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KOSMOS

JEWELLERY, ADORNMENT AND TEXTILES IN THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE

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PEETERS
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KO Ko 2010 CLOTH FRAGMENTS OF THE RAPINEWIAD

Introduction

Not since Patricia Highsmith gave life to the *Talented Mr. Ripley* in 1955, has a figure of such criminal ingenuity so dominated the imaginations of any segment of the educated public as the talented, and, we should also say, resourceful, generous, debonair, shrewd, clever, ingenious, hospitable, peripatetic, high-spirited, cooperative, witty, urbane, enchanting, insightful, indefatigable, and downright nice mastermind of Aegean prehistory and *Aegaeum* conferences, the truly and inimitably elusive *rapineu*, has captivated the attentions of Aegean scholars worldwide.

Proved Authenticity of *Aegaeum*-Related Finds

I have spent a good deal of my career tracking this mastermind in a series of adventures that have always brought me face-to-face with the most incredible discoveries of inscriptions in the most unexpected and out-of-the-way places. What is most extraordinary is that this even happened when I did not attend the actual *Aegaeum* conference where the discovery was made!

These finds are so incredible that it is necessary to review them briefly, just to make sure that they ever were really found. That they are genuine is proved by the fact that references to and discussions of the texts of two such inscriptions appear in serious scholarly publications in France and in Poland.¹

Selective Review of Finds: Dossier *ra-pi-ne-u*²

First, we have the simplest of all these discoveries, twenty years ago, from the STARESO research station in Calvi, Corsica April 23-25, 1990, when intrepid scholars gathered in a James-Bond environment at the Belgian underwater research station to examine *thalassa* in Aegean prehistory. *rapineu* was here joined by *desousa* and *qau* in serving as hosts.

During the period April 10-13, 1994, in Heidelberg, *ruqo* (the name is now explicated in minute detail by Witczak as noted above in note 1) served as *korētēr* and *rapineu* as *prokorētēr* in organizing satisfactory discussions of *politeia*. The consumption of wine, mugs of a beer-like drink, and even of coffee during the coffee breaks, helped focus attention on such topics as the human bull-leaper, which was here identified ideographically for the first time ever.

During the conference on *tekhne* in Philadelphia, April 18-21, 1996 there was a startling discovery of a Linear B tablet in the excavations connected with an urban renewal project. The

1 Most recently, with considerable sophisticated wit, by Krzysztof Tomasz WITCZAK in *DO-SO-MO* 8 (2009) 113-115. Witczak is keeping on course with a running joke in the section of *DO-SO-MO* entitled "Historia Mycenologiae. Personalia." There he interprets the figure *to-ma pa-ra-ma* as 'Stomas by his hand.' Earlier, with more unfortunate results, B. SERGENT in "Les petits nodules et la grande Béotie," *REA* 96 (1994) 365-384, took a joke limerick by Palaima (and Melena) absolutely seriously (370 n. 29): "Th. Palaima publie par ailleurs, dans la revue bibliographique de mycénologie *Nestor*, en Septembre 1992, 2501-2502, une tablette en Linéaire B découverte dans une "collection privée" à Rome, et contenant un poème dans lequel un nommé Thebaios (!) de Karustos porta à Pylos le peau d'un taureau... Ce serait bien là le seul poème de l'épigraphie mycénienne!!"

2 These finds are published by T.G. PALAIMA, in *Thalassa*, 4; "A Linear B Tablet from Heidelberg," in *POLITEIA*, 699-670; "PH Up 1996," in *TEXNH*, 539-543; "A Linear B Inscribed Galet from Liège: LIE Ga 1998 A Gaufre or 'Galet'," in *Polemos*, 507-511 "A Linear-B-Inscribed 'Herring' from Göteborg: An Ichthyomorphic Epiphany," in *POTNIA*, 485-491; "A New Linear B Inscription from the Land Down Under," in *DAIS*, 429-432.

text contained in line .3 the first ever hybrid logograms. These denoted a ‘bête en cour’ = VIR + TA and a rabbit-man or *lapineus*. The conference also used a new form of vehicle, designated ideographically and made specific by the word-unit in the dual form *lawophoreiō* or ‘people-carrier.’

