

The Hesiodic *Aspis*

Introduction and Commentary on vv. 139–237

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is concerned with the pseudo-Hesiodic *Aspis*, also known as the *Scutum* or *Shield of Herakles* (*Heracles*). It is divided into two halves: the Introduction, consisting of four chapters, is followed by detailed line-by-line commentary on a portion of the Greek text.

Chapter I surveys the evidence for the poem's origins and dating before moving on to its scholarly reception since Wolf. It then argues that, for a proper understanding of the *Aspis*, the methodologies of oral poetics must be balanced with an awareness of its responses to fixed texts (in particular the *Iliad*).

Chapter II examines the author as a poet within the oral tradition, focussing on: narrative style and structuring; type-scenes; similes; poetic ethos; the poem's position relative to the Hesiodic corpus; the use of formulaic language; and the growth of the poem in the author's hands. These problems are most fruitfully approached by taking account of the interplay of tradition on the one hand and of allusion to specific texts on the other. Wider points about the advanced stages of the oral tradition also emerge; in particular, from an analysis of narrative inconsistencies in the *Aspis* it is suggested that writing played a role in the poem's composition.

Chapter III positions the poet within the literary tradition: his interactions with other songs and tales are sometimes sophisticated engagements of a kind more often detected in Hellenistic and Roman poetry. The presentation of the protagonist of the *Aspis* evinces the poet's skilful handling of myth, here manipulated for political purposes. Chapter III concludes with a survey of the poem's reception in early art and in literature up to Byzantine times.

In Chapter IV the central section of the poem, the description of Herakles' shield (vv. 139–320), is examined in detail, both in relation to the Homeric Shield of Achilles and within the context of the *Aspis*.

The second half of the thesis comprises a critical edition of and lemmatic commentary on vv. 139–237.

PREFACE

The present work builds on the foundations laid in my MSt thesis (2011–12), where my early ideas about the *Aspis* were shaped and refined under the guidance of Dr J. S. Scullion. For my doctoral dissertation I had intended, besides writing an extended Introduction, to comment line by line on the whole shield description. It proved in the end impossible to cover vv. 139–320 in sufficient detail within the confines of the DPhil, and I preferred to reduce the number of verses covered than to make the notes more cursory. The reasons for taking v. 237 as an end-point are explained in Chapter IV, where the ecphrasis as a whole is treated.

I was fortunate to secure as my doctoral supervisor Professor R. B. Rutherford, who has been a constant source of wise and humane advice. For encouragement and for guidance on specific problems I am also grateful to Professor A. Benaissa, Professor G. O. Hutchinson, Dr A. D. Kelly, Professor J. D. Konstan, Mr R. Lane Fox, Professor J. L. Lightfoot, Dr N. J. Richardson, Dr Scullion, the late Dr M. L. West, and Mr N. G. Wilson. Dr N. Koopman kindly sent me a copy of his doctoral thesis, which contains much stimulating material on ecphrasis. None of these scholars, of course, is responsible for any of the errors and shortcomings in what follows.

Portions of the thesis were first presented at conferences where I received helpful feedback. Particularly useful were the criticisms offered at a commentaries workshop held in Oxford in March 2014; I am grateful to all those who participated. In September 2014, under the auspices of OIKOS in Ravenstein, my respondent Professor A. P. M. H. Lardinois asked searching questions which led me to sharpen my methodological approach to the *Aspis*.

Throughout my graduate studies I have been supported financially by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and since 2012 jointly by Merton College. Their generosity and support, together with the encouragement of my friends and family, has made writing the thesis less of a χαλεπὸς ἄθλος than it might otherwise have been.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABV</i>	J. D. Beazley, <i>Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters</i> (Oxford 1956).
<i>AHS</i>	T. W. Allen, W. R. Halliday, E. E. Sikes, <i>The Homeric Hymns</i> , 2nd edn. (Oxford 1936).
<i>ARV</i>	J. D. Beazley, <i>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</i> , i–iii, 2nd edn. (Oxford 1963).
<i>Beazley Addenda</i>	<i>Beazley Addenda</i> , ed. T. H. Carpenter with T. Mannack and M. Mendonça, 2nd edn. (Oxford 1989).
<i>CA</i>	J. U. Powell, <i>Collectanea Alexandrina</i> (Oxford 1925).
<i>CEG</i>	P. A. Hansen, <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca</i> , i–ii (Berlin–New York 1983–9).
<i>DELG</i>	P. Chantraine, <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque</i> , rev. edn. (Paris 2009).
<i>EGF</i>	M. Davies, <i>Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (Göttingen 1988).
<i>EGM</i>	R. L. Fowler, <i>Early Greek Mythography</i> , i–ii (Oxford 2000–13).
<i>FGrH</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin–Leiden 1923–58).
<i>GEF</i>	M. L. West, <i>Greek Epic Fragments</i> (Cambridge MA 2003).
<i>Garl. Phil.</i>	A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, <i>The Garland of Philip</i> , i–ii (Cambridge 1968).
<i>GVI</i>	W. Peek, <i>Griechische Vers-Inschriften</i> , i (Berlin 1955).
<i>Hom. Encycl.</i>	M. Finkelberg (ed.), <i>The Homer Encyclopedia</i> , i–iii (Oxford 2011).
<i>LfgRE</i>	<i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (Göttingen 1955–2010).
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zurich–Munich 1981–99).
<i>LSJ</i>	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. Stuart Jones, <i>Greek–English Lexicon</i> , 9th edn. with Revised Supplement (Oxford 1996).
<i>Paralipomena</i>	J. D. Beazley, <i>Paralipomena</i> (Oxford 1971).
<i>PEG</i>	A. Bernabé, <i>Poetae Epici Graeci</i> , i–ii, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart 1996–2007).
<i>PMG</i>	D. L. Page, <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> (Oxford 1962).
<i>PMGF</i>	M. Davies, <i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , i (Oxford 1991).
<i>RE</i>	A. F. von Pauly and G. Wissowa (edd.), <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart–Munich 1893–1980).
<i>Roscher</i>	W. H. Roscher (ed.), <i>Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie</i> (Leipzig 1884–1937).

<i>SH</i>	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. J. Parsons, <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> (Berlin–New York 1983).
<i>SLG</i>	D. L. Page, <i>Supplementum Lyricis Graecis</i> (Oxford 1974).
Stith Thompson	Stith Thompson, <i>Motif-Index of Folk-Literature</i> , i–vi, 2nd edn. (Bloomington 1955–8).
<i>TrGF</i>	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt, <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , i–v (Göttingen 1971–2004).

Abbreviations for ancient authors follow LSJ and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, or are more explicit than them, except that ‘Hes.’ is omitted from citations of the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. The major Homeric Hymns are cited as *Dem.*, *Ap.*, *Herm.*, *Aphr.*, and the rest by their standard numeration. For Σ , Σ^{par} , Σ^Z , and Ped. see Sigla.

Fragments are cited from the following editions, unless stated otherwise: early epic, *GEF*; Hesiod, Merkelbach–West (*Fragmenta Hesiodica*, supplemented by the third edition of the OCT); lyric poets, *PMG*, *PMGF*, or *SLG*, except Stesichorus (Finglass); Lesbians, Voigt; iambic and elegiac poets, West; Pindar, Snell–Maehler; tragedy, *TrGF*; comedy, Kassel–Austin; Callimachus, Pfeiffer. Other editions are specified where necessary but are not, as a rule, listed in the Bibliography.

In the spelling and accentuation of archaic epic I have taken West’s edition of the *Iliad* as my guide, bringing citations from the relevant texts into conformity with it (silently for the most part).

An asterisk accompanying a citation from an ancient work signifies that the phrase is found in the same metrical *sedes* as in the relevant passage of the *Aspis*. At other times the asterisk is used to indicate that a phrase or form is hypothetical. It will be obvious from context in which sense the asterisk is intended.

References to the Commentary are signalled by (e.g.) ‘163n.’; such citations are to be distinguished from those of the form ‘n.163’, which refer to footnotes (numbered continuously throughout).

EDITIONS

The following are the chief editions that have been consulted. They are cited throughout in these abbreviated forms; page-numbers are given only when the reference is to something other than the editor's text of or note on a passage.

Aldine	Venice 1495; part of a miscellany.
Juntine	Venice, ¹ 1515, ² 1540.
Trincavelli	V. Trincavelli, Venice 1537. Includes Ped. (paraphrastica and technologica).
Basel	(J. Oporinus), Basel 1542. Includes Σ (for the first time) and Ped. The Cambridge manuscript used for the scholia, once considered lost (see West (1966) 62–3; Oates (1986) 84–5), has now been identified as Leid. Vulc. 23 by Di Gregorio (1971) 194–200. Repr. several times.
Heinsius	Dan. Heinsius, Leiden 1603; rev. 1622.
Winterton	R. Winterton, Cambridge 1635. Several further editions published.
Guyet	See next.
Graevius	J. G. Graevius, Amsterdam 1667. Includes the notes of F. Guyet. The second part of the book, <i>Lectiones Hesiodeae</i> , was also issued separately.
Clericus	J. Clericus, Amsterdam 1701. Includes notes of Heinsius, Guyet, Graevius.
Robinson	T. Robinson, Oxford 1737. Notes of Guyet and Clericus.
Loesner	C. F. Loesner, Leipzig 1778. Recension of Robinson; notes of Heinsius, Guyet, Clericus, Graevius. Repr. Königsberg 1787.
Heinrich	C. F. Heinrich, Breslau 1802. Includes Σ and Ped.
Gaisford	T. Gaisford, as part of <i>Poetae Minores Graeci</i> , Oxford 1814–20; text of the poem in vol. i, scholia in vol. iii. Scholia cited from vol. ii of the Leipzig reprint (1823), which has different pagination from the Oxford edition but also marginal numbers corresponding to the original. Contains Σ . Still the most recent edition of Ped.
Dindorf	L. Dindorf, Leipzig 1825. Repr. 1843.
Goettling	C. Goettling, Leipzig ¹ 1831, ² 1843. Contains Bentley's conjectures. The second edition responds to Hermann (1835). Cf. Flach.
Wolf	See next.
Ranke	C. F. Ranke, Quedlinburg–Leipzig 1840. Includes Σ (pp. 19–40); Σ^{par} (pp. 41–65); F. A. Wolf's laconic notes (pp. 67–107) and partial Latin translation (pp. 107–8). The rest is Ranke's own contribution.

- van Lennep D. J. van Lennep, Amsterdam 1854; posthumously edited by J. G. Hulleman. The lack of the author's *ultima manus* is sometimes evident.
- Paley F. A. Paley, London ¹1861, ²1883.
- Schoemann F. G. Schoemann, Berlin 1869.
- Koechly–Kinkel A. Koechly and G. Kinkel, Leipzig 1870. The editors survey the manuscripts used by their predecessors (pp. 145–9). Koechly also published an edition alone, Leipzig 1870.
- Flach J. Flach, Leipzig 1878 (advertised as 3rd edn. of Goettling). Under his alias H. Flach he published a separate edition, Berlin 1874.
- Sittl K. Sittl, Athens 1889.
- Rzach A. Rzach, ed. maior, Leipzig 1902. Teubner. The ed. minor (Leipzig ¹1902, ²1908, ³1913) differs sometimes from the ed. maior (e.g. v. 144), and makes use of papyri published after 1902. I do not cite Rzach's first edition, Leipzig 1884. Unqualified references to 'Rzach' denote the 1902 ed. maior.
- Evelyn–White H. G. Evelyn–White, London–New York 1914. Loeb. Rev. 1920, 1936.
- Mazon P. Mazon, Paris 1928. Budé. The numerous reprints are falsely implied by the publisher to differ from the first edition.
- Russo C. F. Russo, Florence ¹1950, ²1965. Most of the revisions are confined to pp. 211–25.
- Solmsen F. Solmsen, Oxford ¹1970, ²1983, ³1990. OCT. Bound with *Fragmenta selecta*, edd. R. Merkelbach and M. L. West. The text of the *Aspis* is unchanged between these editions, but the Praefatio is updated. Some of the Hesiodic fragments are to be found only in the latest edition.
- Most G. W. Most, Cambridge MA 2007. Loeb vol. ii.

I. PRELIMINARIES

‘It is certainly a very antient Piece, and well worth the Notice of Men of Genius.’

THOMAS ‘HESIOD’ COOKE

I.1. Subject, Date, Authorship

The *Aspis*, also known as the *Scutum* or *Shield of Herakles*, is a short epic poem composed in the archaic period. The first 56 lines recount the double birth of Herakles and Iphikles: within a single night Zeus and Amphytrion make love one after the other to Alkmene, and Alkmene becomes pregnant with twins, one semi-divine and the other mortal. The remainder of the poem (57–480) narrates how the adult Herakles, in company with his loyal nephew and charioteer Iolaos, finds in the precinct of Apollo at Pagasae the brigand Kyknos. Kyknos, a son of Ares, has been robbing pilgrims on their way to Delphi. He refuses to move aside to let Herakles and Iolaos pass, and so Herakles is forced to engage with him in combat. In the ensuing duel Herakles easily vanquishes Kyknos. At this point Ares, who has been hovering in the background, rushes forward, enraged at the death of his son, and attempts to slay Herakles; but with Athena’s encouragement, Herakles succeeds in wounding Ares, and the prostrate god must be rescued by his attendants, Deimos and Phobos. The centre-piece of the poem, from which it derives its title, is the description of Herakles’ shield (139–320; the battle narrative frames the shield description), which he takes up in readiness for the forthcoming combat.

In antiquity the poem was commonly attributed to Hesiod; those who doubted this ascription offered no alternative. Modern scholars are unanimous in rejecting Hesiodic authorship. The main reason is chronological: the poem is dated between the late seventh and early sixth centuries BC, about a hundred years after the commonly accepted date of the

author of *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. The arguments for the date of the *Aspis* rest on artistic, historical, and literary evidence.¹

Since the *Aspis* purports to describe a shield, scholars have sought to connect the images depicted on it with Greek art; Cook placed the poem between 580 and 570 on the strength of such *Realien*.² Art has also been used to date the poem from a different standpoint, namely through representations of the combat of Herakles and Kyknos: this subject attains great popularity during the sixth century but fades by the beginning of the fifth, and direct influence of the poem on the artists has been convincingly demonstrated (§III.3.i). Happily, the two approaches via art agree in their end result: the *Aspis* was most probably composed in the first few decades of the sixth century.

Second, the historical arguments. Since the mid-twentieth century, French scholars in particular have sought to connect the *Aspis* with the circumstances of the First Sacred War: they regard the poem as a piece of pro-Theban propaganda produced in response to that shadowy conflict.³ According to the traditional account of the War, in the early years of the sixth century the town of Crisa was accused of extorting taxes from pilgrims travelling to nearby Delphi; an alliance in which the Thessalians were prominent destroyed Crisa and gained significant power at Delphi as a result. How might the *Aspis* relate to this? In our poem the supreme Theban hero annihilates a Thessalian villain who, with pretensions to enjoy Apollo's favour (cf. *Aspis* 68–9), is in reality an unwelcome presence in the god's sanctuary and is moreover robbing pilgrims (477–80)—the very charge that had been levelled

¹ The following paragraphs cover similar ground to Janko (1986) 38–48.

² Cook (1937). Cf. n. 273.

³ The main work is Guillon (1963), developed by Janko (1986) 43–8; cf. Defradas (1954). Fowler (1998) links the *Catalogue* to the War, detecting in it influence from the political situation of the Delphic Amphictyony. The very historicity of the War has been doubted by Robertson (1978), on insufficient grounds; cf. Lehmann (1980), Davies (1994).

against Crisa. The *Aspis* poet, most likely himself a Theban, would be responding to the allies' charge against Crisa by turning it back on the pious saviours themselves. Kyknos would represent the Thessalians, and Herakles would stand for Thebes. The message would be that Thebes is dominant over Thessaly, and that Thebes is the true friend of Apollo. This theory is seductive but, unfortunately, unprovable. The theories connecting the *Aspis* to the First Sacred War must remain speculative.⁴

The literary testimonia also help with the dating. According to the Hypothesis to the *Aspis*, Aristophanes of Byzantium noted that the first 56 lines of the poem were also found in the *Catalogue of Women*, whose author he believed to be Hesiod. Reasoning (presumably) that Hesiod would not reuse a part of his own composition, he suspected that the *Aspis* was not the work of Hesiod himself, 'but of someone else who had undertaken to imitate the Homeric shield';⁵ that *Iliad* 18 is imitated by the *Aspis* has not seriously been doubted even by the most committed oralists. We learn from the same Hypothesis that Apollonius Rhodius championed the poem's authenticity; this implies that this question was at issue in his lifetime as well.⁶ Lastly, we are told 'Stesichorus says that the poem is Hesiod's'. This is a controversial datum, but in my view it refers to the melic poet of the sixth century and his poem *Kyknos* (fr. 166); cf. §III.3.i. This testimonium gives a further chronological indication for the *Aspis*:

⁴ Forrest (1982) 293 is justly cautious: '[the] suggestion that the fight in southern Thessaly between (Theban) Heracles and Cynus, retailed in the Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*, reflects Theban ambitions still further north at the same period rests more on hope than evidence.' Janko (1986) 48 suggests that *Aspis* 270–313 are a vignette of the poem's first performance: games held outside the walls of Thebes to celebrate the victory in this war (cf. esp. the *seven-gated* city, 271–2). Heinrich (LXV–LXVI), too, had suggested that the *Aspis* was first performed at games in the vicinity of Thebes (though without connecting it with the First Sacred War). Jeffery (1976) 74–5 suggests that the poet has been influenced by contemporary political events to give a new twist to an old myth.

⁵ Hypothesis to *Aspis*, p. 86 Solmsen. Aristophanes' observations about vv. 1–56 have received support from P.Oxy. 2355 and 2494A (Π_{36–7}), published in 1956 and 1962 respectively.

⁶ For Apollonius' scholarly interest in Hesiod cf. Pfeiffer (1968) 144, and cf. §II.5.

Stesichorus' floruit is thought to lie in the period 610–540,⁷ and if he was able to be fooled into believing that the poem had been composed in the distant past, we must allow some time for the *Aspis* to have circulated before reaching him. We would accordingly prefer to place the *Kyknos* near the end of Stesichorus' career.

Linguistic criteria have been employed in dating the *Aspis*. One would expect a later Greek hexameter poem to contain more modern linguistic forms than an early one, as singers updated the *Kunstsprache* to reflect their everyday speech. Janko sought to construct a relative chronology on this basis.⁸ But West in particular has been a forceful critic of this approach, repeatedly insisting that a range of factors beyond the poet's date will determine how 'advanced' his language looks. Indeed, the *Aspis* has often been held up as a corrective to the 'chronoglottometric' approach: it shows a higher observance of digamma than the *Iliad*, even though the relative chronology of the two poems is beyond doubt; as West puts it, 'it follows that counting digammas doesn't pay'.⁹ Janko's methods take into account a whole range of morphs and other criteria. But we are still left with the awkward fact that a demonstrably late poem is composed in language that is in some respects more 'archaic' than that of older poems. Janko's solution to this problem is 'false archaism': later poets were echoing the diction of fixed older texts. But this seems a dangerous and slippery concept, too easy to

⁷ Davies–Finglass (2014) 1–6.

⁸ Janko (1982), revisited in Janko (2012).

⁹ West (1963a) 11–12; (1965b) 159; (1995) 204–5; (2012) 227–8. Cf. Faulkner (2008) 26 n. 97. The position of the *Kunstsprache* relative to the poet's vernacular seems to me particularly important; thus although the *Aspis* poet, being most probably of Theban origin, would have naturally said φίκελος, at 345 he allowed himself προγένοντ' ἴκελοι, since he took the neglect of digamma to be typical of epic and overcompensated (elsewhere in the epos this digamma is respected, except at *Il.* 19.282).—Also problematic is the sample size of the *Aspis*; this leads to anomalous results in criteria such as tmesis (an 'archaic' feature), where the frequency is significantly higher than in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*; the reason is the large number of lines like 168 ἐν ... ἔσαν (so Haug (2012) 103).—As for 'ambition', cf. Matthews (1974) 85 on Panyassis, who 'is not a slavish imitator of Homeric diction. Rather he is an epic poet who, although thoroughly versed in the traditional language, is yet sufficiently original to employ untraditional words and even to introduce words of his own.' The *Aspis* poet's linguistic habits are discussed in §II.6.

invoke in order to bring theories into accordance with facts. We are fortunate to have other evidence to date the *Aspis*, and we are unlikely to go wrong in placing it within the limits 600–570.

1.2. History of scholarship

The *Aspis* has always occupied a marginal status in scholarship. Although it received attention from Hellenistic scholars, verse for verse the scholia are far less ample than those on the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, to say nothing of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This will not be a mere accident of transmission and epitomisation: it indicates that in antiquity less scholarly attention was paid to the *Aspis* than to these other poems. By the Roman period, it was a commonplace to regard the *Aspis* as ‘bad’ poetry (§III.3.iii), although the reasons for this judgement are never adequately explained. In modern scholarship, too, the *Aspis* has received short shrift.¹⁰ Underlying this negativity is a troubling sense of the poem’s secondary, epigonal status. A sketch of the criticism of the *Aspis*, with an emphasis on the period after Wolf, will contextualise the present thesis and explain its premisses and assumptions.

In modern scholarship there was, as far as one may gather, no wholesale condemnation of the *Aspis* before the late eighteenth century. Quite the contrary: the poem was highly esteemed by eminent authorities. Daniel Heinsius, whose acumen was recognised by his appointment to professor before the age of twenty-five, declared that the *Aspis* was ‘duplici modo lepidum ποίημα, & quod non minus Apolline quam Hercule dignum sit’.¹¹ Thomas Robinson in 1737 summed up his comparison of the battle-descriptions in the Homeric and

¹⁰ Some examples are collected at Martin (2005) 154–6.

¹¹ On p. 120 of the second, separately paginated section of his edition (‘Introductio in doctrinam, quae libris Ἑργῶν καὶ Ἡμερῶν continentur ... item notae, emendationes, observationes in Hesiodum, eiusque Interpretes’).

Hesiodic shields with the succinct judgement: ‘palnam Hesiodo dare non dubitem’. The first translator of Hesiod into English, a man who crossed intellectual swords with no less a figure than Alexander Pope,¹² was equally enthusiastic, as will be seen from the epigraph to this chapter.

Modern scholarship on the *Aspis* began in earnest in the late eighteenth century, in Germany. Wolf’s *Prolegomena* was published in 1795, changing for ever the face of Homeric scholarship. Not all the same considerations apply to a short poem like the *Aspis* as to the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Nonetheless, much did seem applicable to the short epic, and the immediate impact of Wolf’s new school of Homeric criticism on the *Aspis* is clear to see. The first edition published in the wake of Wolf was Heinrich’s in 1802. Heinrich was a pupil of Heyne, the founder of the Göttingen school of Homeric criticism from which Wolf himself had emerged, and a man on whose ideas Wolf drew extensively in the *Prolegomena*.¹³ Heinrich signals his debt to Heyne, but he also makes explicit mention of the *Prolegomena* and the profound influence that the book has had on his own studies of Hesiod.¹⁴ In 1840 Ranke, a scholar who was also in thrall to Wolf, brought out his edition of the *Aspis*, in which he was able to print the master’s unfinished notes on the poem. Wolf’s commentary is destructive in intent: he wishes to illustrate the decline of epic poetry (p. 71), and he marvels that another scholar whose acumen he respects could have given a positive aesthetic judgement of the *Aspis* as recently as 1811 (pp. 74–5). The negative attitude taken towards the *Aspis* by the High Priest of Analysis informed the assumptions and approach of others who undertook to study the poem.

¹² In *The Battle of the Poets* (1725) (cf. Mack (1985) 465).

¹³ Cf. the *subsidia* gathered at Grafton–Most–Zetzel (1985) 232–47.

¹⁴ Heinrich (1802) XLI–XLIII.

It had always been known that the *Aspis* was a composite work, and since the testimonium from Aristophanes of Byzantium showed that it was undoubtedly a ῥαπτὸν ἔπος, it was particularly tempting to prod at the seams. Goettling's first edition of the Hesiodic poems came out in 1831; it remained the standard edition of Hesiod for 50 or 60 years. The boldest hypothesis concerning the *Aspis* advanced in that book is that the whole shield description—that is, one-third of the total length of the poem—is an interpolation made in the Hellenistic period. Goettling would leave us with a straightforward account of Herakles fighting Kyknos and then Ares, with a total length of about 300 lines.¹⁵ Soon afterwards Hermann, in his magisterial review of Goettling, rejected the latter's wholesale excision of the shield description. Instead, he sought to 'restore' the 'primitive design' of the poem by stripping away later accretions and recovering the 'core'.¹⁶ This was the technique that Hermann had applied to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in developing his 'kernel' theory, according to which original poems much shorter than these had been expanded by later poets through interpolation. Hermann, who had been just twenty-three years old when the *Prolegomena* was published, had spent his formative years in a system which revered Wolf; indeed, he encouraged Ranke to publish Wolf's notes. In any case, the main interest that the *Aspis* held was as a literary-historical artefact, and certainly no longer as an object to excite aesthetic appreciation. Homer too had been 'downgraded' in this period, but the *Aspis* is treated with especial censoriousness.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, dissertations appeared which investigated the linguistic relationship of the poem to Homer and compared the two

¹⁵ Goettling's theory, which recalls Zenodotus' deletion of the Iliadic Shield, is refuted in §II.2.i. Even more elaborate textual gymnastics inspired by Goettling's theory will be found at Deiters (1858) 59–60.

¹⁶ Hermann (1835) 204–16.

ecphrases.¹⁷ Scholars almost always concluded that Homer was superior. Here, for instance, is the final sentence of a Breslau dissertation of 1872: ‘Id vero constat, multo aptius et accuratius scutum Achillis descriptum esse, quam Herculis.’ A Prussian treatise of 1868 blithely concludes: ‘lector attentus haud difficile intelligit, Hesiodum descriptionem suam nimis, rebus allatis, cumulasse, Homerum contra omnia placide, perlucide simpliciterque descripsisse.’¹⁸ We note how the contrary positive example of Homer is adduced in order to denigrate the *Aspis* still further. The negative attitude was inspired by Wolf’s *Prolegomena* and the new brand of philology that it ushered in in Germany. This new philology demanded that texts be treated with authority and decisiveness: a moderate opinion would not do: it had to be a conviction, and destructiveness was an index of authority.¹⁹

Prejudice against the poet and his abilities influenced editorial practice. When confronted with a textual difficulty which resists explanation, scholars normally seek to emend it away as best they can. But with the *Aspis* many things that in the case of other authors would be considered straightforward corruptions were allowed to stand, because editors have supposed that the poet himself was responsible. Wolf set the tone. When commenting on the scene on Olympus, for example, with its digression at 203b–205a, he pronounces: ‘totus locus lucido ordine caret, *auctoris ipsius, opinor, culpa*’ (emphasis added). At 166–7 Wolf retained κύανεα

¹⁷ Noteworthy are: Deiters (1858); Fietkau (1866); Schäfer (1868); Rhode (1872); Balsamo (1898–1900) (of which I have seen only Part I); Kuenneth (1901–2); Stegemann (1904); Bolaffi (1919); cf. also Ranke 339–74. These works are of varied quality. The most lucid and consistently sensible dissertation of the traditional stamp is Schwarz (1932). For bibliography on art see n. 273.—As is well known, this use of ‘ecphrasis’ lacks ancient authority: the ancients used ἔκφρασις to denote a λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπὲρ ὅψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον (Theon II.118 Spengel); cf. Webb (1999). But it is a convenient term for verbal description of a work of art, something which was at any rate a sub-genre of ancient ecphrasis (Webb (2009) 1–2).

¹⁸ Rhode (1872) 29; Schäfer (1868) XXII.

¹⁹ Cf. Turner (1997). Wilamowitz recalls how as a youth some time before 1870 he was preparing for Usener’s seminar: ‘One of the Rhenish students confessed: “I have not got anything for Usener, but I shall reject a couple of verses in a Euripidean prologue. Then he will be satisfied, and only condemn a larger number as spurious.”’ (Wilamowitz (1930) 105 = (1928) 92).

with its anomalous scansion, because ‘α longum in tali poeta minime nos offendit’. ‘Talis poeta’ does not mean ‘poeta epicus’, in whose work such a licence might be possible (cf. *Od.* 10.353): it means ‘poeta ineptus’. At 254 βάλλ’ stands for βάλλον ‘vitio poetae haud dubie’.²⁰ And so on. Wolf has decided that the poet of the *Aspis* is a poor artist because that is the impression given by his only surviving work in its present textual state; if these were verses of the *Iliad*, Wolf would assuredly not have tolerated the faults. The circularity of his approach is self-evident.

Parry ushered in a new revolution. And yet, for all the attention that has been lavished on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (and to a lesser extent the *Hymns*, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*), the *Aspis* has been neglected. The most important work of the twentieth century is Russo’s commentary on the poem, which, staying basically within the tradition of Heinrich and Ranke and not much affected by the new oralist trends, lays sound and dependable philological foundations to which all subsequent research on the *Aspis* is indebted. But the constraints of the series in which his commentary was published do not allow him to discuss issues at the length they deserve, and he must also sometimes pass over wider questions which have an important bearing on the poet and his work. Nonetheless, Russo’s commentary remains indispensable. Specifically linguistic studies have been undertaken, but very little of wider interest to the poem has been published.²¹ The *Aspis* rarely receives more than the briefest notice in the standard accounts of Greek literature. The time is ripe for a fresh look at this fascinating poem. But first we must decide what sort of approach will be both valid and fruitful.

²⁰ On this problematic verse cf. Hainsworth (1964), forcefully opposed by West (1965*a*).

²¹ Linguistic studies include Edwards (1971), Janko (1982); for formulae cf. the works cited in §II.6. Studies of broader relevance include Janko (1986), Effe (1988), Toohey (1988), Martin (2005), Stamatopoulou (2013).

I.3. Aims and assumptions

The *Aspis* opens with a quotation of 56 verses of the *Catalogue*; in my view, the poet of 57–480 took these over as a ready-made preface (§II.7.i). We therefore need to treat the two blocks separately. There are other indications that the *Aspis* draws on fixed texts, in particular books 5, 16, and 18 of the *Iliad* (§III.1). There are moreover some striking verbal interactions with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which suggest that the *Aspis* is echoing particular Homeric *loci*, rather than simply drawing on the shared formulaic repertoire (§II.6.ii). The *Aspis* poet knew the *Iliad* as a fixed text, a literary classic which he wanted to rival and outdo. Given the date of the *Aspis*, it is possible that he had access to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in written form, and it is more likely still that in composing for performance he made use of writing; cf. §§II.6.vi, II.7.iii. What implications does all this have for our approach to the *Aspis* as a piece of literature?

Nineteenth-century scholars went too far in arguing for the slavish imitation by the *Aspis* of the Homeric poems. Linguistic parallels were invariably taken to signify direct dependence, and since the *Aspis* was known to be posterior to the *Iliad*, linguistic parallels with Homer were inevitably regarded as ‘thefts’. Editions and theses have sections whose titles amount to: ‘Verses taken from the Homeric poems’; nowadays we would entitle such sections ‘Language and relationship to other early poetry’, allowing for a softer view and preferring, in general, to posit shared use of a common inherited stock of formulae. Similarly with type-scenes: older critics may complain that the poet has stolen this or that motif from Homer, as if the *Iliad* were the first poem in which the well-worn phrases that describe a warrior’s arming had been used. No one would advocate such an approach nowadays.

But, like all assaults on entrenched positions, the reaction against the idea of the existence of a direct relationship between two texts produced in the oral tradition has strayed

dangerously to the other extreme, obscuring real and meaningful links between fixed texts. Appealing to the resources of the ‘traditional repertoire’ is certainly a helpful concept in many situations, and the poet can deftly exploit the audience’s expectations of the course of action usually followed in such sequences; but this approach cannot always give us the whole answer. The *Aspis* is a clear instance in which we need to investigate direct influence of earlier poems on the later text. What, though, does it mean at this period to ‘allude to’ an earlier text? Is the concept a meaningful or helpful one in a predominantly oral culture? The *Aspis* poet will have known the *Iliad* primarily through performance—certainly by listening to other poets recite it, and perhaps by performing parts of it himself. This is how the audience will mostly have been acquainted with it. Does this limit what we can expect in terms of allusion? We underestimate the capabilities of archaic audiences at our peril. Not only will they have been attuned to verbal echoes in speech and recitation: they will also have been highly retentive of the details of a particular telling of a story, and sensitive to instances where the poet was retailing events ἀντία προτέρων (as with the Herakles–Eurystheus legend, for which see §III.2.ii). Competence and intelligence will of course have varied from audience member to audience member, and their experiences and reactions will have differed.²² Some of the poet’s intricacies may have gone unappreciated by part—perhaps even all—of the audience. But it is still legitimate to enquire whether the author intended such subtleties.

It is generally accepted that the *Odyssey* responds directly and self-consciously to the *Iliad* in a variety of thematic and structural ways.²³ Verbally, too, it seems to rework certain fixed

²² For such considerations (in relation to Athenian theatre) cf. Revermann (2006).

²³ Cf. Rutherford (2001).

passages of the *Iliad*, as we can see from numerous echoes of the earlier poem.²⁴ Provided that there is ‘some similarity in context, in situation, or in the thematic aspects of a given episode’,²⁵ it is appropriate—necessary, even—to see orally trained archaic poets in a deliberate dialogue with their literary predecessors. With the *Aspis*, it has usually been assumed that echoes of the *Iliad* are due to lazy imitation by the later poet, or rather poetaster. But his intentions are in fact more subtle, to generate meaning in the new text through reference to the model (§III.1). As our knowledge of archaic poetry grows, we see increasingly that allusion in this corpus can be both sophisticated and meaningful: similarities need not be gratuitous, as if other poets were content simply to filch verses from their predecessors. Rather, the reuse of an earlier passage can, even in the archaic period, constitute an essential part of the fabric of the receiving text. Aspects of our current approach to archaic poetry resemble the view once taken of Hellenistic and Latin poetry in relation to their Greek antecedents: we no longer say that Virgil has ‘copied’ such-and-such a simile from Homer: we say that ‘the genesis of this simile is to be seen in Homer; the new elements are as follows; the allusion enriches the poem in the following way.’ A similar shift in scholarship on the earlier period would be welcome—provided of course that it is undertaken with sufficient regard to the realities of a shared repertory of poetic formulae and motifs.

The oral element must not recede too far from our view: not every echo will be significant. We must also remember that the *Aspis* was designed for recitation and we must pay sufficient attention to the original performance context if we are to reach balanced and sensible conclusions. For example, the *Aspis* poet has in the past been criticised for obscurity and narrative illogicality: he does not tell us what Kyknos’ crime was until the very last lines

²⁴ Cf. West (2014) 70–7, with references to earlier work.

²⁵ Rutherford (2001) 127.

of the poem (477–80). But he was not writing for our sake or to inform us of the bare facts of Herakles' combat with this particular foe. His audience knew the story and background, and we have no right to demand that the poem should meet our peculiar requirements or tell us everything we should wish to know;²⁶ one might as well censure Alcman for being obscure in the *Partheneion*. Moreover, the *Aspis* contains some narrative inconsistencies which have attracted censure: for example, Athena is said at one moment to be in a chariot at the edge of the battlefield, but in the next instant she somehow reaches out from the chariot and deflects a spear that is flying towards Herakles (455–6). It seems that the poet has borrowed the motif from the aristeia of Diomedes in *Iliad* 5, where Athena is standing in the chariot next to Diomedes when she does this (853–4). Obviously, for the *Aspis* poet the priority was to stress Athena's support of Herakles, and this trumped narrative consistency. Ancient audiences were evidently not much troubled by the flaw, if indeed they noticed it. There is, however, more to be said about this scene (§§II.7.iii, III.1).

Lastly, editorial practice is changing the way that the poem looks and is altering our view of the poet's abilities. First, the issue of priority. On the shields of Achilles and Herakles we find four near-identical verses describing various battle demons. It had always been assumed that the *Aspis* had shamelessly taken over these verses from the *Iliad*, but in 1965 Solmsen persuasively argued that an interpolator had added the *Aspis* passage to the Homeric text (see 156–60n.). Virtually no one had previously considered this solution: scholars were prejudiced by their low opinion of the *Aspis* as a derivative work. Second, textual corruption. Unlike Wolf, we no longer assume that the poem's present textual state is always due to the original composer's ineptitude. This has been particularly true since the publication of Π_{34} in 1907: in

²⁶ Cf. West (2007a) 62, 'In earlier ages when poetry was entirely oral it must have been quite common for poets to supplement their recitals with accessory information given informally.'

this ancient copy the repetitious 209b–211a are absent, lending weighty support to their earlier excision by Peppmüller (cf. 207–15n.). With the excision of 209b–211a the scene becomes clearer, and the author rises in our estimation. The same will be true if we delete 203b–205a (cf. ad loc.), rather than attributing the clumsiness of the scene to the author himself (as Wolf did, cf. §I.2). Cf. §II.7.ii.

We are, therefore, better placed than ever before to produce a study of the *Aspis* that will give us a true picture of the author's intentions and his audience's expectations. We need no longer think of it as a miserable assemblage of recycled Homeric verses, little better than a cento; we have Parry to thank for that. We no longer leave textual corruptions unhealed on the assumption that they are due to the author himself; for this we can cite both changing scholarly attitudes and decisive papyrus evidence. Lastly, we no longer hold the prejudicial belief that Homer is the standard by which everything else should be judged; we are literary relativists, concerned rather to investigate as objectively as possible the culture of song in archaic Greece. The *Aspis* lets us see how an orally trained poet engaged with a famous exemplar; it shows us creativity in a tense relationship with tradition, at both a thematic and a linguistic level; and it jostles at the intersection of orality and literacy. It is a valuable resource which we can no longer afford to leave unexploited.

II. THE POET AND HIS CRAFT

II.1. Style

Previous work on the *Aspis*'s relationship to other early hexameter poetry has largely confined itself to verbal parallels. Some of this work would now be considered redundant by scholars accustomed to the oral-formulaic nature of early Greek hexameter poetry (§§I.2–3); cases in which our poet seems to echo a particular passage are discussed in §II.6.ii. But very little attention has been paid to the *Aspis*'s relationship to other early Greek hexameter poetry in ways that go beyond the merely verbal. The result of this investigation will be an improved understanding of our poet's art and of the relationship of our poem to other early hexameter poetry.

II.1.i. Narrative style

The narrative style of an epic poem will depend on how much material is to be covered, and in what compass and with what emphases. Thus we can infer that '[i]n view of the amount of material covered in four books, the narrative [of the *Little Iliad*] must have been quite brisk, without the leisurely amplitude of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The poet was not aiming to create an epic of great length to rival them but to get through the episodes on his agenda.'²⁷ Another important factor is the author's own predilections and capabilities. What sort of a narrative is the *Aspis*?

²⁷ West (2013) 170. Cf. also Fränkel (1975) 251 on *Dem.* 174ff., a passage that 'betrays the quicker tempo of a more recent, un-epic age of poetry. A series of pictures is presented, pleasing, serious and vividly drawn, fading swiftly one into another.'

In a brief but illuminating discussion of Homeric narrative Kirk drew attention to a type which he termed the ‘abbreviated-reference style’.²⁸ By this he denoted the compressed narrative style adopted by the poet when he is referring to something outside the main narrative of the poem, often via a reminiscence in a character’s mouth. An example of this is *Il.* 6.167ff., where Glaukos recounts the story of Bellerophon’s exile to Lycia. The Iliadic passage is notable for its cryptic and vague phraseology, a result of the poet’s wish to ‘glide over familiar developments in a well-known story or to gloss over legendary incidents the details of which were unfamiliar or forgotten’. If a narrative in the abbreviated-reference style contains any direct speech, the speech will be short, as is the case with the two-line utterance of Anteia reported by Glaukos just previously (*Il.* 6.164–5). The amount of speech is at any rate much lower than in the main narrative of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where the overall average is 55 per cent.

The *Alkmene-ehoie* (*Aspis* 1–56) would best be described as composed in the abbreviated-reference style: the audience is presumed already to be familiar with the story of the Taphians’ raid and its aftermath; the tale is recounted regressively, not in a continuous narrative; details are mentioned only as need arises, and in most cases they are hardly fleshed out. Thus from *Aspis* 12 χωσάμενος περὶ βουσί we are required to understand that once Elektryon had recovered the cattle from the Taphians, there arose a dispute between him and Amphytryon, a dispute which led to an act of homicide (this is a detail that we learn only from later sources). That is too much to extract from the phrase χωσάμενος περὶ βουσί unless the audience is already familiar with the story. There is no direct speech in the *ehoie*. Speech seems to have been rare in the *Catalogue*,²⁹ although not wholly absent from it. The

²⁸ Kirk (1962) 164ff.

²⁹ Cf. Diomedes *Gramm. Lat.* i. 482–3 Keil.

used for the main narrative, not simply for secondary recollections (as in the *Iliad*). The main narrative of the Cyclic poems will thus have been balder and less ample than that of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

What is the narrative style of *Aspis* 57–480? Our poet certainly uses the abbreviated-reference style in Herakles' first speech to Iolaos (*Aspis* 78ff.):

ἦ τι μέγ' ἀθανάτους μάκαρας, τοὶ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
 ἦλινεν Ἀμφιτρύων, ὅτ' εὐστέφανον ποτὶ Θήβην 80
 ἦλθε λιπὼν Τίρυνθον, εὐκτίμενον πτολίεθρον,
 κτείνας Ἥλεκτρώνα βοῶν ἔνεκ' εὐρυμετώπων·

The most important idea—that Amphitryon offended the gods—is expressed first (79–80). Only then is the background detail filled in, as need arises: first, we are told that he left Tiryns, an event recorded in a compressed ὅτε-clause (80–1); second, we are given the reason why he left Tiryns, his slaying of Elektryon βοῶν ἔνεκα; as with the parallel phrase at *Aspis* 12 βοῶν ἔνεκ' εὐρυμετώπων, here too the audience is supposed to be familiar with the story. An ample Homeric narrative would have not only taken much more time over this story but would have reversed the order in which these last two elements are here related: first Amphitryon killed Elektryon, then he went into exile. But this use of the abbreviated-reference style by the poet of the *Aspis* is in full conformity with Homeric precedent, as it occurs in a character's brisk recollection of an event in the distant past.

It is not the only style which the poet of the *Aspis* knows, however: for most of the narrative our poet uses a much more ample style, one similar to that used in the narrative of the Homeric epics. Here the details are presented in a linear fashion and in an expansive manner. For example, the description of Ares and Kyknos at 60–5 is lingering and unhurried: Herakles saw Kyknos and his father in the sanctuary, resplendent in their armour; the horses were pawing the ground; a dust-cloud arose under their chariot; the equipment on the horses

clattered around. A version of this passage in the abbreviated-reference style would have had little space for pictorial details such as these and would have contented itself with the bare essentials of the plot: that Herakles found his adversaries in the sanctuary of Apollo. Again, at 338–44 the preparations for combat are described in a leisurely style: Athena mounted the chariot; Iolaos urged on the horses; the horses ran swiftly, churning up a dust-cloud; for Athena gave them strength with the aegis; and the earth resounded.

Yet our poet has a distinct personality and is not identical to the poet of the *Iliad*. The style of the *Aspis* has often been called awkward, and this is in no small part because of the poet's brevity of expression. Things often happen κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον. 139. Herakles must lay down the spear he had picked up at 135, since he uses *both* hands to heft the shield; but the poet does not trouble to tell us that he released the spear from his grasp. 320–1. We are not told explicitly that Herakles transferred the shield to one hand, secured it to his body with a τελαμών, and grasped the spear again: all this is obvious, the poet thinks, and can be inferred from 321 πάλλεν. 321–3. Herakles leaps onto his chariot, although we had not been told that he had descended (as he must have done in order to arm). 340–1. Iolaos urges on the horses. As Russo notes, in Homer the formula ἵπποισιν ἐκέκλετο (used at *Aspis* 341) is always followed by direct speech in which the charioteer addresses the horses, but there is no direct speech at this point in the *Aspis*. This briefer narrative style is precisely paralleled at *Dem.* 88–9, where the same un-Homeric deployment of this formula is to be observed. 413–15. In the *Iliad* we are usually (though not always) informed that a warrior 'balanced' or 'aimed' his spear, and only then do we learn the outcome of the missile's trajectory (*Il.* 3.346, 355, etc.); here, however, the poet omits the preparatory stage and says merely that Kyknos σάκει ἔμβαλε χάλκεον ἔγχος. This is the first indication we have had that Kyknos has thrown his

spear at all. 68–9. I take this last because it is a less certain case. Kyknos hopes to defeat Herakles, ἀλλά οἱ εὐχολέων οὐκ ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων· ἰ αὐτὸς γάρ οἱ ἐπῶρσε βίην Ἑρακλῆειν. The *Iliad* poet would normally give the words of the hero's prayer.³¹ Kuenneth deleted 68–9: 'es ist hier plötzlich von εὐχολέαι die Rede, von denen wir vorher nicht das mindeste erwähnt finden'.³² It is also possible that in 66 there was for ἐλπόμενος a *varia lectio* εὐχόμενος, in which case the mention of prayers in 68 would not be so unexpected.³³ We might instead posit a lacuna before 68, in which the words of Kyknos' prayer were given in direct speech. Probably, however, the text is sound, and we should set the unexpressed prayer in the context of the poet's tendency to leave unsaid what the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* would have made explicit. There is also a literary motivation for keeping Kyknos silent (§II.1.iv).

Notice too the technique used to describe the approach of a god: when in the *Iliad* a deity comes to a warrior's aid, we are usually told that he or she 'noticed' something on the battlefield and in response travelled from Olympus (with or without vehicular transport); Athena in the *Aspis*, however, appears abruptly at Herakles' side, 325 ἀγχίμολον δέ σφ' ἦλθε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη, without any narrative preparation.³⁴ Here it will be instructive to return to the *Cypria* fragment quoted above: there we are told that Lynkeus saw the Dioskouroi, and the next line runs νύξε δ' ἄρ' ἄγχι στὰς μεγάλην δρῦν. Unless we accept W. Ribbeck's lacuna between lines 6 and 7, the compression of thought is noteworthy: after saying that Lynkeus descried the Dioskouroi, the poet states that he 'stabbed the tree,

³¹ Morrison (1991) 146–7; at 147 n. 4 he lists Homeric passages where prayers are expressed indirectly.

³² Kuenneth (1901–2) ii. 25–6; vv. 68–9 are expunged also by Schwarz (1932) 20, who (wrongly) regards their being addressed to Apollo as impossible and a sure sign of the interpolator's hand.

³³ Cf. Solmsen ap. Russo, *Addenda* p. 217.

³⁴ *Il.* 5.123 ἀγχοῦ δ' ἰσταμένη ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (Athena to Diomedes), where there is no description of Athena's journey, might seem to be parallel, but Diomedes has just prayed to Athena for aid and she has responded. Even when Athena suddenly appears during the Quarrel, the poet immediately explains that Hera had sent her (*Il.* 1.195–6). There are a few exceptions in the *Odyssey*, however, when Athena appears alongside her protégés.

standing next to it' without bothering first to say that he went up to it. Just like the poet of the *Aspis*, then, the poet of the *Cypria* requires the audience to supply intervening detail in cases where the *Iliad* would have been more ample in its presentation.

II.1.ii. Structure

Of the poem's composition van der Valk comments, 'it is stiff and makes an impression which we may define as archaic. If, in fact, we did not know that the *Iliad* is the original poem, the archaic character of the *Aspis* would make us think that the latter is the older work.'³⁵ This impression of an 'archaic' compositional quality can be extended to the structure of the poem. The structure is simple: the *choie* (1–56), narrating the conception of Herakles, is followed by an account of a feat accomplished much later in his life (57–480). The duel and its preparations proceed in linear fashion, except for the narrative pause occasioned by the intercalated ecphrasis (139–320). In line 57 the poet states his theme in summary form—ὃς καὶ Κύκνον ἔπεφνεν—and follows this up with a retrograde γάρ. Ample parallels for this archaic feature can be cited.³⁶

The poet mentions only Kyknos in his proem. The wounding of Ares, however, is clearly integral to the poet's framework from the outset and is organic to the whole. Ares is alluded to as early as 57 Ἀρητιόδην μέγαθυμον, and from line 70 to 114 the focus of both the narrator and Herakles is the god rather than Kyknos. Thus, after describing Kyknos' vain prayer to Apollo, at 70–4 the narrator dwells on the resplendence of Ares: the sanctuary shone ὑπὸ δεινοῖο θεοῦ τευχέων τε καὶ αὐτοῦ, and the god's eyes gleamed with fire. No mention of Kyknos. The poet continues his build-up: 'Who would have dared to face [Ares] but Herakles and Iolaos?' Here the pronoun ἐκείνου (72) rather than (metrically possible) ἐκείνων

³⁵ Van der Valk (1953) 267.

³⁶ Cf. van Groningen (1958) 58.

shows that the poet has in mind only the terrifying aspect of Ares, not of his son. At 98 Herakles tells Iolaos to direct the chariot forward μηδὲν ὑποδδείσας κτύπον Ἄρεος ἀνδροφόνοιο and predicts that Ares καὶ κρατερός περ ἐὼν ἅται πολέμοιο (101). Iolaos, however, switches the focus back to Kyknos: he declares that the gods are honouring Herakles, οἷον δὲ καὶ τόνδε βροτὸν κρατερόν τε μέγαν τε | σὰς ἐς χεῖρας ἄγουσιν, ἵνα κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἄρῃαι (cf. *Th.* 530–2). This is a delicate piece of characterisation: Herakles with immense self-confidence considers Kyknos no threat whatsoever and is apprehensive only of Ares; Iolaos with greater humility suggests to his uncle that Kyknos perhaps ought to be taken seriously after all. Iolaos does return to the topic of Ares (109–12), but he has lowered Herakles' sights a little.

Like various scholars before him, van Groningen declares that the poem has very weak unity.³⁷ This is ungenerous. It is true that the transition from the *ehoie* to the *Aspis* proper is rough, but the poet of 57–480 has paid attention to the content of the *ehoie*. There are links between the *ehoie* and Herakles' speech at 78–88 (cf. §II.7.i). Moreover, we learn from the *ehoie* that Zeus has a grand plan in begetting Herakles: ὥς ῥα θεοῖσιν | ἀνδράσι τ' ἀλφειοτῆσιν ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα φυτεύσαι (28–9). Wolf asks in what sense Herakles was a 'helper' to the gods, and he canvasses a reference to the Gigantomachy as well as noting that there are other occasions in myth when Herakles aids the Olympians. But Wolf rightly concludes that these explanations are unnecessary: 'non longe quaerenda est talis occasio, siquidem in hoc ipso carmine opem fert Hercules Apollini, Cycno occidendo'.³⁸ The Kyknomachy is thus consistent with and indeed complementary to the *ehoie*. As noted above,

³⁷ Van Groningen (1958) 120–1; cf. Schmid–Stählin (1929) 270, 'Das der Schild in der Kampfszene keine hervorragende Rolle spielt, so erscheint die ganze Ekphrasis als müßiges Einschleusen, das nicht denselben Verfasser zu haben braucht wie die umgebende Kampfszene; diese ist vielleicht aus dem Αἰγίμιος geschöpft.' (They cite Robert (1920–6) ii.1. 532 n. 1.)

³⁸ Wolf 88. Cf. n. 67.

the wounding of Ares is prepared for from the outset. Further structural unity is achieved through foreshadowing in the ecphrasis of the action of the main narrative (§IV.4).

What of the end of the poem? ‘Early hexameter poems, however well constructed overall, finish without ceremony. Their last lines, taken by themselves, could never be identified as last lines.’³⁹ In the case of the *Iliad* it is supposed to be proved by the fact that with a small textual adjustment the poem could be made to lead directly on to the *Aethiopis*. Moreover, early Greek epic poems—hymns excepted, where the formula is highly stereotyped—do not have proper epilogues: ‘[l]’épilogue définitif sera celui qui répète l’essentiel de l’ouvrage, soit qu’il en résume les idées, soit qu’il en condense la force émotionnelle, soit encore qu’il combine ces deux aspects’; the last verses of the *Aspis* ‘ne résument même pas en une cheville rétrospective le dernier épisode’; the last clause, ὅτι ῥα κλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας | ὅστις ἄγοι Πυθοῖδε βίηι σύλασσε δοκεύων, so lacks finality that it would have invited the audience to ask the bard: ‘et comment donc Cynos s’était-il méconduit à l’égard des pèlerins en route vers Delphes?’⁴⁰ This analysis is, in my view, mistaken: the poet takes pains to round off his composition and tidy up the loose ends.

Style and structure need to be considered together for a true understanding of the poem. It was noted above that our poet employs an ample style for most of his narrative. After the defeat of Ares, however, the poet seems to be in a hurry to reach the conclusion. Mazon, who has no high opinion of the *Aspis* as a whole, is particularly dismissive of this section, with its series of clauses qualified by αἶψα and similar connectives: ‘en neuf vers [sc. 463–71], tout est fini: les marionnettes sont rentrées derrière le rideau’.⁴¹ The composition is indeed brisk:

³⁹ West (1985) 121.

⁴⁰ Van Groningen (1958) 76, 112.

⁴¹ Mazon 129.

τῶι δὲ Φόβος καὶ Δεῖμος εὐτροχὸν ἄρμα καὶ ἵππους
 ἦλσαν αἶψ' ἐγγύς, καὶ ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης
 ἐς δίφρον θῆκαν πολυδαίδαλον· αἶψα δ' ἔπειτα 465
 ἵππους μαστιέτην, ἵκοντο δὲ μακρὸν Ὀλύμπον.
 υἱὸς δ' Ἀλκμήνης καὶ κυδάλιμος Ἴόλαος
 Κύκνον σκυλεύσαντες ἀπ' ὤμων τεύχεα καλά
 νίσοντ'· αἶψα δ' ἔπειτα πόλιν Τρηχῖνος ἵκοντο
 ἵπποις ὠκυπόδεσσιν. ἀτὰρ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη 470
 ἐξίκετ' Οὐλύμπόν τε μέγαν καὶ δώματα πατρός.

This reminds one of *Thebaid* fr. 2 (quoted in §II.1.i). But this style has not been employed throughout the poem. The theme of the *Aspis* is announced as the slaying of Kyknos (57), and the narrative high-points of the poem are this and the wounding of Ares. Once these events have been recounted, the poet regards his task as all but finished, and so he switches to something akin to the abbreviated-reference style.

The audience, having heard an account of the two duels, has received what it was promised at the outset; now, sensing the rapid acceleration of narrative pace, they are given the impression that these verses constitute the end of the composition. This is the case with the end of the *Iliad*, where the execution of Hektor's funerary rites is narrated briskly; the poet even seems to insist on the rapidity with which it was all accomplished. Note the connectives at the end of *Iliad* 24: 792 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα, 797 αἶψα δ' ἄρα, 797 αὐτάρ, 799 ῥίμφα δέ, 801 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα. Thus although van Groningen is right to say that the last line of the *Iliad* 'ne présente pas le moindre rapport avec l'ensemble du poème' and 'ne diffère, ni au point de vue formel, ni au point de vue fonctionnel, d'autres vers qu'on lit en cours de route', he has not taken sufficient account of the change in narrative style which, as in the *Aspis*, is deployed in order to suggest the completion of the poet's task. By contrast, *Il.* 17.735 ὥς οἱ γ' ἐμμεαῶτε νέκυν φέρον ἐκ πολέμοιο, which bears some similarity to 24.804 ὥς οἱ γ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο, occurs in the midst of ordinary Homeric narrative

in the ample style and is used to provide a transition to a parallel scene in the same style. With regard to the *Odyssey*, too, West notes that the suitors' funerals 'are dealt with in a mere couple of lines [*Od.* 24.415–19], and the story proceeds as if they have hardly taken any time at all'; he believes that the poet 'is becoming more slapdash as he hastens towards the end'.⁴² We should rather say that the poet is signalling to his audience that the end of the narrative arc is in sight.

