

# Palaeolexicon



Pre-Greek studies  
Volume 1

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Prometheus or Amirani?

March 2014

First, let me thank the Paleolexicon team, whose website I have often visited. I would like to briefly illustrate a new theory of the probable relationship between Pre-Greek and some other ancient and modern languages in and around Anatolia.

It is well known that the Greek lexicon contains a considerable number of sub-strata words. Additionally, Greek historians themselves wrote about a “flourishing civilized area in the Ægean Sea”, a powerful kingdom in the isle of Crete. Nevertheless, minor settlements in the Cyclades also arose. Many words were and still are enigmatic in any form and have yet to be convincingly explained. For many long decades and indeed for nearly two centuries, despite several attempts, linguists have dramatically failed to establish the origin of these words.

Sir Arthur Evans discovered tablets during the excavation of Knossos’ palace. Over time two kinds of writing have emerged: Linear A and (Linear) B. The latter was deciphered by an architect, Michael Ventris and his mentor John Chadwick; whilst Linear A has not been cracked yet. Even in the third millennium, experts continue to believe in an isolated language or, at best, in a minor extinct ancient language group.

I devoted my last decade to studying what’s happened to the Ægean area in the Bronze Age, where originally Pre-Greek people come from, and, more important, if any phylogenetic relationship with some languages of the Anatolian plateau may be existed.

A comparison with neighbourhood Semitic(-Hamitic) language is been attempted since then, relationship between Greeks and Near East cities starting earlier in history; despite that, except for borrowing lexical items, no serious glottochronological origin can be proven.

After Linear B and Hittite decipherment, scholars went to a more deep and clear studies on Indo-European language family. Indo-European studies bearing two centuries of good investigation in the linguistic field; and I can say, it is the more robust and accurate research ever.

To read R. S. P. Beekes (Leiden Uni., NL) brief (PDF, available on-line): "*Pre-Greek. The Pre-Greek loans in Greek – 3<sup>rd</sup> version, January 2007*", is really worth it. It is a quick introduction on phonological ground; some of his assumption are incorrect; nevertheless, his synchronic point of view still are – as a whole – quite good. In any form, basic feature are seen and shared with R. A. Brown, L. R. Palmer in "..... *The existence in the syllabary of a system of opposition plain : palatalized : labialized to the neglect of the oppositions voiceless : voiced : aspirate, which are essential to Greek, strongly suggests that the ancestral form of the syllabary was created for a non-Indo-European language (LP 19. 29). Such phonemic systems are found inter alia among Caucasian languages*". With this words, despite Palmer's Luwian connection, an initial suspect is looked at. There is a psychological block toward ancient languages to be historically related with unfamiliar languages to scholars.

My research paper it aims to find the correct solution to etymologically unsolved question in Greek language. How do I know if I hold the right answer? Anything based on Science must be **LOGIC**; in Linguistics such Logic is called **RULES**; a list of words must follow the same rule in its articulatory environment; rules may change due to position, accent, or the like.

There are several problem within comparative system I propose to, notably the North Caucasian family; which still be rejected in any aspect, from phonology to syntax; there are huge differences between Western Caucasian (Adyghe, Abkhaz-Abaza and extinct Ubykh) and Nakh-Daghestanian or Central-Eastern family (30 languages grouped in 7 branches). Both groups lacks of early attested sources, linguistic reconstruction is rather probable.

My investigation expand to three ancient poorly attested languages, such as Hattic (a pre-Hittite and non-IE language), and Hurro-Urartian (non-IE and non-Semitic).

Against this hypothesis, mostly scholars are sceptic still. At a glance, it appear to them as '*a reprise*' of dismantled old theories. In somehow, their critic are correct when and where appropriate. I deeply myself try to see phonological rules and to reject any folk etymology; nevertheless, I see no

reason to discharge a priori, before to check if a Pre-Greek word has or has not a chance to meet a counterpart somewhere else; most important are RULES as correct way to demonstrate its validity.

