

lied after the vessel was manufactured suggests the possibility—indeed, even probability—that the jar was a multi-purpose vessel of the kind that a merchant might keep at hand to dispense small quantities of bulk products.³⁹

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³⁹ This hypothesis is supported by the jar from Dor discussed in the previous note. The likelihood is not very great that the label represents the reuse of a jar that originally had contained some other substance, since a vessel of this sort probably was not valuable enough to have warranted cleaning and reuse; furthermore, it might have been difficult to remove residual substances and odours satisfactorily.

Homer's linguistic forebears*

M. L. West¹ has recently presented a magisterial account of the history of Greek epic in which Aeolic phases and other entities are assumed. His account is the more impressive because it combines linguistic features skilfully handled with an account of the thematic development of epic, and also specifies at what stages the various linguistic features entered the tradition. West assumes an Aeolic phase, or phases, of heroic epic composition, and accounts for the presence of Aeolic forms (162): 'It has usually been inferred that they are just a residue left after Ionian poets had adapted an Aeolic poetic language into their own dialect as far as it would go. This is, I have no doubt, the correct interpretation.' I think it is not.²

One of two methodological preliminaries are in order. The question of Aeolisms in Homer is a linguistic question, and must be solved or resolved in the first instance in linguistic terms.³ If, after examining the data, one is minded to identify certain elements as Aeolic (or Lesbian or Doric or Attic), one should not thereby conclude that the forms in question derive from an Aeolic epic or tradition of epic poetry otherwise unattested. Such a conclusion seems premature if not preposterous, and one has many questions that must be answered before according one's assent. Rather one will first seek the most economical explanation for linguistic variety among the many that are available.

Secondly, if one does assume an Aeolic phase of epic composition, one is—it seems to me—obliged to provide an accounting for all linguistic aspects of the supposed Aeolic epic. That is to say, most hypotheses of an Aeolic phase of epic composition are so vague and imprecise that positive evidence abounds, since it is

* I am grateful for the comments of a reader which have improved my presentation, particularly as regards the table of forms to be reconstructed for earlier phases of Greek epic poetry.

¹ M. L. West, 'The rise of the Greek epic', *JHS* cviii (1988) 151-72.

² My arguments against an Aeolic epic, of a purely linguistic nature, can be found in 'Επιστιμονική Έπετηρίς της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Ἀριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης xiv (1975) 133-47. Cf. also D. Gary Miller, *Homer and the Ionian epic tradition* (Innsbruck 1982); and G. Horrocks, *Minos xx-xxii* (1987) 269-94 for a measured and skilful treatment of the subject.

³ I note that P. Wathélet, *AC* I (1981) 833 n. 65 states that only by 'la rencontre de données de divers ordres' will the history of epic be clarified. I concur, but would insist that all the data be examined separately and be securely based before one proceeds to global conclusions. I do not feel that this precondition has been met in the matter in question.

sought, and negative evidence is never sought or adduced.⁴ Again if one assumes an Aeolic phase of the epic language, one cannot conclude from that language anything about the contents of the epic or the locations in which it was practised unless there is legendary or historical evidence supporting the former and archaeological evidence to confirm the latter. Again insufficient rigor is applied in these matters, and scholars are apt to assume that a (vaguely defined) Aeolic proves a (partially delineated) thematic content performed in several (archaeologically and historically unsupported) locations. In what follows I restrict myself to a consideration of the linguistic evidence alone, while pointing out here and there what I consider weaknesses in other parts of the argument. I cannot disprove the hypothesis of an Aeolic epic, nor will I be able to prove my own contentions, but I hope to indicate that the theory of an Aeolic epic is unlikely on linguistic grounds and that a better explanation for the presence of non-Ionic forms in Homer's poems is available.

A descriptive grammar of the Homeric dialect will display a complexity greater than that of grammars of other forms of Greek. In the section devoted to phonology, for instance, there will have to be included some sort of statement which reveals that a number of words have two prosodic habits: μέγα can appear with a long initial segment or a short (or at least allows short vowels to appear as long in arsis before it), and δτι can appear with one τ or two. The section on morphology will incorporate the facts that: the dative plural of consonant stems shows both -σι and -εσσι; the aorist of καλέω can appear with one σ or two; the thematic present infinitive can end in -ειν or -έμεν. In the Homeric lexicon many words will have to be marked to show that: they can appear either with a long vowel or a short, as in δνομα; they do or do not allow hiatus, as in άναξ. A grammar of the Homeric dialect, then, will be phonologically and morphologically more complex than other grammars, to such an extent, indeed, as probably to be unique. When one considers, though, that all utterances composed in the Homeric dialect had to conform metrically to the exigencies of the dactylic hexameter, one sees immediately the justification for the otherwise inexplicable allomorphy.

A descriptive grammar requires no labels save those imposed by the system of analysis chosen and the language analyzed.⁵ Scholars long ago noted, however, that the Homeric language is basically Ionic, its grammar, that is, closer to that of Herodotus than to that of Thucydides or Pindar. This fact, in grammatical terms, makes it possible for the grammarian, if he should so wish, to utilize a pre-existing grammar of Ionic as the basis for his Homeric grammar, noting in the latter only those cases in which Homer diverges from Ionic usage. Why anyone should want to do this systematically is unclear, but P. Chantraine displays a propensity in this direction, particularly in the early chapters of his *Grammaire homérique*.⁶ It is with the introduction of an Ionic grammar that classifications arise and explanations appear. Thus 'metrically lengthened' forms make their appearance because they can be interpreted as lengthen-

⁴ One reason why Aeolisms are easily assumed is that Ionic has developed and diverged from earlier forms of Greek more than most dialects, and hence Aeolisms, if assumed, are very likely to correspond at least metrically with earlier, non-Ionic, stages of the language. Aeolic is more conservative of older forms, and thus earlier stages of epic are inevitably going to appear more Aeolic.