The content of *Aspis* 472–80 is also important: here all the loose ends are tied up. We are told that Kyknos received burial and that his σῆμα was obliterated by the river Anauros in accordance with Apollo's wishes; and here too we see the use of the abbreviated-reference style. Yet instead of disparaging the poet's awkward composition, we should recognise the reduction in the narrative's fullness as a method in early epic for signalling closure.

Thus the *Aspis* is not simply a lay which could be inserted into a larger poem on Herakles' labours; rather, it has its own architecture and is self-contained.

II.1.iii. Teleology

An important principle of epic composition is teleology: narrative developments are planned for, and preparations are as a rule followed by the poet; false trails are alien to the idiom. But the *Aspis* is more straightforward than the *Iliad* in this regard. This supports van der Valk's contention that the 'archaic character' of the *Aspis* gives it an air of greater antiquity than the *Iliad*. Some examples will show the difference clearly. The Διομήδους ἄριστεία is an episode which has evidently had considerable influence on the poet of the *Aspis* (§III.1), and so comparison between this episode and the *Aspis* is particularly fruitful. In both poems Athena instructs her protégé about the forthcoming battle with a god, but there

⁴² West (2014) 303.

are important differences. In the *Iliad* Athena says that Diomedes may wound Aphrodite εἴ κε ... ἔλθῃσ' ἐς πόλεμον (*Il.* 5.131–2), which is indeed what happens in due course; but with this conditional clause the *Iliad* poet introduces some uncertainty about the course the narrative is to take. In the *Aspis*, on the other hand, Athena speaks in definite terms about what will happen (331–7). Particularly revealing is 333 αὐτὸς δὲ βροτολοιγὸν Ἄρη' ἐπιόντα δοκεύσας: Athena does not tell Herakles to look out *in case* Ares should attack him after the death of Kyknos, but takes it as certain that this will happen. It is admittedly less surprising given that the *Aspis* describes a two-on-two contest as opposed to the general mêlée of the battlefield, but the precision with which the events are anticipated remains striking.

Again, Diomedes' attack on Apollo (*Il.* 5.431ff.) *contravenes* the bounds earlier set by Athena, who had explicitly told him not to fight with any of the gods but Aphrodite (129–31); in the *Aspis* Herakles has been told to withdraw after wounding Ares (336–7), and indeed he does not try to obstruct Deimos and Phobos when they come to rescue their fallen master (463–6). Herakles plays by the rules. Lastly, at *Il.* 5.826ff. Athena merely encourages Diomedes by saying τύπον δὲ σχεδίνην μὴδ' ἄζωο θοῦρον Ἄρηα, and the precise details of how Diomedes is to wound Ares emerge only in the course of the narrative. By contrast, in the *Aspis* Athena tells Herakles precisely where to wound Ares (334–5), and this is followed to the letter in the narrative (458–62). That the narrative is developing precisely in accordance with its projected course is underlined by the strong verbal echoes between Athena's instructions and the main narrative: 333 ≈ 425 αὐτὸς δὲ βροτολοιγὸν Ἄρη' ἐπιόντα δοκεύσας,⁴³ and 334 γυμνωθέντα σάκεος ὑπο δαιδαλέοιο is repeated at 460. The author directs his narrative according to established epic principles; but, in contrast with the poet of

⁴³ With the (accidental?) *variatio* Ἄρην προσιόντα in the latter passage; S there has Ἄρηα, whence Solmsen ἄρη' ἐπιόντα fuisse suspicor (cf. 333). Russo, however, deletes 425.

the *Iliad*, he prefers these preparations to be laid out in definite terms and to be followed with absolute strictness.

II.1.iv. Sight and sound

The poet has a special fondness for pictorial detail and for sound-effects. Note in particular the lingering image of Ares and Kyknos, gleaming in their armour, their chariot kicking up a dust-storm as the horses whinny (60–5). As Schwarz points out, we can see the hand of the same poet in 340–8: Iolaos cries out to the horses (340–1), the earth resounds (344), the chariots kick up dust (342), and the horses' whinny re-echoes (347–8);⁴⁴ this provides a welcome indication of the poem's unity. In the ecphrasis, the dolphins pursuing the fish are spouting (211); on the surface of Okeanos there are fish as well as swans (neither is found in the parallel passage of the *Iliad*), and the birds are making a din (315–17). Even if there is a pointed reference in the κύκνοι to Kyknos (cf. §IV.2.iii), to a certain extent the image is undoubtedly developed for its own sake.

In the ecphrasis there are frequent references to sound. We hear gnashing teeth ([160], 164, 235, 249); music and song (201–6, 272–85); women's shrill cries (243); chariot wheels in motion (309); and, most extraordinarily, the shield itself re-echoing (231–3). In the battle description we hear the shouts of the warriors, the din of battle, and the crash of weapons (sometimes the descriptions are found in similes relating to the combatants): 373, 379, 382–3, 401, 406, 412 (spurious?), 423, 436 (spurious?), 438, 441, 442. Martin has aptly compared this fixation with sound-effects to the same preoccupation in 'trashy' modern films.⁴⁵

It is all the more notable, therefore, that the poet does not dignify Kyknos or Ares with a voice; the only sounds they make are clattering or shrieking. This is part of a literary scheme

⁴⁴ Schwarz (1932) 27. Chariots clatter loudly also at 308–9.

⁴⁵ Martin (2005).

to demote the opponents of Herakles to the sub-human plane and by contrast to present Herakles and Iolaos as the superior guarantors of justice (§§II.4.i, III.2.ii); such exaggerated contrasts between the prospective victor and the antagonist are common in ‘tall stories’.⁴⁶ Indeed, the ‘incongruous’ speeches of Herakles and Iolaos serve to balance the enemies’ bestial sounds at 98–9 (note in particular κεκληγώς, which is very rarely used of articulate, human sound).⁴⁷

II.1.v. Repetition

It is often assumed that the Greeks were indifferent to repetitions at close range. There is, however, evidence in the *Iliad* scholia that Zenodotus and Aristarchus were troubled by the four occurrences of ἀμβροσ- within nine Homeric verses, for which reason they made the flat emendation καὶ μεγάλους to replace one of the occurrences of ἀμβροσίους in the passage in question.⁴⁸ Modern critics usually follow the Alexandrians in regarding close-range repetitions as a stylistic ‘fault’, and although they do not try to remove the repetitions through emendation they nonetheless accord the poet a *censura* for careless or lazy composition.⁴⁹

Repetitions may enhance rather than mar the poet’s composition by creating meaningful structures. One such device is ring composition, used three times in the ecphrasis formally to mark off a section of the description as a self-contained unit. The fact that the same technique

⁴⁶ Cf. Burkert (1979a) 18. In the *Aspis* the imagery of destructive fire is most often applied to the ‘baddies’, though not exclusively so.

⁴⁷ Peretti (1947) 59.

⁴⁸ Sch. AT *Il.* 14.177; cf. Pickering (2003) 498. Richardson (1974) 60 lists examples of close-range repetition from the *Hymn to Demeter*, regarding them as wholly unintentional.

⁴⁹ Cf. Schwarz (1932) 21 on *Aspis* 70–2, ‘poeta suis ipse verbis usus—saepius autem hac in re eum deprendemus—speciem Martis terrorem incientem tribus itidem versibus pingit’; note the pejorative flavour of ‘deprendemus’. West (1966) 328 comments on Hesiod’s ‘failure to vary words, resulting in a lame repetition’.

is used within the ‘non-Homeric’ and ‘Homeric’ portions of the ecphrasis is significant, since the consistency of technique suggests unity of composition (cf. §IV.3.i). Cf. 168–9 ~ 176–7; 272–3 ~ 284–5; 305–6 ~ 310–11. Another meaningful use of repetitions is to enhance structural parallels. We have seen in our earlier discussion of narrative style that the poet proceeds in a more straightforwardly teleological fashion than does Homer and that he lets the narrative unfold according to the advance preparations he has made (§II.1.iii).

Sometimes, however, the close-range repetitions do not seem deliberate, nor is there a discernible purpose to them. In the following cases no explanation for the repetition suggests itself beyond the poet’s having been driven by associative pressure to use the same word again:

- 60 τεύχεσι λαπμομένους; 71 λάμπεν; τευχέων; 72 ἀπελάμπετο
- 61 ὠκέες ἵπποι; 63 ἄρμασι; ἵππων; 64 ἄρματα; 65 ἵππων
- 96 ἵππων ὠκυπόδων; 97 ὠκυπόδων ἵππων
- 131 θανάτοιο; 132 θάνατον
- 142 ὑπολαμπές; 143 λαπμόμενον (v. del. Heyne); 145 λαμπομένοισι
- 147 δεινῶν; 148 δεινή
- 160 δεινόν; 161 δεινῶν

There are three possible counter-examples to the notion that the poet was indifferent to close-range repetition. The first is 297 = 313 where περικλυτοῦ Ἡφαιστόιο is perhaps avoided (in favour of περίφρονος Ἡ.) because of the immediately preceding κλυτὰ ἔργα; cf. §II.6.iii. The second is discussed at 236a n. The third is 382–3 οἱ δ’ ἀλαλητῶι | θεσπεσίωι σύνισαν. The poet seems to have in mind *Il.* 18.149 θεσπεσίωι ἀλαλητῶι and 14.393 = *Th.* 686 οἱ δὲ ξύνισαν μεγάλωι ἀλαλητῶι; he has hybridised the two, as is suggested by the

splitting and inversion of ἀλαλητῶι from θεσπεσίωι. Perhaps he was discouraged by contextual considerations from using μεγάλωι ἀλαλητῶι:

φωνῇι ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων μεγάλ' ἴαχον· οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῶι
θεσπεσίωι σύνισαν· μέγα δ' ἔκτυπε μητίετα Ζεύς.

Certainty cannot, however, be reached, since θεσπεσίωι ἀλαλητῶι is a perfectly good formulaic phrase which might have suggested itself to the poet in any context.

II.1.vi. Other characteristics

I collect here some other characteristics of the poet's style:

- (a) a fondness for juxtaposition and balance. Consider: the balance in the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs, a balance that seems to require certain artificial measures (179, 183, 185 nn.); the structural and artistic opposition of the adversaries Ares and Athena (191–200); the wedding-procession in which ahead of the bride's party her slaves πρόσθ' ἔκιοι (277), just as in front of the groom's entourage some musicians πρόσθ' ἔκιοι (284); and the dogs ἰέμενοι μαπέειν set against the hares ἰέμενοι ὑπαλύξαι (304).⁵⁰
- (b) a predilection for deferral and delay.⁵¹ The poet uses as many means as possible to defer the coming battle, through speeches and similes, yet at the same time he teases the audience by insisting that it is 'close at hand' (118–19). In the ecphrasis many actions are straining towards completion but never quite reach it; this

⁵⁰ Contrast the corresponding verse of the *Catalogue* which describes the Boreads pursuing the Harpies, ἰέμενοι μάρψαι, ταὶ δ' ἐκφυγέειν καὶ ἀλύξαι (fr. 156.29). Since the poet of the *Aspis* knew the *Catalogue* as a unitary work (§II.7.i), he will have known this very line, which he adapts by dispensing with the pleonasm ἐκφυγέειν καὶ ἀλύξαι and opting instead for the repetition of ἰέμενοι, so as to highlight the opposition between the hunters and quarry.

⁵¹ Cf. Bing (2012).

reflects the ‘imminence’ of the combat and also evinces a consistent style, one that revels in what is *on the point of* happening. For examples in the ecphrasis see §IV.6.

- (c) (conversely) a desire that events should happen ‘quickly’: cf. 370 αἶψ’ ἐπὶ γαῖαν, 418–19 θοῶς ... ἥλασ’, 434–5 ἀντίος ἔσται Ἄρης ... ἰ ἐσσυμένως (‘mirum’, comments Solmsen), 452 καρπαλίμως ἐπόρουσε, 464–9 αἶψα *ter*.
- (d) a taste for the macabre, hyperbole, the impressive, and the fabulous. These aspects have been discussed in detail by Russo 14–22; the high-point is the horrifying portrait of Akhnys (264–70).⁵²
- (e) a tendency to over-burden with weakly integrated detail for the sake of impressionism. Circular reasoning may be involved in diagnosing this: for example, should we expel 398 κέγχροισι – 401 ὥρην (Russo), or tolerate it as part of the poet’s style? Van der Valk has made instructive comparisons with Quintus Smyrnaeus and remarks that we find there too that ‘passages sont trop souvent indépendants, isolés, au détriment du contexte et de l’ensemble du poème’.⁵³
- (f) Russo (17, 99–100) believes that the poet misdirects his audience in order to create surprise. For example, at 108 it turns out that Herakles, who had previously been eager to join battle with the enemy, is in fact *unarmed*. (Earlier commentators saw evidence of a double recension.) If correct, this observation must be related to the poet’s need to create narrative motivation: the description of Herakles’ arms attaches most naturally to an arming-scene.

⁵² On the reading Ἀχνύς (for transmitted Ἀχλύς) cf. West (1987).

⁵³ Van der Valk (1966) 472.

II.2. Type-scenes & Themes

Eine genauere Betrachtung darüber, inwieweit der Dichter der *Aspis* [die typischen Szenen und Handlungsschemata] verwendet, würde viele Anstöße aus der Handhabung überkommenen Gutes erklären und unsere Kenntnis der Technik des mündlichen Epos sehr fördern.⁵⁴

Since Arend's pioneering study of type-scenes, our understanding of these building-blocks of epic poetry has been advanced by several scholars, and principally by Fenik. Not only has knowledge of individual type-scenes been refined: there have also been valuable explorations of the conventions of Greek epic that operate on a larger scale than that of the scene, 'themes'. J. M. Foley's concept of 'traditional referentiality' has proven particularly influential in this area.⁵⁵ As a result, we are now better placed to understand the techniques and structures employed by archaic epic poets and to reconstruct the expectations of their audiences. The conventions followed in the poems are not so much 'rules' as expectations based on the path that the narrative normally followed in particular circumstances. The conventions of the established patterns can be detected by us only through careful study of other instantiations of a particular sequence—usually in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, of course. Tracing these deviations improves our understanding of the artistry and literary qualities of the poem.

The *Aspis* poet was an orally trained singer, composing for an audience steeped in the *Iliad*. It is natural to assume, then, that he will have been conversant with standard narrative patterns and that he will have constructed his poem on the basis of conventions that he and his audience understood. It is our task now to explore how he handles two principal narrative

⁵⁴ Merkelbach (1952) 130 n. 1.

⁵⁵ Arend (1933); Fenik (1968), (1974); Kelly (2007a) 5–17 discusses the concept and utility of traditional referentiality, and in his bibliography he lists Foley's relevant works. In my notes on 139 σάκος and 168–77 I raise doubts about the rigidity of traditional reference; it should be remembered that no two poets will have adhered to quite the same conventions or had quite the same repertoire as a backdrop.

situations: arming and fighting. Only the first is a type-scene proper, but it is convenient to consider them together. Since they are both martial in association, the main comparandum is the *Iliad*. The *Iliad*, of course, may not be a faithful representative of the ‘standard’ instantiation of each typical element of the epic singer’s repertoire; we do not have enough evidence to know, and yet the untypicality of the *Iliad* has become evident the more we discover of non-Homeric early Greek epic.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the *Iliad* was known intimately to the *Aspis* poet, and so he will have taken a strong lead from its handling of particular situations. It is therefore legitimate to hold up the *Iliad* as the control when assessing the experiments with convention made by the poet of the *Aspis*.

II.2.i. Arming

The sequence of a warrior’s arming is recognised as an established type-scene in Greek epic, and it has a firm place in the formulaic tradition. Remarkably, however, this type-scene occurs in full on only four occasions in the *Iliad*, even though there are many other potential opportunities for its use. Armstrong’s close study of the deployment of the motif has shown that each occurrence makes a special poetic point, none being simply a ‘filler’-scene such as an Odyssean feast on the sea-shore.⁵⁷

In the *Iliad* the sequence in which a warrior arms is invariable: greaves, breastplate, sword, shield, helmet, spear. This is not just conventional but has a historical basis: sword and shield were attached to the breastplate on the warrior’s back with straps; hence the helmet had to be

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. Griffin (1977), Davies (2001).

⁵⁷ Armstrong (1958). Sequences of four seem to be significant in the *Iliad*: there are four occasions on which Hektor’s authority is challenged by Polydamas and Hektor alternately accepts and rejects his doublet’s advice, with disastrous results on the last occasion (12.60–81, 210–50, 13.726–53, 18.254–309); the manner of Achilles’ death is predicted on four principal occasions, each time with increasing precision (18.96, 19.416–17, 21.277–8, 22.359–60).

donned after them. Despite their following a fixed sequence, however, no two arming scenes are exactly identical; rather, they are varied by embellishment and expansion:

- (i) Paris (3.328–38). Breastplate: belonged to his brother Lykaon.
- (ii) Agamemnon (11.15–46). (1) Breastplate: a gift from one Kinyras; description of its decoration. (2) Sword: its decoration. (3) Shield: its workmanship and devices. (4) Spears: bright sheen.
- (iii) Patroklos (16.130–44). (1) Breastplate: belonged to Achilles. (2) Spear: Patroklos did not take Achilles' spear, since only Achilles was able to wield it.
- (iv) Achilles (19.364–91). (1) Shield: its splendour is highlighted by a simile. (2) Helmet: it shone like a star. (3) Spear: only Achilles could wield it.

The supplementary details are significant and add meaning to the poem. In (i) and (ii) the provenance of the breastplate reveals something about each of the warriors: Paris has no breastplate of his own because he is not used to fighting at close quarters, preferring instead to take on the (heroically dubious) role of archer; and lordly Agamemnon received his guest-gift as a sign of respect from the foreign king because his fame had reached all the way to Cyprus. Similarly, in (iii) Patroklos' inability to make use of Achilles' spear foreshadows his failure to 'become' him in battle, and it is contrasted with Achilles' resumption in (iv) of his signature weapon when he sets out to avenge his fallen comrade.

As many scholars have observed, in the *Aspis* the invariable Homeric order is abandoned. The sequence in the *Aspis* is: greaves, breastplate, sword, quiver, spear, helmet, shield. The shield has been moved from its usual position after the sword to the final position. Placing the shield last allows the poet to proceed smoothly to the ecphrasis, since after declaring that the shield was θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι (140), he is then able to explain *why* it was a wondrous sight (with

a γάρ-clause). The ecphrasis gets under way smoothly. This observation refutes the wholesale deletion of the ecphrasis by Goettling (§I.2): we can see that the poet has expressly violated the established sequence of arming, and he has done so in order to put the shield in last place. The shield description was therefore integral to the poem's design from the outset: it is not an extraneous growth that could be excised without leaving a scar.

As already noted, however, the Homeric sequence is based on the real-life process of arming, in which certain items must be donned before others. Through his modifications of the type-scene the *Aspis* poet has created an illogical picture: it is as if a modern novelist were to describe a character putting on his jacket, then his tie, then his shirt. The incoherence of the picture proves that the poet is deviating from the standard pattern. He seems aware indeed that he has created a logistical problem, for he has Herakles take the shield up with his hands (χερσί), rather than strapping it ἄμφ' ὤμοισι as is usual (139–40n. χερσί).

An instructive parallel for this illogical sequence may be found in Zenodotus' text of Paris' arming scene in *Iliad* 3. In the vulgate the arms are donned in the conventional order. But in Zenodotus' eccentric text the sequence was: greaves, breastplate, helmet, shield, spear—i.e. no sword, and shield *after* helmet. The motivation for these changes was apparently literary: 'Zenodotus has logic on his side in that Paris does not keep Menelaos at bay with a sword when Menelaos' own sword has shattered'; but the alterations 'result in the wrong order of arming (as Aristarchus objected), with the helmet put on before the shield with its strap, which would have fouled the plume'.⁵⁸ Kirk attributes the changes to Zenodotus' demand for 'logic'; probably, however, the peculiarities of Zenodotus' text are largely to be explained by

⁵⁸ Kirk (1985) 314. On criticism in the Hellenistic era of Zenodotus' take on this passage cf. Kelly (2014).

the hypothesis that he had an idiosyncratic rhapsode's text.⁵⁹ Evidently this rhapsode had no firm grasp of *Realien* and was motivated by literary considerations, which for him decisively overrode practical ones. The *Aspis* poet was such a man too.

There are two other structural features of the *Aspis*'s arming sequence which call for attention. First, in the place normally occupied by the shield we find a quiver. This element is not present in the Homeric type-scenes, nor do the arrows feature in the narrative of the *Aspis*. It is hard to see indeed how they could feature, since Herakles is not even said to have a bow. The quiver is evidently inserted as a nod to the familiar tradition which made Herakles an archer,⁶⁰ and it serves no function other than a literary one.⁶¹ The quiver is at least put in a logical position in the arming sequence, since, like the sword, it would be strapped to the breastplate. Second, the normal sequence helmet–spear is reversed in the *Aspis* to spear–helmet. Theoretically 135 could be transposed to follow 138, but this would be arbitrary. Rather, the poet, having already altered the structure of the type-scene in two significant ways, no longer felt obliged to adhere to the ordinary sequence helmet–spear; perhaps the dislocations caused him actually to forget the conventional order. It is also possible that he did not wish to finish his arming sequence prior to the ecphrasis with a dull and colourless line such as 135 εἴλετο δ' ὄβριμον ἔγχος, ἀκαχμένον αἶθοπι χαλκῶι.⁶² Instead, he wanted this section to end with a more ornamented description, of the richly wrought helmet. In any

⁵⁹ On the nature of Zenodotus' text see West (2001) 33–45.

⁶⁰ Note in particular that according to Euripides (*HF* 389–93) it was with his bow that Herakles defeated Kyknos. Within the context of the play, however, the bow is being championed by Amphytrion as a legitimate weapon, and Wilamowitz ad loc. takes the archery-based version of the Kyknomachy to be an *ad hoc* invention.

⁶¹ Conversely, at *Od.* 11.609–14, where Herakles is depicted as an archer, it is his τελαμών that is superfluous (on the τελαμών cf. 139–40n. χερσί).

⁶² The paradosis has the verse begin ἦσαν· ὃ δ'; as Hermann saw, this is a corruption motivated by a syntax-easing gloss on 133–4, a clause which omits the verb 'to be' (a legitimate licence, cf. 197n.). Hermann's emendation has now received further manuscript support: cf. Mason (forthcoming b).

case, the poet has introduced another awkwardness by having Herakles put on his helmet while already holding his spear, a manoeuvre which in real life no one could perform.

In matters of detail too there are deviations from the standard epic prototype exemplified in the *Iliad*, as the following analysis of each scene will show.

(i) Greaves (122–3)

ὥς εἰπὼν κνημῖδας ὀρειχάλκοιο φαεινοῦ,
Ἥφαιστου κλυτὰ δῶρα, περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκε.

The poet alters the invariable Iliadic formula κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκε and introduces Hephaistos, thereby establishing from the outset that Herakles is favoured by the gods. As Armstrong notes, in all the arming passages except that of Achilles the three-line leitmotif κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκε | καλὰς, ἀργυρέοισιν ἐπισφυρίοις ἀραρυίας· | δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσι ἐδυνεν is followed by a ‘particularizing-descriptive’ line or lines.⁶³ Rather than doing that, the *Aspis* poet has intercalated his expansion from hemistich to hemistich. He also has the greaves made of the un-Homeric metal ὀρείχαλκος,⁶⁴ and he omits to mention their silver ankle-pieces. Again we see the poet’s grasp of *Realien* being overpowered by his desire for literary ornamentation—in this case, the mention of Hephaistos and the introduction of a fantastic metal.

(ii) Breastplate (124–7)

δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσι ἐδυνε
καλὸν χρύσειον πολυδαίδαλον, ὃν οἱ ἔδωκε
Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη, κόρυη Διός, ὅππότε ἔμελλε
τὸ πρῶτον στονόνετας ἐφορμήσεσθαι ἀέθλους.

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⁶³ Armstrong (1958) 342.

⁶⁴ On this substance see most recently Davies–Finglass (2014) 592.

The breastplate is a standard place to elaborate the description, and, as noted above, in the first two Iliadic passages the elaboration contributes significantly to the characterisation of the hero. Here the poet introduces Athena's patronage, which is of great importance in the *Aspis*, and he sets the Kyknomachy in the wider context of Herakles' labours (cf. Herakles at 94: αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ δαίμων χαλεποὺς ἐπετέλλετ' ἄεθλους). The physical splendour of the breastplate is emphasised by 125 καλὸν χρύσειον πολυδαίδαλον, a suitably rare type of asyndeton employed in descriptions of divine objects (cf. *Aphr.* 88–9, the goddess's ὄρμοι ... | καλοὶ χρύσειοι παμποίκιλοι, where Faulkner compares *h.* 6.7–8 (Aphrodite's) στεφάνην ... | καλὴν χρυσεῖην).

(iii) Sword (128–9)

θήκατο δ' ἄμφ' ὤμοισιν ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα σίδηρον,
δεινὸς ἀνὴρ.

In the Iliadic parallels the sword is mentioned after the breastplate. Herakles' sword plays no role in the combat with either Kyknos or Ares; its presence is due to the pressure exerted by the type-scene. The sword is made of iron, an un-Homeric detail: although the poet of the *Iliad* knows of iron, he preserves the ethos of the Heroic Age by excluding it from descriptions of weaponry.⁶⁵ In effect, then, we have another non-Homeric metal.

In the *Iliad* the invariable formula is ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος (ἀργυρόηλον), but here we find a slight recasting; cf. §II.6.iii. Moreover, in no Iliadic scene is there a qualification of the hero mid-arming like the δεινὸς ἀνὴρ here; rather, it is the *armour* which is normally qualified. The poet thus draws special attention to the terrifying aspect of Herakles himself. Compare 52 δεινὸν τε κρατερόν τε. It is possible that the poet was

⁶⁵ The *Aspis* poet avoids the anachronism elsewhere, unless the μελάνδετον ἄορ of Perseus (221) is meant to refer to an iron weapon; cf. ad loc.

motivated to establish a close verbal link with the *ehoie*, as well as to use his favourite word (147n.). This finds support in the fact that δεινὸς ἀνὴρ in the present passage is a non-integral piece of enjambement but is tacked on languidly; contrast *Il.* 11.653–4 εὖ δὲ σὺ οἶσθα ... οἶος ἐκεῖνος | δεινὸς ἀνὴρ.

Similarly with the substitution of ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα σίδηρον for ξίφος (ἀργυρόηλον): the expression ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ is not particularly common in the epos,⁶⁶ but it does occur at *Aspis* 29 with reference to Zeus' begetting Herakles. Its recurrence here suggests to me that the poet of 57–480 had in mind the Alkmene-*ehoie* when composing his own poem: Herakles the ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ fittingly carries a weapon which is itself an ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ. In particular, the *ehoie*'s use of the term is more 'organic',⁶⁷ which suggests that the composer of 57–480 is secondary to the poet of 1–56. Moreover, that his sword is a *warder-off* of harm rather than an inflicter of it characterises Herakles as a non-aggressive hero, something that we see consistently in the *Aspis* (§III.2.ii).

(iv) Quiver (129–34)

κοίλῃν δὲ περὶ στήθεσσι φαρέτρην
κάββαλεν ἐξόπιθεν· πολλοὶ δ' ἔντοσθεν οἰστοί 130
ρίγῃλοι, θανάτοιο λαθιφθόγγοιο δοτῆρες·
πρόσθεν μὲν θάνατόν τ' εἶχον καὶ δάκρυσι μῦρον,
μέσσοι δὲ ξεστοί, περιμήκεες, αὐτὰρ ὅπισθε
μόρφονιο φλεγύαιο καλυπτόμενοι πτερύγεσσιν.

(For the very presence of the quiver see above.) The poet gives us the first glimpse of his characteristic taste for the macabre (§II.1.vi), combining a unique epithet for 'death' with a chilling description of the arrows; the latter goes far beyond the slight and rare

⁶⁶ *Th.* 657, *Il.* 18.100, and in Zenodotus' text at *Il.* 14.485 and (probably) 18.213 (cf. West on *Th.* 657, Janko on *Il.* 14.484–5).

⁶⁷ Cf. Kretschmer (1913) 40, 'Hercules v. 29 multo aptius ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ appellatur quam v. 128 ferrum, ad quod hoc epitheton imitatione delatum videtur.' It is not, however, impossible to apply a *nomen agentis* to an object: cf. the Odyssean formula for a spear, κυνῶν ἀλκτῆρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

personification of weapons which is found in the *Iliad*.⁶⁸ The description of the arrows, with its focus on the front, middle, and back of the object, reminds one of the technique used in describing monsters such as the Chimaera, which was πρόσθε λέων, ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων, μέσση δὲ χίμαιρα (*Il.* 6.181). This further emphasises the monstrous characteristics of these arrows. Moreover, a connection with the hero's father Zeus is suggested by the detail that the feathers were *eagle's* feathers.

(v) Spear (135)

εἶλετο δ' ὄβριμον ἔγχος, ἀκαχμένον αἴθοπι χαλκῶι.

(For the text cf. n. 62). This single-line description can be closely paralleled in three of the Iliadic passages (3.338 εἶλετο δ' ἄλκιμον ἔγχος, 11.43 εἶλετο δ' ἄλκιμα δοῦρε δύω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῶι, 16.139 εἶλετο δ' ἄλκιμα δοῦρε); in Achilles' arming-scene the spear is given special prominence and a non-traditional description (19.387–91). It is nonetheless noteworthy that ἄλκιμον/-α is replaced in the *Aspis* by ὄβριμον, which is metrically identical to the familiar word: ὄβριμον ἔγχος is a familiar formula (13× *Il.*) but is not used in arming scenes, nor is ὄβριμον ἔγχος otherwise found outside feet five and six of the hexameter; this is perhaps a conscious *variatio* by our poet (cf. §II.6.iii). It is rare elsewhere for Herakles to wield a spear.

(vi) Helmet (136–8)

κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳι κυνέην εὐτυκτον ἔθηκε,
δαιδαλέην, ἀδάμαντος, ἐπὶ κροτάφοις ἀραρυῖαν,
ἥ τ' εἴρυτο κάρη Ἡρακλῆος θείοιο.

Another material alien to Homeric poetry, adamant, is mentioned; it is, however, found in Hesiodic poetry (231b n.). The formally redundant ἥ τ' εἴρυτο κάρη Ἡρακλῆος θείοιο is

⁶⁸ Cf. 11.573–4, 15.316–17, 21.70, and 4.126 with sch. BT ἐμφαντικῶς τὴν τοῦ βαλόντος προθυμίαν εἰς τὸ βληθὲν μετήγαγε κτλ. At *Aspis* 420 a spear is ἀνδροφόνος, as already in Tyrtæus (fr. 19.9).

(*contra* Paley, who wished to delete 138) quite in our poet's manner, especially since it adds further honour to Herakles. Russo notes the impressively heavy rhythm (cf. *Il.* 15.25), which suggests solemnity and closure of this section.

In the poet's arming type-scene, then, we see several factors at play. The most important conclusion is that literary considerations trump archaeological: the poet is not troubled by inconsistencies of strict narrative logic, and one does not get the impression that he has a great interest in *Realien*; this is a useful result for us when considering his approach to the shield itself, cf. e.g. 141–3n. His expansions are, however, highly effective: he succeeds in implying the support for Herakles of Hephaistos, Athena, and Zeus; he sets the πάρεργον of the Kyknomachy in a chronological context; he gives us a taste of his poetic inventiveness and drive for novelty; and he characterises Herakles with majesty.

II.2.ii. Warcraft

After the arming and the ecphrasis comes the fighting itself. There are two martial encounters in the *Aspis*: a duel between Herakles and Kyknos and a combat between Herakles and Ares, a 'duel' being more formal than a 'combat'. The structure is as follows:

A 320–48 Preliminaries to duel with Kyknos; instructions to Herakles from Athena

B 349–67 Herakles admonishes Kyknos

C 368–423 Duel with Kyknos

a 424–42 Preliminaries to combat with Ares

b 443–50 Athena admonishes Ares

c 451–62 Combat with Ares

d 462–6 Prostrate Ares not stripped

D 467–9 Corpse of Kyknos stripped

It is not until after the wounding of Ares that Herakles has the opportunity to strip Kyknos' corpse; this is in accordance with Athena's instructions (331–2) and, therefore, with the poet's teleological plan (§II.1.iii). This means that the two episodes are not merely juxtaposed but interlocked, a device which helps to bind the poem together and unify its action. The two passages share several elements: the admonishment of an enemy who ignores the warning and comes to grief; the rushing together of the warriors on foot; and the vanquishing of the enemy with a spear. As Kelly has shown, this pairing constitutes a 'decreasing doublet' (the second instantiation is a shorter version of the first). This duplication is not due to laziness or lack of inventiveness on the part of the poet; rather, as Kelly argues, the 'decreasing doublet' is a strategy used consistently by archaic poets to signal closure.⁶⁹

There are, however, differences between the two episodes. The duel is a formal affair: the two sides approach in their chariots; their charioteers drive away; words are exchanged; spears are cast in turn. All this has ample Homeric precedent.⁷⁰ By contrast, Ares attacks Herakles in an impassioned reaction to his son's death; such 'chain-reaction' fights (in Fenik's terminology),⁷¹ have no space for formal advances and challenges. A more detailed analysis of certain elements will now prove instructive.

Athena gives advice to Herakles. Gods may give advice to mortals in the *Iliad*, but usually they disguise themselves and take on the form of a familiar figure (cf. §II.4.ii). Only very rarely does the god show him- or herself openly. Twice in the Diomedea (*Il.* 5.115–23, 792–834) Athena instructs Diomedes, and she gives encouragement (though few orders) to Achilles at 22.216–23. That two parallels occur in *Iliad* 5 is significant, given the other connections between this episode and the *Aspis* (§III.1). However, there are important

⁶⁹ Kelly (2007b).

⁷⁰ Cf. e.g. Bezzantakos (2003).

⁷¹ Fenik (1968) 10; cf. *Il.* 4.473–507, 13.361–539, 14.442–507, etc.

differences (besides the increased precision of Athena's instructions, as discussed in §II.1.iii). First, Athena says that Zeus is granting Herakles the power to slay and despoil Kyknos (Zeus' support is confirmed by the omen at 383–5), whereas in the Iliadic passages Zeus does not feature, and Athena's giving of aid is her own initiative. One reason for this may be the established Zeus–Athena partnership in relation to Herakles. We can infer from the *Iliad* that in earlier narratives of Herakles' exploits Athena was regularly sent by Zeus to aid Herakles: she tells us as much at 8.362–9. The mention of Zeus also sets Herakles' deed in a wider, cosmic context, and it accords with the generally serious attitude of our poet towards the hero (§III.2.ii).

In the Diomedea Athena fights closely at her protégé's side and indeed takes an active part in the fighting, giving physical assistance to Diomedes: Diomedes thrusts his spear at Ares, ἐπέρεισε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη | νείατον ἐς κενεῶνα (*Il.* 5.855–60). In the *Aspis* she takes a less active role, instead allowing Herakles to triumph without decisive aid. Such assistance might have diminished our sense of Herakles' prowess; compare the way in which Athena refrains at first from giving Odysseus and Telemachus a decisive victory over the suitors, since ἔτ' ἄρα σθένεός τε καὶ ἀλκῆς πειρήτιζεν | ἡμὲν Ὀδυσσεύς ἡδ' υἱοῦ κυδαλίμοιο (*Od.* 22.236–40). Nor would Athena's giving direct aid to Herakles agree with what we know from elsewhere about his formidable reputation in combat with the gods: on other occasions he inflicted wounds on the Olympians, apparently unaided (*Aspis* 359–67; *Il.* 5.392–404). It does not diminish Herakles' prowess that Athena dulls the force of Ares' spear (*Aspis* 455–6), but evidently it would seem condescending if she actually had to supplement his physical strength. Just as Ares is presented as the unreasonable, out-of-control party (see below), so the poet hereby demonstrates that Herakles is mightier than the *Iliad's* Diomedes (cf. §II.4.ii).

Much space is devoted to the preparations on Herakles' side: Herakles and Iolaos exchange words (78–121); Herakles has a full arming scene (122–140); in an ample style (cf. §II.1.i) the poet lingers over the heroes as they mount the chariot and has space to describe Iolaos' directing it towards the enemy (321–44). Of the other side, however, the poet is content to relate in a mere two lines that Kyknos and Ares too drew near, and in a further distich to say that the horses of both parties whinnied as they faced one another (345–8). We might compare *Il.* 3.339, where after the full description of Paris' arming the poet simply says ὥς δ' αὐτῶς Μενέλαος ἀρήϊος ἔντε' ἔδυνεν. Ares and Kyknos were, admittedly, armed already (60, 71), which would make an arming scene for them superfluous. Yet in the *Iliad* Paris re-arms before his duel even though he is already armed: the illogicality is permitted because the literary motivation is strong enough. But the poet of the *Aspis* is not simply trying to save himself labour: rather, he has a conscious programme to present the enemies of Herakles in an unfavourable manner, as savage, bestial creatures. Hence there are no ethopoetic scenes between Ares and Kyknos, and they utter no articulate sound (§II.1.iv); similarly, during his duel with Herakles Kyknos is not the subject of an individual simile. With this poetic principle established, it is evident why an arming scene for Kyknos or Ares would have been out of place.

Kyknos disregards Herakles' warning and thus seals his own fate; nor can Herakles now be held responsible for slaying someone with whom he shares a bond of guest-friendship (353–6; cf. §III.2.ii), since he had given him ample warning not to oppose him. Kyknos casts his spear first and it sticks in Herakles' shield (413–15); Herakles in response strikes back and kills Kyknos instantly. This follows a common Iliadic pattern: 'A throws at B and misses, or

fails to pierce B's armor. B then kills A.⁷² The poet of the *Aspis* is clearly familiar with the standard epic type-scene and he conforms to it, relying on the audience's expectation of the outcome. Also Iliadic is the instant death: warriors in Homer are either lightly injured (and the wound is then forgotten about or healed by a god), or else they are killed outright; they are never wounded mortally and then allowed to limp off in pain,⁷³ nor do they ever suffer a lingering death. Thus despite the *Aspis*'s fondness for the macabre (§II.1.vi), in the combat the poet follows Homeric taste and propriety. In fact, there is no trace of the macabre or the fantastic in the *Aspis*'s main narrative: the battle description is realistic and devoid of the fantasy of the ecphrasis. Nothing of the shield's alleged magical properties is remembered when it comes to the battle itself. The poet is too serious and will have nothing of the grotesque imagery found occasionally in the *Iliad* of eyes falling out or spears quivering in fresh wounds.

The transition to the combat with Ares is made via the formula τὸν μὲν ἔπειτ' εἶσε (424). In the *Iliad* this is normally used 'amidst a series of rapid slaying when the successful victor is hurrying from one victim to the next'⁷⁴ and where the slayer does not strip the enemy's corpse. There is no verbal exchange between the combatants since chain-reaction fights are by nature more spontaneous than duels. In the case of chain-reaction fights, however, there is no expectation that one party will be victorious rather than the other: thus whereas at *Il.* 4.473–507 Odysseus successfully avenges his friend Leukos, at 13.383–8 Asios loses his life in an attempt to slay Idomeneus who had just killed Asios' friend Othryoneus. Of the actual

⁷² Fenik (1968) 11.

⁷³ A partial exception is the wounded chieftains at *Il.* 14.28 and 19.47–9; but their condition is not life-threatening.

⁷⁴ Fenik (1968) 24. The relevant passages are 5.148, 11.148, 426, 20.456; cf. also 5.847. Two exceptions to this are *Il.* 8.125 and 317, where Hektor leaves the corpses of his own charioteers where they are; still, the five other Iliadic examples fit Fenik's pattern, which can therefore justly be called a typical battle scene.

course of the combat there is little to say, except that it conforms to the established spear-sword sequence (a type-scene in which the order is never reversed).⁷⁵ However, it is noteworthy that Athena admonishes Ares mid-charge: whether or not one deletes 436, it is certain from the simile of the rushing boulder at 437–40, followed by the explicit τὼς (ἄρ) ὁ μὲν ἰαχῇ βρισάρματος οὐλῖος Ἄρης | κεκλγηὼς ἐπόρουσεν (441–2), that Ares is now in motion, and indeed that Herakles has resisted his first onrush (442 ὁ δ' ἐμπαπέως ὑπέδεκτο). Yet then Athena addresses him. This is highly abnormal: the usual procedure is for speeches between characters to come before or after the combat, not during, and certainly not mid-charge.⁷⁶ In order to rescue narrative logic we would have to delete 437–42 (so La Penna), but this seems drastic and, given what we have already seen of our poet (especially in the arming scene), it is probably mistaken. For another possible explanation of the oddity see §II.7.iii.

Lastly in this section we shall look more closely at Herakles' paradeigma (357–67) as an example of a typical battle scene. Herakles warns Kyknos that his father will not be able to save him, and to prove this point he recalls that on a previous occasion he wounded Ares three times and felled him with the fourth wound. The pattern of 'three times ..., but on the fourth ...' occurs several times in the *Iliad*,⁷⁷ and when it is used in the description of an attack by one warrior against another person or a god, the warrior who attacks is put in his place by Apollo. Thus Diomedes, having tried three times already to slay an Aineias who is under Apollo's protection, on the fourth attempt is sharply rebuked by the god (5.432–46); Apollo gives a similar terrifying admonition to Patroklos as he makes his fourth attempt on the wall (16.702–11). The third example is slightly different: Achilles, after lunging three

⁷⁵ Fenik (1968) 23: cf. *Il.* 5.580, 4.517, 4.527, 20.457, 20.478.

⁷⁶ Cf. La Penna (1949) 59.

⁷⁷ Fenik (1968) 46–8.

times at Apollo who has just rescued Hektor, taunts Hektor for having been rescued by a god (20.445–54). Achilles is allowed to seize the prerogative from the god because of his special status within the *Iliad*, but implicitly at least he has been put in his place by Apollo, his mortal ambitions checked by Hektor's divine patron. We might include here 21.176–9, where Asteropaios tries three times to free Achilles' spear which is stuck in the riverbank: as he makes his fourth attempt, he is struck dead by Achilles; the attempt to seize the Pelian ash, τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν | πάλλιν, ἀλλὰ μιν οἷος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς, is equivalent to an act of hybris against the gods.

In the *Aspis*'s single instantiation of the type-scene (362–7) it is the god, Ares, who seems to play the role of the hybristic mortal: at Pylos Ares was 'three times' struck by Herakles (and therefore presumably he attacked the hero at least three times), and on the fourth occasion he was seriously wounded; functionally this is equivalent to Ares' being 'put in his place' by Herakles. Herakles is therefore the figure imbued with majesty and dignity, while Ares is the party lacking in self-control who needs chastising. Note also that, although Herakles had been set limits for his victory over Ares and told what was not αἴσιμον (336–7), Ares too is told by Athena that it is οὐ θέμις for him to slay Herakles (446–9). Herakles obeys Athena; Ares disregards her and suffers the consequences. Again, therefore, Ares plays the role of the mortal who needs to be reminded brutally of his limits by an Olympian.

As in his handling of the arming-scene, then, so too in his combat-sequences we can see the *Aspis* poet exploiting in a highly sophisticated manner the conventions of the epic idiom and, in the process, creating intricate webs of meaning within his composition.

II.3. Similes

II.3.i. Introduction

Similes are a central feature of Homeric style. Not only do they introduce variety into the narrative and give the audience a window into a world of which they otherwise see very little in the poem: similes also enhance the narrative and contribute further levels of meaning.

In earlier scholarship on Homeric similes one of the principal concerns was to identify the *tertium comparationis*. Once the point of correspondence between the simile and its surrounding narrative had been established, the interpreter could feel satisfied that he had understood the author's thought-process and thus uncovered the literary point at which he was presumed to have been driving. Of course it is important to gauge the appropriateness of a simile to its surrounding narrative. But Fränkel's fundamental study taught scholars to be more subtle in their approach.⁷⁸ It had long been noticed that Homeric similes often overrun the strict bounds of what the narrative intends to convey. According to Fränkel, however, whose ideas have been developed by subsequent scholars, such expansion is not to be dismissed as 'irrelevant' digression: the imagery and associations contained in the simile complement the narrative, even if there is no precise correspondence. Likewise, similes do not allude merely to what has already been narrated: they may also anticipate, hinting at narrative developments that are yet to unfold. These assumptions and approaches are the basic principles that will guide the present study of the *Aspis's* similes, which—like so many aspects of this poem—have either been given insufficient attention or dismissed as inferior.

⁷⁸ Fränkel (1921).

An authority on Homeric similes, for example, declares that '[the *Aspis*'s similes] show one obvious point of comparison, and are very simple by Homeric standards'.⁷⁹

There is another methodological problem that must be discussed at the outset. The semantic fields on which the similes of the *Aspis* draw are without exception familiar from the similes of the Homeric poems; and like-themed similes also surely occurred in Greek epic which is now lost (though see next paragraph). Together, these Homeric and non-extant antecedents form a web of associations that will have served to guide the poem's author in his process of selection and composition. Such associations will have informed the expectations of the audience and their reaction to each simile. Foley's concept of traditional referentiality (cf. §II.2) should therefore direct our interpretation of the literary import of each of the similes in the *Aspis*.

But traditional referentiality alone cannot here give us a complete picture. We presume that both the author of the *Aspis* and his audience were steeped, not merely in traditional epic poetry, but specifically in the *Iliad* and (perhaps to a lesser extent) the *Odyssey* (§III.1). It is therefore legitimate to hunt for precise parallels between the *Aspis* and Homer and to enquire into the significance and meaning of such connections. It does make sense in our case to speak of secondary similes and direct transferral, provided that there is sufficient evidence to support such a relationship. In particular, it should be remembered that similes are rare elsewhere in the early hexameter corpus.⁸⁰ They seem to be due in large part to the poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* individually. If indeed they are primarily associated with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it makes more sense to approach the problem from the perspective of direct literary

⁷⁹ Edwards (1991) 24 n. 30.

⁸⁰ Edwards (1991) 24 n. 30 counts just nine outside Homer and the *Aspis*.

dependence than it does to speak of free-floating motifs which need not have had definite textual instantiation.⁸¹

II.3.ii. Narrative fit

In *Aspis* 57–480 there are seven passages that may be classed as long similes. I give here the barest outline, reserving detailed discussion for later sections:

- I. 374–9. Herakles and Kyknos: boulders rolling down a mountain.
- II. 386–92. Herakles: boar.
- III. 402–4. Herakles and Kyknos: lions.
- IV. 405–12. Herakles and Kyknos: vultures.
- V. 421–3. Kyknos: falling tree.
- VI. 426–34. Herakles: lion.
- VII. 437–42.⁸² Ares: boulder rolling down a mountain.

At 393–401 we have the simile-like vignette of high summer, which is not formally a simile, since there is no point of comparison with anything in the narrative; rather, the description serves to specify the time of year at which the combat took place.

As usual with the *Aspis*, textual problems complicate matters. Various deletions and transpositions have been proposed, and some of them have a good chance of being correct. These are serious problems that cannot be ignored. We must draw conclusions about principles of arrangement and structure only with the greatest caution. For the purposes of the present study, however, we will, as far as possible, focus our attention on the similes as literary artefacts. Of course, even if some of the similes are indeed rhapsodic interpolations,

⁸¹ For criticism of the notion that one cannot (in theory) identify the original context of a simile cf. West (2001) 232 n. 65.

⁸² *Aspis* 436 is probably to be deleted (cf. n. 76); hence I count the simile as beginning at 437.

they nonetheless found favour with at least one ancient reciter and his audience and were considered fit accompaniments to the text. It is our task here to see in what ways they were regarded as appropriate embellishments to the *Aspis*, and to judge how successfully they achieved their aim.

II.3.iii. Distribution & Deployment

The *Aspis*'s long similes all cluster round the combat: (I)–(V) in the duel of Herakles and Kyknos, (VI)–(VII) in the combat of Herakles and Ares. So too in the *Iliad* it is in battle narrative that similes preponderate. Moreover, all the long similes in the *Aspis* occur in the narrator's voice, not in character-text; the same is true for the short similes, such as 60 σέλας ὧς πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο or 222 ὃ δ' ὥς τε νόημ' ἐποτᾶτο. In Homer, similes in character-text are much rarer than those in narrator-text. However, given the paucity of direct speech in the *Aspis*, the restriction of similes to narrator-text is more likely to be an accident than a deliberate choice. In any case, we can conclude that the similes are employed in the *Aspis* in a conventional and expected context.

Conscious that he has reached the stage of a martial narrative at which it is proper to heighten tension and excitement with similes, our poet accumulates a dense mass of them in order to adorn the climax of his work. In the *Iliad*, too, a concentration of similes marks out an important or climactic portion of the poem. What is noteworthy about the *Aspis* is that the similes are piled on top of one another with little or no narrative intervening. At 372 the heroes have dismounted and the charioteers have driven away; at 413 Kyknos casts his spear at Herakles. In narrative terms, what has happened in the interim is that the warriors have drawn closer together and begun to engage one another, admittedly making impressive sounds as they do so. The concisely related exchange of blows between Herakles and Kyknos

(413–20) is thus preceded by four similes: three referring to Herakles and Kyknos together (I, III–IV), one to Herakles alone (II). There is no direct narrative between the end of (II) and the start of (III), nor would there be even if we adopted the transposition of 386–92 (see below); instead, the poet specifies the season of the year at which Herakles and Kyknos fought. After the end of (IV), we finally advance to a new stage of the narrative (413–20).

The accumulation of similes that is in evidence in (I)–(IV) is paralleled in the Catalogue of Ships, which is preceded by a series of no fewer than five similes—the longest such concatenation in Homer (*Il.* 2.455–83). That is an exceptional passage, however, and it is not normal in Homer for similes to follow one another directly.⁸³ Where in Homer similes do cluster in a particular passage, they regularly describe different stages of an event after new phases of the narrative have been detailed; again, therefore, the sequence in *Iliad* 2 is exceptional, since all the similes describe the same moment of action (albeit with varying focus).⁸⁴ Let us examine the *Aspis*'s similes to see what principles of arrangement and what emphases in perspective are to be detected.

The dramatic event between *Aspis* 372 and 412 is the convergence of the combatants. We therefore expect (I)–(IV) to refer to this stage of proceedings. The first of the *Aspis*'s long similes describes boulders rushing down a mountainside. They crash into one another (375) and tear up trees as they go (376–8), until they reach the plain (378): just as the boulders fell against one another, so too Herakles and Kyknos clashed (375 ἐπ' ἀλλήλαις δὲ πέσωσι ~ 379

⁸³ There are exceptions, such as *Il.* 11.548–65 (Ajax is successively compared to a lion and an ass) and 17.742–53 (the Aiantes are compared first to mules, then to a rock). As van der Valk (1953) 273 notes, critics (including Zenodotus for the *Iliad* 11 passage) have censured this dovetailing in Homer and sought to eliminate one of the similes in each pair. But those Homeric similes are properly rounded off, whereas there must be some textual disturbance in the *Aspis*, since 402–4 is not rounded off with a *Sosatz* (see below).

⁸⁴ Moulton (1977) 27–33 discusses how the similes begin with the general picture and gradually narrow down to the specific.

ὥς οἱ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι πέσον). πίπτω, together with 382–3 οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῶι θεσπεσίωι σύνισαν (note the aorist), signifies that the warriors have now come together and are fighting each other. So too (III) describes lions in the process of attacking each other (403 ἐπὶ σφέας ὀρμήσωσι), while (IV) also depicts vultures actively engaged in conflict. Even if only one of (III) and (IV) is genuine, it is clear that (I), (III), and (IV) all belong with a conception of combat just being joined. They each describe the same stage of hostile engagement, namely the initial stages of the clash, and are thus an appropriate accompaniment to this stage of the *Aspis*'s narrative.

However, (II) relates to Herakles dismounting from the chariot. Considering how oddly it sits here, it should probably be transposed to follow 371,⁸⁵ giving us the order (II)–(I)–(III)–(IV). This is further supported by an examination of the content of the simile, for (II) is clearly suited to the preparatory stages, before the heroes have actually clashed. The boar is only at the point of contemplating its attack (387 φρονέει θυμῶι μαχέσασθαι); it sharpens its tusks (388–9), something it could do only in advance of actual engagement; and it displays symptoms of heightened physical excitement which belong to the moments prior to the clash itself: it foams at the mouth, its eyes flash, its back bristles (390–1). Assuming that the poet did indeed intend this simile to precede (I)–(III)–(IV) and that the present order is due to an accident of transmission, we may applaud the appositeness of this image pertaining to the preliminary stage of the duel. The imagery is not merely stock, but has been chosen aptly for the narrative context. Thus in both (II) and (I)–(III)–(IV) the poet has used similes

⁸⁵ Herakles and Kyknos had dismounted at 370–1. (II) concludes with τῶι ἵκελος Διὸς υἱὸς ἄφ' ἱππέου θόρε δίφρου (392). Kiene (1867) 598 n. 7 suggested transposing 386–92 to follow 371. No editor so far has followed this proposal. Some scholars tolerate the incongruity because of their low opinion of the poet of the *Aspis*, others resort to deletion. Probably 386–92—which are consistent with the image of boars presented elsewhere in the *Aspis* (168–77n.) and the poet's descriptive style—were written in the margin of a learned copy in the Hellenistic era, having been omitted in some recensions, and were re-inserted in the wrong place (cf. §II.7.ii).

whose temporal reference is appropriate to the narrative that they are ornamenting. The same is true of (V), where the slaying of Kyknos is followed immediately by a simile illustrating the event.

The same concern that the simile should fit its narrative context is observable in (VI) and (VII), which adorn Herakles' subsequent bout with Ares. We are told that Herakles disregarded Kyknos' corpse and anticipated (425 δοκεύσας) the onrush of Ares. Before any spears are cast or blows exchanged, Herakles is likened to a lion that has come across a carcass (VI). This is only loosely analogous to the situation with Kyknos' corpse. Rather, it is the lion's attitude and appearance that are the poet's focus: the lion is filled with μένος, its eyes flash, it lashes its flanks and shoulders with its tail, and it paws the ground. As with (II), these are all actions that relate to the anticipation of an attack, which is indeed just the stage of the Herakles–Ares combat that we have reached. After this simile is concluded, we are told in direct narrative that events are moving forward: Herakles stands his ground, but Ares advances towards him (434–5). And now there follows the boulder simile (VII), which, like (I)–(III)–(IV), relates to the coming together of the warriors: the boulder (Ares) bounds along until it comes up against a crag (Herakles). The action is further delayed by Athena's vain attempt to dissuade Ares (443–9) from his attack, and then finally the combatants clash (450–62). In neither the first nor the second combat sequence do similes accompany the description of the fighting itself.

