

New Perspectives in the Early History of Ancient Greek

Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics
University of Copenhagen

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Abstracts

Putting the Accent on Prehistory: New Perspectives in Greek Historical Phonology

Roberto Batisti

Ca' Foscari Università di Venezia

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Some of the most interesting recent advances in the historical phonology of Ancient Greek concern the interaction between the accent and segmental phonological changes. Indeed, the idea that the position of the accent may have acted as a conditioning factor in (Proto-)Greek sound changes was not considered heretic at all in 19th-century linguistics, before the consensus shifted in the opposite direction. Renewed pursuit of this avenue of research in recent years has yielded promising results, at least one of which – the twofold treatment of **-Ls-* (cf. **órsos* > (**)*ὄρσοις > Att. ὄρροις ‘arse’ vs. **orsá* > οὐρά ‘tail’: Wackernagel 1888; Miller 1976; Batisti 2017) – is by now all but generally accepted (e.g. Ringe 2024, 140–1). Other cases, to be sure, remain more speculative, such as the development **-ŃT-* > **-ŃD-* > *-ád-* (Van Beek 2017), or the possibility that in Ionic-Attic **-ŴNs-* and **-ŴsR-* were targeted by **s* > **h* plus 1st compensatory lengthening at a later time and with different outcomes (ῆ, ω, vs. εἰ, οὐ) than **-VRs-* and **-VsR-* (cf. **μósnos* > ὥνος ‘price’ vs. **uosná* > Ion. οὐνή ‘sale, contract’; see Batisti, Höfler fthc., building on Peters 1984, 86 n. 9). In yet another case, the twofold vocalization of **CRHC* sequences (**d^hnh₂-tó-* > θνητός ‘mortal’ vs. **d^hñh₂-to-* > θάνατος ‘death’), a widespread solution based on accent position has been challenged by one based on a different prosodic factor, namely syllable structure (Van Beek 2021).

At any rate, these and similar changes do not necessarily plead for an intensive realization of the Proto-Greek accent (as opposed to

the pitch accent usually reconstructed for the Classical stage). While such a scenario is, in fact, far from impossible, there seems to be no typological correlation between the phonetic realization of the accent and the kind of segmental phonological changes undergone by the language (see the balanced discussion by Dieu 2022, 34–5, with the rejoinder by Méndez Dosuna 2023, 228–30).

An accentual conditioning is also included in the most promising formulations of two controversial sound changes: ‘Laryngeal Breaking’ (LB = the development of **UH* sequences to a sequence of glide + long vowel, e.g. **g^wiĥ₃-uó-* > **g^wiō-uó-* > ζώος ‘alive’; see Olsen 2009, who restricted it to unaccented syllables) and ‘Miller’s Law’ (ML = the deaspiration of PIE voiced aspirates after a nasal following an accented vowel, e.g. **d^hró-n-b^h-o-* > θρόμβος ‘clot’ vs. **d^hreb^h-e/o-* > τρέφω ‘thicken, congeal’: see Miller 1977a, 1977b). It is fair to say that both laws are still very much *sub iudice* (for example, neither one is accepted in Beekes’ *EDG*). In both cases, the accentual conditioning *per se* is typologically well-founded and goes a long way to making the law more plausible, but other problems remain. For instance, while Olsen’s attractive formulation of LB efficiently disposes of most counterexamples, new developments in the understanding of PIE morphology make it possible to explain some of the ‘classic’ examples via the reconstruction of full, rather than zero, grades, and a thorough critical discussion of all the evidence is sorely needed (Nikolaev 2024).

As far as ML is concerned, despite growing recent support (e.g. Kümmel 2013, 169–70), it too suffers from lack of a systematic analysis of the evidence, whose admittedly uneven quality justifies the enduring skepticism in the field (most recently, Ringe 2024, 127–8). Even the precise scope of ML is still unclear – in particular, whether, as often suggested, it only applied to the labial sequence **-Vmb^h-* > *-Vμβ-*. Another issue is the law’s chronology, which must be very old (predating the devoicing of PIE voiced aspirates), on the background of increasing evidence for a common Graeco-Phrygian stage (e.g. Obrador Cursach 2019), with its implications for the dating of the ‘coming of the Greeks’ into Greece (Hajnal 2024). While I discuss ML in general elsewhere (Batisti 2025), in this presentation I focus on a subset of troublesome data: di- and trisyllabic forms of the synchronic structure *-VNT^h(r)V(CV)-*. If inherited, such forms would be problematic for their failure to undergo ML, especially since they do not usually show by-forms with *-ND-*. To be sure, many such