⁵ Such a descriptive grammar is as yet lacking, as noted by B. Forssman in J. Latacz (ed.), *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung* (= Colloquium Rauricum II, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1991) 287 n. 104.

⁶ P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* I, (Paris 1959).

ings of Ionic words;⁷ diektasis labels a class of words which seem to be strung out or extended forms of their colloquial counterparts.⁸ In both cases the Homeric grammar will include rules which operate on the colloquial form to produce the Homeric. This is probably the simplest solution to many divergences from Ionic usage, and it probably fairly well matches Homer's own intuition about his language. In other cases of divergence from contemporary Ionic no such solution is possible, and simplification is attempted in another way. $-\epsilon\sigma\sigma$, $-\xi\mu\epsilon\nu(\alpha)$ cannot be viewed as deviations or extensions of Ionic rules (though $\xi\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha$ can), for nothing similar occurs in Ionic. Simplification here, if simplification it be, is attained by positing a grammar of Aeolic in which such forms actually do occur, and including in the Homeric grammar an instruction to refer to the Aeolic grammar at certain points. This solution is not so appealing as the first one, and may or may not—probably not, I should think—correspond to Homer's own intuitions. The reader will observe that now, instead of one Homeric grammar which will easily incorporate polymorphy, one needs an Ionic grammar, an Aeolic grammar, and a Homeric conversion table (or grammar) to transform the Ionic and Aeolic into acceptable Homeric. The Aeolic grammar will be used relatively infrequently.

Scholars have often concluded that something of the history of heroic epic can be inferred from the presence of Aeolisms in the text.⁹ There are a number of explanations for the Homeric state of affairs. One school holds that the epic language is the latest stage in the development of a Mycenaean koine, a koine formed of proto-Ionic and proto-Aeolic elements.¹⁰ Others hold that, though there was no corresponding linguistic koine, there was a poetic koine formed of Mycenaean (or post-Mycenaean) elements and Aeolic elements: most of the proponents of this view are literary critics and historians, not linguists.¹¹ Most linguists tend to accept the most popular and well-presented view: the epic tradition, once Aeolic, passed into the hands of Ionic bards who translated the original Aeolic into their own Ionic.¹²

⁷ Cf. my *Metrical lengthening in Homer (Incunabula Graeca 35, Rome 1969)*.

⁸ Cf. Chantraine (n. 6) 75-83.

⁹ As we shall see below, however, history is perhaps less important in this regard than nature. Classical scholars are inevitably inclined to seek the explanation of events and states in history, whereas a more nearly synchronic explanation may in many cases suffice.

¹⁰ This view, not really to be seriously maintained any more in this form, constitutes a kind of maximal hypothesis according to which all features in the Homeric poems can be mapped onto a Mycenaean grid. And by this theory therefore there can have been a straight development from Mycenaean Greek to Ionic. The major supporter of this theory is V. Georgiev, *Mycenaean studies* 125-39 (E. L. Bennett, Jr. ed., Madison 1964), *Minos* xii (1971) 361-79, par. 371. K. Strunk, *Die sogenannten Aeolismen der homerischen Sprache* (Köln 1957) approaches this view, as do all those who deny an Aeolic phase and assume a Mycenaean, in that he denies that there are any specifically Aeolic forms in the Homeric poems. By both these views the Ionic epic can be the direct lineal descendant of a Mycenaean (Achaean) epic.

¹¹ M. Parry, 'The epic technique of oral verse-making II', *HSCP* xliii (1932) 1-47 = *The making of Homeric verse* (Oxford 1971) 325-361; C. Whitman, *Homer and the heroic tradition* (Cambridge 1958) esp. 60; D.L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1959) 218-96, esp. 219-221; G.S. Kirk, *CAH* 11.2 (Cambridge 1975) 828; N.G.L. Hammond, *A history of Greece to 322 BC* (Oxford 1967) 57.

¹² The list of scholars subscribing to this view is enormous, and includes M. L. West. I cite only the most recently authoritative book-length treatments: P. Wathelet, *Les traits éoliens dans la langue de l'épopée grecque (Incunabula Graeca 37, Rome 1970)*; and M. Durante, *Sulle preistoria della tradizione*

poetica greca I (*Incunabula Graeca* 50, Rome 1971). For schematic summaries of the views of various linguists on the whole question of Mycenaean and Aeolic elements in Homer, cf. *Studia Mycenaea* (ed. A. Bartoněk) Brno 1968, 198-201. The view in its origins goes back well into the nineteenth century, as West observes, and found its most outspoken and extravagant exponent in A. Fick who attempted to recover the original Aeolic text in which the poems were first composed. For a history of scholarship on this matter cf. Wathelet 50-6.

