

ΛΑΩ: TWO TESTIMONIA IN LATER GREEK POETRY

THE verb *λάω* is attested in two passages of early epic poetry, (a) *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 360 οὐδέ κεν αὐτὸν / αἰετὸς ὀξὺ λάων ἐσκέφατο, where the infant Hermes is hiding in a dark cave,¹ and (b) τ 229 ff. ἐν προτέροισι πόδεσσι κύων ἔχε ποικίλον ἐλλόν, / ἀσπαίροντα λάων· τὸ δὲ θανμάζεσκον ἅπαντες, / ὥς οἱ χρύσειοι ἐόντες ὁ μὲν λάε νεβρὸν ἀπάγχων, / αὐτὰρ ὁ ἐκφυγείν μεμαῶς ἦσπαιρε πόδεσσι, of a hound seizing a fawn on the brooch of Odysseus. Of the several meanings suggested by the ancient lexicographers for *λάω*, *seeing*, *gazing*,² or *crying*, *screeching*³ would suit (a). These senses recur in their explanations of (b), with *gripping* or *devouring* as additional possibilities.⁴ The most extensive modern treatment of *λάω* is by Leumann, who explains it as a present falsely formed from the perfect *λέληκα* (X 141 ὀξὺ λεληκώς, of a hawk), and originally intended to describe the cry of a bird of prey. The unfamiliarity of the form led to its being associated later on with the *sharp-sightedness* of such birds, as well as with the bark of a hound fastening on its quarry.⁵ On Leumann's thesis another derivation would have to be found for words like *ἀλαός* *blind* which have been connected with *λάω* *see* by ancient and modern critics.⁶

The purpose of the present article is to examine the occurrence of *λάω* in two disputed passages of late classicizing poetry. The first is *AP* 5. 237. 5 (Agathias Scholasticus) :

Πᾶσαν ἐγὼ τὴν νύκτα κινύρομαι· εὐτε δ' ἐπέλθῃ
ὄρθρος ἐλινῦσαι μικρὰ χαριζόμενος,
ἀμφιπεριτρύζουσι χελιδόνες, ἐς δέ με δάκρυ
βάλλουσιν, γλυκερὸν κῶμα παρωσάμεναι.
5 ὄμματα δ' οὐ λάοντα φυλάσσειται· ἡ δέ 'Ροδάνθης
αἰθῆς ἐμοῖς στέρνοισι φροντὶς ἀναστρέφεται, κτλ.

Our only witness to lines 5–6 is the Palatine manuscript of the *Anthology*, as they are omitted by Planudes and are not paraphrased in the imitation of this epigram by Nicetas Eugenianus, *Charicles and Drosilla*, 6. 649 ff.⁷ The scribe (A)

¹ *λάων* codd. E and L₁, βλέπων cett., see Gemoll ad loc.

² As implied by the variant βλέπων. Hsch. s.v. λάετε· σκοπεῖτε, βλέπετε, see *EM* 563. 49 al. Apollon. Soph. s.v. λάων· λέγεται ἐπὶ τῆς ἐντετορευμένης πόρπης τοῦ Ὀδυσσεως (τ 229), σημαίνει δὲ τὸ βλέπων. ὁ δὲ Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπολαυστικῶς ἔχων. βέλτιον δὲ τὸ πρῶτον. N 334 γηθήσειεν ἰδὼν is transmitted by *P.Oxy.* 769 as γηθησ[ε]ιε λ[, with the letters νιδ written above the λ. Allen and Halliday on *h. Herm.* loc. cit. complete the text as γηθήσειε λάων.

³ Hsch. s.v. λάε· ἐφόφῃσεν. οἱ δὲ ἐφθέγγετο, quoting τ 230. Cyr. Gloss. s.v. λαημέναι· φθέγγεσθαι.

⁴ Sch. V on τ 229 λάων· ὁ μὲν Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπολαύων, ἀπολαυστικῶς ἔχων· ὁ δὲ Κράτης

λάων φησίν, ἀντὶ τοῦ βλέπων. ὅθεν κατὰ στέρησιν ἀλαός ὁ τυφλός. οἱ δὲ φασιν ἀφῆρησθαι τὸ ν, ἵνα ᾖ ὑλάων. ἡ ἀπελαύνων. Sch. B ad loc. ἀπολαυστικῶς ἐσθίων· ἡ ὑλάων κατ' ἐνδειαν τοῦ ν. ἡ βλέπων· ὅθεν καὶ ἀλαός ὁ τυφλός κατὰ στέρησιν. See also Sch. on τ 230, *EM* 563. 52, Apollon. Soph. loc. cit.

