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THREE MYCENAEAN NAMES FOR 'COCK'

Abstract: Three Mycenaean personal names, *a-re-ko-to-re* (dat. sg.), *a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo* (nom. sg.) and *ko-ka-ro* (dat. sg.), are presented and reviewed. It is suggested that these Mycenaean anthroponyms are derived from three different appellatives for 'cock', cf. Class. Gk. ἀλέκτωρ, ἀλεκτρούων and κόκαλος. The present author disagrees with the hypothesis that these names of 'cock' denoted originally persons and then they were applied to the fighting cock and secondarily to the hen (and also used as a generic name). It seems more convincing that these three Mycenaean personal names were derived from the Mycenaean appellatives denoting 'cock'.

In her interesting article A. Adham-Karkamani (1981) presents the earliest written evidence for the acquaintance of the wild and domesticated birds by Greeks. However, she documents only the bird names taken from literary sources beginning from Homer and Hesiod till the end of the archaic epoch. In order to get to know the earliest certified names of the birds in Greek, one should reach the Mycenaean dialect, the oldest registered phase of the Hellenic language. Written in the so called Linear B script, it is preserved on clay tablets dating from the 14th till 12th cent. B.C., found in Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, Mycenae and other places.

The bird names occur in the Linear B tablets in four different contexts:

1. religious – birds as subjects of worship.
2. animal husbandry – birds kept on farms.
3. artistic – a pattern with a bird as an ordinary ornament.
4. onomastic – names of birds occurring in some personal names.

Our attention should be focused on the fourth group, as the Mycenaean names for 'cock' belong to it. Three following names for 'cock' occur in the Mycenaean anthroponymy:

• Class. Gk. ἀλεκτρυών (m.) 'cock', (f.) 'hen' (*GEL* 62): Myc. Gk. **a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo** PY An 654, PY Es 650 (nom. sg. *Alektruwōn*), **a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo-no** PY Es 644 (gen. sg. *Alektruwonos*), **a-re-ku-tu-ru-[wo]-ne** PY Es 649 (dat. sg. *Alektruwonei*). The same noun appears as a personal name in Homer's poem (*Il.* XVII 602: 'Αλεκτρυών) and as an anthroponym ('Αλεκτρυών, 'Ηλεκτρώων) or a by-name in other ancient sources (Benseler 1884: 54; Ventris, Chadwick 1956: 192, 416; Chadwick, Baumbach 1963:170; Chadwick 1976: 32, 66; Dornseiff, Hansen 1978: 119; Aura Jorro 1985: 99).

• Class. Gk. ἀλέκτωρ (m.) 'cock' and perhaps 'man, husband' (*GEL* 62): **a-re-ko-to-re** KN Ce 152 v. 1 (dat. sg. *Alektorei*). The same appellative appears in a Homeric poem as a personal name (*Od.* IV 10: 'Αλέκτωρ), as well as in other documents (Benseler 1884: 54; Chantraine 1968: 58; Baumbach 1971: 157; Ventris, Chadwick 1973²: 534; Dornseiff, Hansen 1978: 124; Aura Jorro 1985: 99).

• Gk. dial. (Hesych.) κώκαλος (m.) 'a kind of cock' (*GEL* 1016): Myc. Gk. **ko-ka-ro** (PY Fr 1184.1; Fg 374) (dat. sg. *Kōkalōi*). According to ancient authors (D. Sic. *Bibl.* IV 77, XII 71; Paus. *Gr. Descr.* I 21.4; VII 4.6; Theon. *Prog.* c2; Ath. *Deipnosoph.* I 10e; Zen. IV 92 and so on), the personal name Κώκαλος denotes the mythical ruler of the island Sicily, whose daughters killed Minos, the mythical king of Crete (Benseler 1884: 750). The Mycenaean anthroponym seems identical with the mythical one (Ventris, Chadwick 1956: 217, 420, 1973²: 481, 555; Landau 1958: 72, 180, 266; Palmer 1963: 269; Chadwick, Baumbach 1963: 215; Aura Jorro 1985: 372).

