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## POMEGRANATE IN MYCENAEAN GREEK

*Abstract:* The Greek appellative for ‘pomegranate (tree and fruit)’, Attic *ῥοῖά*, *ῥοά*, Ionic *ῥοῖή*, Aeolic *ῥόα*, Doric *ῥοά* f., is attested as early as in the Mycenaean times (cf. Myc. Gk. *ro-a* /rhoai/ = Homeric Gk. *ῥοαί*). It forms creates a number of derivatives (e.g. Myc. Gk. dimin. *ro-i-ko* /rhoiskos/ = Anc. Gk. *ῥοίσκος*), all following the well known principles of the Ancient Greek word-formation. In this paper a new etymological explanation of the Greek term for ‘pomegranate’ is suggested.

Pomegranate (*‘Punica granatum* L.) is a deciduous tree or shrub native to the Mediterranean (Hehn 1902: 242–243; Schradler, Nehring 1917–1923: 408; Sfikas 2001: 104). It is sometimes considered to have originated from Persia or India. However, the pomegranate tree has been cultivated in the Mediterranean region (Balkans, Near East, northern Africa) since ancient times. There are Semitic, Egyptian and Greek sources from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C., documenting the cultivation of pomegranate-trees in the Near East, the northern Africa (esp. Egypt) and Greece.

The rind of the fruit is tough and leathery, protecting soft, juice interior. Pomegranate fruits contain “hundreds of tightly-packed pulp-covered granules” (Iatridis 1988: 78), separated by whitish, membranous walls. Each granule contains the sweet or slightly sour juice which is not only a refreshing drink, but also a rich source of vitamins, antioxidants, polyphenols and minerals. The juice is extremely nutritious and healthy – it can reduce inflammation, accelerate healing and relieve symptoms of many diseases (including dermal, sexual and digestive disorders). Because of their positive impact on physical and sexual health, pomegranates are considered as a symbol of fertility.

### 1. Mycenaean Greek evidence.

José Fortes Fortes (1984: 8) indicates (with a question mark) that the Greek phytonym *ῥοά* ‘pomegranate (tree and fruit)’ is attested in Mycenaean texts. His view is not accepted by other

scholars, such as Kazanskene and Kazansky (1986), Duhoux (1993) and Kaczor (2000).

As far as we can tell, pomegranate seems to be mentioned in the Mycenaean Greek texts as *ro-i-ko* (PY Va 482) ‘small pomegranate’ (so Palmer 1963: 368, 453; Bertolín Cebrián 1997: 15) and *ro-a* (KN Xd 148.1) ‘pomegranates (?)’ (so Stella 1965: 176). Both interpretations are far from being certain, according to Aura Jorro (1993: 260).

The botanical interpretation (‘Granatapfel(baum)’) of both attested forms is preferred by Bartoněk (2003: 173, 356, 600) in his *Handbuch des mykenischen Griechisch*. He correctly reconstructs the Mycenaean Greek term *ro-a* as *rho(h)ai* (?), nominative plural ‘pomegranates’ (cf. Attic ῥοαί, Ionic ῥοαί ‘id.’). Under the heading *ro-i-ko* he mentions the traditional derivation from Greek ῥοικός ‘gekrümmt, gebogen / crooked’ (Ventris, Chadwick 1956: 408), indicating the phonological difficulties connected with such an interpretation (the Greek adjective ῥοικός should be written as *\*\*wo-ro-ko* or *\*\*wo-ro-i-ko*, as it clearly derives from PIE. *\*uroikos*, cf. ME. *wrah* adj. ‘twisted, wrong, stubborn’, MLG. *wrih* adj. ‘crooked’, Du. *wreeg* ‘stiff’, Swed. dial. *vrå* adj. ‘awerse, sulky, gloom’, Lith. *raišas*, also *raišas* adj. ‘lame, limping’, Alb. *rreth* m. ‘circle, hoop, ring, rime (of a wheel)’, adv. ‘all around’ (Orel 2003: 470), as well as Avest. *uruuaesa-* m. ‘vortex’ (Beekes 2010: 1286). Thus the Czech scholar thinks that Palmer’s interpretation is better (“besser”) (Bartoněk 2003: 600, fn. 240).

