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αῦος/αὔος, αὔω/αὔω and εὔω

Etymological dictionaries usually give three different etymologies for αῦος/αὔος, αὔω/αὔω and εὔω. The first term would derive from \**sausos* "dry" in Lith. *saūsas*, O.Sl. *suchŭ*, O.I. *śōṣa-*, etc. (cf. forms with \**sus-* as O.I. *śūṣyati*); the second is compared with Lat. *haurio*, O.Nor. *ausa* "to draw water"; and the verb εὔω is universally acknowledged as derived from \**euso* "to burn", just like O.I. *ōṣati*, Lat. *ūro*.

As against this general thesis, I believe it highly plausible that all these words really have a common etymology related to the idea of "fire", "to pick up fire". In fact, I believe that the root witnessed in εὔω that derives from IE \**eusō* is the same as that to be found in the other two words.

Really, the two etymologies of the first two words are phonetically possible in themselves, although that of αῦος/αὔος still poses certain problems. Yet as the semantics of all these words is originally the same and as one may always start with the root of εὔω, phonetically speaking, I believe that the simplest explanation should prevail over the more complex one: one and the same root corresponds to one and the same semantics.

As I said above, there are a few phonetic problems for the first etymology as it is commonly given (for example, in the etymological dictionaries of Frisk and Chantraine). They are not the chief difficulty, but should nevertheless be pointed out.

It is, as I said before, a question of αῦος/αὔος. The truth is that an Indo-European \**sausos* is not to be witnessed and is only established through comparison with the Greek word, that is, by means of a vicious circle: \**sōusos* or \**sousós*<sup>1</sup> is more plausible. Above all, it is difficult to explain the alternance between forms with and without *spiritus asper*, these being more frequent. What LSJ says and, along with him the etymological dictionaries, is not true: that there is a *spiritus asper* in Attic. I find it in the mss, in Ar. *Eq* 534; elsewhere as Alex. 158 and Call. *SHell*. 288.52, it is a question of editorial corrections. But there are traces of the *spiritus asper*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kiparsky in *Language* 43, 1967, p. 627.

in compound verbs such as ἀφραυαίνω, καθραυαίνω, not to mention αἶω (which Frisk relates to this adjective, whilst he separates αἶω).

Obviously, it may be thought<sup>2</sup> that the form with psilosis is Æolic, widespread as from Homer; Kiparski attributes the accent specifically to Lesbian. It may also be thought to be Ionic, for the word is in Hdt. and Hp., although in this case nothing could be said about the accent (which is not at all anomalous, on the other hand). Yet the word has a more general usage, it is found, for example, in the Comic dramatists with and without the *spiritus asper*. In fact, a vacillation was introduced with regard to the *spiritus*, no more nor less than in αἶω/αἴω, which we shall discuss later. And this is not usual in words that come from roots with an initial *s-*. On the other hand, in a series of words that etymologically begin with *au-* or *u-* (as is acknowledged is the case for αἶω) this fluctuation is indeed frequent.<sup>3</sup> This is just one more reason for doubts to arise as to the lack of a relationship between αῖος/αἶος and αἶω/αἴω (I have already said that Frisk gives a different etymology to these last two forms).

But let us return to the main point. This is that the semantics of the three words we are concerned with is the same.

If εἶω is "to burn", the oldest use of αῖος/αἶος means, within the concept of "dry", that it is a question of inflammable material that burns easily: it is something like "easy to set fire to, that burns easily" (cf. in O.I. *uštá* alongside *šyati*, in Lat. *ustus* alongside *ūro*). This is the first entry in our DGE: I 1 *seco* ref. easy-burning ξύλον *Il.* 23.327, δένδρεα *Od.* 5.240, ὕλη *Pl. Lg.* 761 b, δένδ[ρ]εον *Call. SHell.* 288.52, *Paus.* 7.18.11. Of course, in Homer himself the meaning "dry" already appears when speaking of well-tanned hides; this is an obviously secondary use. The most frequent references are still to wood and vegetables in general.