words have uncertain etymologies and are often suspected of being Pre-Greek, especially those with a dental aspirate. On the other hand, since in disyllabic words $-\check{V}v\vartheta-$ is not obviously segmentable as the well-known suffix $-\imath\vartheta(o)-$, $-\upsilon\vartheta(o)-$, a reliable indicator of ‘Pre-Greek’ origin (Quattordio Moreschini 1984; Kroonen 2024), substrate origin cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, for several such forms an IE etymology has been recently put forward. Through a survey of the above-mentioned material, I hope to show some of the problems inherent in the study of this problem of Proto-Greek phonology and some of the insights that can nonetheless be won. In particular, the fact that most recalcitrant forms have $-\gamma\chi-$ or $-\nu\vartheta-$, while few to none have $-\mu\varphi-$, may reinforce the suspicion that labials were the favorite (or only?) target of post-nasal deaspiration.

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The Curious Case of Feminine Adjectives in -ος

Stefan Höfler
Universität Wien

04 Aug
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Ancient Greek stands out among Indo-European languages for being the only one in which thematic adjectives in -ος < *-os can have feminine agreement forms in either -ος < *-os (e.g., ἄλκιμος μάχη ‘stubborn battle’) or -η, -ᾱ < *-eh₂ (e.g., καττερὰ μάχη ‘fierce battle’). All other branches that exhibit feminine gender make use of the second strategy only (e.g., Vedic *priyā kanyā*, Latin *puella pulchra* ‘pretty girl’, Old Church Slavonic *slěpa žena* ‘blind woman’, Latvian *liela māja* ‘big house’, Gothic *stibna mikila* ‘loud voice’, etc.). The Greek adjectives of two terminations, where the masculine set of endings is used for both masculine and feminine substantives (as with ἄλκιμος μάχη ‘stubborn battle’), have long intrigued scholars of both Greek and Indo-European linguistics. They are usually seen as archaisms (cf. Wackernagel 1924: 50; Kastner 1967: 116), and some have seen them as a reflex of the agreement system prior to the origin of the feminine gender in which *-os was the nom.-sg. ending of the common gender thematic adjective and *-on the respective form of the neuter (cf. Olsen 1999: vi). Under this view, the spread of *-e-h₂ as the feminine agreement marker for thematic adjectives must have happened gradually, and while most languages reflect its full (and predictable)

grammaticalization (cf. Vedic *priyā kanyā*, Latin *puella pulchra*, etc.), Ancient Greek preserves the more archaic state, perhaps similar to the late Proto-Indo-European situation.

The distribution and rationale behind adjectives with three terminations versus those with two remain largely unexplained (cf. Höfler 2022 for a discussion). While some patterns can be observed — such as compounds typically having two terminations (e.g., ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως ‘rose-fingered Eos’) — no clear rules apply to simplex adjectives. Various factors have been proposed to account for these forms, including influence from compounds, metrical requirements, remnants of former nouns, and semantic analogy (cf. Kastner 1967), but these explanations are far from comprehensive, and the phenomenon is often just accepted as a quirk of Ancient Greek.

It is, therefore, time to reassess feminine adjectives in *-ος < *-os*. Rather than focusing solely on why compound adjectives or certain suffix types predominantly exhibit two terminations while most simple adjectives favor three terminations, it may be more productive to examine the exceptions to these tendencies. These include simple adjectives that occasionally have two terminations and compound adjectives that occasionally exhibit three terminations. In my presentation, I will demonstrate that previously unnoticed distributional patterns in the use of three- versus two-termination adjectives can indeed be identified, offering new insights into this longstanding linguistic puzzle.

