

XIII.—*The Homeric Gloss: a Study in Word-sense*

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There are, in general, two distinct views held concerning those Homeric words whose meaning is, for us, unknown or conjectural. Some suppose that their original signification was known to Homer and his public, but was lost because of linguistic changes which took place between the epoch of Homer and the historical period of Greek literature. It is chiefly the hope of making good this loss which has inspired the many well-known attempts to explain these words by the methods of comparative philology. Others suppose that their meaning had already been more or less forgotten when the verses of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed.¹ This theory has been suggested often and variously, but always

¹ In this study a somewhat special distinction will be made in the use of the terms *signification*, *meaning*, *sense*. The *signification* of a word is that which it denotes, that is, the definition which would be given it as an entity isolated from all contexts. *Meaning* refers to the ideas, single or multiple, exact or vague, which a word arouses in the mind when used in connection with other words. The *sense* of a word is that particular delimitation of its meaning brought about by its *repeated* use in combination with certain other words, or in connection with the expression of certain categories of ideas, or in certain forms of literature. Thus to take an example in English: *Alexander the Great*. The signification of *great* is "large in spatial dimension" (Webster); its meaning is "eminent or distinguished by rank, power, or moral character" (Webster); its sense is—more or less exactly—"King of Macedon, B.C. 336–323." For in this phrase, as it is ordinarily used and understood, the adjective does no more than specify that it is a certain Alexander who is mentioned. An example of the sense of a word determined by its repeated use in connection with the expression of certain categories of ideas, is the word *idea* itself, in Greek or English, used as a term of Platonic philosophy. One example of the sense of a word resulting from its use in a certain form of literature is that possessed in old English ballads by 'merry,' or 'greenwood.'

The importance of these distinctions lies in the fact that, just as the meaning of a word replaces its signification, from the point of view of its thought content, just so does the sense replace the meaning.



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more as an impression than as the conclusion of any constructive reasoning; and that for a quite natural cause: so long as it was believed that the processes of verse-making were the same for Homer as for any poet of ancient or modern times who wrote an individual style, it was impossible to explain reasonably how a poet could have used words which he did not understand. The purpose of this paper is to give an explanation of how this could really be, based on the conception that the Homeric style is a traditional style, a view which I have set forth in my study *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928). But the present pages will not take as the premises of their reasoning the conclusions of that essay. Rather I would point out, to begin with, one of the phenomena determining our own comprehension, or non-comprehension, of the glosses, and then show that this phenomenon, in turn, can be understood only in the light of a traditional technique of verse-making.

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It must be granted that the definition of the gloss given by Aristotle (*Poetics*, 1457b3) is incomplete: "By a *regular word* I mean one which is in common use, by a *gloss* one which is used abroad."² For the third alternative is omitted: the word which is obsolete in all dialects. Indeed, to all purposes the glosses of Attic poetry were for the greater part archaisms. Only the smallest portion of an audience of Aeschylus could have known that ἀναξ was still employed in Cyprus, and κέλευθος in Arcadia;³ they must have recognized them as words met with in Homer, or in more recent poetry, and felt simply that they were no more in common use. The definition of Liddell and Scott—"An *obsolete* or *foreign* word which needs explanation"—is unsatisfactory for the important reason, as we shall see, that by far the larger number of words which must be classed as glosses certainly needed no explanation. What is more, the essential characteristic of the gloss is its

² λέγω δὲ κύριον μὲν ὡς χρῶνται ἕκαστοι, γλῶτταν δὲ ὡς ἕτεροι, ὥστε φανερόν ὅτι καὶ γλῶτταν καὶ κύριον εἶναι δυνατόν τὸ αὐτό, μὴ τοῖς αὐτοῖς δέ.

³ Buck, *Greek Dialects*¹ § 191.

form, and not its "foreign" and so poetic quality, which is a consequence of its form. In the following pages I shall use the term *gloss* as signifying *an element of vocabulary which has either no correspondence, or at best a remote one, with any element of vocabulary in the current language of an author's public.*

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The phenomenon which furnishes the point of departure of the present study is simply this: the words in Homer for whose meaning we are in the dark are limited almost entirely to the category of ornamental epithets, that is, of adjectives used attributively and without reference to the ideas of the sentences or the passages where they appear.

