

The use of *πρός*, *πρωτί* and *ποτί* in Homer

By RICHARD JANKO, Trinity College, Cambridge

It has long been noticed that 'Attic' correption occurs very frequently before *πρός*, more so than might be expected. Meillet¹⁾ was first to suggest that such forms as *προσηύδα* replaced the **ποτηύδα* of an earlier stage of the epic, and his suggestion is echoed by Wathelet in his article on syllabic liquids in Homer²⁾. Just how frequent this licence is becomes clear if we tabulate the frequency of its occurrence before *πρό* for comparison: in the first column of the table below is the frequency of short final vowels maintained short (- \check{V}) before *πρός*, then the number of short final vowels lengthened (\bar{V}) before *πρός*, and then the percentage that remains short: in the last three columns we see the same figures for *πρό*³⁾, whose behaviour is not distinguished from that of *πρός* by Chantraine⁴⁾:

	\check{V} <i>πρός</i>	\bar{V} <i>πρός</i>	% \check{V}	\check{V} <i>πρό</i>	\bar{V} <i>πρό</i>	% \check{V}
<i>Il.</i>	121	86	58.4	7	175	3.8
<i>Od.</i>	132	93	58.6	2	83	2.3
<i>Th.</i>	2	2		5	4	
<i>Erga</i>	5	1		4	2	

Homer's usage in this matter is significant enough: but there are further arguments in favour.

One slight metrical licence particularly associated with *πρός* is *Silbenwägung*, or the 'lengthening' of a naturally light syllable in thesis before a following consonant, as in Pyth. *Ap.* 187 | *εἴσι Διός*

¹⁾ R.E.G. XXXI p. 303, cf. P. Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique*² I 108.

²⁾ *ap. Taalonderzoek in België*, ed. Y. Lebrun, 1966.

³⁾ These figures are obtained from a computerised Key-word in context concordance to the whole of early epic, compiled from O.C.T. texts derived from Edinburgh under the auspices of Dr. J. L. Dawson, of the Literary and Linguistic Computing Centre, Cambridge. Correption in *πρός* (\check{V} *πρός*) is found 3 × *Aspis*, 4 × *Dem.*, 3 × *Del.Ap.*, 2 × *Pyth.Ap.*, 3 × *Herm.*, 5 × *Aphr.*, its absence (\bar{V} *πρός*) 1 × *Aspis*, 1 × *Cat.* (*Eoiai*), 5 × *Dem.*, 2 × *Del.Ap.*, 1 × *Herm.*: cases of \bar{V} *πρό* 7 × *Cat.*, 7 × *Dem.*, 3 × *Del.Ap.*, 2 × *Pyth.Ap.*, 4 × *Herm.*, 1 × *Aphr.*, with no cases of \check{V} *πρό*: it is difficult to draw any conclusions from these smaller figures. Both sets of results include compounds. Note the greater use of \check{V} *πρό* in Hesiod. We may presume that the licence spread by analogy with *πρός*: Hesiod's diction is as usual more advanced than Homer's.

⁴⁾ For refence see n. 1.

πρὸς δῶμα . . . Figures for this may be compiled from Hilberg⁵). In the first column the total number of cases in the second thesis is given, then the number of these that are caused by *πρός*, and finally the percentage represented by that number:

	- \bar{V} C C-	<i>πρὸς</i> C-	% <i>πρός</i>
<i>Il.</i>	63	31	49.2
<i>Od.</i>	67	34	50.7

Apart from the increased frequency of *Silbenwägung* in the *Odyssey*⁶), it emerges clearly that *πρός* accounts for no less than half of the instances of it.

A third feature is the use of *πρωτί/ποτί* before vowels and in hiatus caused by the loss of initial digamma. *πρὸς* is never found in either of these environments, at least in thesis: there is one in arsis, discussed below. The poets of the tradition preferred hiatus to a 'false' quantity, and we can argue from this that the disyllabic forms were retained until the time when initial digamma began to be lost. Note that the identical treatment of hiatus caused by the loss of digamma and of other hiatus proves the theory that digamma was pronounced in a special poetic diction but not written untenable.