West argues for a Greek epic which passed through a Mycenaean phase and an Aeolic one before ending up in Ionia, with Homer. In so arguing he assumes a migration of oral poets from Mycenaean centres to Thessaly, from there to Lesbos, whence the epic tradition found its final resting place in Ionia. His view is able to incorporate in a single historical development all the aspects of the poems which scholars have been minded to posit over the past century and more. For this reason it is attractive and powerful. His theory, though, posits a number of things which we do not know, and also a few things which seem unlikely, or at least unmotivated. We will leave aside the question of a Mycenaean hexametric epic, but we should, I think, be very leery of a movement of bards out of the Peloponnese and into Thessaly during LHIIC. So far as I am aware there is nothing in the archaeological record to substantiate such a move, and yet surely potters and other artisans also would have fled the Peloponnese along with the poets. Would the poets not more likely have fled, e.g., to East Attica, along with (apparently) other Mycenaean refugees? This may, though, be a trivial objection based on an argument from silence. More serious is the notion of translation. In a land in which Boeotian Hesiod sang in the epic dialect, equally Boeotian Pindar in the Doric, Coan Hippocrates wrote in Ionic, Attic Aeschylus composed his choruses in 'Doric', in a land, in short, in which literary dialect was an integral part of literary form; is it really likely that the epic would have been twice translated, once from Achaean into Aeolic, once from Aeolic into Ionic? One could argue that the notion of literary or genre dialect was unknown prior to Homer, but one must agree that all the evidence we have points in exactly the opposite direction: once established for a genre, the dialect in which it was originally formulated was as much a part of the genre as the themes treated. How would a bard have reacted when presented with a new audience? When an Achaean bard found it necessary to sing before an Aeolic audience? The chances are that he would have continued to sing as he always had done, and would have encouraged his audience to understand the older, truer, dialect. For we must remember that the Greek dialects were mutually intelligible to all Greeks in the classical period, and that during the Mycenaean age dialectal differences will have been less pronounced even than they were later on. No real effort of translation would have been required, and hence any translation seems motivated by the need of modern scholars to

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¹³ This view is not new, and has been upheld by D. B. Monro, *A grammar of the Homeric dialect* (Oxford 1891) 386-96; V. Pisani, *Enciclopedia classica* Sec. II Vol. v Pt. 1 (1960) 25-47, esp. 42-43; O. J. L. Szemerényi, *JHS* lxxix (1959) 193; *SMEA* i (1966) 31-5.

explain rather than by the demands of the evidence. An Achaean bard in Aeolic lands, or his Aeolic apprentices, would no doubt have picked up colloquial forms here and there, but surely would have preserved as much as possible of the earlier phraseology, to the extent indeed that we ought to be able better than we are now to discern the various layers of epic.

If translation is not the weakest point in the theory of an Aeolic epic, then the notion of an Aeolic epic itself is. We may be willing to forgive the absence of any trace of Achaean epic outside Homer on the grounds that the cloddish speakers of Arcadian and Cypriote simply forgot how to compose epic after the collapse of Mycenaean civilization. I think we will be less inclined to be so lenient with the Lesbians. We know something about Lesbian poetry through the works of Sappho and Alcaeus, and what we know is that their poetry was generally local in orientation, stanzaic in form. There is not a hint of any epic poetry lying behind their verse, save reminiscences of Homer, nor do we hear of any pre-Homeric Lesbian poets. What happened to Aeolic epic? The answer must surely be that there never was any such thing. Aeolic epic exists now, and has existed since the latter part of the last century thanks to the labours of August Fick and others, but it did not exist prior to that time. It was created by scholars out of the extant text of Homer and their desire to account for some aberrant linguistic forms, generally of a different metrical shape from contemporary Ionic forms, which could be labelled Aeolic because they appeared in one or another of the Aeolic dialects. The enthusiasm which greeted the discovery of Aeolisms created in the first instance an Aeolic epic, and the subsequent enthusiasm engendered by the decipherment of Linear B produced an Achaean epic. Aeolic epic has left not a trace and Achaean epic has vanished. Is this likely? Is it likely that the epic, once in Aeolic, and sung—one imagines—to the applause of local Lesbian audiences, was subsequently taken to the big city, as it were, and all singers abandoned their homeland and took up residence in Ionia, leaving not a trace—not one—of their former presence? The assumption is too neat, too mathematical, too little tied to the realities of human life and poetic production in an oral mode. The theory smacks of the library, not the festival, the banquet or the contest. Instead of being an aid to understanding heroic epic the Aeolic phase has become something of an awkward impediment.

West's theory is of course not impossible, but a more satisfactory one would derive epic directly from Mycenaean times in a continuous tradition to the poems as we have them. What seems required is a theory which will both account for the presence of Aeolisms in Homer and divorce the question of Aeolisms from the prehistory of epic. West (163) explicitly rejects such a possibility: 'But a simple linear development is absolutely excluded by certain fundamental features of the Homeric language: the use of $-\alpha\omicron$, $-\acute{\alpha}\omega\omicron$ and not $*-\eta\omicron$ $-\acute{\eta}\omega\omicron$, of $\pi\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ and $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$, not $\pi\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota$ and $*\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota$, of $\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\epsilon\varsigma$ $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\mu\epsilon\varsigma$ not $\acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$ $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$. These forms make the assumption of an Aeolic phase unavoidable. In a continuous tradition from proto-Ionic, the metrically convenient alternatives to later Ionic $-\epsilon\omega$ $-\epsilon\omega\omicron$, $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, $\acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma$, $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma$ would no doubt have been preserved, but in the forms $-\eta\omicron$ $-\acute{\eta}\omega\omicron$, $\pi(\rho)\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota$, $\acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$, $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$ '.¹⁴ Absolutely excluded? Yes, of course, on certain assumptions. On the assumption, for instance, that a form once in the tradition in one shape will automatically change along