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The Formation of Ancient Greek from a Genomic and Linguistic Perspective

Guus Kroonen,¹ Rasmus Thorsø,² and Andrew Wigman²

¹Københavns Universitet; ²Universiteit Leiden

04 Aug
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The Greek language is an Indo-European subgroup that rose to prominence in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Late Bronze. Of all known varieties, Mycenaean Greek is the earliest attested, documented in the Linear B syllabic writing system mainly on Crete and the Peloponnese between the 14th and 12th centuries BCE. After the so-called Dark Ages, Greek reappears in alphabetic writing from the 8th century BCE onwards, now having diverged into several dialects, including Attic, Aeolic, Doric, Ionic, and Northwest Greek.

A traditionally central question concerns the timing of the prehistoric arrival of Greek's earliest Greek speakers on the Greek mainland. Results from a large-scale genomic study performed by Fulya Eilem Yediay et al. demonstrate the appearance of ancestry of the Yamnaya culture, now widely associated with the Indo-European dispersal, during the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE, implying that the linguistic ancestor of Greek arrived here around the same time.

By the Late Mycenaean period, the Yamnaya component in Greece is generally diluted to low proportions, suggesting heavy admixture with local populations. The continuity of local ancestries may be

viewed in the light of historical claims of persistence of non-Greek languages in Ancient Greece and with linguistic observations that Greek incorporated a significant amount of loanwords from one or more of such languages.

Thus, while based on an Indo-European dialect, likely arriving in the Balkans during the late 3rd millennium BCE, different lines of evidence suggest that the formation of the Greek language occurred during the early 2nd millennium BCE and resulted from a complex interplay of both intrusive and local elements.

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Dorian myths of origin and the ethnic and linguistic landscape of Middle and Northern Greece in the Dark Ages

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George Hinge
Aarhus Universitet

The idea of a Doric invasion after the collapse of the Mycenaean palace culture played a crucial role in previous scholarship (e.g. Hammond 1931–32, Cook 1962, Desborough 1964, Snodgrass 1971, Wilcken 1973) but has been met with scepticism in the last couple of decades. In poetry (e.g. Tyrtaeus, fr. 1.13-15 G.-P., Pindar, P. 1.63-66), the establishment of the Dorian cities was closely associated with the so-called Return of the Heraclidae, and a migration from the north was also accepted as a fact in historiography (e.g. Herodotus 1.56, 8.43, Thucydides 1.12, 1.107).

It has been pointed out, rightfully so, that these narratives serve a political agenda (e.g. Hall 1997, 2002, Bremmer 1997, Luraghi 2008, Nagy 2019, 2023). Furthermore, it is difficult to find archaeological traces of a distinct Doric culture in prehistoric times and a change in material culture in the post-Mycenaean Peloponnese (e.g. Cartledge 1979, Musti 1985, Hiller 1985). The idea of a migration has not been

abandoned altogether, but more pragmatic models have replaced the invasion model (e.g. Schachermeyer 1980, Kirsten 1983, Malkin 1994, Eder 1998).

In my presentation, I will revisit the ancient narratives and the linguistic and archaeological evidence. Our Classical sources connect the origin of the Dorians with specific locations in Middle Greece, namely the city of Erineos, the landscape of Doris, and the mountain of Pindos. In historical times, this is an area where the Northwest Greek dialects were spoken. We have very few inscriptions from Doris itself, but in recent years our knowledge of neighbouring dialects has increased (see Méndez Dosuna 1985, Filos 2018). It is my hope that I will be able to present a coherent scenario for the genesis of Doric and Northwest Greek.

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Metrics and Greek historical linguistics: some proverbs in Hesiod's Works and Days

Claire Le Feuvre

Sorbonne Université

04 Aug
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Some proverbs, found in the second hemistich, can be traced back to old pherecrations, of which the paremiac, a metrical form associated with proverbs, is itself derived (West 1973). Pure pherecrations are few (e.g. *Op.* 40), and most were dactylized by means of simple changes: insertion of *δέ τε* in *Op.* 218 (also attested in Homer with a variant), or in *Op.* 23, addition of a preposition in *Op.* 369. While other metrical forms certainly existed for proverbs, I will concentrate on a few lines in which a pherecratian can be restored, and in which this restoration can solve a linguistic problem, with the idea that combining metrics and linguistics can lead to new hypotheses. Basically, I will apply the method developed by Tichy (2010) to a different material. Proverbs are typically conservative. Thus, the results may be better on this material than on average dactylic hexameters.

