The Greek Root Word ‘Kos’ and the Trade of Ancient Greek with Tamil Nadu, India

D. Pugazhendhi

Abstract—The ancient Greeks were forerunners in many fields than other societies. So, the Greeks were well connected with all the countries which were well developed during that time through trade route. In this connection, trading of goods from the ancient Greece to Tamil Nadu which is presently in India, though they are geographically far away, played an important role. In that way, the word and the goods related with kos and kare got exchanged between these two societies. So, it is necessary to compare the phonology and the morphological occurrences of these words that are found common both in the ancient Greek and Tamil literatures of the contemporary period. The results show that there were many words derived from the root kos with the basic meaning of ‘arrange’ in the ancient Greek language, but this is not the case in the usage of the word kare. In the ancient Tamil literature, the word ‘kos’ does not have any root and also had rare occurrences. But it was just the opposite in the case of the word ‘kare’. One of all the meanings of the word, which was derived from the root ‘kos’ in ancient Greek literature, is related with costly ornaments. This meaning seems to have close resemblance with the usage of word ‘kos’ in ancient Tamil literature.

Keywords—Arrange, kare, kos, ornament, Tamil.

I. INTRODUCTION

WORD is a blend of sound and meaning. The interdependence between sound and meaning is believed to be a central property of a word. Across languages, strings of different sounds are used to express similar concepts. Also, the same sound may denote different things. The word ‘Kos’ means ‘readiness’ in ancient Greek literature.

II. ‘KOS’ AND GREEK LITERATURE

The word ‘Kos’ means ‘readiness’ in ancient Greek literature.

Meaning

The ancient Greek epic Odyssey which was written by Homer belongs to 800 BC. Homer is known for his creative talents and for his works, which are known as Greek epics. The Odyssey is one of the two major epic poems, along with the Iliad. The Odyssey tells the story of Odysseus’ journey home after the Trojan War. The epic is rich in details and brings to life the lives of its characters. The Odyssey is a work of art that is both a celebration of the human spirit and a commentary on the human condition.

TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΩΣΜΕΙ’ IN GREEK AND ‘READY’ IN ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἐν</td>
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<tr>
<td>η ηγείαν κοινωνεῖν εν μέτοχόν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η οι πύρινης και εξοπλ ο θρόνον εικόνας.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line 13, Book 7, The Odyssey Homer, 800 BC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Build or Make

The root word ‘κοσ’ also occurs with the meaning of ‘building’ or ‘making’ in the epic Odyssey written by Homer. This meaning of ‘build’ is slightly related with readiness. If anything is built, then it is ready for use. In this way, the root word ‘κοσ’ has two meanings in the ancient Greek literature. But its exact meaning is to be discussed.

Abstract Arrangements

Arrangement in the mind is the example for abstract arrangements. When explaining this type of situation, the root

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word ‘κοσ’ was used by Plato in his work called Phaedo which belonged to 400 B.C.

Concrete Arrangements

Iliad is the ancient Greek epic written by Homer in 800 B.C. In this epic, he has described the array of army for the war. In this place, the root word ‘κοσ’ is used.

In the war, arranging the army is not an easy task. The arrangement of the army depends upon the plan of enemy army. It has to be planned considering both the strengths and weaknesses of the forces and hide the weakness and exhibit the strengths and expose the full efficiency. This was clearly shown in other places of Iliad epic.

Here, the meaning of arranging is not only occurrence. Here the root meaning of κοσ is arranged effectively. So this word κοσ has got some more accuracy in its meaning as a special type of arrangement of people particularly during war time.

Characters, Orderly, Well-Behaved, Regular, Discrete

Every worldly thing has some characters. The root word κοσ also is used as synonym to the word ‘character’. The Greek Philosopher Plato used this root word κοσ in this sense in his work called ‘Republic’.

Here from the root meaning of ‘κοσ’, a word coined with the meaning denoting arranged arguments. By this way, in this place, the ‘κόσος’ has some extension in its meanings. Initially, it meant ‘readiness’. Further it denoted ‘arrangement’ and it got extended to ‘arranged arguments’. In the meanings related with arrangements, it also includes abstract arrangements. Also in another type of arrangement, the root word κοσ has occurred.

