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ΗΙΚΑΤΙ, ΗΙΚΑΣ . . . AND THE INITIAL ASPIRATION IN DORIC

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HIKATI, HIKAC ... AND THE INITIAL ASPIRATION IN DORIC

The articles etymological dictionaries by Frisk and Chantraine¹ deal on the numeral "twenty" refer to the form $\eta\kappa\acute{o}\delta\iota$, "the twentieth day of a month" from Thera (ca. 480/450 b.C.). Due to its redaction it seems to be the only example of a non explained initial aspiration in this numeral. The lack of knowledgements about further testimonies also belonging to the doric range, may become a misleading matter.

Hence:

- $\eta\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota$ IG IV, 1588 Aegina (4th c.b.C.)

- $\eta\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\tau\iota$ Lipara c.475-450 b.C.²

More examples, that can be found in recently published inscriptions must be added to these:

Inside the Sicilian doric the form $\eta\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\tau\iota$ SEG 27,1977,657 Palermo (5th c.b.C.) has been testified.

Moreover the seven decrets printed on bronze (SEG 30,1980,1117-1119), coming from Entella,³ in Sicily, probably dated on 3rd c.b.C. provide new data at this respect: $\epsilon\phi' \acute{\iota}\kappa\acute{o}\delta\alpha$ (1117,3; 1118,3) appears in two of them.

It might be an hypercorrect spelling, but this explanation cannot be valid for two reasons: a) there is no mistake of this kind in the inscriptions of Entella; b) the accumulation of examples like that of Thera and the rest, makes it impossible to think of an orthographic error.

It's obvious that this aspiration can not be justified etymologically. So, it seems clear that there has been an interference between the process: $*\underline{w} \rightarrow w \rightarrow \emptyset$ and $*\underline{sw} \rightarrow wh > h$, /wh/ taking the place of /w/. Such confusions are relatively frequent in Phonetics. So in modern English the pronuntiation of /wh/ varies not only depending on the area but also, according to the various idiolects and the cultural level of the speakers, is articulated with or without aspiration.⁴

It is generally insisted that /w-/ is aspirated when the syllable ends in sibilant or in words beginning with a consonantal group whose first element is a sibilant. However this is not exclusive of this context: other voiceless phonemes appear, being able to condition the aspiration, /k/ on the examples above, and /t/ in the following:

- $\pi\epsilon\nu\tau\alpha\eta\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha$ Tables of Heraclea I 105

- $\epsilon\phi' \acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\sigma$ SIG 742 Ephesus (88 b.C.)

¹ P.Chantraine, Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque, Paris 1968-1980, s.v. $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota$. H.Frisk, Griechische Etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg 1960-1970, s.v. $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota$.

² It refers to one of the fragments on the marble base of one of the statues in Delphi that Liparenes erected to commemorate their victory over the Etruscan. Vid. Jeffery L.H. L.S.A.G. 351 n.1.

³ It cannot be known the precise point of origin of these inscriptions, as they were got out of the country fraudulently. Yet the inscription 1119 must have been drafted originally in Nacona.

⁴ P.Trudgill, Dialecte in Contact, Oxford 1986,44ss.

-πένθ' ἔτη IG IV 1,121 Epidaurus (the second half of the IV b.C.)

Schwyzler explains this fact by an analogic extension of the aspiration that appears in groups of words related semantic and etymologically (inscriptions of the IV and III centuries b.C.).⁵

This having been considered, is evident that the form Ηικάδι from Thera to name "twentieth day of the month" is not the only one presenting aspiration instead of the initial /w-/ expected, as testified by the etymological dictionaries that quote Bechtel.⁶ Similar forms of the numeral twenty with initial aspiration appear in different places of the doric scope (Entella, Palermo, Aegina, Lipara).

Though it cannot be affirmed that it is a general characteristic of Doric, at least it seems clear that had an effect on an important part of the Doric domain: Doric of the Isthmus that includes Aegina and the metropolis of the Sicilian colonies, Thera, Lipara and Sicilian Doric whose base is the Siracusan; at the moment, it is not possible to determine exactly the geographical limits.

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⁵ E.Schwyzler, Griechische Grammatik, München 1959, I 305ff.

⁶ F.Bechteler, Die griechischen Dialekte, II, Berlin 1921, 521 doesn't distinguish between both treatments as the examples mentioned of w- > h, one correspond to *sw- Ηαδίμα, and the other to *w- Ηικάδι.