WHO IS WHO IN THE MYCENAEAN ZOO?

The Linear B tablets contain words and ideograms for a variety of animals. Some Mycenaean animal names are known directly (e.g., *i-qo*, *o-no*, *po-ro*, *go-o*), other names are known indirectly, as part of compounds (*a3-k|i*-, *o-wi-*), *su*-. The tablets from Pelopidou Street in Thebes, excavated in the mid-nineties of the 20th century, have yielded a set of animal names not previously attested for Mycenaean; the identification of the words in question as animal names has been contested—unjustly, I believe. ¹

In this paper, I review the Mycenaean vocabulary and ideograms for animals.

1. HORSE, ASS

The Mycenaean word for horse is *i-qo* /ikʷkos/. It is found in KN Ca 895 (nom. pl. *ikʷkoi*):

From CoMIK

The same tablet mentions asses (*o-no* /onoi/) and foals (*po-ro* /pōlos/ or /-ō/ or /-oi/), the young both of horses and of asses.

One might wonder whether in line .2, the first equ after *po-ro* is not to be read as equ¹. True, the neck has been drawn diffe—

rently from those of the two equ’t immediately following i-go and o-no; but then, the EQUm of line .1 and line .2 are also different. Since the right part of the tablet has broken off, we cannot tell what the EQU after po-ro in the first line is meant to represent (perhaps EQUf’?). Eventually, however, it may be preferable to opt for a different explanation: in line .1, the (‘sexless’) young animals follow the grown-up females and males, in line .2 the (again ‘sexless’) young animals are registered between the grown-up females and males.2 The necks of the two po-ro items look roughly the same.)

In PY Ta 722.1, i-go represents the instr. form ikwkwō (decoration on a ἄρινα):

Theoretically, a-to-ro-quo and i-go could be instrumental plural forms in -oís, but in light of the clearly singular forms po-ru-po-de and po-ni-ke, we can be virtually certain of the singular forms antērōkō and ikwkwō.

The initial aspiration of classical ὄπος (when there is no psilosis) is unetymological (cf. Skt. aśvaḥ and Lat. equus). I have thought of an onomatopoeic explanation: the sound of whinnying, as in the Latin verb hinnire. Unfortunately, Greek horses speak a different language, their whinnying is called χρεμετίζειν. Therefore, I do not entirely trust my own suggestion. Ruijgh explained the aspiration from the frequent association of horses and chariots, the latter having developed a post-Mycenaean initial aspiration: ἀρμα(τα) < *arhma(ta) < *arsma(ta). On this view, the aspiration of ὄπος must also be post-Mycenaean.3 Proof positive for the absence of initial h- is provided by the word e-pi-go-i from Thebes (Fq 214, 229, 252), if the interpretation /ep-ikwkwōi/ is correct: before h, the i of epί would not be elided.4

The i of ikwkwōs was explained by Ruijgh as follows: the Greek word is a loan from a neighbouring, closely related Indo-European idiom, the speakers whereof were excellent horse-breeders.

I only mention, without discussion, a number of compounds and derivatives:

i-qo-e-qe (KN Sd): /ikwkwō-hekā/ (instr.) lit. “horse-follower”, wooden part of a chariot

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2 This is the interpretation of Docs2, p. 210.
4 Cf. also classical Ἀεώς-Ĥπος, not ** Λεύξ-Ĥπος.
i-qo-po-qo, -qo-i (TH Fq): /ikʷkʷo-p⁰orgʷōi, -oīi/ ‘horse-feeder(s), and i-po-po-qo-i(-qe) (PY Fn 79) /ippo-p⁰orgʷōihi/ ‘horse-feeders’ (by dissimilation from ikʷkʷo-

i-qo-jā, -jo (KN Sd, Sf): /ikʷkʷiā, -ai,-ō/ ‘(horse-drawn) chariot(s)’. One may presume that the word i-qī-ja was used because the pars-pro-toto word ἄρμα(τα) was poetical and therefore unfit for prosaic administration purposes, while moreover, and even more importantly, the word arhmo was in regular use to register wheels.

2. OX (COW, BULL)

The only attestation so far of the word for ox (&c.) is the acc. plural qo-o /gʷōns/ in PY Cn 3:

1 jo-i-je-si , me-za-na , | 2 e-re-u-te-re , di-wi-je-wei , qo-o ,

As for compounds containing the ox word, we have:

qo-u-ko-ro: /gʷou-kolos, -oi/ ‘ox-herd(s)’ (sing. in TI Ef 2, prob. also in PY Nn 831.5; plur. in PY An 18.9 &c.);

gen. sing. qo-u-ko-ro-jo (PY Ea 781)

qo-u-qo-ta (KN L 480): /Gʷou-gʷōṭāi/ ‘Oxherd’, man’s name

qo-qo-ta-o (PY Ea): /gʷo-gʷōṭāho/ or /-āhōn/ ‘oxherd(s)’

It is a well-known hypothesis that we owe the form gʷō- beside gʷou- to the acc. sing.:

*Gʷom > *Gʷom > *Gʷon > ἄον (Hom.; Doric, which also has the nom. sing. ἄον, based on the acc. sing.).

