

GREEK AND INDO-EUROPEAN WORDS IN $*mVl-$

1. Lith. *malónē* 'Gnade, Gunst, Gefallen'

This word has been associated¹ with $*m̥l̥du-$ (Skt. *m̥ḍdū-*, Lat. *mollis* < $*moldui-$ < *mldu-iH_a*, $\dot{\alpha}$ -μαλδύ-νω, βλαδεῖς < $*μλαδέFες$ < $*m̥l̥deu-$ ², with $\dot{\alpha}$ μαλός³, with μαλακός, and with $\dot{\alpha}$ μβλύς⁴. The Skt. *malvā-* and *marāla-* are quite ambiguous and opaque to me.

I see no reason to intrude this word in the already vexed question of *mel̥sti* and other debated forms perhaps related to *moliti*.

It seems to me that there is a much better match for our word in Greek if we clarify somewhat the Greek details themselves. μέλω, μέλει μοι is declared by Frisk⁵ „ohne überzeugende Etymologie“. The crux of this verb lies in the interpretation of the perfect forms, of which we must take μέμηλα, μέμβλεται as the oldest; see also Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* I 426. In the latter, the -ε- has been taken as a thematic vowel, but I think wrongly. If we start from μέμηλ- as an accommodation in syllabication to an older athematic $*μέμλη-$, we may view $*μέμυλε-$ as a revocalised zero-grade to $*μέμλη-$, as with έθε-το: έθη-κε. It may be that this is what Chantraine suggests, *Grammaire homérique* I 432, but it is hard to be sure. Parenthetically, we may dismiss Pokorny's (*IEW* 720) Doric μέμᾶλα. Thus we have $*memleH-$ $memlH_{\text{e}}$. The nominal derivatives μελέτωρ, μελέτη point specifically to $*melH_{\text{e}}$ - with their vocalised ε. I therefore take the present μέλω, if not a fresh formation, as $*melH_{\text{e}}-\delta$.

¹ See Fraenkel *Lit EW* 402—3.

² See Frisk *GEW* 1.240 for other forms and comment.

³ Nicht sicher gedeutet, according to Frisk *GEW* 1.85. We might perhaps see here a cognate in OIr. . *mall* 'slow'.

⁴ Frisk *GEW* 1.90 accepts this as probably $*\dot{\alpha}μλ-ύς$, to $\dot{\alpha}$ μαλός. It seems to me more likely, on the basis of the stem-class, the a²-, and the internal apparent zero-grade, that the word results from a cross of $\dot{\alpha}$ μαλός with $*μλδύς$. The interaction of $\dot{\alpha}$ μαλός and $*μλδύς$ is further borne out by the initial $\dot{\alpha}$ - of $\dot{\alpha}$ μαλδύνω. We therefore seem to have an early Greek conflation (schematically):

$*m̥l̥dū-$	$> ml̥adū-$	$> ml̥adū-$	$> βλαδύ-$
	$q̥maldū-$	$> q̥maldū-$	$> \dot{\alpha}μαλδύ(νω)$
		$q̥malaHū-$	$> \dot{\alpha}μβλύ-$
$*qm̥lHó-$	$> q̥malHó-$	$> q̥malHó-$	$> \dot{\alpha}μαλό-$

It will be noted that this is not to deny that *some* prothetic vowels are laryngeal in origin.

⁵ *GEW* 2.206, after a detailed rehearsal of the forms.

When we turn to the Welsh *gofal* 'care', which seems certainly the most likely cognate, we find the laryngeal confirmed. We have here $^*\ddot{\chi}omal- < ^*u(p)o-malV-$; the best explanation for this vocalism is $^*malV- < ^*m\ddot{h}HV-$.⁶

I propose then to associate with μέλω 'care for' and Welsh *gofal* the isolated Lith. *malóné*, *malonùs*, etc. In this fashion we must dismember Pokorny's entry 3. *mel-*, *IEW* 720.

2. μαλακός, μαλθακός

As Frisk reports (*GEW* 2. 167), these two have certainly undergone some kind of interaction. The question is, in what direction and to what extent? They cannot be accepted on equal grounds as Fraenkel *Lit EW* 431 s. v. *mélmenys* does.

