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**GR. *τρογγών* '1. TURTLEDOVE; 2. STINGRAY (FISH)':
ONE WORD OR TWO WORDS?***

Abstract. The stingray, *τρογγών*, is not named after the turtle dove *τρογγών* (from *τρούζω* 'to coo'), as is usually assumed: the fish is not a 'sea turtle dove'. It should rather be analyzed as **ptrug-on-* 'the winged one', with the zero grade of *πτέρυξ, -υγος* 'wing': the ray's fins are similar to wings, and their slow flapping movement gives the impression that the ray flies rather than it swims. A zero-grade form of the name of the wing is attested in Iranian (Av. *fraptarajāt* 'bird'), but is probably not to be sought in Slavic **astrebn* 'hawk'. The etymological form, then, should be reconstructed **(π)τρογγών*; the attested form is *τρογγών*, with long [u:] warranted in metrical occurrences, and analogical after that of the bird name *τρογγών* 'turtle dove', because of the synchronic system in which many bird names were transferred to fish, the bird name behaving as the model. Thus two originally distinct words, *τρογγών* 'turtle dove' and **τρογγών* 'stingray' merged into one single word.

1. Introduction: general remarks on zoonyms

Zoonyms are frequently metaphoric denominations, referring to a physical characteristic of animals, either their aspect or their cry. Thus German *Forelle* 'trout' (OHG *forhana*) is 'the spotted one' (Skr. *pr̥śni-* 'spotted', Gr. *περκνός* 'dark, with dark spots', and the fish name *πέρκη* 'perch'); *σίμος* 'pug (nose)' is the name of an unknown fish; *χελών* is the name of a kind of mullet, meaning literally 'the one with big lips' (*χέιλος*). The name of the crane, Gr. *γέρανος*, Lat. *grūs*, OHG *kranuh* could belong to a root meaning 'to shout' (Skr. *gr̥h̥āti*), if it is to be reconstructed as **gerH-* with pure velar and not **g^uerH-*.

Within that frame, it can happen that a same word be used for different animal kingdoms: Gr. *λύκος* means both 'wolf' and 'sturgeon'; *ἔχινος* means both 'hedgehog' and 'urchin' (or 'sea hedgehog'). There are especially many fish names which are identical with bird names: *χελιδών* 'swallow' is also the name of a fish;

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ἰέραξ ‘hawk’, *κίχλη* ‘thrush’ and *γέρανος* ‘crane’ are also the names of sea fish; and *κόκκυξ* ‘cuckoo’ is the name of the gurnard. In all these cases the name of the fish is a transposition of the name of the terrestrial animal (including birds), which is the model:¹ the latter is the dominant form in the couple, the former (the fish name) is subordinate, so to speak.

2. Gr. *τρῶγών*

2.1. Stingray and turtledove

We find such a case in Gr. *τρῶγών*, which usually means ‘turtledove’, but is also the name of a kind of fish, the stingray.² *Τρωγών* ‘turtledove’ is clearly a derivative of *τρύζω* ‘to coo’, the bird being named after its characteristic cry, but the reason why the stingray is so named is far from clear. Some scholars think it refers to the noise the fish makes when it is caught and driven out of the water, which would be similar to a turtledove’s cooing.³ This is unconvincing, but it is true that *τρύζω* also applies in the medical vocabulary to the gurgling of liquids, particularly to the gurgling of the intestinal flush expelled with diarrhea. This would perhaps be more in line with *τρυγών* ‘stingray’, admitting that the fish causes water to gurgle when caught (?). But still, it is far from satisfactory. Others think it is a euphemistic name, that of a harmless bird applied to a dangerous fish, because the stingray is venomous, and the use of antiphrastic or euphemistic denominations for dangerous animals is frequent⁴ compare for instance the well-known case

¹ Cf. Lacroix 1937 and Zucker 2006.

² *Τρωγών* is attested as an anthroponym in Sicily (5th c. BC, *LGPN* IIIA 436), but has probably nothing to do with the turtledove, it belongs with *τρύγη* ‘harvest, wine harvest’, as does *Τρυγαῖος* in Aristophanes’ *Peace*.

