

ALLITERATIONS' FUNCTIONS

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Résumé : Dans une culture comme celle des hommes de langue indo-européenne, les allitérations sont le procédé le plus anciennement mis en oeuvre par les techniciens du langage, savants phonologues, pour leurs textes d'art, poèmes et prières. Servant à focaliser un terme, elles ont, du fait même qu'elles ne peuvent exister que dans des syntagmes au moins bimembres (type ombr. *futu fons*), une fonction ligatrice, d'applications diverses : constitution de formules, liaison entre les *côla* d'un vers, entre les vers d'une strophe qu'elles servent à délimiter. Dans des corpus plus hermétiques, elles font partie, avec les chiasmes, les récurrences lexicales, les répétitions de formules, la composition circulaire, des techniques qui valent à la poésie d'être appelée "liage" : en composition discontinue, elles ont servi à relier des thèmes distendus dans un texte par l'intrusion d'autres épisodes. En une fonction de cohésion voisine, elles ont servi à relier les noms de personnes apparentées, au nombre de deux (*Romulus / Remus*, *Agamemnon / Clytemnestre*) ou plus (famille des Tyndarides et de leur cousine Pénélope). Comme technique d'hermétisme, elles ont servi au cryptage, par les poètes, d'inventaires phonologiques (déjà dans la formule d'où est issu le fameux *kléwos áphthiton*), prosodiques, parfois d'anagrammes. Enfin, on peut soupçonner qu'elles ont joué un rôle dans les renouvellements lexicaux des langues, parfois par calque (pélasge *Larissa*, *Teutamides* / gr. *Argos*, *Myrmidons*) ou emprunt (pél. *pyle* / gr. *thyra*), le plus souvent par "Reimwortbildung" (exemple des noms du dieu de l'orage).

Mots clés : Indo-européen ; allitérations ; focalisation ; composition ; liage ; cohésion ; cryptage ; anagrammes ; renouvellement lexical

1. ALLITERATIONS IN OCCIDENT : LINKING AND FOCUSING FUNCTIONS

Very learned in all kind of things and expert in language, the poets and priests of Indo-European language made a large use of the consonant alliterations : these latter constitute the most immediately obvious mark of an artistical language in a civilization with an oral character as they had.

Above all they are known in the poetry of Latin, Celtic, Germanic ; but they are also present in the religious texts, which may be poetic - let us think for instance of the Vedic hymns - but no necessarily, as this is the case for some prayers and/or descriptions of ritual acts, for example the ones we found in the Umbrian Tables of Iguvium (Meyer, 1913-1914 ; Heims, 1914 ; Lehmann, 1953 ; Durante, 1958 ; Campanile, 1979 ; 1988 ; etc. ; alliterations in O.Russian epic literature : Čiževsky, 1949 ; for the Umbrian tables, Prosdocimi, 1992). Here they are two Latin examples. One is taken from the works of a poet : Enn., *Ann.* I.1 : *Musae quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum* : the interlacing of *m* and *p* is built up from the Muses Olympus' names ; and the alliterations have two functions, a focusing one, since they throw the proper nouns into relief, and a linking one, since they are used for linking the two *côla* of the verse, like in the Celtic and Germanic poetry. The other example is the consecration formula pronounced by Decius Mus : Tite-Live 8.9.6 : *uos precor ueneror ueniam peto feroque uti populo Romano Quiritibus uim uictoriam prosperandis hostesque populi Romani Quiritium terrore formidine morte adficiatis* "I request, beg and demand you and suggest you favorably that, in consideration of Quirites Roman people, you favour strength and victory, and that you strike Quirites Roman people's enemies with fright, terror and death" (adapted from Bloch-Guittard's translation). The alliteration throw into relief the syntagm of the "prayer and veneration", built up from **pr-ek- h₁w-en-* "to wish to obtain thanks to words (and) acts", cf. O.Ir. *arco fuin*, etc. (*L.E.I.A.*, 1959, A-86, *s.u. arc-* "to ask, to request") ; and they delimit a no metric stanza.

