The Phrygian god Bas

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Among the gods identified in the Phrygian corpus, Bas stands out because of the lack of a Greek counterpart. Indeed, Matar equates, more or less, to Κυβέλη, Ti- to Ζεύς, Artimitos (B-05) to Άρτεμις, Διουνσιν (88) to Δίονυσος, and Μας (48) to Μήν. Yet Bas remains without a clear equivalent and seems to only appear in Phrygian texts. He occurs almost eight times in different contexts of both the Old Phrygian (OPhr.) and New Phrygian (NPhr.) corpora. This makes Bas the third most referenced god after Ti- (the Phrygian Zeus, documented almost exclusively in NPhr. curses) and Matar (the Mother-Goddess, exclusively in OPhr. monuments). The high number of references allow for the analysis of his purpose and the identification of the origin of his name in the light of our increasing knowledge of Phrygian and the general Anatolian framework.

The oldest occurrence of this theonym is documented in the Luwian city of Tuwanuwa in Cappadocia (called Τυανα in Greek, and currently called Kemerhisar). The name of Bas can be read on a fragment of a severely damaged stele discovered in 1908 (T-02b). Although most of the monument is lost, its shape is believed to be parallelepiped with a semi-circular summit, similar to the Neo-Assyrian style. C. Brixhe interpreted the significance of this document as a signal of Phrygian suzerainty of this country in the late eighth century BC. In that case, the historical

* This paper was funded by the research project Los dialectos lúvicos del grupo anatolio en su contexto lingüístico, geográfico e histórico (Ref. FFII2015-68467-C2-1-P) granted by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Competitiveness.


2 The enumeration and readings of the Old Phrygian inscriptions (transcribed in the Latin alphabet) are given according to C. Brixhe and M. Lejeune, Corpus des Inscriptions Paléo-Phrygiennes I. Texte (Paris, 1984) (abbreviated here as CIPPh) and its supplements. The enumeration and readings of New Phrygian inscriptions (in the Greek alphabet) are given according to the traditional enumeration developed from the works of W. M. Ramsay. In the case of recent findings, I use the system established by O. Ligorio and A. Lubotsky, “Фригийский язык,” in Языки мира, Реликтовые индоевропейские языки Передней и Центральной Азии, ed. Ю. Б. Корюк и А. А. Кабрик (Москв, 2013), 182.


5 CIPPh, 253–68. Another very similar stele was found in modern times also in Tyana (T-03): see A. Çınaroğlu and E. Varinlioğlu “Eine neue altphrygische Inschrift aus Tyana,” Epigraphica Anatolica 5 (1985): 5–11. Phrygian contacts with Tyana are also evident in the Iviz relief, where the king Wapalawas (known to be ally of Midas) is depicted wearing Phrygian ornaments (his belt, fibula and, very likely, his tunic). See C. Brian Rose, “Fieldwork at Phrygian Gordion, 2013–2015,” American Journal of Archaeology 121 (2017): 159.

background of the Phrygian presence in such a place must be Midas’ campaigns for hegemony over the Syro-Hittite states, and against Sargon II as recorded by Assyrian sources. Despite the opaqueness of this fragmented text, T-02b contains the highest number of words readable in all fragments from Tyana, and is the only known preserved and datable text contemporaneous to King Midas in which he is mentioned (l. 3). The fragment reads as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
[- - - ]
\end{align*}
\]

Unfortunately, little can be said about this inscription. The sequence *tesan* was dubiously identified as borrowed from the Lydian *tašë*, “stele,”8 agreeing with the adjective *ašion* in sg.acc. However, this Lydian word must be read as *tašë*,9 and Phrygian *tesan* can be considered a pronominal cluster similar to *esauš* (W-01b, sg.dat.),10 and analyzed as *e-tesan* (sg.acc.), if not an *a*-stem noun. In addition, perhaps *[- - - ] tumida* is a personal name in sg. acc. followed by the term *mevenis*, attested as *mevenais* in M-01b and M-02 (in both inscriptions, a possible patronymic). In any event, these interpretations are precarious because of the lack of parallels, and because the sole verifiable information of T-02b is the reference of Bas appearing for the first time in a Luwian country.

This god perhaps appears in two other OPhr. inscriptions. The first one, the inscription B-04 (from Bithynia, fifth or fourth century BC), seems to contain the accusative of this theonym, but the text is hard to read and its context is unclear.11 The other inscription from a little bit later (fourth century BC), the graffito G-221 incised on a sherd from Gordion, could be adduced here, but the pertinent sequence is read as *baš’am* by CIPPh,12 and the meaning of the whole text remains unclear.

