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Constructions: A New Approach to Formularity, Discourse, and Syntax in Homer

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Constructions:
A New Approach to Formularity, Discourse, and Syntax in Homer

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
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by

Chiara Bozzone

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Constructions:
A New Approach to Formularity,
Discourse, and Syntax in Homer

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Indo-European Studies
University of California, Los Angeles 2014
Professor Brent Harmon Vine, Department of Classics, Chair

This dissertation argues that formulaic phenomena in Homer are best described by using the linguistic concept of construction (borrowed from Construction Grammar). Through a series of case studies, the dissertation explores new possibilities opened by the adoption of this framework, in particular regarding the synchronic and diachronic study of the technique and the study of Homeric word order (i.e., syntax and discourse).

While chapters 1-3 lay the methodological bases for the enterprise, chapters 4-7 explore theoretical and practical issues in the workings of Homeric constructions. Chapter 1, *Describing Homer's Technique*, frames the goals of the work against the backdrop of earlier research. Chapters 2 (*Homeric Formulas and their Definitions*) and 3 (*Formulas in Linguistics*) discuss the topic of formularity within Homeric studies and linguistics, respectively, leading up to the

concept of construction in usage-based linguistics and its application to the study of Homer. Chapter 4, *Homeric Constructions at Work*, explains conventions for the formal notation of Homeric constructions and discusses how constructions have semantic, syntactic, and discourse functions. Chapter 5, *The Synchronic Workings of Constructions*, discusses how poets acquire constructions during their training, and asks whether constructional habits can be used as diagnostics for individual style; a case study on the epithets of Here illustrates how constructions pass through a life cycle, and how we can use type and token frequency to distinguish innovative constructions from fossilized ones. A study of the famous formula ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην 'manliness and youth' shows that this formula was created using a regular and productive construction in the technique, and is thus unlikely to preserve phonological or metrical archaisms (as often argued). Chapter 6, *The Diachrony of Constructions*, integrates the study of how constructions change over time with previous work on the diachronic evolution of the language of Greek epic; a case study illustrates how different speech introduction constructions evolved at different speeds between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, depending on their type and token frequencies. Chapter 7, *Constructions and the Study of Homeric Discourse*, introduces the study of Homeric discourse and covers the principles of referent management, information structure, and word order in Homer.

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List of Abbreviations

3sg.A	Third singular ergative agreement (Mayan)
3sg.B	Third singular absolutive agreement (Mayan)
A	Agent (subject of a transitive verb)
Adv.	Adverb or adverbial phrase
B.Foc	Broad Focus
Con.Top	Continued Topic
Dat.	Dative
EC.Top	Exclusive Contrastive Topic
Foc	Focus
FS.Top	Frame Setting Topic
N.Foc	Narrow Focus
NP	Noun-phrase
O	Object
Obj.	Object
Part.	Participle or participial phrase
PAS	Preferred Argument Structure
PFV	Perfective (Mayan)
PLAIN	Plain status (Mayan)
Pr.	Pronoun
S	Subject (subject of an intransitive verb)
S.Top	Switch Topic
Subj.	Subject
Top	Topic
V	Verb
VP	Verb-phrase

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1

Describing Homer's Technique

How does one go about describing Homer's technique? The term in itself is rather vague. Since Parry demonstrated that the Homeric poems display features that point to oral composition, one common way of thinking about Homer's technique has been oral composition through juxtaposition of formulas. Nowadays, even scholars who do not believe that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* themselves arose through oral composition agree that the traditional technique that Homer employed originated in this way.

But composition by means of formulas has often seemed reductive to many scholars, for it seemed to leave little room for the creativity of the poet. The importance of flexibility in the usage of formulas has been rightly stressed (Hainsworth 1968), and scholars have gradually become weary of statistics trying to separate the formulaic from the not-so-formulaic, and thus the oral from the written. Many, in fact, out of "interest in and respect for Homeric artistry" (Bremer et al. 1987:vii), have yearned to move beyond the oral-formulaic model of

composition. Visser (1987, 1988) was an eager attempt at taking words, not formulas, as the basis of Homer's versification. The desire has been to make formulas somehow disappear, so that we could keep talking about Homer's style the way we talk about the style of any writing author, and appreciate Homer's artistry the way we appreciate that of any writing author.

Yet it is not wise to abandon formulas as a unit of analysis of Homeric style: for formulas do seem to be the best spot to start describing how the poems were put together. They are units that poets dealt with on a concrete level; units that poets and audience alike would have recognized as "words of Homer," had they encountered them. Formulas are frozen bits of lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, narrative, discourse, and meter all wrapped together and ready to use. And while certainly individual formulas in themselves are not what matters, but the system that they engender is, formulas as a category are clearly central to the poetic technique and its acquisition, as Lord's work on the living Serbo-Croatian tradition has made clear (Lord 1960).

The question then is what is the best angle to describe formulas and Homeric technique in general. Is this the domain of style or the domain of grammar? In style, we normally think about a choice between alternatives; in grammar, we think about obligatory choices. A useful concept to overcome this dilemma is that of a poetic grammar:[1] "a grammar superimposed, as

[1] See Watkins 1995:28-49 for an illuminating discussion of Indo-European poetic grammars in general.

it were, on the grammar of the language concerned" (Lord 1960:36; further discussed in Bakker 1997:187ff.). From this point of view, Homeric technique can be analyzed using the same tools that we use to describe grammars: it can be described using linguistic categories. This is the aim of this work.

In practice, what we call Homeric technique (or Homeric style, or Homeric poetic grammar) can be conceived of as a complex of habits that the poets acquired during their training and that enabled them to perform. Habits are behaviors that have become automatic, and as such are rigid, do not require conscious control, and are predictable. Because of this, they can be described by rules. They also change regularly over time, in the way language does.

One could of course argue that there is more to the style or technique of an author than what is automatic. In a way, we often think that what is deliberate is the true signature of an author (or at least, we like to ascribe intentionality to whatever "makes this work so great"). Yet the best thing that we can do, at least to start, is to describe what is regular and traditional (and thus most likely automatic), and then measure against it what is not so. This is very similar to Parry's original concern in studying Homeric style: telling the traditional apart from the individual;[2] and while such a sharp dichotomy may be illusory, it may be interesting to

[2] "Only then will the modern reader have that sense of style which Homer knew, at the moment when he

reflect on why our literary criticism is so obsessed with originality, authorship, and innovation. As we shall see, this approach will allow us later on to single out odd or infrequent compositional behaviors in the poems, and use them to raise questions about the making of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in a more concrete way.

This dissertation uses the linguistic concept of *construction*, borrowed from usage-based linguistics (Goldberg 2006, Bybee 2010) but not incompatible with other theoretical approaches to language (see section 3.3 below), to capture and describe the habits that make up Homer's poetic grammar – his technique. These habits are often co-extensive with formulas, but they are often more abstract and more pervasive than individual formulas themselves. They are, as we shall see, the *molds* that underlie the formulas. In modern linguistic terms, constructions are a way of describing the *competence* of the poet, rather than his *performance* (his *langue*, in Saussurean terms, as opposed to his *parole*). Constructions are also a way of describing and explaining the synchronic mechanisms of Homeric language first, before we venture into the diachrony for deeper answers.

Constructions are defined as *learned*[3] pairings of form and function (Goldberg 2006:1).

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composed them, would be the criterion by which his own poems would be judged" (MHV:4).

[3] I like how *learned* brings a focus onto the acquisition process, which Parry correctly viewed as crucial to understanding the technique: "In the study of the epic style, we should always keep before us the conception of the apprentice poet: he is essential for our understanding of the formation and preservation of the epic technique and diction." (Parry, MHV:56).

This means that an analysis of Homeric style in terms of constructions will entail two steps: one has to isolate a form, and then describe its function. There are several choices for each of these steps. One may describe the form at different levels of abstraction, and one can make the function as complex and sophisticated as one wishes. One may be content to say that the function of the form πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς is to express the idea of 'Akhilleus' under given metrical conditions (Parry), while another may want to say that its function is to re-introduce the referent Akhilleus as the subject of a finite verb after the mid-line caesura, perhaps in some specific narrative (thematic) contexts.

Once established that constructions can be a powerful tool for describing Homer's technique, two avenues open up for exploration: on the one hand, one could set out to systematically map all the constructions that make up the technique, or some part thereof. This endeavor would amount to writing a dictionary of Homeric constructions, and would be an enourmous undertaking, which would surely yield a number of important finds. However, such a work would be essentially descriptive in nature, and would not serve to test any theory. On the other hand, one could explore what are the further theoretical ways in which a constructional approach to Homeric formularity can specifically enhance our understanding of the language of archaic Greek epic. The current work opts for the second route, by exploring how we can use a constructional approach and methods of contemporary linguistics to answer

core questions concerning Homer's technique of verse composition: in particular, how the technique is acquired, how it functions as a synchronic system (which includes the study of discourse and syntax in Homer), and how it changes diachronically.

After reviewing the theoretical work on Homeric formularity and linguistic approaches to formulaic phenomena in natural language (leading up to the development of the concept of construction), this study will address the questions above by means of a series of case studies.

1.1 The Plan of This Work

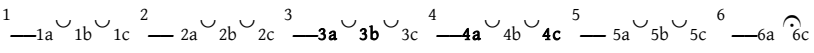
After laying the methodological bases for the enterprise in chapters 1-3, chapters 4-7 explore theoretical and practical issues in the workings of Homeric constructions through a series of case studies. Chapter 1, *Describing Homer's Technique*, frames the goals of the work against the backdrop of earlier research. Chapters 2 (*Homeric Formulas and their Definitions*) and 3 (*Formulas in Linguistics*) discuss the topic of formularity within Homeric studies and Homeric linguistics, respectively, leading up to the concept of construction in usage-based linguistics and its application to the study of Homer. Chapter 4, *Homeric Constructions at Work*, explains conventions for the formal notation of Homeric constructions and discusses how constructions have semantic, syntactic, and discourse functions (the latter two functions having been previously unrecognized in oral-formulaic studies). The portion on semantics addresses how we determine the exact meaning of formulas through a treatment of the death scenes of

Sarpedon, Patroklos, and Hektor, and discusses traditional referentiality and intertextuality in the poems. Chapter 5, *The Synchronic Workings of Constructions*, discusses how poets acquire constructions during their training, and asks whether constructional habits can be used as diagnostics for individual style; a case study on the epithets of Here illustrates how constructions pass through a life cycle, and how we can distinguish innovative from fossilized constructions using type and token frequency. A study of the famous formula ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην 'manliness and youth' shows that this formula was created using a regular and productive construction in the technique, and is thus unlikely to preserve phonological or metrical archaisms (as often argued); on the basis of constructional, morphological, semantic, and philological considerations, an emendation to ἀδρότητα καὶ ἥβην 'vigor and youth' is further proposed. Chapter 6, *The Diachrony of Constructions*, integrates the study of how constructions change over time with previous work on the diachronic evolution of the language of Greek epic; a case study illustrates how different speech introduction constructions evolved at different speeds between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, depending on their type and token frequencies. Chapter 7, *Constructions and the Study of Homeric Discourse*, introduces the study of Homeric discourse and covers the principles of referent management, information structure, and word order in Homer; killing scenes from *Iliad* 4–6 and 14 serve as case studies. One important finding is that noun-epithet formulas are always topical (which in

turn explains their clause-final position); the chapter also discusses criteria for establishing how metrical constraints may alter word order, and points out some typologically striking patterns of subject and object ellipsis in typical scenes.

1.2 The Hexameter and its Notation

In notating the various positions that elements can occupy in the Homeric hexameter, I accept Janse's (2003) proposal of using a neutral and transparent system that assigns numbers to the feet and letters to the positions within the feet:



In this system, the masculine and feminine caesuras of the third foot are 3a and 3b respectively, the hephthemimeral caesura is 4a and the bucolic diaeresis is 4c (these are P, T, H, and B, respectively, in the terminology introduced by White 1912:152). I also maintain the terminological distinction between caesura (word-end within a foot) and diaeresis (word-end that coincides with foot-end), in the interest of transparency (in this system, *n*c will always be a diaeresis, while *n*a,b will always be caesuras).

This approach is largely agnostic as to the debate on metrical boundaries (i.e. caesuras and diaireses) in the hexameter, which has a very long history in the field (Fränkel 1926/60, O'Neill 1942, Porter 1951, West 1982:35-8, Kirk 1985:18-24, Sicking 1993:75-7, Cantilena 1995) and could probably be a legitimate dissertation topic on its own. From a theoretical

standpoint, it should be enough to note that Fränkel's (1926) approach to the caesuras in the hexameter (as *Sinnesgliederungen* that gradually become metrical incisions) is the most compatible with my approach to Homeric technique (see also discussion in Cantilena 1995). Descriptively, the main metrical boundaries in the line should be the places in the line where word-end is most frequent. It seems then that the debate could be resolved statistically (the metrical boundaries that get violated most often are not the main ones): the only variable is the definition of 'word' that one uses.[4] Fränkel's (1926/1960) *Wortbild*, close to the contemporary concept of phonological word, is then more correct than that of morphological word (O'Neill 1942 and Porter 1951).

As for the origin of the hexameter, also a popular topic of debate in the field, one should note that many of the arguments for reconstructing a pre-form of the hexameter (Berg 1978, Tichy 1981, see discussion in Hackstein 2010:413-4) rely on taking some phenomena in the synchrony (metrical irregularities or morphological irregularities induced by the meter) and explaining them through a diachronic scenario (i.e. explaining meter by older meter). Though this is the standard heuristic process of historical linguistics, one should not neglect to address the first question that the historical linguist must ask when looking at synchronic

[4] The definition of 'word' is indeed a complicated problem in linguistic typology, especially when one abandons the "Eurocentric" habit of dealing with largely synthetic languages. For an overview of the literature and some criteria to define 'word' in different languages, see Dixon and Aikhenvald 2007. The distinction between grammatical and phonological word is still important even for synthetic languages.

data: is there any *synchronic* mechanism that could explain this data? I hope that my work will be a contribution in this direction (see, for instance, my discussion of ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην in 5.4.4).

2

Homeric Formulas and their Definitions

Before we venture into the recasting of Homeric formulas as Constructions, a brief history of the concept of formula within Homeric scholarship is in order. As does every work on Homeric formularity, one should start with Parry's definitions of the formula (the first from the *Epithète*, the second from *Homer and Homeric Style*):

- "An expression regularly used under the same metrical conditions to express an essential idea" (MHV: 13)
- "A group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (MHV: 272)

The definition can be broken down in three parts:

1. *An expression / group of words*: this is the only point of divergence between the two definitions. The second version ("group of words") is meant to exclude from the realm of formularity those traditional phenomena like the localization of a single word in the line,[5] or

[5] Localization of given word shapes in some parts of the line is common to all hexametric poetry (see Porter 1951).

the recurrence of a sequence of "connectives"[6] under the same metrical conditions.

2. *Under the same metrical conditions*: this part has been subject to the most revision, especially within approach (2) (see below).

3. *An essential idea*: this part draws attention to the fact that, at least in the formulas first investigated by Parry, there is a nucleus of meaning, and a periphery of "style".[7] In the formula "swift-footed Akhilleus,"[8] for instance, the essential idea is merely "Akhilleus" – "swift-footed" is there purely for reasons of traditional style. This distinction does not apply to all formulas in Homer. The formula ἄλγος-παθ- (Kiparsky 1976:86; see below), for instance, does not arguably have a nucleus and a periphery.[9] This qualification is more useful for formulas that contain supposedly "ornamental" material. It is important to stress that these kinds of formulas were the beginning of Parry's investigation (style and Homer's choice of epithets), but that they do not represent the entirety of the technique.

When other scholars began to operate with Parry's definition, two problems arose:

[6] Connectives are excluded because they have no underlying "essential idea."

[7] Visser (1987, 1988) has picked up on this aspect of the definition, and developed it into a full theory of Homeric versification. There are weaknesses to Visser's theory that I have addressed in Bozzone 2008:91-4.

[8] In what follows, I will transcribe Greek proper names rather than use their Latin variants (e.g., Akhilleus for Achilles, Aias for Ajax etc.). The only concession is the spelling Odysseus for Odusseus, for the sake of familiarity.

[9] What rather could be said, if one embraces Kiparsky's syntactic definition of formulas, is that within each formula there is one element that acts as the syntactic head (a verb in a VP, and a noun in a NP) – but this is a matter of syntactic dependency, not of ornamentation.

- The hybrid nature of the formula (in that the formula is a unit both at the textual level and at the psychological level, in the poet's mind).
- The gradience of the formula (in that individual formulas are often part of a continuum of more or less fixed traditional expressions).

These two aspects make the formula hard to pin down. Different approaches to Homeric formularity have dealt with each problem differently. For the purposes of this exposition, I will speak of two main approaches:

- Approach (1) is primarily concerned with proving the orality of Homer through *quantitative* analysis of formulas in the text; as such, it focused on a textual definition of formulas and allowed for limited gradience thereof.
- Approach (2) is mostly interested in a *qualitative* understanding the poet's technique; as such, this approach focused on a psychological definition of formulas and has explored gradience.

This, of course, is a rough schematization and most Homerists have used different approaches at different times.[10]

[10] Lord (1960:36), for instance, stressed the importance, within a poet's techinique, of formulaic patterns derived from formulas ("the particular formula itself is important to the singer only up to the time when it has planted in his mind its basic mold. When this point is reached, the singer depends less and less on learning formulas and more and more on the process of substituting other words in the formula patterns."), but he also believed that the quantitative measure was a reliable demonstration of orality of composition (see below).

2.1 Proving the Orality of Homer

Parry successfully demonstrated that Homeric style was traditional (*Epithète*), and specifically the product of an oral tradition ("the technique of the formulas is one which could only be created and used by oral poets"; MHV:322).[11] A further step was to demonstrate that Homer himself was an oral poet; that is, not that he simply inherited the tradition, but that the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could be explained *entirely in terms of that tradition*, without the need for writing or other factors.[12]

Quantitative formula analysis was considered the chief criterion[13] for demonstrating the orality of the poems, and the definition of formulas was honed to serve this argument. In Lord's words:

> "There are ways of determining whether a style is oral or not, and I believe that quantitative formula analysis is one of them, perhaps the most reliable." (Lord 1968:16)

In order to carry out a quantitative formula analysis of a text one needs a precise, text-based definition of formula (simple repetition under the same metrical conditions), and one which is not gradient (so that something is either counted as a formula or it is not). To this purpose, a

[11] This argument was based on the analogy with the living tradition of Serbo-Croatian oral poetry.

[12] This opens the vexed question of exactly "How oral is Homer" (see, among others, Miller 1982).

[13] Enjambement has played an important part in the argument, starting from Parry 1929 (MHV:251-65).

strong line was drawn between straight formulas and formulaic expressions,[14] and the two were counted separately. Straight formulas were the best measure of orality, while decreasing amounts of straight formulas vis-à-vis increasing numbers of formulaic expressions were taken to indicate a movement away from tradition (for an example of this thinking applied to the *Homeric Hymns*, see Cantilena 1982).[15]

Quantitative formula analysis thus mostly relied on the measurement of straight formulas. It is perhaps significant that finding straight formulas in a text is a relatively easy task (nowadays, computers can do it, and, in fact, have: Pavese and Boschetti 2003). Mapping the entirety of the formulaic network, on the other hand, is a much harder task, in that it cannot be easily automated, and relies heavily on human judgment.

Peabody (1975) proposed an extension of the criteria for orality,[16] claiming that formularity is but one of the relevant measures. But the degree of formularity as main

[14] Starting from *Homer and Homeric Style* (MHV:301): "I have put a solid line beneath those word-groups which are found elsewhere in the poems unchanged, and a broken line under phrases which are of the same type as others. In this case I have limited the type to include only those in which not only the metre and the parts of speech are the same, but in which also one important word or group of words is identical, as in the first example: μῆνιν ... Πηληιάδεω Ἀχιλῆος and μῆνιν ... ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος."

[15] One problem with this argument is as follows: when measuring the amount of formularity in a shorter text (like a Homeric Hymn) by using the Homeric poems as a base, we could be measuring the homogeneity of that text to the Homeric poems more than anything else. In other words, we are measuring the amount of phraseology that our text shares with the Homeric poems (plus the amount of phraseology repeated within our text), not necessarily the actual amount of formularity in the text.

[16] Peabody's five tests are the the *phonemic test*, the *formulaic test*, the *enjambement test*, the *thematic test* and the *song test* (Peabody 1975:3-5).

criterion of orality still has its followers: Pavese and Boschetti 2003 embrace it, and they stipulate that any text at or above 55% of formulas is oral.[17]

2.2 Understanding Homer's Traditional Technique

Approaches in the second group were interested in formulas for the purposes of describing the poetic technique, performing linguistic analysis, or studying inherited poetics. These are all endeavors for which gradience and the psychological reality of the formula (that is, in linguistic terms, a formula's *underlying form*) are more important than its surface realization. Within these approaches, metrical conditions lose importance, until they are discarded altogether. The underlying form of the formula is then the focus of study, though, for each scholar, underlying form means something different.

Nagler (1967) first introduced the concept of formula as mental template (pre-verbal *Gestalt*), of which the surface form was an epiphenomenon. This template entertains all sorts of analogical relationships with variously associated templates (in terms of wording, verbal echo, theme, etc.). The poet's diction is then an immensely intricate network of these pre-verbal *Gestalts*. The core of the formula is largely semantic (Parry's "essential idea"), while syntax and

[17] Which is precisely the degree of formularity that their study finds in Homer – which makes one wonder how the determination of orality for Homer would not then be entirely circular.

meter do not play a primary role.

Russo (1963, 1966) set out to catalogue syntactic-metrical schemas that underlie the surface realization of formulas; in his definition, these are called structural formulas.[18] The underlying form of a formula then is not an essential idea, but patterns of syntax (in the form of word-types) and meter. Though most scholars recognize that these elements too should be part of a poet's technique, they do not agree that they should all be equally called formulas.

Hainsworth (1968) addressed the problem of gradience of the formulas, mostly from the point of view of the metrical conditions. In Hainsworth's analysis, formulas can undergo several kinds of traditional modifications.[19] The poet's technique, in other words, not only comprises formulas, but also ways of modifying them to suit the purposes of composition.[20] Hainsworth's formula is then a traditional expression that can be variously adapted to fit the verse and the narration; what binds the formula together is a "mutual expectancy" between words, in the sense that "the use of one word created a strong presumption that the other would follow" (1968:36).

Kiparsky (1976) was the first to attempt a linguistic (and in his case, *syntactic)* definition

[18] For instance, a structural formula would be: $[\_\_\cup]_V[\cup\_\_\_]_N$, as exemplified in τεῦχε κύνεσσιν = δῶκεν ἑταίρῳ.

[19] The permutations are: (a) dislocation, (b) modification, (c) expansion, (d) separation. (Hainsworth 1968 passim).

[20] Incidentally, Hainsworth thinks that proof of orality is in the quality of the technique, not in the quantity of formulas (1968:19).

of formulas.[21] He draws a comparison between formulas and the bound expressions found in ordinary language, and further distinguishes between *flexible bound phrases* (which should be syntactically well-behaved and have compositional semantics) and *fixed bound phrases* (for which the opposite can be the case): the latter ones, he argues, are the correlates of Homeric formulas (more or less, *fixed bound phrases* correspond to straight formulas, and *flexible bound phrases* to formulaic expressions). Crucially, he stipulates that, in either case, formulas should be syntactic constituents dominated by a single node. In other words, he builds a syntactic layer into the underlying form of a formula. He nevertheless states that the true essence of the formula is "the abstract bond between ἄλγος and παθ-" (Kiparsky 1976:86);[22] meter, on the other hand, is left out of the equation ("no metrical criteria are made part of its [the formula's] definition"; 1976:87).

In Kiparsky's model, the difference between fixed and flexible phraseology lies in the storage: *fixed phrases* are stored in their surface form (so they cannot undergo syntactic modification), while *flexible phrases* are amenable to transformation. Kiparsky indeed succeeds at characterizing the two opposite poles of traditional phraseology (fixity vs. flexibility), but, as he admits in response to Watkins' comments:

[21] "Formulaic diction has been extensively studied, but for the most part as a phenomenon *sui generis*. No-one has attempted to compare systematically the phrase patterns of oral poetry with those of ordinary language" (Kiparsky 1976:1).

[22] In this, being very close to Hainsworth 1968 above.

> "I cannot prove that they are exactly two categories. It might be that there is a continuum, for example: fixed formulas, flexible formulas, and all kinds of gradations of flexibility in betweeen. And I don't see any way of settling the matter" (Kiparsky 1976:114).

In other words, Kiparsky recognizes that we are dealing with a gradient phenomenon, but his theoretical framework does not allow him to simply build gradience into his analysis (something is either stored in its surface form, thereby unchangeable, or it is generated).

Nagy (1974) and Watkins (1976) both point out that, beyond the phenomena of flexibility variously described, the core of the formula is the essential idea – and that essential idea is nothing but a traditional *theme* of oral poetry. Hence, the two major features of oral poetry as investigated by Lord (the formula and the theme) are brought together, and the underlying form of the formula is a purely conceptual entity – in a radical simplification of Parry's original definition, whereby only the essential idea is left.

Under this approach, meter comes later, as a result of the crystallization of traditional phraseology in fixed prosodic patterns (Nagy 1974; see also Bakker 1997:146-55), and renewal of the surface expression over time is not only possible, but expected (just like any other linguistic material). These adjustments open the door to the field of inherited poetics, and the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European formulas.

In this direction, the fullest elaboration is Watkins 1995 (see initial discussion in 16-19, and then especially section IV "How to Kill a Dragon in Indo-European: A Contribution to the Theory of the Formula"), where the emphasis is shifted from the internal dynamics of Homeric language to the much greater time depth of Indo-European poetics (see also Katz 2010:359-62). Formulas, in this definition, are fragments of inherited culture, and tracing their history opens up a new area of investigation to the comparative method. It is important to note that this definition applies to *inherited* formulas, which constitute only a limited part of a poet's repertoire: formulas can also be new, recent, and have different statuses in different poets' minds; new themes can come into traditional poetry, and old ones can be gradually lost.[23] In Parry and Lord's terms, what defines a formula is simply its repeated usage in composition.[24] By focusing on the most ancient inherited formulas, we are then leaving aside a large part of the formulaic system and its synchronic workings.

An important aspect of this historical approach to phraseology, as mentioned above, is the emphasis on the surface renewal of the formula. Like any other element in language, formulas too are affected by language change and lexical substitution, so the only truly diachronically stable element of the formula is the theme, the traditional association of ideas:

[23] Hainsworth 1962 ("The Homeric Formula and the Problem of Its Transmission") already reasons about these topics.

[24] "Whether it is one remembered from other singers or it's one created anew, a phrase becomes set in the poet's mind, and he uses it regularly. Then, and only then, is the formula really born" (Lord 1960:43).

the surface can be completeley renovated. Yet, this makes true inherited formulas harder to detect with certainty, because the danger of parallel innovation is high in cognate languages and cultures.[25] Two small observations are in order here:

1. The theme-based formula captures a lot of formulaic phenomena, but leaves some others out: namely, verbal echoes and structural (syntactic) formulas (i.e. any kind of formula based on formal analogy that does not involve content).
2. While the idea of inherited fragments of culture is exciting, such as the reconstructed formulas for "eternal fame" and "killing the serpent", most formulas we encounter in Homer are more trivial and less culturally charged, like "thus he answered" or "so among them he rose." These are themes (or at least motifs) nonetheless, even if more mundane.

2.3 Homeric Formulas at a Glance

The best way to grasp the different conceptions of formula reviewed so far is perhaps to look at one example of each.

Parry's Formula:

1. Group of words: πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς 'swift-footed Akhilleus'

[25] This, in a sense, is analogous to Sapir's drift (Sapir 1921:vii): the idea that cognate languages will tend to develop in parallel ways even after they have parted. Of course several criteria can be employed to increase the plausibility of our claims, such as context, genre, etc.

2. Metrical conditions: ⏑ ⏑ _ ⏑ ⏑ _ ⏓

3. Essential idea: Akhilleus

Fills a functional slot of the hexameter: subject of verbs placed before the longum in the fourth foot.

Nagler's Formula

1. Pre-Verbal Gestalt (true formula): idea of Akhilleus
2. Surface realization (not really a formula): πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς

Hainsworth's formula:

1. Basic Formula: καρτερὰ δεσμά 'strong chains' (the mutual expectation between the two words)
2. Modifications: (a) dislocation, (b) modification (i.e. inflection), (c) expansion, (d) separation

Ex.:

expansion+ modification: κρατερῷ ἐνὶ δεσμῷ 'in strong chains'

separation + modification: δεσμοῖο ⏑ _ κρατεροῦ. 'strong...chain'

Watkins' formula (Watkins 1995:302):

Theme: HERO SLAY (*$g^{wh}en$-) SERPENT (with WEAPON/with COMPANION)

Note that some syntax is implied, though not expressed notationally. Conventionally, the word

order is English.

Kiparsky's Formula:

1. Fixed formula: Ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς 'As soon as early-born rose-fingered Dawn appeared'
2. Flexible formula: $[[\text{ἄλγος}]_{NP}\ \text{παθ-}]_{VP}$ 'pain...suffer'

Russo's Formula:

Structural formula : $[\ \_\_\ \cup]_V\ [\cup\ \_\_\ \_\_\ ]_N$

Ex.: τεῦχε κύνεσσιν 'threw to the dogs', δῶκεν ἑταίρῳ 'gave to his companion'

Visser's Formula:

$[\text{πόδας ὠκὺς}]_{PERIPHERY}\ [\text{Ἀχιλλεύς}]_{NUCLEUS}$

In Visser's theory of composition, the poet worries about finding a spot in the verse for the nucleus, and then optionally uses the periphery if he finds that metrically convenient.

The problem with all of these definitions (apart from Parry's) is that one has to choose between surface and underlying form, and between extreme fixity (surface expression) and extreme gradience (underlying idea). One must dispose of one of the elements that were in Parry's definition, often two. Yet Parry was talking about something tangible, something that seems indeed to work as a basic unit of hexametric poetry. In order to maintain this useful descriptive unit (Homeric-internal), we need a definition of formula that does not force us to

ignore different layers of the definition, and can handle *different levels* of gradience (so that we can study the system as a whole, not just part of it). I believe that usage-based linguistics (and specifically Construction Grammar) can provide such a definition.

3

Formulas in Linguistics

Phenomena analogous to Homeric formulas (i.e., ready-made surface units) have made a recent appearance in linguistic theory.[26] It is indeed a pity that the heyday of formulas in Homeric studies preceded by a few decades the heyday of "formulas" in linguistics; for we are now in a much better position to understand and describe the phenomenon of formularity, and to point out what is exceptional and what is not about Homeric formulas.

This new attention to formularity in some areas of linguistics is mainly a result of the development of corpus-based studies of language. Formularity was first observed in Homer because it was there that instruments to systematically search a corpus for collocations (like the *Parallel-Homer*, published by Schmidt in 1885) were first developed. Once we had corpora for contemporary languages (spoken and written), formularity became evident there as well.[27] This is because, as I will illustrate below, formularity is a general hallmark of language production *tout court*, not just of oral traditions.

[26] A recent synthesis is Wray 2002.

[27] See Svartvik 2007 for a short history of the field of corpus linguistics.

There are nowadays entire theories of language that are based on "formulas".[28] These theories have come to embrace the notion that language production is in many cases a piecemeal affair, not a purely creative generation of novel utterances. This new area of linguistic research has deep consequences for Homeric studies, and it is from this area that we shall draw a new definition of formula.

Evidence for "formularity" in natural languages comes essentially from two fields:

- corpus linguistics
- language acquisition studies

The first field investigates language usage, the second the construction of language competence. A third field, Construction Grammar, provides a theoretical framework for the systematization of the findings; below I provide a short introduction to each of these areas.[29]

3.1 Idioms and Formulas

Idioms (i.e., fixed expressions, often exhibiting a non-compositional semantics,[30] like "tie the knot" or "pull some strings"), have long been recognized as somewhat parallel, in natural language, to fixed formulas in oral traditional literatures. In traditional and generative

[28] For a concise introduction, see Bybee 2010.

[29] Some of the materials below, in a much abbreviated version, were presented in Bozzone 2010:27-30.

[30] This is the standard definition. For a more fine-grained approach see Croft and Cruse 2004:232-6.

theories of language, idioms have often been regarded as a peripheral phenomenon; they are bound expressions, exhibiting limited or no modificability, that have to be stored, somehow, in the lexicon, and cannot be compositionally generated. In other words, they do not function the way that most of language does. Kiparsky 1976, as mentioned above, was an attempt at approaching formularity as an equivalent to bound phraseology in language, and at the same time providing a theory of bound phraseology within the framework of generative grammar:[31]

> "The language of Oral Literature does not differ qualitatively from ordinary language. It does differ quantitatively in the extent and frequency of its use of bound phraseology, especially, but not exclusively, when the meter is strict." (Kiparsky 1976:88)

Importantly, the general feeling was that the frequency and extent to which Homer (or oral literature) uses bound phraseology is far greater than in natural language. This feeling fed the perception that formularity was a straitjacket around the poet's creativity. The thinking goes as follows: if natural languages are largely compositional, the normal condition of the speaker is to always have great freedom to creatively generate novel utterances (idioms being a

[31] Bound phraseology was not a popular linguistic topic at the time, see Kiparsky (1976:77, emphasis mine): "How is bound phraseology to be accounted for in the framework of a formal generative grammar? This is a question which has received regrettably little attention in linguistics recently. As might be expected, most of the excitement has for some time been around the new ways of investigating productive syntactic (and phonological) processes which generative grammar has opened up. *The less productive regularities of language, notably morphology and phraseology, on which generative grammar does not throw nearly so much light, have been treated as sideshows*, though interest in them is clearly beginning to revive."

minority phenomenon); if the poet has to rely on "idioms" because of the meter, his freedom of expression is severely limited. On this perception also lay the belief that quantitative formula analysis could be a measure of orality of composition, since "normal language" ought not to be so rich in prefabricated expressions.

3.2 Formulas in Corpus Linguistics

One of the first results of the development of corpus linguistics, since its beginnings in the 1970s, was the realization that idiomaticity was indeed a much broader phenomenon than previously acknowledged. Fixed linguistic expressions (termed *collocations*[32] in the field) seemed to account for a substantial percentage of the corpora, far from being relegated to the periphery. On the level of language production, scholars in this field started to doubt that syntax was as free as generative approaches assumed.[33] There was the so-called *puzzle of native-like selection:*

> "Native speakers do not exercise the creative potential of syntactic rules to anything like their full extent [...] indeed, if they did so they would not be accepted as exhibiting

[32] "<Collocation> is a *psychological association* between words (rather than lemmas) up to four words apart and is *evidenced by their occurrence together* in corpora more often than is explicable in terms of random distribution" (Hoey 2005:5, emphasis mine). Note the striking parallel to the Parrian definition of formula.