2. GREEK

In the following part, I would like first to focus on the unknown uses of the alliterations, above all in Greek, language in which the very existence of the phenomenon did not receive the attention it deserved (see nevertheless Riedel. 1900). although there are plenty of them in

bound by a *r* ; it takes the *r* of the previous verse, but, at the same time, Ὀρθην offers a syllable *or* in pair with the *ol* x 2 of the same verse, which, moreover, intervene in the following plays on words : (Ἡ)λά(ν)ην / (Ὀ)λα(ο)σσόνα, and πόλ(ιν) / τ'ολ(ο-) (in sandhi), the first one announcing to enhance it the *-pol-* of the name of the chief and the *ptol-* of his epithet, 740 ; in 741, the *r* of Πειρι- closes the stanza in circular composition whereas, by a "family function" of the alliterations (§ 3.4), its *p* takes his son's one ; and the *r/l* characterization of the stanza is based on the names of the father (Πειρι-) and of the son (Πολυ-).

2.2. Functions of coding

The alliterations had some other hermetic uses.

Phonologic inventories' media

An example such as Hesiod's one, *Works* 235 ("women give birth to sons alike to their fathers", adapted from Mazon's translation),

τίκτουσιν δὲ γυναῖκες ἐοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσι,

built up around the "childbirth of women", shows a third function of the alliterations : the one by means of which the poet builds up an embryo of phonologic system, thanks to pairs like *m/p* (nasal and occlusive labials) in Ennius's example, or like here (in which the alliterating phonemes are *k, t, g, n*) *k/g* (voiceless and voiced gutturals), *t/n* (occlusive and nasal dental consonants), *kt* in group shutting the previous syllable that it lengthens (τίκτουσι) / *k...t* heterosyllabic in two short syllables (ἐοικότα) / *t...k* (τέκνα) in two syllables whose second one is short whereas the first one is lengthened by the tautosyllabic group *kn*, itself going on a par with the heterosyllabic *g...n* of γονεῦσι ; the occlusive of this latter enters itself the *g/k* pair, and the diphthong enters an inventory by exemplars of the diphthongs with a first short element of Greek ; of those ones which may be in *i* or *u* in theory and of an *a, e, o* vocalism, the poet offers us *ai, oi, eu*.

The syntagm which is at the origin of all the researches about the poetic Indo-European language, **kléwos ṛdhg^whitom* "everlasting glory, renown which allows the name to remain in the living memory", Skr. *śrávaḥ áksitam*, Gr. κλέφος ἄφθιτον, already included a miniature phonologic inventory (Bader, 1993, 26-27), with its six phonologic pairs : **k/t*, two voiceless (guttural and dental) consonants enclosing the syntagm in circular composition ; **k/g^wh*, voiceless (guttural) consonant and voiced aspirated (labiovelar) consonant : **t/dh*, voiceless

"Hippochoos, as for him, leads the Pelasgians' tribes with good spears, Pelasgian inhabitants of the fertile Larissa. They are led by Hippochoos and Pylaios, Ares' offspring, both of them Pelasgian Lethos' sons, himself Teutamos' son...

The Paphlagonians obey Pylaimenes with wilful heart. They come from Venetoi's land" (adapted from Mazon's translation).

