ON THE LYDIAN WORD FOR ‘KITE’

Abstract: It is suggested that the Lydian appellative for ‘kite, Milvus milvus L.’, attested in the Hesychian glossary as βαθύρηγαλή (recte: βαθύρηγαλη {bat’yipali}), derives from Hittite bird name pattarpalīs (orig. ‘[bird] having broad wings’).

The Lydian term for ‘kite, Milvus milvus L.’ is attested in the Hesychian glossary, which was composed in VI cent. A.D. It contains, however, not only many Greek (especially dialectal) words, but also numerous glosses taken from some different languages of the ancient world, including Lydian. Among them there is a Lydian word denoting ‘kite’:

βαθύρηγαλή· ἤκτινος, ὑπὸ Λυδῶν.

Roberto Gusmani quotes this gloss in the different form βαθύρη· γαλῆ, ἤκτινος, ὑπὸ Λυδῶν (cod. βαθύρηγαλη). Here the original text of the codex Marcianus is corrected after an nineteenth-century edition of the Hesychian glossary by M. Schmidt. This correction ignores the fact that Gk. γαλῆ denotes ‘weasel, marten’ or a similar animal of the weasel family, also ‘a small fish’, whereas Gk. ἤκτινος means ‘kite’, including two kinds, namely the Common Kite (Milvus regalis Briss.) and the Black Kite (Milvus ater Gm.), or ‘a kind of wolf’. In other words, after accepting Schmidt’s and Gusmani’s version, the semantics of the Lydian gloss becomes both unclear and ambiguous.

3 Gusmani 1964, p. 272.
7 The correction would be perhaps acceptable, if we could suggest the emendation ἤκτις (or dial. ἤκτις acc. pl. ἤκτιδως) ‘yellow-breasted marten’ or
It seems likely that the Lydian term in question is well preserved. Lyd. βαθρηγάλη may be a compound formation, containing as many as two lexical elements. The former one Βαθρηρp represents, according to my opinion, a straightforward reflex of the Hittite *pattar (n.) ‘wing’ (< Proto-Anatolian [henceforth: PA] *patt, cf. OInd. *patram n. ‘wing’, Gk. πτέρων n. ‘wing’ and so on). This correspondence seems quite regular, as the initial Anat. *p yields Lyd. ṣ-, e.g. PA. *pi- ‘to give’ > Lyd. bi(d)- ‘id.’; Hitt. pir ‘house’ > Lyd. ḫira ‘id.’ etc. Greek -o- appears here as an equivalent of Lyd. -t- (< Hitt. -tt- < PA. *t), whereas Greek -ų- (= Hitt. -ar) represents a primitive liquid sonant (PA. *r).

If the identification of the first element of the Lydian compound is correctly established, as it seems to be, then we must ask whether the Lydian gloss βαθρηγάλη is related to Hittite pattar-palhi ı c. (i-stem) ‘an oracle bird / eine Orakelvogel’ or not. The Hittite bird name denotes a relative big bird which is characterized by the “broad wings” (Friedrich[10] explains it as ‘Breitflügel’, see Hitt. pattar n. ‘wing’ and palhiı adj. ‘broad’). Also Ignacy Ryszard Danka gives the same explanation of the Hittite word, stressing that both the elements of the compound demonstrate a clear Indo-European etymology.[11]

The resemblance between the Lydian bird name and the Hittite one is striking, but the second parts are not identical (see Graeco-Lydian γαλη vs. Hittite -palhiı-). There are, however, some similarities. The Lydian -al- (= Greek -al-) exactly corresponds to Hitt. -alḫ-. The laryngeal reflex disappears regularly in Lydian. As regards the fate of the laryngeals in Lydian, H. Craig Melchert[12] emphasizes the following opinion:

“There is no trace of either PA */H/ or */h/ in Lydian. I know of no examples (it is very unlikely that afara/i means ‘bill of sale’

‘wild ferret’ (an African and Spanish animal, called also γαλή ἄγρα) against of ἰκτίνος ‘kite’. The semantics of γαλη and ἰκτίς (ικτίς) is well compatible. Thus the emendation βαθρηρηγάλη γαλη, ἰκτίνος, ὑπὸ Λυδῶν is a possibility, which was not taken into account by modern researchers. In my opinion, the emendation is unnecessary and superflous, as Lyd. βαθρηγάλη may be easily explained as a lexical ingredient of Anatolian (and Indo-European) origin.

[10] Ibid.
or the like and reflects PA *hop-, contra Gusmani 1964, p. 52). However, since the stronger PA */H/ is lost everywhere in Lydian, we would expect the same for the weaker */h*/.

The correspondence between Hitt. -i- and Gk. -η may be easily explained, if we accept the possibility that Gk. η should be read as [i], representing the so called itacism. In this case, Greek η renders Lydian [i] and PA *i. The fact that the Proto-Anatolian high vowel *i is generally stable in Lydian is noteworthy.

The only one important difference is seen in Gk. -γ- and Hitt. -p-. The standard reflexes of PA *p are Lydian [b] and [f], not [g]. I believe, however, that the problem is not of phonological nature, but rather of paleographic one. The letter gamma (Γ) in the codex Marcianus might appear against the letter pi (Π), especially in the case when the letter pi was originally written with the “short” right foot (╚). This is why I would like to suggest the following correction of the Lydian gloss in question:

βαθυρηγάλη (recte: βαθυρηηάλη) · ἱκάνος, υπὸ Λυδῶν.

Taking into account the suggested itacism I believe that the most probable reading of the Lydian gloss for ‘kite’ would be [bathiripali]. It is clear now that it must be related to Hitt. pattarpalḫiš ‘an oracle bird’.

The suggested here interpretation of the Lydian word for ‘kite’, βαθυρηηάλη [bathiripali], allows us to two following conclusions:

1. Lydian βαθυρηηάλη (recte: βαθυρηηάλη) ‘kite, Milvus milvus L.’ may be securely treated as a straightforward reflex of Hittite pattarpalḫiš ‘an oracle bird’ (literally ‘a broad-wing bird’).

2. The Lydian gloss in question strongly suggests that the Hittite bird name pattarpalḫiš denoted nothing other than ‘kite, Milvus’. In fact, kite is a relatively big bird of prey, belonging to the hawk family, thus the Anatolian Benennungsmotiv for kite, based on an adjective that means ‘having broad wings’ (see Hitt. pattar n. ‘wing’ and palḫiš adj. ‘broad’) is plausible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
