

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-ra*₂ GRANUM and *pa*₃-*ni* GRANUM on HT 102, however, *sa-ra*₂ and *pa*₃-*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.

1. A. Furumark, *Linear A und die altkretische Sprache, Entzifferung und Deutung I*, Berlin 1956, 21.

2. Maurice Pope, "On the Language of Linear A", *Minos VI* (1958), 21.

3. Cyrus H. Gordon, "Minoan Linear A", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies XVII* (1958), 247; cf. id., "The Language of the Hagia Triada Tablets", *Klio 38* (1960), 65.

4. Cyrus H. Gordon, "Minoan", *Athenaeum*, N.S. XLVII (1969), 127; cf. id., *Evidence for the Minoan Language*, Ventnor N.J. 1966, 26 (sub 11).

5. Cf. for *sa-ra*₂ HT 28a.2, HT 28b.3, HT 93a.4 and for *pa*₃-*ni* HT 85a.2 (edition W.C. Brice, *Inscriptions in the Minoan Linear Script of Class A*, Oxford 1961).

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".⁶

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 *dq-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.⁷ The occurrence of *sa-ru* as a definite personal name in the HT series itself is in support of Billigmeier's interpretation.⁸

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*.⁹ Moreover, we do find occasionally HORDEUM in ligature with both *qe* and *qa* in Linear B texts from Knossos.¹⁰

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*.

7. Jon-Christian Billigmeier, "Does Minoan *ku-ni-su* mean 'grain'", *Kadmos* XIII (1974), 81.

8. Cf. HT 94a.2, HT 123a.4.

9. Cf. for GRANUM + *qe* HT 18.1, HT 28b.1, HT 36.1, HT 99a.2, HT 101.1, for *qe* + HORDEUM HT Cr IV 4a and for GRANUM + *ku* HT 61, HT 128a.2, HT 128a.2, HT 128b.1, HT 128b.2.

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 Hagia 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;¹¹ *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 *qe* (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:¹² 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 (*Documents²*, 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 *kunīšu* in Semitic texts from Hurrian Nuzi and Hittite Boğazköy CAD and AHW s.v. *kunāšu(m)* and for *qa-ra₂-wa* / *qe-ra₂-u* AHW s.v. *qalitu* "Röstkorn" and s.v. *qalû* I "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 Jucquois, *Phonétique comparée des dialectes moyen-babyloniens du Nord et de l'Ouest*, Louvain 1966, 122-142 (pars. 4-6).