As the Homeric form ἄον cannot be Doric, and as we have the plural form gʷōns in Mycenaean, we may infer that the Mycenaean acc. sing. was gʷōn. For the development, cf. the acc. sing. of *dyews: *dyewm > *dym > Ζῆν(α), Lat. *diēm (> diēm), giving rise to nom. sing. diēs.

The ideogram is not too difficult to recognise: *109 = *23 µu; and it is used in the entries following qo-o in PY Cn 3.

Heifers are mentioned in PY Ta 707 ... qe-qī-no-me-na ... po-ti-pī-qe ... /... gʷegʷinōmenai ... portipʰi kʷe .../, decoration on the o-pi-ke-re-mi-ni-ja of a to-no /tʰornyos/. (Nobody seems to heed the objection raised by Gray on archaeological grounds.)

3. SHEEP

The word owis has not been attested so far; in PY Ae 134, a poimēn watches over κυτροπόδα:

ke-ro-wo, po-me, a-si-ja-ti-ja, o-pi, ta-ra-ma-<ta->o qe-to-ro-po-pi ‘o-ro-me-no’ vir l

That the word κυτροπόδα does not specifically denote sheep can be seen from Ae 108, where κυτροπόδα are watched over by an a3-ki-pa-ta /aigipa(s)tās/ ‘goat-herd’.

However, owis may perhaps be inferred from the word o-wi-de-ta-i (PY Un 718), i.e., if one of two interpretations, (dat. plur.) /owi-detāhi/ ‘sheepflayers’ or /owi-detāhi/ ‘sheepbinders’ is correct. Anyway, the sheep-word must have been owis at an intermediate stage between Indo-European/Proto-Greek and Classical Greek.

The ideogram for sheep is assumed to be *106 = *21 qi. How do we know?

The ideograms for animals are often differentiated for sex; this is one way to be confident that we are dealing with animal ideograms in the first place. Female animals are characterised by a split hasta (reminiscent of wo), male animals by two cross-bars (reminiscent of pa).

Some of the animal ideograms can be recognised easily: *104 CERV deer, *105 EQU horse / ass, *108 SUS pig, *109 BOS ox; but how do we know that *106 represents sheep, and *107 goat? Going back to the early days of Mycenaean studies, we find in Documents the following reasoning (after the identification of horse, deer, pig, and ox):

“It would seem likely therefore that the remaining two signs should represent sheep and goats, and the problem becomes merely that of deciding which is which. SHEEP are much more numerous than GOATS; and they are repeatedly associated with the sign wool, sometimes with nothing intervening (...). This in turn is associated with textiles (...), and the animal product most likely to be used in garments is wool. Goats’ hair or goatskin is not impossible, but is obviously less likely to be a common commodity.”

The identity of the ideogram for WOOL (*145 LANA), in its turn, is a matter of agreement; the association with ideogram *159 (cloth, in different varieties, frequently occurring together with the vocabulary word (plur.) pʰaráweha; cf. φάρος in Homer) makes

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6 Docs2, p. 196.
the string sheep – wool – cloth sufficiently convincing, not to say inescapable. Since the early days much work has been done on this complex of texts, only to strengthen the conviction that the identifications are correct.

If we look for the word for ‘lamb’, we do not find it. However, the adjective wo-ro-ne-ja at MY Oe 111.2 dealing with LANA has been interpreted as an adjective of material, wroneyā (neut. plural) or wroneyā (fem. sing.), derived from *warēn ‘lamb’. On the other hand, the names wa-na-ta-jo (KN PY) and wa-ni-ko (PY) have also been connected with *warēn: Warnataios and Warniskos. The first one is morphologically odd, with -atios following warn-, for the second one there is no such draw-back. The variation wron-~warn- is to be explained as follows: the ‘Linde-man-form’ nom. sing. *wēn became warēn in all dialects, whereas gen. sing. *wrn-os became *wrnos in the ra-dialects, and *wronos in the ro-dialects. In Attic-Ionic, (ϝ)αρήν – (ϝ)ρανός was levelled to ἄρην - ἄρνος. The situation in Mycenaean must remain obscure until we find forms of the word for ‘lamb’, but for the time being, I believe that both wron-eyes and Warn-iskos are acceptable guesses. (In the end, Mycenaean likely levelled in a way comparable to what happened in Attic-Ionic.)