A possible formular corroboration of this may be found in the pair of phrases . . . ἄρα γ' εἶπε πρὸς δὲν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν | (*Il.*, *Od.*) and . . . πρωτί δὲν μνηθήσατο θυμόν | (*Il.*, *Od.*). The advanced diction of εἶπε¹¹ πρὸς δὲν (with Attic correction and neglect of digamma in *σφον) might be a replacement for ἄρ' ἔφη¹¹ ποτί (F)δὲν, with a modification of a P₂ to a T₂ formula, in Severyns' terminology.

Another confirmation that *πρός* is a late arrival in the tradition may be derived from the distribution of *πρός* when used in *Silbenwägung*. The occurrence of disyllabic and monosyllabic forms in thesis in the Iliad is as follows: the number of the foot is given above.

	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.
<i>ποτί</i> , <i>πρωτί</i>	0	8	19	5	5
<i>πρὸς</i>	2	26	7	32	0

⁵) J. Hilberg, *Das Prinzip der Silbenwägung*, 1879.

⁶) Whether this trend continued in Hesiod is hard to establish: M. L. West (*Theogony* p. 97) lists eleven cases in the second thesis, including one due to *πρός*: but my notes record three of the latter. Certainly eleven cases in 1020 lines is twice as frequent as in the *Odyssey*.

The table following shows the same pattern in the *Odyssey*:

	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.
$\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}$, $\pi\rho\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}$	0	3	12	14	7
$\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$	2	29	7	35	0

Excluded from these tables are cases of $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ before two consonants, where the monosyllable is certain and the poet(s) could not exercise the same freedom of choice. Of these the *Iliad* has five cases in 2nd. thesis, three in the 3rd.: in the *Odyssey* there are five in 2nd. thesis, three in 3rd. and three in 4th. There is thus a slight increase of indubitably monosyllabic forms in the *Odyssey*. Even more interesting is the consistent use of $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ in the first thesis, where *Silbenwägung* is licit, and its preponderance in the second and fourth; yet in the third and fifth disyllables predominate—or are the rule, in the fifth, where the dactylic rhythm was most desired. This again suggests that $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ has replaced disyllabic forms.

Thus the latter hypothesis may be supported by four arguments: the frequency of 'Attic' correption before $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$, its frequent involvement in *Silbenwägung*, the use of $\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}$ and $\pi\rho\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}$ before vowels in hiatus, and the retention of these forms in the fifth thesis. There is one more to add—the rarity of forms that are definitely monosyllabic. In the *Iliad* there are only thirty cases where position in arsis before a consonant or in thesis before a double consonant or cluster certifies monosyllabicity; in the *Odyssey* there are thirty-three, with the familiar slight increase. Herein are included two cases before digamma, I 147 = 289, | $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ οἶκον Πηληϊῆος . . . If we have deduced rightly from the use of $\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}$ before once-digammated words that $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ was introduced after the loss of initial digamma, then it follows that apocopated forms such as $\pi\omicron\tau$ and $*\pi\rho\omicron\tau$ must have existed, for which some cases of monosyllabic $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ have been substituted, and the latter is really even less common.

Whence came $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$, to supplant the disyllabic forms?

For an explanation of this we need to consider the wider history of the Greek epic tradition as a whole. Two theories are current—that the tradition passed from the mainland direct to Ionia, where it borrowed a number of forms (such as $\delta\pi\pi\omega\varsigma$ and $\xi\mu\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$) from the dialect of Lesbos nearby, or that it reached Ionia only indirectly through a Lesbian intermediate stage. Both theories can account for the 'Achaean' (or Mycenaean) forms embedded in the tradition but the latter is less economical in that it postulates a less direct

transmission. Nonetheless this theory, proposed by K. Meister⁷⁾ and accepted by M. Parry⁸⁾, does explain certain features of the epic speech that are otherwise obscure, and in the present state of knowledge deserves serious consideration at the least.