I will take as a case study *Op.* 355 δώτη μὲν τις ἔδωκεν, ἄδωτη δ' οὐ τις ἔδωκεν, which displays the irregular forms δώτη and ἄδωτη, both hapaxes. Those cannot be derived from regular agent nouns (δοτήρ, -δότης, δώτωρ), and Leukart 1994 gives no satisfactory account for them. Ἀδότης is usually assumed to be a privative of δότης. However, agent nouns do not form privative compounds. The kernel of the line is the second hemistich ἄδωτη δ' οὐ τις ἔδωκεν, which must be the modernization of an older pherecratian *ἄδωτ' οὐ τις/χίς ἔδωκεν, with a dative ἄδωτ(ι) of the regular possessive compound *ἄδως “without giving,” compound of δῶς “giving” < *deh₃-t- found right afterwards in *Op.* 356 (δῶς ἀγαθή, ἄρπαξ δὲ κακή, θανάτοιο δότειρα). The meaning “without giving” evolved into “who does not give,”

which is close to an agent noun. Modernization of τ-compounds into τ̄-compounds is attested (ἐπιβλής Hom. / ἐπιβλήτης Hsch., ἄγνως Hom. / ἄγνώτης Maximus Conf., ἄδμης Hom. / proper name Ἄδμήτης). The old t-stem is probably preserved as the first member of Ved. *dātivara-* “giving treasures.” If one considers only the isolated nominative δῶς, the form is ambiguous and can be interpreted as a *t*-stem or as a root-noun **deh₃-* (Vijūnas 2009). The analysis of the compound confirms that it is a *t*-stem. Therefore, the relationship between simple and compound must be reversed: the simple δῶτης in the first hemistich of *Op.* 355 was abstracted from the remodelled form ἄδῶτης, for the sake of the symmetry between two antonymic hemistichs (**deh₃-t-* → **h₃-deh₃-t-* > ἄδωτ- → ἄδῶτ-ᾱς → δῶτης). This explanation of ἄδῶτης, in turn, can be applied to the parallel compound συβῶτης instead of the regular form -βότης: it can be traced back to an older **βωτ-* < **g^weh₃-t-*, preserved in βωτιάνειρα, and its original meaning must be “having the feeding of pigs,” hence “who feeds pigs.” Accordingly, βωτιάνειρα, explained by Tribulato (2015) after most scholars as a verb initial compound (Tribulato assumes the long vowel originates in the aorist), must rather be a possessive compound, as *dātivara-*, and the long vowel is that of the *t*-stem. Another compound of the same type with an irregular full grade is ἐμπυριβλήτης instead of the regular -βάτης, next to βητάρμων. Together, the three compounds suggest that *t*-stems with full grade, a recessive formation in Greek, were still known in Proto-Greek and left traces in compounds. They can be added to the list of forms studied by Vijūnas.

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“Semantically unconvincing” Historical Semantics and Etymological Practice

Daniel Kölligan

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

04 Aug
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A frequent verdict in etymological studies, dictionaries, etc. is that a proposed explanation, though formally admissible, is deemed semantically unconvincing by the author(s) and hence to be rejected, e.g., the derivation of Gr. γαστήρ ‘belly’ from γράω ‘to eat’ is accepted by Frisk (1960 s.v.: “Ohne Zweifel ... aus *γρασ-τήρ als „Fresser“ zu γράω”), and Chantraine (1999: 212: “On admet sans hésiter l’étymologie habituelle, de *γράστηρ « dévoreur », tiré de γράω avec dissimilation des deux ρ.”), and rejected e.g. by Beekes (2010: 262: “The semantics are far-fetched since the belly is not an “eater””). The notorious lack of a methodology as reliable as the comparative method applied to phonology and morphology necessarily leads to subjective judgments. The problem is rarely explicitly stated as e.g. in Kroonen (2013: xiii): “*Since there is no methodology for semantic reconstruction* [my emphasis], these proto-meanings [sc. given for head-words] are not necessarily factual, and are merely to be taken as an indication of the author’s intuition.”, and discussions about how to improve etymological research do not always address the problem of historical semantics (cf. e.g. Byrd 2016). On the other hand, there have been studies about regularity in semantic change in specific functional and semantic fields (e.g., Traugott & Dasher 2002), and recent computational approaches (cf. e.g. Probert et al. 2019, Perone et al. 2021) and databases (e.g. CLICS³ [<https://clics.clld.org/>], <https://datsemshift.ru/>, etc.) discuss approaches to and provide information about recurrent synchronic polysemies and diachronic shifts of meaning in an increasing number of languages. The paper will discuss to which extent both large datasets and detailed philological study of individual lexemes and semantic fields may be helpful in tackling problems in Greek lexical semantics and etymology.