More than ten years ago, prof. Petar Hr. Ilievski (1992) discussed extensively the two first names: **a-re-ko-to-re** (dat. sg. *Alektorei*) and **a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo** (nom. sg. *Alektruwōn*), explaining their origin, derivation and semantic development. He is convinced that identifying the Mycenaean Greek personal name *a-re-ko-to-re* with Homeric 'Αλέκτωρ is correct. He also believes that *a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo* is the Mycenaean equivalent of Homeric 'Αλεκτρυών and simultaneously it is a synonym for the former name (Ilievski 1992: 67, 76). This position is accepted by most Mycenologists, see especially Aura Jorro (1985: 99 with numerous references). Ilievski, following Thompson (1936: 33), claimed that ἀλέκτωρ is an old form of the common appellative ἀλεκτρυών, deriving them from the verb ἀλέσκω denoting 'to defend, ward off'. It originates from the Indo-European root **H₂elek-* with the same meaning. This verbal

root takes a few forms: **H₂elek-* (hence Gk. ἀλεκ-), **H₂el-k-* and **H₂lk-* (> Gk. ἄλκ-). Prof. Ilievski (1992: 76) said the following words about the root in question:

Its meaning 'protect, defend, shelter' is appropriate for personal names. In the Mycenaean texts over 20 names are related to this root. Some of them, especially those which are derived from ἄλκ- (full grade of the root and reduced of the suffix **H₂el-k-*), written in the ambiguous syllabic script, give possibility for various identifications, e.g. *a-ka / Alkas, Arkas, or Arkhas/; a-ka-i-jo / Alkaios, or Ankaios/; a-ke-u / Alkeus, Ageus, or Arkheus/; a-ke-ta / Alketās, Agētās, Agestās, or Akestās/*, etc. But among the names related to the radical ἀλεκ- and ἄλκ- enlarged with the elements *-m-*, *-s-* there are transparently clear Greek personal names, e.g. *a-re-ka-sa-da-ra / Aleksandra/*, a feminine pendant of 'Ἀλέξανδρος'; *a-re-ke-se-u / Alexeus/; a-re-ki-si-to / Alexitos/; a-ka-ma-jo / Alkmaōil*, dat., cf. 'Ἀλκμῶων; *a-ka-sa-no / Alxānōr/*, cf. 'Ἀλξήνωρ, etc. It is noticeable that the names derive from the stem ἄλκμ- are mainly Homeric and mythical. The names **a-re-ko-to- / Alektor/* 'Ἀλέκτωρ and *a-re-ku-tu-ro-wo / Alektruōn/* 'Ἀλεκτρύων correspond to some appellatives: ἡλέκτωρ, ἄλέκτωρ, ἄλεκτρύων. 'Ἀλέκτωρ and ἄλεκτρύων are with a metaphorical meaning ('a cock'), of later times (VI cent. B.C.).

I accept most of Prof. Ilievski's arguments, but I disagree with the traditional assumption that the meaning 'cock' of two appellatives ἄλέκτωρ and ἄλεκτρύων is relatively late, though the personal names, corresponding to these appellatives, are attested many centuries earlier (both in the Linear B tablets and in Homer). It seems doubtful that the name of an animal could be posterior in comparison with the man's name. Much more probable is that a warrior (in Homer, 'Ἀλεκτρύων is one of the Greek heroes in *Iliad*, XVII 602) was named after a brave, protective bird. It should be emphasized that in every language the personal names create their own system which is a part of the tradition of every society. The close relationship between the personal nomenclature and the culture remains beyond doubt. The difference between the Mycenaean and Classical Greek anthroponomy is not only chronological but also dialectal (Milewski 1969: 149). The occurrence of a bird name in a man's name proves that these animals were very much present in Mycenaean Greek's life. It is also an opinion shared by some competent researchers (Kazanskene, Kazansky 1986: 74).