Let us now review the Mycenaean Greek testimony.

The term *ro-a* is attested in an unclear context. It appears only once in the fragmentary tablet KN Xd 148 written by scribe “124” in the Linear B script. The tablet was originally formed like a palm leaf, containing three lines of text. Unfortunately, only the left part of this Knossian tablet is preserved, both the central and the right parts being lost. Three or two Linear B syllabic signs are legible in two initial lines. The text runs as follows:

.1	ro-a , ku[
.2	qa-mo [
.3	vacat [

The term *ro-a* opens the text in question and seems to refer to some unknown objects, possibly to cultivated trees and their fruits. Unfortunately, no ideogram is preserved, so the botanic interpretation of the tablet is far from secure. The plural interpretation of *ro-a* (= Gk. *rhoai* ‘pomegranates’) seems certain.

The word *qa-mo* denotes a Cretan place name (Aura Jorro 1993: 183–184) which should be identified with Bamos (now Vamos), a large village in the western Crete.

The term *ro-i-ko* is attested once in the Linear B tablet PY Va 482, which lists pieces of ivory (Myc. Gk. *e-re-pa* = Anc. Gk. ἔλεφας), both ‘unworked’ (*a-no-po*) and ‘incised, drilled, engraved’ (*qe-qi-no-me-no*):

‘qe-qi-no-me-no’

E-RĒ-PA , a-no-po , a-ko-so-ta ZE  
1 e-wi-su-\*79-ko 4 ro-i-ko 3

Tablet PY Va 482 has been interpreted as follows:

“Ivory ... Aksotas<sup>m</sup>, pairs: four *evenly-matched, turned*, three crooked” (Ventris, Chadwick 1956: 348). The italics indicate an uncertain translation. Thus, two of the Mycenaean forms are translated: *qe-qi-no-me-no* (‘turned’) and *e-wi-si-zu?-ko* (‘evenly-matched’), whereas the term *a-no-po* is not translated into English.

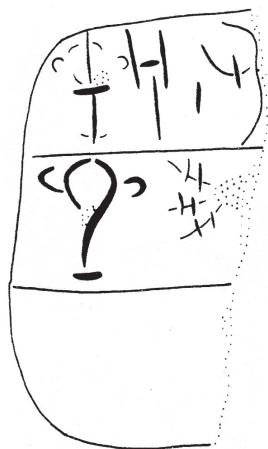
“Aksotas [has issued] ivory to Anopos (a craftsman), one pair. Carved as *e-wi-su-\*79-ko* ‘Engraved’ 4, with small pomegranates 3” (Palmer 1963: 368–369).

The English translation could also be phrased as follows:

“IVORY to Aksotas ONE unworked PAIR, “engraved” FOUR PAIRS *e-wi-su-\*79-ko*, THREE PAIRS with small pomegranates”.

The term *ro-i-ko* has been interpreted in two different ways: [1] ‘crooked’ (cf. Anc. Gk. ροικός adj. ‘bent, crooked’ < PIE. \**uroikos*) and [2] ‘(with) small pomegranates’ (cf. Anc. Gk. ρόϊσκος m. ‘small pomegranate’). The first interpretation is impossible due to phonological reasons, as the Mycenaean form fails to display the initial digamma, to be expected based on the related (Germanic and Iranian) data (cf. Avest. *uruuaesa-* m. ‘vortex’; Swed. dial. *vrå* adj. ‘awerse, sulky, gloom’, ME. *wrah* adj. ‘twisted, wrong, stubborn’ < Germanic \**wraixaz* adj. (Pokorny 1959: 1158; Frisk II 656; Orel 2003: 470; Bartoněk 2003: 600, fn. 240; Smoczyński 2007: 497; Beekes 2010: 1285–1286).

2. Ancient Greek evidence from 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.



The Linear B tablet KN Xd 148. Source: CMIK (1986: 69).