I briefly explain what the issues are:

1. Caucasus is mountain chain, also a “Mountain of tongues”, more than 60 languages are spoken over there; two main kind of ethnic division must be considered: Indigenous and settled. For the first type, a second sharp division include three or two linguistic families (West Caucasian, Nakh-Daghestanian, South Caucasian [with Georgian]); meanwhile IndoEuropean, Uralic, Altaic, Semitic are waves of population over the centuries.
2. Linguistic typology shows an abyss between languages / groups / families; phonologic inventory may vary even in dialects of the same language. Morphology and Syntax are no less relevant than phonological feature. In any form, in North Caucasian (both, Western and Nakh-Daghestanian) languages, **ERGATIVITY** is a distinctive mark.
3. Except for Georgian, Armenian and – for a short period of time – Albanian [do not confuse Albania in the Balkans with Caucasian Albania, now Azerbaijan], any other language in Caucasus area has not written record. The research hardly can be proven correct. Reconstruction is very tentative.
4. About three ancient languages I quote earlier, lexicon is limited to few words, also repetitive in inscriptions, and sometimes, doubtful in interpretation and meaning. Their relationship with North Caucasian (Western and Central-Eastern), despite several attempts, it is not widely accepted. Further evidence needed in order to establish a secure glottochronology or common roots.

On top of that, despite all related problems, some other tests are faced: The Ægean area. If it is problematic to reconstruct a linguistic family, how can we solve problems through problems? Does it seems a very bad hypothesis

to deal with. In my mind, based on knowledge I have with, and historical facts I add to, I begun to elaborate a new theory from scratch; any previous attempt made by other scholars is completely revised. So, the second problem I could face is the Ægean mystery; where everything vanished, except for Pre-Greek lexicon in Greek.

In the past, only Paul Kretschmer had had the idea to sieve IE words from non-IE; hence, the substrata idea slowly emerged from dust and darkness. Kretschmer's idea itself was baffled in Academic world. Only R. A. Brown (1985), R. S. P. Beekes progressed with the concept of a substrata language; and then I begun to compare with some linguistic families in the distance radius or geographically close to Crete and Ægean sea.

Another problem may raise in Greek context is: Source. Hesychius is deeply neglect among philologists, hardly they look at his lexicon as tool. But, an insight to the massive word-list he provided with, it put the research paper in the right column. Hesychius is not the only source to get from, some words are well attested since Mycenæan time; one of them is βασιλεύς. In 1945, A. J. Van Windekens wrote "*Le Pélasgique. Essai sur le langue indo-européenne préhellénique*", his conclusion for βασιλεύς was a connection with Sanskrit *bhás-* 'lumièrè, éclat, majesté, puissance / enlightened'; unfortunately, in Linear B tablets such word was written *qa-si-re-u* [= *g<sup>w</sup>asileús*]; and I found not casual the idea of Adyghe language, in its lexicon it still be in use: *g<sup>w</sup>asã* or *g<sup>w</sup>ašã* 'princess', so, Pre-Greek and Adyghe shows a common root in \**g<sup>w</sup>asV-*, and perfect agreement in semantic field. There are several rules may it appears alien to Indo-Europeanists, simply because – in all respect – old syllabic structure CVCV(CV) was the original form of all those languages; and then, each language developed from it. It also is not a coincidence that synchronic and diachronic analysis are side by side, like Ἀκακαλλίς goddess, hence:

The word is known from other sources:

1. ἀκακαλίς 'gall of the oriental tamarisk (Dsk. 1, 89)'.
2. ἀκακαλλίς 'narcissus (Eumakh. Ap. Ath. 15, 681e)'.
3. ἀκακαλλίς 'juniper (Ps. - Dsk. 1, 75)'.
4. κακαλλίς = νάρκισσος (H., κ 292).

This word has no known etymology. The sequence -κ\_\_κ- is a clear pointer of its non-IndoEuropean origin, as is also the fluctuation between -λίς, -λλίς, and the prosthesis and/or apheresis of initial α-. In mythology Akakallis is one of Pasiphae's daughters, thus indicating the strong links between this word and Crete (R. A. Brown 1985, pp. 26-27).

Hardly I can keep away a connection with Tsezi *gagali* 'flower'; two kind of observation are held:

- I. No opposition voiced ~ voiceless.
- II. Aphaeresis (or Apocope) in both cases: synchronic and diachronic.

