

Lecture 3: **Metrical considerations****1. Metre**

- Typical dactylic line: — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — —
- 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 ὦς ὁ μὲν ἔνθα καθεῦδε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς

- Caesura (word-break) usually located in third foot.

a) after the long

Il. 1.8 — — / — ∪ ∪ / — ∷ ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — —
 τίς τ' ἄρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι;

b) after the first short

Od. 1.1 — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∷ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — ∪ ∪ / — —
 ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, ∷ πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ

- a) = penthemimeral, because it is after the fifth (pent-) half (hemi) foot
 b) = trochaic because the foot before it is a trochee (— ∪)

- Basic shape of half lines:

— ∷ / — ∷ / — + ∷ / — ∷ / — ∪ ∪ / — —

— ∷ / — ∷ / — ∪ + ∪ / — ∷ / — ∪ ∪ / — —

- 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 ἦρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν

3. Certain shapes of words tend to go in certain places

- a) ∪ — — at the end of a line
 b) ∷ — ∪ either at the end of a line or before a caesura
 c) ∷ — ∪ ∪ after the caesura
 d) — — —
 — ∪ ∪ — 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.

BMJ 12 February 2005

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 περι, τι, ὅτι, rarely in the dat. sg.
e.g. Il. 16. 385 385 ἦματ' ὀπωρινῶ
- Long vowels not elided
- But diphthongs in –αι and –οι a special case
e.g. Il. 1. 117 βούλομ' ἐγὼ
Il. 1. 170 170 οὐδέ σ' οἴω

Correption

- Final diphthongs in αι and οι can scan short
Il. 1. 299 οὔτε σοὶ οὔτε τῷ ἄλλῳ, ἐπεὶ μ' ἀφέλεσθέ γε δόντες·
- But they can sometimes scan long
Il. 1. 18 Ἀτρεΐδαι τε καὶ ἄλλοι εὐκνήμιδες 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.
Il. 18. 36 ἡμένη ἐν βένθεσσιν

Metrical lengthening

- Some lengthening of vowels seems to be purely metrical, with no etymological justification
- Perhaps because of couplets like ξεινος vs ξένος
e.g. ειλήλουθα
 Ἀπόλλωνα (long first a)
 πουλοβότειρα
 ἀπονέεσθαι
 Ἀγαμεμνονέος (for ιος)
 αἰσχροῖσ' ἐπέεσσι (for *-οισι φέπεσσι)

Vowel contraction

- Ionic non-contracted words e.g. ἥλιος
- 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. Ἄρχειφόντης
- But although lines with high proportion of spondees is rare, there is one e.g. of mostly spondees:

Il. 10. 415 βουλὰς βουλεύει θείου παρὰ σήματι Ἴλου

- Contraction also known - ἥλιος is also found
- Contraction exploited – sometimes both forms found in the same line:

Il. 10.249 Τυδεΐδη μήτ' ἄρ με μάλ' αἶνεε μήτέ τι νείκει·

- One example –gen. sing ending – either οιο or ου (οιο > ογγο > ογο > οο > ου)
- In some cases οο is necessary

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

- But in some contracted form is more likely:

Il. 1. 422 μῆνι' Ἀχαιοῖσιν, πολέμου δ' ἀποπαύεο πάμπαν·

2. Archaic forms found on scansion

2.1. Digamma

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

II. 1. 363 ἐξάυδα, μῆ κεῦθε νόω, ἴνα εἶδομεν ἄμφω.

II. 1. 108 ἐσθλὸν δ' οὐτέ τί πω εἶπας ἔπος οὐτ' ἐτέλεσσας·

- Words with initial Ɔ: ἐστία (Vesta), ἔσπερα (vesper), οἶκος (vicus), οἶνος (vinum), ἰδεῖν (videre), ἔργον (work)
- Ɔ word internally: ξενƆος (cf Ionic ξεινος, Attic ξένος), δƆειδω (cf. ἐδδεισαν)
- 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

II. 1.19 ἐκπέρσαι Πριάμοιο πόλιν, εὔ δ' οἴκαδ' ἰκέσθαι·

- In some cases, the presence or absence of digamma appears to have been 'exploited'
e.g. μελιηδέα οἶνον but μελιηδέος οἶνου

2.2. Initial *s

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

Il. 1.51 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκὲς ἐφίεις

- 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: ἔμμαθε – no reason for gemination here.
- More examples of words being scanned with unetymological –s than digamma

Il. 4.274 τὼ δὲ κορυσσέσθην, ἄμα δὲ νέφος εἶπετο 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 *ἀ-* in Greek, *in* in Latin. Both come from n. cf Greek νήνεμος 'windless, calm' [νη- ἄνεμος].
- Original r develops to ρο- or ρα- in Attic Greek.
- Evidence:

Verbs in zero-grade

e.g.	λείπω [= e-grade]	ἔλιπον [=zero-grade]
cf.	πείθω	ἔπιθον
	τρέφω	ἔτραφον

Other words

e.g.	κράδιη
cf.	Lat. cordis

- But r can still be 'vocalic' in Homer, as we can see from the scansion of certain lines:

ἀσπίδος ἀμφιβρότης

Il. 16. 85 λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτήτα καὶ ἦβην

Il. 2.651 Μηριόνης τ' ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλίῳ ἀνδρειφόντη·

References

Horrocks, G. C. 1980 'The antiquity of the Greek epic tradition. Some new evidence', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 26 1-11.

ἦμαρ cf Attic ἡμέρα

ἦμβροτε =aor. 3. sg. of ἀμαρτάνω