

MYCENAEAN *PO-RO-* AND GREEK *προ-*

The Mycenaean prefix *po-ro-* may be distinguished with reasonable certainty in two classes of words:

Class 1 (*po-ro* + verbal stem)

Class 2 (*po-ro-* + nominal stem)

po-ro-ko-wa προχοῦά

po-ro-du-ma-te

po-ro-ko-wo πρόχοῦοι

po-ro-ko-re-te

jo-po-ro-te-ke jo + πρόθηκε

There can be no doubt that in the words of Class 1 *po-ro-* represents *προ-*. This prefix is thereby shown to have functioned before verbal stems in Mycenaean very much as in classical Greek. It was shown by Delbrück and Wackernagel that the meaning of *προ-* was not only 'forth, forwards' but also (and perhaps more frequently) 'away'.

Unfortunately, the same degree of attention has not been paid to *προ-* in composition with nominal stems. In his *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* 240, Wackernagel demonstrated that, in common with Latin and Indo-Iranian, Greek nominal compounds with *προ-* resemble the verbal compounds in that the prefix often means 'away'. But there remain a number of compounds in *προ-* for which this meaning is entirely inappropriate. Two well-known examples of nominal compounds in fifth century Greek are *πρόμαντις* and *πρόξενος*. Since *προ-* in these words cannot mean 'away', is there any justification for assuming (with LSJ) that it gives the sense of 'standing in another's place' (as if *πρό* could mean the same as *ἀντί*)?

So far as *πρόμαντις* is concerned, this assumption is quite unjustified. A *πρόμαντις* is not one who 'prophesies on behalf of another' but, simply, a 'prophet'. *πρόμαντις* has exactly the same meaning as the earlier word *μάντις* and the most likely explanation of the presence of *προ-* is that it has been added by analogy with the close synonym *προ-φήτης* and *προφήτης* was not, or at least was not originally, 'one who speaks for a god and interprets his will to man' (LSJ) but 'one who speaks out the truth' (see Wackernagel's discussion, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* II 239—240).

It may appear at first sight that the use of *πρόξενος* by classical authors does bear out the suggestion that the *πρόξενος* acted 'in place of' another. For example it is clear from the description in Plato's *Laws* 642b that a *πρόξενος* officially represented the interests of another city in his own. The word was also applied (as by Herodotus 6. 57. 2) to Spartan citizens who were officially appointed by the kings to protect the interests of foreigners or, in other words, to 'represent' them. But *πρόξενος* is used by Plato and Herodotus in its extended, not its original, significance. As Thummer puts beyond doubt in his commentary on the *Isthmians* (4. 8), *πρόξενος* and *προξενία* mean for Pindar (and also for Aeschylus) nothing more than *ξένος* and *ξενία* respectively. So when Pindar calls the Cleonymids *πρόξενοι ἀμφικτιόνων* he means not that they were the formally appointed representatives of their neighbours (as Herodotus said of the Spartans) but simply that they maintained a relationship of *ξενία* with them. The prefix in *πρόξενος* is therefore to be regarded as an example of the familiar 'emphasizing' use, which surely arose from the meaning 'forth, out' (Schwyzer *Griechische Grammatik* II 505 n. 7).

It is evident that neither of the classical words which are supposed to mean 'standing in the place of' can have had that sense originally. With this observation in mind, let us look at the Mycenaean words of Class 2.

It is usually considered that *po-ro-du-ma-te* and *po-ro-ko-re-te* mean respectively 'one who stands for a *du-ma-te*' and 'one who stands for a *ko-re-te*'. For some reason, the Latin formations *proconsul* and *propraetor* are thought to be parallel to these Mycenaean words. This interpretation has seemed the more attractive because in PY Jn 829 the contribution of bronze expected from each *po-ro-ko-re-te* is considerably less than that from each *ko-re-te*. So the notion has grown up that the *ko-re-te* is a kind of 'mayor' and that the *po-ro-ko-re-te* is his 'vice-mayor'.

The fact that later Greek yields no example of *προ-* with the required meaning (if attention is paid to the original significance of *προ-* compounds) constitutes a serious obstacle to this suggestion. Another obstacle arises from an examination of the Mycenaean texts themselves. *po-ro-* is not the only prefix which is attached to *du-ma-te* and *ko-re-te*. A *me-ri-du-ma-te* is attested also; and the existence of a by-form *me-ri-da-ma-te* encourages the belief that there was some close affinity, if not identity, between *da-ma-te* and *du-ma-te*. The dossier is completed by the word *po-ru-da-ma-te*. Now it is clear that *po-ru-da-ma-te* cannot be a simple variant of *po-ro-da-ma-te*: the variation *o/u* would be inexplicable, unless one had the hardihood to maintain that there could be an oscillation between *προ-* and **πρυ-* like that between *ἀπο-* and *ἀπυ-*. But, if *po-ro-* in these nominal compounds is dissociated from *προ-* altogether, everything becomes clear. *po-ru-da-ma-te* can be equated, quite naturally, with a word **πολυδάμαρες* meaning 'officials having competence in several fields' (Lejeune *Mémoires de philologie mycénienne* I 196). The more specialized

me-ri-da-ma-te and *me-ri-du-ma-te* may be given their generally agreed meaning 'officials in charge of (sacred) honey'.

What, then, of *po-ro-da-ma-te* and *po-ro-ko-re-te*? The few scholars who have rejected the equation of *po-ro-* with *προ-* on semantic grounds suggest that *po-ro-* represents *σπόρος* (e. g. Lejeune *Mémoires* I 196 and Wundsam *Die politische und soziale Struktur in den mykenischen Residenzen nach den Linear B Texten* 93). For the reasons already advanced, I feel sure they are right to prefer the explanation of *po-ro-* in these words as a noun, not an adverb/preposition. Their actual equation is unexceptionable. Yet it remains true that the word *po-ro-* itself has one of the most securely attested meanings in the whole corpus: it can represent nothing else than *πῶλος* 'foal'. In the case of the obscure word *po-ro-su-re* (KN Sg 888), Lejeune has rightly said that, in the absence of context, we cannot be sure whether *po-ro-* represents *προ-* or *πωλο-* (*Mémoires* III 315 n. 78). If the first element of *po-ro-du-ma-te* and *po-ro-ko-re-te* cannot represent *προ-*, the possibility that it represents *πωλο-* deserves consideration. There is nothing absurd in the suggestion that a system which found room, for 'supervisors of honey' had a place also for those whose business it was to rear and train horses; but it is impossible to tell whether such words are meant literally or represent mere honorific titles.

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