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## **The Mycenaean and the historical Greek comparative and their Indo-European background**

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THE MYCENAEAN AND THE HISTORICAL GREEK COMPARATIVE  
AND  
THEIR INDO-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

The Mycenaean evidence often reveals more archaic forms than those in use in historical times from Homer onward. In the field of phonology, a welcome surprise was the discovery that the labiovelars still existed as an independent set. In morphology, the perfect participle active shows that Greek inherited a paradigm, in which the *-τ-* of the Classical paradigm is still absent. I have discussed this problem elsewhere. Today, I should like to investigate another formation which holds equal surprises for the linguist. I mean the comparative forms of adjectives.

In historical Greek an *-n-* stem type, formed with *-ιον-*, is found as a less frequent and clearly archaic variant beside the more frequent and living formation with *-τερος*. The comparative of *μέγας* is *μέζων* (Att. *μεζων*), *κακός* forms *κακίων* etc. But, beside the normal *-n-* stem inflection *μείζων*, *μείζονα*, *μείζονος*, *μείζονι*, plur. *μείζονες*, *μείζονας*, *μείζονων*, *μείζοσι*, etc., the archaic type also has some defective forms: *μείζω* is found as the acc. sg. m.f. and nom-acc. pl. ntr., and *μείζους* is used as the nom-acc. pl. m. f.

The historical method cannot account for these peculiar features of the comparative. In fact, this is one of the clearest cases where, without the help of the comparative method, we would know nothing about the nature and background of the Greek comparative. But a comparison of the Latin and Aryan formations throws bright light on the defective type. The Latin comparative suffix m. f. *\*-iōs/ntr. \*-ios*, and Sanskrit *\*-yās/-yas* guarantee an Indo-European suffix *-yōs/-yos*, and it is clear that Greek *-ω* represents *-o(σ)-a*, and *-ους* is derived from *-o(σ)-εσ*. The *y* of the Indo-European suffix *-yōs* also explains the changes in the root-final consonant seen in *μέζων*, from *\*meg-yo-*, *θᾶσσον* from *\*thakh-yo-* etc.

Since comparison is so eminently successful in explaining the defective cases and the changes in the root, it is easy to understand that an explanation of the normal comparative suffix *-ιον-* should also have been sought from that quarter. Now the Germanic languages do present something very similar to the Greek formation. There a comparative suffix *-izan-* is used. E.g.:

Gothic <i>manags</i>	"many"	comp. m. nom. <i>manag-iza</i> , gen. <i>manag-izin-s</i> etc.
<i>fawai</i>	"few"	<i>fawiza</i>
<i>juggs</i>	"young"	<i>juhiza</i>
<i>hardus</i>	"hard"	<i>hardiza</i> .

Since *-iza/-izin-* must be traced to an earlier *-isōn/-isen-*, it seems reasonable to take *-is-* as the nil-grade form of the Indo-European comparative suffix *-yos-*, which thus

appears with an additional suffix *-en/-on-* in the Germanic comparative. On the other hand, such Greek comparatives as *ἡδίων, κάλλιον, βελτίον*, are also traceable to *-ison*, and Thurneysen drew the conclusion that the Germanic and Greek type represented an Indo-European variant of the simpler *-yos*.<sup>1</sup>

This doctrine is generally accepted today.<sup>2</sup> The new Mycenaean evidence is, however, sufficient to disprove it — once again a case where Mycenaean is of the greatest importance for the reconstruction of Indo-European.

The comparatives of “large”, “big” and “small” are well-known from three groups of tablets. First, they are used to qualify boys and girls in the Ak-tablets of Knossos (509, 610 etc.), typical phrases and spellings being:

612	<i>kowa mezo</i> 1 1 bigger (older) girl,	<i>kowa meujo</i> 1 1 smaller (younger) girl,	<i>kowo mezo</i> 1 1 older boy,
5741	<i>kowa mezo</i> 1	<i>kowo mezoe</i> 2	
636	<i>kowa mezo</i> 1	<i>kowo meujoe</i> 3	
611	<i>kowa mezoe</i> 4	<i>kowo mewijo</i> 1	
615	<i>kowa mezoe</i> 6	<i>kowo mezoe</i> 2	
621	<i>kowa mezoe</i> 4	<i>kowo mezoe</i> 6	
824	<i>kowa mezoe</i> 5	<i>kowa mewijoe</i> 15	<i>kowo mewijoe</i> 4
613	<i>kowa meujoe</i> 9		
782—3	<i>mewijoe</i> 2	<i>mewijoe</i> 14	

Secondly, the famous tripod-tablet, PY Ta 641, uses these adjectives to distinguish various types of *dipa* (in form, if not in meaning, Hom. *δέπας*). We have

<i>dipa mezo</i> [e] <sup>3</sup>	<i>getorowe</i> 1
<i>dipae mezoe tiriowee</i>	2
<i>dipa mewijo</i> . . .	1

A third group of tablets, from Pylos (Sh 733—744, with the exception of 736), describes parts of the corslet, called *opawota* (ntr. pl., “plates”?), as *mezoa*<sub>2</sub> and *meujoa*<sub>2</sub>.

These data then supply the sg. nom. m. f. ntr. *mezo*; du. nom. m. ntr. *mezoe*; pl. nom. m. f. *mezoe*; pl. nom. ntr. *mezoa*<sub>2</sub>; and sg. nom. m. f. ntr. *meujo*/*mewijo*; du. nom. m. f. *meujoe*; pl. nom. m. f. *mewjoe*/*mewjoe*; pl. nom. ntr. *mewjoa*<sub>2</sub>.

The Knossos-tablets further supply the forms *aro<sub>2</sub>a* (ntr. pl.) and *aro<sub>2</sub>e* (fem. pl. ?), applied to textiles (KN Ld 571 etc.; L 735) and wheels (KN So 4430). Since the spelling indicates *ἀρίον, ἀρίονες*, it is tempting to interpret them with Ventris (Documents s.v.) as “better” or “of better quality, class”, somehow connected with *ἀρίων*.<sup>4</sup> Particular importance attaches, in my view, to KN So 4437, where we read

*AMOTA pterewa aro<sub>2</sub>jo temidwete ROTA ZE 5*

translated by Ventris as “wheels of elm-wood, of better class, with tyres” (Documents

<sup>1</sup> R. Thurneysen, *KZ* 33 [1895], 551 f., esp. 554.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Brugmann, *Grundriss*<sup>2</sup> II 1, 550; Brugmann-Thumb, *Griechische Grammatik*<sup>4</sup>, 1913, 245; Chantraine, *Formation* 437, *Morphologie*<sup>2</sup> 103 f.; Schwyzler I 536 f. (does not sound quite convinced); Streitberg, *Urgermanische Grammatik*, 1896, 212; Krause, *Handbuch des Gotischen*, 1953, 173.

