SUPPLEMENTUM
EPIGRAPHICUM MEDITERRANEUM
KU-NI-SU: EMMER WHEAT OR PERSONAL NAME?

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Arne Furumark was the first scholar who argued that *ku-ni-su* followed by ideogram GRANUM on HT 86a should be read as a specification of wheat or perhaps a quality of grain.¹ Maurice Pope stated that "it is extremely tempting to compare the frequent Babylonian *kunasu*, which means a species of wheat or emmer"² and Cyrus H. Gordon could prove that instead of *kunašu ku-ni-šu* is found indeed in the Nuzi texts.³

Gordon tried to demonstrate once for all that Linear B *si-to* GRANUM provides the Mycenaean equivalent of Linear A *ku-ni-su* GRANUM "since things equal to the same thing (WHEAT, in this case) are equal to each other."⁴

In the combinations *sa-ra₂* GRANUM and *pa₂-ni* GRANUM on HT 102, however, *sa-ra₂* and *pa₂-ni* are definite personal names, occurring several times in lists of personal names in the HT series itself,⁵ so that in accordance with Gordon's formula in the combination *ku-ni-su* GRANUM *ku-ni-su* should be a personal name, too.

In an excellent article Emilio Peruzzi, reflecting on Furumark’s and Gordon’s interpretations of Linear A texts, scrutinized the parallel texts of HT 86 and HT 95 and demonstrated convincingly that ku-ni-su, sa-ru, di-de-ru, qa-ra₂-wa / qe-ra₂-u, da-me and mi-nu-te, all occurring on both tablets in interchangeable order, do belong to one and the same category of words: “all place names, or all personal names, or all vocabulary words”.

Jon-Christian Billigmeier could present equivalents in the Linear B texts from Knossos for no less than three words on HT 86: HT qa-ra₂-wa / KN qa-ra₂-wo, HT di-de-ru / KN di-de-ro, HT da-me / KN qa-me; because these equivalents are all definite personal names at Knossos, he took ku-ni-su, sa-ru, di-de-ru, qa-ra₂-wa / qe-ra₂-u, da-me and mi-nu-te for personal names. The occurrence of sa-ru as a definite personal name in the HT series itself is in support of Billigmeier’s interpretation.

In spite of this we see ourselves confronted by the same HT series with GRANUM in ligature with qe, with qe + HORDEUM and with GRANUM in ligature with ku. Moreover, we do find occasionally HORDEUM in ligature with both qe and qa in Linear B texts from Knossos.

On the analogy of Linear B use of ideograms in ligature with syllables, we are entitled to gather that the syllables ku, qe and

6. E. Peruzzi, “Recent Interpretations of Minoan (Linear A)”, Word 15 (1959), 316-320; see ibid. 317, note 15 for Peruzzi’s discovery of the variants qa-ra₂-wa / qe-ra₂-u.
10. Emmett L. Bennett Jr., “Linear B-abel, Notes on the transcription of the Mycenaean ideograms”, Minos VIII (1963), 76: (HORDEUM + qa); 78: (HORDEUM + qe); cf. for another combination, viz. ideogram TELA in ligature with identical syllables in both Linear scripts at Hagia Triada and Knossos respectively, Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, Documents in Mycenaean Greek, Cambridge 1973, 313: “The Linear A version, found only on Agia Triada tablet HT 38, has two intermediate strokes, and (surprisingly) the surcharged KU and ZO also found occasionally at Knossos.” Why ‘surprisingly’? The Linear scripts at Hagia Triada and Knossos were contemporary (ca. 1400 B.C.) and formed part of one and the same ‘Minoan’ culture.
"qa are the abbreviations of vocabulary words, by which GRANUM and HORDEUM are specified respectively;" ku-ni-su and qe-ra₂-u / qa-ra₂-wa, written in full for ku in ligature with GRANUM exclusively (kunišu only means "emmer wheat" after all) and qa (at Knossos also qa) in ligature with both GRANUM and HORDEUM are the specifications most suited, if only hellenists were ready to admit that Semitic qalû "toasted" (cf. qalitu "toasted grain") can be used as a technical term for the preparation of several grain varieties: the onus probandi to the contrary rests with them.

11. Cf. e.g. ko-ri-ja-da-na, ko-ri-a₂-da-na: abbreviated ko, sometimes inserted in the condiment ideogram (Documents¹, 227) and the pot ideograms ligatured with di for di-pa, with a for a-pi-po-re-we and with u for u-do-ro (Documents², 324, Fig.16).

12. Cf. for kunišu in Semitic texts from Hurrian Nuzi and Hittite Boğazköy CAD and AHW s.v. kunišu(m) and for qa-ra₂-wa / qe-ra₂-u AHW s.v. qalitu "Röstkorn" and s.v. qalû l"geröstet". According to Peruzzi (op. cit. 317, note 15), a/e alternation can be noticed on the HT tablets in other instances (e.g. di-ra-di-na / di-re-di-na); cf. for a/e alternation in the scripts of the North-West Semitic region Guy Yocquois, Phonétique comparée des dialectes moyen-babyloniens du Nord et de l'Ouest, Louvain 1966, 122-142 (pars. 4-6).