The paucity of direct narrative in the *Aspis's* descriptions of combat, and particularly in 368–423, is striking. The narrative is held in suspension, and then it proceeds at a rapid pace once resumed. The poet shows himself to be more interested in preparations for the combat than the combat itself, a characteristic of his art that may be observed throughout the *Aspis*

(§II.1.vi). Homeric duels also of course dwell on the preliminaries, and the deferral seen in the *Aspis* is somewhat similar to an episode in the Patrokleia. Mid-way through the Patrokleia, Sarpedon and Patroklos dismount from their chariots, whereupon the poet compares them to vultures rushing at one another (*Il.* 16.426–30). There follows an effective and poignant delaying device: a conversation on Olympus between Zeus and Hera about the fate of Zeus' son (431–61). The action on earth is now resumed, over thirty lines after we had been told that the warriors were racing towards each other. Then, just as we think that the duel is about to be joined, the tension is allowed to build further, but through a different device: lesser warriors attendant on Sarpedon and Patroklos are killed, and horses escape (462–76). Only then do the champions succeed in engaging each other directly (477ff.). There is a crucial difference between this and *Aspis* 368–423: Homer avails himself of a variety of deferral devices, whereas the poet of the *Aspis* adopts just one, namely similes (among which we may include the pictorial 393–401). The poet of the *Aspis* also has Zeus thunder from on high and rain down bloody drops from the sky (if 384 is genuine). The motif of bloody rain is found also at *Il.* 11.53–5 and 16.458–61. In the second passage, to which the *Aspis* is verbally closer and which occurs (significantly) in the Patrokleia (cf. §III.1), it is preceded by a debate among the gods over the fate over Sarpedon. This scene of Zeus' anguish was surely one of the more striking and memorable parts of the *Iliad* for an ancient audience. It becomes all the more noticeable, then, that the poet of the *Aspis* has not introduced variety into his strategies of deferral.

To summarise: the *Iliad* poet has not recycled the same device, nor has he restricted digression and elaboration to just one stage of the lead-up to the duel, as has the poet of the *Aspis*. It must be said that in the *Aspis* this 'front-loading', although it has the undoubted

benefit of imparting pictorial richness, lends a stiff and unbalanced quality to the flow of the narrative.

In the poem's second combat sequence, however, our poet has been more adventurous. As already noted above, the similes are contextually appropriate. Between them there intervenes a suitable narrative section to bring the action forward more steadily (433–5). Moreover, the poet adopts a fresh device for retarding the action: Athena attempts to intervene and stay Ares from his rash course of action by intercepting him and addressing him directly (443–9). This intervention is introduced even at the cost of narrative inelegance. In fact, I believe that the poet added this scene later (§II.7.iii). If so, we may suppose that in the first draft, the poet was not satisfied that there had been adequate build-up for the extraordinary clash of Herakles and the god of war. So he decided to delay the climax; but this time he was more imaginative in opting for a device other than a simile.

II.3.iv. Content

Similes involving wild animals are very common in Homer. However, some of the most memorable similes in the *Iliad* are those that draw upon a sphere of experience other than war and focus instead on peacetime activity. But, just as ecphrasis in the *Aspis* differs from its Iliadic counterpart in concentrating on violent rather than tranquil experiences, so too the *Aspis*'s similes all complement the violence-heavy narrative of the poem with similarities rather than offering a contrast to its military atmosphere. Not for the poet of the *Aspis* a woman brushing away a fly from her child's face, or boys kicking down a sandcastle.

As noted above, the similes preceding the Catalogue of Ships each bring a different perspective to the narrative and form a coherent sequence that narrows from the general to the specific. Can any such movement or progression be detected in the *Aspis*? We assume

that the similes once stood in the sequence (II)–(I)–(III)–(IV), with either (III) or (IV) being an interpolation. In (II) the scene is static, with the focus on the boar's mental and physical preparation. In (I) the boulders are moving, and the poet emphasises speed, destructiveness, and noise. Mental processes (403 κοτέοντες), movement (403 ὀρμήσωσι), and sound-effects (404) are the focus of (III). And (IV) hinges around sound and, to a lesser extent, rapid movement. Clearly there is a significant difference between (II) and (I)–(III)–(IV). But there is no discernible shift of emphasis in the series (I)–(III)–(IV). We cannot of course expect a narrowing of focus from the general to the particular as in *Iliad* 2, since the poem narrates a duel rather than the movement of an army. But in each of (I)–(III)–(IV) the poet presents a pair of evenly matched opponents that fall or rush against each other while making a loud sound. It would not make a thematic difference in what order these three similes stood.

Between the two similes in the second combat sequence, however, there is a progression of movement. In (VI) the lion is stationary as it paws the ground, whereas in (VII) the boulder is in rapid motion. Moreover, it is only in (VII) that sound appears: in (VI) the lion is silent, and only its flashing eyes are remarked upon. Lions never roar in Homeric similes either, and it has been suggested that these creatures were known to the Greeks only from iconography.⁸⁶ However that may be, the poet shows no concern whatever for sound in the first simile, not even in the *Sosatz* (433–5).

It will be noticed that (I) and (VII) are kindred in theme: they both describe a boulder, or boulders, bounding down a mountainside. The Herakles–Ares engagement is, in narrative terms, a doublet of the Herakles–Kyknos duel (§II.2.ii). The two sequences share a simile on the same theme, something which binds them together. La Penna deleted the second simile,⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Cf. Burkert (1979a) 82.

⁸⁷ La Penna (1949).

but it is mistaken to regard it as a rhapsodic doublet of (I), for such pairs of similes also occur in Homer at very short range. ‘The explanation of this phenomenon is probably psychological rather than stylistic, as an object of comparison once used effectively would naturally recur to the mind when a similar situation next arose.’⁸⁸ We cannot, however, draw any conclusions from this about the nature of the poem’s composition, as this psychological tendency would manifest itself just as readily with or without the medium of a written text (cf. §II.6.vi).

II.3.v. Points of comparison

We have briefly touched already on the appropriateness of the similes to the narrative situation in the poem. It is time to examine the passages more closely in order to understand the poet’s practice with regard to individual comparisons. In particular, we will focus on the degree to which his similes correspond to the narrative in points of detail. Does he let his images develop freely, or is he more narrowly interested in precise *Vergleichspunkte*? For the time being, we will ignore similar passages in Homer.

(I) 374–379

It is implied that the rocks are descending from the same peak, bouncing down the mountainside in tandem. As they do so, they crash into one another. They smash into trees, breaking them in the process, until they reach the plain, where there is no more greenery to stand in their way.

It does not make strict sense for Herakles and Kyknos to originate from the same peak, since in fact they are coming together from different starting-points. The detail that the boulders crash into each other is apt; the poet is also able to play on the double sense of

⁸⁸ Wilkins (1920) 148; cf. van der Valk (1953) 273 for other examples.

πίπτω as ‘fall (randomly)’ and ‘fall upon (actively)’. However, there is nothing in the narrative to correspond to the vegetation that is flattened by the boulders. This detail would sit far better in a context of two champions among an anonymous mass of soldiers on whom the heroes inflict collateral damage as they force their way through the *mêlée* to face one another.

As for 379, the poet now draws attention to the sound that the warriors made. Logically, of course, the only sound that rocks can make is a crash and a thud, and one might have thought from the way that the simile was introduced that this is what the poet had in mind. For at 373, just before the simile is introduced, he says that the earth resounded under Herakles’ and Kyknos’ feet as they rushed along: 373 τῶν δ’ ὑπὸ σευομένων κανάχιζε πῶς’ εὐρεῖα χθών (s.v.l.). However, when concluding the simile, the poet implies that the noise of the boulders was like the combatants’ shouts: 379 ὥς οἱ ἐπ’ ἀλλήλοισι πέσον μέγα κεκλήγοντες. This is the thought that he then takes up in the following verses, where he relates that towns both near and far resonated with their cries and that they came together ‘with a terrible shout’ (382–3 ἀλαλητῶι | θεσπεσίωι). The initial point of comparison has thus shifted by the end of the simile.

(II) 386–392

The idea of a lone boar standing its ground well suggests Herakles taking his firm stance against his foes. Herakles’ prime concern at this point is with Kyknos, but Ares is also on his horizon. Herakles may therefore fitly be said to be standing off against more than one hunter. The description of the animal’s physical state could not, of course, be paralleled in an account of Herakles in the narrative, except perhaps for the flashing of the eyes (390). Note, though, that it is said in (VI) that Herakles stands δεινὸν ὄρῶν ὅσσοισι (426), and that the lion to

which Herakles corresponds takes his stance γλαυκιδόων ὄσσοισι (430). The detail in the present passage that the boar's eyes are like fire is, therefore, perhaps mentioned specifically so as to characterise Herakles. This focus on flashing eyes is at any rate consistently maintained in (VI).

(III) 402–404

That Herakles and Kyknos are both likened to lions suggests that they are evenly matched and that the impending combat will be closely contended (though of course it is not); the dual number supports the impression of balance. The slain deer, however, has no point of reference in this narrative. The simile would be more appropriate if the warriors were vying over the corpse of a slain comrade, as indeed Herakles and Ares do later.

The emphasis on sound in this section of the poem is strong—cf. the immediately preceding πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει (401)—and so the ἰαχή is a natural quality of the animals to emphasise. The grinding of the animals' teeth may perhaps be related to an unstated point in the narrative, if this poet shared the conception of *Il.* 19.365–8, where the grinding of teeth represents heroic character (cf. 164–5n.).

(IV) 405–412

The screeching combat of the vultures provides a suitable image for the savage war-lust of Herakles and Kyknos. However, as in (III), no referent can be found for the slain deer nor, therefore, for the hunter. Several details are added to give colour to this hunter, but of course none of them can be related to the narrative.

(V) 421–423

A slain hero is often compared to a falling tree. But the detail that this tree has been struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus suggests that Kyknos' demise is at least in part due to the supreme

god. This is fitting, not only because Herakles is presented in the poem as Zeus' agent, but also because at 383 Zeus had thundered ominously prior to the battle. Moreover, Herakles himself is compared to his father's thunderbolt (321-3) which suggests the parallelism between him and the supreme god as the agent of Kyknos' demise.

(VI) 426-434

For Herakles' fierce look see under (II) above. The lion filling its heart with μένος is picked up closely by 434 ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θάρσος ἀέξων. The lion is said to be so terrifying that no one upon seeing it dares to come close and fight it. Ares of course does just this, 435 ὃ δέ οἱ σχεδὸν ἤλυθεν ἀχνύμενος κῆρ, and the close verbal echo of 431-2 produces a fitting paradox of Ares' rashness in the face of such a foe as Herakles, whom all others dare not approach. The poet successfully offsets the expectations raised by the simile against the course of events that unfolds in the narrative.

(VII) 437-442

This is a close-correspondence simile. Ares rushes towards Herakles like a boulder from a peak; μακρὰ δ' ἐπιθρώισκουσα suggests Ares' eagerness (cf. 452 καρπαλίμως ἐπόρουσε). The boulder goes along 'eagerly' (ἐμμεμανῆα)—it is personified—and with an ἡχή. As in (I), the poet lets this thud shift its meaning so as to denote a vocal shout (cf. 442 κεκληγώς). Herakles obviously corresponds to the πάγος that checks the advance of the πέτρη, and the poet thus anticipates a development in the narrative.⁸⁹

We have seen a variant practice in the above similes. In some cases an effort has clearly been made to suggest a close connection between simile and narrative in points of detail (V,

⁸⁹ With Athena's speech intervening at this point, the close connection between Herakles and the πάγος is lost, and the audience is invited, wrongly, to relate the πάγος to Athena. This is further evidence to suggest that the poet added Athena's speech at a later stage in his composition (§II.7.iii).

VI, VII). Elsewhere, however, no such concern is to be detected. Rather, the poet lets the pictorial world of the simile outrun the precise conditions of what he is ‘meant’ to be describing. This is all in the manner familiar from Homer, and ‘irrelevant’ expansion is one of the qualities that modern readers of Homeric similes tend to value rather than disparage. Indeed, as Fränkel remarks, a simile that was true in every respect would be a very dull affair.⁹⁰ It is our task now to investigate the traditional associations of the imagery in these seven similes and their relation to their Homeric forerunners.

II.3.vi. Allusion within tradition

If one studies all the similes in Homer that relate to a particular sphere of experience—for example, natural phenomena, inanimate objects, or wild animals—it is possible to reconstruct the intrinsic literary significance that these held for an ancient poet and his audience. As I have noted above, each of the *Aspis*’s similes draws on themes that are already familiar from the Homeric poems; this line of inquiry should therefore prove particularly fruitful. It must be remembered, however, that in the Homeric poems the same set of motifs can be deployed in different contexts. It is not therefore legitimate to assign absolutely fixed meanings to particular motifs, since they do not exist in a vacuum. Due consideration must be given to the context in which a simile is used.

We shall also find cases where direct influence from a Homeric passage is plausible. We noted above that it is not a requirement of epic similes to correspond in all points of detail with the narrative. Nonetheless, if we compare the *Aspis*’s similes with their Homeric counterparts, we see that sometimes the most probable way of accounting for the *Aspis*’s failure to establish precise correspondence between the narrative and the simile is to regard

⁹⁰ Fränkel (1921) 106.

the *Iliad*'s simile as prior and the *Aspis*'s as a secondary transferral. Such a relationship may be posited when the simile in question seems more closely integrated into its context in the *Iliad* than in the *Aspis*, or when details mentioned in it cohere better with the situation in the Homeric poem.

(I) 374–379

Compare *Il.* 13.137–42, where Hektor rages over the plain inflicting destruction,

ὄλοοίτροχος ὥς ἀπὸ πέτρης,
ὄν τε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμὸς χειμάρροος ὥσῃ,
ῥήξας ἀσπέτῳ ὄμβρῳ ἀναιδέος ἔχματα πέτρης,
ὔψι δ' ἀναθρώσκων πέτεται, κτυπέει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ
ὔλῃ· ὃ δ' ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, ἕως ἵκηται
ἰσόπεδον· τότε δ' οὔ τι κυλίνδεται, ἐσσύμενός περ.

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The *Aspis*'s counterpart seems inescapably secondary when set alongside this passage. The *Iliad* tells us that a rain-swollen river has dislodged the boulder; the *Aspis* gives no such explanation. Instead, the boulders simply 'leap off' (ἀποθρώσκωσιν) their peak. The poet of the *Aspis* wishes, for straightforward literary reasons, to personify the boulders. But so does the *Iliad* poet, who, however, reserves his boulder's personification for a later point in his simile (140 ὔψι δ' ἀναθρώσκων πέτεται). The *Aspis* leads off with the idea of the boulders 'leaping' (374–5) and offers no explanation of how they were set in motion. This weaker internal coherence suggests that the poet has recycled this simile from this passage of the *Iliad*. The impression of dependence on the *Iliad* is strengthened by the observation that *Aspis* 375 = *Il.* 16.297 (still in a simile, but one of different subject-matter). (For further points of contact with the Patrokleia cf. n. 208.)

Moreover, in the *Iliad* ἕως ἵκηται | ἰσόπεδον is well motivated and makes narrative sense: the boulder comes to a stop because it has no more gravitational impulse; this detail well mirrors Hektor's inevitable slowing down as his energy and drive are exhausted. But in the

Aspis the significance of εἵως πεδίωνδ' ἀφίκωνται is different: the boulders break up and dislodge trees 'until they reach the plain' because on the plain there are no more trees to be crashed into. This is obviously a weaker, less organic use of the motif 'until it/they reach(es) the plain'. Moreover, it makes sense for Hektor to lay waste to the wood (140–1), which obviously represents the general mass of soldiers. But to what do the unfortunate trees correspond in the *Aspis*'s narrative? Nothing. The imitator has retained the flattened vegetation because it suggests a general atmosphere of powerful destruction. But it is clearly primary in the Iliadic simile; it is not redeployed in a fully congruent manner.

The *Sosatz* of this simile deserves special comment. *Aspis* 379 ὥς οἱ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι πέσον μέγα κεκλήγοντες is closely parallel to and surely based on *Il.* 16.430 ὥς οἱ κεκλήγοντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι πέσον. But ὥς οἱ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι πέσον μέγα κεκλήγοντες is not merely a gratuitous *variatio* of the prototype: in the *Iliad* the point of the simile 16.428–30 is to highlight the sound of the clash of Sarpedon and Patroklos, and in the summation (430) the poet naturally focusses on κεκλήγοντες. In the *Aspis* passage, however, the point of comparison is *movement*, and there is no mention of sound. When drawing the simile to a close, therefore, each poet chooses to emphasise the aspect on which he had nominally focussed at the outset of the digression. Hence whereas the *Iliad* places κεκλήγοντες prominently, in the *Aspis* πέσον (~ 375 πέσωσι) takes the more important position in the logic of the line.

(II) 386–392

There are several relevant parallels in the *Iliad*: at 11.414–20 Odysseus, standing his ground against the Trojans, is like a boar facing hounds and men; at 12.146–52 the Lapiths Polypoites and Leonteus on their aristeia are like two boars facing a mass of hunters. To the Homeric

mind, boars are second only to lions in their ferocity (cf. 168–77n.). In both these passages of the *Iliad*, a warrior is pitted against an armed mass, and so it is logical that the boar should be facing a large number of enemies. However, at *Il.* 13.471–5 Idomeneus stands his ground against Aineias alone:

ἀλλ' ἔμεν', ὥς ὅτε τις σὺς οὔρεσιν ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς,
 ὅς τε μένει κολοσυρτὸν ἐπερχόμενον πολὺν ἀνδρῶν
 χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, φρίσσει δέ τε νῶτον ὑπερθεν,
 ὀφθαλμῷ δ' ἄρα οἱ πυρὶ λάμπετον· αὐτὰρ ὀδόντας
 θήγει, ἀλέξασθαι μεμαῶς κύνας ἡδὲ καὶ ἄνδρας·

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Why does this boar await the ‘great rabble of men that is approaching’? It seems at first sight inappropriate to the narrative situation. But Fränkel, approved by Janko, believes that the mass of men anticipates the comrades whom Aineias will summon.⁹¹ In the *Aspis*, the focus on this point is Kyknos: so why does the *Aspis*’s boar also stand against ἀνδράσι θηρευτῆις? An ungenerous assessment would be that the poet has simply used a well-established Homeric pattern and not worried that it does not fit his own narrative situation; the traditional associations of a fierce boar standing its ground were enough for him, and he took comfort from this passage of *Iliad* 13 where a single enemy (Aineias) seems to correspond to a multitude of foes. But I think rather that Herakles is focussing his attention on both Kyknos and Ares: the latter will (as Herakles has been warned by Athena, 333–7) confront him directly after the slaying of Kyknos. The plurality of the boar’s enemies, then, suggests Herakles’ concern with Kyknos and Ares alike, anticipating also the direction in which the narrative will develop.

⁹¹ Fränkel (1921) 64; Janko (1992) 107.

(III) 402–404

The closest parallel is *Il.* 16.756–61, where Patroklos and Hektor vie for the corpse of Patroklos' charioteer, Kebriones:

τὼ περὶ Κεβριόναο λέονθ' ὥς δηρινθήτην,
 ὃ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇσι περὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο,
 ἄμφω πεινάοντε, μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον·
 ὥς περὶ Κεβριόναο δύω μήστωρες αὐτῆς,
 Πάτροκλός τε Μενoitιάδης καὶ φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ, 760
 ἔεντ' ἀλλήλων ταμέειν χροά νηλεῖ χαλκῶι.

It need hardly be said that lion similes, of which they are a great number in the *Iliad*, characterise their referents as terrifying and savage beings. The *Iliad* describes only the mental state of the lions, but the *Aspis*, while retaining this element (403 κοτέοντες), also describes the sound that they make (404). This emphasis is characteristic of our poet. Cf. 169n.

In the *Iliad* the warriors fight περὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο: cf. *Aspis* 402 ἀμφὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο. I noted in §II.3.v that this slain deer has no point of reference in the *Aspis* and that the simile would be more appropriate if the warriors were vying for the corpse of a slain comrade. This is precisely the situation in the *Iliad*. The Iliadic passage is more organically integrated to its context, and we may therefore say with some confidence that the poet of the *Aspis* has taken it over from the Patrokleia, making it his own but nonetheless leaving clear traces of Iliadic priority.

(IV) 405–412

Kyknos and Herakles rush at one another like vultures. Vultures are dominant among birds: at *Il.* 13.531 a warrior is compared to a vulture to suggest speed; at 17.460 Automedon is like a vulture among cranes as he speeds through the mass of the army; and at *Od.* 22.302–8 Odysseus and Telemachus, slaying the suitors, are like vultures descending upon smaller

birds. In the *Aspis* we have vulture versus vulture, something which suggests both that the combatants are great in stature and that they will be evenly matched.

Two specific Iliadic parallels must be adduced in relation to *Aspis* 405–12. At *Il.* 16.426–30 Patroklos and Sarpedon dismount in readiness for combat:

οἱ δ' ὥς τ' αἰγυπιοὶ γαμψώνυχες ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι 428
 πέτρῃ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ μεγάλα κλάζοντε μάχωνται,
 ὥς οἱ κεκλήγοντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ὄρουσαν.

The second passage of relevance is 16.756–61, which has been quoted above.

Aspis 405–6 = *Il.* 16.428–9,⁹² *Aspis* 412 = *Il.* 16.430. Into this simple frame the *Aspis* has inserted a developed picture of the background to the birds' conflict: the vultures fight over a goat or deer that has been shot by a hunter who, being unfamiliar with the terrain, has been unable to locate his kill and has thus wandered off in the wrong direction; but the vultures notice the unclaimed carcass and begin a fierce struggle over it. These extra details find no point of comparison with anything in the *Aspis*'s narrative and so cannot have been motivated by a concern to create a close correspondence. Rather, the profusion of detail is intended simply to enhance the simile, surely in order to outdo the rather straightforward model. The supplementary detail most likely derives from *Il.* 11.473–81. Not only is there a verbal echo in the *Aspis*'s ἦν τ' ἐδάμασσε βαλὼν αἰζήιος ἀνὴρ | ἰῶι ἀπὸ νευρῆς of the *Iliad*'s ὄν τ' ἔβαλ' ἀνὴρ | ἰῶι ἀπὸ νευρῆς. There is also a thematic parallel: the animal is wounded or slain by a human, but its body is left unclaimed; wild animals then compete for the spoils.

The *Aspis*'s simile is oddly phrased: the vultures μάχωνται | αἰγὸς ὀρεσσινόμου ἢ ἀγροτέρης ἐλάφοιο | πίονος. We would have expected περί (as Σ^Z note). The preposition is

⁹² οἱ δ' ὥς τ' αἰγυπιοὶ γαμψώνυχες ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι is found otherwise only at *Od.* 22.302. On the question of ἀγκυλοχῆλαι/–χεῖλαι see Janko on *Il.* 16.428, West (2001) 238–9.

present in *Il.* 16.756–61, where the birds vie *περὶ καταμένης ἐλάφοιο*. The defective Greek betrays the secondary origin of the passage in the *Aspis*.

Along with Russo, however, I believe that 405–12 is an interpolation in the *Aspis*, an alternative for 402–4. There is evidence of textual disturbance in this part of the poem, for after 404 we must certainly posit a lacuna for (as a minimum) a *Sosatz*; alternatively, 412 may originally have been intended to conclude 402–4. The similarity of 402 and 407–8 is (as Solmsen notes) suspicious; our poet tends not to take over verses from Homer without change, as he has done in 405–6 and 412; and the extra detail that the poet has accumulated in *Aspis* 407–11 does not give the impression of having been worked out with careful thought for this context, nor is it even expressed with grammatical accuracy.

(V) 421–423

There are several passages in the *Iliad* in which a fighter's collapse is likened to a tree falling or being felled:⁹³ 13.178–81, 13.389–93 = 16.482–6, 14.414–20. In all these passages the poet wishes to increase the pathos of the situation. 'We shed no tears over Cycnus',⁹⁴ but the traditional associations of such tree similes must colour our view of the characterisation of the villain.

The *Aspis* specifies the thunderbolt of Zeus as the force that has brought ruin to the tree. In only one of the Iliadic parallels, 14.414–20, is this detail found. Hektor is knocked out by Aias. As Janko notes (following Krischer), 'this tree is an oak, the toughest to fell, and the thunderbolt replaces the axe to make its fall more awesome'; of the *Aspis* passage Janko remarks that it 'weakens the effect by making the tree an oak or a pine'.⁹⁵ Perhaps, then, we have a secondary, careless use of a specific Iliadic simile. But does the poet of the *Aspis* really

⁹³ Cf. Krischer (1971) 72–5.

⁹⁴ Janko (1986) 59.

⁹⁵ Janko (1992) 214.

want to emphasise the difficulty of killing Kyknos? If so, why does he make Herakles' victory so very easy, and present it throughout the poem as a foregone conclusion? Instead, I think that our poet is allusively drawing a parallel between Kyknos and Hektor, likening Kyknos' fate to Hektor's, just as the role of the Iliadic Achilles is played by Herakles (cf. §III.1).

Finally, it remains to consider why the poet says that Kyknos fell like a δρῦς or a πεύκη.⁹⁶ Alternative trees are given in *Il.* 13.389–90 = 16.482–3, ἥριπε δ' ὥς ὅτε τις δρῦς ἥριπεν ἢ ἀχερωῖς | ἢ ἐ πίτυς βλωθρή. Metrically, ἀχερωῖς could of course have stood in place of ὅτε πεύκη at *Aspis* 389. The most likely explanation for the divergence is the poet's reminiscence of the preceding *Aspis* 376 πολλὰ δὲ δρῦς ὑψίκομοι, πολλὰ δέ τε πεῦκαι.

(VI) 426–434

The simile begins with the lion's joy at finding an animal which he then kills (428 μελίφρονα θυμὸν ἀπηύρα). In Homer lions are presented as scavengers rather than predators (cf. *Il.* 3.23–6, 11.479–81, 13.198–9), so this conception is in itself novel. It characterises Herakles as a more impressive warrior if he is likened to a hunting animal rather than to a scavenger; and indeed in the forthcoming battle Herakles actively wounds Ares (although he does not, of course, take his life). As noted in §II.3.v, it is an effective paradox that Ares dares to approach and fight Herakles when of the lion in the simile it had been said οὐδέ τις αὐτόν | ἔτλη ἐς ἄντα ἰδὼν σχεδὸν ἐλθέμεν οὐδὲ μάχεσθαι.

The phrasing of 426 λέων ὥς σώματι κύρσας repays close examination. The line resembles the introduction of a simile in *Iliad* 3 in which Menelaos, catching sight of Paris, rejoiced ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας (23). Here, as everywhere else in

⁹⁶ On the v.l. πέτρη cf. n. 169.

Homer, σῶμα seems to denote a dead body.⁹⁷ But in the *Aspis*, as we have seen, the σῶμα must be a living creature. We can see what has happened: the poet of the *Aspis* remembered the simile from *Iliad* 3 and, regarding its phraseology as successful, he took it over with little adaptation. In so doing, he introduced a linguistic anomaly by distorting the meaning of σῶμα.

For the rest, however, the *Aspis*'s simile is effective and memorable. The focus is on the lion's brave spirit and the terror he inspires in enemies, but there is also fine pictorial detail, reminiscent of part of a simile comparing Achilles to a lion (*Il.* 20.169–73):

ἐν δέ τέ οἱ κραδίηι στένει ἄλκιμον ἦτορ,
οὐρῇ δὲ πλευράς τε καὶ ἰσχία ἀμφοτέρωθεν 170
μαστιέται, ἐὲ δ' αὐτὸν ἐποτρύνει μαχέσασθαι,
γλαυκίῳ δ' ἰθὺς φέρεται μένει, ἦν τινα πέφνηι
ἀνδρῶν, ἧ' αὐτὸς φθίεται πρώτῳ ἐν ὀμίλῳ.

The *Aspis* includes all the details found in the *Iliad* (courage fills the lion's heart; he lashes his body with his tail; his eyes flash) and more besides: he paws the ground (431) and is too terrifying for anyone to approach. The *Iliad*'s lion is happy either to kill the men surrounding it or to die in the attempt. We can see why the poet of the *Aspis* did not have an equivalent of ἧ' αὐτὸς φθίεται πρώτῳ ἐν ὀμίλῳ, for that would have undermined the martial supremacy of Herakles that the *Aspis* strives so hard to establish—or else even imply that Herakles had a death-wish (as did the *Iliad*'s Achilles at this point in the poem). The simile is, then, carefully crafted to its context, despite its evident dependence on Iliadic models.

⁹⁷ Russo, however, raises doubts in the Addenda to his second edition (p. 225).

(VII) 437–442

Ares is given a simile of his own during the combat with Herakles; van der Valk suggests, quite plausibly, that this is because Ares is a god and so ‘needs’ a simile.⁹⁸

This simile has much in common with 374–9, and it is surely the work of the same poet. The same Homeric parallel is relevant. Again, no reason for the boulder’s initial impulse is given: it simply ὀρούσηι from its resting-place. We saw in (I) that the motif of ‘until they reach the plain’ was transferred awkwardly from the *Iliad*. In this case, however, there is a more logical and meaningful reason for the boulder’s stopping: it comes up against a lofty πάγος. Our poet has done a better job here, fitting this simile closely to the narrative and giving the events in it a coherent structure.

II.3.vii. Conclusions

The poet uses a rather limited range of subjects in his similes, and every simile in the *Aspis* can be paralleled, at least in part, by something in the *Iliad*. Sometimes motifs are chosen by the poet of the *Aspis* because of their traditional resonances, resonances that we can reconstruct by considering their use in Homer. There are several cases in which direct dependence on the *Iliad* is beyond doubt: the genetic relationship between the two poems supports the methodology advanced in §I.3. It is moreover notable that the poet shows familiarity with passages from across the span of the *Iliad*, an invaluable datum for the early reception of that epic. Sometimes our poet takes over the basic idea and phraseology from Homer but succeeds in giving new life to the image, fitting it to the situation in his own

⁹⁸ Van der Valk (1953) 266. This idea is given support from what we observe of the poet’s generally serious and reverent attitude towards the gods (§II.4.i).

poem. At other times, however, the process of adaptation is less successful, and incongruities are created, or the simile strikes us as not quite appropriate in its new guise and surroundings.

II.4. Ethos

II.4.i. Gravitas

The poet's whole outlook is more serious than the *Iliad*'s. In §III.2.ii we shall see that in the *Aspis* Herakles is presented as a dignified figure, an ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ and a servant of Apollo. Moreover, the *Aspis* shows close connections to the *Diomedea*, and the poem's allusions to this part of the *Iliad*—and in particular, their differences from it—underscore the rather grave atmosphere of the *Aspis* (§III.1). Here are some further examples of the serious ethos of the *Aspis*.

Aspis 393–400 is inspired by *Op.* 582–6 (n. 203), but van der Valk has commented well on the difference in tone between the two passages:

In Hesiod *Op.* 582ff. the heat of summer is defined by the following details: the blooming of the artichoke, the singing of the cricket, the goats, the wine, sexual intercourse. In the *Scutum* the description of the cricket is amplified, the other details are omitted and the ripening of the oats and the grapes is mentioned instead. The difference between the two passages seems to be partly due to a difference in character between *Scutum* and *Opera*. The theme of the *Scutum* is an heroic combat, the poem belongs to the same class as the *Iliad* and the *Theogony*, who [sic] treat of a solemn and exalted subject. [...]. For the same reason the mentioning of sexual intercourse in *Op.* 582ff. has been omitted in the simile of the *Scutum*.⁹⁹

Throughout the *Aspis* the gods are treated seriously by the poet. Dionysos in the *Iliad* (14.425) is χάρμα βροτοῖσι, in the *Theogony* (941) πολυγηθῆς, but in the *Aspis* (400) wine is χάρμα καὶ ἄχθος;¹⁰⁰ this is particularly appropriate for Herakles, who had it not been for

⁹⁹ Van der Valk (1953) 272–3.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Thgn. 875, 211–12, and more generally Papakonstantinou (2012). *Aspis* 400, identical with [Hes.] fr. 239.1 (where the transmitted ἔχθος is emended to ἄχθος on the strength of the present passage), may be a 'secondary interpolation' (cf. §II.7.ii); note especially the inaccurate οἶα, where οἶας

wine might not have killed his family. Zeus adds further gravitas: he oversees everything in a remote and magisterial fashion; similarly, in the *Hymn to Demeter* he is given no direct speech.¹⁰¹ In the *ehoie* Amphitryon's task is set by Zeus as guarantor of justice, θεοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μάρτυροι ἦσαν (30). Contrast the *Iliad's* scenes of divine frivolity on Olympus and the poem's whole approach to divine justice (cf. §II.5.ii). Let us return to Athena's instructions to Herakles: Athena reports the favour of Zeus towards Herakles (328–9); she then gives the further instruction that Herakles is to wound Ares. However, this section of her instructions is introduced by ἄλλο δέ τοί τι ἔπος ἐρέω, and it is cast in the form of imperatives (rather than the third-person indicative used previously to refer to Zeus' ordinance). The effect (as van der Valk notes) is to keep Zeus free from the taint of authorising a mortal to wound a god; contrast *Il.* 5.765–6, where Zeus tells Hera to rouse Athena against Ares.¹⁰² Admittedly Zeus is not there sanctioning that a mortal should wound a god, but he nonetheless provides the impetus and gives his approval for this τιμή-diminishing episode. In the *Iliad's* Theomachy, too, he shows his disregard for the majesty of the other gods by taking delight in their undignified conflict (20.22–3, 21.388–90).

II.4.ii. The (more) Heroic Age

Some early epic shows little interest in the chronology of legendary times: the opening of the *Cypria*, for example, speaks vaguely of 'a time' when the earth was overburdened. The *Aspis*, however, is interested in the structure of mythical time; cf. 216n. ἱππότα. Another way in which the poet aims to distinguish strata of time is by showing that the heroes of

is expected (Russo). Equally, though, the lines may have been inserted from the *Catalogue* by the author of the *Aspis* without due regard to their grammatical appropriateness in their new surroundings (cf. §II.6.ii; 146n. πλῆτο).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Richardson (1974) 33–4, who is sceptical about the idea that this makes the *Hymn's* Zeus 'Hesiodic'.

¹⁰² Van der Valk (1953) 268 n. 2.

Herakles' era were more heroic still than those who fought at Troy. This is a topos already in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: for instance, Agamemnon rebukes Diomedes for not living up to Tydeus' standards (*Il.* 4.370–400). Herakles, too, is adduced by Achilles as the example of the supreme hero who, for all his prowess, still became subject to death (*Il.* 18.117–19). From the *Odyssey* one thinks of 8.223–5, where Odysseus boasts that he excels all other archers now but adds: ἀνδράσι δὲ προτέροισιν ἐριζέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλῃσω, | οὐθ' Ἡρακλῆϊ οὐτ' Εὐρύτῳ Οἰχάλῃϊ, | οἳ ῥα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἐρίζεσκον περὶ τόξων. We find in the *Aspis* that the sense of the Trojan heroes' epigonal status is repeatedly emphasised through a variety of devices.

It is a commonplace of the *Iliad* that men nowadays are inferior to their predecessors: 'two men could not lift that stone, οἳοι νῦν βροτοὶ εἰσι, but Diomedes lifted it easily' (5.302–4, etc.). Herakles belongs to the generation before the Trojan War and is the greatest hero of all. How can the poet emphasise his prowess within such an era? At 72–4, where after describing the terrifying aspect of Ares the poet asks rhetorically τίς κεν ἐκείνου | ἔτλη θνητὸς ἐὼν κατεναντίον ὀρμηθῆναι | πλήν γ' Ἡρακλῆος καὶ κυδαλίου Ἰολάου; The past tense ἔτλη shows that the poet is asking 'Who (in the time of Herakles) would have dared...?'. The poet is therefore contrasting Herakles and Iolaos with their peers, not with men of the present age. There is surely a poetic motivation for this: it would be small praise indeed to say that Herakles was superior to men of the present age, given that the *Iliad's* heroes were also fashioned *de meliore luto* than the poet's audience: the way to raise the *Aspis's* heroes above the epigones at Troy was to say Herakles and Iolaos were braver and stronger than the other men of their own time.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ This topos is paralleled only once, I think, in the *Iliad*: at 12.445–8 Hektor lifts a stone which οὐ κε δύ' ἀνέρε δῆμου ἀρίστῳ | ῥῆϊδίῳς ἐπ' ἄμαξαν ἀπ' οὔδεος ὀχλίσσειαν. After this verse the

A further way in which the *Aspis* shows Herakles and Iolaos to be more heroic than the heroes of Troy concerns their attitude towards Ares. In the *Iliad* he is evoked as a terrifying figure: Hektor, for example, advances Γοργούς ὄμματ' ἔχων ἡὲ βροτολοιγοῦ Ἄρηος (8.349).¹⁰⁴ Yet Herakles mentions a previous victory over the god (359–67), and throughout the *Aspis* he shows no fear of him. The poet employs a pointed deviation from *Iliad* 5 in order to emphasise this point. At *Il.* 5.859–63 Ares shrieks (as loudly as a whole army, it must be admitted), τοὺς δ' ἄρ' ὑπὸ τρόμος εἶλεν Ἀχαιοὺς τε Τρῳάς τε | δέισαντας. By contrast, in the *Aspis* Herakles tells Iolaos not to fear the war-god's din (98), nor is Herakles himself troubled by it: at 442 Ares κεκληγῶς ἐπόρουσεν and Herakles ἐμμαπέως ὑπέδεκτο. Note also that at *Il.* 5.826–8 it is Athena who must tell Diomedes not to fear Ares: τοίη τοι ἐγὼν ἐπιτάρροθός εἰμι. In the *Aspis*, however, it is *Herakles* who reassures Iolaos. The allusion to *Iliad* 5 suggests that the *Aspis*'s Herakles is as authoritative and fearless as the goddess of war, and implies that, welcome though Athena's assistance in the Kyknomachy may be, it is not indispensable. Diomedes is one of the foremost Greek heroes at Troy, yet even he falls far short of Herakles.

There is another means through which the *Aspis*'s heroes are presented as superior to the *Iliad*'s. Inability to recognise a particular god is the default position in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The exceptions in the *Iliad* are Achilles and Helen, but their privileged knowledge of the divine world is one of the ways in which the poet distinguishes them from the other

manuscripts add οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσ'· ὃ δέ μιν ῥέα πάλλε καὶ οἷος (= 5.304, 13.383 (v.l.), 20.287). This is expunged by Lachmann, and West (2001) 220–1 argues persuasively it was interpolated by someone who failed to grasp that the poet was comparing Hektor with the ἄνδρες δήμου rather than men of a subsequent age. The parallels for such an opposition that are cited by West (*Il.* 12.212–14; 2.188, 198) concern the superiority conferred by kingly status, not physical prowess, and so are not quite like 12.445–8. In any case, note that the *Iliad* feels the need to justify Hektor's superiority over his peers: Zeus made the stone light for Hektor (450; ancient critics objected to the verse because it seems to undermine the notion of Hektor's innate superiority to his common peers).

¹⁰⁴ For the terror-inducing stare of the Gorgon cf. 145n.

characters in the poem; this is particularly true of Achilles. The *Aspis* presents Herakles as exempt from the ἄχλϋς which by default dulls men's vision. This is to be inferred from the fact that Athena, who appears in her own form to the hero, does not bother to reveal her identity to him in her speech at 325–37. The episode is evidently modelled on *Il.* 5.121–32, but there Athena's epiphany is preceded by a prayer by Diomedes that she may appear (115–20); when she duly appears she has no need, therefore, to identify herself to him. The situation is different at *Aspis* 325ff., for the hero has not called upon the goddess and is therefore not expecting her to manifest herself.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Athena in the *Iliad* must cast the ἄχλϋς from Diomedes' eyes so that he can recognise the gods; the aorist ἔλον (*Il.* 5.127) perhaps shows that Diomedes, even though he had just called on Athena, would have been unable to recognise even her had she not already done this. When Diomedes recognises Ares at *Il.* 5.604¹⁰⁶ and Athena at 815, the ἄχλϋς has yet to be cast back over his eyes. By contrast, Herakles is certainly able to recognise Ares as Ares as early as *Aspis* 98–101, and when Athena instructs him to wound Ares ἔνθα κε γυμνωθέντα | ... ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδῃς (334–5), she does not declare that she will upgrade his eyesight: there is no need. But again, the poet of the *Aspis* is not trying to mark Herakles out as special like Achilles, privileged in comparison with his contemporaries: Iolaos too can see Ares from the outset (108ff.). All this is in accord with what the *Catalogue* tells us of the period before the Trojan War: it was a time when feasts and councils were held in common between gods and humans (fr. 1.6–7) and at which the gods might manifest themselves ἐναργέες (fr. 165.5). Yet Herakles and Iolaos are

¹⁰⁵ It is the same with Achilles and Athena during the Quarrel: Achilles turns round, αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνων | Παλλάδ' Ἀθηναίην (*Il.* 1.199–200).

¹⁰⁶ 'Omitted by two papyri and perhaps interpolated' (West (2011) 164).

completely unfazed by the apparition, something which sets them apart from their contemporaries.¹⁰⁷

In conclusion: by deft manipulation of the epic convention, and by deviating in subtle yet meaningful ways from specific scenes in the *Iliad* (particularly in *Iliad* 5), the *Aspis* poet forms a consistent conception of the heroic status of his protagonists, placing them on a level up from those of the *Iliad* and from their peers.

II.5. Hints of Hesiod

‘Von dem eigenthümlichen Geiste der Hesiodischen Poesie, soweit wir dieselbe kennen, ist hier nichts wahrzunehmen.’¹⁰⁸

The authorship of the *Aspis* was questioned in antiquity, notably by Aristophanes of Byzantium (§I.1). But Apollonius of Rhodes believed it to be the work of Hesiod ἔκ τε τοῦ χαρακτῆρος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πάλιν τὸν Ἰόλαον ἐν τῷ Καταλόγῳ εὐρίσκειν ἡνιοχοῦντα Ἡρακλεῖ. Apollonius is evidently responding to a challenge to the poem’s authenticity, and on chronological grounds this challenge must have come from someone other than Aristophanes.¹⁰⁹ The authenticity of the *Catalogue* was rarely questioned in antiquity;¹¹⁰ indeed, Apollonius’ second ‘proof’ of the *Aspis*’s genuineness is predicated on his acceptance

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Richardson on *Dem.* 188–90, West (2013) 78. In P.Köln III 126 (= *Meropis* fr. 3 PEG; *adesp. pap.* SH 903A) Herakles is again able to recognise a divinity, Athena: ὁ δ’ εἴ[σι]δεν ἄσθματι θυίω[ν] | [γνῶ τε] θεόν. The course of events in this fragment does not suggest that he had received special dispensation. If the fragment is indeed archaic not Hellenistic (cf. Henrichs (1993) 187–95), it might suggest that this conception of Herakles was commonplace at the period of the *Aspis*.

¹⁰⁸ Bergk (1872) 998. By contrast, Fränkel (1975) 112 writes, with respect to *Aspis* 264–70, ‘[t]he gloomy symbolism of this successor to Hesiod recalls Hesiod in many respects, but the speculative element is wanting’.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Janko (1986) 39 n. 4. Of Megacles, a Homeromastix of the fourth century BC, we are told in the Hypothesis γνήσιον μὲν οἶδε τὸ ποίημα, but I am not sure that we are entitled to infer that he was answering a challenge to the *Aspis*’s authenticity: he was more of an arbitrary Zoilus than a scholarly γραμματικός (Janko (2000) 138–43), and he may merely have mentioned Hesiod’s name in connection with the *Aspis*.

¹¹⁰ Cf. West (1985) 127.

of the *Catalogue* as the work of Hesiod himself. But Apollonius' comment about the 'Hesiodic character' of the *Aspis* is intriguing. Scholars hitherto have made little of it.

Apollonius was a sensitive literary critic and steeped in epic poetry that is unavailable to us. Besides the *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, *Aspis*, and *Catalogue*, he will have known the poems such as the *Megalai Ehoiai*, *Wedding of Keyx*, *Aigimios*, *Precepts of Chiron*, and *Astronomy*. He was not a naive unitarian determined to believe that everything which bore the name 'Hesiod' was the work of that poet: we happen to know that he athetised the *Ornithomanteia*, a supplement attached in some copies to the end of the *Works and Days*; he also made a textual remark on a line of the *Theogony*.¹¹¹ Apollonius' sense that the *Aspis* somehow belonged with the Hesiodic poems therefore deserves serious attention. We see from the style of his argument about Iolaos that he thought it valuable to make mythographical comparisons between poems current under the name of Hesiod; beyond this, we cannot tell what his criteria were. It is therefore worth considering in more detail what he might have meant by saying that the poem had a 'Hesiodic character'. In order to do so, we must adopt his view of the poems' authorship: when speaking of 'Hesiod' in relation to Apollonius, we include the *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, *Aspis*, and the majority of the fragments (most of which come from the *Catalogue*). In this section of the Introduction, therefore, 'Hesiod(ic)' refers to everything that Apollonius believed to have been written by Hesiod. Similarly, 'Homer' may be used for the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, since Apollonius was not a Separatist.

When Bergk (quoted above) wrote that the *Aspis* did not resonate with the spirit of Hesiodic poetry, 'soweit wir dieselbe kennen', much less was known about the *Catalogue*. As

¹¹¹ Cf. Pfeiffer (1968) 144.

for Hesiodic features in the *Aspis*, scholars might have noted the localisation of the Muses to Pieria (cf. 206n.); the *Theogony*-like catalogues at 154–[60] and 178–90, the former of which, dealing with abstractions, is particularly redolent of the *Theogony* (cf. 154–5n.); and the naming of the Fates (*Aspis* 258–63 ~ *Th.* 218, 905). These parallels do not amount to much. But Lobel's publication of Oxyrhynchus vol. xxviii in 1962 doubled the total number of Hesiodic papyri, and valuable works of interpretation have followed.¹¹² One result of our improved knowledge of the *Catalogue* is that it is no longer possible to regard the poem as an 'agglutinative' composition;¹¹³ rather, it has a coherent structure and must be the creation of a single mind. I hold that *Aspis* 57–480 was composed in the knowledge of the Alkmene-*ehoie* (§II.7.i) and—especially since this comes from the fourth book (of five) of the *Catalogue*—I am inclined to think that the poet of the *Aspis* knew the *Catalogue* in its entirety. Notwithstanding the possibility of interpolations within the *Catalogue*,¹¹⁴ I therefore take that poem as essentially a unity, the product of a single mind—even if the author's sources were very varied and wide-ranging. Moreover, since the *Catalogue* is a continuation of the *Theogony*, it is inconceivable that, if the *Aspis* poet knew the *Catalogue*, he did not also know the *Theogony*. Likewise, since the *Works and Days* responds to the *Theogony* (cf. esp. *Op.* 11–26 ~ *Th.* 225–6), we can safely assume knowledge of the second canonical Hesiodic poem too.

Let us then investigate the *Aspis*'s relationship to the Hesiodic corpus more fully. The problem of the true authorship of the *Aspis* is not at issue here. Rather, by investigating how

¹¹² Cf. esp. West (1985); Hirschberger (2004); Hunter (ed.) (2005); Ormand (2014).

¹¹³ Cf. West (1985) 121–2 with 122 n. 209.

¹¹⁴ Such as fr. 25.26–33, verses which claim that Herakles achieved divinity and which are obelised in the papyrus that is our sole witness. The strongest argument for deletion is that they cause Herakles to descend to Hades only to be raised thence to Olympus. We cannot know whether they had established themselves in the text of the *Catalogue* by the time of the *Aspis*, but if they were interpolated at a similar time to *Od.* 11.602–4 (ascribed to Onomacritus, who lived in the late sixth to early fifth centuries), they will postdate the *Aspis*. In fr. 229 Herakles is on Olympus and there is nothing to suggest that the verses are spurious.

(if at all) the *Aspis* is aligned with the other Hesiodic poems we may better understand why Hesiod's name was associated with it, apparently as early as Stesichorus (§III.3.i). This inquiry will address itself principally to the conception of the divine; mythography; poetic ethos; and narrative technique.

II.5.i. Hesiodic character

First, however, we must investigate what Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ might mean. This phrase, or similar expressions, appears four times in ancient writings.¹¹⁵ Three of those occurrences are in the Homeric scholia.

First, the list of Nereids at *Il.* 18.39–49 (cf. *Th.* 243–62) was athetised by Zenodotus and is said to have a Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ. It is not just that here we have a catalogue and Hesiod was the most prominent exponent of catalogue poetry: rather, as the scholia explain, 'Homer's practice (unlike Hesiod's) is to speak of collectivities of goddesses, such as the Muses or Eileithyiai, without giving them individual names'.¹¹⁶ Moreover, it is perhaps because of the enumerative style of the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue* that the second book of the *Iliad* bore the Hellenistic title νεῶν κατάλογος ἢ Βοιωτία: the Ascraean Hesiod was the most famous exponent of catalogue poetry, hence all catalogue poetry was somehow 'Boeotian'.¹¹⁷

Second, *Od.* 15.74 χρὴ ξεῖνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν ἐθέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν, a line which we are told by the scholia ἐν πολλοῖς (sc. exemplars) οὐκ ἐφέρετο, is 'Hesiodic' because gnomic.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Schwartz (1960) 43–6.

¹¹⁶ West (2001) 244–5, where he calls the scholiast's observation 'true and pertinent' and advances further reasons for deletion (in the Teubner edition he brackets *Il.* 18.39–49). West (2011) 344–5 is more cautious.

¹¹⁷ Differently West (1973) 191–2, who with regard to the association of catalogue poetry with the name of Hesiod asserts 'that the only poems of the Hesiodic corpus known to come from Boeotia are the two known to be by Hesiod; that none of them is a catalogue in anything like the same sense as the catalogue of ships; and that in any case they are Ionic in language and metre'; he suggests that the reason the catalogue begins from Boeotia may be that the fleet gathered at Aulis. The opening words of a poem often served as its title, cf. Kenney (1970).

This label must derive from the prevalence of single-hexameter *gnomai* in the *Works and Days*;¹¹⁸ the *Precepts of Chiron*, with its direct, schoolmasterly wisdom, is also likely to have contained such *gnomai*.

Third, the description of the petrification of Niobe at *Il.* 24.614–17 was athetised by Aristarchus: ἔστι δὲ καὶ Ἑσίοδεία (sc. ἡ παραμυθία) τῷ χαρακτήρι. As Schwartz says, the reason for the description of the παραμυθία as ‘Hesiodic’ eludes us. It may just be that the scene in the *Iliad* is similar to one in the proem of the *Theogony*: both involve minor goddesses dancing round springs, but the tableau seemed more organic in the *Theogony* passage; moreover, there is a verbal similarity between *Il.* 24.616 νυμφάων αἶ τ’ ἀμφ’ Ἀχελώϊον ἐρρώσαντο and *Th.* 8 ἐπερρώσαντο δὲ ποσσίν.

The fourth explicit reference to the Ἑσιόδειος χαρακτήρ is the report of Apollonius’ assessment of the *Aspis*.

It will be seen that the first two examples above refer to generic categories of hexameter verse: catalogue poetry on one hand and gnostic poetry on the other. Some scholars assume therefore that the basis of the *Aspis*’s Hesiodic χαρακτήρ was nothing more than its superficially genealogical appearance: the *Aspis* opens with an *ehoie* (so e.g. Russo 68). As far as the ancients were concerned, Hesiod himself had composed a genealogical poem on the γυναικῶν φῦλον in which the structuring and transitional formula was such a recognisable hallmark that Hesiod’s Γυναικῶν κατάλογος was also known as the Ἡοῖαι; on this basis the *Aspis*, opening with the very words ἡ’ οἷη and a genealogical excursus on a heroine, was automatically of a Hesiodic χαρακτήρ.

¹¹⁸ Rzach even suggested that it recalled specific verses from the *Works and Days*, cf. Schwartz (1960) 44.

We need, however, to examine the meaning of *χαρακτήρ* more closely; the word's semantics were not static.¹¹⁹ 'Stamp, impress' was the original sense, but by Theophrastus' time it could refer to someone's personality, and in literary contexts it might denote more broadly the 'style' of a work. Thus Demetrius in a well-known passage asserts εἰσὶ δὲ τέτταρες οἱ ἀπλοῖ χαρακτῆρες, ἰσχνός, μεγαλοπρεπής, γλαφυρός, δεινός, καὶ λοιπὸν οἱ ἐκ τούτων μιγνύμενοι (*Eloc.* 36); these are not formal or generic features but more broadly stylistic ones. The date of this Demetrius is highly uncertain, but no one would place him earlier than the fourth century BC or later than the first century AD. One of the Aratean *Lives* (2.7–8 Martin) says that Aratus imitated Ὀμηρικὸς χαρακτήρ in metrical composition (κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἐπῶν σύνθεσιν): presumably formal features are meant. We may suppose that the Hypothesis to the *Aspis* was composed between the second century BC and the first century AD, and in this period *χαρακτήρ* will have had an extended application.

We must also correct a fallacy in discussions of our testimonium about Apollonius. Russo 68 assumes that Apollonius himself used the word *χαρακτήρ* in his criticism of the *Aspis*, but we are not entitled to infer this: *χαρακτήρ* could be the Hypothesis-writer's own word to encompass what he, having read Apollonius' discussion, regarded as a matter of *χαρακτήρ*, i.e. style rather than mere hallmarks of genre. Even if Apollonius did use the word *χαρακτήρ*, to the composer of the *Aspis*'s Hypothesis the word would have denoted more than merely formal features, and if the compiler wrote *χαρακτήρ* he will have been using the word in its more developed sense. The author of the Hypothesis would not have used it if it had been merely a question of the generic marker ἢ οἷον, since the word would not have meant to him

¹¹⁹ Körte (1928) offers a diachronic study of *χαρακτήρ*; cf. also van Groningen (1930), Diggle (2004) 4–5.

or his audience what it may have meant to Apollonius (unless we suppose that *χαρακτήρ* had developed to mean ‘style’ already by Apollonius’ lifetime).

Indeed, Russo has aptly compared the *Aspis*’s Hypothesis to one of the hypotheses of Euripidean *Rhesus*, where we learn that the authenticity of the play has been doubted: τὸν γὰρ Σοφόκλειον μᾶλλον ὑποφαίνειν χαρακτῆρα. The significance of this is disputed:

[A]n explanation of Σοφόκλειος *χαρακτήρ* has been variously sought in the brevity of the gnomic expressions, in the metrical style, in resemblances to the diction of Sophocles (which indeed are few) or in supposed reminiscence of a particular play of his. It has also been suggested that the ancient critics may have been influenced by the form of the play’s opening, which is strikingly different from the familiar Euripidean monologue [...]. Another view is that the Sophoclean quality was found in the subject of the play and the manner of its treatment.¹²⁰

If we follow Russo in saying that Apollonius can only have been referring to the formal observation that the *Aspis* opened with an *ehoie*, we seem to contradict the evidence furnished by this other, stylistically similar hypothesis. Rather, we should recognise that in scholastic criticism of the Imperial period the word *χαρακτήρ* could be used in a wider sense than simply ‘(formal) stamp’. Certainly Apollonius must have presented his arguments for the *Aspis*’s Hesiodic *χαρακτήρ* at much greater length than the Hypothesis reports: not only is this supposition *a priori* likely, it is also hinted at by the detail that Apollonius discussed the *Aspis* ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ, which suggests that he produced an expansive œuvre of scholarly criticism rather than making unsubstantiated, dogmatic statements about the authorship of archaic texts.

