

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

A NOTE ON SOME METRICAL IRREGULARITIES IN HOMER

In his *Les formules et la métrique d'Homère*, the study that complements *L'épithète traditionnelle*, Milman Parry argued that certain metrical irregularities occur in the Homeric poems because a traditional poet would always rather use a traditional expression—even if this would entail a metrical fault—than abandon the tradition for the sake of observing so-called metrical rules.¹ This view of the poet's choice evidently proceeds from the assumption that a traditional poet uses a metrically irregular expression in a given context because that expression is the only option the tradition provides for this context. After Parry, this thesis has largely been taken for granted.² If, however, we examine the metrically irregular expressions with which Parry dealt, we find that his suppositions cannot account for all of them; for there are cases where the poet could have avoided the metrical fault, not by inventing a new expression, but by using a different traditional expression.

Discussing two similar cases of hiatus, *Odyssey* 3. 64 ὥς δ' αὖτως ἦρ' αὖτο 'Οδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός and *Odyssey* 16. 48 ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειτα 'Οδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός, Parry wrote: "there were no formulae other than the ones we quoted to express, in the same portion of the line, the ideas 'in the same way Telemachus prayed' and 'Telemachus sat there.'"³ Such a formula does, however, exist: ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο, by means of which the same metrical difficulty is often resolved in the *Odyssey*.⁴ Thus the poet could have avoided hiatus in these cases as well by saying ὥς δ' αὖτως ἦρ' αὖτο ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο and ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειθ' ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο.

Commenting on the hiatus at *Iliad* 2. 571 'Ορνειάς τ' ἐνέμοντο 'Αραιθυρέην τ' ἐρατεινήν, Parry remarked: "To enumerate the towns which sent troops to the war, the bards created, among other devices, one consisting in saying in the first half of the line 'who inhabited such and such a town,' and in the second

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1. I shall refer to the English translation of Parry's work, "Homeric Formulae and Homeric Metre," in *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford, 1971); for Parry's views, see, e.g., pp. 196, 237.

2. See, e.g., A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes* (Amsterdam, 1965), pp. 9–10; A. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, pp. xxviii–xxix; G. P. Edwards, *The Language of Hesiod in Its Traditional Context* (Oxford, 1971), p. 90; R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 33.

3. "Homeric Formulae," p. 203.

4. Most commonly in the expression τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπ' ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο: see *Od.* 2. 409, 18. 405, 21. 101; cf. also *Od.* 18. 60, 21. 130.

half, 'and such and such a town (*or* towns).' . . . But to make lines of this shape without metrical fault, the second half-line, expressing in the accusative case the idea 'and such and such a town,' had to begin with a single consonant. . . . But 'Αραιθυρέην does not lend itself to this device."⁵ Yet among the techniques that the poet uses to arrange the names of towns in the Catalog of Ships there is one that allows him to divide the verse at the penthemimeral caesura and say, in the first half of the verse, "who had such and such a town."⁶ The poet could have formed *Iliad* 2. 571 after this pattern, avoiding the metrical fault by saying 'Ορνειάς τ' εἶχον καὶ Ἀραιθυρέην ἐρατεινήν.

The expression τετελεσμένα ἦεν occurs at *Iliad* 18. 4 (τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ δὴ τετελεσμένα ἦεν), which introduces an inner monologue of Achilles: at the very moment when Antilochus arrives to announce Patroclus' death, Achilles recalls that his mother had once told him that "the best of the Myrmidons" must fall at Troy while he himself was still alive, and he begins to have a premonition of Patroclus' end. Parry pointed out that the hiatus in τετελεσμένα ἦεν results from a modification of the formula τετελεσμένον ἔσται (*or* ἔστι), which is found seventeen times in Homer;⁷ but we can also regard the hiatus as having been caused by the juxtaposition of this formula with the formula τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ. . . .⁸ Now *Iliad* 18. 4 is not the only Homeric line to combine two expressions with these meanings: compare *Iliad* 2. 36 τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ ῥ' οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον and *Odyssey* 2. 156 ὄρμηναν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ περ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον. Comparison of these expressions with *Iliad* 18. 4 reveals the reason for the metrical fault in the latter: since expressions of the type τὰ φρονέων ἃ . . . demand that their object be in the plural, the combination of such expressions with the appropriate form of the phrase τετελεσμένον ἔσται would inevitably involve hiatus. At *Iliad* 2. 36 and *Odyssey* 2. 156 the metrically equivalent formula τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον evidently was introduced to avoid hiatus. If at *Iliad* 18. 4 the poet had adopted the solution offered by this formula, he could have produced something like τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ οἱ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον.⁹ He would thus have avoided the metrical fault without being forced to abandon traditional diction.