[33] An excellent history of the scholarship is Partington 1998, from which I derive some of the following quotations.

> nativelike control of language. The fact is that only a small proportion of the total set of grammatical sentences are nativelike in form [...] in contrast to expressions that are grammatical but are judged to be 'unidiomatic', 'odd' or 'foreignisms.'" (Pawley and Syder 1983:193)

Language production seemed to involve large amounts of simple retrieval of stored sequences:

> "Speakers do at least as much remembering as they do putting together [...]. We are now in a position to recognize that idiomaticity is a vastly more pervasive phenomenon than we ever imagined, and vastly harder to separate from the pure freedom of syntax, if indeed any such fiery zone as pure syntax exists." (Bolinger 1976:2–3)

The strategy of retrieval (vs. computation) had clear advantages from the point of view of processing:

> "The indications from neurophysiology and psychology are that, instead of storing a small number of primitives and organizing them in terms of a (relatively) large number of rules, we store a large number of complex items which we manipulate with comparatively simple operations. The central nervous system is like a special kind of computer which has rapid access to items in a very large memory, but comparatively little ability to process these items when they have been taken out of memory."

(Ladefoged 1972:282)

In the past few decades, research has moved from the view that processing is cheap and storage is expensive, to the view that storage is cheap and processing is expensive.[34] This duality in language processing, that is, retrieval vs. computation, was captured by John Sinclair in the principles of *idiom* and *open choice*:

> "The principle of idiom is that a language user has available to him a large number of preconstructed or semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, *even though they appear to be analyzable into segments*" (Sinclair 1991:110, emphasis mine).[35]

The principle of open choice, on the other hand, entails that "at each point where a unit is completed (a word, phrase, clause), a large range of choice opens up and the only restraint is grammaticalness" (Sinclair 1991:109).

The next step was then to measure the relative proportions of the two principles in actual language. This was done by Erman and Warren 2000, over an English language corpus

[34] The amount to which our conceptions of human processing capacities are shaped by the development of information technology is instructive. In the early days of computers, storage was indeed expensive. Bill Gates is quoted in the 1970s saying that computers in the future will need *little* storage capacity (and that would be a form of progress). The exact opposite has in fact happened. The quote is allegedly: "No one will need more than 637 kb of memory for a personal computer." (http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Bill_Gates).

[35] This last point touches onto what Langacker has termed the *Rule/List Fallacy* (Langacker 1987): just because something can be rule-generated, it does not mean that it cannot be stored (i.e. listed) as well. With proponents of Emergent Grammar (Hopper 1998), one can in fact say that rules *emerge* from storage, and are epiphenomenal to it.

(both oral and written). The results were rather surprising, in that 55% (on average) of all texts analyzed (whether oral or written) were made up of prefabricated material (*idiom principle*). Differences between oral and written texts were minor, and appeared more in the semantic *types* of prefabricated expression than in sheer quantity. Idiomaticity, then, far from being a non-core property of language, seems to be a prevalent principle of language production.

3.3 Formulas and Language Acquisition

Research on language acquisition contributed more material to this debate. In a series of publications (summarized in Tomasello 2003), Michael Tomasello has developed a model of language acquisition in which what we have called the principle of idiom plays a central role. Tomasello's research shows that children start learning language from concrete items and specific constructions, and eventually achieve fluency by complex processes of abstraction and generalization across the repertoire of linguistic utterances that they have stored. For instance, the exposure to the following items (as requests):

more juice

more grapes

Could lead to the learning of the following "request more" construction:

more ___ [grapes, juice]

This construction is, at first, very narrow in scope (and function), and is extended to other lexical items only much later on in the process of acquisition.

Crucially, children do not acquire abstract syntactic categories all at the same time. At first, they operate rather with *islands*, that is, constructions specific to a given lexical item. Tomasello's daughter, for instance, during the same developmental period, could use the verb 'draw' with a variety of prepositional phrases (draw ___ , draw on ____, draw ____ for ____, _____ draw on ___), but she only knew one construction with the verb 'cut' (cut ___). That is, syntactic learning in one construction is not automatically transferrable to other constructions, at least at this early phase (Tomasello 2003:117). In other words, children are not operating with the same syntactic categories (such as subject, object, verb etc.) with which linguists operate. The basic idea in this approach is that schemes (i.e., abstractions, grammatical rules and categories) are simply emergent from the storage of concrete linguistic utterances, so that storage of tokens and abstraction of types really are the same thing: one does not exist without the other.[36]

Some aspects of Tomasello's analysis are in fact not far from views adopted in recent years within the generative framework: in syntax, one such view is the idea that lexical items contain syntactic information (i.e., *features*) that is stored, and not generated; in Minimalism

[36] This can be (and has been) elegantly modelled using Parallel Distributed Processing (for an overview, see Ellis 2003).

(Chomsky 1995), these syntactic features control and constrain licit syntactic derivations. This is very similar to saying that, for instance, every verb comes with its own construction. Another such view is the concept of local *islands* (vs. more general rules), which has been successfully employed in phonology and morphology to model analogical change (Albright 2002); Albright talks about *islands of reliability*: one can see this as a shift towards local, concrete rules vs. highly general, abstract ones.

3.4 Construction Grammar

The most convenient way to model the idiom principle and the language acquisition phenomena described by Tomasello is the concept of *construction* developed within the framework of Construction Grammar. In Construction Grammar, the basic units of linguistic analysis are constructions, that is, "learned pairings of form and function". Constructions can have different levels of abstraction (that is, they are gradient), and, at every level, they are meaningful: they are not simply empty structures. Here I reproduce a table from Goldberg 2006:5, showing several examples of constructions "varying in size and complexity":

Table 3.1 Examples of Contructions, Varying in Size and Complexity (from Goldberg 2006:5)

morpheme	e.g.: pre-, -ing
word	e.g.: avocado, anaconda, and
complex word	e.g.: daredevil, shoo-in
complex word (partially filled)	[N-s] (for regular plurals)
idiom (filled)	e.g.: going great guns, give the Devil his due
idiom (partially filled)	e.g.: jog [someone's] memory, send [someone] to the cleaners
covariational conditional	the [X]er the [Y]er e.g.: The more, the merrier
distransitive (double object)	Subj. V Obj.1 Obj.2 e.g.: he gave her a fish taco
passive	Subj. aux VPpp (PPby) e.g.: the armadillo was hit by a car

In this framework, every language has a collection of constructions (of varying levels of abstraction) that speakers employ to achieve given communicative goals. Though speakers may in principle carry out more radical abstractions across the data (eventually yielding something similar to the categories that traditional and generative linguists operate with), most of their performance does not depend on these radical abstractions, but rather on intermediate, lexically-based constructions that lie somewhere between the fixity of idiom and the abstractness of pure syntax.

This approach succeeds at capturing the gradience that exists between the two poles. In the examples above, "give the Devil his due" can be analyzed at two levels: as a fixed idiom, and as an instance of the much more general ditransitive construction. In this approach, the

two analyses are not exclusive: “give the Devil his due” is an instance of a ditransitive construction that became entirely lexically specified, and cannot be modified.

Not all the kinds of constructions listed above will occupy us (the level of description that will concern us here will be mostly syntactic, since this is the area that most calls for description). What is useful for our purposes here is that constructions easily accommodate both the hybrid nature and the gradience that Parrian formulas exhibit, since constructions too are hybrid (a pairing of form and function) and can be gradient (in the sense that they can accommodate different levels of abstraction).

3.5 Homeric Formulas as Constructions

For the aims of this work, I will then speak of *Homeric constructions* (i.e. “learned pairings of form and function”), instead of formulas. The term formula, apart from its innumerable definitions, carries with it too many connotations (the claim of traditionality, the claim of orality and so on) to benefit from yet another recasting. The term construction is more neutral and permits us to capture phenomena in greater detail and larger scope; describing Homeric constructions is, I believe, a step forward towards describing Homeric language as we would any natural language. If we now look back at the examples of formulas in the preceding chapter, we can see that virtually all of them can be recast as syntactic constructions (of

varying degrees of abstraction, size, and complexity).

Let us take one example and work gradually from concrete to abstract (in this case, a construction for an NP):

1. πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς: a Subject NP construction after the longum of the fourth foot.
2. $[[\breve{\breve{}}\ \_\_\ \breve{}]_{\text{MODIFIER}}[\breve{}\ \_\_\ \text{⏜}]_{\text{NOUN}}\ ]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$: a more abstract construction for a Subject NP in the same position in the line, with the same mapping of syntax and meter (parallel to: ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων ‘far-darting Apollo’).
3. $[\breve{\breve{}}\ \_\_\ \breve{\breve{}}\ \_\_\ \text{⏜}]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$: an even more abstract construction, that does not specify the internal structure of the NP. (Parrian formula *types* would be here; other instances of this same type would be: νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς ‘cloud-gathering Zeus’, ξανθὸς Μενέλαος ‘blond Menelaos’ etc.).
4. $[[x]_{\text{MODIFIER}}[x]_{\text{NOUN}}\ ]_{\text{NP}}$: a yet more general construction for a NP in Greek altogether (without metrical specification).

In this list, (1) is a Parrian Formula, (3) a Parrian formula type. (2) is a structural formula in Russo’s terms, while (4) is the kind of general statement one would find in a descriptive grammar of Greek. In our definition, 1-4 are all constructions: they are all valid and correct ways to analyze the phrase πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς: it will be our task to pick, case by case, what the most *interesting* level of analysis will be (and it may be more than one at a time). We do not

have to throw out any data *a priori*.

Both in language learning and in our analysis, different levels of abstraction will be built up for each construction based on the availability of the data: the more different types we have, the more abstract the construction we can build. And vice versa: the fewer types we have, the more concrete the construction. With constructions, we can use the same mechanism to model (in Homeric terms) a fixed formula and a "free expression"; while many scholars have talked about a continuum between the two extremes, no framework so far has been able to capture this gradation.

3.6 What Exactly Does This Earn Us?

For the purposes of gaining an understanding of the technique of Homeric verse composition, formulas in traditional terms (swift-footed Akhilleus *vel sim*.) are really just the tip of the iceberg. Hainsworth (1968:113) saw this clearly: these "highly schematized formula-types are then the consequence of ossification of more flexible systems at points of frequent use." Most of the technique then (the body of the iceberg) is in the form of flexible systems: these are precisely the kinds of systems that we can describe by means of constructions, and not formulas.

In the past, the focus has been mostly on finding exact surface repetitions of two or

more words (expressions), while the more abstract patterns that underpin full sentences have often been neglected.[37] Other regularities of Homeric style, like localization phenomena for a given word (or word-type) have been observed, but denied formulaic status – since they were taken out of their syntactic context. The main reason for this tendency is that straight formulas were easier to spot, and were believed to be somehow coextensive with orality of composition. But if the goal of demonstrating orality is set aside,[38] then leaving out all of the rest of formulaic phenomena, which can be described through constructions and not through formulas, becomes an unjustifiable waste of data. There is no reason why the straight formula should be privileged as an object of inquiry over the overall constructional network, which is a far more interesting and complex reality, and which can tell us much more about the process of composition. Once all of the technique is surveyed, we may in fact find many other indicators that can help us decide whether a text is oral or not.

In any traditional genre of poetry (as in any natural linguistic system), one expects some kind of constructional network always to be in place, while straight formulas may be

[37] Though not so Parry, who in the *Épithète* gave ample demonstration of full-line-creating devices.

[38] After all, the matter is extremely complicated: we know of oral traditions that do not rely so much on straight formulas (like the hymns of the Rig Veda), but nonetheless do rely on a vast network of traditional constructions. Moreover, a lot of the reasoning in the matter has been circular: one assumes that whatever amount of formulas is found in Homer is indicative of orality, and whatever we find in a later poem is not. While I do think that demonstration of orality is desirable, I feel that this goal should not monopolize our investigation, and it is perhaps premature at our current level of knowledge.

found only sometimes, as Hainsworth puts it "at the points of frequent use", and provided no cultural norms are in place to discourage them.[39] By using constructions, we can expand our studies of formularity to these neglected areas of the technique, and integrate them into a comprehensive account of Homeric syntax and discourse.

[39] This occurs in much of Roman poetry (see Bozzone 2010:33-4), and, I suspect, in the Rig Veda as well. In particular, the pursuit of "new expressions" created by the elaboration and modification of existing formulaic materials could be seen as a general feature of the tradition of erudite, hymnic-type Indo-European poetry, such as we see in Pindar and the Rig Veda, as opposed to non-strophic narrative traditions (such as Homer and the Sanskrit epics).

4

Homeric Constructions at Work

In the previous chapter, we saw that formulaic phenomena in Homer can be described using *constructions*, which are defined as "learned pairings of form and function" (Goldberg 2006). In this chapter, we will explore some features of Homeric constructions along these two axes: their form and their function.

4.1 Homeric Constructions and their Forms

The formal side of Homeric constructions is perhaps the easiest to capture. Formally, some constructions are invariable, in that they would correspond to a straight formula in Parry's approach; πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς is such a construction. I call this a *lexically filled construction*, because every aspect of its form is already determined; lexically filled constructions are the prototypical Parrian formulas, and sometimes I will still informally refer to them by that label.

The same sequence πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς can be described as an instance of a more

abstract construction, which simply specifies the metrical shape of an expression:

[⏑ – ⏑ – ×]$_{NP}$

This is a *lexically empty construction*. As we shall see, adding syntactic information to this kind of construction (such as the Noun Phrase label that I have added here) will make it a powerful tool for describing how sentences are formed within the technique.

A third, intermediate option, is that of having a construction that is *partially lexically filled* and partially not. This is similar to Tomasello's *verb islands* discussed in 3.3 above, where in the construction for 'asking more food' we saw a fixed nucleus (lexically filled) and a variable periphery (lexically empty):

more [ ]

Conventionally, I notate the nucleus (or lexically filled part of a construction) in bold, and the lexically empty part of the construction in brackets. In Homer, the lexically empty part of a construction would always contain some sort of metrical information, which we would notate as follows:

more [⏑⏑–]

Constructions with a fixed lexical nucleus can be named after the nucleus. Thus, the construction above is the "more construction," etc. Normally (as we shall see below), I will add syntactic information to partially lexically filled constructions as well:

more $[\cup\cup\text{—}]_{NP}$

In the following sections, I discuss the functional side of Homeric constructions. Syntactic information, which is also part of my notational system for constructions, will be discussed in 4.3.

4.2 Homeric Constructions and their Functions

In Parry's view, the formula had both a formal and a functional side: the formal side was the surface expression (the group of words) and its metrical shape, while the functional side was the essential idea (later identified with the concept of theme). This reveals an essentially lexical conception of formulas: formulas substitute for words, so that πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς stands in for plain Ἀχιλλεύς, and so on. From this point of view, Homeric language is similar to regular language, but it has an "enriched" lexicon that is metrically determined. This, in effect, continues Witte's line of research on how Homeric language is "ein Gebilde des epischen Verses" (Witte 1913:2214; see also Witte 1972).

Yet the function of formulas can be described in a much more detailed fashion: I would like to argue that there are at least three functional layers that formulas express, and that these can be fruitfully described as part of the poet's technique:

1. a semantic layer

2. a syntactic layer

3. a discourse layer

While the first layer is what most scholars (starting from Parry) focused on, Kiparsky (1976) was the first to introduce the second layer. The work of Bakker (1997) on the function of noun-epithet formulas is perhaps the only contribution so far that points to the third layer, which, as we shall see, is also important. In what follows, I will discuss each of these layers separately.

4.2.1 The Semantic Function of Constructions

The clearest function expressed by a formula, or by a construction, is its capacity to advance the narrative by conveying traditional thematic material. It is important to note that only constructions that are lexically filled can have a semantic/narrative function (constructions that are bare metrical/syntactic templates cannot carry thematic connotations – or if they can, they have yet to be discovered[40]). From this point of view, constructions using the verb προσέειπε serve to introduce direct speech, and constructions using the verb ἔπεφνε serve to describe killing scenes. This may seem self-evident, and ultimately coextensive with the semantics of the lexical items present in the construction, but there are many cases in which the function of a construction is much more specific than what its lexical semantics would

[40] Note that a large part of Golberg's theory of Constructions was developed to describe lexically-empty sentence constructions (argument-structure constructions), and to show that even these "empty" syntactic templates can convey meaning that is not lexically encoded (see Goldberg 2006:5-9).

seem to imply.

See for instance the following formulaic line, which uses the verb εἵλετο in the first foot:

εἵλετο δ' ἄλκιμον ἔγχος ἀκαχμένον ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ (6x: *Il.* 3x, *Od.* 3x)

'and he took a powerful spear, tipped with sharp bronze'

We can compare this line with other instances (repeated or not) of line-initial εἵλετο in the poems:

εἵλετο δ' ἄλκιμον ἔγχος, ὅ οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει (*Il.* 3.338, *Od.* 17.4)

'and he took a powerful spear, which fitted his grip'

εἵλετο δ' ἄλκιμα δοῦρε δύω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῷ (*Il.* 11.43, *Od.* 22.125)

'and he took two powerful spears, tipped with bronze'

εἵλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ (*Il.* 2.46)

'and he took the staff of his father, always imperishable'

εἵλετο δὲ ῥάβδον, τῇ τ' ἀνδρῶν ὄμματα θέλγει (*Il.* 24.343, *Od.* 5.47)

'and he took his *rhabdos*, thereby he lulls to sleep the eyes of men'

εἵλετο δ' ὀξὺν ἄκοντα, κυνῶν ἀλκτῆρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν. (*Od.* 14.531)

'and he took a sharp javelin, that keeps away dogs and men'

By generalizing across these lines, we may write a construction for line-initial εἵλετο as

follows:

$$εἵλετο_{V}\ δ(ὲ)\ [\ (\ \_\ )\breve{}\breve{}\_(\breve{})]_{Obj.NounPhrase}\ [(\breve{})\breve{}\_\breve{}\breve{}\_\breve{}\breve{}\_\breve{}]_{Obj.Modifier}$$

The notation expresses that εἵλετο, the main verb ($_{V}$), occurs line initially, is followed by a designation for a direct object ($_{Obj.NounPhrase}$) that goes up to a caesura in the third foot (this object is most often a weapon), and is then followed by an expression that further describes (modifies) that object ($_{Obj.Modifier}$).

The verb εἵλετο is found line-initially only in this construction, which is in turn overwhelmingly found in arming scenes, when a warrior or a god is getting ready for action. This distributional restriction is not predictable simply from the meaning of εἵλετο 'took up', but it is a learned part of the poetic technique: the verb εἵλετο, when used line-initially, has very specific thematic connotations, and means specifically to 'arm oneself with'. A departure from this convention would probably be perceived as marked by a traditional audience, and by critics.

For instance, the line below, which uses our construction for a non-martial endeavor, has attracted much critical scrutiny:

εἵλετο δὲ κληῖδ' εὐκαμπέα χειρὶ παχείῃ (*Od.* 21.6)

'she took a well-curved key with her thick hand'.

Several scholars (Parry first, 1971:151, and references in Edwards 1988:31-2) have remarked on

the oddness of referring to Penelopeia's hand as 'thick.' This expression appears in the line above because of its connection to another 'arming' construction using εἵλετο in in a different position in the line:

$_{3a}$[λίθον]$_{Obj.NP}$ [εἵλετο]$_{V4c}$ [χειρὶ παχείῃ]$_{Dat.NP}$ (*Il.* 7.264).

'He took a boulder with his thick hand'

Other instances of this latter construction are found in *Il.* 10.31 (δόρυ 'spear'), *Il.* 21.403 (λίθον 'boulder'), and *Od.* 22.326 (ξίφος 'sword'). From this point of view, *Od.* 21.6 above is indeed the exception that proves the rule: even when used for non-martial topics, the verb εἵλετο brings martial connotations, which in *Od.* 21.6 are revealed by the usage of the Dative NP χειρὶ παχείῃ.

4.2.1.1 The Meaning of Constructions: Traditional Referentiality and Textual Referentiality

It is the semantic level of constructions that scholars have discussed most extensively, since it pertains most closely to literary criticism. First, there is the question of what the poet *means* by the terms he uses as part of his traditional phraseology. We know that what counts as an "appropriate" description is different in oral poetry than it is in literary mediums. The sky can be 'starry' even if it is day, Aigisthos can be 'blameless' even when he is sleeping with another

man's wife etc.[41] This does not mean that traditional phraseology (or any part thereof, even what is deemed to be 'periphery') is devoid of literal meaning. Rather, traditional phraseology has the capacity to convey far more than its literal meaning, at least to a traditionally trained audience. Foley (1991) has used the term *traditional referentiality* to describe the capacity of formulaic material

> "to evoke a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself, that brings the lifeblood of generations of poems and performances to the individual performance or text." (Foley 1991:7)

When one investigates the usage of a given traditional expression, one may be able to identify its thematic context, though we may always fall short of reconstructing what the original audience's competence may have been like (and individual variation must have existed as well).

Second, there is the question of what it means for a poet to use the same phraseology on two different occasions, and whether this can constitute a legitimate link between *two passages*, as it perhaps would in a literary work. In other words, scholars have wondered

[41] This is of course a topic to which a great deal of scholarship has been devoted, starting from Parry's *Épithète*, which has an entire chapter on 'The Meaning of the Epithet in Epic Poetry' (Ch. IV, MHV:118-172). A good short summary of the main issues (with references) is Miller (1982:30-2). For a fuller treatment, see Edwards (1988:§7).

whether a traditional expression can have *textual referentiality*[42] (point to a specific song or episode thereof, or a specific passage in the current text) on top of *traditional referentiality* (pointing to a generic traditional situation, a type-scene or the like). Within an oral tradition, textual referentiality is much harder to demonstrate, though few scholars would be happy to rule out its existence altogether (after all, spotting textual referentiality is a significant part of how we do literary criticism). We shall discuss a few examples to illustrate this point.

The line quoted above:

εἵλετο δ' ἄλκιμον ἔγχος, ὅ οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει (*Il.* 3.338, *Od.* 17.4)

'he took a powerful spear, which fitted his grip.'

appears in *Iliad* 3 referring to Menelaos, and in *Odyssey* 17 referring to Telemakhos.

Yet nobody would argue that, in using this line, the poet of the *Odyssey* is trying to make an explicit connection between the arming of Telemakhos in *Od.* 17 and the arming of Menelaos in *Il.* 3.338. What is correct to say is that the line is part of the thematic complex (type-scene) of the arming of the hero, and that both of our lines descend from that complex. That is to say, the two lines are linked indirectly, through the tradition (common descent, traditional referentiality), and not directly through citation (direct borrowing, textual referentiality). This assessment is largely uncontroversial for two reasons:

[42] On this topic, see Burgess 2012, who talks about 'intertextuality without text' in early Greek epic.

- arming scenes are common, and as such are seen as a standard and unremarkable part of the poetic technique (unmarked).
- there is nothing in the immediate context of the passage that suggests a specific parallel between Menelaos and Telemakhos.

In cases where the evidence for a given construction is less plentiful, and the construction itself seems to refer to a more momentous (though equally generic) event, the occurrence of the same formula in two different places can seem more striking (marked). Yet we have no way of determining how striking, and how specific that match would have been for the original audience of the poems, since our corpus is so limited. These considerations, however, have sometimes failed to restrain critics, as we shall see.

4.2.1.2 The Death of Akhilleus (part 1)

A case in point is the famous three-line expression below, which is used once for the death of Patroklos and once for the death of Hektor in the *Iliad*:

῾Ως ἄρα μιν εἰπόντα τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψε·

ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη ῎Αϊδος δὲ βεβήκει

ὃν πότμον γοόωσα λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην (*Il.* 16.855-8, 22.362-4)

'As he spoke thusly, the edge of death covered him;

his soul flew away from his chest and went to Hades

lamenting its fate, leaving behind manliness and youth'

The first line of the three also occurs at the death of Sarpedon (*Il.* 16.503). It is clearly part of a wider thematic template for the death of a hero in battle that these three episodes share.[43] From these distributional facts, one can conclude that we are looking at a construction employed for the death of a young hero of some importance; on a basic level, one is correct in arguing that the reason why these lines occur in these places is that they are part of the thematic complex of the death of a young hero (traditional referentiality), and those conditions equally and independently apply to Sarpedon, Patroklos, and Hektor (common descent).

Within the *Iliad* as we have it, however, one may go one step further and argue that the recurrence of these lines connects the death of Patroklos and the death of Hektor (and perhaps Sarpedon too) in a non-trivial way (traditional AND textual referentiality, common descent AND borrowing). After all, there is a cause-effect relationship between these three deaths; they are subsequent links in a chain of vengeances that will ultimately lead to the death of Akhilleus, and they all seem to share substantial thematic material and sheer proximity in the text. Unlike the Telemakhos – Menelaos situation above, it is the context itself that suggests that *textual* referentiality is at work, and that these lines are repeated not simply because these

[43] This passage, of course, has attracted an enormous amount of attention. A recent treatment is Barnes 2011, with references.

deaths happen to be similar, but because the poet ostensibly wanted to point out the fact that they are similar (note, however, that drawing this line is particularly hard to do in principle).

The context actually encourages one to go further: in all of these deaths, and especially in the death of Patroklos and in that of Hektor, the foreshadowing of Akhilleus' death is quite evident: Hektor's last words actually spell out Akhilleus' death explicitly, and he dies as he utters them.

φράζεο νῦν, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι
ἤματι τῷ ὅτε κέν σε Πάρις καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
ἐσθλὸν ἐόντ' ὀλέσωσιν ἐνὶ Σκαιῇσι πύλῃσιν.
Ὣς ἄρα μιν εἰπόντα τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψε (*Il.* 22.358-61)

"Think now, lest I become for you a cause of the wrath of the gods,
on the day when Paris and Phoebus Apollon,
despite all your valor, will vanquish you at the Skaean gates."
As he spoke thusly, the edge of death covered him.'

Our lines above immediately follow. Countless scholars (including Wilamowitz 1920) have then taken a step further and concluded that our lines must have been *the actual lines* for describing Akhilleus' death, and that the poet of the *Iliad* is quoting them (textual referentiality) from a song on that theme, which somehow underlies this entire episode.

However, it is merely the immediate context that makes these lines evocative of Akhilleus' death, not the lines themselves, at least not as far as one can reasonably tell. Beyond this passage, *a stable and exclusive connection* between these lines and the death of Akhilleus is simply unprovable. In a way, we are taking the foreshadowing from the text too seriously and too literally. It seems likely that these were common lines in the tradition, that one could employ for the deaths of several different heroes (as the poet of the *Iliad* has just done, after all). In no way do these lines and their usage in the *Iliad* render necessary the existence (and primacy) of a specific death scene of Akhilleus that functioned as a source. Of course, such a scene is possible, judging from what we know about the tradition, but it is not a necessary *source* for what we have in the *Iliad*.

Given the nature of oral tradition, it would be hard to prove definitively that this is direct borrowing (vs. common inheritance) even if we did have a song on the death of Akhilleus that contained precisely these lines (for starters, we would not know the direction of the borrowing); and yet we don't have such a poem at all — rather, a poem of such sort has been postulated on the basis of the usage of these lines. This is entirely circular, and though it is a nifty idea, it cannot be more than speculation.

4.2.1.3 The Death of Akhilleus (part 2)

The danger of associating a given traditional expression too strongly with a specific situation

or character, based on its distribution in our corpus, is further illustrated in the following case. There is another formula that is associated with the death of Akhilleus in the *Odyssey*, and as such has also been claimed to be a part of Akhilleus' "missing" death scene (see Barnes 2011:4-5, who assembles a reconstruction of the scene itself).[44]

μαρνάμενοι περὶ σεῖο· σὺ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης

κεῖσο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων. (*Od.* 24.39-40, of Akhilleus)

'(they were) fighting around you: and you in the swirl of dust,

lay huge in your hugeness, forgetful of your horsemanship.'

The line, taken in its context, seems to be appropriate for a situation where there is battling around a fallen hero's body, and perhaps especially appropriate if the hero is associated with the art of driving a chariot (certainly not a rare event in the epic, and not something that Akhilleus does specifically). This formula could nevertheless be specific to Akhilleus after all, since part of it describes Akhilleus in *Il.* 18.26-7 as well, while he is alive, and mourning fallen Patroklos:

αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς

κεῖτο, φίλῃσι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἤσχυνε δαΐζων.

'And he outstretched in the dust, huge in his hugeness

[44]For this line, see the discussion by Burgess 2012.

lay, tearing at his hair with his own hands, marring it.'

Watkins (1995:499-504) has shown that a construction using κεῖτο/κεῖται line-initially is part of the standard announcement of the death of the hero/monster in Indo-European poetry. So here we have the operation of a more general and very ancient construction, which the poet is deliberately using to describe Akhilleus *as dead* while he is alive and mourning Patroklos. It would be the first line alone, with the description of the body lying in the dust 'in all of its hugeness', that would be specific to Akhilleus, perhaps pointing to a specific death scene that our poet is familiar with (direct borrowing, textual referentiality). Here too, hower, the direction of the borrowing would be hard to determine (*Iliad* to *Odyssey*? *Odyssey* to *Iliad*? Missing song about Akhilleus' death to both?).

Yet this supposedly Achillean line is used (in a way that matches the *Odyssey* passage more closely), and quite aptly, in association with a rather minor character in the *Iliad*:

μαρναμένων ἀμφ' αὐτόν· ὃ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης

κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων. (*Il.* 16.775-6, of Kebriones, Sarpedon's charioteer)

'(they were) fighting around him; and he, in the swirl of dust

lay, huge in his hugeness, forgetful of his horsemanship.'

Since Kebriones is a charioteer, and he has just fallen off of his chariot in a spectacular

fashion (as detailed in the famous 'diver' simile, *Il.* 16.745-50), the line fits him very accurately. And there is nothing in the context that would sensibly suggest that Kebriones (Hektor's charioteer) is meant to stand in for Akhilleus in this scene. Is this really a specifically Achillean construction, that directly points to Akhilleus' death scene wherever we find it? This does not seem to be the case. This construction seems to point to Akhilleus only when Akhilleus is present contextually. This construction is like a pronoun: it picks up its referent from the context, and the fact that it picks up one referent once or twice does not mean that it is perpetually tied to it. The fact that this construction is somewhat rare and striking, and so is the event of Akhilleus' death, makes us associate this construction with Akhilleus more strongly than the original audience would have. By the same logic, the speech introduction formula:

ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ' αὐτίκ' ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπε· (*Od.* 4.471, 4.491, 4. 554; 11.145, 11.404, 11.440, 11.487)

'Thus I spoke, and immediately he said to me in return'

Could be taken as thematically associated with Menelaos and Odysseus, because they are the only characters that use it in the *Odyssey*. Instead, this is a formula for 1st person narration, which could hardly have been restricted to only a couple of characters in Greek epic tradition.

When a traditional audience hears a given traditional expression, it will determine the meaning of that expression based on its general semantics (traditional referentiality) and its immediate context. The immediate context will help the audience to narrow down the meaning of that traditional expression from the range of traditional associations that that expression can carry to what is meant in that specific usage. At times, the immediate context will encourage the audience to strongly connect the current episode with some other specific episode that the audience is familiar with: this episode may be part of the same song the poet is singing, or may be outside of the current performance, within another song altogether.[45] In these last two cases, we will have textual referentiality (intertextuality), which we could call intra-textual or extra-textual, if we wish to be so specific. What one cannot do is to systematically extend an interpretation beyond its original context, and suppose that, if a given traditional line is used to refer to a specific episode in one song, it will always bear such a connotation.

4.2.2 The Syntactic Function of Constructions

Kiparsky (1976) was right in observing that formulas should be studied based on their syntactic

[45] Of course, since we are operating within oral tradition, we should be wary of the concept of a single fixed text: it would rather be one specific song, which may or may not, in its actual performance, contain the exact lines we would want it to.

function, and not simply based on their lexical content. Syntactic information tells us how constructions can combine to form larger units, and can give us insight into the wider workings of the technique. When I notate constructions, I will thus always give syntactic labels as well:

[⏑⏑ _ ⏑⏑ _ ⏓]$_{Subj.NP}$

The labels have two parts: role in the sentence (Subject) and surface realization (Noun Phrase), separated by a period.

From the syntactic point of view, we can distinguisth between constructions for *constituents* and constructions for *sentences* in which those constituents would fit.

The following formulaic line, for instance,

Τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος **προσέφη** πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (*Il.* I 84)

'And to him, in response, said swift-footed Akhilleus'

can be described by the following *sentence construction*, centered around the verb προσέφη:

[—]$_{Obj.Pr}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—]$_{Subj.Part}$ **προσέφη** [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏓]$_{Subj.NP}$

This *sentence construction* selects three kinds of constituent constructions to fill its variable slots:

- a *constituent construction* of the kind [—]$_{Obj.Pr}$, to work as its direct object;
- a *constituent construction* of the kind [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—]$_{Subj.Part,}$ to provide some circumstantial

information;

- a *constituent construction* of the kind [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$, to work as its subject.

The sentence construction above is capable of capturing all of the following lines in the poems (and dozens more):

Τὴν δὲ μέγ’ ὀχθήσας προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς· (*Il.* I 517)

‘And to her, greatly enraged, spoke cloud-gathering Zeus’

Τὸν δ’ ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (*Il.* IV 356)

‘And to him, smiling, spoke lord Agamemnon’

Τὸν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη κρατερὸς Διομήδης· (*Il.* V 251)

‘And to him, with an angry glance, spoke mighty Diomedes’

While not all the lines captured by this construction will be straight formulas (in that they may occur only once in our corpus), they are all clearly generated by the same mold, and by the same part of the technique.

