

HOMERIC *Kankanos* AND ITS MODERN GREEK DESCENDANTS

APOSTOLOS N. ATHANASSAKIS

University of California, Santa Barbara

The meaning of *κάγκανος* and its obvious relationship to *πολυκαγκής* did not escape the ancients. Hesychius knows of the verb *καγκαίνω*, “parch, dry,” and even of a shorter form *κάγκω*. Eustathius certainly knew that *κάγκανος* means “dry” and that *πολυκαγκής*, an epithet of *δίψα*, means “parching.” He even suspected that *καίω* or even *καίνω* might be at the root of these rather rare words. This much can be clearly surmised from his references in 871.4; 1605.5; 1241.46; 1848.38; 873.3. The feeling that there might be a relationship with *καίω* lingers (so LSJ under *πολυκαγκής*), but the precise relationship has not been explained. I hope to show that instinct and common sense can be substantiated in this case, and that Modern Greek still preserves two words which go back to *κάγκανος*.

In *Iliad* 21.364 *ξύλα κάγκανα* is used in a simile which likens a boiling river to a cauldron. In the *Hymn to Hermes* 112 Hermes makes fire by placing *κάγκανα κᾶλα* in a ditch. In *Odyssey* 18.308–10 in order to make fire, the suitors

... περὶ δὲ ξύλα κάγκανα θῆκαν
αὔα πάλαι, περίκηλα, νέον κεκεασμένα χαλκῷ
καὶ δαῖδας μετέμισγον . . .

If *κάγκανος* is related to *καίω*, *αὔα* and *περίκηλα* of line 309 are synonyms which emphasize the same idea (for *αὔος* cf. *αυαίνω*, “to dry,” *αὔω*, “to burn,” etc., also L. *uro*). As for *πολυκαγκής*, it qualifies *δίψα* in *Iliad* 11.642, and since it is a *hapax legomenon* in Homer, the meaning “parching” is inferred from the context and from the suspected partial morphophonemic relationship to *κάγκανος*.

For *κάγκανος* Frisk sees IE cognates in words meaning “hunger,

torture.”¹ Among others, he lists κέγκει· πεινᾶ (Photius), Lith. *keñkti*, “it hurts,” with a supposed original meaning “it burns, it dries;” also, Old Icel. *ha*, “to torture,” Lith. *kanka*, “torture, pain,” Goth. *huhrus* and OHG *hungar*, both meaning “hunger.” The connection with Skr. *kankala-*, “skeleton,” and *kanikṣati*, “to desire,” he considers uncertain. Frisk’s view is basically in agreement with that of Pokorny,² and Chantraine, who mentions the Germanic and Lithuanian cognates, but leaves the Sanskrit ones out of his article.³ Hofmann’s view is essentially the same.⁴ The derivation κάγκανος < κά-σκα-νος (presumed root σκα-, “to burn”) was also put forth by Goebel⁵ but no longer merits serious consideration.

From the phonological point of view the cognates proposed by Frisk and Chantraine, despite certain obvious difficulties, are tempting. However, since the antecedent meanings “burn, dry” are presumed, the semantic distance between the proposed cognates and κάγκανος is difficult to bridge. What could hunger and torture have in common with wood which is about to be burned, especially in the context of the Homeric occurrences of the word?

My own conjecture is that the root on which κάγκανος is built is essentially the same as that of καίω/κάω, and that κάγκανος is derived from a reduplicated **kanos* meaning “parching, dry.” First, let us take a look at καίω which obviously comes from **kaFjw*, with Attic κάω reflecting a different treatment of intervocalic -Fj-. The overwhelming majority of derivatives from this root demonstrably go back to *kaF-*. Certainly, the Hesychian gloss *καυαλέον· ἢ καυαλές· ὑπὸ Αἰολέων τὸ αἶθος· ἢ κατακεκαυμένον, καπυρόν, ξηρόν, θερμόν*, and even *κᾶλον* (wood) < **κάFαλον* clearly show *kaF-*, although *κηλέος*, “burning,” and *περίκηλος*, “very dry, parched” may reflect *kehF-*, with *κηλέος* and Hesychian *κηλόν· ξηρόν* showing a secondary *kehF-*, such as may well underly the aorist ἔκηα (< **ἔkehFa*). Prima facie, all this seems to militate against **kanos* because Greek should have *κᾶνος* or *καῦνος* < **kaF-nos*. The etymology of καίω is uncertain but on the basis of Greek, and of Lithuanian *kuleti*, “to burn,” a root

¹ HJ. Frisk, *Griech. Etym. Wört.*, s.v.