The expression ἄφθιτα αἰεῖ, which also involves hiatus, occurs in Homer's description of Poseidon's underwater palace at Aegae (*Il.* 13. 21–22):

Αἰγᾶς, ἔνθα δέ οἱ κλυτὰ δώματα βένθεσι λίμνης
χρύσεια μαρμαίροντα τετεύχεται, ἄφθιτα αἰεῖ.

The metrical irregularity results from a modification of the formula ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ, which is used three times in the *Iliad* to describe precious objects of divine origin.¹⁰ Plainly, such descriptions can be metrically correct only when the object in question occurs in the singular; the plural will inevitably involve hiatus, as it

5. "Homeric Formulae," p. 207.

6. Cf. *Il.* 2. 574 Πελλήνην τ' εἶχον ἡδ' Αἴγιον ἀμφινέμοντο, 607 καὶ Τεγέην εἶχον καὶ Μαντινέην ἐρατεινήν, 608 Στύμφηλόν τ' εἶχον καὶ Παρρασίην ἐνέμοντο.

7. "Homeric Formulae," p. 201.

8. For τὰ φρονέοντ' (*or* φρονέων *or* φρονέουσ') ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ . . . , see *Il.* 2. 36, 10. 491, *Od.* 2. 116; cf. also ὄρμηνην (*or* ὄρμηναν *or* ὄρμαίνοντ') ἀνὰ θυμὸν at *Il.* 21. 137, 24. 680, *Od.* 2. 156.

9. Cf. *Od.* 2. 116 τὰ φρονέουσ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ οἱ πέρι δῶκεν Ἀθήνη.

10. See Parry, "Homeric Formulae," pp. 198–99.

does in *Iliad* 13. 22. How, then, does Homer usually describe such objects when they occur in the plural? Examination shows that Homer can use the formula θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι as a kind of plural for ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ: whereas the scepter of Agamemnon (*Il.* 2. 46, 186) and the throne promised by Hera to Hypnos (*Il.* 14. 238) are each referred to as ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ, the tires of the wheels (ἐπίσσωτρα) of Hera's chariot (*Il.* 5. 725), the armor (τεύχεα) of Rhesus (*Il.* 10. 439) and Achilles (*Il.* 18. 83), and the automated golden statues of Hephaestus (*Il.* 18. 377) are described as θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.¹¹ If Homer had resorted to this formula in the case of Poseidon's δώματα, he could have produced a regular line, χρύσaea μαρμαίροντα τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, that would at the same time have used perfectly traditional language.¹²

Unlike the metrically irregular expressions considered so far, those that I shall now discuss could not be avoided by the simple substitution of an established Homeric formula. We shall, however, see that even in these cases there are formulaic patterns that the poet could have adapted to the context in order to prevent the metrical fault.

At *Iliad* 4. 91 λαῶν, οἳ οἱ ἔποντο ἅπ' Αἰσίοιο ροάων (describing Pandarus' men) the hiatus was caused, according to Parry, by the adaptation of the formula ἅπ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροάων.¹³ But this formula also occurs in the form παρ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροάων, which apparently was intended for use in metrical environments like the one in question.¹⁴ If the poet had turned to this pattern, the line λαῶν, οἳ οἱ ἔποντο παρ' Αἰσίοιο ροάων would have been both traditional in its language and metrically correct.

