Lecture 3: **Metrical considerations**

1. **Metre**

   - Typical dactylic line:  
     - $-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ/-\circ\circ$  
   - 1 short = 1 mora, 1 long = 2 morae, therefore 1 long = 2 shorts  
   - Longs may be ‘resolved’ into 2 shorts. 2 shorts may be ‘contracted’ into 1 long – making dactyl into spondee

   **Od. 6.1**  
   \[\omega \delta \mu \epsilon ν\theta\alpha \kappa α\theta\varepsilon\delta\pi\omega\lambda\tau\lambda\delta\mu\sigma\varepsilon\theta\alpha\;\]  

   - Caesura (word-break) usually located in third foot.  
     a) after the long  
     **Il. 1.8**  
     \[\tau\xi\tau\;\acute{\alpha}\sigma\phi\omega\theta\varepsilon\nu\;\xi\vartheta\iota\iota\;\xi\nu\nu\kappa\varepsilon\;\mu\chi\varepsilon\theta\ai;\;\]  
     b) after the first short  
     **Od. 1.1**  
     \[\alpha\nu\delta\varrho\;\mu\omicron\iota\nu\nu\pi\omicron\nu\;\mu\omicron\sigma\alpha\;\varpi\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\;\delta\zeta\mu\alpha\lambda\;\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\omicron\;\]  
     a) = penthemimeral, because it is after the fifth (pent-) half (hemi) foot  
     b) = trochaic because the foot before it is a trochee ($-\circ$)

   - Basic shape of half lines:  
     - $-\infty/-\infty/+/\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty$  
     - $-\infty/-\infty/-\infty+/\infty/+/\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty/-\infty$  

   - Word position also affected by metrical rules. For example,  
     1. Contraction less likely in third foot because of caesura.  
     2. Words containing three consecutive long syllables are placed so that only 1 contraction is required:  
     **Il. 1.3**  
     \[\eta\rho\omega\nu\omega\;\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\omicron\omicron\delta\;\epsilon\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\tau\omicron\omicron\epsilon\chi\nu\nu\epsilon\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\;\]  

     3. Certain shapes of words tend to go in certain places  
     a) $\circ/-/-$ at the end of a line  
     b) $\circ/-$ either at the end of a line or before a caesura  
     c) $\circ/-$ after the caesura  
     d) $/-/-$  
     $-\circ\circ/-$ either at the beginning or before the caesura
Medical support:

Reciting Homer's Iliad or Odyssey could offer great benefits to your health according to an article in Scientific American (2004;October: 13). German physiologists have shown that such poetry can get your heart beating in time with your breathing and such synchronization could improve gas exchange in the lungs as well as the body's responsiveness to changes in blood pressure. The type of poetry is critical however. The original hexametric pace of the verse as maintained by the German translation was chosen because of its known "feel good" effects on readers and listeners.

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Full article at:
http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=00075241-741B-1150-B36283414B7F0000&sc=I100322

Synizesis

- Two vowels can sometimes scan as one
- This usually done with –εω eg. also rarely with εο e.g. χρυσεον

Elision

- Vowel before vowel is often elided
- α, ε, ο most easily elided
- ι never in πεφι, τι, δτι, rarely in the dat. sg.
  e.g. II. 16. 385 385 ήματ’ ὀπωρινὼ
- Long vowels not elided
- But diphthongs in –αι and –οι a special case
  e.g. II. 1. 117 βούλομ’ ἐγὼ
  II. 1. 170 170 οὐδέ σ’ οίω

Correption

- Final diphthongs in αι and οι can scan short
  II. 1. 299 οὔτε σοι οὔτε τῷ ἄλλῳ, ἐπεὶ μ’ ἀφέλεσθε γε δόντες·
- But they can sometimes scan long
  II. 1. 18 Ατρεΐδαι τε καὶ ἄλλοι ἕυκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,
- Not just metrical – also accentual rules depend on them counting as short syllables. Could be due to ι functioning as glide?
- But extended to other cases e.g.
  II. 18. 36 ἡμένη ἐν βένθεσιν
**Metrical lengthening**

- Some lengthening of vowels seems to be purely metrical, with no etymological justification

- Perhaps because of couplets like ξείνος vs ξένος e.g. εἰλήλουθα
  Απόλλωνα (long first a)
  πουλοβότειρα
  ἀπονέεσθαι
  Αγαμεμνονέος (for ιος)
  αἰσχροίσ' ἐπέεσσι (for *-οἰς ἐπέεσσι)

