO* with Gr. σκάφος, which is an extremely rare spelling of Gr. σφάκος, 'sage'. This word is also spelt φάσκον (in Theophr. HP 3. 8. 6) and φάσκος (in Hesych. s.v.). The spelling σκάφος appears in the papyrus of the *Dyscolos* of Menander (v. 605) and in Hesych. s.v. βρύα (*codex*). This

³ Docs. 223: the monogram *133 = *AREPA* = Gr. ἄλειφαρ is written downwards in PY Un 6 and upwards in PY Un 718.

⁴ Compare Docs. 50, 223 and Palmer, Interpretation 301

⁵ Docs. 223

⁶ Docs. 219, 395

⁷ Compare the doubts on the identity of the two forms *KAPO* and *ka-po* already expressed by A. Morpurgo, *Lexicon*, s. v. *Ka-po*.

⁸ See LSJ s. v.

⁹ RCCM 1959, 256 n. 1

interpretation also seems to me unsatisfactory, since no variety of sage is mentioned as an ingredient in perfumes by either Theophrastus, Pliny or Dioscorides¹⁰, our chief sources of information on the preparation of perfumes in classical times. Another Mycenaean term, the adjective *pa-ko-we* which specifies perfumed oil, has usually been interpreted, following Bennett¹¹, as deriving from Gr. σφάκος. But this interpretation is open to the same objection, that there is no evidence for the use of sage in the manufacture of perfumes in classical times¹².

Theophrastus (HP IX. vii. 3) lists the principal plants from which ingredients for perfumes were derived: Οἷς μὲν οὖν εἰς τὰ ἀρώματα χρῶνται σχεδὸν τάδε ἐστί· κασία κινάμωμον καρδάμωμον νάρδος ναῖρον βάλσαμον ἀσπάλαθος στύραξ Ἴρις νάρτη κόστος πάνακες κρόκος σμύρνα κύπριον σχοῖνος κάλαμος ἀμάρακον λωτὸς ἄνητος.

The use of κινάμωμον in the preparation of perfumes is confirmed by Dioscor. I passim and Pliny NH XIII passim.

Herodotus (III. 111) applies the term κάρφεια "bark" to κινάμωμον¹³: "Ορνιθας δὲ λέγουσι μεγάλας φορέειν ταῦτα τὰ κάρφεια τὰ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ Φοινίκων μαθόντες κινάμωμον καλέομεν. . . W. W. How and J. Wells comment on this passage: "the dry sticks (κάρφεια) are the familiar form in which cinnamon is still exported"¹⁴.

¹⁰ Compare Theophr. De odor., ed. A. Hort, Loeb Classical Library, London 1916; Plin. NH XIII 4—19; XV 28—31; Dioscor. De Materia Medica, ed Wellmann, I 52—76. See also R. J. Forbes, The Manufacture of Classical Cosmetics, in Studies in Ancient Technology III², Leiden 1965, 30—40. For sage-oil as an ingredient only in modern unguent preparations see J. T. Killen, CR 1964, 172.

¹¹ Oil 17—19 n. 11

¹² Bennett on the other hand did not ignore this problem, when he stated with regard to the various kinds of sage to which the term σφάκος seems to refer "some one or more of the species under the name in Mycenaean times might well have been found useful in perfumery . . ." (Oil 17—19 n. 11). According to M. Lejeune, REA 1958, 18 and L. A. Stella, PdP 1959, 248, in *pa-ko-we* (from σφάκος) we should not see sage but a kind of lichen. Gallavotti understood *pa-ko-we* differently and linked it with βάκχος in the sense of 'vine, wine' (cf. SIFC 1958 61—63 and PdP 1959, 94).

¹³ The basic meaning of Gr. κάρφος is "any small dry body, esp. 'dry stalk', as of the 'dry sticks' of cinnamon, Hdt. III. 111": LSJ s. v., where the other, more precise, meanings of the same word may be seen.

¹⁴ Cf. W. W. How — J. Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus I, Oxford 1912 (republ. 1961), 292. A complete description of κινάμωμον and of κασία is given in Theophr. HP IX. 5. 1. The quotation from Theophr. IX. 4. 5 which appears in How—Wells, passage quoted, is mistaken.

Herodotus's statement that κιννάμωμον came from Arabia¹⁵, when in fact it came from the East Indies, is on a par with the common error in ancient Greece of placing in Arabia the origin of certain plants of the so-called 'travelling group' which came from the Far East. The confusion arose because the Arabs often traded with ports of southern Asia, while the Phoenicians frequently took on the distribution of the merchandise from Arabia onwards¹⁶. It should be noted also that there is a curious similarity between the Greek term κάρφος and the Arabic name for bark and cinnamon, *qirfat*, *qerfat*¹⁷.