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The fat pasture: Greek Βοιωτία and Vedic *gávvyūti*-

Tore Røvs Kristoffersen

København's Universitet

04 Aug
14.00
15A.0.13

Like many Greek toponyms and ethnonyms, Βοιωτία and Βοιωτός do not have a clear etymology. Ancient scholarship derived Βοιωτία, in various ways, from βοῦς ‘cow’, and Liddell & Scott (*LSJ*: s.v. Βοιωτία) similarly assume that it was “so called from its cattle-pastures”. The etymological dictionaries reject this explanation: Chantraine (*DELG*: 183) takes “terre à boeuf” as a folk-etymology, while Pokorny (*IEW*: 117) and Frisk (*GEW*: I, 249) assume a relationship with Βοῖον ὄρος ‘Mount Boeon’ in Epirus.

In the present paper, I will take the path suggested in *LSJ*, which leads to a strikingly similar-looking word in another language, namely Vedic *gávvyūti*- ‘pasture’. The word is a compound with a first member **g^wou-* ‘cow’ and a second member *-(H)iuH-ti-* cognate with Ved. *yávvasa-*, Av. *yauuauha-* ‘pasture’ from a root **(H)ieuH-* (*EWAia*: I, 481). The identity of the root-final laryngeal is unknown. Nikolaev (2014) has suggested **h₂*, comparing Gk εἰαμενή ‘riverside pasture, flood plain, meadow’, but this explanation of the Greek word has been criticized for the large number of intermediate stages needed in the derivational chain (Eric Dieu, *CEG* 15: 133–135; Van Beek 2019: 18). If we assume, on the other hand, that the laryngeal was **h₃*, a proto-form **g^wóu-(H)iu_{h3}-ti-* would yield **g^wou-íuōt°* > **g^woíiōt°* > Gk Βοιωτ° through the regular development of unaccented **uh₃* > Gk **uō* (cf. Olsen 2009). Ved. *gávvyūti-* and Gk Βοιωτία, Βοιωτός may then be exactly equated, except for the stem-formation which is most likely due to Greek innovation.

The etymology finds support in the poetic traditions of both Vedic (Rigveda) and Greek (epic, tragedy), which share a formula containing the respective reflexes of **g^wóu-(H)iu_{h3}-ti-* ‘pasture’. This may be reconstructed as [GOD(S) – WET – PASTURE (**g^wóu-(H)iu_{h3}-ti-*) – with FAT]. In both traditions, the formula forms part of a larger poetic theme of reciprocity between gods and humans, characterized by the exchange of [FAT], symbolizing wealth and fertility in the Indo-European *Dichtersprache* (cf. Massetti 2022). In this way, the present proposal does not merely identify cognate words, but sheds light on aspects of the Proto-Indo-European social and religious conceptions as reflected in the poetic tradition.

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The Graeco-Phrygian Verbal System: An attempt at reconstruction

Ivo Hajnal

Universität Innsbruck

04 Aug
15.00
15A.0.13

There is no doubt that Greek and Phrygian go back to a common precursor. This is supported on the one hand by striking isoglosses (see Obrador-Cursach 2019) and on the other hand by historical reports (see the summarizing overview in Brixhe 1994 and 2002). Accordingly, it is to be expected that the Greek and Phrygian verbs have an identical basis.

Our knowledge of the Phrygian verb is limited. It is described in detail from a current perspective in Sowa (2007) and Obrador-Cursach (2020, 98–108). Structurally, the Greek and Phrygian verbal systems appear to be identical. Both comprise three tenses (present, aorist, and probably perfect), two *genera verbi* (active and middle) and four modes (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and optative).

