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Author(s): Warren A. Brewer

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## Notes on Venetic *.e.kvopetari.s.*

There should now be little doubt that the Venetic word *.e.kvopetari.s.* must, at least etymologically, have had something to do with horses. This is the earliest form of the word in the Fifth Century B.C., with a later, more common samprasāraṇa phase as *.e.kupetari.s.*, with the development of final syncope in one case, *ECUPE-TARS*, and assimilation in another, *.e.p.peltari.s.* There is, first of all, a good attestation of an independent use of the 'horse' word in an inscription on the pedestal of a bronze equestrian statuette from Este that reads as follows<sup>1</sup>):

*.e.[-----].s. e./kvo[.]n[.] dona.s.to / re.i.ti[ia.i.] mego*

The damaged beginning of the inscription must have contained the name and patronymic of a man who "has dedicated me, a horse, to [the horse-goddess] Reitia."

Secondly, of the inscriptions with *.e.kvopetari.s.* or its variants half have equestrian motifs associated with them, and all five of them, incidentally, come from Padua. In my translations I normalize the word as *ekvopetaris*, but defer its interpretation until later.

1. Four of the five equestrian motifs are depictions of chariots. The first is on a stele clearly showing an *essedum* (a Gaulish two-wheeled cart) drawn by a pair of rearing horses; a driver holds the reins, while his passenger holds an oblong shield and brandishes a gladius. The inscription reads:

*plede.i. ve.i.gno.i. / kara.n.mniio.i / e.kupetari.s. e.go*, which means something like

"I am the *ekvopetaris* for Pledeyos, offspring of Veyyos, who was the son of Karanmns"<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>1</sup>) M. Lejeune (1974), *Manuel de la langue vénète* = MLV], no. 50 [= p. 211]; Pellegrini-Prosdoci (1967), *La lingua venetica* [= PP], Pa 2 [= v. 1, pp. 328–331]. Good surveys of the *ekvopetaris* problem can be found in PP 2, 74–78; MLV § 128, et passim; and in E. Pulgram (1976), pp. 299–304 in the Palmer Festschrift, *Studies in Greek, Italic and Indo-European linguistics*, ed. by Davies & Meid. Cf. G. B. Pellegrini (1981), „Osservazioni epigrafico-linguistiche su Padova preromana“, esp. pp. 86–91 in *Padova Antica*; S. Mazzarino (1976), „Il concetto storico-geografico dell' unità veneta“, in *Storia della Cultura Veneta...*, p. 17 & n. 21.

<sup>2</sup>) MLV no. 131 [= p. 251]; PP Pa 2 [= 1, 328–331].

2. Another stele depicts two people in an *essedum* drawn by several prancing horses. The presence of dotted-circle decoration has been interpreted as corresponding to the Celtic expansion into Italy, introducing this La Tène art motif<sup>3</sup>):

[ ]*.s.terope.i .a[ ] ugeriio.i .e.k/[up]etari.s .e.go*

“I am the *ekvopetaris* for -sterops, son of A.”

3. From the First Century B.C. comes an inscription in Roman letters and Latinate forms, with genitives instead of Venetic datives<sup>4</sup>):

[*-.GALLE*] *NIM' .F.OSTIALAE.GALLEN/IAEEQVPETARS*

“The *ekvopetaris* of ... Gallenus ... son of Ostiala, the daughter of Gallenus.” This stone shows three people in a chariot drawn by a team of rearing horses; between the auriga and a togaed man stands a woman.

4. Like the third example, there is another chariot stele lacking the prosopopoeic *ego* of the first two. It shows a man in cart and the inscription reads<sup>5</sup>):

*vhugiiio.i .u./posediio.i / e.petari.s.*

“An *ekvopetaris* for Fugius, son of Uposedos.”

5. The last equestrian stele we know of depicts a warrior on horseback bearing a round shield and wielding a spear; there appears to be some sort of bird flying after him<sup>6</sup>).

*.e.nogen.i .e./nettiio.i .e.p.petari.s. a.l.ba/renniio.i.*

“An *ekvopetaris* for Enogenes, son of Enettus, who was the son of Albarenus.”

Torp and Pedersen had only the *samprasāraṇa* forms of *ekvopetaris* to work with when they connected *eku-* with Greek *véxvς* ‘corpse’ and even Hittite ‘die’ as in *aki* ‘dies’<sup>7</sup>). The occurrence of the

<sup>3</sup>) MLV no. 132 [= p. 251]; PP Pa 3 [= 1, 331–336].

<sup>4</sup>) MLV no. 134 [= p. 252]; PP Pa 6 [= pp. 344–348]; Pulgram, p. 301, unaccountably has *equpetarius*.

<sup>5</sup>) MLV no. 135 [= p. 252 f.]; PP “Aggiunta”, 1, 654.

<sup>6</sup>) MLV no. 133 [= p. 252]; PP Pa 3 bis [= p. 337–340].

Venetic word on two bronze vessels, furthermore, weakens the old analysis of the remaining *-petaris* as having anything to do with *πέτρα* ‘stone’:

6. The first is a ‘bronze cup, probably inscribed in the Fifth Century B. C., before being converted into a tripod (and so damaging the inscription) and put into an Este grave in the Fourth Century B. C.

*.e.go iuva.n.te.i. he[- -]torio.i. ve.s.kete.i. e.kvopetari.s. kala[-]iio.i.*

“I am the *ekvopetaris* for Yuvants, son of Hegetoris, the foster son of Kalanos”<sup>8)</sup>).