³ Lacroix 1937, 284-285, who seeks help in Aristotle (*ibid.*, 281), who says that some fish are named after the noise they make, taking as an example *κόκκυξ* and *χαλκίς* (*Hist. Anim.* 535b): this is doubtful, because *χαλκίς* refers to the copper-like colour of the fish, not to the sound it is thought to produce. *Κόκκυξ* is the name of the gurnard, a fish which actually produces a kind of grunt through its swim bladder, as some fish do (for instance the frogfish), hence its french name, *grondin*, from *gronder* ‘to roar’; but *κόκκυξ* does not refer to roaring (as noticed already by Lacroix 1937, 281), and it seems more likely that the fish received its name in Greek from its shape, and not from the sound: the characteristic triangular shape of its head and the breastplate-like aspect of it recall a cuckoo’s beak, and the image would be the same as in the anatomical meaning *κόκκυξ* ‘coccyx’ for the terminal vertebrae, forming a solid block, curved and triangular as the cuckoo’s beak. Aristotle may have been misled when he thought the image was a matter of sound and not of shape.

⁴ Strömberg 1943, 118, who doubts that the name refers to a noise produced by the fish and admits a tabu-phenomenon. See the different hypotheses in Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. *τρύζω*.

of the bear, **h₂rtko-* (Hitt. *hartaka-*, Gr. *ἄρκτος*, Lat. *ursus*, Skr. *ṛkṣa-*), which in Slavic languages is replaced by *medvěď*, literally 'honey-eater', and in Germanic languages by **beran-* (OE *bera*, OHG *bero*), literally 'the brown one'. But even if we admit a kind of euphemistic denomination for the stingray, the motivation remains unclear: 'brown' or 'honey-eater' for the bear are metaphorical names relying on real characteristics of the animal, 'turtledove' for the stingray is hardly based upon any similarity in appearance or behaviour between both animals. Another kind of ray is named *ἀετός* 'eagle': this metaphorical denomination is based upon an analogy concerning movement, as the ray glides in the water like an eagle in the sky, seeming to fly, and when it swims its movements are similar to the slow flapping of an eagle's wings; this is still the case in modern languages, where a subgroup is called *eagle-ray*, in French *raie-aigle* or *aigle de mer* (genus *Myliobatis* and *Aetobatus*).⁵ In the case of the eagle-ray, the metaphoric denomination has its roots in observable reality: but that is not the case for the stingray/turtledove, as far as we can see.

2.2. Ray wings

I would like to propose here an alternative analysis for *τρογγών* 'stingray': it has, I think, nothing to do with *τρούζω* 'to coo', nor with the turtledove. Rather it could be analyzed as a derivative of *πτέρυξ* 'wing' in the zero grade. As is well known, the main physical characteristic of rays is that they have no fins of the usual type, but their pectoral fins developed into large flat wing-shaped appendices, and we buy at the fish shop ray wings, not ray fins. In Greek, *πτέρυξ*, and especially the diminutive *πτερόγιον*, means both 'wing' of a bird and 'fin' of a fish, because the affinity in form and function is obvious. And the ray is the winged fish *par excellence*: this is precisely the metaphor underlying the use of *ἀετός* 'eagle' for a kind of ray, and several modern scientific name for subspecies of rays are compounds of *ptero-* 'wing' (*Pteromylaeus*, name of the bull ray, called *βοῦς* in Greek); biologists talk about the flight of the ray to describe its locomotion. Some rays, including the stingray, are able to jump out of the water and fly literally above the surface.⁶

We should then reconstruct **ptrug-on-*, or **ptrug-Hon-*. The treatment of the consonant group **ptru- > trv-* is parallel to that of *τράπεζα* 'table' < **k^ut(ɥ)ṛ-ped-ja*, literally 'four-footed', and Homeric *τροφάλεια* 'helmet with four *φάλοι*' < **k^ut(ɥ)ṛ-*, beside *τετράφαλος*.⁷ A similar case of simplification of a complex consonant cluster

⁵ As noticed already by Lacroix 1937, 283.