Surely one of the most unusual of all such discoveries, and the tastiest and easiest to consume, was the *gaufre* or, as it is known in the local dialect around the arms-manufacturing center of Liège, *galet*, found during the period April 14-17, 1998 not long after the infamous Kafkania galet or ‘pebble,’ discovered on April Fool’s Day, 1994, first began to make its own strange paths through the annals of Aegean scholarship. This inscribed *galet* or ‘Belgian waffle’ seems to have been a kind of labyrinthine game where a man name *Deukalion* encountered threatening weapons, *polla astea*, tempting feasts, frustratingly escargot-paced waiters, crazed Liègian drivers, alluring women, Zakro-Master-style multi-sex monsters, incurable and unrepentant girls of the sort formerly cared for at a local architectural curiosity known as Vertbois, and many coffee breaks, in order to reach his sweetheart named *pura*. Love eventually conquers all, even *rapineu*, to judge by his own habits as a husband whose scholarly peregrinations were not punctuated by long stays with modern Calypsos and Circes.

In Göteborg, from April 15-20, 2000, during a conference, coincidentally enough, devoted to *potnia*, the *mistress* goddess, a unique ichthyomorphic text, an inscribed herring to be exact, recorded the celebration of the 65th anniversary of an honoree named ‘Robin Bird-Cherry’ who had as distinguished a career in Aegean archaeology in Sweden and Athens as *rapineu* has had in Belgium and beyond. Here an individual named *para,ma* was *grapheus* and the famous *rapineu* himself was *epistatēs*.

An incredible and un-disposable text from Melbourne, March 25-29, 2008, was shaped in the form of a boomerang. It recorded the proceedings of a conference devoted to the Mycenaean feast or *dais*, under the stewardship of *rapineu*, Hitscock and Crowley. There were ‘coffee breaks,’ Shelmerdian wine, and rightly unmentionable things done for the sake of love by means of fatted pigs.

I know it may seem as if nothing could possibly top any of the finds reviewed in this awe-inspiring, albeit condensed and selective, catalogue of singular epigraphical finds. But I am honored to report that, as might be expected when we are dealing with the thaumaturgical *rapineu*, this is not the case.

Circumstances of Discovery

Some months ago Marie Louise Nosch sent to me fragments of Mycenaean cloth that had been stored away inside a Mycenaean *qerana* (of a kind found at Dendra) from a Geometric context. It seems to have been a kind of Geometric t-shirt. The specialists here in Copenhagen had noticed evanescent traces of what looked like characters of script seemingly imprinted on the surface of the heirloom cloth.

Method of Analysis:

To study this new find, I drafted an emergency application to INSTAP to fund the wherewithal to use a method I learned from *rapineu* thirty years ago in Patras, Greece at the 2nd International Peloponnesian Conference. There, at our first meeting, we were engaged as audiovisual experts and amateur electricians. *rapineu* proudly lists this event as #6 under *Réunions Scientifiques* on his epic 37-page (!!!!) *curriculum vitae*, but suppresses the fact that we were forced to work as non-union labor despite the strong pro-labor politics of PASOK in Greece at the time. Having secured funding from INSTAP, I purchased the necessary research enhancers, cases and cases of it.

I then proceeded to examine the traces on the t-shirt. As I studied, I had first ‘just a drop’ of good Texan wine, and then another and another. And not too soon—these things take time—the text became clearer and clearer in its entirety.

Fragments of an Early Epic (Fig. 1)

I am happy to reveal here that we seem to have our earliest traces of an alphabetic epic text. The text reads as follows and has been given the title, for obvious reasons, the *Rapinewiad*.