¹²⁰ Ritchie (1964) 12. Liapis (2012) 60–1, after rejecting various other possibilities, endorses this last option, concluding, ‘the reference to the play’s “Sophoclean character” may be merely pointing to its being closely modelled on *Iliad* 10, just as Sophocles’ own plays were famed for “following in the Poet’s [viz. Homer’s] tracks”.’

II.5.ii. The working of the divine

Kyknos is portrayed in the *Aspis* as the enemy of Apollo. This is implied already at 65–9, where it is said that upon seeing Herakles and Iolaos approach, Kyknos rejoiced, hoping for victory: ἀλλά οἱ εὐχολέων οὐκ ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων· ἰ αὐτὸς γάρ οἱ ἐπῶρσε βίην Ἑρακληΐην. So too in the epilogue to the *Aspis* the poet recalls that after Keyx had given Kyknos (his son-in-law) a proper burial, Apollo caused the river Anauros to burst its banks and wash away the sepulchral monument of Kyknos who had been violating the rights of pilgrims and so suffers a violent visitation of divine wrath. Implicitly, too, he is a violator of the bond of ξενία, for at *Aspis* 350–6 Herakles asks Kyknos to move aside and allow him to pass along the road, mentioning that he is travelling to the house of Kyknos' father-in-law, Keyx, in Trachis. Keyx is supposed (sch. Soph. *Tr.* 40) to be the nephew of Amphytrion, Herakles' putative father, and Kyknos is therefore under an obligation of guest-friendship towards Herakles, an obligation which he disregards even once he has been reminded of it.¹²¹ At 413 the narrator says that Kyknos was eager to kill the 'son of almighty Zeus', and at 447–8 Athena warns Ares that it is not right for Ares to slay the 'stout-hearted son of Zeus': in both passages the patronymic emphasises the idea that an assault on Herakles is tantamount to an assault against the king of the gods. The villain of the *Aspis* suffers the consequences of his impiety.

This view of the divine recalls the conception of justice found in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, and contrasts markedly with that of the Homeric poems, and particularly the *Iliad*. Characters in the *Iliad* often make confident statements about the workings of divine justice, and for pathetic effect Homer exploits the gulf between expectation and reality: the gods pay

¹²¹ Further evidence in the *Catalogue* of friendly relationships between Keyx and Herakles is to be seen at fr. 71A (cf. [Hes.] fr. 251, from the *Megalai Ehoiai*); cf. D'Alessio (2005) 183–6.

no heed to the mortals' constructed system of retributive justice.¹²² Things are different in the Hesiodic poems. For example, according to *Op.* 252–62 Zeus observes the kings through his agents, making sure that the rulers are behaving honestly and arbitrating justly, and punishing them if he finds that they are not. This passage of the *Works and Days* is placed in the authoritative voice of the poet, not put into the mouth of a character for pathetic contrastive effect; rather, Hesiod believes in, and gives us no reason to doubt, the reality and efficacy of divine justice. Conversely, if in Homer Zeus plays any role as the upholder of justice, it is in a vague and remote sense. (The exception to this general rule is *Il.* 16.386–93, a passage whose 'Hesiodic' character is often remarked upon.¹²³) Contrast the story of Salmoneus in the *Catalogue* (fr. 30), where Zeus, wroth with Salmoneus for his impious behaviour, reacts decisively:

βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο [χο]λούμενος, αἶψα δ' ἵκανε 15
 λαοὺς Σαλμ]ωνῆος ἀτ[ασ]θάλου, οἳ τὰχ' ἔμελλον
 πείσασθ' ἔρ]γ' ἀΐδηλα δι' ὑβ[ρ]ιστὴν βασιλῆα·
 τοὺς δ' ἔβα]λεν βροντῇ [τε κ]αὶ αἰθαλόεντι κεραυνῷ.
 ὥς λαοὺς ἀπε]τίθεθ' ὑπερβ[ασίην] βασιλῆος.

This is more than personal revenge: Zeus' aim is to restore the proper balance of things (22–3), and it is significant that Tyro is spared for her attempt to direct Salmoneus away from impiety. Similarly, in our poem Amphytryon's vendetta on the Taphians is imposed and demanded by the gods in their capacity as guarantors of justice (*Aspis* 20–2):

τὼς γάρ οἱ διέκειτο, θεοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μάρτυροι ἦσαν· 20
 τῶν ὅ γ' ὀπίζετο μῆνιν, ἐπείγετο δ' ὅτι τάχιστα
 ἐκτελέσαι μέγα ἔργον, ὃ οἱ Διόθεν θέμις ἦεν.

¹²² It will be obvious to the reader that I reject the thesis of Allan (2006).

¹²³ Cf. also *Il.* 18.507–8 (prize awarded to the judge ὃς ... δίκην ἰθύντατα εἵποι).

The gods' anger will be roused if Amphytryon fails to take revenge. This is not the *Iliad's* way: there, characters must enforce and guarantee their own systems of justice.

There is, moreover, something notable about Zeus' interaction with mortals in the Salmoneus fragment: he comes down from Olympus himself. In Homer, by contrast, Zeus never leaves the upper ether, but sends Iris as his messenger or incites other gods to action; he descends from Olympus only to watch the battle from the peaks of Ida (still decidedly ἐν κορυφῇσι: *Il.* 8.51, 11.183, 14.332). His abstaining from the Theomachy is all the more notable since he himself ordained it but will take no part in it beyond that of audience member. But the mobile Zeus of our Salmoneus fragment is not a one-off in Hesiod. At *Aspis* 30–6 Zeus starts from Olympus and descends to Typhaonion, and thence to Thebes and Alkmene's bed-chamber. Now, it is self-evident that if Zeus is to beget so many heroes he must leave his usual zone of Olympus a few times in the *Catalogue* (as also in some of the liaisons recounted in the source underlying *Il.* 14.315–27); so too in fr. 140–1 Zeus cannot remain aloft and aloof when tricking Europa through his disguise as a bull.¹²⁴ But in fr. 30 he need not have moved from Olympus in order to punish Salmoneus: elsewhere in the *Catalogue* he is quite capable of acting from afar: thus in fr. 51 Zeus χώσατ', ἀπ' Οὐλύμπου δὲ βαλὼν πολέοντι κεραυνῶι | ἔκτανε Λητοίδην (sc. Asklepios), Φοίβωι σὺν θυμὸν ὀρίνων. (We cannot tell where Zeus was in relation to Eetion when he struck him down with the thunderbolt (fr. 177.8–12).) The Zeus of the *Theogony*, too, is required to move from his zone and to grapple and struggle for survival in a way quite alien to Homer. Perhaps the best example of this is the fight with Typhaon (*Th.* 820–80). At fr. 141.1–2 it is said that Europa crossed the sea Διὸς δμηθεῖσα δόλοισι: compare *Aspis* 30, where Zeus descends from

¹²⁴ It is noteworthy that his movement from Olympus is played down at *Il.* 14.315ff.: Zeus talks only of the desire which overtook him on each occasion, and only in the case of Alkmene does he mention the locality of the encounter (323).

Olympus δόλον φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων. The poet of the *Catalogue* is evidently fond of a conception of the supreme god which makes him something of a trickster, not indeed unlike his presentation at certain points in the *Theogony* (as in the Prometheus episode, 507–616). He is more august in the *Iliad*, and particularly in the *Odyssey*.

These parallels in Zeus' behaviour serve only to confirm a certain unity within the *Catalogue*, and to a lesser extent with the two genuine Hesiodic poems. But if Apollonius did not observe that *Aspis* 1–56 was also to be found in Book 4 of the *Catalogue*, he presumably had no reason to doubt that the poem was unitary. Therefore, when he pronounced that the *Aspis* had a Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ, he probably took into account the evidence of *Aspis* 1–56. For us, though, who have the benefit of Aristophanes' observation (and the confirmation of it by papyri: cf. n. 5), the *Aspis* cannot be regarded as the work of just one author. And in fact, when we come to analyse the use of the divine apparatus in *Aspis* 57–480, we find that it is rather closer to the *Iliad* than to the Hesiodic poems. In the *Aspis* Zeus is left remote on Olympus and given a silent part, except for thundering ominously (and also raining blood?) (383–5).¹²⁵ His support of Herakles, asserted also by Iolaos (103–4), is based on the fact that he is his son; the theodicy which demands that Kyknos be punished derives from Apollo alone, whose sanctuary and whose pilgrims Kyknos has been violating. In the *Catalogue* men are firmly punished by the gods:¹²⁶ one thinks in particular of the gods' justice visited upon Salmoneus (fr. 30.1–24), Alkyone and Keyx (fr. 10a.83–98, cf. fr. 10d). Niobe's children can have been enumerated only in the context of her being punished, through their all being

¹²⁵ As Fränkel (1975) 72 n. 10 observes apropos of Homer, '[l]ightning and thunder are the only language in which the lord of heaven speaks to mortals; he is too lofty to communicate with them in words, as the other gods do.'

¹²⁶ Cf. Hirschberger (2004) 79–80.

killed, for her hybris against Leto (fr. 183). The gods' obliteration in the *Aspis* of the impious Kyknos fits well with the ethos of divine retribution that pervades the *Catalogue*.

We should also consider Athena. Athena accompanies Herakles and brings him success, just as she did in the conception of the poets of the *Theogony* (318ff.), the *Catalogue* (fr. 33a), the *Iliad* (8.362–9, 20.144–8), and the *Odyssey* (11.626). All these poems must have derived this partnership from pre-existing Herakles epics (cf. n. 215). More specifically, however, we might say that the *Aspis*'s Athena most closely resembles the Athena who aids Diomedes in the Book 5 of the *Iliad*. The poet of the *Aspis* was heavily influenced by the Διομήδους ἀριστεία (§III.1), and so it is not surprising that his gods should look rather Iliadic—even if their deployment is a little peculiar. As remarked in §II.1.i, when in the *Iliad* a deity comes to a warrior's aid we are usually told that he or she 'noticed' something on the battlefield and in response travelled from Olympus. When, however, Athena appears to Herakles at *Aspis* 325ff. there has been no narrative preparation (except perhaps 197–200, cf. ad loc.). The *Catalogue* follows the more expansive style of the *Iliad*. Before the portion of fr. 30 quoted above, the poet says (12–14):

ὁ δ' ἀγᾶτ[ο πατ]ήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε[ε,
σκληρὸν δ'] ἐβρόντ[ησεν ἀπ'] οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος
[]ον δὴ· ἐτ[ί]γαξε δὲ γαῖαν ἅπασαν.

This is perfectly adequate preparation for the god's subsequent descent, but we do not find its like in the *Aspis*. Similar is fr. 185.10, where Apollo 'sees' ἀπ(ὸ)] ἡχήμεντος Ὀλύμπου the girl he intends to rape. If fr. 204.113ff. does indeed refer to the inability of the gods (particularly Apollo?) and of men to perceive the wider plan of Zeus, this does at least imply that the poet of the *Catalogue* expected the chief god and the lesser deities to be working in tandem and to a known overall plan. This is the situation in the *Iliad*, at least in the long

term: all the gods know that Troy will fall, and Zeus periodically updates them with prolepses of what is to happen. Again, however, the *Aspis* shows deviation from this expectation: Athena, Apollo, and Zeus work towards a common goal, but although there is a hint (no more) that Athena is helping Herakles at Zeus' behest (*Aspis* 103, 329–30), Apollo acts completely independently from the other two.

The theology of the *Aspis* is Hesiodic in that it subscribes to the idea of a universe overseen by Zeus in which the impious are punished and the laws of ξενία respected. We could go further if we believed *Aspis* 1–480 to be the work of a single poet, as Apollonius surely did. But as far as the deployment of the divine characters is concerned, the *Aspis*, which takes so many cues from the *Iliad*, also basically conforms to Homeric precedent and cannot be said to have a Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ.

II.5.iii. Hesiodic Herakles

The *Aspis* deals with a single exploit of Herakles, his combat with Kyknos. Although we know of no systematic treatment of the feats of Herakles until Pisander (seventh or sixth century?), it is widely accepted that poetic accounts of his deeds must have existed in the eighth century (§III.2). The Homeric epics and the two genuinely Hesiodic poems offer only passing glimpses of Herakles, using inset narrative and making only incidental reference to him; their stories about Herakles are consequently never more than a few lines long. It is otherwise with poems such as the *Wedding of Keyx* and the *Capture of Oechalia* (the latter referred to by Pausanias (4.2.3) as the *Herakleia* (Creophylus fr. 3)). The *Wedding of Keyx* was linked with the name of Hesiod, and it told how Herakles, after being abandoned by the Argonauts in Magnesia, made his way—apparently uninvited, cf. fr. 264 (quoted below)—to

the wedding of Keyx in Trachis, where he engaged in a series of riddles.¹²⁷ As far as we can judge from the exiguous fragments, the poem portrayed a jocular and brash Herakles. Herakles justifies his presence with the memorable and light-hearted words αὐτόματοι δ' ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ δαΐτας ἔενται (fr. 264); if we can seriously credit fr. 265 (of dubious status, since it derives solely from the sixteenth-century mythographer Natalis Comes), the poem also described a contest in gluttony between Herakles and Lepreus, whom Herakles subsequently killed *ob indignationem aemulae virtutis*. This gluttonous Herakles has ample parallels from the fifth century,¹²⁸ but he is very unlike the Herakles of the *Aspis*, who is a careworn, dignified, and serious figure (§III.2.ii). Nonetheless, the fact that the *Aspis* is an *Einzellied* on Herakles is significant, since the spurious Hesiodic poems show a special interest in Herakles: note the *Wedding of Keyx*, *Aigimios*, and *Megalai Ehoiai*. This last poem described the entertainment of Herakles by Telamon (fr. 250), and an interest in Heraklid genealogy is implied by frr. 251b and 252. Moreover, in the *Megalai Ehoiai* Herakles seems to have cut a more dignified figure, since in fr. 248 we find Alkmene addressing her son with the sympathetic words ὦ τέκος, ἦ μάλα δὴ σε πονηρότατον καὶ ἄριστον | Ζεὺς τέκνωσε πατήρ.

At *Aspis* 353–6 Herakles mentions that he is on his way to Trachis, seat of Keyx. As Russo 164 notes, Herakles is reported elsewhere in the mythographical tradition to have visited Keyx: following his accidental killing of Eunomos son of Arkhiteles; when going into exile after slaying Iphitos; and after feasting on Theiodamas' ox.¹²⁹ None of these occasions, however, seems to be a possible context for Herakles' journey to Trachis in the *Aspis*: the first two situations would mean that Herakles was blood-stained—something which would

¹²⁷ For a detailed reconstruction of the poem's contents cf. Merkelbach–West (1965). Fr. 264 is marked as dubious in Merkelbach–West owing to the uncertainty of the author's name as transmitted.

¹²⁸ Cf. Harder (2012) ii. 227.

¹²⁹ Diod. Sic. 4.37; Apollod. 2.7.7; Call. frr. 24–5d.

undermine his presence in the Pagasitic sanctuary as the vindicator of Apollo (cf. n. 227)—and the episode with Theiodamas' ox requires that Herakles be alone and afflicted with hunger, not driven around by the faithful Iolaos. Nor can the *Aspis* be tied to the context of the *Wedding of Keyx*. First, this poem seems to have begun, not with the wedding at Trachis, but with Herakles leaving the Argo at Aphetai.¹³⁰ Moreover, the *Aspis*'s Keyx is already long since married: indeed, he has a daughter, Themistonoe, whom Kyknos has taken to wife (356).¹³¹ It is therefore impossible that the events narrated in the *Wedding of Keyx* were directly linked to the action of the *Aspis*, and there can have been no attempt to do what certain poems of the Epic Cycle—in particular the *Cypria* and *Telegony*—did in positioning themselves parasitically around the already well-established Troy poems: the *Aspis*'s Herakles cannot be riding urgently into a subsequent Hesiodic poem, so to speak.

But the mention of Keyx in the *Aspis* does not seem to be accidental. We noted above that Herakles invokes his and Kyknos' shared connection to the king of Trachis in order to place Kyknos under the obligations of ξενία. However, the detail that Kyknos is married to Keyx's daughter is mentioned only here in early sources: could it be an *ad hoc* invention? Perhaps the poet of the *Aspis* drew in Keyx because he was aware of the poem describing Herakles at the wedding of Keyx; since, however, we do not have a *terminus ante quem* for the *Wedding of Keyx* before the fifth century, we cannot press the matter. At any rate, the mention of Keyx localises the wide-ranging panhellenic Herakles in central Greece, his locale also in the *Capture of Oechalia* (referred to at [Hes.] fr. 26.28–33). Nilsson noted that the first six of Herakles' labours—the Lernaean Hydra, the Nemean Lion, the Erymanthian Boar, the

¹³⁰ Merkelbach–West (1965) 302.

¹³¹ The fact that Kyknos has a royal wife is a relic of his status in other versions of the myth as a Thessalian aristocrat (cf. n. 218); here he has been relegated to the sub-human plane (§II.2.ii).

Stables of Augeas, and the Ceryneian Hind—form a coherent Peloponnesian series.¹³² The *Catalogue* mentions the ἄεθλοι of Herakles (fr. 190.12), as does the *Aspis* (94), but it seems to ignore the Peloponnesian series. Instead, the *Catalogue* focusses on the exploits which take Herakles to central and northern Greece. True, the sack of Pylos in the Peloponnese is narrated at some length (frr. 33–5); however, this is not one of the (Mycenaean?) Labours, but a military exploit such as Megaclides (on whom see n. 109) censured poets for attaching to Herakles: cf. Athenaeus 12.512e (= Stes. fr. 281) Μεγακλείδης ἐπιτιμᾷ τοῖς μεθ’ Ὀμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον ποιηταῖς ὅσοι περὶ Ἡρακλέους εἰρήκασιν ὥς στρατοπέδων ἡγήετο καὶ πόλεις ἦρει. The *Aspis*’s localisation at Pagasae, whatever its historical significance (§I.1), may be intended to associate our Herakles with the Herakles of the *Catalogue*.

II.5.iv. Fantasy

The Homeric epics are notoriously inhospitable to magic and fantasy, and in this regard they are sharply distinguished from the poems of the Epic Cycle.¹³³ The Hesiodic poems, however, are much more receptive to the fantastic; in the *Theogony* one thinks of the monstrous progeny of Phorkys and Keto (270–336); and in the *Catalogue*, of characters such as the διφυεῖς Molione (fr. 17), the shape-shifting Periklymenos (frr. 33–5), Iphiklos so fleet of foot that he could run over corn-stalks without breaking them (fr. 62), griffins (fr. 152), and the Harpies (frr. 156–7). It has been observed that when Homer and Hesiod mention the same creatures or events, the Hesiodic version emphasises the fantastic whereas the Homeric

¹³² Nilsson (1932) 216–17.

¹³³ Cf. Griffin (1977). The division is not rigid, however: the *Odyssey* contains numerous *Märchen* elements, and even the *Iliad* admits the Ἀἴδος κυνέη (5.845; cf. *Aspis* 227 with n.); a talking horse (19.404–18); horses fertilised by a wind (20.223–4); and a creature as fabulous as the Chimaera (6.179, 16.328–9). Other eccentric details, such as Zeus καταχθόνιος (*Il.* 9.457), are confined to speeches. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the odd ones out relative to other early epic.

counterpart plays it down or ignores it completely.¹³⁴ Thus whereas in the *Catalogue* the Molione are emphatically conjoined twins, it was left to Aristarchus to explain the sense of Homer's non-committal Ἀκτορίωνε ... οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἔσαν δίδυμοι from Hesiod's explicit testimony (sch. A *Il.* 23.638–41 = [Hes.] fr. 18). The Hesiodic Sirens are able to charm (θέλγειν) the winds themselves (fr. 28), whereas in the *Odyssey* the eerie calm is attributed to the δαίμων (on which cf. §III.2.ii, with n. 236). In Zeus' catalogue of his amours at *Il.* 14.315ff. there is no hint of the fabulous guises he assumed, whereas the Alkmene-*ehoie* contains just such a fantastic account. This may have given the *Aspis* a Ἡσιόδειος χαρακτήρ for Apollonius.

Here, however, we can move beyond the evidence of the Alkmene-*ehoie* to see that the *Aspis* is decisively set apart from the Homeric poems in its attitude towards the fantastic. In the ecphrastic portion there is much fantasy: one thinks of the snakes that come alive when Herakles is under attack (164–5); of Perseus miraculously suspended like a hologram (217–19); and of the shield itself resounding from the Gorgons' rapid footsteps (231–3). Moreover, the *Aspis* constantly draws our attention to the fact that all these scenes were depicted in an artistic medium; when the poet mentions the sounds and motions of the scenes on the shield (as he often does), we are all the more aware that this is a fantastic, unreal object. The shield is also replete with monstrous figures of a gruesomeness not found in Homer but hardly alien to Hesiod—one thinks of the snaky Typhaon, for example (*Th.* 820–80). Yet, as already noted, the fantastical does not intrude into the main narrative of the *Aspis*.

¹³⁴ Griffin (1977) 41.

II.5.v. Conclusions

This investigation has been largely negative in its result: beyond the *ehoie*, there is nothing definitively Hesiodic about the character of the *Aspis*. Nonetheless, there are some features which separate it from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and bring it closer to the poems of the Hesiodic corpus. Of special note are the conception of divine justice; the interest in a single exploit of Herakles, localised in northern Greece; and the more accommodating attitude towards the fantastic. Conversely, the working of the divine is closer to that of the *Iliad*, but this is readily explicable when we consider the genre of the *Aspis*: a military poem would most naturally follow the conventions exemplified in the *Iliad*. In the next section we shall turn to the *Aspis*'s language, including its Hesiodic features.

II.6. Language & Formulae

II.6.i. Methodology

The epic language was not static: formulae were subject to adaptation and modernisation, and epic poets were conservative or innovative to different degrees.¹³⁵ Formulae may be 'modified' in two main ways. The first is through the alteration of the forms of the words themselves, by declension or conjugation, so that a formula can be deployed in a greater range of grammatical circumstances; a familiar example is the anomalous scansion μέροπῆς ἄνθρωποι, caused by declension of the formula in the genitive. The second category is the moving of the formula within the verse (this may be combined with the first type of modification): from the logic of the hexameter's structure we can know that certain formulae were designed to sit in a particular part of the verse, and when we find a formula deployed

¹³⁵ Fundamental are Hoekstra (1965), (1969), Hainsworth (1968), Janko (1982).

outside its 'proper' context, a formular modification may be supposed to have occurred.¹³⁶ Infelicities such as hiatus, dubious grammar, or shaky scansion indicate that a formula is being used outside its original context.

A problem arises when analysing early Greek epic: is a formular modification a modification of a particular phrase or passage in another poem, or is it a deviation from the inherited common stock of epic diction? In contrast with their nineteenth-century counterparts, scholars nowadays are very cautious about declaring that one of two similar passages is the *exemplum* and the other the *imitatio*.¹³⁷ It is indeed often an idle question to ask which of two similar passages is prior. But this is not always the case: sometimes (as we have seen with similes) a phrase is more organic in one context than in another, whether through sense or grammar. With the *Aspis*, the case for positing *imitatio* of the *Iliad* is *a priori* more likely, since a direct relationship exists between the two works.¹³⁸ In particular, contextual similarities will increase the likelihood that the poet of the *Aspis* has in mind a specific passage of an earlier poem.

The most recent analysis of the diction of the *Aspis* claims that of the poem's 480 verses no fewer than 389—around 81.0 per cent—are to some degree formulaic.¹³⁹ Such statistics tell us little beyond the fact that the poem follows established epic idiom, and the utility of mechanical approaches to formulae seems to me doubtful: formulae need to be analysed, not

¹³⁶ Cf. Hainsworth (1968) 105–9, Edwards (1966) 150–2.

¹³⁷ Janko (1982) 225–8 tries to establish some criteria. Cf. also §1.3.

¹³⁸ Cf. Janko (1986) 42, 'the [*Aspis*] is at precisely that stage in the evolution of the epic tradition where we can begin to speak with confidence of the imitation of far older fixed texts, at least in terms of diction.'

¹³⁹ Pavese–Venti (2000) 39. For comparison, their figures for the *Theogony* are 79.3 per cent and for the *Works and Days* 66.9. Cf. also Venti (1991), Vara Donado (1972), Nieto Ibáñez (1994). Space forbids me to say anything about metre apart from noting that Porter (1951) 32 collects a series of metrical peculiarities in the *Aspis* which lead him to separate it off from the other two Hesiodic poems. Cf. n. 166.

merely counted, if truly interesting results are to be reached. Rzach's editio maior and Pavese–Venti give the basic data for the detection of formulaic parallels. Neither of these works, however, offers any comment on or interpretation of the parallels, and they show no interest in the contexts in which formulae are used. Moreover, Pavese–Venti confine their inquiry to linguistic echoes, and one will not necessarily learn from them whether Homer expresses a kindred idea with completely different phraseology. (Rzach, however, proceeds in a less mechanical fashion.) Russo does not attempt a systematic description of the *Aspis*'s formulae, but his commentary nonetheless contains observations relevant to the deployment of formulae in the *Aspis* versus their use in other early poetry. The main problem is the size of the sample: if there is only one example of a certain formula or formulaic situation, it is hard to draw conclusions beyond the particular. Nonetheless, it is possible to shed light on the poet's general tendencies, as well as his relationship to his predecessors and his own position within the epic tradition. Determining the poet's attitude towards his inherited linguistic repertory provides a valuable index of his skill as a composer and of his desire to innovate.

II.6.ii. Recycled materials

Sometimes in the *Aspis* we find verses that are close to or even identical with those in other poems. It is idle in some instances to wonder whether the echo is of a particular *locus* or of a formulaic phrase that was common property. For example, 374 ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς ὄρεος μέγαλοιο = *Il.* 16.297, where it is used in the very different context of Zeus moving clouds 'from the peak of a high mountain'; it works equally well in the *Aspis* as in the *Iliad*. But priority can sometimes be established. 75–6 ~ *Th.* 151–2 ~ *Op.* 148–9. The *Theogony* instance seems primary, since only there does ἐπὶ στιβαροῖσι μέλεσσι make full sense. But

75–6 may be a secondary interpolation in the *Aspis* (cf. n. 210). 351 ἀνδράσιν οἳ τε πόνου καὶ οἰζύος ἴδριές εἰμεν ~ *Op.* 113 νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνου καὶ οἰζύος; in the *Aspis* passage ἀνδράσιν looks like filler, whereas in the *Works and Days* νόσφιν ἄτερ is integral.

On other occasions a similar phrase is reused *within* the poem, and it is sometimes possible to determine which instance is prior;¹⁴⁰ the case will be strong only if the formula recurs rarely (or indeed nowhere else) in the epos. 29 ~ 128 ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα, which is quite a rare collocation, is more appropriate to a person than to a weapon; 29 therefore looks prior to 128, something which conforms to our suppositions about the growth of the poem. Cf. also §II.2.i and n. 67. 90 σφέτερόν τε δόμον σφετέρους τε τοκῆας ~ 239 σφετέρης πόλιος σφετέρων τε τοκῆων. Kretschmer points out that this makes better sense at 90, since the defenders were fighting not only for their parents but also for their wives and children (and the γυναῖκες who at 242–4 watch from the walls presumably include wives as well as mothers). 414 σάκει ἔμβαλε χάλκεον ἔγχος ~ 453 καὶ ῥ' ἔμβαλε χάλκεον ἔγχος. As Kretschmer notes, in 453 ῥ' serves no use besides bridging a hiatus, and this suggests that 414 is prior.—In these three instances the prior version occurs earlier in the poem. This supports the natural assumption that the poet composed through a linear process (cf. however §II.7.iii). Further internal repetitions are discussed by Kretschmer, but none seems to me to be able to claim definitive priority over the other instantiation(s).¹⁴¹

Notable collocations, which one might term ‘pseudo-formulae’, that are confined to the *Aspis* and may well have been coined by the poet, include the following. 96 = 434 θάρσος ἀέξων: ἀέξω is otherwise found with the abstracts μένος, θυμός and πένθος; the closest

¹⁴⁰ Kretschmer (1913) 40 has been used throughout this paragraph.

¹⁴¹ Yet in the following instances I suspect that the underlined occurrence is prior: 334/460, 433 (cf. 346)/459, 251/306, 332/424. Again, the *earlier* instances seem to have priority, except in the last case (for which cf. §II.7.iii).

parallel to the present phrase is *Od.* 11.195 μέγα δὲ φρεσὶ πένθος ἄέξει. 174 = 268 αἶμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζ': 173–4n. 195 = 323 δίφρου ἐπεμβεβαώς: 195n. 261 = 411 μάχην δριμεῖαν ἔθεντο. Cf. *Th.* 713 μάχην δριμεῖαν ἔγειραν. ἔθεντο is probably a conscious *variatio*.¹⁴² 279 = 348 περὶ δὲ σφισιν ἄγνυτο ἡχώ. The phrase is odd in sense, and it contains an ungainly hiatus. Perhaps (as Russo suggests) it is inspired by *Il.* 12.148 περί σφισιν ἄγνυτον ὕλην; the adaptation of a pre-existing formula introduced hiatus.

241, 251, 304 δῆριν ἔχειν is a favourite of the poet's (equally suited, in his mind, to war and war-like contests), though it is not his alone (*Od.* 24.514).

There are certain instances where the poet seems to have taken over a ready-made phrase and failed to make the necessary grammatical adjustments—a practice in which the *Odyssey* poet has been detected relative to the *Iliad*.¹⁴³ One possible example is 151–3, where the present tenses betray a secondary origin (cf. ad loc.); we cannot be sure, however, who inserted the verses in their present place. At 374 πολλὰ δὲ δρυὺς ὑψίκομοι, πολλὰ δέ τε πεύκαι the nominative plural form δρυὺς is unexpected: the correct form is δρύες, which was accordingly conjectured here by Rzach. However, it is equally likely that the poet of the *Aspis* was led by analogical pressure to retain the form δρυὺς from the formulaic prototypes such as *Il.* 11.494 πολλὰς δὲ δρυὺς ἄζαλέας, πολλὰς δέ τε πεύκας and *Op.* 509 πολλὰς δὲ δρυὺς ὑψικόμους ἐλάτας τε παχείας.¹⁴⁴ The most promising case is 113–14 οἱ δὲ σφι σχεδόν

¹⁴² Both 258–63 and 405–11 have been regarded as interpolations. The two passages may of course be the work of the same interpolator, or the interpolator of one passage may have echoed the phraseology of the other passage. Similarly, θυνέω is not a reliable index of a passage's authenticity (156n.).

¹⁴³ Cf. van der Valk (1949) 217; above, n. 24.

¹⁴⁴ 'Trees' needs to be in the nominative in the *Aspis* passage because the poet was not content to follow the structure of the Homeric model. For whereas the river is the subject of the simile throughout the closely allied *Il.* 11.492–6, in the *Aspis* the poet has deviated from this straightforward syntax and made the subject switch halfway through the simile, from the boulders to the trees. Such a

εἶσι, λιλαιόμενοι πολέμοιο | φυλόπιδα στήσιν, τά σφιν πολὺ φίλτερα θοίνης. When λιλαιόμαι is used in Homer with an infinitive, the infinitive must be present or aorist. The future at *Aspis* 114 may (as Russo points out) be explicable as a confusion with the construction used with μέμονα; however, Russo also notes the parallel with *Od.* 11.314 φυλόπιδα στήσιν πολυάϊκος πολέμοιο, where the infinitive is regular and expected after ἀπειλήτην in the previous line. It seems that the *Aspis* poet took over this verse from a portion of the *Odyssey* which he knew well (§III.1) without adjusting it to its new surroundings. Incidentally, if this analysis is correct, the *Aspis* supplants Stesichorus or Eugammon as the literary *terminus ante quem* for the *Odyssey*.¹⁴⁵

II.6.iii. Choosing carefully

In certain instances we can see that the poet has taken care to choose formulae that are appropriate to the situation of the poem. 70 Ἀπόλλωνος Παγασαίου (for ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος) localises the action in the temenos of Pagasaeon Apollo. Similarly, the unique 104 ταύρεος Ἐννοσίγαιος seems to refer to a Boeotian cult of Poseidon, something which would fit well with the poet's pro-Theban bias (§I.1)—or at any rate with Herakles' Theban origins. In 85 τίον δ' ἄρα κηρόθι μᾶλλον the expected verb would be φίλον (cf. *Od.* 15.370, *Ap.* 138). But 'honoured' rather than the usual 'loved' accords to Herakles' (putative) father greater respect and higher status, honour being a graver quality than love; for the poet's serious attitude towards Herakles cf. §III.2.ii. In 98 Ἄρεος ἀνδροφόνοιο the designation of Ares as 'man-slaying' is very rare, and there can be little doubt that the poet has in mind *Il.*

predilection for violent change of subject is in evidence elsewhere in the poem: cf. e.g. 143 (cf. ad loc. and n. 333), 291 οἱ δ' (reapers) ἄρ' ἐν ἔλλεδανοῖσι δέον καὶ ἔπιπνον (the sheaves) ἄλωϊ (s.v.l.).

¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Martin West (pers. comm.) warns that 'the heroines section in the *Nekyia* has a close relationship with the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, and the lines about the Aloadai might have been known to the poet of *Scut.* from a ps.-Hesiodic account rather than from the *Odyssey*. Note [Hes.] fr. 19–21.' Furthermore, *Aspis* 114 was expelled by Paley.

4.439–41 (cf. 194n.). The epithet is chosen because of the god's actions in the *Aspis*: the ecphrastic Ares is imagined as slaying men (194), and he charges at Herakles κακκτάμεναι μεμαώς (453). The poet might have written μηδὲν ὑποδδείσας κτύπον Ἄρης βροτολοιγοῦ (for the prosody cf. *Il.* 2.767); but βροτολοιγός is generic by comparison with ἀνδροφόνος. In 102 ἀμώμητος Ἰόλαος the breach of economy (as against ἀρήφιλος Ἰόλαος, cf. *Th.* 317) suggests that the poet was sensitive to the potential infelicity of calling Iolaos 'dear to Ares' in a poem in which he and Herakles kill that god's son and fight with Ares himself.¹⁴⁶ The modification in 379 has been discussed in §II.3.vi.

In two passages there is an attempt at etymologising.¹⁴⁷ 101 ἦ μὴν καὶ κρατερός περ ἐὼν ἄται πολέμοιο. Herakles finishes his speech with a grimly humorous pun on the stock formula Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο (59); the pressure of the word-play leads to the anomalous future form ἄται. 107 ἵνα κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἄρηαι is probably an attempt to derive Herakles' name as if from κλέος and ἄρνυμαι.¹⁴⁸

In other cases it is not certain how far we should argue for intelligent design. 340 διόγνητος Ἰόλαος is surprising, since there has been great emphasis elsewhere in the poem on the fact that Herakles is the son of Zeus, Iolaos the son of Amphytryon (48–56, 88). But consider that Herakles is four times called Ἀμφιτρωνιάδης (165, 416, 433, 459): describing Iolaos as 'Zeus-born' may then be deliberate, and the poet would be undermining the rigid distinction he had drawn between the scions of gods and of men. 346 Ἄρης ἀκόρητος αὐτῆς breaches economy; Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο (3× *Il.*) would be regular. Probably the poet here

¹⁴⁶ So also Edwards (1971) 70–1. Yet Herakles is ἀρήϊος (66) and he has Iolaos instruct Herakles to don his τεύχε' ἀρήϊα (108): the poet did not carry out with consistency his design to dissociate Herakles from Ares.

¹⁴⁷ For Homeric paronomasia cf. Edwards (1991) 58–9.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Joyal (1991).

overlooks this common formula and borrows one that is applied to a diversity of subjects in the epos (including Herakles twice in the *Aspis*, 433 and 459). But one might consider the possibility that the poet was aiming at assonance with a trio of ἄ-; the same might then apply to the novelty at 433 ~ 459 Ἀμφιτρωνιάδης, (δεινῆς) ἀκόρητος αὐτῆς. Intentional assonance is not uncommon in Homer.¹⁴⁹

One example of deviation from an established formula deserves extended discussion. At 91 Herakles tells Iolaos that Zeus snatched away the wits of Iphikles, who then went off to serve ‘impious Eurystheus’ (ἀλιτῆμενον Εὐρυσθῆα). The form ἀλιτῆμενον (< ἀλιταίνω) occurs also at *Od.* 4.807. However, Guyet, taking a cue from *EM* 428.10 ἡλιτόμημος καὶ ἀλιτῆμερος· σημαίνει δὲ τὸν ἑπταμηνιαῖον γεννηθέντα παῖδα (i.e. because the child ‘misses’ the right month), conjectured at *Aspis* 91 ἀλιτῆμερον Εὐρυσθῆα; Bentley preferred Εὐρυσθῆ ἡλιτόμημον on the basis of *Il.* 19.118, where Hera induces the birth of Eurystheus καὶ ἡλιτόμημον ἔοντα.¹⁵⁰ The purpose of these conjectures is to introduce a reference to the story told in the *Iliad* of how Zeus, having disclosed that the next child born would be supreme among men, was out-manoeuvred by Hera, who brought Eurystheus into the world prematurely; Σ p. 27 also refer us to this story,¹⁵¹ and according to West ἀλιτῆμερον ‘can no longer be doubted now that the word is found in Archilochus [fr. 196a.39]’.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Shewan (1925) 198–9, Edwards (1993) 58.

¹⁵⁰ Bentley is supported by Fick (1890) 6, who with great implausibility traces the mistake to false metagrammatism from Aeolic ΑΛΙΤΕΜΕΝΟΝ.

¹⁵¹ As printed by Gaisford (p. 621.4–12) and Ranke (p. 27), Σ begins ἀλιτῆμενον Εὐρυσθῆα] διὰ τὸ πρὸ τοῦ καιροῦ τεχθῆναι. The scholiast then tells the story familiar from *Iliad* 19 and ends by saying of Arkhippe ἑπτὰ μηνῶν αὐτῆς ἐχούσης, Εὐρυσθέα τεκεῖν ἠναγκάσθη. It is unclear whether Σ read ἀλιτῆμερον or whether ἀλιτῆμενον was carelessly interpreted by reference to the story of Eurystheus’ premature birth.

¹⁵² West (1977). ἀλιτῆμερος was in fact attested before the Cologne Epode (published in 1974), not only from the *Etymologicum Magnum* but also at Hsch. ω 167 ὠλιτῆμερος· (ὁ) ἡμαρτηκὼς τῶν ἡμερῶν. See further Medaglia (1979). Since Hesychius’ lemmata are often taken without alteration

But on other grounds, neither Guyet's conjecture nor Bentley's should be accepted. Herakles' account of his and Iphikles' life, which associates the nonentity Iphikles with Eurystheus, contradicts the standard version and finds no parallel: the poet of the *Aspis* is polemically revising the standard version of the Herakles–Eurystheus legend, transferring from Herakles to his brother the motif of subordination to Eurystheus (§III.2.ii and n. 233). Once the poet has declared that it was Iphikles who was bound in servitude to Eurystheus, there is no longer any place in the story for a Herakles subject to Eurystheus because of Hera's machinations. Nor is there a place for a premature Eurystheus: Herakles and Iphikles were born on the same night, and so the poet might have retained the motif that the next child to be born would reign supreme; in this case a designation of Eurystheus as 'prematurely born' would be apt, and the only difference would be that the premature birth had impacted on the destiny of Iphikles rather than on that of Herakles. However, this is disproved by internal logic: Zeus in the *Iliad* declared that the next child to be born would be supreme precisely because he was the son of the chief god (*Il.* 19.105 τῶν ἀνδρῶν γενεῆς, οἳ θ' αἵματος ἐξ ἐμοῦ εἰσι); by contrast, the fact of Iphikles' *mortal* parentage is emphasised in the *Aspis* (48–56, 88), and Herakles explains Iphikles' servitude otherwise: τοῦ μὲν φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς (89). When Zeus is said to rob a hero of his wits it is an unpredictable, one-off event, not an ineluctable consequence of a man's destiny.¹⁵³ Therefore Iphikles was subject to Eurystheus as the result of a freak act of folly (its precise nature is left unspecified; perhaps the poet did not trouble himself about this), and not because Eurystheus' birth was cunningly made to precede Iphikles'.

from their source, we can deduce that ἀλιτήμερος was found outside hexameter verse, which would not admit the cretic ὠλιτη-.

¹⁵³ Cf. *Il.* 6.234 (Glaukos), 19.137 (Agamemnon); Alkimedon asks Automedon which of the gods νηκερδέα βουλήν | ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔθηκε καὶ ἐξέλετο φρένας ἐσθλὰς (17.469–70).

ἀλιτήμερος in the right context would be a suitable word for Eurystheus, and it is possible that it was attached to Eurystheus in pre-existing poetry about Herakles now lost to us (cf. §III.2). ἀλιτήμερος (υ υ – υ υ) and ἡλιτόμηνος (– υ υ – υ) would prove useful in different metrical contexts, and we may therefore suppose that they co-existed in the formular tradition. If so, I submit that the poet of the *Aspis* has replaced ἀλιτήμερον with ἀλιτήμενον as part of his literary programme to rewrite Herakles' story. It was very probably through aural association¹⁵⁴ with ἀλιτήμερον that he opted for this blander substitute epithet, a substitution that served his poetic purposes.

Sometimes the poet deviates from a prototype, or otherwise innovates, in order to highlight the interest, horror, or violence of an image.¹⁵⁵ At 62 a cloud of dust 'blazes', like fire, around the chariot: an extension of ἀμφιδαίω beyond earlier usage (cf. 155n.). At 95 reins are φοινικόεντα rather than σιγαλόεντα (as almost everywhere in the *Iliad*).¹⁵⁶ Pictorial detail and colour (particularly based on φοιν–) are important to our poet (§II.1.iv): cf. 194 αἵματι φοινικόεις, 249–50 Κῆρες κυάνεαι, λευκοὺς ἀραβέοσαι ὀδόντας, | δεινωποὶ βλοσυροὶ τε δαφονοί τ' ἄπλητοὶ τε (~ [159] εἶμα ... δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν). The poet therefore substituted φοινικόεντα for σιγαλόεντα, even at the cost of creating a spondaic fifth foot. For 119 ὕσμινη τρηχεῖα the closest Homeric congener is μάχη δριμεῖα (*Il.* 15.696). The *Aspis*'s phrase is a novelty: in Homer ὕσμινη, if qualified to give emphasis, is only ever κρατερή. τρηχὺς in Homer and Hesiod is always used in a literal sense, 'rough, prickly', and it

¹⁵⁴ For similar cases in Homer cf. Wackernagel (1891) 1064–5 (e.g. *Od.* 6.122 ὥστε με κουράων ἀμφήλυθε θῆλυς αὐτή ~ 12.369 καὶ τότε με κνίσης ἀμφήλυθεν ἡδὺς αὐτμή). The adaptation of formulae through 'parallels of sound' is discussed by Edwards (1971) 74–84.

¹⁵⁵ The mention of Sirius at 151–3 would furnish another example of the poet opting for a more violent image at the expense of strict logic; but the verses are probably interpolated (cf. ad loc.).

¹⁵⁶ For the two exceptions (8.116 and 137) cf. §III.3.ii.

is not until Pindar (*I.* 4(3).17(35) τρηχεῖα νιφὰς πολέμοιο, *N.* 4.96 τραχὺς ... ἔφεδρος) that we find τρηχὺς used in a metaphorical sense. 131 θανάτοιο λαθιφθόγγοιο δοτῆρες is perhaps the poet's most successful phrase, and we may hardly doubt that λαθίφθογγος is his own coinage (based probably on λιγύφθογγος). He was inspired by *Op.* 356 θανάτοιο δότεῖρα, as presumably was Alcaeus S262.23 (*SLG*) παῖδα Δῖος πολέμω δότε[ρ]αν. But he, too, outdoes his model by qualifying θανάτοιο with a striking epithet of his own devising. Qualifying a noun with an epithet when in the prototype the noun is left unqualified is something that we observe the poet of the *Aspis* doing elsewhere, for example at 446 μένος κρατερὸν καὶ χεῖρες ἄπτοι: the standard epic phrase is μένος καὶ χεῖρες ἄπτοι (or declensions thereof).

Now for some examples of specially violent or horrifying language.¹⁵⁷ At 243 the women on the city walls tear their cheeks in anguish. The verb used is καταδρύπτομαι, which occurs at *Od.* 2.153 in the description of the two eagles that fly over the Ithacan assembly and with their claws rend one another's cheeks in a fierce struggle, and also at *Il.* 16.324, where a spear shears off a warrior's arm from the muscles. The poet of the *Aspis* thus applies to his description of grieving women a word which in the Homeric poems belongs to descriptions of extreme physical violence. The result is hyperbole, perhaps even melodrama. In 255 Tartaros is κρυόεις; elsewhere in the epos it is εὐρύς, βαθύς, μέγας, ἡρόεις, but never κρυόεις (though cf. *Op.* 153 κρυεροῦ Ἀΐδαο). Here the poet might have had Τάρταρ' ἐς ἡρόενθ', had he not wished to emphasise the grim and horrific. Aural association of ἡρόεντα and κρυόεντα encouraged the substitution. At 289 the labourers reap αἰχμηῖς ὀξείησι; αἰχμή, which elsewhere means 'spear' or 'point', must stand for δρέπανον, and

¹⁵⁷ Some scholars include θυνέω in this category, but matters are complicated: cf. 156n.

indeed in the parallel scene of the Shield of Achilles the reapers are more conventionally equipped, ὀξείας δρεπάνας ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντες. But our poet reasoned that αἰχμαῖ were more dramatic than agricultural sickles and preferred expressionism over accuracy; nor did he wish slavishly to follow the Iliadic model. 384, which some have regarded as an interpolation, is closely parallel to *Il.* 16.459 αἱματοέσσας δὲ ψιάδας κατέχευεν ἔραζε. ‘Pour down’ is neutral and follows epic idiom (cf. *Lfgre* s.v. χέω G1), but the *Aspis* substitutes ‘throw down’ since it is more ‘performative’. (At *Il.* 11.534–6 αἶματι δ’ ἄξων | νέρθεν ἅπας πεπάλακτο καὶ ἄντυγες αἶ περι δῖφρον, | ἄς ἄρ’ ἀφ’ ἱππέων ὀπλέων ῥαθάμιγγες ἔβαλλον the use of βάλλω is to the point, since fast-rotating wheels can aptly be said to ‘throw up’ drops.)

At other times the poet deviates from the formular prototype for no discernible reason. His intention may sometimes be to advertise his originality, or even defamiliarise the audience from the staleness of well-known phraseology;¹⁵⁸ at other times, it looks as though the variation is wholly accidental. At 135 Hermann’s conjecture εἶλετο δ’ ὄβριμον ἔγχος, ἀκαχμένον αἴθοπι χαλκῶι is certain (n. 62). Nonetheless the verse exhibits a peculiarity: as Page observed, in Homer φαίδιμος and ὄβριμος, both epithets ‘potentially of a most useful type, easily adaptable to three or four places in the line, and broad enough in meaning to be applicable to a great variety of subjects’, are in practice confined to the fifth foot;¹⁵⁹ and ὄβριμον ἔγχος (13× *Il.*) always occupies the fifth and sixth feet (though not in the *Odyssey*). Moreover, in all the full-scale arming scenes in the *Iliad*, the weapon described at this point is

¹⁵⁸ Comparable are Quintus Smyrnaeus’ avoidance of off-the-peg sequences for typical activities (e.g. 9.489 ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ κορέσαντο ποτοῦ καὶ ἐδητύος ἐσθλῆς in place of Homeric αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο), Apollonius’ ‘para-formulaic’ style (cf. Fantuzzi–Hunter (2004) 266–82), and Stesichorus’ innovations with the epic language (cf. Davies–Finglass (2014) 45–6). The need for authors to ‘defamiliarise’ literature was one of the central pillars of Russian Formalism.

¹⁵⁹ Page (1959) 231, 269 n. 33.

always given the epithet ἄλκιμος (3.338, 11.43, 16.139). It is therefore noteworthy that ἄλκιμον is replaced in the *Aspis* by ὄβριμον, an epithet which brings neither a metrical nor a distinct semantic advantage over ἄλκιμον and which also contravenes the otherwise invariable localisation of ὄβριμον within the line. At 278 we find ἴεσαν αὐδήν. Although ἴημι is used with ὄψ and ὄσσα to convey the idea of ‘spoke’, there seem to be no examples of its use with αὐδή; αὐδή has no advantage over ὄσσα, and the principle of economy is breached. In 297 = 313 the poet speaks of κλυτὰ ἔργα περίφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο. Everywhere else in early epic the epithet περίφρων is reserved for women. Hephaistos is often περικλυτός, but it is understandable that the poet should have eschewed περικλυτοῦ Ἡφαίστοιο because of κλυτὰ ἔργα immediately preceding (cf. 236a n.). However, in the *Odyssey* Hephaistos is thrice described as πολύφρων, on all occasions in the genitive. There are three possible explanations for the *Aspis*’s divergence from this usage: (i) the *Odyssey* is peculiar in its reservation of περίφρων for women, and the *Aspis* is simply continuing a different branch of the tradition in which no such restriction was observed; (ii) the *Aspis* poet is deliberately disregarding the traditional application of περίφρων, a process helped by the close parallel of sound between περίφρονος and πολύφρονος; (iii) the confusion is wholly unconscious. 386 ἐν βήσσηις ὄρεος, a unique phrase, varies the metrically identical *οὔρεος ἐν βήσσηις (9× epos). 414 κτεινέμεναι μεμαώς ~ 453 κακκτάμεναι μεμαώς are metrical doublets, as are 333 Ἄρην ἐπιόντα δοκεύσας and 425 Ἄρην προσιόντα δοκεύσας; in both cases the variation is probably accidental. 424 Διὸς ταλακάρδιος υἱός is metrically equivalent to 448 Διὸς θρασυκάρδιον υἱόν. In the latter passage Athena warns Ares not to attack Herakles, and the epithet may be chosen—despite the breach of economy—in order to deter Ares by emphasising Herakles’ heroic qualities. 456 ἔγχεος ὀρμήν inverts the order seen in a

passage which the *Aspis* poet will certainly have known, *Il.* 5.118 ὀρμὴν ἔγχεος (metrically identical); a similar inversion is seen in 466 ἵππους μαστιέτην (the usual epic phrase is μάστιξεν δ' ἵππους, and the poet could perfectly well have written μαστιέτην ἵππους). 468 Κύκνον σκυλεύσαντες (for συλήσαντες) shows a variation in the usual epic word for 'despoil', συλάω. (The weakly attested συλήσαντες is a *facilior lectio*.)

There are examples in the *Aspis* of the use of the formulaic language in ways that, though not ungainly, are untraditional (as far as we may tell). A consistent pattern is the application to animals of human vocabulary.¹⁶⁰ But there are further innovations. 60. τεύχεσι λαμπομένους (etc.) 'is reserved by Homer for Hephaistos-made armour, as at 17.214 when Hektor dons it, and at 20.46 when the Trojans shudder at Akhilleus' appearance in it.'¹⁶¹ 63. In Homer ὕφ' ἄρμασιν is always followed by ὠκέας ἵππους (5×), whereas here we have ὕφ' ἄρμασι καὶ ποσὶν ἵππων. 160. In Homer καναχή and καναχέω are reserved for the clatter of objects (usually metallic); the possible exception is *Od.* 6.82 καναχή δ' ἦν ἡμιόνοιϊν, but there the point may be that since Nausikaa's mules are heavily laden (*ibid.* 72–80), they clatter when moving off. The only other evidence we have for καναχή applied to human subjects is the suspect *Il.* 19.365–8 (cf. 146n.). Similar is 249: the only place in Homer where ἀραβέω / ἄραβος is not restricted to the crashing of weapons is in the (late) Doloneia, *Il.* 10.375 ἄραβος δὲ διὰ στόμα γίγνεται ὀδόντων, a line very similar to *Aspis* 411 (lions) δεινὴ δὲ σφ' ἰαχὴ ἄραβός θ' ἅμα γίγνεται ὀδόντων. At 341 Iolaos σμερδαλέον ἵπποισιν ἐκέκλετο. In Homer the formula ἵπποισιν ἐκέκλετο is invariably followed by direct speech, but here and at *Dem.* 88 it is not; this is characteristic of the more compressed narrative compass of these

¹⁶⁰ Russo 115 collects the passages: 147, 164, 167, 169, 176, 390, 403–4, [410], 426.

¹⁶¹ Edwards on *Il.* 18.510–12.

two poems. 355 σὺ δ' εὖ μάλα οἶσθα καὶ αὐτός in parallel phrases (cf. *Il.* 11.653, 15.93, *Herm.* 382) introduces an indirect question, with (necessary) runover; here, however, it is used absolutely. Nor can it be paralleled precisely, though cf. *Herm.* 376 τὰ δέ τ' οἶδε καὶ αὐτός (verse-final). 362 ἐμῶι ὑπὸ δουρὶ τυπείς is used in the *Iliad* of mortal wounds; it is therefore anomalous to apply it to a wound inflicted upon Ares. 364, 461. Likewise, Olympians do not elsewhere have *flesh* to wound (they do, however, have skin); scribes' unease with this has lead to the corruption in both places to σά(κ)κος. A similar oddity is found at 367, where Herakles speaks of the god's ἔναρα βροτόεντα. 451 φλογὶ εἵκελα is used attributively, which is untraditional; cf. the compound adjectival phrase at 165 ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων, a distention of ἐπιχθόνιος.

II.6.iv. Obscurity

Sometimes the poet manipulates the formulaic language with insufficient skill, creating real obscurity or at any rate the sense of unattractive composition. In addition to the examples discussed below see Commentary on 168 ἀγέλαι; 173–4 κελαινόν | αἶμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζ'; 189 ὥς εἰ ζωοί περ ἑόντες; 232–3a βαινουσέων.

66. Kyknos rejoices, ἐλπόμενος Διὸς υἱὸν ἀρήιον ἡνίοχον τε | χαλκῶι δηιώσειν καὶ ἀπὸ κλυτὰ τεύχεα δύσειν. Is Kyknos hoping to despoil Herakles and Iolaos, or just Herakles? In other words, is ἡνίοχον an adjective or a noun? Sense suggests the former, language the latter; in either case, the poet is guilty of obscurity. For if he means ἡνίοχον to be an adjective referring to Herakles (cf. *Il.* 5.580, 8.119 ἡνίοχον θεράποντα), then calling Herakles 'chariot-driving' is hardly apposite, given that he has a charioteer in this poem; and if he means ἡνίοχον to be a noun (as at 77, 307, 323, 372) and therefore to refer to Iolaos, he has expressed himself in an unhelpfully compressed manner. Probably the poet has in mind a

passage such as *Il.* 17.610 αὐτὰρ ὃ Μηριόναο ὀπάονά θ' ἠνίοχόν τε | Κοίρανον, but in adapting that sort of prototype he has strained the formular language and created obscurity.

77. If we delete 75–6 (probably interpolated: cf. n. 210), 74–7 runs: πλήν γ' Ἡρακλῆος καὶ κυδαλίμου Ἰολάου; | ὅς ῥα τόθ' ἠνίοχον προσέφη κρατερὸν Ἰόλαον. This sort of speech introduction is abnormal: usually the person addressed is placed at the start of the line and in the accusative. In the parallel *Il.* 7.355–6: δῖος Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἑλένης πόσις ἠυκόμοιο, | ὅς μιν ἀμειβόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα there is no ambiguity about the referent of ὅς, since Helen is feminine. In the *Aspis*, however, ὅς could refer to either Herakles or Iolaos; only when the line unfurls fully, and we find Iolaos in the accusative, is the ambiguity resolved. The poet has attempted to create a tightly constructed composition, but he has produced obscurity by using a traditional formula without due consideration to its present surroundings.