Many of the sentence constructions that I will discuss in this work will be centered around a finite verb: in our terms, they will be *partially filled sentence constructions*. Yet, one may even be more abstract, and write a *lexically empty sentence construction* for, say, a transitive verb of the shape [⏑⏑—] as follows:

[—]$_{\text{Obj.Pr}}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—]$_{\text{Subj.Part}}$ [⏑⏑—]$_{\text{V}}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

An interesting question is to what extent Homer relies on patterns that are so abstract, and to what extent does he relies on patterns that are specific to given lexical items (in this case, given finite verbs). This particular sentence construction seems not to extend much beyond the verb προσέφη in the epic. The only other verb of the shape [◡◡—] that uses a similar sentence construction seem to be the very closely related μετέφη (which takes the dative and not the accusative):

τοῖσι δ' ἀνιστάμενος μετέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς· (*Il.* 1.58, 19.55)

'And rising among them spoke swift-footed Akhilleus'

τοῖσιν δ' εὐχόμενος μετέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων· (*Il.* 2.411)

'and among them in prayer spoke lord Agamemnon'

τοῖς δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων μετέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (*Il.* 4.153)

'and among them, with heavy sighs, spoke lord Agamemnon'

Its sentence construction is as follows:

[—]$_{\text{DatObj.Pr}}$ [◡◡—◡◡—]$_{\text{Subj.Part}}$ μετέφη$_{\text{V}}$ [◡◡—◡◡—⏑]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

Other sentence templates, however, may prove to be more general.

Another question is whether all parts of the technique can be shown to fall together as neatly as these famous speech introduction lines (or battle scenes, or similar), which have always attracted particular attention because of their exceptional regularity. Here, we may

very well be describing the most rigid part of the technique, and one may want to statistically measure how much of our poems structures of this kind in fact account for. Though we may never know, because our corpus is not vast enough (isolated lines could belong to broader patterns, that incidentally happen not to appear regularly in our texts), regular areas are a good place to start.

4.2.3 The Discourse Function of Constructions

The third functional layer of constructions, the discourse layer, is so far largely unexplored, though, as we shall see, it is closely related to syntax; to begin this exploration, I must first introduce the field of *discourse analysis* and some of its basic concepts.

Discourse analysis is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is produced and used in real communication contexts. In Saussurian terms, it studies *parole* (actual utterances, performance of speakers), though many aspects that regulate discourse production are certainly part of a speaker's grammar (*langue*). The term *discourse* has been given multiple definitions over time,[46] but for general purposes it is largely equivalent to language use, and it is often concerned with units of language that go beyond the sentence (which is the standard unit of analysis for theoretical linguistics).

[46] For a useful summary of the subject, and references, see Schriffin et al. (2001:1-2).

During the 1980's, a particular kind of discourse studies flourished, which focused specifically on spoken language (how people tell stories and how people interact in real-life dialogue); a notable example of this is the work of Wallace Chafe and his school on the Pear Stories project, the results of which were published in the many volumes of the series *Advances in Discourse Processes*. Some of these studies used spoken discourse as a gateway to explore human cognition and the deployment of consciousness in general (for a summary of this, see Chafe 1994). They also reavealed much about the difference between oral and written language — a topic of keen interest for the study of Homer and oral traditions.

The relevance of Chafe-style *discourse analysis* for Homeric scholarship has been first pointed out by Egbert Bakker, in publications starting in the early 1990's. Bakker has shown that several features of spoken discourse are present, in a stylized form, in Homeric narrative, and they can explain a lot of its peculiarities. In this vein, Bakker has successfully applied discourse analysis to the segmentation of Homeric narrative (1997:35-53), the usage of particles in Homer (1997:54-122), and (more relevant to our topic) the function of noun-epithet formulas (1997:162-5). Many of Bakker's insights will concern us here and in chapter 7, for they touch upon key elements of the technique. In particular, we shall discuss the discourse function of noun-epithet formulas. While Bakker's account of the role of noun-epithet formulas in Homeric discourse crosses over into pragmatics (he sees them as "minirituals" that

set the stage for the epiphany of a god, 1997:162), I shall operate here within a rather narrower definition of discourse, and I shall focus on what contemporary linguistics would call *Information Structure* (Erteschik-Shir 2007).

Information structure studies how speakers package information in discourse; this is roughly thought to reflect *states of activation* (i.e. how salient a piece of information is) in the speaker's mind. Considerations of information structure are reflected in phonological, morphological, and syntactic features of a given utterance. For instance, speakers tend to give a stronger accent to words that are informationally salient (Focus), as opposed to words that represent background information (Topic).[47] In some languages, such words will also receive a specific morphological marking; in yet some other languages, this kind of information will be expressed through permutations in word order. It is also very common for these three strategies to co-occurr (and items can receive morphological, syntactic, and prosodic marking for focus all at once).

Southern Quechua, a Quechuan language of the Andes, uses morphological marking for both Topic and Focus, as well as syntactic movement and intonation, to spell out its informational structure:

[47] For all of these concepts, more precise definitions will be introduced in Chapter 7.

Pirdu-m *wa-si-ta-qa* *ruwa-rqa-n*

Pirdu-FOC house-ACC-TOP build-PAST-3s

'It was Pirdu who build the house' (Sánchez 2010:7)

Here the new information (FOC) 'Pirdu' appears in a left-fronted position (mirrored by the cleft construction used in the English translation), followed by the background information (TOP).

In Greek, Information Structure does not receive morphological marking, but is reflected in word order and phonology. This is to say that Ancient Greek, like Modern Greek (see E. Kiss 1995:5) is a discourse-configurational language.

To sum up, Information Structure interacts with phonology, morphology, and syntax to efficiently package the information that the speaker is trying to convey and to signal such packaging to the addressee; in doing so, it mirrors some basic patterns of activation in a speaker's mind (simply, whether an idea is present to the speaker's attention or not, and to what degree). In effect, successful communication is about mirroring the information in the speaker's mind (and its activation patterns) into the mind of the addressee (see Yokoyama 1986:3-31 for a model). A few examples will clarify this point.

Information structure determines whether the arguments of a clause will be realized as lexical NPs or as pronouns (or, in languages that allow for it, elliptically). We call this the realization of referents (referents are the entitites that NPs refer to). From the syntactic point

of view, the sentences below are identical:

(1) Mario hit the ball.

(2) He hit it.

In terms of information structure, however, (2) tells me that both Mario and the ball were already active in the speaker's and audience's mind (present to their attention) before the sentence was uttered, while (1) tells me they were not. The most common reason for referents to be already active in a speaker's mind is that they have been just mentioned in the preceding discourse. In general, only referents that are already active in a speaker's mind can be expressed using pronouns. For this reason, (1) could be a good sentence to start a new narrative, while (2) would not be as good, for the audience would not know who the speaker is talking about (no referents are active in the audience's attention).[48] For felicitous communication to be achieved, the levels of activation in a speaker's mind must closely match the levels of activation in the audience's (addressee's) mind at every point in the discourse.

Another example of information structure at work is illustrated by the following utterances:

(3) Mario hit the ball.

[48] True, (2) could be used at the beginning of a narrative for literary effect (*in medias res*), since it creates a strong expectation that the referents will soon be clarified. But this is in effect exploiting the standard expectation that, if a speaker uses a pronoun and not a lexical NP, he does so because he thinks that the audience already knows who is being talked about.

(4) It was Mario who hit the ball.

(5) The ball, Mario hit

(6) The ball was hit by Mario.

Sentences (3-6) have identical propositional content (semantics), in that the same truth conditions hold for all of them: in other words, they all mean the same thing. Yet their information structure is different: different word orders (syntax) and different morphology (passive vs. active) convey different emphasis on the arguments of the clause, mirroring different levels of activation for the referents involved (if these were spoken, different prosody would be observable too). In (3-4), the *Topic* of the clause (what is being talked about) is Mario; in (5-6), it is the ball.

Much of the literature about Information Structure concerns matters of Topic and Focus and their surface realization in the world's languages. In describing Homeric technique, I will also talk a lot about the realization of referents and the management of the flow of discourse (see Bakker 1997 on particles). These are all parts of the technique that, in large part, still await description. As I shall discuss in Chapter 7, a lot of these matters are key to our understanding of Greek syntax altogether.

An example will serve to clarify what I mean by the *discourse function* of a construction. Let us once again consider the line:

Τὸν δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενος **προσέφη** πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (*Il.* I 84)

We have described this line using the following sentence construction:

[—]$_{\text{Obj.Pr}}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—]$_{\text{Subj.Part}}$ **προσέφη** [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏓]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

From the point of view of information structure (as we shall explore in more detail in Chapter 7), the analysis is as follows:

[—]$_{\text{Contrastive Topic}}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—]$_{\text{Focus}}$ **προσέφη** [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏓]$_{\text{Continued Topic}}$

In simple terms: this construction serves to transition from one discourse topic (the old speaker, expressed pronominally and presented as a contrastive topic) to another (the next speaker, expressed with a post-verbal noun-epithet formula and presented as a continued topic). The new speaker, hower, is not new: it is a continued topic resumed from the previous discourse. In achieving this transition between topics, the construction is also used to mark a narrative boundary (as is often the case with continued topics).

Homeric technique, as we shall see, seems to be particularly rich in constructions that deal with discourse transitions (e.g., introducing a new referent, or moving on to a new scene); since transitions are among the most mentally taxing parts of a narrative to produce (in that they take a toll on working memory, see Chafe 1980:40-7), it makes sense that poets would rely more heavily on automatic behaviors there than elsewhere.

To sum up, the lexically-filled construction πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς has the following

functions:

1. semantic function: designating ‘Akhilleus’ (and his thematic connotations)
2. syntactic function: Subj.NP
3. discourse function: resuming the old discourse topic ‘Akhilleus’ and possibly marking a scene boundary.

While the semantic layer tells us what a construction means, and the syntactic layer tells us how it is formed, the discourse layer tells us what a construction actually *does* in the narrative.

5

The Synchronic Workings of Constructions

5.1 I-Language and L-Language

Constructions, as we have seen, are the habits that poets rely on for composing epic verse. But how do these habits arise, and where, and how do they change over time? The grammar of poetry is not unlike the grammar of a language, and to understand how it is acquired and how it evolves we should take a step back and talk about language, and language change, in general terms. Understanding these concepts will allow us to deal with constructions more precisely (and even tackle some of the most basic aspects of the *Homerica quaestio* with fresh eyes).

Just like the grammar of a language, a poetic grammar can be said to reside in two places: the individual speaker, who acquires it as a child and uses it throughout his lifetime, and the community of speakers (in our case, the community of singers and their audience) who share that language and use it to communicate. Linguistics has long debated which of the two versions of "language" (the one in the individual, or the one shared by the community) should be the focus of linguistic research, for they are not identical. On one hand, you have a

single, well-defined object of research, that resides somewhere in the mind of a single speaker (I-Language), and which is observable indirectly through the utterances produced by that speaker and his judgments on the grammaticality of other utterances. On the other hand, you have an abstract object that represents the "average" of the competences of the speakers in a community.[49] It will contain variation, and it will not be *simplex et unum*. There is not a common term for this object, but I propose to call it L-Language: the language that we normally call Language. Though generative linguistics has long picked I-Language as the true object of linguistic inquiry (Chomsky 1986:15),[50] most linguists in effect operate on some undefined version of L-Language. Apart from the case of fieldworkers working with a single speaker, the language that ends up in grammars is not meant to represent the competence of a single individual, but the norms that are shared within a community, thus L-Language (and, in many cases, this will be taught as a linguistic norm to children).

Complicating the situation even further, language change is normally studied on the level of the L-Language, not at the level of the individual (I-Language). First, the types of

[49] In cognitive science terms (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), this concept of language is a *conceptual blend*: the product of a largely unconscious mental operation which takes as input a number of disparate objects (in this case, the different I-Languages of a group of individuals) and "blends" them into a single cognitive object (an L-Language); this operation often serves to achieve "human scale" (it is easier for our minds to think about one unified object than to think about 1000 similar objects), and underlies a great number of complex thought patterns.

[50] This was in contrast to E(xternal)-language: i.e. the total amount of utterances produced by a community of speakers, which was regarded as the object of linguistic inquiry by American structuralists (see Hale 2007:10).

macroscopic changes (sound laws and the like) that historical linguistics is interested in often exceed the lifespan of a single individual. Second, some generative theorists[51] deny that true language change can happen within the individual once the grammar of his L1 has been learned, and believe that the only true language change can happen at acquisition, as each speaker constructs his own I-Language based on the linguistic sample at hand.[52]

Usage-based approaches to language, on the other hand, believe that language change is driven (at least in part) by language usage, and as such can take place (or must also take place) within the lifetime of individuals, as they gradually use more or less of a given construction, or extend that construction to new contexts of usage. It is worth noting that Construction Grammar, whose concept of construction I have been borrowing for this work, operates within the usage-based model of language change.

Usage-based approaches also take language itself to be much more vast than generative approaches do, since they do not operate with a sharp distinction between grammar (the unchangeable, abstract rules cemented at acquisition, and the main object of generative

[51] For a detailed theoretical discussion of language change in a generative perspective, see Hale 2007, ch. 1.

[52] Of course, it is very rare to have adequate data on a single individual to study potential I-Language change during a lifetime. One exception is Queen Elizabeth II, who has been recorded every year since 1952 for the Christmas broadcast. Jonathan Harrington has published several studies of phonological change in the Queen's speech (see Harrington 2007 with references). For a history of Christmas broadcasts, see http://www.royal.gov.uk/ImagesandBroadcasts/TheQueensChristmasBroadcasts/AhistoryofChristmasBroadcasts.aspx.

linguistic inquiry) and the lexicon. Rather, they believe that the two are indivisible, and that grammar itself *emerges* from language usage (Hopper 1998). For usage-based approaches, language is a collection of constructions at different levels of abstraction: what we normally call grammar is just the most abstract layer thereof. This, as we shall see, has important consequences for our purposes, in that it allows us to talk about Homeric technique (the I-Language of a poet, or the L-Language of the tradition) as a collection of constructions, some abstract and generic, some specific and concrete.

How do these considerations affect our description of Homer's technique? They should remind us that there are two approaches to the question "how did Homer's poetic grammar arise" and "how did it change". One concerns the acquisition of I-Language on the part of an individual poet, the other concerns the evolution of a poetic L-Language within a community of speakers, over many generations. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall take up the two separately.

First, I shall discuss how a poet acquires his I-Language and whether it is possible, for us, to talk about constructions (habits) that are peculiar to a given poet (I-Language) vs. other poets. This is equivalent to asking whether constructional habits can offer us a way of discerning the authorship of a given passage. Second, I will take up the synchronic layering within the I/L-Language of our poems, and discuss how we can evaluate the age and

productivity of a given construction, and how this knowledge can inform textual criticism. In the next chapter, we shall tackle diachronic change within the L-Language of archaic Greek epic, and see some examples of constructional differences between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which can be construed as language change.

5.2 Language Acquisition: Building an I-Language

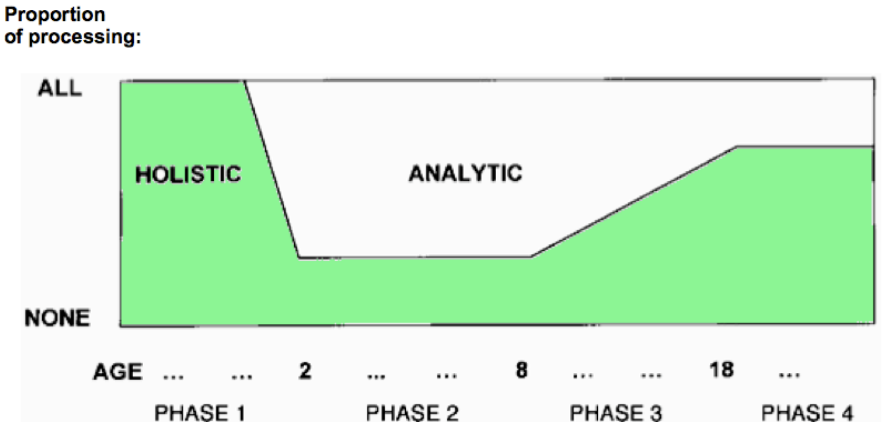
> "In the study of the epic style, we should always keep before us the conception of the apprentice poet: he is essential for our understanding of the formation and preservation of the epic technique and diction." (Parry, MHV:56)

An apprentice poet acquires his poetic technique not unlike a child acquires a language: he learns through exposure and imitation. In fact, several insights on child language acquisition apply to the acquisition of the poetic technique as well (at least as described by Albert Lord in the *Singer of Tales*). With Tomasello (2003), we have seen how formularity plays an important role in initiating the process of language acquisition in children. But the role of formularity does not stop here: it is pervasive, and can be tracked all the way through adult competence.

Alison Wray (Wray and Perkins 2000, Wray 2002) has developed a descriptive model of first language acquisition in which formularity ("holistic processing") plays a different role

depending on the level of linguistic development.[53] See Figure 5.1 below:

Figure 5.1 Holistic vs. Analytic Processing from Birth to Adulthood
(after Wray and Perkins 2000:20)



The model is very simplified, but has good expository value. It is very rewarding to compare this model of language acquisition with Lord's account of the singer's apprentice. I give here quotations form Lord's ST organized under the different phases in the Wray 2002 model. The narratives of acquisition are remarkably similar.

5.2.1 Phase 1: Memorizing Other Speakers' Constructions

In phase (1), the child repeats and re-uses what he hears, without analyzing it deeply: he understands basic pairings of form and function.

"In this (...) stage in his apprenticeship the young singer must learn enough of these formulas to sing a song. He learns them by repeated use of them in singing, by

[53] In Wray's terminology: Analytic Processing = Open Choice Principle, Holistic Processing = Idiom Principle.

repeatedly facing that need, until the resulting formula which he has heard from others becomes a part of his poetic thought" (ST:22).

5.2.2 Phase 2: Extracting Construction Patterns

As the child's mental lexicon reaches a critical mass, he starts extracting patterns,[54] thus building a full grammatical competence; at this point (phase 2), he is able to freely generate sentences using his mental grammar.

"The particular formula itself is important to the singer only up to the time when it has planted in his mind its basic mold. When this point is reached, the singer depends less and less on learning formulas and more and more on the process of substituting other words in the formula patterns" (ST:36).

"The really significant element in the process is rather the setting up of various patterns that make adjustment of phrase and creation of phrases by analogy possible. This will be the whole basis of his art" (ST:37).

"New formulas are made by putting new words into the old patterns" (ST:43).

[54] The critical mass is reached at different times for different constructions. The child will figure out some parts of the grammar before others, depending on the stored material he can rely on.

5.2.3 Phase 3: Developing a Constructional Network

As the child accumulates more linguistic experience, he will start building up a corpus of useful expressions that he employs frequently; for processing convenience, these expressions are stored rather than generated every time anew (phase 3). Thus, the portion of prefabricated material will continue to grow as the speaker expands his language experience.

> "Whether it is one remembered from other singers or it is one created anew, a phrase becomes set in the poet's mind, and he uses it regularly. Then, and only then, is the formula really born" (ST:43).

> "The phrases for the ideas most commonly used become more surely fixed than those for less frequent ideas, with the result that a singer's formulas are not all of the same degree of fixity. Indeed, the creation of phrases continues always as well" (ST:43).

5.2.4 Phase 4: Fluency

In phase (4), adult-like fluency, the speaker can largely rely on prefabricated material for dealing with familiar, repetitive situations, resorting instead to his analytic grammatical knowledge whenever he needs to generate new, original expressions. Importantly, the border between holistic and analytic processing is permeable: analytically-generated material can

become stored, and vice-versa, depending on the frequency of use. The speaker is always adapting his language-processing strategies to his changing linguistic needs, and the specific layout of the system (which specific expression is generated vs. which one is stored) can change over time.

> "A singer's stock of formulas will be directly proportionate to the number of different themes which he knows (...). No two singers would have at any time the same formulas in their repertories. In fact, any given singer's stock of formulas will not remain constant but will fluctuate with his repertory of thematic material" (ST:49).

> "There would, however, be a large group of formulas known to all singers, just as in any speech community" (ST:49).

Within the I-Language of an individual singer, we can then recognize several different sources for constructions. Some sequences will come from the initial acquisition (phase 1), and never be modified (among these sequences we will probably find some of the most conservative areas of the technique). Some sequences will be created anew by the individual (phases 2-4), following productive patterns, and stored because of their frequency. Even at phases (2-4) some sequences will be acquired from other speakers, and stored as they are. With all these different sources, the actual constructional network of a given singer (I-Language) will be

highly idiosyncratic,[55] yet rooted in the areal tradition to which it belongs (L-Language).

5.3 Can We Tell One I-Language from Another?

We now turn to a second, and important, question. Is there any way of telling these "highly idiosyncratic" I-Languages apart? Can we tell one individual singer from another, based on the evidence of his constructional usage? Can we show, for instance, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were produced by different singers (different I-Languages)? Or that, though the poems are the work of multiple singers, they belong to different stages of the same tradition (different diachronic stages of an L-Language?). Can we even zoom in and tell, on the basis of constructional usage, that a given episode has been put in words by a singer that is different from the one of the episode before?

This, in a way, brings back questions that recent Homeric scholarship had partially obliterated, in the spirit of oral tradition: the concept of individual authorship, or even the phantom of analysis. So much effort has been devoted (with varying degrees of success) to highlighting the importance of the tradition over the individual singer (Nagy 2009), and (often

[55] Note that, by defining the I-Language of a singer as his entire constructional network, we are in fact talking about a much wider entity than what a generative linguist would call grammar (as I have mentioned above). While it would be very hard to tell apart the grammars *stricto sensu* of two individuals that speak the same language (in that they would be maximally abstract entities which do not contain much discriminating information), a constructional network is a much larger, more concrete, and more idiosyncratic entity.

by scholars of different persuasion) in demonstrating the cohesion of the poems as a whole over their parts (Vivante 1970, Schadewaldt 1975). Some approaches (Neoanalysis) have tried to have their cake and eat it too, by showing how an individual poet could have operated on traditional material.[56]

On the other hand, the enduring fascination with the individual poet and his creative process continues to fuel scholarship (West 2011). For reasons that would take too long to explore here (but that are ultimately cognitive in nature, and have to do with the way we conceptualize literature), the idea of the individual poet (his skill, his creativity) has a very strong hold on our way of approaching the Homeric poems. It is an integral part of the way we think about and experience literature, and critics continue to return to it. Does this enduring concept have a correlate on the side of language?

As much as I am myself more concerned with the tradition (L-Language) than the individual poet, the words that we read in our editions of Homer must have been generated, at some point, by the I-Language of some individual singer (these words, of course, were then potentially and hopelessly changed by the process of written transmission).[57] I-Languages, at

[56] For an introduction to Neonalysis, see Clark 1986, Willcock 1997.

[57] I say *written* transmission here, because I do not believe that there could be *verbatim* oral transmission of the poems after they were composed: at every new performance, the poems had to be generated anew through the I-Language of the poet who was performing them: they will then bear the constructional signature of this last individual in the chain of transmission. This is the classic oralist position (Lord 1960). While *verbatim* oral

least in terms of constructional usage, can be idiosyncratic enough that we may sometimes catch a glipse of individuality; we may sometimes see some constructional usage that is distinct enough, and local enough (i.e., the same unusual construction repeated within a limited range of verses and nowhere else), to reasonably point to an individual poet.

5.3.1 An Odyssiac Construction for προσέειπε

A likely example of individual style (which seems thus far to have gone unnoticed as such) is an isolated half-line construction for the verb προσέειπε, which is limited to a handful of consecutive books in the *Odyssey* (14-17).[58] The general construction type is as follows:

$$[(\cup)\cup\ -\ ]_{\text{Obj./Subj.Pr}}\ \textbf{προσέειπεν}\ [\cup -\ \overset{\cdot}{\cap}]_{\text{Obj./Subj.NP}}\ (5x)$$

Within this construction type, the subject can either follow the verb, as in 1, or precede it, as in 2-3 (the more frequent option):

(1) στῆ δὲ πάροιθ' αὐτῆς. τὸν δὲ **προσέειπεν** Ἀθήνη· (*Od.* 16.166)

'he stood by her; and to him spoke Athene'

---

transmission is documented for some oral traditions (like that of the Rig Veda), nothing makes us think that such methods of transmission were employed for Greek epic poetry; such transmission would require a completely different kind of training and technique from what Lord has described for the Serbo-Croatian tradition. Verbatim transmission was arguably common for lyric poetry as we have it (where a poet like Pindar would compose a fixed text, and performances would reproduce that faithfully), but not for narrative poetry.

[58] These are all situations in which the character of Eumaios is more or less involved: three instances are in fact with Eumaios explicitly mentioned as the addressee; the other two are with Athene.

(2) ἄστυδε ἰέμενος, καὶ ἑὸν **προσέειπε** συβώτην· (*Od.* 17.5)

[as he was] going towards the citadel, and said to his swineherd:

(3) πυκνῇσιν λιθάδεσσιν, ὁ δὲ **προσέειπεν** ἄνακτα· (*Od.* 14.36)

'[he drove the dogs away] with a shower of stones. And he spoke to his master:'

Though Edwards (1970:32-33) comments on 16.166 as "unique," and remarks that the sequence προσέειπε συβώτην in *Od.*17.5, 17.236, and 17.342 does not occurr elsewhere, he does not connect the usages as part of the same construction (a concept that, of course, he would not be using), and thus fails to see that all of these rare usages reflect the same poetic grammar.

Armed with a constructional approach, we can see that not only are these usages connected, but we can also appreciate how exceedingly rare a construction they reflect: προσέειπε is one of the most common verbs in Homer, and its constructional behavior is highly regular. προσέειπε can appear in three positions in the line (each equivalent to a construction type):

1. 2b-3b: δὴ τότε μιν **προσέειπε** μέγας Τελαμώνιος Αἴας (71.92%, 123x)

   'and then spoke to him huge Aias Telamonios'

2. 5b-#: ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος **προσέειπεν** (25.14%, 43x)

   'again he said to him in response'

3. 4b-5b: στῆ δὲ πάροιθ’ αὐτῆς. τὸν δὲ **προσέειπεν** Ἀθήνη· (2.92%, 5x)

‘he stood by her; and to him spoke Athene’

Construction type 3, with the verb in position 4b-5b, is the rarest by far. Moreover, constructions for προσέειπε are typically full-line constuctions (our case being virtually the only exception) and, for the vast majority, tend to be very rigid in terms of constituent order. The marginality of our construction, its localized distribution, and the fact that it admits of a good amount of variation (both in terms of constituent order and metrical shape), are strongly indicative of a new, incipient construction which is the local experiment of an individual poet.

5.3.2 A Few Isolated Constructions in *Iliad* 23

Likewise, we may sometimes see that a given episode, or book, is distinct enough from what surrounds it in terms of its constructional usage that one could reasonably argue it was created by a different I-Language. This is the case, at least anecdotally, for book 23 of the *Iliad*, which displays a number of constructions that have more in common with the *Odyssey* than with the rest of the *Iliad*. Nothing of this sort has been argued for *Iliad* 23 so far; yet, in constructional analyses, this book comes up often as an outlier. I here present a small sample of such isolated behaviors (each of these cases invites further commentary). While the list below may seem limited, it is otherwise very rare to find constructions that consistently

pattern in one book and not anywhere else in a poem:

Constructions that appear only in *Il.* 23 and *Odyssey*:

(1) **ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε** [ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$ (2x in *Il.* 23, 8x in the *Odyssey*)

'and then he thought up something else – divine swift-footed Akhilleus'

(2) **σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές,** {οὐδέ σε λήσει}.[59] (1x in *Il.* 23 and 5x in the *Odyssey*)

'but I will tell you a sign, a very clear one, which you won't miss'

(3) {χωόμενος} **χαλεποῖσιν ἀμεί[**ψασθαι] **ἐπέεσσι·** (2x in *Il.* 23, 1x in *Odyssey*)

'in anger, to reply with harsh words'

Constructions that appear only in *Il.* 23:

(4) στῆ δ' ὀρθὸς καὶ μῦθον ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἔειπεν (7x in *Il.* 23 and nowhere else)

'the stood up straight and gave a speech among the Argives'

Constructions that disproportionally appear in *Il.* 23:

(5) ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. (of 21 occurrences in Homer, 7 are *Il.* 23)

'swift-footed divine Akhilleus'

Examples of this sort could be multiplied. But what do they mean? How do we move from anecdotal observations to something similar to a proof of authorship? For other literary authors, statistics (and corpus lingusitics) has recently started to offer some answers (see Peng

[59] Curly brackets indicate parts of the line that are not part of the construction (they are unregulated).

and Hengartner 2002). For Homer, the first step would be to run some n-gram tests, a practice that has already been used for attributing authorship. For now, we shall be content with saying that identifying different I-Languages that produced different parts of our poems is, in principle, possible, but that more work is needed before a truly large scale examination can take place, and provide us with some answers.

5.4. The Synchronic Layering of Constructions

Above, when we discussed the I-Language of an individual singer, we identified different possible *sources* for his constructions, from the point of view of language acquisition: while some constructions can be acquired early on and never change, some can be new coinages, made from productive patterns. There is a different way of looking at this layering, which takes a wider diachronic scope: examining the synchronic layering in the technique in terms of the relative age and productivity of constructions. It is to this wider diachronic scope that we shall now turn.

5.4.1 Productive vs. Non-Productive Constructions

Languages change; we know this because the language of *Beowulf* is markedly different from Present-Day English. But we also know this, on a smaller and more concrete scale, because

there is historical layering *within* each synchronic language (whether I-Language or L-Language): that is, every synchronic layer of a language contains constructions that are very old (e.g., the English strong verbs), alongside constructions that are relatively newer (e.g. the English weak verbs).[60]

The demarcation between old and new constructions in a language most often corresponds to the demarcation between processes that are productive for the speakers and processes that are not productive any more (in teaching grammars, these are normally labelled as regular vs. irregular processes). On the concept of productivity, which is normally used in the study of morphology, see Bauer 2001; on how morphological productivity and constructional productivity can be understood as the same phenomenon, see Mos 2010.

When speakers build their I-Language during language acquisition, they will encounter some processes that are widely represented in their learning sample (i.e. they have high type-frequency and high token-frequency): for these, speakers will be able to extract productive rules (or patterns), rules that they will confidently use also for items that were not originally in their sample, but match the pattern in some way.[61] Some other processes in their sample, however, will be isolated and not well represented (low type-frequency). At most, speakers will

[60] For a treatment of strong and weak verbs in English, within a framework compatible with the one I use below, see Branchaw 2010.

[61] A formal model of this (which however does not use token frequency) is the Minimal Generalization Learner, as developed in Albright and Hayes 1999, and Albright 2002.

understand them in terms of small, local rules, and will not be able to fit them within wider patterns. These processes are non-productive: speakers may still acquire them, but are unlikely to ever extend them beyond what they observed in their learning sample. Of these non-productive processes, speakers will hold on to the ones that, despite being non-productive, have very high token-frequency (low type-frequency, high token-frequency), while they will gradually substitute the ones with low token-frequency (low type-frequency, low token-frequency) with new and productive patterns. Following this logic, *went* (a very high-token-frequency verb) is not likely to be supplanted by *goed*, while *spat* (a low token-frequency verb) is likely to be supplanted by *spitted*.

But why would speakers tolerate processes that are old, irregular, and non-productive within their languages at all — why don't English children rise up against irregular verbs, and vote to substitute *went* with *goed*? In part, this is possible because speakers are going to store frequent segments anyway (vs. producing them online using abstract patterns): frequency promotes storage, and storage permits irregularity. Second, speakers are trying to replicate the sample that they observe, not change it radically. This formal layering of productive and non-productive processes is a quality of the learning sample that the speakers are trying to recreate (as for ways in which this layering originates, see section 5.4.2 below on grammaticalization).

The situation described above holds for the (I/L)-Language of Greek epic as well: here too, we observe areas of the technique that are new and regular (productive), as opposed to areas of the technique which are old and irregular (non-productive), and all of these areas can coexist within the I-Language of the same singer. Telling these areas apart is key to our understanding of the diachronic development of Greek epic, as well as to explaining the current form of our poems.[62]

5.4.2 Grammaticalization as a Source for Formal Layering

The competition between productive and non-productive patterns in language has been studied within grammaticalization theory, one of the main branches of usage-based linguistics. The main goal of grammaticalization theory is to detail how morphological categories can originate from lexical constructions through generalization, semantic bleaching and phonological compression, and how they tend to do so in ways that are typologically predictable.[63] Grammaticalization theory has also emphasized the role of cyclical change and

[62] Note, however, that this is very different from saying that passages of our poems containing non-productive constructions must be older than passages containing productive constructions: this would be like saying that a passage containing the strong verb *sung* is necessarily older than a passage containing the weak verb *called.*

[63] For an introduction to grammaticalization, see Bybee 2010 (older references are Traugott and Heine 1991, Hopper and Traugott 1993). A very famous example of grammaticalization is the English 'going to'/'gonna' construction, which, having lost its original semantics of movement, is now simply an expression of future. As the construction lost its original semantics, its form also became phonologically compressed. Grammaticalization itself is the process whereby a lexical item ('go') comes to serve a grammatical function (future). This is one of the ways in which languages can acquire new morphemes. Grammaticalization paths (as studied by Bybee et al. 1994)

renewal in the diachrony of languages. Since usage begets semantic bleaching, constructions are always gradually being pushed forward in the grammaticalization chain (and away from their original function), and new constructions arise to take their place.[64] These cycles of obsolescence and renewal create functional competition and formal layering within a language, whereby, for instance, English has both strong and week verbs, as well as several future constructions (*-ing*, *will*, *shall, going to, gonna*), and Ancient Greek has three kinds of active aorists, all with different historical origins (root aorist, thematic aorist, sigmatic aorist), but largely equivalent in function.

These cycles of loss and renewal of constructions (and the formal layering that they engender) are discernible in the L-Language of Greek epic as well: by using criteria developed by grammaticalization theory, we can in fact identify which areas of the technique are new, and which are old. It is, in other words, possible to talk about the life cycle of a given

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are typologically frequent chains of grammaticalization as documented in the history of several languages; a common grammaticalization path is the development of a verb of movement into a future. Another is the development from a periphrasis containing 'have', to a resultative, to an anterior, and finally to a simple past (as in the Romance periphrastic perfect).

[64] Horace would have been very much sympathetic to usage-based approaches to language:

> Multa renascentur quae iam cecidere, cadentque
> quae nunc sunt in honore uocabula, si uolet usus,
> quem penes arbitrium est et ius et norma loquendi. (Horace, *Ars Poetica* 70-3).
> 'Many words that have died will be born again, and many
> will fall down which are now held in high esteem, if Usage so desires,
> which is the ultimate arbiter, law, and norm of speech.'

construction within the L-Language of Greek oral epic, just as it is possible to talk about the life cycle, say, of the the sigmatic aorist in the history of Greek.