⁶ Aelian even says it flies: *ἢ τρογγών, ὅτε βούλεται, νήχεται, καὶ ἀδ' ἅλιν ἀρθεῖσα πέτεται* 'the stingray when it needs swims and then, ascending anew, flies' (Aelianus, *Hist. An.* 8, 26).

⁷ The phonetic treatment is not clear: Schwyzer, *Gr. Gr.* I, 337 admits that the phonetic treatment is *trv-* (*τροφάλεια*), and that *τράπεζα* instead of **τρώπεζα* is a remodelling after

is κτερίς < *(p)ktens ‘comb’, with zero grade in Greek, corresponding to Lat. *pecten* with *e* grade (*pek- ‘to comb’). The suffix is probably the ‘Hoffmann-suffix’ *-Hon-, which has a possessive meaning:⁸ τρυγών is ‘the one endowed with wings’, ‘the winged one’, which can apply generically to any kind of ray, the stingray as well as other subspecies.

2.3. Vowel length and analogy

This analysis of Gr. τρυγών is straightforward both morphologically and semantically. If it is correct, the identity between ‘turtledove’ and ‘stingray’ is secondary. We are not dealing with a single word, but with a homophony between two different words, triggered by the phonetic evolution of *(p)trug-on- > *τρυγον-. As a result, the word was no longer motivated, that is, no longer analysed as belonging with πτέρυξ. And unmotivated words, being isolated, are likely to be attracted by other words or groups which are formally close, but not etymologically unrelated. This is what happened to the name of the stingray, which was attracted to the group of τρύζω ‘to coo’, τρυγών ‘turtledove’, as is shown by the [u:]. Etymologically, τρυγών ‘stingray’ should have a short [u] – the vowel is etymologically short in πτέρυξ –, whereas τρῶγών ‘turtledove’ has a long [u:], metrically warranted (Aristophanes, Menander, Theocritus among others). But in all its occurrences in metrical texts, τρῶγών ‘stingray’ appears also with a long [u:]. Of course, metrical lengthening is a possibility, because in didactic poets using hexameter, such as Nicander (*Theriaca* 828, 830) and Oppian (*Halieutica* 505), τρῶγόνα, -ος, -ι would scan as a tribrach if the [u] were short, which is to be avoided. But we find also the fish τρῶγών in comedy, in different metres (Antiphane,⁹ Epicharmus¹⁰), and there is no form with a short [u]. Thus, if τρῶγών ‘stingray’ has a long [u:] as τρῶγών ‘turtledove’, we have to admit, within the framework of the etymological hypothesis formulated above, an analogical remodelling of *τρῶγών ‘stingray’ after τρῶγών ‘turtledove’:

τετρα-, others accept that *k^ut(u)r- > *(π)τρα- or *(κ^w)τρα-. Mycenaean has *to-pe-za* = *τόρπεζα, with a different vocalization and no trace of *u. The idea found in Sihler 1995, 411 that τράπεζα reflects in fact *tr-ped-, where *tr- would be an archaic form of τρι- ‘three’, because originally tables had three feet and not four, is to be rejected for formal reasons: tables may of course have three feet, but there is no IE language in which the numeral ‘three’ appears without /i/, and in compounds one finds only *tri- (cf. τρίπους ‘tripod’, Myc. *ti-ri-po*, which would be at odds with *to-pe-za* if the latter were ‘three-footed’).

⁸ Hoffmann 1955. Pinault 2000 identified this suffix as a verbal root *h₃en(h₂)- ‘to take advantage of’, and we have here a case of reanalysis of the second member of the compound as a suffix, which then became productive in the daughter languages.

⁹ Antiphanes, *fr.* 27, 23 *PCG* (26, 23 Kock): ἀφύας δὲ λεπτάς τάσδε καὶ τὴν τρυγόνα ‘those thin anchovies and the stingray’ (iambic trimeter).