The prosodic inventory is organized around the *lā/la* pair, which links the two nouns *πύλη* "gate" (at the base of *Πύλαιος*) and *(F)λάσιος* "wilful" (purposes of another coding of the poet who inserts a Pelasgian term into the Pelasgian catalog and a Venetic term into the Venetic catalog). We find in it, from the exemplary in *l + ā*, the short open syllables inside the word (*-βώλακα*) and the sentence in sandhi (*φύλα*), and the long ones by position (*Πελασγός*-), or by nature : diphthong (*Πύλαιος*), or long vowel for which the poet, doing historic phonetics, puts against each other *ā* altered in Ionic (*Λήθο*-) and *ā* preserved in the name of the city that has been borrowed, as he knows it (for it comes for Troade), *Λάρισσα*. The phonologic inventory brings together the labial occlusives, owing to the words alliterating in *lā*, *b* (*-βώλακα*) / *ph* (*φύλα*) / *p* (geminated in *ἵππο*-, where *pp < *kw*), and member of the *p-l* alliteration, built up from the *πυλαι*-, common element of the two catalogs ; according to the articulation function, the *p/ph* pair, accompanied by the alliteration in *lā*, links to the Pelasgians' catalog the one of the *Παφλαγόνων* ; to the tautosyllabic *-phla*- of this latter name is opposed the heterosyllabic *φ(ύ)λα* of the first catalog.

Homer : alliterations and writing

Those inventories built up by a poet who is necessarily a phonologist because of the constraints of the metre, syllabic (and this point is true for all the Indo-European speaking poets, whatever the used metre), have been linked to the *writing* : on the one hand, a complete inventory of the Greek phonologic system is found in the only Homeric passage where the writing is explicitly mentioned (Z 168-9) ; on the other hand, in the four examples of the language of the *Iliad*'s gods, the poet coded an Ionic alphabet according to some phonologic criteria (Bader, 1988 ; 1994 a ; 1997).

Discontinuous composition

Among the other hermetic plays on words based on the use of the alliterations, one proceeds from their linking function : like other devices (chiasmi lexical recurrences repetitions of

Jerimadeth) ; and anagrams (Bader, 1993), like those fabricated by Pindar who drew his inspiration from Homer (Bader, 1993, 43-44), or Homer himself.

The pindaric anagram of the coral

And I will take here for example the anagram of the coral in Pindar's works (formed on "the mandrake's" one in *Odyssey*, that I study somewhere else). Before being attested in Theophraste's works, etc., the name "coral", κοράλλιον, was first acknowledged in Pindar's works, *N.* 7.78-79 ("the Muse, as for her, assembles the gold with the white ivory and the lily flower that she removed from the marine dew, that is to say the coral : note and translation adapted from Puech and modified for the lily which is a narcissus, because mandrake has a "narcotic" power) :

(Μοῖσά τοι) ΚΟΛΛῶ χρυσὸν ἐν τε λευκὸν ἐλέφανθ' ὀμῶ
καὶ λείριον ἄνθεμον ποντιάς ὑφελόϊσ' ἑέρσας.

In this text, Pindar forges the anagram of the coral on the Homeric anagram of the mandrake :

ΚΟΡΑλλιον on μανδραΓΟΡΑΣ,

two quadrisyllables joined by *-kora-/gorā-*, with the phonologic pairs *k/g*, *a/ā*, even better the *ra/rā* pair, present in *μανδραγόρας*.

The anagram's starting point is not a consonant but a syllable, the *ko* of the "collage" verb (because Pindar's model is the name of the mandrake that Homer anagrammatizes by putting the syllabic sequence "*andra*" apart) ; then its constituent parts are the *r* and the *l* of the names "gold" and "ivory", materials with which the coral is associated (by collage ? I don't know) in the decoration ; besides these *r* and *l* alliterate in two different ways : in chiasmus in the flower's name that designates it metaphorically, λείριον, and each of them in recurrence in one of the two verses, the *l* of "ivory" with "white ivory", whereas the group *l-r* is resumed in ὑφελόϊσ' ἑέρσας in the order of λείριον.

3. FOUNDATIONS IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE POETIC ALLITERATIONS

By their uses of the alliterations, the poets only exploited some tendencies of these provided by the language.

