

Aeolic Reflexes of Labiovelars in Homer

William F. Wyatt, Jr

ONE OF THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES diagnostic of the Aeolic dialects is the development of the inherited labiovelar consonants to labials, even in environments in which a dental is the result elsewhere.¹ Thus all Aeolic dialects have *πέμπτε* for *πέντε* 'five' (< *penk^we) and *πεεε-* / *πεετ-* for *τεεε-* / *τεετ-* 'four' (< *k^wetw-). There are in the Homeric poems a few words containing *π β φ* from labiovelar consonants before *ε/ι* in accordance with the Aeolic rule and counter to the Ionic, which would produce *τ δ θ*.² Since the normal dialectal shape of the epic is Ionic, these words have constituted a problem: how can words displaying a non-Ionic linguistic form appear in an (essentially) Ionic poem? The most popular and well-known response to this question has been that the poems, though in their final shape predominantly Ionic, had passed through an Aeolic phase of composition prior to the attested Ionic phase.³ The words showing *π β φ* for *τ δ θ* constitute evidence for the assumed Aeolic stage: because there were no Ionic equivalents at hand to replace the Aeolic words, they remained in their original form. The theory of an Aeolic epic does not rest solely on the aberrant behavior of labiovelar consonants in a few words, but I think it is fair to state that it derives a

¹ M. Lejeune, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien* (Paris 1972) 43–53, esp. 47–50. O. J. L. Szemerényi, *SMEA* 1 (1966) 29–52, has argued that the labial outcome in Aeolic dialects is due not to regular phonetic change but rather to analogical influences of one sort or another. His view, though skillfully argued, has not found wide acceptance (cf. R. Arena, *SMEA* 8 [1969] 7–27). For our purposes it matters little how the Aeolic forms arose, for their presence in an essentially Ionic poem still requires explanation, regardless of their (phonological or analogical) development. All references to Szemerényi in this article are to *SMEA* 1.

² P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*³ I (Paris 1959) 113–15 [hereafter, CHANTRAINE].

³ It is not always clear what "Aeolic phase of composition" is intended to mean in the writings of various scholars. There seem to be three possible interpretations of the phrase. (1) The Homeric poems are translations into Ionic of poems originally composed in Aeolic: this is the view of A. Fick (*Die homerische Odyssee in der ursprünglichen Sprachform wiederhergestellt* [Göttingen 1883]) 12–13, and is no longer accepted as is by anyone. (2) The Ionic epic tradition is a transposition into Ionic of an originally Aeolic epic tradition. Many have held

good deal of its support from these words. It is well to point out, though, that only five words are in question, and that the majority of them are of restricted occurrence: *πέλομαι* 'become, be' (65×), *πίκυρες/ας* 'four' (6×), *πελωρ-* 'portentous, ominous' (33×), *Φῆρες* 'Centaur' (2×), *βέρεθρον* 'deep hole' (?) (2×).⁴

Not all scholars have agreed that these words constitute evidence for an Aeolic stage in the history of Homeric epic. K. Strunk (*Die sogenannten Äolismen der homerischen Sprache* [Köln 1957] 20–37) endeavored to show that the forms in question need not be specifically Aeolic, since both Aeolic and other dialects show inconsistencies in the handling of labiovelar consonants. His arguments, however, are themselves inconsistent both with the attested facts and with linguistic method, as has been pointed out by O. J. L. Szemerényi (*JHS* 79 [1959] 192–93) and, at greater length, by E. Hamp (*Glotta* 38 [1960] 194–98). Szemerényi has more recently (*SMEA* 1 [1966] 31–35) returned to the question and has himself argued that the alleged Homeric instances do not support the theory of an Aeolic stage in the development of Homeric epic. He concludes that all the words in question are susceptible of another, better, explanation. His conclusion is, I believe, correct, but his arguments have not carried general conviction, so that Wathelet (pp.63–91) and Durante (pp.17–62) retain the traditional view. In what follows I shall endeavor to support Szemerényi's position with other arguments, in hope of being able to win for it wider acceptance. Before proceeding, however, I would point out, as Chantraine (I 115, 509) and Hamp (*op.cit.* 198) have done, that all these words are definitely 'epic' and have a special flavor or color of their