The earliest attestation for ‘pomegranate’ in alphabetic Greek sources appears in the *Odyssey* (Autenrieth 1887: 250; Fortes Fortes 1984: 10). The great Greek poet mentions pomegranates twice in two similar passages:

ἔνθα δὲ δένδρεα μακρὰ πεφύκασι τηλεθάοντα,  
ὄγγυαι καὶ ῥοιαὶ καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι  
συκέαι τε γλυκεραὶ καὶ ἐλαῖαι τηλεθόωσαι.

(Homer, *Od.* VII 114–116)

“Therein grow trees, tall and luxuriant, pears and pomegranates and apple-trees, with their bright fruit, and sweet figs, and luxuriant olives.”

(English translation by Murray 1919: 241)

δένδρεα δ’ ὑψιπέτηλα κατὰ κρήθεν χέε καρπὸν,  
ὄγγυαι καὶ ῥοιαὶ καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι  
συκέαι τε γλυκεραὶ καὶ ἐλαῖαι τηλεθόωσαι.

(Homer, *Od.* XI 588–590)

“And trees, high and leafy, let stream their fruits above his head, pears, and pomegranates, and apple trees with their bright fruit, and sweet figs, and luxuriant olives.”

(English translation by Murray 1919: 429)

[1] Ionic and Epic (Homeric) ῥοῦή, Doric ῥοά f. ‘a pomegranate-tree; a pomegranate-fruit’, Epic (< Aeolic) ῥόα f. ‘id.’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1364), Attic ῥοιά, ῥοά f. ‘pomegranate-tree; mulberry-tree’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1365). This Greek appellative appears to be identical with the Mycenaean term *ro-a* (KN Xd 148.1) ‘pomegranate’.

Ancient Greek derivatives:

[2] with the diminutive suffix *\*-iskos*: Anc. Gk. (dimin.) ῥοῖσκος m. ‘small pomegranate’ = Mycenaean Greek *ro-i-ko* (KN PY Va 482) ‘id.’.

[3] with the suffixes *\*-id-* and *\*-ewā*: Hellenistic ῥοῖδέα f. ‘pomegranate-tree’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1365);

[4] a diminutive form derived by the stacking of two suffixes *\*-id-* and *\*-iyom*: Attic Gk. (dimin.) ῥοῖδιον n. ‘a small pomegranate (fruit)’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1365); Boeotian (?) ῥύδια· ῥοά ἦ (Hes., ρ-470).

[5] an adjective created by means of the suffix *\*-inos*: Gk. ῥοῖνος adj. ‘of pomegranate’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1365).

[6] with the suffix *\*-itās*: ροίτης ‘pomegranate-wine’.

[7] a collective form with the suffix *\*-ōn*: Gk. ροών m. ‘a pomegranate-orchard’ (Liddell, Scott 1996: 1366).

### 3. Byzantine, Medieval and Modern Greek evidence.

[a] Apulian (in Corigliano) ρούα f. ‘melagrana / Granatapfel’, Apulian (Otranto) ρουέα f. ‘melagrano / Granatapfelbaum’ (Rohlf s 1964: 441; Andriotis 1974: 482, No. 5245) goes back to Doric ροά f. ‘pomegranate (fruit)’.

[b] Mod. Gk. Apulian (in Zollino) ρουέα f. ‘melagrano / Granatapfelbaum’ (Rohlf s 1964: 441; Andriotis 1974: 482, No. 5245). It seems to derive from West Doric \*ρῶεᾶ f. ‘pomegranate-tree’ < Proto-Greek \*ρῶιέϜᾶ f. ‘id.’.

[c] Mod. Gk. ροδιά f. ‘pomegranate-tree’, dial. (Roumelia) ρουδιά ‘id.’ (Albanoudis 2014: 104), Tsakonian ροῖδία, ροδία n. ‘pomegranate-tree’ (Kostakis 1987: 114); Cretan ρογδιά f. ‘id.’ (Ksanthinakis 2001: 451; Kontosopoulos 2006: 142), Cytherean ρογδιά, also ρογδέα f. ‘id.’ (Komis 1996: 371), Carpathian εροέα, ροέα, εροά f. ‘the tree *Punica granatum* L.’ (Minas 2006: 290); Apulian *rudèa* (Ma, Mp, Sl), *rutèa* (in Zollino) f. ‘melagrano / Granatbaum’; Bova *rudìa* (in B, Ch, G) ‘id.’ (Rohlf s 1964: 441). It represents the Hellenistic noun ροῖδέᾶ f. ‘pomegranate-tree’.