However, there are striking differences between the Greek and Phrygian verb. To name the main divergences:

- Phrygian uses the ending */-e-ti/* in the 3rd person singular of thematic verbs and does not seem to have an equivalent to Greek */-ei/*.
- In Phrygian protaseis, *da Yet*, (αδ)δαχκετ or (αβ)βερετ serve as subjunctives. The use of the secondary ending */-t/* is striking and stands in contrast to the Greek subjunctive with primary endings.
- The Phrygian subjunctive is formed with a single thematic vowel instead of a double thematic vowel as in Greek **/-e/o- + -e/o-/ > /-ē/ō-/*.
- Phrygian uses the medial ending **/-toi/* which, unlike in Greek, serves as a secondary ending (cf. *edatoy*, *estatoi*, etc.). In addition, in αδδαχκετορ, αββερετορ and others, the variant **/-tor/* is found, which is not attested in Greek.
- Phrygian aorists such as 3rd person sing. *edaes* deviate from the *k*-extended Greek aorist εθηκε. At the same time, the *k*-extension of the stem **/dā-/ < */d^heh₁-/* is present in the above-mentioned subjunctives such as *da Yet*, (αδ)δαχκετ, etc.

- Phrygian adds the suffix */-se- (-si-)/ to verbal forms that obviously have a modal meaning (cf. *dedasitiy*, δεδασσινυι etc.; s. Hämmig 2019) and no obvious parallel in Greek.

The attempt to reconstruct a common Graeco-Phrygian verbal system must take these divergences into account. It cannot be ruled out that some of them are archaisms. They may contribute to a better understanding of the position of Greek and Phrygian in the Indo-European language family and the development of Greek verbal system.

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Greco-Albanian in Time and Space

Adam Hyllested

Københavns Universitet and Danmarks Nationalleksikon

04 Aug
15.30
15A.0.13

In Hyllested & Joseph (2022), we argued that Albanian and Greek form a particularly close subgroup within Indo-European and that these two branches (together with a range of fragmentarily attested languages) make up a larger subgroup with Armenian.

The questions of a) the position of these three language branches in the IE family tree and b) their relationships to each other have since received increased attention after the publication of some recent interdisciplinary papers on IE migrations (Zhivlov & al., 2021; Lazaridis & al., 2022a; Lazaridis & al., 2022b; Yediay, Kroonen & al., 2024). One central question that has arisen is whether it is Albanian or Armenian that can be connected to Early Bronze-Age Yamnaya migrations into the Balkans, and, consequently, whether influx from later stages of the evolving Yamnaya populations (such as the Catacomb Culture) represents speakers of a Greco-Armenian or rather a Greco-Albanian unity.

This calls for a treatment of some additional evidence that Brian Joseph and I, for reasons of space limitations, did not prioritize in our 2022 work; evidence which is especially relevant in the context of uncovering prehistoric migrations.

We did not include changes in specific plant-names (e.g., Alb. *ah* ‘beech’ ~ Gk. ὄξυς ‘id.’ vs. ‘ash-tree’ elsewhere in IE) as they may reflect new geographical surroundings rather than genealogy. We also deliberately restricted ourselves to inherited evidence, leaving out shared substratum words even when they point to a common protoform such as Alb. *dëllinje*, *dëlli* ‘juniper’ ~ Gk. (Hsch.) σχέλινος ‘wild cypress or juniper’, indicating a protoform **(s)ǵ^helin-(i)o-* (Danka & Witczak 1995: 132).

Unfortunately, much of this evidence does not point unequivocally to Mediterranean surroundings. For example, the meaning of **(s)ǵ^helin-(i)o-* should probably not be reconstructed as anything more specific than ‘juniper’, a term covering both Mediterranean and Steppe species.

However, it is significant for our purposes when such substratum words also occur in Italic. An illustrative example is Albanian *mëllagë*, *mullagë* ‘marshmallow, *Althea officinalis*’ ~ Gk. μάλαχος ‘id.’.

This is a Mediterranean culture-word probably of Semitic origin, but the Greek and Albanian forms point to a common protoform **malág^hā*, and it also occurs in Latin as *malva* ‘id.’. The voiced stop in Albanian speaks against a simple loan from Greek.

In my paper I will go through substratum words shared by Greek, Albanian and Italic as well as “Mediterranean” innovations within the interited material shared by the three groups, assessing the value of this material for the identification of Albanian as the branch that arrived in the Balkans together with Greek.