this view, and I cite only two of the most recent adherents: P. Wathelet, *Les traits éoliens dans la langue de l'épopée grecque* (*Incunabula Graeca* 37, Rome 1970) [hereafter, WATHELET]; and M. Durante, *Sulla Preistoria della tradizione poetica greca I* (*Incunabula Graeca* 50, Rome 1971) 17–62 [hereafter, DURANTE]. (3) Other scholars, while not positing an Aeolic stage of epic composition prior to the Ionic, have nonetheless supposed Aeolic influence at an early period of oral epic composition: e.g. M. Parry, *HSCP* 43 (1932) 1–50, particularly 40–46; D. L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley 1959) 220–21; C. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1958) 60. All of these views have in common the twin assumptions that (a) there was an Aeolic epic and (b) that Aeolic forms in the Homeric poems were inherited from this Aeolic epic. I shall not distinguish among the various views in what follows, intending that by 'Aeolic epic' and 'Aeolic stage' the reader assume that principles (a) and (b) are referred to, and not any specific variety of them.

⁴ I omit from consideration here *θεσπέσιος* and *ἄσπετος*, *ὄβελός*, *εβέννυμ*, though included by Wathelet (67–69). Cf. Chantraine, *loc.cit.*, for these words, and H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch I–III* (Heidelberg 1960–72) s.vv. [hereafter, FRISK].

own. They are not words which would appear in everyday discourse but are on a higher stylistic and emotional level.

Our first task is to show that these words cannot have been derived in a direct line from an Aeolic epic later translated or transposed into Ionic. Those who favor an Aeolic stage in epic composition usually maintain that, when the Aeolic epic was adopted in Ionia, all metrically equivalent words were replaced by their Ionic counterparts: the only words to retain their Aeolic form were those which either were metrically different from their Ionic counterparts or had no Ionic counterpart. Since by this view Aeolic forms cannot have been created by Ionic poets, they must have been preserved intact in old formulas (from which they can have subsequently spread) and have been handed down over the years from bard to bard. As it happens, the word *τέλσον* 'headland' in the formula *τέλσον ἀρούρης* (*Iliad* 13.707, 18.544, modified in 18.547) both (probably) contains an initial labiovelar (cf. Frisk II 873) and does not occur in Ionic, thus fulfilling the conditions for the preservation of an Aeolic form.⁵ In accordance with the theory of an Aeolic epic this word should have been preserved as **πέλσον*. Since we find *τέλσον*, the traditional view cannot be correct. Furthermore, the word *περιτέλλομαι* (etymology: Frisk II 869) in the traditional phrase *περιτελλομένους ἐνιαυτούς* (*Il.* 8.404, 418) was not retained as **περιπέλλομαι*, in spite of the fact that it does not occur in Ionic and in spite of the fact, too, that a labial derivative (*περιπλομένους ἐνιαυτούς Il.* 23.833) existed in the poems to protect the *π-* from Ionic corruption. These two words prove that the regular epic development of labiovelar before /e/ was *τ-*, regardless of whether the word existed in Ionic.⁶ Forms with *π-* are secondary, not original. The question now facing us is, of course, from what source did the *π-* forms enter the epic tradition, and why?

πέλομαι 'become, be' (Frisk II 500–01) for expected *τέλομαι* (Frisk II 870–71) has beside it the aorist *ἐπλόμην*, and it seems certain that Szemerényi (34) is at least partly correct in holding that the consonantism of the aorist has influenced that of the present. Reducing

⁵ On this word most recently cf. R. S. P. Beekes, *The Development of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals in Greek* (*Janua Linguarum Series Practica* 42, The Hague 1969) 275–77.