Here the root word koorisis used in the same sense as that of progression of characters. It shows the root word κοσ has
some different meaning from its early mentioned meanings of readiness and arrangements. But when looked deep, all of these are interconnected.

Man has both the characters of the good and the bad, which conflict each other. Surpassing the bad character and expediting the good character makes one a good person. So it is also related with arrangements. From this, it has yet another meaning of orderly, well behaved, regular, discrete which Plato used in his work named Phaedo. So from the root meaning of ‘arrangement’ the root word koś has developed its meaning as readiness, character. More than that, it is also used to denote a post related with army.

TABLE VIII
USE OF ‘ΚΟΣΜΙΑ’ IN GREEK AND ‘ORDERLY’ IN ENGLISH

| 108a | κόσμησάντας ἅγα τόπους καὶ διόπτα 
| 108b | δοιὼ δ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι ἰδέειν ὅποι καὶ τοῦ νόον καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔκειτο θεσμὸς ἢ καὶ τῷδε σέ. |
| 108c | Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων ἦλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν ἐξεστὶ ἀνάσσειν ὧν ὅδέ ήγαγόν κρατῶν: οὐδ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπου σοὶ τόνδε κρατῶν |

Now he came as Sparta’s king that you came, not as master over us. Nowhere was it more than he you. Neither there was need of your lawful guides, since no one could miss the way to any place if there were only one road. But really there seem to be many forks of the road and many windings; this I infer from the rites and ceremonies practiced here on earth. Now the orderly and wise soul follows its guide and understands its circumstances; but the soul that is desirous of the body, as I said before, flits about it, and in the visible world for a long time,

Phaedo 108a, Plato

To Dispose, Order, Rule, Govern

The root word koś has also occurred in the sense to denote order.

TABLE XI
USE OF ‘ΚΟΣΜΙΕΙ’ IN GREEK AND ‘DRESS OF WOMEN’ IN ENGLISH

| 1100 | Αθηνᾶ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη καλύπτρην ἀργυφέη ἐσθῆτι: κατὰ κρῆθεν δὲ | | 1103, Ajax, Sophocles, 300 BC |

In the Ajax written by Sophocles in 300 BC., this root word koś has got the meaning of to dispose, order, rule, govern. Initially this word has the meaning of arrangements. By the arrangements in war, this word has got another meaning as the leader of an army. The leader is not an ordinary post. It is associated with power, domination and rule. From that this root word, koś has got the meaning of rule. Thus the meaning related with the arrangement of troops in the war is seen to extend its meaning to get a new meaning of rule. Besides this, in one more sense, the word ‘arrangement’ finds its usage which is given below.

Dress of Women

Dress is the symbol of wealth when it is costly. The facts are artistically placed and decorated with embroidery which highlights here the intricacies in the arrangement involved in it. Thus, from the root word koś is coined to denote the costly dress. This word was used by the poet Hesiod of 750 and 650 BC., in his work called ‘Theogony’.

TABLE XII
USE OF ‘ΚΟΣΜΗΣΕ’ IN GREEK AND ‘DRESS OF WOMEN’ IN ENGLISH

| 573 | Άγγελον ἐξήλθη: κατὰ κρῆθεν δὲ καλύτερον |

Here, because of the arrangements of the costly articles...
presented in the dress, the root word κόσ finds its place here and it is related with the dress. Also the costly articles may be related with that of ornaments. So from the root of κόσ, another word that denotes ornament originated.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE XIII</th>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΌΣΜΟΝ’ IN GREEK AND ‘ADORNMENT’ IN ENGLISH</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| κόσμων | But when she had decked her body with all adornment, she went forth from her chamber, and calling to her Athenian.
| Lines 187, Book 14, Iliad, Homer, 800 BC. |