² A. Walde, J. Pokorny, *Vergleich. Etym. Wört. der Indogerm. Spr.* I, 401.

³ P. Chantraine, *Dict. Étym.*, s.v.

⁴ J. B. Hofmann, *Etym. Wört.*, s.v.

⁵ A. Goebel, *Lexicologus zu Homer und den Homeriden* (Berlin 1878–80) II, 156.

keu-kau-ku has been posited.⁶ The question then is: could the weaker grade *ku* show a reflex without the semivowel in Greek?

Let us examine a case which I consider analogous. *χάος*, *χάσσω* (2nd aor. *χανεῖν*, pf. *κέχηνα*), *χανύειν*, *χαῦνος*, *χάνος* and *ἄχανής* (< *ἄ-χανής by dissimilation of aspirates) are definitely derivatives of the same root. Even if their precise relationship is not sufficiently well understood, we can make certain observations. L. *hisco*, Old Icel. *gina*, "to gape," OHG *ginein*, "to yawn," point to a root *ghi* < *ghei*. Old Icel. *gomi*, "palate," OHG. *guomo/goumo* > German *Gaumen*, "palate," point to a root *ghou/ghau* which, if the connection is correct, is a bit closer to the Greek reflexes. The Greek *χαν-* in *χανεῖν*, *χανδόν*, "with gaping mouth," corresponds to Old Icel. *gana*, "to gape, to gape after." This shows that *χανεῖν* may be quite old, and that Hellenistic *χαίνω* may be a secondary formation from the second aorist of an earlier *χαίνω* < **χανjω*, which for a long time was displaced by *χάσσω*. We are dealing then with a radical consonant *gh* basic to all these forms, and with widely ranging vocalization: *ghi* (< *ghei*), *ghou* (both not reflected in Greek), and *ghau*, *gha* (both reflected in Greek). Where my line of argument for *κάγκανος* is concerned, the important thing is that Greek has *χάος* < **χαFος*,⁷ *χαῦνος* < **χαFνος*, but also *χανεῖν*, *χάνος*, *χάσσω* with no *F*. Greek *χαν-* may go back to a nominal-adjectival suffix *-no-*, and to an original **gha-no-s* which gave a secondary root *ghan-* and subsequently a denominative verb *ghanjō* > **χαίνω*, *ghanein* > *χανεῖν*. The existence of **ghanos* is quite neatly paralleled by the historic *χάνος* which is most likely derived from *χανεῖν*. In other words, the sequence may have been **ghanos* > **ghanjō* > *χανεῖν* > *χάνος*.

Much can also be learned from *φάος*, *πιφαύσσω*, *φανστήρ*, *φάσσω*, *φαίνω*, *φανός*, and also from *φημί*, *φάτις*, etc. *φάος* is clearly from *φάFος* (cf. Pamphylian *φάβος*), and the *F* is reflected in *πιφαύσσω* and in many other forms. The related *φημί*, *φάσσω* and such nouns as *φάσις*, *φάτις* show no *F*. *φαίνω* < **φαίνjω* and *φανός*, as well as the second member of such compounds as *Ἀριστοφάνης*, have been held

⁶ Chantraine, s.v. *καίω*.

⁷ It is remarkable that Epirotan Greek has *χάβους* for "a yawning abyss," and *χαβώνου* for "to cause someone to gape (and freeze) with terror." See *E. Μπόγκας, Τὰ Γλωσσικά ἰδιώματα τῆς Ἡπείρου* (Jannina 1964) *A'*, s. vv.

to mirror a nasal radical extension not unparalleled in other IE languages (cf. Arm. *ban*, "word"). Outside Greek, L. *fa* of *fatum*, *fabula*, etc. and Skr. *bha-* of *bha-ti*, "to shine," *bha-nuh*, "lustre, brightness," etc. are thought of as cognate roots which point to the semantic development "to speak, to explain" \rightleftharpoons "to make clear, to shed light on." The IE root seems to be *bhā-bhāu-bhau*. The semivowel shows in some of the Greek derivatives but not in all of them. At this point, I should like to suggest that the *ν* of *φαίνω* is not necessarily a nasal radical extension, but rather derived from a suffix *-no-* added to the root.⁸ A presumed noun or adjective **bha-no-s* would give rise to a denominative verb **bhanjō* > *φαίνω*. The historic *φανός* would be derived from the stem of this denominative verb (cf. *ἐφάνην*). *φανός* would stand to **bhanos* as *χάνος* to **ghanos*.