Meister's basic argument for the Aeolic phase of epic diction runs as follows: if the Ionians were simply borrowing metrically useful forms from other dialects, we would expect them to transmute them into the form of their own vernacular as far as possible. Thus form *ἡνορέη* (known to be Aeolic from the shift $\rho\iota > \rho\epsilon$) is Ionicised for original **ἄνορίᾱ > *ἄνορέᾱ*, *ἡνεμόεις* for *ἄνεμόεις* with metrical lengthening, etc.⁹⁾ On the same principle we would expect the genitival endings *-ᾱο* and *-ᾶων* to appear as *-ηο* and *-ῆων*, but they do not. Meister showed that long alpha persisted where the word involved was current in Ionic speech with a short alpha (e.g. *ἀθάνατος*), or where Ionic lacked the form altogether (e.g. *θεά*). In this case only the second explanation can apply, and we conclude that Ionic only adopted these forms after *-ᾱο* and *-ᾶων* had been altered by quantitative metathesis to *-εω*, *ῆων* (indeed we almost invariably find them a stage further on, with synizesis). Now *-ᾱο* and *-ᾶων* are integral to entire formular systems and are therefore extremely frequent, while *-εω* and *-ῆων* are very infrequent by comparison. From this it inescapably follows that these morphs are more than isolated borrowings, indeed fundamental to the entire epic diction. Therefore the bulk of the tradition, if not all of it, reached Ionia at a date not much anterior to the composition of the monumental poems we possess. Advocates of a long tradition of epic verse in the Ionic dialect must explain why *-ᾱο* and *-ᾶων* did not become Ionic *-ηο* and *-ῆων*, just as *-ᾱν* became *-ην* and *-ᾱς* became *-ης* throughout the epos as we know it: otherwise, Meister's reasoning must be right. Parry¹⁰⁾ has supplemented his arguments with the observation that in the first and second personal pronoun plural the Aeolic forms are only used where metrically necessary, whereas the Ionic forms could almost always be replaced by the Aeolic pronouns without damaging the metre.

This is now an unpopular view, because of the forms in Homer that can now be traced back to Mycenaean Greek, as well as arte-

⁷⁾ *Die homerische Kunstsprache* 146–171, cf. P. Wathélet, *Les Traits éoliens dans la langue de l'épopée grecque* 180–182, 376.

⁸⁾ *HPh* 43 (1932) 22–47.

⁹⁾ Cf. P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*² I 98, 170.

¹⁰⁾ *HPh* 43 (1932) 39f.

facts now attested by Mycenaean archaeology: many find it a more economical hypothesis to derive the Ionian epic tradition straight from the Peloponnese, direct from the major centres of the palace civilisation¹¹). It is therefore needful to repeat the case for the Aeolic phase, and to recall that at present no means exist of excluding the possibility that the Mycenaean (Arcado-Cypriot) features of diction were transmitted via those northern outposts of palatial rule, Thebes, Orchomenus or Iolcus. Nor can we exclude the possibility that the bardic tradition passed from the Peloponnese to Lesbos with the descendants of Orestes, the Penthilidae who ruled in Mytilene to Alcaeus' day. We shall remark below that there are no forms in the epic diction which can be proved to have been exclusive to mainland Aeolic. The simple fact is that we cannot trace the precise area of epic development further back than the Aeolic phase, save that it must have occurred in a region familiar with Mycenaean speech and culture.

The replacement of *ποτί* by *πρός* is a further testimony to this Aeolic phase. The case for this event rests on statistical foundations, like Parry's study of the personal pronouns. When to this is added the observation (akin to Meister's on *-āo*) that we would expect to find **ποσί* in a continuous Ionic tradition, a further piece of evidence for the Aeolic phase emerges.