[d] Byz. Gk. ροῖδιον n., dial. ρούδιον n. ‘pomegranate fruit’; Med. Gk. ροῖδιν n. ‘id.’; Mod. Gk. ρόδι n. ‘pomegranate fruit’, Tsakonian ροῖδι, also ρόδι n. ‘id.’ (Kostakis 1987: 114); Cretan ρόγδι n. ‘id.’ (Ksanthinakis 2001: 451; Kontosopoulos 2006: 143), Cytherean ρόγδι n. (Komis 1996: 371), Carpathian ερόῖν, ρόῖν n. ‘fruit of the tree *Punica granatum* L.’ (Minas 2006: 290, 783), Cyprian ρόῖν, ρόβῖν n. ‘id.’ (Giagkoullis 2002: 309); Mod. Gk. Pontic ρούδῖν (used in Kerasus), ρούδ’ (in Chaldia, Kotyora and Trapezunt) n. ‘pomegranate / Granatapfel(baum)’ (Andriotis 1974: 482, No. 5255); Bova *rúdi* n. ‘melagrana / pomegranate fruit’ (cf. Bova *èna rúdi priçio* ‘una melagrana acerba’), Apulian *rúdi*, *arúdi*, *rúti* n. ‘id.’ (cf. Apul. *èna rúdi afsinò* ‘una melagrana acerba’) (Rohlf s 1964: 441).

### 4. Interpretations.

To our best knowledge, the Greek term ροιά ‘pomegranate’ has so far been explained in three ways: 1) as a Semitic loanword, 2) as a native (Greek) innovative formation based on a verbal root of Indo-European origin, and 3) as borrowing from an unknown Mediterranean substrate. A short presentation of these basic theories is given below.

## 4a. The Semitic theory.

Benfey (1842: 372) treated the Greek term *ῥοιά* f. ‘pomegranate’ as a borrowing from Hebrew *rimmōn* ‘id.’. The same etymology was also suggested by Vaniček (1878: 45), Keller (1891: 192–193) and Hehn (1902: 237, 243). Other linguists have correctly rejected the Semitic etymology for phonological reasons (Müller 1877: 279, 296–297; Muss-Arnolt 1892: 110–111; Lewy 1895: 25; Rosół 2013: 202). Schrader and Nehring (1917–1923: 408) likewise rejected the derivation of Gk. *ῥοιά* f. ‘pomegranate’ from a Semitic or Egyptian source (cf. Assyrian *armānu*, Akkadian *lurmu*, Hebrew *rimmōn*, Arabic *rummān* < Semitic \**rimān*- ‘pomegranate’; Egyptian (NK) *rrm.t* ‘a kind of fruit’, Coptic *erman*, *herman* ‘pomegranate’<sup>1</sup>) on the basis of phonological difficulties.

## 4b. Greek (or Indo-European) etymology.

An Indo-European etymology was proposed by Wharton (1890: 110), who tried to connect Gk. *ῥοιά* f. ‘pomegranate’ (also *ῥοιάς* ‘poppy’, *ῥοῦς* ‘sumach, *Rhus coriaria* L.’) with Skt. *sravā* f. ‘a kind of plant (or tree)’<sup>2</sup>. Meyer (1902: 447) derives Greek (Aeolic) *ῥόα* f. ‘Granatapfel’ from the verb *ῥέω* ‘fliessen, strömen / to flow, stream’. Similarly, Strömberg (1940: 52) suggested a connection with the Greek verb *ῥέω*. In his opinion, the noun *ῥοιά* (< IE. \**sroujā* f.) was used to denote the pomegranate fruit because of the richness of its juice. André (1956: 302–305) argued for the same etymology, pointing to the laxative character of the pomegranate fruit (“la caractere laxatif de la grenade”). Carnoy (1959: 231) followed the same reasoning, accepting the native (Greek and Indo-European) derivation from the Greek verb Gk. *ῥέω* and the Indo-European root \**sreu-* ‘to flow, stream’<sup>3</sup>. Having