<sup>3</sup> The scribe’s mistake for *mezo*, defended by Gallavotti-Sacconi, *Inscriptiones Pyliae*, 1961, 119.

<sup>4</sup> In spite of theories, it is quite possible that the original form *ἀρίων*, now revealed by the tablets, was refashioned by the bards to *ἀρίων* after *ῥερίων* etc. Cf. Lejeune, *RPh* 84 (1958), 209, and *Mémoires de philologie mycénienne*, 1958, 280 f., with a different, but to my mind improbable, explanation of *aro<sub>2</sub>jo*; cp., however, *BSL* 54/2 [1959], 91: *αργος, αργος* < *ἀρ-ιστος*, later *ἀρίων*.

372). He took *aro<sub>2</sub>jo* to be a dual form, that is misspelt for *aro<sub>2</sub>e*. But if we accept the form *aro<sub>2</sub>jo* as it stands, it is possible to interpret it as *ἀρλοος*, with the frequent spelling *jo* for *o*. This would be a genitive agreeing with *pterewa*, "of better quality elm-wood", not with wheels, and would be an important addition to our knowledge of Mycenaean morphology.

The 1957 Pylos tablets, so promptly published by Miss M. Lang, brought a fourth comparative. Tablet Va 1323 reads: *akosone kazoe 32*, which, as Miss Lang stated, means: *ἄξονες κακίους* "axles of inferior quality" or "damaged axles".<sup>5</sup>

As can be seen, the Mycenaean paradigm shows no trace of the historical *-n-* suffix. It remains, of course, possible to argue that, since the Mycenaean cases attested so far are identical with the defective cases, perhaps the other cases did show the *-n-* suffix even in the Mycenaean paradigm. This argument would be effectively answered if our interpretation of *aro<sub>2</sub>jo* were confirmed by new tablets. But even on the evidence available at the present time we must emphasize that those who accept an Indo-European suffix *-ison-* have never envisaged it as a defective paradigm, forming a suppletive system with *-yos-*. On the contrary, they always imply that *-ison-* supplied the full living paradigm, while *-yos-* led a "defective", though tenacious, existence in the case-forms specified above. And if the *-ison-* type were inherited from Indo-European, it would be strange indeed if it had been confined to one sector of the paradigm only. On the strength of the Mycenaean evidence we must now take the next step and deny the existence of a variant *-ison-* in Indo-European times.

As in the case of the perfect participle, our conclusion again poses two questions. First, how is the alleged suffix *-ison-* to be explained? Secondly, how is the change in Greek from the *-s-* stem to the *-n-* stem-inflection to be accounted for?

We have already seen that the case for the assumption of an Indo-European comparative suffix *-ison-* essentially rests on the Germanic evidence, and there the existence of this suffix is undeniable. But it is also a fact that in the Germanic languages the new suffix completely ousted the old suffix *-yos-*. Furthermore, the Germanic adjective generally developed a system of "weak", that is *-n-* stem, inflection which is used, according to certain syntactic rules, side by side with the "strong" forms. Apart from a number of specific cases, all adjectives have, in the positive, both weak and strong forms, and the same is true of the superlative. If the comparative fails to conform to this pattern, the explanation must be sought in certain defects of the strong inflection as inherited from Indo-European. Now it is clear that the comparative, like any other consonant-stem class, preserved the original ablaut variations within the paradigm. Thus, for instance, in the singular masc. we would have from

IE m. nom.	<i>-yōs</i> ,	acc.	<i>-yos-ŋ</i> ,	gen.	<i>-yes-os</i> ,	dat. (loc.)	<i>-yes-i</i>
Gothic	<i>-jōs</i>		<i>-jas</i>		<i>-jis(s)</i>		<i>-jis</i> ,

that is a very peculiar and certainly intolerable paradigm. Even levelling of the suffix to *-jōs-* would not remedy this difficult situation. In these circumstances it is understandable that the speakers should have opted for the exclusive use of the weak and clear type in the comparative.

A similar type of *-n-* extension is also found in Lithuanian as a living formation. The regular comparative has the ending *-esnis* (nom. m. sg.) which, as is shown by the

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. Lang, *AJA* 62 [1958], 191. The figure 32 (instead of 33) is Chadwick's reading, now accepted by Miss Lang. On the reading *kakioes* see also Chadwick, *JHS* 79 [1959], 190; Lejeune, *Mémoires* 340; Heubeck, *Glotta* 39 [1961], 166, 168.

cognate languages, derives from an earlier *-yes-*. The type therefore shows a combination of the inherited comparative suffix with a nasal enlargement (originally *-en-*) and a final element which is probably the pronoun used in the definite inflection of adjectives.<sup>6</sup> There is no trace of the *-n*-enlargement in Slavic and this suggests that the Baltic formation came into being under the influence of Germanic. But the old-type comparative, without the nasal enlargement, still survives in Lithuanian in the superlative: *ger-iaūs-ias* (*ger-iaūs-is*) "best", with the Indo-European suffix *-yōs-*, replaced the old superlative in *-istos*.<sup>7</sup>

We find then that the alleged external evidence is irrelevant. Now that the Greek evidence has disappeared from the Indo-European horizon, we must dismiss as unfounded the various recent theories operating with the conflation of *-s-* and *-n-* stems in Indo-European times.<sup>8</sup>

Returning to Greek, we should note that the theory of external connections was denied, even before the decipherment, by H. J. Seiler in his valuable dissertation on gradation in Greek.<sup>9</sup> Naturally, he was also aware of the problems arising out of this conclusion. The main question is, of course, as has been pointed out above, the emergence of the *-n*-inflection in post-Mycenaean times. Seiler thought (o.c., 12 f.) that the original *-s*-inflection was particularly well-established and long-lived in the neuter plural (*πλείω, ἐλάσσω* etc.) and therefore suggested that the innovation started in the neuter singular where the original *-(y)os* was in due course replaced by *-ov* (p. 14), because the latter was felt to be better suited as an adjectival ending than *-os*. This, as he saw, still leaves the question open as to what the model of the innovation was. He could only think of adjectives that, originally positive (e.g. *ἀμείνων — ἀμεινων*), came to be used as comparatives.

It seems to me that, although this approach is essentially correct, the point of departure is too narrow. There is no reason why we should assume that the neuter plural is any more frequent, and therefore better innervated, than (some of) the other caseforms, since we can see from Classical usage that the original forms in *-ω* (acc. sg. m. f.) and *-ους* survive just as tenaciously. We should rather emphasize the fact that in most comparatives of this type the formative element was very much obscured by the regular phonetic developments from consonant plus yod. A glance

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., J. Endzelynas, *Baltų kalbų garsai ir formos*, Vilnius 1957, 137 f.; J. Otrębski, *Gramatyka języka litewskiego* III, 1956, 127 f. A. Vaillant (*BSL* 51 [1956], XXII; *Grammaire comparée* II, 1958, 564 f.) starts from the neuter *-jas* (IE *-yos*) but forms like *tuštėnis*, in contrast to *tūštias* from *-t-jas*, make it very doubtful, if not impossible, to start from *-t-jasnis* instead of *-t-jesnis*.

