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Phonology and Poetics: The Problem of Greek \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) and \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \)

The existence of Greek \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \) beside Homeric \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) '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 \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreúslam}^h \text{oreús} \), similarly *apó-poinalá-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 \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) (as in Homer) became \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \) (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, \( \text{a-pi-po-re-we} \) and \( \text{a-po-re-we} \). It then became unclear whether Hom. \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) indeed preserves the long Mycenaean form and later gives rise to \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \), attested elsewhere in inscriptive and literary Greek, or whether \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) is already a back-formation based on \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \) (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. \( \text{a-pi-po-re-we/amphipore:we}/ \) \( \text{nom. pl. m.} \) occurs once (KN), and the reduced form \( \text{a-po-re-we/amphore:we}/ \) \( \text{nom. du. m.} \) 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. \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \), error must also be excluded. Therefore, \( \text{a-po-re-we} \) had begun to coexist with older \( \text{a-pi-po-re-we} \) already in Mycenaean times.

Now the full form \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \) occurs nine times in Homer (\( \text{Il.} \ 2x; \text{Od.} \ 7x \)). The simple form \( \text{amp}^h \text{oreús} \), 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 \( \text{amp}^h \text{ip}^h \text{oreús} \), 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.