with its colloquial counterparts and be retained, so that $*\pi\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota$, if ever a part of the epic tradition, would have remained intact if that tradition was Ionic; or that forms rendered unfamiliar by colloquial developments such as $-\eta\omicron$ (from $-\alpha\omicron$), which had further development to a monosyllabic $-\epsilon\omega$ (with synzezeis) in Ionic, will not be replaced by other forms which might prove more familiar or comprehensible. These assumptions should be investigated and alternative possibilities excluded before one leaps to the assumption of an Aeolic epic.

There are two basic possibilities about Aeolic epic and its translation into Ionic: either there was an already existent Ionic epic, or at least poetic, tradition or there was not. If there was one, we will have to assume that an alien Aeolic tradition was grafted onto the Ionic or was introduced beside it and to some extent in competition with it, much as epic later coexisted with local forms of lyric and other kinds of poetry. This kind of a theory, though perhaps more plausible than the other of translation into an epic void, seems not to be adopted. Let us assume the void. What then? Ionian poets (?) will have heard Aeolic epic, perhaps from Aeolic travelling bards, may even have apprenticed themselves to these bards, will have learned the new genre and begun singing it to their countrymen, first probably in the original Aeolic. Later, as they became gradually more accustomed to their craft or their listeners became more familiar with the genre, they introduced Ionic forms to replace the metrically equivalent Aeolic forms, keeping only those which were not metrically equivalent. The earliest borrowed Aeolic epic will have contained the features listed by West above. And Ionic at that time, if we are to follow the argument, must have had genitive singular of masculine α -stems either in $-\eta\omicron$ or in $-\epsilon\omega$. If in $-\eta\omicron$, then $-\alpha\omicron$ will merely have replaced the longer Ionic form; if in $-\epsilon\omega$, then the new form will have been unfamiliar and strange to the Ionic hearer. One can learn, however. On the second assumption, however, the introduction of the Aeolic form will have had to take place after the passage of /a:/ to /e:/ in Ionic and the metathesis-synzezeis which followed that, at a fairly recent date, that is. And—and here I realize that the argument gets shaky—in order for $-\alpha\omicron$ to be introduced and not immediately pass to $-\eta\omicron$, there must already have been present in the Ionic dialect instances of /a:/. Where do they come from? They come from the contraction of vowels (/a/ + /a/ or /a/ + /e/ as in $\acute{\alpha}\theta\lambda\omicron\nu$) which came into contact after the loss of intervocalic /w/, and thus very late in the history of the tradition indeed. They arise also from the merger of the nasalized vowel [a] which resulted from the loss of /n/ before /s/ as in $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha < *pansa$. $-\alpha\omicron$ cannot have been introduced early, and may have been introduced very late. Lesbian Aeolic does not have the form, so we must find a window of time during which Lesbian had $-\alpha\omicron$ and Ionic had already developed a new /a:/. It's a tricky business.¹⁵ Furthermore, $\pi\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ must have been able to maintain itself against the general East Greek tendency to assibilation of final $-\tau\iota$. This is not too difficult to imagine, however, since $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\iota$ and $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota$ were able to hold out, even in colloquial Attic and Ionic, as were nouns like $\mu\acute{\eta}\tau\iota\varsigma$. No conclusions here, any more than there can be with $\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\epsilon$ $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\mu\epsilon$, for we cannot know when Attic and Ionic extended these words with ordinary consonant stem endings.

Is it likely that Ionic poets, once in control of their new medium, would have been so careful to preserve

¹⁴ He here cites as authorities J. Chadwick, *G&R* iii (1956) 47; C. J. Ruijgh, *Lingua* xviii (1967) 96 f.; Wathelet 104, 180 f.; 290; Durante 28, 34, 54; R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* (Cambridge 1982) 89 f.

¹⁵ In fact I believe that the conditions for the passage of $-\alpha\omicron$ to $-\eta\omicron$ in Ionic were not met in Homeric epic. The change is one of contraction, not metathesis, and so $-\alpha\omicron$ remained because contraction could not take place. Cf. *Metrical lengthening in Homer* (n. 6) 100.

Aeolic forms, when by simply altering a phrase or formula, they could easily have introduced their own native forms? The theory that Aeolic words and forms were preserved even in an Ionic epic works best if one assumes the mechanical transference of a fixed *text* from one dialectal medium to another, and this was Fick's original hypothesis. It works very poorly or not at all in the context of the oral theory of epic composition. We must assume (a) that there were fixed formulas incorporating (e.g.) ἄμμε which the poets were at pains to keep; and (b) that they created new lines (formulas) containing ἄμμε because the word proved metrically useful. Examples of (b) abound and with them the notion of metrical utility, a motive which might be considered reason enough to have such forms. Where are examples of (a)?