The history of these forms is as follows: inherited *ποτί* and *πρωτί* (cf. Avest. *pā'ti*, Skt. *prāti*) were assimilated in East Greek to (Mycenaean) *posi* and **πρωσί*, which forms result in Arcado-Cypriot and Ionic *πός* and *πρός* respectively. Lesbian uses the latter, while West Greek and the mainland Aeolic dialects retain the inherited forms. The problem for those who believe that the Ionic traditional diction reaches back a long way, perhaps to Mycenaean times, is to explain why the poets did not substitute *ποσί* and **πρωσί* for these forms, just as they must also explain why *-āo* was not changed to *-ηο*. If no answer is forthcoming (and I have seen none), then we must conclude that these forms are not mere archaisms stretching back to the separation of East and West Greek, but originated in a tradition that included such West Greek archaisms as *ποτί*, or *τοί* in the definite article for *οί*. Where can such an amalgam of West Greek forms and Mycenaean culture be found, but in the cradle of the Aeolic dialect, eastern Thessaly and probably Boeotia? Recent work¹ has shown that the purest form of Aeolic speech is

¹¹) e.g. T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer* 160–162.

not to be found on Lesbos, as was formerly thought, but in eastern Thessaly. It is in this area that many Homeric Aeolisms are attested, including *ποτί*, *τοί* in the article and infinitives in *-μεν*. None of these are found in Lesbian as we know it from Sappho, Alcaeus and later inscriptions, which have *πρός*, *οί* in the article and infinitives in *-μεναι*. In this Lesbian agrees with Ionic: the infinitives are a blend of mainland Aeolic *-μεν* and East Greek *-ναι*. Both Porzig and Risch¹²⁾ concluded that Lesbian has been heavily influenced by Ionic, and this seems to be the best explanation for its divergence from East Thessalian in these cases. Thus we are free to assume that an earlier phase of Lesbian did contain these elements, although the alternative that the epic diction acquired them during a sojourn on the mainland before the Aeolic migration cannot be definitely excluded at present. On the other hand, we are not free to suppose that the Ionians borrowed the epic language direct from mainland Aeolis, as such forms as *δππως*, *δπποτε* and *ἐμμεναι* make a Lesbian phase very likely¹³⁾.

To conclude: in the epic diction *ποτί* and *πρῶτι* have been replaced by *πρός* in nearly all the places where this could be done. The replacement occurred after the neglect of initial digamma began; the older forms originated in the Aeolic phase of the epic. Who was responsible for the replacement—Lesbian poets, when Ionic influence ousted the older forms from their speech, or Ionian poets, doing their best to adapt the tradition when transferred to their dialect—is doubtful¹⁴⁾.

¹²⁾ W. Porzig, *Sprachgeographische Untersuchungen zu den altgriechischen Dialekten*, *IF* 61 (1954) 147–169; E. Risch, *Die Gliederung der griechischen Dialekte in neuer Sicht*, *Mus. Helv.* 12 (1955) 61–76.

¹³⁾ Cf. Parry, art. cit. 23–47, L. R. Palmer ap. *A Companion to Homer* 97–103.

¹⁴⁾ Either way another conclusion is probably to be drawn from this fact: initial prevocalic digamma began to be neglected in the tradition before it was transferred to Ionia. The problem of the relative and absolute dating of the Lesbian phase of the tradition is a dark one: I hope to be able to throw some light on its later stages in a statistical study of the general development of the epic diction, which should be completed within 1978. I have by another route reached the conclusion that initial prevocalic digamma was lost in the traditional diction before the transfer to Ionic dialect characterised by the appearance of quantitative metathesis and *Ζηρός* for *Δώς*. If this is so, the loss must have occurred in a Lesbian phase, as it is alien to the other dialects.