⁶ One can, to be sure, rescue the theory of an Aeolic stage of composition by assuming that both *τέλσον* and *περιτέλλομαι* existed in Ionic at the time of the introduction of Aeolic epic but disappeared prior to our written records. At this point it is preferable to reach for Occam's razor.

all forms of a stem to one single shape is a frequent linguistic occurrence, and where there is a labial-dental conflict in Greek, it does in fact seem that the labial outcome triumphs: cf. λείπω, λείπει (for *λείπει); and ἔπομαι, ἔπεται (for *ἔτεται), though the instance of θείνω : ἔπεφνον (< *gh^wen- : *gh^wn-, cf. Frisk I 657–58) should caution us against assuming that all such irregular paradigms are leveled in favor of the labial, especially when different aspect stems are involved. Szemerényi apparently assumes that an earlier *τέλομαι : ἔπλετο was analogically leveled in favor of πέλομαι : ἔπλετο within the Ionic dialect or within the history of epic. He is perhaps correct in this, but the facts that θείνω did not pass to *φείνω, -τέλλομαι did not pass to *πέλλομαι, and that neither *τέλομαι nor *πέλομαι occurs in Ionic, encourage us to look in another direction, while at the same time maintaining the essence of Szemerényi's explanation. If *k^welomai (in its two root shapes *k^wel- and *k^wl-) had been part of the epic tradition prior to the elimination of the labiovelars, it must of necessity have appeared at one time as *τέλομαι : ἐπλόμην;⁷ it is not likely that ἐπλόμην alone was inherited and that πέλομαι was a new, purely epic creation formed by analogy. One wonders, then, what motive there can have been for the Homeric poets to remodel *τέλομαι, the more so since (περι)τέλλομαι was not remodeled to *(περι)πέλλομαι.⁸

We can cite as a possible motive the fact that τέλομαι was unknown in Ionic, was supported by no analogies, and was therefore isolated in epic. Its isolation cannot be the sole reason for its reshaping, however, for the remodeling of an attested word on the basis of its aorist is a far from obvious solution, one resorted to only when communication is likely to be seriously impaired or when the effort required to remember the correct form exceeds the amount of informational yield. Both of these factors may have played a rôle in the reshaping of *τέλομαι, but it seems to me that there is another factor which accounts both for the reshaping and for the Aeolic appearance of the word. πέλομαι is not an epic word only, for it occurs frequently also in

⁷ Forms of τέλομαι occur in some Doric dialects: Cyrene τένται (SEG IX 3.38, 72.18, 86: this latter inscription is Buck no.115=C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* [Chicago 1955]); on this form cf. Szemerényi, *Syncope in Greek and Indo-European and the Nature of the Indo-European Accent* (*Quaderni Napoli* 3, 1964) 165–67; Drerus τέλομαι ICr I.ix 1.46, 63; *ενντέλεσθαι* 1.69–70 (=Buck no.120). Hierapytna τέλεται ICr III.iii 4.68.

⁸ In the case of this latter word we can posit that the common ἀνατέλλω 'rise' (of any heavenly body) preserved περιτέλλομαι from analogical change. Such is, however, not necessary: the form remained because there was no reason to change it.

the poems of Sappho (50.1, 81(b)3, 79.5, 94.26 L-P) and Alcaeus (E2.6, Z37.2, Z50 L-P) in the same meanings that it has in epic. In the Aeolic poets it does not give the appearance of being a peculiarly poetic word, and it thus stands a good chance of being relatively colloquial. It is most natural to assume, then, that epic poets borrowed the shape *πέλομαι* from Lesbian Aeolic. In so doing they will have both regularized the paradigm, thus rendering it more clear, and will have incorporated an easily comprehensible word for one that could have caused difficulties in comprehension. They may, indeed, have felt that *πέλομαι* was the 'correct' epic form and *τέλομαι* some sort of mistake in the tradition. *πέλομαι*, though a Lesbian form and hence an Aeolism, represents a surface Aeolism in the poems—an Aeolism, that is, which replaces a form nonexistent in Ionic with an existent (though not Ionic) word. It is doubtful, however, that the poets thought in terms of Ionic and Aeolic *dialects*, or even of Ionic and Lesbian or local and foreign. Rather they probably thought in terms of existent and nonexistent *words*.

