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I N D E X

A PRE - MARINE   VESTIGE   OF   ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ:

A N   ETYMOLOGICAL   PROPOSAL

M a r t t i   N y m a n

Culture is syncretistic, and so is language, too, because it is
acquired simultaneously with culture. Coexistence of tradition (pet-
rified forms and meanings, i.e. linguistic fossils) and creation
(productive patterns of language) must always be taken into account
in synchronic as well as in diachronic descriptions (cf. Maher 1977).
Fossils of language cannot be directly mapped onto thought (as has
been done at least earlier in some circles concerned with "psycholog-
ical reality" of linguistic descriptions), but only through etymolog-
ical explanation. This makes etymology a necessary component, in a
panchronic grammar, mapping the transfer from derivational morphology
to lexicon. One factor leading to reconceptualization is Sachwandel,
which makes the "Wörter und Sachen" approach a necessary descriptive
ingredient.

These principles will be illustrated in the present paper by
means of the word ϑάλασσα, which has not yet been satisfactorily
etymologized.

1. Earlier proposals

1.1. Alleged pre-Indo-European extraction

The ordinary Greek word for 'sea' is ϑάλασσα. When the "Achaean"
tribes infiltrated into Greece about 2000 B.C. or somewhat later -
this is how the story is usually told - , they either coined by means
of traditional Indo-European elements or borrowed (the ancestral form

of) θάλασσα to designate the sea, that new element they now had come
into contact with.

    According to the majority view, if there is one in this matter
(Frisk and Chantraine leave all doors open), θάλασσα is a loan from
some preIE source (e.g., Huber 1921:27; Meillet 1930:12; Schwyzer 1.
58; Bertoldi 1950:71; Lesky 1943/1966; 1947:8-9; Hofmann 1951:110;
Hester 1965:354, 383; Beekes 1969:13, 190). None of the above scholars
ventures a comparison with alleged circum-Mediterranean substrate
languages. Such a noncommittal position is apt to bring out the neg-
ative character of non-IE solutions: A given word not lending itself
to systematization within the descriptive framework of IE comparative-
historical grammar(s) is, as it were, doomed to a non-world of *dis-
iecta membra*. Extra grammaticam nulla salus! And it is rather the
etymological *non liquet* that creates the scholarly intuition about
the "un-Greek" appearance of θάλασσα than the other way around.

    At least the following attempts have been made to substantiate
the guess about θάλασσα being of non-IE extraction:
(1) a. Dravidian origin (Autran 1939:82);
     b. Kartveloid Armenian δα-γlaþ 'big watercourse'
         > θάλασσα (Karst 1930:33);
     c. Theme *to, tol, dol, tal, tala* 'waters (etc.)': "Dr. du s.,
         *talla,*mare, citerne; *tadaga,* étang; *toya,* eau, rivière,...;
         berb., *taduri,* chute d'eau (Wölfel); arabe, *tall,* pluie légère;
         tal-ag, neige; *tala,* mouiller; berb. Ahaggar, et kab., *tala,*
         fontaine; berb. Zawa, *thala,* source; berb. Chaouia, *tala,*
         mare (cf. drav.); berb., *tahala,* petite source (Wölfel); hébr.,
         tal, rosée. Anc. gr., *thala-ssa,* la mer; *tellō,* mouiller,
         tremper, arroser. Probablement, sum., *tul,* source" (Lahovary
         1957:234/§ 532);
     d. PreIE ("Alarodic") *dhala(n)khja* > θάλασσα and (allegedly
         Macedonian) δαλάγχα; whereas Albanian *dēt* 'sea' < "Alarodic"
         dhaja(n)khta (Oštir 1924 [non vidi; abstract in IdgJb 1I
         (1927) 80-81/no.59]);

e. PreIE *sal+ 'sea-water' > Dor. σάλασσα > θάλασσα (Battisti
   1942:372);

f. θάλασσα~σάλασσα (cf. σάλος 'tossing motion, esp. of the sea';
   ζάλη 'surging of the sea') as an exemplification of the cor-
   respondence τ θ δ ~ σ(σ)ζ, allegedly typical of pre-Greek
   Wortgut (Furnée 1972:256).

The fact that there are no "genetically pure" languages lends
substratum studies their due theoretical justification. But this field
of research is methodologically problematic, because the material which
its practitioners have to deal with is meager, heterogenous and often
difficult to subject to semantic control. In these circumstances it
is a pragmatic necessity to become a disbeliever in strict sound laws.
But there are no other means but (grammatical generalizations expressed
by) sound laws to explicate genetic relatedness in a methodologically
non-arbitrary and intersubjectively controllable way. For want of Laut-
gesetze, the generalizations must be based on more or less impression-
istic sound assonances. Such a "phonaesthetic" comparison easily tran-
scends the confines of probability and becomes what Paper (1958:556)
sarcastically, yet appositely, calls the "Stream-of-Consciousness
Comparative Method" and Hubschmid (1955:18), "Kling-Klang-Verglei-
chung". I suspect that the proposals mentioned in 1(a-c) result from
wielding such a method. Given the current methodological tenets, con-
necting θάλασσα and τέλλω is arbitrary. Here (Pseudo-)Voltaire's famous
characterization of etymology as "une science où les voyelles ne font
rien et les consonnes fort peu de chose" is perfectly apposite. As
fas as Oštir's proposal 1(d) is concerned, his reduction of θάλασσα and
Alb. dēt to the allegedly preIE variants *dhala(n)khja and *dhala(n)-
khta, respectively, intimates, through the family resemblance of these
protowords, the ultimate genetic relatedness of the Greek and Albanian
words for 'sea'. But Jokl's (1911) commonly received (cf. Çabej 1972:
134) etymology dēt 'sea' < *deub+eto+ 'deep(ness)' seems phonological-
ly and semantically unassailable. Battisti's argument 1(e) is crucial-
ly dependent on the focality of Dor. σάλασσα (> θάλασσα by "dissimi-
lazione regressiva"); and Furnée's 1(f) connection of three

etymological cruces (θάλασσα ~σάλος ~ ζάλη) does not deepen our etymological knowledge in any way.

1.2. Indo-Europeanist attempts

In Indo-Europeanist solutions θάλασσα is analyzed as consisting of the root θαλ(α)+, to which the suffixal element +(α)σσα (<+(a)(n)-gh+ya) has been attached. In what follows we shall concentrate on the radical element.