**Vowel contraction**

- Ionic non-contracted words e.g. ἠλιος

- Therefore tempting to uncontract all cases of contracted vowels

- Indeed many diphthongs are placed in the weak part of the foot, where they could be either two shorts or one long e.g. Ἀργειφόντης

- But although lines with high proportion of spondees is rare, there is one e.g. of mostly spondees:

  I. 10. 415   βουλὰς βουλεύει θείου παρὰ σήματι Ἰλου

- Contraction also known - ἠλιος is also found

- Contraction exploited – sometimes both forms found in the same line:

  I. 10.249  Τυδείδη μήτ' ἄρ με μάλ' αἴνεε μήτε τι νείκει·

- One example –gen. sing ending – either οιο or ου (οιο > ογγο > ογο > οο > ου)

- In some cases oo is necessary

  Od. 10. 60   βῆν εἰς Αἰόλου κλυτὰ δώματα· τὸν δ’ ἐκίχανον

- But in some contracted form is more likely:

  I. 1. 422  μήνι' Ἀχαιόσιν, πολέμου δ’ ἀποσαύεο πάμπαν·
2. Archaic forms found on scansion

2.1. Digamma

- F found in inscriptions of other dialects, pronounced like English ‘w’
- Had metrical effects on language – blocked hiatus and made position

Il. 1. 363  ἐξαύδα, μὴ κεῦθε νόω, ἵνα εἴδομεν ἅμφω.

Il. 1. 108  ἐσθλὸν δ' οὕτε τί πω εἴπας ἔπος οὔτ' ἐτέλεσσας.

- Words with initial F: ἑστία (Vesta), ἕσπερα (vesper), οἶκος (vicus), οἶνος (vinum), ἰδεῖν (videre), ἔργον (work)
- F word internally: ξενος (cf Ionic ξεινος, Attic ξένος), δειδω (cf. ἐδειδω)
- But we can’t restore digamma to the text - it is clear that at the final stage of composition, the digamma had disappeared from the spoken language

Il. 1.19  ἐκπέρσαι Πριάμοι πόλιν, εὖ δ' οἰκαδ' ἰκέσθαι:

- In some cases, the presence or absence of digamma appears to have been ‘exploited’
  e.g. μελιηδέα οἶνον but μελιηδέος οἶνον
2.2. Initial *s

- Initial *s has developed into [h] in the Greek language e.g. ὑπερ, cf Latin super, also cf ἐχω, root – σχ –
- But initial s still leaves traces in the metre
- Makes position:

  II. 1.51 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκές ἐφείς

- Before λ, μ, ν, ρ s also disappeared but left traces. Word-internally, -s- led to a gemination e.g. λαμβανω – root = σλαβ- . This explains ἔλλαβε.
- Some analogical extensions made: ἐμμαθε – no reason for gemination here.
- More examples of words being scanned with unetymological –s than digamma

  II. 4.274 τὼ δὲ κορυσσέσθην, ἅμα δὲ νέφος εἵπετο πεζῶν

- Disappeared earlier than digamma?
2.3. Syllabic \(r\)

- In Indo-European several phonemes have a consonantal and a vocalic allophone e.g. \(m\).
- This still exists in Sanskrit.
- Before vowels, it is pronounced as a consonant, between consonants as something more ‘vocalic’.
- For example, negative prefix \(\dot{a}\)- in Greek, \(i\)n in Latin. Both come from \(n\). cf Greek νήνεμος ‘windless, calm’ [νη- ἄνεμος].
- Original \(r\) develops to \(\varphi\)- or \(\varphi\)- in Attic Greek.
- Evidence:

**Verbs in zero-grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e.g.</th>
<th>λείπω [= e-grade]</th>
<th>ἔλιπον [=zero-grade]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cf.</td>
<td>πείθω</td>
<td>ἐπιθον</td>
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<td></td>
<td>τρεφῶ</td>
<td>ἑτραφον</td>
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**Other words**

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<th>e.g.</th>
<th>κράδη</th>
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<td>cf.</td>
<td>Lat. cordis</td>
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- But \(r\) can still be ‘vocalic’ in Homer, as we can see from the scansion of certain lines:

\[\dot{ασπίδος} \dot{αμφιβρότης}\]

II. 16. 85 λιποῦσ’ ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην

II. 2.651 Μηριώνης τ’ ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλίω ἀνδρειφόντη·

**References**


ἡμαρ cf Attic ἡμέρα
ἡμιστε =aor. 3. sg. of ἀμαρτάνω