The same explanation does not work so neatly in the case of *πίκυρες* 'four' (*πίκυρες* *Od.* 5.70, 16.249, *πίκυρας* *Il.* 15.680, 23.171, 24.233, *Od.* 22.111). Indeed this word constitutes a problem both for those who posit an Aeolic epic and for those who do not. The form occurs as such only in Homer, appears in no Aeolic dialect, and therefore cannot without further argument be labeled Aeolic. All the Aeolic dialects agree in showing an *e*-vowel in the first syllable, and all show *-ss-* (*-tt-*); *πίκυρες* cannot have entered the epic tradition from a living Aeolic source.⁹ There the matter may rest so far as the theory of an Aeolic epic is concerned. There is, however, the further problem that *πίκυρες* cannot be Ionic either, since Ionic always has *τεcc-* and never has a *u*-vowel. It must therefore be a compromise form, and must replace an earlier form of identical metrical but different phonological shape. Szemerényi (34) holds that *πίκυρας* is an approximation to

⁹ *Πέκυρες* has been frequently assumed as an Aeolic (Lesbian) form on the basis of $\Upsilon\text{Ρ}\text{Ε}\text{Σ}\text{Κ}\text{Α}\text{Ι}\text{Δ}\text{Ε}\text{Κ}\text{Ο}\text{Τ}\text{Ο}\text{Σ}$ (*IG* XII 282.3), which occurs in a clear numerical sequence. The restoration *Πέκυρες* looks convincing in the editor's transcription into standard Greek letters, but his representation of what actually appeared on the original reveals that the left hand margin is not even. One can then restore either ΠΕΣ or ΠΕΣΣ, but given the unanimous testimony of the other Aeolic dialects in showing *τεcc-* and Hesychius' *πέκυρες*, it seems all but certain that *τεcc-* is to be restored here. Balbilla (O. Hoffmann, *Die griechischen Dialekte* II [Göttingen 1893] no.177.6 p.128) has *πέκυρα*, and this is to my knowledge the only evidence for *-c-* in any Aeolic dialect (unless the Homeric form be included).

neighboring Lesbian of an earlier (regular Ionic) $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\nu\rho\alpha\varsigma$ or $\star\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\alpha\varsigma$, the Ionic development of the accusative $\star k^w\text{eturns}$. He is surely correct in his assumption of an approximation to Aeolic, and his $\star k^w\text{eturns}$, amply supported from the Indo-European point of view (cf. Skt. *caturah*, accusative plural masculine), economically accounts for the presumed early Ionic form. The only objection to his view is that nowhere else in Greek is any development of a form $\star k^w\text{eturns}$ attested. Hence I would set beside—not against—his explanation the possibility that $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ is an accommodation to Aeolic either of $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ or of an Ionic phonological development of it, e.g. $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ or $\star\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ (< $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\tau\upsilon\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ < $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon\varsigma$). $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ is required for Greek, since the West Greek dialects have it, and for epic, since Hesiod has $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\rho(\alpha)$ (*Erga* 698).¹⁰ The operative consideration is not, however, what the replaced form was, for we shall probably never know. What is important is that $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ is, as Szemerényi holds, an approximation by an Ionic poet to a (presumed) Aeolic word. We must posit an early epic form of ‘four’, the first two syllables of which were short, and which probably derived either from $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ or $\star\acute{\tau}\acute{\epsilon}\tau\upsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma$. Why the epic poets replaced their own unclear form with what must have been the equally unclear $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ is nonetheless a mystery, a mystery for which I have no convincing solution. The best I can do is to suggest that Ionic epic poets found themselves singing a nonexistent word to which there corresponded in neighboring Lesbos a near phonological and metrical equivalent. Feeling that the Lesbian form, though not an exact metrical equivalent, was nonetheless likely to be closer to the old epic form than the form they had learned, they adopted it.¹¹

$\pi\epsilon\lambda\omega\rho-$ seems also to have been borrowed from an Aeolic source, this time Thessaly. Szemerényi (32–33) has a different solution, one that seems less satisfactory. He is inclined to deny (1) that $\pi\epsilon\lambda\omega\rho-$ and $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omega\rho-$ are the same word and (2) that $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho$ is connected with $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$ ‘ominous sign’ (< $\star k^w\text{er-}$, cf. Frisk II 878): he holds that $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho$ “can be

¹⁰ Cf. G. P. Edwards, *The Language of Hesiod in Its Traditional Context* (Philol. Soc. Publ. 22, Oxford 1971) 115–16 with the references to earlier work there cited.

