ΝΕΚΥΣ, ΑΝΤΙΚΡΥ, AND METRICAL LENGTHENING IN HOMER

1. νέκυς

In early Greek epic, the final syllable of the forms νέκυς and νέκυν always scans long, even before an initial vowel.[1] It is generally held that the length of the u is original.[2] However, at Beekes (1973: 237-8), it was argued that the length must be artificial, and that it should be explained within the framework of Homeric diction—viz. as the generalization of a pre-consonantic scansion, based on the adaptation of formulaic phrases. This view was recently rejected by Martínez García (1996: 116-7, 245-6), with the dubious argument that the forms νέκυς and νέκυν do not always occur before a caesura.[3] In the following pages we re-argue the case for metrical lengthening, elaborating upon the concise discussion in Beekes (1973).

External evidence. Greek νέκυς corresponds in sense and formation with Avestan *nasuš* ('corpse'), but this parallel proves unhelpful: *nasuš* may continue a form in *$-us$ or in *$-ūs$.[4] However, a general argument for an original short *u* can be drawn from the PIE morphological system. Within Greek, νέκυς stands beside νεκρός in a Caland relationship. Although there is still much discussion about the workings and scope of the Caland 'system', it seems safe to say that it did not comprise forms in *$-ūs$.[5] This agrees with the evidence in later Greek poetry, where the forms νέκυς and νέκυν, as a rule, scan [⏑⏑] before vowel. The few exceptions can be explained as Homerisms. Thus A.R. 4.1534 (νέκῡν ἐλεεινὰ παθόντα) and Q.S. 3.265 (ἀμφὶ νέκῡν Ἀχιλῆος) allude to *Il.* 23.110 (ἀμφὶ νέκῡν ἐλεεινόν); E. *Ph.* 1744 (ὃς ἐκ δόμων νέκῡς ἄθαπτος οἴχεται) and Greg. Naz. *AP* 8.45.3 (εὐχομένης δὲ νέκῡς ἱερῇ παρέκειτο τραπέζῃ) are based on *Il.* 22.386 (κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκῡς ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος).[6]

Internal evidence. Within the Homeric corpus, nom. sg. νέκυς and acc. sg. νέκυν occur only in the *Iliad*.[7] The forms always scan [⏑–]: 14 times before consonant[8] but also 8 times before vowel:

4.492	βεβλήκει βουβῶνα, νέκυν ἑτέρωσ' ἐρύοντα
7.84	τὸν δὲ νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆας ἐυσσέλμους ἀποδώσω
17.277	ἀλλὰ νέκυν ἐρύοντο· μίνυνθα δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἀχαιοί
17.394/5	ὣς οἵ γ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέκυν ὀλίγῃ ἐνὶ χώρῃ	εἵλκεον
17.692	εἰπεῖν, αἴ κε τάχιστα νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆα σαώσῃ
17.724	Τρωικός, ὡς εἴδοντο νέκυν αἴροντας Ἀχαιούς
22.386	κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκυς ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος
23.109/10	μυρομένοισι δὲ τοῖσι φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς	ἀμφὶ νέκυν ἐλεεινόν

(1) One of these instances would have been prosodically correct in an older stage of the language: 17.277 νέκυν ἐρύοντο continues *νέκυν ϝερύοντο.[9] The sequence νέκυν (ϝ)ἐρυ- seems to have been formulaic. This is also suggested by the fact that the *Iliad* has 14 more examples of ἐρύω with object νέκυν, νεκρόν or νεκρούς.[10]

(2) The formula νέκυν (ϝ)ἐρυ- seems to lie at the basis of several other instances of νέκῡν before vowel. This is clearest in the case of 4.492 νέκυν ἑτέρωσ' ἐρύοντα, where the two elements of the formula have been split by the insertion of ἑτέρωσε. Note that the elision in ἑτέρωσ' shows that this phrase was created after the loss of the initial ϝ.

(3) In 17.394-7 we are dealing with a less straightforward adaptation:

> ὣς οἵ γ᾽ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα <u>νέκυν</u> ὀλίγῃ ἐνὶ χώρῃ
> <u>εἵλκεον</u> ἀμφότεροι· μάλα δέ σφισιν ἔλπετο θυμός
> Τρωσὶν μὲν <u>ἐρύειν</u> προτὶ Ἴλιον, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοῖς
> νῆας ἔπι γλαφυράς.