The above proves nothing, but does indicate the great difficulties that those positing an Aeolic epic should confront. They should also consider the question of lines and formulas not translated into Ionic which have apparently simply vanished. The Aeolic dialects treat contract verbs as athematic,¹⁶ and there can therefore be no metrical equivalents of lines like:

ix 340 ἦ μοῖνοι φίλειουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων
ἀνθρώπων

xx 74 ὄν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ
Σκάμανδρον

Were no epic heroes moved to ponder as Achilles did, or no epic poet to reflect on the name Scamander in Aeolic epic? If they did, we can have no trace of their thoughts since these lines cannot represent them: the Aeolic lines would contain φίλεισ' κάλεισι.

None of the above speculations is necessary if one simply assumes a linear development of epic, placing its beginning stages wherever one chooses, but in any event not allowing an Aeolic phase prior to the Ionic. We may now pass to a consideration of the forms generally considered in connection with the assumption of an Aeolic phase. I provide here a table, reprinted from my Thessalonike article, which displays the forms most often introduced as evidence supporting this assumption. Be it noted at the outset that I do not deny that these forms are Aeolic: the question is how they entered the epic tradition.¹⁷

¹⁶ W. Blümel, *Die aiolischen Dialekte (Ergänzungsheft zur Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung xxx, Göttingen 1982)* 30.

¹⁷ The table is derived in the main from matter presented by Chantraine (n. 6) 496-513. It is divided into six columns, the first two presenting the linguistic evidence of the Homeric text itself. In column one I have listed the words and forms which appear both in the Homeric poems and in the Ionic dialect. In the second column appear forms which are semantically identical with forms of the first column, but which are—in most cases—metrically different. These forms appear both in the Homeric poems and also in one or more of the Aeolic dialects, a fact which is noted in column three: T stands for Thessalian, B for Boeotian, L for Lesbian. Many of the forms of column two are characteristic also of other dialects, and I have listed in column four some of the dialects which share these features. Column five lists, wherever possible, the earliest reconstructed form of the Ionic dialect, a reconstruction based not only on Attic and Ionic, but on those dialects plus Homer. At the risk of begging the question I wish to argue that the earliest form of

The reader will note that many—or most—of the forms labelled Aeolic are metrically identical either with the reconstructed proto-Ionic or even the proto-Greek form, though not the later Ionic. Basing myself on this observation I would state as a principle: Whenever the Homeric form is metrically equivalent to the old Ionic, Mycenaean, or proto-Greek form of the same word, the Homeric is to be regarded as an archaism inherited from the epic tradition regardless of the shape it displays in the poems. Given this principle, it remains only to account for why these archaisms wear an Aeolic dress. In the course of time, because of changes in the Ionic dialect, archaic forms became strange and subject to misunderstanding. Faced with the possibility of misunderstanding, in some instances poets borrowed (or adopted) the Aeolic form which was metrically equivalent to the form which they had inherited from the tradition, and which was not subject to misunderstanding. Aeolisms are therefore as it were corrections of the epic tradition, and are late corrections at that. We may take example ten as a paradigm of this process. In this case Aeolic preserves the original form, but Ionic had diverged widely. Not only does it differ in the first syllable, it differs in the second as well. The regular phonetic development in Ionic would show the first syllable of the word displayed in the first column and the second syllable of the word in the second column, thus *ἡμέξ, the form of column five. This is the form which lies behind the actual Ionic ἡμεῖς. But in colloquial Ionic the second syllable was lengthened, so that the word now counted two long syllables in all positions in the verse, and it replaced the older *ἡμέξ in epic whenever possible, for instance at the end of the line, and for the same reason that it replaced the short form in the spoken language: epic words developed exactly as did the colloquial except when prevented by the meter. When ἡμέξ was scanned as a trochee, however, the poets were forced to keep it, for the longer and colloquial ἡμεῖς would not fit this metrical slot. In keeping the older, shorter, form, though he was true to the tradition, the Homeric poet was singing a form which did not occur in any variety of spoken Greek, and which might have been misunderstood by his hearers. What was he to do? He could either keep the epic word, at the possible expense of being misunderstood, or he could adopt another form which would be both metrically correct and comprehensible to his hearers. He therefore gave up the inherited ἡμέξ and adopted the metrically

East Greek reconstructible leads to forms which are both Homeric and are also close to the metrical shape of the earliest Greek reconstructible. In column six I give the presumed earliest form within the Greek language as a whole. A fuller treatment of these matters would entail much discussion, e.g., of my assumed early πῶτι vs. Mycenaean *po-si* (cf. *SMEA* xix [1978] 117-23), the relation of παρ and παρᾶ, and the source of the -μ- in forms such as ὄγμεν. (Cf. *TAPA* ci [1970] 557-632, 'The prehistory of the Greek dialects', for an overall view of the history of Greek dialectal history). The table is schematic and suggestive, and is designed to show that an Aeolic phase of epic composition is not necessary: it does not prove the point.