¹¹ It is interesting that in most instances Homer provides contextual evidence to show that $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ means ‘four’, or at least that a number is involved: (1) the number four is inevitable (*Od.* 22.111). Here $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\tau\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha$ occurs in the previous line, and there are only four people to be equipped with armor. (2) The number four is implied, though not inevitable. At *Il.* 15.680ff reference is made to a team of horses, probably four (*Leaf ad* 15.683): that teams of four horses were known in the Homeric heroic world is clear from 11.699–700 and 8.185 (cf. *Leaf ad loc.*). For the yoking of four horses in the Homeric poems cf. J. Wiesner,

suspected of 'Eastern' provenience." One cannot argue this last point, though it seems reasonable enough, but the first two are not likely to be correct. All the evidence we have points to the correctness of the equation $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho = \tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho$. Hesychius has the two glosses $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho \cdot \pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\nu, \mu\alpha\kappa\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu, \mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha; \tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma \cdot \mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha\varsigma, \pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$. Though it is true that we cannot know the basis on which Hesychius excerpted these words, we must admit that he or his sources were in a better position than we are to judge the correctness of a semantic equation between rare and poetic words. It is not enough to say that Hesychius may have been misled. The other bit of evidence, cited also by Szemerényi, is a second-century inscription from Egypt, the first line of which reads:¹²

στῆθι λάον κατενώπα τελώριον ἐν τριόδοις

To be sure, the poem is queer, full of peculiar expressions, and the first line, with its $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\omicron\nu$ for $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\alpha\nu$, is difficult and scarcely Greek.¹³ This fact does not, however, affect the equation $\pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma = \tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$. In fact this poem provides good evidence that, at least in second-century Egypt, $\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$, known from whatever source, was equated with $\pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$. Szemerényi points out that $\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ here cannot mean 'immense, gigantic'. He is surely correct, but again this point scarcely affects the issue, since it seems quite likely that the poet of this more or less mystical and religious poem (about the death of a sacred snake) was recalling *Odyssey* 11.594:

\lambda\acute{\alpha}\alpha\nu \beta\alpha\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\nu\tau\alpha \pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\nu \acute{\alpha}\mu\phi\omicron\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\eta\varsigma\iota\nu

descriptive of Sisyphus' attempts to roll a rock up a hill. All the evidence we have, such as it is, points clearly to the identification of $\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ and $\pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$.¹⁴

¹² "Fahren und Reiten," *Archaeologia Homérica* I F (1968) 22–23, with references to earlier work. At *Il.* 23.171 it is likely that we are to think of one horse to a side of Patroklos' funeral pyre: numbers are mentioned in succeeding lines. (3) A number, though not four, is inevitable: *Od.* 16.249 $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\upsilon\rho\epsilon\varsigma \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\iota \phi\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\varsigma \xi\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu$. Amongst the gifts given by Priam to Achilles we find at *Il.* 24.233 two tripods and $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\upsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma \lambda\acute{\epsilon}\beta\eta\tau\alpha\varsigma$. (4) In 5.70, though numbers are mentioned of other phenomena, there is no necessity that there were four springs in Calypso's cave. Four is, however, likely. Thus Homer seems to have been at some pains in each case to explicate this $\gamma\lambda\acute{\omega}\varsigma\sigma\alpha$ for his hearers.

¹² W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* I (Berlin 1955) 1313.

¹³ One will compare for the form and scansion of $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\omicron\nu$ the equally peculiar scansion of $\nu\acute{\alpha}\omicron\nu$ 'temple' as an iamb in Cretan inscriptions, e.g. *ICr* I xxiii.3.9, 11–12 (Phaistos), xvi.24.2 (Lato), xvii.21.2 (Lebena).

¹⁴ The only bit of evidence that might suggest that the π - of $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\rho$ is original and not from

Szemerényi glosses *πέλωρ* as ‘giant’ and hence denies connection with *τέρας*. His gloss is, however, incorrect. Hesychius glosses *πέλωρα* as *θηρία, δείματα, τέρατα, σημεῖα μεγάλα*, and comes much closer to the truth. *πέλωρ-* in Homer does frequently enough refer to things that are large or huge, but the primary Homeric meaning of the word is ‘ominous, portentous’, not ‘huge’. It refers to people, things and situations which one hopes one will never encounter, and is therefore admirably suited for etymological connection with *τέρας*, as in the Hesychian gloss.¹⁵ There are two passages in the Homeric poems in which *πελωρ-* and *τέρας* are closely connected:

<i>Il.</i> 5.741	<i>ἐν δέ τε Γοργεΐη κεφαλῇ, δεινοῖο πελώρου</i>
742	<i>δεινὴ τε κμερδνὴ τε, Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο</i>
<i>Od.</i> 15.161	<i>αἰετὸς ἀργὴν χῆνα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον</i>
168	<i>ἦ νῶϊν τόδ’ ἔφηνε θεὸς τέρας ἦε σοὶ αὐτῶ</i>

In neither case is the equation *πελωρ* = *τέρας* assured, for 5.742 is more likely to have referred originally to the aegis described than to the

a labiovelar is the Pamphylian personal name (in the genitive) *πελώρου* (E. Schwyzer, *Dialectorum graecarum exempla epigraphica potiora* [Leipzig 1923] 686a5b). This name, however, is more likely to be connected with Apollo, with the loss of *α-* common in Pamphylian. Cf. A. Thumb, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte*², rev. A. Scherer, II (Heidelberg 1959) 179.

¹⁵ The identification of *πελωρ-* and *τέρας* goes back to H. Osthoff, *ArchRW* 8 (1905) 51–68, particularly 51–54. And the definition of *πέλωρ-* as ‘ominous, portentous’ is amply supported by the text of Homer. He uses *πελωρ-*

(1) of portent scenes. In addition to the passages cited in the text the word is used also in the description of the portents at Aulis at *Il.* 2.321. ‘Huge’ in general seems inappropriate.

(2) of otherworldly and frightening persons and events. In all these cases something supernatural and possibly threatening is involved.

Underworld: Orion (*Od.* 11.572), rock lifted by Sisyphus (11.594), Gorgon (11.634), Hades (*Il.* 5.395). Circe’s island: a deer (*Od.* 10.168), humans transformed by Circe (10.219). Gods: Hephaistus (*Il.* 18.410), Ares (7.208). Cyclops: *Od.* 9.428, 257, 187, 190 (*θαῦμα*). Scylla: *Od.* 12.87.

(3) Only when used of mortals and inanimate objects is the notion ‘huge’ possible. In most cases, however, the accessory notion of ‘portentous, ominous’ is present and even prominent.

(a) Agamemnon (*Il.* 3.166): Priam asks Helen to name the man who, not so big as others, is nonetheless more *γεραρός* ‘majestic’ than the rest. Ajax: Helen identifies Ajax for Priam (3.229); is compared to Ares (7.211); at 17.174 Hector refers to Ajax in response to Glaukos who had chided him with cowardice; at 17.360 Ajax protects the corpse of Patroklos. Achilles: 21.527 describes Priam’s watching Achilles rage over the battlefield; 22.92 Hector awaits Achilles (and death). Hector: at 11.820 Hector is irresistible. Periphas (5.842, 847), an Aetolian, killed by Ares just before Ares himself is wounded by Diomedes.

(b) *ἔγχος* *Il.* 5.594 of Ares attacking *κύματα*: sent by Zeus (*Od.* 3.290). *τεύχεα*: *Il.* 10.439 the weapons of Rhesus are like those of the immortals; 18.83 the weapons of Achilles which had been given to Peleus on his wedding day.

Gorgon's head of the previous line;¹⁶ and 15.168 probably refers both to the eagle and the goose of 161 and not the goose alone. Nonetheless there is a connection, if not of grammatical agreement, at least of proximity. Once, however, *τέρας* is used unequivocally in apposition with a noun which is earlier described as *πέλωρος*:

- Il. 12.201 αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης, ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λαὸν ἔέργων,
 202 φοινήεντα δράκοντα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον.
 208 Τρῶες δ' ἐρρίγησαν, ὅπως ἴδον αἰόλον ὄφιν
 209 κείμενον ἐν μέσσοισι, Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο.

The semantic connection between *πέλωρ-* and *τέρας* is thus clear, and an etymological connection is by no means excluded. Whether or not the words are of Indo-European origin is a separate question. If they are related, they must be descended from a root **k^wer-*.