As a result of the direct and substantial nature of Homeric thought, finding its expression in a style which rigorously avoids abstraction, those words in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which have no correspondents in later Greek, with the exception of those which are ornamental epithets, are usually explained by the context. The explanation necessarily varies in exactness, according to the word and the circumstances of its use, but in only a very few instances does the meaning remain obscure. *δαήρ*, 'brother-in-law', which is found only in Homer, may be taken as an example of the way in which the signification of a word is thus revealed. In Z 344 Helen addresses Hector: *δαερ ἐμείο*; and then we have the verses spoken by Helen at the funeral of Hector:

Ω 768 ἀλλ' εἴ τις με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
δαέρων ἢ γαλῶν ἢ εἰνατέρων ἐνπέπλων,
ἢ ἐκυρή,

Typical too is *ἔστωρ*, which appears in Greek only once, in Ω 272, where Homer relates the preparing of the wagon which is to carry Priam and the ransom to the camp of the Achaeans:

Ω 270 ἐκ δ' ἔφερον ζυγόδεσμον ἅμα ζυγῶι ἐννεάπηχυν.
καὶ τὸ μὲν εὖ κατέθηκαν ἐνἔστωι ἐπὶ ῥυμῶι,
πέζηι ἐπὶ πρῶτῃ, ἐπὶ δὲ κρίκον ἔστορι βάλλον,
τρὶς δ' ἐκάτερθεν ἔδησαν ἐπ' ὄμφαλόν, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
ἐξείης κατέδησαν, ὑπὸ γλωχίνα δ' ἔκαμψαν.

For *ἔστορι* there has been found no nearer correspondence than the doubtful one with Ionic-Attic *ἔρμα*, and *ὑσταξ* glossed by Hesychius: *πάσσαλος κεράτινος*; but it is evident that it can signify only the *yoke-pin*.⁴

In some cases the context furnishes us with the meaning, though not the signification of a word. Certainly such a word has a certain quality of vagueness, and so of remoteness, which, if anything, must have made it all the more suitable to epic style; but nevertheless, in such instances, the meaning indicated is usually quite clear. The aorist *ἄεσα*, for instance, has no nearer correspondent in Homer than *ιαῦσαι*, and in later Greek than *αὐλή*,⁵ but a single use of the word gives its meaning:

π 366 ἄμα δ' ἠέλιω καταδύντι
οὐ ποτ' ἐπ' ἠπείρου νύκτ' ἄσαμεν, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ
νῆι θοῆι πλείοντες ἐμίνομεν Ἡῶ δῖαν,

What is more, this word, used only in the aorist (6 times), is invariably joined with *νύκτα*. That it signify 'rest', 'pass', or, as its possible etymology would suggest, 'stay', can add little to our understanding of the verses where it appears. Similarly there is *ἔμμαπέως*, found only in E 836 and ξ 485, where the circumstances of its use easily and surely furnish some such meaning as 'rapidly':

E 835 Ὡς φαμένη Σθένελον μὲν ἀφ' ἵππων ὦσε χαμᾶζε,
χειρὶ πάλιν ἐρύσασ', ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἔμμαπέως ἀπόρουσεν.

ξ 484 καὶ τότε ἔγῳ Ὀδυσῆα προσηύδων ἐγγυὸς ἔοντα
ἀγκῶνι νύξας· ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἔμμαπέως ὑπάκουσε.

Even in such a case as that of *ἀμολγῶι* we do not really suffer anything from our inability to give a definition. The word is found always in the expression (*ἐν*) *νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶι* (5 times) which, taken as a whole, can only mean 'in the dark of night'; it would

⁴ See Leaf, *Iliad*² (London, 1902), II, pp. 623 ff.

⁵ The etymological evidence adduced by the comparative method which will be cited in this paper is chiefly from Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Heidelberg, 1923.

be difficult to devise a meaning which would be essentially different.

In a very rare number of cases we do find a word other than an ornamental epithet which must remain unexplained, for example *έντυπας*, found only in Ω 163. In this passage the poet tells how Iris, arriving at the palace of Priam, found the household plunged in grief:

Ω 161 παῖδες μὲν πατέρ' ἀμφὶ καθήμενοι ἔνδοθεν αὐλῆς
δάκρυσιν εἶματ' ἔφυρον, ὃ δ' ἐν μέσσοισι γεραιὸς
έντυπὰς ἐν χλαίνῃ κεκαλυμμένος.

έντυπας, evidently an adverb, has variously found the interpretations 'prostrate', 'bowed', 'closely-wrapped', and its meaning must remain doubtful. But it is almost sure that if we had even one other use of the word we could explain it: in no case do we find in Homer a word other than an ornamental epithet which, when used with any frequency, refuses to disclose its meaning.

