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*tu-qa-no? – τύμπανον

Айсѝракиѝ: Покрај мислењата на многумина дека *тѝмѝаноѝ* се појавил во Егејот дури во V век пред н.е., сепак микенското лично име *Tu-qa-ni-ja-so* укажува дека овој инструмент бил присутен во Егејот и пред V век пред н.е. Долго време се сметаше дека зборот во грч. јазик е заемка од семитските јазици, но споредбите со називите на Балканот и пошироко укажуваат дека повеќе станува збор за подражавање на звукот на самиот инструмент – *тѝуѝ*.

1. *Tympanon*¹ (a unique kind of a drum familiar to the Greeks – τύμπανον, in poetry also τύπανον) was not a kettledrum, a description which in most cases is found in lexicography as well as with many commentators who attempt to put an interpretation on this instrument. The shape is the same as that of the *daire*² – a small drum with a circular frame (with 30–50 cm in diameter), according to M. L. West possibly closed with skin on both sides, but only one side was struck.³ The *tympanon* was held straight up in the left hand

¹ The Greek τύμπανον does not correspond to the Macedonian *tapan*, in fact that membranophonic instrument in Macedonian music tradition is called *daire* (*dajre*) – a small drum (see Pl. 2). The name *daire* is not a Macedonian word but it was imported along with the instrument, Arab *dā'ira* > Turkish *da'ire* 'circle' (P. Skok, *Etimološki rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, Zagreb 1972, JAZiU, s.v.). There is also a difference in the shape: on the frame of the *daire* there are rectangular slits in which pairs of metal disks have been inserted. Up till now metal disks have not been seen in the scenes illustrating the instrument but most often, not always, have been depicted as handles (see Pl. 1). That is the reason why I have taken the transcription *tympanon* – in order to keep the distinction of the instrument itself. But we should not identify it with to modern *tympanon*.

² А. Линин, *Народниѝе музички инсѝтруменѝи во Македониѝа*, Скопје 1986, 34.

³ M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music*, Oxford 1992, 124. There is also a tambourine closed on both sides. According to the illustration from the classical period and the Near East (see in "Ancient Israel", *Music in the Ancient World*, Haifa Music Museum and AMLI Library, Israel 1979), the position of the left hand holding the *tympanon* straight up suggests that the frame is closed on both sides. This way of holding the *tympanon* is impossible because the hand itself also faces the left side and that position of the hand is wrong. This is most likely due to the two dimensional painting. The *tympanon* must have been faced parallel or a bit aslant to the body of the player.

and smitten with the fingertips or knuckles of the right hand. The position of the left hand enables it to strike the edge of the drum with the fingertips of the left hand which has been the practice of striking such an instrument in the Balkans.⁴

2. Almost everybody who has studied this issue claims that the *tympanon* emerged in the Aegean region in the fifth c. B.C.⁵ Is it possible that the drum, one of the oldest instruments since human existence, emerged in Greece that late, in spite of the fact that the drum was present among the most primitive peoples and still exists up till now?⁶ It has generally been accepted that drums of similar forms have existed since about 2000 B.C.⁷ In the classical period it appeared exclusively in orgiastic cults of the Great Mother, Dionysus Bacchus and Sabazius⁸ which proves its oriental origin. There are neither evidences in the Minoan civilization nor any other archaeological findings in the Mycenaean world. There is a Knossos tablet, KN Db 1279,⁹ written in Linear B script, on which the name of shepherd is mentioned *Tu-qa-ni-jo-so* identified as *Tumpaniasos* according to *Τυ(μ)πανέαι*¹⁰ – probably meaning ‘One who beats the drum.’¹¹ The name is derived from *τύ(μ)πανον*, a word which has no other meaning in the Greek language except ‘drum.’¹² It is most

⁴ Nowadays *daire* players produce the stressed values of the notes by striking with their right hand while those unstressed are produced by the left hand. It is most likely that there used to be *tympanons* closed with skin only on one side and their back side cannot be seen because of the two dimensional painting, there is only a frontal approach.

⁵ 14 Homeric Hymn, where it is mentioned, is very likely to date back before the fifth c. B.C. J. Younger in his monograph (*Music in the Aegean Bronze Age*, Jonsered (Sweden): Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998) does not even mention it, even though in many places he describes instruments about which, except vague interpretation of certain fragments, there is no reliable archaeological evidence.

⁶ In ancient times the drum was a typical shamanic instrument which made it possible for the shamans to get in touch with the rest of the world and which was also used for healing by exorcising evil spirits. Shamans assumed that their drums originated from supernatural material. (M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Princeton, 1972, 168–9).

⁷ C. Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, New York 1940, 76, 97, 108s.; J. Rimmer, *Ancient Musical Instruments of Western Asia in the British Museum*, London 1969, 23 s., pl. VI, VII, IX.