The other seven occurrences of the theonym Bas are recorded in the NPhr. sub-corpus, from the second and third century AD. He is featured six times as the agent of three different curses against tomb desecrators, always mentioned in their apodeses.13 Note that curses are by far the most common kind of text in the NPhr. corpus, since only 13 of the 117 known inscriptions contain anything more than a curse.14 Two inscriptions contain the first imperative formula mentioning Bas, 33 and 36, both found in Sinanli:

\[
\begin{align*}
(33) \text{αὐτὸς κε οὐα κὲ ἧροκα γεγαριτμενὸς ἀς Βάταν} & \text{τευτοὺς} \\
(36) \text{αὐτὸς κ’ οὐ[α’κ’ ὀροκα} & \text{γάμον ἀριτ} | \text{με[ν]ο]ς α Βάταν} & \text{τευτοὺς}
\end{align*}
\]

The meaning of this text roughly translates to: “and let him and his oracle (offspring?) be at the mercy of Bas teutoi.” Some of these words are comprehensible: *αὐτὸς* equates to Greek *αὐτός*, *κε* is the copulative conjunction (< PIE *kó*, “and”), *οὐα* is the 3sg.fem. possessive pronoun (< PIE *ske*), and *γεγαριτμενὸς* is the masc.sg.midd.-pass.part. (parallel to Greek *κεχαρισμένος* with specific imprecatory sense found in Anatolia). However, *ὁροκα* remains obscure as well as *τευτοὺς*, which does not seem to have a good explanation. The latter has been equated to the discussed word *τευτοῖς*, “people,” attested only in the Italian, Celtic, German, and Baltic branches of Indo-

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10 See Ligorio and Lubotsky, “Фригийский язык,” 184.
12 CIPPh, 179.
13 A common curse can be divided into two different parts: protasis and apodosis. Protases indicate who the potential addressee of the curse is. A standard protasis in NPhr. says as follows: *τοις σεμουν κυνκμανι βακκαν οβάκοτε . . .* (“whoever does harm to this tomb . . .”). Apodeses mention the punishment considered to happen to the addressee of the curse, and very often name a god or group of gods as the agent(s) of that punishment (normally Τιτανος, only substituted by Bas as we will see, and once by Dionysos). A common NPhr. apodosis reads in this way: με δεν κε ξεμελος κε α τε τιτετεκμενο ετοου (“let him be accused by Zeus in the sight of gods and men”).
14 These inscriptions, nos. 9, 15, 18, 30, 31, 48, 57, 69, 98, 116, 128, and 130, only represent 11% of the whole corpus.
European languages. For this reason, this Phrygian word has been often considered a borrowing from Galatian. Since these two inscriptions, as indicated above, were found in Sinanlı in the most northeastern point where NPhr. texts are documented, on the border with Galatia, this explanation seems likely. However, in light of the few occurrences of this word in the poorly-attested language of the Galatians (see, e.g., the tribal names Ambitoutous, established near Gordium according to Plin. HN 5.146, and Toutobodiaci, associated to Tectosages according to Plin. HN 5.146), which shows that in this language *teut- became tœt-, this suggested borrowing can easily be refuted. Consequently, a new interpretation must be given. Because it appears in a position where a verb in the imperative mood is expected (see, e.g., 88: τγ[γεγαριτμενος του], very likely τευτους is the verb of this imprecative apodosis. Thus, the sequence -του corresponds to the 3sg.impv. ending, although its attached sigma and meaning remain unexplained. Either way, τευτου is the only word of this apodosis which can be interpreted as a verb.

The second imprecative apodosis with references to Bas is contained on two inscriptions, found in two cities near by one another in the north of the NPhr. epigraphic area, Güney and Erten respectively:

(86) Ba[ς] | τοι βεκος με βερε[τ]
(111) Βας τοι βεκος με βερετ

The components of this apodosis are relatively clear: the sg.nom. Bas is the subject, τοι is a pronoun in sg.dat., βεκος is the word for ‘bread’ (a neut.sg.-acc.), με is the prohibitive particle, and βερετ the verb

in 3sg.pres.subj, which goes back to PIE *μη[θ]-, “to bear” (LIV 76–77). Regarding the meaning of this apodosis, during the last Phrygian Conference (early November of 2015 in Eskişehir), A. E. Hämmig aduced suitable Greek parallels found in Anatolia and collected by J. H. M. Strubbe:

μηδὲ γῆ καρποφορήσοιτο αὐτῷ . . . (76);
οὔτ’ γῆ αὐτ<ὁ> καρπὸν ἐνένεκη . . . (121);
μ[ήτε] ἡ γῆ καρποφόρος . . . (122);
μη γῆ . . . καρποὺς δοίη (153);
μη γῆ καρπὸν ἐκφέρω (155);
μη δὲ γῆ καρπὸν . . . (357);
μη [ήτε γη] . . . καρπὸν φέρω (368);
μη γη ἐνέγκαι αὐτώι . . καρπὸν (369);
μηδὲ γη . . . καρπὸν <α>υτόν ἐνινκαίτω (374);
μη <α>νέγκη [ἡ γη αὐτώι] καρπὸν (377); and
μη γη καρπὸν ἐνέκαι (385).

According to Hämmig, βεκος can be equated to καρπὸν, βερετ to φέρω, με to μη, and Βας to γη.

