

**THE HOMERIC DIALECT:  
ITS LEADING FORMS  
AND PECULIARITIES**

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The homeric dialect: its leading forms and peculiarities by James Skerrett Baird

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PECULIARITIES.

BY

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following work is published with a view to meet the requirements of the ordinary student of Homer, by supplying him with such information, on the variations of the Epic language, as the usual School Grammars do not afford.

In compiling the present Introduction, the Author has availed himself of many useful tables and paradigms derived from the works of the best German writers on the Dialects. These it is hoped will tend to facilitate the progress of the Student by placing before him, in a clear and inviting form, the various Dialectic peculiarities and formations which distinguish the Homeric poems.

Should this work be received with any adequate measure of success, the other Dialects will appear at intervals on a similar plan.

J. S. B.

London, June, 1853.

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N.B. It has not been considered necessary to compile a List of Homeric Verbs, as Liddell and Scott's admirable Lexicon will supply all needful information on Tenses in use, Irregularities, &c.



## INTRODUCTION.

### *The Greek Dialects.*

THE Greek Dialects are those provincial peculiarities of speech which distinguished the inhabitants of different countries speaking the Greek language.

All the tribes of Pelasgic<sup>1</sup> origin who settled themselves in Greece and the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, the South of Italy, Sicily, and the Western coast of Asia Minor, originally spoke a common language, from which subsequently branched off the several provincial forms called Dialects.

This ancient or common language is represented by the *Æolic*, and by the *Latin*, which separated from the Greek in the Pelasgic era.

The following will explain the source of the Dialects :—

#### OLD ÆOLIC (representing the ancient language).

ÆOLIC Proper (used by Sappho and Alceus); and BŒOTIC (spoken by the Bœotians).

DORIC (used by Theocritus and Pindar, and spoken by the Dorians).

From the Old Pelasgic arose another dialect, the Old Ionic, from which sprung the Attic, thus :—

#### OLD IONIC.

NEW IONIC (used by Herodotus, and spoken by the inhabitants of the Western part of Asia Minor).

#### ATTIC.

1. *Old* (in which the laws of Solon were written).

2. *Middle* (used by Thucydides and the Tragedians).

3. *New* (used by Demosthenes and Plato, and to some extent by Xenophon).

<sup>1</sup> The Pelasgians, the earliest inhabitants of Greece, are represented as having sprung from Pelāgus, a mythical hero, and a descendant of Phoroneus, king of Argos, from which city it was believed by the Greeks the Pelasgi spread to the other parts of the country.

From the original language also arose the language of *Epic* poetry, used by Homer and Hesiod, and sometimes styled the *Homeric Dialect*, though it is not strictly a dialect, but merely the usage of the poet and his followers. It was based upon Ionic, with varieties of the other dialects interspersed.

The *Æolic*, as the more ancient language, was harsh and unpolished. The *Doric*, as closely allied to the *Æolic*, shared the same qualities.

The *Ionic*, on the other hand, was remarkable for a peculiar softness and weakness shown in the resolution of syllables, accumulation of vowels, and the use of labial and lingual sounds.

The *Attic*, which sprung from the Ionic, took a middle course, rejecting the harshness of the Doric, as well as the excessive smoothness of the Ionic, and thus became the most polished and refined of all the dialects.

After the conquest of Greece by Philip of Macedon and Alexander (previous to which each independent state employed its own dialect), the Attic, but not in its pure form, became the general language of the whole country; and this dialect, known by the name of *Common* (*κοινή*), is taken as the basis of Greek grammars.

The Greek Testament and the Septuagint are examples of this dialect.

*Examples of Elision, Synizesis, &c. found in Homer.*

*Elision*, of which Apostrophe (') is the sign, is used in the following cases:—

αι in the terminations -ομαι, -αται, -εται, -ονται, -εσθαι, -ασθαι: as, βούλομαι ἐγὼ, ἀρίσθ' ἐπί, &c.

α in ται and μοι.

α without limitation.

ε in all terminations: ex., ἰδέ, and term. -ζε, and Opt. -ειε.

ι in Dat. Sing. occasionally, and the personal endings -ασι, -ησι, -ησι, -ουσι, -ουσι.

ο in τοῦτο, δύο, ἀπό, ὑπό, and the verbal term. -ατο, -ετο, -ατο, -οιατο, ex. τό and πρό.

*Synizēsis*, which is the coalition of two vowel sounds into one, is most frequently found in the case of ε: thus—

ε with α or φ, as ἡμέας.	ε with ο, as πλέονες.
ε ,, αι ,, ἴσσειαι.	ε ,, ω ,, πλέων, Πηληϊάδεω.
ε ,, εα ,, βέλεια.	ε ,, οι ,, θεοῖσιν.
ε ,, η ,, χρυσέην.	ε ,, ου.

The following examples are also found: αε, αει, ηι, ια, ιαι, ιη, οι, ιο: οο in ὄγδοον, υοι in ἐακρόυσι.

The following combination is used between two words: η α, η ε, η η, η ηε, η ει, η ου, η οι, ει ου, ω α, ω ου.

*Crasis* is limited to few cases; chiefly

αα in τάλλα = τὰ ἄλλα.
αιε ,, εἰγώ = καὶ ἐγώ.
οα ,, ἄριστος = ὁ ἄριστος, ωνός = ὁ αὐτός.
οε ,, ἀμός = ὁ ἐμός, προῦπερφα = πρὸ ἐπερφα.
ουε ,, ὄνεκα = ὄν ἐνεκα, τοῦνεκα = τοῦ ἐνεκα.

*Diæresis* most frequently occurs in words when two vowels are separated by the digamma, and in words compounded with εἶ, γρηῶς, πᾶς.

*Apocope*. The final vowel is dropped in ἀρα, παρά, ἀνά, κατά, ὑπό, ἐπί, πορτί, and the final consonant changed or assimilated according to the nature of the following letter.

*Contraction*. Contract vowels are frequently lengthened; ā into αα, η into ηη, ω into ου, ωο, ωω, chiefly in Contract Verbs.

The use of Contraction, however, often varies to suit the measure of the verse.

*Metathesis*, or the transposition of a consonant, takes place in many words, especially in words with a liquid in the root, and frequently in the case of ρ with a preceding vowel.

#### *Breathiug.*

The rough breathing frequently passes into the smooth, when its syllable is strengthened by the insertion of other letters or altered by inflection: as from ἀλλομαι comes ἄλτο; ἡμῖν, ἡμμι; ἕκλος, εὐκλος; ἱέραξ, ἱρηξ.