I should now like to schematize the reflexes of the three IE roots discussed above:

1. to burn: **κα καF κα-vo-(?)*
2. to gape: *χα χαF χα-vo-*
3. to speak, to shine: *φα φαF φα-vo-*

From 2 and 3 we see that there is nothing unreasonable about expecting a derivative with a base *καν-* related to *καίω* < **καF-jω*, since in 2 and 3 we have analogous derivatives. The presumed *κάνος* would give *κάγκανος* by the type of reduplication seen in *πάμπαν*, or better yet in *παμφαίνω* and *καγγαλάω*. There is no compelling reason to posit *καF-vo-s* which in historic Greek would exist as **καῦνος* (cf. *χαῦνος* < **χαF-vo-s*). From the reduplicated base we get not only *κάγκανος* and *πολυκαγκής*, but also Hesychian *καγκαίνω*. *ξύλον* or *κᾶλον* *κάγκανον* is wood for burning, firewood, that is, and *δίψα πολυκαγκής* is much burning or parching thirst. Incidentally *καίνω* (2nd aor. *καεῖν*), "to kill," may not be unrelated to all this. If *καίνω* is a denominative built on the presumed *κά-vo-s*, *καίνω* might originally have meant "to destroy by fire." The assumption of a relationship to *κτείνω* presents, at least to me, insurmountable difficulties.⁹

My own native dialect of Radovyzia, a form of Epirotan (NW)

⁸ For this suffix see Chantraine, *La Formation des Noms en Grec Ancien* (Paris 1933) 191 ff.

⁹ Chantraine, s.v. *καίνω*.

Greek, still uses a very interesting word, γκάνια, "parching thirst," and the verb derived from it, γκανιάζω, "I am parched with thirst." Turkish, S. Slavic, Albanian, and Italian, the usual sources of loan words in the dialect, present us with nothing tempting in the semantic areas which might generate γκάνια/γκανιάζω in the dialect. As I have already pointed out, the remoteness of the region until very recently has secured the preservation of many interesting survivals from Ancient Greek.¹⁰ In fact, a few words, such as τάλαιρος and κοτάω (Hom. κοτέω) have hardly changed since Homeric times. To me the obvious derivation is κάγκανος > *καγκανία > γκάνια > γκανιάζω. The drop of the reduplication is regular throughout M. Greek. The verb γκανιάζω occurs almost invariably in the phrase γκάνιαξα ἀπ' τῇ δίψᾳ, "I am burning with thirst," a phrase strongly reminiscent of Homer's δίψα πολυκαγκῆς. Another semantic phrase variant is γκάνιαξαν τὰ σπαρτὰ γιὰ νερό, "the corn fields are parched for want of water." Sometimes one also hears γκάνιαξε ὁ λαιμός μου ἀπ' τὶς φωνές, "my throat is dry from shouting." Even this last phrase represents nothing unusual in semantic transition. That we do not have γκανία from *καγκανία, should not disturb us. Instances of accent shift, especially of the recessive variety, are amply evident. Thus ὀρμήνεια < ἔρμηνεία, ὀρφάνια < ὀρφαν(ε)ία, to cite two of the many examples.

I must admit that when I tested my views on Greek scholars in Greece they reacted with disbelief and suggested that γκάνια is a local variant of γάνα = "smudge, soot" (accumulating from burning wood). Andriotes connects γάνα with γανώνω and derives γανώνω from the ancient γανόω = I. "make bright, polish." II. "tin, lacker." All this is very sensible especially since γανώνω besides meaning "to blacken by applying soot" also means "to apply tin" to copper utensils. Andriotes also lists γανιάζω = "to become dry at the mouth" and derives it from γάνα.¹¹ However, I think that γάνα and γκάνια as well as γανιάζω and γκανιάζω should not be confused as variants of

¹⁰ For the dialect of Radovyzia see my preliminary reports: "Epirotan Dialect Descended from Northwestern Greek," *Amer. Philos. Soc., Year Book* (1968) 521-24, and "Epirotan Dialect in Relation to Ancient Greek," *Amer. Philos. Soc., Year Book* (1974) 524-26.