In the places mentioned above, the root word κόσ is not only related with the women’s adornments but in some places it is also related with that of men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE XIV</th>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΌΣΜΟΝ’ IN GREEK AND ‘WOMEN’S ADORNMENT’ IN ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κόσμων</td>
<td>the manufacturers of all kinds of articles, especially those that have to do with women’s adornment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic, Plato, 424BC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When related with men, this root word κόσ shall not eliminate the possibility to denote the objects which are used in wars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE XV</th>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΌΣΜΗΣΑΝΘ’ IN GREEK AND ‘MEN’S ADORNMENT’ IN ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κοσμήσανθ</td>
<td>I would not tremble before any mere ornaments on a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines 397, Seven Against Thebes, Aeschylus, 525BC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This word is also seen to be used for ornaments of animals like that of horse used in war. Thus from the root word κόσ many words were coined with different meanings [7]. But all the words seem to be coined based on the meaning related to ‘arrange’. So from the root word κόσ which has the root meaning ‘arrange’, several words were evolved with many meanings that are found to be used in different contexts.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE XVI</th>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΌΣΜΗΣΑΝΘ’ IN GREEK AND ‘ADORNED’ IN ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κοσμημένοις</td>
<td>the young sons of the old ἔπαι δε χάλκινος, σωμάτοι οἱ κοσμημένοι Oedipus, had adorned themselves in their bronze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines 1359, Phoenissae, Euripides, c. 480 BC.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In one place in Tamil Sangam literature, the word kasu denotes the gold coin.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE XVII</th>
<th>USE OF ‘ΚΌΣΜΟΝ’ IN GREEK AND ‘HORSE ORNAMENT’ IN ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κόσμων</td>
<td>but it lieth there as a king’s treasure, alike an ornament for his horse and to its driver a glory;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines 145, Book4, Iliad, Homer, 800 BC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ancient Tamil literature is called as the Sangam literature. This literature is a collection of 2381 poems written by 473 poets and among them 102 was anonymous. There are some controversies about its period. According to a research on ancient Greek literature which is related with Atti and Cythie, the era of the Tamil Sangam literature goes up to 1200 BC. This literature registered the life of the person who lived in that era. It also registered some foreigners who visited Tamil Nadu during that time [3]. So this literature has an unavoidable place in the history of the ancient world.

This Sangam literature has a very rich glossary of words. In this the word ‘Kasu’ which is dealt in Tamil literature has some similarity in the pronunciation with that of the Greek word κόσ. When seen at a glance, they may seem to represent different words. But in depth, they are interrelated. In Tamil land ‘O’ is pronounced as ‘Aa’. The word ‘Office’ is pronounced here as ‘Aa’ fees’. In the last syllable, if there is a consonant, normally Tamilians add U. So the word Office is pronounced as Aafeesu. The same variation in the pronunciation is also seen in the word kasu as Ko > Ka, Kos > Kasu. In the whole of 2381 poems, only in less than 15 places, this word has occurred. It is to be explored whether the Greek word κόσ and the Tamil word kasu have similarity only in the pronunciation or also in their meanings.

The Meaning of Kasu

In one place in Tamil Sangam literature, the word kasu denotes the gold coin.

‘stopped in Thai month jewel with rows of golden coins – lifted loins with lines, tall lifted loins pretty colors, big clusters, swaying with tender leaves 269, Maruthan Ilanākanār, Akanānūru, Sanga Ilakkiam[8].

In this poem, the word Kasu is used as a simile to represent the beauty of the small fruit. The fruit resembles the gold coin [Kasu] in its colour and shape. Yet another poem has used it in the same sense.

