

Homer and the Ionian Epic Tradition: Some Phonic and Phonological Evidence against an Aeolic 'Phase'



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Language, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Sep., 1984), 657-658.

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lated to the central issue, e.g. whether a sequence of postvocalic resonant + laryngeal yielded a double resonant in Germanic and Hittite, and whether a Palaic graphic *g* can represent PIE $*H_2$. In fact, though, these latter issues seem only indirectly related, in that they concern the development of the PIE laryngeals.

L's approach is necessarily polemic. He examines the evidence, i.e. the relevant forms in various languages that have been cited and analysed by others with regard to the questions mentioned above; and he attempts to evaluate the success of the particular analyses put forward for these forms. In general, he is able to find questionable features in these analyses, and he offers alternative accounts which are more in line with his hypothesis of a laryngeal merger. Sometimes he is quite successful, and is probably correct in claiming that the quality of the evidence has been overstated, as with the notion that Palaic *g* continued PIE $*H_2$ in some words. Often, though, his alternative accounts are less than convincing, and create more problems than they solve.

For example, L relies on a putative dissimilation of $*x^w$ (= $*H_3$) to $*x$ (= $*H_2$) / — ... w ... , on numerous occasions (e.g., p. 25 re La. *auris*, Gk. *oûs* 'ear'; p. 26 re Skt. *aviḥ*, La. *ovis* 'sheep'; p. 27 re Gk. *pôu* 'flock', Skt. *pāyu* 'protector', and re PIE $*ak'$; p. 29 re Arm. *aganim* 'I dress', even though dissimilation is usually a somewhat rare and sporadic process—and in this case makes sense only if $*H_3$, the *o*-coloring laryngeal, really was phonetically something like $[x^w]$, a claim which itself requires independent justification. Similarly, L often posits extra morphological steps and unattested forms where a recognition of the triple representation of $*\partial$ in Greek would simplify matters considerably. A case in point is his discussion of verbs like Gk. *emēō* 'vomit' and parallel forms (including the *ane*- stem of the isolated noun *ánemos* 'wind'). L assumes that Gk. inherited pairs of athematic and thematic present stems, e.g. $*wema-$ (with *a* from $*\partial$) vs. $*wemH-e-$ (with prevocalic $*H \rightarrow \emptyset$ eventually), and that the more productive thematic type was re-analysed as athematic, i.e. $*wemH-e- \rightarrow *weme-$, replacing the old athematic stem (p. 43); but if we assume that $*wem\partial-$ $\rightarrow *weme-$ directly, we avoid the need for such a poorly motivated re-analysis.

Frequently also, L falls back on the argument that 'there is nothing to prove definitely' that a particular form is related to another, or derived

from a particular pre-form (e.g. p. 45 re Arm. *di-k'* 'gods' and Gk. *theós*). While relatively few etymological connections can ever be viewed as absolutely certain, this line of argumentation becomes extremely weak when over-used.

L has succeeded in demonstrating that it is possible to construct an account of the development of the PIE laryngeals in which $*H_1$ $*H_2$ $*H_3$ all merged in non-Anatolian IE. However, he has not shown that this account is preferable in any significant way to the standard view. L relies too much on ad-hoc explanations of troublesome forms—so that even though he is undoubtedly correct in saying that not all the evidence put forward in support of the standard view is valid, one is still left with a residue that is hard to explain away convincingly (e.g. Gk. *ánemos*). Nonetheless, this most interesting and thought-provoking book certainly merits the attention of serious Indo-Europeanists in general—especially those with an interest in laryngealistic matters, who will find here important challenges to many popularly held views. [BRIAN D. JOSEPH, *Ohio State University*.]

Homer and the Ionian epic tradition:

Some phonic and phonological evidence against an Aeolic 'phase'. By D. GARY MILLER. (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 38.) Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1982. Pp. xvi, 192. öS 480.

M here presents a discussion of the data bearing on the issue of whether 'the [Greek] epics were originally composed in Aeolic and later translated into Ionic' (p. 9), thus going through a so-called 'Aeolic phase' before reaching their now-familiar form. The central problem is thus one of the development of Greek epic—a question properly in the domain of the Classics, some would maintain; but M brings to bear upon it the full resources of the linguist schooled also in the Classics, i.e. a true classical linguist (with equal emphasis on each member of the epithet). As his title indicates, M uses the data to argue against the postulation of a separate Aeolic phase—though importantly, he does not deny that interaction occurred between concurrently developing Aeolic and Ionic traditions.

M argues his case in two separate parts. In the first, Chs. 1–3 rehearse commonly held views on formulaicity in Greek epic, the origins

of Greek meter etc., leading up to the impressive and most interesting Ch. 4, 'Phonic properties of epic formulas'. Here M develops a particularly ingenious argument against an Aeolic phase, based on the phonic properties of Homeric formulae: he shows that many vocalic echoes in phrases, e.g. $\bar{e} \dots \bar{e} \# \bar{e} \dots \bar{e}$ in *hégēsai* 'Athēnē' 'Athena led' (Il. 22.247), or the several involving *sēma* 'burial mound', depend on specific innovations found in Ionic but not Aeolic dialects (e.g. $*\bar{a} \rightarrow \bar{e}$ in *Athēnē* and *sēma*).

The second part of the book is a series of studies on 'the phonological history of some epic forms' (xiii). Specifically, M examines several of the trickiest problems in Greek historical phonology: the reduction of *-ss-* to *-s-* in Homer and in Aeolic, and especially the question of dative plurals in *-essi* (Ch. 5); assibilation of *t* to *s* before *i* (Ch. 6); loss of initial and postconsonantal *w* (Ch. 7); and quantitative metathesis (Chs. 8–9). The individual discussions are united by the way M uses the data to argue against the hypothesis of an Aeolic phase. Some of his claims are controversial, especially regarding quantitative metathesis, but all are certainly of interest to the classical linguist. M's discussions are well-documented, and Ch. 8 contains a nice survey of the inscriptional evidence concerning quantitative metathesis from all the Ionic territories.

This book is necessarily addressed to an audience of both linguists and classicists. In general, M succeeds in meeting the needs of both camps, partly through the presentation of alternative explanations of facts: thus, since some readers might take exception to his view of forms like nom. pl. *epartées* (Od. 8.151) 'ready-equipped' as resulting from the 'relaxing' of the contraction rule deriving 'normal' *eparteis* from underlying */eparté-es/* (p. 140). M shows that a more traditional explanation in terms of analogy (stem *eparté-*, as evident in acc. pl. *eparté-as*, plus the usual nom. pl. ending *-es*) produces the same results; he concludes that 'either way one chooses to describe the facts, [contracted] *eparteis* is the unmarked form and [uncontracted] *epartées* marked for poeticality' (141).

The greatest failing of this book is its style. All too often, the major point of a particular section is obscure, and the reader has to wade through some fairly difficult discussion before finding an explicit statement of the problem at hand. A case in point is §§85–93 (on Homeric evidence concerning the loss of *w* and quanti-

tative metathesis), the main point of which is given in §94, after all the data and discussion. This criticism applies to the book over-all, since M's ultimate goal is stated clearly for the first time only at the end of Ch. 2 (p. 34). As a result, it seems best to read the conclusions to Part One (pp. 70–71) and to Part Two (Ch. 10) before the rest of the book; these are very convincing summaries, and set the stage for the problems to be discussed better than the actual introductory material does. In addition, the numerous references to M's forthcoming book (*Phonological history of Ancient Greek*) are a bit annoying, since M often merely summarizes linguistically significant facts and forms, in anticipation of fuller treatment in this yet to be completed work.

All in all, though, M has written a perceptive and provocative book, which classicists and classical linguists alike should read and note. M shows well how a real understanding of linguistics, and of what linguists do, can be of value in the Classics and can contribute much to the analysis and appreciation of Homeric diction. Finally, M's discussion of the phonic complexities of Homeric formulae will interest all linguists, but especially those interested in matters of linguistic artistry and iconicity in language. [BRIAN D. JOSEPH, *Ohio State University*.]

The grammatical papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt: Contributions to the study of the 'ars grammatica' in Antiquity. By ALFONS WOUTERS. (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren, Jaargang XLI, 92.) Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1979. Pp. 333, with 21 plates.

Although the Greek grammatical tradition was thoroughly explored by 19th century philologists—who left us, e.g., the outstanding corpus of the *Grammatici graeci* (Leipzig, 1867–1910)—very little work has been done on the grammatical literature written on papyri. Indeed almost exclusive attention has been given to grammarians like Dionysios Thrax, Apollonios Dyscolos, and Herodianos—whose writings constitute the bulk of the three parts of the *Grammatici graeci*—and to Tryphon, whose work has been edited by A. de Velsen (*Try-*