We are thus left with two options: either we know nothing of the origin of *πέλωρ-*, or it shows a labial development of an old labiovelar. The former is a course of despair, and it is perhaps best to attempt to account for the latter. *τελωρ-* occurred in various areas of the Greek world, as is proved by the Hesychius glosses and the Egyptian epigram, and it can be presumed to have occurred at one time in early Ionic. It seems not to have occurred in the Ionic of Homer's day, for no such form is attested in any extant document. An earlier epic **k^welōr-* must of necessity have developed to **τελωρ-*, and because it is not attested in Ionic, it must have been isolated in epic and perhaps subject to misunderstanding. We must assume that the epic poets learned of a *πέλωρ-* synonymous with their isolated **τελωρ-* and adopted it for epic.

We cannot of course know whence Homer or his predecessors borrowed the Aeolic form of the word: it may also have been current in Lesbian Aeolic, but we have no evidence from any source to indicate that it was. We do, however, have evidence for Aeolic provenience of the root, though not perhaps in its Homeric meanings.

¹⁶ The Gorgon's head in this passage is notoriously a late feature, possibly seventh century. Cf. Leaf *ad loc.*; H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* 190 (London 1950); G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 186; M. L. West, *Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 46 n.2. The passage, prior to its elaboration, will have contained only lines 738 and 742 (modified for grammatical agreement):

738 ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετ' αἰγίδα θυεσσάνοισσαν
 742 δεινὴν τε μερδινήν τε, Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο

For a similar expansion of a passage cf. *Zīva Antika* 21 (1971) 55–64.

Baton of Sinope (*FGrHist* 268 F 5) refers to a Thessalian festival, the *Πελώρια*, dedicated to Zeus *Πέλωρ*, which he says is similar to the Roman Saturnalia and was celebrated in his own day. It is true that F. Jacoby in commenting on the passage (*FGrHist* IIIA Comm. pp.208–211) is strongly inclined to deny any sort of authority to Baton's account. He may be correct in his main contention, but he has not provided any reason why Baton should have come up with the epithet *Πέλωρ*.¹⁷ It seems most reasonable to assume that Baton was correct in assigning the epithet to Thessaly and that the epic poets knew of the words *πέλωρ*- from a Thessalian source and replaced their own difficult **τελωρ*- with an actually occurring form.

Φῆρες 'Centaur' (*Il.* 1.268, 2.743) also stems from a Thessalian source. The word quite clearly belongs amongst the sure Aeolisms in the Homeric poems, is the Aeolic development of earlier **gh^wēres* (Frisk I 671–72), and is the counterpart of Ionic **Θῆρες*. Szemerényi (34) hesitantly suggests that *Φῆρες* may be a borrowed word, like *Κένταυροι*, but this suggestion is unlikely to be correct (Arena, *SMEA* 8 [1969] 9–11): it is most natural, though not inevitable, to retain the traditional connection. How, then, did *Φῆρες* make their way into the Homeric poems? Szemerényi (34–35) maintains that "it is quite possible that the story of the *φῆρες*, first sung by local bards in Thessaly, was received into the mainstream of epic poetry, naturally with the local form of the name." He is quite possibly correct, but he is forced on this explanation to assume a Thessalian (epic?) poetic tradition for which we have no other evidence. It is rather more likely that Homer (or one of his predecessors) had from the tradition the phonologically correct **Θῆρες*, which corresponded to nothing in Ionic if referred to human(oid)s and which could not refer to animals in the passages in question. Both Sappho (*φῆρ* [19.2 L-P]) and Alcaeus (*φῆρα* 01(b)³ L-P) have *φῆρ*, but in neither case does the context indicate that the word refers to Centaurs. We cannot rule out the possibility—even the likelihood—that *Φῆρες* = 'Centaur' was known on Lesbos and adopted by the Homeric poets from Lesbian. Since the word is striking and has elicited comment by both ancient and modern scholars (*cf.* Leaf *ad Il.* 1.268), it is rather more likely that it is a *γλωσσα* in Homer.¹⁸ Somehow the epic poets—and we must not

¹⁷ The Thessalian connection of the term is further strengthened by the notice in Schol. T to *Il.* 16.176 that the giant *Πέλωρ* was killed by Poseidon in the Spercheius river.