	Ionic	Aeolic	TBL	Other	Proto-Ionic	Proto-Greek
I	1) Ἄτρειδαο	-αο	TB	Myc.	-αο	-αο
	Ἄτρειδαων	-άων	TB	"	-άων	-άων
2)	ἀνθρώπου	-οιο	T	"	-οιο	-οιο
II	3) παρά	παρ	TBL	Arc.	παρ	παρ
	5) πρός	ποτί	TBL	Dor.	ποτί	ποτί
	6) μέσος	μέσσος	TB	Dor.	μέσσος	μέτσος
III	7) ἔχεα	ἔχευα	L	---	*ἔχηα	ἔχευσα
	8) ----	ἄμβροτ-	L	---	*ἄμβροατ-	ἄμρτ-
	9) θήρες	Φήρες	TBL	---	θήρες	*khwe:res
	10) ἡμεῖς	ἄμμες	TBL	---	*ἡμές	*ahmés
	11) ----	ἄμυδις	---	---	ἄμόδις	ἄμόδις
	12) ἄγειν	ἀγέμεναι	TB	---	ἄγειν	ἄγειν
	δοῦναι	δόμεναι	L	---	δοέναι	?
δοῦναι	δόμεν	TB	Dor.	δόεν	?	
IV	13) ποσί	πόδεσσι	TBL	---	ποσσί	ποτοσί
	ἔπεσι	ἐπέεσσι	L(?)	---	ἔπεσσι	ἔπεσσι
V	14) ἐδικασα	ἐδικαζα	TB	Cyp.	?	?
	15) -----	ζάθεος	L	Att.	?	?
	16) οἱ αἱ	τοῖ ταῖ	B	Dor.	?	τοῖ ταῖ
	17) μία	ἰα	TBL	Cyp.	?	ἰα
	18) κεκληγότες	-οντες	TBL	---	?	?

identical Aeolic (Lesbian) ἄμμες.¹⁸

Did Homer adapt his epic only to Aeolic? Did he not also introduce forms from other dialects, and specifically, why not from Doric dialects, some of which he must have known from contact with Cos or Rhodes? Scholars have not much sought out Doric forms in Homer, and here West (167-8) is an exception.¹⁹ He does find some, and assumes that they entered the trad-

¹⁸ The essence of this argument is to be found already presented by O.J.L. Szemerényi, *JHS* lxxix (1959) 193: 'wherever the normal Ionic development would have led to forms non-existent in Ionic, the speech-form of the neighbouring Aeolic was adopted. This is to assume a certain amount of influence from Aeolic, but not a full-scale Aeolic stage in the development of epic poetry.'

¹⁹ G.P. Shipp, *Studies in the language of Homer* (Cambridge 1972) 4 also assumes Dorisms. West's main example is the one I cite, and his others are equally compelling, but one cannot instance the forms in dialect texts. His (1) and (2) involve pronouns of the second and third person singular, and such are very rare on inscriptions (C.D. Buck, *Greek Dialects* [Chicago 1955] 97 n. 1). His (4) πρότι can, he holds, be very old: I tend to think of it as being purely epic. His (5) ἔσσεῖται (Chaintaine [n. 5] 290-91) is too irregular to sustain much weight. 1-3, though, are definitely Doric, and the only question is when they entered the tradition. I cannot point to inscriptional examples from Asia Minor, save in the case of ἄμός, which occurs in Rhodes (Buck *Greek dialects* § 105, 106.17). Homer certainly acquired this form at least in Asia Minor.

ition in Euboea when northern bards entered that island in the tenth or ninth century. It seems rather more likely that these forms entered from Asia Minor. The word ἄμός, 'my, our' cannot be Ionic, early or late, cannot be Aeolic, and must be a Doric replacement for *ἡμός. Why did the poets not use the Aeolic ἄμμός? The answer is that the Aeolic form means only 'our', and never means 'my', while ἄμος means both: the form occurs on Rhodes.

Though ἄμός²⁰ shows the poets borrowing non-Ionic forms, and hence in general strengthens the argument presented above, it still does not answer the question why the poets ordinarily chose an Aeolic form. I have already mentioned possible misunderstanding as a motive, but this may not seem sufficient. I believe that a number of other factors were also operative. Two negative considerations first. One, Homer and his ancestors may not have thought so much about dialectal differences and dialectal affiliations as we tend to: the inclusion of a non-Ionic form in the epic dialect, a dialect which was already far removed from that of their

²⁰ Many scholars feel that this word merely represents a later spelling of ἄμμος; E.G. Floyd, *Glotta* xlvii (1970) 119 with refs. J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* (Göttingen 1916) 210-12, determined the motive for the appearance of ἄμός but assumes that ἄμμος (not *ἡμός) was replaced by the Doric form through the influence of Attic.

own day, may not have been a major step.²¹ Secondly, ἡμέξ, for example, is not a word in any form of Greek, and therefore was not really a Greek word: epic poets preferred to use Greek words, even if Aeolic, to using non-words, even if historically correct. There are also positive motives. In the first place Aeolic, at least in its Lesbian variety, was spoken nearby, and hence was familiar to Homer and his hearers. Secondly, many of the heroes of epic lived in Aeolic-speaking areas, including Achilles the Thessalian, and some of the action reported in the *Iliad* was situated near Lesbos. Furthermore, Lesbian was spoken in roughly the same area as that in which Troy was located. There was therefore a thematic reason for the poets to utilize the Aeolic dialect. There was, though, also a linguistic reason, and here we must make a leap of imagination. What did epic sound like in 750, 800, 850 BC? We cannot know, but let us imagine that it contained the archaisms noted in categories one and two on the table, as well as the proto-Ionic forms given in category three, some of which at least were strange in epic. At some point the poets became aware of the existence of another form of Greek, an Aeolic dialect, which not only used some of the archaisms present in epic, but also possessed metrical equivalents for some of the isolated forms in their poems. They would naturally enough conclude that they had discovered the original source of the epic language, and adapted their isolated forms—like Centaurs and ἡμέξ to the Aeolic Φήρες and ἄμμεξ.²²