⁸ Hdt. 4. 76. 4; *Ἕμν. Ἑομ.* 14. 3; Pind. fr. 70b etc. Sabazius, the name of the god Dionysus in Phrygia and Thrace.

⁹ perhaps on two other KN Dk 920 and Uf 5721, but which is not certain (J. Chadwick, *Docs*², 1973, 588).

¹⁰ F. A. Jorro, *Diccionario Micénico, II*, Madrid, 1993, 377.

¹¹ П. Хр. Илиевски, *Живошоп на Микелциите во низниите џисмени све-гоушпа*, МАНУ, Скопје, 2000, 339.

¹² There is no other meaning as in *au-ro*.

likely that the name is actually a nickname.¹³ Even though it is about a personal name, yet it is written evidence which suggests that the Mycenaeans knew about that instrument.

3. É. Masson who researched the Semitic words in the Greek language, connects the etymology of τύ(μ)πανον with the Semitic root *tupp-*, about which there is evidence in all Semitic dialects.¹⁴ The Jewish name of the instrument *top*,¹⁵ whose shape was actually taken by the Greeks, is confirmed in the Aramaic as *tuppa*. The root **tpp* is confirmed in Ugaritic as a noun *tp* as well as in the Phoenician verb *tpp*. The Jewish *top* (*tof*), especially pl. *tuppim* represents a common name for all kinds of drums. According to this the Greek word is formed from the root *tupp-* and the I.E. suffix for instruments *-ανο*.¹⁶ The presence of the nasal infix in front of a double Semitic labial is confirmed – σινδών < *sadd-* or *sidd-*. Nevertheless É. Masson is not quite sure in her assertion about the etymology of the word, although there is no doubt that the instrument *tympanon*, two-sided skin hand-drum, is of Semitic origin, which is also proved by its being present in the chtonic and orgiastic cults which originate from the Orient.¹⁷ Such a doubt has been suggested by M. Lejeune's¹⁸ interpretation that the word has been derived from the Greek verb τύπτω, stem *τυπ*, by adding the suffix *-ανο*- and inserting the nasal infix, as a sort of praehellenic term, with a folk etymology. Although it is a kind of instrument which is of Semitic origin, I personally think that M. Lejeune's interpretation is more accurate because in the Macedonian language besides *tupan*, *tapan*, *t'pan*, from the root **tup*, there have been derived verbs *tupa*, *tupka* (pf. *tupna*), *tupoti*, the nouns *tupanje*, *tupkanje*, *tupot*, *tupotenje* (from verbs), *tupanica* and *tupalka* (*tupalo*) – anything that produces the sound *tup*.¹⁹ The musicologist Y. Arbatsky, who for a long time studied the tradition of playing the drum in the Balkans, particularly in Macedonia, shares the same opinion as É. Masson,²⁰ which is that

¹³ Whether this was about a nickname given to a person who struck the tympanon or whether it was given as an insulting name because of the shape of a part of his body or the body itself cannot be proved.

¹⁴ É. Masson, *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec*, Paris, 1967, 94–5.

¹⁵ According to the new transcription – *tof*.

¹⁶ cf. βάσανος, ὄργανον, τρύπανον, etc. (P. Chantraine, *DELG*, 1144).

¹⁷ It is most likely that most of the instruments and the Near East cults reached the Aegean Region simultaneously.

¹⁸ *Mémoires de philologie mycénienne*, I, Paris 1958, p. 305, n. 95; cf. also P. Chantraine, *Formation des noms grecq*, Paris 1933, p. 200.

¹⁹ Serbian and Croatian *bubanj* is also from onomatopoeic I.E. root *bḡb* (P. Skok, 1972, s.v.)

²⁰ É. Masson's opinion has been accepted among all those who have been studying this issue.

the word is of Semitic origin as well as the instrument itself, but he does not rule out the possibility that the word might be an imitation of the sound of the drum.²¹ Well, then, are τύπτω, τύπος and ταραν, тарап, t'pan and all the other words derived in the Macedonian language from the root *tup of Semitic origin derived from the root *tupp? It is impossible to adopt something that exists in almost all speeches of all peoples – *onomatopoeia* of sounds in nature and other things. While writing down the sound a difference might appear because of the different languages and the different kinds of instrument. Thus the Hebrew *top*, *tuppim*, Aramaic *tuppa*, Phoenician *tpp*, Greek τύ(μ)πανον, Macedonian *tupan* (*таран*, *t'pan*) are all derived from the root *tup, which represents an imitation of the sound of the instrument.²²

With the advanced technique in playing the drum as well as the appearance of different kinds of drums there appeared different names such as the Russian and Bulgarian *baraban*,²³ a small drum with a metal frame, two wooden sticks being used to beat it and the technique and the sound corresponds to the name of the instrument. The same is the case with the English *drum* – an *onomatopoeia* of the sound of the later drums.²⁴

²¹ Y. Arbatsky, *Beating the Tupan in the Central Balkans*, Chicago, Illinois, 1953; „Свириење на тапан во Македонија“, *Макројроектѝ „Историја на културата на Македонија“*: *Музиката на јочвајта на Македонија*, к. 7, МАНУ, Скопје 1999, 296.