Although this interpretation is convincing, the equation Βας ~ γη, first argued by Haas, is, as she admits, difficult to support from a linguistic point of view. The Greek word is not a ι-stem noun, and the correspondence between Phrygian β and Greek γ is not defensible (note that Greek γωνι, “woman,” corresponds to Phrygian knays). Of course, this parallel is not necessarily phonetic, but only semantic regardless of the etymologies. However, these expressions look like a specific formula from Caria (76, 121, and

16 First proposed by W. M. Ramsay, “Neo-Phrygian Inscriptions,” Jahrbü*cke des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien 8 (Beiblatt) (1905), 97, it was still considered by Ligorio and Lubotsky in “Frisi*ches W.,” 194.
17 A third occurrence of this word might be τευτους (NPhr. 116), found in an obscure sentence of a funerary stele not related to the imprecative part of the text.
18 This possibility was suggested to me by an anonymous reviewer of this paper whom I would like to thank. However, I must add that a second anonymous reviewer was not convinced by this possibility because of the “enigmatic” -τσ attached to τευτου.
19 In the light of the Phrygian shift *ē / *ēh > ā and the preposition με (in the formula με δες κε ἔμελος κε), the communis opinio considers me (B-05) / με a preverb against O. Haas’s previous identification of it as inherited from the PIE particle *meh;
The last imprecation featuring the god Bas is found on the inscription 128:

μέ δέω με ξεμελα λος τετετικμενος | ειτου | ας Βαταν Ορουεναν κε.

As one of the most common formulae, the meaning of this passage is generally accepted, although it is the only occurrence of the kind in which there are two guarantees: “let him be accursed in the sight of gods and men by Bas and the Keeper(?).” Here the accusative is governed by the preposition ας (⟨PIE *h₂,ps⟩, and replaces the more common ας Τιαν (“by Zeus”). More, it is also coordinated with the sg.acc. ορουεναν, whose sg.nom. is ορους, attested in NPhr. 48. In this last text, a quasi-bilingual Greek-Phrygian, this term has been equated to the Greek θεος “father,” by Lubotsky,28 who reconstructed it as *sorūn, a form related to Greek οδύρος “watcher, guard(ian),” < *sor-uo. According to Lubotsky, it is an epithet of Phrygian Zeus.29 The formula με δέως κε ξεμελας κε τετετικμενος ειτου, as Lubostky suggested, follows a Luwian apodosis attested in KARKAMIŠ A 2+3 §24: wa/i-sa- | DEUS-na-za | CAPUT-tā-tā-na- | 366–na-na | (DEUS) TONITRUS-tā-tā-i | (LOQUI)ta-tara/i-ia-mi-sa i-zi-ia-ru, “let him be made accursed by Tarhunzas in the sight of(?) God and men.”30 Additionally, during the last Phrygian Conference, I adduced a Greek text contemporary to the NPhr. one,31 an inscription found in a house at Seferihisar (Sviri Hissar), near ancient Teos (Ionia): καὶ γεγραμμένοις θεοῖς Κατανανδηνος, “let him be accursed by Zeus.” Here, “read” also refers to “food” via synecdoche.

In addition, if Hämäg’s likely new reading of NPhr. 18 is accepted, then in this kind of apodosis, Bas is once substituted by the obscure word σαρναν: βεκος ιος με με τοτοσσειτι σαρναν (instead of βεκος ιος με τοτοσσειτι σαρναν). Since σαρναν fits as a nominative singular (‘en, sec, e.g., iman, imenos), it could be considered an epiphenomenon of the same god. Recently, A. Avram has equated this name to Ζεῦς Σαρνενός, read in Greek inscriptions from northeast Phrygia / northwest Galatia (with one occurrence in Bithynia and Dacia).26 However, its meaning remains unclear.

24 During the last Phrygian Conference, I analysed this formula in the light of Semitic and Hieroglyphic Luwian curses: the bilingual inscription from Tell Fekherye (Assyrian 28–29 and Aramaic 17–18) and KARKAMIŠ A11a §27, respectively (B. Obrador-Cursach, “The Luwian origin of the Phrygian imprecations,” forthcoming in Tzetkhladze, ed., Phrygian Lands Over Time). However, I operate with Hämmig’s parallels because they are closer in time and place.

25 She argued this very convincing identification during the last Phrygian Conference.

26 A. Avram, “Two Phrygian gods between Phrygia and Dacia,” Colloquium Anatolicum 15 (2016): 70–83. I would like to thank the author for kindly sending me a draft of this paper prior to its publication.


29 Obrador-Cursach, “Luwian origin of the Phrygian imprecations.”
The Phrygian god Bas

Table 1 — Inflection of Bas in comparison with nevos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Bas</th>
<th>nevos</th>
<th>PIE endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. Sg.</td>
<td>Βας</td>
<td>νεβος</td>
<td>*-t-s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. Sg.</td>
<td>Βαταν / Βαταν</td>
<td>νεβοταν</td>
<td>*-t-m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Lubotsky, Bas—as well as Mitrafata and the Tem(b)rogic Mas and the Pontic Βοτανς—and dubiously with Old Indian Bhadrā. The result of his comparison reverted the translation to the reconstructed root *bhad-, “fortunate, happy, prosperous; good” (IEW 106), and attributed a Bithynian origin of this theonym in order to avoid the phonetic problems of his etymological proposal. However, Lubotsky dismissed Witzczak’s argumentation as ungrounded.