It is now time to turn to example thirteen on the table, for it alone is a form shared only by Homer and Aeolic and is not the metrical equivalent of an earlier form. —εσσι occurs in all the Aeolic dialects and in Homer, and occurs only occasionally and rarely elsewhere. It cannot be inherited from earlier Greek, and it cannot have been borrowed from any dialect other than an Aeolic one.²³ How can it have entered epic? And I stress *can* in the previous sentence, for it may have entered in any number of different ways, and I suggest but one. Homer was singing to his audience the glorious deeds of some of their glorious ancestors, and was singing in a language which was both removed from the language of his hearers and was also closer to the imagined language of the heroes whose actions he was describing. His language is archaic in many respects, archaizing in others: he consciously sought to increase the distance between contemporary Ionic and the old Ionic of epic, but without decreasing comprehension. We have already seen that he accommodated old, and no longer comprehensible, forms to the Aeolic of neighbouring Lesbos because he discovered that Lesbian Aeolic was closer to the language of the heroes than was the epic language

which he had learned from his poetic predecessors. And one of the most striking—and indeed primitive in conception—features of Lesbian Aeolic was the dative ending of consonant stems in —εσσι. It also had the very useful metrical property that it could be used at the two main breaks in his hexameter line, in the middle and at the end; and it also allowed certain nouns and adjectives, like *δυσμενής*, to be used now in the dative plural, as they could not have been when measuring *δυσμενέσσι*. Hence he adopted it both because it seemed to him archaic, and hence in keeping with the nature of epic language, and—equally important—because it was easily and usefully incorporated into his verse. There existed in epic a number of words which appeared either with one —s- or two. Thus Homer sang both *μέσσο* and *μέσσο*s ‘middle’, and *τόσσο* with *τόσσο*s ‘so much’: he also sang *ἔπεσσι* beside *ἔπεσι*, these words being datives plural of ‘word’. *ἔπεσσι* already contained—legitimately—an ending —εσσι which Homer could not have explained, and which was metricaly useful. When he found that Lesbian Aeolic not only had this ending, but also used —εσσι in other words as well, he adopted the Aeolic practise. He thus introduced *πόδεςσι* ‘feet’ for his own *ποσί* and so on. The ending —εσσι is an Aeolism, and was borrowed into epic, but by Homer or one of his predecessors—it is not a feature inherited from the earliest stages of epic composition.²⁴

West (166) holds that the language of Ionic epic is West Ionic. This startling and challenging conclusion is based primarily on the fact that East Ionic (poets) have κ- forms of the interrogative and indefinite conjunctions whereas Homer always has *ποῦ πῶς πότε ποῖος*. These forms—paradoxically—cannot be Aeolisms because Ionic poets adapted Aeolic forms to their own Ionic ‘so far as was possible’, and—one assumes—would have adapted these forms likewise had their native speech contained κ- forms.²⁵ Unfortunately for his argument, though poets and Herodotus show κ- forms,

²⁴ It might be well here to point out that in fact —εσσι can have been generated by epic poets purely out of epic resources without recourse to the Aeolic explanation. They possessed the form *ἔπεσσι* beside their colloquial *ἔπεσι* and *ποσί*. Analysis of the longer form can easily—by means which cannot and need not be specified—have yielded the ending —εσσι, and that, considered to be added to the stem of the noun, can have led directly to *πόδεςσι*. To be sure, the occurrence of —εσσι in neighbouring Lesbos will have strengthened the poets’ conviction of the antiquity of the form.

²⁵ This is his only real argument, since the other cases are too weak to support any weight. They are instances such as *ἐνάτη ἄνοιτο ξενίη* in which the digamma once following the nasal disappears, but without the compensatory lengthening of the previous syllable seen elsewhere in epic: this characteristic is West Ionic and of course Attic. (Cf. Wathelet [n. 12] 154-57, AC 1 (1981) 819-33, Chantraine [n. 6] 161-63). Attic corption, ordinarily avoided in epic, is allowed in (e.g.) *προσηύδα* (which replaces Aeolic **ποταύδα*). But it seems clear—at least to me—that corption before this word indicates rather that an earlier form was (Ionic) **ποσηύδα*: cf. *SMEA* xix (1978) 89-123. His concern that West Ionic has —ττ— and not —σσ— and —pp— for Ionic —ρσ—, can be dismissed easily: even Attic authors avoided these clusters in their formal writings because they were too parochial. Even if—as I believe they were not—epic poets had been Euboean, they still would have avoided these sounds.

²¹ A. Morpurgo Davies (*Linear B: a 1984 survey*, ed. A. Morpurgo Davies and Y. Duhoux, Eds. [Louvain-le-neuve 1985] 86 interestingly suggests that epic, among other forms of literature, avoided ‘some types of linguistic variation and in particular types tied to geographical distinctions.’

²² On the developments involving labiovelars, cf. my article in *GRBS* xvi (1975) 251-62.