φρόντιδ' ἄειδε, θεά, **Φαιδροκλέφρος Λαφινῆρος**
ὠφελίμην, ἣ μύρια λάμπροις κέρδε' ἔθηκε.
 πολλὰς δὴ συνετὰς ψυχὰς Μαριᾶ προέπεμψεν
 ἐμπείρων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἀριστεφάνους γε τέτυκται
 ἀνθρώποισί τε πᾶσι. τελείετο κόσμος βουλή.

Sing the attentive solicitude of **Bright-Fame Lafineus**
 the **helpful** care which set myriad benefits upon brilliant persons.
 Indeed it sent forth many intelligent souls to Marie
 of **learned** persons, and it made them conspicuously crowned,
 and for all human beings. The plan of *kosmos* was brought to pass.



Fig. 1 Tom Palaima’s drawing and inking of the evanescent text on the Geometric fabric sent from Copenhagen. Palaima used methods known to *rapineu* to see and draw, drop by extra drop, first in pencil and then in ink, the characters of these five lines apparently from the opening of the long-lost *Rapinewiad*. The characters are in a 7th-century Euboean script, with some possibility of influence from the region of Thorikos in eastern Attica. The text reads boustrophedon and was done in a reasonably steady hand. Note the lower-register first omicron in the *Beiname Phaidrokleweos* in line 1

Commentary

Line 1: Φαιδροκλέφρος ‘Bright-Fame’ seemingly a *Beiname* or second personal name, the Greek equivalent of an IĒ compound name, akin to Germanic **Robert** from *hrod* ‘fame’ and *beraht* ‘bright.’

Line 3: Μαριᾶ undoubtedly a reference to Marie Louise Nosch.

The intertextual echoes here with the *Iliad*, or perhaps vice versa, are clear.

Compare:

<i>Rapinewiad</i>		<i>Iliad</i>
τελείετο κόσμος βουλή	vs.	Διὸς δ’ ἐτελείετο βουλή
the plan (or council) of <i>kosmos</i> was brought to pass	vs.	the plan of Zeus was brought to pass

The opening of this epic makes clear that for this council discussing *kosmos*, the well-known figure *rapineu*, here with his well-deserved *Beiname* as ‘Fame-Bright,’ has himself sent the brightest and most talented persons to the care of Marie (Louise Nosch).

As he has done throughout his long and distinguished career, Robert Laffineur has given us the opportunity to share specialist knowledge across disciplinary boundaries in a stimulating, engaging, polite, and socially satisfying way. For more than twenty years, he has worked hard at furthering research and more than purely scientific knowledge in our field. He has done so with grace, charm, good humor, without complaint, but with more than ‘just a drop.’

I personally am honored that he has trusted me on so many occasions with the task, as Horace once put it, of smiling while speaking the truth ‘*ridentem dicere verum.*’ All my many discoveries have been inspired by a ‘brightly famous’ friendship and by my own admiration of Robert’s equanimity, enthusiasm, commitment as a scholar and devotion to the essence of what collegiality and collaboration mean in a field like Aegean studies. I have been particularly aware of the need throughout to manifest and put into practice a quality that marks the hero of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, namely *pietas*.

These inscribed finds have continued the tradition that my dear and now ailing mentor Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., began in *Nestor* over fifty years ago: “il est permis de rire entre mycénologues.” This has also inspired me. And I take great pride, once again, in discharging a duty that I prize among the greatest privileges my career has afforded me.

rapineu – Laffineur, whether as ‘Robert’ or Φαιδροκλέφης, deserves to have the spotlight of *kleos* shine brightly upon him for all the *kosmos* he himself has brought to the field of Aegean studies since 1972 when he began as an aspirant of the Belgian National Research Foundation and during his time as editor of the *Aegaeum* series.

Let us all rise and publicly applaud in Copenhagen and throughout the *kosmos*, the continuing work of our great friend and colleague, a true humanist, Robert Laffineur. We hope that when we next look, his *curriculum vitae* may be 40 pages long!

rapineu! rapineu! rapineu!

Thomas G. PALAIMA