With these inconclusive interpretations, and having verified that the word Bas does not exist in surrounding languages, only determining the internal reconstruction remains in order to identify the origin of this theonym. Thus, I propose that the theonym Bas is a Phrygian derivative t-stem from the PIE root *bhōh₂-/*bhēh₂-, “shine” (LIV² 68–69). According to its inflection, it can be a primary t-stem formation, but it only fits with the acute type, e.g., PIE *nékō-t-/*nēkér-t-, “night.” Therefore, the form *bhōh₂-t-/*bhēh₂-t- can be assumed as the origin of this theonym. However, the nom. Bas presents a problem. If the laryngeals in Phrygian work in the same way as they seem to in Greek, a nominative **bhop and accusative **bhora would be predictable. Nevertheless, the nominative and accusative root vowel may have been levelled from oblique cases, where e-grade is expected. Unfortunately, they are not attested. However, this is not the only levelling assumed in Phrygian, since A. Kloekhorst recently argued such a levelling for the word

35 I. M. Diakonoff and V. P. Neroznak, Phrygian (Delmar, NY, 1985), 97.
38 Note that very often *bheh₂-/*bheh₂- “speak” (LIV² 69–70), is considered to be the same root with a semantic development: see G. E. Dunkel, “Latin inor and fis,” in Sound law and analogy: papers in honor of Robert S. P. Bucke on the occasion of his 60th birthday, ed. A. Lubotsky, (Amsterdam, 1997), 31. However, this issue does not pertain to the proposal of this paper.
34 Haas, Die phrygischen Sprachdenkmale, 97.
"feet," “man, hero,” can be adduced to support this new interpretation. K. Brugmann and B. Delbrück equated this word with the Vedic s-stem bhāś-, “light, splendor, power,” and assumed that the Greek word was indeed a secondary t-stem noun, as well as many others in this language. After a century during which this explanation remained more or less unaccepted, M. Peters improved the formal analysis of this etymology and opened the possibility of an ancient t-stem agent-noun without excluding an original radical noun.

On its meaning, he considered that the word developed from “shining,” adducing some Indo-European formulae which associate this concept with heroes (consequently, the meaning “man” is a secondary one). He also considered the Greek personal names in *φως, φοτός, and *φωσσα, equivalent to Old Persian *fās- and Avestan *xvarənah, in order to show this association. More recently, A. Vijūnas has argued that this Greek word originated from a primary t-stem, the same kind of formation suggested here for the Phrygian word (see also NIL 7–11), where the whole Greek paradigm has levelled the o-grade of the root from the nominative and accusative singular (the opposite way of the Phrygian word, see Table 2).

Although in ancient times *φως, φοτός was related to “light” (as Apollonius the Sophist showed), this etymology is not commonly accepted. Some scholars refute it because they consider it “semantically implausible.” Indeed, no satisfactory explanation of this suggested semantic development has been proposed and, what is worse, it seems that there is no synchronic evidence which points out the semantic shift “light” > “hero” > “man.” Therefore, in order to accept the suggested etymology, the meaning of the development of *φως, φοτός from the proposed prehistoric meaning “the shining one” to “hero, man” must be explained.

It is clear that *φως, φοτός is basically a poetic word rarely occurring in prose. It means that the use of this noun was restricted to the elevated style of epic or tragedy, far from common language usage. Certainly, the two usual meanings, “hero” and “man,” are inferred from the context. Φως means “hero” when it is used to qualify some characters such as Achilles (Iliad 2.239), although in other occurrences it clearly conveys the meaning “man, mortal,” e.g., εἶμι δ’ ἐξ ἄνθρωπον ὄμοιος δαφοίνεὸν ἀμφοτέρων ἀμαίνη φωτόν, “the clothing upon her shoulders showed strong red with the men’s blood” (Iliad 18.538).

Sometimes this noun appears in apposition to personal names, similar to epithets, especially in two formulas. The first one is ἰσόθεος φως, “godlike man,” said of Euryalus (Iliad 2.565 and 23.677), Priam (Iliad 3.310), Menelaus (Iliad 4.212 and 23.569), Ercuthalion (Iliad 7.136), Patroklos (Iliad 9.211 and 11.644), Sokos (Iliad 11.428), Aias (Iliad 11.472 and 15.559), Meriones (Iliad 16.632), Odysseus (Odyssey 1.324), and Telemachus (Odyssey 20.124). The second

