

*Historical Truth Preserved*Kirk, G. S., The Language and Background of Homer. Cambridge, 1964Chadwick, John, "Mycenaean Elements in the Homeric dialect"
~~"The Greek Dialects and Greek Pre-History"~~

- p.51 The demonstration by K. Meister ¹ that the Homeric dialect is an artificial creation is now beyond challenge. The elements making up the amalgam vary in both provenance and date, and in the final composition we find these forms mixed in such inextricable confusion that the attempts to separate, on purely linguistic grounds, the different strata of which the poems are composed have led to inconclusive results. It is obvious that an archaic feature may be a deliberate archaism in the work of a later poet, while a late form may in many cases be a modernization of an earlier one. It therefore seems to be most generally agreed that the epic tradition which produced the Iliad and the Odyssey were in living evolution down to the eighth century B.C., and only then were the poems fixed, and, allowing for certain vagaries of spelling, were transmitted to us in the form they then received.

Footnote 1 Die homerische Kunstsprache, Leipzig 1921

- p. 120 If the Homeric poems record authentic facts of the Mycenaean age, certain details of which have been confirmed by archaeology, then the tradition must have been oral; for there is no evidence yet to suggest that Linear B survived the fall of Mycenae, and the oral nature of the epic tradition has been amply demonstrated. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Greek epic had its roots in the Mycenaean age, and that the Homeric descriptions of bardic entertainments ³ are not anachronistic. We may now hope to confirm this assumption by the search for linguistic elements belonging to the Mycenaean age which have been preserved by the traditional dialect.

Footnote 3 Od. 1 153-359; 8.62-107

- p. 120 It is not of course sufficient to point to words which are common to Homer and the tablets, for a large number of these are merely part of the common stock of Greek vocabulary. . . . We must restrict our search to words which in the literary tradition are 'poetic'. Poetic words are two kinds: artificial usages, such as the creation of a new compound or a transference of meaning; and words which are unknown in common speech, either because they have become obsolete or because they have been borrowed from another dialect. . .

There is a further difficulty in that our records of early Greek are hopelessly inadequate; but when we find that a Homeric word occurs in later literature only in verse, where we may presume it to have been borrowed from the epic tradition, or in late artificial prose, where the same explanation is possible, then it is probably safe to assume that it was already obsolete at the time it was incorporated into the Homeric poems. If more than a few such words can be shown to occur on the Mycenaean tablets, the existence of a direct link can then be inferred. . .

The following list is not exhaustive. . . Each word will be found in Homer. . .

(a list of 37 words follows) - - -