¹⁰ Epicharmus, *fr.* 66: τρυγόνες τ’ ὀπισθόκεντροι καὶ μάλ’ ἀροὶ κοβιοί ‘stingrays with a sting in the back, and fleshy mullets’ (trochaic tetrameter).

a partial homophony became a full homophony through the levelling of vowel length. This levelling is a consequence of the remotivation of the word through the secondary identification with *τρογγών* 'turtledove'. We have seen above that many names are common to birds and fish (*χελιδών, κίχλη, ιέραξ, ἀετός, κόκκυξ*, cf. 1.), so the identification of **τρογγών* 'stingray' with *τρογγών* 'turtledove' is in full conformity with a general pattern in Greek; in some authors the stingray is sometimes called *θαλασσία τρογγών* 'sea *τρογγών*' (Dioscorides, *De materia medica* 2, 20; Cyranides 1, 19, 9), which shows that for the Greeks it was the same word.¹¹ This fact explains easily the long [u:] in the name of the fish.

3. Comparative data

This hypothesis implies that the zero grade of *πτέρυξ* did once exist in Greek, whereas in all of alphabetic Greek the stem is invariant with *e*-grade.

3.1. Ablaut of the name of the wing

The name of the 'wing' or 'feather' appears in IE languages either as **ptero-* or as **petro-* (Skr. *pátra-*),¹² thematicizations of an old *-r/-n-* stem found in Hitt. *pattar*, the *-n-*stem surfacing in Lat. *penna* 'feather' < **pet-nā*. A zero-grade **ptro-* would not be very surprising, then, and it is in fact attested in the Avestan compound *fraptərəjāt* 'bird' < **pro-pt̥rg/g^u-*. The Avestan word is not a direct match for our *τρογγών*, because the stem is **pterg-* and not **pterug-*, but it confirms that there were zero grade forms of **pter-(u)g-* 'wing'. In fact, the Greek stem **pterug-* does not have any direct equivalent in other IE languages: a *u*-stem is found in Skr. *patáru-* 'flying', beside *patará-* 'id.', and may be related to the *-u-* in *πτέρυξ*, but with full grade. And the velar-enlarged variant is found in Avestan, but without the *-u-*. It seems as though Greek recombined two different variants, **p(e)teru-* (found in Indian) and **pterg-* (found in Iranian), yielding *πτέρυγ-*. In that case, if the zero-grade of the stem is found in Avestan in one of these predecessors of *πτέρυξ*, it can be expected to be found also in Greek: that would be the case in *τρογγών* < **πτρογγών*.

¹¹ The use of *θαλάττιος* to specify the name of the fish is a common type: we find also *θαλάσσιοι κύνες* 'sea dogs', *θαλαττία χελιδών* 'sea swallow' (the exocet, or flying fish). It shows that the fish name is an analogical denomination, subordinate to the primary name which is that of the bird or the quadruped.

¹² Alcman has a unique compound *ὑποπετριδίων* (Alcman, *fr.* 1, 49 Page), epithet of dreams, meaning 'borne by wings', which has been analyzed either as a metathesised variant of **ὑποπετριδίων* (Chantraine, *DELG*) or as the remnant of the stem **petro-* parallel to Skr. *pátra-* (Frisk, *GEW*; Beekes, *GED*). The word has nothing to do with *πέτρα* 'rock'.