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**Table 2—Proposed development of PIE *bhōh2-t- in Phrygian and Greek**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>PIE</th>
<th>Phrygian</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. Sg.</td>
<td>*bhōh2-t-s</td>
<td>ḅos</td>
<td>φως</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc. Sg.</td>
<td>*bhōh2-t-m</td>
<td>Batan / Batan</td>
<td>φότα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gn. Sg.</td>
<td>*bhōh2-t-s</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φωτός</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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44. A. Vijūnas, The Indo-European primary t-stems (Innsbruck, 2009), 72–76.
46. In his Λέξεις Ομηρικοί we can read as follows: φῶτες- ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἀπό τοῦ φωτισθὲν τὰ νόοιμα πάντα διὰ τό λόγον, “φῶτες [refers to] humans because they illuminate all thoughts through the reason.” However, this association might be given because of the similarity with φως, φοτός, “light.”
47. R. S. P. Beekes, Etymological Dictionary of Greek (Leiden, 2010), 1602, similar to the expression used by Chantraine, “Dictionnaire étymologique,” 1238.
formula is the patronymic scheme φῶτ’ [name in genitive] ὕιον, where φῶθ’ is always found in the beginning of a verse: e.g., ἐπί δὲ Διὸς ὕιον ἀφίκετο καρτερόθυμον, φῶθ’ Ἦρακλῆ, μεγάλον ἐπίστερο πόρον, “when he came to Zeus’s son, the mighty-hearted man Heracles, a master of monstrous deeds” (Odyssey 21.25–26); or ἃγάθοι ὃτι τάχιστα Μαχάον δεῦρο κάλλεσσον φῶτ’ Ἀσκληπιοῦ ὕιον ἀμύμονος ἰητήρος, “Talthybios, with all speed go call hither Machaon, a man who is son of Asklepios and a blameless physician” (Iliad 4.193–94).

Finally, in some contexts φῶς is clearly opposed to women, e.g., ὡς ρύσατο περὶ χρόνι μῆδα φῶτός “to pull over his body to cover his man’s genitals” (Odyssey 6.129), although in a few instances (although never in Homer) it refers to a couple of man and woman, e.g., οὐκτρώ φῶτε, “to two pitiable humans” (Euripides, Helen 1094, in dual, referring to Helen and Menelaus).

In light of this last context, it is clear that the word was not comprehensible to the audience of the Homeric poems. Moreover, it can be deduced that the original meaning is not the generic “human,” because it is never said of a woman, so it likely means “man.” However, in many contexts it is used to refer to warriors and, especially in singular, to the important ones. Thus it can be concluded that this word, despite its poetic value, is a semantically empty archaism.

Before explaining the consequences of such a conclusion, a similar case can be adduced. There is another archaism understood as “men” despite the lack of a clear etymology: μέροπες. Although its original meaning is unknown, in Homer it is always used in the plural as an epithet of ἄνθρωποι, “men” (e.g., Iliad 18.288) and, sometimes, of βροτοῦ, “mortal men” (Iliad 2.285). In other texts, it is attested with λαοί, “men, people” (Aeschylus, Suppliant Women 90). In such cases, it was understood as “mortal.” However, in the works of tragic authors and later poets, the word occurs as a noun with the meaning “men.” Finally, it is reported to be the name of a bird (Aristoteles, History of Animals 615b.25). Leaving aside this bird name, it is evident that μέροπες did not have a clear meaning for ancient Greek speakers, and the meaning “men” is only inferred from its relation with ἄνθρωποι in Homer.

The same could then be said of φῶς: its original meaning was unclear, but it was understood as “men” or “hero” because it appeared in relation to them. Indeed, what happened here is a well-established phenomenon called “productive misunderstanding” by M. Leumann, “iconism” by M. S. Silk (from a literary perspective) and, equating it to modern languages, “irrational resemantization” or “irrational polysemy” by Méndez Dosuna. Certainly it has been claimed for archaic words in Homer which later speakers misunderstood, but, because of the importance of their literary tradition, were still used with a new meaning deduced from context. It is the case for many adjectives and (especially) epithets, since they play a peripheral role in sentences.

A good example of this process is found in the adjective αἰόλος, which combines the meaning “quick, nimble, shimmering” with “variegated, colorful,” two meanings not conceivable with a natural semantic shift. According to Méndez Dosuna, it originally meant “variegated, colorful” and, as a later invention of the glossographoi, it was understood also as “quick.” Another paradigmatic example of such a misunderstanding is κύμβαχος, earlier used as a technical noun (“crest of a helmet”), and later as an adjective (“falling head-first”).

Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between φῶς and μέροπες. Indeed, while the latter is far from being etymologically explained, φῶς can be analyzed as an inherited PIE word with a primary meaning: “shining, radiance.” Thus, its unnatural semantic shift is a parallel process to the meanings of αἰόλος.

As it has been said, it seems that there is no synchronic evidence in Greek for the meaning “shining, radiance.” That is why M. Peters needed to adduce the Old Irish collation liúan láith, “hero’s light” as a semantic parallel of his proposal. Nevertheless, this

48 Beekes, Etymological Dictionary of Greek, 933.

49 Méndez Dosuna, “Glosografía griega y polisemia irracional.”

50 Méndez Dosuna, “Glosografía griega y polisemia irracional.”

51 Peters, Beiträge zur Griechischen Etymologie, 105.
is shown in these two instances, the divinity (here Athena) gives to the warriors an attribute which is considered divine: brightness. Certainly, the Greek gods are known to be imbued with a brilliant aura when they appear in their true form. A good description of this feature is found in the Homer Hymns. See, e.g., how Demeter is depicted at Keleos’ house (Hymn to Demeter, 187–88 and 277–80):

But the goddess walked to the threshold: and her head reached the roof and she filled the doorway with a heavenly radiance. [. . .] Beauty spread round about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders, so that the strong house was filled with brightness as with lightning.