So, Pre-Greek: α-, Ø- (αC-,#C-)

Caucasian languages: Ø- (#C-)

A feature like that, it appears in so many lexical items. The reason why, is not clear yet, but I suspect α- is used for grammatical purpose. Unfortunately, such rule is not applicable to all lexical items, if they are too short, like ἄχνη 'straw'; in this case a different rule shall be apply within. Again, it is not a coincidence that in Bezhta *naxu* means 'straw'; and the rule is: metathesis. Unlikely other more common rules, metathesis is always rejected among scholars; only few of them begun to explore the reason why it occur. Metathesis is a very universal common phenomenon, very underestimate in phonology; however, Blevins & Garrett and E. Hume give us a clear explanation of sounds affected from; and the result, it is more regular than we expect: only *l, r, m, n, s* are involved.

Greek culture must be seen as a continuity of Cretan one, and to bear in mind that, some words already had an explanation through mythology; in this case, its original meaning is not directly exposed to the reader. A comparative system reveal the name truthfulness; like Pre-Greek ἀράχνη and Kryz (Lezgian group of Nakh-Daghestanian family) *bab ruχ* «spider» ← litt. 'old woman' + 'to weave'. The Greek tale is about a competition between a weaver (her name was ἀράχνη) and Ἀθήνη goddess, and then ἀράχνη was condemned to be a «spider» forever. Semantically speaking, the word 'spider' in Greek (Latin *arāneo*) – mythology and comparison – reveal the

exact equation of 'spider ← the weaver'.

My research paper carry on a lot of informations and data, and then, archaeology is also involved as supported proof of, thus the two discipline thesis' give further evidence of Bronze Age way to live. Sometimes two phonologically similar words in Caucasian and Pre-Greek has – apparently – different meaning; but, archaeological description give us the reason why they fit in; like “*Rock tombs, Bay of Matalla, southern Crete. The deepest tombs, directly above the beach, at the lower left end [of the picture], are partly flooded by sea-water, sign of recent subsidence on this part of the Cretan coast. Further to the west, on the steep coastal cliffs to the south of Levka. On water-level marks at considerable height indicate recent elevation of this parts of the island*”<sup>1</sup>; that's why Pre-Greek κύδαρ [a typical Pre-Greek word in -αρ] ‘burial, funeral’ agree with Chamalal q:it<sup>w</sup> ‘precipice’; the connection is explained by Cretan burial custom. When and where is possible, a complete set can demonstrate how close languages are:

Pre-Greek: δέω ‘make wet’

Hurrian: *tab-*, *taw-* ‘to pour, to cast’

Hattic: \**tewu*- in *tewu*/*ne* ‘drink-offering’

Akhwakh: =*et*<sup>w</sup>- ‘to drop, to drip, to flow’.

In some occasion, Pre-Greek has a good counterpart with Hurrian and/or Urartian and/or Hattic; so, no exact match with North Caucasian languages. I quote ὄβριμος, ὑβρις, βρί, βρί ‘strong’, much more the same as Hattic \**ure*, \**uri* ‘stark, mächtig, kräftig / strong’, and Hurrian *wuru*, *puru* ‘ib.’.

Furthermore, Semitic loanwords are not ignored, like νῶροψ, -οπος ‘flashing’, a long vowel with circumflex accent may bear an approximant like /w/, exactly the same as Akkadian *nawāru(m)* ‘to be(come) bright, shine’, also with Hebrew and Chaldee נור [nūr] ‘fire’, ניר [nēyr] ‘a light’ < נר [nēr] ‘ib’.

This short introduction is wrote for illustrate new theory. Such theory is welcomed and constantly under supervision of Academics in Italy, UK, Canada. So, my research paper it goes thicker and revised daily. In any form,

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Georg Wunderlich ‘The secret of Crete’, op. cit; ved. Bibliografia.

it is not exhaustive, a lot of proposed etymology still are doubtful. Nevertheless, hundreds of words are investigated, as result, regular sound change has been observed.

Hopefully all the job done should lead to Linear A final decipherment, Pre-Greek is a tool to better understand – not only the Greek itself – all the problems related to.

For any query, you can directly write to the website contact email.

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