This is far clearer as far as the verb αἶω is concerned, it is unrealistic to separate it from αἴω (in *Hdn. Gr.* 2.133 αἶω· ζηραίνω cf. also ἀφραύω *Ar. Eq.* 394 but καταύω *Alcm.* 31 *PMG.*). Here, both Frisk and Chantraine note that the reference to fire is normal: the verb means "to start burning", "to light up" as from its first appearance in *Od.* 5.490. A series of words such as ἐξαστήρ, πύραυνος and πυραύστρα (cf. *Myc. purantoro*, in the dual) mean tongs for "picking up fire". The πυραύστης, a kind of butterfly, has been interpreted as the "one who picks up fire",<sup>4</sup> and the verbs ἐναύω, ἐξάύω habitually mean "to pick up fire". It is clear that "to pick up fire" from a brand or torch that were kept for this purpose is a usage

<sup>2</sup> With Burger, *REIE* 1, 1939, p. 451 and Kiparski, l.c.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my *Estudios sobre las sonantes y laringales indoeuropeas*, Madrid 1973, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. E. K. Borthwick, "The verb αἶω and its compounds," *CQ* 63, 1969, p. 312.

derived from "to set fire to", a meaning that on the other hand is at times preserved: really, the translation is often ambiguous (thus in Arat. 1036) and Hsch. and the Scholists habitually translate the forms of αὔω as "to burn".

Why, then, should one separate αὔος/αὔος from αὔω/αὔω if one also adds that both words took an *-s-* after the *u-* in exactly the same way as εὔω? Αὔστηρός, αὔσταλέος are quoted in relation to αὔος; ἐξαυστήρ, πυραύστης, in relation to αὔω, etc. I would stress that this is a case of one and the same root. Cf. also in Hsch. αὔσόν· ξηρόν, with preservation of the *-s-* which is certainly analogical.

The reason for saying that "wahrscheinlich, die Beziehung auf das Feuer sekundär ist" (Frisk), that "l'emploi de αὔω à propos du feu que l'on prend est ancien en grec, mais accidentel" (Chantraine), is the desire to maintain the relationship with Lat. *haurio*, O. Nor. *ausa* which is "to take out" (water, etc.). An article by F. K. Borthwick on αὔω that I have quoted before (l. c., pp. 306-313) meticulously scrutinises the use of this verb in an attempt to deduce the meaning "to take out fire" from an older one "to take out". Yet, apart from an ἐξαὔσαι ἐξελείν by Hsch. that shows nothing, all that he finds are a few derived or figurative uses, such as when in Plu. *Cim.* 10 there is mention of ὑδάτων τε πηγῶν καὶ πυρὸς ἔναυσιν, or when an epigramme by Nossis (A. P. 7.718.2) mentions τᾶν Σαυροῦς χαρίτων ἄνθος ἔναυσόμενος.

Borthwick is at least explicit. He accepts the possibility that all the passages that he quotes could be translated as "draw fire" (his above-mentioned exception from Aratus is not an exception). He moreover begins his article by giving his starting-point: West's interpretation of αὔω as "to take by scooping, to draw" on the explicit basis of its common etymology with Lat. *haurire*. Time and again, an etymological prejudice is the cause of the facts being ignored.

The truth is that, if one wishes to maintain this connection, one has to start backwards: one has to accept that, as from "pick up fire", the verb then passed into Latin and Norse to mean "to take", as in certain secondary examples from Greek. After all, a few examples are preserved in which *haurio* is used in Latin when speaking of fire.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore impossible to separate αὔω/αὔω from αὔος/αὔος. Both meaning and form coincide. On the other hand, the meaning is indeed close to that of εὔω and one should research whether the etymology is also connected with the well known and by no means doubtful etymology of this verb. This is the subject we shall discuss below.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Borthwick, art. cit. p. 309, n. 5.

We have, therefore, on the one hand εῦσ-, and αῦσ- on the other, with the same meaning of "to burn, to pick up fire". The relationship seems clear: εῦσ- is a full degree, αῦσ- a zero degree with a prothetic vowel. Quite probably, we are faced with one and the same root.