<sup>7</sup> See Vaillant, l.c., XXI-XXIII, who, phonetically satisfactorily, derives *-iaūs-* from *-ē-yōs-*. I myself had thought of explaining *-iaūs-* as a blend between the alternating forms *-jas-* and *-jōs-* (developing into *-jaus?*), see *Kretschmer-Gedenkschrift* II, 1958, 171 fn. 38. It is disheartening to see that Solmsen's lighthearted suggestion, thrown out in a review (*IFA* 15 [1904], 225 f.) and never elaborated, should still be favoured by some scholars (see, e.g., Endzelynas, l.c., and others mentioned by me, l.c.). But the suffix *-εύς* is a Greek innovation and cannot provide an Indo-European basis *-ēus* for the Lithuanian superlative, even if one ignored the semantic difficulties.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Friš, *Archiv Orientalní* 21 [1953], 113, paralleling *-lav* with Av. *šrayan-*; Otrębski, *Lingua Posnaniensis* 3 [1951], 297; A. Erhart, *Archiv Orientalní* 24 [1956], 441 (*s/n* heteroclisy).

<sup>9</sup> *Die primären griechischen Steigerungsformen*, Diss. Zürich, 1950. The significance of the new Mycenaean data is shown by the fact that, although Seiler is strongly against the external connection, yet the traditional view is sufficiently impressive for him to admit (p. 20) that the *-n*-enlargement existed since Indo-European times. Now we see that the only area where *-yos-* was enlarged, was Germanic (Lithuanian being merely an „Ausstrahlungsgebiet“), and there the innovation presupposes the full functioning of the weak adjectives in the positive. But no one would assert that this, too, is of Indo-European date.

at such forms as<sup>10</sup> μέζως \*κάλλως πάσσως θάσσως βράσσως κρέσσως is sufficient to show that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the suffix of the comparative was reduced to -ως/-ος, a type that was altogether foreign to the adjectival system. Although we now know that the perfect participle also had this peculiarity, there was a wide gap between the two types in that the latter was not comparative in meaning, and, from the formal point of view, its suffix was the clear morpheme *ῥως*, added to the stem without any alteration, and the feminine had a distinct form. Thus the only comparable formation that existed in the linguistic system was provided by the not very large group of words in -ως in the masculine and feminine, and the sizeable group of neuter words in -ος. But these words were all nouns and thus the "ties" were rather more irritating than helpful. The -s-stem adjectives in -ής/-ές suffered from a disability imposed by their differing vocalism.

There can be no doubt therefore that the position of the comparatives in -ως/-ος called for a better adjustment to the synchronous system. But it is worth noting that even the nouns were not quite without such alternations, nor quite immune to similar pressures. Thus, for instance, αἰών, although a normal -n-stem in Classical times, has certain forms that suggest an earlier -s-stem. The acc. αἰῶ (Aesch. Choeph. 350) and the adverb αἰές are generally regarded as based on \*αιῖός-a and \*αιῖες (locative without ending, paralleled by αἰέν from \*αιῖέν, the same case from αἰῖών).<sup>11</sup> The acc. of the word κνκεών appears in Homer as κνκειῶ (A 624, 641) or κνκεῶ (K 290, 326; Hymn. Cer. 210). The noun εἰκών has a frequent acc. εἰκῶ (e.g. Aesch. Septem 559; Hdt. 7, 69; Plt. Tim. 37 d), and even a gen. sg. εἰκοῦς (Eur. Hel. 77) and acc. pl. εἰκοῦς (Aristoph. Nub. 559; Eur. Troad. 1178). In the last case in particular an original -s-stem \*ῥεικῶς would seem to be quite in order. But even if we do not believe that all such forms are the relics of earlier -s-stems<sup>12</sup>, they do reveal a close connection between -n-stems and -s-stems in the nominal inflection, and this is borne out by such well-known forms as Ἀπόλλω, Ποσειδῶ etc. The close links between the two inflections would be easier to understand if there existed certain inherited variations. Thus, for instance, if \*αιῖος- and \*αιῖων- were both inherited, the complicated inflection of \*αιῖός might, in the majority of case-forms, have given way to the perspicuous pattern of αἰών. But we can hardly pin-point any such doublets with any confidence.

These considerations make it clear that the reduced vitality of the animate -s-stems in Greek — contrast for instance the proliferation of nouns of the type *honus labos arbos* in Latin — is due to the fact that, their inflection being impaired by normal phonetic developments, they were largely transferred to the -t-stems or -n-stems. The choice of the new inflection was obviously determined by the particular connections in the semantic field that the individual words, or groups of words, had established. The perfect participle "decided" for the -t-inflection because the present participle exercised a certain pull in that direction. The

<sup>10</sup> See Seiler's list, p. 126.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Schwyzler I 514; Chantraine, *Morphologie*<sup>3</sup> 63.72.

<sup>12</sup> I must confess that the proliferation of such varied formations as \*āyu-, \*āyus-, \*aiwo-, \*aiwi-, \*aiwos-, \*aiwon-, all of Indo-European date, strikes me as very unlikely for any synchronous state. Aryan certainly has \*āyu-, and Latin-Germanic \*aiwo-; but Skt. āyus- can be secondary (as is certainly āyu-ns), cp. *manu-* and *manus-* where Gmc. *mann-* guarantees the Indo-European date of the former. Gk. αἰεί could be the loc. of \*αιῖόν = *aeuom* (cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Ai. Gr.* II 2, 478), and αἰέν αἰές may be transformed from this, instead of representing \*αιῖέν and \*αιῖές, very dubious locatives without -i; contrast πέρσι!

comparative, we must infer, changed to the *-n*-inflection because of models that exerted a more powerful attraction than any alternative group.

Now in the Greek system of adjectives, *-n*-stems always figured in large numbers. And here a point of contact with the *-s*-stems was given in the dat. plur., after the *-n*-stem dat. *-ασι* from *-η-σι* was refashioned to *-οσι*, since this now coincided with *-οσι* from *-οσ-σι* in the *-s*-stems<sup>13</sup>; note, e.g., *πίων/πίοσι*, *πέπων/πέποσι*, *-φρων/-φροσι*. If the type *γλύκων* was more wide-spread, \**γλύκσως* could easily yield to an analogical *γλύκωνων*. This would mean that it was first in the gen. pl. that the analogy worked: after the type *-οσι/-ωνων* the comparative innovated *μέζοσι* → *μεζόνων*. From the plural, the innovation spread to the singular: *μέζονι* *μέζονος* replaced the opaque *μέζοι μέζοος*.

