THE ETYMOLOGY OF BOYLOMAI AND OΦΕΙΛΩ

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1. The dialectal forms corresponding to Ionic-Attic βούλομαι show that (1) the word originally had an initial labio-velar, (2) there is a remarkable variation of e- and o-grade 1), (3) in most dialects it originally had a stem-suffix, the exact phonetic nature of which will be discussed in this article. This suffix disappeared, causing the stem-vowel to be lengthened or the λ to be geminated, in the same way as what happened in the phonetic process known as the first compensatory lengthening (CL) 2). A few dialects had no such suffix, and consequently no CL or gemination 3).

1) e-grade in Thessaly, Boeotia, Locris, Phocis, Heraclea (and therefore presumably Laconia), the Doric-speaking islands in the Aegean except Crete, Cyrene, Elis; o-grade in Lesbos, Arcadia, Cyprus, Crete, Pamphylia and the Ionic-Attic territory; no data for Aetolia, Megaris, Corinth, Messenia, Argolis and Achaea.

2) δηλ/-βωλ- in Heraclea, the Doric islands, Elis; δειλ/-βολα- in Locris, Phocis, Pamphylia (?) and Ionic-Attic; βελ/-βολλ- in Thessaly, Lesbos; βειλ- in Boeotia, where, unfortunately, none of the attestations dates from before the 'Boeotian spelling reform', by which every long e was written ει. Still more unfortunately, Aristophanes' Theban (Acharn. 860-954), when saying "if you wish", suddenly disavows his native tongue and turns Athenian: ειτι βουλαε (870). There is one suspect case of τη βηλομενη (dat. sing. fem.) in an inscription from Tanagra (E. Schwyzer, Dialectorum Graecarum exempla epigraphica potiora, Leipzig 1923, nr. 462, 18; cf. M. Buttenwieser, IF 28 (1911), 31 f., 80). The -η- of the stem is probably due to Koiné-influence: the same inscription hesitates between η and ετ (for Att. η), φηνητη and φηνετη (for Att. φαινηται). Since o-grade derivations of the stem show ω (e.g. προβολεμένων, Ευβολω (dat.), Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 461, 7 and 526, 3), it is probable that before the phonetic change [ε:] > [ei:] (or [ei]) took place in Boeotian, the verb had a long, open e, [ε:]. For βολ- in Thessalian, cf. Appendix A.

3) βόλομαι, used in Arcadia, Cyprus, Oropus, Eretria. Thasian βόληι (subj., Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 777 A2) should rather be taken as βάληι. A Pamphylian inscription (Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 686) has ξολάστο (Att. ξολεύστο) and ο βολεμενος (Att. ο βουλόμενος). Schwyzer prints ξολ-, but βολε-, as if from βόλομαι, which is of course mere conjecture.
This shows that before the phonetic laws of CL/gemination and labio-velar > labial/dental operated, there were three alternative forms of this verb in Greek: *γʷόλΧομαι, *γʷέλΧομαι, *γʷόλομαι, ‘X’ standing for an unknown consonant.

δφέλω apparently had the same sort of (if not the same) stem-suffix, but this suffix is present everywhere ⁴). We can therefore postulate *δφέλΧω as ancestor of all forms ⁵). There are, however, traces of an older *δφέλω.

2. It is rather difficult to connect either of the verbs under discussion with words in other IE languages. δφέλω will probably derive from *h3bhel-, but good parallels are scanty ⁶). βόλομαι,

⁴) We find δφηλ- in Crete; δφελ- in Boeotia (after the spelling reform), Aetolia, Phocis, Epidaurus, Ionic-Attic and the poet Epicharmus (fr. 111 Kaibel), who may be taken to represent the dialect of his metropolis Corinth; also, surprisingly, in the Doric-speaking islands (Crete excepted); δφελα- in Lesbian; on the juxtaposition of δφελα-, δφηλ-, δφελλ- in Arcadian, cf. Appendix B. No data for Thessaly, Cyprus, Locris, Megaris, Laconia, Elis, Achaea, Pamphylia.

Theraean δφελεσθαι (Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 227 B31) as against δηλομένα (Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 228, 4) is to be explained as an orthographic whim: the inscription (the ‘Testament of Epicteta’, end 3rd century) shows an arbitrary wavering between η and ι even for PIE long e (ποτὲ ινον, subj. δφηλεσται etc.). It is clear that these forms prove that a general phonetic change [e:] > [e:] is on its way in Hellenistic time in Thera, but they do not disprove that long e resulting from the first CL was originally [e:] (cf. A. Thumb-E. Kieckers, Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte, I, Heidelberg 1932 ², 174). The situation in Cos, Cnidus, Calymna and Rhodes is slightly different inasmuch as PIE long e continues to be written η, long e resulting from the first CL is written η at first, ι later (cf. Thumb-Kieckers, o.c., 187; 197). Therefore, long e generated by CL cannot have been [e:]. On the other hand it is distinguished from long e generated by vowel-contraction, which is hardly ever written η (cf. Thumb-Kieckers, o.c., 188, 197). An explanation of these facts would carry us too far.

⁵) Arcadian Φφλ- is an example of spurious digamma, as is shown by lin.-B o-pe-ro-sti, δφῆλονσι; the explanation of F- as remnant of a prefix (cf. H. Frisk, Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg 1960-1972, s.v. δφῆλον; M. Lejeune, Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien, Paris 1972, 175 n. 3) looks rather improbable to me, because its sense is completely identical to that of δφέλω (cf. Schwyzer, o.c., nr. 661, 1 with 654, 4).