‘like it is spread on the loom, sun, bright, shaking, very hot wasteland like cuckoo eyes bright unripe fruits matured
like gold coins’
Poem No. 293, Kāvanmullai Poothanār, Akanānūru, Sanga Ilakkiam.
‘The wasteland is a harsh place
where ukā trees with dried trunks,
the color of a pigeon’s back, shower
down dense, gold coin like berries when
cruel bandits climb on their branches’
Poem No. 274, Uruthiranār, Kurunthokai, Sanga Ilakkiam.
‘where strong gusts of wind drop on
…………the rock-filled path, fresh, perfect
…………gooseberries from trees with tiny
…………leaves and thick trunks, beautiful
…………like coins made with gold,’
Poem No. 363, Mathurai Pon Sey Kollan Vennākanār, Akanānūru, Sanga Ilakkiam.
‘Your lover went through mountain paths
where big tigers prowl in groves, a female
of a stag rubs against a kumilam tree,
it's bright fruits like coins made with gold,’
Poem No. 274, Kāvanmullai Poothanār, Natrinai, Sanga Ilakkiam.

Chain
In one poem, it was denoted as chain made of coins which are joined through the holes.
‘trees with parched trunks and gooseberries
dropped by the western winds lie heaped
on the dry ground, looking like marble gold
coins with holes from broken strands.’
Poem No. 315, Kudavāyil Keerathanār, Akanānūru, Sanga Ilakkiam.
So these gold coins mentioned in this poem might be used for the purpose to denote the chain whereas in one poem, it clearly denotes to the gold coins that were found in the ornament, necklace.
‘where a bright neem fruit held in a
parrot’s curved beak, appears like
a gold coin through which a
goldsmith puts a new thread, using
his fine, sharp fingernail tips,
to make a gold-coin necklace?’
Poem No. 67, Allūr Nanmullaiyār, Kurunthokai, Sanga Ilakkiam.
But these poems do not clarify about the person who wore this ornament. In some poems clarity is found on the gender who wore, but some other poems explain where it is worn i.e., on the neck part.

Waist Ornaments
In one of the poems, it was mentioned that the gold coins were worn in the waist part.
‘O lord of victorious battles! With pale eyes, stopping your chariot, you ask me without quickly, “Who is she?”
about the young woman with delicate beauty, who
wears
on her waist jewels made with gold coins created perfectly
by a skilled goldsmith, in bright strands, and walks on freshly laid sand.’
Poem No.353, Kāviripoompattinathu Kārikkkanānār, Puranānūru, Sanga Ilakkiam.
This poem clearly mentions the gender who wore the ornament and where it was worn. The unmarried women wore it in the waist region. In the same sense, it occurs in yet another place.
‘her waist ornament with strands of gold coins twisted, her garland losing its shape,
hers small bangles slipping down, her great beauty lost,’
Poem No. 66, Inisantha Nākanār, Natrinai, Sanga Ilakkiam.
This poem shows the gold coin ornament worn by a sad lady. Because of sadness, she becomes very lean. Hence, the gold coins in her waist ornament get loosened and so get twisted. Here, the lady was a married woman. To conclude, the ornaments made of ‘kasu’ were worn by women of both unmarried and married in their neck and waist regions. This ornament is also seen to be worn in other places.

Anklets
One poem describes the ornament made of kasu worn in the leg region.
‘In this cold season, kuruntham
trees sway along with kondrai
trees that have put out buds looking
like shining bells with open ends
resembling the gaping mouths
of frogs, strung on the bright, gold
anklets worn by wealthy children on
their small feet.
If you tell me that this is not the rainy season, I have to ask you whether you are dreaming.’
Poem No.148, Ilankeeranthaiyār, Kurunthokai, Sanga Ilakkiam.
This poem shows that the children wore an ornament made up of kasu in their leg part. There was no evidence for women wearing this ornament in the leg part.

Fig. 2 Meanings of Kasu
Except this word kasu, no other words are used in the same sense in the ancient Tamil literature. Even today, an ornament is named as kasumalai which is worn in the neck part. And it is also worn only by women. In the middle era, when the Government introduced gold coins, it was called as Kasu. After the Government withdrew the gold coins and introduced copper and lead coins, the same word kasu was used to denote the coins. After that, a word was coined from it as ‘Kasaler’ in Tamil which means cashier.