Herodotus uses the term κάρφος 'bark' for cinnamon, a spice which was used in Classical times for the preparation of perfumes. We know, moreover, from the science of botany, that the only spice that is derived from 'bark' is cinnamon¹⁸. I feel, therefore, that it is reasonable to infer that the monogram *KAPO* is related to the Greek term κάρφος 'bark' referring to cinnamon. The term κάρφος would therefore have been used to indicate a kind of cinnamon in the Mycenaean lexicon.

¹⁵ Hdt. III. 111. Compare also Theophr. HP IX. 7. 2: τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα τὰ εὖσμα οἷς πρὸς τὰ ἀρώματα χρωῖνται, τὰ μὲν ἐξ Ἰνδῶν κομίζεται κάκειθεν ἐπὶ θάλατταν καταπέμπεται, τὰ δ' ἐξ Ἀραβίας, οἷον πρὸς τῷ κιννάμωμῳ καὶ τῇ κασίᾳ καὶ κόμακον.

¹⁶ Even a caravan route could have brought the plants coming from the Far East to the Aegean basin. This route passed further to the north and there also Semitic peoples (in particular the Assyrians and Babylonians) played an important part as intermediaries: compare H. N. and A. L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*, Waltham 1952, *passim*.

¹⁷ Compare this in LSJ Liddell-Scott ed. s. v. κάρφος; see also the reasonably clear Indo-European etymology of the group of words relating to κάρφος in Frisk s. v. κάρφω. The Arab term *qirfat* has been linked to the Greek term κέρπαθος (to be linked etymologically with κάρφος?) by D. H. Müller, PW I 18 s. v. *Abasenoī*. This term, which is a *hapax*, is attested, in a list of spices, in Uranius, quoted by Steph. Byz., fr. 12 Müller IV 524:

Ἀβασηνοί, ἔθνος Ἀραβίας ... Οὐράνιος ἐν Ἀραβικῶν τρίτῳ ... Ἡ χώρα τῶν Ἀβασηνῶν σμύρνην φέρει καὶ ὄσσον καὶ θυμίαμα καὶ κέρπαθον. LSJ interprets κέρπαθος (s. v.) as "a kind of incense".

¹⁸ A. Ferrara, *Tecnologia delle spezie*, Firenze 1958, groups spices together according to the organ and part of the plant from which they derive and distinguishes spices as follows: 1) flowers; 2) fruits; 3) seeds; 4) bark; 5) rhizomes. The fourth type of spice is represented by various kinds of cinnamon. Under the general heading of cinnamon are collected the aromatic bark of trunks of certain kinds of *Cinnamomum*, evergreen trees of the *Lauraceae* family, natives of tropical eastern Asia. In actual commerce two basic types may be found: 1) cinnamon from Ceylon (*Cinnamomum Zeylanicum*); 2) cinnamon from China (*Cassia*, *Cassia lignea*), which is obtained from the trunks of *Cinnamomum obtusifolium*.

In Classical Greek there are three names for varieties of cinnamon (both the tree and its product), no one of which appears in the Mycenaeen texts:

1. κιννάμωμον usually identified with *Cinnamomum cassia*, but possibly to be understood also as *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* which supplies the so-called 'Cinnamon of Ceylon'¹⁹;

2. κασία, usually identified with *Cinnamomum iners*;

3. κιττώ, another kind of *Cinnamomum*.

Of these three terms, the most common in ancient times was κασία (we find it in Sapph. fr. 52 Gall = 44 L.-P.); κιννάμωμον appears on the other hand for the first time in the passage of Herodotus quoted above (III. 111); κιττώ is a hapax in Dioscorides I. 12.

The three words κιννάμωμον, κασία and κιττώ are generally held to be of Semitic origin²⁰. Κιννάμωμον in particular, to which Herodotus applies the term κάρφεια, is usually related to the Semitic *qinnamōn*²¹, which may appear to lend support to Herodotus's view of a Phoenician origin²². But, as E. Masson remarks, "la forme phénicienne n'est pas attestée et ce terme, qui ne se trouve qu'en hébreu, n'appartient pas non plus à un fonds sémitique ancien"²³.

It seems to me that what has been said above could constitute indirect proof of the priority of the term κάρφος over the term κιννάμωμον for indicating cinnamon in Greek.

¹⁹ This type of cinnamon was imported from the Indies by the Semites (compare H. N. and A. L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*, Waltham 1952, p. 76) and could therefore have arrived in Greece through Semitic intermediaries.

²⁰ Compare E. Masson, *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec*, Paris 1967, pp. 48—50.

²¹ On the basis of this Hebraic model, we would expect to find in Greek the form κίνναμον, which exists, but which is only met with later and infrequently, in Nicander and Pliny.

²² Compare Frisk s. v. κιννάμωνον.

²³ E. Masson, *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec*, Paris 1967, p. 50.