

**GREEK DIMINUTIVES
IN -ION: A STUDY IN
SEMANTICS**

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Greek Diminutives in -ion: A Study in Semantics by Walter Petersen

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WALTER PETERSEN

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SEMANTICS**

GREEK DIMINUTIVES IN *-ION*

A STUDY IN SEMANTICS

75

BY

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WEIMAR, GERMANY,
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PREFACE

The first part of this dissertation is abbreviated from a thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University in the year 1908.

On account of their extremely great number I have refrained from giving a list of abbreviations used. Most of them will be found self-explanatory, and for the rest, I have tried to follow standard works, being guided particularly by the following: Liddel and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, the Parisian Stephanus, Herwerden's Lexicon Graecum suppletorium et dialecticum, and Brugmann's Grundriss.

The omission of a general bibliography is due to the fact that an enumeration of each and every work cited would increase too much the already great bulk of the dissertation, while mention of only those works which are written on diminutives particularly, would largely be a repetition of the list given in Brugmann's Grundriss 2. 1². 121 f. What has been written since then, has mostly appeared in the periodicals, and so can be found without difficulty. I will mention, however, Ribezzo, *Die Diminutiva der altindischen Sprache*, Naples 1907, and Wrede, *Die Diminutiva im Deutschen*, in *Deutsche Dialektgeographie* 1 p. 73 ff., Marburg 1908.

When not otherwise stated, the references below to modern works are to pages of the work cited. An exception is Whitney's Sanskrit Grammar, which is cited by paragraphs.

Ancient authors are cited according to the numbers of the standard editions. In case of the Comic fragments, I refer to volumes and pages of Meineke. References to spurious works of Greek authors are not distinguished from the genuine ones: for it is the usage of the language, and not of the authors, that is of interest for my purposes, and for purposes of chronology not much can be made even of a difference of a century or so in the appearance of a word.

I desire to express my obligations for valuable counsel and suggestions to Professor Karl Brugmann, of Leipzig, who suggested the subject; to Professors E. W. Hopkins and E. P. Morris of Yale University, and particularly to Professor Hanns Oertel of Yale, whose searching criticisms and helpful guidance have been of inestimable value to me.

WALTER PETERSEN.

LINDSBORG, KANS.,
July, 1910.

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

1. The object of this monograph is to trace the development of diminutive and related meanings in case of a suffix which presents the most favorable conditions for such an investigation. For, since the fact that diminutive formatives are usually the same as those forming secondary adjectives¹ argues that the latter developed into the former, it is of advantage if, as Greek *-ω-*, the same suffix is at the same time both a diminutive and a secondary adjective suffix in the same language. No matter whether *-ω-* is held to have developed its diminutive meaning in Indo-European or in Greek times, we can be reasonably certain that the transition-types, which give an insight into the process, are extant.

2. In judging the relations of the different extant meanings we must be careful not to be influenced too much by the theories of both ancient and modern grammarians. Since the former knew nothing of the historical point of view, it is, for instance, of no importance to us that they continually treated the idea of small size as primary,² and considered other meanings as secondary or neglected them altogether. Natural as it is for one looking at the fully developed meanings to view the more tangible idea as most characteristic and therefore primary, this is no criterion for one looking for the origin of a phenomenon. The Greek grammarians, however, erred not only in their theories, but their facts are often quite untrustworthy, partly because they were often describing phenomena which antedated themselves by centuries, and of which they could have no more empirical knowledge than we have, partly because pre-conceived notions obscured their view. Thus they had inherited a certain number of traditional *εἰδη* or derivational classes from Dionysius Thrax, which, though not meant to be exhaustive, nevertheless presented themselves to certain later grammarians as a number of pigeon-holes into which every word must fit somehow or other. A glaring example of this is a scholiast to Dionysius, AB. p. 793 f., where, after asserting that *-ω-* derivatives are diminutives, he does not hesitate to give as examples among real

¹ Cf. Brugmann, K. Vgl. Gr. 337.

² Thus cf. Arist. Rhet. 3, 2, 1405 b 32; Dionysius Thrax, AB. 635; Scholion to Dionysius, AB. 855 f.; Priscian ap. Keil, Gram. Lat. 2, 101.

diminutives such words as ἐρίων, ἀσπίων, βιβλίων, σταμίων, πυξίων, θηρίων, χωρίων, ἡρίων, στίων, σχηνίων, λόγων, παραμύθιων, μειράμιων, κεράμιων, ἀργύριων, ἄμφων. Even though all grammarians are not as reckless as this one is (cf. e. g. the scholiast to Dionysius, AB. 856, who justly declares that ταχίων, ἐρίων, θηρίων, μηρίων, ἔγκλιων, and ἔγγλιων are not diminutives, and remarks that the adjective μέγα with θηρίων and ταχίων in Homer disproves their diminutive meaning), no faith whatever can be placed in their statement that this or that word is a *δικοριστικόν*. Finally, the confusion of two totally different classes of words, the real diminutives and short forms of proper names, as is shown by Fick-Bechtel, Griech. Personennamen 36, referring to the scholion to Dionysius, AB. 856 f., shows that the term *δικοριστικόν* did not always convey to them a distinct meaning.¹

3. Modern authorities have, in the first place, until recently usually accepted without reserve the opinion transmitted to them from the Greek grammarians through the Romans, that small size is the original of the so-called diminutive meanings. Cf. Schwabe, *De Dim. Gr. et Lat.* 1 ff.; Kessler, *Die Lat. Dim.* 2 ff.; Stolz, *Hist. Gram.* 575; Polzin, *Stud. zur Gesch. des Dim. im Deutsch.* 52; Brugmann, *K. Vgl. Gr.* 338 f. Of these Stolz actually mentions Priscian as having already judged correctly the relation of meanings as a whole. While this view may be right for some diminutives, it does not necessarily follow that it is so for all others. On the contrary, the case may be different for each suffix, as becomes particularly evident when we examine the complex mosaic of meanings in case of suffixes like *-ων*, where we have such a wealth of material before our eyes. The development does not take place in a straight line, but is continually checked or reinforced by other meanings which also branched out from the vague original meaning. Widely different starting-points come to the same end, and meanings which are alike to begin with branch out widely because of the mere accident of different environment of the words. It is, moreover, not true that the usual view of the relation of meanings of diminutive suffixes is *a priori* the only plausible one; G. Müller, *De Ling. Lat. Dim.* 13 ff., finds it possible to start from the hypo-

¹ The mistake of the Greek grammarians as well as of some moderns lay in considering the two as really and necessarily identical. This does not hinder us from admitting that the same suffix could have sometimes served both purposes or that diminutives could develop from 'Koseformen' and *vice versa*. Cf. Brugmann, *K. Vgl. Gr.* 339; Wrede, *Die Dim. im Deutschen* § 87 ff. (= *Dialektgeographie* p. 132 ff.).