IV. ΚΟΣ – COMPARATIVE STUDY

The word ‘κοσ’ is seen in both the languages. It not only resembles in pronunciation that is sound symbolism but also has some uniqueness in the meanings. In the ancient Greek, the words which evolved from the root κοσ have the meanings of ‘readiness, building, character, arrangement, leader of the army, women dress, men war dress, ornament of the horse and so on’.

In ancient Tamil literature called Sangam literature, the word Kasu only denotes gold coin. Some of the ornaments which were made of gold coins were also related with the root word kasu. But these ornaments were only related with women and children and not with men and animals. This word is not at all related with war in Tamil literature. There is no any other word related with this ‘kasu’ either in the noun form or in the verb form in the ancient Tamil language. Its root is not seen in Tamil except this research shows its root in the ancient Greek.

Table XVIII clearly shows the level of relationship between these two languages in the usage of the root word κοσ. The Greek language has a verb form of κοσ. Tamil language does not have the verb form of κοσ. There are many words derived from the root word κοσ in the Greek language. Even today in English cosmology, words like ‘cosmetics’ have the root from the root word κοσ in the Greek language. Even today in Tamil language does not have the verb form of κοσ. Tamil language does not have any other word related with this ‘kasu’ either in the noun form or in the verb form in the ancient Tamil language. Its root is not seen in Tamil except this research shows its root in the ancient Greek.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>readiness</th>
<th>buildings</th>
<th>arrange</th>
<th>leader</th>
<th>Women dress</th>
<th>Women jewels</th>
<th>Men war dress</th>
<th>Horse dressing</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>ornament</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
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Table XIX

| TABLE XIX
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu in Greek and English Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tyndis</strong> is of the Kingdom of Cerobothea; it is a village in plain sight by the sea. Muziris, of the same Kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nellcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the Pandian. This place also is situated on a river, about one hundred and twenty stadia from the sea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peripiles of the Eritheranian Sea [4]

[Períπλοις τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς Θαλάσσης]

The above words mentioned in the Peripiles of the Eritheranian Sea show that there was an exchange of materials from Ancient Greece to Tamilnadu, which is confirmed by the Tamil Sangam literature. This Greek work clearly shows the sea route from ancient Greece to Tamil Nadu. The names mentioned in this Greek work which are connected with Tamil Nadu are shown in the map.

Fig. 3 Muziris

Peripiles of the Eritheranian Sea is a book written in ancient Greek. The author was unknown. It has registered that the business and trade have taken place between the ancient Greek and Tamil Nadu.
This Tamil Sangam poem explains in a similar way as the Greek work of Peripules of the Eritheranian Sea about the foreign trade in Tamil Nadu. It also states about the kingdoms of Chēran [Χηροβότρος], Pāndiyan [Πάνδιον] and the famous harbour of Musiri [Μουζιρη] as mentioned in the Peripules of the Eritheranian Sea.

In Tamil Sangam literature, the Arabsians and the Greeks were denoted as Yavaner. The Tamil letter ‘ya’ is written as ். This is in the shape of the trident which was like the symbol of Poseidon that is mentioned in Greek myth that is related with sea. The ancient Greek might have had this trident in their ships for the worship of Poseidon in the sea journey. This might be reason to call the Greeks as Yavaner in Tamil. And in this poem it mentions that the Greeks exchanged gold with that of the spics with Tamilians. Here the Tamil word for spices is mentioned as Kari. Similar to way in which the Greek word Kasu finds a place in Tamil literature the Tamil word Kare is present in Greek literature. This Kare is used for many purposes which include medicine. It is also used for cooking of meat. In some places, the meat associated with cooking is denoted as κρέ in ancient Greek literature.

Here it can be noted that this word very rarely occurs in ancient Greek literature. And there is no root for this word in Greek. So the word κρέ might be the transformed form of the Tamil word Kare. Thus ancient Greeks exported not only gold but also the Greek word κόσ along with it and imported not only spices but also the Tamil word κρέ.

The works such as Περίπουλος της Ερυθραίας highlights the sea route from Greece to Tamil Nadu which also happens to be the way for the exchange of these words κόσ and κρέ.

Fig. 4 Ancient Sea Route from Greece to Tamil Nadu

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