99. περιμαίνομαι is not used again until Aelian (*Ep.* 7, with περι- equivalent to περισσῶς), and the expression περιμαίνεται ἱερὸν ἄλσος, 'he is mad around the sacred grove' = 'he is rushing around the sacred grove in a rage', is oddly mannered.

112. παῖδας ἀμύμονας Ἀλκείδαο is probably built by a parallel of sound on the Odyssean formula παῖδες ἀμύμονος Ἀλκινόοιο (8.118, 419),¹⁶² where παῖδες refers (quite properly) to biological offspring belonging to the next generation. In the *Aspis*, however, παῖδας refers to named 'descendants', an extension of meaning that is contrary to Homeric usage (cf. *Lfgre* s.v. Ἀλκεΐδης).¹⁶³

123 Ἥφαιστου κλυτὰ δῶρα. At *Th.* 927 we find Ἥφαιστον κλυτόν. As West ad loc. notes, there are many passages in early epic where Hephaistos is given the epithet κλυτός (including *Aspis* 244) or something based on the κλυτ- root (περικλυτός, ἀγακλυτός, κλυτοτέχνης, κλυτοεργός, κλυτόμητις). The phrase κλυτὰ δῶρα is

¹⁶² The formula παῖδες ἀμύμονες – ◡ ◡ – ◡ || (or metrically equivalent declensions of it) is uncommon in Homer, occurring only six times; two of these are in the formula παῖδες ἀμύμονος Ἀλκινόοιο.

¹⁶³ For παῖς as 'descendant' in Pindar see Slater (1969) 407 s.v. παῖς 3.

unexceptional and has parallels (*Il.* 24.458, *Od.* 8.417), but it is unusual that Hephaistos lacks an epithet whereas δῶρα is given one; contrast 244 ἔργα κλυτοῦ Ἡφαίστοιο (no epithet for ἔργα), 297 = 313 κλυτὰ ἔργα περίφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο, *Il.* 24.458 ἐς δ' ἄγαγε κλυτὰ δῶρα ποδώκεϊ Πηλείωνι. It would appear that a structural and aural association between Ἡφαιστος κλυτός and κλυτὰ δῶρα has produced this hybrid formula; the poet was forced to do this because he always respects the digamma of ἔργον (7×) and so could not have said (e.g.) *κλυτοῦ ἔργα. 274. ἦγοντ' is used incorrectly: as editors including Sittl and Russo have noted, the poet, who is here describing men *leading* a woman in a marriage-procession, has become confused by the idiom ἄγομαι = 'take to wife'. 279 = 348, discussed in §II.6.ii. 320 ἀρσάμενος παλάμησι must, as Russo says, be equivalent to ἀσκήσας παλάμαις (*Th.* 580), not to ἄρμενον ποιήσας ταῖς παλάμαις (sc. of Herakles); the reason for the obscurity is that the poet has adapted the common ἄρμενον ἐν παλάμησιν. 361. The emphatic form ἐμεῖο here is unnecessary, since Herakles is not contrasting himself with anyone else. Different are *Il.* 17.31, 20.197, *Aspis* 449 μηδ' ἀντίος ἴστασ' ἐμεῖο, prospective threats where there is a point to the contrast: 'Do not challenge *me*, but choose an opponent whom you have a chance of beating.' In non-contrastive statements of this sort, an unemphatic form of the pronoun should be used, as at *Il.* 21.150 τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν ὃ μοι ἔτλης ἀντίος ἐλθεῖν; The *Aspis* poet has used ἐμεῖο, however, since it retains the shape of 434 *ἀντίος ἔστι Ἄρηος, 444 *ἀντίη ἦλθεν Ἄρηος. 373. κανάχιζε πόσ' εὐρεῖα χθών has been variously emended: it breaches Hermann's Bridge, and although the (rare) elision πόσσ' can be paralleled, πόσ' cannot.¹⁶⁴ But the text is probably sound, and the irregularities have been caused by the poet's adaptation for the sake of *variatio* of *Il.* 2.784–5 (or a verse very like it).¹⁶⁵ Analogy with χέρσ'

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Richardson on *Dem.* 273.

¹⁶⁵ This is the tentative suggestion of Solmsen in his app. crit.; Schwarz (1932) 30 is also cautious.

(4× *Il.*, 1× *Od.*) probably encouraged the poet to admit πός'. 442. Ares rushed at Herakles, and Herakles 'quickly received him' (ὃ δ' ἐμπαπέως ὑπέδεκτο). This is almost nonsensical. It arose through a careless adaptation of a phrase in which ἐμπαπέως made sense, such as ὃ δ' ἐμπαπέως ἀπόρουσεν (*Il.* 5.836) or ὃ δ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο μάλ' ἐμπαπέως ὑπάκουσεν (*Od.* 14.485, *Aphr.* 180).

II.6.v. Hesiodic & Hymnic

It is a vexed question whether there were ever meaningfully distinct 'schools' of epic poetry. As far as language is concerned, it has proved impossible to trace a consistent pattern across the corpus: 'if there were schools of poets they cannot be distinguished by more than a few regional formulae: the unity of the tradition is impressive'.¹⁶⁶ But since the *Aspis* belongs to a period in which older fixed texts are being imitated, it is essential to examine its position within the corpus in terms of phraseology, in order to understand how the poet is differentiated from the earlier stages of the hexameter tradition. Even when we find such differentiations, it may remain impossible to gauge how far such distinctions are intentional and how far subconscious.

Below are collected the striking phrases or types of expression which, though alien to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are found in the *Aspis* together with the poems of the Hesiodic corpus that were certainly known to our poet (i.e. *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, *Catalogue*) and/or the *Hymns*. This section builds mainly on nineteenth-century work,¹⁶⁷ but adjustments have been made in light of papyrus finds. If no parallels are quoted, it is to be understood that there are

¹⁶⁶ Janko (1982) 26. Equally unrevealing is the *Aspis*'s metrical relation to other poems: in the omission of the third-foot caesura it groups with Hesiod and the Pythian portion of the *Hymn to Apollo*; however, in its proportion of spondees before the bucolic diaeresis the *Aspis* is closer to the *Hymn to Aphrodite* and *Theogony* (Janko (1982) 37, 39). Cf. n. 139.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. n. 17; also Vara Donado (1972) 348–65, which includes some examples that are inadmissible.

parallels in both Hesiod and the *Hymns*; if parallels are quoted, they are usually the only ones available. Note that ‘fr(r).’ without qualification = [Hesiod]. *Aspis* 1–56 of course need to be considered separately from 57–480.

8, 47. πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης (she is χρυσή in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*). 15 νόσφιν ἄτερ: *Op.* 91, 113. 34 μήδετο θέσκελα ἔργα: *Op.* 204. 56 θεῶν σημάντορι πάντων. 59 αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα ὄν: fr. 43a.69. 65 κεχάρητο: the reduplicated pluperfect is found again at *Dem.* 458. 74 πλήν γ’ Ἡρακλῆος: fr. 25.3. 75–6 ~ *Th.* 151–2 ~ *Op.* 149–50 (cf. n. 210). For ἐπὶ στιβαροῖσι μέλεσσιν the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Hymns* have γναμπτοῖσι. 79 ἀθανάτους in combination with μάκαρας.¹⁶⁸ 82 βοῶν ἔνεκ’. 84. ἄρμενα πάντα (preferable to the v.l. ἄρματα, cf. West on *Th.* 639): *Th.* 86 εὐσφύρωι Ἡλεκτρύωνη follows the formulaic paradigm for Elektryone used at *Aspis* 16 εὐσφύρου Ἡλεκτρύωνης; εὐσφυρος is exclusively Hesiodic, cf. *Th.* 254. 87 ἐπιπλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν is a v.l. at *Th.* 493. 88 οὔτε φυὴν ἐναλίγκιοι οὔτε νόημα: *Op.* 129. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have *οὔτε νόημα, and the *Odyssey* οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, as also at *Ap.* 465. 97 ὠκυπόδων σθένος ἵππων. 106 κρατερός τε μέγας τε: fr. 10a.68, 70.36 (*Catalogue*), 294.1 (*Aigimios*). 116 μάλα γάρ νύ οἱ ἄρμενα εἶπεν ~ *Op.* 424. 125 καλὸν χρύσειον πολυδαίδαλον: a ‘hymnic’ pile-up of adjectives, as at *Aphr.* 89 καλοὶ χρύσειοι παμποίκιοι (where Faulkner compares *h.* 6.7–8). 127, 144, 231 ἀδάμας: 231n. 131 θανάτοιο δοτῆρες: *Op.* 356 θανάτοιο δότεира. 144 οὐ τι φατειός: cf. ad loc. 161 ὄφης is a common Hesiodic word (cf. West on *Th.* 299), but occurs only once in the *Iliad* (12.208). 165: cf. ad loc. 166 δεινοῖο δράκοντος: *Th.* 825. 193–5 ἔχων ... κελεύων ... ἐναρίζων ... ἐπεμβεβαώς: the progressive piling up of participles finds its closest parallel at *Ap.* 515–16 φόρμιγγ’ ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων, ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζων, | καλὰ καὶ ὑψὶ βιβάς; possibly to be classed

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Janko (1982) 156.

as a hymnic feature. 201 ἀθανάτων ἱερός: *Th.* 21, 105 (cf. 57, 939). 220 ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶν ἔχεν πτερόεντα πέδιλα: cf. ad loc. 247 σφετέροισι τέκεσσι: *fr.* 204.121 (*Catalogue*), 266(a)10 = (c)3 (*Wedding of Kelex*). Cf. also *Aspis* 90 ~ 239. 261 = 411 μάχην δριμεῖαν ἔθεντο: including the variation in the *Theogony* (713), ἔγειραν, this phrase may be called Hesiodic (though cf. n. 142). 318 Ζηνὶ βαρυκτύπῳ. 331 εὖτ' ἂν δή: *Op.* 323, 458. 393 ἡχέτα τέπτιξ: *Op.* 582 (though *Aspis* 393–401 may be interpolated).

II.6.vi. Conclusions. Orality and literacy

We have come to a clearer understanding of how the *Aspis* poet manipulates the formulaic language and responds linguistically to fixed texts. In §II.6.ii we saw that certain formulae are reused within the poem, and it emerged that in all but one instance the later occurrence is secondary; this insight has useful results for our understanding of the growth of the poem. The poet seems also to have devised new formulae, often on the basis of prototypes; in them he admits unconventional elision and hiatus. Sometimes when he reuses verses that seem to come from other texts, he fails to make the verses fully at home in their new surroundings. In §II.6.iii we saw (by contrast) examples of deliberate and subtle tailoring of formulae to the context of the poem, even when this meant breaching the principle of economy (on which see further below); in other instances, however, the violations serve no ostensible purpose. Another type of consistent modification found in the *Aspis* is aimed at increasing the sense of horror or violence; this is in accord with the poet's general taste for the macabre (§II.1.vi). At other times there is no evident reason why the poet has deviated from the inherited form of words, unless it is to challenge the audience's expectations of how an epic poem 'ought' to sound. From §II.6.iv it emerged that the poet is not always in command of the formulaic language, and that he sometimes creates obscurity through his attempts to manipulate it.

The poet therefore seems ambitious with regard to the formulaic language; and though he often manipulates it thoughtfully, at other times his efforts are less satisfactory. This has an important consequence for the problem touched on already at n. 9: now that we have examined in detail the characteristics of one sixth-century poet, it seems even more hazardous to put great trust in the ‘glottochronometric’ approach. Nor of course was our poet the only one to be doing such untraditional things: to give but one example, at *Aphr.* 267 ἡλίβατος, restricted in Homer to rocks, is applied to trees.¹⁶⁹

In §II.6.v we noted a number of formulae which are foreign to Homer. With the exception of 131 θανάτοιο δότειρα, there is no overwhelming contextual similarity to a Hesiodic passage which has triggered a direct reminiscence. This does not mean that at certain points our poet was not thinking of a particular Homeric or Hesiodic passage: enough examples have been collected above to show that he adapted, and in some cases perhaps half-remembered, particular phrases in fixed epics. In only one instance are the Hesiodic and the Homeric formula metrically interchangeable: *Aspis* 76 ἐπὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι vs. στιβαροῖσι. If we were concerned with the eighth or seventh centuries, the existence of such economy-violating doublets might be regarded as evidence for parallel streams of the epic tradition, each exhibiting a certain degree of independence. But by the sixth century, epic has already become panhellenic. We have seen ample evidence already that the poet of the *Aspis* was intimately familiar with the *Iliad*. He was also familiar with the two Hesiodic poems and the *Catalogue*. Therefore to speak of an Ionian–mainland disjunction is, by the time of the *Aspis*, meaningless. We are dealing instead with a poet who, wherever he may have received

¹⁶⁹ At *Aspis* 422, where ἡλίβατος also occurs, the v.l. πέτρη (attested only in the scholarly S, *supra lineam*) is to be rejected and πεύκη retained. In general cf. Hoekstra (1965), (1969).

his poetic training, has assimilated elements of diction from a range of locales and traditions. His diction is hybridised and eclectic.

What implications does all this have for the question of orality and literacy? Formular modification occurs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But an advanced state of formular modification is often taken as a sign of lateness, or of literate composition, or of both. These assumptions are based on the Parry–Lord canon that once an oral singer becomes literate, he loses the ability to compose in a truly oral style. A ‘truly oral style’ would be one in which a singer, composing in performance, adheres to the traditional application of formulae and to their traditional positioning within the verse, always observing economy. Committed oralists still admit the existence of minor breaches of economy, such Ἑκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο (4× *Il.*) as against ἀνδροφόνιοιο (11×).¹⁷⁰ However, neither more serious breaches of economy nor *ad hoc* modifications of the formular system are (on this view) possible in truly oral poetry, owing to the circumstances of composition and performance. In the *Aspis* we have seen gratuitous breaches of economy, and these suggest to me that the poet has receded from a fully oral style. The natural inference is that he was literate.

On the other hand, a characteristic that has often been supposed to indicate orality is parallels of sound, a phenomenon to which Edwards devoted a chapter of *The Language of Hesiod*. Examples are to be found in the *Aspis*; note in particular: 91 ἀλιτήμενον < ἀλιτήμερον (§II.6.iii); 112 παῖδας ἀμύμονας Ἀλκείδαο < παῖδες ἀμύμονος Ἀλκινόοιο (§II.6.iv); 288 βαθὺ λήϊον < βασιλήϊον (§III.3.ii); probably also 370 αἶψ’ ἐπὶ γαῖαν < ἄψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν/γαίηι (ἄψ is a minority variant in the *Aspis*, but the emphasis on speed accords with the *Aspis* poet’s taste, cf. §II.1.vi). A more elaborate example is 376 δρῦς ὑψίκομοι. At *Il.* 11.494 (a simile

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Parry (1971) 184–7. In the *Catalogue* (fr. 141.29) we find the latter.

which the poet has in mind) the epithet ἄζαλέας has troubled commentators both ancient and modern: why should the river sweep away *dry* trees? In any case, the *Aspis* does not follow the *Iliad* in describing the trees as ‘dry’; instead they are ‘tall’. On one hand this is a fairly common epithet of the δρῦς in the epos; but the proximity of ὑψηλῆς (374) may also have helped the change. This would be a process parallel to that posited by Janko on *Il.* 16.431–2, where instead of the usual formula πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε the poet used the much less common Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω. Janko suggests that the change was motivated by the occurrence of ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι a few lines earlier (428). The same associative mental process is in evidence at *Od.* 9.183–6:

... ὑψηλόν, δάφνησι κατηρεφές· ἔνθα δὲ πολλά
μῆλ', οἷες τε καὶ αἶγες, ἰαύεσκον· περὶ δ' αὐλή
ὑψηλὴ δέδμητο κατωρυχέεσσι λίθοισι
μακρῆισίν τε πίτυσσιν ἰδὲ δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν.

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This seems to have happened at *Aspis* 192–4 (cf. 194n.). The problem is that these associations would occur in a fully literate composition too, especially if the writer is creating something specifically for performance. He would undoubtedly try out phrases aloud, and repeat sections back to himself, as he shaped his poem, thereby putting himself through the same process as a fully oral composer.

Indeed, most scholars have long since abandoned the notion that because oral poetry is formulaic, formulaic poetry must be oral: without external evidence, there is no way of knowing whether a poem composed in the formulaic style is genuinely oral or simply a literate imitation of that style.¹⁷¹ The precise echoes of earlier epic that pervade the *Aspis* show great familiarity with these works. The way in which the poet interacts with them linguistically suggests to me that he had access to written versions of at least the *Iliad*. In such

¹⁷¹ The soundest refutation of this position remains Kirk (1966).

a context, and at the date at which he lived, it would be surprising if the *Aspis* poet did not make use of writing as he composed his own work.

II.7. The growth of the poem

II.7.i. A stitched song

It has long been known that the *Alkmene-ehoie* (1–56) and the main portion of the *Aspis* (57–480) are of different origin (§I.1). But the relationship of the two parts remains disputed: Did the poet adopt the *ehoie* as an introduction to his own composition, or were the *ehoie* and the *Aspis* originally independent compositions which have been combined by a later redactor? Our answer to this question has important consequences for our view of the artistic coherence of the poem.

The common view is that the poet took the *ehoie* as a preface for his own poem.¹⁷² In this case, the *Aspis* would provide a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Catalogue*: for, since the *Catalogue* is a unitary composition (§II.5 and n. 113), the currency of the *Alkmene-ehoie* presupposes the existence of the *Catalogue* as a whole. Guillon has argued that the *ehoie*'s claim of Herakles' divine paternity is designedly vindicated by the action of the *Aspis*.¹⁷³ It has also been suggested that the characterisation of Herakles at 28–9 as the ὀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ for mankind (compare his cult-title ἀλεξίκακος) is borne out by the rest of the poem, in which the hero rids the world of a villain who had been preying on pilgrims making their way to Delphi (479–80).¹⁷⁴ The composer of the *ehoie* probably intended ὀρῆς ἀλκτῆρ to refer to Herakles' Labours, and perhaps specifically to the Gigantomachy, but it is an attractive suggestion that the poet took over this characterisation and used it as a model for his own

¹⁷² Hirschberger (2004) 49 provides a convenient bibliography.

¹⁷³ Guillon (1963) 29ff.

¹⁷⁴ Van der Valk (1953) 277–8.

‘purification’ of the hero (§III.2.ii). This theory is supported by the recurrence of the phrase ὀρθῆς ἀλκτῆρα at 128: ὀρθῆς ἀλκτῆρ is a rare phrase in the epos, but its use at 128 is readily explicable if the poet had line 29 of the *ehoie* fresh in his mind. In linguistic terms, too, 128 looks secondary to 29 (n. 67).

An obstacle to the view that the *Aspis* was composed as a response to the *ehoie* has, however, been found in Herakles’ speech to Iolaos. Lines 78–88, where Herakles describes the life of Amphitryon and the birth of Herakles and Iphikles, have proved particularly controversial: we had already been told about the twins’ birth in the *ehoie*. The ‘unitarian’ view of the *Aspis* regards 78–88 as both a summary of and a supplement to the *ehoie*. Thus Wilamowitz asserts that Herakles’ speech ‘hat ja nur den Zweck, die Angaben der Eoee zu ergänzen’; and Guillon emphasises that—in contrast with the *ehoie*—Herakles’ speech focusses on the hero’s *mortal* ancestry.¹⁷⁵ But other scholars have denied that anyone would have composed the second passage if the *ehoie* had from the outset formed part of the *Aspis*’s architecture. Thus for West, the *Aspis* acquired its present form ‘by being welded together out of two separate poems’, and ‘[t]hat the author of *Sc.* 57–480 did not intend it as a continuation of the excerpt from the *Catalogue* that precedes it, is shown by 78–88, which is an attempt, laudable in intention if clumsily executed, to inform us of the circumstances of the birth of Heracles and Iolaus while avoiding straightforward narrative [...]. By prefacing the poem with the *Ehōea*, the editor has anticipated the content of Heracles’ speech and thwarted its purpose.’¹⁷⁶ A compromise position had previously been advocated by Thiersch, who held that only 78 and 97–101 belonged to the ‘ursprüngliche Gedicht’.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Wilamowitz (1905) 122; Guillon (1963) 29ff., supported by Janko (1986) 39.

¹⁷⁶ West (1966) 49 with n. 5, following Bethe (1914) 9 n. 10.

¹⁷⁷ Thiersch (1813) 27 n. 18. There have been other attempts to see two recensions in Herakles’ speech: for example Hermann (1835) 194–5 retains only 79–94.

Several important differences emerge from a comparison of the content of the *ehoie* and Herakles' speech:

- (i) *The ehoie is female-centred, the speech male-oriented.* In the *ehoie* Alkmene is the exclusive subject of ten lines of description by the poet (1–10);¹⁷⁸ she is the reason for the missions of both Amphitryon and Zeus; and the culmination of the story is her giving birth to Herakles and Iphikles. In Herakles' speech, by contrast, she receives only the briefest of mentions (86–7), and the focus is, rather, on Amphitryon and his sons. The marital concord of Alkmene and Amphitryon is stated from the wife's perspective in the *ehoie* (9–10) but from the husband's in the speech (86–7): in each case the relevant party is the subject of the verb (9 Alkmene τίεσκειν, 86 Amphitryon ζῶε ... ἀγαλλόμενος).
- (ii) *The ehoie and the speech do not narrate all the same events.* Herakles does not mention the war against the Taphians, and he ignores Alkmene's refusal to allow Amphitryon into her bed until he has avenged the killing of her brothers (14–19). He glosses over his and Iphikles' birth in summary fashion (86–9). The *ehoie* ends with the account of Alkmene giving birth to Herakles and Iphikles, but Herakles continues the story so as to span the whole of Iphikles' life (89–93).

Herakles also ignores Zeus' impregnation of Alkmene, and Janko claims that the poet of Herakles' speech 'does not hesitate to exploit the irony that Heracles is himself unaware of the truth about his birth'.¹⁷⁹ This is, however, disproved by internal evidence: Iolaos in his reply to Herakles refers to his friend as Διὸς υἱόν (110); the detail is introduced casually, and the identity of his own father can hardly come as

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Davidson (1998).

¹⁷⁹ Janko (1986) 39.

news to Herakles. Moreover, Herakles himself says (88) that he and Iphikles were οὔτε φυὴν ἐναλίγκιοι οὔτε νόημα (cf. 48–56, esp. 50 οὐκέθ' ὁμὰ φρονέοντε). At *Op.* 129 the same phrase describes the inferiority of the Silver Race to the Gold which had preceded it, and, as here, the reason is the fundamentally different genetic make-up of the persons concerned.

- (iii) *When the ehoie and the speech cover the same material, the detail given is not always identical.* The *ehoie* does not specify the homeland of Amphitryon and Alkmene (1, 12 πατρίδα γαῖαν), but Herakles tells us that it was Tiryns (81). Moreover, whereas the *ehoie* says only that Amphitryon ἐς Θήβας ἰκέτευσε φερεσσακέας Καδμείους (13), according to Herakles he was welcomed by Kreion and Heniokhe (83–5). Herakles asserts that Amphitryon's killing of Elektryon was an offence against the gods (79–80), but the *ehoie* (11–13) makes no mention of the gods and follows the *Iliad's* underlying assumption that it is the wrath of the deceased's relatives or community that must be escaped.¹⁸⁰

On a general level it is true that both passages refer to the birth of Herakles and Iphikles, and it is possible that two poets have, in ignorance of one another's work, simply described the metoecism and supplication in slightly different terms: the first poet expresses the pathos of leaving one's fatherland and stresses the welcome extended by all the Thebans; the second poet happens to name Tiryns (Amphitryon's home town being common knowledge), and focusses on the individuals who received Amphitryon.¹⁸¹ However, it has emerged that the only repetition without variation is the detail that Amphitryon killed Elektryon in anger over oxen (11–12 ἦ μὲν οἱ πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἀπέκτανε Ἴφι δαμάσσας, | χωσάμενος περὶ βουσί ~ 82

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Nünlist (2009).

¹⁸¹ As often in descriptions of one character's supplication at a city, cf. *Il.* 16.574 ἐς Πηλῆ' ἰκέτευσε καὶ ἐς Θέτιν ἀργυρόπεζαν; cf. [Hes.] fr. 257.

κτείνας Ἡλεκτρύωνα βοῶν ἔνεκ' εὐρυμετώπων). This repetition is not without purpose and is thus, in my view, excusable: in Herakles' speech the story leads on to the explanation of divine justice and is used to account for the fates of Iphikles and Herakles, whereas in the *ehoie* it explains only Amphitryon's relocation to Thebes. Therefore it is understandable that a poet should have repeated this detail even if he had the *ehoie* as a preface from the outset. In fact, this repetition repays closer scrutiny. According to an alternative account, Amphitryon's killing of Elektryon was *involuntary*.¹⁸² Since this version is not attested until Pherecydes, or possibly even until 'Apollodorus', we cannot know if it was current already in the early sixth century. But if it was, the poet's agreement with the *Catalogue* on the circumstances of the homicide would suggest that he had the *ehoie* in front of him.

Do the differences between the content and emphasis of the two passages mean that the speech is a 'response' to the *ehoie*? A consideration of genealogical digressions in the *Iliad* will prove instructive. These occur either in speeches, or else in the narrator's voice as an introduction to or vignette for a character. The speeches most commonly form part of the prelude to single combat between two heroes: one hero may actually be unaware of the identity of the other (such is the case with Diomedes and Glaukos at *Il.* 6.124–5), but more often the speaker recites his genealogy in order to intimidate his opponent, even if the opponent knows his enemy's genealogy perfectly well (as with Aineias and Achilles at 20.200–41). Such digressions are a well-established element in Homeric battle narrative, and there is therefore no reason to suspect Herakles' speech as an interpolation on the grounds that it provides information which is redundant from the perspective of its intended recipient.

¹⁸² [Apollod.] 2.4.6; cf. sch. *Od.* 11.266, which ascribes the story to Pherecydes (fr. 13b Fowler). A parallel version to this (id. fr. 13c), which does not actually mention Pherecydes and is of doubtful authenticity, appears to rely heavily on the *Aspis*: it knows of the quarrel over the oxen, the reception by Kreion and Heniokhe (cf. *Aspis* 83: the names are even in the same order), and the τιμή μεγίστη which the suppliants received (cf. *Aspis* 85 τίον δ' ἄρα κηρόθι μᾶλλον). Cf. *EGM* ii. 262–7.

What is untypical about the present speech is that it is addressed to the hero's comrade rather than to his enemy: verbal exchanges between comrades—not infrequently heroes and their charioteers—often precede a military engagement in the *Iliad*,¹⁸³ but the hero's giving of his *genealogy* to his companion seems to be unparalleled. Two likely reasons for this departure from the type scene suggest themselves: first, the poet wants to postpone direct contact between Herakles and Kyknos (cf. §II.1.vi); and second, instead of having Herakles boast to his enemy, he must characterise the hero as a long-suffering mortal (§III.2.ii). We can discern other motives for the insertion of a speech here: it adds *gravitas* and marks the combat as a Homeric duel,¹⁸⁴ and it increases the amount of direct speech in a poem where the overall proportion of it—less than 20 per cent—is far below the figure of 55 per cent calculated for the Homeric poems. West's assertion that the purpose of this speech is 'to inform us of the circumstances of the birth of Herakles and Iolaos while avoiding straightforward narrative' rather oversimplifies the matter.

In giving his genealogy the speaker must take the lineage down to his own lifetime, and since Herakles' speech serves equally as a genealogy for his nephew Iolaos, it describes Iphikles' life too. The nature of an *ehoie*, however, is that it stops once the offspring of the woman in question have been listed; the poet then proceeds to the next relevant female, whether in the same stemma or a different one. The *Catalogue* is of course centred on the

¹⁸³ The 'consultation pattern', cf. Fenik (1968) 24ff.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Hermann (1835) 194, 'die Rede des Herkules bedarf dieser Verse [sc. 79–94], um dem Gedichte von dem Kampfe eine schickliche Einleitung zu geben.' Some have found a contradiction between 95–101 and 108: in the former passage Herakles commands his charioteer to make straight for the enemy, but in the latter verse Iolaos bids him don his armour: it now becomes apparent that Herakles is unarmed. The over-eager Herakles is gently chastised by his nephew, and Herakles' smile following Iolaos' speech (115–16) is perhaps to be interpreted as an admission that he had been a little over-hasty (116 μάλα γάρ νύ οἱ ἄρμενα εἶπεν): so Goettling (2nd edn.) 118. He may wish to conceal this from Iolaos, however, since in epic doing something 'in one's heart' signifies hiding one's intentions (*Th.* 551, *Od.* 19.210, 20.310) (Verdenius (1972) 225 n. *).

γυναικῶν φύλον, and it is thus no wonder that Alkmene is the focus of the *ehoie*. Indeed, throughout the *Catalogue* the actions of males are subordinated to the structure and aims of the female genealogies.¹⁸⁵ It was also observed above that Herakles in his speech is concerned with the male line to the exclusion of the female, but again there is no reason to regard this as a conscious avoidance of the same material as that covered in the *ehoie*. Rather, it is typical of such genealogical digressions that they focus on the male line, and understandably so, given their setting and intended purpose. The summary reference to Alkmene in the speech is exactly parallel to Diomedes' passing mention of Tydeus' wife in his account of his own genealogy (*Il.* 14.113–25). If in such passages the females are mentioned in anything other than the briefest terms, it is for some special reason. Thus since the semi-divine status of both Achilles and Aineias is due to their respective mothers, Aineias mentions Thetis and Aphrodite alongside Peleus and Ankhises (*Il.* 20.206–9); but when he goes on to describe the line from Dardanos to himself (219–40), it is only the *male* progenitors and scions who are catalogued. There is nothing exceptional about Alkmene, beyond her wifely excellence (1–10), so she does not merit special attention in a genealogical speech. Moreover, the fact that the *ehoie* does not mention the gods' wrath in relation to Amphytryon's sons is irrelevant: Amphytryon himself suffered no ill other than exile as a result of his crime; the *ehoie*, whose chronological limit is the *birth* of Herakles and Iphikles, therefore has no cause to describe the workings of divine justice in relation to these two heroes.

The differences in content and outlook observed under (i)–(ii) above can therefore be explained by the requirements of genre and by the context of the speech. Mutual independence cannot be excluded, but it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that the poet of

¹⁸⁵ Asquith (2005) 269.

Herakles' speech, fully aware of the conventions of both an *ehoie* and a genealogical speech, composed the latter precisely so as to enable himself to cover different ground from that of the earlier passage, and to do so from a different perspective. We have already suggested reasons why the poet may have wished to make Herakles address Iolaos at this point. The reiteration of the birth story therefore need not (*pace* West) be attributed to an unfortunate welding accident. The divergences noted under (iii) above are instead artful supplements to the *ehoie*: in specifying Tiryns and the identity of the Thebans whom Amphitryon supplicated, the speech enhances and refines the information provided in the *ehoie*. Wilamowitz hit the mark with his conclusion that the speech was intended 'die Angaben der Eoee zu ergänzen'.

There is a final question which ought to be addressed in this connection: how did the *Aspis* originally begin if not with the *ehoie*? Not of course with a relative pronoun. It could have been prefaced with something like the fifteenth hymn in our collection of *Homeric Hymns*, which was evidently designed to introduce recitations of Herakles epic. This hypothetical hymn + Kyknomachy would have been structured much like a Homeric hymn, a single and significant event from the subject's past being narrated and encased by a frame consisting of an honorific naming (and envoi?).¹⁸⁶ Such hymnic openings were easily attached to and separated from the poems for which they served as a surround, and many of the shorter hymns in our collection are apparently intended as 'off-the-peg' prefaces to rhapsodic recitations.¹⁸⁷ It should also be recalled that the relative pronoun, which is what the *Aspis* proper begins with, is a well-established means of transition from the attributive to the

¹⁸⁶ Suggested already by Bergk (1872) 996 n. 75, Bethe (1914) 9 n. 10.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Faulkner (2011) 17–18. The openings of archaic epics were textually unstable: Kirk (1985) 51–2, discussing the variant incipit of the *Iliad*, remarks that 'a proem could easily be varied from time to time, especially perhaps to suit a special audience or to accord with longer or shorter versions of what was to follow'.

narrative section of a hymn (cf. e.g. *Herm.* 20 ὅς καί). But Aristophanes had evidently not seen any exemplar in which the *Aspis* was detached from, or prefixed by something other than, the *ehoie*. Probably this is because the poet used writing in composition (§§I.3, II.6.vi, II.7.iii), which conferred greater stability on the finished product: certainly it would be harder for a later redactor to delete pre-existing passages than to insert new ones.

If the main portion of the poem does indeed respond to the *ehoie*, the situation is akin to the genesis of the *Hymn to Apollo*, which is most likely a combination of two poems, one composed as a response to the other.¹⁸⁸ West in fact adduces the cobbled *Hymn* as a parallel to the welded *Aspis*,¹⁸⁹ but because he insists that *Aspis* 78–88 are straightforwardly ‘anticipated’ by the *ehoie*, he rejects the obvious conclusion that the *Aspis* is to be ascribed to someone composing in the knowledge of a pre-existing poem and creating a new composite work. If we move the joining away from the later author’s lifetime and attribute it to a hypothetical third party, the notion that the *ehoie* and the *Aspis* were not always a unity is made still more implausible. There is reason enough for a poet to have prefaced from the outset his own composition with the authoritative account of Herakles’ birth as told by ‘Hesiod’ in the *Catalogue*.¹⁹⁰

Another question that has an important bearing on the unity of the *Aspis* concerns the relationship of the battle-narrative to the ecphrasis. It has been claimed that the shield description is inorganic, an easily detachable intercalation. In formal terms this is unacceptable: in our analysis of type-scenes we saw that the modification of the arming

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Burkert (1979*b*), Janko (1982) 112–15 (whose account is more plausible than West (1975)).

¹⁸⁹ West (1966) 49.

¹⁹⁰ For the citation of the *ehoie* as an appropriation of Hesiodic authority cf. Guillon (1963) 29–38. For other evidence to support the notion that the same poet is responsible for the narrative as for the ecphrasis cf. 146, 168–77, 173–4, 176, 219, 231a nn.; §§II.1.iv–vi, III.3.i.

sequence proves (*pace* Goettling) that the shield description was integral to the design of the poem from the outset (§II.2.i).

Yet there remains the question of the poet's overall aim: was the priority to narrate the Kyknomachy, or does the battle serve merely as a context for the ecphrastic *tour de force*? The lengthy preparations for the duel are not matched by the duration of the actual combat; the poet is evidently not interested in describing the actual fighting. Instead it is the build-up on which he spends most energy: speeches by Herakles and Iolaos, the arming, similes, and, of course, the ecphrasis. The ecphrasis occupies about one-third of the whole, because an ecphrasis, and not the description of a duel, was the most appropriate place for the poet to indulge his gift for depicting the fantastical and the baroque. It also seems likely that, although he had the option of dressing Herakles in what we think of as his standard costume, the poet opted instead for the panoply of a Homeric warrior in order that he should be able to describe the hero's shield (§III.2.iii). The structure of his own poem, and its focus on the ecphrasis, suggests that producing a counterpart to Achilles' shield was the primary purpose of the *Aspis*. But shield description cannot be the whole story: the poet's political allegiances are pro-Theban (§I.1), and he polemically revises the myth of the city's chief hero in order to present Herakles in a more positive light (§III.2). Without the ecphrasis the poem would be rather summary and bald.

II.7.ii. Interpolation. Editorial principles

A thorny issue in the textual criticism of the *Aspis* concerns interpolation. Some brief remarks here will outline the approach to this important problem that is followed in the Commentary. First, I take it that the *Aspis* is overwhelmingly the work of an individual poet, and my aim is to recover the poem as he left it in its final state. The trend in nineteenth-

century scholarship was to detect multiple authorship, and passages were summarily declared to be ‘doublets’ of one another. Such analyses often crumble on close inspection, and Occam’s Razor directs us to regard the poem as a unity unless there is good reason to suppose otherwise.

What tools are available to us? For the *Iliad*, the ancient witnesses sometimes offer significant variants, and it may happen that verses attested in the medieval paradosis are lacking in ancient copies. In the case of the *Aspis* we rarely have such resources at our disposal to widen out the picture: the strongest weapon is *ratio et res ipsa*. The most important exception is Π₃₄, which reveals part of the *Aspis* in a purer, uninterpolated state (cf. 207–15n.). Its especial value consists in its confirming the reality of *Binneninterpolationen*, i.e. interpolations that interlock from hemistich to hemistich; this seems *a priori* less likely than interpolation of whole verses and was rarely entertained before in the textual criticism of the poem, even though it gives far the most elegant solution at 203b–205a (deleted by a discerning scholar as early as 1815). In most cases we must be guided by our impression of the poet’s stylistic mannerisms and by close analysis of language; our investigation of the poet’s style has allowed us to form a clearer picture of his techniques and idiosyncrasies. Yet we must not forget the small size of the total sample, as well as the dangers of circularity in arguing, by the principle of *einmal ist keinmal, zweimal ist immer*, that such-and-such a trait is characteristic of or alien to the poet’s style.

What is the significance of the oral background of the poem? The *Aspis* poet is orally trained, but it is likely that he made use of writing in composition (§§I.3, II.6.vi, II.7.iii). It would be naive to suppose that he sat down one day and wrote the *Aspis* in a single sitting: no doubt he made modifications while the poem was still in a semi-fluid state, as new ideas

occurred to him and in response to audience reactions.¹⁹¹ On this hypothesis, he produced a written text from which all other exemplars ultimately derive. There is, then, an Urtext of the *Aspis*, and not all variants are created equal. It is conceivable that there were authorial variants in the final text produced by the poet.

Authorial additions must be distinguished from those made by later rhapsodes or scribes. Other rhapsodes reperformed the poem after they had become acquainted with it through the poet's written text—whether by reading it themselves or hearing another perform it. In performance the poem was embellished and passages were misremembered, although its substance was not fundamentally altered; further copies were produced, some with marginal variants, and these reached the Alexandrians; the scholarly editors included the variants, marking some of them through critical signs as being of dubious status (cf. 207–15n.);¹⁹² certain marginal passages may have been falsely inserted into the main text (e.g. 151–3), or else inserted in the wrong place (e.g. 386–92, cf. n. 85; 42–5, designed to stand after 38).

Rhapsodic doublets are the easiest to diagnose. These are alternative versions of the same passage found side by side, and the alternatives add nothing essentially new to the picture; nor can one conceive a single author's having composed them to be heard or read sequentially.¹⁹³ Similar doublets are to be seen in the Homeric Hymns. These are accidental additions, and one of the versions of each passage must be expunged from the text in order to recover the poem as the primary author left it. More difficult to discover are *intentional* insertions by later reciters (e.g. 151–3, 156–60). They will have sought to integrate their

¹⁹¹ For theoretical types of fixity cf. Currie (2012b) 575. In §II.6.ii I adduced evidence to suggest that the order of composition was basically linear (cf. n. 141).

¹⁹² The existence of such copies is posited by e.g. Wilamowitz (1905) and Merkelbach (1956) to explain textual vagaries.

¹⁹³ As Janko (1986) 39 remarks of the doublets in the *Aspis* (the most important of which he lists), 'the alternative versions of these passages have every appearance of oral variants, and are no doubt owed to rhapsodic performances of a text that attained a real popularity in later sixth-century Athens'.

insertions stylistically into the pre-existing poem, and this complicates the editor's task of distinguishing the main poet's work from that of his successors.

What criteria can we use to distinguish the original passage from the alien interpolation? The principle most commonly enunciated is that the shorter, more straightforward version is likely to be the earlier.¹⁹⁴ This is a sound but not infallible method: in performance a rhapsode might have failed to remember an elaborate passage and instead extemporised a précis. Moreover, as mentioned above, it is just possible that the main poet himself left variants in his master copy, or that non-identical versions of the poem were produced by him in his lifetime and put into circulation—and in this case, a 'richer' variant would represent the original author's final thoughts and thus be 'genuine' in the sense defined above. The only safe criterion is to weigh each case on an individual basis and ask: would the original author have composed this passage? No simple rules can be formulated, but I reject 156–60 (for instance) because I cannot accept that the main poet would have anticipated his later, more elaborate description of the Keres with a pale foreshadowing of it (cf. ad loc.).¹⁹⁵ Subjectivity is inevitable, and it is a case of balancing probabilities rather than formulating definitive judgements.

II.7.iii. Athena the afterthought

When he began work on the *Aspis*, the poet had a clear idea of how the poem was to proceed, and he settled on the following sequence: Herakles' birth; preparations for the Kyknomachy; the shield description; combat of Herakles and Kyknos; combat of Herakles and Ares; epilogue. It is perfectly possible, though, that he will have reworked it in small

¹⁹⁴ Peppmüller (1893) 6, van Groningen (1958) 113.

¹⁹⁵ For other cases cf. Commentary on 151–3, 156, 182, 203b–205a, 207–15. Note also 75–6 (cf. n. 210); 405–12, to be considered alongside 258–63 (cf. n. 142).

ways as new ideas occurred to him. One place where this seems to be the case is 277–84 (note that 281 and 283 are secondary interpolations). Up to this point the wedding procession has been described in basically visual terms; the only hint of sound is 274 πολὺς δ' ὑμέναιος ὀρώρει. In my view, 277 πρόσθ' ἔκιοι was originally picked up by 284 πᾶσαν δὲ πόλιν:

τοὶ δ' ἄνδρες ἐν ἀγλαΐαις τε χοροῖς τε	272
τέρψιν ἔχον· τοὶ μὲν γὰρ εὐσώτρου ἐπ' ἀπήνης	273
ἦγοντ' ἀνδρὶ γυναῖκα, πολὺς δ' ὑμέναιος ὀρώρει·	274
τῆλε δ' ἀπ' αἰθομένων δαΐδων σέλας εἰλύφαζε	275
χερσὶν ἐνὶ δμωῶν· ταῖ δ' ἀγλαΐῃι τεθαλυῖαι	276
πρόσθ' ἔκιοι· πᾶσαν δὲ πόλιν θαλῖαι τε χοροὶ τε	277/284
ἀγλαΐαι τ' εἶχον.	285

But when the poem was already in a fixed state, the poet decided to add sound-effects: he has a great fondness for these (§§II.1.iv, IV.6); they are mentioned in the Iliadic counterpart (18.491–5), and the poet, having omitted them in his first version, subsequently felt the need to match and (by expansion) outdo his exemplar; and he may have reasoned that the addition of music would serve his literary aim of contrasting the joys of peacetime and Apollo with the songless life of Ares (cf. 191–206n.).¹⁹⁶ After inserting these verses, he effected a transition to what was now 284 (the dislocated hemistich that had originally concluded 277) by repeating πρόσθ' ἔκιοι.¹⁹⁷

The *Aspis* is a short poem and consequently there was not the scope for 'tectonic' expansions such as those for which West has argued in *The Making of the Iliad*. Nonetheless, I believe that the poet decided, after designing the poem and composing a substantial portion of it, to make a major alteration to the original structure: he added Athena.

¹⁹⁶ Paley on 281 refers to Eur. *Ph.* 791 for Ares' κῶμος ἀναυλότατος.

¹⁹⁷ That 278b–284a are a later insertion is an idea found already in Deiters (1858) 34–5 and Rhode (1872) 25–6; but unlike them, I attribute the insertion to the original author, since I see sufficient motivation for him to have made it.

Tradition made Athena Herakles' mentor throughout his Labours (§II.2.ii). But the fundamental story of the Kyknomachy seems not to place Athena by Herakles' side during the combat. The version retailed by Stesichorus (and Pindar) has Ares and Kyknos rout Herakles in the first encounter (cf. §III.3.ii), and Athena cannot be present if Herakles is to suffer this reverse. But Athena did not neglect her protégé entirely: according to sch. BEQ Pi. O. 10.20, Ἡρακλέα τραπέντα ἀνέρρωσεν ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ. As Janko remarks, '[t]his detail must also be from Stesichorus; these scholia make no reference to the *Aspis*'.¹⁹⁸ The tale that the *Aspis* poet inherited therefore most likely did not include Athena on the battlefield, and it is understandable that she should not have featured in his initial draft. He grafted her on later, and the joins can still be seen.

Except for one passage in the ecphrasis (197–200), there is no mention of Athena until 325, when she appears abruptly on the battlefield to give advice to Herakles and Iolaos. Such abruptness is characteristic of our poet (§II.1.i). More worrying, however, is the fact that her presence alongside Herakles and Iolaos achieves so little: she delivers a speech of encouragement (327–37), although Herakles had already expressed confidence in his ability to defeat his opponents (Ares included). She then mounts the chariot (338), but since Herakles already has a charioteer, she is left with nothing to do except put strength into the horses (343–4). In contrast with her partnership with Diomedes in *Iliad* 5, here Athena gives no physical aid to Herakles; our poet wants to show that Herakles is capable of victory on his own strength, but it is odd that he has brought Athena into the picture at all if he wanted to present a Herakles who did not need any actual help. The reason he is not aided by Athena is

¹⁹⁸ Janko (1986) 50. In *Olympian* 10 Pindar does not mention Athena at all—just Herakles, Kyknos, Ares and Iolaos.

that the poet had already composed the following battle sequence and did not wish to make substantial revisions to work already done.

If we delete 325–40 (Athena’s epiphany and speech), insert θ’ in 341 (healing the metre in the process),¹⁹⁹ and excise 343–4, we can recover convincingly the earlier state of the poem, in which Iolaos was Herakles’ only companion. The logic flows beautifully: Herakles mounts the chariot,

τῷ δ’ ἡνίοχος κρατερὸς Ἰόλαος	323
δίφρου ἐπεμβεβαῶς ἰθύνετο καμπύλον ἄρμα,	324
σμερδαλέον (θ’) ἵπποισιν ἐκέκλετο· τοὶ δ’ ὑπ’ ὁμοκλῆς	341
ρίμφ’ ἔφερον θοὸν ἄρμα κονίοντες πεδίοιο·	342
τοὶ δ’ ἄμυδις προγέροντ’ ἵκελοι πυρὶ ἡὲ θυέλλῃ...	345

There are signs, too, that the goddess’s speech was modelled on the action narrated at 424–5. Athena’s instructions correspond very closely indeed to what Herakles does in the combat; this is partly a consequence of the poet’s straightforward teleological approach to composition (§II.1.iii). But there is a telling datum embedded in 424 τὸν μὲν ἔπειτ’ εἶασε, which corresponds to 332 τὸν μὲν ἔπειτ’ αὐτοῦ λιπέειν. At 332 the words are part of Athena’s instructions to Herakles, whereas at 424 they are used in the narrative of Herakles’ actions. ἔπειτα can be used in Homer to refer to both past and future time. However, μὲν ἔπειτα is always used in Homer in narrative, hence it refers exclusively to the past; and the regular way for the poet to describe the transition from the slain foe to a revenge-attack (as at 424–5) would be τὸν μὲν ἔπειτ’ εἶασε (cf. *Il.* 8.125, 317, 11.323). The use of μὲν ἔπειτα at *Aspis* 332 is therefore abnormal, since it refers to *future* time. This suggests that Athena’s speech was modelled on the narrative, a passage which the poet had already composed and in

¹⁹⁹ None of the twenty-two other occurrences of σμερδαλέον in the epos entails metrical lengthening of the -ov. Some mss., including the trustworthy J, have θ’, but this is probably due to scribal emendation.

which Herakles acted without having received any prior instruction from Athena. Note also that 424–5 look more fluent than—and thus prior to—the similar 332–3: in 332 αὐτοῦ must mean ‘there’ and αὐτός in the next verse ‘you yourself’. This is an ungainly structure. By contrast, 424 is a fluent verse, and Διὸς ταλακάρδιος υἱός belongs in the post-caesural position in which we find it. Conversely, the participle δοκεύσας is much more at home in 333 than it is in 425; yet 425 could easily be emended to προσιόντ’ / ἐπιόντ’ ἐδόκευσε (Peppmüller), the later verse having been corrupted by reminiscence (in recitation or writing) of 333. On balance, 424–5—in which Athena does not feature at all—seem to be prior to Athena’s speech, and the speech looks as if it was modelled on the later narrative.

The next time we hear of the goddess is at 443: she opposes Ares and warns him not to attack Herakles. Ares ignores her admonition and casts his spear at Herakles, but Athena turns aside its force, ὀρεξαμένη ἀπὸ δίφρου (455–6). She is more useful here, although the spear had apparently already been lodged in Herakles’ σάκος μέγα (455); still, the poet clearly has in mind a passage of the Diomedea, and the motif-transferral is sufficient explanation for the incongruity (§III.1). Yet we could easily do without Athena, since (as at 415) it is the divine shield that is Herakles’ salvation. A hypothetical earlier draft might have run:

καί ῥ’ ἔμβαλε χάλκεον ἔγχος,	453
σπερχνὸν παιδὸς ἐοῦ κοτέων περὶ τεθνηῶτος,	454
ἐν σάκεϊ μεγάλωι· (but the spear failed to pierce it). ²⁰⁰	455
δριμὺ δ’ Ἄρη’ ἄχος εἶλεν· ἐρυσσάμενος δ’ ἄορ ὀξύ...	457

Moreover, 442b–452a, where Athena addresses Ares and warns him not to attack Herakles, seem to have been inserted at a still later stage of the poem’s evolution. By 442 Ares is in motion, charging towards Herakles. Are we to imagine that Athena sprints alongside

²⁰⁰ Cf. 415, *Il.* 3.348, 7.259, 17.44. I refrain from giving an *exempli gratia* supplement, uncertain how much to supply—the obvious choices being half a verse or one-and-a-half.

Ares, or that he stops in his tracks to listen to her? Surely not. Rather, in the initial draft Ares, after the failure of his spear-cast, rushed straight at Herakles. But after composing a sequence in which Ares attacked Herakles and was wounded by the hero *without* divine assistance (as in the tale of his previous victory over Ares that Herakles recalls at 359–67), the poet changed his mind and decided that he wanted Ares first to be duly chastised by Athena: ‘to the archaic mind it is of special importance that the adversaries when they are killed or defeated, should only have themselves to blame’.²⁰¹ Cf. also my remarks on 437–42 in §II.3.v with n. 89.

There is a similar incongruity at 455–6, where we are obliged to understand that Athena has re-mounted the chariot. Yet it seems unlikely that our poet, if his composition indeed proceeded in a linear fashion, would have implied that Athena was in a chariot when he had just depicted her on foot. In an earlier draft of the narrative, the poet had Athena remain in the chariot throughout the combat. The audience of this hypothetical earlier draft would still have been obliged to imagine from 455–6 that the goddess stretched her arm some considerable distance. However, whereas it is conceivable that the poet of the *Aspis* forced his audience to suspend their disbelief to this extent, it is harder to imagine that from the outset of his composition he was happy to imagine the goddess in a chariot less than ten lines after depicting her as a pedestrian.²⁰² In other words: 442b–452a are a *secondary* authorial insertion within the overall insertion of Athena into the *Aspis*, and I believe that the earlier version ran:

τὼς (ἄρ') ὃ μὲν ἰαχῇ βρισάρματος οὔλιος Ἄρης	441
κεκληγὼς ἐπόρουσε βίῃι Ἑρακλήϊι	442/452
κακκτάμεναι μεμᾶως·	453

²⁰¹ Van der Valk (1953) 268.

²⁰² On the other hand, epic poets are occasionally inconsistent in this regard. Russo (1946*b*) 82–3 notes that at *Il.* 3.29 Paris is already armed, yet he arms a little later too, because the poet wants to describe this for literary effect; and in their meeting Glaukos and Diomedes are presented throughout as being on foot, except at 6.232–4 where they leap down from their chariots—no doubt to give vitality to the scene. Nonetheless, the example in the *Aspis* seems more extreme than either of these two.

The insertion *ad incastro* (cf. 207–15n.) betrays itself through 442 κεκληγῶς ἐπόρουσεν ~ 452 καρπαλίμως ἐπόρουσε. Compare also my remarks at the beginning of this section on 277 = 284 πρόσθ' ἔκινον.

We hear one last time of Athena at 470–1, lines that are easily detachable. I do not commit myself on whether 197–200 were part of the shield description from the outset or were added when the poet thought to introduce Athena to the narrative: either scenario seems possible to me.

To summarise: 325–40, 343–4, 455b–456, and 470–1 are authorial insertions into a fixed text; 442b–452a were added after these three expansions had already been made. The natural explanation for their being detectable is that the *Aspis* was composed with the aid of writing, a medium which brought greater fixity to poems than was possible for those that remained fully oral. If this analysis of the growth of the *Aspis* is correct, it should alert us to the realities of epic composition throughout what is traditionally regarded as the ‘oral period’. It is also significant that it is not just long poems that were composed with this technology, but short ones too: an exciting prospect for future research into archaic poetry.

Why did the poet want to include Athena? First, her partnership with Herakles was traditional (see above). Moreover, the poet considered that divine favour would increase the prestige of the hero: hence his support from Apollo (68–9), Poseidon (104–5) and Zeus (103, 383–5). The poet was also heavily influenced by the Diomedea, and by alluding to this section of the *Iliad* (in which Athena features so prominently as the protagonist’s tutelary) he is able to make a literary point about the figure of Herakles (§III.1). There may also be influence from audiences in Athens, where the *Aspis* enjoyed great popularity in the sixth century (n. 193; §III.3.i): like Theseus’ cameo appearance (182n.), a more prominent role for

the city's patron goddess would be gratifying to them. Perhaps the *Aspis* was originally conceived for a Theban audience but tailored by the poet for a new public. (I am not suggesting that Athena is an 'Athenian insertion' in the same sense as certain verses in the *Iliad*.) An Athena-less *Aspis* makes more sense in terms of narrative logic, but we can readily understand why the poet sought to revise his earlier version. Overall his reworking was effective, but it was not so perfect that all traces of the poem's primitive state have been effaced.

III. LITERARY POSITION

III.1. Literary landscape

What literary works might our poet have known? Where is his place in the canon? The surest way to establish a relationship to an earlier text will be through tracing thematic echoes; verbal parallels tend to be less secure.²⁰³ These echoes will be more convincing if we can detect some literary motivation for the poet's allusion. As Currie puts it,

It is in general clear what constitutes a good argument for dependence between texts (when dependence between them is historically possible). Connections between them should be *striking* (they should not just consist in commonplaces of language, including formulae) and *significant* (they should be interestingly and convincingly interpretable by the critic as allusions).²⁰⁴

In addition, allusions to a particular text will be more probable if there is a certain 'critical mass' of them. In this vein, and as discussed in §I.3, the time seems ripe to attempt importing to the archaic period the methodology applied to fifth-century and later Greek literature.

The *Aspis*'s clearest structural debt is to the Diomedea in the *Iliad*. Schwarz argued persuasively that the action of the poem is modelled on Book 5:²⁰⁵ Athena aids her protégé in a battle against Ares, who is wounded as a result. Herakles corresponds to Diomedes, Iolaos to Sthenelos; Athena and Ares appear in both narratives. But the parallels are not due to the

²⁰³ I take this opportunity to collect verbal parallels with early texts which have as good a chance of being independent representations of the formulaic heritage as direct echoes (without literary significance); these have been gathered mainly from Rzach (with some omissions) and are arranged in approximately chronological order. | *Thebaid* fr. 11 ~ 120; *Archil.* fr. 1.1 ~ 371; *Thgn.* 275 ~ 84, 1170 ~ 79–80; *Sappho* fr. 44.31–3 ~ 242–6 (Musolesi (1980–2) regards the *Aspis* as the source, an improbable chronology); *Solon* fr. 13.2 ~ 206; Cf. also *h.* 8.1 ~ 441 (the date of the *Hymn* cannot be determined). *Alcaeus* fr. 347 and *Aspis* 393–9 draw, one presumes independently, on *Op.* 582–8.

