

ΝΕΦΟΣ

Beekes¹ (p. 80) rejects a laryngeal origin for the lengthening provoked by νέφος in Homer. The evidence is admittedly weak, but is, I believe, worth considering positively.

Beekes lists (p. 74) a number of possible cognates, which I will consider in a somewhat different order. Skt. *abhra-*, Avestan *awra-*, Armen. *amb* 'cloud' all make a perfectly good equation, **mbh-*; Latin *imber* can easily be added to these. I have also reconstructed² Albanian *avull* (and the earlier borrowing seen in Romanian *abur*), with *v* from hiatus-glide **μ* in **áμul* < **áulV-* < **ábulV-*, as ultimately reflecting **Nb(h)lo-*. These could equally be derived from a pre-form **mbh* (**Nbh-*) or **Hmbh-* (**Hñbh-*) with or without an *-l-* or *-r-* suffix

It is of course easy to relate Skt. *ámphas-* 'water' phonologically to the above. Though Frisk also admits ὄμβρος an obvious problem arises with the β. If this were isolated we should be tempted to dismiss the claimed relation immediately. But Skt. *ambu* induces us to think twice. Certainly the simplest way to account for the vocalism of ὄμβρος = *ámphas-* is with **H_o-*; this leads to **H_oenbh-* ~ *H_onebh-*.

Perhaps the aberrant **b* of ὄμβρος and *ambu* is to be regarded as a conflation with the etymon of Indo-Iranian *āp-*, Latin *amnis*, OIr. *aub*, Anatolian *hap-*, which I have discussed elsewhere³.

To the above argument for **H_onebh-* we may adduce as confirmation Lith. *dėbėsis* Latv. *debess* 'cloud', which I have proposed as **?nebes-* < **Hnebhēs*-⁴.

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¹ *The Development of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals in Greek*, Mouton 1969. For the fluctuating facts on νέφος see P. Chantraine. *Grammaire homérique* I (1958) 177.

² *Revue roumaine de linguistique* 20, 1975, 499—500. We may further add to these ἄφρός.

³ *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 30 (1972) 35—38.

⁴ *Chicago Linguistic Society Book of Squibs* (1977) 46—48.