If we accept μαλακός as being relatively original, because of βλαξί, then the first task is to explain μαλθακός. Surely this latter is not to be divorced from $^*m\ddot{h}dú-$ (see above). We know, moreover, that beside $^*m\ddot{h}dú-$ we also have βλαδαρόν < $^*m\ddot{h}d(\theta)ro-$; a degree of suffix variation was clearly possible at an early period. On one hand, $-u \sim -ro$ was a special relation in IE; on the other hand, laryngeal suffixes participated in such alternations; if not μέγαρον to μέγα, then πλατύς to Πλάταια. I have argued⁷ in the case of ἄνθρωπος that at least later in Greek prehistory an old dental (presumably voiced in the cases in point) preceding a laryngeal-bearing syllabic could become aspirated. Thus we may provisionally view μαλθακός as $^*μαλδηακό-$ or $^*m\ddot{h}dhHkó-$. This would then be the result of conflation of $^*m\ddot{h}d-ú-$ with $^*m\ddot{h}Hkó-$. The details must remain provisional for the present, but it is possible that such forms could instruct us on the chronology of the development of αΡα from *RH* in Greek^{7a}.

In any event, I do not see that μαλθακός must be directly related to Gmc. *mild*. If the above sketch is correct, μαλθακός joins βλαδεῖς, ἀμαλδύνω, and ἀμβλύς as indirect progeny of $^*m\ddot{h}dú-$.

However, μαλακός and βλαξί seem to reflect $^*m\ddot{h}H-k-$ in the well-known duality seen in θάνατος : θνητός etc. Therefore, I see no possibility of the *n*-stem entertained by Frisk (*GEW* 2. 166) so long as we choose not to divorce this natural pair. In another direction, $^*m\ddot{h}H-k-$ goes well with ἀμαλός if the latter is to be analysed (α) *mHkó-*; but it is still not clear that this is the same sequence $^*m\ddot{h}H-$ seen in μάλη⁸, which I discuss elsewhere.

⁶ One implication of this is that μέλλω cannot be related. For such Keltic cases see my contribution to *Evidence for Laryngeals* (1965).

⁷ Atti e memorie del 1° Congresso internazionale di micenologia, Roma 1968, 786–90.

^{7a} Following the line of reasoning presented by E. D. Francis in his oral paper at the Linguistic Society of America (December 1970) on the types ἀλάμω, θάνατος etc., we may also envisage schematically $^*m\ddot{h}Hekó-$.

⁸ Frisk, *GEW* 2.166.

In the above terms, these Greek forms all reduce to two bases, *m̥ld-ú- and *qm̥lH(-k-)ó-. This is obviously not a final solution, but it is hoped that some ground has been cleared.

3. μέλος

H. Koller, *Glotta* 43, 1965, 38 has posited the following scheme for the development of meanings attached to this shape: μέλος 'task, duty' (: μέλει)

1. > 'kult. Chorlied' > ἡδυμελής, (αὐλός), πολυμελής (μοῦσα) > 'melody, tune'

2. > ἀμελής, ἀμελεῖν, ἐμμελής > λύειν μέλεα = λ. γυῖα > 'limbs'.

This set of semantic observations is ingenious, but I find it at the same time fragile on more than one point. It could equally be that we have in μέλος the convergence of two originally separate roots. The base seen in μέλπω could quite easily show the archaic and obscure extension in -π- that we see in θάλπω and ἔλπομα, and perhaps in πέμπω (?) If so, we have *melos 'melody, etc'.

By contrast, as Szemeréyi has suggested *inter alia*⁹, the sense 'limb' goes well with βλώσκω. The latter, as a zero-grade formation¹⁰, must be *m̥lH_o-sk-ō. Therefore, this sense of μέλος would be *melH_oos. Only later did these two fortuitously fall phonetically together.

Again, as with Welsh *gofal* above, the vocalism of Welsh *cym-mal* 'articulus, iunctura' is well explained by the inter-syllabic laryngeal. We see at the same time that if the root had a set form, at least in British Keltic in this set of senses, we cannot reconstruct with Pokorny¹¹ *melsō-¹².

There is, furthermore, no need to relate Lith. *mélmenys*, Latv. *mēlmeni*; on these very ambiguous and surely not immediately relevant forms see Fraenkel *Lit EW* 431 for an abundant range of guesses. Something meaning 'soft' would fit well; but the etymon of ἀμαλός would do as well. That is, however, to be regarded only as a possibility in the absence of clearer evidence in the related semantic fields.

4. The IE roots „mel-“

Pokorny's root 1. *mel-* is largely represented in the words for 'grind, mill, etc.' (*IEW* 716—17). I analyse this root as *melH_e-, and I regard such anit forms as OIr. *mlith* as having developed later by loss

⁹ AJP 72, 436 ff.

¹⁰ See Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* I 316, § 148.

¹¹ *IEW* 720; the Breton and cornish forms require a separate account in any case.