The phrase ἔγχεα ὀξυόεντα at *Iliad* 5. 568 is a similar case. As Parry pointed out, this irregular expression is derived from the formula ἔγχει ὀξυόεντι, which occurs eight times in the epics.¹⁵ Consider, however, the expression τεύχεα παμφανόωντα, which is found in the same position in the line as ἔγχεα ὀξυόεντα.¹⁶ That the formation of an analogous expression, ἔγχεα παμφανόωντα, would not have been at variance with epic usage is shown by the fact that the epithet παμφανόωντα elsewhere modifies another Homeric word for "spears," δούρατα (*Il.* 5. 618–19).

As for the hiatus at *Iliad* 18. 48 Μαῖρα καὶ Ὠρεΐθυια εὐπλόκαμός τ' Ἀμάθεια, a line from the list of the Nereids,¹⁷ we can see one way it could have been avoided if we look at a line from Hesiod's list of the Nereids, *Theogony* 250 Δωρίς καὶ Πανόπεια καὶ εὐειδὴς Γαλάτεια, where the introduction of the epithet εὐειδὴς circumvents the same metrical problem. Since εὐειδὴς, as an

11. The combination of both characteristics can be found at *Il.* 5. 724–25, in the description of Hera's chariot: τῶν ἦτοι χρυσεὴ ἵτις ἄφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε / χάλκε' ἐπίσσωτρα προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

12. One might object that it was important to Homer to say that the palace of Poseidon was "imperishable"; in that case nothing prevented him from saying ἄφθιτα μαρμαίροντα τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι; cf. the phrase ἄφθιτον ἀστερόεντα applied to the palace of Hephaestus at *Il.* 18. 370.

13. "Homeric Formulae," p. 208.

14. Cf. *Il.* 19. 1 Ὡς μὲν κροκόπελος ἅπ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροάων with *Od.* 22. 197 οὐδὲ σέ γ' ἠριγένεια παρ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροάων. Parry (*ibid.*) does mention the variant παρ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροάων but makes nothing of it.

15. "Homeric Formulae," p. 199.

16. See *Il.* 18. 144, and cf. 5. 294–95. Note also ἔντεα . . . παμφανόωντα at *Il.* 9. 596, 15. 120.

17. See Parry, "Homeric Formulae," p. 208.

epithet for a woman, is not alien to Homer,¹⁸ there seems to be no reason why he could not have avoided the metrical fault by producing something like Μαῖρα καὶ Ὠρεΐθια καὶ εὐειδῆς Ἀμάθεια.

Finally, there is the case of *brevis in longo* in the expression μέροπες ἄνθρωποι at *Iliad* 18. 288. K. Witte long ago pointed out that the irregular μέροπες ἄνθρωποι was prompted by analogy with μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, which occurs nine times in Homer;¹⁹ and Parry later showed that the expression is a result of the juxtaposition of two Homeric formulae, πόλις (or πόλεις) μερόπων ἀνθρώπων and Πριάμοιο πόλις (or πόλιν).²⁰ But let us consider the whole context:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πριάμοιο πόλιν μέροπες ἄνθρωποι
πάντες μυθέσκοντο πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον.

We can see now that Homer used the expression μέροπες ἄνθρωποι to convey the idea that Troy once enjoyed worldwide fame for its wealth. But we can also see that to express such an idea Homer did not in fact need μέροπες ἄνθρωποι or any other phrase meaning "mortal men." So, for example, if the poet had said πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πριάμοιο πόλιν κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν / πάντες μυθέσκοντο κτλ., the lines would have expressed his idea just as well and would at the same time have been metrically sound. Though the phrase κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν occurs in Homer only once (*Od.* 17. 418), the equivalent expression ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν is attested seven times.²¹ Of the eight occurrences of these phrases, five fall at the end of the verse; and in two cases, including the occurrence of κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν, the expressions are used to convey the idea of worldwide fame, the same idea that is at issue in the passage under discussion. Had he employed κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν at *Iliad* 18. 288, the poet would have departed not at all from traditional usage.