<sup>1</sup> It should be emphasized that Orel and Stolbova (1995: 450) derive the Semitic and Egyptian appellatives from the Hamito-Semitic (Afro-Asiatic) archetype \**riman-* ‘fruit’. A Semitic word appears in the codex Parisinus Graecus 2419 (26, 18): *πῶρουμάν · ἡ ῥοιά* ‘pomegranate’ (Delatte 1930: 84) < Arabic *rummān* ‘id.’. This Byzantine codex, created in the 15th century AD by Georgios Mديات, is a medieval copy of an earlier botanical lexicon (Delatte 1930: 59).

<sup>2</sup> According to Monier-Williams (1999: 1274), the Sanskrit phytonym *sravā* f. or *sruvā* f. denotes the following plants: ‘the plant *Sansevieria roxburghiana*’ (lex.) and ‘the tree *Boswellia thurifera*’ (lex.), whereas the compound form *madhu-sravā-* f. means ‘*Sansevieria roxburghiana*’ (lex.), ‘*Hoya viridiflora*’ (Bhpr.), ‘a kind of date’ (lex.); cf. also *madhu-srava-* m. ‘the tree *Bassia latifolia*’ (lex.), ‘*Sansevieria zeylanica*’ (lex.).

<sup>3</sup> Under the heading *rhoa*, *rhoia* the Belgian scholar wrote that Greek *ῥοιά* „est un des noms du « grenadier » (*punica Granatum* [sic!]) et de son fruit très juteux, méritant bien de porter un nom derive de la racine de *ῥέω* « couler » (ind.-eur. *sreu*)” (Carnoy 1959: 231). He also refers to three different Greek

accepted Strömberg's explanation, Frisk (1962: 660) derived the Greek term for 'pomegranate' from the Proto-Greek protoform \* $\rho\omicron\phi\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}$  ( $\bar{a}$ -stem). He explained it as an "Ableitung" from  $\rho\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  m. 'stream, flow, current' (< IE. \* $s\acute{r}\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$ ).

#### 4c. Mediterranean (substrate) theory.

According to Schwyzer (1939: 61, 348, 469), the Greek noun in question is of foreign origin ("Fremd ist  $\rho\omicron\upsilon\eta$ "), being a borrowing from an unknown Aegean substrate. Chantraine (1977: 976) directed attention to the suffix  $-i\bar{\alpha}$ , accepting the loanword hypothesis ("Il serait plausible de penser que le mot est emprunté"). He points out that the Mycenaean evidence (Myc. Gk. *ro-i-ko* 'small pomegranate') demonstrates no trace of digamma (PGk. \* $\phi$ ), thus the connection with the verb  $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  (< PGk. \* $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\phi\omega$  < IE. \* $s\acute{r}eu\bar{\omega}$ ) should be rejected ("La parenté avec  $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , si elle était retenue, exclurait le rapprochement de myc. *ro-i-ko* [sans  $-w$ - intervocalique]"). Finally Beekes (2010: 1289) prefers the substrate origin of the Greek noun in question.

In our opinion, a different Ancient Greek term for 'pomegranate' (Ionic  $\sigma\acute{\iota}\delta\eta$  or  $\sigma\acute{\iota}\beta\delta\eta$ , Boeotian  $\sigma\acute{\iota}\delta\bar{\alpha}$  f., Aeolic  $\xi\acute{\iota}\mu\beta\bar{\alpha}$ , dial.  $\sigma\acute{\iota}\lambda\beta\bar{\alpha}$  and so on) should be viewed as a substrate borrowing, as it demonstrates a number of substrate features (Furnée 1972: 286; Witzcak, Zadka 2014a: 121), e.g. [1] a nasalization; [2] an alternation between [ks] and [s]; [3] a secondary dental stop; [4] an epenthesis of  $\lambda$ . It has been proposed that this alternative appellative represents a borrowing from an Anatolian source, cf. Hittite  $\text{GIS}^{\text{S}}\text{sadduwa-}$  'a kind of fruit-tree' (Witzcak, Zadka 2014b: 131–139).