⁵ M. Leumann, *Homerische Wörter* (Basel, 1950), 233 ff. Earlier accounts by Lobeck, *Ῥηματικόν* (1846), 6, Fick, *Wörterbuch* (1890), i. 119 f., Bechtel, *Lexilogus* (1914), 27. See also Boisacq, *Dict. Etym.* (1950), s.v. λάω, Frisk, *Gr. etym. Wörterb.* (1960 ff.), s.v. λάω.

⁶ e.g. Hsch. s.v. λάων, Sch. VB on τ 229, Bechtel, loc. cit. See Leumann, 236.

⁷ *Erotici Scriptores Graeci*, ed. Hercher (1859), ii. 521.

has beyond doubt written οὐ λάοντα. This is unmetrical, since in the examples of λάω surviving in epic the alpha is short. Similarly, derivatives from ἀλαός (which are metrically relevant, since we cannot be sure that they are not connected with λάω) have their second alpha short.¹ In his edition of the *Anthology* Beckby ignores this metrical anomaly, printing the manuscript text and translating: 'Offen dann steht mir das Aug und kann doch nicht sehen; die Sorge / um Rhodanthe bedrückt wieder mir quälend das Herz.' Wilamowitz paraphrased the same text as 'aber ich halte die Augen geschlossen und in dem Herzen habe ich Rhodanthe'.² Waltz prints the stopgap οὐ <τι> λάοντα: 'Mes yeux alors de veiller, mais sans rien voir, car le souci de Rhodanthê revient hanter mon cœur.' Others have sought to emend λάοντα or φυλάσσειται.³ This latter course is mistaken; the poet imagines himself as lying awake at day-break, and both words are relevant to his situation. To restore the original text only a very small change is necessary. Agathias wrote, I submit, not οὐ λάοντα but ὁξὺ λάοντα, in deliberate evocation of the Homeric Hymn: 'My sharply-gazing eyes are keeping watch'.⁴ The phrase could be an instance of *interpretatio Homerica*, conveying what Agathias thought to be the correct reading in the Homeric Hymn, or what he conceived to be the meaning of λάων there.⁵ The solution here proposed may seem over-simple considering the heavy weather which critics have made of this line. Their perplexity has been due in part to the rarity of λάω in literature (as opposed to lexica) and the consequent dubiety about how a late poet might have been expected to use the word. In this connection it will be helpful to consider a line in the *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae* of Paul the Silentiary, a contemporary and friend of Agathias.⁶ Paul is referring to the all-night vigil preceding the second consecration of the church on 24 December 562 (the poem is preserved, like the epigram of Agathias, in the Palatine manuscript of the *Anthology*):

333 καὶ δὴ νύξ τετέλεστο προηγέτις εὐποδος ἡοῦς
εὐφροσύνην καλέουσα, θεοῦ δ' ὑπεδέξατο κήρυξ
ἄμβροτος ἀγρύπνοιο λάων κελάδημα χορείης

¹ See LSJ and Supplement, and Stephanus s.vv. ἀλαῶω, ἀλασκοπία, ἀλασκόπος, ἀλαῶπις, ἀλαωπός, ἀλαωτός, ἐξαλαῶω. In κ 493 and μ 267 μάντιος ἀλαοῦ init. vs., edd. scan μάντιος as a molossus (see G. Hermann, *Elementa Doctrinae Metricae* [ed. Glasgow, 1817], 424), many preferring the late variant μάντης.

² *Hermes*, liv (1919), 63. Wilamowitz refers to *h. Herm.* l.c., and also to Theognostus, *Canones* 27. 11 λαίω (sic) τὸ βλέπω καὶ τὸ φονεύω (see K. Alpers, *Theognostus περὶ ὀρθογραφίας* [Diss. Hamburg, 1964], pp. 82, 82a; Cramer, *An. Ox.* ii. 9. 13). Wilamowitz would, however, apparently retain οὐ λάοντα in our epigram.

³ οὐ μόνοντα Hecker, *Comm. Crit. de Anthol. Gr.* (1843), 87, see Nonn. *D.* 26. 132 ὁμματα δ' οὐμνοντα κατακλείω γενετήρος, Call. *Dian.* 95 οὐ μόνοντα λαγῶν. δὲ σταλάοντα Jacobs (1 edn. Addenda, t. xiii. 87; 2 edn.), οὐκέτ' ἄκλαστα (id., manuscript note in his own copy

of his commentary, preserved in the Bodleian Library). δ' ἀενάοντα and δ' οἰδαίνοντα Stadtmueller. δ' οὐχ εὐδοντα F. G. Schmidt ap. Stadtm. δὲ κλάοντα Lumb, *Notes on the Greek Anthology* (1920), 17. δ' οἰδαίνοντα Tucker ap. Lumb. μυδαλέοντα παλάσσειται, μυδαλέοντα παλ. Jacobs (1 edn. comm., and Addenda, t. xiii. 87).