¹² Incidentally, Pokorny's comparison with Skt. *támas* (I suppose he means the root for 'darkness') is negligent, since that is a set base, and Lithuanian moreover loses medial schwa.

of the laryngeal in prevocalic paradigmatic forms such as *melid*; the adjective *mlāith* and the Welsh noun *blawd*, not belonging to the verbal paradigm, show the expected set vocalism. I deal elsewhere with the Greek remnant *μύλη*.

In these terms I see the etymon of ἀμαλός or of μαλακός as a better candidate for relation to **melH_e-* than the group represented by **mldiū-*. But perhaps the second alpha of μαλακός argues rather for **melH_a-*.

It will be noted that Frisk¹³ simply gives up on βλασφημέω; he is equally non-committal on μέλεος, with its noteworthy accentuation and ambiguous hiatus. However, there seems to be ample support for Pokorny's 2. **mel-* 'verfehlen, etc.' For the most recent well founded account of related forms see Fraenkel *Lit EW* 430 s. v. *mēlas* 'Lüge'.

I have already suggested that 3. *mel-* may not be an IE root at all; the only items left, μέλω, Lat. *prō-mellere* (and other troublesome Latin forms), and OIr. *mall* are themselves problems.

Pokorny's 4. *mel-* really boils down to μάλα, μᾶλλον, Lat. *melior*, *multus*, Latv. *milns*. For Lat. *molta*, Umbr. *mutu*, etc. see now J. W. Poultney, *The Bronze Tables of Iguvium* (1959) 312, who derives them from **molk-tā*. Frisk *GEW* 2. 165 gives an adequate account of μάλα (zero-grade), μᾶλλον (for *μέλλον = *melius*) with normal-grade regular for the comparative, and Latin *multus* like Latv. *milns* as apparent zero-grade participial formations. It is not clear to me that Latv. *milns* should be put with Lith. *milžinas* 'giant' and its cognates as Fraenkel *Lit EW* 453 does. I do not see a natural link for this root with any other now known.

There is no clear unity in Pokorny's 5. *mel-*. Except for Toch. AB *mälk-* (which has additional problems) the forms listed are either ambiguous or have already been dealt with above.

Pokorny's 6. *mel-* 'colour-senses, esp. dark' appears at first to be a richly supported etymon, but most of it rapidly disintegrates. Frisk *GEW* 2. 199 has pointed out the vacuousness of the claimed Indic comparisons for μέλαν-, and he rightly rejects as impossible (238) any connexion for μίλτος and as purely hypothetical (270) any interpretation of μάλλος. If μολύνω and Skt. *mála-* are to be related at all it must be on the basis of meaning 'dirt'. The first element of μάλωψ (283) is also quite obscure, and supports no etymology.

I am not at all sure what the initial element in Alb. *mëllenjë* and *mëllezež*¹⁴ represents. Surely *i mjerë* does not in all likelihood reflect **mel-ro-*. Lat. *mulleus* belongs to one of the most difficult phonetic configurations of the Latin lexicon; it could easily be non-IE.

The Germanic formations (Goth. *mēl-*, OHG *mal*, ON *māl-*) are ambiguous in semantics and in phonology. If they are to be related, they appear to be related in the first instance to the Baltic long-vowel

¹³ *GEW* 1.242.

¹⁴ See my corrigenda, *IF* 67, 1962, 147.

forms, and in that case, without special study, it would be difficult to assert that they were not the result of early borrowing.

It is difficult to see why Russ. *malina* 'raspberry' is cited alone. Actually the word is pan-Slavic: Czech Polish *malina*, Bulg. *malina*, SCr. *mǎlina* < **mal'na*. This obviously suffixed form could be derived from several bases, and Lith. *mėlynė* 'blueberry, blackberry' does little to help our puzzlement; it could itself easily be a folketymology on *malina*. However, Latv. *melnene* 'blackberry' cannot be left out of account in any attempt at explanation.

We are therefore led to agree with Frisk (199) that of all the forms adduced by Pokorny only certain Baltic items are really interesting. The many forms cited by Fraenkel (*Lit EW* 430) also require some selection, refining and systematizing.

It is simplest to take Lith. *mėlymė* and *mėlynė* as nominalizations built on the adjectives; *mėlys* (pl). 'blue dye' is also a derived noun. This leaves us basically with two groups of words¹⁵:

- a.) Llth. *mėlas* 'blue', Latv. *mēļš* (**mēlias*) 'dark blue', *mēlene* 'dark blue cloth';¹⁶
- b.) Lith. *mėlynas* *mēlenas* 'blue', Latv. *mēlīns* 'black', *melīne* 'black cloth'.