We shall now see two case studies that illustrate these phenomena. The first case study shows how two constructions can compete for the same functional spot in the technique, and demonstrates how we can ascertain which construction is older than the other on the basis of their synchronic usage. The second case study looks into discerning the antiquity of an expression based on the productivity of the construction that generated it, and illustrates how constructional analysis can inform philology.

In the next chapter, we shall undertake a third case study, within a more decidedly diachronic perspective: we shall see how some very frequent speech introduction constructions have changed between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

5.4.3 Epithets of Here[65]

In 1978, Hainsworth was interested in describing the diachronic development of a formulaic system: "I persuade myself that it is possible to discern various stages of maturity in the formula system" (Hainsworth 1978:43). Hainsworth attempted to discern such levels of maturity on the basis of the assumption that "special epithets in due process of time gain ground at the expense of generic ones" (45). Such an assumption was based on Gray's (1947)

[65] An earlier version of this treatment appears in Bozzone 2010:38-41.

findings about the designations for metallic weapons in the epics, which appear generic and not specialized; in Gray's view, this is because metallic weapons are new to the epics, and did not have the time to develop specific designations yet. In this view, if there are two competing epithets for one item, a generic epithet and a specific one, the specific epithet should be winning over the generic, and replace it, in the long run. Problematically for this view, there are two equivalent 3b-# noun-epithet formulas for Here in the *Iliad* that show the opposite behavior:

Τὴν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα **θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη**· (*Il.* 15.92)

'And to her replied divine white-armed Here'

Τὸν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα **βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη**· (*Il.* 4.50)

'And to her replied cow-eyed lady Here'

As Hainsworth (45) remarks: "θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη (19x), despite its indistinct and generic colour, has gained considerable ground against the dramatic βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη (11x)." This case seems to contradict Gray's findings (the specific designation, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη, should be gaining ground instead), and therefore Hainsworth speaks of "fragility" and "disruption" of the formula-system. If we frame the situation in terms of "competing constructions" in grammaticalization terms, however, it is easy to see what is happening and why, and there is no need to invoke a "disruption" of the system.

I argue that θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη is an overall high type-frequency, high token-frequency construction (x19), on the basis of the following considerations: (1) There are several examples of parallelly-formed θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (they share the same expansion scheme: θεὰ + 4a-# formula = 3b-# formula). (2) Λευκώλενος is a generic epithet, used for other female figures (Ναυσικάα λευκώλενος , Ἀρήτη λευκώλενος etc.) 13 times in the poems. (3) The sequence shows some flexibility (inflection):

οὐδ' ἔλαθ' Ἀγχίσαο πάϊς **λευκώλενον Ἥρην** (*Il.* 20.112)

she did not forget about the son of Anchises, white-armed Here'

μητρὶ φίλῃ ἐπίηρα φέρων **λευκωλένῳ Ἥρῃ**· (*Il.* 1.572)

'rendering a service to his mother, white-armed Here'

On the other hand, I classify βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη as a low type-frequency, high token-frequency construction (x14). I do this because: (1) Despite the general usage of πότνια in this position of the line (πότνια Λήδη, πότνια μήτηρ, πότνια Ἥβη, πότνια Κίρκη etc.),

(2) βοῶπις is a specialized epithet for Here (it appears only 3 times in the poems with other referents). (3) The sequence does not show signs of flexibility (it is a "fossilized formula": see below).

This situation predicts, on the one hand, the long-time supremacy of θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη (because of its higher type- and token-frequency), and, on the other hand, the survival of

βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη (because of its high token-frequency).

> "We can predict that in the specialization of competing forms (...) the construction with highest type-frequency will be the one to specialize over other members of the competing set. Furthermore, we can also predict that high-frequency tokens of the less competing types will be the last to succumb to the specialization process." (Smith 2001:378)

Gray depicted just one direction of development in a formulaic system: indeed, there is specialization of individual sequences, but there is also generalization of common types — both strategies are needed for achieving efficiency in a system. The interplay of these strategies gives rise to a sort of "convective" movement. I try to illustrate these concepts in Figure 5.2 below.

Fig 5.2 The Continuous Creation of Diction

	Low token-frequency	*Medium token-frequency*	*High token-frequency*
Low type-frequency	(4) Fossilized Formula (close to replacement)	← decay	(3) Resistant Fossilized Formula (opaque)
Medium type-frequency	↓ replacement ↓		paradigmatic isolation ↑
High type-frequency	(1) Compositional Sequence	chunking →	(2) Young Formula (transparent)

Diachronically, a linguistic sequence starts out as fully compositional (1) (open-choice principle): it is derived from a productive construction type in the language. If the sequence is useful, and becomes frequently employed, it undergoes *chunking*,[66] and becomes stored (idiom principle): at this point, a formula (in Parrian terms) is really born (2). Once a formula (lexically-filled construction) is stored, it starts to resist modification. At this point, two things can happen:

1. As long as the type that produced the formula (lexically-filled construction) remains productive in the language, the formula remains transparent to the speakers: this is the "youth" of a formula (2). Whitin the Homeric poems, θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη is at this point of evolution: it is indeed a formula, but it is transparent, and it still belongs to a productive type.
2. Over the course of time, howerer, it is likely that the *type* that generated the formula will gradually disappear from the language, and the formula will become paradigmatically isolated: at this point (3), the formula represents an older state of the poetic language, potentially under every aspect (phonetically, morphologically, syntactically, semantically).[67]

[66] *Chunking* (Bybee 2002:112) is the phenomenon by which a linguistic sequence becomes processed as a single unit, because of its high token-frequency.

[67] Hale 2010, for instance, uses the fossilized Vedic formula *návasyā vácaḥ* 'with newer speech' as a locus for

Because of its isolation, the formula (lexically-filled construction) is now difficult for the speakers to analyze: it survives as a fixed, fossilized expression, but only as long as its token-frequency remains high enough to justify the storage. βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη stands at this point in the tradition. If, for any reason, its token-frequency starts to decrease, the formula decays, and becomes prone to replacement (4). A replacement sequence — performing the same function, but deriving from a productive type in the language — can gradually take its place; this is happening with θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη, right before our eyes. From here, the cycle begins over again.

As far as the *Iliad* is concerned, it is reasonable to think that these two competing constructions could coexist within the grammar of a single poet (in *Iliad* 1, for instance, they appear within a short distance of each other: βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη in 1.568 and θεὰ λευκώλενος in 1.595). But what if this were not always the case? The *Homeric Hymns* provide an ideal testing ground for this question. Throughout the *Hymns*, the productive construction θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη predominates (it occurs 6x, and it shows signs of flexibility). The only hymn that still shows the older construction, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη (3x), is the *Hymn to Apollo*. This hymn is traditionally considered to be comprised of two parts, the Delian and the Pythian.[68] In fact, the

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morphological and phonological archaism.

[68] For the traditional division, see Clay 1989:18, Cassola 1975:97-102 with references. Bakker 2002 is a study of how the two halves of the hymn work together as a unit.

first half of the hymn ends with a standard farewell:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οὐ λήξω ἑκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα

ὑμνέων ἀργυρότοξον ὃν ἠΰκομος τέκε Λητώ. (177-8)

'But I won't cease to sing hymns to far-darting Apollon,

of the silver bow, whom Leto of the fair tresses bore'

"L'idea che il poeta, dopo questo saluto, potesse recitare ancora altri trecentosessanta versi è inconcepibile" (Cassola 1975:97). Differences in style, long noticed by commentators, confirm that we are looking at at least two different I-Languages. And quite nicely, while the first part of the hymn (1-181) uses (and inflects) θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη, the second part of the hymn (182-546) uses the fixed construction βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη exclusively. These facts are compatible with the idea that we are dealing with two poets here, and each of them only uses one noun-epithet construction for Here.[69] Establishing the precise history and chronology of the hymn, however, is a task for another time.

5.4.4 Vigor and Youth

To tell the relative age and productivity of a construction can also be crucial in evaluating

[69] With respect to the rest of the tradition (and its trajectory of development) the second poet —who is normally considered the later one, and a "volonteroso mestierante" (Cassola 1975:98) — seems to be the odd one out. Note that in line 305 he uses another epithet for Here: χρυσοθρόνου … Ἥρης 'Here of the golden throne', which is used of Here only 3x in the *Iliad* (1.611, 14.153, 15.5), and in the *Odyssey* is specialized for Dawn instead.

wider claims about a given passage or form. This is the case for the very famous line, which we have already discussed in section 4.2.1.2 above, as part of the alleged death scene of Akhilleus:

ὃν πότμον γοόωσα λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην (*Il.* 16.858, 22.364)

'lamenting its fate, leaving behind manliness and youth.'

This line (or simply its second hemistich) has been taken as extremely old, on account of the irregular scansion of the word ἀνδροτῆτα (see West 1982:15, Watkins 1995:499 with references). This word, it has been observed, would scan regularly if Greek still had syllabic resonants (which would put us some time in the Bronze Age, before Mycenean as we have it).[70] This fossilized formula would then preserve a fragment of Greek as it was spoken 700 years or so before the composition of our poems.

Alternatively, it has been argued, when this line was created, the scansion of ἀνδροτῆτα was the same, but the hexameter itself was different. This is the Berg-Tichy hypothesis of the proto-hexameter,[71] which, in Tichy's formulation, uses ἀνδροτῆτα in our line as one of the key pieces of evidence. Under this hypothesis, the hexameter originated with the combination of two Aeolic meters (a glyconic and a pherecratean), and thus metrical irregularities in the first and fourth foot belie the earlier presence of an Aeolic base. The cretic sequence

[70] For the Mycenean development of syllabic resonants, see Bartoněk 2003:135 with references.

[71] Berg 1978, Tichy 1981. For a recent survey of the issue, see Haug and Welo 2001. For ἀνδροτῆτα specifically, see Pike 2011:166-75, Barnes 2011.

—⏑— in Homeric ἀνδροτῆτα would have fit regularly in an earlier stage of the hexameter, where the fourth foot had yet not been fully 'dactylicized'. Instead of a phonological fossil, we would have a metrical fossil, preserved in an old formula.

In evaluating these theories, the first question that we should ask is: does this line look like a fossil? Does it look as if it has been produced by constructions that are flexible, productive parts of the diction, or by constructions that are old and fossilized? If a construction is to preserve much older phonological or metrical information, it would have to be fossilized (i.e. stored, and not generated); in order to prove that a construction is fossilized, we would have to show that it could not possibly have been created by the productive mechanisms of the language.[72]

Let us look at the constructions that this line employs. The first hemistich, with the first participle, is produced by a flexible construction for γοόωσα in this position in the line, which is fairly well represented in our corpus (5x):

[—⏑⏑—] **γοόωσα**$_{3b}$

ἐξ ὕπνου γοόωσα (*Il.* 5.413)

'[lest she rouses her maidens] from sleep, with her lamenting'

[72] Note that this is different from saying that the idea conveyed by this hemistich cannot be old or traditional. We know that very old IE formulas can continue in the daughter languages through lexical substitution (i.e., the theme is preserved over their form; see Watkins 1995:301-3). The argument, however, here relies on the form entirely: it is the form of this expression that we have to prove is old (or recent), not its thematic function.

ἀμβλήδην γοόωσα (*Il.* 22.476)

‘lamenting with sudden bursts’

τῆς δ’ ἀδινὸν γοόωσα (*Od.* 4.721)

‘among them, lamenting loudly’

θυμῷ μὲν γοόωσαν (*Od.*19.210)

‘[But Odysseus,] in his mind, [pitied her] as she lamented’

τῆκε, πόσιν γοόωσα (*Od.* 19.264)

‘[don't] melt [your mind], lamenting your husband’

The position of the second participle is likewise part of a productive construction, whereby a bisyllabic verb starts at the 3b caesura, and is followed by an Obj.NP starting at the hephthemimeral caesura:

$_{3b}$**λιπὼν**$_{4a}$ [⏑⏑—⏑⏑—⏓]$_{Obj.NP}$

σὺν κεινῇσιν νηυσὶ **λιπὼν** [ἀγαθὸν Μενέλαον]$_{Obj.NP}$. (*Il.* 4.181)

‘[he has gone home] with empty ships, and left noble Menelaos behind’

Ἰδαῖος δ’ ἀπόρουσε **λιπὼν** [περικαλλέα δίφρον]$_{Obj.NP}$, (*Il.* 5.20)

‘Idaios darted away, leaving behind his beautiful chariot’

πεζὸς γὰρ τὰ πρῶτα **λιπὼν** [νέας ἀμφιελίσσας]$_{Obj.NP}$ (*Il.* 17.612)

‘for [Idomeneus had come] on foot at first, leaving the curved ships’

Ἠέλιος δ’ ἀνόρουσε, **λιπὼν** [περικαλλέα λίμνην]$_{\text{Obj.NP}}$, (*Od.* 3.1)

‘The sun rose, leaving the beautiful pool of water’

τίπτ’ αὖτ’, ὦ δύστηνε, **λιπὼν** [φάος ἠελίοιο]$_{\text{Obj.NP}}$ (*Od.* 11.93)

‘Why [have you come] here now, o unlucky man, leaving the light of the sun?’

Τηλέμαχος δ’ ἀπόρουσε, **λιπὼν** [δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος]$_{\text{Obj.NP}}$ (*Od.* 22.95)

‘Telemakhos rose, leaving his long-shadowed spear’

This is part of a much more abstract productive construction in the hexameter, whereby a transitive verb of the shape $_{3b}[\smile\!\!-]_{4a}$ is followed by its object, which extends from 4a to the end of the line. See also, very closely matching our case, the same construction with the feminine participle λιποῦσα:

βάσκ’ ἴθι Ἶρι ταχεῖα **λιποῦσ’** [ἕδος Οὐλύμποιο]$_{\text{Obj.NP}}$ (*Il.* 24.144)

‘Go now, swift Iris, leaving the seat of Olympos’

We are then left with the latter part of the line, namely the coordinated Obj.NP ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην. There are several generic parallels for coordinated object structures in this position in the line (note, moreover, the recent character of the conjunction καὶ,[73] which has proven to be a stumbling block for those wishing to bestow Mycenaean age onto our formula). But we also have some strikingly specific parallels. Here is a line using a coordinated

[73] On καὶ in the epics, see Hackstein 2010:403 with references.

object phrase featuring a trisyllabic -της abstract in the same position in the line as ἀνδροτῆτα, depending on an aorist participle with the same shape as λιποῦσ':

αἶψά κε θηήσαιο$_{3b}$ [ἰδὼν]$_{\mathbf{V}4a}$ [ταχυτῆτα$_{\mathbf{5b}}$ καὶ ἀλκήν]$_{Obj.NP}$. (*Od.* 17.315)

'readily you would have marveled, seeing his swiftness and speed (= his dash)'

More strikingly, the same structure is visible in the rather frequent formula:

[(ἐ)$_{3b}$μίγην]$_{V4a}$ [**φιλότητι$_{5b}$ καὶ εὐνῇ**]$_{Dat.NP}$ (*Il.* 3.455, 6.25, *Od.* 5.126, 23.219)

'[I/he/she] joined [him/her/you] in love and bed (= sexual union)'

The verb, this time finite, has the same metrical shape as λιποῦσ': so do the coordinated elements, which are dative instead of accusative. Interestingly, this construction can also inflect:

ὄφρα ἴδῃ ἥν τοι χραίσμῃ$_{4a}$ **φιλότης$_{5a}$ τε$_{5b}$ καὶ εὐνή**, (*Il.* 15.32)

'so that you may see if the love and bed will be useful to you'

Note here how the τε is added to make up for a missing syllable in the nominative, following the very common pattern of τε καὶ coordinations in the 5th foot.

By combining the data points above, one can write the following constructions for coordinated –της abstracts in Homer:

Dative and accusative:

$_{3b}$[∪—]$_{V\ 4a}$[∪∪**τητ**∪ **καὶ** — ⏑]$_{Dat/Obj.NP}$

Nominative:

$_{3b}[\cup\text{—}]_{V\ 4a}[\cup\cup$**της τε καὶ — ⏑**$]_{Subj.NP}$

This pattern, which seems to be common (and flexible) all the way through the *Odyssey* (and seems to be most represented there) is synchronically responsible for producing ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην.[74]

Note that -της abstracts form a rather small class in Homer (for a full treatment of the category, see Pike 2011:146-85, with references): there are only 9 of them, and 7 out of 9 are trisyllabic in the nominative, just like ἀνδροτῆτα. Of these 7, ἀνδροτῆτα is the only one that does not start with two short syllables.[75]

Even the - της abstracts which do not take part in this coordinative construction still have a strong tendency to localize in this position in the line (4a-5b). This is true for the most frequent –της abstract in the poems, φιλότης (57x in the poems, 11x in 4a-5b), and even more evident in less-frequent –της abstracts, such as κακότης (26x in the poems, 10x in 4a-5b):

[74] Note that it is not uncommon for constructions to specify the derivational morphology of the words involved. Several constructions, for instance, are specific to middle thematic participles in -μεν-, or to 3rd sg. middle sigmatic aorists in -σατο.

[75] This remarkable similarity in prosodic form for words that share the same derivational morphology may not be coincidental. There may have been a prosodic constraint on the creation of –της abstracts, which specified the desired prosodic shape of the resulting forms (so as to optimize the footing into moraic trochees: while a regular trysillabic –της abstract, like κακότης, would parse neatly into two moraic trochees, ἀνδροτής would not). See Gunkel 2010 for a discussion of the role of prosodic footing in Greek morphology (and Hayes 1995 for an introduction to the concept of prosodic footing within Metrical Stress Theory). In our case, this could be an additional reason to regard ἀνδροτῆτα with suspicion: this form is not just hard to parse into the hexameter; it is hard to parse in Greek prosody altogether.

$_{3b}$θεοὶ$_{4a}$ **κακότητος**$_{5b}$ ἔλυσαν (*Od.* 5.397; 13.321; 16.364)

'the gods freed him from his woe'

$_{3b}$ὑπὲκ$_{4a}$ **κακότητα**$_{5b}$ φύγοιμεν (*Od.* 3.175; *9.489*; 10.129)

'from woe may we escape'

As well as ἰότης (12x in the poems, 8x in 4a-5b):

$_{3b}$ θεῶν$_{4a}$ **ἰότητι**$_{5b}$ μόγησα(ν) (*Od.* 7.214; 12.190; 17.119)

'I have suffered by the will of the gods'

And, finally, for ταχυτής (2x in the poems in 4a-5b; *Il.* 23.740). Of trisyllabic –της abstracts in Homer, only the marginal νεότης (2x) and βραδυτής (1x) do not appear in this position. The remaining δηϊοτής and ποτής do not conform to this pattern, in that they have different metrical shapes.

In consideration of this robust constructional evidence, to argue that we are looking at an extremely old, fossilized expression, which preserves either a Bronze-Age version of Greek phonology, or a pre-form of the hexameter, is untenable. This line was created by a productive synchronic pattern, which otherwise creates lines that are perfectly regular both phonologically and metrically. Conversely, we cannot assume that the regular pattern:

$_{3b}$[⏑–]$_{V}$ $_{4a}$[⏑⏑**τητ**⏑ **καὶ** – ⏔]$_{Obj.NP}$

originated with the unique token ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην at a time when when the hexameter was

different, and then morphed into a productive pattern for –της abstracts of different metrical shape, which generates completely regular half-lines all the way through the *Odyssey*. Our line has to be a recent creation of epic diction; what we have to clarify now is how the *longum in brevi* came to be. I see two ways of explaining ἀνδροτῆτα and its irregular scansion.

5.4.4.1 Constructional Analogy – Metrical Shortening

At first sight, the metrical irregularity in our verse above could to be due to the (infelicitous) attempt, on the part of the poet, to use the trisyllabic –της abstract ἀνδροτής in the most common position in the line for trisyllabic -της abstracts, and within the very common half-line construction:

$_{3b}$[⏑—]$_{V}$ $_{4a}$[⏑⏑**τητ**⏑ **καὶ** — 𝄐]$_{Obj.NP}$

However, since ἀνδροτής, unlike the rest of the trisyllabic -της abstracts in Homer, does not start with two short syllables, the poet creates a line with a metrical fault. In other words, this could be another case of a metrical disturbance created by the synchronic workings of the technique (similar to Parry's juxtaposition of formulas), rather than a diachronic problem. We can call this phenomenon *constructional analogy*: the poet has extended a productive pattern to a form that is partially compatible with it (it is a trisyllabic -της abstract), but not completely

(it starts with a heavy syllable). Because of the high *confidence*[76] of this pattern, the poet decided to extend it to ἀνδροτῆτα, even though a metrical fault resulted.

What makes this particular fault odd is that we are used to seeing metrical lengthenings (*brevis in longo*) more often than metrical shortenings (*longum in brevi*). Chantraine 1958:106-7 has very few examples of *abrègement métrique*, the most solid of which is the form δήϊον πῦρ, with short scansion of the first syllable; this is a complicated problem in itself (see Pike 2011:178-84; coincidentally, this seems to be the base adjective for the abstract δηϊοτής). Rau 2009 explains the creation of the short-vowel –ευ- stems in Homer as part of an inner-epic analogical process of metrical shortening. But our case seems rather different.

The closest parallels to our form, as it is often pointed out, seem to be cases where we find a short scansion of a vowel before the sequence -μβρο- (i.e., another sequence with an excrescent stop between a nasal and a liquid), as in νὺξ ἀβρότη 'immortal night' (*Il.* 14.78) instead of expected ἀμβρότη, which would have been unmetrical; other related forms normally cited are ἀβροτάξομεν (*Il.* 10.65) and ἀμφιβροτή (*Il.* 2.389, 11.32, 12.402, 20.281), which have been variously discussed and explained as secondary (see discussion in Tichy 1981:37-41, summarized in Barnes 2011:7-8). Barnes (2011:10) argues that the short scansion of vowels

[76] Under the Minimal Generalization Learner (Albright and Hayes 1999), the efficacy of a rule is its *confidence*, which is a statistical measure based on how many times a rule makes a correct prediction, i.e. how often a rule actually does apply where its structural description is met. Rules with high confidence are likely to be analogically extended beyond their original core, by ousting rules with low confidence.

preceding -μβρο- sequences is explained by the late date of the labial epenthesis (as witnessed by epigraphic practice, and as opposed to dental epenthesis, which already took place in Mycenaean), and suggests that our ἀνδροτῆτα is based on a missing ἀμβροτῆτα (he then adduces comparative evidence for the existence of an inherited formula meaning 'immortality and wholeness', which in Greek became 'immortality and youth'). The argument here rests on the assumption that, at some point in Greek, and before epenthesis happened, a sequence -αμρο- could scan α.μρο (Barnes 2011:10). This assumption is not unproblematic – as one would imagine the preferred scansion (in both Greek and PIE) of such a sequence would have been heterosyllabic, as in αμ.ρο.[77]

I believe that we need an up-to-date phonological treatment of consonant epenthesis in Greek and its relative chronology to really assess the viability of this solution. But even if the scansion α.μρο were granted, we still have to rely on an unattested ἀμβροτῆτα (where the position of the accent is explained by haplology of an original form < *ἀμ(β)ροτότητα, see Barnes 2011:9) and on a poet who takes that form (and its scansion and accent) as a model for creating ἀνδροτῆτα – an explanation that is very costly, and that unfortunately lies outside of the bounds of what can be proven.

[77] For the principles of Indo-European syllabification, and for the heterosyllabic scansion of VCCV sequences in particular, see Byrd 2009:157-8, who builds upon Hermann 1923. Possibly in favor of Barnes' analysis could be considerations of a morphological nature, but the whole issue deserves a monographic treatment.

5.4.4.2 A Textual Explanation: ἁδρός and ἁδροτής

There is another possible scenario for our line. My starting point is similar to Barnes' own starting point – that ἀνδροτῆτα is a late creation. My path to a possible solution is different: rather than looking for a source upstream in the Indo-European poetic tradition, I am going to look downstream in the manuscript tradition. This form, I will argue, was created by the mechanics of the transmission of the text, and not purposefully by a poet.

Let us start by presenting the argument that ἀνδροτῆτα itself was not generated by the synchronic grammar of the poet. In fact, virtually everything about this form is irregular, and requires special pleading:

1. Morphologically, "it is the only denominal abstract found in Homeric Greek ... until the end of the 5th century BC" (Pike 2011:157); in Homeric Greek, abstracts are made to adjectives, not to nouns.
2. Accentually, instead of patterning with the other abstracts in -ότης in Homer, it patterns with the also problematic form δηϊοτής. This in turn is a form whose accent was debated in the tradition, and rests on the conflicting authority of one or more *grammatici*, for which we cannot reconstruct a clear argument (see the very interesting discussion in Probert 2006:38-45). While this could indicate that the accentuation (at least of the form δηϊοτής, and of our form by similarity) had a source in contemporary bardic tradition (Lehrs' (1833)

hypothesis, supported by Probert), it may also have been the product of the grammarian's analysis itself, the logic of which is for us unrecoverable and may have been flawed.[78]

3. Metrically, it fails to scan as expected.

These are thus three respects in which the form fails to conform to the synchronic system of epic Greek – and thus could not have been generated by its grammar. All agree on this. The points of disagreement are (1) whether these odd features should be a sign of a precious archaism (i.e., the form was generated by an older grammar), or (2) whether they are a signal that there is something wrong with the form as transmitted. Since explanation (2) is cheaper, we should explore it before we pursue (1).

Some late manuscripts of Homer[79] have a *varia lectio* ἀδρότητα/ἀδροτῆτα (sometimes with the expected accentuation on the thematic vowel, sometimes with the same accentuation as ἀνδροτῆτα). The form ἀδρότητα is also found in a passage in Plutarch that quotes our line.[80] The term ἀδροτής 'vigor, maturity (of a plant)' it also appears in Epicurus (*Ep.* 1.31.U) and in the *Historia Plantarum* by Theophrastus (IV-III B.C.), as well as a few later texts (we always find

[78] From Eustathius, who refers to Herodian's work, we gather that the argument for the final accentuation of the Homeric abstracts δηϊοτής and ταχυτής (which are treated together) may have hinged upon the Aeolic and Doric pronunciation of these words. But scholars agree that Eustathius' summary of the argument is self-contradictory, and may indicate a misunderstanding on his part (Probert 2006:41).

[79] For more details, see Latacz 1965.

[80] *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 17D1.

the accusative, and the accent is always on the thematic vowel, except in the very latest text, the *De Musica* of Aristides Quintilianus, I AD). This form is related to the thematic adjective ἁδρός (Hdt.+) 'strong, fully grown' (possibly connected with the IE root *seh_2-, see Beekes 2010 s.v.). Unlike ἀνδροτῆτα, this form would be morphologically pristine, accentually, and metrically regular: in short, it could easily have been generated by the synchronic grammar of the poet. In what remains, I argue that ἁδρότητα was in fact the original reading, and should be restored in our text.

Of course, the very regularity of the form also speaks against it: it may have been a late emendation. In his overview of the issue, Latacz (1965) concludes that ἁδρότητα (which he writes ἁδροτῆτα) must have been an old variant in the tradition, rather than a late conjecture, and points to some epigraphic considerations that would explain its existence. Latacz (1965:66, with references) points out that nasals are often not written in epichoric scripts (e.g., Attic ΝΙΚΑΔΡΟΣ for ΝΙΚΑΝΔΡΟΣ, see Kretschmer 1894:§142; for more examples see Van Leeuwen 1918:105 and Threatte 1980:485-7, who remarks that -ανδρ- becoming –αδρ- is one of the most common instances of an omitted nasal before a stop in epigraphic Attic); thus, a form ἀνδροτῆτα and a form ἁδρότητα could have been both equally spelled ΑΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ in the pre-Alexandrinian (and possibly Attic) tradition of the text, leading to potential confusion. Latacz concludes that ἀνδροτῆτα must be the original reading on semantic basis (we shall tackle this

matter below), but this solution leaves us with all the formal problems enumerated above.

Latacz's insight, however, can work in the other direction as well. Let us assume that the original text had ἀδρότητα, a regular and synchronically expected form. Let us assume that it would be regularly spelled ΑΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ in our text. Now let us imagine reading that text (perhaps from an Attic copy), and knowing that the spelling ΑΔΡΟ can *sometimes* stand in for -ανδρο-: confusion becomes possible. But what does *sometimes* mean? The sequence -ανδρο- is immensely more frequent in Greek than the sequence -αδρο-. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, while -αδρο- occurs only 1x (the adverb μεταδρομάδην 'running after' in *Il.* 5.80), -ανδρο- occurs 164x (without counting the three occurrences of our form). This is to say that for any reasonable reader who encounters a sequence spelled ΑΔΡΟ, the overwhelmingly safe guess would be that it stands for -ανδρο-. This, I believe, is how ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ was born. Note that this would turn the generation of our form into a purely mechanical error, which is likely to have happened not once, but many times in the course of the pre-Alexandrinian tradition.

The further question is why the reader/copyist/editor would accept such a morphologically and metrically aberrant form as part of his text. To do so, he would have to exercise tolerance at two levels: the morphological level and the metrical level (more about the accent below). Semantically, the form would not appear too puzzling (more discussion below).

I believe that the morphological tolerance has to do with the history of the -της suffix itself in post-Homeric Greek. While the synchronic grammar of Homer could only create -της forms to adjectives (and not very many at that), the suffix -της knew a veritable explosion of usage as soon as medical and philosophical thinking took off. And while most formations are still to adjectives, in the V-IV century we begin to find -της abstracts made to pronouns and nouns. Among these are remarkable technical coniages such as ποιότης 'quality' (Hippocrates, Aristotle), made to a pronominal stem, and τραπεζότης 'tableness' (which Diogenes Laertius 6.53 attributes to Plato), made to a noun.[81] To a Greek of the V-III century, an abstract ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΣ, made to a nominal stem, would sound much more acceptable than it would have sounded to a Greek of the VIII century.

The metrical tolerance can be explained in two ways: the awareness that *quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*, as well as the possible confusion created by the ΑΔΡΟ / ΑΝΔΡΟ spelling (cf. νὺξ ἀβρότη above).

In the end, the preservation of the accidental form ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ is due to the awareness, on the part of the traditon, that odd and arcane words are to be expected as part of Homer's diction: a striking (yet still morphologically and semantically parsable) form ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ then has a good chance of passing as an original Homeric form, and a *lectio*

[81] For a history of the category in Greek, see Mignot 1972. For a discussion of ποιότης and τραπεζότης in particular see Mignot 1972:113-4. For a comparative study of the category in PIE, see Pike 2011.

difficilior.

I believe that this is also the reason behind its accentuation: the tradition recognized that there were two kinds of Homeric -της abstracts: the regular ones, continued as a productive category in the language, and the irregular ones. The regular ones were made to transparent thematic adjectives, and were accented on the thematic vowel. The less regular ones were, morphologically, a mixed bag, and were, for one reason or another, accented on the suffix (a feature that the grammatici discussed at length, though perhaps not always with clarity). When the monstrum ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ was created, its sheer oddness persuaded the editors that it should pattern with the less regular group of -της abstracts, and with δηϊοτής (along with which it is listed by the grammarians) in particular.

A final argument in support of this reading is semantic in nature, and depends on the properties of the coordinated construction discussed above.

$_{3b}$[⏑—]$_{V}$ $_{4a}$[⏑⏑**τητ**⏑ **καὶ** — ⏑̇]$_{Obj.NP}$

Stylistically speaking, the coordinated object is a *merism*, i.e., "a bipartite noun phrase consisting of two nouns in a copulative relation (A and B), two nouns which share most of their semantic features, and together serve to designate globally a higher concept C" (Watkins 1995:45). This semantic property of the construction is not just evident in φιλότητι καὶ εὐνῇ (often translated with the single term "love"; so Murray, Lattimore, and McCrorie), but also in

ταχυτῆτα καὶ ἀλκήν in its context (which accordingly I render with a single term "dash").

"καὶ λίην ἀνδρός γε κύων ὅδε τῆλε θανόντος

εἰ τοιόσδ' εἴη ἠμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ ἔργα,

οἷόν μιν Τροίηνδε κιὼν κατέλειπεν Ὀδυσσεύς,

αἶψά κε θηήσαιο ἰδὼν ταχυτῆτα καὶ ἀλκήν.

οὐ μὲν γάρ τι φύγεσκε βαθείης βένθεσιν ὕλης

κνώδαλον, ὅττι δίοιτο· καὶ ἴχνεσι γὰρ περιήδη. (*Od.* 17.313-7)

"'This is the dog of a man who died far away.

If his shape and action were similar to when Odysseus

left him, going off to Troy,

immediately you would marvel at the sight of his dash,

no creature in the thick of the deep woods could escape him,

once he started the chase: and he was keen of scent too.'"

Here, Eumaios is talking about the old dog Argos, and he is remembering his ability to chase down prey in his youth, so that none could escape him: the meaning of ἀλκή here is clearly equivalent to 'swiftness' (note that, in his etymological dictionary, Chantraine translates ἀλκή as *élan*) rather than the PIE root etymology, which means 'defensive force'. In this passage, the two terms ταχυτῆτα καὶ ἀλκήν should be considered as largely synonymous.

If we take this semantic feature of our construction to heart, we may have an additional criterion to prefer ἁδρότητα over ἀνδροτῆτα. The concept of youth shares a lot more semantic features with ἁδρότητα 'vigor, maturity' than it does with manliness (or the 'human condition', or 'courage', to list a few proposed translations for ἀνδροτῆτα): as such, 'vigor, maturity' is a better match for 'youth' in a merism.

There is more. The vegetal connotations of ἁδρότητα (wich Latacz disliked) indeed seem to work very well within the larger poetics of the *Iliad*. ἁδρότης, meaning 'vigor, maturity' (of a plant) would fit very well into the general theme of the *Iliad* of the 'hero as a vegetable', which is particularly fitting in this context, where the hero has died at the peak of his vigor. See Nagy 1979:174-84. See also Beekes 1971:353-5, who points out some further textual parallels. In English, we can bring out the value of the merism by relying on the existing metaphorical connection between plants (and particularly flowers) and youth (see below).

In sum, I believe that a reasonable argument can be made to restore our line to:

λιποῦσ' ἁδρότητα καὶ ἥβην

Whose metaphorical meaning can be rendered as: 'leaving the flower of youth behind'. If one is willing to accept this solution (as several editors of the text have done in the past), this would be a further illustration that *recentiores non sunt deteriores* – as well as a

demonstration of the power of constructional analysis.

6

The Diachrony of Homeric Constructions

In the previous chapter, I painted the image of a poetic technique that is constantly evolving through its usage, where constructions become routinized, fall out of fashion, and are then replaced.[82] All the elements of a poetic language take part in this cycle of preservation and renewal. Yet the cycle affects different elements differently, and at different paces: some morphological features may spread more rapidly than others, and, among constructions, some will evolve steadily, and some will stagnate. In this chapter, we will explore some of these dynamics.