Here the basic idea of 'dragging a corpse' has been expanded into a simile. In the clause which caps this simile, the phrase ὀλίγῃ ἐνὶ χώρῃ (only here in Homer, crucial to the image) has been inserted in the position occupied in the original formula by a form of ἐρύω, pushing the verb to the next line. Because ἐρυ- cannot stand in verse-initial position, the poet has substituted synonymous εἵλκεον, a form which the augment betrays as late.[11] Yet ἐρύειν in the next clause betrays his point of departure.

(4) In 17.724 νέκυν ἀείροντας, the form ἀείροντας (vv.ll. ἄραντας, αἴραντας) surprises, because αἰρ- for ἀειρ- does not occur elsewhere in the Homeric corpus. None of the various conjectures that have been made is plausible. It lies near to assume that we are dealing with a young form in a late passage,[12] and that νέκυν ἀείροντας, which resumes 17.722 ἀγκάζοντο, presents a late adaptation of the formula νέκυν ἐρύ(οντας).[13]

The phrase νέκυν ἀείροντας also occurs in an epic papyrus fragment (*P.Oxy.* 2510) which Bernabé attributes to the *Ilias Parva* (his fr. 32).[14] This text, which describes the (eventually successful) attempt of Ajax and Odysseus to salvage Achilles' corpse from the battlefield, leans heavily upon the description of the battle over Patroclus' corpse in *Iliad* 17, the Homeric passage which contains the most examples of νέκῡν. The papyrus itself contains no less than five instances of this form in 21 lines, of which three stand before a vowel: beside 6 [ὡς δ᾽ εἴδοντ᾽ Ἀχιλῆ]α νέκυν ἀείρον[τ]ας Ἀχαιούς (after *Il.* 17.724), compare also 15 Ἀχι]λῆα νέκυν ε[.].θ..κ [, and 11 νώτοισι νέκυν οἴσωμ[εν] (after *Il.* 17.735, 746, 24.697 νέκυν φέρον).[15]

The other instances of νέκῡν/νέκῡς before vowel in the *Iliad* cannot be explained as transformations of νέκυν ϝερυ-. Yet here too there are indications that the poet is using before a vowel an expression which was originally designed to stand before a consonant.

(5) The sequence ἀμφὶ νέκυν ἐλεεινόν, in 23.110, follows closely after unobjectionable πάντῃ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ νέκυν κοτυλήρυτον ἔρρεεν αἷμα, in 23.34. It is furthermore suggested by the adaptation ἀμφὶ νέκυ[ν] κατατεθνηῶτα μ[άχεσθαι at *Ilias Parva* fr. 32.8 B. that the poet of the *Iliad* was also thinking of the scansion of ἀμφὶ νέκυι in *Il.* 16.526, 565 (αὐτός τ᾽ ἀμφὶ νέκυι κατατεθνηῶτι μάχωμαι/εσθαι) and 24.108 (Ἕκτορος ἀμφὶ νέκυι καὶ

Ἀχιλλῆϊ πτολιπόρθῳ). Quintus' imitation ἀμφὶ νέκυν Ἀχιλῆος, at *Posthom.* 3.265, is likewise flanked by no less than seven instances of ἀμφὶ νέκυν before consonant.[16])

(6) The phrase νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆα σαώσῃ, in 17.692, may be compared to the unproblematic sequence νέκυν περ ἐόντα σαῶσαι, in 24.35.[17]) This specific collocation of verb and object does not occur elsewhere, and it is therefore quite possible that 17.692 is based on 24.35. It may also be relevant that the scene to which 17.692 leads over concludes with ὥς οἵ γ᾽ ἐμμεμαῶτε <u>νέκυν φέρον</u> ἐκ πολέμοιο / <u>νῆας ἔπι</u> γλαφυράς (17.735-6). Finally, there may also be influence of the formula νέκυν ἐρυ-, as σαόω is synonymous with ἔρυμαι 'to save', and in the context of salvaging a body the semantic difference between dragging off and saving is insubstantial.