4. GOAT

The word for ‘goat’ has not been found in the Linear B texts so far, but can be inferred from the following vocabulary items:

\begin{itemize}
  \item $a_{3}-ki-pa-ta$ (PY Ae 108; 264): /aigipapas/`goat-herd`
  \item $a_{3}-ki-po$ (KN U 4478), -po-de (PY Mb 1397); at KN prob. /Aigipos/ (man’s name), at PY perhaps dat.-loc. /Aigipodei/ (place name)
  \item $a_{3}-ke-u$ (PY Ta 641): /aigeus/ (A-), of uncertain interpretation
  \item $a_{3}-za$ (PY Ub 1318.7): /aidz/ < *aigya ‘goat-hide’, in apposition with di-pet-ra ‘hide’; one might be tempted to interpret aidz as a female animal (dipet'era aidzās, ‘hide of a …’), but there are no traces of such a form in later Greek, and αἴξ itself is feminine more often than not.
\end{itemize}

The extension $i$ in aig-i-(pa-ta, -po) is unexplained; cf. aipolos (<πι - <kʰkʰ - ) < aig+kʰolos, without such an $i$. Was aig- perhaps influenced by owi- so as to be (incidentally) modified to aigi-? As we have seen, both sheep and goats could be referred to as kʰetropoda.
The young animal seems to have been called *e-po, prob. *erp'os ‘kid’ (variant of *ἐρηφος);⁷ the nom. plur. */erphōi/ is found at KN Ce 283 (together with *OVIS; but *e-po can hardly be a word for ‘lamb’), the acc. plur. */erpōns/ at PY Vn 493.

The contexts of ideogram *107 do not by themselves give us any clue as to the kind of animal registered (or, perhaps, only the texts of the KN Mc series, where *CAP appears together with the ideogram *151 CORN, identified by Evans as the horn of the *αγρίμι goat); however that may be, after the identification of *106 as the sheep ideogram, the only likely candidate left for *107 is goat, as stated in Documents.

5. PIG

The ideogram for pig is *108 = *85 *au; the word behind it must be *sūs or *ḥūs. *su- is used in the compound *su-gō-ta, gen. *-ta-o (PY Ea), */su-gʷōtās, -tāho/ ‘swine-herd’.

The word *sūs or *ḥūs has not been attested so far, but the word *si-a₂-ro acc. plur. */sihalons/ ‘fat hogs’ is found at PY Cn 608:

1 jo-a-se-so-si , si-a₂-ro | 2 o-pi-da-mi-jo

followed by place names and the ligatured ideogram SUS+S/ in ll. 3-11.

*o-pi-da-mi-jo is commonly taken to be nom. plur., the ‘residents’ of the places mentioned thereafter; however, I wonder whether it could not be acc. plur., in agreement with *sihalons: ‘entrusted to the dāmos’ of each place mentioned.

About the problem of *sūs beside (regular) ṣūs one can only speculate.

The word *kʷoiros for the young animal is probably found in three tablets of the TH Ft series: ko-ro dat. sing. */kʷoirōi/ ‘young pig’, as a recipient of olives.⁸ I shall deal with the Theban animals as a group.

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⁸ The form ko-ro (not ** ko-ro₂), if interpreted correctly, implies that *χοῖρος does not go back on *gʷor-yo.
6. THEBAN ANIMALS FROM PELOPIDOU STREET

Within the compass of the F- and G-series, the first editors of the tablets from Pelopidou Street identified five or six animal names:

- **e-mi-jo-no-i** (Gp): /hēmionoihi/ ‘mules’
- **e-pe-to-i** (Gp): /herpetoihi/ ‘reptiles’ (cf. Lat. *serpens*), rather than a general term for four-footed animals
- **ka-no, ka-si** (Ft): /kānōn, kānsi/ ‘geese’
- **ke-re-na-i** (Fq Gp): ?/gerēnāhi/ ‘cranes’?
- **ko-ro** (Ft): /kōirōi/ ‘young pig’
- **ku-ne, ku-no, ku-si** (Fq, gen. also Gf Gp): /kunes, kunōn, kunsi/ ‘dogs’
- **o-ni-si** (Fq): /orni(s)si/ ‘birds’; if this is too general (we also have the specific mention of *geese*), one might consider, e.g., ‘chickens’ (like occasionally in later Greek)

Even if we strike one or two items, the conclusion must be that this set of animal names can hardly be a mirage. Attempts at interpreting them as, e.g., place names and personal names are unconvincing, to my mind. Try this: find four or five flower names in one or two series of tablets from one site, which next turn out not to be flower names at all. It is just a matter of weighing the odds.