Some researchers believed that the Greeks did not acquaint with chicken before the beginning of the 5th cent. B.C., as documented by the temporary coins from Sicily (Himera), Dardanos, Caristos and Phaistos. This is why Thompson (1936: 43) suggested that the arrival of cocks from Asia Minor to Europe "was owing

somehow to the Persian War". In his *Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages* Buck (1949: 174) claimed that ἀλεκτρούων initially referred to a personal name, which was later «applied to (at first the fighting) 'cock', secondarily, also 'hen'». Forty years after Thompson, John Pollard suggested that the farmyard cock (*Gallus gallinaceus*) "reached Greece via Persia in the seventh century B.C.". However, the archaic evidence taken from the Greek literary sources documents the perfect knowledge of chicken by the Greeks (Adham-Karkamani 1981: 198). Nothing indicates a fresh acquaintance of the Greeks with the farmyard cock. The name ἀλέκτωρ 'cock, gallus' is attested in five places (*Batr.* 192, *Pind. Ol.* 12, 14, Simonides, Phrynichus, Bakchylides), the term ἀλεκτρούων is mentioned by Theognis (once in *Eleg.* I 864) and Pythagoras (three times). Also the name for 'hen, gallina' is known (ἀλεκτορίς at Epicharmus). It is highly probable, therefore, that the Greeks were acquainted with chicken as early as in the Mycenaean times. According to archaeologists and paleobotanists, sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle were domesticated in the Mycenaean times, as well as horses, oxen, and mules. Chicken and geese may also have been kept. No evidence for cats has been found, but dogs were kept as hunting-companions. With respect to game, the Mycenaean times would have hunted boar, deer, wild ass, hare, wild cats and perhaps bear. Wild animals posed more of a threat in those days: wild boar could damage crops and injure people, and lions still roamed the countryside. Game birds included ducks, geese, peacocks, pheasants, partridges, thrush, and quail. Fishing would have been important, the catch including all sorts of fish and shellfish.

New findings from the Theban archive demonstrate that many animals, including domesticated birds, appear in a cult context (cf. Sacconi 2000; Iodice 2005). There are numerous indications for the goose as a sacred animal in the Mycenaean times (Iodice 2005: 10–11): *Myc. Gk. ka-si* (TH Ft 141.2; Ft 220+248.2, Ft 234.2, Ft 268.2, Fq 205.4, Ft 143.2, Ft 151.2, Ft 219.2, Ft 246.1 = dat. pl. *khānsi*), *ka-no* (TH Ft 217.2 = gen. pl. *khānōn* 'of the geese', Att. *chnin*) and *ka-ne-jo* (TH Fq 254+255.3 = adj. *khaneios* 'goose; belonging to the geese'). The same conclusion should be drawn with reference to chicken. The Theban tablets inform us about some "birds": *o-ni-si* (TH Fq 123.2, Ft 169.5, Ft 342.3 = dat. pl. *ornisi*), which in the religious context must be interpreted not in a generic sense, but in the concrete meaning 'farmyard cock, *Gallus gallinaceus*', cf. Anc. Gk. ὄρνις (gen. sg. ὄρνιθος) m. f. 'bird (including birds of prey and

domesticated fowls)', mostly in the concrete meaning 'cock, hen' (*GEL* 1254). Thus it is obvious that the Mycenaean Greeks were acquainted with chicken and had to introduce some specific names for cock, which reflected its nature and character. Defending its hen-house against the intruders is, in fact, a cock's job.

There is one more word that should be related to our theme: *ko-ka-ro*, found in PY Fq 374, Fr 1184, interpreted as Κώκαλος. The meaning of the anthroponym in question, as well as the related appellative, is etymologically unclear (Chantraine 1970: 605). According to Hesychios, it denotes a kind of cock: κώκαλον · πάλαιον · καὶ εἶδος ἀλεκτρυόνης (Latte 1966: 556; cf. also Thompson 1936: 188). It is probable that the mythical king of Sicily was named after a cock, perhaps the fighting cock.

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