The situation is only too different in the case of those glosses which are ornamental epithets. We are frankly ignorant, in spite of the fact that they are often frequently used, of the meaning of *αἰγίλιπος* (3 times, of cliffs); *αἶμονα* (once, in the phrase *αἶμονα θήρης*); *ἀκάκητα* (twice, of Hermes); *ἀλαλκομενῆς* (twice, of Athene); *ἀλοσύδνης* (once of Thetis, once of Amphitrite); *ἀλφειστάων* (5 times, of mortals); *ἀτρυγέτοιο* (17 times of the sea, once of the air); *ἀφήτορος* (once, of Apollo); *ἀμφιγυῆς* (11 times, of Hephaestus), etc. There are as many other words of the same sort commencing likewise with the vowel alpha for which we may, or may not, know the meaning, for it is often as difficult in this connection to refute an explanation as it is to confirm one. These epithet glosses are used ornamentally, and the idea which each expresses has no bearing upon the ideas of the sentence or passage where they appear. They do not express an *essential*⁶ idea and so they

⁶ For the exact force of the term *essential* as used here cf. Parry, *L'Épithète traditionnelle*, p. 16.

are not, as are the other parts of speech, an integral part of the frame of thought.

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We now know the relation, *for us*, between the context and the meaning of the glosses, and we have made the distinction between the glosses which we usually understand and those which can be explained only in the degree that they have some correspondence with other words in Homer or in later Greek; these latter will from now on be referred to as ornament glosses. But as yet no attempt has been made to decide whether, or to what extent, Homer was here in the same position as ourselves. Accordingly we shall first consider the possible conditions under which he might have understood the ornament glosses and then, if these are unacceptable, see how the explanation that he did not know their signification, or their original meaning, accords with what we know from other sources concerning the traditional character of the epic language and diction.

If the poet (or the poets) of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* knew the true signification of the ornament glosses, without having access to any traditional or recorded explanation, we shall be forced to make the date of composition of the poems go back to a time so ancient that it will find, certainly, no serious support. For we shall thus be obliged to suppose that the elements of vocabulary which make up the ornament glosses were then in current use in the spoken language, so that poet and public understood *μερόπων*, for instance, with the same facility as an audience of Pindar or Aeschylus understood any of the epithets of these poets. The thought may occur to some that we might be able to show linguistically that certain ornament glosses were formed in an earlier period of the language, but it is doubtful if we may hope to prove very much in this way. Such epithets as *μῶνυχες*, *νήγρετος*, *νηλής*, or those containing an Aeolic element, as *ζατρεφέων*, *ζαθείοισι*, *ἐρήρος*, *ἐριαύχενες*, etc., furnish no conclusive evidence, since their meaning is sufficiently indicated either by corresponding

elements in Homer, or by the meaning of the nouns with which they are joined. (This latter is the sole manner in which the context may help explain an ornamental epithet.) Such interpretations as *διάκτορος*, 'Giver' (*διά* + *κτέρας*), or *ἀργειφώντης*, 'of gleaming rays' (which M. Bérard seems to accept as originating with some Chaldean conception of Hermes as the planet),⁷ and the like, are at the best doubtful. And even if the formation from ancient elements of vocabulary were proved in the case of certain ornament glosses, it would have only a proportionate bearing on the others. Without speaking of the limitations, in this connection, of the comparative method,⁸ we lack almost altogether the two basic elements of the proof, by specific linguistic evidence, of the date when the ornament glosses were formed: the date of the poems and the sure signification of even a few of those ornament glosses which have no correspondences in Homeric or later Greek.

The answer to the question must be based upon our general estimation of the rapidity with which the Ionic dialect could have changed. Can we suppose that the time which elapsed between the period of Homer and that of Archilochus, of Theognis, even of Herodotus, to name periods for which we have a progressively increasing knowledge of Ionic vocabulary, is sufficient to justify the differences of phonology and vocabulary which make it impossible to explain so large a part of the Homeric vocabulary by corresponding elements in Greek of the historical period? The words in Archilochus and Theognis (with the exception of those imitated from the epos) for which we are unable to find corresponding elements in Ionic or Attic prose are few or none. Unless, then, we wish to suppose, for the spoken Greek of Ionia between the period of Homer and historical times, an acceleration of linguistic change unparalleled elsewhere in the domain of Greek dialects, to what great antiquity must we assign Homer if we would suppose

⁷ *Introduction à l'Odyssée* (Paris, 1924), I, p. 202.

