

SOME REMARKS ON THE MYCENAEAN VERBAL ENDING -τοι

1. Since the primary personal ending Myc. *-to* (Arcadian and Cypriot -τοι, -ντοι) has been variously argued when dealing either with the relationship of Mycenaean to the other Greek dialects or with the IE origin of such, it may be useful to assess briefly the interpretation I set forth sixteen years ago¹, on the eve of Michael Ventris' decipherment, making full use of the new evidence now available.

2. In opposition to the traditional view about Greek (Ionic, Doric, Aeolic) -μαι, -(σ)αι, -ται, -νται, as reflecting in their vocalism the IE status, it was pointed out that, since outside Greek reflexes of such a set of endings are only exhibited by IE languages that somehow have merged **ǝ* and **ǣ* into one single vowel, and therefore do not distinguish the outcome of IE **-oi* from that of IE **-ai*—namely Germanic, Baltic, Indo-Iranian, Tocharian²—, the question whether the *ai*-set or the *oi*-set goes back to Indo-European cannot be ultimately settled by purely comparative criteria, so that we must resort to other linguistic methods, such as the so-called internal reconstruction.

It was thus suggested that the arrangement of the correlation primary *vs.* secondary personal endings would become quite clear if (following a suggestion from Thurneysen and others) we assume the former (i.e. active **-mi*, **-si*, **-ti*, **-nti*) to be made up of the secondary correlates (**-m*, **-s*, **-t*, **-nt*) plus the deictic element **-i* «hic et nunc», and if we are prepared to allow the same principle to be applied to the middle endings. If so, we should expect

¹ «Desinencias medias primarias indoeuropeas», *Emerita* 20, 1952, pp. 8-31.

² As for Neo-Phrygian ἄββερεται and ἄδδακεται (one single instance of each), along with ἄββερετορ (twice), ἄββιρετορ (once) and ἄδδακετορ (three instances), see J. Friedrich's authoritative treatment in *RE A XX* 1 col. 878, under «Phrygia (Sprache)»: -ται «wohl einfach griechisch gebildet».

the IE primary endings to be $*(m)ai$ ($< *-[m]ai$), $*-soi$, $*(t)oi$, $*-ntoi$), contrasting with $*-ə$, $*-so$, $*(t)o$, $*-nto$, an assumption which led us to the inference that Greek $-(\sigma)\alpha\iota$, $-\tau\alpha\iota$, $-\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ should have originated in an analogical process spreading from first person $-\mu\alpha\iota$ over the three others, whereas Arcado-Cypriot (and now Mycenaean too) $-ο\iota$, $-\tauο\iota$, $-\nu\tauο\iota$ should be regarded as archaisms.

A similar analogical levelling is commonly accepted for the sigmatic aorist, whose $-\alpha-$ seems to have spread mainly from the first person singular ($*-m > -\alpha$). On the other hand, first person optative $\xi\epsilon\lambda\alpha\upsilon\upsilon\iota\alpha$ in Arcadian supplies us with another strikingly archaic personal ending in one of those dialects.

3. In the frame of this theory, Cypriot $\kappa\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\iota$ was something of a foreign body: neither the shift of final $-ο > -\upsilon^3$ could account for it, since the diphthong $-ο\iota$ is well preserved (and it would make it necessary to postulate a analogical remaking of $-\tauο\iota$ into $-\tau\upsilon\iota$ after secondary $-\tau\upsilon$ from $-\tauο$), nor does Arcadian have a similar ending $*-\tau\upsilon\iota$ in spite of the fact that this dialect exhibits both possible starting points, namely the ending $-\tauο\iota$ and the shift $-ο > -\upsilon^4$.

4. Unfortunately, the lack of any Arcadian and/or Cypriot instance of the first person singular made it impossible, in 1952, to test the validity of the theory: should either of these dialects prove to have $-\mu\alpha\iota$, then the whole set $-\mu\alpha\iota$, $-(\sigma)\ο\iota$, $-\tauο\iota$, $-\nu\tauο\iota$ would have been taken as the true reflex of IE as far as the vocalism is concerned (see below § 8). However, in those dialects $*-\mu\ο\iota$ was not altogether unthinkable (and we should eventually have to invoke an analogy of $-(\sigma)\ο\iota$, $-\tauο\iota$, $-\nu\tauο\iota$ exerted on $*-\mu\alpha\iota > *-\mu\ο\iota$), but its appearance would have deprived us of any means of controlling our theory, since we cannot rule *a priori* the possibility of an analogy starting from secondary $-\tauο$, etc., and spreading over the paradigm of the primary endings.

³ See (A. Thumb-) A. Scherer, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte* II², Heidelberg 1959, p. 157; cf. O. Masson, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques, Recueil critique et commenté*, Paris 1961, pp. 305 s., 379.

⁴ See Scherer, *loc. cit.*, p. 120.

The new evidence may be presented as follows (§§ 5-7):

5. Surprisingly enough —at least from the traditional point of view— it appeared that Linear B texts include among the sign-groups ending in *-to*, as well as past tenses (e. g. *o-de-ka-sa-to* = -δέξατο), present (e. g. *e-u-ke-to* = εὔχετο) and perfect ones (e.g. *e-pi-de-da-to* = ἐπιδέδαστο) in the third person singular or plural. The case was most clearly stated by Ventris and Chadwick in *Documents*⁵. Ever since no doubt has been cast on this *communis opinio*.

As a result of the administrative style of the Mycenaean records, the only personal forms detected so far are in the third person, singular or plural, and there is very scanty probability that such sign-groups as those ending in *-ma* (or *-mo*), *-meta*, *-te*, should prove in the future to conceal personal forms of verbs like *-μαι* (or **-μοι?*), *-με(σ)θα*, *-(σ)θε*.