(2) a. ProtoIE *dhel+ 'something deep/low'; 'Wölbung, Höhlung' (cf. Pokorny, 245): θόλος 'round building'; θάλαμος 'inner room'; Goth. dals 'valley, ditch'; etc. (Buck 1936; 1949:36);

   b. PIE *del+ (Pokorny, 196) 'long'; there are two variant proposals to this effect, viz. (A) θάλασσα < *dhl_oHghya[1] (Pisani 1931; 1974:148/no.286; accepted by Bartoli 1950:15); (B) θάλασσα < *dhálassa < *dH$_e$lH$_1$ghyH < *dl_oH$_1$ghyH (Vey 1955);

   c. PIE *del(H)+ 'extend': Lith. délna 'innere, flache Hand'; OSl dlanь 'Handfläche' [apud Pokorny, 194f., included in the entry del+ 'spalten, schitzen, kunstvoll behauen'] (Hirt 1900: 88, where initial dh- is reconstructed; accepted by Petersson 1921:260; independently proposed by Merlingen 1967:31);

   d. PIE *sal+ (cf. Pokorny, 878) 'salt' (Steinhauser 1959);

   e. PIE *(s)tel+ 'let flow' (cf. Pokorny, 1018): στάλαγμα 'drop'; etc. (Georgiev 1939 [apud Hester 1965:354]);

   f. PIE *tel+ 'flach(er Boden, Brett)' (cf. Pokorny, 1061): Skt talam 'palm; surface'; etc. (Van Windekens 1949:200-201; 1952: 56, 88);

   g. θάλασσα <*θάλαχ ja~PAlb. *del't > Alb. dēt (deit, dejët) 'sea', originally 'the swelling one' (Bugge 1892:165).

As far as the initial consonant is concerned, only 2(a) seems not to involve formal complications: PIE dh- can be mapped onto Greek

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1 For simplicity of presentation I am here using H as the cover symbol for schwa (ə) as well as for various laryngealistic orthographies (ə̯,ħ,H).

ϑ- by a well-established rule. The rest of the ProtoGk representa-
tion *ϑαλα+ must be derived from the reduced grade of a seṭ root
(i.e. $dh\underset{o}{l}H+$ or perhaps rather $dh_e lH+$; cf. Beekes 1969:206-209). To
account for the initial ϑ- in θάλασσα Pisani (2(bA)) posits an in-
itial dh- for the PIE root for 'long'; but accounting for Skt $dīrghá+$
and Gk δολιχός in terms of dissimilatory deaspiration is arbitrary.
Also in Hirt's analysis 2(c) θάλασσα is the crucial case in recon-
structing initial aspiration for the root. Vey's attempt (2(bB)) to
derive the aspiration by means of the rule $\underset{o}{l}H >$ Hάλα is unacceptable
(see Cowgill 1965:173-174; Polomé 1965:31 n. 132; Beekes 1969:209).
In the remaining proposals resort has to be made to minor rules ex-
pressing generalizations about sub-regularities in the Greek lexicon.
Rules such as

(3)   a. PIE d- > "Gk" th- (= Gk ϑ-) [2(c)/Merlingen];

      b. PIE s- > "Gk" þ- (> Gk ϑ-) [2(d)];

      c. PIE t- > "Gk" th- (= Gk ϑ-) [2(e-f)]

can be defined as obligatory and exceptionless only by assuming that
they belong to the phonological component of another, categorically
different, non-Greek yet IE, Sprachsystem ("langue") from which Greek
has borrowed. Calling this language "Exceptionese" would adequately
characterize its methodological status; but its customary denomination
is "Pelasgian", a name that implies an attempt to giving an ontological
interpretation to this "language", which is reconstructible only through
Greek.

1.3. Concluding assessment: No breakthrough so far!

Ancient etymologies of θάλασσα are conveniently summarized in
EM 441,26-31:

ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ: Παρὰ τὸν σάλον, σάλασσα καὶ θάλασσα μεταθέσει τοῦ Σ
εἰς Θ, ὡς ὀρχησμός, ὀρχηθμός. Ἢ παρὰ τὸ ἆσσον εἶναι θανάτου
γίνεται θάνασσα, καὶ θάλασσα. Ἢ παρὰ τὴν ἁλὸς γενικήν, ἅλασσα·
καὶ πλεονασμῷ τοῦ Θ, θάλασσα. Ἢ παρὰ τὸ τείνω, ἐκ τοῦ ἐπιτετα-
μένην ἔχειν τὴν ὁδόν.

As compared with these ancient views, the etymological proposals listed
in 1 and 2 hardly imply a real advancement or deepening of etymological
knowledge. So, they seem to deserve Frisk's wholesale verdict: "Die
wiederholten Versuche, die bis in die neueste Zeit gemacht worden
sind, um das Wort aufzuklären, müssen alle als gelinde gesagt hypo-
thetisch betrachtet werden" (GEW 1.649). The only noticeable mark of
progress is Lesky's careful semantic explication (1943 = 1966:468-
478; summary, 1947:9-11), which boils down to the result that in Homer
θάλασσα is a polysemous word denoting both 'sea' and 'sea-/salt-water
(esp. in shore)'. This descriptive statement is certainly acceptable,
but Lesky's historical conclusion, according to which 'sea-/salt-water'
was the original meaning, is not cogent at all. His conclusion is
based on the following argumentation (cf. Lesky 1966:477ff.):

(4)   a. ἅλς is (largely) commutable, and hence synonymous, with θά-
         λασσα;

      b. ἅλς 'salt(-water) > 'sea' witnesses the semantic development
         from [-countable] (i.e. mass-noun) to [+countable];

      c. hence, it is probable, "zumal dies unserem Wissen um häufige
         Formen der Sprachentwicklung entspricht", that the synonymous
         θάλασσα has developed the same way.

To be sure, this meaning development is rendered probable-in-principle
by the parallel adduced in 4(b), but it is possible to quote contrary
parallels as well: Latin *mare* 'sea' is sometimes used to denote sea-
water (see TLL 8.389,32-51): e.g., Ovid. met. 3,686 *mare naribus ef-
flant* 'they gush the sea-water from their nostrils' is quite compar-
able with Od. 5,455-456 θάλασσα δὲ κήκιε πολλή / ἀν στόμα τε ῥῖνάς θ'
'and streams of sea-water gushed from his mouth and nostrils'. Lesky's
qualification "zumal..." in 4(c) is supposed to involve a kind of
naturalness argument for the directionality required by his semantic
reconstruction. But not much can be capitalized on this claim, which
seems to be based on more on intuition than on empirical data.