⁸ Cf. Meillet, *Aperçu d'une histoire de la langue grecque*¹ (Paris, 1920), p. 40.

that he naturally understood the ornament glosses, explaining them by corresponding elements of current speech? This antiquity it is easy and necessary to accept for his language, but difficult to believe in for himself. And even if we were to grant this very great antiquity of the poet and to accept an explanation of very rapid linguistic change, we should have shown only how Homer might have understood those ornament glosses which were Ionic. He could not, under any circumstances, have understood without some written or traditional explanation the non-Ionic elements of vocabulary found in these words. Yet knowing as we now do, by the linguistic evidence, that the epos, with its language and style, was Aeolic before it became Ionic, and possibly Achæan before that, it would be rash to claim that the ornament glosses were exclusively Ionic.

It is important in this connection to make the following observation: with the exception of the ornament glosses there is no difficulty raised by supposing that the spoken language of Homer was substantially the same as that of Herodotus. Homer would have understood with a perfectly sufficient accuracy the meaning of the glosses which are not ornamental epithets, learning them, as we do, from the context, but better than we can, for he would have seen them used infinitely more frequently and more variedly. This process of learning the meaning from the context is indeed the very thing we constate so abundantly at other periods in the case of those Homeric (or more exactly epic) glosses which we find in the verses of later poets. The list of epic-tragic and epic-poetic words which have no corresponding elements in styles more closely related to the spoken language is long: ἦτορ (Sim., Pind., Aesch.), θύελλα (Aesch., Soph.), θυοσκός (Eur.) μάρπτω (Archil., Pind., Aesch., Soph., Eur., Ar., Anth. Pal.), ματεύω (Pind., Soph., Aesch., Ar., Theocr.), ὄβριμος (Pind., Aesch., Eur.), etc. A striking example is furnished by the adoption by later poets of words containing the ancient glossic element *νη-*: νημερτής (Aesch., Soph., Ap. Rh.), νήνεμος (Aesch., Eur., Ar.

and once even in Aristotle and Plutarch), *νηλεής* (Pind., Aesch., Soph., Eur., Epigr. Gr.), etc.

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There is a second way in which one might explain how Homer knew the true signification of the ornament glosses: it could have been handed down in writing, or as an oral tradition, by the corporation of Singers. But there is not the slightest evidence in the scholia or in any ancient writer which would confirm such an explanation, improbable enough in itself. Accordingly if there had been such a tradition it was completely lost between the time of Homer and the beginnings of critical study of Homeric language, which we find already developed in the fifth century.⁹ This is the sort of theory to which one would resort only when all other explanations had failed.

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It is not yet definitely established to what extent the diction of Homer, taken as a whole, is formulaic and traditional. The complexity of the ideas of the epos, and the comparatively small amount of poetry which we possess, render impossible the complete analysis of a technique of composition which must be as varied as the thought it is designed to express. Only in the case of the ornamental epithets does an abundance of material render possible a quantitative analysis which indicates that they are probably all traditional.¹⁰

The ornamental epithet is always a fixed epithet, for its quality of ornament derives solely from the fact that it has been used repeatedly in conjunction with a certain noun and without reference to the thought of the sentence where it appears.¹¹ This repeated use is determined chiefly by the factor of metrical convenience; for the fixed epithet plays an important part in the traditional technique of epic composi-

⁹ As is indicated by the fragment of Aristophanes (222 Hall).

¹⁰ Parry, *op. cit.* pp. 99 ff.

¹¹ *Ib.* pp. 156 ff.

tion which Homer followed: it combines with the noun to form a noun-epithet formula of a certain metrical value.¹² The uses of noun-epithet formulae are varied and many, but their common utility lies in the fact that they fill exactly a certain portion of the verse where the noun, or its synonym, would not fit. The technique of the use of the fixed epithet as we find it in Homer reveals plainly an ancient and intense development. In those cases where the importance of a word, or of a category of words, has brought about its use frequently, and in different combinations of words, we find that the noun-epithet formulae constitute systems characterized by a great complexity and by a strict economy.¹³ For example, in the case of the 37 most important characters of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* we find that each has a noun-epithet formula which fills the hexameter exactly between the feminine caesura and the verse end (πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς (38 times), διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντης, etc.): in the number of such formulae lies the complexity of the system. On the other hand we find for these 37 characters only forty different formulae of the measure in question; that is to say, in the case of 33 of them, no matter how often they may be mentioned, the poet uses only one formula which fills the verse between the feminine caesura and the verse end: in this lack of formulae which could replace one another lies the economy of the system. It is this character of the system which is the proof of its integral antiquity. Such a system could not be the work of a single poet: it must represent the effort of generations of Singers, ever seeking and ever guarding the convenient expression, and using it when found, to the exclusion of all other formulae which could replace it. This system of noun-epithet formulae of the characters, in the nominative, falling between the feminine caesura and the verse end, is only one of the many which go to make up the technique of the use of the fixed epithet in the traditional

¹² *Ib.* pp. 11 ff. and 50-51.