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Cladistics and Linguistic Realism

Don Ringe

University of Pennsylvania

04 Aug
16.30
15A.0.13

Historical linguists have been trying to model the diversification of languages and dialects for more than a century and a half. Over the past thirty years new computational methods have been employed more and more often, but the facts have not changed. It seems appropriate to step back and take another look at the patterns of linguistic facts with which cladists must grapple. Both the position of Greek in the Indo-European family and the diversification of Greek dialects are instructive.

Do we really know 'Minoan' Linear A? Exploring alternative taxonomic approaches

Ester Salgarella

Aarhus Universitet

05 Aug
09.30
15A.0.13

This paper sets out to re-examine, afresh and anew, the traditional sign list¹ of the still undeciphered Linear A script of Bronze Age Greece (ca. 1800–1450 BCE) and critically evaluate the theoretical underpinnings on which it hinges, with a view to putting forward an alternative taxonomic framework, built on a detailed palaeographic study of Linear A signs and which takes into due account the historical developments of the discipline (Bronze Age Aegean Scripts).²

It will be shown, in fact, that the traditional framework behind Linear A sign classification reflects the taxonomic approach devised for the 'Mycenaean' Linear B script (ca. 1400–1190 BCE), following its decipherment as an early form of Greek,³ on the implicit assumption that their respective signaries could be systematised in the same fashion. This assumption, however, is fraught with problems (albeit presenting some interesting food for thought for the study of the historical developments of the discipline), and hinders our appreciation of the inner workings of the Linear A writing system.

¹GORILA V: xxii–xxvii

²Based on the methodology put forward in Salgarella 2020; 2022.

³On the Linear B decipherment process, and its historical implications, see esp. Chadwick 1967; the most up-to-date list (and discussion) of Linear B signs is given in Docs³ I: 95–136.

For, some signs have been ‘overlooked’ (resulting in an overall reduction of the total number of Linear A signs), while others have been ‘multiplied’ by taking allographs (of the same sign) as independent signs (resulting in an *increase* in the total number of Linear A signs). A far assessment of the actual number of signs, as realistically reconstructable as possible, will not only give us a more accurate understanding of what the Linear A script *looks like*, but it will also give us valuable insights into how it works, especially with respect to the underlying phonological system. This, in turn, has the strong potential to inform our linguistic investigations into the nature of the still too poorly understood ‘Minoan’ language,⁴ which Linear A (still rather enigmatically) encodes

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⁴The most recent and comprehensive investigations into the Minoan language encoded in Linear A are Davis 2013; 2014; forthcoming a; forthcoming b.

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Non-Indo-European Substrates and Ancient Greek: Some methodological problems of investigation

Matthew Scarborough
København Universitet

05 Aug
10.00
15A.0.13

It has been long recognised that a significant proportion of the Ancient Greek lexicon lacking a good etymology from the inherited Indo-European lexicon or another known and identifiable borrowed source language.⁵ Some (but by no means unanimous) consensus has emerged in the literature that some of this lexical material should be ascribed to one or more non-Indo-European substrate languages which were spoken by peoples that Greek speakers encountered when entering the Aegean.⁶ Indeed, recent work on the linguistic structure of the language underlying Linear A appears to show a morphological and syntactic profile inconsistent with other older Indo-European languages of comparable date (Davis 2014: 269–278, cf. also Schrijver 2018). While this recent work appears to (partly) vindicate the hypothesis that at least some recent prehistoric borrowed vocabulary is likely of non-Indo-European origin (as prominently advocated for by Beekes 2010; 2014, building on the work of Furnée 1972), there nevertheless remain significant obstacles to the linguistic analysis of non-Indo-European substratum loanwords including:

- The question of one or many substratum languages (recently Meester 2024; cf. Duhoux 1998; 2020)

⁵For instance, based on a survey of Chantraine (1968–1980), Morpurgo Davies (1986: 105) estimated as much as 52.2% his dictionary headwords of obscure etymology, while recently Ringe (2024: 341–342) considering an Ancient Greek Swadesh 100 list to contain 32 lexemes completely unetymologised or of uncertain etymology.

⁶See Verhasselt (2009; 2011) for a critical survey of different hypotheses from the nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries.

- The difficulties of delimiting the corpus of alleged substratum borrowings to determine what may be identified as a genuine ‘substratum’ loanword; and finally
- Imposing delimitations on the basis of the philological *reliability* of the source material itself.