To do so, we are going to compare the constructions for the most frequent speech introduction verbs in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: these are προσέειπε, προσέφη, and προσηύδα. For the first two verbs, we will see how the patterns of usage changed significantly between the two poems, and we will explore the trajectory and causes of that change. For the latter, we

[82] This perspective is at odds with an old (but somewhat persistent) conception of formularity, which saw formulas as static and extraordinarily conservative. See Janko (2012:24): "This admirable insight was long overshadowed by Parry's other claim that all or most epic verse consists of formulae, which would of course imply that their language hardly changes over time."

will see that the usage remained remarkably stable, and then ask why.

In section 6.2, we will discuss some theoretical questions emerging from this enterprise, and in particular how they impact some previous diachronic treatments of the language of Greek epic.

6.1 Speech Introduction Constructions in Homer and Their Usage

Speech introduction formulas have been one of the touchstones of the study of Homeric technique. The reasons are several: speech introductions are incredibly regular, and incredibly frequent (the two facts are not unrelated). They are the main locus for noun-epithet formulae. They have been treated in a number of monographic works (Edwards 1970, Riggsby 1992, Beck 2005). These works, however, have been largely descriptive in nature (the primary goal was to comprehensively list expressions used to introduce speech in Homer), and the major theoretical questions that they have addressed are the economy of the system and the freedom of the poet. While Edwards provides a listing and a book by book commentary of all "anomalous forms," while trying to uncover traces of "individual work" (Edwards 1970:1), Riggsby applied Visser's "paradigmatic" method to speech introduction formulas, concluding that the system is indeed economical (so, metrically determined). More recently, Beck (2005)

offers a list and a study of the circumstances and modalities of speeches. Most importantly, all of these approaches are synchronic in nature, in that they take the situation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as reflective of a stable and unified system (the technique of Homer), where most items have their largely unique function, as opposed to the other members of the system.

My approach is rather different, in that it is diachronic, and in that it focuses on tracking how the productivity of individual constructions changes from one poem to the other. In other words, our goal is to track the life cycle of each individual construction, rather than seeking contextual cues as to why the poet may have picked one construction over another in the course of composition. In this way, we are treating constructions as linguistic rather than stylistic entities, and we are studying them as we would members of a morphological system. What we'll find is an illustration of the life cycle of constructions introduced in 5.4.3 above.

6.1.1. General Features of Speech Introduction Constructions

Our poems are particularly rich in speech introduction constructions, all with different degrees of frequency and flexibility. We can see three examples in the following lines, all introducing Odysseus as a speaker, all using one of the three verbs that will be the focus of our next section.

(1) Τὸν δ’ αὖτε προσέειπε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς· (*Il.* 9.676)

‘And to him then spoke much-enduring divine Odysseus’

(2) τὴν δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς· (*Od.* 19.106)

‘And to her in response spoke Odysseus of the many wiles’

(3) ὣς φάτο, ῥίγησεν δὲ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,

καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Od.* 5.172)

‘Thus she said, and much-enduring divine Odysseus shuddered,

and addressing her spoke winged words’

In general terms, we expect all speech introduction contructions to convey three basic pieces of information, which allow for a limited range of alternative realizations. These are: a reference to the speaker, the addressee, and some indication of the modality of the speech act.

Of these three elements, both speakers and addressee can be expressed nominally (possibly with a noun-epithet formula), pronominally, or elided.[83] Typically, the reference to the addressee works as a bridge between the previous discourse and the current event. In the main clause, the addressee is realized as the direct object of the speech verb, and the speaker (naturally) as the agent. In some cases, the addressee is also the subject of a short clause that concludes the preceding speech act (ὣς φάτο ‘so he spoke’).

[83] For a thorough introduction to the handling of referents in Homer, see Chapter 7.

The modality of the speech act can be expressed by a participle, a finite verb, or an adverb; this can be as generic as signifying that the speech is 'in reply' to another speaker, or can expand on the emotional state of the speaker (much more rarely on that of the addressee); sometimes the location or appearance of the speaker is also expressed (ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱσταμένη 'standing close', or τῷ ἐεισαμένη 'looking like him'). As opposed to what is expressed through various participial and adverbial expressions, the speech verb itself is often rather uninformative. We will see many examples of these various configurations below. Table 6.1 highlights the different treatment of each piece of information in the lines above:

Table 6.1 Addressee, Modality, and Speaker in προσέειπε, προσέφη, and προσηύδα constructions

		Addressee	*Modality*	*Speaker*
(1)	προσέειπε	Τὸν	αὖτε	πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς
(2)	προσέφη	τὴν	ἀπαμειβόμενος	πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς
(3)	προσηύδα	ὣς φάτο... μιν	ῥίγησεν	πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

Each of the lines above can also be represented constructionally as follows:

(1) [_]$_{\text{Obj.P}}$ [⏑⏑_]$_{\text{Adv.}}$ **προσέειπε** [⏑_⏑⏑_⏑⏑_⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

(2) [_]$_{\text{Obj.P}}$ δ' [⏑⏑_⏑⏑_]$_{\text{Subj.Part.}}$ **προσέφη** [⏑⏑-⏑⏑_⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

(3) **ὣς φάτο**, [_⏑⏑_]$_{\text{VP}}$ δὲ [⏑_⏑⏑_⏑⏑_ ⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$,

καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·

Overall, we can see that constructions (1) and (2) share a similar structure, where the

addressee is realized pronominally at the beginning of the line, which is followed by an adverb or a participle qualifying the speech act, the finite verb in the middle of the line, and a noun-epithet formula (of differing shapes) at the end of the line. In (3), both the addressee and the modality of the speech act get their own sentence in the first line (which also includes a full mention of the speaker), and are followed by a second sentence that simply spells out the act of speaking, without providing additional information; this line also features a pronominal reference to the addressee, a participle that conveys virtually no additional information, and an expansion of the simple verb of speech προσηύδα with the generic object ἔπεα πτερόεντα. The subject is elided. As with many other events in the narrative, the poet could pick a more or less leisurely style of expression: προσηύδα here represents the leisurely option.

Of course, many more options exist for each of the constructions exemplified above. While construction type 1 for προσέειπε affords very little room to provide additional information on the speech act (swapping αὖτε with πρότερος would let us start a dialogue instead of continuing one, but would require a different set-up, in which the interlocutors move towards each other),[84] προσέφη affords a number of options for expanding on the

[84] As in: Ὣς οἳ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον,
τὼ δὲ τάχ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθον ἐλαύνοντ' ὠκέας ἵππους.
τὸν πρότερος προσέειπε Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱός· (*Il.* 5.274-6)
'As they were speaking such words to each other,

modality of the speech act.

Τὸν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς· (*Il.* 1.148)

‘And to him, with an angry glance, spoke swift-footed Akhilleus’

Τὴν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (*Il.* 1.364)

‘And to her, with deep sighs, spoke swift-footed Akhilleus’

Τὴν δὲ μέγ’ ὀχθήσας προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς· (*Il.* 1.517)

‘And to her, greatly enraged, spoke cloud-gathering Zeus’

ἀγχοῦ δ’ ἱσταμένη προσέφη πόδας ὠκέα Ἶρις (*Il.* 2.790)

‘And standing close spoke swift-footed Iris’

τῷ μιν ἐεισαμένη προσέφη πόδας ὠκέα Ἶρις· (*Il.* 2.795)

‘And looking like him spoke swift-footed Iris’

Τὸν δ’ ἐπιθαρσύνων προσέφη ξανθὸς Μενέλαος· (*Il.* 4.183)

‘And to him, with encouragement, spoke blond Menelaos’

Τὸν δ’ ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (*Il.* 4.356)

‘And to him, with a smile, spoke lord Agamemnon’

These options, however, do not account for the great majority of the realizations of προσέφη,

---

they quickly drew close, driving their swift horses.

To him first spoke the bright son of Lukaon’

which prefer the generic (and thus versatile) ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη + Subj.NP. We will explore more of these dynamics below.

6.1.2 The Role of Meter

When describing a very tightly regulated area of the technique (such as battle scenes or, precisely, speech introductions), one is often tempted to present meter (and thus, perhaps, the metrical shape of some fundamental elements) as the main motivation for the poet to select a given construction over another. This is really a development of Parry's observation that noun-epithet formulas tend to organize themselves into economical systems, and has been most fully pursued by Visser 1987, 1988 (whose method Riggsby 1992 has applied to speech introductions); even for small units, this is a tendency, rather than a rule (as we saw with the epithets of Here in 5.4.3 above). But for larger units, this assumption proves inadequate as soon as we look at the data. The poet has more options that one often recognizes: options that do not just include fitting words of a given shape in a line, but setting up the narration in different ways (ways that perhaps do not require fitting those fundamental elements in one single line).

In speech introduction constructions, this flexibility (which already Edwards 1970:36 recognized) is particularly on view. Note how easily we can construct a two-line speech

introduction using προσηύδα that is informationally identical to the προσέφη example below:

*ὣς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων,

καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·

'So he spoke, and Agamemnon lord of men smiled,

and addressing him spoke winged words'

Τὸν δ' ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (*Il.* 4.356)

'And to him, with a smile, spoke lord Agamemnon'

And note how the three speech introductions in 6.1.1 above all convey the equivalent information "and to him/her Odysseus replied".

And while it is surely true that verbs with different metrical shape combine with noun-epithet formulas of different metrical shape, it is also worth keeeping in mind that all main characters come with noun-epithet formulas of all shapes (feminine, bucolic, and hephthemimeral), so that none is banned from one of these constructions simply by virtue of meter.[85] Often, whether one or another construction is used, then, does not have much to do with the content that is being narrated (since the same communicative goal could be achieved by a number of different strategies), but with what construction was most available in the poet's mind at the time that he was putting his thought into words. In other words, it has to do

[85] Moreover, as we shall see in 6.2.3.2 below, often the mention of the noun-epithet formula is altogether unnecessary from the informational point of view.

with linguistic *productivity*.

In the past, there has been a tendency to regard fixed formulas as the normal state of oral-formulaic technique, and flexible expressions as some kind of degeneration thereof (this is the argument that is made about, for instance, the *Homeric Hymns* in Cantilena 1982, where an increase in formulaic expressions over straight formula is taken as a sign of the decline of the tradition; see also 6.3.2 below). But variation is to be expected in language usage (Hackstein 2002 has explored this for Homeric morphology), and for the technique to continue, it needs to have room to experiment and innovate. This experimentation, which happens at the margins (just as in natural language) is a sign of health, not decay, in an oral tradition. Below, we will see what it means for a construction to lose flexibility, and how that spells the decline, not the success, of a construction.

6.2 Speech Introduction Constructions Between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Let us now see how our three verbs fare in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. We can compare their absolute token frequencies in table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Token Frequecies For προσέειπε, προσέφη, and προσηύδα.

	προσέειπε	προσέφη	προσηύδα
Iliad	75	116	91
Odyssey	96 (64% increase)	96 (0.6% increase)	75 (0.9% increase)

When we adjust for the different length of our texts (the *Odyssey* is roughly 78% of the *Iliad*), we see that, while the frequency of προσέφη and προσηύδα is largely equivalent in the poems, the frequency of προσέειπε has increased dramatically. Why is this so?

We shall now zoom in on the constructional usage of each verb, and see if the usage of the different subtypes has undergone any changes. For προσέειπε, we also want to see if the increase in frequency is distributed homogeneously among all subtypes, or whether a single subtype is responsible for the increase.

6.2.1 Construction Types for προσέειπε

As we mentioned above, there are three construction types for προσέειπε in the poems (only two in the *Iliad*), each corresponding to a position in the line where the verb occurs:

Type 1: δὴ τότε μιν **προσέειπε** μέγας Τελαμώνιος Αἴας

'then huge Aias Telamonios spoke to him'

Type 2: ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος **προσέειπεν**

'again he spoke to him in reply'

Type 3: στῆ δὲ πάροιθ’ αὐτῆς. τὸν δὲ **προσέειπεν** Ἀθήνη·

‘he stood by her; and to him said Athene’

Table 6.3 Token and Type Fequencies for προσέειπε

	type 1	type 2	type 3
Iliad	61	14	0
Odyssey	62 (30% increase)	29 (165% increase)	5 (100% increase)

In terms of token frequency, while type 1 has undergone a significant increase, type 2 shows a true explosion of usage. Overall, we get the picture of a peak of productivity for προσέειπε constructions in the *Odyssey*, with old construction types gaining considerable ground, and new construction types being created. From this point of view, the high productivity of προσέειπε can be considered a defining trait of the technique of the *Odyssey*.

6.2.1.1 Subtypes for προσέειπε Type 1 Constructions

Let us now see how the productivity of each subtype of προσέειπε changes between the two poems. Beyond the αὖτε προσέειπε and πρότερος προσέειπε subtypes already described in 6.1.1, and both captured by the construction:

$[\_]_{\text{Obj.P}}\ [\cup\cup\_]_{\text{Adv.}}$ **προσέειπε** $[\cup\_\cup\_\cup\_\overset{\frown}{\_}]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

the only other major subtype features an Obj.NP in pre-verbal position; this type admits of quite a lot of variation, as seen from the examples below, and is thus harder to write as a

construction:

Ἀτρεΐδην προσέειπε, καὶ οὔ πω λῆγε χόλοιο· (*Il.* 1.224)

'He said to Agamemnon, and did lot let of of his anger'

Ἀτρεΐδην προσέειπε καὶ ἐξερεείνετο μύθῳ (*Il.* 10.81)

'He said to Agamemnon, and questioned him'

Ἥρην δὲ προσέειπε κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε· (*Il.* 16.432)

'He said to Here, his sister and wife'

Λητὼ δὲ προσέειπε διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντης· (*Il.* 21.497)

'He said to Leto, the messenger, killer of Argos'

Ζεὺς δ' Ἥρην προσέειπε κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε· (*Il.* 18.356)

'Zeus said to Here, his sister and wife'

$[\_\breve{}\breve{}\_]_{\text{Obj.NP.}}$ **προσέειπε** $[\breve{}\_\breve{}\breve{}\_\breve{}\breve{}\_\breve{}]_{\text{Subj.NP/Obj.NP}}$

While relatively well-represented in the *Iliad*, this type occurs only once in the *Odyssey*.

Ἑρμῆν δὲ προσέειπεν ἄναξ Διὸς υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων· (*Od.* 8.334)[86]

'He said to Hermes, lord Apollon son of Zeus'

[86] Interestingly, this line does not occur in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, to which it would have been quite well suited. In fact, the Hymns only know the αὖτε προσέειπε subtype.

Table 6.4 προσέειπε Type 1 Constructions (Most Frequent Types)

	αὖτε προσέειπε	πρότερος προσέειπε	Obj.NP + προσέειπε
Iliad (of 61)	41	10	5
Odyssey (of 61)	56 (36% increase)	1	1

If we keep the total number of tokens of type 1 constructions constant, here is how the relative frequency of each subtype changed. The αὖτε προσέειπε subtype, which specializes in a generic response, is now responsible for almost the entirety of type 1 constructions. All of the other subtypes are being marginalized.

While at first pass type 1 seems to be gaining ground in the *Odyssey* (at least token-wise), the analysis of the subtypes tells a different story: more and more, this construction is used for a single, fixed, and generic usage, and is losing its vitality. Its productivity, in other words, is falling, even as its token count increases. This is how a construction starts to die.

6.2.1.2 Subtypes for προσέειπε Type 2 Constructions

Let us now look at the type 2 construction, the one responsible for the veritable explosion in the usage of προσέειπε in the *Odyssey*, and which is almost absent from the *Iliad*. Here too, the increase in tokens seems to be attributable to a single subtype.

Table 6.5 προσέειπε Type 2 Constructions

	ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπε	Τὸν δ’ αὖτ’ [Subj.NP] ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέειπε	[Obj.NP] προσέειπε
Iliad (of 14)	2	1	4
Odyssey (of 29)	21 + 4	1	3

Unlike with construction type 1, however, if we look closely at the most frequent subtype, we can see that it is buzzing with (regularized) activity. Observe this subsystem of usage in the *Odyssey*:

ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ’ αὐτίκ’ ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 4.471, 4.491, 4.554)

‘So I said, and immediately he said in reply’

καὶ τότε δή μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 5.96)

‘and to him he said in reply’

ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 16.193)

‘again to him he said in reply’

ἐξαῦτίς σφ’ ἐπέεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 21.206)

‘again to them he said in reply’

ἐξαῦτις μύθοισιν ἀμειβομένη προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 4.234)

‘again he said in reply’

By comparing the last 3 lines, we can observe that the system is not economical (4.234 could

stand in for the two preceding lines). Also note the short-range variation in *Od.* 19

ἡ δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν τάρφθη πολυδακρύτοιο γόοιο,

ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβομένη προσέειπε· (*Od.* 19.213-4)

‘but after she had her fill of tearful lament,

again she spoke to him in response’

ἡ δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν τάρφθη πολυδακρύτοιο γόοιο,[87]

καὶ τότε μιν μύθοισιν ἀμειβομένη προσέειπε· (*Od.* 19.251-2)

‘but after she had her fill of tearful lament,

then again she spoke to him in response’

This lack of economy is not a sign of decay of the technique, but bears witness to the youth and vitality of this constructional network.

In other words, ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπε seems to be a healthy construction, whose expansion depends on a number of successful subtypes. Interestingly, these productive subtypes are unique to the *Odyssey*, and relatively dissimilar from the only type present in the *Iliad* (represented in *Od.* 22 as well), which has a Subj.NP in the first hemistich:

τὸν δ’ Ἀχιλεὺς μύθοισιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Il.* 23.794)

‘to him Akhilleus spoke in response’

[87] Note that this line itself seems to be a fixed construction used only 3x in *Odyssey* 19-21.

Εὐρύμαχος δέ μιν οἶος ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν (*Od.* 22.44)

'Eurumakhos alone spoke to him in response'

Crucially, the productivity of type 2 προσέειπε constructions seems to be an *Odyssey*-internal affair, for which no warning sign could be found in the *Iliad*. In other words, while the evolution of type 1 represents an expected continuation of the Iliadic situation, type 2 shows authentic innovation in the *Odyssey*.

This situation is confirmed outside of Homer, where the *Homeric Hymns* only know type 1, and the only instance of type 2 (*Hermes)* continues the rare type in *Il.* 23, conjoined with the usage of ὁ γέρων as NP.[88]

Τὸν δ' ὁ γέρων μύθοισιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Herm.* 201)

'To him the old men spoke in response'

Hesiod (including the *Scutum*) only knows type 1 (with either following Subj. or Obj.NP).

6.2.1.3 The ἀμείβ- Network

It is important to note that these successul constructions which contain ἀμειβόμενος (and which are specific to the *Odyssey*) form a larger set with constructions where ἀμείβετο serves as the finite verb, followed by a noun-epithet formula (or by an adverbial expression) that fills

[88] The presence of the definite article used as such is quite rare and limited in the *Iliad*, and would deserve a monographic study.

the bucolic slot (i.e., the space between the bucolic diaeresis and the end of the line). These constructions are in a direct derivational relationship to each other, and they rely on the same constituents. Compare:

ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ' αὐτίκ' **ἀμειβόμενος** προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 4.471)

'So I said, and immediately he spoke to me in response'

ὣς ἐφάμην, ἡ δ' αὐτίκ' **ἀμείβετο** δῖα θεάων· (*Od.* 4.382)

'So I said, and immediately she replied, the divine among goddesses'

We can highlight this "paradigmatic" relationship by creating the following new lines out of the pieces we have seen so far:

*Τὸν δ' Ἑλένη μύθοισιν ἀμειβομένη προσέειπεν

'To him Helene said in reply'

*Τὸν δ' Ἑλένη μύθοισιν ἀμείβετο κερδαλέοισι

'To him Helene replied with cunning words'

*καὶ τότε δή μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμείβετο δῖα γυναικῶν

'And then to him replied the divine among women'

*ἐξαῦτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμείβετο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

'Again to him replied divine Odysseus'

*ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ' αὐτίκ' ἀμείβετο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

‘So I spoke, and to me immediately replied divine Odysseus’

In each of these lines, the verb works as a pivot, where the participial form selects for the “empty verb” προσέειπε, while the finite form selects for some additional, non-crucial information in the bucolic slot.[89] Variants of the finite ἀμείβετο construction occur 11x in the *Odyssey*, often within a short distance from the ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν constructions. They are (as we shall see) much rarer in the *Iliad*.

Similarly, in the *Hymn to Hermes*, we find the complete set of participle and finite verb (the latter more frequent):

Τὸν δ’ ὁ γέρων μύθοισιν **ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν**· (201)

‘To him the old man spoke in reply’

Τὴν δ’ Ἑρμῆς μύθοισιν **ἀμείβετο** κερδαλέοισι (162, 260, 463)

‘To her Hermes replied with cunning words’

Arguably, in the explosion of type 2 constructions for προσέειπε in the *Odyssey*, what we are seeing is really the advancement of the ἀμείβ- constructional network as a whole. When we find traces of such a network in the *Iliad*, they are very localized. In fact, we only find it in a short span of verses in *Il.* 3:

Τὸν δ’ Ἑλένη μύθοισιν ἀμείβετο δῖα γυναικῶν· (*Il.* 3.171)

[89] As we shall discuss in 7.4.2, who the next speaker is going to be, in a discussion scene, is often clear from context. The noun-epithet formulas at the end of the line should not be regarded as necessary information.

‘To him Helene replied, divine among women’

Τὸν δ’ Ἑλένη τανύπεπλος ἀμείβετο δῖα γυναικῶν· (*Il.* 3.228)

‘To him Helene of the long robe replied, divine among women’

Τὴν δὲ Πάρις μύθοισιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπε· (*Il.* 3.437)

‘To her Paris spoke in response’

The presence of this Odyssiac network sharply separates *Il.* 3 from the rest of the *Iliad*, and makes one wonder about the chronology of textualization for this specific book (together with other constructional data, it could be used to argue for the recency of the book). The only other locus in the *Iliad* displaying a piece of this constructional network is book 23:

τὸν δ’ Ἀχιλεὺς μύθοισιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Il.* 23.794)

‘To him Akhilleus spoke in response’

We had seen already that *Il.*23 has a number of exceptional features in its technique, which often put it closer to the *Odyssey*. The ἀμείβ- constructional network is yet another.

6.2.2 Construction Types for προσέφη

Unlike προσέειπε, προσέφη only occurs in one place: the middle of the line. The most frequent subtype features the participle ἀπαμειβόμενος, as we observed in section 6.1.1.

τὴν δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς· (*Od.* 19.106)

Other types (also exemplified in 6.1.1 above) can be captured by the more general construction:

[_]$_{\text{Obj.P}}$ δ’ [⏑⏑_⏑⏑_]$_{\text{Subj.Part.}}$ **προσέφη** [⏑⏑-⏑⏑_⏓]$_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

Not conforming to this mold, we find a few other minor types, such as:

δουρὶ δ’ ἐπαΐσσων προσέφη κρατερὸς Διομήδης· (*Il.* 10.36)

‘Throwing his spear said strong Diomedes’

Ὣς φάτο, τὸν δ’ οὔ τι προσέφη κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ· (*Il.* 6.342)

‘So he spoke, and to him Hektor of the shining helmet said nothing’

And followed by an Obj.NP of the addressee:

καί ῥα καλεσσάμενος προσέφη χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην· (*Il.* 5.427)

‘and calling her by name he spoke to golden Aphrodite’

All of these sutypes are represented in table 6.5 below.

Table 6.6 Subtypes of προσέφη

	ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη	ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν	μέγ’ ὀχθήσας	ἀγχοῦ δ’ ἱσταμένη	οὔ τι προσέφη	ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη	καλεσσάμενος προσέφη + Obj.NP	δουρὶ δ’ ἐπαΐσσων προσέφη
Iliad (of 116)	33	13	10	6 (5+1)	6	3	1	2
Odyssey (of 96)	56	7	3	1	1	1	2	0

Overall, the *Iliad* presents more richness and variation, featuring a number of minor types quite solidly. The *Odyssey*, while dramatically increasing the ἀπαμειβόμενος type, has virtually

eliminated all of the other variants. This is a construction that is quickly losing its vitality.

6.2.3 Construction Types for προσηύδα

In the poems, προσηύδα appears in two positions in the line:

1. καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα$_{5b}$ **προσηύδα**· (*Il.* 1.201)

'and addressing him he spoke winged words'

2. αὐτίκα δ' Ἰδομενῆα$_{3b}$ **προσηύδα**$_{4c}$ μειλιχίοισιν (*Il.* 4.256)

'And immediately to Idomeneus he spoke kindly'

The first type, which overwhelmingly features the fixed Obj.NP ἔπεα πτερόεντα, we saw above. The second, which is much less represented in our sample, we will see below.

Table 6.7 προσηύδα Types

	type 1	type 2
Iliad	74	17
Odyssey	62	13

Overall, both constructions seem remarkably stable througout the poems, showing almost identical token distributions.

6.2.3.1 Subtypes for προσηύδα Type 1 Constructions

When we zoom in on the subtypes of type 1, the situation seems equally stable (with maybe a small narrowing of rare types in the *Odyssey*).

Table 6.8 προσηύδα Type 1

	ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα	φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα	other participle + ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα	Obj.NP + ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα	other
Iliad	55	21	21	10	19
Odyssey	52	24	20	7	10

We can see some examples of the most frequent type (note the inflection of the Obj. pronoun):

καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 10.163)

'and addressing him he spoke winged words'

καί σφεας φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 10.191)

'and addressing them he spoke winged words'

Other subtypes are:

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱστάμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (*Il.* 13.462)

'and standing close he spoke winged words'

καί ῥ' ὀλοφυρόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 11.815)

'and lamenting he spoke winged words'

καί μιν ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 15.48, 23.557)

'and replying to him he spoke winged words'

τοὺς ὅ γ' ἐποτρύνων ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 13.94, 13.480, 17.219)

'and urging them on he spoke winged words'

αἶψα δ’ Ἀθηναίην ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 4.69, 5.713, 8.351, 19.341, 21.419)[90]

‘Immediately to Athene he spoke winged words’’

ἦ ῥα, καὶ Ἀντίνοον ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Od.* 17.396)

‘So he said, and to Antinoos he spoke winged words’’

καί μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Od.* 17.459, 18.459)

‘and to him, with an angry glance, he spoke winged words’

6.2.3.2 Προσηύδα and Προσέφη: A Substitutional Network

Interestingly, some of the constructions above are effectively alternative to προσέφη type 1 constructions: the only difference is that, while the προσέφη construction will use a noun-epithet formula for the speaker, the προσηύδα construction will leave it out.

ἀγχοῦ δ’ ἱσταμένη προσέφη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη· (*Il.* 2.172)

ἀγχοῦ δ’ ἱσταμένη ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 4.92)

Compare as well:

Τὸν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς· (*Il.* 4.349)

καί μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Od.* 17.459, 18.459)

And finally:

[90] Note that this construction is, surprisingly, limited to the *Iliad*, while it is never used on the many occasions when Athena speaks in the *Odyssey*.

Τὸν δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς· (*Il.* 1.84)

καί μιν ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· (*Il.* 15.48, 23.557)

What seems to emerge from these last two sets is that the προσηύδα construction is used when building a coordinate clause, while the προσέφη construction is used to form a new sentence. This syntactic difference also seems to impact the choice of Obj. pronouns: the coordinate clause gets the unstressed anaphoric pronoun μιν, while the independent clause gets the stressed anaphoric pronoun τὸν.

6.2.3.3 Subtypes for προσηύδα Type 2 Constructions

Type 2 and its subtypes seem eerily stable as well. Here, προσηύδα sits line-medially, and can be followed by either a Subj. or Obj.NP, or by an instrumental.

αὐτὰρ ὃ μειλιχίοισι προσηύδα ποιμένα λαῶν· (*Il.* 6.214)

‘But he spoke kindly, the shepherd of men’

τὸν δ’ Ἑλένη μύθοισι προσηύδα μειλιχίοισι· (*Il.* 6.214)

‘to him Helene replied with kind words’

αὐτίκα δ’ Ἀλκιμέδοντα προσηύδα πιστὸν ἑταῖρον· (*Il.* 17.500)

‘immediately he said to Alkimedon, his faithful companion’

Table 6.9 προσηύδα type 2

	προσηύδα + Subj.NP	προσηύδα + Obj.NP	προσηύδα + Dat.NP
Iliad	11	2	3
Odyssey	7	3	3

Type 2 is the only construction seen so far to work with a noun-epithet formula that fits in the bucolic slot. The Subj.NP type encompasses a line used repeatedly for Here, which follows the common template (addressee, participle, V, Subj.NP):

Τὴν δὲ δολοφρονέουσα προσηύδα πότνια Ἥρη· (*Il.* 14.300, 14.329, and 19.106)

'And to her, planning deceit, spoke lady Here'

Compare the syntactically identical προσέφη construction, using a longer noun-epithet formula for Here:

Τὸν δὲ χολωσαμένη προσέφη λευκώλενος Ἥρη· (*Il.* 24.55)

'And to him, angrily, spoke white-armed Here'

This seems once again to suggest a paradigmatic link betweeh προσηύδα (this time, construction type 2) and προσέφη: in this case, the choice of the predicative participle determines which verb the poet will pick. This link seems already well established in the *Iliad*, and remains active in the *Odyssey*.

6.2.4 Analysis of the Results

The main observation that we should gather from this short study is that, during the same chronological interval (i.e. the time that separates the textualization of the *Iliad* from the textualization of the *Odyssey*), different constructions within the technique may move at different speeds; this speed depends largely on their life cycles (fossilized constructions will have a more stable behavior than innovative ones), but also (and this is more challenging to model) on the changing productivity of constructions that they are related to.

In general, we would predict that constructions in phases 1-2 of their life cycles should expand and change more quickly than constructions in phases 3-4. During phases 1-2, we also expect constructions to be embedded in larger networks, which may impact their productivity in a positive or negative way.

In our study, προσέειπε presents a complex picture, where the oldest construction (type 1) shows a loss of type frequency in the *Odyssey* (despite an increase in token frequency); this is the signal of a construction in transition from phase 3 to 4, and eventually on the road to replacement. Type 2, on the other hand, shows an explosion of usage in the *Odyssey*, though mostly related to a single subtype, which is to be connected with the general success of the "ἀμειβ- network". In the *Iliad*, this network is conspicuously limited to a few hundred verses in book 3, and just one verse in book 23.

Προσέφη, already exhibiting a dearth of types in the *Iliad*, shows a further narrowing of subtypes in the *Odyssey*, even as its overall token count remains stable. This seems to be another construction type on its way to replacement (phases 3-4).

Finally, προσηύδα gives an eerily stable picture, where both types and token frequencies are virtually identical in the poems. This is a construction that is already in phase 4 of its life cycle, and, as far as we know, may remain there for a while. As illustrated above, both of the προσηύδα construction types appear to entertain a paradigmatic relationship with προσέφη constructions. It is possible that this paradigmatic relationship will contribute to keeping all three construction types alive for longer, despite their low productivity overall.

6.3 Approaches to the Evolution of Epic Language

The observations above tie into a number of wider methodological questions about the study of the evolution of Greek epic language, which we are going to address in the remainder of this chapter.

The first question is also the widest in scope: is it really adequate to consider the language of the *Odyssey* as a diachronic variant of the language of the *Iliad*? For the study above, we have tacitly considered the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as different chronological exponents of the same L-Language. This choice is not unjustified, but it may represent a radical

simplification of the facts, or, at least, it may imply a rather loose definition of what we mean by "L-Language". Are we thinking about an L-language that encompasses all archaic Greek epic, regardless of geographical area and content matter? Is this the same L-language as metrical inscriptions and all of the Homeric Hymns, and Hesiod? Or should we be operating with a set of narrower L-languages, and then proceed with the analytic tools of language contact studies?

As one compares constructional usages beyond Homer, it is clear that the shared constructional feautures between different epic texts would take the form of a complex network, and there is no certainty that those features would easily cluster into a number of discrete "epic" dialects. Indeed, mapping the shared constructional network between Archaic Greek epic texts would be a worthwhile enterprise (which nowadays could be undertaken computationally), and a necessary step in determining exactly (a) if it makes sense to talk about such a thing as an L-Language of Greek epic, and (b) what some meaningful subdivisions would be, and whether they are more sensitive to geography or to content-matter; finally, it would be possible to investigate how exactly chronology cuts across all of these variables, and how textualization may have impacted our data. This is a project for another day, but the shortcomings of previous approaches to the diachrony of Greek epic, as well as the complexities in constructional change explored in this chapter, should serve to highlight its

urgency.

The study of the evolution of Greek epic diction has a long history, and a large portion of it has been oriented towards reconstructing the prehistory of the technique;[91] a lot of this work has taken the shape of arranging what appears in the poems as synchronic variants and along a single diachronic axis, in the form of a number of phases, which are typically dialectal in nature.[92] In a way, this view takes the ancient narrative about Homer traveling across the Greek world and picking up a number of different dialects along the way (as in the *Vitae Homericae*), and turns it into a narrative about the epic tradition doing the same (of course, this can be cast in more or less sophisticated terms).

Rather than a hypothetical prehistory, our current enterprise is concerned with the development of the epic techinque within the bounds of the texts as we have them. Our study, however, can shed new light on two previous approaches to the diachrony of the L-Language of epic. In the first case (Janko's statistical approach to the diachrony of the technique), we can offer a critique. In the second (Hoekstra's study on Homeric modifications to formulaic prototypes), we can offer a different interpretation of the results.