Another point of contact seems to have been provided by certain positive adjectives that, because of their meaning, became comparatives. Seiler has referred to *ἀμείνων-ἄμεινον* as one such possible case (o.c., 14). But this model seems to disappear when he later gives as his preference derivation from *ἀμείνων* (p. 120). Since, however, neither privative compounds with comparatives are known in Greek<sup>14</sup>, nor is it acceptable now that \**μείνων* was the comparative of \**μινός* 'small', this interpretation will hardly fit the facts, so that *ἄμεινον* as a positive *-n*-stem may still be allowed as a possible model<sup>15</sup>. Particularly strong is the case for *ἄρειον* as a positive neuter, in the sense that the comparative *ἀριώως-ἄριος* and the adjective *ἄρειος-ἄρειον* 'helpful' (from *ἄρος-ὄφελος*<sup>16</sup>) stood side by side and so *ἄρειον* could change *ἄριος* to *ἄρειον*, whereafter *ἀριώως* became *ἀρειών*<sup>17</sup>. The formation makes it advisable to regard *λῶλων* as presenting the refashioned form of a positive *λῶιος*<sup>18</sup>, and Hom. *χέρειον* may also be a positive neuter<sup>19</sup>, cf. *χέρεια* Ξ 382.

<sup>13</sup> This important "link" was noticed by Seiler, o. c., 12. It would be important to know the date at which the identity arose. From the phonetic point of view we can state that *-οσοι* would not have been reduced to *-οσι* in Mycenaean times. But the morphological pattern (*-oes/-o-as/-o-on/-o-si*) could have produced the result earlier. In the *-n*-stems, too, the date of the change from *-ασι* to *-οσι* is (as yet) unknown.

<sup>14</sup> Hesychius' *ἀφέρτεροι ἥσσονες* (Hesychii Alex. Lexicon, ed. K. Latte, I, 1953, 291), contrasting with *ἀφερτέρους ταχύτερους* and *ἀφάρτερος ταχύτερος*, must be due to a late misinterpretation (by poets or grammarians) of Ψ 311, facilitated by the existence of Hom. *φέρτερος φέριστος*. It is certainly hazardous to use it as genuine evidence of a negative comparative (bahuvrihi according to H. Frisk. *Über den Gebrauch des Privativpräfixes im idg. Adjektiv*, Göteborg Högskolas Årsskrift 47/11 [1941], 17). The well-attested *ἀβέλτερος* is hardly a comparative connected with *βελτιων*.

<sup>15</sup> That itself may be from an *-o*-stem and, since the diphthong *-ei-* is rather dubious (Seiler 120), an original \**ames-no* "strong" (cf. Skt. *ama-* etc.) seems possible.

<sup>16</sup> On this see Seiler 118 f.; Gallavotti, *Rivista di Filologia Classica* 35 [1957], 225 f.

<sup>17</sup> If, as I believe, there was a comparative \**χρῆλως* (= Skt. *hrasīyas-*), from which Hom. *χρῆλων* and *χῆρων* are in some way transformed, then this produced \**ἀρῆλως* etc.

<sup>18</sup> Schwyzer I 539 with fn. 5; Chantraine, *Gram. hom.* I 255<sup>2</sup>; E. Fränkel, *JF* 59 [1948], 159 f.; Leumann, *MH* 2 [1945], 7 f., especially 9, denies the positive and contests the value of the passage where this seems attested (see Liddell-Scott).

<sup>19</sup> Brugmann, *Grundriss*<sup>2</sup> II 1, 557; Schwyzer, l.c., as against Leumann, l.c., 2 f. Leumann also argues (p. 2, 5) that *χειρόομαι*, *μείω*, Ion. *ἔσσομαι* can only be understood as *-o*-stem derivatives and thus show that *χείρον μείον ἔσσαν*, the neuter forms of the comparative, were felt to be *-o*-stem forms. But if we bear in mind the old paradigm *μείων/μείο-α/μείο-ος/μείο-ι* etc. it is clear that the stem was *μειο-*, without being an *-o*-stem, and factitives were naturally based on this stem. The same applies to such comparatives as *χειρό-τερος* etc., which do not prove an *-o*-stem, not even a reinterpretation, but as rather late blends between the old type and the new type are based on the stem of the old type. Kerschensneider's contention (*MSS* 15 [1959], 39–64) that *χειρόομαι* is from *χελῖ* is misguided.

A further problem, connected with the origins of the Greek comparative, is the variation between  $-(j)\omega\eta\sigma$  and  $-\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ , exemplified by  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\omega\eta\sigma-\acute{\eta}\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ . This is certainly the result of the Indo-European rules of syllabication, according to which, after light syllables (ending in short vowel plus one consonant, e.g.  $\kappa\rho\epsilon\tau-$ ,  $\mu\epsilon\gamma-$  or in a long vowel, e.g.  $\pi\lambda\eta-$ ), the suffix was  $-y\acute{o}s$ , whereas after heavy syllables (with a long vowel plus a consonant, or a short vowel followed by two consonants) the same suffix appeared as  $-iy\acute{o}s$ .<sup>20</sup> The distribution is well illustrated by Homeric  $\beta\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$   $\theta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$   $\kappa\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$ <sup>21</sup>  $\mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\eta\sigma$   $\mu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$   $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\omega\eta\sigma$ <sup>21</sup>  $\delta\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$   $\pi\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\iota\omega\eta\sigma$  on the one hand,  $\alpha\acute{\iota}\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$   $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$   $\kappa\rho\acute{\epsilon}\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$   $\acute{\xi}\acute{\iota}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  on the other.<sup>22</sup> But it is easy to understand that there should have been a growing tendency to replace the obscure final  $-\omega\eta\sigma$  by the clear form  $-\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ . Thus  $\theta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$  is later replaced by  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\chi\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ , first in the Hippocratic Corpus; for Hom.  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$  we find the hapax  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\chi\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  in Aratus, but other speakers may have used it before him. In both cases the innovation has the additional merit of restoring the general form of the adjective. In some cases the replacement occurred at a much earlier date. Thus Hom.  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  is refashioned from the regular and expected  $*\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\eta\sigma$ , or rather  $*\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\sigma$ , but the ntr.  $\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\sigma$  survives as the noun  $\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\sigma$ .<sup>23</sup> Similarly, instead of  $*\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$ , the comparative of  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  is  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\kappa\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ , and here the innovation seems to be of Mycenaean date since  $\kappa\alpha-zo-e$  can hardly be  $\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega\epsilon\varsigma$  but, at the most,  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\kappa\acute{\iota}\omega\epsilon\varsigma$ ; if, however, Lejeune's interpretation of Myc.  $z$  as representing both  $\zeta$  and  $\sigma$  is correct, the Myc.  $\kappa\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega\epsilon$  represents the expected comparative from  $*\kappa\acute{\alpha}\kappa-yo(s)-es$ .

