Nagy, Gregory, On the Origins of the Greek Hexameter: Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives. Studies in diachronic, synchronic, and typological Linguistics, Festschrift for Oswald Szemerényi, Amsterdam 1979, 611–631.

Vigorita, John F., The Indo-European Origins of the Greek Hexameter and Distich. Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 91, 1977, 288–299.

Wathelet, Paul, La coupe syllabique et les liquides voyelles dans la tradition formulaire de l'épopée grecque. Linguistic Research in Belgium, ed. Yvan Lebrun, Wetteren 1966, 145–173.

Witte, Kurt, Homerische Sprach- und Versgeschichte. Die Entstehung der ionischen Langzeile. Glotta 4, 1913, 1–21.

ἀλιτήμων: Iliad 24.157 (= 186)

By John J. Keaney, Princeton University

Zeus gives directions to Iris to be transmitted to Priam about the ransoming of Hector's corpse, and ends his speech with a statement about Achilles:

24.157   οὔτε γάρ ἐστ' ἄφρων οὔτ' ἄσκοπος οὔτ' ἀλιτήμων,
ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἐνδυκέως ἱκέτεω πεφιδήσεται ἀνδρός.

It is agreed[1]) that ἀλιτήμων is connected with ἀλιταίνω, but I propose to revive an ancient[2]) alternative and suggest that Homer himself intended the word to be privative of the root λιτ-, "supplication". The argument has two bases, analogical and thematic. For the first, it can be stated that, when a verse of the *Iliad* contains one alpha-privative adjective and another adjective with the same referent beginning with alpha, the second (and, as here, third) will also be privative[3]). A list from the *Iliad* follows[4]):

---

[1]) Frisk, *GrEW* 67; Meiwes, *LfgrE* 491; Risch, *Wortbildung der hom. Sprache,* ²1972, 52 § 22αβ.

[2]) Eustathius, *ad loc.* (= 1343.35ff.): τινὲς δὲ τὸ ἀλιτήμων ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀλιτάνευτος· διὸ καὶ ἐπάγει "ἀλλὰ μάλ'" κτλ.

[3]) The single exception to this statement is 18.370, where Hephaestus' house is called ἄφθιτον ἀστερόεντα. I assume that in 13.41: ἄβρομοι αὐίαχοι, but it is not clear that the poet so understood them. The same phenomenon obtains in the Odyssey (exception, 1.232: ἀφνειὸς καὶ ἀμύμων), Hesiod (exception, *Th* 878: ἀπείριτον ἀνθεμόεσσαν), and the Homeric Hymns.

[4]) Prefixed to each passage is N = narrative or S = speech: no examples occur in similes. Adjectives ἅπαξ εἰρημένα in the *Iliad* (including those repeated in these examples) are signaled by *.

68   John J. Keaney

S   1.99   ἀπριάτην* ἀνάποινον*, ἄγειν θ' ἱερὴν ἑκατόμβην
S   1.415   αἴθ' ὄφελες παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀδάκρυτος* καὶ ἀπήμων
S   2.201   οἳ σέο φέρτεροί εἰσι, σὺ δ' ἀπτόλεμος καὶ ἄναλκις
S   3.40   αἴθ' ὄφελες ἀγονός* τ' ἔμεναι ἄγαμος* τ' ἀπολέσθαι
N   4.540   ὅς τις ἔτ' ἄβλητος* καὶ ἀνούτατος* ὀξέι χαλκῷ
N   5.342   τοὔνεκ' ἀναίμονές* εἰσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται
S   6.60   Ἰλίου ἐξαπολοίατ' ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι*
S   7.100   ἥμενοι αὖθι ἕκαστοι ἀκήριοι, ἀκλεὲς αὔτως
S   7.117   εἴ περ ἀδειής* τ' ἐστὶ καὶ εἰ μόθου ἔστ' ἀκόρητος
S   8.539   εἴην ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως ἤματα πάντα
        N   2.447   ἀγήρων ἀθανάτην τε
        S   12.323 ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε
        S   17.444 ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε
S   9.35   φὰς ἔμεν ἀπτόλεμον* καὶ ἀνάλκιδα· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα
S   9.41   ἀπτολέμους* τ' ἔμεναι καὶ ἀνάλκιδας, ὡς ἀγορεύεις
S   9.63   ἀφρήτωρ* ἀθέμιστος* ἀνέστιός* ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος[5])
S   9.125   οὔ κεν ἀλήιος* εἴη ἀνὴρ ᾧ τόσσα γένοιτο,
        οὐδέ κεν ἀκτήμων* ἐριτίμοιο χρυσοῖο
S   9.158   δμηθήτω — Ἀίδης τοι ἀμείλιχος ἠδ' ἀδάμαστος*
N   10.258 ταυρείην, ἄφαλόν* τε καὶ ἄλλοφον[6]), ἥ τε καταῖτυξ
N   13.37   ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένοιεν (θ 275)
N   13.360 ἄρρηκτόν τ' ἄλυτόν τε τὸ πολλῶν γούνατ' ἔλυσεν
N   13.761 τοὺς δ' εὗρ' οὐκέτι πάμπαν ἀπήμονας οὐδ' ἀνολέθρους*
N   15.697 φαίης κ' ἀκμῆτας καὶ ἀτειρέας ἀλλήλοισιν
S   17.41   ἀλλ' οὐ μὰν ἔτι δηρὸν ἀπείρητος* πόνος ἔσται
        οὐδ' ἔτ' ἀδήριτος* ἤ τ' ἀλκῆς ἤ τε φόβοιο
S   19.346 οἴχονται μετὰ δεῖπνον, ὁ δ' ἄκμηνος καὶ ἄπαστος*
S   20.303 ὄφρα μὴ ἄσπερμος* γενεὴ καὶ ἄφαντος* ὄληται
S   22.386 κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκυς ἄκλαυτος* ἄθαπτος*[7])
S   24.157 οὔτε γὰρ ἐσι' ἄφρων οὔτ' ἄσκοπος* οὔτ' ἀλιτήμων*