This notwithstanding, the finding of Mycenaean *-τοι*, *-ντοι* had a bearing on the whole question. It took us several centuries back to the IE origins, and we need not any longer *guess* at the existence of *-τοι* and *-ντοι* at the time of the Arcado-Cyprian community (i.e. in the IIInd millenium B. C.), because we already *know* that they were extant in Greek as early as 1400-1200 B. C.

However, it should be emphasized that, while giving our theory a higher degree of probability, this older chronology of *-τοι* does not provide us by itself with a definite proof that those endings go back to Indo-European: in fact, we might imagine that the hypothetical analogical action of secondary **-to* on primary **-tai* took place before the date of the Mycenaean documents.

6. The progress achieved in the study of Cypriot inscriptions (thanks to the research work of a few scholars, and to the publication of Masson's *Recueil*) has produced decisive data for the problem under consideration.

First of all, *κειτυ* has proved to be a false reading in an in-

⁵ Pp. 87 s. In «Evidence» (= *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73, 1953, pp. 84-103), p. 99, *e-u-ke-to* in PY Eb 35 was interpreted as imperfect εὔχετο; thereafter I suggested, *Zephyrus*, 5, 1954, p. 59, that it might actually conceal a present tense εὔχετο. See E. Vilborg, *A Tentative Grammar of Mycenaean Greek*, Goteborg 1960, p. 104.

scription of Paphos (now Koukliá), nr. 11 Masson. It is an epitaph written in the Paphian syllabary. The last sign but one was read *tu* by R. Meister in 1909, whence the interpretation κειτυι, to be found in Schwyzer's *Delectus* (683.6), and in reference works up to Scherer's *Handbuch*. After careful inspection, Masson clearly states that «la photographie montre un *to* paphien *évident*: on a donc chypriote κειτοι» (italics mine). Κειτυι was thus a «ghost-word», and we are indebted to Masson for having removed it from our data.

7. Most important evidence was furnished by the so-called «Losidhes stele», first published by T. H. Mitford⁶. This inscription was found at Morphou, near Soloi, and dates to the 5th or the early 4th century B. C. (213a Masson). Its text is, according to Masson, «trop peu assuré», except for the beginning ι(ν)θάδε ἐγὼν κειμαι which appears to be «évident», and is paralleled by another inscription (11 Masson): Ὀναισις ἅ Ὀναισιφος γυνὰ | ι(ν)θάδε κειτοι. From ι(ν)θάδε we can be sure that we are dealing with a genuine Cypriot text.

8. Let us recall that -μαι, as attested in κειμαι, is precisely the «missing link» in the chain of argument we have condensed in §§ 2-4. In the present status of our knowledge the paradigm of primary middle endings in the dialects we are concerned with, is:

First person singular:	Cypriot -μαι
Second » »	Arcadian -οι
Third » »	Mycenaean, Arcadian, Cypriot -τοι
» » plural	Mycenaean, Arcadian -ντοι

It should be stressed that such an anomalous paradigm (-αι contrasting with -οι) can only be accounted for as the preservation

⁶ *Minoika. Festschrift Sundwall*, Berlin 1958, pp. 261-266, plate 1. A few remarks on the importance of Cypriot κειμαι for the reconstruction of the IE endings were read by the present writer at a meeting of the Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos, held at Salamanca in December 11, 1964 (cf. *Estudios Clásicos*, 45, 1965, p. 243 s.). See now W. Cowgill, *Ancient Indo-European Dialects*, edd. Birnbaum & Puhvel, Berkeley 1967, p. 80 n. 13.

of an archaism. As a matter of fact, a general trend in linguistic evolution (unless other intervening factors are to be assumed) is the levelling of irregularities. First person IE **-əi* was felt to be «regular» as long as *-ə* acted as its secondary correlate, and became anomalous when **-əi* shifted to **-ai* and even to **-mai*, and, on the other hand, secondary **-ə* underwent changes to become Greek $-\mu\bar{\alpha}\nu$. By *reductio ad absurdum* we can dispose of the contrary assumption: we cannot think of a regular pattern $-\mu\alpha\iota$, $-(\sigma)\alpha\iota$, $-\tau\alpha\iota$, $-\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ (whose *ai*-vocalism was moreover supported by other verbal endings, such as infinitive $-\nu\alpha\iota$, $-\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$) being disturbed by the analogical pressure of the secondary set of endings $\mu\bar{\alpha}\nu$, $-(\sigma)\omicron$, $-\tau\omicron$, $-\nu\tau\omicron$ (in itself irregular), and shifted to $-\mu\alpha\iota$, $-(\sigma)\omicron\iota$, $-\tau\omicron\iota$, $-\nu\tau\omicron\iota$ ⁷.

9. It thus appears that the evidence which has come to light since 1952, does strengthen the view that the IE verb is to be credited with the primary endings **-(m)ai*, **-soi*, **-(t)oi*, **-ntoi*, whatever may be the implications of this assumption for the pre-history of the Greek dialects⁸ and for the internal reconstruction of the IE verb.⁹

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⁷ W. Cowgill, *loc. cit.*, p. 81 n. 14, now suggests IE **-A-o-y* as the first person sing. primary ending of the middle voice; it should have yielded Greek **-μoι*. However, it would involve positing **-A-o* as the secondary correlate, for which Hit. $-(ha)ha-ri$ might offer indirect support.

⁸ E. g. L. R. Palmer, «The Language of Homer», in Wace-Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer*, London 1962, p. 91.

⁹ E. g. F. R. Adrados, *Evolución y estructura del verbo indoeuropeo*. Madrid 1963, pp. 208 ss.