This interpretation of  $-\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  presupposes that the inherited  $-iy\acute{o}s-$  has a short  $i$ . But one of the peculiarities of Attic Greek is that  $i$  is always long, in contrast to the other dialects and Homer, where  $i$  is short; note, e.g., Att.  $\acute{\eta}\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$ ,  $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\tau\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  etc.<sup>24</sup> However, in view of the dialect distribution, Attic long  $i$  can, prima facie, hardly be taken as an inherited feature. It is therefore surprising to see that Seiler decides that the long vowel is of Indo-European date, on the grounds that there is no phonetic development that could account for the lengthening. For, he says, "if Attic lengthened, why had Homer not done it before?"<sup>25</sup> But surely Attic is the one dialect for which lengthening in the comparative is in fact reliably attested: in contrast to Ionic etc.  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\omega\eta\sigma$   $\kappa\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$  etc., Attic (and our Atticized Homer) has  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\omega\eta\sigma$ ,  $\kappa\rho\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\omega\eta\sigma$  etc. There can be no doubt therefore that the lengthening of  $\acute{\eta}\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  to  $\acute{\eta}\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\eta\sigma$  is an Attic

<sup>20</sup> For the Sievers-law, reformulated by Edgerton, see *Language* 19 [1943], 83—124, and quite recently, Lindeman, *NTS* 20 [1965], 38—108.

<sup>21</sup> Hom.  $\kappa\rho\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$   $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\omega\eta\sigma$  show Atticization in their vocalism.

<sup>22</sup> Only  $\acute{\eta}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\eta\sigma$  are at variance with the rule.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Seiler 68 f. But there is no need to assume that  $*\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\sigma$  (he posits  $*\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\eta\sigma$ , p. 70) became a positive. The comparative in  $-y\acute{o}s-$  was originally an "intensive" (Benveniste, *Noms d'agent et noms d'action en i-e*, 1948, 115 f.; N. Berg, *NTS* 18 [1958], 202—30, esp. 214 f., 216) or "elative", and thus the neuter could indicate a quality. (For a different view, see Otrebski, *Lingua Posnaniensis* 3 [1951], 299). We must now also ask whether the peculiar noun  $\beta\eta\sigma\sigma\alpha|\beta\acute{\alpha}\delta\sigma\sigma\alpha$ , instead of representing  $*\beta\acute{\alpha}\theta\gamma\alpha|\beta\acute{\alpha}\theta\sigma\acute{\alpha}$  (Schwyzer, *RhM* 81 [1932], 193 f.), is not transformed from the neuter comparative  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omega\sigma$  from  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\theta\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ , this form supplying Hesychius'  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\delta\sigma\sigma\omega\sigma$ :  $\sigma\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$   $\acute{\eta}$   $\beta\eta\sigma\sigma\alpha$ . Vey's suggestions (*BSL* 51 [1965], 101 f.) are very unlikely.

<sup>24</sup> See for the facts Seiler 15 f.

<sup>25</sup> Seiler 17.



innovation, causally connected with that seen in *μείζων κρείττων*.<sup>26</sup> The explanation is perhaps to be sought along the lines indicated by Kuryłowicz.<sup>27</sup> Since within the Attic system the suffix *-ων* of the comparative was in many frequently used forms preceded by a long vowel (*μείζων κρείττων θάττων μάλλον* etc.), the pattern "long vowel plus *-ων*" was transferred to *-ῶν* which thus became *-ῶων*.

The new Mycenaean data can thus be seen to have a revolutionizing effect on our views of the origin and development of the comparative. But, as usual, the new evidence not only settles outstanding problems, it also raises new ones. One of the most unexpected revelations of the tablets was the form of the comparative *μείων* which appears as *meujo* and *mewijo*. According to the old explanation, due to Osthoff<sup>28</sup>, *μείων* replaced an earlier *\*μείων* (surviving in *ἄ-μείων*) under the influence of *πλείων*; *\*μείων* itself was built on a neuter noun *\*μει-νο-ν* "diminution" from the root *\*mei-* "to diminish", from which we have the positive *μινός* "small"; Lat. *minus*, *minor* *minus*; Germanic *\*minus* in O. Engl. *minne* "mean, vile", and the comparative *\*minwiza*, superlative *\*minwists*.

We can now certainly state that the comparative *\*μείων*, constructed purely for the sake of *ἄμείων*, is a fiction.<sup>29</sup> But the connection of *μείων* with the words just mentioned seems so clear that the Mycenaean evidence is a challenge rather than a disproof. But so far the Mycenaean forms have not been clarified.<sup>30</sup> Chantraine suggested that *mewijo* should be read as *μειϜίων*, which would save the root *\*mei-* but leaves the offending *Ϝ* unexplained.<sup>31</sup> Even so, the alternant spellings *meujo/mewijo* are irreconcilable with *μειϜίων*, they guarantee the reading *\*mewjōs*. Georgiev's Gordian solution that "*wi* is an inverse spelling for *i*, because intervocalic *w* had already begun to disappear"<sup>32</sup>, is not only in contradiction to the well-known fact that *w* led a vigorous existence for several centuries more, but also ignores *meujo*.<sup>33</sup>

Now derivatives of the root *\*mei-/mi-* are attested in Greek, besides the adjective *μινός* already referred to, in the forms *μείων μείστος* and *μικρός*. For *μικρός*

<sup>26</sup> For the Indo-Europeanizing explanation, see the earlier literature quoted by Schwyzler I 537; Seiler 17.20; Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Ai. Gr.* II 2, 443 f. But the "external" evidence, i.e. the Sanskrit type *svādīyas-*, *navīyas-* (replacing Vedic *navyas-*!), is itself an innovation, see Pisani, *Grammatica dell'antico indiano*, Rome 1930-3, 299. The *ī* is lengthened from *i* in order to prevent its consonantalization to *y*, and is paralleled by *-īya-* from *-īya-* (see Wackernagel-Debrunner, *o. c.*, 441 f., esp. 442 g); note in particular the ordinals *turīya-trīya-* etc. from *tur(i)ya-* etc. Of more recent Indo-Europeanizing theories, I note A. Erhart, *Archiv Orientalní* 24 [1956], 439 (:- *īyos* from Proto-IE *Ai-Ajos*).

<sup>27</sup> J. Kuryłowicz, *L'apophonie en indo-européen*, Wrocław 1956, 275 f. But I am inclined to think that the explanation, which must apply to other categories as well, is quite different.

<sup>28</sup> See H. Osthoff—K. Brugmann, *Morphologische Untersuchungen* VI, 1910, 308 f.; accepted by Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 1916, 621 f., 639 f.; Schwyzler I 538<sup>b</sup>; J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1949-59, 711.

<sup>29</sup> The terse judgment of the decipherers, *Documents* 400.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. J. Chadwick, *TPS* 1954, 6. I do not think that Hesychius' *μεζῶν ἐλάσσων* can be utilized.