In my presentation I will discuss some of these challenges and difficulties and present preliminary results of a project to compile a dataset of suggested substratum loanwords in Ancient Greek, together with some suggestions for potential productive research on these materials in the future.

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Reconstructing subgrouping and convergence among second-millennium dialects

Lucien van Beek
Universiteit Leiden

05 Aug
11.00
15A.0.13

In this contribution I present my views on how Greek sound changes and morphological innovations of the second millennium BCE impact our picture of the Greek family tree. The changes to be discussed concern the syllabic liquids (van Beek 2022a); the labiovelars (van Beek 2020); the infinitive endings (van Beek 2024); and the contract verbs and the development of final **-ti* (Willi 2012). I will further develop arguments, mentioned only in passing in van Beek 2022b and elaborated in more detail in van Beek 2024, that bear on the cladistic position of Aeolic as a subgroup (on which see recently Scarborough 2023). In particular, I will make the case for the idea (cf. Miller 2014: 321-322; Finkelberg 2017) that Lesbian is originally a South Greek dialect that “turned Aeolic” when that subgroup formed by convergence in the late second millennium.

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The riddle of Ancient Macedonian: The perspective from the glosses

Wojciech Sowa

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

05 Aug
11.30
15A.0.13

Since the late 19th century, scholarly consensus has largely regarded the non-Greek language spoken in Ancient Macedonia – commonly termed “Macedonian” – as an independent Indo-European language of the ancient Balkans. A widely accepted distinguishing feature excluding Macedonian from the Greek dialectal group has been the development of Proto-Indo-European voiced aspirated stops into voiced stops, contrasting with the voiceless aspirates characteristic of Greek. However, recent scholarship, particularly within the last three decades of research into Ancient Greek dialectology, has increasingly interpreted Macedonian as a markedly aberrant Greek dialect, or as a form of “para-Greek,” ostensibly of Aeolic or North-West Greek origin, but heavily influenced by non-Greek languages of the northern Balkans. These distinguishing phonological features, notably the transition from *mediae aspiratae* to *mediae*, have been variably reinterpreted within a Greek phonological framework (see, e.g., Hatzopoulos, Crespo, Méndez Dosuna). A significant limitation of these studies, however, lies in their predominant reliance on epigraphic evidence, such as the Pella inscription, while disregarding secondary evidence – namely, the so-called Macedonian glosses.

This paper seeks to address how many linguistic idioms might plausibly be posited within the Kingdom of Macedon, based on this secondary evidence. Setting aside the purely Greek material, which evidently cannot be considered dialect-specific, approximately 60 forms remain, presenting significant etymological challenges and potentially reflecting a linguistic reality distinct from that suggested by the Pella inscription. This raises the critical question: are the theories of coexistence between an ancient Greek dialect and a non-Greek language in Macedonia truly justified when examined through the lens of the glosses? The study will tackle several enduring and complex linguistic questions: if an Ancient Macedonian language can indeed be reconstructed from extant material, what were its defining characteristics, and to what extent are these adequately supported by the evidence? Furthermore, how does this language relate to its Indo-European and Balkan neighbours, and to what degree might external influences—such as Thracian or Phrygian—be postulated, as some

scholars have argued? The paper aims to position the fragmentary Macedonian evidence within the broader context of the Balkan dialectal area of the Indo-European language family, examining “Balkan” isoglosses in the preserved Macedonian material. It will assess the relationship between Macedonian speech and the Greek dialects, considering their development from the Proto-Greek period.

The synchronic distribution of Greek dialects, alongside traditional migration models positing successive “waves” of Greek settlement in the Aegean, has been significantly challenged by the discovery of Mycenaean texts. Alternative subgrouping models have since emerged, suggesting that, while the Greek dialects may have formed as discrete units within Greece, they retain numerous features inherited from the Balkan linguistic substratum. This raises the broader question of whether the reconstructed “Proto-Greek” can be equated with a Balkan Indo-European dialectal area, or whether this Balkan linguistic zone might have preceded the Proto-Greek stage chronologically. Consequently, the paper will evaluate whether the supposed “Balkan” characteristics are identifiable within the Macedonian linguistic corpus and consider whether developments within Macedonian are genuinely comparable to those observed in the Greek dialects and related languages.

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