¹³ "Par une grande extension et par une grande simplicité," *ib.* p. 7, cf. pp. 20-23.

style: a complete description of this technique must necessarily be as long as the technique is complex.¹⁴

Now when one has seized the conception of a traditional and formulaic technique of verse-making, the presence of the ornament glosses in Homer has been explained. The epic poets over the generations guarded those words which, though they had passed from current usage, were yet metrically convenient, or, to be exact, were now metrically indispensable. Certainly the fact that these old words had a special poetic quality must not be neglected; it was one of the factors making their survival possible, but this semantic consideration is dominated by that of metrical convenience, as is proved by the economy of the formulaic systems. We can well see, in the case of the noun-epithet formulae, how deeply rooted was the tendency to preserve the gloss for its metrical convenience. *Εὐρύπια* is an epithet of much-discussed meaning, of an Aeolic ending. It is always joined in Homer with *Ζεὺς*, to form the formula *εὐρύπια Ζεὺς* which fills the hexameter between the bucolic diaeresis and the verse end (14 times), as does *μηρία* (*μηρία Ζεὺς*, 18 times), a word somewhat clearer in meaning, but also Aeolic in form. The two formulae differ by the very important element of the initial sound; in no case could they replace each other; and we find in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* no other noun-epithet formula which could replace either. The number of cases where one or the other of the formulae has helped the poet to complete his verse indicates their usefulness. Imagine, then, a poet who, dissatisfied with the ancient formula, wished to abandon it (this first supposition is difficult in itself). Not only would he have to renounce a traditional word consecrated by usage; he would, which is more tangible, be obliged to find an epithet of the same metrical value, that of a first paeon, and beginning and ending with the same metrical element. But in no case could he find in Ionic an epithet ending, in the masculine nominative, with a short vowel. Nor can *Ζεὺς* be placed first, after the bucolic-

¹⁴ *Ib.* pp. 23-24.

diaeresis, since its initial consonant would necessarily make position, and might occasion the serious fault of overlengthening.¹⁵ It cannot be asserted that it would be impossible to create in Ionic, for the king of the gods, other noun-epithet formulae of the metrical values of *εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς* and *μηρία Ζεὺς*; but such formulae must be paraphrases.¹⁶ And then too what immeasurable difficulty there would be in finding an expression which would equal *εὐρύοπα* or *μηρία* in the quality of *σεμνότης*. Thus *μηρία*, an Aeolic form, and *εὐρύοπα*, an ornament gloss, survived.¹⁷

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Did Homer, then, accept blindly, as an unchangeable part of the traditional style which he inherited, a large number of words concerning whose meaning he was completely ignorant? We have seen that in the case of the other glosses he was instructed by the context, but that this source of knowledge is barren for the ornament glosses.

It may be considered as certain that Homer thought he understood the ornament glosses: it is not possible that as an *αἰδώς*, as an *homme de métier*, he should not have had some explanation for each one of them. But his method of explaining them must have been radically different from that which has been followed in the etymological studies which in the last fifty years have been inspired by the perfection of the comparative method. For Homer, if we are to assign him to a point of time anywhere near the historical period of Greek literature, can only have explained the words in question by associations, however far-fetched, with words of which he knew the signification. His etymological science, for such it may be called, must have been dominated at every point by the principle of analogy; it is very doubtful if the conception

¹⁵ *Ib.* p. 52.

¹⁶ *Ib.* pp. 72 and 93-94.