None of the aforementioned substrate features appears in the set containing Mycenaean Greek *ro-a*, Ionic  $\rho\omicron\upsilon\eta$ , Attic  $\rho\omicron\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ ,  $\rho\omicron\acute{\alpha}$  f. 'pomegranate, *Punica granatum* L.'. The appellative in question forms a number of derivatives (e.g. Myc. Gk. dimin. *ro-i-ko* / $\rho\theta\omicron\iota\sigma\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ / = Anc. Gk.  $\rho\theta\omicron\iota\sigma\kappa\omicron\varsigma$  m. 'small pomegranate', see chapter 2), which follow the well known principles of the Ancient Greek word-formation. Therefore, the Ancient Greek term should be explained on the basis of a purely Hellenic development from an Indo-European archetype.

#### 5. A New Indo-European Etymology.

The Greek appellative  $\rho\omicron\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$  'pomegranate', as clearly evidenced by the Mycenaean data (Myc. Gk. *ro-a*, *ro-i-ko*), con-

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names for 'pomegranate' (**side**, **silbia**, **ximbra**), which he explains as oriental borrowings from the languages of the Near East.

tained no digamma (Gk.  $\varphi < \text{IE. } *y$ ) in the initial and medial position. This is why the traditional derivation from the archetype *\*srouia* (< IE. *\*srey-* ‘to flow, stream’) is hardly acceptable. What is more, there is no reason to assume a Semitic or Mediterranean origin of the Greek phytonym.

In our opinion, the Greek term in question demonstrates a purely Greek formation and represents a straightforward reflex of the Indo-European archetype *\*rosjā* f. ‘a juicy plant; fruit with juicy drops (granules)’ (perhaps also *\*rosā*, cf. Skt. *rasyā* f. ‘a name of two different plants (called *rāsnā* and *pāthā*<sup>4</sup>), as well as Skt. *rasā* f. ‘name of various plants (including *Clypea hernandifolia*; *Boswellia thurifera*; *Panicum italicum*; a vine or grape’ (Monier-Williams 1999: 870–871). The Sanskrit plant name *rasyā* unmistakably derives from the Old Indic adjective *rasya-* ‘juicy, taste, savoury, palatable’ (Monier-Williams 1999: 871) and the noun *rāsa-* m. ‘the sap or juice of plant, juice of fruit, any liquid of fluid, the best or finest or prime part of anything, essence, marrow’ (Monier-Williams 1999: 869). Thus the Greek and Sanskrit phytonyms originally referred to the juicy nature of the plants or their fruits. In the case of the pomegranate it should be assumed that the Greek term  $\rho\omicron\iota\acute{\alpha}$  (representing PIE. *\*rosjā*) originally denoted the pomegranate fruit and denoted the richness of its juice (as it has been stressed by earlier researchers).

The Indo-European root *\*res-* (with the apophonic variant *\*ros-*) is attested not only in Greek and Sanskrit, but also in other Indo-European languages (see Pokorny 1959: 335–337). The Indo-European root noun *\*rōs-* appears in Latin as *rōs*, gen. sg. *rōris* m. ‘dew, moisture’. It also denotes a plant (Lat. *rōs marinus*, spelled also *rōsmarinus* m. ‘Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis* L.’). The Latin verb *rōrō* (< *\*rōsājō*) ‘to let fall, drop, to distil dew; to drop, trickle, drip, distil; to bedew, to moisten, wet’ should be treated as a denominal formation.

