

## Some Etymological Notes on Gk. ΣΤΑΦΥΛΙΝΟΣ 'carrot'

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Gk. *σταφυλῖνος* is the standard classical word for the cultivated carrot; it shared a certain amount of semantic space with *δαῦκος* but it seems entirely clear that *δαῦκος* is used, when used precisely, for the 'wild carrot.' When Gk. *σταφυλῖνος* would refer to the wild carrot, it would appear as *σταφυλῖνος ἄγριος* 'wild carrot', and this separation seems clear much of the time. Galen<sup>1)</sup> said that the *δαῦκος* was the word for the wild *σταφυλῖνος* and the Scholiast to Nicander<sup>2)</sup> says that the *δαῦκος* is smaller than the *σταφυλῖνος*, and there are two types, one Cretan, the other Asiatic.

The origin of the domestic carrot is not all clear,<sup>3)</sup> though it is evident that it was not much valued for nutritional reasons. Dioscorides says<sup>4)</sup> it was edible when boiled, but it was primarily the Romans who used the carrot as food. A gourmet, probably Caelius Apicius,<sup>5)</sup> gives three recipes for preparing the carrot. One method involves frying and then serving with a wine-flavored fish sauce; it can also be cooked, salted and served with olive oil; or it can be boiled, minced, sprinkled with cumin and then fried in olive oil. But for the gastronomically less inspired Greeks, the prime purpose<sup>6)</sup>

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<sup>1)</sup> *De alimentorum facultatibus* ii.67; in the Kühn edition VI. 654–655: *Τινὲς δὲ τὸν ἄγριον σταφυλῖνον ὀνομάζουσι δαῦκον.*

<sup>2)</sup> Scholium 94 to the *Theriaca*: ... *Δαύκου: δύο γένη τῆς βοτάνης. ἡ μὲν Κρητικὴ, ἡ δὲ Ἀσιατικὴ.*

<sup>3)</sup> Here see a noble effort by Alfred C. Andrews "The Carrot as a Food in the Classical Era," *Classical Philology* 44, 1949. 182–196. The eating of carrots in the West is largely a phenomenon of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the eating of raw carrots (from which we derive fewer benefits than from the boiled) is a rather recent custom.

<sup>4)</sup> Max Wellmann, ed.: Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei, *De materia medica*, Weidmann, Berlin 1958, III.52 (volume 2, pp.65–66): *ρίζα δε δακτύλου πάχος, σπιθαμιαία, εὐώδης, ἐδωδίμη ἐφθῆ.*

<sup>5)</sup> Mary Ella Milham, ed.: *Apicii decem libri qui dicuntur de re coquinaria et excerpta a vinidario conscripta*. Teubner, Leipzig 1969. Book III.21 (p.22): *1. Caroetae frictae oenogaro inferuntur. 2. Aliter caroetas: sale, oleo puro et aceto. 3. Aliter: caroetas elixatas concisas in cuminato oleo modico coques et inferes. cuminatum coliculorum facies.*

<sup>6)</sup> Dioscorides, *op. cit.* III.72 (vol.2, p.83–84): *πάντων δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα θερμομαντικόν ... ἀπαλλακτικὸν βηχῶν.* III.52 (vol.2, p.66): *τὰ δὲ φύλλα λεία μετὰ*

was medicinal, and the medicaments were largely derived from its seeds (good for coughs) and its leaves (good for ulcers when beaten with honey); the root is also mentioned (a help when bitten by a poisonous animal).

Latin *staphylinus*, from the Greek, is of indistinct meaning, and it is glossed also as a 'parsnip'. This, however, has no reference to Gk. σταφυλῖνος, for, as Andrews points out,<sup>7)</sup> there is no good evidence that the parsnip was cultivated in Greece in the classical era, even though it was later used in Italy, where the confusion must have begun.

The geographical origin of the carrot is complex, the subject of much scholarship; there are multiple points of view.<sup>8)</sup> But put most simply, two principal subspecies of *Daucus carota* perhaps provided the standard domestic version, *D. carota sativus* (Hoffman), and the various influential subspecies came from as far east as Afghanistan (the anthocyan carrot) and indeed the cultivated version might have come to Europe from Central Asia. But subspecific merger is clear, and many domesticated versions developed in Asia, Africa and Europe, all changing as breeding introduced new subspecies.

The etymology is perplexing. Both Frisk and Chantraine see it as a word formed from the same stem as σταφυλή 'bunch of grapes', though the semantic bridge seems a bit hard to imagine. It is my opinion, and the point of this paper, that σταφυλῖνος is originally related in no way to Gk. σταφυλή, and their present symmetry is the result of a very early merger of two phonetically similar stems through the force of folk etymology. And though I can offer no insights into the origin of σταφυλή, σταφυλῖνος is a different case, and the following comments support the suggestion that σταφυλῖνος is a loan word<sup>9)</sup> from the East.

