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Phonology and Poetics: The Problem of Greek *amp^hip^horeús* and *amp^horeús*

The existence of Greek *amp^horeús* beside Homeric *amp^hip^horeús* 'two-handled pitcher or jar' has been explained by the phonological phenomenon known as haplology, a special type of dissimilation consisting in the loss of a whole syllable before or after a phonetically similar syllable. While rare because of the conditions that must prompt it, haplology occurs most commonly in compound constructions, as indeed in *amp^hi-p^horeús/am-p^horeús*, similarly **apó-poina/á-poina*, *he:mi-médimnon/he:-médimnon* and a number of others in Greek (Schwyzer; Lejeune 1972).

However, with the decipherment of Linear B and the discovery of the Mycenaean Greek dialect, the assumption that early Greek *amp^hip^horeús* (as in Homer) became *amp^horeús* (as in Herodotus, Aristophanes+) by the process just described came into question: the Mycenaean tablets attest *both* the long and short forms of the word, *a-pi-po-re-we* and *a-po-re-we*. It then became unclear whether Hom. *amp^hip^horeús* indeed preserves the long Mycenaean form and later gives rise to *amp^horeús*, attested elsewhere in inscriptional and literary Greek, or whether *amp^hip^horeús* is already a back-formation based on *amp^horeús* (Morpurgo Davies 1985). The most recent discussion of the problem, by I. Hajnal (1998), is likewise non-committal. Nevertheless, although the matter remains unresolved, a more careful look at the Mycenaean and especially the Homeric data may yet shed a bit more light on the situation.

In the extant tablets, Myc. *a-pi-po-re-we* /*amp^hip^hore:wes/* (nom. pl. m.) occurs once (KN), and the reduced form *a-po-re-we* /*amp^hore:we/* (nom. du. m.) twice (MY and PY) (Docs.²; DMic.). There is no evidence that the dichotomy reflects dialectal distinctions within Mycenaean, on a geographic or any other basis. Moreover, since the short form is attested twice and corresponds to 1st-millennium Gk. *amp^horeús*, error must also be excluded. Therefore, *a-po-re-we* had begun to coexist with older *a-pi-po-re-we* already in Mycenaean times.

Now the full form *amp^hip^horeús* occurs nine times in Homer (*Il.* 2x; *Od.* 7x). The simple form *amp^horeús*, being for all intents and purposes metrically impossible in any case form, is not attested in the epics. A detailed analysis of the Homeric material shows the essentially formulaic behavior of *amp^hip^horeús*, with non-formulaic attestations having arisen by analogy. The Homeric data themselves, then, strongly suggest that the long form was indeed a survival, and not merely a metrically convenient back-formation.