²⁰⁴ Currie (2012b) 547. Of course, one man's 'striking similarity' is another's 'mere coincidence'.

²⁰⁵ Schwarz (1932) 40–1; cf. Russo 30 with n. 26, 158–9; also n. 349. Note in addition to these arguments 324 *καμπύλον ἄρμα*, a formula which, though comparable to Pindar's *καμπύλον δίφρον* (*I.* 3(4).47) and Aeschylus' *καμπύλοις ὀχήμασιν* (*Supp.* 183), recurs only at *Il.* 5.321.—There is however a complication: Diomedes' Athena-aided battle is itself influenced by an account of Herakles' theomachic combat at Pylos (for which cf. also sch. D *Il.* 11.690; *Panyassis* fr. 26; *Pi.* O. 9.29–35); the *Aspis* and *Iliad* alike are drawing on a traditional story about Herakles. We are faced with a 'double allusion', but the model of *Iliad* 5 is certainly in the poet's mind, as proved by *Aspis* 455–6 ~ *Il.* 5.853–4 (discussed below).

poet's lack of resource or inventiveness: rather, they are deftly exploited by him in order to generate meaning in the receiving text.

Diomedes is presented in the *Iliad* as a positive hero, a figure parallel to Achilles but without the latter's complications. The very fact that Herakles follows Diomedes' narrative pattern thus suggests that he is akin to Diomedes, the ideal warrior. Yet the *Aspis*'s Herakles is still more faultless and majestic than the *Iliad*'s Diomedes: in the *Iliad* Diomedes requires special dispensation to wound Ares; it is only through a special, one-off exemption that he is able to descry the gods, who are usually invisible to him; and, although he had been granted permission to strike only Aphrodite, he oversteps the mark by attempting to strike Apollo (who gives him a devastating rebuke: 437–44) and by successfully wounding Ares. In the *Aspis*, by contrast, Herakles had been confident of besting Ares from the outset, just as he had done on a previous occasion (359–67); he (like Iolaos) can see the gods without divine assistance; and he dutifully adheres to the limits imposed on him by Athena, being *supported* throughout by Apollo. (Cf. §§II.1.iii, II.4.ii.) It is in this context that 455–6, where Athena reaches out 'from the chariot' to turn aside the force of Ares' spear, must be set. As Schwarz observes, this is modelled on *Il.* 5.853–4, and it technically makes no sense in the *Aspis*. But the poet has kept the detail, against narrative logic, in order that the allusion to the Diomedea should be 'activated'. One might compare the weak internal motivation seen in passages of the Homeric poems where Neoanalysts have posited motif-transferral, such as the Nereids' mourning for Patroklos, a lament originally intended for Achilles.²⁰⁶

Iolaos must not be forgotten. In the *Iliad* Athena gives Diomedes his second set of instructions and decides to mount the chariot herself (5.825–40). Sthenelos is Diomedes'

²⁰⁶ Differently Kelly (2012). Another example is the ecphrastic Ares and Athena, who are more tightly integrated into their context in the *Iliad* (they actually fight in the battle) than in the *Aspis* (cf. §IV.3.i).

charioteer and is by no means a nonentity (witness his distinguished parentage—he is a son of Kapaneus—and the role he played in the Epipoleis, 4.401–10). However, the goddess pays scant regard to him: without the slightest warning and without bothering to address him, Athena pushes Sthenelos roughly out of the chariot, ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἐμπαπέως ἀπόρουσεν (5.836); she then ascends alongside Diomedes and takes the reins herself. Differently the *Aspis*: here, after addressing Herakles, Athena mounts the chariot without warning; but she leaves Iolaos in place and in charge of the horses (325–42). The Iliadic scene is amusing and it shows how disparate is Athena's treatment of her protégé on one hand and an ordinary mortal on the other. However, for the poet of the *Aspis* with his reverent attitude to the gods it would be unthinkable for Athena to behave with such crassness.

Nor would it be appropriate for Athena to eject Iolaos. One reason is that Iolaos is needed later in the narrative, to drive Herakles on towards Trachis after the defeat of Kyknos and Ares (467–70); he cannot therefore be shoved aside at this stage. Another reason is that Iolaos was a venerable figure in Theban cult,²⁰⁷ and that to show him here in an unfavourable light would have undermined the poet's pro-Theban bias (§I.1). Here therefore our poet departs from the Iliadic model both because he is more solemn than the *Iliad* poet and in particular because he is dealing with Iolaos. Note also that in the Epipoleis Sthenelos' lack of self-control is contrasted with Diomedes' good temper; conversely, in the *Aspis* Iolaos is of good cheer in contrast with an initially rather despondent Herakles (103–16). The allusion to the structural pattern of the Diomedea emphasises the contrast between the two charioteers and elevates Iolaos above his Iliadic counterpart.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Schachter (1981–94) i. 30–1, ii. 25–7, 64–5; more generally, West (2009).

Connections with the Patrokleia are also evident;²⁰⁸ but I see no literary meaning in these parallels. Rather, the poet found this high-point of the *Iliad* memorable and fell under its influence. As for the Doloneia, which most scholars assign to a similar period to the *Aspis*: despite the stylistic similarities noted by Russo 14–22 (cf. my Commentary on 146; also *Aspis* 249, discussed in §II.6.iii), I have found nothing specific to suggest that either text was composed in knowledge of the other. Thus the *Aspis* is of no help in determining at what date the Doloneia became widely known or was incorporated into the *Iliad*.

An extremely suggestive thematic parallel with the *Iliad* is the equivalence between Herakles and Achilles on one hand, and Kyknos and Hektor on the other. The Herakles–Achilles parallel is set up most prominently by the *Aspis*’s extended echo of the description of Achilles’ shield in *Iliad* 18. But there are other ways, too, in which the two central heroes of the *Iliad* are alluded to. With Athena’s instructions to Herakles, εὖτ’ ἂν δὴ Κύκνον γλυκεροῦ αἰῶνος ἀμέρσῃς, compare Priam’s fear expressed to Hektor as he faces Achilles μὴ ... ἢ φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμερθῇς (*Il.* 22.57–8): these are the only two occasions in the epos on which αἰών and ἀμέρδω are joined, and they relate to the prospective slaying of Kyknos by Herakles and of Hektor by Achilles. Similarly, the epithet ἱππόδαμος is reserved in the *Iliad* for the Trojans, and is most strongly associated with Hektor; in the *Aspis* it is used only once, of Kyknos (346). The same is true of ἐυμελῆς, which is limited in the *Iliad* to the Trojans and applied to Kyknos at *Aspis* 368.²⁰⁹ Moreover, as Russo notes, the mortal wound that Herakles inflicts on Kyknos (416–20) is very similar in manner (spear) and anatomical detail (exposed

²⁰⁸ Russo 168–9 singles out *Aspis* 218 ἐσθήρικτο ~ *Il.* 16.111 (but note *Th.* 779 ἐσθήρικται); 374 ~ 16.297; 384 ~ 16.459–60 (the blood-omen is more logical in the *Iliad*; some however reject *Aspis* 384); 402–4 ~ 16.756–8; 412 = 16.430; 413 ἔνθ’ ἦτοι ~ 16.399, 463; 420 ἐμπίπτω ~ 16.81; 421 ~ 16.482. 405–6 ~ *Il.* 16.428–9 is interpolated in the *Aspis*. Russo notes that the Patrokleia ‘è l’unico canto omerico da cui il poeta non esita di riprendere alla lettera, contrariamente al suo solito [...], un certo numero di versi interi anche se non sono versi-formula’.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Page (1959) 252 (on ἱππόδαμος) and 240–1 (on ἐυμελῆς).

part of neck) to the death-wound dealt by Achilles to Hektor (*Il.* 22.324ff.)—a unique wound in the *Iliad*. The simile marking Kyknos' death (421–3) finds its closest Iliadic parallel in the knock-out of Hektor at 14.414–20 (§II.3.vi; cf. however n. 208 for a parallel from the Patrokleia). Lastly, the *Aspis* ends with the funeral rites of Kyknos, just as the *Iliad* closes with Hektor's burial. And in the *Aspis* the large crowd that gathers for this event is described as λαὸς ἀπείρων (472). As Russo observes, the use of ἀπείρων is unusual: in Homer ἀπείρων indicates more often the expanse of the sea and land, and the closest parallel to this usage of the word is the δῆμος ἀπείρων that gathers for Hektor's funeral. All this cannot be a coincidence, and I suggest that the poet of the *Aspis* is alluding in a conscious, 'Alexandrian' manner to the *Iliad* in order to foreshadow the outcome of the combat and to emphasise the supremacy of Herakles as the equivalent, in this poetic universe, of the most impressive hero of the Trojan War. Kyknos, meanwhile, will play the role of Hektor as the hero doomed from the outset to fall at his adversary's hands.

The poet knew the *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and *Catalogue* (§§II.5, II.7.i).²¹⁰ He also probably knew the *Odyssey*, or at any rate the *Nekyia* (§II.6.ii with n. 145; 215n.). Of the *Hymns* we must consider first the Pythian portion of the *Hymn to Apollo*. Trypanis thought that the Pythian hymn imitated the *Aspis*; but none of the verbal parallels that he adduces is quite convincing.²¹¹ A more promising line of inquiry is the political tension evident in these two texts and their relationship to the First Sacred War (cf. §I.1): if the *Aspis* is pro-Theban, the Pythian hymn is certainly anti-Theban, since its author 'goes out of his way to denigrate Thebes, which was not only displeasing to Apollo as the site for his first shrine (so much for

²¹⁰ It is unclear whether *Aspis* 400 is a genuine echo of the *Catalogue* (fr. 239.1), or an alien interpolation (cf. n. 100). *Aspis* 75–6 is probably an interpolation (cf. *Th.* 151–2, *Op.* 148–9; as noted in §II.6.ii, the *Theogony* instance seems primary, since only there does ἐπὶ στιβαροῖσι μέλεσσι make full sense), but just possibly an authorial insertion.

²¹¹ Trypanis (1939).

Apollo Ismenius!), but was even uninhabited (226)—a description not applied to any other place on Apollo's itinerary. This looks like a deflation of Theban pretensions to Ogygian antiquity.²¹² In such a context the verbal parallels in the *Hymn* with *Aspis* 151–3 and 218 (cf. ad locc.) become more interesting. Cf. also 201–6n. However, I do not see a firm reason for assigning priority to one text over the other.

With the *Hymn to Demeter* we are concerned only with verbal parallels. *Aspis* 472 λαὸς ἀπείρων (unique: cf. *Il.* 24.776 δῆμος ἀπείρων) corresponds to *Dem.* 296 πολυπείρονα λαόν; as Richardson ad loc. observes, the hymnist has taken the ἀ- as intensifying, and this could suggest that the *Aspis* is primary and the *Hymn* secondary. *Aspis* 290 βριθόμενα σταχύων: through the 'méthode Leumannienne' one might argue that ἄσταχυς (*Dem.* 454, 456) is formed by misdivision of this verse;²¹³ but it is unlikely that this was the only occasion on which the collocation -α σταχ- occurred in the early epic language. We must never forget how much poetry we have lost.

Aspis 269 πολλή δὲ κόνις κατενήνοθεν ὦμους corresponds to *Dem.* 279 ξανθαὶ δὲ κόμαι κατενήνοθεν ὦμους; note that κατενήνοθεν occurs nowhere else in Greek literature. The etymology and meaning of the isolated form ἐνήνοθεν are disputed (cf. *Lfgre*); a derivation from ἄνθος is the most plausible suggestion. The word is often used in contexts related to downy hair, but at *Od.* 8.365 = *Aphr.* 62 (ἐλαίῳ) οἶα θεοὺς ἐπενήνοθεν ὦμους an extended meaning 'cover' is apparent, as also at *Aspis* 269 and *Dem.* 279. The use in the *Hymn* of the singular verb next to κόμαι has led some scholars to the conclusion that the *Hymn* is imitating the *Aspis* (in which κατενήνοθεν is expected after the singular κόνις). However, in epic no forms of ἐνήνοθεν occur other than the third person singular: it was evidently

²¹² Janko (1986) 46.

²¹³ Strasser (1974).

stereotyped and used even when sense required something else, as at both *Aspis* 269 and *Dem.* 279 (the imperfect is wanted rather than a perfect: cf. λάμπε in the same line of the *Hymn*, and also Commentary on *Aspis* 146 πλῆτο). Nor, even if the *Hymn* uses the word in a sense closer to that suggested by its probable etymology, can we declare the *Hymn* prior to the *Aspis*: the word is used with great flexibility within the epic diction. It does not seem safe, therefore, to declare the *Aspis* the *exemplum* and the *Hymn* the *imitatio*.²¹⁴ Indeed, no concrete relationship between the *Hymn* and *Aspis* seems to me to have been established.

This is about as far as we can go in establishing firm links between the *Aspis* and the scant remains of archaic Greek poetry. We have only to consider one final category: poems about Herakles.

III.2. Herakles

The *Aspis* is the only preserved archaic poem on the subject of Herakles, but it was by no means the only one concerned with the hero's exploits.²¹⁵ The developed formulaic system for Herakles' name,²¹⁶ as well as the allusions to his life and deeds throughout the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Theogony*, and the *Catalogue*, prove that there existed poetic narratives of his adventures, even if his Labours were not canonised until the end of the archaic period. Indeed *Einzellieder* on Herakles seem to have been popular: one thinks of the *Wedding of Keyx*, the *Aigimios*, and the *Capture of Oechalia*; possibly also there was a rhapsodic poem by Archilochus treating a specific part of Herakles' legend (fr. 286).²¹⁷ There is of course much mythographical common ground between the different poetic accounts, but the *Aspis*

²¹⁴ Cf. Janko (1982) 182, who notes that Wyatt (1969) 116 regards *Aspis* 269 as 'a clear imitation' of *Aspis* 269—whereas Russo had come to the opposite conclusion.

²¹⁵ For hypothetical Herakles epics cf. Huxley (1969) 99–112, *GEF* 19–24.

²¹⁶ Burkert (1979a) 177 n. 4 observes that βίη 'Ηρακληείη could be 'used conveniently in nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative'.

²¹⁷ Cf. Bowie (1986) 34 n. 110.

exhibits some significant peculiarities in addition to the hero's unusual martial attire (§II.2.iii). I will examine these deviations in more detail by comparing the depiction of Herakles in the *Aspis* with the portrait of him that emerges from other early hexameter texts; I omit from my discussion other accounts of the battle with Kyknos, owing to limitations of space and because the variants have been well compared by Janko.²¹⁸ We shall see that the Homeric poems and the Hesiodic corpus present us with a culture hero who, unable to adjust his violent tendencies when the world moves on to a more civilised state, is a dangerous and incongruous presence in it; the *Aspis* is the exception to this general rule.

III.2.i. Hesiod and Homer

In the *Theogony* Herakles rids the world of monsters: Geryon (287–94, 979–83), the Hydra (316–18), the Nemean Lion (326–32), and the eagle which torments Prometheus (526–7). The poem does not condemn any action performed by Herakles. Quite the contrary. Herakles' killing of the eagle is *prima facie* in violation of the will of Zeus, who had ordained that it should punish Prometheus (521–5); when the poet tells how Herakles slew the bird, however, he adds that he did so with the approval of Zeus, who wanted to extend his son's κλέος over the earth. Thus Herakles acted with divine sanction and was not a law unto himself. When Herakles finds himself in the heroic world, however, he is—as far as the *Catalogue* is concerned—a volatile anachronism.²¹⁹ This poem alludes to Herakles on many occasions. Since most of his actions in the *Catalogue* are performed in the post-theogonic world (the *Catalogue* being composed expressly to continue the *Theogony* to this next stage of mythical time), this does not generally reflect favourably on him, as most of his adversaries

²¹⁸ Janko (1986) 48–59. Of particular importance is the rehabilitation of sch. T *Il.* 23.346 (= *Thebaid* fr. 11), apparently a relic of an alternative version of the myth, as retailed in a Cyclic poem, in which Herakles defeated Kyknos in a horse-race (with a bride as prize) rather than in single combat.

²¹⁹ The rest of this paragraph draws closely on Haubold (2005).

are mortals who are powerless to resist (though he does slay the Γίγαντας ὑπερφιάλους at fr. 43a.65). He sacks Oechalia on account of Iole (fr. 26.31ff.); compare fr. 196.4, where the Trojan War is waged ἐῖνεκα κούρης.²²⁰ This motivation is not necessarily negative (cf. fr. 43a.37, where ‘a girl’ is the cause of the quarrel between Sisyphos and Aithon), but to an Aias at any rate such an incentive for a warrior’s recalcitrance is irrational and excessive (*Il.* 9.637–8). When Herakles sacks Pylos (frr. 33–5), the poet takes care to present Neleus and his sons sympathetically (fr. 35.6).²²¹ In his temerity Herakles destroys the ἱμερόεντα πόλιν of Cos ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὀλίγης (fr. 43a.61–2), and it is as a sacker of cities that he dies (fr. 25.23).

The negative picture of Herakles is shared by the *Iliad*. At 5.638–42 Tlepolemos recounts Herakles’ sack of Troy: it was clearly a devastating attack, if Tlepolemos is not exaggerating when he says that Herakles χήρωσε the streets of the city. The war on Pylos was no less pitiless, since Nestor alone of his eleven brothers survived—and that by pure chance (11.690ff., as also in [Hes.] fr. 35). The *Odyssey* might at first sight seem to be more favourable than the *Iliad*: it mentions Herakles and Eurytos in the same breath (*Od.* 8.224), which leads one to expect a story of how Herakles killed him at the sack of Oechalia; in fact, however, the poet immediately says that Apollo killed Eurytos for the latter’s insolence in challenging the god of archery to a contest of the bow, thus absolving Herakles from the stain of wrongdoing. The detail later in the *Odyssey* that Herakles received from Iphitos the bow which was later to pass to Odysseus (21.11–30) is consistent with the first passage, and is ‘certainly incompatible with the familiar tradition’.²²² However, although Iphitos presents Herakles with the bow, our hero kills him ξεῖνον ἔοντα ... ὧι ἐνὶ οἴκῳ, apparently in order to take possession of his horses (21.29–30). This is, then, even more unfavourable to Herakles

²²⁰ Haubold (2005) 91.

²²¹ Haubold (2005) 90–1.

²²² Davies (1991) xxv–xxvi.

than the normal tradition, since Herakles now has no motive for killing his guest Iphitos—none, that is, except greed. As Davies notes, it is possible that Homer is suppressing the usual tradition of the sack of Oechalia, and the effect of this would be to characterise the whole incident with even more hostility towards Herakles. It is unfortunate that we cannot establish a relative chronology of the *Odyssey* and the *Capture of Oechalia*,²²³ where the canonical version of the Herakles–Eurytos legend is certainly attested. But that the *Odyssey* is here departing from an established story seems to me particularly likely, given the explanation of Eurytos’ death by the generic motif of a mortal’s boasting that he outdoes a god in the god’s own sphere and thereafter suffering the consequences of his unruly tongue (cf. Marsyas, Niobe, Thamyras). The *Odyssey*, then, has gone out of its way to present Herakles in a negative light.²²⁴

III.2.ii. Herakles transformed

How different the Herakles of the *Aspis*: ‘[f]rom the violator of xenia in the *Odyssey*, he has developed into its defender’.²²⁵ Herakles removes from Apollo’s temenos at Pagasae a presence which is unwelcome there, and he thus bears out the claim of the *ehoie* that he is an ἄρκης ἀλκτῆρ. According to Iolaos, Zeus and Poseidon are bringing Kyknos into Herakles’ grasp so that he may win κλέος ἐσθλόν. We have noted that in the *Theogony* Zeus allows Herakles to kill the eagle in order to increase his son’s κλέος. The slaying of Kyknos thus resembles one of those acculturating feats that took place in the theogonic era, not a later act of uncouth bellicosity. Moreover, Herakles is indeed reluctant to fight, though certainly not

²²³ The meagre fragments are collected in *GEF* 172–6 (~ *PEG* i. 161–4, *EGF* 149–53).

²²⁴ Differently Andersen (2012) 144, for whom it is ‘problematic to take the mentioning of Eurytus and Heracles together here as in any interesting sense a negation of that other, untold story. It is just ignored and does not come into the picture.’

²²⁵ Galinsky (1972) 17.

because he is worried about his chances of victory. Later, he tries to avoid coming to blows with Kyknos and asks merely for unhindered passage (352–3):²²⁶ all he wishes to do is to drive on to Trachis.²²⁷ He addresses Kyknos first—the topos suggests Herakles' dominance of the situation—and he uses the expression (ῶ) πέπον (350, 357): the tone is certainly condescending (cf. *Il.* 2.235, 13.120), so sure is Herakles of his own superiority, but it is not vindictive. He does not directly threaten Ares, who is right beside Kyknos in the chariot (note however the dual ἐπίσχετον); contrast the hero's behaviour in the passages cited at n. 238. And the paradeigma about the previous wounding of Ares (359–67) reads as a stern warning rather than a vaunt.²²⁸

Apollo's support of Herakles is made explicit at 65–9, where the god ignores the prayers of Kyknos and rouses Herakles to battle. Friendly relations between Apollo and Herakles are implied by [Hes.] fr. 33.29, where it is said that Herakles' bow was a gift from the god. Even if this is a mere *façon de parler*, one cannot help but contrast the partnership of Apollo and Herakles with the story of the Struggle for the Tripod at Delphi.²²⁹ An isolated representation

²²⁶ Van der Valk (1953) 268. Guillon (1963) 38 n. 40 sees in the reluctance of Herakles to enter combat a reflection of Thebes *at peace* on the shield (270–2); he notes also the emphasis on Theban hospitality at 78–90. This may all be a refutation of the suggestion that Thebes was a bully in and around the First Sacred War (cf. §1.1). As for Kyknos' refusal to move, we may see here a reflection of the motif of the champion who challenges all comers to a contest.

²²⁷ It would seem that Kyknos is blocking the main road, which would not run through the sanctuary. Chiarini (2011–12) esp. 117–18 notes that it would be unusual for blood to be shed within a sanctuary and suggests that the poet is here 'correcting' the setup implied earlier in the poem, according to which Herakles was to slay the enemy on holy ground. This is possible though not certain: for example, Herakles slew Bousiris in a sacred enclosure (for the early attestations cf. *EGM* ii. 317–18), and Chiarini herself notes that the Struggle for the Tripod took place within the Delphic sanctuary.

²²⁸ Galinsky (1972) 17 speaks of the 'boastful speeches' which lead up to the duel, but cf. van der Valk (1966) 452–3 for the 'attitude modeste' of Herakles. I agree with Solmsen that there is a lacuna after 367 which contained the protasis to the conditional clause (for examples of this construction cf. Richardson on *Dem.* 310–13), the substance of which was that Herakles would have humiliated Ares, *had not Zeus taken preventative action*; the significance of this is that the past Herakles might not have restrained himself (as he manages to do later in the *Aspis* when faced with a similar situation: he has developed and improved as a character).

²²⁹ Nor could vase painters resist comparing the two episodes: cf. n. 246.

of the conflict has been found on the leg of a bronze tripod from Olympia; it is dated to the late eighth century.²³⁰ This shows that the poet will certainly have been familiar with the tale, even if it does not become popular in art until the sixth century. Bothmer in his survey of the iconographical evidence for the Struggle notes that in about one-third of the Attic vases Herakles is nude or at least does not have the lion skin. He attractively suggests that this may be because the Struggle occurred *before* Herakles' Labours and the more thoughtful artists were avoiding anachronism.²³¹ In this case the *Aspis*, according to which Herakles has certainly started his Labours (94), would postdate his youthful act of hubris against the god. This is an older, wiser, and careworn Herakles, who rather than trying to unseat the oracle of Apollo (if that is what the Struggle represents)²³² instead safeguards the god's sanctuary. Herakles also enjoys the favour of Poseidon (104), Zeus (*ibid.*; 383–5), and Athena (124–7; 325ff.). In the *Iliad*, too, Zeus takes an active role in aiding and protecting his son (*Il.* 14.264–5, 15.24–30), and he often does so via Athena (§II.2.ii).

There is one major element of the divine apparatus that is missing from the *Aspis*'s picture of Herakles: Hera. The Alkmene-*ehoie* knows of Zeus' impregnation of Alkmene, and Zeus' paternity of Herakles is accepted by the poet (66, 110, etc.). He does not, however, refer to the story that Hera prolonged Alkmene's travail while hastening the birth of Eurystheus (*Il.* 19.95ff.). The absence of this story from the *ehoie* is perhaps due to poetic economy: the *ehoie*'s main concern is to narrate the conception and birth of the children, not the actual event of the birth; hence at 48–56 the emphasis is on the novelty of dual paternity. The same might be argued about the *Aspis*'s failure to mention Hera's hostility in the birth story at 78ff. But this is not a trivial omission: for Herakles gives a précis of the life of Iphikles at 89–93,

²³⁰ Parke–Boardman (1957) 278.

²³¹ Bothmer (1977) 63.

²³² Cf. Parke–Boardman (1957) 277–8.

according to which it was not he himself but rather his brother who ὤιχετο τιμήσων ἀλιτήμενον Εὐρυσθῆα. Herakles must ascribe this decision to a combination of Zeus' robbing Iphikles of his wits (89) and of ἄτη (93). This variant of the usual myth is quite without parallel, and it was surely invented by the poet 'out of respect for Herakles in order to disburden him from the humiliating service with Eurystheus'.²³³ When the *Aspis* poet revised the Herakles myth, removing the servitude to Eurystheus, the intention was not merely to reject the traditional account but to imply that this version is superior to the rejected one.²³⁴ The linguistic aspects of the innovation are discussed in §II.6.iii (with reference to *Aspis* 91 and 94).

Once the Eurystheus element is removed, there is no longer a logical connection between Herakles and Hera, although she was of course firmly grounded in the Herakles myth, as the hero's very name seems to show.²³⁵ The *Catalogue* admits that Herakles and Hera were later reconciled, when Herakles achieved immortality (cf. n. 114); but the *Aspis* seems to suppress the existence of Hera's enmity altogether: at 94 Herakles speaks merely of the δαίμων who has imposed the ἄεθλοι. We have already seen (n. 233) that this δαίμων has ousted Eurystheus, but if any particular god is meant, it can only be Hera, who by driving Herakles to kill his own family will have provided the motivation for his expiatory Labours. It might

²³³ Van der Valk (1953) 278. The artificiality of this mythographical innovation is shown clearly by 94 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ δαίμων χαλεποὺς ἐπετέλλετ' ἄεθλους, since the formula ἐπιτέλλειν / ἐπιτέλλεσθαι ἄεθλους seems to have been devised—presumably for Herakles epics—to describe Eurystheus' imposition of Labours upon Herakles: cf. [Hes.] fr. 190.12 (rest.), *Od.* 11.622. ἄεθλοι is virtually the *terminus technicus* to describe them, cf. also *Aspis* 127, *Th.* 951, *Il.* 15.30, 19.133. At *Th.* 994–5 the phrase is used, evidently in a derivative fashion, of Pelias and Jason. At *Aspis* 94, however, 'the δαίμων' has forced out the king: the *Aspis* poet is consciously rewriting the standard epic formula in which Eurystheus consistently featured.

²³⁴ Cf. Danek (1998) 508.

²³⁵ Even if Nilsson (1932) 189–92 is right that 'the name [Herakles] is the *prius* and is not originally derived from the myth in order to characterize the hero', the fact remains that the association between Hera and Herakles was inescapable for the ancients: cf. Pi. fr. 291; Burkert (1985) 210.

be argued that Herakles here speaks of ‘the δαίμων’ in accordance with the convention that epic refers in this way to ‘the divine power that the mortal apprehends but cannot identify’;²³⁶ in this case, there would be nothing significant about Herakles’ failure to specify the agency of Hera. However, we have already seen that Herakles is able to recognise deities when they appear in the flesh (§II.4.ii). A god’s corporeal manifestation is not of course identical with his or her agency, and perhaps Herakles’ powers of perception are limited to physical recognition. But it is significant that Iolaos in his reply to Herakles (103ff.) is able to discern that it is specifically Zeus and Poseidon who are on Herakles’ side, just as Herakles had said that it was Zeus who took away the wits of Iphikles (89). Iolaos’ claim that Zeus and Poseidon are honouring Herakles resembles Athena’s later declaration of Zeus’ support (328–9): the mortal and the goddess make similar assertions about the divine, and they express them in similar terms (103 (Iolaos) ἦ μάλα δὴ τι πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε ~ 328 (Athena) νῦν δὲ Ζεύς). Whether or not the conjectures of Herakles or Iolaos are correct, what matters is that characters in the *Aspis* are not (as their Iliadic counterparts generally are) bound to speak of the activity of τὸ θεῖον in vague terms. To put it another way: if Herakles said that Hera was responsible for his sufferings, the audience would not complain that a character had exceeded the perceptual boundaries ordained by the poet for mortals in his poem. The poet has therefore suppressed the idea of Hera’s wrath, no doubt because the motif would ill suit his agenda to present Herakles as an ally of the gods.

There is, however, an apparent exception to this whitewashing of Herakles’ character: the *exemplum* at 359–67. The hero warns Kyknos that Ares will be of no help to him, since he has

²³⁶ West (2011) 308, cf. Burkert (1985) 180–1; further references in Hopkinson’s note on Call. *h.* 6.31–2.

already bested the god once before, at Pylos.²³⁷ Dione in her consolation of Aphrodite refers to Herakles' wounding of both Hera and Ares, probably on this very same occasion (*Il.* 5.392–404);²³⁸ this is the cue for the *Iliad's* most searing condemnation of Herakles (403–4), and it might seem inevitable that the same judgement would attach implicitly to the *Aspis's* reference to these events. In fact, however, the terms in which Herakles describes this past combat portray *Ares* as the violator of right. *Ares*, according to Herakles, was the aggressor (361 ἀντίος ἦλθε),²³⁹ and it is the god who was μάχης ἄμοτον μενεαίνων (361). According to the *Aspis*, *Ares* was wounded with a spear at close quarters (361–4); it could not have been a spear-cast, since Herakles stabbed *Ares* no fewer than four times with his spear. This at least allows for a situation in which Herakles was defending himself. Contrast the use of arrows against Hera and *Ares* in the *Iliad* passage, a detail which is certainly compatible with a pre-emptive—perhaps even gratuitous—attack by the hero. The *Aspis* paradigm obviously foreshadows the wounding of the god later in the poem (450ff.). There, in anger over *Kyknos's* death, *Ares* rushes at Herakles, who pierces his thigh (459–61). So too *Ares* had attacked *Diomedes* at *Il.* 5.851ff. (*Ares* initiates hostile contact), just after the extraordinary passage where, uniquely in the *Iliad*, a god is said to have killed a man (842; cf. *Aspis* 194n.). It is therefore hinted retrospectively that the scene at *Aspis* 359–67 is a reasonable response on

²³⁷ Whether or not this story originally referred to a struggle at the 'Gates of Death', the poet certainly intends 'Pylos' to mean the city, since he gives it the stock epithet ἡμαθόεις (360).

²³⁸ It is not certain whether it is the same occasion as when Herakles slew *Neleus's* sons (*Il.* 11.690–3, [Hes.] fr. 35); cf. Kirk (1990) 101–2. For Herakles threatening gods with violence cf. his confrontation of *Helios* and *Okeanos* in the *Geryon* episode ([Apollod.] 2.5.10; Diod. Sic. 4.17.1–25.1; Pherecyd. fr. 18a Fowler). Pindar, who mentions the hero of Thebes fighting *Poseidon*, *Apollo*, and *Hades* (O. 9.29–36), finds the idea unpalatable (ἀπό μοι λόγον ἢ τοῦτον, στόμα, ῥῖπον). The theomachic Herakles resurfaces in *Panyassis* (cf. n. 205).

²³⁹ Contrast 434, where Herakles ἀντίος ἔσθη Ἄρης; like the πάγος in the simile that follows, Herakles merely stood rooted in self-defence, braced for the attack of *Ares*.

the part of Herakles to an (implied) attack by the shrieking god of war, the out-of-control creature whom even Zeus despises (*Il.* 5.888ff.).

In §II.2.ii we saw how in this scene Ares behaves like a hybristic mortal, while Herakles plays the role of the god that puts the mortal in his place. This is also the case with Athena's warning to Ares not to overstep the mark (446ff.): a motif has been transferred from the mortal who would normally be the recipient of such a rebuke (*Il.* 5.436ff., 16.703ff.). Ares, however, does not obey Athena, and his ignominious defeat is therefore not offensive to the audience's proprieties, nor does it reflect negatively on Herakles. It is for this reason that Herakles studiously follows Athena's earlier instructions and does not try to surpass the limits she had previously set (336–7): she had told him not to attempt to seize Ares' horses or strip his body, and so he does not oppose Phobos and Deimos when they come to rescue their fallen master (462ff.).

III.2.iii. Dressing the part

In the *Aspis* Herakles is not dressed like Herakles: his panoply is instead that of the Homeric warrior. Xanthus, an obscure melic poet who lived sometime before Stesichorus, also apparently depicted Herakles in this way (*PMG* 699). The passage of Athenaeus from which this testimonium is derived claims that the dressing of Herakles ἐν ληιστοῦ σχήματι—i.e. in a lion skin, armed with a club and bow—was due to Stesichorus (fr. 281). This, if true, would mean that the *Aspis* poet simply did not know of a Herakles who wore anything other than Homeric armour. So too in early iconography Herakles does not have his club or lion

skin; their absence from Geometric art may, however, be merely a convention of the genre, since ‘Geometric art in general characterized the warrior in this manner’.²⁴⁰

In my view, however, our poet did know of Herakles ἐν ληιστοῦ σχήματι. First, there is the fact that another source ascribes the change in Herakles’ apparel to Pisander (fr. 1); this poet should perhaps be dated to the mid-seventh century, comfortably before the *Aspis*. Second, in Homer and in other early traditions Herakles is a bowman; if Megacledes overlooked this, the notion that he rigorously researched this question becomes weaker.²⁴¹ Moreover, Herakles’ analogues from the Near East are armed with club, bow, and lion skin; the Sumerian seals which depict a Herakles-like figure might even predate the coming of the Hellenic peoples to Greece.²⁴² When the *Märchen*-hero was transferred from the Near East (in the eighth century?), he will have come in costume. The *Aspis* poet therefore had open to him the option of equipping Herakles either as a Homeric warrior or with the more primal weaponry, and he chose the former precisely in order that he should have the opportunity to describe a richly decorated shield (§II.7.i). It may be added that, were mere ecphrasis the poet’s concern, he might have contented himself with describing another piece of the hero’s armour, such as his τελαμών (cf. *Od.* 11.609–14). But he wanted to rival the *Iliad*, and so he was obliged to dress Herakles as a Homeric warrior. As throughout his presentation of Herakles, then, we see the *Aspis* poet here making a conscious choice that furthers his literary aims.

²⁴⁰ Brommer (1986) 65.

²⁴¹ Cf. Davies–Finglass (2014) 568–70, who suggest that ‘it may be true that Stesichorus was the first poet to depict Heracles with all three accoutrements at once’.

²⁴² Burkert (1979a) 80–3.

III.3. *Nachleben*

III.3.i. The first decades

The *Aspis* enjoyed great popularity in the decades following its composition, particularly in Attica.²⁴³ The impact of the poem is shown principally by the evidence of art: the combat of Herakles and Kyknos is one of the most popular subjects on Attic pots of the sixth century.²⁴⁴ The relation of art to text is of course a question fraught with difficulty: painters have their own agendas and considerations and do not ‘paint poems’.²⁴⁵ Artists could also be responding to the tale as it appeared in a Cyclic poem (cf. n. 218) or to Stesichorus. In particular, Herakles is never (to my knowledge) depicted with a shield, an awkward fact for those seeking a close connection between art and the poem. Nonetheless, Shapiro has shown that many painters, and in particular Lydos (active in the late sixth century), show a special familiarity with the *Aspis*. One of the ways in which they demonstrate this is through the devices placed on Kyknos’ shield, which may reflect the circumstances of the poem. Thus Shapiro remarks, apropos of painters who do not depict Apollo as present at the combat, that they sometimes allude to the god’s involvement in other ways: ‘the tripod as a shield device, though not particularly rare in other scenes, occurs a disproportionately large number of times on Kyknos vases, once on both Kyknos’ and Ares’ shields’; this would allude to the Struggle for the Tripod, a story that is in many respects a counterpart to the Kyknomachy

²⁴³ Shapiro (1984*b*) suggests attractively that this localisation is due to the propaganda of the Peisistratid regime, which appropriated Herakles as a political symbol (cf. the works of Boardman cited in the bibliography; criticism in Osborne (1998) 253); the tailing off in the *Aspis*’s popularity at the end of the sixth century correlates with the demise of the tyrants. Davies–Finglass (2014) 2 seem unduly sceptical when they write, ‘both [the *Aspis*] and vases could be independent responses to a more general interest in the myth of Heracles’.

²⁴⁴ Vian (1945), updated by Shapiro (1984*a*); Zardini (2009) collects what she believes to be a complete catalogue, totalling some 166 items.

²⁴⁵ Cf. in general Snodgrass (1998), Shapiro (1994).

(§III.2.ii).²⁴⁶ Or the decoration of Herakles' shield in literature may be transferred to that of Kyknos in art: Ares and Kyknos often bear a shield decorated with a gorgoneion (cf. 144; 216–37) or dolphins (cf. 207–15);²⁴⁷ we also see snakes arising from Kyknos' shield (cf. 164–5). It is also probable that the boar–lion combat in the ecphrasis (168–77) is alluded to in representations of the Kyknomachy. (See Commentary on all these passages.) Such interactions provide welcome confirmation of the unity of the ecphrasis with the Kyknomachy from the earliest times (§II.7.i).

It was not only artists who were influenced by the poem. From the Hypothesis to the *Aspis* we learn that 'Stesichorus (fr. 168) says the poem is Hesiod's'. This statement has proved highly controversial: the most natural assumption is that this refers to Stesichorus the sixth-century lyric poet. Some scholars have supposed that the name is corrupt, or that a different Stesichorus was intended, or that Stesichorus cannot in any meaningful sense have attributed the poem to Hesiod.²⁴⁸ More likely, however, is the suggestion that Stesichorus in his *Kyknos* (fr. 166) censured the treatment of the Herakles–Kyknos myth in the *Aspis* for its impiety: in the *Aspis* Herakles wounds a god, whereas in Stesichorus' version Ares routed Herakles in their first encounter, and Kyknos was defeated only later, when his father was absent: not for Stesichorus a Herakles who could best the war-god.²⁴⁹ Stesichorus will have mentioned

²⁴⁶ Shapiro (1984*b*) 271.

²⁴⁷ Zardini (2009) nos. 37 (= *LIMC* 46; 550–525 BC), 42 (= *ARV* 63.89; 525–500), 156 (= *ABV* [361] 16 *bis* (p. 715); 510–500), with pp. 180–1.

²⁴⁸ The sceptical view was taken notably by Davison (1955); cf. Janko (1986) 41–2. Davies–Finglass (2014) 468–9 note that it is possible that 'the poem did not name Hesiod, and Stesichorus' views on the authorship of the *Aspis* have been illicitly inferred from a verbal echo or other irrelevant datum'.

²⁴⁹ The 'pious' version attested in Stesichorus and Pindar may represent the form of the myth before it came into the hands of the *Aspis* poet; Davies–Finglass (2014) 467, however, hold that '[t]he flight of Heracles is presumably a Stesichorean innovation' and note that 'if it is, Athena's intervention to check his flight must also be original'.

Hesiod's name in connection with the version of the myth he rejects, just as on another occasion (fr. 171) and for a similar reason he named his melic predecessor Xanthus.

III.3.ii. Literary legacy

Who read or was interested in the *Aspis* after the sixth century? Paley claimed that 'no Greek writer of the Attic period ever cites or alludes to the poem',²⁵⁰ a statement that is easily shown to be false. In his editio maior of the Hesiodic poems Rzach collected verbal echoes of the poems in later authors (mostly poetic); supplements to Rzach's lists have been produced by West.²⁵¹ Determining the validity of verbal allusions is not a straightforward matter: with the early material in particular, it is not always easy to know if we are simply faced with a traditional phrase that happens to be attested for the first time in the *Aspis*; with the later material, it can be hard to decide whether the allusions are directly to the *Aspis* or are instead 'window allusions' to the poem via the earlier receiving works: for instance, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Paulus Silentiarius each echo *Aspis* 270. It is mostly a matter of judgement on a case-by-case basis, and the reader with a serious interest in this question will have to follow up each case and determine its merits. (I have silently passed over a few of the weaker examples in earlier collections.) Nonetheless, echoes in later authors enable us to plot with some definiteness the fortunes of the poem, and occasionally they are of importance for textual matters (cf. e.g. 145n.). Note also that when authors demonstrate knowledge of vv. 1–56 they may of course be thinking of the *Catalogue* rather than the *Aspis*.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Paley xxii.

²⁵¹ West (1969), (1989).

²⁵² The view of Hunter (2005) 253 n. 51, that '[i]f Theocritus 24 alludes to the *Alcmene-choie* [...] this is presumably an allusion to the *Aspis* rather than to the fourth book of the *Catalogue*', is justified only because Theocritus' knowledge of the *Aspis* is otherwise demonstrable.

By combining the work of previous scholars and adding some fresh gleanings, we arrive at the following synoptic view:

Greek

1. Late Archaic, Classical

< *Aspis*

<i>Hymn to Hermes</i>	(i) 80, 440 (~ <i>h.</i> 7.34); (ii) 236.	(i) 165; (ii) 12.
Pindar	(i) <i>P.</i> 1.14; (ii) <i>O.</i> 10.44; (iii) <i>P.</i> 4.77; (iv) <i>P.</i> 9.64; (v) fr. 70b.26	(i) 207; (ii) 320; (iii) 380; (iv) 400 (= [Hes.] fr. 239.1); (v) 441
Parmenides	fr. 1.21 D-K	97
Empedocles	fr. 8.2 D-K	357
Aeschylus	<i>Pers.</i> 539	270
Sophocles	(i) <i>El.</i> 166; (ii) <i>Tr.</i> 990	(i) 270; (ii) 7
Euripides	(i) fr. 725g.18-27; (ii) fr. 911.2	(i) 1-3; (ii) 220
Antiphanes	fr. 192.1-2	213-15
Hermippus Com.	fr. 77.7-10 K-A	7-8
Aeschines	<i>In Timarchum</i> 49.4	260

2. Hellenistic

(Ps.-)Theocritus	<i>Id.</i> (i) 1.39-44; (ii) 22.216 (cf. A.R. 2.281); (iii) 23.2; (iv) 25.277	(i) 207-15; (ii) 249; (iii) 48-56; (iv) 427-8
Callimachus	(i) fr. 75.31; (ii) <i>h.</i> 4.60	(i) 142; (ii) 230
Apollonius Rhodius	<i>Passim</i> , ²⁵³ but esp.: (i) 1.64; (ii) 1.739; (iii) 4.679; (iv) 4.1437; (v) 4.1665	(i) 189; (ii) 228; (iii) 153; (iv) 142, 147; (v) 249
Euphorion	<i>SH</i> 415.ii.19 ²⁵⁴	19

²⁵³ Echoes may be traced through Campbell (1981).

²⁵⁴ The point is the rarity of the name Τηλεβόαι: cf. Mason (forthcoming *a*).

Moschus	1.47	211
Aratus	63	228
Nicander	<i>Al.</i> 612	236
<i>SH</i> adesp.	903.7	24
Anon. <i>CA</i>	p. 251 Powell, fr. 8	213–15
‘Simonides’	<i>ep.</i> 70 Page	331

3. Imperial

Archias	<i>AP</i> 15.51.3–5 = <i>Garl. Phil.</i> 3776–8	388–91
Dionysius Periegetes	259–60	47
<i>Anacreontea</i>	fr. 34.3 West	395
<i>Oracula Sibyllina</i>	(i) 3.546, 11.157; (ii) fr. 3.36 Rzach	(i) 357; (ii) 400 (= [Hes.] fr. 239.1)
Quintus Smyrnaeus	<i>Passim</i> , but esp.: (i) 1.159; (ii) 5.32–3; (iii) 5.25–34; (iv) 1.5; (v) 5.29; (vi) 6.231; (vii) 5.38–40; (viii) 6.200–2; (ix) 5.68, 5.42, 10.185; (x) 5.57–9; (xi) 3.377	(i) 148; (ii) 148; (iii) 154–60; (iv) 175; (v) 195; (vi) 228; (vii) 230–7; (viii) 233–6; (ix) 244; (x) 286–91; (xi) 290
(Ps.-)Oppian	(i) <i>Hal.</i> 1.694; (ii) <i>Cyn.</i> 2.328–9; (iii) <i>Cyn.</i> 2.430; (iv) <i>Cyn.</i> 2.549	(i) 42–5; (ii) 451; (iii) 153; (iv) 357
Manetho	2.372	385
Nonnus	<i>Passim</i> , but esp. <i>D.</i> (i) 3.130; (ii) 28.244; (iii) 38.292	(i) 220; (ii) 147; (iii) 199

4. Byzantine

Christodorus	298	220
Gregory of Nazianzus	<i>Carm.</i> 2.2.27.3–4	4–5
Eudocia	2.342 Ludwich	316

Paulus Silentarius	<i>AP</i> 5.226	270
Tzetzes	<i>Posthom.</i> 413	357

5. Uncertain date

Delphic oracle	<i>ap. Plu. Thes.</i> 3.5 = 110.1 Parke-Wormell	330
<i>Fragmenta Orphica</i>	340.6 Bernabé	255
<i>Orphic Lithica</i>	603 Halleux-Schamp	168
<i>Orphic Hymns</i>	(i) 69.9; (ii) 76.2	(i) 222; (ii) 206
<i>Orphic Argonautica</i>	(i) 522; (ii) 1111	(i) 320; (ii) 357
<i>Homeric Hymn</i> 8 (Ares)	1	441

Latin

Lucretius	5.33	236
Virgil	<i>Aen.</i> (i) 1.403–4; (ii) 5.87–8; (iii) 8.624; (iv) 8.671–4; (v) 12.332	(i) 7–8; (ii) 142; (iii) 166; (iv) 207; (v) 341–5
Horace	<i>Carm.</i> 3.2.6	242–3
Ovid	<i>Met.</i> (i) 3.33–4 (ii) 12.307; (iii) 13.685	(i) 144–6; (ii) 185; (iii) 270–2
<i>Ilias Latina</i>	891	258–63
Nemesianus	<i>Ecl.</i> 3.11 ²⁵⁵	292–3

Notable authors to whom the poem was available for quotation include ‘Apollodorus’ (*Bibl.* 2.38.3), ‘Longinus’ (*de subl.* 9.5), and Athenaeus (5.180d–e).

²⁵⁵ Cf. Schulze (1892) 274, Schwarz (1932) 67 n. 113.

This overview shows us that the *Aspis* was read continuously throughout antiquity and into the Byzantine period—and by authors whom we regard as canonical as well as those who are not mainstream. The *Aspis* also influenced ancient authors in more far-reaching ways. Space permits only a brief overview.

First, the text of the *Iliad* appears sometimes to have been corrupted by that of the *Aspis*:²⁵⁶

- 8.116/137. A small strand of the tradition has ἥνία φοινικόεντα for the usual σιγαλόεντα; West accepts the minority variant, commenting that it ‘is hard to account for unless it is original’, but concedes that ‘the poet’s motive for varying the epithet is obscure’.²⁵⁷ *Aspis* 95 is the only other occurrence of this formula in the epos; given what we have seen of the *Aspis* poet’s attitude toward the formulaic language (cf. esp. §II.6.iii), he is more likely to have varied the standard phrase than is the *Iliad* poet. ἥνία φοινικόεντα is known from the *Iliad* by the scholia to 16.159b, which shows that the corruption was widespread and, therefore, probably early.²⁵⁸
- 18.535–8 (cf. 156–60n.) is a very early interpolation which affected the entire tradition of the *Iliad*.

²⁵⁶ Allen (1924) 203–5 collects some instances where the tradition of the Homeric texts has been influenced by the Hesiodic poems; but he detects influence from the *Aspis* only at *Il.* 1.265 and 18.608a–d. His claim that the variant ἴστασο (for ἴσταο) at *Od.* 22.233 is due to *Aspis* 449 is weak.

²⁵⁷ West (2001) 201.

²⁵⁸ Note moreover that we need only explain the appearance of φοινικόεντα in the first of the two *Iliadic* passages 8.116/137, since in all but one of those mss. in which φοινικόεντα appears at 8.137, the word is a correction or γράφεται-variant for σιγαλόεντα. φοινικόεντα, then, is not original at 8.137, and the reason for its (very marginal) appearance there at all is that the phrase had occurred just twenty lines previously and a rhapsode or scribe, consciously or unconsciously, made 137 conform with a formula which occurred so very recently. Prior to 8.116 we have to look as far back as 5.328 to find ἥνία σιγαλόεντα, and the next occurrence of ἥνία σιγαλόεντα is as distant as 11.128: both of these were far enough away to escape the interference of a ‘corrector’ who had the *Iliad* 8 passages in mind. Note in this connection that whereas at 8.116 sch. A^{im} implies a lemma of φοινικόεντα, at 137 it implies σιγαλόεντα: in other words, the scholiast’s text had the reading φοινικόεντα only at 116, since someone had not brought 137 into conformity with 116 (cf. van der Valk (1963–4) ii. 579 n. 18).

- 18.550 ἐν δ' ἐτίθει τέμενος βασιλήϊον. Part of the tradition offers βαθυλήϊον or βαθὺ λήϊον.²⁵⁹ At neither *Il.* 2.147 ὥς δ' ὅτε κινήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήϊον ἐλθὼν nor 11.560 (donkey) κείρει τ' εἰσελθὼν βαθὺ λήϊον is there a possibility of misunderstanding the noun–epithet phrase as an adjective. At *Od.* 9.134 ἐν δ' ἄροσις λείη· μάλα κεν βαθὺ λήϊον αἰεὶ | εἰς ὥρας ἀμόωιεν, however, there is a theoretical possibility of taking βαθὺ λήϊον as a neuter adverb βαθυλήϊον. But a much easier misunderstanding could arise by a rhapsode's recollection of *Aspis* 288 αὐτὰρ ἔην βαθὺ λήϊον. Although this must be understood as an epithet–noun combination in the *Aspis*, a rhapsode who had forgotten its context might take ἔην not as 'there was' but as 'it was'. In this case, the rhapsode would interpret the sequence ΒΑΘΥΛΗΙΟΝ as an adjective. When reciting the *Iliad*, therefore, he might well substitute βαθυλήϊος for βασιλήϊος. This would be helped by the strong contextual similarity between the two scenes, since both occur in the agricultural portion of the shield–ecphrases.
- 18.608a–d. This corresponds to *Aspis* 207–15 (cf. ad loc.), but the corruption is of less moment since it is confined to the isolated Π₃₄.²⁶⁰
- 24.578. For ἐυξέστου δ' ἀπ' ἀπήνης there is a minority variant ἐυσσώτρου. ἐυσσώτρου has the support of two papyri, the T scholia, and a few manuscripts (in some it is a γράφεται–variant);²⁶¹ it occurs nowhere else in the epos besides *Aspis* 273, and in the *Aspis* there is no support for ἐυξέστου. The poet nowhere else has

²⁵⁹ Cf. Leumann (1950) 68 n. 35. There is support for βαθυλήϊος in the scholia; cf. van der Valk (1963–4) ii. 134–5. Some Hellenistic and later poets presuppose the reading (A.R. 1.830, *CA ep. adesp.* 4.18, *AP* 9.110.1).

²⁶⁰ For 'wild' papyri of Homer cf. S. West (1967), who in her discussion of Π₃₄ (pp. 132–6) is sceptical about certain inferences drawn from its testimony.

²⁶¹ Cf. van der Valk (1963–4) ii. 578.

cause to speak of chariots in this metrical context, so we cannot comment further on his choice between *ἑύσσωτρος* and *ἑύξεστος*. The situation is, therefore, similar to that at 8.116/137: either *ἑύσσωτρον* is original in the *Iliad* and the poet of the *Aspis* has preferred the rarer epithet in his own poem; or *ἑύσσωτρον* is a novelty on the part of the *Aspis* which has intruded into the *Iliad* in one place.²⁶² (As ever, the possibility of a non-extant common source must remain.) We might posit another breach of formular economy by the poet of the *Iliad* for no apparent semantic gain: compare the Iliadic doublets *ἑύξοον* (1×) and *ἑύτροχον ἄρμα* (2×). Or we should accept that the phrase is original in the *Aspis* and intrusive in the *Iliad*; it would be an example of the *Aspis*'s 'defamiliarising' approach to the formular language (§II.6.iii). As with *ἡνία φοινικέοντα*, this corruption will have taken place in antiquity, since *ἑύξέστου* is presupposed by the T scholia.

Another possible instance, *Aspis* 182 = *Il.* 1.265, is discussed in the Commentary.

These interferences with the *Iliad*'s text suggest that the *Aspis* was a part of more than one rhapsode's repertoire; the first corruption, however, could be merely scribal.

Some authors respond to the *Aspis* in a broad thematic way. There is a remote possibility that **Eugammon** was influenced by the *Aspis* (n. 347). We are on more solid ground with **Euripides**, in whose *Electra* (452–69) Achilles' shield is adorned with a scene of Perseus fleeing the Gorgons. This is in fact Achilles' *first* shield, which Patroklos lost to Hektor, and so the absence of any such scene from Hephaistos' decorations in *Iliad* 18 is not technically a

²⁶² It might be thought that the *Iliad*'s phraseology *ἑύσσωτρον δ' ἅπ' ἀπήνης*, without hiatus, should be considered prior to that of the *Aspis*, which has hiatus. However, in the *Odyssey* we find hiatus in *ἑύξέστου ἐπὶ δίφρου* and *ἑύξέστωι ἐπ' ἀπήνῃ*, and in the *Iliad* in *ἑύξέστωι ἐνὶ δίφρῳ* and *ἑύξέστωι ἐπὶ ῥυμῶι* (all verse-final, as at *Aspis* 273 and *Il.* 24.578). With such precedents—and especially with the *Odyssey*'s very similar *ἑύξέστου ἐπὶ δίφρου*—there is no reason to suppose that the hiatus in the *Aspis*'s *ἑύσσωτρον ἐπ' ἀπήνης* is due to formular modification of *Il.* 24.578.

problem.²⁶³ Nonetheless, the choice of theme is striking and is surely due to the influence of *Aspis* 216–37. **Apollonius Rhodius**, whom we know to have been a careful student of the *Aspis* (§II.5), employs a dense network of allusions in his ecphrasis of Jason’s cloak (1.721–67) in order to make a comment on Jason’s brand of heroics in the *Argonautica*.²⁶⁴ The *Aspis* also influenced the genre of ‘epyllion’: note in particular **Callimachus’** *Hecale* and even perhaps **Catullus** 64.²⁶⁵ **Virgil’s** shield for his protagonist (*Aen.* 8.626–728) is indebted to the *Aspis* more deeply than has traditionally been appreciated.²⁶⁶ But the most devoted reader of the *Aspis* is undoubtedly **Quintus Smyrnaeus** who, besides many verbal parallels, shows a considerable debt to the poem in his description of Achilles’ shield at 5.6–109. Moreover, Herakles’ belt and quiver, made by Hephaistos, are ‘contaminated’ with some of the decorations of the same hero’s Hesiodic shield: in particular, the quiver includes Perseus (10.195–8); compare Euripides’ transferral of the same motif to Achilles’ shield. Nor could the demons that throng Quintus’ Trojan plain have been spawned without the *Aspis*.