3.1. Opening-shutting of the gate's leaves

Here it is an example that includes the two syllables necessary for any alliterating play on words (as it is the case of the syllables that tie Ἀργισσῶν and Γυρτώνην in B 738, etc.) ; this is a bimembered syntagm applied to the opening/shutting of a folding gate, **dhwer- h_lwer-* :
 Let fowls opening. She answered, shutting. P. V. 1120.2. Cr. n. 98. ὄρνις ἄνοιγον ἑρμαινέου

ears", *frg.* 334, Kern, with an alliteration then reduced to θ ; but, on the other hand, in the variante of this formula which includes instead of $\theta\upsilon\rho\alpha$ another name of the "gate", $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\eta$ (§ 4.1.1), the ancient alliteration, double in the initial formula ($w-r$), remains double, in $p-l$, provided some arrangings built upon the "gate"'s name : $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\alpha\varsigma \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\upsilon \mu\epsilon\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\varsigma \tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \acute{\omega}\sigma\iota\nu \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\theta\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$, *frg.* 13, Kern. In the initial syntagm the alliteration has got a function of cohesion between the two syntagm's members ; it becomes focusing function of the "gate"'s name in the syntagms which are renewals of it.

3.2. Agamemnon

Alliterations of the same kind may have been used in the onomastics. We will take here for example of this the name of *Agamemnon*, quadruply deep-rooted in an Indo-European linguistic tradition, if we see in it a compound with a first member $*m\grave{g}-h_2-$ (zero degree of $*meg-h_2-$ > Gr. $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha-$, Skr. $m\acute{a}hi-$) and a second member of $*men-$, $m\acute{e}n-m\bar{o}n$ (with an inversion of the nasal consonants), cf. O.Irl. *menme* ; Skr. $m\acute{a}n-man-$ (analysis by $*men-$ with nasals' inversion in Saussure, 1881) : on the one hand, it is comparable, with its constituent parts, to Skr. $mah\acute{a}-manas-$, $mahi-mati-$ "with great thoughts" (in the vocative case, so called of Indra) ; on the other hand, as a name of sovereign with a second member of $*men-$, it is comparable to Achaemenians' one, O.P. $hax\bar{a}-maniš-$ (with a first member comparable to Skr. $s\acute{a}kh\bar{a}y-$) ; in the third place, as a compound with a first member "great", it is linked to the phraseology which applies to one of the Achaemenians : "I am Xerxès, the great king, king of the kings..." ; thus, the alliterations of Agamemnon's name are in relations with the "greatness" and the "act of thinking" of the king. The name (which only alliterates in m in Sanskrit) includes a nasals' inventory : m and n , consonants, repeated once in group, mn , once separated, m initial of an open syllable (me), $-n$ final of a closed syllable ($-men-$) and n initial of an open syllable ($-n\bar{o}n$) ; $*m\grave{g}$ vowel in $*m\grave{g}h_2-$, but which, at the same time, is before g , a palatal nasal, adding itself to the labial m and the dental n . The inversion of $-nm-$ in $-mn-$ has got two reasons : the phonologic research of a tautosyllabic group which, concerning the nasals, only can be $-mn-$ ($-nm-$ does not exist in Greek with this letter) ; and what we will call family liaison by alliterations : on the one hand, the $-mn-$ of 'Αγαμέμνων is opposed, as a tautosyllabic group, to the heterosyllabic $m \quad n-$ of Μεγέλας in the same order : on the other

pairs, by her birth name, Ἀρναία, to her parents' ones (Ἰκάριος, Περίβοια) by (a)r, whereas the ar alliteration links to the generation of her father Ἰκάριος this latter and her brother and sister's names Τυνδάρεως and Ἀρ(ή)νη. Τυνδάρεως and his wife Λήδα are linked by da ; among their children, Κάστωρ, Κλυταμνήστρα, Πολυδεύκης, Ἑλένη, two of them have got names linked by t to their father's one, three of them have names linked by l to their mother's one ; the two sisters are linked by l-n, the two brothers by k, and, moreover by d if Κάστωρ lays on *k~~m~~-d- (cf. Κάδμος, κεκαδμένος), and not on *k~~m~~-s- (cf. κέκασμαι, Κασσάνδρα, etc.). Those phonetic plays on words emphasize the fact that a family onomastics may be semantically structured (Bader, 1998 b and c). These family alliterations have an articular function in discontinuous composition, like certain poetic alliterations.