The Baltic and Slavic languages demonstrate similar terms for ‘dew, drop’, cf. Lith. *rasà* f. ‘dew, drop’, Latv. *rasa* f. ‘dew, drop, drizzle’, OCS. *poca* f. ‘dew, rain’, SC. *pòca* f. ‘dew’, Slovenian *rósa* f. ‘id.’, Bulg. *pocá* f. ‘dew, drop of sweat, drizzle’, Russ. *pocá* f. ‘dew’, Ukr. *pocá* f. ‘id.’, Czech *rosa* f. ‘dew’, Slovak *rosa* f., Pol. *rosa* f. ‘id.’ (Borys 2005: 518; Smoczyński 2007: 500; Derksen 2008: 438) < BSl. *\*rasā* f. ‘dew, drop’. All of the Balto-Slavic forms mentioned above are exact equivalents of

<sup>4</sup> It is worth emphasizing that Skt. *rāsnā* f. denotes ‘the ichneumon plant’ (Suśr., ŚārngS.) and ‘bdellium’ (Bhpr.), as well as other plants including ‘*Mimosa octandra*; *Acampe papilosa*’ (lex.), whereas Skt. *pāthā* f. means ‘*Clypea hernandifolia*’ (lex.).



OInd. *rasā́* f. ‘moisture, humidity’ (< IE. \**rosā́* f. *ā*-stem ‘dew, moisture’<sup>5</sup>). What is more, the Sanskrit proper name *Rasā́* f. also denotes ‘a mythical stream supposed to flow around the earth and the atmosphere’ (Monier-Williams 1999: 870). The Avestan texts also mention a mythical river called *Raṣhā*. The Old Indic hydronym *Rasā́* and the Avestan river name *Raṣhā* evidently refer to an ancient river flowing in the hypothetical Indo-Iranian homeland. It is often considered equatable with the East European river called ‘Pā (< Iranian \**Rahā* < Indo-Iranian \**Rasā*)’ in Greek texts and commonly identified as the Volga river (now in Russia). Finally, it should be added that the Iranian noun \**rahā* f. also denoted a juicy plant, namely the Syrian or wild rhubarb (*Rheum ribes* L.), which was called ῥᾶ ποντικόν (literally ‘the Pontic rha’) by the Ancient Greeks and *rha ponticum* ‘id.’ by the Romans (Carnoy 1959: 229; André 1985: 217).

## 6. Conclusions.

The final results can be summed up as follows:

1. The Ancient Greek term for ‘pomegranate, *Punica granatum* L.’ is attested as early as in the Mycenaean times (cf. Myc. Gk. *ro-a* /*rhoai*/ KN Xd 148.1 ‘pomegranates’, *ro-i-ko* /*rhoiskoi*/ PY Va 482 ‘small pomegranates’).

2. The noun ῥοιαὶ f. pl. ‘pomegranate-trees’ appears twice in the Homeric poems (*Od.* VII 115; *Od.* XI 589). It is attested as ῥοῖη in Ionic and Epic, as ῥοά in Doric, as ῥοα in Epic Greek (< Aeolic), as ῥοιά and ῥοά in Attic (with the meaning ‘pomegranate-tree; mulberry-tree’). The lexical evidence from the Byzantine, Medieval and Modern Greek sources is also included.

3. None of the etymologies proposed so far is acceptable. The derivation of the Mycenaean Greek term for ‘pomegranate’ (*ro-a* /*rhoai*/, dimin. *ro-i-ko* /*rhoiskoi*/) from the Proto-Greek protoform \*ῥοριά (*ā*-stem) and IE. \**srouiā́* seems impossible for phonological reasons (Mycenaean shows no traces of digamma). The suggested Semitic etymology, as well as a Mediterranean (‘substrate’) explanation, must likewise be rejected.

4. The Ancient Greek appellative for ‘pomegranate (tree and fruit)’ seems to represent the Proto-Indo-European archetype

<sup>5</sup> Derksen (2008: 438) reconstructs PIE. \**Hros-eh₂* f. ‘dew, drop, moisture, humidity’, but the Indo-Iranian reflexes show no lengthening of the vocalism \**-o-* in the open syllable (according to Brugmann’s law). The conclusion must be that the syllable \**ros-* was originally closed by a laryngeal. The Proto-Indo-European archetype has to go back to \**rosH-eh₂* or perhaps \**HrosH-eh₂*. Note that Greek ἐρωή f. ‘rush, impulse, force, throw’ (Beekes 2010: 469) has nothing to do with the Indo-European term for ‘dew’.

\* *rosjá* f. ‘a juicy plant; fruit with juicy granules’. The Greek noun undoubtedly refers to the richness of the pomegranate’s juice.

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