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μέλιτος ἐπιτιθέμενα τὰ φαγεδαινικὰ Ἑλλη ἀνακαθαίρει. III. 72 (vol. 2, p. 84): ἡ δὲ χρῆσις ... τῆς ῥίζης, ἥτις μάλιστα πρὸς θηρία πίνεται μετ' οἴνου. Galen notes that it is an aid to urination and menses (*De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis et facultatibus* VIII. 36 (Kühn, vol. 12, p. 129): οὐρα δὲ κινεῖ καὶ καταμήνια προτρέπει καὶ σύμπασα μὲν ἢ πόα, μάλιστα δὲ τὸ σπέρμα καὶ ἡ ῥίζα. Pliny (*Natural History* XXVIII. 68 [232]) saw the carrot seed as beneficial for dropsy though he mixed it with calf dung: *Hydropicis auxiliatur ... fimi vitulini cinis cum semine staphylini*.

<sup>7)</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 188–190.

<sup>8)</sup> Andrews (*op. cit.* 182–184) wades through the numerous complexities.

<sup>9)</sup> Frisk suggested this, but only as a possibility, and he did not separate σταφυλῖνος from σταφυλή.

There are, unreported in Greek and Latin handbooks, a few correspondences to *σταφυλῖνος*. Syriac has *əštaflîn*<sup>10)</sup> and Arabic has *ištaflîn*<sup>11)</sup>, but both these words are not doubt derived from the Greek. The Syriac was probably a direct loan, but the Arabic might have come via the Syriac, for often Greek words were rendered into Arabic from that intermediary. Of greater interest are Arm. *steplin* and Georgian *štapilo* 'carrot'. The Armenian word must be independent of the Greek for the Gk. *φ* would have come through into Armenian as an aspirate (*ϕ*) or, if loaned after the twelfth century, as an *f*.<sup>12)</sup> Further, the *-e-* vowel is wrong for a loan from Greek. These Armenian loans from Greek were rather bookish things, and they sometimes would even continue the Greek gender marker (note here Arm. *nardos* 'nard', the origin of which is obvious). And though there are always orthographic perplexities when dealing with loan words, the form *steplin* is too distant from an expected *stap<sup>ϕ</sup>(i)-lin-(os)*. Similarly, the Georgian form wholly lacks any trace of the suffix *-ivos* though it otherwise conforms to the Greek shape.

The dating of these two terms from Georgian and Armenian is complex. The history of the Georgian language is poorly known, and even the literary language is incompletely catalogued. Georg. *štapilo* is listed in the great lexicon of Orbeliani,<sup>13)</sup> first published in

<sup>10)</sup> This term is found in Paul Anton de Lagarde *Geoponicon in sermonem syriacum versorum quae supersunt*, Teubner, Leipzig 1860, page 98, section XII. 28, where we read, according to the translation of George Krotkoff (per litt.): "Vegetables which can be planted between these trees are parsley (celery?), carrot (also glossed as parsnip), mint, dill, beet, lettuce, [grgr], leek, cress, turnip, radish," which corresponds well to the Armenian series on p. 174, paragraph 271 (for which see footnote 14).

<sup>11)</sup> I could not find this word in Lane's dictionary, but it is cited in the Armenian etymological dictionary of Adjarian (Hr. Ačaryan, *Hayeren armatakan bararan*, Yerevan 1979, vol. 4, 272), noted as appearing in the Turkish translation of the *al-qâmûs al-muhîr* 3. 131 (Istanbul 1872) which is not available to me and the pagination of which does not correspond to the regular Arabic editions.

It is suggested that the *kitāb al-felaḥah* (*The Book of Agriculture*) is the Arabic version. A French translation by J.-J. Clément-Mullet was published in two volumes (Paris, Librairie, A. Franck, 1864-1866), and the Arabic original was published, with parallel Spanish translation, in Madrid, Imprenta Real, 1802., correctly attributed to Yahya ibn Mohamad. I could not, however, relate the Greek or Armenian text to the Arabic.

<sup>12)</sup> The letter *f* does not appear in the Classical Armenian alphabet, but was added in the tenth century to accommodate foreign words. It is used abundantly in the Armenian version of the *Geoponica*.

<sup>13)</sup> Orbeliani, Sulxan Saba, 1966. *Txzulebani* (Works), vol. IV. 2, Tbilisi. Sabčota Sakartvelo. I wish particularly to thank Professor Alice Harris of Vanderbilt University for her assistance with the Georgian material.