We can see, therefore, that at least in some cases the poet's real choice lay not, as Parry believed, between violating a metrical custom and abandoning a formula but, paradoxically, between violating a metrical custom and using or adapting an established formula. Accordingly, Parry's assumption that the traditional poet would always choose the only expression the tradition could provide seems to need qualification.

When formulating his ideas, Parry started from the assumption that the same principles could be applied both to the impersonal epic tradition and to its personal medium, the individual poet. Not infrequently, however, his conclusions seem to leave the latter out of the account. To take only one example: according to Parry, metrically irregular expressions like those discussed in this paper must have belonged to the traditional stock.²² This claim relates directly to the principle of economy he formulated: if the poet uses a metrically irregular expression, he does so because that is the only means the tradition can provide for conveying a given idea under given metrical conditions. If, however, Homeric expressions such as τετελεσμένα ἦεν, ἄφθιτα αἰεὶ, and ἔγχεα ὀξυόεντα, which

18. See *Il.* 3. 48 γυναῖκα' εὐειδέ' (of Helen).

19. "Homeros, Sprache," *RE* 8 (1913): 2223.

20. "Homeric Formulae," pp. 197-98.

21. *Il.* 7. 446, 24. 342, *Od.* 1. 98, 5. 46, 15. 79, 17. 386, 19. 107.

22. "Homeric Formulae," p. 237.

are metrically irregular and can be replaced by regular traditional equivalents, belonged to the traditional stock, this would mean not only that the traditional diction preserved two expressions for one and the same idea (as it sometimes does), but also that one of them was metrically faulty.²³ Now there may be a reason to preserve a metrically faulty expression if it alone can convey a given idea;²⁴ but there would seem to be no such reason in cases where a metrically sound rendering of the same idea exists. In other words, when they are considered only from the perspective of the tradition, the expressions τετελεσμένα ἦεν, ἄφθιτα αἰεὶ, and ἔγχεα ὀξυόεντα appear to have no *raison d'être*. That expressions of this kind nonetheless emerge shows that the tradition was not the only factor involved.

As for the question why the poet did not choose the metrically regular alternatives in the cases discussed, one answer most naturally suggests itself in the majority of cases: he simply did not think of the appropriate expression while assembling his verses under the pressure of extempore composition.²⁵ At the same time, there are also cases in which a more specific interpretation seems to be more suitable. Thus, we can see that the metrically irregular τετελεσμένα ἦεν, implying as it does that Achilles' premonition has already come true,²⁶ is a more powerful expression than the regular τελέεσθαι ἐμελλον: perhaps this consideration determined the poet's choice at *Iliad* 18. 4. One can take a similar approach to the description of Poseidon's palace at *Iliad* 13. 22: a palace made of gold is an obvious deviation from the traditional idiom;²⁷ perhaps the metrical flaw in this verse occurred precisely because the poet wished to introduce just such a palace.

It is quite possible, therefore, that some metrical flaws were due not to the poet's simple failure to use his stock in a perfect—let me say, a computer-like—way, but to his wish to express something for which his tradition did not provide the ready-made diction.²⁸ In either case we must admit a sort of tension between

23. This argument does not apply to expressions that, though metrically regular in themselves, produce a metrical irregularity when used in a certain context (e.g., the case of Ὀδυσσεὺς φίλος υἱός or ἅπ' Αἰσθήποιο βοάων discussed above).

24. This is obviously the case with πῶσα οἰῶν, which occurs at *Il.* 11. 678 and *Od.* 14. 100 (cf. Parry, "Homeric Formulae," pp. 212–13): the hiatus could be avoided if πῶσα οἰῶν were replaced by πῶσα μῆλων (see *Od.* 4. 413 πῶεσι μῆλων, and cf. Hes. *Op.* 786); but since in *Il.* 11. 678 and *Od.* 14. 100 the flock is divided into sheep and goats, the use of the collective term μῆλα is precluded.