3.2. Slavic **astrēbъ* ‘hawk’

Another parallel with a zero-grade form could be found in Slavic **astrēbъ* ‘hawk’ (R. *jastreb*, from older *jastrēbъ*, Cz. *jestřáb*), remodelling of an older **āstro-* with the suffix of *golqbb* ‘dove’ (< **-omb^h-*). But the analysis of the stem **āstro-* is disputed: some scholars derive it from an old compound **Hōku-ptr-o-* > **ās̥tro-*; the compound would be parallel to Gr. *ὠκύπτερος* ‘with swift wings’, epithet of the hawk in Homer (*ἴρηξ ὠκύπτερος* *Il.* 13, 62), and to Lat. *accipiter* ‘hawk’, if understood ‘with swift wings’.¹³ But there is no trace in Slavic of a jer which would reflect the **u* implied by this analysis. Other scholars derive it from an old adjective **Hōk-ro-* ‘swift’, corresponding to Gr. *ὠκύς* ‘swift’, Skr. *āśú-* ‘swift’, Lat. *ōcior* ‘faster’, in the frame of a Caland system (**-u-* ~ **-ro-* as in Skr. *ṛjrá-* ‘quick’ / *árjuna-* ‘white, shining’, from **h₂erg-* ‘be shining/quick’):¹⁴ **ōkro-* yields **āstro-* in Slavic, with epenthetic [t] in a sequence **-sr-* (cf. OCS *sestra* < **s(u)esrā* ‘sister’).¹⁵ This second hypothesis echoes another old Indo-European formula: *ὠκύς* is also an epithet of the hawk in Homer (*ἴρηκι εἰοικώς* || *ὠκέϊ* > ‘similar to a fast hawk’, *Il.* 15, 238), and *āśú-* is an epithet of the eagle in the RigVeda (RV 4, 38, 2; 8, 5, 7).

The problem with the analysis **Hōku-ptr-o-* is the following: Lat. *accipiter* cannot be compared directly with *ὠκύπτερος* and *ὠπυπέτης/āsupátvan* because *acci-*, admittedly a remodelling of *acu-* after *accipio*, cannot belong with **Hōku-* (*ὠκύς*, *āśú-*, Lat. *ōcior*), but probably belongs to the root **h₂ek-* ‘be sharp’ (*ἄκρος*, Lat. *acer* etc.) and means therefore ‘with sharp wings’ or ‘with sharp flight’ and not ‘with swift wings’.¹⁶ And on the other hand, the other *comparandum*,

¹³ Vey 1953; Kortlandt 1982, 26; Derksen 2008, s.v.; for the treatment of the consonant cluster Vey admits **ptr-* > **pstr-* > **str-* (therefore the prototype would be **ās̥stro-*), comparing in initial position *stryjъ* ‘uncle’ < **ptru-jo-* (Av. *turiia-*); Derksen 2008 is skeptical about this treatment **ptr-* > *pstr-* > *str-* in initial position (s.v. **stryjъ*, after Kortlandt (*ibid.*)), and admits in **Hōku-ptr-o-* > **ās̥tro-* a mere simplification of the internal consonant cluster, with loss of syllable-final [p].

¹⁴ For the Caland system in **Hōk-u-*, cf. *DELG*, s.v. The reconstruction of the root itself is difficult: some reconstruct **h₁ok-* (**h₁oh₁k-ú-*), which allows an identification with **h₁ek₁-o-* ‘horse’, meaning literally ‘the fast one’; this is very tempting, and in that case the formulaic syntagm *ὠκέες ἵπποι*, *āśúm āśvam* ‘swift horse(s)’ would show a *figura etymologica*, but it cannot be demonstrated, therefore I leave here **Hōk-*.

¹⁵ Meillet, *MSL* 11, 185; Vasmer, *REW*, s.v.; Arumaa, *Ursl. Gr.* II, 100; Shevelov 1964, 200–201. The epenthetic [t] is a late development, posterior to the merger of **k* with /s/ in Common Slavic, therefore **-kr-* > **-sr-* > **-str-*, as shown by ORussian *рѣстрѣ* (R. *нѣстрѣи*) ‘variegated’ < **pikro-* (Gr. *πικρός* ‘pointed’), from **peik-* ‘to sting’ (OCS *рѣсати* ‘to write’).