1716, but a reference to an actual text is not available. More is known about Arm. *steplin*, though the information is late; it can be found in the Armenian translation<sup>14)</sup> of the Byzantine Greek *Geoponica*,<sup>15)</sup> a translation dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16)</sup> This is exactly the text from which the Syriac *astāflīn* is known but Gk. *σταφυλῖνος* does not appear in the Greek original. Further, the Armenian word appears in a passage that does not seem to have any Greek equivalent:<sup>17)</sup> Thus, unlike the Syriac and the Arabic, the Armenian *steplin* does not seem to be a direct loan from Greek. Arm. *steplin* can be noted elsewhere in the so-called *Bark' Galianos*,<sup>18)</sup> glossing Gk. *δαῦκος* though the principal gloss for *δαῦκος* is *gazar*, an Arabic loan into Armenian. And though the earliest parts of the *Bark' Galianos* might date from the sixth century, those parts with Arabic glosses must stem from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, or later. Another aspect that suggests a late entry for *steplin* is that the term it glosses, Gk. *δαῦκος*, is preserved by the manuscripts in a state of orthographic perfection, a

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<sup>14)</sup> *Girk' Vastakoc' Vank' Mxit' aray i Surb Łazar*. 1877. It is noted that the Armenian translation is derived from an Arabic version. Arm. *steplin* is found in a series of plants (p.174, cap. 271): *K'erēfsn, steplinn, ananuxn, samit' n, čakndetn, hazarn, gotemn, k'úrat' n, bolkn ew šolgamn* "celery, carrot, mint, dill, beet, lettuce, cardamom, leek, radish and turnip."

<sup>15)</sup> This text was probably compiled by Cassianus Bassus under the direction of Constatine Porphyrogenetus (905–959) and in twenty chapters deals with such things as the raising and setting of the stars, the cultivation of the vine, olives and olive oil, horses, deer, hares, pigeons and other birds, a great number of topics pertaining to nature and man's cultivation of it. The most recent Greek edition is by Heinrich Beckh, Teubner, Leipzig, 1895.

<sup>16)</sup> This is the view most recently expressed Babken C' ugaszyan (ed.), *Bžškaran jioy ew ařhasarak grastnoy*, Yerevan 1980, p.15.

<sup>17)</sup> Brockelmann ("Die armenische Übersetzung der *Geoponica*", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 5, 1896. 385–409) sets out the correspondences between the Greek chapter numbers and the Armenian chapter numbers. Extraordinarily, the Armenian passage does not have an extant Greek correspondence, though it falls after XII. 39; another instance of Arm. *steplin* falls on p.74, paragraph 96, and this too has no Greek equivalent, though it falls after V. 33. On the Armenian *Geoponica* as compared to the Greek, one might also see Almo Zanolli, "Per gli studi sul testo e sulla lingua della redazione armena dei 'Geoponicon libri'", *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 1929–1930; vol. LXXXIX, parte seconda. Pp.609–627.

<sup>18)</sup> This is the so-called dictionary to Galen, a collection of some 500 Greek pharmaceutical terms, written in Armenian script and glossed by a term in Classical Armenian. An edition based on the manuscript sources was recently published by John A.C. Greppin: *Bark' Galianos: The Greek-Armenian Dictionary to Galen*. Caravan Books, Delmar, New York, 1985.

phenomenon that is entirely uncommon in the oldest level of this Greek-Armenian dictionary where the Greek words, written in Armenian script, have become horribly corrupt, and where gender marking for the Greek words is largely unknown.

It would seem that Arm. *steplin* and Georg. *ṣtapilo* are terms that perhaps coexisted with the fore-runner of Gk. *σταφυλῖνος* (in whatever form it held before it merged with the root for *σταφυλή*), and reflect an Asiatic word of unknown shape and origin. Unlike the Greek and Arabic terms, which are clearly loans from Greek and of a later date, the two terms from the Caucasus are independent of the Greek term. That Arm. *steplin* doesn't actually appear until rather late in a literary source might be due to the importance of *gazar*, a word also shared with Persian, and which might have entered Armenian via loan from Persian at a date earlier than the bulk of the Arabic words came into Armenian.<sup>19)</sup>

Our conclusions are not clear. We can only support the view that the Armenian and Georgian terms are independent of the Greek word. Their origin remains unknown but an eastern origin is supported by the known movement of the domesticated carrot from Central Asia.

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<sup>19)</sup> That it was relatively early loan is also clear from the phonetic shape, *gazar* rather than *jazar*, for later *g* passed to Arabic *j* in most dialects except the Egyptians and some in Arabia. Generally, medieval Arabic grammarians regarded the *g* pronunciation as debased.