²³ This ending has much been discussed: Cf. E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* i (Munich 1939) 564, and more recently C. J. Ruijgh (n. 9) 14-17, and my article, to appear in *Essays in linguistics offered to Oswald Szemerényi on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday*, ed. B. Brodyanyi and R. Lipp (Amsterdam 1992).

inscriptions do not (generally),²⁶ and one cannot therefore confidently affirm that the κ- forms are generally Ionic: that they were at least sporadic and genuine is of course proved by their use in elegiac and lyric poets. They would appear, however, as West's evidence seems to show, to have been utilized by poets in their more local utterances, elegiac or iambic, in poems composed for local audiences. Even Hipponax, for instance, though he knew that κ- was allowable in trimeter and epode, used π- in hexameters (128.3, 129 West), burlesque though they be. The κ- forms, in short, were a parochial phenomenon, one not suited for the pan-Aegean and even pan-Hellenic epic. Given the choice—if indeed he was—between a local dialectal feature redolent of a specific time and place, and a more general, more widespread form, the Homeric poet chose the latter.

Homeric epic was not a poem of local derring-do or local political concern. It was a poem which celebrated Hellenic heroism against the Asiatic foe, and which recalled mighty deeds of mighty warriors united in a Greek overseas expedition. In the service of this poem the poet utilized a pan-Hellenic language, a language full of (heroic) archaisms and the various forms of Greek known to him from around the Aegean Sea and possibly elsewhere. Though basically Ionic and hence basically his own dialect, or an archaic form of his own dialect, Homeric epic nonetheless admitted influences from outside that dialect. A national epic required a national language, and Homer forged that language, as he forged his poem, out of resources drawn from the entire Greek world.

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²⁶ Cf. Buck (n. 17) 63, F. Bechtel, *Die griechischen Dialekte* iii (Berlin 1924) 87-89. Bechtel holds that -k- develops regularly in the indefinite relative between two /o/'s. And it may well be that this is where the development began. See now J. Chadwick, *JHS* cx (1990) 174-77.

The descent of the Greek epic: a reply

In *JHS* cx (1990) 174-7 Dr John Chadwick expresses scepticism about certain lines of argument followed in my article 'The Rise of the Greek Epic' (*JHS* cviii [1988] 151-72). He will not expect me to be heartened by his remarks. But I am. If this (I reflect) is the worst that the linguistic establishment can throw at me, there cannot be too much wrong with my approach.

His paper consists largely of a rehearsal of elementary facts and principles familiar to me and to everyone in the field. We differ, evidently, in our assessments of the bearing of these facts and principles on my reconstruction of the main phases of the epic tradition. I will try to explain succinctly why his representations leave me so unabashed.

His first point is that the spelling conventions of our text of Homer (use of εἰ and οὐ for ē and ō, elimination of qoppa, etc.) cannot go as far back as the seventh century. The text therefore underwent 'various modernisations' before reaching the Alexandrian editors. In this process, he claims, forms such as κῶς, δίκου, if

Homer had used them, would have been replaced by πῶς, δίκου, so that there is no force in my argument that the absence of the κ forms aligns epic Ionic with Central or West Ionic as opposed to the Ionic of Asia Minor.

Chadwick fails to distinguish between orthography and phonology. To replace Φορε by κούρη, χσενος by ξεῖνος, etc., is merely a matter of spelling. There is no doubt that modernisations of this sort must have occurred in the Homeric tradition, even though we do not know what kind of alphabet was used in the original written text. But to replace κῶς by πῶς is not a matter of spelling—π is not another way of writing κ—it is a substantive change from one dialect form to another. That a change of this sort was effected in the pre-Alexandrian written tradition is an unsubstantiated hypothesis, and one that raises awkward questions. Why should κῶς and κού be changed to πῶς and πού, when they were perfectly familiar as 'Ionic' forms from Herodotus and other authors? Why were they *not* changed in Callinus, Mimnermus, Semonides, Hipponax, and Anacreon?¹ If we did not know where these poets came from, we could infer correctly from their use of κ forms that they came from the East Ionic area,² by contrast with Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Theognis, and Solon, who have π forms. Why should this criterion be deemed inapplicable to the epic dialect?

Chadwick writes: 'West might have supported his thesis of a Euboean origin for the Homeric text by pointing to the aspiration which is guaranteed by consonant changes resulting from contact with initial aspirate (type τῖφθ' οἰτῶς). Psilosis is normal in East Ionic, but the aspirate is partially preserved in Central Ionic and fully in West Ionic'. I must point out firstly that I was not arguing for 'a Euboean origin for the Homeric text',³ but for 'Euboea as the area in which the epic language acquired its definitive and normative form' (my p.166). Chadwick then proceeds to attack the argument I did not use in support of the thesis I did not propound: 'But aspiration in Homer is quite obviously the consequence of editorial interference with the tradition, so that this proves nothing about the origin of the text'. Actually the question of aspiration and psilosis in Homer is more complex than he implies. I dealt with it briefly, and I think sufficiently for my purposes, on my p.163.

The usefulness of linguistic features as pointers to the past would indeed be diminished if, as Chadwick supposes, some generations of oral transmission intervened between 'the monumental composer' and the establishment of a complete written text, which he thinks only happened towards the end of the sixth century. This is of course the theory of G. S. Kirk, and it was courteously demolished by Adam Parry a quarter

¹ Cf. 166 of my article.

² Amorgos belongs here as a Samian colony.

³ I did suggest that the *Odyssey* might be a Euboean poem, but I made it clear that I believe the *Iliad* to have been composed in Asia Minor (172).