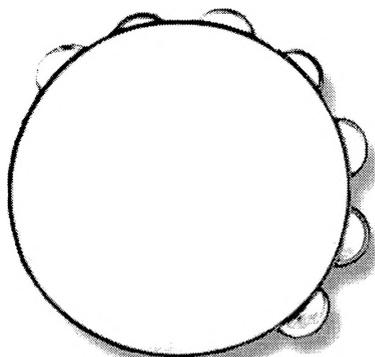
²² In the Macedonian language the difference between *таран*, *tupan* and *t'pan* might not be a phonetic one, because these names come from different dialects and at the same time there is little difference in making the instrument and the sound it produces. The same is the case in the Greek language: it might be that nasal *-m-* is not an infix, but is an imitation of a sound – *timp*, as it is in the African *tam-tam*. It certainly is a sound imitation in the root *tup, perhaps the Semitic sound imitation influenced the Greek name and later the Greek one influenced the Macedonian name. If that is the case, why then did the tribes, which were for a long time isolated from other civilizations (and were illiterate) and had no script, have a similar name for the instrument? The *onomatopoeic* origin of the root *tup* is also attested in the Sanskrit *tup*, *tuph*, *topati*, *tup^o*, *tuph^o*, *tuph^o* = *туп-то-ω*, *τύμπανον* (M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 1899–1979, s.v.).

²³ М. Фасмер, *Этимологический словарь русского языка*. I, Москва 1986, s.v. and *Български етимологичен речник*, 1971ss., s.v. *baraban* as a loan word from Persian, Polish and the Ukrainian *taraban*.

²⁴ Samuel Kurinsky (“The Transformation of Egypt Under Canaanite Rule,” *The Eighth Day: The Hidden History of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization*, Jason Aronson Inc., 1994, ch.5, pp.113-128) connects wrong the word *drum* with Hebrew *top*, that from the Greek *tympanon* the word insinuated into the Latin *tympanum*, and ends in the English words *timbrel*, *tambourine*, *tabret*, and *timbre*. along the way the word detours into the Low German *trumme*, the Dutch *trommel* and *drummel*, and enters English as *drum*. What then are Sanskrit words *tup*, *tuph*, *topati*?



Pl. 1 – τύμπανον.



Pl. 2 – daire.

4. Now, then, is the personal name *Tu-qa-ni-jo-so*, which was read on the Mycenaean tablets, a sufficient proof that the *tympanon* existed in Mycenaean music? It was proved that it existed in the Eastern Mediterranean (see above), it has been mentioned in the Old Testament in the oldest texts,²⁵ it is especially associated with King David who reigned at the same time when the Mycenaean civilization in the Aegean region collapsed.²⁶ The Old Testament evidence shows that the *tympanons* used to be a part of an instrumental band made up of many instruments. A characteristic of these instruments is that they are always mentioned as being together with the cymbals, as used to be the case in the classical period in Greece.²⁷ Music cannot exist without percussion instruments, especial not without the drum, which can be seen in the Old Testament texts. The fact that there is no evidence in the Aegean Region is due to the fact that *tympanon* is made of organic materials such as skin and wood. The absence of figure depiction is most likely due to the fact that the *tympanon* was not respected in upper class circles or among clergy, but it was present among the lower walks of life, this being suggested by the personal name of the shepherd – *Tu-qa-ni-jo-so*.

²⁵ *Gen.* 31 : 27, *tympanons* are mentioned along with *kitharas*; *Ex.*, 15 : 20 the prophetess Miriam with *tympanon* and the female chorus with *tympanons*.

²⁶ *1. Sam.* 10 : 5, when Samuel anointed Saul as king, in front of the prophets at the head of the procession went an instrumental band consisting of a *psaltery*, *tympanon*, *auloi* and *kinnors* (*kinyra*, *kithara*); *1. Sam.* 18 : 6, women with *tympanons* and *cymbals* greeting David after his victory over Goliath; *2. Sam.* 6 : 5, where David and other musicians before God play *kinnors*, *psaltery*, *tympanons*, *cymbals* and *auloi*; *1. Chron.* 13 : 8, again David and all the Israelis before God play *kinnors*, *tympanons*, *cymbals* and *trumpets* and in other places of the psalms.

²⁷ M. L. West, 1992, 125.