Also Apollo is described in a similar way when he enters into his temple in Delphos for the first time (Hymn to Apollo 440–45):

Then, like a star at noonday, the lord, far-working Apollo, leaped from the ship: flashes of fire flew from him thick and their brightness reached to heaven. He entered into his shrine between priceless tripods, and there made a flame to flare up bright, showing forth the splendor of his shafts, so that their radiance filled all Crisa.

parallel is unclear and unnecessary. Indeed, the image of a hero imbued with a shining appearance is explicitly depicted in some passages of the Iliad. See, e.g., Iliad 5.4–6, where Diomedes’ helmet shines due to the intervention of Athene:

[Athena] made weariless fire blaze from his shield and helmet, like that star of the waning summer who beyond all stars rises bathed in the ocean stream to glitter in brilliance.

A similar scene is found related to Achilles in Iliad 18.205–14:

A good description of this feature is found in the Homer Hymns. See, e.g., how Demeter is depicted at Keleos’ house (Hymn to Demeter, 187–88 and 277–80):

But the goddess walked to the threshold: and her head reached the roof and she filled the doorway with a heavenly radiance. [. . .] Beauty spread round about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders, so that the strong house was filled with brightness as with lightning.

Also Apollo is described in a similar way when he enters into his temple in Delphos for the first time (Hymn to Apollo 440–45):

Then, like a star at noonday, the lord, far-working Apollo, leaped from the ship: flashes of fire flew from him thick and their brightness reached to heaven. He entered into his shrine between priceless tripods, and there made a flame to flare up bright, showing forth the splendor of his shafts, so that their radiance filled all Crisa.

54 Translation of Iliad and Odyssey passages are given according to The Chicago Homer (Lattimore’s and Huddleston’s, respectively): http://homer.library.northwestern.edu/.

55 See M. L. West, The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth (Oxford, 2003), 113–16. West compares it to other gods from the ancient Near East. The examples from the Homer Hymns adduced here are taken from this book. However, the following translations are given according to Hugh G. Evelyn-White.
In consideration of these passages, the formula ἰσόθεος φῶς must be reexamined. Although it has been interpreted as “godlike man,” it very likely means “the godlike shining one, he who shines like gods.” A complement to this occurrence is Menelaus’ speech in Iliad 1796–105, in which he is afraid of attacking Hector, considered a superior warrior:

Τρόις δ’ ἐνθάδε πάντας ἀγεὶ κορυφαίολος Ἑκτωρ. ἅλλα τί μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός; ὡσπότ’ ἀνήρ ἐκλήθη πρὸς δαίμονα φωτὶ μάγχεσθαι ἢν κε θεὸς τιμῇ, τάχα ὡς μέγα πήμα κυλῆσθη. τὸ μ’ οὗ τις Δαναῶν νεμεσθῆται ὡς κεν ἰδίατι Ἑκτωρι χωρῆσαι, ἐπεὶ ἔκ θεοὺς πολεμίζει. εὶ δέ ποι Παιάντος γε βοήν ἁγάθῳ πυθίσμην, ἄμφω κ’ αὐτοῖς ἰόντες ἐπιμνησάμεθα χάρμης καὶ πρὸς δαίμονα περ, εἰ ποι ἐρυσαὶμήκε τεκνὸν Πηλείθ τὸν Ἀχίλη: κακὸν δὲ κε φέρτατο εὖ.

Hektor of the shining helm leads all of the Trojans here. Then why does his helm own heart within me debate this? When a man, in the face of divinity, would fight with another whom some god honours, the big disaster rolls sudden upon him. Therefore, let no Danaan seeing it hold it against me if I give way before Hektor, who fights from God. Yet if somewhere I could only get some word of Aias of the great war cry, we two might somehow go, and keep our spirit of battle even in the face of divinity, if we might win the body for Peleïd Achilles. It would be our best among evils.

In this soliloquy, Menelaus is afraid of fighting with Hector because the Trojan hero fights with divine aid. Then in vv. 98–99 he states: ὥσπότ’ ἀνήρ ἐκλήθη πρὸς δαίμονα φωτὶ μάγχεσθαι ὡς κε θεὸς τιμῇ, τάχα ὡς μέγα πήμα κυλῆσθη, “When a man [= ἀνήρ], in the face of divinity, would fight with another man [= φῶς] whom some god honours, the big disaster rolls sudden upon him.” Note that here Hector is clearly equated to this φῶς, who is honored by a god, and Menelaus to the plain ἀνήρ, who cannot beat his great adversary.

In conclusion, what happened to φῶς is that at one moment the use of this word was restricted to epic verses and later misinterpreted by Greek speakers. Nevertheless, because of its literary significance, φῶς was reused with its apparent sense “hero, man.” According to this consideration, the etymology φῶς < *bʰ₁dh₂- t-s, “shining,” is a valid one.

Leaving aside the Greek word, the interpretation suggested for the Phrygian theonym provides a suitable scenario which aligns with an Anatolian divinity. Indeed, common epithets of the Storm-God in Hittite texts are the adjectives πιḫαιμ(m)-, πιḫαμ(m)-, and πιḫασῖςι-, derived from a Luwian word piḫa- (attested in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription KARATEPE 1 §52).56 According to CHD s.v. piḫaim(m)-,57 since sometimes these adjectives are placed in juxtaposition, their meaning must be different; but this distinction cannot be substantiated because all forms share origin and context. CHD then compares their meaning with the difference between English “joyful” and “joyous,” and interprets these epithets as “imbued with splendor/might.” Therefore, Phrygian Βας is very likely a calque of the Luwian epithets used to qualify Tarhunt.