2. Against a metaphorical interpretation of the "sea" on
    the Athenian acropolis

2.1. The Indexicality Argument

Working on the assumption that the original meaning of θάλασ-
σα can be revealed by investigating Homer's use of this word, Lesky
does not pay due attention to those instances in which θάλασσα oc-
curs "in seiner seltsamsten Verwendung" (cf. Lesky 1966:469-470).

In his detailed but somewhat ambiguously worded eyewitness'
account of the so-called Erechtheion on the Athenian acropolis,
Pausanias (1,26,5) tells us that inside the temple there is ὕδωρ
θαλάσσιον ἐν φρέατι 'sea-water in a well/cistern', a sacred token
of Poseidon. The same object is referred to by Herodotus in the
following passage:

> ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλι ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθέος τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου
> εἶναι νηός, ἐν τῷ ἐλαίη τε καὶ θάλασσα ἔνι, τὰ λόγος παρὰ
> Ἀθηναίων Ποσειδέωνά τε καὶ Ἀθηναίην ἐρίσαντας περὶ τῆς χώ-
> ρης μαρτύρια θέσθαι
>
> 'on that acropolis there is the temple of Erechtheus, who is
> said to be earthborn, wherein an olive tree and a θάλασσα which,
> according the the Athenian tradition, were set by Poseidon and
> Athene as tokens of their strife for the land' (Hdt. 8,55).

The use of θάλασσα in the present context is remarkable enough:
Whatever was referred to by Herodotus was certainly not a sea, but
rather a spring, a pool, a well, or a cistern. Presumably Herodotus
was using (the Ionian shape of) the traditional Athenian appellation,
but the problem still stands. What is the reason for such a rash
metaphor? One conceivable answer goes in terms of what will be called
the

(5) Indexicality Argument

The word θάλασσα was used in order to bring out the indexical
(or metonymic) relation between Poseidon and the sacred pool/
well, qua his token and, as it were, part of his salt-water

reign; and although θάλασσα was not a very adequate expression
for a pool or a well, it certainly brought out the fact that
the object in question contained salt-water.
This argument, I take it, involves a fair picture of the views held
by most modern scholars as well as by Greeks of the classical age.

2.2. Why the Indexicality Argument fails

The Indexicality Argument presupposes that Poseidon here fig-
ures as the Sea God. It will become evident in this section that this
assumption cannot be maintained.

2.2.1. Poseidon's lordship of the sea represents a relatively
late systematization, which was handed down by Homer to the classical
age. It is probable that earlier Poseidon was the god of inland wa-
ters. In this quality his role as the "Quellöffner" is very prominent
(see e.g. Gruppe 1906:1147; Lesky 1947:97-98; Schachermeyr 1950:22-
25,32,37-38,46,50,142,179; Schweitzer 1952:388,392; Wüst 1953:479,
492; Webster 1958:47-48; Nilsson 1960:450-451; Hunger 1975:345-346).
Note in this context also the eponyms κραναῖος (SEG 15 [1958] no.377)
and κρηνοῦχος (Cornutus 22 [p. 44,4 Lang]). It has even been recently
suggested by Littleton (1973) that Poseidon was the Greek reflex of
the(?) IE "Source of Waters" deity. According to the commonly (though
often reluctantly) received etymology, Ποσειδῶων was the husband (πό-
σις) of the Earth (δᾶ). But Chadwick (1976:86-87) is quite justified
in pointing out the shaky linguistic grounds of this etymology. Now
Littleton (434-436) - obviously independently of Carnoy (1924), who
made a similar suggestion - connects the element -δα- with IE *dā+
'(flowing) water' (cf. Pokorny, 175), the underlying base of two IE
word stems, viz. *dān+u/ew+ 'flowing water' and *dām+ 'drip, drizzle
(etc.)', reconstructible on the basis of
(6)   Skt dānu+ 'drop, dew';
        Avest. dānu+ 'river'; Ossetic don (< dan) 'water, river';
        Scythian (Hdt.) Τάναις (< *dānavya+ < IE *dānew+yo+) 'Don';

Engl. (river names) *Do(o)n* < **dānu+*;

Celtic *Donwy* (< **dānow+yā+*), river in Wales

       Dānuvius 'Danube'

       Condāte 'Confluens';

Russian *Dnjepr*/Δάναπρις < Iran. **dan+apra+* 'deep river',

       Dnjestr/Δάναστρις < Iran. **dan+ystyr+* 'quck river'

       (Schmid 1978:19),

and

(7)   Gk δημός (< **dāmós*) 'fat, grease';

      Alb. *dhjamë* 'fat, tallow';

      Arm. *tamuk* 'humid, dewy';

      Hitt. *dame(n)k* 'drizzle (?)',

respectively.

It is easy to see that δᾶ 'flowing water' is better and more
directly attested than $^?$δᾶ 'earth' (pace Sakellariou 1977:112-113),
and therefore the interpretation of Ποσειδάων as 'Lord (rather than
'Husband'; Szemerényi 1977:9) of (Flowing) Waters' is a welcome al-
ternative to the pragmatic marriage of Poseidon and Demeter.

Whether Littleton's etymology is accepted or not, it is evident
that Poseidon the Opener of Springs represents an older tradition tha:
Poseidon the Lord of the Sea. Now, in the mythical contention for
Attica Poseidon certainly figures as the Opener of Springs; witness
Apollodorus' account:

    ἧκεν οὖν πρῶτος Ποσειδῶν ἐπὶ τὴν 'Αττικήν, καὶ πλήξας τῇ τρι-
    αίνῃ κατὰ μέσην τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἀπέφηνε ϑάλασσαν, ἣν νῦν 'Ερε-
    χϑηίδα καλοῦσι

    'so Poseidon was the first to come to Attica, and thrusting
    his trident to the middle of the acropolis he produced a ϑά-
    λασσα which they now call the Erechtheid Sea' (Apollod. Bibl.
    3,14,1).