<sup>31</sup> *RPh* 29 [1955], 19. This reading is accepted by Lejeune, *Historia* 8 [1959], 135 fn. 34, and now repeated by Chantraine, *Morphologie*<sup>2</sup>, 1964, 111; Lejeune, *BSL* 59/2 [1964], 72. The form *meujo* also excludes Bolognesi's derivation from a *\*meiwo-* (*Atti del Sodalizio Glottologico Milanese* 7-8, 1958, 55). Heubeck's assumption (*Sprache* 9 [1963] 199-201) that *\*meiwojōs* and *\*meiwojōs* gave Myc. *\*mewjōs*, rests on unacceptable premises. The correct reading is also given by Bartoněk, *Sborník Brno A* 12 (1964), 202.

<sup>32</sup> *Izvestija Akademii Nauk, Otdelenije literatury i jazyka*, 14/3 [1955], 271.

<sup>33</sup> The word has been discussed recently by G. Liebert (*Die ie. Personalpronomina und die Laryngaltheorie*, *Lunds Universitets Årsskrift* 52/7 [1957], 35 f., esp. 37) on laryngealist assumptions, and by H. Rosén (*Lingua* 7 [1958], 368<sup>7</sup>) who thinks of *\*meiwojōn* from a *\*mus-* "winzig" in *μῦς* etc.

Seiler has suggested that *-ρός* might have been taken over from the opposite *μακρός* (o.c., 115). But this leaves out of account Doric and Boeotian *μικρός* and the names *Μικυθος Μικυλλος Μικύλος Μικων* etc.<sup>34</sup> These clearly show that the adjective "small" started as *\*μικός*, and the influence of *μακρός* merely added *-ρ-*, even that not in all dialects; *μικρός* is an expressive variant of *\*μικός*, comparable to Lat. *hippus* from *\*hīpos* etc.<sup>35</sup> The form *\*μικός* itself, with its long *i*, is hardly due to an Indo-European long-diphthong root *\*mēi-/mī-*, which does not appear in *μινός* etc., but is rather from *μι-ικό-*, an "age-group" derivative<sup>36</sup> from *\*māyo-*,<sup>37</sup> formed directly from *\*mei-/mi-*.<sup>38</sup> The comparative from this adjective is expected with the full-grade of the root, that is to say, we must posit an early *\*mei-yōs*.

The question now is how the early *\*meyyōs* and Myc. *meuyōs* can be reconciled. It will be recalled in this connection that a similar intrusive *w* has already caused some heartsearching in philologist quarters. I am thinking, of course, of Myc. *perusiniwwo* "of last year" which flies in the face of all our notions about the temporal suffix *-inos*. But here the happy intuition of M. Lejeune has cleared up the Mycenaean "anomaly": *perusino-* was transformed to *perusinwo-* under the influence of the correlative *newo-* "new".<sup>39</sup> It is more than somewhat tempting to look for a similar explanation of the intrusive *w* in *meuyōs*.

If we survey the field of suitable adjectives in the Greek system, it is impossible not to think of the comparative *πλείων* which has always been linked with *μείων*. However, the gradation of *πολύς* presents a thorny problem for the philologist. The Sanskrit *puru-* "much", comp. *prāyas* "mostly", and Avestan *pouru-* "much, many", comp. *frāyah-* "plus", superl. *fraēštəm* "plurimum" establish an Aryan *prā-yas-/pra-išta-*, which, on the face of it, could be equated with Gk. *πλείων/πλείστος*, if *πλείων*, instead of *\*πλέων* (with shortening from *\*plē-yōs*) was transformed, say, after *πλείστος*. On the other hand, Lat. *plūs* can hardly be traced directly to an Indo-European neuter *\*plē-yos*. To complicate matters, Greek possesses some strange forms such as Hom. nom. pl. *πλέες*, acc. *πλέας*, Lesb. (inscr.) *πλέα(ς)*, Cretan *πλες πλια(ν)ς πλιασιν πλια*, Attic *πλεῖν ἦ*. This set has been interpreted as representing an archaic type, based on *\*plē-is*, that is *\*plēis-es* gave *πλέες* etc.<sup>40</sup> But even if an adverbial *\*plē-is* had to be acknowledged as the source of Att. *πλεῖν*,<sup>41</sup> it would still be impossible to accept such a suffix for the normal paradigm of the comparative. Although in Indo-European times there may have been a regular alternation between

<sup>34</sup> For the names, compare also Leumann, *Glotta* 32 [1953], 219 with fn. 2 (on the adjective *μικύλος*), 222 (*Μίκις* etc.).

<sup>35</sup> This was suggested as an alternative by Boisacq, o.c., 636<sup>1</sup>. A further expressive *-ικό-*, that is *-ιχο-*, appears in *μικκιχος* and Lacon. *μικκιχιδόμενος*, see Schwyzler I 498.

<sup>36</sup> On these see Chantreine's recent study in *Études sur le vocabulaire grec*, Paris 1956, 97 f., and my comments in *JHS* 78 [1958], 147 f. Note in particular the semantic field of the only Homeric appellative adjectives *παρθενική* and *ὄρφανικός*.

<sup>37</sup> An adjective *\*māyo-* would also give an easy explanation of Lat. *nimius*. Lat. *mīca* is either a derivative like *μικός* or borrowed from it.

<sup>38</sup> A derivative *\*μ-Ὶαγ-/μ-Ὶαν-* "diminution, impairing", restricted to the religious sphere, could account for *μαρός*, *μαίω*, etc.

<sup>39</sup> First proposed in *RPh* 29 [1955], 164, and now generally accepted.

<sup>40</sup> E.g., Brugmann, *Grundriss*<sup>2</sup> II 1, 554.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Lat. *mag-is*. O. Irish *līa*, however, is very doubtful (see Thurneysen, *Grammar of Old Irish*, 1946, 236), and can be from *\*plē-yos*. But the very fact that *πλεῖν ἦ* is confined to ordinary, everyday, Attic speech (comedy etc.), makes it very unlikely that it should go back to such an extraordinary formation, of which there is no further trace at all in the Greek system. It is much more likely to be an "umgangssprachlich" transformation of the common neuter *πλείων*, reduced to *πλεῖν*, see Szemerényi, *Syncope*, 254 f.

-yōs/-yos-η/-yes-os etc. (a faint trace of which may survive in Lithuanian -(j)es-nis), in Greek the -o-grade was generalized already in Mycenaean times. For the same reason, earlier attempts to operate with \*πλε-(j)εσ-εσ etc.,<sup>42</sup> must now be ruled out.

In view of these difficulties, it is no wonder that two alternative explanations should have gained support in recent years. One view tries to explain the Greek peculiarities by assuming that the normal comparative neuter πλέον, felt by the speakers to be an -o-stem form, gave rise to the plural πλέα, which again was felt to be a consonantal plural, producing in its turn πλέες πλέας etc.<sup>43</sup> But, although the Attic forms ἐχ θάττων (296 B.C.) and μεῖα (396 B.C.) are quoted as instances illustrating such a transfer,<sup>44</sup> the fact is that, even if they were correct and reliable, which they are not, they would be too late and too isolated to prove anything for Homer and earlier times.<sup>45</sup> The greatest difficulty is, however, the repeated switch from consonantal to thematic and then back to consonantal inflection, which, as far as I can see, remains an ad hoc assumption without evidence.