4. ALLITERATIONS AND LEXICAL RENEWALS

Finally, *last but not least*, the alliterations played a great part, in the language, in the lexical renewals. We will give here two series of examples.

4.1. languages in contact (Pelasgian and Greek)

In the first one, the renewals come from the contact between the two languages spoken on the Greek soil that were Pelasgian and Greek (see Bader, 1998 a, for the borrowing and the calques that have been studied here).

The Pelasgian borrowing πύλη and the Greek θύρα

One of the examples is provided by the two Greek names of the "gate" : the old PIE one, θύρα, and besides it, another one, πύλη, a loan-word from the Pelasgian language, belonging, like the name Πελασγός itself, to a root common to Greek and Pelasgian : *p~~l~~h₂-, root of the "display", which gave birth to forms connected with migration, metaphorically conceived according to the image of the birds' migrations, when wandering (Gr. πλανάομαι, etc.) and to what put an end to it, the "gates", πύλαι, of the founded city ; πύλη is integrated into Greek as a specialized term for the "gates of the city", sense that had the name in the Pelasgian vocabulary of the fortified cities' construction, which includes, also πύργος "tower", another Pelasgian borrowing to Greek - "gates" and "towers" forming part of the Citadel, *Lārissa*, a Pelasgian toponym -.

Calques : Argos / Lārissa, Myrmidons / Teutamidēs

The linguistic contacts between Greek and Pelasgian may also have taken the calques' form

Peloponnese : *Lārissa*, first metonymic designation of the whole establishment, that is to say Citadel and plain of cultivation that it protects (cf. for Troades' Larissa B 841, Λάρισσᾶν ἐριβόλακα [alliterations *-lā-ri-/ri...lā-*]), was restricted to one of the two Argos' Citadels (the other one, *Aspis*, took its name from the Greek lexicon) , in compliance with its etymological sense ; the Greek name, Argos, which is a calque of it, was consequently transferred to the other landscape's component, the plain.

In other respects, the name of the Myrmidons (B 684, etc.) is a calque of the ethnic that is hidden behind the Τευταμίδης of B 843 : whereas this latter is made on the name of the well-known "politic totality" in Occident (O. Irl. *túath*, etc.), the name Μυρμιδόνες is a derivative in *-δον-* of the theme in **-i-* to which corresponds, in **-o-*, the μύρμος· μύρμηξ of Hesychius ; always in plural, the Μυρμιδόνες constitute an Anthill, "totality" (cf. Lat. *tōtus*) like the **teutā*, working for productivity and its defense like ants (cf. Ov., *Mét.*, 7.622-670 ; Nonn., 13.206-211, etc.).

Phonic plays on words

Borrowing and calques given here in examples are in phonic relation : θύρα and πύλη by *u + r/l* ; Ἄργος and Λάρισσα by the *ar/ār* pair ; Μυρμιδόνες and Τευτα(μίδης), by the reduplication of a consonant, *m-m/t-t*, and by *-mid-*, because the poet had chosen a derivative in **-mo-* for the pelasgian name, and the Greek form of the patronymic adjective for the Pelasgian name in order to adopt it at best from a phonic point of view with the Greek ethnic.

4.2. Reconstruction : Reimwortbildungen (example of the god of storm's names)

The alliterations are both those of the radicals and of the derivation morphemes in the case of the last examined example ; this is the case of the renewal which takes the curious form of *Reimwortbildungen* in the different I.E. languages. We will take for example of this the names of the god of storm (one of the most important god for Indo-European speaking men because the absence of storm and rain may bring dryness), from **ter-h₂-*, **per-(k^w/g-)*, **ker-h₂-* (see, for these names, the common etymologic dictionaries with which I sometimes disagree).