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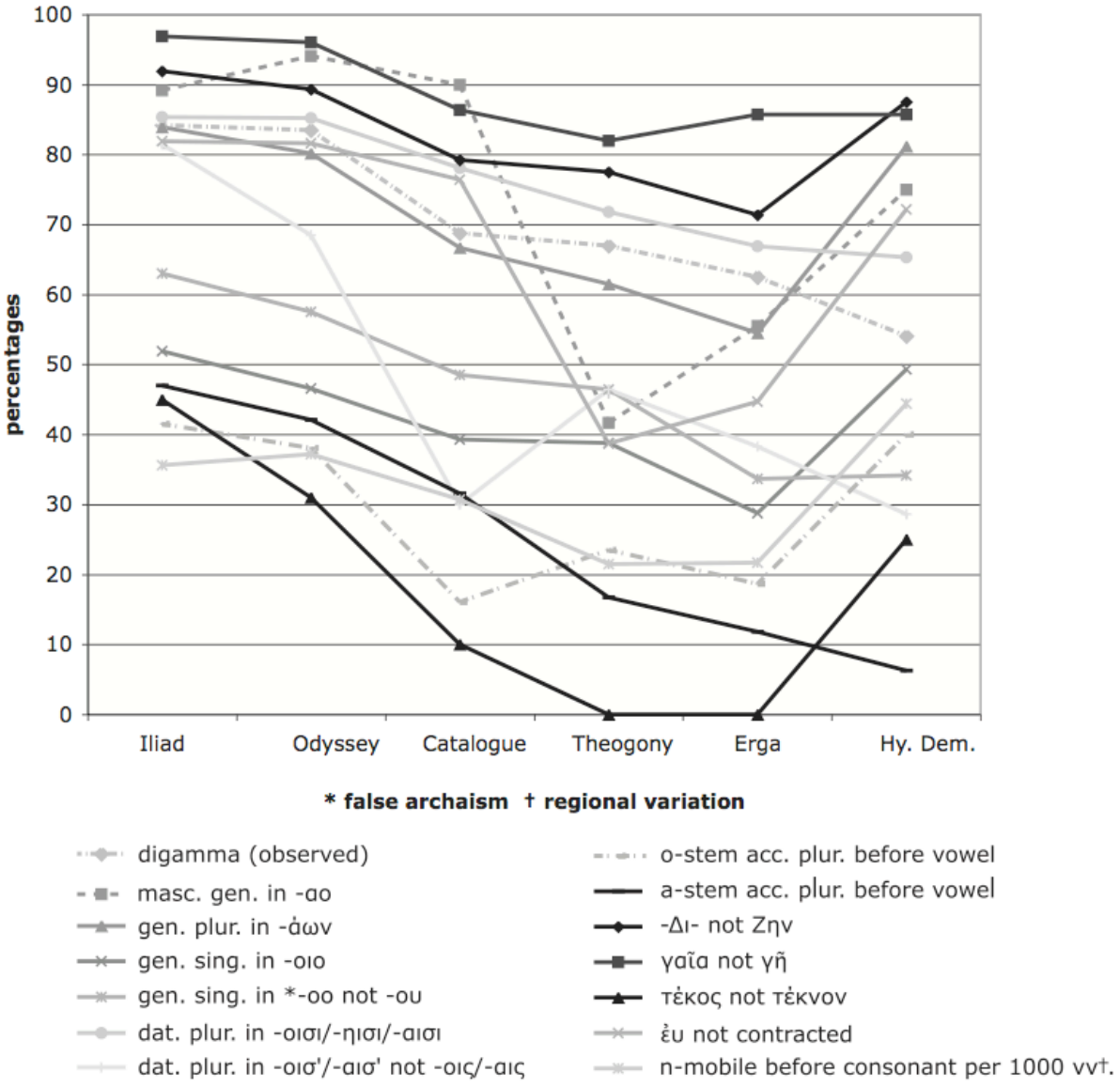
[91] There are a number of good surveys of this topic: see recently Horrocks 1997, Passa 2008, Hackstein 2010; Palmer 1962 is still perhaps the most thorough overview.

[92] Extreme cases of this are the attempts at "taking Homer back in time," whether by making the text fully Aeolic (see the infamous Fick edition), or by restoring entire sections to a supposedly older version of the hexameter (Tichy 2010, see also the review by West 2011).

6.3.1 Janko and How to Measure Linguistic Change in Greek Epic

In his 1977 dissertation, Richard Janko carried out a statistical study of a small number of morphological and phonological features across archaic Greek epic texts; his goal was to use the statistical data to compile a relative chronology of such texts based on "how far along" those texts were in their usage of those features. The way to establish such a chronology was first to verify which two texts were farthest away from each other in terms of the morphophonological features under study, and then to arrange the remaining texts along a scale between the two extremes; chronological values were then supplied to the points in the scale. The statistics are summed up visually in fig. 6.1 (from Janko 2012:28).

Figure 6.1. Dimishing Archaisms in Epic Diction (from Janko 2012:28)



This last step, naturally, is problematic, because it converts linguistic distance into chronological distance. For one thing, this is a blunt instrument, since it has to assume a regular rate of change for linguistic phenomena, which is trivially untrue. One could call this

the "we are losing four digammas every hour" approach.[93]

The most remarkable conclusion of Janko's research is his newfound unitarian faith ("my results turned me to a unitarian position", Janko 2012:25-6), in the very oldest sense of the word: he agrees that little enough has changed between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (at least from the point of view of his measures) that it is conceivable, as the author of the *Sublime* proposed, that they both be the work of a single author at different points in his life. This particular conclusion is at the very least premature, for we really have no idea of how much the language of one individual is supposed to change during their lifetime;[94] at the current stage of research, drawing a line is a matter of personal judgment.

But there are two vaster methodological objections to Janko's enterprise, which have to do with (a) the nature of the items he is counting, and (b) the type of count that he is relying on. These choices both tend to obscure the amount of linguistic change that has actually taken place between the individual poems, and explain why, as opposed to Janko's assessment, we have in fact found ample difference in the usage of constructions between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

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[93] This is similar to saying that, statistically, 365 Americans die of indigestion every year, which makes on average one death per day, and expecting to use this figure to claim that exactly seven Americans have died of indigestion since last week – when it may very well turn out that 200 out of 365 die of indigestion around the winter holidays, and at no other time in the year.

[94] As mentioned in 5.1, fn. 52, so far we only have studies on the phonology of Queen Elizabeth II. This is hardly helpful for establishing how much the I-language of a poet may change during a lifetime.

The first issue concerns the kinds of features that Janko has picked for his analysis. His selection of features reflects areas of the language (morphology and phonology) where change can be exceedingly slow, and harder to observe incrementally. As we can observe in the history of other IE languages, morphology and phonology can be remarkably stable across centuries; moreover, with phonology, spelling conventions can systematically mask changes, or delay their appearance. The reason we found substantial differences between the two poems is that we concentrated on syntactic constructions, and we picked particular usages of lexical items (i.e., what kinds of arguments does a particular verb take) rather than general properties of the language (i.e., what is the dominant word order in a main clause).

Even when looking at general properties of the language, some of the most reliable differences between Mycenaean and Homeric Greek are syntactic in nature, such as the usage of conjunctions (see Hackstein 2010:403 with references). Syntactic changes also are less likely to be masked by the textualization and written transmission process. Similarly, between Homer and archaic prose, the usage of the definite article is perhaps the most noticeable linguistic change.[95] In sum, syntactic constructions provide a much finer instrument to detect linguistic change, especially when we stop looking at formulaic phenomena as stylistic choices,

[95] The usage of the article in Homer itself is a fascinating topic, which deserves a closer study (in this direction, see Guardiano 2003 and 2014); what we seem to be witnessing is a lexical-diffusion scenario where the article is limited to a handful of lexical items, like ὁ γέρων 'the old man'; similar limitations seem to hold in lyric poetry as well (see Hummel 1993).

but as belonging to the realm of linguistic productivity.

The second issue with Janko's study is the nature of the count he performed: he kept track of tokens, not types. This procedure can be very misleading, because it does not show whether the productivity of a given process is changing. To use a morphological example, the sheer token frequency of root aorists in Greek may remain stable across the centuries, but this observation obscures the fact that much more changes in the way the aorist is handled. For instance, Janko counts how many genitives in -οιο appear in a text as opposed to genitives in -οο. But to which stems are those genitives formed? And does the number of stems using a given genitive change between one text and another, even when the token count remains constant? To take one example from above, while the token count for προσέφη constructions between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is similar, there has been a significant drop in types in the *Odyssey*, indicating that the construction itself is on the way to fossilization (and eventual replacement). These changes in type frequency afford a more precise measure of language change than simple token counts, which give accurate measures only in the very long run.

6.3.2 Hoekstra, Formulaic Modifications, and the "Decomposition" of the Technique

Finally, we can address another important contribution to the study of Homeric language, and

recast it in the light of discussion of the productivity of constructions. In his 1964 work, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes*, Hoekstra set out to measure how much recent phonological changes (quantitative metathesis, loss of digamma, insertion of moveable -ν) were reflected in formulaic areas of the technique (how much they resulted in modifications of formulaic prototypes). He concluded that most formulas did not reflect these recent developments, which are otherwise visible in areas that show formulaic modification; he took this distribution as an indication that the technique of oral composition underwent *decomposition* (i.e., decay) soon after those changes were introduced. I find two issues with Hoekstra's analysis: (a) the expectation of the rate of innovative vs. conservative processes in a language, and (b) the concept of decomposition itself.

First, with respect to the number of tokens, conservative and unproductive processes can still account for a great portion of a given language. Language change first happens at the margins, and quite slowly: most of what makes up language competence is, relatively speaking, fairly old. New features take a while to spread, and we can imagine that this general condition is exacerbated in a medium that actively treasured archaism. This is mostly because speakers rely on storage for all of their most frequent needs, and on processing (thus rules) for the rare and unexpected (see figure 5.1, concerning "holistic" vs. "analytic" processing for adult speakers). We can make this point concrete with a small morphological case study. Root aorists

probably ceased to be productive some time in PIE, and thematic aorists exhibit only a low degree of productivity. In Homer, root and thematic aorists still represent all of the 13-most frequent aorist stems in the poems (the first ranked, ἦλθον, has 581 tokens). In the list of most frequent aorist stems, the first sigmatic aorist (a category that started being productive in late PIE, and is still expanding) is at rank 14, with a comparatively modest 164 tokens:[96] the rate at which token frequency reflects language change is glacial. It is then not surprising that, token-wise, we do not find that many formulaic expressions in Homer that incorporate the latest morphological and phonological innovations of some dialects of 1st millennium Greek.

The second issue concerns the idea of *decomposition* and decay of the technique, and ultimately has to do with the concept of *modification* of formulas. Since Parry (MHV:197-202), scholars have talked about fixed formulas and formulaic expressions that are similar to them. Thus, a formula is the genitive noun phrase μερόπων ἀνθρώπων# (*Il.* 1.250, 3.402, 9.340, 11.28, 18.342. 18.490, 20.217; *Od.* 20.49, 20.132), while a formulaic expression is its nominative counterpart μέροπες ἄνθροποι# (*Il.* 18.288) (with irregular scansion explained by analogy with the formula in the genitive).[97] The usual analysis is that the formula is traditional, while the formulaic expression (or the modification of the formula) is generated on the spot – and can

[96] Data from Ryan Sandell, personal communication.

[97] Note that this construction also has a dative plural, μερόπεσσι βροτοῖσιν# (*Il.* 2.285).

thus show a number of irregularities and (this is Hoekstra's contribution) can be a locus of linguistic innovation. This analysis is correct, but should be qualified: not all formulas are modifiable, and modification (thus the existence of formulaic expressions) should not be taken as a sign of "decay" in the technique (the incorrect assumption here being that a truly traditional poet will rely on straight formulas for the most part, while a less traditional one will merely modify the few formulas he has learned).

If a speaker has acquired a construction as truly fixed and fossilized (low type frequency, high token frequency), he is very unlikely to treat it as modifiable, and derive new expressions from it. This is the reason why, for the most part, in grammars, old and irregular patterns fail to spread at the expense of new and regular ones, despite their higher token frequency. In concrete terms, this is the reason why the oldest formula for Here, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη (note that also the prosody indicates its antiquity), does not inflect, while the newer one, θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη, does. Once again, this is the reason why προσέφη loses types instead of gaining new ones (i.e., becomes less modifiable) between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Modificability is a property of a lively construction. This does not prevent high-frequency members of a constructional paradigm from being linguistically more conservative than the less frequent members, because high token frequency members of a paradigm are

stored rather than generated.[98] This also does not prevent analogical pressures from holding between members of a paradigm (since Witte, Homer's predilection for keeping paradigms isometrical is famous), and thus does not prevent us from using formulaic paradigms to explain irregularities in the diction. But we should not assume that a poet will go ahead and "modify" just any formula that he has acquired. Rather, the poet will have a sense that some formulas (the ones in phase 2 of their life cycle) still have paradigms and can be "modified," while he will know that phase 4 formulas can only be used in their fixed form. That is to say, if the poet receives no evidence for modificability, he is very unlikely to introduce a newly modified form.

Thus, the fact that some very frequent formulas in Homer show modifications (i.e., other members of the same constructional paradigm) that reflect recent linguistic innovations is a testament to the vitality of the system – quite the opposite of decomposition.

[98] For a psycholinguistic introduction to morphological processing, see Baayen 1989, Chapter 7. See also the classic paper of Hasher and Zacks 1984 on token frequency effects.

7

Constructions and the Study of Homeric Discourse

7.1 The Study of Discourse

In Chapter 4, I suggested that we can study the function of constructions along three axes: semantic function, syntactic function, and discourse function. While the first two elements have received some attention in the previous chapters, it is now time to explore the third element, in some of its many ramifications.

The study of Homeric discourse (units of language that go beyond the sentence) is a rather young field, but one that has already made substantial contributions to our understanding of the poems. Foundational work has been done by Bakker (summarized in Bakker 1997), who has applied some of the basic principles of Chafe-style discourse analysis to the study of our texts. In what follows, I will summarize some of these principles, while

preparing for the analysis of two crucial and yet still relatively unexplored area of Homeric discourse: the management of discourse referents, and Homeric word order.

Because of the many new concepts that need to be introduced, the first two sections of this chapter are theoretical in nature; the analysis of the Homeric data starts in section 7.3.

7.1.1 Consciousness and Speech

One of the principles of Chafe-style discourse analysis is that oral language production closely mirrors the flow of consciousness, and thus affords one of the most direct ways for us to study its properties. Basic (and stable) properties of consciousness (adapted from Chafe 1994:28-30) are as follows:

1. consciousness proceeds in short bursts (is dynamic)
2. it has a center (a *focus*),
3. which is embedded in a *periphery*, which provides orientation (context).

Vision illustrates these properties quite clearly; here, our eyes move in quick bursts (*saccades*), which rapidly shift the focus of our perception (in physical terms, saccades re-orient the *fovea*, which is the portion of our retina capable of highest resolution). In our subjective experience, these short bursts are seamlessly integrated in an illusory continuity, and thus we believe that

we are experiencing everything in our visual field at the same time, and in a similar resolution. In fact, we are blind to change that happens in the periphery of our attention (cf. Simons et al. 1997, Becker and Pashler 2002). This periphery is nonetheless important for grounding and orienting our perception, much like a map would: without a notion of the periphery, our eyes would not know how each focus fits within the general picture.

These basic properties of consciousness translate rather straighforwardly in the processing of spoken discourse (terminology from Chafe 1994). Speech too procedes in short bursts (*intonation units*), which verbalize a single focus of consciousness at a time (*idea unit*), which is normally embedded in a larger context (*discourse topic*) providing grounding for our perception. When experiencing speech, we mostly don't notice these minor subdivisions, but we seamlessly reconstruct meaning from the stream of language.

Within each language, these basic properties of consciousness are accommodated by specific grammatical strategies. Many of these accommodation strategies will be cross-linguistically similar, in that they are functional adaptations to the same cognitive environment (the human mind) which support the same behavior (linguistic communication). In each natural language, we should then find the following:

1. structures that mirror the limitedness of consciousness, and
2. grammatical strategies that are dedicated to bridging such limitations, making

complex communication possible.

7.1.2 A Short Spoken Narrative

In the tradition of Chafe-style discourse analysis (which deals with oral narratives, so applies particularly well, *mutatis mutandis*, to Homer), we shall now use a short oral narrative (a *pear story*[99]) to illustrate the points made so far and illustrate some further concepts; this particular story was recorded by a UCLA undergraduate student, Jason Pan, in the Spring of 2013.

a. there was A FARMER,[100]
b. (.1) who was picking
c. (.3) PEARS.
d. (.3) he put the pears into the basket,
e. .. and then he went up into the tree,
f. (.6) but then A KID came along,
g. (.4) and he took'em.
h. (.88) the kid put'em on his BIKE
i. which was also probably stolen,
j. (.6) and he was RIDING down -
k. (.4) a path -
l. .. and then

[99] A *pear story* is a short oral narrative obtained by showing subjects a 6-minute video (the *pear film*, realized at UC Berkeley in 1975) featuring a boy stealing pears, and then asking the subjects to recount what they saw. Through the years, pear stories have been collected for a number of different languages (see http://pearstories.org/ for the Chinese pear stories). The standard reference is Chafe 1980.

[100] Notational conventions: each line is an *intonation unit*. A falling intonation (suggesting closure) at the end of a unit is marked by a period. A rising intonation (suggesting continuation) by a comma. A flat intonation (also suggesting continuation) by a dash. The numbers in parenthesis at the beginning of each line are the duration of the pause that preceded it, in seconds. Short pauses, of the duration of less than 0.1 seconds, are marked with two periods. CAPITALIZED words carried sentential stress (i.e. they were noticeably louder than their surrounding context).

m. (1.17) he went to,
n. (.6) past a girl
o. (.46) he was checking her out -
p. (.1) but WHILE checking her out
q. (.69) he HIT a rock
r. (.22) and
s. (.63) fell over.
t. (.72) and then he CRIED.
u. (.66) uh no he didn't really cry.
v. (.39) [laughs] and
w. (.6) mmm
x. (.57) then then some KIDS came along
y. and helped him back up,
z. they picked up his PEARS.
aa. (.5) for him(?) the pears had fallen over,
bb. (.84) mm
cc. (.16) cause he fell over
dd. (.45) and then the kids kept walking along the way,
ee. (.13) the kid went off into the DISTANCE.
ff. .. and then at the VERY end,
gg. (.9) the KIDS
hh. (1.44) passed by the,
ii. (1.38) farmer,
jj. (.18) again
kk. and the farmer sees them.
ll. (.21) with the pears.
mm. (1.101) and he
nn. (.53) and that's where it ends.

First, the narrative is segmented in individual bursts of speech or *intonation units*. There are several criteria for segmenting a stream of speech into intonation units; the most obvious are pauses and intonational contour, but changes in voice quality and pace of delivery also play a

role (Chafe 1994:69).

Descriptively, intonation units tend to last 2-3 seconds, and contain a number of syllables that spans from 5-10 (Fenk-Oczlon and Fenk 2002:223), depending on the individual language and its features: the number of syllables seems to be inversely proportional to their phonological complexity (thus Japanese, with CV, has the most syllables per intonation unit among the languages considered by Fenk-Oczlon and Fenk 2002). A duration of 2-3 seconds corresponds to measures of working memory (and especially the *phonological loop* component, see Baddeley et al. 2009:44-9), and even to more general measures of human motor activity (*action units*) (Fenk-Oczlon and Fenk 2002:221). With these units, Chafe believes that we are looking at the psychological measure of 'now', and the capacity of consciousness.

With respect to Homer, Bakker (1997:50-1) has shown how we can normally recover either two or three intonation units in each line of Homer, following metrical, syntactic, and phonological cues.

Each intonation unit reflects a small package of information that the speaker is trying to communicate to his audience at one time; Chafe labels this package an *idea unit*. The content of each information package is variable, but constrained in terms of its maximum informational weight, which can't outstrip the capacity of consciousness of both the speaker and the audience; at all times, an attentive speaker will try to match the content of his working

memory with the presumed contents of the audience's working memory. Syntactically, the most complex intonation units tend to correspond to entire sentences (e.g. d, h, x), the simplest to single words (e.g. c, hh). In between, several intonation units correspond to syntactic constituents (e.g. k, n).

7.1.3 Informational Weight and the Size of Intonation Units

The different syntactic size of intonation units is predicated on their informational weight, i.e. how hard they are to process. At the beginning of the story, it took our speaker three intonation units to introduce the idea of the farmer (a), the action of picking (b), and the pears (b). These were all new ideas, so it took time to load them into working memory. Once introduced, however, ideas become easier to process, and thus lighter, and easier to fit in packages. In (d), our speaker managed to fit in a single intonation unit a complete sentence featuring the farmer, the pears, and the action of putting the pears in a basket. Since effectively only the action of putting the pears in the basket was new, the informational load was small enough for a single intonation unit.

7.1.3.1 The One-new Idea Constraint, Aperiodic Style, and the Surface Realization of Referents

In terms of informational load, ideas that are not already in working memory (*inactive* ideas) are heavier than ideas that are already present therein (*active*); in this regard, Chafe talks about the *activation cost* of each idea as determining its informational weight: inactive ideas are 'heavy', active ideas are 'light'.

Chafe talks about a one new idea constraint (Chafe 1994:108-19), which is the tendency of speakers to convey at most one new idea per intonation unit, so as to keep the informational weight of each package manageable. In spoken narratives, this desire to limit informational weight often results in a preference for short, self-contained clauses connected by coordination rather than subordination, which is analogous to Homer's *aperiodic* style (Bakker 1997:36-44, Devine and Stevens 1999:204-9).

Ideas that are not already in working memory (inactive ideas) differ in how accessible they are (to both the speaker and the audience: an attentive speaker will try to adjust to what he assumes is accessible to the audience, and not just himself). Ideas that are more identifiable are more accessible, and, for NPs, this is marked grammatically by definiteness. In English, brand new referents must be realized as indefinite NPs (*a farmer*); once an idea is familiar to the audience (whether it is active in working memory or stored in long-term memory), it can

be realized as a definite NP (*the farmer*). Ideas that are already in working memory are accessible (thus definite) by definition.[101]

Within ideas that are active in working memory, some are more *salient* than others: this is to say that the level of activation of each idea is variable. Among referents, the most active ones will be eligible for pronominal anaphora or ellipsis (depending on the morpho-syntactic type of the language). This reflects a general principle of communication, iconicity (Givón 1985), whereby informational weight tends to be isomorphic to phonetic weight.[102] This phenomenon is, of course, limited by the concern with perspicuity, and the desire to avoid ambiguity in communication.

Finally, the activation of ideas is only temporary, if not continuously sustained: that is to say that an idea, after it had been introduced into working memory, can gradually slip out of it, or be displaced by other more salient ideas, unless it is continually or periodically used.

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[101] In our pear story above, intonation unit (d), we can see a particular case with 'the basket', in which definiteness of a referent does not result from previous mention in the discourse, but from the speaker's assumption (correct or not) that a referent (in this case, the basket) would be available to the audience because of the mention of the action of picking pears. This contextual availability of referents has been variously studied. It is the same phenomenon as:

> We went to eat a pizza, and the waiter was rude.

Where the idea of waiter is made available (thus definite) by the general *frame* (Minsky 1974) of 'going to the restaurant'.

[102] This is also the principle that drives phonetic compression in grammaticalization, whereby a linguistic segment that is highly frequent and thus highly predictable is likely to be phonetically reduced. A nice illustration of this is the different timing of supposedly homophonous Engl. *thyme* and *time*, where the second one is always shorter than the first (Gahl 2008).

7.1.4 Focus Strategies

We have now accounted for much of the segmentation present in our narrative, by pointing out that limits on informational weight demand that the discourse be broken up into a series of small units. We still have to account for why, within intonation units, some words receive sentential stress and some do not.

Intuitively, the assignment of sentential stress is really about the speaker guiding the audience's attention to what is most relevant in a sentence or in an intonation unit. We can think of sentential stress in English as a foregrounding strategy, which calls attention to the most salient information in the clause. In units (a) and (c), note how both the farmer and the pears bear sentential stress, alerting the audience to their importance in the subsequent narrative. We can call this a *focus strategy*.

As we've mentioned in 4.2.3, languages can have different kinds of focus strategies, involving prosody, morphology, syntax, or a combination thereof. In Greek, focus strategies mostly involve marked word order patterns, with the focused element surfacing to the left of its unmarked position. While it is likely that focus strategies in Greek also involved prosodic marking, traces of these are harder to detect (though see discussion in Devine and Stephens 1994:479-80).

A general distinction among types of foci, which will be useful for the study of Greek, is

that between *Narrow Focus* (N.Foc) and *Broad Focus* (B.Foc). A common way of testing for focus is by using questions and replies – as a general rule, the replies will present the requested information under focus (see Erteschik-Shir 2007:27-30).[103] While broad focus takes scope over the predicate and one (or more) of its arguments, Narrow focus takes scope over a single constituent.

(1) What did John do?

He [ATE A CAMEL]$_{B.Foc}$

(2) What did John eat?

He ate [A CAMEL]$_{N.Foc}$

In Greek, focus processes not only take scope over constituents as a whole, but over individual words within constituents as well. Classical Greek marks this kind of focus by "extracting" the focused element (this is most often an adjective in an NP) from its constituent, and fronting it. This results in a discontinuous constituent (such as 4).

(3) The many ships

(4) MANY the ships

This phenomenon is part of what ancient grammarians called *hyperbaton*, and has been

[103] There is in fact a comprehensive approach to information structure in discourse, the Question Under Discussion (QUD) framework (Roberts 1996), that capitalizes on this strategy, and holds that any discourse can be analyzed as a series of questions and answers. For a recent application to Greek prose, see Recht 2014.

studied dy Devine and Stevens (1999: chapter 2), who call this Y_1 *hyperbaton*.

7.1.5 Topic Strategies

Everything that is foregrounded (thus focused) is only so against some kind of background. We have seen that consciousness has a center and a periphery, and that the role of the periphery is to provide context and orientation for our perception.

Likewise, for linguistic communication to be efficient, every new piece of information should be added to some background information that is already active in our working memory, and can work as an organizing principle. The general linguistic term for such active (known, presupposed) information that provides anchoring for newer information is *Topic*.

Languages have a number of *topic strategies*; a very common one is to organize the new information as a series of statements *about* one (or more) discourse referents that are active. This is like selecting some prominent objects in a scene and using them as viewpoints for the action. We can label these referents *discourse topics*.[104] In Centering Theory (Grosz et al. 1995), they are called *centers*, because they also provide the point of view for narration.

In our pear story, we can see how the entire discourse is organized as statements that

[104] Note that this is not the same as Chafe's definition of *discourse topic*s as "aggregates of semi-active information that segment a conversation into larger chunks than intonation units" (1994:135).

are either about *the farmer*, *the boy*, or *the boys*. In general, languages seem to prefer discourse topics that are high on the animacy hierarchy, probably because these are more apt to provide a volitional and deictic center for the action. In our case, while the pears themselves could have functioned as a unified topic running through the entire story (they are the only item appearing in every scene), our narrator decided to use the human characters as organizing devices (note that this is also the option that requires the least marked syntax in English, since centering on the pears would have entailed a lot of passive constructions).

In English (and other IE languages), discourse topics are realized mostly as grammatical subjects, that is, either as Agents of transitive verbs (A) or Subjects of intransitive verbs (S). It is worth keeping in mind, however, that topichood and subjecthood are distinct categories (see Li and Thompson 1976, who developed the typological distinction between subject-prominent and topic-prominent languages, as well as languages that are both or neither). Li and Thompson hold that subjects are "grammaticalized" topics (Li and Thompson 1976:484), i.e. topics that have been integrated in the argument structure of the verb.

Even in English, however, not all topics have to be subjects (or even *Discourse Topics*):

(5) As for the party, Clara decided not to go.

(6) As for running, we now go every other day.

7.1.5.1 Switch Topics and Continued Topics

Discourse topics come in two flavors: *Continued Topics* (Con.Tops) and *Switch Topics* (S.Tops). These two kinds differ substantially in their informational content, and this difference is often mirrored in their surface realization, which is kept distinct in many languages.[105]

Con.Tops are topics that are unchanged from the previous discourse unit: they are predictable or inferrable information. As such, continued topics are pronominalized or gapped as often as possible (as in 8 below), though they can be realized as NPs for purposes of disambiguation; when realized as NPs, continued topics can either appear in their neutral grammatical position within the clause (as in 9) or, in some languages, in right-detached position, outside the clause, as in example (10) below.[106]

(7) [She]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$ called me the other day.

(8) [Clara]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$ called me the other day.

(9) [She]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$ called me the other day, [Clara]$_{\text{Cont.Top}}$.

S.Tops, on the other hand, signal that the topic has changed from the previous clause,

[105] A classic study that clarified this difference is Vallduví's (1992:109-10) account of Catalan (see discussion in Erteshik-Shir 2007:10-13), where he demonstrated that Con.Tops and S.Tops differ in both their prosodic properties and in their linear ordering possibilities. In Catalan, while S.Tops (which he calls Links) appear in left-detached position, Con.Tops (which he calls Tails), appear in right-detached position.

[106] Since Catalan is a pro drop language, examples (8) and (10) will look different from English, in that the first Con.Top will not be realized on the surface. Sentence (9), Vallduví would argue, would occur only if 'Clara' was a S.Top.

and thus must obligatorily be expressed (normally as a NP, but also as a stress-bearing pronoun). Only S.Tops can bear sentential STRESS (which has been taken as an indication that they are part topic, part focus; see Erteshik-Shir 2007:41).

(10) [CLARA]$_{S.Top}$ called me the other day.

(11) [Clara]$_{Con.Top}$ called me the other day.

In English, S.Tops can either appear in their neutral grammatical position within the clause or in a left-detached position. They do not, as a rule, appear in a right-detached position the way continuous topics can (this generalization seems to hold typologically).

In section 7.4.1, I will introduce two further kinds of S.Tops: *Exclusive Contrastive Topics* (EC.Tops), and *Frame Setting Topics* (FS.Tops); this terminology comes from Matić's 2003 treatment of information structure in Classical Greek prose, and will be useful for our analysis of constituent order in Homer.

It is important to point out that there is not a simple relation between focus and new information and topic and old information. Information in a clause can be old or new; among this information, strategies for marking topic and focus signal to the audience which piece of information should be taken as a starting point (topic), and which should be taken as most relevant (focus). Contrast can apply to both, yielding contrastive topic as well as contrastive foci.

(12) Contrastive Topic: [Cats]$_{C.Top}$ I like, [dogs]$_{C.Top}$ I don't like.

(13) Contrastive Focus: It was [JOHN]$_{C.Foc}$ who broke the bowl, not the cat.

Finally, we should mention a strategy called *pragmatic accommodation* whereby I stipulate to my audience that a new piece of information will act as Topic, even if it is not familiar or accessible to them. If I did not know who Akhilleus was, I would need to use pragmatic accommodation to process:

(14) [Akhilleus]$_{S.Top}$ was sad.

Without pragmatic accommodation, a speaker will introduce a new piece of information as Focus, before establishing it as Topic:

(15) There was [a man]$_{N.Foc}$ called Akhilleus; [he]$_{C.Top}$ was sad.

7.2 Discourse Topics and Referential Chains

7.2.1 Referential Chains

We can study discourse topics more closely by talking about *referential chains* and their properties. Referential chains are described by a number of theories, and they are a largely uncontroversial object of discourse studies.[107]

[107] A landmark study on referential chains (collecting studies on the realization of discourse referents in a number of different languages) is Givón 1983. The topic is also treated under the rubric of *discourse cohesion* within the

A referential chain is the sum of all the consecutive mentions of one and the same referent (i.e., discourse topic) in the course of a discourse. Each mention of the referent is a link in the chain. A chain continues as long as the referent is *active*, and is broken once the referent leaves working memory. The first link in a chain, which installs its referent in the working memory, is called its head.

Once a referent is established in working memory, its linguistic realization in each subsequent clause tends to become "more compressed": while the head of a chain is most often a NP, subsequent links tend to be pronominal or gapped, at least if there is no risk for ambiguity. In discourse, several chains can be active at a same time, though processing limits apply.

In our story, we can observe some typical anaphoric behavior in the referential chain for 'farmer'. The referent, which is new and non-identifiable, is first introduced with an indefinite NP in (a), bearing focus, and taking up an entire intonation unit; it is then resumed pronominally (mirroring its state as a discourse topic) as long as is it remains within the center of attention (b-d-e).

In (hh-ii), when too much time has passed since the farmer's last mention (and several other referents have intervened), our referent has to be introduced again using a full NP –

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discipline of Text Linguistics (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981), as well as in Centering Theory (Grosz et al. 1995).

which this time is definite, since the referent is deemed identifiable. Despite this identifiability, it took our speaker 1.38 seconds to verbalize the word 'farmer' in unit (ii) after uttering the word 'the' in unit (hh), suggesting that he had to retrieve the referent from long-term memory, and that the activation cost was high.

Table 7.1 Referential Chains for 'farmer'

	Farmer	
head	a FARMER (a)	focus
2	who (b)	con.top
3	he (d)	con.top
4	he (e)	con.top
5	by the ... farmer (hh-ii)	con.top
6	the farmer (kk)	s.top
7	he (mm)	con.top

After being re-introduced in a prepositional clause in (ii), the farmer needs to be re-established as a main discourse topic in (kk). Only now can it be active enough to undergo pronominalization in (mm).

This kind of demarcation (where NPs signal where a referent enters or exits the discourse) is seen in the chain for 'kid' as well. By the length and number of pronominal realizations in the chain, we can see that this is the main discourse topic for most of our story.

Table 7.2 Referential Chain for 'kid'

	Kid	
head	a KID (f)	n.foc
1	he (g)	con.top
2	the kid (h)	con.top
3	his (h)	con.top
4	he (j)	con.top
5	he (m)	con.top
6	he (o)	con.top
7	he (q)	con.top
8	ø (s)	con.top
9	he (t)	con.top
10	he (u)	con.top
11	him (y)	con.top
12	his (z)	con.top
13	he (cc)	con.top
14	**the kid** (ee)	con.top

Our referent is first realized as an indefinite NP (a KID) in (f), under N.Foc; this makes it active enough to be resumed pronominally in (g). In (h), our referent is realized again as a full NP (con.top) to establish it as the new major discourse topic for the upcoming sequence of events.[108] In (ee), after a chain of 11 uninterrupted pronominal references, our referent is realized as a full NP (con.top) as it leaves the center of our attention, and wanders off into the distance; 'the kids' are now our main discourse topic. In sum, NP realization can either promote or demote a referent, marking either the beginning or the end of a thematic unit.

[108] In Homer, it is common for discourse topics to have to be reinstatiated after a change of scene.

In section 7.3, we shall see what referential chains in Homer look like.

7.2.2 Regulating Chains: Pivot Conditions and Preferred Argument Structure

Referential chains (and thus the surface realizations of discourse topics) can be regulated in a number of ways. English, for instance, prefers its discourse topics to be realized as subjects of intransitive verbs (S) or agents of transitive verbs (A). Dixon (2012:201) calls this an *S/A pivot condition*. Because discourse topics are, by definition, informationally light, this results in English having a lot of 'light subjects' (Chafe 1994:82-92 has described this as a light subject constraint). In our pear story above, 14/23 subjects are pronominal (light), and out of the remaining 9, only 3 are new information (heavy).