The long series of roots with similar treatments, beginning with the group *H<sub>u</sub>-*, may be compared: I refer to my *Estudios* ... mentioned above, p. 110 ff. In these roots, both in the full degree (P) and in the ∅ degree, we occasionally find a prothetic *a-*, derived from the development of <sup>o</sup>*H* (laryngeal with implosive pronunciation that closes the syllable). Alongside Hitt. *hues* "to live", there is P.Gr. ἐστία, O.I. *vásati*, etc., but also Gr. ἄεσα; and ∅ Gr. αὐλή, (with reduplication). Or we could quote from other roots, Gr. ἄελλα (P) together with αῦρα (∅); Hitt. *huhhas* "grandfather", Lat. *avus* (both ∅ with and without prothesis); Hitt. *mes-* "to dress", Gr. ἔννυμι, Lat. *vestis* (P), alongside Lith. *aunu* "to put one's shoes on". In our book and in the relevant bibliography, many more examples may be found.

This explanation may be useful to understand the difference between the regular *spiritus asper* in εῦω and the vacillating one in αῶος/αῶος, αῦω/αῦω. It is well known that the *spiritus* of εῦω comes from the aspiration derived from the intervocalic *-s-*, which is taken to the beginning of the word: *\*Heuso* > *\*enho* > εῦω. On the other hand, the forms with *au-* in ∅ degrees of diverse languages (derived from <sup>o</sup>*H<sub>u</sub>-*) only very irregularly take an aspiration derived from the laryngeal: there is one in Arm. *haw* "grandfather", Lat. *haurio* (if it comes from our root) and one should also recall sporadic aspirations in the full degree (Gr. ἐστία quoted above).

Really, αὐ- is habitual in Greek and not αῦ-. Of course in our case one could postulate that *\*aus-V* should give *\*auh-V* > *\*hau-V*. But it occurs that even in parallel roots with intervocalic *-s-* we have *au-* without the *spiritus asper*. Thus in λαῶω quoted above, from *\*Hij<sup>o</sup>Hsō*; and in αἰῶω < ἄϊῶω (cf. αἰσθάνομαι). It is not easy to explain the phenomenon why the intervocalic *-h-* aspiration is regularly transferred before initial *e-* and not before *a-*; it is however thus. It is so to the point that I suspect that the rare and anomalous aspiration of αῶος, αῦω, αὐαίνω may be analogical precisely with εῦω.

The only small problem lies in the fact that the forms of the ∅ degree with *au-* usually come from roots that begin with *H<sub>u</sub>-*, whilst here we have *Hens*. Yet obviously, *\*Hmes* "to live" and *\*Heus* "to burn" are two different roots that nevertheless coincide in the ∅ degree, and of course, in the form of same with prothetic vowel (*aus-*). Roots with a similar organization, that is, ending in resonant plus another phoneme and able to take a

full degree *e* (or *o*) before both phonemes, are frequent.<sup>6</sup> Let us for example quote the root of "wind" \**H<sub>2</sub>enII<sup>h</sup>* with full degree in the first syllable (Gr. *ἄνεμος*, Welsh *anadl* "breath", but also with  $\emptyset/\emptyset$ , O. H. G. *unst* "storm"). Or that of "to plough" \**H<sub>2</sub>erH<sup>h</sup>* with  $\emptyset/P$  (with prothesis) in Lat. *arātrum* and  $P/\emptyset$  in Lith. *árklas* "plough".

In fact, I think that my explanation is simpler than others given and that it fits in with a series of well-known phonetic facts. In any case, those who attempt to carry on treating our three words as belonging to three different roots will from now on have to give more positive arguments and discard the previous aprioristic and atomistic treatment that the subject has been given so far.

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<sup>6</sup> For the general theory, cf. my article "Further considerations on the phonetics and morphologizations of *III<sup>i</sup>* and *H<sup>h</sup>* in Indoeuropean" *Emerita* 49, 1981, pp. 231-271 (above all p. 244 ff.).