Renewal of forms and of metaphors

Two of these roots refer to the "crossing", respectly by "drilling" for **ter-h₂-* (cf. the names of the "auger", etc.), and "clearing" (cf. Lat. *portus*, etc.), for **per...* The first one, attested at the

... Διὸς βέλος, Ar., Av. 1714 ; Zeus κεραυνοβόλος, IG 5/2,37 ; κεραυνεγχής, B 7.48 ; ἐγγεικεραυνός, Pd., O. 13.77, etc. As a name of weapon, κεραυνός is not a metaphor : its root is "to strike", cf. Skr. *śṇāti* "to destroy", κεραῖζω "to fell", etc. (and many forms among which, here, the noun of "coral", § 2.2.6), κοράλλιον, κουράλιον, κωρά(λ)ιον < **korw-l-yo-*, and the noun of "horns", on the models of κέρας and *cornū*, deverbative formation, by *-n-*, from the present with infix ; and it gave names of weapons, like Got. *haírus*, O.Isl. *hjórr*, O.E. *heoru* "sword", Skr. *śáruḥ* "projectile", stems in **-u-*, like the form whose κεραυνός is a derivative with secondary suffix **-no-* : **kerh₂-eu-no-*, with a full double degree, radical and suffixal ; for this latter, **-eu-*, which received its vocalic staining *a* from the laryngeal, cf. Hitt. *karawar* "horn" beside ^{Glš}*karhuwa*, name of plant, Skr. *śaravyā* derivative from *śáru-*, Gr. κεράφος, Lat. *ceruus* < **cerauus*, with syncoped *a*. And it is the name of the (god of storm's) weapon that gave the thunder's one in Greek.

Morphemes of derivation

Those *Reimwortbildungen* (I had never had access to Güentert, 1914) are accompanied by a formations' permanence. They are : in **-u-* (**t₁h₂-u-* > anatol. *tarhu-*, etc. ; **per-u-*, with *-u-* widened by other suffixes, in Skr. *parú-s-*, or in **-w-₁h₂-*, Gr. πεῖραρ, ατος, Skr. *párvata-*, etc. ; **perk^w-u-*, ancient form with a new sense of "oak", the old sense of "lightning" having the more recent form **-u-* + *-h₂-no-* in *Perkūnas* ; **k(e)rh₂-u-* in Skr. *śáruḥ*, Got. *haírus*, etc.) ; with nasal (**-ni-* in Gaul. *Taranis* < **t₁h₂-^oni-* ; Skr. *Parjanya-* < **perg-^oni-o-*, cf., out of the semantic field of storm, Skr. *śaráṇiḥ* "fracture, rupture of obedience" < **k(e)rh₂-^oni-* ; **(e)nt-* in Lyc. *trqqñt-*) ; in **-u-* + *-h₂-no-*, morpheme of appurtenance-determination, with treatment of **-h₂n-* by assimilation or by fall of *h₂* and compensatory lengthening in Het. ^d*IM-unna-* = **Tarhunna-*, Lit. *Perkūnas*, etc. ; and, for **ker-h₂-*, in Gaul. *Cernunnus* "Horned" god, derivative from a name of the "horn", without any functional relation with the god of storm, Κεραυνός, in **-u-* (*-eu-*)*no-*.

Alliterations and Reimwortbildungen

The permanence of these morphemes in the names has got for effect some alliterations which are not the cause of it. On the contrary, these latters played a part in the renewal of **ter-h₂-* in **per...* and **ker-h₂-* : motivated by a renewal of the metaphors dealing with the representation of the god of storm, the formal change is realized by substitution of the radical's initial for the

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