Other languages, like Dyirbal (Pama–Nyungan, Queensland), prefer that their discourse topics be realized as subjects or objects (but not as agents). Dixon 2012:202 calls this an *S/O pivot condition*. When discourse topics are gapped, the difference between English and Dyirbal becomes apparent. Compare the interpretation of (17) in English and Dyirbal.

(16) The woman saw the man and [gapped topic] ran away.

a. English: The woman saw the man and (she) ran away.

b. Dyirbal: The woman saw the man and (he) ran away.

A number of valency-changing operations (like passive in English, or antipassive in Mayan K'iche') serve in fact to 'feed' pivot conditions: they allow a discourse topic to surface in the desired argument position (most often S) despite its semantic role: passives allow semantic objects (undergoers) to surface as intransitive subjects, and antipassives allow semantic agents to surface as intransitive subjects.

Beyond regulating the argument role of links in a topic chain, many languages regulate how new referents can be introduced to the discourse (that is, how the head of a referential chain is realized). In a study of Sacapultec, a Mayan language of Guatemala, Du Bois (1987) has shown that there is an overwhelming tendency to introduce new referents as either S or O. Agents always tend to be already active in the discourse (topical).

Du Bois has called this *Preferred Argument Structure* (PAS), and has proposed it as a universal tendency for spoken languages (which often holds for written languages as well). In a more recent volume (Du Bois et al. 2003), additional studies have confirmed this tendency in a number of unrelated languages. In Du Bois' analysis, PAS provides the discourse basis for ergative alignment in morphology: the absolutive case (which marks S and O) is the only case that can be used to introduce new referents to the discourse.

Rather than being some kind of discourse primitive, PAS seems to emerge from two principles that we have already observed:

1. the tendency to avoid having more than one new referent in a single sentence or Chafe's one new idea constraint (thus, in a transitive sentence, one of the arguments should be topical),
2. and the tendency for agents to be more topical than objects (mostly because agents tend to be higher in the animacy hierarchy than objects).

We can see PAS at work in our narrative as well. Let us look at the first three transitive verbs in our story: *pick* (b), *put* (d), and *take* (g):

a. there was A FARMER,
b. (.1) who was picking
c. (.3) PEARS.
d. (.3) he put the pears into the basket,
e. .. and then he went up into the tree,
f. (.6) but then A KID came along,
g. (.4) and he took'em.

Note how, in all of these cases, the referent that will serve as the agent of a transitive verb is first introduced to the discourse as the subject of an intransitive predicate.

This pattern is very common in spoken narratives. See the almost identical treatment in Mayan K'iche', where new referents are introduced with the presentational *k'oo* 'there

is/was' before they can act as agents:[109]

(17) k'oo jun ixoq, x-in-r-il-o

exist one woman PFV-3sg.B-3sg.A-see-PLAIN

'there was a woman; she saw me'

K'iche' speakers sometimes use the presentational *k'oo* to introduce a new referent even if an intransitive predicate follows:

(18) k'oo jun ak'al, x-ø-opan-ik

exist one boy, PFV-3sg.B-arrive-PLAIN

'there was a boy, he arrived'

In section 7.3.4, we will see that Homer appears, at least at a first analysis, to deviate quite strongly from PAS, in that we often have full NPs acting as agents, alongside pronominalized objects. This observation will guide us in establishing the informational status of noun-epithet formulas in speech-introduction constructions.

7.2.3 Starting a Chain: Constructions for Introducing New Referents

We have remarked above on how introducing (or re-introducing) an inactive referent to the

[109] These two examples are from two different oral narratives (the *Story of the Lost Dog*, and a *Pear Story*, respectively) recorded by Fidel Sontay at UCLA in the winter of 2014. Transcripts are in Bowler et al. 2014. I am very thankful to Fidel for sharing his language with me. For a more detailed treatment of discourse-referents and word order in K'iche', see Bozzone 2014a.

discourse can be particularly demanding from a processing perspective. For this reason, it makes sense that languages would develop routinized strategies for streamlining such tasks. In other words, we would expect to find constructions that are specialized for introducing new referents.

In the K'iche' example above, we have seen how a construction featuring the presentational *k'oo* + an indefinite NP is routinely used to introduce new referents to the discourse. Our English pear story also makes use of a fixed construction for introducing new referents. Compare units (f, g) and (x, y):

f. (.6) but then a KID came along,

g. (.4) and he took'em.

x. (.57) then then some KIDS came along

y. and helped him back up.

The construction can be written out as:

then [indefinite NP]$_{N.Foc}$ **came along**

Note how the two instantiations of the construction even share the same intonational pattern. This construction conventionally establishes the new referent as a discourse topic.

After this general overview, we now turn our attention to Homer, and see how these same features are managed in the technique. In section 7.3, we will see how discourse referents

are handled in Homer, and we will see some interesting pivot configurations in battle scenes. In section 7.4, we will tackle the vast topic of constituent order in Homer through a study of yet more battle scenes. This will lead us to establish the informational status of noun-epithet formulas in speech introduction constructions.

7.3 The Management of Homeric Referents

Bozzone 2006 was a complete study of referential chains in books 1-4 of the *Iliad*. Reviewing some of the results of that study can give us a good idea of the general properties of referential chains in Homer, before we zoom in on some specific features of their management.

7.3.1 Multiple Chains and their Rankings

In the discussion above, we mentioned that, in a given discourse, several topic chains can be active at the same time. This observation is especially true of complex narrative discourse, such as Homeric epic.[110] Here, very frequently, the narration moves between two topic chains that are highly salient, while a third chain tracks referents that are contextually available, but less salient (Bozzone 2006:40). Say, for instance, that Akhilleus (chain #1) is rebuking

[110] While drawing all of these parallels between Homer and short oral narratives, we should keep in mind that oral epic narration displays a much higher level of complexity and sophistication, one that may remind us of the properties of written narrative. Complexity and sophistication, of course, do not mean written: they mean specialization and technologization of a medium, and mastery on the part of its users.

Agamemnon (chain #2), in front of the assembly (chain #3). Or again, say that Diomedes (#1) is attacking a Trojan (#2), and his attendants (#3) are ready to strip the armor off of the victim's shoulders. Occasionally, we observe up to five topic chains active in the same stretch of discourse (say that Aias, Odysseus, and Phoenix are talking to Akhilleus in his tent, and Patroklos is there as well). In all likelihood, the maximum number of active topic chains reflects the size of working memory.[111]

The saliency ranking of referential chains can of course change in the course of the discourse: say that Odysseus (chain #1) has just finished rebuking Thersites (chain #2). If Odysseus leaves the scene, and Thersites stays, Thersites will now become the primary topic (chain #1).

In fact, there are constructions used specifically to demote a primary topic, and/or to promote a secondary one. This happens most often in discourse exchanges, where characters speak one after the other, and whatever character is currently speaking can be regarded as chain #1.

(19) Τὸν [former chain #1, just demoted to #2] δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα
ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς [new chain #1]· (*Il.* 1.148)

We will further explore the constituent order of such constructions in section 7.3.4 below.

[111] The recent consensus is that working memory can hold up to *four* chunks of information at one time (Cowan 2004). Whether this number would translate directly into a number of topic chains is hard to say.

7.3.2 The Surface Realization of Discourse Chains

To see what it means for a chain to be ranked higher or lower in saliency, we shall now observe how saliency ranking impacts surface realization. Table 7.3 below summarizes the surface realization of referential chains in *Iliad* 3.[112] Rather than listing all the individual chains separately, the table sorts them by their saliency ranking. Under 'chain #1', we see all of the data points for the surface realization of primary topics, under 'chain #2' the secondary topics, and so forth.

Table. 7.3 The Surface Realization of Topic Chains in *Iliad* 3[113]

	Chain #1	Chain #2	Chain #3	Chain #4	Chain #5
Start NP	41	22	27	10	5
NPs (copies)	7 (4.9%)	4 (3.3%)	16 (22.5%)	6 (27.2%)	2 (33.3%)
NPs (synonyms)	5 (3.5%)	7 (5.7%)	3 (4.2%)	0	0
Pronouns	66 (46.4%)	61 (50.4%)	37 (52.1%)	11 (50%)	2 (33.3%)
Ellipsis (null anaphora)	64 (45%)	49 (40.4%)	15 (21.1%)	5 (22.7%)	2 (33.3%)
Total nr. of links	142	121	71	22	6
Average length	3.4	5.5	2.6	2.2	1.2

A number of general observations are possible: while pronominal realization seems to account for about half of the links in most chains regardless, nominal realization and ellipsis

[112] The other three books investigated by Bozzone 2006 yield similar figures (see Bozzone 2006:43-8).

[113] Note that the NP realizations in each chain are sorted into *starts* (the first mention of a referent), *copies* (verbatim repetitions of the first referent, including equivalent formulas), and *synonyms* (periphrases of the first mention of the referent, such as 'the old man' standing in for 'Priam').

(null anaphora) are highly sensisive to saliency ranking, with ellipsis predominating in higher-ranked chains, and nominal realization predominating in lower-ranked ones. Beyond chains #1 and #2, nominal realization increases from around 8% to above 20%; at the same time, ellipsis sharply decreases from around 40% to around 20%.

Saliency ranking of a chain impacts its average length as well: beyond chains #1 and #2, chains become noticeably shorter (with chain #5 being most often composed of just one head and one link). A similar effect is seen in the total number of links per each rank, which steadily decreases from chain #1 onwards.

Overall, there seems to be a sharp divide between chains #1 and #2 and the remaining ones, a divide that we can tentatively map onto the cognitive difference between ideas that are at the 'center' of our working memory, and ideas that are at the 'periphery' thereof.

7.3.3 Homeric Pivots and Argument Structure: Battle Scenes

While table 7.3 does not register which argument roles chains tend to take, depending on their saliency ranking, this aspect seems to be highly regulated as well, and lends itself to a number of interesting observations.

We can see this by examining the referent handling within battle scenes. These are

three consecutive killing scenes in *Il.* 5.38-58. For each sentence, I tagged all the referents with their argument role (A, O, S, as well as D for dative and G for genitive), and color-coded them to help keep each character apart (here, we see interactions between two chararacters per scene: one is the attacker, and one is the slain).

πρῶτος δὲ **ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων (A)**
ἀρχὸν **Ἀλιζώνων Ὀδίον (O)** μέγαν ἔκβαλε δίφρου·
πρώτῳ γὰρ στρεφθέντι μεταφρένῳ ἐν δόρυ **πῆξεν (A)** *(40)*
ὤμων μεσσηγύς, διὰ δὲ στήθεσφιν **ἔλασσε (A)**,
δούπησεν (S) δὲ πεσών, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' **αὐτῷ (D).**

'And first Agamemnon, lord of men,
hurled tall Odios, lord of the Halizones, from his chariot.
He (Agamemnon) stuck the spear in the middle of his shoulders, as he (Odios) was turning his back,
and pushed it through his chest.
He (Odios) made a thud as he fell, and his armor clattered upon him.'

Ἰδομενεὺς (A) δ' ἄρα **Φαῖστον (O)** ἐνήρατο Μήονος υἱὸν
Βώρου, **ὃς (S)** ἐκ Τάρνης ἐριβώλακος εἰληλούθει.
τὸν (O) μὲν ἄρ' **Ἰδομενεὺς (A)** δουρικλυτὸς ἔγχεϊ μακρῷ *(45)*
νύξ' ἵππων ἐπιβησόμενον κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον·
ἤριπε (S) δ' ἐξ ὀχέων, στυγερὸς δ' ἄρα **μιν (O)** σκότος εἶλε.
Τὸν (O) μὲν ἄρ' **Ἰδομενῆος (G)** ἐσύλευον θεράποντες·

Idomeneus killed Phaistos, the son of Maionian Boros,
who had come out of Tarne of deep soil.
Idomeneus, spear-renowed, stabbed him with the long spear
as he was mounting his chariot, in his right shoulder.
He dropped from the chariot, and the hateful darkness took hold of him.
Idomeneus' servants stripped him (Phaistos) of the armor.

υἱὸν δὲ Στροφίοιο Σκαμάνδριον αἴμονα θήρης (O)

Ἀτρεΐδης Μενέλαος (A) ἕλ' ἔγχεϊ ὀξυόεντι *(50)*
ἐσθλὸν θηρητῆρα· δίδαξε (O) γὰρ Ἄρτεμις αὐτὴ (A)
βάλλειν ἄγρια πάντα, τά τε τρέφει οὔρεσιν ὕλη·
ἀλλ' οὔ οἱ (D) τότε γε χραῖσμ' Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα,
οὐδὲ ἑκηβολίαι ἦσιν τὸ πρίν γε κέκαστο (S)·
ἀλλά μιν (O) Ἀτρεΐδης δουρικλειτὸς Μενέλαος (A) *(55)*
πρόσθεν ἔθεν φεύγοντα μετάφρενον οὔτασε δουρὶ
ὤμων μεσσηγύς, διὰ δὲ στήθεσφιν ἔλασσεν (A),
ἤριπε δὲ πρηνής (S), ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' αὐτῷ (D). (*Il.* 5.38-58)

'Menelaos, son of Atreus, killed Strophios' son, Skamandrios, with his sharp spear
- he was a fine huntsman. Artemis herself
had taught him to strike down every wild thing that the mountain forest grows.
Yet neither could Artemis of the showering arrows help him,
nor his own long spearcasts in which he used to excel.
Instead, Menelaos, spear-renowned, son of Atreus,
stabbed him with a spear as he fled before him,
in the middle of his shoulders, and pushed it through his chest.
He dropped forward on his face, and his armor clattered upon him.'

The assignment of argument roles between attacker and slain is regular across all three scenes: syntactically, the attacker always appears in agent role, while the slain is either object or subject.[114] This looks like a kind of absolutive/ergative alignment, whereby (in an ergative language) the slain would take absolutive agreement, and the attacker would take ergative.

There are two further remarkable features in these battle scenes:

a. the attacker can have multiple nominal realizations (which seems to directly contradict

[114] The only exception to this distribution is when there is a lengthy background section detailing the life of the slain, who may then sometimes have agent (A) role within the digression (see below). This, however, is separate from the main narration, and shoul be seen as an excursus.

PAS), while the slain is only realized nominally once.

b. there is no marking for switch reference: note how, in the last scene, the verb ἔλασσεν (subj. Agamemnon) is immediately followed by ἥριπε (subj. Scamandrios): both verbs have null subjects, though those subjects are different. There is nothing in the language that disambiguates this possibly confusing transition (the particle δὲ does not mark switch reference, but simply continuation): context, familiarity with typical battle scenes, and probably the convention observed above, whereby each chain gets either 'ergative' or 'absolutive' arguments, helps to keep the two referents distinct.

This convention, which holds across standard battle scenes throughout the poems, speaks to a division of labor between chains #1 and #2, at least in typical battle scenes. It can also be used to literary effect.

While in the scenes above the victim is portrayed as having no chance of surviving, the duel between Hektor and Akhilleus in *Il.* 22 is composed rather differently. Here, both referents are alternatively realized as agents. Not only that: Hektor is treated as the main topic (and thus the attacker) for most of the confrontation (249-310), as well as for the section leading up to it.[115] Thematically, Hektor does things that successful attackers normally do: he first avoids Akhilleus' spear (ἠλεύατο, 274), and does not miss his mark when throwing (βάλε … οὐδ'

[115] Book 22 begins with Hektor contemplating whether to fight Akhilleus or retreat inside the citadel, and is followed by the lament of his mother and father from the walls.

ἀφάμαρτε, 290): these transitive constructions, where Hektor is the A, are normally associated with the character who survives.[116]

καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ·

ἕζετο γὰρ προϊδών, τὸ δ' ὑπέρπτατο χάλκεον ἔγχος, (*Il.* 22.274-5)

'And looking before himself shining Hektor avoided [the spear],

he crouched, seeing where it would fall, and the bronze spear flew past.'

Ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλὼν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος,

καὶ βάλε Πηλεΐδαο μέσον σάκος οὐδ' ἀφάμαρτε· (*Il.* 22.289-90)

'So he spoke, and after poising his long-shadowed spear, he hurled it,

and struck the son of Peleus in the middle of his shield – he did not miss.'

In a traditional audience, these narrative choices conspire to build a precise expectation, only to thwart it. This tension between discourse and narrative conventions (where Hektor, the main discourse topic, functions as our "center") and the facts of the plot (whereby we know that he will die) provide dramatic energy to the narrative. This dramatic

[116] We can contrast this with the death of Sarpedon, another of the most important deaths in the *Iliad*,(*Il.* 16.462-507), where Sarpedon twice misses (ἀπήμβροτε) his mark.

Σαρπηδὼν δ' αὐτοῦ μὲν ἀπήμβροτε δουρὶ φαεινῷ (*Il.* 16.466) 'Sarpedon missed him with his shining spear'

Ἔνθ' αὖ Σαρπηδὼν μὲν ἀπήμβροτε δουρὶ φαεινῷ (*Il.* 16.477) 'Then Sarpedon missed his mark with his shining spear'.

energy would have been much diminished if the episode treated Akhilleus as the main topic from the start, along the lines of: "and then Akhilleus killed Hektor, the son of Priam, who was by far the best warrior in Troy; he hit him with his spear while he was rushing forward; he fell, and his armor sounded above him").

7.3.4 Homeric NPs and Preferred Argument Structure

In (a) above, we saw that battle scenes agents tend to be realized nominally more often than subjects and objects do. This seems to directly contradict PAS (the dispreference for introducing new referents in agent role), at least if we take nominal realization of referents as indicating new information. But are these nominally-realized agents actually conveying information that is new?

This is definitely not the case for Ἰδομενεὺς in line 45, which occurs only two lines after the character had been introduced to the scene. Similarly, it is not the case for Ἀτρεΐδης δουρικλειτὸς Μενέλαος in line 55, which picks up the referent introduced in line 50. In both cases, nothing has happened in the discourse to make us assume that the referents had lapsed outside of the narrator's memory and become inactive. Rather, both of these NPs are Con.Tops. Nominal realization of Con.Tops (over pronouns or ellipsis) often occurs at discourse boundaries, or for disambiguation purposes. It can also be a stylistic storytelling device (that is to say, some narrative styles may be characterized by a higher frequency of nominally realized

Con.Tops; see further discussion in 7.4.2).

This leads to a further question: in our battle scene, how new were our characters (Agamemnon, Idomeneus, Menelaos) when being introduced in lines 38, 43, and 50, respectively? Clearly, these are well-known characters, part of the core cast of Akhaians fighthing at Troy; in the context of a battle scene in the *Iliad*, their appearance is more than expected. In this sense, informationally, they could all be considered Con.Tops. The surface NPs serve to re-activate or confirm the activation of familiar information.

In effect, the particular medium of traditional epic poetry makes it so that a number of the core characters never need or receive proper introduction. They are all assumed to be known, and, depending on the specific episode being narrated, all present and ready for action.

It is in fact possible, in the poems, to distinguish between the main and secondary cast by seeing whether the poet feels the need to introduce the character as new or not. In *Iliad 1*, for instance, both Akhilleus and Agamemnon are introduced without any specification beyond their epithet (one wonders whether the epithet in itself may work as a handy, compressed 'micro-introduction', that however is regularly available for familiar characters only).

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος (*Il.* 1.1)

'The wrath, sing, Goddess, of Peleus' son, Akhilleus'

Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. (*Il.* 1.7)

‘The son of Atreus lord of men and divine Akhilleus’

This is very much unlike the detailed introduction that some minor characters get:

Ἦν δέ τις ἐν Τρώεσσι Δάρης ἀφνειὸς ἀμύμων

ἱρεὺς Ἡφαίστοιο· δύω δέ οἱ υἱέες ἦστην (*Il.* 5.9-10)

‘There was a man among the Trojans, Dares, rich and blameless,

a priest of Hephaistos: he had two sons’

ἦν δέ τις ἐν Τρώεσσι Δόλων Εὐμήδεος υἱὸς

κήρυκος θείοιο πολύχρυσος πολύχαλκος (*Il.* 10.314-5)

‘There was a man among the Trojans, Dolon, son of Eumedes,

the godlike herald, wealthy in gold and bronze’

ἦν δέ τις Εὐχήνωρ Πολυΐδου μάντιος υἱὸς

ἀφνειός τ’ ἀγαθός τε Κορινθόθι οἰκία ναίων, (*Il.* 13.663-4)

‘There was a man, Eukhenor, the son of Poluidos the seer,

rich and noble, who lived in Korinth.’

Note the similarity of this construction with the incipit of our pear story above “there was a farmer”.[117]

[117] These three character introductions are thematically very similar: they all introduce warriors who are sons of holy men of some sort: priests, heralds, and seers. This motif, which articulates the religious paradox of how even the sons of those who serve the gods (and are wealthy) fall victims to the war (in the first case, one of the sons of

There are, however, finer distinctions that we can draw between the informational role of nominally-realized referents in the poems. To do so, we must pay attention to word order.

7.4 Homeric Constituent Order

So far we have talked about the realization of referents in Homer, but we have not treated where they appear in the sentence or in the line. This is a complex subject, part of the enormous and even more complex topic of constituent and word order in Homer. While covering all of this topic would be a matter for a separate dissertation, we can start here to sketch out some important features in broad brushstrokes.

We do not yet have an account of word order in Homer. What we do have, in recent years, is a surge in interest in word order in Greek, driven by the understanding that, much like Modern Greek, Ancient Greek is a discourse-configurational language, in which information structure is marked through word order. To date, the most sophisticated study of word order in Ancient Greek is Matić 2003, based on a survey of Classical prose (Xenophon, Thucydides, Aristotle, Plato). Matić's work is preferable to Dik 1995 and 2007, in that it uses a more fine-grained framework (for an appraisal of Dik's method, see Goldstein 2008, as well as

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Dares is spared by Hephaistos precisely for that reason), must have resonated particularly with the audience: the poet of the Doloneia picked it to characterize Dolon and set up his fate.

Matić 2003:574-8). Edwards 2002:9-13 has used some of Dik's framework to analyze Homeric word order, but the results do not do justice to the complexity of the issue at hand. Bakker (1997), who has worked on other discourse features (such as particles), has not addressed word order systematically.

In what follows, Matić's framework will be introduced gradually, by means of small case studies, without the ambition to be exhaustive. Applying Matić's analysis to Homer is challenging for two reasons: first, there is a substantial diachronic (and stylistic) difference between the language of Homer and classical prose (for instance, the usage of the pronoun ὅ, ἥ, τό,[118] has undergone substantial changes); and second, an account of word order in Homer cannot ignore the influence that the meter may have on the arrangement of words in the line.

Our main concern here will be basic constituent order (in our case studies, we will concern ourselves with the relative orders of agents, objects and verbs in battle scenes); most of these constituents will be simple and continuous, and will not present any major challenges (or their discontinuity will not impact our analysis). We will, however, encounter some cases of discontinuous constituents that directly impact our analysis; for those cases, I will follow the work of Devine and Stevens (2000) on hyperbaton.

I will work from the assumption that though meter may interfere with how

[118] Following West 1998:xxi (see Probert 2003:137-7), ὅ, ἥ, τό is accented when used as a strong anaphora (see Bozzone 2014 for a discussion of strong vs. weak anaphoric pronouns in Homeric Greek).

information structure is reflected in word order, it may only do so in *narrowing the choices* that would otherwise be available to a speaker who operates outisde of meter; at any moment in discourse, several information packaging strategies are available to a speaker: meter may push the speaker to choose one over another. Meter, however, should not be able to push the language outside the bounds of perspicuity, and should not push the language to create entirely novel and unparalleled structures: rather (just as with morphology or phonology), it may encourage the speaker to exploit one alternative strategy over another, and perhaps to extend the usage of one strategy beyond its original locus.

In order to isolate the effect of meter on word order, we shall proceed as follows. For each stretch of discourse (or for each recurring discourse situation), we will try to assess the overall discourse strategy; deviations from that strategy that co-occur with hard-to-place word shapes will be attributed to the influence of meter. While meter may explain why a given constituent or part thereof appears in a given position in the line, we still have to explain what the linguistic mechanisms are that placed it there.

Before we go on, finally, it is important to remark that identical constituent orders (or identical constructions) may express different information structures; this is the basic objection to any approach that simply counts the surface occurrence of constituents (i.e.: are there more VOA or AVO orders?), without engaging in a deeper analysis of the discourse

context of each sentence.

This lack of one-to-one correspondence between constituent order and information structure should not be surprising. Even English, which has fixed word order and a strong preference for topical subjects, may have different interpretations for the same constituent order; we saw this above with the examples:

(20) [CLARA]$_{S.Top}$ called me the other day.

(21) [Clara]$_{Con.Top}$ called me the other day.

In the case of English, these two readings can be disambiguated by phonological information (i.e. pauses, stress, and intonation) which we can hardly recover for Homer. Likewise, broad and narrow focus are indistinguishable in English (as well as in Polish, which is discourse-configurational, see Eschenberg 2008), without context and phonological information.

For this reason, while the following section will lay out the basic principles for identifying information structure in Homer, in some cases it will not be possible to choose definitively between two plausible interpretations.

7.4.1 Information Structure and Constituent Order in Killing Scenes

Let us now turn back to the killing scenes above, and try to assess their discourse strategies. We have already remarked on how the appearance of famous Akhaians in this context

(Agamemnon, Idomeneus, and Menelaos) is not particularly newsworthy in itself (these referents should be viewed as simple Con.Tops). What is newsworthy is potentially two-fold:

a. that say, Agamemnon performed a given killing, and not some other Akhaian.

b. that a given Trojan was killed, with either emphasis on the victim himself (Narrow Focus), or on the act of killing as a whole (Broad Focus). In English, these two alternatives can be represented as follows:

(22) Q: What did Agamemnon do?

A: [Agamemnon]$_{Top}$ [killed Odion]$_{B.Foc}$.

(23) Q: Whom did Agamemnon kill?

A: [Agamemnon]$_{Top}$ killed [Odion]$_{N.Foc}$.

These different discourse strategies, which result in alternative Greek word orders, are in principle equally available to the poet. But which one does he choose? To find out, we will first examine some more battle scenes.

7.4.1.1 Questions and Answers

We mentioned above that questions are a good way of detecting information structure, in that they provide a precise informational viewpoint. Quite conveniently, questions are often a stylistic device in Homeric narration, where the poet is channelling information from the Muses, and often interrogates them directly, as in:

Τίς τάρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι; (*Il.* 1.8)

'Who among the gods put them in enmity, to fight each other?'

Simple questions get simple answers, presented under focus:

Ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξενάριξεν

Ἕκτωρ Πριαμίδης, ὅτε οἱ Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν;

Ἀσαῖον μὲν πρῶτα καὶ Αὐτόνοον καὶ Ὀπίτην

καὶ Δόλοπα Κλυτίδην καὶ Ὀφέλτιον ἠδ' Ἀγέλαον

Αἴσυμνόν τ' Ὦρόν τε καὶ Ἱππόνοον μενεχάρμην. (*Il.* 11.299-303)

'But then who was first, and who was last to be stripped

by Hektor son of Priam, when Zeus bestowed glory upon him?

Asaios was the first, and Autonoos and Opites,

and Dolops, son of Klutios, and Opheltios and Agelaos,

and Aisumnos and Oros and Hipponoos who was firm in battle'

Note here how in the answer everything that belongs to the presupposition (the agent, Hektor, and the verb, ἐξενάριξεν) is left out entirely, and only the focused objects appear.

More complex, indirect questions are more instructive. In *Iliad* 14, the poet asks the Muses who was the first among the Akhaians to carry off Trojan spoils:

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι

ὅς τις δὴ πρῶτος βροτόεντ’ ἀνδράγρι’ Ἀχαιῶν

ἤρατ’, ἐπεί ῥ’ ἔκλινε μάχην κλυτὸς ἐννοσίγαιος (*Il.* 14.509-10)

‘Tell me now, Muses, who inhabit the houses of Olumpos,

who was the first among the Akhaians to carry away the bloody spoils,

after the famed Earth-shaker tipped the battle in their favor?’

The answer is not as straightforward as the one above. Rather, the question serves to set up a quick battle report, where we know (i.e., presuppose) that Akhaians are going to be doing the killing, and that they are going to provide our vantage point: what we don’t know yet is who precisely among the Akhaians was the first to strike, and who exactly was struck. This information is provided as follows:

Αἴας ῥα πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος Ὕρτιον οὖτα

Γυρτιάδην Μυσῶν ἡγήτορα καρτεροθύμων·

Φάλκην δ’ Ἀντίλοχος καὶ Μέρμερον ἐξενάριξε·

Μηριόνης δὲ Μόρυν τε καὶ Ἱπποτίωνα κατέκτα,

Τεῦκρος δὲ Προθόωνά τ’ ἐνήρατο καὶ Περιφήτην· *(515)*

Ἀτρεΐδης δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπειθ’ Ὑπερήνορα ποιμένα λαῶν

οὖτα κατὰ λαπάρην, διὰ δ’ ἔντερα χαλκὸς ἄφυσσε

δῃώσας· ψυχὴ δὲ κατ’ οὐταμένην ὠτειλὴν

ἔσσυτ’ ἐπειγομένη, τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυψε.

πλείστους δ’ Αἴας εἷλεν Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς υἱός· (*Il.* 14.508-20)

‘Aias was the first, the son of Telamon – he wounded Hurtios,

son of Gurtios, leader of the strong-minded Musians.

Antilokhos stripped Phalkes, and Mermeros.

Meriones slew Morus and Hippothion,

And Teukros killed Prothoon and Periphites.

Atreus’s son then wounded Huperenor, the shepherd of men,

in the flank, and the bronze pushed out the bowels

as it cut through him: his soul rushed out from the stricken wound,

and darkness veiled his eyes.

But the most Trojans, it was Aias who killed them, the fast son of Oileus’

With the exception of 513 and 520 (to which we will return below), each killing displays a version of the same constituent order:

agent - object - verb

I will further argue that each scene shares the same discourse configuration. Let us start from the first killing:

Αἴας ῥα πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος Ὕρτιον οὖτα

Here, Aias, the Agent, is a known member of a finite set of expected agents: the Akhaians. In Matić's terminology, this is an Exclusive Contrastive Topic (see discussion in Matić 2003:603-8); in other words, we were expecting this sentence to be about one of the major Akhaian heroes: the EC.Top specifies which one. Unlike plain Con.Tops, which can appear in a number of positions in the sentence, EC.Tops have to occur sentence-initially (they are a subtype of S.Tops).

The Object, Hurtios, is the least expected information in the sentence: though we were expecting *some* Trojan to be killed, this is a minor enough character that neither we (nor arguably the original audience) had any clue that he was going to be the next victim (or perhaps that he even existed). Thus, the NP sits in the preverbal narrow focus position (the verb itself is not focused, since we were expecting some sort of killing). We can write out our analysis as follows:

[Αἴας ῥα πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος]$_{EC.Top}$ [Ὕρτιον]$_{N.Foc}$ οὗτα (*Il.* 14.508)

A similar configuration (but with coordinated object) appears in:

[Μηριόνης δὲ]$_{EC.Top}$ [Μόρυν τε καὶ Ἱπποτίωνα]$_{N.Foc}$ κατέκτα. (*Il.* 14.514)

As well as in:

[Τεῦκρος δὲ]$_{EC.Top}$ [Προθόωνά τ']$_{N.Foc}$ ἐνήρατο καὶ [Περιφήτην]$_{N.Foc.}$ (*Il.* 14. 515).

Here, we can assume that the sentence ends at the verb, and that καὶ Περιφήτην is

appositional (or part of a second sentence with identical and unexpressed presupposition).

Finally, the same configuration (only, spread over two lines) is expressed in:

[Ἀτρεΐδης]$_{EC.Top}$ δ' ἄρ' ἔπειθ' [Ὑπερήνορα ποιμένα λαῶν]$_{N.Foc}$

οὗτα κατὰ λαπάρην(*Il.* 14.516)

The only difference is that we get more details about the killing in post-verbal position (we can see this as part of the verbal predication).

At the very end of our section, we finally find a slightly different constituent order, O-A-V:

πλείστους δ' Αἴας **εἶλεν** Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς υἱός· (*Il.* 14.520)

Here the perspective has shifted: it is πλείστους, the object, that works as an Exclusive Contrastive Topic (the most Trojans, as opposed to the Trojans mentioned so far), while the agent, presented here as the most unexpected element in the sentence, occupies the pre-verbal narrow focus position (we had no particular reason to expect that the Lesser Aias would kill the most enemies):

[πλείστους]EC.Top δ' [Αἴας]N.Foc εἶλεν Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς υἱός· (*Il.* 14.520)

'But the most Trojans, it was Aias who killed them, the fast son of Oileus'

Effectively, the discourse configuration remains constant throughout the passage:

EC.Top - N.Foc - V

What changes is whether the Agent or the Object are realized as topics or focus. At first, the question oriented the choice of the narrator to present agents as topics; at the end, the narrator shifts his strategy slightly, to focus on the unexpected achievements of the Lesser Aias.

7.4.1.2 A Complex Case: Line 14.513

So far, we have left out line 513, which has a rather more complicated surface order:

Φάλκην δ' Ἀντίλοχος καὶ Μέρμερον ἐξενάριξε (*Il.* 14.513)

This line presents a number of challenges. The coordinated object (Φάλκην καὶ Μέρμερον) appears as a discontinuous constituent. The agent appears in second position. Unlike in line 520 above, however, the agent is not immediately preverbal, and thus cannot be in narrow focus. The second part of the coordinated object structure, rather, seems to occupy the narrow focus position. But why is Φάλκην all the way to the front?