With the exception of "ageless/immortal"[8]), none of these combinations is likely to have begun life at an early stage of the oral tradition. No traditional formula with an alpha-privative epithet[9]) combines with another epithet to create a new formula. Rather, in almost half of the instances above, one of the epithets is generated from the immediate context[10])

---

[5]) Cf. Sophocles, F 4 Radt: ὡς ὢν ἄπαις τε κἀγύναιξ κἀνέστιος.

[6]) The collocation τε καὶ in this kind of combination is found only here in Homer: cf. *HVen* 123: ἄκληρόν τε καὶ ἄκτιτον.

[7]) Cf. Sophocles, *Ant* 29: ἐὰν δ' ἄκλαυτον ἄταφον.

[8]) Cf. *Od* 5.218; Hesiod, *Th* 277, 949; F 25.28: with ἤματα πάντα, *Od* 5.136; 7.94, 257; 23.336; *Th* 305; F 229.8 and (restored) F 23(a).12, 24. Pace M. L. West, "Greek Poetry 2000–700 B.C.", *CQ* n.s. 23 (1973) 179–92 at 179, alpha-privative is a rare fore-element in juxtaposed compounds.

[9]) E.g. ἄαπτοι χεῖρες, ἀεικέα λοιγόν, ἀκάματον πῦρ, ἄχεα ἄκριτα.

[10]) There is one example of the reverse process, in which the privative form is taken up by the positive form. Cp. Agamemnon's words at 9.125–6

1.99	ἀνάποινον* — ἄποινα
1.415	ἀδάκρυτος* — κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα (413),
4.540	ἄβλητος* καὶ ἀνούτατος* — ἔβαλεν (524),
	οὖτα (525), βάλε (527)
5.342	ἀναίμονες — αἷμα (339)
6.60	ἀκήδεστοι — κήδεαι (55)
7.100	ἀκλεὲς — κλέος (90)
9.35	ἀνάλκιδα — ἀλκήν
9.41	ἀνάλκιδας — ἀλκήν (39)
9.159	ἀδάμαστος* — δμηθήτω (159)
13.37	ἀλύτους — λύσας (35)
13.360	ἄλυτον — ἔλυσεν (360)[11])
13.761	ἀνολέθρους* — ὀλέσαντες (763)[12])

The second basis of the argument is thematic. The interpretation of ἀλιτήμων I have suggested arises from the immediate context, the first step in the process leading to Priam's supplication of Achilles. This is itself the culmination of the theme of supplication, a theme which has been developing with increasing urgency since the initial precipitating act of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's rejection of Chryses' supplication[13]). The sequence in Book 24 parallels that of Book 1[14]), in which the entrance of Zeus into the story is caused by Thetis' supplication of him, on the instructions of Achilles. Zeus' words here are at once ironic and predictive: ironic, because Achilles has just refused the supplications of Priam's sons, Lycaon[15]) and Hector[16]); predictive, because Achilles will accepts the supplication of Priam, although he considers the possibility that he may not[17]).

with Achilles' reply to Odysseus (9.406—9):

> ληϊστοὶ μὲν γάρ τε βόες καὶ ἴφια μῆλα
> κτητοὶ δὲ τρίποδές τε καὶ ἵππων ξανθὰ κάρηνα·
> ἀνδρὸς δὲ ψυχὴ πάλιν ἐλθεῖν οὔτε λειστὴ
> οὔθ᾽ ἑλετή, ἐπεὶ ἄρ κεν ἀμείψεται ἕρκος ὀδόντων.

[11]) Ameis-Hentze *ad loc.* suggested word-play with ἔλυσεν.

[12]) A chiastic arrangement with lines 762—5: ἀπήμονας/ ἀνολέθρους// ψυχὰς ὀλέσαντες/ βεβλημένοι οὐτάμενοί τε.

[13]) λίσσετο, 1.15. The rhetoric of supplication is especially prominent in Phoenix' speech in the *Embassy*: in his autobiography (9.451, 465), in the allegory of the Λιταί (501, 511), and in the paradeigmatic story of Meleager (574, 581, 583, 585, 591).

[14]) (1) Achilles — Thetis — Zeus: (24) Zeus — Iris — Priam and Zeus — Thetis — Achilles.

[15]) 21.99ff.   [16]) 22.345ff.

[17]) 24.570: καὶ ἱκέτην περ ἐόντα, Διὸς δ᾽ ἀλίτωμαι (ἀλίτηται, 586) ἐφετμάς. The anonymous source of *EtMag* 65.2—5 used line 586 to support his etymology of ἀλιτῶ, τὸ λιτῆς καὶ ἱκεσίας στερεῖσθαι.