The most reasonable Baltic basis for these developments would be a.) **mēlas* 'blue', and b.) **mēlnas* 'black'. Lithuanian would subsequently have refashioned the nasal suffix, at the same time creating semantically a synonym for 'blue'. Earlier, **mēlas* was extracted by backformation as a thematic form from **mēlnas*, at the same time giving a basis for the typically Baltic semantic differentiation. Still earlier, we derive **mēlnas* by the well known rule from **mēlēnas*. This of course gives us an equivalent for *μέλαν-*.

At the same time we see that Lith. *mul̄vas* etc. cannot belong to the same series; we can relate it only if we regard **mēlnas* as a Dehnstufe formation, and hence divorce it from *μέλαν-*. Lith. *mólis* 'Lehm' remains ambiguous, in addition to presenting the usual ablaut problems for the Baltic history of *ó*.

It is surprising that Pokorny omits at least a mention from this list of the Welsh *melyn* 'yellow', which however Fraenkel includes. The feminine of this adjective shows by its vowel alternation (*felen*, underlying *melen*) that the pre-form is **melino-*. Apart from the different colour meaning, this agrees neither with Greek and Baltic **mēln-*, nor with Lithuanian *mėlynas*, nor with Slavic *malina*. In fact, I believe that it does not belong in this group at all, and that it represents a Keltic transformation of the adjective **melit-o-* 'honey-coloured'. I deal with this in an article currently appearing in IJSLP.

¹⁵ Old Prussian forms are too problematic in phonetics and orthography to allow a sensitive assignment here of the attested *melne* and *milīnan*.

¹⁶ Latv. *mēlene* could be explained either as a formation modelled on *melīne*, or as a derivative from an intermediate equivalent of Lith. *mėlynas -enas*.

Since Latv. *mēlns* has a status within Baltic that is by no means settled, although I consider its rôle to be highly important and indicative, and since in any case the athematic rôle of μέλαν- is quite isolated, Pokorny's 6. *mel-* must dissolve for the present into nothing at all.

Pokorny's 7. *mel-* 'wool' is from the start very fragile indeed. Frisk (*GEW* 2. 168) considers μαλλός 'unerklärt'. Fraenkel (*Lit EW* 452) has nothing beyond the report of earlier mentions to offer for *milas*. In principle, *milas* would appear to be **mlHo-* if indeed it is Indo-European; this cannot be accommodated directly by μαλλός, whether or not the suffix is indeed *-no-*.

Pokorny's 8. *mel-* contains, in my opinion, two quite separate groups of forms. One comprises βλάσκω, and as I would add, μέλος 'limb', discussed above; I analyse this root as **melH_o-*. Skt. *mani-* 'pearl' must remain outside the present discussion. The other forms are supposed to reflect an etymon for 'hill, mountain, lump, etc.'; whatever this latter is — and the attestations between Albanian, Keltic, Baltic, and so-called Illyrian are not themselves unambiguous — it could easily be pre IE or Krahe's *Alteuropäisch*.

5. SUMMARY

Of Pokorny's roots, I see the following as assured or probable¹⁷:

1. **melH_e-* 'grind' (μύλη); **mld-(ú-)* 'soft' (βλαδεῖς, ἀμαλδύνω, ἀμβλύς, OE *meltan*, Slavic **moldъ*); **(H) mlH_a-(k-)ó-* (ἀμαλός, μαλακός, βλᾶξ) 'weak, soft'; 2. **mel-* 'wrong, lie'; **melH_e-* 'care' (μέλει μοι); 4. **mel-* 'much' (μάλα); **mel-(π-)* 'sing, tune' (μέλος, μέλπω); 5. **melH_o-* 'limb, walk' (μέλος, βλάσκω). Apart from dubious items of unclear vocalism or of possible non-IE pedigree, this leaves chiefly unaccounted for: βλασφημέω, μέλεος; μέλλω (to OIr. *mall?*); μέλας; μαλλός. At present I see no clear way of accounting systematically for these, other than on the basis of weak semantic guesses.

Of the above, **melH_e-* 'grind' and **melH_e-* 'care' were doubtless distinguished by their different present formations, by their perfects, perhaps by their aspect, and probably by the syntaxes into which they entered. **mel-* 'wrong' seems to have participated in nominal formations, while **mel-* 'much' was largely an adjective or quantifier. **mel-* 'sing, tune' is of less clear pedigree, but in any case in contrast with the last two it would have been primarily verbal.

In all the above cases, then, phonology and syntax would have easily served to keep these bases distinct; the problem arises only because of the great time and fragmented evidence that we must bridge.

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¹⁷ I use his numbers where possible.