¹⁷ For the analysis of similar cases where the poet was, to all purposes, obliged to retain the ancient formula, see Parry, *Les formules et la métrique d'Homère*, Paris, 1928, pp. 45 ff.

of phonetic alteration could have entered into it at all. The ancients explained *μῶνυχες* as formed by haplology from *μόνος* and *ὄνυξ*; Homer must have understood the word similarly. The fact that the word probably had an earlier form * *σμῶνυξ*, * *σμ*—being the reduced form of I.E. * *σεμ*—‘one’, can have had no bearing on his comprehension of the epithet. For *λόμωροι*, an epithet of the Argives used in Δ 242 and Ξ 479, the scholiast gives the explanation “famed for their arrows,” a signification which certain moderns would deny because the initial vowel of *λός*, ‘arrow,’ is long. It is possible that this difference of quantity would prove the falsity of the scholiast’s explanation as giving the *original* signification, but such must in all probability have been Homer’s comprehension of the word, based on an association with the ideas found in *ἐγχεσίμωρος* and *ὕλακόμωρος*. In his discussion of the epithet *ίοντα*, a *harpax* joined in Ψ 850 with *σίδηρον*, Boisacq has done well to approve the derivation from *ιον*, ‘violet,’ rather than to attempt, like Fick, to find a meaning ‘subject to rust’ (how inappropriately!) based on Sanskrit and Latin forms signifying ‘poisonous.’ Likewise *διάκτορος* must have been associated with *ἄγω* rather than with *κτέρας*. *ἀργειφόντης* was probably the ‘slayer of Argos,’ though it might also have been given the other explanation which is furnished by the scholia: *ἀργός καὶ καθαρὸς φόνου*. It is evident that what we need here, in order to reconstruct the meaning which Homer gave to the ornament glosses, is not a rigid science of etymology, but a working out of the popular method.

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And yet one would err seriously were he to consider that the epic poet gave to the ornament glosses a sense similar to that which he gave to words embodying a part of the essential thought. The characteristic sense of the ornamental epithet differs profoundly from that of the words which carry ahead the movement of the poem; for the ornamental epithet does not have an independent existence. It is one with its noun,

with which it has become fused by repeated use, and the resulting noun-epithet formula constitutes a thought unit differing from that of the simple noun only by an added quality of epic nobility.¹⁸ The meaning of the fixed epithet has thus a reduced importance: it is used inattentively by the poet, and heard by the auditor in a like manner; it is a familiar word on which the mind need not dwell, since its idea has no bearing upon that of the sentence. It is this circumstance of the indifference of the auditor to the signification of the epithet which explains how the poet has often come to use it irrationally (*φαεινήν . . . σελήνην*, Θ 555, *ἀμύμονος Αἰγίσθου*, α 29);¹⁹ how he can allow himself to use it invariably under certain conditions (the type-hemistich *τὸν δ' ἡμίβητ' ἔπειτα*, in 251 cases out of 254, is completed by a noun-epithet formula filling the rest of the verse);²⁰ how he can use it disproportionately with certain nouns in certain grammatical cases (Odysseus is *δῖος* 99 times in the nominative, and only once in an oblique case); how the poet can repeatedly use epithets of vague connotation (*δαίφρων*, *μεγάθυμος*); and finally, in the case of the present problem, how he can use as epithets words which are comprehended only by more or less distant associations with other words, and to which he is often forced to attach a meaning very remote from the main current of his thought. The meaning 'abandoned even by goats,' which was probably given to *αἰγίλιπος*, 'ox-eyed' for *βοῶπις*, 'slayer of Argos' for *ἀργειφόντης*, when used in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* led the mind far from the path where it was closely following the rapid movement of the story. It is not that this quality of remoteness is exclusive to the ornament glosses; many other epithets of certain meaning possess it equally—*ποδάρκης* of Achilles, *λευκώλενος* of Hera, *νεφέληγερέτα* of Zeus. But this inattentiveness of the auditor for the meaning of all ornamental epithets allows him to pass rapidly over the ornament glosses, feeling in them only an element which ennoble the

¹⁸ Parry, *L'Épith. trad.* pp. 156 ff.

¹⁹ *Ib.* pp. 150 ff.

²⁰ *Ib.* pp. 17 and 172 ff.

heroic style. They are words, it is true, for whose comprehension he must perform an etymological exercise of the mind; if he would realize their meaning as he hears them in a Singer's verses, he must turn his thought aside for them. But his familiarity with them, his habit of hearing them joined with certain nouns, absolves him from doing this: they are remote words, and he accepts them as such. He is fully alive to their sense, but scarcely heedful of their meaning. And so we come to Aristotle: "Thus one's style should be unlike that of ordinary language, for if it has the quality of remoteness it will cause wonder, and wonder is pleasant."²¹

²¹ *Rhet.* 1404b10. διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον· θαυμασταὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀπόντων εἰσὶν [ἄνθρωποι], ἡδὺ δὲ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν.