

## The Etymology of Greek πάλαι

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Etymological dictionaries of Greek have so far agreed with remarkable unanimity that πάλαι is a derivative of a stem containing an initial labio-velar *\*kʷl-* and can therefore be cognate with Greek τῆλε 'far' with an easy transference of distance in space to distance in time. To the same base can be assigned Skt. *caramá-* 'extreme'<sup>1</sup>). No reason to question this theory existed before the decipherment of Linear B in 1952.

However, it became clear at an early stage in our work on this that under some circumstances the I-E labio-velar stops were represented by a series of signs separate from velars, labials and dentals (e.g. *qo-u-* = *|gʷou-|* = *βου-*, *-qe* = *|kʷe|* = *τε*); the transcription *q* was therefore employed for this series. But no sign for *qa* was at first identified, though there seemed to be two signs with the value *pa*. It would have been possible to identify *pa*<sub>2</sub> (no.16) as the missing *qa* on the basis of words such as *qa-si-re-u* corresponding to classical βασιλεύς. But the use of *pa*<sub>1</sub> to write words believed to have labials of labio-velar origin seemed to establish that the elimination of labio-velars before *a* had already taken place. Thus the same *pa*<sub>1</sub> used for the first syllable of *pa-te* = πατήρ was also employed for *pa-ra-jo* = παλαιός and *pa-sa*, *pa-te*, *pa-si*, etc. = πᾶσα, πάντες, πα(ν)σι. It was only at a later stage that the truth emerged: that *pa*<sub>2</sub> was the missing *qa*, as could be established by such series as *i-ro-ro-qo* = ἵπποφορβός, *ro-qe-wi-ja* = φορβεία, *ro-qa* = φορβή.

It followed from this discovery that the examples of *pa*<sub>1</sub> representing *\*kʷ* or *\*kʷl* (or their voiced and aspirated forms) were suspect. The etymology of πᾶς could be fairly easily revised since Meillet<sup>2</sup>) had already proposed treating this as cognate with Tokharian A *puk*, B *po*, plural *ponta*. But the equation of *pa-ra-jo* with παλαιός now appeared doubtful, and we began to wonder if the meaning was sound. It was not until new texts became available that it became clear that *pa-ra-jo* and *ne-wo* were opposites. The clearest evidence is PY Sa 787 *to-sa pa-ra-ja we-je-ke-a*<sub>2</sub> compared

<sup>1</sup>) E. Boisacq, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque; H. Frisk, Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch.

<sup>2</sup>) In S. Levi, Fragments de Textes Koutchéens, p. 38.

with Sa 843 *to-sa we-je-ke-a<sub>2</sub> ne-wa*, in both cases with totals of wheels. Since *ne-wa* is plainly */newa/* (= *νέα*), it follows that *pa-ra-ja* must be */palaiā/* (= *παλαιά*); therefore it is not the identification but the etymology which is at fault.

But although this establishes the meaning of Mycenaean */palaios/* as 'not new', it was not immediately clear what the exact sense might be. J.T. Killen<sup>3)</sup> has now shown in his discussion of the relevant texts that effectively Mycenaean *pa-ra-ja* is interchangeable with *pe-ru-si-nwa* = */perusinwa/* (= *περυσινά*) 'last year's'. This applies equally to the descriptions of women in the Knossos Ak tablets, where the abbreviations *pe* and *pa* are shown to be mutually exclusive variants conditioned by the scribal hand. They are therefore to be regarded as abbreviations of the same pair of adjectives. This suggests that the sense of */palaios/* in Mycenaean may have been not 'ancient', but 'of the recent past'. Is there any evidence from alphabetic Greek which bears on the semantics of *πάλαι* and *παλαιός*?

An analysis of *πάλαι* in Homer shows that the predominant sense is: 'for a period of past time extending up to the present', 'for some time now', 'long since'. It is noticeable that the length of the period of time does not normally extend beyond a life-time, and may be much shorter. For instance *ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἔοντα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ* (*Il.* 16.441, cf. 22.179) can hardly refer to a fate existing before his birth. *Τηλέμαχος δ' ἄρα μιν (sc. Ὀδυσσῆα) πάλαι ἤδεεν ἔνδον ἔοντα* *Od.* 23.29 refers to knowledge of only very recent standing. Perhaps most significant is a passage in which *πάλαι* is actually opposed to *πάρως*:

*νῦν δὲ δὴ ἐγγύθι μοι θάνατος κακός, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἀνευθεν,  
οὐδ' ἀλέη· ἧ γάρ ῥα πάλαι τό γε φίλτερον ἦεν  
Ζηνί τε καὶ Διὸς υἱὲ ἐκηβόλω, οἷ μὲ πάρως γε  
πρόφρονες εἰρύατο. Od. 22.300–3*

Here *πάλαι* clearly means 'in the recent past' as opposed to 'long ago', 'formerly', which is expressed by *πάρως*.

It is doubtful whether *πάλαι* ever means 'at some point of past time', since it is used in expressions which imply continuation up to the present time. For instance:

*τῷ κεν δὴ πάλαι ἄμμες ἐπανσάμεθα πτολέμοιο,  
Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσαντες ἐυκτίμενον πτολίεθρον. Il. 21.432–3*

<sup>3)</sup> *Acta Mycenaea*, Salamanca, 1972, pp. 433–440, esp. p. 440.

This refers not just to a past point at which they would have stopped fighting, but to the period of peace which would have extended up to the present. This is even clearer where the verb is in the perfect tense: *ἀνδρὸς μὲν τόδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος Il. 7.89*; in this case the following line makes it clear that the period since the man's death is not too long, since he was killed by Hector. The formula is then copied in *Il. 23.331 ἢ τευ σῆμα βροτοῖο πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος*, where the date could well be the indeterminate past. But in all other cases where the length of time can be roughly determined, the period is relatively short. There is of course nothing surprising in a word meaning 'in the immediate past' developing into a general adverb indicating past time.

The same remarks apply to the Homeric uses of *παλαιός*. It is used of persons to mean 'of advanced age', 'old' (e.g. *Il. 14.108, 23.788, Od. 13.432*, etc.). It is used twice of things which are not new, but not so old as to be useless: *νῆες . . . νέαι ἤδὲ παλαιαί Od. 2.293, πίθοι οἴνοιο παλαιοῦ ἠδυνότοιο Od. 2.340*. More often it means 'belonging to a previous period of time', 'former': e.g. *ἀσπᾶσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἴκοντο Od. 23.296*, where Odysseus at last takes Penelope to bed, and the bed is not ancient, because we know that Odysseus made it himself. But here again the extension from the immediate to the more remote past is visible: e.g. *παρ' Ἴλον σῆμα παλαιοῦ Δαρδανίδαο Il. 11.166* (cf. *11.372*), and actually qualified by *πάρος*: *κέρδεά θ', οἷ' οὐ πῶ τιν' ἀκούεμεν οὐδὲ παλαιῶν | τάων αἰ πάρος ἦσαν ἐϋπλοκαμίδες Ἀχαιαί Od. 2.118–9*.

These examples could be paralleled from later Greek, where *πάλαι* and *παλαιός* could always be used of the immediate past, especially if it extended up to the present. This investigation is necessary to demonstrate that this sense, now proved to exist in Mycenaean, may have been the original one, from which the more general sense developed. For if we adopt this as a hypothesis, we can now offer an alternative theory to supply an etymology.

The structure of *πάλαι* closely resembles the adverb *χαμαί*; both may be in origin locatives of a substantive having a reduced grade in the first syllable. Thus we might on formal grounds attach *πάλαι* to the disyllabic base *\*pelə<sub>2</sub>*, which underlies such words as *πέλας*, *πελάζω*, *πίλναμαι* and *πλησίον*. The vowel of the initial syllable follows the pattern of *τάλας*, *τλήμων*, etc. The obvious objection to this has always been the belief that *πάλαι* means 'distant' in time, but as shown above 'near in past time' is theoretically adequate as the basic meaning. The fact that the other words refer to spatial

nearness is no obstacle, for spatial and temporal relationships are regularly expressed by the same word (e.g. *πρό*). The only supposition that has to be made is that *πάλαι* was always restricted to the recent *past* and could not apply to the near future; once it had been specialised in this way, then the development of the more general sense 'in the past' without limit of time would arise naturally. It is interesting to see how rare that sense is in Homer, where the great majority of examples refer to relatively recent periods extending up to the time of the utterance. But as usual, Homeric usage contains the seeds of later development and stands mid-way between the Mycenaean and the classical meanings<sup>4</sup>).

### Gr. *δειδέχατο* und idg. *\*dék̑ti, dék̑toi*

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*Für Hans Schwabl*

[Die athematisch reduplizierten Formen und das *nu*-Präsens der Wurzel *\*dék̑-* bei Homer mit den Bedeutungen „(jdm. einen Becher) überreichen, (einen Gott) verehren; kämpfen“ werden als Kausativaorist bzw. faktitives *nu*-Präsens bestimmt. Da ved. *dāśnóti* und *dāśti* in ihren Bedeutungen auffallende Übereinstimmungen zu den griechischen Kausativbildungen zeigen, muß idg. *\*dék̑-ti* gegenüber *\*dék̑-toi* faktitive Funktion zugeschrieben werden. Der im Griechischen erhaltene athematische Kausativaorist sowie die übertragenen Bedeutungen im Kausativ sind möglicherweise indogermanischen Alters. Als idg. Wurzelbedeutung wird „(in die Hand) nehmen; wahrnehmen“ angesetzt].

Die epischen Formen *δειδέχατ(ο) δείδεκτ(ο) δεικνόμενος δεικάνοντο* (Ilias), *δειδέχεται δειδίσκετο -όμενος* (Odyssee) „begrüßen, willkommenen“ (,greet, welcome‘ LS) werden allgemein zu *δέχομαι*

<sup>4</sup>) I should like to record the circumstances in which this article was written. The basic idea occurred to me when I was at the British School of Archaeology in Athens in October-November 1973 on a British Academy grant. Its final writing up was completed while Cecil H. and Ida Greene visiting professor at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, in July 1974. I should like to thank all those who, at both places and in some cases unwittingly, helped me. Dr. J.T. Killen has, as always, played an important part in the development of this idea.