At this point, it must be said that S. Bernd-Ersöz suggested that evidence existed for a Storm-God in Phrygian monuments,58 and that this god was called

56 F. Starke, Untersuchungen ur Stammbildung des kelischrift-luwischen Nomens (Wiesbaden, 1990), 103–106, suggested that piḫa- was a derivative from the PIE root *vrddhi-, “shine” (LIv 68–69), a vrddhi formation where Eichner’s Law worked: *vrddhi-. Although some people still operate with this etymology (see, e.g., H. C. Melchert, “Naming Practices in Second- and First-Millennium Western Anatolia,” in Personal Names in Ancient Anatolia, ed. R. Parker [Oxford, 2013], 34, or D. Schürr, “Zur Herkunft des Pegasos,” Graecolatina et Orientalia 35–36 [2014]: 114–16), Eichner’s Law is discussed and, consequently, Starke’s proposal is not accepted by all scholars. Thus, A. Kloekhorst, Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon (Leiden, 2008), 674–76, claimed that a new etymology is to be found in other PIE verbal roots, and that the meaning of Luwian piḫa- must be established in the light of Phoenician 핏, “power, strength,” the equivalent of “FULGUR”-Kalda /piḫas/a- in the Phoenician version of the bilingual inscription KARATEPE 1. However, this is not so easy, since the Luwian rendering of this inscriptions shows many inaccuracies (see I. Yakubovich, “Phoenician and Luwian in Early Iron Age Cilicia,” Anatolian Studies 65 [2015]: 46–48), and the expected equivalent for Phoenician 핏, “might” is muwatta- (Melchert, pers. Comm., February 24, 2016). Recently, I. Yakubovich (“The degree of comparison in Luwian,” Indogermanische Forschungen 119 [2015]: 157 n. 5) considered that the cultural term piḫa-, “predetermined with FULGUR ‘lightning’, is akin in its meaning to the Akkadian melammu-, the mystic aura of gods, heroes, and kings.” This Akkadian concept is also equated to the brightness of the Greek gods by West, East Face of Helicon, 113–16.


Atas.59 Her argument starts with the fact that sometimes the so-called Phrygian idol, a schematic human depiction related to the Mother-Goddess, has another adjoining representation. According to her, the second idol could stand for the Phrygian Superior Male god (likely the Anatolian Storm-God) in the light of the mini-relief of the Mother-Goddess from Gordion, where also a bull, icon of the Storm-God, was represented (a common Anatolian iconographic motive). She suggested his name was Atas, arguing that, in Hittite, atta-, “father,” is sometimes used “for the Father of the gods or Father god,” and she considered that the Phrygian Atas meant “father,” too. Nevertheless, no occurrence of the Phrygian Atas happens in a context where a god is expected, and it is well attested as an anthroponym both in Phrygian and Greek inscriptions from Phrygia. Atas is the dedicatee of the inscription W-10,60 since it occurs in the dative Atai. However, in the Phrygian corpus, many inscriptions are dedicated to men, and even the OPhr. M-01a, engraved on a façade (a kind of monument dedicated to the Mother-Goddess), is dedicated to the king Midas almost two centuries after his death. Moreover, despite the common etymology for this Lallname (the Anatolian word for “father”), in Phrygian it is never used as a common noun, while the inherited IE word ph2tr-´, “father” (NIL 554–562), is twice attested in nominative plural (πατερης 48 and its syncopated variant πατερες 130) denoting “parents.” Consequently, perhaps for Phrygian speakers, it was a meaningless personal name as other Lallnames, like Baba (M-01b and G-121) or Tatas (G-04). Despite these considerations, her identification between a Phrygian Storm-God and some representations remain valid,61 and only the name given to this deity must be changed.

As a concluding remark, the relation between Βας and Τι-, the Phrygian Zeus,62 must be explained. Indeed, it is known that the Anatolian Storm-God was worshiped as Ζες Βροντων, “Zeus Thunderer,” according to Greek inscriptions from Roman Phrygia.63 It means that Tarhunt was assimilated to Ζες. But what is the place of Βας here? The most economical explanation is to consider that the syncretism between the Anatolian Storm-God Tarhunt and Ζες, his Greek counterpart, also happened between Tarhunt and Τι-, the Phrygian Zeus, in the beginning of the first millennium BC. Therefore, Βας and Τι- can be considered two epikleseis of the Phrygian Superior Male god. This elucidation explains two features related to Βας and Τι- in the Phrygian curses.