(7) The sequence τὸν δὲ νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆας ἐυσσέλμους ἀποδώσω, in 7.84, may be based on 17.127 τὸν δὲ νέκυν Τρῳῇσιν ἐρυσσάμενος κυσὶ δοίη: the *incipit* τὸν δὲ νέκυν is restricted to these two passages. Yet 7.84 also shares with 17.692 the phrase νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆα(ς), so that a derivation 7.84 < 17.692 < 24.35 (or even 17.692 < 7.84 < 17.127) is equally conceivable.

(8) The remaining instance, 22.386 κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκυς ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος, lacks a prosodically correct parallel. Yet this line also looks like a relatively recent creation. The line contains the only example of nom. νέκυς before vowel; the word stands in the position in which disyllabic forms of νέκυς most frequently occur (namely directly after the caesura: see Abbenes 1997: §M); the phrase ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος can only be paralleled from the *Odyssey* (11.54 ἄκλαυτον καὶ ἄθαπτον, 72 ἄκλαυτον ἄθαπτον); and πὰρ νήεσσιν, although it occurs once more in the *Iliad* (24.408 ἢ ἔτι πὰρ νήεσσιν ἐμὸς πάις, beside 48 instances of παρὰ νηυσί[ν]), seems more at home in the formulaic line αὐτοῦ πὰρ νήεσσι/νηί τε μένειν καὶ νῆα ἔρυσθαι, which occurs only in the *Odyssey* (14.260 = 17.429 / 9.194 = 10.444; the presence of ἔρυσθαι is perhaps significant: cf. on 17.692, [6] above).[18])

In short, the eight Homeric passages where νέκυν/νέκυς scans [⏑–] before a vowel can be plausibly explained within the framework of epic diction: four seem to continue a formulaic sequence *νέκυν ϝερυ- (preserved in 17.277, adapted in 4.492, 17.394, 724), three others contain various phrases ending in νέκυν which elsewhere appear before a consonant (7.84, 17.692, 23.110; only 22.386 stands isolated). In light of this evidence, it seems safe to assume that νέκυς, -υν continues PIE *nek̑us with a short *u*—as is suggested by the existence of νεκρός, confirmed by post-Homeric poetry, and allowed by the Avestan evidence (it follows that the Avestan form also continues a short *u*). The fact that no form with a short *u* is attested in the Homeric poems is coincidental and to be explained from the fact that the use of acc. νέκυν is strongly associated with one specific context, namely dragging a corpse from the battle-field. On the whole, eliminating Homeric νέκῡς as secondary seems a more economical solution than the one proposed by Martínez García (1996: 116-7), who

explains post-Homeric νέκ$\breve{\upsilon}$ς as an assimilation to the type βότρ$\breve{\upsilon}$ς of an original paroxytone $\bar{\upsilon}$-stem νέκ$\bar{\upsilon}$ς, a morphological category for which there is otherwise little evidence. An original νέκ$\breve{\upsilon}$ς, -υος, on the other hand, simply fits into the unproblematic category βότρ$\breve{\upsilon}$ς, -υος.[19]

2. ἀντικρύ

A similar case is presented by ἀντικρύ, 'over against, straight on'. Of the 29 instances of this adverb in Homer (26 in the *Iliad*, 3 in the *Odyssey*), only two show a scansion [− − ⏑]: *Il.* 5.130 = 819[ex] θεοῖς ἀντικρὺ μά-χεσθαι. In the remaining 27 instances the final υ scans long, and with the sole exception of *Il.* 23.673 (ἀντικρὺ χρόα) it is followed by a *single* conso-nant. It is therefore attractive to conclude that the length of the υ in ἀντικρύ is native, and that the short vowel in *Il.* 5.130 and 819 is sec-ondary. Yet on second thought this can hardly be the case. Metrical length-ening is a common phenomenon in Homeric diction, but metrical shortening is unusual. Moreover, later Greek also has a form ἄντικρυς, which, as the accent indicates, contains a short υ.[20] But the most important argument against an original $\bar{u}$, is provided by historical phonology. Although the forms ἀντικρύ and ἄντικρυς have no reliable etymology, they may safely be analyzed as compounds consisting of the preposition ἀντί < *h_2enti plus an element κρυ- which nothing prevents us from regarding as also being Indo-European.[21] In Greek words of Indo-European origin, a long υ can only derive from u + laryngeal (or compensatory lengthening, but this is excluded in word-final position). However, word-final *-uH after a reso-nant would have resulted in -υε/α/ο, parallel to the development *$potnih_2$ > πότνια. Therefore a final -$\bar{\upsilon}$ (or, for that matter, -$\bar{\iota}$) can never be orig-inal. We must conclude that the dominant Homeric form ἀντικρυ is met-rically lengthened. Why this form came to be preferred to ἀντικρ$\breve{\upsilon}$, we can only speculate.[22] Note that in the compound κατ̲α̲ντικρύ (*Od.* 10.559 ≅ 11.64) the final vowel *had* to be long (scansion [⏑ − − −]).