25. As Hoekstra observed (*Homeric Modifications*, pp. 10–11), Parry stated his view that the Homeric poems were orally composed only in his "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making," *HSCP* 41 (1930): 73–147 and *HSCP* 43 (1932): 1–50, whereas in his earlier works, including *Les formules et la métrique*, he spoke of the traditional (not the oral) character of Homer's poetry. If Parry had reached his conception of oral composition as early as *Les formules et la métrique*, his formulation of the alternatives open to the poet might have been less rigid.

26. The idea itself is unique in the epics; on the theme of Thetis' warning as an innovation, see M. M. Willcock, "Ad Hoc Invention in the *Iliad*," *HSCP* 81 (1977): 41–53, esp. 52.

27. Nowhere else in the epics do we encounter a golden palace: even the palace of Zeus is regularly referred to only as "having a brazen base," χαλκοβατές δῶ (*Il.* 1. 426, 14. 173, 21. 438, 505); the phrase is also applied to the palaces of Hephaestus (*Od.* 8. 321) and Alcinoüs (*Od.* 13. 4). Cf. also *Il.* 18. 371, where the palace of Hephaestus is referred to as "made of bronze" (δόμον . . . χάλκεον).

28. Parry saw such a motive as characteristic of "a poet of individual style"; he regarded the use of such a style in traditional poetry as a sign of its decline: see especially his discussion of the expression Ὀδυσσεὺς ἱερὴ ἱς in the Hesiodic *Catalog of Women* (Hes. frag. 198. 2 Merkelbach and West), "Homeric Formulae," pp. 237–38.

the epic tradition and the individual poet. To be sure, this tension can be recognized in places other than the expressions discussed in this paper (compare, for instance, nontraditional Homeric usages that contain no metrical faults). But metrically irregular expressions that can be replaced by regular traditional equivalents allow us to identify not only a deviation from the norm but also the very norm from which the deviation has been made. It is with their aid, therefore, that the existence of such a tension can most clearly be shown.

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WHEN WAS AESCHINES BORN?

At first glance, the answer to this question appears to be rather simple, for Aeschines himself states quite plainly in his speech against Timarchus (I. 49) that he was then forty-five years old: since the speech was delivered in 346/45 B.C., he would have been born in 391/90 or 390/89.¹ But this is not all that Aeschines says in the passage. He goes on to remind the court that many men do not look as old as their years—Misgolas among them: his youthful appearance notwithstanding, Misgolas is actually the same age as Aeschines himself, who with his gray hair would seem to be much older. This observation leads him to warn the jurors that their impression that Misgolas and Timarchus are the same age is quite mistaken. The jurors are left to draw the obvious conclusion that Timarchus is in fact younger than Misgolas. As F. Blass pointed out, however, Timarchus was a member of the Council in 361/60 and therefore must have been at least thirty in that year.² This would date Timarchus' birth to 391/90 or 390/89 at the very latest—and so to the same time as, if not earlier than, the birth of Aeschines and his coeval, Misgolas. Yet this conclusion would seem to be impossible, since Aeschines unambiguously implies that Timarchus is younger than Misgolas.

Blass did not propose a solution to this problem, which did not receive further consideration until D. M. Lewis examined it afresh in 1958.³ Lewis considered four ways of resolving the difficulty in the passage as it stands, but rejected all of them and concluded that the text must be corrupt. He proposed that πέμπτων καὶ τετρακοστών should be emended to τέταρτον καὶ πεντηκοστών. In support of his emendation he pointed out that according to the *Life of Aeschines* attributed to a certain Apollonius, Aeschines died during Antipater's purge (i.e., in 322) at the age of seventy-five; on that chronology he would have been born

1. For the date of the speech, see E. M. Harris, "The Date of the Trial of Timarchus," *Hermes* 113 (1985): 376–80; the trial probably took place early in the archonship of Archias (= late summer 346). For the problem involved in determining a date of birth from information about a person's age in a given archon-year, see J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families, 600–300 B.C.* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 125–26.

2. *Die attische Beredsamkeit*², vol. 3.2 (Leipzig, 1893), p. 170, drawing on Aeschin. I. 109.

3. "When Was Aeschines Born?" *CR* 8 (1958): 108. Lewis' argument was accepted by J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families*, pp. 545–46.