III.3.iii. Ancient scholarship

The earliest scholar we know to have written on the *Aspis* is the fourth-century Megacledes (cf. n. 109), who criticised the illogicality of Hephaistos’ having made armour for his mother’s enemy, Herakles. Scholarly activity is also attributable to Apollonius Rhodius, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Seleucus, Hieronymus, and Epaphroditus. The poem was well known to the grammarians: there are numerous quotations in the etymologica, and the poem is cited by the *Iliad* scholia (sch. A 18.100; cf. also 180n.). Aristophanes’ rejection of the *Aspis* apparently had only a limited effect on the activities of other scholars. Moreover Π₅₅, a fifth-

²⁶³ Cf. Hirschberger (2000) 66.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Mason (forthcoming a).

²⁶⁵ For Callimachus cf. Hollis (2009) 25; for Catullus cf. Konstan (1993).

²⁶⁶ Cf. Faber (2000), Heckenlively (2013).

century papyrus, shows points of contact with the scholia that survived into the medieval period, and the papyrus notes are of a sufficiently elementary nature to suggest that in late antiquity there was an audience for the *Aspis* beyond the learned elite (cf. n. 354). Our knowledge of the scholia—which, at least in their epitomised form, are much less abundant than those for the *Theogony* or *Works and Days*—remains imperfect, despite recent progress; a new edition from Martano is anticipated, to replace the hopelessly outdated work of Gaisford and Ranke. The scholia vetera contain traces of ancient learning and are sometimes essential for the constitution of the text (144n.).²⁶⁷ In the Roman period the *Aspis* was selected, along with the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, to form a triad—probably a convenient grouping for the purposes of book-production.²⁶⁸ The transferral of the *Aspis* from roll to codex ensured its survival (in around sixty medieval manuscripts) and enabled it to continue to find an audience. One such reader was the Palaeologan scholar John Pediasimus (Diaconus), who wrote notes on the *Aspis*; these are of very limited use for the modern interpreter.²⁶⁹ The poem's fortunes in post-Renaissance scholarship are discussed in §I.2.

The fact that Apollonius creatively reused the *Aspis* (§III.3.ii) suggests that he found it to be an engaging and valuable text. Other ancient critics were less enthusiastic.²⁷⁰ In an ancient commentary on Dionysius Thrax (*Proleg. Vossiana*, pp. 3.31–4.4.3 Hilgard; cf. Theod. Gramm. pp. 54.13–55.31 Goettling) it is implied that no one would read the *Aspis* were not the name of Hesiod attached to it. ‘Longinus’ (*de subl.* 9.5) refers to and quotes part of 264–70, yet he implicitly denigrates these verses. It is notable that these negative judgements are accompanied by some expression of doubt about the poem's authorship. In the *Heroicus*

²⁶⁷ Cf. Schultz (1910), (1913), as well as the works of Martano cited in the Bibliography.

²⁶⁸ Cf. West (1966) 51–2.

²⁶⁹ Pediasimus' contribution is assessed, and some passages of his text are emended, in Mason (2015).

²⁷⁰ There is a fuller survey in Heckenlively (2004) 27–41.

(692.32ff.) Philostratus censures ‘Hesiod’ for singing of the Gorgon ὑπτίως (‘carelessly’) τε καὶ οὐ ποιητικῶς (cf. 144n.), although he fails to explain his reasoning. It seems that by this stage, it had become fashionable to denigrate the *Aspis* as poor literature.

IV. THE SHIELD DESCRIPTION

The centrepiece of the *Aspis* (139–320) is the description of Herakles' shield. In the Commentary I treat vv. 139–237 in detail; here I examine the ecphrasis as a whole and on a macro-level.

IV.1. Methodology

The nature of ecphrasis has been a prominent concern in recent classical scholarship, and in relation to the *Aspis* we must address two particular methodological issues: (i) What does the shield ecphrasis describe? (ii) What is the relationship of the ecphrasis to its narrative context?

(i) Ecphrases purport to describe static works of art. But there is only a limited sense in which they can do this. In the first place, two people viewing the same image will not necessarily start at the same point of the image, nor are they bound to proceed in the same order. With a circular shield it might seem natural to begin in the centre and to work out towards the edges;²⁷¹ however, the choice of which image to focus on in the second tableau, or what aspects of it to describe, is arbitrary. Indeed, the *Iliad*—with the exception of the tableau of Okeanos, which runs round the rim—does not specify the spatial relationship of one image to the next. And how much need the poet describe? He is constantly inviting the audience to visualise something, and yet each person will have a different bank of mental resources on which to draw. It thus becomes problematic to regard any ecphrasis as a straightforward description of a work of art. In the second place, an ecphrasis may leave

²⁷¹ As in both the *Aspis* and *Iliad*, as well as in Nonnus (*D.* 25.385–412). By contrast, Euripides' description of Achilles' shield (*El.* 452–69) begins at the rim.

behind the restrictions of straightforward description and move into pure fantasy, in what Laird has termed ‘disobedient’ ecphrasis:

Obedient ecphrasis limits itself to the description of what can be consistently visualized. [...] *Disobedient* ecphrasis, on the other hand, breaks free from the discipline of the imagined object and offers less opportunity for it to be consistently visualized or translated adequately into an actual work of visual art.²⁷²

We, too, need to break free from the shackles of scholarship that is too narrowly concerned with the visual ‘reality’ of Herakles’ shield, turning instead towards literary considerations. Previous work on the *Aspis*’s shield description has largely been concerned with its relationship to *Realien*.²⁷³ It is of course important to be aware what artistic sources might have inspired the poet, and convincing connections have been drawn between sixth-century art and the images described in the *Aspis* (§I.1). But we must not go too far in seeking direct equivalences. The extreme position was taken by Studniczka, who argued that the poet was describing an actual shield; Myres also offered a ‘reconstruction’ of the shield, and the nineteenth-century master sculptor Ludwig von Schwanthaler went so far as to realise Herakles’ shield in bronze (much as Flaxman did for Achilles’ shield). The underlying assumption is that the poet had a real shield in front of him; he of course elaborated on what he saw, adding movement and life to the scenes. But the premise of such archaeological ‘reconstructions’ is false: the *Aspis* is a literary text, and its primary purpose and engagement with the audience are on a *literary* level. The poet was of course influenced by contemporary iconographical conventions, but that does not mean that he set out to describe a real shield.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Laird (1995) 19.

²⁷³ Notable are Schlichtegroll (1788); Welcker (1818); Müller [1834] (1873); Lehrs [1840] (1856); Studniczka (1896); Friedländer (1907) 108–20; Cook (1937); Myres (1941) (sometimes rather eccentric); Schneider-Herrmann (1954); Chiarini (2012). Further bibliography at Fittschen (1973) 18 n. 83.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Fittschen (1973) 4–5 (apropos of the Iliadic shield).

(ii) We move now to the second major methodological question: what is the ‘purpose’ of an ecphrasis? Undoubtedly sheer entertainment and poetic virtuosity are a significant consideration. But what contribution may we expect an ecphrasis to make to a text on a literary level? I agree with the majority of scholars in believing that an ancient audience would in general have sought to relate the content of an ecphrasis to the narrative context, rather than taking it as mere embellishment.²⁷⁵ There are two principal ways in which an ecphrasis may enhance the narrative: by reinforcing it with similarities or by complementing it with differences.²⁷⁶ The shield of Achilles is of the second type: the scenes crafted by Hephaistos function as a poignant contrast to the life of Achilles and emphasise the joys of peacetime against the narrative context of hateful war; hence, despite Achilles’ unquestioned status as the supreme warrior in the *Iliad*, only one-quarter of the ecphrasis is warlike in subject-matter. The shield of Herakles, however, is of the first (and far commoner) species of ecphrasis: its largely martial content fits with the hero’s character.

Since the ecphrasis formed part of the design of the *Aspis* from the outset (§II.2.i), we are required to read it as an organic part of the poem, not as a detachable intercalation. The majority of scholars have indeed accepted that an ecphrasis is original to the poem’s design. But they have not accepted the present ecphrasis as a unity: most scholarly energy on the ecphrasis has been directed towards questions of authorship and the distinguishing of the genuine from the spurious. Adopting the techniques of Analytical criticism, numerous studies have sought to unravel different compositional strands (cf. §I.2). There is no doubt that the poem contains some rhapsodic doublets (§II.7.ii). Such additions must, however, be distinguished from compositional layers and deliberate interpolations of new scenes. But a

²⁷⁵ Cf. Fowler (1991) 27–8.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Bartsch–Elsner (2007) for various theories of the purpose of ecphrasis.

sensitive analysis of the ecphrasis suggests that there is in fact just one primary author for 139–320, as we shall now see.²⁷⁷

IV.2. Content and Import

IV.2.i. Workmanship and Provenance

Herakles is not portrayed by the poet of the *Aspis* as brash or arrogant (§III.2.ii), but he is nonetheless a fearsome opponent: one need think only of the self-confidence with which he resolves to oppose Ares (95–101), the account of his previous victory over the god (359–67), and the effortless defeat of son and father in succession. The shield of the supreme hero of Greek mythology is therefore said to be unbreakable (139–40), a claim proved by its subsequent withstanding of Kyknos' spearcast (414–15). This reflects the notion that divinely made armour is invincible.²⁷⁸ But Achilles' shield is not fully invulnerable: in the passages cited in n. 278, the spears of Aineias and Asteropaios both succeed in partially penetrating Achilles' shield; Herakles' shield, however, seems to be completely invincible, as Kyknos' spear does not make the slightest dent. Partly this is a result of the differing attitudes of the poets of the *Iliad* and *Aspis* with regard to the magical (§II.5.iv). But the fact that Herakles' shield is unbreakable also serves to underscore his status as the supreme hero living in an age superior to that of the Trojan heroes (§II.4.ii). It also owes something to our poet's one-upmanship with regard to the *Iliad*, in which Herakles' human frailty is emphatically asserted by the chief hero of that poem (*Il.* 18.117–19): the superiority of Herakles' shield to Achilles',

²⁷⁷ Cf. esp. §IV.3.ii with n. 304; also 161 and 176 nn. For the unity of the poem cf. §II.7.i with n. 190.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *Il.* 20.259–68, 21.164–5 (both of Achilles' shield). It has been suspected the reason Apollo removes Patroklos' borrowed armour (*Il.* 16.791–804) is that this set of (Achilles') arms, too, was originally invulnerable: cf. Kakridis (1961).

and in particular the suggestion of its ‘immortality’, serves to counter the *Iliad*’s denigration of Herakles.

The supremacy of the shield is also due to its provenance: Hephaistos crafted the shield for Herakles, just as he does the shield of Achilles, and also Peleus’ dagger ([Hes.] fr. 209). But Herakles’ shield was made through the βουλαί of Zeus (318–19), whereas it is at the instigation of Thetis that Achilles’ armour is fashioned. The specification in the *Iliad* of Thetis is in accord with a well-established folktale pattern whereby a female figure connected with the hero procures arms for him at the beginning of his career;²⁷⁹ so too our poet makes Herakles’ breastplate a gift from Athena to the hero ὁππότε ἔμελλε | τὸ πρῶτον στονόεντας ἐφορμήσεσθαι ἀέθλους (124–7). The detail that Zeus is the god who commissioned Herakles’ shield is therefore unconventional, and it must be intended to make a particular point. First, it shows that Zeus backs his son in his heroic endeavours, and particularly in the defeat of Kyknos (cf. 103–4, 383–5). In addition, Herakles’ sword is an ἀρῆς ἀλκίηρ (128): the rare phrase echoes the description of Zeus begetting Herakles to be an ἀρῆς ἀλκίηρ (§II.7.i). Although the sword is not explicitly said to have been procured by Zeus, it is likely that this is the case, given that the greaves were also made by Hephaistos (123). Thus the idea that Zeus bestowed on his son—the ἀρῆς ἀλκίηρ whom he had begotten for the benefit of the world—an ἀρῆς ἀλκίηρ with which to carry out his mission, suggests the ‘cosmic’ purpose of the Kyknomachy (§III.2.ii). Second, the specification of Zeus as the god at whose instigation Herakles’ shield had been made establishes a parallel between the shield and the aegis, the armament of Zeus and Athena; this link is underscored by the presence of the Gorgon both on Herakles’ shield and on the aegis (cf. 144n.). So too the *Iliad* scholia judge

²⁷⁹ Cf. Davies (2007).

that by giving Agamemnon a shield decorated with a Gorgon (*Il.* 11.36–7)—an ἀσπίδα παραπλησίαν αἰγίδι—the poet approximates the king of Mycenae to the king of heaven.²⁸⁰

It is curious to note that Zeus' connection with Herakles' shield is not mentioned until *after* the ecphrasis; similarly, it is not until this passage that the poet tells us that Hephaistos was the shield's maker (318–20). Yet Hephaistos' craftsmanship is assumed throughout the ecphrasis (219, 244, 297, 313), and it had also been specified that Herakles' greaves had been fashioned by him (123). The information finally made explicit at 318–20 therefore comes as no great surprise, especially given the Iliadic parallel. But why the delay about the shield's provenance? Possibly for the sake of a climax: only at the end will the poet reveal that Herakles' shield was made at the behest of his father, the supreme god, at the forge of the divine smith.²⁸¹ More likely, however, is that the poet simply took this information for granted; we may appeal to the oral background of the poem, a context in which such obscurities would matter rather less than they may do to a modern critic (cf. n. 26). We should also note that Herakles' shield was a wonder to behold *even for Zeus*: here the poet again strives for one-upmanship over the *Iliad*, where Hephaistos promises to manufacture arms for Achilles οἷά τις αὖτε | ἀνθρώπων πολέων θαυμάσσειται, ὅς κεν ἴδῃται (18.466–7).

IV.2.ii. Animal warfare

Herakles' martial qualities are emphasised by the decoration on his shield, which is dominated by depictions of war and battle: no fewer than nine of the thirteen tableaux—accounting for about two-thirds of the total length of the ecphrasis—relate to combat and war. In particular, there is a focus on the terrible elemental powers associated with combat.

²⁸⁰ Sch. T *Il.* 11.36b; cf. Hardie (1985) 22–3.

²⁸¹ Cf. Solmsen (1965) 3 n. 4.

The most fully developed description is that of the Keres (248–57), but there are also abstractions such as Phobos (144) and Eris (148); nothing of this sort is found on the Iliadic shield, except in the passage now agreed to have been interpolated from the *Aspis*, 18.535–8 (cf. 156–60n.). There is also the combat between the boars and lions, where we see in strikingly humanised terms the savagery of war (cf. esp. 169, 176, with nn.); again, however, animal combat is not depicted on the shield of Achilles, and even in the *Iliad*'s city at war there is no hint of the emotional savagery that the poet of the *Aspis* attributes to these beasts.

Close parallels for the joint depiction of abstractions and bestial creatures are to be found in three Homeric ecphrases. The first is the belt of Herakles described in the *Nekyia* (*Od.* 11.609–12):

σμερδαλέος δέ οἱ ἀμφὶ περὶ στήθεσσιν ἄορτήρ
 χρύσεος ἦν τελαμών, ἵνα θέσκελα ἔργα τέτυκτο, 610
 ἄρκτοι τ' ἀγρότεροί τε σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες,
 ὕσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ' ἀνδροκτασίαι τε.

(611 ~ *Aspis* 177 σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες; 612 ~ *Aspis* 155 Φόνος τ' Ἀνδροκτασίη τε.) The second parallel is the little expansions interspersed throughout the description of Agamemnon's arming at *Il.* 11.16–46, where the king's breastplate is said to feature coloured serpents; his shield to be decorated with the Gorgon, Deimos, and Phobos; and his belt to depict a three-headed snake. All of the motifs on Agamemnon's armour are found on Herakles' shield; Deimos and Phobos indeed appear in both the Hesiodic ecphrasis (195–6) and narrative (463–6). The third point of overlap is the aegis (*Il.* 5.738–42), which is crowned with Phobos and depicts Eris, Alke, Io, and the Gorgon.

In these Homeric passages the terrifying aspect of the warrior in question is emphasised: the description of Herakles' belt follows a succinct portrait of him as a terrifying shade; Agamemnon's arming scene precedes his *aristeia*; and Athena takes up the aegis just before

re-entering the fray to help wound Ares. These parallels therefore reinforce the fashioning of the hero of the *Aspis* into an unambiguously martial figure. They also show us that Achilles' shield is peculiar in its ornamentation: the archaeological evidence proves that whereas snaky devices, boars, and lions are common on archaic weaponry,²⁸² depictions of agricultural life are not; farming is found, albeit rather rarely, on vases and bowls, but never (to my knowledge) on weaponry.²⁸³ The decorative motifs that the *Aspis* adds to what the *Iliad* had bequeathed are all motifs that—in subject-matter if not in presentation—are probable for real-life archaic shields. Thus we see that Achilles' shield functions largely as an item of poetic symbolism, whereas Herakles' shield stays closer to archaeological reality. The only exception to this rule is the three tableaux—the city at war, the city at peace, and Okeanos—with which the *Aspis* closes, each of which engages closely with the *Iliad* (§IV.5) and is unlikely to be independently inspired by contemporary iconography. Herakles' shield, then, corresponds both to his own character and to the decoration of sixth-century weaponry. Such a correspondence lacks the subtlety and poignancy that characterises the ornamentation of Achilles' shield, but in a narrow sense the *Aspis* is more 'logical'.

IV.2.iii. Mythographical allusion

The Shield of Achilles contains no specifically identifiable figures or localities, except the brief mention of Ares and Athena (*Il.* 18.516–19): it is concerned with timeless activity. This is not the case with the shield of Herakles, on which we find a battle between Lapiths and Centaurs (178–90), tableaux of the gods (191–206), the figure of Perseus (216–37), and a

²⁸² Cf. 144, 168–77 nn.; also Lorimer (1929) 151.

²⁸³ Cf. Fittschen (1973) 11–15, esp. 13, 'bäuerliche Themen begegnen in der minoisch-mykenischen wie auch in der frühgriechischen Kunst sehr selten'.

probable reference to Thebes (270–2). These specifications both add to the texture of the poem and reflect the origins of the *Aspis*.

At 178–90 the poet describes the combat of the **Lapiths and Centaurs**. This conflict mirrors the action of the *Aspis*: the audience is invited to draw a structural parallel between the civilised Lapiths and Herakles on the one hand, and the uncouth Centaurs and Kyknos/Ares on the other. Throughout the poem Herakles is presented as a hero who upholds order (§III.2.ii), and Kyknos, the ambusher of pilgrims (479–80), is relegated along with his father to the sub-human plane (§II.2.ii). Herakles himself is said to have clashed with the Centaurs: there is evidence in seventh-century art for Herakles' wounding of Nessos, and the Pholos story is attested iconographically as early as 590–580 and featured on the Chest of Kypselos (Paus. 5.19.9); it was known to Stesichorus (fr. 22). Another parallel with the situation is that the Lapiths, under Peirithoos' son Polypoites, chased the Centaurs away from the region around Mt Pelion (*Il.* 2.742–4): so too Herakles displaces Kyknos from his base in the region of Pagasae, a place whose geographical proximity to Pelion is made explicit by the poet (380–1 ≈ 474–5).²⁸⁴

Moreover, in the Pholos story, as well as in the tale of Peirithoos' wedding which provides the context for *Aspis* 178–90, the underlying cause for the Centaurs' violence is wine. In other early literature, and still in Panyassis and Euripides, Herakles is the wine-loving feast-goer, whereas in the *Aspis* he is more serious and dignified, shunning such worldly pleasures (§III.2.ii). An appetite for feasting is not inherently incompatible with martial valour.²⁸⁵ But

²⁸⁴ Conversely, in order to further Dorian interests Herakles once did battle *against* the Lapiths, according to the (sixth-century?) *Aigimios* ([Hes.] fr. 294–301; cf. Huxley (1969) 107–10, Schwartz (1960) 261–4). It is not clear whether this tale was known to our poet; and in any case, not all stories known to the poet need be simultaneously 'activated'; and since the Centaurs played no part in this story, the connection is rather weak.

²⁸⁵ Cf. [Hes.] fr. 206; West (2007a) 458.

in the context of the *Aspis*'s consistently positive presentation of Herakles, it is no accident that Herakles' struggle against Kyknos is compared to one between temperate feasters and their drunken foes, especially given Herakles' earlier comment that the feast is much dearer than war to Ares and Kyknos (113–14).²⁸⁶

At the centre of the ecphrasis comes the lengthy description of **Perseus pursued by the Gorgons**, one of whom he has slain (216–37). There is a strong connection between Perseus and Herakles. First, Perseus is the great-grandfather of Herakles: Perseus is father of Elektryon, himself father of Alkmene. Moreover, Perseus and Herakles are both sons of Zeus through a clandestine union: Zeus had to infiltrate the tower in which Danae was imprisoned, just as he had to disguise himself in order to fool Alkmene; this story is clearly alluded to in the *Alkmene-ehoie*, and it is in order to reinforce this connection that Athena addresses Herakles and Iolaos with the words χαίρετε, Λυγκῆος γενεῇ τηλεκλειτοῖο (327), Lynkeus being the great-great-grandfather of Perseus; this is a further link between the ecphrasis and the narrative.²⁸⁷ But it is not just that Perseus is Herakles' ancestor: 'Apollodorus' (2.4.5) says that it would be the next male in a given generation to be born of *the clan of Perseus* who would reign over Mycenae. If we can take this detail back to the time of the *Aspis* (at *Il.* 19.105 Zeus says merely that the next child born 'from his blood' will be supreme), Perseus on Herakles' shield legitimates Herakles' claim to supremacy.

Furthermore, Perseus is the monster-slayer *par excellence*, and his two main foes—Gorgons and the sea-monster—are anguine; Herakles, too, is famed for his victories over serpentine

²⁸⁶ On the ambiguous nature of wine cf. also *Aspis* 400 (perhaps interpolated, cf. n. 100). In the trivial outlook of Alcaeus (fr. 335) wine is the best φάρμακον for everything.

²⁸⁷ Compare from the *Telegony* the decoration of the krater given by Polyxenos to Odysseus, which depicted the tale of the donor's grandfather Augeas (cf. West (2013) 294). In Quintus Smyrnaeus (6.273–82) the shield of Eurypylos, grandson of Herakles, includes a scene of Herakles fighting the Centaurs on the occasion of his entertainment by Pholos. Both items are the subject of an ecphrasis.

monsters (161–7n.). Like Herakles, Perseus enjoyed the patronage of Athena.²⁸⁸ Moreover, according to Pherecydes (fr. 11 Fowler), Athena appropriated the Gorgon's head and mounted it on her aegis (cf. *Il.* 5.741–2);²⁸⁹ given the connections drawn by the poet between Herakles' shield and the aegis (144n.), yet another link is established between Herakles and his ancestor.²⁹⁰ Some scholars have seen Perseus' triumph over the Gorgons as a triumph over death;²⁹¹ although their arguments cannot be taken as certain, it is nonetheless suggestive that Herakles was credited with such an exploit (at least from the sixth century: cf. the discussion of Apollo and the divine choir below), and the *Aspis* poet may have been attracted by the paradigm of Perseus for this additional reason. Lastly, Hirschberger has pointed to an analogy between the din raised by the Gorgons (231–3) and the disturbance caused by Ares and Kyknos (61–5); she also sees it as significant that, just as Perseus can achieve only partial victory over the Gorgons since Medusa alone is mortal, so too Herakles cannot definitively defeat the god Ares.²⁹² Neither point of contact is particularly strong, but both are worthy of consideration.

What of Apollo and the divine choir? At 191–206n. I suggest that this tableau reminds us of the more peaceable side of heaven and is suitable because it concerns Apollo, a god intimately involved in the action of the *Aspis*. It may also allude to Herakles' translation to Olympus. This was the reward for accomplishing his grim labours, of which the Kyknomachy is just one. Apollo and his choir would serve as a hint of the joys that Herakles

²⁸⁸ Hermes also aids Perseus, but only from the sixth century onwards, cf. *EGM* ii. 253.

²⁸⁹ Though a different explanation is offered by Euripides (*Ion* 989–96), cf. *EGM* ii. 255.

²⁹⁰ Aeschylus (fr. 262) also had Hephaistos make the harpe with which Perseus decapitates Medusa: the possession of Hephaistos-made armour would be another point of contact between Herakles and Perseus. But this detail is perhaps an innovation on Aeschylus' part, cf. Ogden (2008) 42–3, *EGM* ii. 254 n. 50.

²⁹¹ Cf. Ogden (2008) 50, with references.

²⁹² Hirschberger (2000) 62.

was one day to enjoy in contrast with his current toils (cf. 94 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ δαίμων χαλεποὺς ἐπετέλλετ' ἄεθλους). However, it is uncertain exactly when the divinity of Herakles became established:²⁹³ the earliest iconographical attestation is dated to 550–530, and the *Aspis* may precede the development. On the other hand, the idea of Herakles' conquering death seems integral to his story: besides the fight 'at the gate, among the corpses' (cf. n. 237), note his battle with Periklymenos ([Hes.] fr. 33–5), whose name is one of the many euphemisms for the god of death (cf. Hsch. π 1736).²⁹⁴ Moreover, there are references to Herakles' divinity in the *Catalogue* (fr. 25.26–33), in the *Theogony* (950–5; usually taken to be post-Hesiodic), and in what is usually held to be a later addition to the *Odyssey* (11.601–4). The most important of these for us is the passage of the *Catalogue*: if the verses are genuine there (cf. n. 114), we can affirm that, since the *Catalogue* is a unity and our poet knew the *Alkmene-choie* (§§II.5, II.7.i), this piece of mythology was known to the poet of the *Aspis*. If the poet of the *Aspis* did not know of Herakles on Olympus, the tableau nonetheless asserts the presence of Apollo in the poem.

Two other sections of the ecphrasis relate to the poem in a wider context. First, there is the **City at Peace**. The *Iliad* gives us no general information about the city, but in the *Aspis*'s counterpart the poet says χρύσειαι δέ μιν εἶχον ὑπερθυρίοις ἀραρυῖαι | ἐπτὰ πύλαι (271–2).²⁹⁵ As has long been recognised, this must be an allusion to Thebes, and it supports the theory of the poem's Boeotian origin (n. 4). The reference to boxers and athletes is particularly appropriate, since Herakles (and Iolaos) were their patrons. Moreover, it has been suggested that through the word ἄεθλον (305, 311) the charioteers' toil is likened to that of

²⁹³ Cf. West (1985) 169.

²⁹⁴ Burkert (1979a) 86 compares his titles Klymenos and Euklees.

²⁹⁵ The text should perhaps be emended to: ἐπτὰ δέ μιν πύλαι εἶχον ὑπερθυρίοις ἀραρυῖαι | χρύσειαι, since in comparable passages the poet mentions the material in verse-initial position in the verse *following* the noun (cf. 192, 220, 225, 226, 243(?), 313); contrast 222 (cf. ad loc.).

Herakles. ‘Throughout the *Shield*, the poet extols and, implicitly, asks us to emulate Herakles’ works on earth.’²⁹⁶

Hephaistos encircles Achilles’ shield with a plain depiction of **Okeanos**, but in the case of Herakles he opts for something more elaborate:

ἀμφὶ δ’ ἵτυν ῥέεν Ὠκεανὸς πλήθοντι ἑοικώς,
 πᾶν δὲ συνεῖχε σάκος πολυδαίδαλον· οἱ δὲ κατ’ αὐτόν
 κύκνοι ἀερσιπύται μεγάλ’ ἦπυον, οἳ ῥά τε πολλοί
 νῆχον ἐπ’ ἄκρον ὕδωρ· παρὰ δ’ ἰχθύες ἐκλονέοντο·

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Some scholars have thought that the only purpose of this addition was to ‘improve upon’ the *Iliad*’s unadorned Okeanos.²⁹⁷ However, the κύκνοι are surely significant. Swans are the birds of Apollo, on whose behalf Herakles is fighting against Kyknos. Kyknos himself also of course bears this avian name; but the connection between Kyknos and the sacred birds of Apollo is a separate matter and cannot be discussed further here.²⁹⁸

IV.3. Structure and Arrangement

IV.3.i. Adapting the *Iliad*

Many modern interpretations of the shield of Achilles have distorted the reality of the poet’s composition by imposing their own headings and groupings on the text. Scholars often group the scenes relating to the farmer’s year (C–E) under that broad title, although there is in fact no statement such as ‘And then Hephaistos depicted a series of agricultural activities’; rather, each of the three activities of ploughing, reaping, and vintage is introduced in the manner we expect for a new tableau. The same is true for E, and again ‘Animals’ is a modern label created by scholars privileging their own sense of order over the poet’s own

²⁹⁶ Galinsky (1972) 18.

²⁹⁷ E.g. van der Valk (1969) 432.

²⁹⁸ On this question cf. Zardini (2009) 53–81; on Apollo and swans, Ahl (1982).

structural markers. This is not to deny thematic progression and intentional patterning in the *Iliad*. But thematic coherence does not equate to structure. The schemata below therefore privilege the structural pointers employed by the poets. In the shield of Achilles, capital roman letters denote what we shall call ‘tableaux’—that is, ‘Level 1’ structural units—and lower-case Greek letters refer to ‘scenes’, i.e. ‘Level 2’ units. In the shield of Herakles, roman numerals are used for tableaux, lower case roman letters for scenes.

The Shield of Achilles

- A. 483–9 Cosmos (ἐν ... ἔτευξε)
- B. 490–508 Two cities (ἐν ... ποίησε)
 - Bα. 491–6 City at peace: Marriage (ἐν τῇ μὲν ... ἔσαν)
 - Bβ. 497–508 City at peace: Legal process (λαοὶ δ’ εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν)
 - Bγ. 509–40 City at war (τὴν δ’ ἑτέραν πόλιν ἀμφὶ ... ἦατο)
- C. 541–50 Ploughing (ἐν δ’ ἐτίθει)
- D. 550–60 Reaping (ἐν δ’ ἐτίθει)
- E. 561–72 Vintage (ἐν δ’ ἐτίθει)
- F. 573–86 Cattle and lions (ἐν ... ποίησε)
- G. 587–9 Sheep (ἐν ... ποίησε)
- H. 590–606 The dance (ἐν ... ποίκιλλε)
- I. 607–8 Okeanos (ἐν δ’ ἐτίθει)

The Shield of Herakles

- I. 144–53 Phobos and Eris (ἐν μέσσωι δ' ἔην)
- II. 154–60 Abstractions of War (ἐν ... ἐτέτυκτο)
- III. 161–7 Twelve serpents' heads (ἐν ... ἔσαν)
- IV. 168–77 Boars and Lions (ἐν ... ἔσαν)
- V. 178–90 Lapiths and Centaurs (ἐν ... ἦν)
- VI. 191–6 Ares with horses, ready for combat (ἐν ... ἔστασαν)
- VII. 197–200 Athena ready for combat (ἐν sc. ἦν)
- VIII. 201–6 Divine choir (ἐν ... ἦν)
- IX. 207–15 Harbour (ἐν ... ἐτέτυκτο)
- X. 216–37a Perseus and the Gorgons (ἐν ... ἦν)
- XI. 237b–270a City at war (οἱ δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτέων ... ἐμαρνάσθην)
- XII. 270b–313 City at peace (παρὰ δ' ... πόλις)
 - a. 272–85a Wedding procession (τοὶ δ' ἄνδρες ... τέρψιν ἔχον)
 - b. 285b–286a Horse riding (τοὶ δ' αὖ ... ἐθύνεον)
 - c. 286b–288a Ploughing (οἱ δ' ... ἥρεικον)
 - d. 288b–291 Reaping (αὐτὰρ ἔην)
 - e. 292–301a Vintage (οἱ δ' ἄρ' ... δέον)
 - f. 301b–302a Athletics (οἱ δὲ μάχοντο)
 - g. 302b–304 Hunting (τοὶ δ' ... ἥϊρεον)
 - h. 305–13 Chariot race (παρὰ δ' αὐτοῖς ... ἔχον)
- XIII. 314–17 Okeanos (ἀμφὶ ... ῥέεν)

The *Iliad* shows Achilles' shield in the process of being made, whereas the *Aspis* (in common with all subsequent such ecphrases) presents the object as a completed artefact. Hence the introductory formulae differ in each case: in the *Iliad* a section is prefaced by ἐν + aorist or imperfect of a verb of manufacture, with Hephaistos as the subject (483, 490, 541, 550, 561, 573, 587, 590, 607); a new tableau normally begins only when ἐν δ' ἐτίθει or the like is found, not if there is just an indicative verb describing what the people depicted on the shield were doing (this is used for giving further details within the same tableau). Thus Bα and Bβ are certainly to be understood as occurring in the same city, and the narrative continues without saying that Hephaistos crafted a new section. The exception is Bγ, which must be a separate city (cf. 509 τὴν δ' ἑτέρην), although this section is not introduced in such a way as to mark it as a distinct tableau. Bγ is nonetheless intimately linked with the scenes of the city at peace, and the poetic point of this close linking is to emphasise the contrast between the two cities.

It is otherwise with the shield of Herakles. At first we find ἐν + imperfect of the verb 'to be' (161, 168, 178, (197), 201, 216) or else ἐν + pluperfect passive of a verb of manufacture (154, 207). After the tableau of Perseus pursued by the Gorgons, however, this changes: past-tense narrative verbs are used (237b), spatial relationships of one group to another are emphasised (237b, 270b, 305, 313; cf. 248 τὰ δὲ μετ' αὐτούς, 264 παρ δ' εἰστήκει), and we find abrupt mid-line transitions to new tableaux and scenes (237b, 270b, 285b, 286b, 288b, 301b, 302b). What is the reason for this difference? Tableaux XI–XIII—i.e. those that are *not* introduced with ἐν + 'to be' or ἐν ... ἐτέτυκτο—all have a counterpart in the Shield of Achilles (B–E), whereas I–X are not paralleled by anything in the *Iliad*.²⁹⁹ The non-Iliadic (139–237a)

²⁹⁹ We discount *Il.* 18.535–8, an interpolation from the *Aspis* (cf. 156–60n.); and F and IV can hardly be compared, since the power-relations between the animals are so different.

and the Iliadic portions (237b–317) are thus formally distinguished from one another, and the difference in introductory formulae may serve as a means for the poet to signal his shift in source material (i.e. from art to literature); alternatively, it could suggest multiple authorship.³⁰⁰ Yet it should be noted that some of the ‘new’ features in the Iliadic portion are found already in the non-Iliadic: the ecphrasis begins with ἐν μέσσωι (144), and the Ares tableau is introduced with ἐν ... ἔστασαν (191) (but see next paragraph).

How, especially in the Iliadic portion, can we be sure when a new tableau begins? Subject-matter must be our guide. It is unthinkable, for example, that the poet meant us to imagine the divine choir (VIII) and the harbour (IX) as in any way linked. Nor does the city at war (XI) have anything to do with the previous image of Perseus: it is timeless war waged by nameless combatants. Yet, according to the Iliadic practice at any rate, the introductory formula should mean that the city at war is a scene within the Perseus tableau. In most cases, the poet gives a clear structural marker by means of the introductory formulae: this is true for I–V and VIII–X, which are obviously all self-contained scenes. One might also assume that Ares (VI) and Athena (VII) are both imagined as distinct tableaux. However, ἐν δ’ ἔστασαν (191) gives cause for doubt. For when in the *Iliad* a scene is introduced by this sort of link, the poet is continuing the narrative *within* a tableau (e.g. Βα). Some scholars have duly involved Ares and Athena with the preceding scene, the combat of the Lapiths and Centaurs, adducing in support *Il.* 18.516: the defenders of the besieged city sallied forth, ἦρχε δ’ ἄρά σφιν Ἄρης καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη. But the phrase that opens VII must be understood as an introductory formula exactly like those used for I, III–V, VIII, and X (for omission of ἦν cf. 197n.): it

³⁰⁰ Cf. van Groningen (1958) 118; Lehrs [1840] (1856) 243–4 counted as spurious all that followed Perseus. The non-Iliadic portion has a closer connection to archaic art, and a ‘real shield’ can be posited only for the non-Iliadic scenes (Fittschen (1973) 19). The same rounding-off technique is found in both the non-Homeric and the Homeric portions of the ecphrasis, a probable indication of unity of authorship (§II.1.v).

introduces a distinct tableau. Ares must be free-standing too, otherwise the symmetrical juxtaposition of the two gods—wholly in character for our poet (§II.1.vi)—is undermined. Moreover, the statement that Deimos and Phobos stood *ἰέμενοι πόλεμον καταδύμενοι ἀνδρῶν* does not accord with a battle between Lapiths *and Centaurs* (cf. 196n.). I conclude, then, that Ares and Athena are both imagined by the poet as separate tableaux, divorced in narrative terms from the preceding battle of Lapiths and Centaurs and also from each other. Cf. also §III.1 with n. 206.

Similar to the mid-line transition at 237b is that at 270b which moves us from Akhnys³⁰¹ to the city at peace: *παρὰ δ' εὖπυργος πόλις ἀνδρῶν*. This is like the transition between the two cities on the Iliadic shield (Bγ). I have suggested above that in the *Iliad* this anomaly encourages the audience to contrast the two cities more closely; the poet of the *Aspis* may be imitating this transitional device from its one Iliadic counterpart. But by the analogy of the transition found in 237, it is legitimate to regard the *Aspis*'s city at peace as a separate tableau from its city at war. In this case, we can conclude that the poet of the *Aspis* did not feel as bound as did the *Iliad* poet formally to introduce each new tableau of the ecphrasis with a verse-initial *ἐν ... ἔην* or *ἐν ... ἐτέτυκτο* formula. Instead, the *Aspis* poet is content to describe different tableaux and scenes in spatial relation to one another, without always having recourse to 'And on the shield there was...'; and in XI–XIII he is satisfied with 'And next to this...'.³⁰¹

How in structural terms does the *Aspis* adapt the Iliadic shield? In Homer the sequence is city at peace > city at war, whereas in the *Aspis* it is city at war > city at peace. This must be a deliberate alteration. But it is not merely wilful departure from precedent. In the *Iliad*, the

³⁰¹ For the reading cf. n. 52.

city at war is followed by agricultural vignettes, each of which is structurally a new tableau. In the *Aspis*, however, it is the city *at peace* that is followed by portrayals of agricultural life. As shown above, these depictions are formally ‘scenes’, that is, depictions subordinate to the overarching tableau of the city at peace. Depictions of peacetime activities of course belong in a city at peace. In the *Iliad*’s city at peace, the poet describes only two scenes: a marriage procession and a trial. But it is only in a peacetime setting that agriculture can be attended to; hence, to the mind of the poet of the *Aspis*, it seems more logical to describe all the peacetime activities in the context of the city at peace. Thus our poet combines B α - β with C-E so as to form a continuous sequence. The *Iliad*’s trial-scene is dispensed with and extra scenes are added, but we can see clearly the process of transformation and re-ordering.

IV.3.ii. Thematic progression

As mentioned above, the Iliadic Shield is structured with an eye for symmetry. Is there any logic to the ordering of the various sections of the *Aspis*’s ecphrasis? According to one scholar, ‘il est impossible d’y découvrir une intention d’arrangement plus ou moins systématique: animaux, héros, dieux, hommes, nature, se suivent sans qu’on sache pourquoi.’³⁰² Let us examine the progression of scenes in closer detail. We begin with elemental forces of terror and battle (I-II): Phobos (cf. 144n.), Eris, Advance, Backtrack, Battle-Cry, and perhaps also Slaughter, Manslaying, and Ker (154-60n.). Next come the twelve serpents (III), creatures halfway between elemental forces and animals: on one hand, like Phobos³⁰³ at 149, they terrify mortals (162), but on the other, they are described in such detail as to suggest actual snakes (esp. 166-7). Thus III may be seen as a transitional tableau. We progress into fully animal territory with the boars and lions (IV), who are warring

³⁰² Van Groningen (1958) 117.

³⁰³ Rather than Eris; see 149n.

among themselves: no mention here of elemental forces, nor of the terror which the creatures strike into the hearts of humans. With the Lapiths and Centaurs (V) we come yet closer to the world of human experience: the Lapiths are fully human, their foes half-human. Tableaux I–V thus represent an upward progression on the monster–man spectrum.

At this point this progression is halted; if this sequence were continuing to a climax of war among men, we would expect the city at war to be described next. Instead this is reserved for later—an indication, surely, that the poet had planned the structure of the ecphrasis from the outset,³⁰⁴ and that what follows 237 is the work of the same composer as what precedes it. Instead the poet depicts Ares and Athena in martial aspect (VI–VII). These two deities feature in the ecphrasis in order to foreshadow their role in the subsequent narrative, but their appearance here rather than anywhere else does not seem to be calculated to produce a particular effect. However, the positioning of the divine choir (VIII) was surely influenced by the preceding tableaux of Ares and Athena: the poet juxtaposes the warring gods with the more peaceable side of heaven (cf. 191–206n.). Furthermore, Apollo, the god who (after Ares and Athena) is most concerned with the events of the Kyknomachy, also appears in VIII. Thus VI–VIII form a coherent triad designed to associate ecphrastically all the gods who are concerned with the main narrative of the poem. (Zeus does not feature in the ecphrasis, despite his presence at 103–4 and 383–5.)

Perseus, who functions as a paradigm for Herakles (§IV.2.iii), is placed at the very centre of the ecphrasis, a position which highlights his importance. After Perseus, we finish the ecphrasis with a series of descriptions which have parallels in the *Iliad* but which have been

³⁰⁴ Van der Valk (1966) 460, ‘le poète a voulu éviter la répétition du même sujet, faisant en cela preuve de goût’. Similarly, the absence of a χορός in the *Aspis*’s City at Peace is best explained by the fact that the poet did not wish to duplicate his earlier dance in heaven (VII) (Friedländer (1907) 111). Van Groningen (1958) 118 n. 2 wonders either whether a Homeric rhapsode inserted the Cretan choir (*Il.* 18.590–606) in response to *Aspis* 207–15, or whether the Hesiodic passage is interpolated.

reordered into what our poet perceives as a more logical grouping. As already noted, it is only XI–XIII that are paralleled on the shield of Achilles. It is surely no accident that they are kept together in the *Aspis*. But why do they occupy the final position? Perhaps because Okeanos had to be the final tableau, since—as the Greeks believed it did in real life—it here encircles everything. If Okeanos was to come last, then the other Iliadic scenes had to precede it immediately. The poet’s hand may to a degree have been forced. In view of this, we can return to the question of the placement of VI–VIII. The reason for their position may be simply that there was nowhere else suitable for these tableaux. At the outset the poet wishes to focus on the terrifying, martial side of Herakles’ shield; he also wants Perseus in the centre; and, since Okeanos must conclude the ecphrasis and the poet has determined to keep the Iliadic scenes together, there is in the end nowhere else for VI–VIII. This may seem reductionist, but we must imagine ourselves as the poet of the *Aspis* and ponder the technicalities with which he had to grapple.

IV.4. Narrating and Describing

It was argued in §IV.3.i that Ares and Athena are not to be linked with the preceding combat of Lapiths and Centaurs; they are conceived of as independent tableaux. The ecphrastic appearance of the gods complements their actions in the narrative itself. Indeed, our poet has troubled himself to devise close correspondences. First the poet introduces the horses of Ares (191–2). Horses of Ares are mentioned elsewhere in early epic (cf. ad loc.) but are by no means an invariable attribute of the god: Ares very often falls in with the infantry. However, there had been great emphasis on the god’s horses at *Aspis* 61–5, and the horses play an essential role in conveying the wounded Ares back to Olympus at the end of the poem (463–6). In that scene it is Deimos and Phobos who drive the chariot, just as in the

ecphrasis they stand in attendance on his team. Again, although Deimos and Phobos appear in the *Iliad* as Ares' charioteers (195–6n.), they could very well have been omitted from this visual description of Ares without detriment. However, since these minor deities are an essential part of the *Aspis*'s narrative, the poet mentions them here in the ecphrasis as a foreshadowing device.

The advance appearance here of Deimos and Phobos softens the abruptness with which they appear in the narrative as Ares' charioteers. For in the rest of the poem, we are led to understand that Ares himself is acting as charioteer for Kyknos; there is no mention of Deimos and Phobos, and to picture from the outset *four* people—Ares, Kyknos, Deimos, and Phobos—in the chariot would strain both the imagination and the vehicle's capacity. The action at the end of the poem is brisk (cf. §II.1.i): Ares falls to the ground, τῶι δὲ Φόβος καὶ Δεῖμος εὐτροχὸν ἄρμα καὶ ἵππους ἤλασαν αἶψ' ἐγγύς. It is as if the poet feels that since he has already spoken of Deimos and Phobos attending upon Ares, he is not obliged to give a full explanation of their appearance and function in the narrative of the poem. The same is true for Athena: in §II.1.i I noted the abruptness of Athena's appearance on the battlefield; but the abruptness is mitigated by her appearance in the ecphrasis in martial aspect, holding the aegis which she duly brings to the battle with which the main narrative is concerned. ἐπὶ δ' ὤιχετο φύλοπιν αἰνὴν (200) seems to function not only on an ecphrastic level but also on a narrative one: Athena was now starting out for battle—primarily the unspecified battle of the ecphrasis, but also the specific battle of the *Aspis*.

These observations about the relationship between ecphrasis and narrative confirm our attempt consistently to relate the two sections of the poem. They also challenge the prevalent

modern notion that narrative means movement and progress, whereas ecphrasis equates to a pause:³⁰⁵ the two are intimately linked in the *Aspis*.

There are significant differences between the descriptive methods adopted by the *Iliad* and the *Aspis*. As noted above, each tableau of Achilles' shield begins with a reminder that Hephaistos was making it; the god is thus recollected at regular and predictable intervals as the shield's creator and is twice cited by title (587, 590). Differently the *Aspis*: since the shield has already been made, the poet simply says what 'was on' the shield or 'had been made' on it. The divine smith is not alluded to as the shield's maker in a regular fashion but is mentioned sporadically. Twice it is to accentuate a particularly wondrous piece of workmanship: at 219 the poet has just described the mid-air Perseus, θαῦμα μέγα φράσσασθ', ἐπεὶ οὐδαμῇ ἐστήρικτο; and at 244 the women on the city walls are especially verisimilar, ζῶησιν ἴκελαι. However, this is not an infallible rule: it seems arbitrary of the poet to mention Hephaistos at 297, where no particular craftsmanship is being singled out for special commendation. As for 312, the nature of the tripod mentioned here is artfully ambiguous. The poet says that the prize offered for the horserace was κλυτὰ ἔργα περίφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο; the primary reference is to the decoration of the shield, but the expression allows for slippage between ecphrasis and reality. The audience is left to wonder idly whether the tripod for which the imaginary charioteers were competing also originated in Hephaistos' forge; similar are 183, 188, 192, 199, 208, 225–6 (cf. ad locc.). From the Shield of Achilles one may compare the warriors εἰλυμένοι αἶθοπι χαλκῶι and the youths at the dance who μαχαίρας ἰεῖχον χρυσείας ἐξ ἀργυρέων τελαμώνων (*Il.* 18.597–8).

³⁰⁵ Cf. Fowler (1991) 25, 'Set-piece description is regularly seen by narratologists as the paradigm example of narrative pause.'

Moreover, the mode of narration within the ecphrasis differs. The *Iliad* ignores the fact that it is supposed to be describing a two-dimensional, static object: it gives a narrative of each scene as if it were a film-reel rather than a still. The figures come alive when the poet's gaze is turned towards them. In the *Aspis* the figures are described frozen in a moment in time. But not invariably: in the descriptions of the boar-lion combat and the Centauromachy, the figures seem to 'progress' within the time that the poet has been describing their unchanging physical characteristics, and by the end of each tableau, we are left with the impression that the static image has in fact become a film-reel; see 168-77 and 178-90 nn. The Gorgons, too, are explicitly said to be in motion (231-3).

This trait should be distinguished from *chronological* progression within scenes. This does have precedent in iconography, as for example in the Phoenician dish depicting the 'Hunter's Day', in which the same lord is seen at various stages of an expedition.³⁰⁶ The *Iliad* follows this convention in the city at war (18.509-34). After the initial description of the invaders stationed round the city and the besieged townsfolk on the walls (509-20), the poet goes on to describe a whole series of episodes: the setting of an ambush (520-4); the rustics' falling into this trap and the resultant slaughter (525-9); the consequent regrouping of the other side's cavalry (530-2); and a pitched battle between the opposing factions (533-4). In the *Iliad* the action is allowed to unfurl in a variety of locations and at a variety of times. Narratives that progress chronologically are also found on the Shield of Achilles at 541-9 and 573-85. However, for his own city under siege, the poet of the *Aspis* has adapted only *Il.* 18.509-19 (the combat focussed around the city itself); he then extends this to give a close-up of the battle (248ff.). The *Aspis* deals here with events occurring in a single location and at a single

³⁰⁶ Cf. Markoe (1985) 278-83.

time. The *Iliad*, then, does not restrict itself to a single iconographical group, as does the *Aspis*. The exception in the *Aspis* is the description of the Keres, who are represented discharging different stages of their grim office (248b–257).

IV.5. Adapting Homer

We shall now examine in greater detail the parts of the ecphrasis which have a particularly close connection with the Shield of Achilles.³⁰⁷

First, the **City at War**. We have already noted that the *Aspis* confines itself to one simultaneously occurring set of events and that in the *Aspis*'s city at war only 237–48 correspond to the Iliadic counterpart 509–20. The *Iliad* here describes the invading force, whose purpose is divided: some wish to destroy the city, others to despoil it (510–13). In the *Aspis*, however, the enemy are unanimously eager to destroy the city, *πρᾶθ' εἶν μεμῶτες* (240). The contrast is instead between the defenders, who wish to drive off the enemy, and the attackers, bent on destruction. Friedländer regards the *Aspis* as inferior in mental insight, since the attackers are of one resolve.³⁰⁸ But it is more useful to set this observation in the wider context of our poet's practice, namely his fondness for thematic juxtaposition and balance (§II.1.vi).

The *Iliad* then devotes two lines to a purely visual description of women, children, and old men standing on the walls of the besieged city (514–15). This is expanded in the *Aspis*: the equivalent scene takes up seven lines (242b–248a). There is phraseological expansion, as one would expect, but the poet also succeeds in adding new angles: the women were screaming shrilly and tearing their cheeks (243); the men stood outside the city (rather than on the wall)

³⁰⁷ Cf. Friedländer (1907) 108–20, (1912) 8–11; Cook (1937) 210–12.

³⁰⁸ Friedländer (1912) 9.

and, hands raised to heaven, offered prayers to the gods. The poet thus enhances his model by embellishing it with sound-effects and vivid pictorial detail.³⁰⁹ He also adds pathos to the scene, first by having the women perform an anticipatory act of mourning (much like that for Hektor at *Il.* 6.499–502), and second through the detail that the old men were afraid *for their children* (rather than the city, which is less personal). Instead of moving on chronologically (as in the *Iliad*), he then turns his attention to the simultaneously occurring battle, in which he abandons the lightly suggested pathos of the *Iliad*'s description and opts for explicit description of the horrors of war personified.³¹⁰

This is the section of the *Aspis* that epitomises the macabre taste of the poet (§II.1.vi). Throughout the city at war the poet of the *Aspis* is at pains to stress the heightened horror. Most memorable is his portrait of the Keres, the terrifying demons who, ranging up and down the battle, eager to drink blood, sank their nails into their victims, consigning their victims to death; after feasting on blood, they discarded the corpses and returned to the fray (248b–257). The obsession with nails resurfaces in the description of two further supernatural groups, the Fates (262–3; probably interpolated, cf. n. 142) and Akhnys (266).

The Iliadic **City at Peace** has been combined in the *Aspis* with the descriptions of agricultural life (§IV.3.i). On the Shield of Achilles we find scenes of marriage (Bα) and legal process (Bβ); ploughing (C); reaping (D); vintage (E); cattle and lions (F); and sheep (G). The *Aspis* has a wedding scene; horse riding; ploughing; reaping; vintage; athletics; hunting; and a chariot race (XIIa–h). The trial-scene, the cattle and lions, and the sheep are dispensed with. Why did our poet abandon Aβ? Probably because disputation and reparation—matters

³⁰⁹ Fittschen (1973) 22 wonders whether the city under siege might not be supposed to represent Troy; but the motifs of women on the walls and men praying to the gods are more likely just to be traditional.

³¹⁰ *Il.* 18.535–8 is interpolated from the *Aspis* (156–60n.).

thematically relevant to the crisis of the *Iliad*—cannot be accommodated into a poem narrating a martial triumph of Herakles.³¹¹ The fact that there is no iconographical parallel for the *Iliad*'s trial-scene also perhaps encouraged the poet of the *Aspis* to omit it.³¹² The closest analogue to *Iliad*'s E and F is the *Aspis*'s IV. In the *Iliad* the cattle and the sheep are peaceable animals, the lions the instigators of violence. By contrast, there are no grazing animals in the *Aspis*, only animals of power and/or violence. Our poet would rather speak of a stand-off between lions and boars (168–77), of energetic activity on horseback (285–6),³¹³ of sharp-toothed dogs chasing hares (303; cf. *Il.* 10.360–4), and of fish 'driven in panic' by swans (317)³¹⁴ than he would depict bucolic life (*Il.* 18.573–86). Indeed the *Iliadic* dogs (18.583–6) are somewhat timid in comparison with those in the *Aspis* (though admittedly the latter have only hares to contend with, not lions). At any rate: in the *Iliad*'s tableau E the interruption of tranquillity is an unwelcome shock, whereas in the *Aspis* intense, violent activity is the norm.

The two poems' marriage-scenes are closely parallel, but again we can see a desire in the *Aspis* to expand and embellish. The *Iliad* records in just six lines (491–6) the following details: marriage; feasting; girls being led under torchlight through the city; wedding-songs; dancers; musicians using the aulos and phorminx; bystanders admiring the procession from their porches. Owing to probable interpolations, it is impossible to determine exactly the prolixity of the *Aspis*'s counterpart (272–85). What is certain is that it is less compressed. Here we find: a woman being transported on a chariot to her marriage; wedding-songs; torchlight; the

³¹¹ Similarly van der Valk (1966) 462, who suggests that the reason is the *Aspis*'s desire for a greater contrast between war and peace.

³¹² Cf. Lorimer (1950) 487, 'The trial scene has not and never can have had any counterpart in art, nor, so far as our evidence goes, had the wedding processions.'

³¹³ Note in particular the 'unnecessarily violent' word ἐθύνεον (286, cf. §II.6.iii); at 156n. I raise the possibility that 286 should be deleted.