¹¹ For all these see N. P. Andriotes, *Ἑτυμολογικὸ Λεξικὸ τῆς Κοινῆς Νεοελληνικῆς* (Thessalonica 1967) s.vv.

the same word.¹² Thus in parts of Epirus, Thessaly, Aitôloakarnania, and Leukas, which I visited in the summer of 1975, *γάνα* and *γκάνια* are clearly distinguished by the people in terms of both sound and meaning. In fact intelligent speakers of the local idioms found the connection of *γάνα* and *γκάνια* groundless and arbitrary. Nor is it convincing to suggest that *γκάνια* came from *γάνα* as a result of the familiar process of the assimilation of a final consonant of a preceding word to the initial consonant of the following word and eventual attachment of that consonant to the following word (e.g., *ὁ νοικοκύρης < τὸ- νοικοκύρην < τὸν οἰκοκύρην*). Modern Greek generally drops the *ν* of the article before the initial *γ*, and in the dialect of Radovyzia *τὴν* before *γάνα* and similar words is reduced simply to *τ'*, i.e., *τ'γάνα*.

Let us now look at some interesting lexical entries from the unpublished archives of the *Ἱστορικὸν Λεξικὸν τῆς Νέας Ἑλληνικῆς* which are listed mainly under *κάνια*—*κανιάζω*¹³ (the origin of the entries is not always given):

Group A

1. *κανιάζω* (Thrace) = be exceedingly thirsty
2. *κανιάζω* (Macedonia) = become hoarse or dry at the throat
3. *κανιάζω* (Cephalenia) = I. feel faint from hunger; be very hungry
II. be tired out, give up
4. *κανιάζω* (Cephalenia) = (of linen) to look dark and soiled
5. *κάνια* (Cephalenia) = (a very filthy kind of) vulture
6. *κάνια*(?) = a night bird
7. *κάνια* = kind of crow
8. *κανιάζω* (Ithaca) = be exceedingly thirsty

Group B

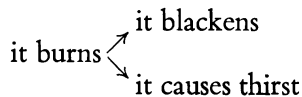
1. *καν(ν)ιάτζω* (Siphnos) = (of birds) to have the first feathers appear
2. *κανιάζω* (Naxos) = (of birds) to have the first feathers appear
3. *κανιάζω, κανιῶ* (W. Crete) = to have the first down appear on one's
lips or pubic area

¹² The Greek Academy's *Ἱστορικὸν Λεξικὸν* lists *γάνα* as of unknown origin but definitely connects it with *γκανιάζω*.

¹³ Here I wish to thank the director of the Lexikon, Mr. Vayakakos, both for his suggestions and for allowing me the use of the archives.

4. $\kappa\alpha\nu(\nu)\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega(?)$ = (of a man's moustache) to have the first down appear
5. $\tau\acute{o}\ \kappa\alpha\nu\iota\alpha\rho\acute{o}$ (Dodecanese) = an emaciated and weak man
6. $\eta\ \kappa\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}(?)$ = a stick suspended from the ceiling of a farm house for the purpose of hanging bags on it

There is a hand-written suggestion in the notes on these lexical items that some or all the words I have listed under B should be linked with Ancient Greek $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\nu\nu\alpha$, $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\nu\nu\eta$ = "pole-reed," through Latin *canna* = "reed." Given Modern Greek $(\tau\acute{o})\ \kappa\alpha\nu(\nu)\acute{\iota}$ = "shin bone," this suggestion may hold true of B5, 6 but not of B1, 2, 3, 4. I must admit that my only reason for listing these words under a separate category was the suggestion that they, too, have something to do with $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\nu\nu\alpha$ /*canna*. Incidentally, whoever was responsible for the entry wrote $\kappa\alpha\nu\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ or $\kappa\alpha\nu\nu\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ obviously because his etymological postulates dictated this spelling. I think that B1-4 should be linked both etymologically and semantically with A1-8. Thus it is interesting to note that the verbs mainly mean either "to be very thirsty" or "to become dark or black," and the nouns denote birds of a black variety. It seems that the idea of blackness is connected with the feeling that what is black is so from burning. The connection of excessive thirst with burning needs no explanation. The steps in semantic development must have been:



This derivative relationship of "it blackens" made possible a partially reverse sequence: it blackens → it burns → it causes thirst. That the blackness of black birds and thirst might be drawn into the same semantic sphere is perfectly well illustrated by the Modern Greek verb $\kappa\omicron\rho\alpha\kappa\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ which means primarily to "become black like a crow" and secondarily "to be excessively thirsty." The semantic variants denoting dryness of the throat, faintness from hunger, and exhaustion require no great leaps of imagination. As for $\kappa\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ with regard to the growth of feathers on young birds or of hair on young men, surely the idea is that of "becoming dark." And this is by no means the only group of words in Modern Greek in which the root underlying $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$

has yielded derivatives which connect burning and blackness. The following words from the Epirotan dialect are quite instructive:

γκαῖλα = a kind of black crow, *γκαῖλου κερασιά* = a cherry tree that bears black cherries, *γκαῖλ(η)ς* = black ox, *γκαῖλω* = black cow, *γκάϊλας* = the burning sun at noon (in the summer).¹⁴

The spelling of these words should not deceive us. *γκαῖλα* is surely derived from *τῇ γκαήλα* < *τῇ- νκαήλα*, with the verbal element *καη-* going back to the aorist *ἐκάη* < *καίω* (iotacism and analogical levelling out is responsible for the ending *-ιλα*; cf. *μαυρίλα* = blackness, etc.).

I have just implied that not only *γκαήλα/καήλα* (usually spelled *γκαῖλα/καῖλα*) but also *κάνια* and *κανιάζω* go back to the root of *καίω*. My readers should be reminded that I postulated the derivative **κάνος*. Is it not possible that this form may have existed but gone unrecorded by the Greek lexicographers? If so, it would definitely account for the origin and meaning of *κάνια* and *κανιάζω*. At this point, I raise the intriguing possibility that the forms *γκάνια-γκανιάζω* in Radovyzia and in other parts of N.W. Greece may not be the remnants of a truncated *κάγκανος* but direct derivatives of the very word which I think gave birth to *κάγκανος* through reduplication. In that case the sequence would be **κάνος* → **κανία* → *κάνια(κανιάζω)* → *γκάνια* (< *τῇ νκάνια* < *τῇν κάνια*) from which the denominative *γκανιάζω*. I raise this possibility but I am not partial to it, because it is possible that *γκάνια* is what is left of *κάγκανος*, and *κάνια* may well be the progeny of the construct **κάνος*. Incidentally, owing to semantic proximity *γάνια* and *γανιάζω* should be linked with these words, at times to account for understandable intrusion,¹⁵ but should not be confused with them. Such survivals as I advocate here are not at odds with the realities of Modern Greek lexicography. And I see no reason to doubt the word of Stylianos Deinakis who assures us that *κάγκανα* (therefore, *κάγκανος* itself) = “kindling” survived on the island of Euboea.¹⁶ He also tells us of the existence of *καγκάνα* = “dried up and

¹⁴ See Evangelos Bongas, *Τὰ Γλωσσικὰ Ἰδιώματα τῆς Ἠπείρου* 1 (Ioannina 1964) s.vv.

¹⁵ According to an unpublished entry of the Lexical archives of the Academy there occurs in Tenos the phrase *γάνιασε τὸ στόμα μου γιὰ νερό*.

¹⁶ Stylianos Deinakis, *Ἡ Ἐξέλιξις τῆς Ἑννοίας τοῦ καίειν*, *Ἀθηνᾶ* 42 (1930) 219. See also G. N. Chadzidakis, *Ἐκθεσις Διαγωνισμοῦ*, *Ἀθηνᾶ* 24 (1912) 296.

wrinkled old woman,” and of *καγκανιάζω* = “to dry up.” Indeed, what survives intact in one part of Greece may crop up altered in another part of the country.

The proposed etymology *κάγκανος* < **κάνος* has definite merits. It brings the roots *κα-/καF-*, *χα-/χαF*, *φα-/φαF* into a perfectly analogical relationship, especially with respect to exhibiting a nominal-adjectival derivative suffixed by *-νο-*. It further shows that such forms as *καίνω*, *χαίνω*, *φαίνω* are denominative verbs from **kanos*, **ghanos*, **bhanos*, and not byproducts of dubious nasal “extensions” of the root. The hitherto unexplained *καίνω* need not take acrobatic leaps to join the root of *κτείνω*. As for *γκάνια-γκανιάζω*, *κάνια-κανιάζω*, whether derived from *κάγκανος* or from the proposed **κάνος*, let it be said that they are perfectly credible both for form and astonishingly tenacious meaning. I record with nostalgia that I owe the first two to my youthful days of herding goats in the hills of Radovyzia during summers when *δίψα κακή μάλα μοι πολυκακγῆς ἦτορ ἔκαιεν*.¹⁷

¹⁷ This line should really be credited to a very kind anonymous *TAPA* referee, who was not happy with my *δίψα κακή πολυκακγῆς ἄλκιμον ἦτορ ἔκαιεν* (diaeresis but no good caesura!). I am happy to take second place in this *ἀγὼν*. *Εὖγε!*