⁴ φυλάσσειται med. and intrans., as K 188 ὡς τῶν νήδυμος ὕπνος ἀπὸ βλεφάρων δῶλαι / νύκτα φυλασσομένοισι κακῇν, where νύκτα expresses duration. For ὡς . . . δῶλαι in Homer, compare line 4 of our epigram, γλυκερόν κῶμα παρωσάμεναι.

⁵ It goes without saying that we should not expect to find the word used by Agathias in an etymologically truer sense than those which the scholia and ancient lexica offer us today. Agathias was doubtless selecting from the same range of alternatives.

⁶ P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1912).

θεσπεσίους τεμένεσσιν ἑοῖς, ὅθι μυστίδι φωνῇ
 παννυχίους Χριστοῖο βιαρκέος ἄνερες ὕμνους
 ἀσπασίως ἐβόησαν ἀσιγήτοισιν ἀοιδαῖς.

333 λαῶν cod. (librarius J, qui in marg. γρ. πέλων et γρ. τελῶν κελάδημα scripsit)¹
 334 τεμένεσσι νεοῖς cod., corr. Friedländer

λαῶν *people* is impossible, as the alpha would be long. J's marginalia are clearly conjectures, and can be disregarded. Friedländer printed in his text λαων, daggered and unaccented. Noting that the vigil took place in the church of St. Platon (= κῆρυξ ἄμβροτος),² he suggested in his *apparatus criticus* Πλάτων for λαῶν. In his commentary, however, he observes: 'Den Namen Πλάτων möchte ich fast in dem verdorbenen λαων erkennen, obgleich der Stil (nicht die unvermeidliche correptio Attica) höchst bedenklich macht' (p. 275). We should not be led by the chance connection with St. Platon to treat λαῶν as a *vox nihili*. It is, as Arthur Ludwich saw, the participle λάων, qualifying κῆρυξ: 'And the immortal herald of God had, waking, hearkened to the strains of the unsleeping choir.'³ That is, the Saint is imagined as taking part in the vigil held in his church. The change in the sense of λάων from *seeing* to *waking* need not offend in a poet of this date, the sense being in any case clarified by its juxtaposition with ἀγρύπνοιο; this juxtaposition, and the alternation of cases in 333, are stylistically impeccable.⁴ Confusion with the noun λαός would readily suggest itself to a copyist, especially since λαοῖσι and λαός appear close by (328, 339). Clearly the participle λάων here baffled J, as λάοντα probably baffled Planudes and Nicetas in *AP* 5. 237. I think, though, that it is sound in both places, and that these instances of λάω should be included in any further supplement to *LSJ*.

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¹ On J as the writer of text and variants here see C. Preisendanz, *Anthologia Palatina, Codex Palatinus et Codex Parisinus phototypice editi* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1911), I. lxxxiii.

² Theophanes i. 238 De Boor ἡ δὲ παννυχὶς τῶν αὐτῶν ἐγκαινίων γέγονεν εἰς τὸν ἅγιον Πλάτωνα, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν ὁ πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Εὐτύχιος μετὰ τῆς λιτῆς, συμπρόντος καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, κτλ. See R. Janin, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, pt. i, t. iii (Paris, 1953), 418. The martyrdom of St. Platon had been restored from its foundations by Justinian, but as this restoration had taken place forty years before, Friedländer's τεμένεσσιν ἑοῖς for τεμένεσσι νεοῖς 334 is doubtless correct. See Procop. *Aed.* i. 4. 27-9.

³ *Textkritische Noten zu Paulus Silentarius*, 25, in *Verzeichnis der auf der Königlichen Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg im Sommer-Halbjahre vom 15. April 1913 an zu haltenden Vorlesungen*. Ludwich's note, which adduced τ 229 and *h. Herm.* 360, seems to have escaped the compilers of *LSJ* (9 edn.) and Supplement.

⁴ For ἄμβροτος and λάων without copula see, for example, id. 782 τρητὸς λεπταλέος περὶ νήματα χρυσὸς ἐλιχθεῖς. It would be technically possible to take ἀγρύπνοιο with θεοῦ rather than χορείης; but ἀγρυπνος is an appropriate epithet for those celebrating a vigil in church, see Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.vv. ἀγρυπνέω, ἀγρυπνία, ἀγρυπνος.