The other view seeks the solution to the Latin and Greek problems in the Indo-European past, and assumes that an Indo-European neuter noun \*plew-os "abundance, large quantity" gave Lat. *plūs*, which was later, by fusion with \*plē-*is*, reinterpreted as a comparative, while the root \*plew- itself appears in Hom. πλέ(Ϝ)εσ πλέ(Ϝ)ας etc., which again, originally, were not comparative forms.<sup>46</sup> But one cannot help wondering how the assumed \*plew- would fit into the Early Greek inflectional system, and according to what pattern it would produce the required

<sup>42</sup> J. Schmidt, *KZ* 26 [1883], 381. Even more antiquated is Thurneysen's "positive" \*πλεσσον, reinterpreted as a comparative (*KZ* 33 [1895], 555).

<sup>43</sup> Leumann, *MH* 2 [1945], 1 f.; *Homerische Wörter*, 1950, 293 fn. 53. This is accepted by his pupils, cf. Seiler 113; J. Egli, *Heteroklisis* 76.

<sup>44</sup> See Egli 77 f. But Schwyzer I 539 has already pointed out that these forms cannot be used. A look into Dittenberger's *Sylloge* (3rd ed., no. 921, fn. 5) shows that the alleged ἐχ θάττων is a vox nihili. The damaged word was seen by A. Wilhelm (in 1916!) to represent the name Ἐχθατίων (in full: Ἀρίστων Ἐχθατίων Θηβαίος, which leaves no doubts about the inappropriateness of an adverbial phrase), see *IG* II—III ed. minor I, 1916, p. 666, no. 713, 3—5, 1.12. The other word, μεῖον, is of course well attested, both in literature and in inscriptions, but it is very doubtful whether it can be the neuter of the comparative μεῖων as some ancient scholiasts would have us believe. The fact that in the inscription referred to by Egli, recording the law of the Demotionid phratría of 396 B. C., and obviously in the living language, too, it is coupled with κορυεῖον, the latter being the major sacrifice, suggests that μεῖον is a similar formation (both patterned on ἱερεῖον), so that the latter derives from μεῖειον; for the contraction, note Δεκελεῖς (*Lysias* 33, 3) beside Δεκελεῖς (normalized Attic Δεκελεῖς) in *Sylloge*, no. 921, 1.64. If that is the case, we may retain the suggested connection on the basis of a μεῖ(ο)-εἶον.

<sup>45</sup> This chronological consideration might be ignored for the Cretan and Lesbian forms. But there one might ask whether the innovation did not start with the gen. πλεόνων, reduced by haplogy to πλέων, on which πλέες πλέας πλέα were built. This would have the advantage that πλέων is the gen. pl. of all three genders, so that from it both πλέες and πλέα can be formed. For a similar haplogy, again in Cretan, compare νεότας "official body of young men", with gen. νεότας and acc. νεότα, obviously from νεοτατος, νεοτατα, see Schwyzer I 263, 528<sup>b</sup>; C. D. Buck, *Greek Dialects*, 1953<sup>a</sup>, 75.

<sup>46</sup> E. Benveniste, *Origines de la formation des noms en i-e.*, 1935, 54, followed by, e.g., L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language*, 1954, 254; T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 1955, 180; J. Manessy-Guitton, *Word* 19 [1963], 36. But a Hom. πλέος (according to Benveniste and Palmer from \*plew-o-) does not exist. There is an Ionic πλεος = Hom. πλείος, but this is identical with Att. πλέως, and goes back to πλωος, probably \*πληϜος, see Schwyzer I 472. The form πλέον of our Homer-text at *v* 355: εἰδῶλον δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλεῖη δὲ καὶ ἀλλή, is an early metathetic form of πλείων, that is πλῆρον, cf. πλεῖη in the line, but with the introduction of the short thematic vowel, characteristic of Ionic. But the manuscript variant πλέων seems preferable. Be this as it may, the form πλείων certainly cannot be traced to an IE \*plew-o-. Cf. Chantraine, *Gram. hom.* 71; R. W. 1923, η μὴ εἰ vor *Vokäl bei Homer*, Diss. Zürich 1948, 65 f.

forms *πλέες πλέας*. Are we to assume a singular *\*πλό(ς)*? But that would surely be a mere duplication of *πολύς*, and, although an alternation *\*p̥lu-/plu-* is imaginable for Indo-European, Greek would surely have eliminated it by Mycenaean times, unless the difference was sufficient to warrant two distinct words.

One might be inclined to save the theory by assuming that the adjective *\*p̥léu-* (or *\*poléu-*), continued by Greek *πολύς*, formed its comparative and superlative from the stem *\*pleu-*, thus producing *\*plewyōs* and *\*plewistos*. The former would readily account for Lat. *plūs* since the neuter *\*plewyos* would lose its intervocalic *y* in pre-historic times<sup>47</sup> and *\*pleuos* would become *\*plouos* which would eventually result in *plūs*. Even the superlative would — with the appropriate Latin changes in the suffix — yield the attested *plourime* or *plouruma*<sup>48</sup>, Classical *plūrimus*. As for Greek, the primitive forms *\*plewyōs* *\*plewistos* would regularly result in *πλείων* *πλείστος* and, what is even more important for our present purposes, early *πλέφῳς* would give a satisfactory explanation of the transformation of *\*meyōs* to Myc. *meuῳs*.

But there are several considerations that speak against this attempt to save the *pleu-* theory. First of all, we should not light-heartedly brush aside the Aryan evidence which requires IE *\*plēyōs* and *\*plē-istos* (or *\*pla-istos*?). For these formations are in full accord with the structural rules, according to which the comparative is based on the root, not on the stem of the positive. Hence *\*plēyōs* from *\*pleH-* is the expected basis for the comparative of the positive *\*p̥H-u-* in *πολύς* *|paru-/pouru-*.<sup>49</sup> Nor can we ignore the Latin *pleores* in the Carmen Fratrum Arvalium; it is quite unwarranted to disrupt the unity of the comparative formation by assuming that *pleores* and *plūs* represent entirely different types.<sup>50</sup> This is just as unfounded for Greek and there is no reason why we should believe that a “comparative” *\*πλεφες* co-existed with inherited *\*πλη(ς)ως*. If Miss M. Lang is right in thinking that PY Wr 1327 *pereito* offers *πλείστος*,<sup>51</sup> then we have evidence showing that *\*plewistos* at any rate is out of the question.