Is it possible that Poseidon figures as both the Sea God and the
Quellöffner at the same time? In principle Poseidon the Sea God
and Poseidon the Opener of Springs belong to different cycles and
and are thus in complementary distribution: qua marine deity Poseidon

does not strike springs (cf. Schachermeyr 1950:44,47,161, cf. 50;
Schweitzer 1952:388; Nilsson 1960:451).[2] But such a compartmentali-
zation was hardly borne out in the long run. In the present case,
however, it seems more probable than not that this mythical contest
reflects a situation that antedates Poseidon's lordship of the sea.[3]

2.2.2. At least two possible situational moorings have been
proposed for Poseidon's mythical contention with Athene for Attica.

2.2.2.1. "The most reasonable interpretation of the myth is
the historical, which sees in it a transfigured reminiscence of a
struggle between two cults, and the different worshippers of two
deities, Athene-worshippers, Poseidon-worshippers, in which case,
further, the Poseidonians can be no other than Ionians, and the
Ἀθηναῖοι may well be the natives" (Macan 1908:442; with lit.). In
this account the myth is connected with the so-called Ionian migra-
tion. Though there may be some room for controversy, it is nonetheless
probable that this migration took place in two phases (Schachermeyr
1961), viz.

(I) The first Post-Mycenaean Migration
     during the 12th c. B.C. from Pylos [via Eleusis and Salamis?]
     to Athens (Sourvinou-Inwood 1973; Webster 1958:141-142,148,153;
     Sarkady 1966:26);

(II) The second Post-Mycenaean Migration (Ionian Migration Proper)

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2 "Entsprechend der veränderten Auffassung des Gottes fällt auch für
   den Dichter seine Eigenschaft als Quellöffner vollkommen weg"
   (Schachermeyr 1950:47); "Das Gegenbild zu den Festlandskulten bieten
   die Kulte des kykladisch-ionischen Bereichs. Hier fehlen...die Be-
   ziehungen...zu Quellen und ihrer Öffnung...ganz. Poseidon ist ganz
   zum Meeresgott geworden" (Schweitzer 1952:388); "Die Bekanntschaft
   mit dem Meer hat ihm besonders unter den schiffahrenden Joniern zum
   Meeresgott gemacht. Von den Quellen...wurde er zurückgedrängt"
   (Nilsson 1960:451).
3 It is true that at the end of the same paragraph it is told by
   Apollodorus that angry about the twelve gods' verdict, according
   to which the country was adjudged to Athene, Poseidon "laid Attica
   under the sea", but this is likely to be a later accretion.

around 1000 B.C. from Athens and Attica to Aegean islands and
the Anatolian coast (Cook 1961:13; Sarkady 1966:22; Webster
1958:141,153).

It is well-known that Poseidon was the supreme deity at Pylos, and
it is quite conceivable that Migration-I may have had some impact
on the Athenian cultic organization: There may have been claims for
supremacy of Poseidon over Athene Polias, and a memory of this con-
flict may have been preserved in a mythical garment.

But Poseidon did not become a full-fledged sea god until Mi-
gration-II (Schachermeyr 1950:44,46,160-161; Schweitzer 1952:388,392,
395; Wüst 1953:460; Nilsson 1960:449; Hunger 1975:346). So, the myth
seems to reflect a situation that is some 200 years earlier than
Poseidon's metamorphosis into the marine deity.

2.2.2.2. It is possible, however, that the temporal gap is
even wider. According to Picard (1931:23-42), the mythical struggle
between Poseidon and Athene reflects the first fights carried on by
the Eleusinians under Eumolpos, son of Poseidon, against Athens under
Erechtheus, protégé of Athene. These struggles for the sovereignty
over Attica antedate the much-debated συνοικισμός which, in turn,
must for several reasons be dated as early as the Mycenaean period
(Padgug 1972; Sarkady 1966).

2.2.3. It has always been taken as self-evident that in the
mythical contention for Attica, the opponent of Athene was the Sea
God. Semantic analysis of Poseidon (§ 2.2.1.) suggested that Athene
was in fact contending with Poseidon the Opener of Springs - a quality
that belongs to an earlier, if not original (cf. Littleton), cycle.
This was found to be compatible with considerations of external evi-
dence provided by possible situational moorings of the myth (§ 2.2.2.).
Accordingly, also the θάλασσα on the Athenian acropolis had been
brought forth, not by the Lord of the Sea, but rather by the Opener
of Springs.

This semantic characterization of Poseidon involves an expli-
cation of the feeling, rather common among the scholars, that in
the present context ϑάλασσα must denote a spring or, metonymically,
a pool (as fed by the spring). More importantly, it also opens a fresh
heuristic doorway out of the etymological impasse of ϑάλασσα. But to
advance on this path we must abandon the Indexicality Argument (5)
as an explanation of why something that was not a sea was referred
to by the word ϑάλασσα. There are other reasons as well for giving
up this argument: (1) 'spring', even 'salt-water spring', as a syn-
chronic metaphor of 'sea' is open to doubt; (2) even if it is true
that ϑάλασσα also means 'sea-/salt-water', there is a significant
constraint for this polysemy: ϑάλασσα means 'sea-water *in loco*'; i.e.,
'salt-water' in a marine context, not e.g. in the context of pickling
(for which there is ἄλμη).

3. The context of semantic change as a heuristic doorway to
   the etymology of ϑάλασσα

Oddities of usage become understandable, when placed in proper
context; in the present case: the context of semantic change (cf.
Maher's 1977:70 "context of chronological state"). So, from now on,
we hypothesize that 'sea' was not the original meaning of ϑάλασσα.

3.1. Vestiges of pre-marine meanings of ϑάλασσα

3.1.1. Θάλασσα 'Ερεχϑηίς. We do not know for certain what kind
of physical reality was denoted by Θάλασσα 'Ερεχϑηίς somewhere inside
the Erechtheion. Pausanias' expression ὕδωρ ϑαλάσσιον ἐν φρέατι is
ambiguous as to whether there was a well of sea-water or an artificial
cistern within the building, but the former possibility is ruled out
by the fact that "there are no remains of a true well, and had there
been one, its shaft could not have disappeared entirely" (Jeppesen
1979:384). So, we seem to have to content ourselves with the idea of
cistern; and indeed, such a cistern could be thought of as historically

underlying the medieval cistern recovered in the "prostomiaion"
in the west part of the Erechtheion (cf. e.g. Travlos 1971:218).
However, even if this were the correct identification of what Pau-
sanias saw, it would not take us far enough. Whereas the Erechtheion
was there only since the end of the 5th c. B.C. (and there is no
evidence for an earlier building on the same spot), the "Erechtheid
Sea" is likely to have existed much earlier   (cf. § 2).