Some of the word-forms in question are clearly dative plural: **e-mi-jo-no-i**, **e-pe-to-i**, **ka-si**, **ke-re-na-i**, **ku-si**, **o-ni-si**. The dative singular **ko-ro** /kōirōi/, if that’s what it is, deviates from the plural pattern. When followed by quantities of a commodity, the datives express the recipients. One need not believe that the *herpeta* drank wine, or that the *geese* were dedicated olive consumers. Other scenarios are possible. The animals were obviously kept, tended, taken care of somehow, and the care-takers may be the actual recipients. (One may notice that I am not going into the Holy War on this occasion. ¹⁰)

The interpretation of **ke-re-na-i** as ‘cranes’ is doubtful. It is not easy to connect *gerēnāhi* with γέρανος and γέρην (f.) in a straightforward manner. With *geraihī* or *gerēnsi*, there would be no problem—but that is not what **ke-re-na-i** can stand for. I am afraid that not even Γερήνιος ἱππότα Νέστωρ can help us out.

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¹⁰ For a discussion of **ma-ka**, cf. my article “Ὦ Μᾶ Γᾶ.” *DO-SO-MO* 7, 2007, pp. 117–121. (Correct my first name in the heading from Fred to Frits.)
interpretations with scriptio plena for \( \text{kern-} \), \( \text{gern-} \) or \( \text{khern-} \) are unacceptable to me on orthographical grounds. Nor can I follow Ruijgh’s proposal \( \text{krēnāhi} \) ‘spring-goddesses’, as there is no trace whatsoever of **\( \text{krēnā} \)– with \( \eta \) outside Attic-Ionic (where it became \( \text{krēnē} \) eventually). 11

7. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Decorative animals

A number of animal words occur in descriptions of furniture. We have already met the horse on the \( \text{t'ranus} \) of PY Ta 722.1, flanked in the description by a human figure to the left, and an octopus to the right:

\[
\text{ta-ra-nu, a-ja-me-no, e-re-pa-te-jo, a-to-ro-qa, i-qo-qa, po-ru-po-de-qa, po-ni-ke-qa *220 l}
\]

\( \text{t'ranus ayai(s)menos elephēnteyō antē rōḳō i kʷ ẉō kʷ e polupodē kʷ e pʰ oimikē kʷ e/} \)

Of course, the adjective \( \text{elephēnteyō} \) must also be taken with the items following \( \text{antē rōḳō} \).

Another \( \text{t'ranus} \) is decorated with lions, \( \text{lewomp}'i \) (PY Ta 708.3, a footstool of ebony \( \text{a-ja-me-no e-re-pa-te-jo a-di-di-ja-pi re-wo-pi-qa} \)), and as we have seen, one \( \text{t'ornos} \) in PY Ta 707 has \( \text{o-pi-ke-re-mi-ni-ja} \) that are \( \text{se-re-mo-ka-ra-o-re qe-gi-no-me-na a-di-di-ja-te-qa po-ti-pi-qa, se-re-mo-krāho-gē qe-gē \text{tōmenai andriantē kʷ e portip}'i kʷ e/} \) ‘enlivened (painted?) with a \( \text{se-re-mo}'s \) head, a man’s figure and heifers’.

B. \( \text{eleph} \)

The word \( \text{eleph} \) (\(+\) adjective \( \text{elephēnteyos} / -ehos \)) occurs several times in the Linear B texts, always meaning ‘ivory’ (nom. \( \text{e-re-pa} \) (KN), gen. \( \text{e-re-pa-to} \) (KN PY), instr. \( \text{e-re-pa-te} \) (KN PY), acc. \( \text{e-re-pa-ta} \) (KN)). In Homer, too, \( \text{ἐλέφας} \) always means ‘ivory’.

The meaning ‘elephant’ is found in Herodotus (to the exclusion of ‘ivory’). If elephants were ever spoken about by Mycenaean people, the same word \( \text{eleph} \) was undoubtedly used; however, I don’t know when the Greeks became acquainted with the animals themselves, in contradistinction to their tusks. Ivory had been known for quite some time, reportedly even since the time of the mammoth-hunters.

11 What we do find is \( \text{krānu}, \text{Aeol. krānu < *krahdnā < *krasnu, Att.-Ion. -η̣} \) is due to Proto-Ionic dissimilation of \( \text{ā}—\text{ō} \) to \( \eta—\text{ā} \) (also, e.g., \( \text{εἰρήνη ~ Ἕρανη} \), in which case Attic has \( \eta \) (instead of \( \rhọ \)), in common with Ionic.
C. *104 CERV

In order to avoid the Evil Eye, I must mention the deer. The word for deer is probably found in the place name *e-ra-po ri-me-ne* /Elap*ôn* limenei/ ‘at Deer Harbour’ (PY An 657).

If you consider going there, beware of Artemis.