University of Leiden,   Robert S.P. Beekes & Martijn Cuypers
Departments of Comparative Linguistics & Classics
r.s.p.beekes@wolmail.nl/m.p.cuypers@let.leidenuniv.nl

1) We may disregard v.l. *Il.* 24.72 νέκ$\breve{\upsilon}$ν Ἕκτορα (schol. T: θρασύν codd., cf. 786).

2) See e.g. Rix (1976: 148), Lamberterie (1990: 654-60), and Frisk (1973), Chantraine (1999) s.vv. (both with reference to Schwyzer, who, however, offers no explanation: "$\bar{\upsilon}$ ist meist metrisch . . ., aber alt in νέκυς, χέλυς . . .," 463 n. 3).

3) While it is true that we often find artificial lengthening before the caesura, the phenomenon is by no means limited to this position. The frequency of artificial

lengthening before the caesura is best explained from the fact that this position most constitutes the border between two formulaic phrases.

4) See de Vaan (2002: 233, §13.2).

5) On the phenomenon as such see Collinge (1985: 23-7); for Greek see Risch (1974: 65-112, 218-9).

6) The υ is short in A.R. 4.480, Q.S. 3.308 (etc.), E. *Alc.* 599 (etc.), Greg. Naz. *AP* 8.46.4 (etc.). On *Ilias Parva* fr. 32.6, 11, 15 Bernabé see below. Otherwise ῡ seems to occur only in two other texts ascribed to Gregory of Nazianzus, *AP* 8.198.2 and *Christ. Pat.* 1077, 1087, 2307, and in Ephraem *Chron.* 9910 (trim.); these instances are not based on specific Homeric models, but surely on Homeric usage.

7) The *Odyssey* has only νεκύων, νέκυσσιν/νεκύεσσι(ν), νέκυας, and once acc. pl. νέκῡς (24.417; cf. *Il.* 18.180 [Edwards ad l.], 7.420). These forms, and Iliadic νέκυος, νέκυϊ, provide no information about the original length of the *u* (**ū* would have been shortened before vowel; acc. pl. -ῡς may continue **-uns* or **-ūns*).

8) *Il.* 17.121, 127, 735, 746, 18.152, 19.225, 23.34, 135, 160, 168, 190, 24.35, 581, 697; see Abbenes (1997).

9) See Chantraine (1999) and Frisk (1973) s. ἐρύω.

10) Beside 4.492 (cited), cf. 17.127, 18.152 (νέκυν), and 4.469, 506, 5.298, 573, 17.104, 235, 317, 581, 635 = 713, 18.540 (νεκρόν/νεκρούς); cf. also 18.173-4 (173 νέκυος, implied object of 174 ἐρύσσασθαι), 22.367 (ἐκ νεκροῖο ἐρύσσατο . . . ἔγχος).

11) See Chantraine (1958: 348). Metre allows substitution of the augmented form along the board, yet everywhere else in Homer the MSS strongly favor unaugmented ἑλκ-.

12) Compare Leaf (ad l.). Shipp (1972: 50; cited by Edwards ad l.) implausibly posits a variant **ϝαργω* beside **ἀϝεργω*. There is no trace of such a form, and we would expect **h₂ur-yō > *ἀϝαργω*. [See now DELG Suppl.]

13) See already van Leeuwen & Mendes da Costa (1895; but ἐρύοντας should not be introduced into the text).

14) Others have argued that it belongs to the *Aethiopis* (perhaps more plausible) or that it does not fit either poem; see the bibliography at Bernabé (1996: 85).

15) Cf. also *Il.* 24.581, *Od.* 24.417. For the curious subjunctive οἴσωμεν cf. Hesych. o 424 (s.v.). The remaining instances are 8]ἀμφὶ νέκυ[γ] κατατεθνηῶτα (see below), 21 ’Οδ]υσ<σ>εὺς βάσταζ[ε] νέ[κυν.