7. The second non-stone artefact is a bronze situla from Belluno, inscribed in Roman letters which dates it *c.* II – I Centuries:

*ENONI. ONTEI. APPIOI. SSELBOISELBOI. ANDETICOBOS  
ECVPETARIS.*

“An *ekvopetaris* for Eno, Onts, Appius, the very sons of Andetios themselves”<sup>9)</sup>).

And finally the last three steles are indeed on tombstones:

8. One Fifth Century B. C. stone shows a woman handing a duck to someone holding a staff.

*pupone.i. e.go rako/.i. e.kupetari.s.*

“I am the *ekvopetaris* for Pupo Rakos”<sup>10)</sup>).

9. A badly damaged stele from Treviso reads:

*.o.s.tiala.i. [o --- ... ---t]a.ikve .e.kvo/petar.s. / vhrefma.i.s.[t]*

“An *ekvopetaris* for Ostiala ...”<sup>11)</sup>).

10. The last is a Paduan stele with obscure symbolism:

*vhugiia.i. a.n./detina.i. vhu/giniia.i. e.p.pe/tari.s[.]*

“An *ekvopetaris* for Fugia, wife of Andetios, daughter of Fugios”<sup>12)</sup>).

7) Pok. 762 \*nek-.

8) MLV no. 122 bis [= p. 214 ff.].

9) MLV no. 236 [= p. 294]; PP Bl 1 [= pp. 451 f.].

10) MLV no. 130 [= p. 250 f.]; PP Pa 1 [= pp. 324–328]; Pulgram p. 299.

11) MLV no. 223 [= p. 286 ff.].

12) MLV no. 136 [= p. 253].: Prof. Pellegrini has reminded me of an eleventh example, Pa 26, with *eku ekupetaris*.

The archeological contexts for Venetic inscriptions are not always fully described in the linguistic handbooks, but with the obvious Celtic elements detectable in the earlier Venetic steles, it is not impossible to imagine in the engravings associated with nos. 1 through 4 above an iconographic reflex of the La Tène chariot burial. The external facts make it likely that the word *ekvopetaris* indicates a type of memorial dedicated to someone of equestrian rank. The problem is then to match a linguistic analysis of the word with this inferred meaning.

The Venetic word certainly has the rhythm of a Gaulish tripartite idionym, like *Epedextorix* or *Eporedorix*; the latter, incidentally would have an etymological meaning of ‘horse-cart king’<sup>13</sup>). An argument along these lines would require a Venetic calque meaning something like “king of swift horses”, *\*ekwo-peta-rēg-s*. Even disregarding the p- and q-Celtic phonetic difficulties, a connection of the *-petaris* half of the Venetic word with the Gaulish *petorritum* (a Gaulish four-wheeled [*\*petru-roto-*] wagon) would be unlikely by simple wheel-count on the steles. The notion is attractive, however, considering the Raetic locale known as *Tarvessedum*, or “bull-cart”<sup>14</sup>).

In Old Irish, it would have been possible to have the phrase *ech pet(t)a* ‘a tamed horse’. The RIA Dictionary defines Old Irish *pet(t)a* as “‘a pet’, usually of a tame or domesticated animal,” and the word is attested in the oldest sources, as in the 7th c. A.D. *Críth Gablach*. It can occur as an attributive following its noun, as in Laws ii 368, 15: *in t-orc peta* ‘the tamed pig’, although most of the citations seem to involve its preposing before the genitive of the noun, as in *petta seneoin* ‘a pet of a falcon’. The etymology of the word is obscure, however, and no confident connection in p-Celtic territory can be made<sup>15</sup>).

All things considered, the best solution seems to be *\*ekwo-pekt-āryos*, which would fit morphologically well on the Italic side, and compositionally fine on the Celtic. The original meaning then would have had something to do with a ‘horse-groomer’, and from this etymological meaning to a prestigious title is not hard to imagine if comparison be made with any number of parallels, such as the

<sup>13</sup>) Cf. *rēda*, *ræda* ‘four-wheeled wagon’, *rēdārius* ‘coachman’; Gaelic *each-raidh* ‘cavalry’, Welsh *ebrwydd* ‘swift’.

<sup>14</sup>) Holder’s *Alt-Keltischer Sprachschatz*, 2, 1741.

<sup>15</sup>) Vendryes’s derivation from Pok. 883 *\*swēdh-* is hard to swallow (*\*sw-* > Ir. *f*, Gaul. *\*sw-*); *Lexique étymologique de l’irlandais ancien*, page “P-8”.

“stable-hand” in the Lex Salica *mariscalcus* seen in Fr. *maréchal ferrant* ‘shoeing smith, farrier’, but ennobled in the *maréchal de France*, a ‘field marshal’<sup>16</sup>). What the *ekvopetaris* inscriptions may commemorate, therefore, are individuals worthy of a knightly burial, no doubt with panoply, and perhaps originally with cart and horse.

Department of Classics  
University of California  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90024/USA

Warren A. Brewer

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<sup>16</sup>) Umbrian *petenata* ‘pectinatam : combed’ shows an Italic simplification of *\*-kt-* to *\*-t-*, which in Venetic is not otherwise attested, a hazard of dealing with *Restsprachen*, but would be paralleled by *\*-pt-* > *-t-* in *OPITER* > *.o.te.r*. The argument against the *-kt-* simplification would be two words from Este. Lejeune wants to interpret *se.g.tio[.i.]* as an idionym calqued on Latin *Sextus* (MLV p. 230 [= no. 97] & p. 338); and there is the idionym *KTULISTOI* (MLV § 160 n. 4 [= p. 143]; PP Es 104). With such scanty data, discussions of accentual variation or regional differences seem foolhardy.