The first one is the presence of Βας in the impreg- apodosis of NPbr. 128: με δεδομεν ζεην λος τιπετηκμενος ειτου ας Βας ινεοπουν κε. Here, the expected god is Τι- (Tarhunt in the Luwian equivalent) instead of the two theonyms Βας, “the Shining one,” and ινεοπουν, “the Keeper.” So these two designations can be considered two epithets denoting the ambivalence of this god: Βας as the Anatolian Storm-God and ινεοπουν as the inherited Phrygian Zeus, worshiped in a similar way to Greek Ζες πατηρ or Latin Iuppiter. Moreover, the presence of two contiguous epikleseis of the same god is common in Anatolia from Hittite times to the Roman Imperial period. See, e.g., Δι Βροντων κε Σαουαδοδ ευχη, “vow for Zeus the Thunderer and the Sabadious” (SEG 8.1307.A, from Avdan, near Dorylaion), or Δι Περσοων κε Βροντων κε Αστραπονε τε ευχη

59 Since the Phrygian alphabet does not mark geminate consonants and Greek occurrences of this personal name are written as Atas (including two Hellenistic inscriptions from Gordion, L. E. Roller, “Hellenistic Epigraphic Text from Gordion,” Anatolian Studies 37 [1987]: nos. 48 and 50; see also L. Zgusta, Kleinasiatische Personennamen [Prag, 1964; abbreviated here KPN], 106–107 § 119–9), Ara and Atai must stand for /Attas/ and /Attai/. In OPhr. texts, the nominative does not take any ending: Atas is clearly read in G-107, G-118, G-224a, G-234, and HP-111. On the other hand, there is a variant of this personal name: Atas M-01a, W-08, G-123, HP-103, HP-104, HP-105, HP-106, HP-107, HP-108. It is also attested in Greek as Αττης (see KPN, 107–108 § 119–10).

60 Still a very obscure text incised on the wall of a rock: Atai edae lel/rapo | vιτε άτεων αταιοι | αλυς οι/ετος das.

61 I.e., the double idols and the bull from Gordion. Also, the strong possibility that the statue found in Kerkenes Dağ represents the Storm-God must be considered. On this find, see C. M. Draycott and G. D. Summers, Sculpture and Inscriptions from the Monumental Entrance to the Palaialic Complex at Kerkenes Dağ Turkey (Chicago, 2008), 10–21, who considered among other possibilities (i.e., a ruler or a goddess) that “it is also possible that the figure represents an elusive Phrygian god.” The mace, which this statue bears, can be equated to a common attribute of Tarhunt.

62 The name of the Phrygian Zeus is attested in the accusative Τιων < *dium (parallel to Greek Ζητων), in the genitive Τιως < *dium (Greek ΔιΟς, Διως) and in the dative Τι, Τιν < *dinei (Greek Διν, Δινι), its etymology and inflection where identified by Lubotsky, “Phrygian Zeus,” 230.

"vow for Zeus of the Persians and the Thunderer and the Lightner" (from Nacoleia). 64

The second feature explained by this interpretation is the relation between the god Βας and βεκος, "bread." Indeed, the association of the Storm-God with crops and food is a common topos in the ancient Near East. It is explicit, e.g., in the Hittite myth of the missing Storm-God (CTH 325): [dIM-aš att aš DINGIR3MEŠ-aš tarš(i)kkezi | DUMU-YA=wa=kan [andan NU.GÁL] | [š]ACT=ar=an=za | nu=wa=ez ḫūman ūšu pēdaš] | [ba]lk in ʾimmarnin ʾalḥantīn [n mannī]| ṣṭin ʾṣpiyatarr=ā pēdaš, “[The Storm God’s father] said: ‘My son [is not there]. He became angry and [carried off] everything good. He carried off grain, animal fecundity, abundance, plenty, and satiation.” 65 It is even found in a similar apodosis to the Phrygian ones, in the inscription from Samʾal devoted to Hadad by Panamuwa I (first half of the eighth century BC): [ʔ] · ytn · lb · ṭkl · b[r]g, “and may [Hadad] not give to him to eat because of his rage.” This relation, explained by the vital importance of rainwater for irrigation purposes, is also found in the Greek inscriptions from Phrygia, where Zeus is invoked, e.g., as Ἀναδότης, “causing the plants to sprout,” or Ἑκατοστίτης, “who makes crops bear a hundredfold.” 66 It is even more explicit in the following hexametric prayer to Zeus from Dorylaion (AD 175):

[Zeus . . . wet the earth, that she become heavy with fruit and flower with ears of corn. This I, Meteodoros, beg of you, Zeus son of Kronos, as I perform delightful sacrifice on your altars.] 67

In conclusion, considering the parallels of the Phrygian imprecations adduced here, where Bas occupies the same position of the Luwian Tarhunt or the Aramaic Hadad, the first occurrence of this god in the Luwian city of Tyana and the suggested etymology, shows that the god Βας fits very well as the Phrygian Storm-God, and that his name can be easily interpreted as a calque of Luwian epithets for this deity.

65 Translated by H. A. Hoffner, Hittite Myths (Atlanta, 1998), 21.
66 I borrow this example form the useful compilation of the cults in Phrygia Epiktetos in the Roman Imperial period presented by M. Ricl during the last Phrygian Conference (“Cults of Phrygian Epiktetos in the Roman Imperial Period,” forthcoming in Tsetskhladze, ed., Phrygian Lands Over Time). I would to thank her kindness in sending me a draft of this paper prior to its publication.