16) Q.S. 3.386, 512, 553, 600, 660, 722, 4.595 (cf. also the variant νέκυν περι(-) at 3.184, 350, 528, 713, 5.619, 10.459). It is, moreover, significant that *Posthomerica* 3 (like *Ilias Parva* fr. 32 Bernabé with which it shares its theme) is strongly indebted to *Iliad* 17 (the direct context of 3.265 is a fly simile inspired by *Il.* 17.569-74). The only other example of ἀμφὶ νέκυν in extant poetry, Nonn. *D.* 37.55 (ἀ. ν. στορέσας), is in turn directly indebted to *Iliad* 23, Nonnus' main model in *D.* 37.

17) This collocation is again imitated by Quintus of Smyrna in the context of the battle over Achilles' corpse; cf. 3.348 (νέκυν Δαναοῖσι σαώσω) and 5.125 (ἐσάωσε νέκυν).

18) The context also shows signs of late composition. Line 385 (= 21.562, etc.) only here occurs outside a soliloquy (Richardson ad l.). Line 387 (with caesura after οὐκ) is clearly based on 7.452 (the only other example of fut. ἐπιλήσομαι in the *Iliad*). Line 388 seems to combine 23.47 and 9.609-10 = 10.89-90. The hapax καταλήθοντ(αι) in 389, found nowhere else in Greek literature, seems an *ad hoc* formation (the poet needed a form starting from a consonant to replace regular ἐπι-); περ is ill at place here. The phrase αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ . . . μεμνήσομ(αι) in 390

(with 'apodotic' αὐτάρ) recalls the closing formula of the Homeric hymns (*h.Cer.* 495, *h.Ap.* 495, etc.); pf. fut. μεμνήσομ(αι) is otherwise attested only in the *Odyssey* (19.581 = 21.79).

19) In the Homeric poems compare, beside βότρυς, e.g. γῆρυς, πίτυς, Ῥαδάμανθυς, γένυς, ntr. μέθυ (the last two definitely of PIE descent, cf. Chantraine, 1999 s.vv.). Assuming a development *νεκῦ́ς, -ύος (oxytone, long υ) >> νέκυς, -υος (paroxytone, short υ) is not a viable alternative, because the type -ῦς, -ύος is so current in Greek poetry from Homer onward that it is hard to see why later poets (νέκυς is restricted to poetry) should have felt the need to replace *νεκῦ́ς with νέκῦς.

20) On the accentuation, of the type ἔμπεδον : ἐμποδών, see Vendryes (1904: 93.) A scansion [– ∪ ∪] occurs e.g. at Q.S. 4.376, 8.323.

21) For attempts see Kretschmer (1913: 356; with κρούω) and Nussbaum (1980: 25, 90, index; with OCS *črěvo*, from *$k'(e/o)ru$, 'form, figure, body', a word which we have not been able to trace). One could think of *$k'ruh_2$- 'flesh' (Greek κρέας); there are indications that a laryngeal in the second constituent of a compound was lost (Peeters 1980; i.e. *$h_2enti\text{-}k'ru < h_2enti + k'ruh_2$). The Attic form ἀπ/κατ-αντροκυ (found in inscriptions) may derive from *ἀντακρυ, with anticipation of ρ and rounding of α to ο before υ (assimilation to υ of an original ι is unlikely). This may even be the original form (E.-M. Voigt, LfgrE I.937: "zu bemerken, daß die Bedeutung 'vorwärts, geradeaus' sonst ἄντα, nicht ἀντί zukommt").

22) Rhythmically, the sequence [– – ∪] is in itself not more problematic than [– – –], but the actual evidence found in Homer suggests a strong preference for using ἀντικρύ at the beginning of an intonation unit (more precisely at the beginning of a clause [19x ἀντικρὺ δέ/δ'] or immediately after its topic). This semantic position agrees with a sequence [– – –], which allows [– [1] – [2]] (21x) and [– [2] – [3]] (6x), but not with [– – ∪], because [– [5] ∪] (*Il.* 5.130, 819) and [– [3] ∪] are undesirable positions to start an intonation unit ([– [2] ∪] and [– [4] ∪] are avoided altogether; see O'Neill 1942). But it is possible, of course, that a predefined preference for the prosody [– – –] *causes* the observed semantic preference.

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