The single insuperable weakness of the *pleu-* theory is, however, that it cannot account for the very facts that it was devised to explain. Familiarity with Greek

<sup>47</sup> This is certainly the explanation of *minor minus*, which is not based on the positive *maso. minus*, inexplicably reinterpreted as a comparative neuter, but presents the “regular” comparative *\*minu-yōs*, built, according to the later pattern, on the positive stem, not on the root. This became *\*minu-ōs/minu-os*, and later *\*minwōs/minwos*, eventually losing its *w* before *ō*: *minōr/minus*. The latter could of course also result from a syncopated *\*minwos*.

<sup>48</sup> Both these forms show inverse spelling for spoken *ū*.

<sup>49</sup> For the primitive form of the positive, cf. F. B. J. Kuiper, *Mededelingen Nederlandse Akademie*, 18/11 [1955], 23 (with unlikely surmises on the nature of the laryngeal p. 24). Lindeman, *Studia Linguistica* 16 [1963], 8, derives the Greek comparative from IE *\*pleyy-*, assimilated from *\*pleH<sub>1</sub>y-*, an altogether unlikely theory.

<sup>50</sup> In my view, *plūs* derives from *\*plēyos* which was at the stage *\*plēos* influenced by *minus* (see above, fn. 47), and *\*pleus* became *plous*, *plūs*. The superlative, starting as *\*plēisamos*, attested by Festus' *plisima*, changed after *plous* to *plousimos*, or after *plūs* to *plurimus*. As to the late change of *eu* to *ou*, note, in addition to the inscription of the Ardea dish: *NEVEN DEIVO* „novem deum“, the new altar inscriptions discovered by M. Guarducci, two of which have *NEUNA FATĀ* „Nonae Fatāe“ and *NEUNA DONO* “Nonae donum”; see E. Vetter, *Handbuch der italischen Dialekte* I, 1953, 332 f.; *IF* 62 [1955], 1 f. All these inscriptions are from the 3rd c. B.C. Another late example of the change is *brūma* which derives from *breuima*, that is to say post-syncope *breuma*, and not an Ur-form *\*breghu-mā*. It is, in my view, also implied by, e.g., *accūsāre*, which presupposes the stages *-kausā-* > *keusā-* > *kousā-*. One might almost say that there was a persistent tendency to change *eu* to *ou* from about the seventh century down to the third.

<sup>51</sup> *AJA* 62 [1958], 191.

dialect history would have warned that the Cretan forms *πλίας πλίαισι* cannot be based on earlier *πλεF-*, for the simple reason that *ε* is not raised to *ι* before an *α* if the lost consonant was a *F*.<sup>52</sup> And it will be important to bear in mind that the Cretan forms only admit *s* or *γ* as the lost consonant.

Thus we find that, instead of throwing light on *\*mewjōs*, it is the form *πλείων* itself that needs some explanation. We must regard as established that the original forms were comp. *\*plēyōs/plēyos* and superl. *\*plēistos* (or *\*plaiistos*).<sup>53</sup> The long vowel of early *\*πλήως/πλήος* was shortened everywhere, in Attic with lengthening of a following short vowel. Hence in Attic-Ionic the early paradigm was *πλέως/πλέωα* or *πλέω* (if *-oa* contracted before shortening) etc. But in all other dialects the shortening produced nom. *πλέως/πλέος*, acc. *πλέσα/πλέος*, gen. *πλέοος*, dat. *πλέοι*; nom. pl. *πλέοες/πλέοα*, acc. *πλέοας/πλέοα*, gen. *πλέων*, dat. *πλέοσι*. It will be seen that, unlike most comparative paradigms, this one presented a surfeit of vowels in hiatic sequence. It can be expected therefore that in a word so frequently used this will be remedied either by early contraction or by hyphaeresis. The latter seems to be the explanation of Homeric *πλε(ο)ες πλε(ο)ας*, and of Lesb. *πλέας*, Cret. *πλίες* etc. This hyphaeresis is paralleled by the form *δαμμεργός* found in several dialects for and from *δαμμοεργός*, and Ionic *Τειχιεσσεις* from *Τειχιεο-*, the ethnic of the place-name *Τειχιούσσα* from *Τειχιώ(F)εσσα*. The reduction of *-ιοε-* to *-ιε-* is parallel to that of *-εοε-* to *-εε-* here proposed.<sup>54</sup> At the same time we should bear in mind the alternative possibility already mentioned (fn. 45): contraction of a form like *πλέων* to *πλεων* could naturally lead to the metaplastic forms *πλέες πλέας* etc. Most likely the short forms are due to both factors.<sup>55</sup>

But apart from certain case-forms,<sup>56</sup> a complete *-n*-inflection was built up and the last remaining problem concerning *πλείων* is its diphthong *ει*. As is known, in Attic it appears only before long vowels, say *πλείους πλείω*, but never in *πλέον*. The diphthong may be due to *πλείστος* but also to the opposite *μείων* which has it in all dialects.<sup>57</sup> And this raises even more acutely the question where Myc. *mewjōs* got its *w* from. Although a *\*plewjōs* can now be safely ruled out, the principle remains valid: some word in its semantic field must have had the ending *-wjōs*. There are two possible candidates. First the Indo-European adjective *\*newo-*, with the comparative *\*newjōs* (cf. Skt. *navyas-*, Goth. *niujoz-*, Lithu. *navjājus-*), was no doubt inherited as such from Indo-European, although in Classical times only the new type *νεώ-τερος* is found. Secondly, IE *\*ywnōn* "young", attested by Skt. *yuvā* and Lat. *iuuenis*,<sup>58</sup> had the comparative *\*yewjōs* as is shown by Skt. *yavnyas-* and O. Irish *ōa*, Welsh *iau* (from *\*yew-*); the corresponding Greek form was Myc. *\*(h)ewjōs* or *\*zewjōs*. It seems to me that probably both adjectives, but especially *\*hewjōs*, were instrumental in reshaping the original *\*mewjōs* to the Mycenaean form *mewjōs*.

<sup>52</sup> Cp. Buck, *Greek Dialects* 22, § 9.7.

<sup>53</sup> We can ignore here the problem how *πλείστος* can be reconciled with the Indo-European form as exhibited by Av. *fraēštam*. Cp. Seiler 114; Werner 82; but also Kuryłowicz, *Études indo-européennes* I, Kraków 1935, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. G. H. Mahlow, *Neue Wege durch die griechische Sprache und Dichtung*, 1926, 32; Schwyzer I 252 f. On *Τειχιούσσα* see W. Ruge, *RE* s.v., and on its location, L. Robert, *RPh* 84 [1958], 59 f.; on *δαμμεργός*, F. Bader, *Les composés grecs du type de demiourgos*, 1965, 159.

<sup>55</sup> In case the change is later, haplogly must be considered, see fn. 45.

<sup>56</sup> The only possible trace of the neuter *πλέος* is the Arcadian *ΠΛΟΟ*.

<sup>57</sup> Seiler 115.

<sup>58</sup> And also by Greek as will be shown elsewhere.