¹⁸ So, from a different point of view, K. Witte, *Glotta* 5 (1914) 48 n.2.

imagine that they were isolated from contacts with the mainland—learned that to the difficult *Θῆρες of epic there corresponded the Thessalian form Φῆρες, a word which referred to the equally Thessalian Centaurs. Hence, since there was no metrical cost and great poetic gain, they substituted the ‘correct’ Φῆρες for the incomprehensible *Θῆρες. Φῆρες is an Aeolism but a secondary one, and Szemerényi (34) is correct in maintaining that Φῆρες “does not guarantee an Aeolic *stratum*.” The most that it can do is guarantee an awareness on the part of the Homeric poets of words and names current elsewhere in the Greek world.¹⁹

Szemerényi (33) has said what needs to be said about βέρεθρον ‘deep hole (?)’: there is no linguistic reason to consider it an Aeolism. There is, however, perhaps a thematic reason for considering it a borrowing from Aeolic or an adaptation to Aeolic of an earlier Ionic form (*δέρεθρον? cf. Frisk I 219). The word occurs twice in the poems. At *Iliad* 8.13–14 Zeus threatens any god who aids either the Greeks or the Trojans:

ἦ μιν ἐλὼν ῥύψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα
τῆλε μάλ', ἦχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον.

And at *Odyssey* 12.93–94 the Scylla is described:

μέσση μὲν τε κατὰ σπείους κοίλοιο δέδυκεν
ἕξω δ' ἐξίχχει κεφαλὰς δεινοῖο βερέθρου.

In both cases mythical and terrifying places are described, and βέρεθρον thus falls into the same category as πελώρια and Φῆρες. We might therefore be tempted to label βέρεθρον Aeolic, if by that term we intend remote and frightening things. I can, however, point to no Aeolic source for the word in Homer and therefore adopt Szemerényi's solution.

¹⁹ The battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs is referred to also at *Od.* 21.295–304 but without mention of Φῆρες. In that passage, however, the word φρήν occurs twice (*φρένας* 297, *φρεσίν* 301), and it is possible that Homer used this word because he had made an etymological connection between φρήν and φήρ. Πειρίθοος also makes his appearance twice in the same passage (296, 298), as well as at *Il.* 1.263, a passage in which φῆρες also appear (268). All this suggests both that Homer was thinking of the word Φῆρες in the *Odyssey* passage as well, and that he connected Πειρίθοος and Φῆρες etymologically (cf. my *Metrical Lengthening in Homer* [*Incunabula Graeca* 35, Rome 1969] 199–200) and that he felt that φρήν was related to both.

Thus we see that forms in Homer displaying the Aeolic development of the labiovelar must be secondary and cannot in any way support the assumption of an Aeolic stage of epic composition. I have also suggested motives which might have induced the Homeric poets to replace the inherited Ionic forms of certain words with Aeolic forms. These motives may seem insufficient, and I add here further general considerations which contributed to the poets' willingness to include Aeolic words and forms. First of all, Aeolic, at least in the Lesbian variety, was spoken nearby and was known to Homer and his hearers. Secondly, some of the heroes, Achilles included, lived in areas in which, during the archaic period, an Aeolic dialect was spoken, and some of the action reported in the *Iliad* was situated near Lesbos. Furthermore, Lesbian was spoken in roughly the same area in which Troy was located. In addition to these thematic reasons there were also linguistic: many archaisms of Homeric epic—such as $\kappa\epsilon$ for $\tilde{\alpha}\nu$, apocope of prepositions, $-οιο$ of the genitive singular masculine—actually occurred in contemporary Aeolic dialects, particularly Thessalian. This sharing of archaisms with Aeolic dialects called forth in the mind of the Homeric poets the equation of archaisms with Aeolic forms generally. Thus, in cases—such as those discussed in this paper—in which an archaic Ionic form was (a) no longer present in Ionic, and (b) had a metrically equivalent Aeolic form, the poets adopted the Aeolic form on the grounds that in so doing they were 'correcting' the epic tradition.²⁰

BROWN UNIVERSITY

April, 1975

²⁰ I hope to develop this notion in greater detail elsewhere. For the moment, cf. my "Homer's Linguistic Ancestors," *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Θεσσαλονίκης* 14 (1975) 133–47.