¹⁶ De Vaan, *LED* reconstructs **aku-petri-* ‘having swift pointed wings’, leaving open the identification of the first element (**He/oHku-*), but the initial /a/ points clearly to **h₂ek-*. As Beekes notes (*GED*, s.v. *ὠκύς*) the Latin word could rather belong with *ὄζύς*, from **h₂ek-* ‘to be pointed, sharp’ (Lat. *acer*, Gr. *ἄκρος*), since this group could also evolve

ἠκύπτερος in Homer is probably not very old: it is an innovation, a creation of Greek, a renewal of the older inherited epithet *ἠκυπέτης* 'swift-flying', epithet both of horses and of hawks or eagles (*ἠκύπτερος ἵρηξ* Hesiod, *Op.* 212), found also in Indo-Aryan with a different suffix (Skr. *āśupátvan-* 'swift-flying', epithet of the eagle, RV 4, 26).¹⁷ Therefore it is not certain whether the etymon **Hōkū-ptero-* has any Indo-European antiquity: if *ἠκύπτερος* was created in Greek, it cannot provide a solid ground for the reconstruction **Hōkū-ptro-* for Slavic **astrěbъ*. As a consequence, if neither *ἠκύπτερος* nor *accipiter* can be a direct match for **astrěbъ*, perhaps **Hōk-ro-* is a safer reconstruction: in that case, the hawk would be simply 'the swift one' and not 'the swift-winged', and the word would not provide a parallel for the zero-grade of **ptero-*.

However, it seems to me that, leaving aside the Slavic word which could have nothing to do with the name of the wing, the Iranian parallel *fraptarjāt* 'bird' (3.1.) establishes clearly enough that there existed a zero-grade form, which provides a parallel for our reconstruction of *τρογών* < **πτρυγών*.

4. Conclusion

If this analysis is correct, we should distinguish two words *τρογών* for an older stage of Greek: the first one, *τρογών*, is the name of a bird, the turtledove, and is a derivative of *τρούζω* 'to coo'. The second one, *τρογών*, is the name of a fish, the stingray, and means etymologically the 'winged' fish. It is built on the zero-grade form of *πτέρυξ*, **(p)trug-*, and it probably had a short [u], but gained a long [u:] through analogy with the homophonous *τρογών* 'turtledove'. This is a process of remotivation which took place within a productive pattern in Greek, namely that many fish names are in fact secondary uses of bird names. In classical Greek there is only one word *τρογών*: phonological change led to the merger of two different

towards the meaning 'fast', as shown by Gr. *ὄζυς* 'sharp', 'fast' after Homer (*ὄζυπους* 'swift-footed' in Euripides, *ὄζύπτερος* 'swift-winged' in Aesopus, but the latter literally means 'with sharp wings'). Another Latin word in which the name of the wing has been sought is *protervus* 'impudent': Festus testifies a *proptervus* which has been analyzed **pro-ptē(g)-uo-* and equated with Av. *fraptarjāt* 'bird' < **pro-ptīg/gʷ-* (Benveniste 1935, 28). But if the formal match is possible, semantically the equation is far from satisfactory: this compound would mean 'with wings in front', hence 'flying forth' (?), which would evolve into 'rash', and then 'impudent, insolent'. De Vaan, *LED*, s.v., rejects this explanation (rightly, to my mind) and favours another hypothesis formulated by Rix, who reconstructs **pro-petes-uo-*, contamination of **pro-petes-* (Gr. *προπετής* 'falling down, precipitate', cf. *πίπτω* 'to fall') with **petes-uo-* 'provided with impetus' (Rix 2001, 288); the latter explanation remains hypothetical, but fits better semantically.

¹⁷ Cf. Le Feuvre 2007, where I studied this type of formal renewal in Greek, and specifically on *ἠκύπέτης/ἠκύπτερος* p. 128.

items, and the synchronic system linking fish names (subordinate) and bird names (dominant) integrated this new couple, which in turn caused the levelling of vowel length on the model of the dominant form, that of the bird name *τρῶγών*. That is why any explanation seeking to unite turtledove and stingray under a single original signifier, admitting that one is a metaphoric use of the other, as in the case of the eagle-ray, cannot be fully satisfactory: because there were two words which merged into one single word through the vicissitudes of phonological change, the link between these animals is merely accidental.

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