If we assume that this line should have the same discourse configuration as the surrounding ones, we would expect something of this kind:

**[Ἀντίλοχος δὲ]$_{EC.Top}$ [Φάλκην καὶ Μέρμερον]$_{N.Foc}$ ἐξενάριξε [unmetrical]

In fact, we see this configuration in other lines featuring line-final ἐξενάριξε, which also have a coordinated object structure:

Αἰνείας δὲ **Μέδοντα καὶ Ἴασον** ἐξενάριξεν. (*Il.* 15.332)

‘Aineias stripped Medon and Iasos’

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα **Θόωνα καὶ Ἔννομον** ἐξενάριξε (*Il.* 11.422)

‘And then he stripped Thoon and Ennomos’

From a position similar to that of Medon and Thoon in the examples above, Φάλκην appears to have been fronted out of the coordinated object constituent and around the agent. Devine and Stevens (2000:160-1) talk about conjunct hyperbaton (i.e. hyperbaton that operates over a coordinated constituent) where the second element is appended to the end of the sentence (as marked by the verb): this is the configuration that we have just observed in *Il.* 14.515. Our line here presents a different configuration, where, instead of the second element being delayed (Y2 hyperbaton), the first element seems to have been anticipated (Y1 hyperbaton). In general, Y1 hyperbata are driven by a (weak or strong) focus operation that fronts a more ‘salient’ word out of its constituent.[119]

But why would Φάλκην be focused outside of its constituent? There is no clear reason for him to be more prominent than the second Trojan victim, which is already sitting in Narrow Focus.[120]

[119] There is debate as to whether hyperbaton in Greek is to be regarded as a phonological or syntactic phenomenon. While Devine and Stevens 2000 treat it syntactically, Agbayani and Golston 2010 argue for its phonological nature; they “propose that phonological movement arises as the result of constraint interaction in the phonological component, subsequent to the interface between syntax and phonology” (133).

[120] In truth, Φάλκης appears one other time in *Il.* 13.791: Φάλκην Ὀρθαῖόν τε καὶ ἀντίθεον Πολυφήτην ‘Phalkes son

I believe that the solution to this puzzle may be metrical. Ἀντίλοχος is a tricky word to place, like all other choriambic words, especially in combination with a spondee (or, with two other NPs in the same line). Φάλκην had to be fronted so as to accommodate Ἀντίλοχος and Μέρμερον in the line: there is no other way of making them all fit in a single verse. In fact, this is not an isolated problem. Our line is identical in structure to:

Δρῆσον δ' Εὐρύαλος καὶ Ὀφέλτιον ἐξενάριξε· (*Il.* 6.20)

'Eurualos stripped Dresos and Opheltios'

Ἱππόδαμον δ' Ὀδυσεὺς καὶ Ὑπείροχον ἐξενάριξεν (*Od.* 11.335)

'Odysseus stripped Hippodamos and Hupeirokhos'

In general, all of these lines seem to follow the same metrical template, which fits three NPs (two objects and one agent) and a verb into a single line:

$[\ \_\ \_\ ]_{Obj.NP}\ [\_\cup\cup\_]_{A.NP}$ καὶ $[\cup\_\cup\cup]_{Obj.NP}\ [\_\cup\cup\_\ \text{⏑}]_{V}$

The construction can be written as follows:

$[\ \_\ \cup\cup\ ]_{Obj.NP}\ [\_\cup\cup\_]_{A.NP}$ καὶ $[\cup\_\cup\cup]_{Obj.NP}$ **ἐξενάριξεν**

In all of these lines, the focus operation is being exploited for metrical reasons. To satisfy the meter, the poet casts additional focus on one of the victims; the audience takes this

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of Orthaos, and god-like Poluphetes', but this seems hardly enough to warrant special treatment.

unexpected emphasis at face value, and the meter is saved.

We can then analyze our line as follows:

[Φάλκην]$_{\text{N.Foc+FOC}}$ δ' [Ἀντίλοχος]$_{\text{EC.Top}}$ [καὶ Μέρμερον]$_{\text{N.Foc}}$ ἐξενάριξε (*Il.* 14.513)

'Antilokhos stripped PHALKES and Mermeron'

If this analysis is correct, we have an additional landing position for a focused element extracted from its original constituent before our EC.Topic (which, as a kind of S.Top, is normally sentence initial). Just like the analysis thus far, this claim also needs to be investigated further.

7.4.1.3 The Victims as Starting Points (*Il.* 6.5ff)

In the opening sequence of *Iliad* 6, we see another discourse strategy for handling killing scenes. This time, in the absence of a framing question, there are no sentence-initial EC.Tops that act as agents; instead, most sentences (7/10) start with a mention of the victim (in the accusative).

Ἄξυλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης
…
Δρῆσον δ' Εὐρύαλος καὶ Ὀφέλτιον ἐξενάριξε·
…
Ἀστύαλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε μενεπτόλεμος Πολυποίτης·
Πιδύτην δ' Ὀδυσεὺς Περκώσιον ἐξενάριξεν *(30)*
ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ, Τεῦκρος δ' **Ἀρετάονα δῖον**.
Ἀντίλοχος δ' **Ἄβληρον** ἐνήρατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ
Νεστορίδης, **Ἔλατον** δὲ ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων·

ναῖε δὲ Σατνιόεντος ἐϋρρείταο παρ' ὄχθας
Πήδασον αἰπεινήν. **Φύλακον** δ' ἔλε Λήϊτος ἥρως *(35)*
φεύγοντ'· Εὐρύπυλος δὲ ***Μελάνθιον*** ἐξενάριξεν.
Ἄδρηστον δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος
ζωὸν ἕλ'· (*Il.* 6.12-38)

'Diomedes of the loud war cry killed Axulos
...
and Eurualos killed Dresos and Opheltios
and Astualos was killed by Polupoites firm in the fight,
with his sharp spear, and Teukros killed divine Aretaon.
Antilokhos slew Ableros with his shining spear,
the son of Nestor, and the lord of men Agamemnon (killed) Elatos.
He used to live by the banks of Satnioeis of the beautiful streams,
in lovely Pedasos. The warrior Leitos slew Phulakos
as he was fleeing. And Eurupulos stripped Melanthios.
And Menelaos of the loud war cry captured Adrestos,
alive.'

The objects appear directly before the verb (when the verb is there at all). Agents appear either after the verb (3x), or before the object (5x). The only exception to this pattern (at the very end of the sequence) shows the order OAV in enjambement (lines 37-8):

Ἄδρηστον δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος

ζωὸν ἕλ'

Throughout the passage, we can interpret the attackers as topics (see discussion below as to whether they should all be analyzed as Con.Tops): they are recurring members of the core cast of the Akhaians (Menelaos, Odysseus, Diomedes), while the victims are minor Trojans who

appear here and nowhere else (Axulos, Dresos, Astualos, Pidutes, Aretaon and Ableron appear only here; an Opheltios also appears as an Akhaian victim in *Il.* 11.302). What is more ambiguous is the informational role of the victims. Their position in the sentence is compatible with two interpretations:

a. the victims are in narrow focus (which is preverbal)

b. the victims are Frame Setting Topics (which are sentence initial, and can be followed by another topic expression).

FS.Tops are used to introduce a new referent as a temporary topic for a short stretch of narrative: they can be seen as pragmatically accommodated new topics. Between FS.Tops and Con.Tops, FS.Tops are used "if the referent is not involved in a continuous thread of narration interrupted by digression, but represents an episodic phenomenon appearing on the scene in a discontinuous matter" (Matić 2003:594), while Con.Tops are used to pick up key characters in the narrative.

In our passage, out of 10 victims, 5 only admit of a N.Foc interpretation, while 2 only admit of a FS.Top interpretation; the remaining 3 can be either. This means that, if we are inclined to see N.Foc wherever possible, 8/10 of our victims stand in N.Foc.

Table 7.4 below summarizes the possible interpretations for both objects and agents in the passage (we will discuss the role of agents in 7.4.1.4 below).

Table 7.4 Information Structure in *Il.* 6.12-38

Line	Role of the Obj. Expression	Role of the A. Expression
Ἄξυλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης	FS.Top or N.Foc	Con.Top
Δρῆσον δ' Εὐρύαλος καὶ Ὀφέλτιον ἐξενάριξε·	N.Foc	Con.Top or FS.Top
Ἀστύαλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε μενεπτόλεμος Πολυποίτης·	FS.Top or N.Foc	Con.Top
Πιδύτην δ' Ὀδυσεὺς Περκώσιον ἐξενάριξεν ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ,	N.Foc	Con.Top or FS.Top
Τεῦκρος δ' ***Ἀρετάονα δῖον***. [ἐξενάριξεν]	N.Foc	FS.Top
Ἀντίλοχος δ' ***Ἄβληρον*** ἐνήρατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ Νεστορίδης,	N.Foc	FS.Top
Ἔλατον δὲ ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων· ναῖε δὲ Σατνιόεντος ἐϋρρείταο παρ' ὄχθας Πήδασον αἰπεινήν.	FS.Top	Con.Top
Φύλακον δ' ἔλε Λήϊτος ἥρως *(35)* φεύγοντ'·	FS.Top or N.Foc	Con.Top
Εὐρύπυλος δὲ ***Μελάνθιον*** ἐξενάριξεν.	N.Foc	FS.Top
Ἄδρηστον δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος ζωὸν ἕλ'· ἵππω γάρ οἱ ἀτυζομένω πεδίοιο	FS.Top	Con.Top

We may prefer a FS.Top interpretation for a victim when (as with Axulos) we then have a few lines about his life story. Victims who briefly appear in one line and are never mentioned again are more persuasively N.Focus. In English translation, the difference between FS.Top and N.Foc amounts to the difference between:

(24) [Axulos]$_{FS.Top}$ was killed by Diomedes

(25) Diomedes killed [AXULOS]$_{N.Foc}$

It is possible that intonation could differentiate between these two interpretations. If we favor consistency, we may see all of our victims as N.Focs, with the exception of only two killings. Arguably, it is useful for the poet to have structures that allow for multiple informational readings: lines with sentence-initial victims can be used either for a quick mention of an inconsequential killing (with the victim working as a N.Foc) or to set up a longer stretch of narrative that expands on the victim's background (victim as FS.Top).

7.4.1.4 The Puzzle of Sentence-Initial Topics

In our battle scene above, the three lines where agents (topics) are sentence initial are of particular interest. In Matić's model, there is a systematic difference between Topics that appear sentence-initially (FS.Tops and EC.Tops), and topics that appear anywhere else (Con.Tops). Following this distinction, we should recognize the attackers in these lines as either FS.Tops or EC.Tops:

Τεῦκρος δ' Ἀρετάονα δῖον. [ἐξενάριξεν] (*Il.* 6.31)

Ἀντίλοχος δ' Ἄβληρον ἐνήρατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ (*Il.* 6.32)

Εὐρύπυλος δὲ Μελάνθιον ἐξενάριξεν. (*Il.* 6.36)

Yet, a clear difference between the discourse status of these sentence-intial attackers and the discourse status of other non-sentence-initial attackers (Con.Tops) is not immediately apparent. In effect, Matić is forced to expand his definition of FS.Tops quite radically to

maintain that all sentence-initial topics in Greek prose are FS.Tops (Matić 2003:588-91), and this still fails to capture cases in Homer when sentence-initial topics fail to convey any kind of contrast or referential discontinuity. Compare the referential chain for Idomeneus in *Il.* 5.43-8, where the same two referents (Idomeneus and Phaistos) are maintained throughout, and there are no thematic interruptions:

[Ἰδομενεὺς]$_{FS.Top}$ δ' ἄρα [Φαῖστον]$_{N.Foc}$ ἐνήρατο Μῄονος υἱὸν
Βώρου, ὃς ἐκ Τάρνης ἐριβώλακος εἰληλούθει.
[τὸν]$_{Con.Top}$ μὲν ἄρ' [Ἰδομενεὺς δουρικλυτὸς]$_{Con.Top}$ ἔγχεϊ μακρῷ
νύξ' ἵππων ἐπιβησόμενον κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον·
ἤριπε δ' ἐξ ὀχέων, στυγερὸς δ' ἄρα [μιν]$_{Con.Top}$ σκότος εἶλε.
[Τὸν]$_{Con.Top}$ μὲν ἄρ' [Ἰδομενῆος]$_{Con.Top}$ [ἐσύλευον θεράποντες]$_{B.Foc}$ (*Il.* 5.43-8, see translation above)

While sentence-initial Idomeneus in line 43 can be interpreted as a FS.Top (since it sets up Idomeneus as our main topic for the following stretch of discourse), such an interpretation is not immediately apparent for line-initial τὸν in lines 45 and 48, which are simply picking up the most topical referent (which was either the S or the O of the previous sentence), in the absence of any discontinuity in the referential frame: here the more likely interpretation is that these are both line-initial Con.Tops. Alternatively, we may choose to interpret these as

EC.Tops, used to constrast the two most topical referents against each other. But it is hard, in the absence of further diagnostics, to settle the matter in a way that is not stipulative.

I would then adapt Matić's view and say that, at least in Homer, sentence-initial topics *may* have special additional properties (mark a switch topic, or contrast), but they don't have to. Post-verbal topics, on the other hand, cannot have additional properties. In sum:

- Sentence-initial topics: FS.Tops, EC.Tops, Con.Tops
- Post-verbal topics: Con.Tops only

We spoke about this distinction in English as well, where we distinguish between:

(26) [CLARA]$_{\text{Switch.Top}}$ called me the other day.

(27) [Clara]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$ called me the other day.

As we mentioned in 7.1.5 above, often different kinds of sentence-initial topics can be distinguished on the basis of their phonological properties, which in turn point to different structural positions in the sentence: in many languages, while FS.Tops and EC.Tops (=Switch Topics) tend to form their own intonation unit, and sit outside of the sentence proper (see Aissen 1991:47 on Mayan), sentence-initial Con.Tops tend to sit inside of the sentence, and tend not to be phonologically independent.

Languages may vary as to how many kinds of sentence-initial topics they allow: while Tz'utujil, a Mayan language of the Quichean branch, allows for both internal and external

topics, sentence-initial topics in Tzotzil and Jacaltec, two western Mayan languages, are always external: they are new or shifted (FS.Tops or EC.Tops) and always form an independent intonational phrase (Aissen 1991). I would argue that Homeric Greek is more like Tz'utujil, in that it allows both internal and external topics in sentence-initial position (though the matter is still very much *sub iudice*). Table 7.5 sums up the situation.

Table 7.5 Sentence-initial Topics in some Mayan and Indo-European Languages

	S.Tops (external topics)	Con.Tops (internal topics)
Tz'utujil	✔	✔
Tzotzil	✔	✗
Jacaltec	✔	✗
English	✔	✔
Catalan	✔	✗
Homeric Greek	✔	✔
Classical Greek (Matić 2003)	✔	✗

For Homer, a prosodic distinction between external and internal sentence-initial topic may be hard to recover, but not impossible: the next step would be to look at the distributional properties of "second-position" clitics, which can be used as diagnostic for sentence structure and prosodic phrasing (see Taylor 1990, Goldstein 2010); while this enterprise goes beyond the scope of this survey, important work in this direction is already under way in Greek prose (Goldstein forthcoming).

All of the structures that we have seen so far for Homer can be captured by the following informational template:

FrameSetting.Topic
Continued.Topic Narrow.Focus Verb Continued.Topic
ExclusiveContrastive.Topic

Note that several topics can co-occur (for instance, an FS.Top and a Con.Top), though Con.Tops are not likely to occur both before and after the verb in a single clause.

On the basis of typological data, we can hypothesize that both the leftmost and the rightmost material is outside of the sentence proper, and would parse in its own intonational phrase:

[FS.Tops or EC.Tops]$_{\text{left-dislocated}}$ [Con.Top N.Foc V] [Con.Top]$_{\text{right-dislocated}}$

[FS.Tops or EC.Tops]$_{\iota}$ [Con.Top N.Foc V]$_{\iota}$ [Con.Top]$_{\iota}$

In simple terms, left-dislocated material serves to set the stage for the sentence, while right-dislocated material serves to disambiguate what has just been said (this is similar to Vallduví's distinction between links and tails, see 7.1.5 above).

7.4.2 Noun-epithet Formulas as Continued Topics

In our analysis above, we have encountered several instances of nominally realized post-verbal Con.Tops. In Matić's analysis of Classical prose, nominally realized post-verbal Con.Tops are the standard way of reactivating a topic referent after their narrative thread has been interrupted; in the absence of such an interruption, a discourse referent will be realized as a zero or a clitic (Matić 2003:593-4). In fact, Homer will favor elliptical realization of discourse

topics within some type scenes (which also makes such scenes easier to adapt to a number of different characters). See this arming scene featuring Paris, where, after the character is established as topical in lines 328-9, it goes through a ten-line stretch of null anaphora.

αὐτὰρ **ὅ** γ’ ἀμφ’ ὤμοισιν ἐδύσετο τεύχεα καλὰ

δῖος Ἀλέξανδρος Ἑλένης πόσις ἠϋκόμοιο.

κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμῃσιν **ἔθηκε (ø)**

καλάς, ἀργυρέοισιν ἐπισφυρίοις ἀραρυίας·

δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν **ἔδυνεν(ø)**

οἷο (G) κασιγνήτοιο Λυκάονος· **ἥρμοσε (ø)** δ’ αὐτῷ.

ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρ’ ὤμοισιν **βάλετο (ø)** ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον

χάλκεον, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε·

κρατὶ δ’ ἐπ’ ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὔτυκτον **ἔθηκεν (ø)**

ἵππουριν· δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν·

εἵλετο (ø) δ’ ἄλκιμον ἔγχος, ὅ **οἱ (D)** παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει. (*Il.* 3.328-38)

‘And he put on his shoulders the beautiful armor,

Alexandros, the husband of lovely-haired Helene.

First (he) placed on his legs the beautiful greaves,

linked with silver fastenings at the ankles.

Second (he) wore the corslet around his chest, the corslet of his brother Lucaon. It fitted him also (or he fit it to himself).

Across the shoulders he slung the sword with nails of silver,

a bronze sword, and above it the great shield, huge and heavy.

Over his powerful head he set the well-fashioned helmet,

with the hourse-hair crest, and the plumes nodded terribly above it.

He took up a strong-shafted spear that fitted his hand's grip. '

Ten-line stretches of null anaphora, however, are not the norm. In other passages,

we have active discourse topics that receive what seems to be an overabundance of nominal realizations (see, for instance, the killing scene featuring Idomeneus above, where Idomeneus is realized as an NP three times in six lines). This may be a storytelling strategy, whereby the speaker tries to facilitate reference tracking by using a number of explicit expressions where implicit expressions would also have been possible.

In fact, in a number of unrelated discourse-configurational languages, it is not uncommon for stylized oral narratives to favor 'clarificatory' nominal realization of Con.Tops, and for these nominal Con.Tops to appear in a right-dislocated position. Mention of this narrative strategy is found in the grammar of Manambu, a Papuan language (Aikhenvald 2008:538, where it is said to be more frequent with older women "accustomed to explaining

and spelling out things for their grandchildren"), as well as Southern Quechua (Sanchez 2010:186ff), where right-dislocated Con.Tops have a characteristic phonetic realization (with breathy vowels and a specific intonation pattern) in children's stories (Sanchez 2010:226-8).

The right-dislocated position is reminiscent of the position of Homeric noun-epithet formulas, which is post-verbal and line final (and, most likely, formed its own intonation unit); it is then possible to see the origin of line-final noun-epithet formulas in Homer in the discourse strategy of using right-dislocated Con.Tops as a clarificatory device in stylized narrative.

7.4.3 Noun-epithet Formulas and "Right-Dislocation"

The fact that noun-epithet formulas are often "superfluous" (i.e., part of the presupposition) in the narrative can be shown in a number of ways. Many commentators have remarked that Homeric style is pleonastic in nature, and more specifically, that what is pleonastic seems to go to the end of the line. In his study of the bucolic diaeresis, Bassett (1905:116) remarks on how often "the last two feet add unessential but picturesque details, or repeat in slightly different form an idea which has already been expressed, the clausula often being entirely parenthetical". Bassett did not include noun-epithet formulas in his observations (at first sight, they seem to convey material that is crucial to the narration), but when the referent is

already part of the presupposition (which is, I would argue, most if not all the time), then noun-epithet formulas too can be seen as "parenthetical" or, more precisely, appositional.

More to our point, in some constructional networks, patterns of substitution show that the noun-epithet formulas are conveying superfluous (presupposed) information.

Let us compare two lines (which we already saw as part of the ἀμειβ-network in Chapter 6):

ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ' αὐτίκ' ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν· (*Od.* 4.471)

ὣς ἐφάμην, ἡ δ' αὐτίκ' ἀμείβετο δῖα θεάων· (*Od.* 4.382)

In the first case, Menelaos is dialoguing with Proteus, the old man of the sea. This is their third exchange, and the audience clearly does not have any trouble recovering who the referent of the pronoun ὁ is, so no nominal realization is necessary. In the second case, Menelaos is talking to Proteus' daughter, Eidothea; this is also their third exchange, and there is clearly no need to identify her for the audience. The pronoun ἡ, which starts the sentence, would have been entirely sufficient. Yet, this line also presents the epithet δῖα θεάων in right-dislocated position.

In fact, line 382 looks like a textbook example of "right-dislocation", of which many variants exist in the epic. We can see other examples (this time with αὐτὰρ, which adds contrast):

Αὐτὰρ ὃ μήνιε νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι

διογενὴς Πηλῆος υἱὸς πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς· (*Il.* 1.488-9)

'But he remained seated by the swift-faring ships,

the god-sprung son of Peleus, swift footed Akhilleus'

αὐτὰρ ὃ βοῦν ἱέρευσε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων (*Il.* 2.402-3)

'But he sacrificed a bull, Agamemnon lord of men'

In the first example, the noun-epithet formula takes up an entire line; in the second example, just the second hemistich. In both cases, the purpose of the construction is to reinstate one of the main discourse topics after some interruption (49 lines in the case of Akhilleus, just 7 lines in the case of Agamemnon).[121]

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[121] Admittedly, these examples seem different from the speech introductions above, in that the noun-epithet formula seems more necessary: without it, how would the audience know which of the many possible discourse topics to reactivate? In *Iliad* 2, however, this is only partially true: Agamemnon has been the overarching topic of the episode, and he has just finished giving orders to the troops a few lines before. After some lines describing how the troops are obeying Agamemnon's instructions, he is the most obvious referent to come back to. In Akhilleus' case, since almonst fifty lines have passed since his last mention, his reactivation may seem less obvious. Yet, the phraseology itself (νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι) suggests Akhilleus and nobody else. It echoes very closely the words of Thetis, earlier in the book:

ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι

μήνι' Ἀχαιοῖσιν, πολέμου δ' ἀποπαύεο πάμπαν· (*Il.* 1.420-1)

'But you, sitting by your swift-faring ships,

continue your wrath against the Akhaians, and refrain entirely from battle'

Note how also later in the poem the verb μήνιε 'was in a state of wrath' itself seems enough to describe Akhilleus' particular situation, even when he is not openly referred to (as in *Il.* 18.257); we are in a poem, after all, which is ostensibly about Akhilleus' wrath.

ἀνδρῶν αὖ μέγ' ἄριστος ἔην Τελαμώνιος Αἴας

ὄφρ' Ἀχιλεὺς μήνιεν· (*Il.* 2.768-9)

'of the men then by far the best was Aias son of Telamon,

The construction with the anaphoric pronoun and right-dislocation seems functionally equivalent to simpler constructions using αὐτὰρ with a sentence-initial topic (which can be construed as contrastive):

Αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς

δακρύσας ἑτάρων ἄφαρ ἕζετο νόσφι λιασθείς, (*Il.* 1.348)

'But Akhilleus,

in tears, having parted from his companions, was sitting'

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς

ἐς Χρύσην ἵκανεν ἄγων ἱερὴν ἑκατόμβην (*Il.* 1.429-30)

'But Odysseus

reached Khruse, bringing the holy hecatomb'

In the examples above, the right-dislocated Con.Top is coreferential with the pronoun ὅ, ἥ, τό that appears towards the beginning of the sentence. In all of these instances, the pronoun seems to convey some amount of contrast added onto the plain expression of the Con.Top; one could argue that, just like stressed personal pronouns, also stressed anaphoric

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while Akhilleus persisted in his wrath'
ὄφρα μὲν οὗτος ἀνὴρ Ἀγαμέμνονι μήνιε δίῳ
τόφρα δὲ ῥηΐτεροι πολεμίζειν ἦσαν Ἀχαιοί· (*Il.* 18.257)
'as long as this man persisted in his wrath against Agamemnon,
so long the Akhaians were easier to fight against'

pronouns like ὅ, ἥ, τό are constrastive (see Bozzone 2014 for such an argument).

In the absence of this added contrast, we would assume that Greek would just use null anaphora of the subject (we saw in in 7.3.3 above that Homeric Greek can use null anaphora even when there is a change of subject). In such a scenario, the post-verbal Con.Top would be the only surface realization of the subject of the clause. This is what we have in two lines of the battle scene analyzed in 7.4.1.3 above, which are clearly formed using the same construction:

῞Αξυλον δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπεφνε [βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$ (*Il.* 6.12)

᾽Αστύαλον δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπεφνε [μενεπτόλεμος Πολυποίτης]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$· (*Il.* 6.29)

[_⏑⏑_]$_{\text{Obj.NP}}$ **δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπεφνε** [⏑_⏑⏑_ ⏑⏑_ ⏒]$_{\text{Subj.NP, Con.Top}}$

Remaining within IE languages, “right dislocation” has been studied in French by Lambrecht (1981:75ff.), who calls these right-dislocated topics *antitopics*. Lambrecht distinguishes antitopics from simple afterthoughts (i.e. results of some kind of mis-planning of an utterance) in that antitopics are syntactically integrated in the argument structure of the verb. In French (and in Italian), antitopics that are objects are licensed by agreement pronouns that appear on the verb. Antitopics that are subjects do not need an agreement pronoun, since both French and Italian pro-drop their subjects.

(28) Non l’ho vista, la Clara.

I didn’t see her, Clara.

(29) Mi ha visto, la Clara.

She saw me, Clara.

In Homeric Greek, right-dislocated Con.Tops are most frequently subjects, but objects can be found too. In these cases, we see that having an overt object pronoun earlier in the clause is not necessary (since Greek can pro-drop objects as well):

Ἦ, καὶ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσεφώνεεν Ἕκτορα δῖον· (*Il.* 20.428)

'(so) he said, and with a dark glance he spoke to divine Hektor'

Here Akhilleus is yelling at Hektor for the second time, and there is no doubt that Hektor is the addressee of the speech act. The noun-epithet formula Ἕκτορα δῖον works as a Con.Top.

7.4.3.1 The Song of Björn Borg and the Position of Formulae

Interestingly, when Miller (1982:19) tried to improvise an oral poem on the deeds of Björn Borg ('the icy Swede'), he noticed that he tended to place formulaic material (and, in particular noun-epithet formulas) at the beginning rather than at the end of lines (1982:34-7). Miller sees this as a sign of a style that is not authentically oral, but imitative thereof (he points out similar tendencies in some imitator's text collected by Lord). In part, however, this tendency in Miller's poem must be due to English word order (subjects come early in the sentence), and information structure preferences (subjects should be topics), and the fact that Miller did not make use of right-dislocated clarificatory topics as part of his style.

7.4.4 Noun-epithet Formulas in Pivot Constructions

We finally have all of the instruments to talk about the discourse function of some of Homer's most frequent constructions: speech introductions. We examined some of these constructions in Chapter 6. I here reproduce table 6.1 (=7.6) and give the constructional notation below.

Table 7.6 Addressee, Modality, and Speaker in προσέειπε, προσέφη, and προσηύδα Constructions

	Addressee	*Modality*	*Speaker*
προσέειπε	Τὸν	αὖτε	πολύτλας δῖος ᾽Οδυσσεύς
προσέφη	τὴν	ἀπαμειβόμενος	πολύμητις ᾽Οδυσσεύς
προσηύδα	ὣς φάτο... μιν	ῥίγησεν	πολύτλας δῖος ᾽Οδυσσεύς

(1) $[\_]_{\text{Obj.P}}$ $[\smile\smile\_]_{\text{Adv.}}$ **προσέειπε** $[\smile\_\smile\smile\_\smile\smile\_\text{X}]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

(2) $[\_]_{\text{Obj.P}}$ δ᾽ $[\smile\smile\_\smile\smile\_]_{\text{Subj.Part.}}$ **προσέφη** $[\smile\smile\text{-}\smile\smile\_\text{X}]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$

(3) **ὣς φάτο**, $[\smile\smile\_]_{\text{VP}}$ δὲ $[\smile\_\smile\smile\_\smile\smile\_\ \text{X}]_{\text{Subj.NP}}$,

καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·

As far as information structure goes, these constructions have two topics: the line-final noun-epithet formula (Con.Top), as well as a line-initial anaphoric pronoun (also a Con.Top, with possibly some contrast added). For constructions (1) and (2), it is the expression that specifies the modality of the speech act that seems to fall within the N.Foc scope. For construction (3), ἔπεα πτερόεντα falls within N.Foc.

One important function that these constructions have is thematic paragraphing. This is

true of other similar constructions that use a pivot verb and a noun-epithet formula, such as those listed in Parry MHV:53-4. The poet uses right-dislocated continued topics to set up new thematic units, such as scenes or sub-scenes (see also Bozzone 2014, which uses Givón's 1983a:56 scale of discourse continuity of referents). These usages often belong in the *framings* of small scenes (in the sense of Bakker 1997:86ff.). While the investigation of thematic units in Homer goes beyond the goals of this work, going forward, there is much ground to cover in exploring the discourse function of constructions both at the sentence level, and at the larger narrative level.

7.4.5 Information Structure, Word Order, and Economy

We seem to have gone a long way, in this chapter, just to establish what is the discourse function of noun-epithet formulas in speech introduction constructions. The gain may seem small, but on the way we have uncovered important principles that impact our understanding of formularity, and, in particular, economy.

We have talked about economy already in Chapter 6, were we saw that any living system should have some variation in order to permit renewal. Violations of economy in this sense do not show a breakdown of the system of oral composition, but simply its vitality. But next we should think about whether we want to include discourse factors in our definitions of what counts as equivalent formulas (or systems).

Let us go back to battle scenes. After speech introductions, these are the parts of Homeric technique that have received the most attention. Visser (1988, 1989) has treated these scenes in detail, and demonstrated how they form an economical system, where the metrical shape of the victim and of the aggressor will determine the choice of verb. However, looking at the system without taking word order (i.e., information structure) into account is misleading. Let us take two seemingly equivalent killing verbs: ἔπεφνε and ἐνήρατο.

Ἄξυλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης

Τευθρανίδην, ὃς ἔναιεν ἐϋκτιμένῃ ἐν Ἀρίσβῃ (*Il.* 6.12-3)

'Axulos was killed by Diomedes of the loud war cry,

the son of Teuthras, who lived in well-settled Arisbe.'

Ἀντίλοχος δ' Ἄβληρον ἐνήρατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ

Νεστορίδης, ...· (*Il.* 6.32-3)

'And ANTILOKHOS killed Ableros with his shining spear,

the son of Nestor, ...'

Their information structure is as follows:

[Ἄξυλον]$_{\text{FS.Top}}$ δ' ἄρ' **ἔπεφνε** [βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης]$_{\text{Con.Top}}$

[Ἀντίλοχος]$_{\text{EC.Top}}$ δ' [Ἄβληρον]$_{\text{N.Foc}}$ **ἐνήρατο** δουρὶ φαεινῷ

Despite their similar propositional meaning (X killed Y), these two lines contribute differently

to the discourse. While the example with ἔπεφνε answers the question "Who was killed next?", the one with ἐνήρατο answers the question "Who (of the Akhaians) killed whom next?". Note how in the first case the poet expands on the victim Axulos after the first line, while in the second case he expands on the attacker, Antilokhos.

When the poet uses one verb over the other, he is in fact setting up the point of view of the scene differently: on one hand he's primarily concerned with who was killed, on the other on who was it that did the killing. We are effectively talking about the difference between:

Y was killed by X.

It was X who killed Y.

We have seen that battle scenes tend to be organized according to one strategy or the other. In some discourse settings, these two constructions may be equivalent (or used as such), but not always. The question then arises as to whether we are justified in considering these two verbs as mere metrical variants of each other. As our understanding of the role of information structure in Homeric diction grows, our concept of economy will need to be refined accordingly.

As a result of understanding Homeric word order more clearly, our practice in translating Homer into English should also change: for instance, a construction in which the object is the topic should probably be translated with a passive in English (which prefers its

topics to be subjects), and we should try to replicate the organization of topics inside paragraphs as well.

As far as the study of the technique is concerned, more attention to discourse factors should promote the idea that an oral formulaic technique is not just about fitting pieces of a metrical puzzle into the line: it is about telling stories. To echo Lord's words (ST:32), it is about uniting rhythm and thought.

Conclusions

At its core, this dissertation is an effort at expanding Lord's idea (ST:36) that formulaic language is acquired and functions just like a natural language. This insight justifies studying the technique in the same ways and with the same tools that we employ for natural languages. The goal of this dissertation was then to inspect the Homeric technique through the lenses of contemporary linguistic frameworks, in particular those that have been developed for treating corpora and the analysis of language usage. This comes after decades of stagnation in the study of both Homeric formularity and Homeric syntax.

Once estalished that formulas and formulaic phenomena are best described by the concept of construction, as borrowed from Construction Grammar, several new avenues of investigation opened up, avenues that (as I hope to have shown) can substantially impact our linguistic, philological, and literary understanding of the poems. Our investigation proceeded along three routes:

1. Synchrony: we looked at how poets acquire constructions and how idiosyncratic

constructional behaviors can be used to test for authorship. We discussed how constructions pass through a life cycle, and how, by measuring the productivity of a construction, we can judge whether an expression is likely to be old or not. Finally, we discussed how specific kinds of synchronic variation in the technique (thus violations of economy) are a sign of health, not decay, in a formulaic system.

2. Diachrony: by looking at variations in the type and token frequency of some speech-introduction constructions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we observed ways in which constructions change over time, and how their life cycle impacts the speed of their change. We also discussed how constructions can be parts of substitutional networks, and how these networks can support their productivity.
3. Discourse and Syntax: we discussed how, beyond a semantic function, constructions have a syntactic and discourse function, which has thus far been little explored. Within formulaic systems, this impacts the definition of economy (as formulas that have been described as equivalent in fact achieve different goals in terms of information structure). In general, we set out some principles for investigating and explaining word order in Homer, a topic that I hope to investigate more fully in the future.

I believe that each of these routes has a tremendous amount to offer to our understanding of both the technique and the poems themselves. A few sample studies in this work have

already shown how the constructional method can sharpen our sense of Homeric style, and how this can translate into more appropriate readings of our texts.

Going forward, the goal is to refine this method while applying it to ever more areas of Homer's language. At the same time, this method can be adapted and transferred to the study of other Indo-European (and not) poetic traditions (*in primis*, Rigvedic poetry), and provide the basis for a typological description of oral poetic languages. I also believe that a constructional approach can provide a very effective means of studying literary languages in general (even ones that were written rather than spoken), and of uncovering the automatic behaviors that sustain them. These automatic behaviors are what we are accustomed to calling "style", but which we really ought to call, simply, "language".

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