The myth of Athene's and Poseidon's struggle suggests that
Θάλασσα 'Ερεχθηίς was a spring. Now, there is literary, onomastic,
cultic and archaeological evidence to show that there was a spring
accessible from the plateau of the acropolis.

The literary evidence consists in a single passage from Plato's
Critias 112d, presented and commented upon by Broneer (1939:429):

> κρήνη δ' ἦν μία κατὰ τὸν τῆς νῦν ἀκροπόλεως τόπον, ἧς ἀποσβεσ-
> θείσης ὑπὸ τῶν σεισμῶν τὰ νῦν νάματα σμικρὰ κύκλῳ καταλέλειπται
> 'there was one fountain in the region of the Acropolis, but this
> was destroyed by earthquakes, and nothing remains but the small
> springs which now trickle out all around' (Broneer's translation).

The cultic evidence - which will be considered conjointly with
onomastic and archaeological evidence - consists in the pre-history
of a rite known as the Arrephoria. The key passage describing the
δρώμενα of this ritual is Pausanias 1,27,3, which has been presented,
commented upon, and interpreted by so many scholars that a 'noch einmal'
would be boring. (The best interpretation of what the Arrephoria con-
ceivably meant to the Athenians at least in historical time has been
presented by Burkert 1966; but see also Deubner 1932:9-17; Broneer
1932:50-54, Adrados 1951; Parke 1977:141ff.; Jeppesen 1979:392).Here
we are primarily concerned with (1) reconstructing the name of the
proto-rite; (2) relating some of the δρώμενα of the rite semantically
to onomastic data.

Consider first the name ἀρρηφόρια. As such the constituent ἀρρη+
means nothing; and interpreting ἀρρηφόρια as a Kurzform of ἀρρητοφόρια
'bearing of unspoken things' (Schol. Lucian. [Dial. meretr. 2,1] 276,13

Rabe; Deubner 9ff.)[4] or *ἀρρηνοφόρια 'bearing of *virilia*' (Adrados
1951:128) involves a quasi-etymological attempt to rationalize
beliefs about what was going on in the ritual ceremony. There is
not much hope that these "underlying" forms will ever open doors
to etymological insight, although both of them certainly picture some
aspects of synchronic reality. Moreover, in these solutions resort
would have to be made to "weak phonetic change" (or more technically:
sporadic, variable [historical-] phonological rules), which induces
a descriptive complication.

Ἀρρηφόρια has the spelling variant ἐρρηφόρια,[5] which was al-
ready in antiquity etymologized as ἐρσηφόρια 'dew-bearing'. What
immediately speaks for this etymology is morphological well-formedness:
ἐρση+φόρια is a perfect compound as such, without extra operations.
And ἔρρη is a perfect Attic shape of the lexeme for 'dew'. Its ante-
cedent was quite conceivably ἐέρση (cf. ἐέλδομαι > ἔλδομαι; Forbes
1958:256); and if the rite is ultimately traceable to Mycenaean Athens,
as I suppose it is, the name for the proto-rite was *ewersāphória.

It is quite feasible to hypothesize such a proto-rite, if it
can be ralated to some historically attested phenomena with the con-
sequence of contributing to the understanding of their nature or
historical provenance. Now it is remarkable that the ritual passage
of the Arrephoroi led from the precinct of Pandrosos to the precinct
of Aglauros: "von Pandrosos zu Aglauros führt der Weg der ἀρρηφόροι"
(Burkert 1966:12). This will be shown to be a vestigial trace of the
proto-rite.

It has been clear since Maass (1910) that Ἄγλαυρος, i.e. ἀγλ+
αυρος, is semantically equivalent to ἀγλαὸν ὕδωρ 'clear water'. (On

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4 This interpretation probably goes back to the atthidographer Istros
   (3rd c. B.C.); Adrados 1951:126-127.
5 Ascribing the variation α~ε to dialect mixture (Adrados, 129) creates
   unnecessary phonological problems. But it is also misleading to in-
   terprete the variation as evidence for two synchronically different
   and distinct rites as was done by Deubner: "Neben den Arrephoren
   gibt es auch Errephoren der Athena" (1932:13; cf. Parke 1977:142-143,
   198 n. 182). The correct interpretation is, in my opinion, that the
   name variant Errephoria reflects the name of the proto-rite.

αὐρ+ 'water', see Frisk, GEW 1,112 & 103f.; Schmid 1973.) Maass'
interpretation "Ἄγλαυρος ist der 'Bezirk der klaren Quelle'" (340)
was like a divination: Some three decades later, Broneer (1939)
happened to discover, as the result of a technically difficult ex-
ploration, a Mycenaean spring-well, the outer entrance to which was
the very cave of Aglauros (cf. Travlos 1971:72).

     There is, thus, external archaeological evidence to show that
the name Aglauros did not come out of the blue. What about Pandrosos?
It is peculiar that a spot so exposed to the burning sun was sacred
to Πάνδροσος (i.e. παν+δροσος) 'All-Dewy'. Association with dew
cannot possibly have been conditioned by physical qualities of the
place. The appellation must have been conceptually motivated. Given
the proto-name *ewersāphória, it may not be too rash to hypothesize
that in Mycenaean times a ritual water-bearing[6] used to take place
from the spring to the spot, where the olive tree grew. It is think-
able that the name Pandrosos was given to indicate the other end of
a ritual "trajectory" from the precinct of Aglauros to that of Pan-
drosos.

     That the ritual water-fetching involved a fertility rite can
be inferred from the appellation ἐρρηφόρια (< *ewersāphória): the
idea of 'dew, rain' as a fertilizing liquid goes back to the IE poly-
semy *Hwers+ 'dew' ~ 'sire' (cf. Benveniste 1973:19-22). Around 1200
B.C., the Mycenaean spring was damaged presumably by an earthquake
(Broneer 1939:423-424; cf. Plat. Crit. 112d, quoted above); and in
sub-Mycenaean times it was possible to descend only the two upper-
most flights of stairs (I-II; see Broneer 1939: Plate XIII) leading
from the acropolis plateau (i.e., the House of the Arrephoroi) to
the cave of Aglauros. This physical upheaval was conjecturally one
factor responsible for the metamorphosis of the fertility rite *Ĕwersā-
phória to the initiation rite (Burkert 1966:13ff.) Arrephoria.

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6 "The underground passage with its dark and tortuous descent to the
   fountain, where maidens in the service of the king used to go down
   to fetch water for the royal household, furnished the proper con-
   ditions for the growth of such legends" (Broneer 1939:428).

To sum up, there can be no doubt that all four types of
evidence (i.e., literary, onomastic, cultic, archaeological) point
to the same physical entity, viz. the Mycenaean spring-well in the
precinct of Aglauros just beneath the so-called House of the Arre-
phoroi.

Now, interestingly, preliminary arguments have been put for-
ward by Jeppesen (1979) for the provocative claim that the ancient
Erechtheion was not identical with the temple of Athene Polias, *alias*
(according to the customary identification) the Erechtheion. Re-inter-
preting pertinent literary passages as well as archaeological re-
mains he draws the (tentative) conclusion that the ancient Erechthei-
on "was a separate structure situated near the cleft above the My-
cenaean well" (1979:393). This structure is obviously to be identified
with the quadrangular foundation of the so-called House of the Arre-
phoroi (cf. Stevens 1936:190-191) or - as far as Hdt 8,55 is concerned
- with the older structure, which was obviously replaced by the "House
of the Arrephoroi" (Jeppesen 1979:386-388).[7] One of the strongest
arguments for Jeppesen's proposal consists in the fact that now, for
the first time, Θάλασσα ʼΕρεχθηίς can be related to something, the
existence of which is archaeologically evidenced without accessory
speculations. Furthermore, the Mycenaean spring qua Θάλασσα ʼΕρεχθηίς
brought forth by Poseidon is compatible with his role as the Opener
of Springs; and the chasm of this well matches the superhuman power
of a divinity.[8]

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7 This interesting identification Jeppesen bases on Bundgaard's (1976:
   34) observation, according to which the House of the Arrephoroi
   "was not the first building on this site. Inside the quadrangle
   is preserved the south-east corner of an older building of approx-
   imately the same size and also incorporating the mouth cf the cave
   [i.e., the chasm above the well/MN]. Since both buildings serve
   and depend upon the descent in the cleft there can be no doubt
   that this descent had an important role in an equally important
   cult".
8 In antiquity the strife-theme was conventionalized so as to accord
   an inconceivably debased role to Poseidon, as Robert (1881:74) quite
   justifiably observed: "Namentlich muss ich bekennen, dass mir die
   dem Poseidon zufallende Rolle eines Gottes unwürdig, ja possenhaft
   und burlesk erscheint".

But the identification of Θάλασσα ʾΕρεχθηίς with the My-
cenaean spring need not depend on whether Jeppesen's claims for
a new identification of the ancient Erechtheion are accepted or not.
There is no evidence for another body of water accessible from the
acropolis plateau but just the Mycenaean spring discovered by Broneer.
Hence, there can be no room for doubt that, at least originally,
Θάλασσα ʾΕρεχθηίς, was the appellation of this spring. Although this
is "only" a "how else?" type of argument, it must be taken seriously
because "a theory which might be true is better than a false theory
or no theory at all" (Itkonen, ms. 1980:11).

3.1.2. Additional instances. Consider the following two instances
from Ionian (Carian) inscriptions, in which θάλασσα denotes a lake
or a pool (see Faure 1914:195, who gives the Latin translation 'la-
cus'):

    GDI 5727a,44 (Halicarnassus; 5th c. B.C.) ἐπρίατο ... τὴν θά-
        λασσαν, ὅπου τὸ ὀρκυνεῖον 'he bought the lake, where (there
        is) the thunny-fishery';

    GDI 5516,6 (Iasus; 4th c. B.C.) ὑπὲρ τῆς μικρῆς θαλάσσης δια-
        λεχθέντες 'having consulted on the small lake'.

Descriptively, these instances indicate the polysemy 'sea' ~ 'lake,
pool' of the lexeme θάλασσα. In conformity with descriptive principles
of historical grammar, we now raise the issue of directionality of
change: Which of these principal meanings is likely to have been the
earlier one? When dealing with historical semantics of geographical
phenomena, Sachwandel is always to be reckoned with: as far as waters
are concerned, inland people migrating to coastal and insular regions
often denote the sea by means of their traditional word for inland
waters (lake, pool, marsh, swamp, etc.). A classical example is Ger-
manic *saiwaz 'lake': "Wie das Gotische lehrt, bezeichnete urgerm.
*saiwaz ursprünglich einen Binnensee. Erst an der Meeresküste wurde
es auf den Ozean übertragen, wobei das sekundäre Femininum *die See*
aufkam, und erst vom Niederdeutschen aus setzte sich diese Verwendung
des Wortes durch" (Nehring 1959:124). Another example is WestIE *mari

'lake, inland water' (Nehring 1959:125,135), which is most likely
to be of preIE extraction.[9] Sardinian *mara* 'marsh, swamp' and Cor-
sican *mara* 'watering-canal for orchards' evidence for a pre-Latin
word **mara* 'marsh' (Hubschmid 1954:63-67), which is likely to belong
to a preIE substratum (Lazzeroni 1964:60-62), vestigial traces of
which surface in sundry WestIE languages (Nehring 1959:passim).

There is no reason not to believe that the converse holds true
as well. However, for some reason, occasional metaphorical extensions
seem to tend to favor the directionality 'lake; marsh' > 'sea', rather
than the other way around; witness e.g. Gk λίμνη 'pool, lake', which
is met with in Homer also in the meaning 'sea' (e.g. Il. 13,21; Od.
5,337).

On this account, it seems not too rash descriptively to reduce
the polysemy 'sea' ~ 'lake, pool' of θάλασσα to the quasi-historical
sequence 'lake, pool' > 'sea'.

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9 Lesky (1947) amasses an impressive amount of literary, linguistic,
  archaeological, religious and other evidence for the Greeks' original
  Seefremdheit. An important piece of evidence consists in his obser-
  vation that there is no Greek counterpart of PIE **mari* 'sea': "Sie
  haben ihn auf ihre Wanderung entweder gar nicht mitgenommen oder in
  deren Verlauf zusammen mit der Kenntnis der Sache verloren" (1947:
  9). This conclusion shows how linguistic reconstruction may affect
  our view on large-scale historical events. The ideal situation from
  a methodological point of view is of course one in which a given
  reconstructed PIE base is systematically reflected in every single
  historical IE language. But this is not the case in **mari*, which
  is "isoglossically" confined to WestIE languages. Lesky's conclu-
  sion is based on the following property of the IE family-tree model:
  given an "isoglossic" reconstruction (e.g. WestIE **mari*), it is in
  principle possible to copy it to the higher node(s). This strategy
  is favored by the method, the ethos of which is that reconstructive
  mapping onto PIE is to be maximized. This ethos, in turn, springs
  from the methodological fact that the explanatory power of a theory
  resides in its generality.
  Reconstructive mapping of **mari* onto PIE creates a professional obli-
  gation to explain, why the reflexes of this reconstruct are lacking
  in all, but the WestIE, languages. In the spirit of Lesky it could
  be argued that, except for WestIE, all IE tribes (not just the Greeks)
  lost their contacts with the sea and, consequently, the correspond-
  ing linguistic sign as well. This argument, if accepted, would give
  reason to locate the "Urheimat" somewhere along the West-European
  coast, which is improbable.

3.2. The etymon of Θάλασσα

According to our hypothesis Θάλασσα did not originally mean 'sea' or 'sea-water'. As a matter of fact, this is the implicit assumption in all the proposals listed in 2(a-g), but not a single piece of external evidence has ever been adduced in their support. It was suggested in § 3.1.2. above that 'lake, pool' may have been one antecedent meaning of Θάλασσα 'sea'. But an even older meaning, viz. 'spring', was unravelled as the result of the discussion in § 3.1.1. above. It is more probable than not that Θάλασσα ᾿Ερεχθηίς was the name of the Mycenaean spring-well on the Athenian acropolis. By this I do not mean that the word Θάλασσα was coined in Athens to denote a given spring. What I mean is that a valuable vestigial trace - a veritable "palimpsest effect" (cf. Maher 1977:33-34) - has been preserved and handed down to us in the traditional appellation Θάλασσα ᾿Ερεχθηίς.

It was long ago suggested by Bugge (1892:165) that Θάλασσα should be related to the word-family θάλλω,[10] θαλερός (universally glossed as) 'to grow, bloom' and 'green, fresh', respectively (cf. 2(g)). The phonological fit is of course perfect in this proposal, but the semantic chasm between Θάλασσα and θάλλω seems difficult to patch up. However, it will become evident in this section that Bugge's intuition lends itself to an explication, in which all parts fall into place.

3.2.1. It is the merit of Lowenstam (1979) to have convincingly explicated the semantic relation between Gk θάλλω, θαλερός; Alb. *del* 'to appear, emerge, go out'; and Arm. *dalar* (cf. θαλερός) 'green, fresh'. All of these words can be formally derived from the under-lying root *dhal+*, which has traditionally been glossed as 'to grow, bloom' (e.g. Pokorny, 234). But Lowenstam points out with good reason that such a primary meaning cannot account for, or make understand-able, all the variegated uses of θάλλω, θαλερός. He establishes four

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10 Except for τεθήλει (Od. 5,69), only various participial forms of this verb are attested in Homer.

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major contexts ("semantic spheres") with pertinent formulaic syntagms
which he takes as reflecting archaic collocations; viz.

(8)   a.   WEEPING: θαλερὸν δάκρυ[11]

      b.   PORCINE FAT at FEASTS: τεθαλυῖα/θαλερὴ ἀλοιφή

                                      ῥάχις τεθαλυῖα ἀλοιφῇ

                                        ὕες θαλέθοντες ἀλοιφῇ

      c.   YOUTHS and FERTILITY: θαλεροὶ αἰζηοί

      d.   PLANT WORLD in association with WATER[12]

Now it is Lowenstam's suggestion that the semantic feature MOISTURE
was significantly involved in all the contexts listed in 8(a-d), and
so he reconstructs 'to spring forth with moisture <u>or</u> from moisture'
as the primary meaning of the root *dhal+. While I find Lowenstam's
semantic reconstruction acceptable, as far as it goes, I doubt that
he has exploited all of its potential.

    It may be useful to explicate Lowenstam's reconstruction in
terms of (an informal variant of) case-/valence-grammar. In the
reconstruction 'spring forth with moisture <u>or</u> from moisture', *dhal+
appears as a two-place verb contracting the case roles Obj(ect) and
Abl(ative). Note that 'with moisture' can hardly be taken as a case
role. It is rather an inherent feature of the verb; accordingly,
'spring forth with moisture' = 'gush forth'. So, *dhal+ appears to
belong to the verb type exemplified by Engl. *stream, gush, trickle,
ooze*; Fin. *vuotaa, pulputa, tihkua, suihkuta*; Lat. *manare, stillare*;
It. *grondare, stillare*; Gk ῥέω, κηκίω; etc., which share the same case
frame, viz.[13]

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11 These allegedly archaic syntagms are here presented in a reduced
    and simplified form.

12 "It is striking that with one exception (ἐλαῖαι τηλεθόωσαι, twice)
    epic formulae which can be identified as such by repetition are
    not attested in this semantic group" (Lowenstam, 129). It will be-
    come evident below that in the present context Lowenstam does not
    quote the etymologically relevant syntagms.

13 In the formal presentation I follow very roughly and non-committally
    Anderson (1971).

(9)

```
    V_____
    |                  Obj              Abl
    |                  N  \             /   N
    |                  |    \          /    |
    |                  |      \       /      \
e.g. gush            blood    ∅    from   the wound
     manat           cruor    ∅    ex     vulnere
     pulppuaa        vertta              haava+sta
          etc.              etc.
```

It is characteristic of these verbs that the grammatical function
of Subject can be assigned to Obj as well as to Abl:

(10)   a. Obj as Subject   b. Abl as Subject

         Αἷμα ῥεῖ ἐξ ὠτειλῆς   Ἡ ὠτειλὴ ῥεῖ αἵματι

         Cruor manat ex vulnere   Vulnus manat cruore

         Verta
         Veri pulppuaa haavasta   Haava pulppuaa verta

         Dalla ferita gronda sangue   La ferita gronda sangue

         Blood is gushing from the wound   The wound is gushing with
                                           blood

Now it is to be credited in favour of Lowenstam's reconstruction that
it tallies with the above pattern 9-10:

(11)

```
    V_____
    |             Obj              Abl
    |             /\               /\
    |            /  \             /  \
    |           /____\           /____\
```

θαλερόν	δάκρυ	∅	8(a)
θαλερή/τεθαλυῖα	ἀλοιφή	∅	8(b)
τεθαλυῖα	ἀλοιφῇ	ῥάχις	8(b)
θαλεροί	∅	αἱζηοί	8(c)

        (On 8(d), see below)

To begin with, θαλερόν δάκρυ involves an adjectivization corresponding
to the unattested but theoretically possible (in the sense of Malkiel
1950:55/§ 22) syntagm *δάκρυ θάλλει 'tears are streaming'. In the same
vein, θαλερή/τεθαλυῖα ἀλοιφή corresponds to *ἀλοιφή θάλλει 'grease is
oozing' (cf. Soph. Ant. 1008 μύδωσα κηκίς 'dripping ooze'; for further
comments, see Lowenstam, 130). Now, ῥάχις τεθαλυῖα ἀλοιφῇ (as well as,

incidentally, ὕες θαλέθοντες ἀλοιφῇ) involves an Ablative subject.
So, *ῥάχις θάλλει ἀλοιφῇ 'the chine is oozing with grease' is analo-
gous to those instances quoted in 10(b) and in principle transform-
able to *ἀλοιφή θάλλει ἐξ ῥάχιος 'grease is oozing from the chine'
(cf. 10(a)). Θαλεροί αἰζηοί and other syntagms exemplifying the
third context 8(c) relate to "sexually mature men and women and their
children (θάλος). What defines a man or woman as θαλερός is πόθος"
(Lowenstam, 131). In a more biological mode of speaking, the moisture
that for pragmatic reasons is left unexpressed involves that moisture
or liquid, which makes the propagation possible.

The instances described in 11 make it possible to draw an
intermediary conclusion concerning semantic selectional restrictions
of *dhal+: Originally, this verb contracted the case roles Obj and
Abl; only those words having the inherent feature MOISTURE or LIQUID
could be assigned to the Obj role:

(12)   * ⎡ δάκρυ   ⎤   8(a)
            ⎢ ἀλοιφή   ⎥ θάλλει   8(b)
            ⎣ ∅ [MOISTURE]⎦   8(c)

In this light, syntagms such as ἐλαῖαι τηλεθόωσαι, δένδρεα τηλεθό-
ωντα (which belong to 8(d)) cannot represent the original type. It
is possible, though, to find instances of 8(d) which are compatible
with the pattern presented in 12 and which, accordingly, are likely
to exemplify the original type.

In Il. 17,53ff., the fallen Euphorbos' life is compared with
the life of an olive tree:

          Οἷον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης
          χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, ὅθ' ἅλις ἀναβέβροχεν ὕδωρ,
          καλὸν τηλεθάον.

In this passage, καλὸν τηλεθάον is universally considered dependent
on ἔρνος ἐλαίης 'olive shoot', obviously because of the parallel
provided by ἐλαῖαι τηλεθόωσαι, etc. However, it would be syntactical-
ly more natural to associate καλὸν τηλεθάον with ὕδωρ. Accordingly,
ὕδωρ καλὸν τηλεθάον would be parallelled by καλλίρροον ὕδωρ 'fair-
flowing water' (e.g. Il. 2,752) and κρήνη καλλιρέεθρος 'fair-flowing
spring' (Od. 10,107).

Another instance to the same effect is Od. 13,245 αἰεὶ δ'
ὄμβρος ἔχει τεθαλυῖά τ' ἐέρση, which Lowenstam (130) leaves un-
classified, although the fertility context 8(d) is clearly involved.
The syntagm τεθαλυῖα ἐέρση is thus likely to represent the original
type. Τεθαλυῖα ἐέρση denotes dripping dew qua fertility liquid for
the vegetation. Now it may be revealing to point out the polysemy
'dew' ~ 'sperm' in ἐέρση (cf. Nonn. Dion. 41,64 γαμίην ἐέρσην) as well
as in δρόσος (cf. Callim. fr. 260,19 δρόσον 'Ηφαίστοιο),[14] which in
fact establishes a parallelism between 8(c) and 8(d): whereas the
latter context involves FERTILITY OF FLORA, the former, FERTILITY
OF MAN. Now it can be seen that the unspecified Obj in θαλεροὶ
∅ [MOISTURE] αἴζηοί could very well be ἐέρση.

3.2.2. Lowenstam does not even mention the word θάλασσα in his
article. I suspect this is an intentional omission due to anticipated
difficulties in any attempt to reconcile the meanings of θάλασσα and
θάλλω. But everything that precedes contributes to the crystallization
of the view that originally there was an ideal, etymological harmony
of form and meaning in θάλλω and θάλασσα:

(13)   θάλ|λω   'to| spring |, gush forth' > 'to bloom, grow'
        θάλ|ασσα   '| spring |' > 'sea'

So there are no semantic problems in subsuming θάλασσα in the family
of words derived from *dhal+ (for parallels, see Buck 1949:§ 1.37).

This paper has focused on a semantic explication of θάλασσα.
It was found that, besides the normal meaning 'sea', Θάλασσα 'Ερεχθηΐς
necessitates the semantic reading 'spring', which was taken as a ves-
tigial trace of the earlier, Mycenaean meaning of this word. The
lenghty argumentation wielded in this discussion shows, once again,
how inseparably language (especially the lexicon) and culture are
intertwined. And etymological research offers an unusually good

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14 For a commentary on both loci, see Schol. Il. 2,547.

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opportunity to practice this preaching.[15]

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15 Morphological analysis of θάλασσα would probably require a monograph of its own. The connection of θάλασσα with a couple of Hesychian glosses, viz. δάξα· θάλασσα. Ἐπιρῶται and δαλάγχαν· θάλασσαν suggests itself both semantically and (morpho-)phonologically: +ασσα can very well be considered a reflex of an underlying +αχ+ja. On the other hand, we ought not to blink the fact that these glosses may lend themselves to an analysis along entirely different lines: e.g., the formal resemblance between δαλάγχα and θάλασσα may be accidental; and δαλάγχα might in principle be analyzed as δα+λαγχα (cf. δα+ in 6-7).

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