³¹⁴ As Thalmann (1984) 204 n. 82 notes, '[e]ditors and translators tend to play down the force of ἐκλονέοντο in line 317, but this verb's normal meaning in epic is "drive (or, in the passive, 'be driven') in panic".'

bride's party advancing, preceded respectively by servants and choral dancers; musicians using the syrinx and phorminx; possibly also a group of musicians on the other side. The poet of the *Aspis* has added little of substance: he has simply expanded the phraseology and increased the amount of detail (probably in two stages, cf. §II.7.iii). Thus the *Iliad* says only that an unspecified 'they' were leading young girls to marriage; our poet gives the details that the bride was being taken on a chariot and that the light was provided by torches held in the hands of servants. As in the city at war, there is an extra emphasis on light (275 σέλας εἰλύφαζε) and sound (279 περὶ δέ σφισιν ἄγνυτο ἡχώ). Moreover, the *Iliad* leaves us to infer that the marriage ceremony was a convivial affair; our poet finds it necessary to state explicitly the presence of ἀγλαΐη (272, 276, 285) and θαλίη (284).³¹⁵ Lastly, the *Iliad* does not specify where the dancers and musicians stood; the poet of the *Aspis*, however, is more precise, telling us that the torch-bearing servants were being followed by χοροὶ παίζοντες (281–4).³¹⁶

The scenes of agricultural life occur in the same order in the *Iliad* and the *Aspis*; our poet has not been so perverse as to disturb the sequence of the farmer's year. But here, in contrast with his practice elsewhere, he has reduced the length of the corresponding scenes. The Iliadic scenes of ploughing, reaping, and vintage occupy 9, 11, and 12 lines respectively; the Hesiodic counterparts just 3, 4, and 10 (in fact fewer).³¹⁷ Gone are the *Iliad's* vignettes such as the heralds under the tree, the youths and maidens with baskets, the boy singing the Linos-song, or the local lord admiring the progress of the reapers. All that we have in the *Aspis* is a brief summary of each activity, with no further expansion upon the theme. The poet

³¹⁵ Cf. Solmsen (1949) 98 n. 96.

³¹⁶ On the text see Russo ad loc.

³¹⁷ On the doublets in the vintage-scene see (besides Russo) Janko (1986) 39–40. Solmsen's text reduces the scene to just 5 verses.

obviously had little interest in detailing agricultural activity; his talents lay in baroque descriptions of warfare. That he included such scenes at all evinces his wish to signal his profound debt to the *Iliad*. Nonetheless, we can see the characteristic focus on the pictorial. The poet of the *Aspis* adds details not found on the Shield of Achilles, such as hitched-up tunics (287–8), curving leaves on the corn-stalks (289), and white grapes in addition to the dark (294, if genuine).

Okeanos has already been discussed in §IV.2.iii.

IV.6. Evocation

As noted in §II.1.iv, the poet of the *Aspis* has an eye for pictorial detail and a fondness for adding sound-effects. Herakles' shield is replete with colour, just like Achilles'.³¹⁸ The shield of Achilles was made of bronze, tin, gold, silver, but to that of Herakles Hephaistos adds τίτανος, ἐλέφας, ἤλεκτρον, and ἀδάμας: it would have been an object of a fantastical decorative appearance. τίτανος and ἀδάμας (cf. 231n.) are never mentioned in Homer, and their presence in the *Aspis* evokes a sense of the exotic and suggests supremacy over the Iliadic shield. Ivory is mentioned in Homer in richly wrought objects, including weaponry, but it never appears on a shield (141n.). The poet's selection of materials thus presents Herakles' shield as unique and innovative in its craftsmanship, something that also suggests the poet's own literary innovativeness.

As we have already remarked, the poet of the *Iliad* mostly describes the scenes on Achilles' shield as if they were ordinary narrative. However, he does also declare to be metallic a number of ecphrastic objects which in real life are not metallic, thereby reminding us that he

³¹⁸ *Aspis* 146, 153, 159, 167, 186, 194, 221, 249, 252, 265, 294, 300.

is describing an imagined world, not reality.³¹⁹ The *Aspis*, whose focus is the description of a shield as an artefact, adopts and extends this principle: hence we find, for example, a golden vine in the *Aspis*'s vineyard (296–7). The choice of materials is not random, however. Van der Valk has suggested that in the tableau of the harbour there is a ‘hierarchy of metals’, a persuasive idea (207–15n.). Less convincing is the same scholar’s attempt to apply this to the Perseus tableau (216–37): there the hero, who is self-evidently the most important person, is made of gold and carries a haversack of silver with gold tassels; his shield is of bronze, whereas the background is pale adamant (roughly equivalent to iron). The problem is that this schema fails to accommodate Perseus’ μελάνδετον (‘grey’, cf. 221n.) ἄορ, an item which, though imagined to be the same colour as the background, is an essential part of the Perseus narrative.

The treatment of sound is important: the serpents grind their teeth when Herakles fights (164–5); a wedding-song and music accompany the procession (274–80); the chariots and the felloes clatter (308–9); the swans sing above Okeanos (316); and most remarkably, the surface of the shield rings out as the Gorgons pursue Perseus across it (231–3). The preoccupation with the aural and visual are already apparent in the main narrative (§II.1.iv). This consistency of style between the narrative and the ecphrasis encourages us in our unitarian view of the *Aspis*. There is much emphasis on sound in the Homeric ecphrasis too—as many as 18 or 19 references. But there is an important difference: in the *Iliad* the sounds are integral to the scenes, whereas in the *Aspis* they may refer to the real-life artefact. Thus the *Iliad* speaks of (for example) the marriage-song (493) and the din of a crowd (502), but never says

³¹⁹ Cf. *Il.* 18.549 (golden furrow), 561–2 (golden vineyard), 563 (silver vine-poles), 564(?) (‘dark’ trench; for κυάνεος cf. 143n.), 574 (cattle of bronze and tin), 577 (golden shepherds). For playfully ambiguous cases cf. §IV.4.

anything like ‘the ploughmen beat the earth, and the shield rang out with the noise’ (nor is the conceit paralleled in later ecphrases).

The reason for this is that Herakles’ shield has magical qualities. The symbols on the shield respond to events in the course of battle: the central device terrified the wits of men οἵτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς υἱὶ φέροιεν (150); the serpents gnashed their teeth εὔτε μάχοιτο Ἰ Ἀμφιτρωνιάδης (164–5); and the Gorgons made the surface of the shield resound as they pursued Perseus (231–3). But, just as the decorations of Achilles’ shield play very little part in the remaining portion of the *Iliad*,³²⁰ so too none of the magical properties of Herakles’ shield turns out to have any relevance in the main narrative (§II.5.iv). The snakes do not leap into action and scare off Kyknos or Ares, and all magic and fantasy is confined to the ecphrasis. Perhaps this is on the model of the *Iliad*, which also virtually ignores the shield’s decoration after it has described its fashioning.

In the *Aspis* there is also frequent mention of the material used.³²¹ Such details are less common in the Iliadic ecphrasis, although there is sometimes an indication there of the manufacturing materials: particularly noteworthy is 548–9 (where a furrow is described): ἦ δὲ μελαίνετ’ ὅπισθεν, ἀρηρομένη δὲ ἐώικει, ἢ χρυσείῃ περ ἑοῦσα· τὸ δὲ περὶ θαῦμα τέτυκτο. But in general the *Iliad* tries as far as possible to make us forget that we are looking at images on a shield, and it does not admit any expressions of the type catalogued below. Any such animadversions have the effect of detracting from the illusion, since they wrench the

³²⁰ Though at 19.14–19 the Myrmidons are seized by fear when they gaze upon Achilles’ new arms, and Achilles himself takes pleasure in examining them closely; the divine origin of Achilles’ helmet (and implicitly his shield, which is described as καλὸν δαιδάλεον, for which cf. 18.479) is explicitly signalled at 22.316. On 20.269–72 cf. 143n.

³²¹ 141–3, 184, 188, 192, 198, 203, 208, 212, 213, 221, 222, 224–5, 231, 243 (?), 249 (?), 271, 295–6, 297, 299, 313.

audience back from the fantasy.³²² Our poet insists on verisimilitude in a way that goes beyond the *Iliad* in the following passages: the Centaurs ὥς εἰ ζωοί περ ἑόντες (189), the Muses λιγὺ μελπομένης εἰκυῖαι (206), the harbour κλυζομένωι ἕκλος (209), the women on the city wall ζωῆσιν ἕκλαι (244), Ares in combat ὥς εἰ ζωοὺς ἐναρίζων (194); note the sound-effects of 206 and 209, which further enhance the ‘realism’. Most remarkably, at the end of the description of the chariot race in the *Aspis* the poet remarks that the competitors were matched in a never-ending contest, because in fact they were just *representations* of charioteers (310–11).

At various points in the ecphrasis the poet says that the shield was a θαῦμα, although the reasons for this shift according to circumstance (139–40n. θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι). An ecphrasis functions partly as a pause in the narrative. We have already seen that this rule does not hold completely for the *Aspis*. However, it is nonetheless the case that the insertion of a long descriptive passage between Herakles’ arming and the joining of battle creates a sense of anticipation. Similarly in the *Iliad*, the need to procure new armour for Achilles allows the poet to hold Achilles back a little longer before his aristeia and thus heightens tension.

The poet of the *Aspis* is fond of deferral (§II.1.vi), and in the ecphrasis he embeds tension in order to mirror the tension he is adding to the narrative. Hence no action is quite completed in the *Aspis*, and one is always uncertain about the eventual outcome. We are left to ponder which of the boars and lions won the battle (168–77); we leave the Lapiths and Centaurs on the point of clashing (189–90); we wonder whether the hares escaped the hunting-dogs (302–4); and the poet tantalises us with the eternal chariot-race (310–11). The audience knows the outcome of the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs, just as it knows that

³²² Cf. Becker (1992) 16 n. 27, who observes that the frequent mention of material ‘assures that the referent does not fully dominate this ecphrasis, as it does in, e.g., Catullus 64 or Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*’.

Perseus escaped the Gorgons' clutches; but nonetheless the sense of 'suspended animation' complements the overall pause that the ecphrasis has imposed on the narrative. This is also true of the conflict scenes in the *Iliad*, where the outcome of the siege (Bγ) and of the attack by the lions (F) are left for ever uncertain. Such hiatuses were the favourite moment in art: on the Chest of Kypselos one notes the tension with Oinomaos chasing Pelops (Paus. 5.17.7), Amphiaraos about to strike Eriphyle (5.17.8), and Menelaos advancing to kill Helen (5.18.3).³²³

IV.7. Conclusions

Aristophanes of Byzantium thought that the *Aspis* was the work of someone who had undertaken to 'imitate' (μιμήσασθαι) the Shield of Achilles (§I.1). We have seen already that the *Aspis*'s combat-sequence is derivative from the *Iliad* (§III.1), and the same is certainly true for the shield description. However, μιμήσασθαι does not do the poet of the *Aspis* justice: as our investigation of the formulaic language showed that the poet of the *Aspis* purposely deviated from traditional usage (§II.6), so too in the ecphrasis we see sophisticated engagement with the model, as well as considerable originality, in what is undoubtedly the most adventurous part of the poem. And it is here that the poet really comes into his own.

³²³ There are several further parallels with the *Aspis*: a tripod set as a prize; the seduction of Alkmene by Zeus; Apollo (called Λατοίδας, as at *Aspis* 479) singing in heaven; military scenes, including Phobos (cf. 144n.) and a grotesque Ker; Perseus pursued by the Gorgons; and Centaurs. (Cf. *Aspis* 312–13; 1–56; 207–15; 237b–270a, with 144 and 248b–257; 216–237a; 178–90.) It is unnecessary to assume a direct relationship: these were evidently popular themes in the early sixth century and are formulated and drawn upon by craftsmen and poets alike.

SIGLA ETC.

Manuscript(s)		Date	Rzach/Russo
A	Par. suppl. gr. 663 (vv. 87–138)	xi ex.–xii in.	C (Ω a)
B	Par. suppl. gr. 663 (vv. 75–299)	xi ex.–xii in.	B (Ω a)
F	Par. gr. 2773 (vv. 1–307)	xiv	F (Ω a)
J	Ambros. C 222 inf.	xii ex.	D (Ω a)
P	Neap. II.D.4	xiii–xiv	
S	Laur. 32.16	1280	E (Ψ a)
V	Vat. gr. 1910 (vv. 29–100, 170–210)	xiii–xiv	
Z	Mutin. α T 9.14	xv	Z
$b = mL(R)$			Ψb
m	Par. gr. 2763, Par. gr. 2833, Vrat. Rehd. 35, Mosq. 469	xv	M (Ψb)
L	Laur. conv. suppr. 158	xiv	L (Ψb)
R	Casanat. 356 (vv. 1–321)	xiii ex.–xiv in.	K (Ψb)
o	consensus of (other) witnesses		
Papyri			
Π_5	P. (Rainer) Vindob. Gr. 19815 (vv. 1–32, 350–4, 426–40, 456–70)	iv	A Rz., Π Ru.
Π_{34}	P. Berol. 9774 (vv. 207–13, with critical signs)	i a. Chr.	Q Rz., Π_2 Ru.
Π_{35}	PSI IX 1087 (BML inv. 18859) (vv. 273–89)	ii–iii	Π_3 Ru.
Π_{36}	P. Oxy. 689 (vv. 468–80)	ii	P Rz., Π_4 Ru.
	PSI I 15 (vv. 28–33)	iv–v	R Rz., Π Ru.

	P. Oxy. 2355 (vv. 1–5) following 7	i ex.–ii
	vv. of the <i>Catalogue</i> ([Hes.] fr. 195)	
Π ₃₇	P. Oxy. 2494A (vv. 1–18, following	ii in.
	the same vv. of the <i>Catalogue</i>)	
Π ₃₉	P. Oxy. 3220 (vv. 83–90, 92–6,	ii
	189–92, 195–202)	
Π ₅₃	P. Oxy. 4664 (vv. 92–106)	i ex.–ii in.
Π ₅₄	P. Oxy. 4665 (vv. 220–30)	ii ex.–iii in.
Π ₅₅	P. Oxy. 4652 (glosses on vv. 243,	v
	245, 308, 387(?), 389)	
Π ₅₆	P. Oxy. 4666 (vv. 253–65, om. 259)	ii ex.–iii in.
Π ₅₇	P. Oxy. 3232 (vv. 325–30)	i
Π ₅₈	P. Köln VII 302 (inv. 2703v)	iii–iv
	(vv. 454–61)	

Other sigla

Byz.	Byzantine corrections (noted separately only for S)
Et ^G	<i>Etymologicum Genuinum</i>
Et ^M	<i>Etymologicum Magnum</i>
Σ	scholia vetera, cited by page of Ranke
Σ ¹	lemma for a scholium
Σ ^{par}	scholia paraphrastica, cited by page of Ranke
Σ ^Z	scholia in Z, cited from Russo or Solmsen
Ped.	notes of John Pediasimus Diaconus
sch.	scholium on another ancient author
Tr.	Triclinius (Marc. gr. 464; 1316–19)

Qualified sigla

J ^{ac}	J before correction
J ^{pc}	J after correction
J ^{yp}	γράφεται-variant in J

This is not the place for an extended account of the textual history of the *Aspis*.³²⁴ But a few explanatory remarks are in order.

The sigla follow Solmsen as closely as possible. Sometimes the equivalents in Rzach and Russo for Solmsen's families are only approximate, as for example with *b* family, which is constituted from more witnesses than Rzach's Ψ*b*.

I include witnesses that are of relevance to the poem as a whole, not merely to vv. 139–237, and sigla that would be required for a complete edition. The new medieval witnesses I have added to the recension are P and V, which I hold to be brothers descended from a congener of J.³²⁵

The papyri continue the series begun by Jacoby, to which the most recent additions, continuing up to Π₅₂, were made by West in his edition of the *Works and Days*.³²⁶ Π_{53–8} are new, but they do not make an impressive contribution to the text; only Π₅₅ has attracted scholarly attention, since it preserves traces of ancient scholarship.³²⁷

³²⁴ Textual histories are to be found at Russo 36–59 and Solmsen ix–xxiii. Corrales Pérez (1994) aims at comprehensiveness and ought to have superseded Rzach (1898); unfortunately, her work is riddled with oversights and inaccuracies, and it is unsafe to take on trust information about manuscript readings or affiliations provided in it. A full and reliable history of the poem's transmission is yet to be written. For a survey of scholarship since Rzach, and remarks on some of the manuscripts, see Mason (forthcoming *b*).

³²⁵ Mason (forthcoming *b*).

³²⁶ West (1978) 75–7.

³²⁷ Cf. Martano (2004*a*), Stroppa (2008) 66–7.

My apparatus is closely based on Solmsen's. Since, however, my text is accompanied by a commentary, it has been possible to reserve some of the more tentative suggestions for that part of the work and thereby to keep the apparatus relatively unencumbered. On this same principle I have dispensed with some of Solmsen's more compressed explanations of variants and emendations, preferring to discuss them less cryptically in the commentary.

My policy has been to cite the most important corruptions of the principal witnesses, even when they are self-evidently false, not least because such information can be valuable for constituting the textual history—a task which, as already mentioned (n. 324), has not yet been adequately carried out for the *Aspis*. I have of course not recorded every triviality; this includes breathings and most accents (hence, for example, I have not noted that at 191 PV have the correct ἔστασαν whereas the rest of the tradition has ἔ-).

It is often worth citing the readings of Σ and Σ^Z , but only very occasionally those of Ped. or Σ^{par} , in whose texts most of the corruptions that disfigure our best manuscripts were already present—and sometimes even more besides.³²⁸

³²⁸ Cf. Russo 56–7; Mason (2015).

TEXT AND APPARATUS OF 139–237

χερσί γε μὲν σάκος εἶλε παναίολον, οὐδέ τις αὐτό
 οὔτ' ἔρρηξε βαλὼν οὔτ' ἔθλασε, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι. 140
 πᾶν μὲν γὰρ κύκλῳ τιτάνῳ λευκῷ τ' ἐλέφαντι
 ἡλέκτρῳ θ' ὑπολαμπὲς ἔην, χρυσῷ τε φαιινῷ
 λαμπόμενον, κυάνου δὲ διὰ πτύχες ἡλήλαντο.
 ἐν μέσσωι δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην φόβος οὔ τι φατειός
 ἔμπαλιν ὅσσοισιν πυρὶ λαμπομένοισι δεδορκώς· 145
 τοῦ καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν πλήτο στόμα λευκαθεόντων,
 δεινῶν, ἀπλήτων, ἐπὶ δὲ βλοσυροῖο μετώπου
 δεινὴ Ἔρις πεπόνητο κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἀνδρῶν·
 σχέτλιος, ὅς ῥα νόον τε καὶ ἐκ φρένας εἴλετο φωτῶν
 οἵτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς υἱὶ φέροιεν. 150
 [τῶν καὶ ψυχὰι μὲν χθόνα δύνουσ' Ἄιδος εἴσω
 αὐτῶν, ὅστέα δέ σφι περὶ ῥίνοιο σαπίσης
 Σειρίου ἀζαλέοιο μελαίνῃι πύθεται αἶηι.]

139 μὲν <i>bBS</i> : μὴν	εἶχε <i>S</i>	142 ἐπιλαμπὲς <i>P</i>	φαιινῷ: φαιινόν <i>Peppmüller</i>
(secl. 143)	143 non leg. Σ^Z , damn. Heyne	ἡλήλατο <i>F</i>	144 δ' ἀδάμαντος Σ (= Σ^Z): δὲ
δράκοντος <i>o</i>	146 λευκαθεόντων <i>accentu supra α delete J^{pc}</i> (ci. Wackernagel; cf. λευκαθ-		
ιζόντων Σ^Z): λευκὰ θεόντων <i>o</i>	147 προσώπου <i>JPS^Z</i> (nimirum et <i>Z</i>)	149 σχέτλιος ὅς ῥα	
Merkelbach (qui in 144 ἀδάμαντος): σχετλίη ἢ ῥα <i>o</i>	148 πόνον <i>Z</i>	150 (= 163)–153 exp.	
Schwarz, 151–3 Lehrs, 151–9 Studniczka	151 δύμεναι <i>J</i> , δύμενος (sic) <i>P</i> : δούουσ' <i>F</i>		
153 κελαινῇι <i>bS^{pc}</i> (corr. m. 1)	φαιινῇι πύθ. αὐγῇι (sive αἶγλῃι) <i>Paley</i>		

ἐν δὲ Προΐωξίς τε Παλίωξίς τε τέτυκτο,
 ἐν δ' Ὀμαδός τε Φόνος τ' Ἀνδροκτασίη τε δεδήει. 155
 [ἐν δ' Ἑρίς, ἐν δὲ Κυδοιμὸς ἐθύνεον, ἐν δ' ὅλοη Κήρ,
 ἄλλον ζῶν ἔχουσα νεούτατον, ἄλλον ἄουτον,
 ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατὰ μόθον εἶλκε ποδοῖν·
 εἶμα δ' ἔχ' ἄμφ' ὥμοισι δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν,
 δεινὸν δερκομένη καναχῆισί τε βεβρυχυῖα.] 160
 ἐν δ' ὀφίων κεφαλαὶ δεινῶν ἔσαν, οὐ τι φατειῶν,
 δώδεκα, ταὶ φοβέεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων
 οἵτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς υἱὶ φέροιεν.
 τῶν καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν καναχὴ πέλεν, εὖτε μάχοιτο
 Ἀμφιτρωνιάδης· τὰ δ' ἐδαίετο θαυματὰ ἔργα· 165
 στίγματα δ' ὥς ἐπέφαντο ἰδεῖν δεινοῖσι δράκουσι·
 κυάνεοι κατὰ νῶτα, μελάνθησαν δὲ γένεια.
 ἐν δὲ συῶν ἀγέλαι χλούνων ἔσαν ἡδὲ λεόντων
 ἐς σφέας δερκομένων, κοτεόντων θ' ἱεμένων τε.

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- 154-60 susp. Welcker, secl. Furtwängler 154-5 προΐωξις ... ἀνδροκτασίη edd. nonnulli
 155 φόβος JFP δεδήει om. J 156-9 exp. Heinrich (157-9 iam Schlichtegroll),
 156-60 Solmsen 158 εἶλκε scripsi: εἶλκε B: ἔλκε cett. 160 βεβρυχυῖα (e βρυχ-
 ομένη Σ) Byz., ci. Ruhnken praeunte Guyet: βεβριθυῖα oΣ^Z 161-7 exp. G. F. Rhode
 162 τοὶ βόσκονται (β e φ corr., γρ. ταὶ φοβέεσκον in mg.) S 163 (= 150) exp. Paley
 165 τὰ δ' ἐδ.: τε γε δαίετο S^{ac}: τ' ἐδαίετο b θαυματὰ sch. Pi. O. 1.43: θαῦματα B:
 θαυμαστὰ hJFPS: θωῦτὰ Byz. 167 κυανέοιο B: κυάνεα F 169 θ' om. J

τῶν καὶ ὁμίληδὸν στίχες ἦϊσαν, οὐδέ νυ τῷ γε 170
 οὐδέτεροι τρεῖτην, φρῖσσόν γε μὲν αὐχένας ἄμφω.
 ἦδη γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγας λῖς, ἀμφὶ δὲ κάπροι
 δοιοί, ἀπουράμενοι ψυχάς· κατὰ δέ σφι κελαινόν
 αἶμ' ἀπελείβει· ἔραζ'· οἳ δ' αὐχένας ἐξεριπόντες
 κείατο τεθνηῶτες ὑπὸ βλοσυροῖσι λέουσιν· 175
 τοῖ δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐγειρέσθην κοτέοντε μάχεσθαι,
 ἀμφότεροι, χλοῦναί τε σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες.
 ἐν δ' ἦν ὑσμήνη Λαπιθάων αἰχμητῶν
 Καινέα τ' ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα Δρύαντά τε Πειρίθοόν τε
 Ὀπλέα τ' Ἐξάδιόν τε Φάληρόν τε Πρόλοχόν τε 180
 Μόψον τ' Ἀμπυκίδην, Τιταρήσιον, ὅζον Ἄρηος
 Θησέα τ' Αἰγείδην, ἐπιείκελον ἀθανάτοισιν·
 ἀργύρεοι, χρύσεια περὶ χροῖ· τεύχε' ἔχοντες.
 Κένταυροι δ' ἐτέρωθεν ἐναντίοι ἡγερέθοντο
 ἀμφὶ μέγαν Πετραῖον ἰδ' Ἀσβολον οἰωνιστήν 185
 Ἄγριον Οὔρειόν τε Μελαγχαίτην τε Μίμάν τε

 170 τῷ bJS^{pc}V: τῶν BFS^{ac}: τοί Byz. (Z)

172 κάπρω et 173 ὦ supra δοιοί, ω supra

ἀπουράμενοι Byz. (Z)

174 ἐξεριπόντες om. P

176 ἀγειρέσθην J:

ἐγ. superscripto ἃ S

178 ὑσμήνη τε μάχη J: ὑσμήνη τε μ. τε S^{ac} (τε μ. τε del. S^{pc}): ὑσμήνη μάχη b

182 exp. Ed. Meyer

183 τεύχεα ο: ἐσθῆς Σ^Z, εἴματα Z

186 Ἄγριον Οὔρειόν τε

Mason: ἄρκτον τ' οὔριόν τε P, V (ut vid.) Byz. (θούριον fere ο)

Μίμάν τε West: μίμαντα ο

καὶ δύο Πευκείδας, Περιμήδεά τε Δρύαλόν τε,
 ἀργύρεοι, χρυσέας ἐλάτας ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντες.
 καὶ τε συναΐγδην ὥς εἰ ζωοὶ περ ἑόντες
 ἔγχεσιν ἡδ' ἐλάτης αὐτοσχεδὸν ὠριγνῶντο. 190
 ἐν δ' Ἄρεος βλοσυροῖο ποδώκεες ἕστασαν ἵπποι
 χρύσειοι, ἐν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐναρσφόρος οὐλῖος Ἄρης,
 αἰχμὴν ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων, πρυλέεσσι κελεύων,
 αἵματι φοινικόεις ὥς εἰ ζωοὺς ἐναρίζων,
 δίφρου ἐπεμβεβαὼς· παρὰ δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε 195
 ἕστασαν ἰέμενοι πόλεμον καταδύμεναι ἀνδρῶν.
 ἐν δὲ Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἀγελείη Τριτογένεια,
 τῇ ἰκέλη ὥς εἴ τε μάχην ἐθέλουσα κορύσσειν,
 ἔγχος ἔχουσ' ἐν χερσὶ(ν) (∪ | – ∞ | – ∞ | – – 199
 – ∞ | – ∞ | – ∞ | –) χρυσέην [τε] τρυφάλειαν 199a
 αἰγίδα τ' ἄμφ' ὤμοις· ἐπὶ δ' ὤχετο φύλοπιν αἰνὴν. 200

189 καὶ τε et Π₃₉ (ut vid.): οἱ τε B (teste Rzach) συναΐγδην BJFΣ^Z Π₃₉ Et^G s.v. Et^M s.v. αἰγὴν:
 συναΐκτην bPVΣΣ 190 om. PV 192 ἐναρσφόρος et Σ^Z Et^G s.v.: ἐναροφ- F: ἐναρφ- V
 Et^M s.v. (ut vid.) 195 δίφρῳι ο: corr. L. Dindorf ἐπιβεβαὼς P δὲ: δὴ m: om. RLS
 197 ἀγελείη et Π₃₉: ὁλοὴ B (ὁλοὴ ἦν Peppmüller) 199 inter χερσὶ(ν) et χρυσέην lac. stat.
 Mason praeunte Muetzell ἐν χερσὶ(ν) bJPV: ἐν(ι) χερὶ BF(S), χερὶ]p[ι Π₃₉ χρυσείην m,
 Vat. gr. 1825 teste West, χ[ρ]υ[σ]ε[ί]ην Π₃₉: χρυσέην cett. ἐν χερσὶ φαεινὴν τε tr. Hermann
 olim: ἐν χερσὶν (ιδεὲ) χρυσέην [τε] tr. Bentley: ἔχουσα [ἐν] χερὶ (χεροῖν Paley) χρυσείην τε tr.
 Goettling 200 ὤμοισιν bBFPVS

ἐν δ' ἦν ἀθανάτων ἱερὸς χορὸς· ἐν δ' ἄρα μέσσωι
 ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε Διὸς καὶ Λητοῦς υἱός
 χρυσεΐῃ φόρμιγγι· [θεῶν δ' ἔδος ἀγνὸς Ὀλυμπος·
 ἐν δ' ἀγορή, περὶ δ' ὄλβος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο
 ἀθανάτων ἐν ἀγῶνι·] θεαὶ δ' ἐξῆρχον ἀοιδῆς 205
 Μοῦσαι Πιερίδες, λιγὺν μελπομένης εἰκυῖαι.
 ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὖορμος ἀμαιμακέτοιο θαλάσσης
 κυκλοτερὲς ἐτέτυκτο πανέφθου κασσιτέροιο
 κλυζομένωι ἵκελος· [πολλοὶ γε μὲν ἄμ μέσον αὐτοῦ
 δελφῖνες τῇ καὶ τῇ ἐθύνεον ἰχθυάοντες 210
 νηχομένοις ἵκελοι·] δοιὼ δ' ἀναφυσιόωντες
 ἀργύρεοι δελφῖνες ἐφοίβειον ἔλλοπας ἰχθύς.
 τῶν δ' ὑπο χάλκειοι τρέον ἰχθύες· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἀκτῆς

-
- 202 διὸς καὶ λητοῦς BPS Π₃₉: λητοῦς καὶ διὸς bJF 203–4 secl. Goettling, 203 θεῶν — 205
 ἀγῶνι Bauermeister 203 δ' ἔδος: ἔδος J: τ' ἔδος S: θ' ἔδος V ἀγνὸν -ον J:
 locum spurium velut corruptum sanare frustra conantur viri docti 206 λιγὺν om. S
 versuum 207–13 loco quattuor versus contracti leguntur post *Il.* 18.596–608 in Π₃₄ 207 εὖορμος —
 208 κυκλ. om. Π₃₄ 208 πανέφθου et Σ Et^G Tittm s.v.: εανου Π₃₄ (ex *Il.* 18.613) 209 πολλοὶ —
 211 ἵκ. non hab. Π₃₄ (expunxerat Peppmüller) 209 αὐτῆς J 210 in ἰχθυάοντες
 desinit V 211 δοιὼ Π₃₄: -οὶ ο ἀμφυσιόωντες P 212 ἐφοίβειον
 Von der Mühlh: ἐ]φοίβειον Π₃₄: ἐφοίβον (sic) F: ἐφοίτων cett. Σ^Z Et^G s.v. ἔλλοψ: ἐφοίμεον West:
 ἐθoinῶντ' Ranke 213 τοῦ δ' Π₃₄ δ' om. b θεόν P ἐπ' ἀκτῆς
 Peppmüller: ἐπ' ἀκταῖς ο (επακτις B) Et^G s.v. ἀμφίβληστρον

ἔζετ' ἀνὴρ ἀλιεὺς δεδοκημένος, εἶχε δὲ χερσὶν
 ἰχθύσιν ἀμφίβληστρον ἀπορρίποντι ἐοικώς. 215
 ἐν δ' ἦν ἠυκόμου Δανάης τέκος, ἱππότη Περσεύς,
 οὔτ' ἄρ' ἐπιψαύων σάκεος ποσὶν οὔθ' ἐκὰς αὐτοῦ,
 θαῦμα μέγα φράσσασθ', ἐπεὶ οὐδαμῇ ἐστήρικτο.
 τὼς γάρ μιν παλάμαις τεῦξεν κλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις,
 χρύσειον· ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶν ἔχεν πτερόεντα πέδιλα· 220
 ὥμοισιν δὲ μιν ἀμφὶ μελάνδετον ἄορ ἔκειτο
 χαλκεῖον ἐκ τελαμῶνος· ὃ δ' ὥς τε νόημ' ἐποτᾶτο·
 πᾶν δὲ μετάφρενον εἶχε κάρη δεινοῖο πελώρου,
 Γοργοῦς· ἀμφὶ δὲ μιν κίβισις θέε, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι,
 ἀργυρέη· θύσανοι δὲ κατηιωρέοντο φαινοί 225
 χρύσειοι· δεινὴ δὲ περὶ κροτάφοισι ἄνακτος
 κεῖτ' Ἄιδος κυνὴ νυκτὸς ζόφον αἰνὸν ἔχουσα.
 αὐτὸς δὲ σπεύδοντι καὶ ἐρρίγοντι ἐοικώς
 Περσεὺς Δαναΐδης ἐτιταίνετο· ταὶ δὲ μετ' αὐτόν
 Γοργόνες ἅπλητοί τε καὶ οὐ φαταὶ ἐρρώοντο 230
 ἰέμεναι μαπέειν· ἐπὶ δὲ χλωροῦ ἀδάμαντος

214 ἔζετ' ἀνὴρ Bentley: ἦστο ἀνὴρ ο: ἦστ' ἀνὴρ Schulze: ἀνὴρ ἦσθ' Gerhard χειρὶ Et^G
 215 ἀπορρίπαντι Et^G A (deest B) 219 τεῦχεν B 221 ὠμοισ]ιν δε μιν et Π₅₃: δέ οἱ
 dubitans Goettling, δ' ὃ μὲν Hermann, γε μὲν Ranke 222 χάλκεον bS νόημα
 ποτᾶτο BJF 225 κατηιωρέοντο scripsi: -εῦντο ο 230 ἅπληστοι Et^G A
 (deest B) s.v. μαπέειν φατοὶ b 231 ἐπὶ — 236 δερκομένω postea inserta cens. Deiters

βαινουσέων ἰάχεσκε σάκος μεγάλῳ ὀρυμαγδῷ

ὄξεα καὶ λιγέως· ἐπὶ δὲ ζώνησι δράκοντε

δοιῶ ἀπηιωρέοντ' ἐπικυρτώνοντε κάρηνα·

λίχμαζον δ' ἄρα τῷ γε, μένει δ' ἐχάρασσον ὀδόντας 235

ἄγρια δερκομένῳ· ἐπὶ δὲ δεινοῖσι καρήνοισι

Γοργείοις ἐδονεῖτο μέγας φόβος.

232 βαινουσάων J

233 δράκοντες bJS

234 ἀπηιωρέοντ' scripsi: ἀπηιωρέοντο

Monac. gr. 283 (m. sec.) teste Ranke: -εὔντ' ο

ἐπικυρτόνοντε mL: -όεντε B: -ώεντα S

235 λίχμαζον m: -σον RLS^{ac}: -σσον (σσ in ras.) F: αιχμασ(σ)ον vario accentu et spiritu BJS^{pe}Σ^{Zyp}

236 ἐπὶ δεινοῖσιν δὲ S

COMMENTARY ON 139–237

139–43. Introduction to the shield.

139–40. **χερσί:** Herakles takes up the divine shield in both hands. The poet had altered the traditional arming sequence so as to effect a smooth transition to the ecphrasis (§II.2.i). But this presents him with a logistical problem, since Herakles, now wearing his helmet, can no longer pass his shield-strap (τελαμών) over his shoulders and secure the shield to his body; instead he must grasp the shield in his hands. But the poet creates a further problem: Herakles enters combat carrying a spear as well (135, 417, 462), and the poet implies that he is still holding it at 139. Herakles therefore ought to have only *one* hand available for the shield, and since χε(ι)ρί and χερσί are frequently confused in manuscripts (199n.), we might be tempted to read χεῖρί. Yet this would be mistaken: the plural is to be retained, since the poet lets us understand that the spear has been temporarily released from the hero's hand. All this is in keeping with his omissive narrative style (§II.1.i) and relaxed attitude towards *Realien* (§II.2.i).

The use of *two* hands also serves a literary end: the shield is an impressive object, and in epic such objects are commonly imagined to be heavy even for a mighty personage to bear, cf. *Il.* 16.140–1 ἔγχος ... ἰβριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν (Achilles) (~ *Il.* 5.745–7, 8.389–91, *Od.* 1.99–101; Athena), 22.328 μέλιη ... χαλκοβάρεϊα (Achilles). By making the doughty Herakles use both hands for this manoeuvre, the poet stresses the epic status of the object; ‘ad praegravem clypeum ex curru tollendum opus Herculi fuit ambabus manibus’ (van Lennep).

γε μὲν: this combination, which here has a progressive force ('and then'), is found also at 5, 50, 171, [209], [260] (dub. lect.), 282, [283], 288, [298], 300, 301 (not all with the same progressive sense). Most manuscripts here have γε μὴν, which editors including Rzach and Solmsen prefer. However, γε μὴν—a favourite with Xenophon but otherwise quite uncommon (Denniston (1954) 347–9)—is unknown to Homer, and the next instance of progressive γε μὴν in poetic diction is Phryn. *TrGF* 3 F 14, where (as also in this passage) it is not metrically guaranteed. Since there are metrically secure examples of γε μέν in the *Aspis*, it is to be preferred here.

σάκος: despite the poem's title Ἀσπίς, σάκος is the only word used in reference to Herakles' shield throughout the poem (139, 217, 232, 315, 319, 414, 455); all other shields in the poem are also σάκος (24, 334, 363, 460), with the exception of Kyknos' ἄσπις (417). Throughout the Homeric ecphrasis Achilles' shield is σάκος, not ἄσπις (though cf. *Il.* 18.458). It is usually held that the two words originally denoted different types of shield—the body-shield (σάκος) and the circular shield (ἄσπις)—but that they were for Homer synonymous metrical alternatives; cf. Janko on *Il.* 13.130–1, and for further bibl. Bershadsky (2010) 2 n. 8. Certainly the poet imagines Herakles' shield as round (141 κύκλωι, 314 ἵτυν), and for him σάκος and ἄσπις are not two physically distinct types of shield.

Is there, then, in early epic a semantic difference between σάκος and ἄσπις? Bershadsky (2010) argues that if in the *Iliad* a σάκος and an ἄσπις appear in the same scene, the σάκος is the victor's armament, the ἄσπις that of the vanquished. As she concedes, this is not an invariable rule, and the exceptions to it must be explained away with sometimes fanciful reasoning. Bershadsky nonetheless believes that the σάκος/ἄσπις distinction holds true for the *Aspis*. It does indeed apply to the Herakles–Kyknos duel (Herakles' shield is consistently a

σάκος, whereas Kyknos' shield is an ὄσπις on its one appearance, 417). But it does not hold for either of the Herakles–Ares combats: the defeated Ares has a σάκος, which is supposed to render its bearer invulnerable, both in the encounter recalled by Herakles and in the main narrative (363, 460). Bershadsky (2010) 23 suggests that the breach of the convention is 'meant to emphasize the extraordinary nature of Heracles' accomplishment as well as his invincibility'. This is unconvincing, and it seems unsafe to make such inferences when our sample is so small. Probably in fact the poet was not aware of and did not observe the distinction formulated by Bershadsky, a distinction that unquestionably breaks down in later poetry. The power of tradition is not absolute: poets will have varied from one another. Cf. n. 55.

παναίολον: a conventional Iliadic epithet of weapons (6×), used once of a shield (13.552); αἰόλος is applied to a shield at *Il.* 7.222 and 16.107 (both times Aias'). It signifies not merely sheen but variegation, cf. Pfeiffer on Call. fr. 575; it thus prepares us for the rich array of materials and different colours detailed in the following verses.

The gleaming of arms marks out them and their bearer as exceptional: before his aristeia Agamemnon takes up a dazzling spear (*Il.* 11.43–6); Achilles' divinely made breastplate is φαινότερον πυρὸς αὐγῆς; and from the same hero's shield σέλας ἀπάνευθεν γένητ' ἥντε μήνης (*Il.* 18.610, 19.374). Cf. Kirk on *Il.* 3.335. Drawing attention to the shield's gleaming splendour serves also to create excitement: the description of its brilliance is deferred to the moment of delivery and is conveyed through human reactions; similarly, Apollonius Rhodius at the beginning of his ecphrasis of Jason's cloak draws attention to the brightness of the object and describes the viewer's response (*Arg.* 1.725–6). The *Iliad* does not mention the gleam of Achilles' shield during its manufacture, focussing instead on its bulk and durability

(*Il.* 18.478, 609 σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε). For the failure to mention Hephaistos here cf. §IV.2.i.

οὐδέ τις ... ἔθλασε: the shield is not merely attractive to look at but is a sturdy weapon, as befits its bearer; the poet here conveys, in an expanded form, the idea of the *Iliad's* μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε (see previous n.), a formula which is reserved for the conclusion of the shield description (319). ῥήγνυμι refers to piercing (cf. 415 ἔρρηξεν), θλάω to crushing or shattering with a rock or similar (hence it is a false reading at *Il.* 20.269). The shield is therefore comprehensively robust—and indeed it successfully withstands the two blows dealt against it in the course of the poem, both of which are inflicted with a spear-point (414–15, 453–5).

τις = any opponent of Herakles, and the aorists ἔρρηξε and ἔθλασε are most likely to be straightforwardly temporal: ‘no one ever broke or smashed the shield’, sc. despite the many blows it sustained in service. But there may be a potential force too, ‘no one could ever have broken the shield’; so already Guyet: ‘ἔρρηξε] perrupit, hoc est, perrumpere potuisset’ (but there is no need to reflect this grammatically by reading (with Voss (1838) 80) οὐτ’ ἄν ῥήξει). The poet is anticipating the triumph of the shield in the forthcoming narrative.

οὐδέ + ῥήξει σάκος is used of Achilles’ divine shield at *Il.* 20.267–8 and 21.164–5. The poet may have those passages in mind and thus be suggesting the comparability of Herakles’ shield to Achilles’. But the reference may be merely traditional, to a hypothetical epic formula ἄρρηκτον σάκος. This locution is not attested until Aeschylus (*Suppl.* 190), but it is used by Sophocles of Aias’ shield (*Aj.* 576 ἐπτάβοιον ἄρρηκτον σάκος). Bershadsky (2010) 22–3 suggests that ἄρρηκτον σάκος is an old epic formula because ‘it is unlikely that Sophocles is just echoing a phrase coined by Aeschylus’. This is not necessarily true (for example, Aesch.

Cho. 585–93 is closely imitated by Sophocles and Euripides: see Garvie ad loc.), but Sophocles' ἐπτάβοιον, being an obvious allusion to Aias' epic σάκος ἐπταβόειον (5× *Il.*), increases the probability that ἄρρηκτον σάκος is an allusion to epic language.

θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι: this is accumulative, not explanatory, as 141 γάρ shows: the shield is a marvel to behold, not because it is unbreakable, but because of its wondrous decoration. For μὲν γάρ explaining a phenomenon cf. *Od.* 7.84ff.: Alkinoos' house shone like the sun or the moon, χάλκαιοι μὲν γὰρ τοῖχοι ἐληλέδατ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κτλ.

Herakles' shield was a marvel to behold for anyone who saw it: the poet does not specify the focaliser—the presumed viewer is anyone who could see the shield in the time of Herakles³²⁹—and the same neutral formulation of the phrase is used at 224 (cf. 166), and indeed wherever else it occurs in early epic (from *Iliad* 18 note 83 and 377), with only a few exceptions: at 218 the suspended Perseus is θαῦμα μέγα φράσσασθ', i.e. wondrous for the poet to relate, and at 318 the shield is θαῦμα ἰδεῖν καὶ Ζηνὶ βαρυκτύπῳ (the wonder of the supreme god at this artefact, revealed to us only at the end of the ecphrasis, crowns its status as a remarkable object, and associates Zeus with Herakles shortly before battle is actually joined); cf. also *Dem.* 10–11, *Th.* 588–9. These specifications heighten audience engagement and provide welcome *variatio*, and each serves a specific function within the ecphrasis.

141–3. The poet first lists the materials from which the shield was made, and then moves on to the decoration of the individual 'zones'. The *Iliad* likewise details the constituent materials of the shields of Achilles and Agamemnon (18.474–7, 11.32–5) before turning to their ornamentation. The materials that the poet specifies at the outset are τίτανος, ἐλέφας, ἥλεκτρον, χρυσός, and perhaps also κύανος and ἀδάμας (for the last two see 143 and 144

³²⁹ I make this additional qualification because the poet conceives of the shield as an object in the distant past which has not survived to the present day; hence the past tenses throughout to describe what was on the shield (cf. 146n.).

nn.). The identities of ἑλέφας and χρυσός are unproblematic, but the other substances are far less certain (cf. nn. below). No further mention is made in the poem of τίτανος, ἑλέφας, ἥλεκτρον, or (probably) κύανος (unless 167 and 249 are to be taken in this sense); conversely, the poet specifies elsewhere that parts of the decoration are in silver (183, 188, 212, 225, [295], [299]), tin (208), and bronze (213, 222, 243; cf. 415 as transmitted), despite not mentioning any of these metals at the outset. The poet supplies us with detail and information only as need arises.

The method of colouration in *Iliad* 18 is *Metallmalerei*: different alloys with different tints are used, and incision, together perhaps with nielloing (i.e. filling incisions in metal with a blue-black metallic alloy), creates further variations in hue; cf. Gray (1954). In part, this technique of ‘painting in metal’ must be what the poet has in mind for Herakles’ shield. But Achilles’ shield is entirely metallic, whereas Herakles’ contains τίτανος and ἑλέφας (which are certainly not metallic) together with ἥλεκτρον and perhaps κύανος (which may or may not be metallic). The best parallel for such a combination is the purple-painted χρυσελεφαντήλεκτροι ἄσπίδες mentioned at Plu. *Tim.* 31;³³⁰ we wish we knew more about these fourth-century shields, and in particular the nature of their ἥλεκτρον (cf. 142n.).

In 141–3 the poet is describing the surface of the shield (though not, in my view, with 143 κύανου ... ἠλήλαντο), not its finer decoration: he wishes to give only the overall impression (cf. 141 πᾶν). How in his mind do the non-metallic elements fit together physically with the metal ones? Perhaps τίτανος and ἑλέφας are inlaid (cf. 141n. λευκῶι τ’ ἐλέφαντι); if they are used in any of the scenes described by the poet, the only suitable such application for them would be in white teeth (146, 249). But translucent τίτανος is not right for this, and is

³³⁰ I owe this reference to Professor G. O. Hutchinson.

certainly less like enamel than is ἑλέφας. Moreover, if ἤλεκτρον here is indeed amber, it too finds no suitable application as a colouring for an ecphrastic item.

Although our poet had very likely seen elaborate ivory–metal decoration (cf. 141n. λευκῶι τ' ἑλέφαντι), I think that overall he has no clear idea of—or indeed profound interest in—how all these materials could in reality be harmoniously combined in a single object, which is even more spectacular than the shields mentioned in Plutarch (see above). Rather, his purpose in bringing together this fantastical conjunction of materials is to maximise the physical and literary splendour of Herakles' shield; cf. §II.2.i, esp. *ad fin.* It is not merely that the range of materials in the *Aspis* makes the object valuable: their lustre is suggestive of the supernatural; compare *Od.* 4.71–5, where Telemakhos declares that Menelaos' palace, which gleams with bronze, gold, ἤλεκτρον, silver, and ivory, must be the house of Zeus, and cf. 139–40n. παναίολον. Literary rivalry with the *Iliad* has led the poet to elaborate on the materials available for Achilles' shield, whose decoration is limited to metals (bronze, gold, silver, tin). The armament he gives to Herakles privileges style over substance.

141. κύκλωι: i.e. ἐν κύκλωι, as at *Od.* 8.278 and often with μέσσωι (*Il.* 3.416, 7.277, etc.). The poet has awkwardly placed κύκλωι next to a series of datives to which it is not related. Editors often censure or seek to eliminate such clumsy collocations, cf. e.g. Eur. *Alc.* 32–4, as emended by Monk (cf. L. P. E. Parker *ad loc.*; Diggle (1981) 44); Erucius *AP* 7.397.6 = *Garl. Phil.* 2249, with Gow–Page. In my view, no such remedy should be sought here: the juxtaposition is the poet's own.

From κύκλωι it is evident that the poet imagines Herakles' shield to be round, like Achilles'; cf. on 139–40 σάκος. Schäfer (1868) VIII–IX argues laboriously and unconvincingly that the shield was oval-shaped.

τίτανωι: a white substance usually identified (following Hsch. τ 975–7) with gypsum (γύψος), although Σ p. 29 claim that it is a binding-paste containing egg. τίτανος is not found in Homer, although the locale Titanos (mentioned just once) is said, intriguingly, to have λευκὰ κάρηνα (*Il.* 2.734).³³¹ It next appears in Aeschylus (fr. 15a). Burkert (1992) 95 (also (2005) 33–4) has cautiously suggested that τίτανος is derived from Akkadian *ṭītu* ‘clay’; cf. Bremmer (2008) 86–7. If this derivation is correct, it becomes even more likely that the place Titanos was named after the raw material.

What is the τίτανος on Herakles’ shield? If we are right to identify it with γύψος, we are faced with a choice, for γύψος (like Lat. *gypsum*) can refer both to the untreated mineral and to the plaster obtained from it by heating; the two are confused even by the expert (Thphr. *Lap.* 64–9, with Eichholz (1967) 108). It is debated whether τίτανος in the present passage denotes a soft paste-like substance derived from cooking a hard rock, or whether the poet is instead referring to the untreated mineral; cf. Chiarini (2012) 50–3 for bibl.

In my view, the τίτανος on Herakles’ shield is some kind of hard decorative substance: the use of a soft white plaster on the shield surface would be impractical. The poet must mean a mineral. He may be thinking of gypsum alabaster, a translucent rock that was widely used in statuettes, pyxides, and similar objects; gypsum alabaster, when properly worked, ‘gains a silky or waxy sheen that is very lustrous’ (Rapp (2002) 123). Myres (1941) 21 suggests that it is steatite (soapstone), though he does not substantiate this theory. But it has much to commend it. Steatite is both soft and cohesive and is thus particularly suitable for intricate carving; it is convincingly identified with Theophrastus’ ‘Siphnian stone’, which is itself probably a less

³³¹ LSJ think that the substance was named after the place, but the converse is surely more likely, as Strabo (9.5.18, iii. 144 Radt) holds. LSJ presumably imagine that from Τίτανοιό τε λευκὰ κάρηνα someone understood that these were ‘white cliffs made of titanos’, but this is an improbable theory, given that an audience would be primed to hear place-names in the Catalogue of Ships.

pure form of the ‘magnetis’ (talc) that Theophrastus also mentions; both rocks were soft enough to be turned on a lathe (Thphr. *Lap.* 41–2, cf. Plin. *HN* 36.159). The presence of talc gives steatite a pearly or silvery lustre, which would make it attractive in an inlay. For further mineralogical discussion see Moore (1859) 156, 181–2; Rapp (2002) 120–3. Myres’ steatite thus looks a promising candidate, although certainty is not possible.

We can conclude that for the poet τίτανος denotes an attractive translucent white mineral. The wondrous use of this substance in a metallic inlay adds to the exceptional aura of Herakles’ shield. As mentioned already, neither gypsum nor steatite is an especially hard substance: the poet is concerned in the first place to give Herakles a shield that is decorative (141–3n. *ad fin.*). This unusual material is mentioned first, perhaps in order to arrest the audience’s attention.

λευκῶι τ’ ἐλέφαντι: ivory, known already to the Mycenaeans, was largely an ornamental material, as in its several appearances in the Linear B tablets (cf. Ventris–Chadwick (1973), index s.v. ‘ivory’) and in Homer (cf. Lorimer (1934) 14–33; Carter (1985) 7–21; *Hom. Encycl.* s.v.). Ivory’s relative hardness made it suitable for practical applications, such as horse-trappings (*Il.* 4.141, 5.583), cf. Lorimer (1950) 507–8, Lapatin (2001) 7–21. It is therefore less strange than steatite as a component of the shield.

Moreover, even before the advent of chryselephantine statuary, ivory was combined with precious metals in decorative objects, as at *Od.* 4.73 and 23.200; the Chest of Kypselos combined figures fashioned in ivory, gold, and cedarwood (Paus. 5.17.5). Lapatin (2001) 46 gives further early examples of the combination of ivory and precious metals in decorative contexts. Certainly a sixth-century poet could have gazed upon and been inspired by such

objects. Whether we think that the poet here imagines an ivory–metal mixture depends on our interpretation of ἤλεκτρον (142n.) and our view of 143.

The monetary value of ivory in the Greek world is difficult to determine, but its symbolic value at any rate was always high, cf. Lapatin (2001) 13–16; its presence makes Herakles' shield still more extraordinary. Moreover, to the mind of a poet, (undyed) ivory can represent the ideal of white sheen, as at *Od.* 18.196 λευκοτέρην ... πριστοῦ ἐλέφαντος (of the beautified Penelope); for later examples see Caubet (1989). That whiteness was a desirable quality for a warrior's shield is shown by the epithet λεύκασπις (first at *Il.* 22.294, cf. Richardson ad loc.). The ivory thus contributes to the visual splendour of the shield (cf. 139–40n. παναίολον). In the present passage whiteness is the quality to which attention is explicitly drawn, as at *Il.* 5.583 ἥνία λεύκ' ἐλέφαντι. However, since it is opaque, the ivory on the shield does not duplicate the visual effect of the pearlescent τίτανος (see previous n.).

142. ἤλεκτροι: ἤλεκτρον may denote either 'amber' or 'electrum' (gold–silver alloy), the common denominator being their yellowish colour. ἤλεκτρον is also cognate with ἠλέκτωρ 'the shining one' (= the sun) (*DELG* s.v. ἠλέκτωρ): amber gleams subtly, while electrum can be dazzling. Either substance would contribute to the poet's scheme of creating a visual marvel for us to imagine.

Which of amber and electrum is meant? Often in early poetry a choice is impossible. 'Amber' will fit the three occurrences of the word in the *Odyssey*, although at 4.73 it could equally well be the metal (cf. S. West ad loc., *contra* Gray (1954) 1 n. 4); at [Hes.] fr. 150.24 it is unquestionably amber. In the present passage it is uncertain which substance is intended. Virgil (*Aen.* 8.402, 624), echoing these lines, evidently took ἤλεκτρον to be the metal; so too probably Callimachus (fr. 75.31), although Harder ad loc. (who provides a helpful discussion

of the whole amber/electrum problem that is not limited to Callimachus) thinks that Callimachus intentionally left the sense open-ended.

Herakles' shield is a work of art as well as a weapon (cf. 141n. τιτάνωι), and of the materials mentioned in 141–3 none has been selected primarily for its practical use; in such a context amber, which is visually appealing but which has a low hardness rating, is not out of place. Moreover, Deroy–Halleux (cf. next n.) observe that ὑπολαμπές suits amber better than it does electrum. ὑπολαμπές refers to all three materials so far mentioned (τίτανος, ivory, and ἤλεκτρον), and the epithet does seem apposite for the idea of subtle luminescence (probably it does not also refer to gleaming gold, see 143n.). Also in favour of the interpretation 'amber' is the structure of the run τιτάνωι ... ἔην, which suggests that the three substances mentioned in it constitute a coherent group; only in the next clause, after ἔην, is a metallic element brought in, together with a different type of visual spectacle (φαεινῶι, λαμπόμενον).

ὑπολαμπές: here only, although the verb is not uncommon. Perhaps the poet articulated ὑπολαμπομενάων at *Il.* 18.492 thus, rather than as (δαΐδων) ὕπο λαμπομενάων, and drew from this his inspiration to use (coin?) ὑπολαμπής.

The meaning of ὑπολαμπές is probably 'subtly shining', the ὑπο- being attenuative (so van Lennep; Deroy–Halleux (1974) 45). P has ἐπιλαμπές (another *hapax*); the sense would then be 'shining brightly' (like ἐπίλαμπρος). But even if correct, this variant is simply a happy accident, as ἐπι- and ὑπο- are frequently confused in manuscripts (Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 69f., supplemented by Diggle (1981) 40), and an original ἐπι- is unlikely to have survived only here in the tradition.

For the possibility that Apollonius Rhodius echoed this line see 147n. ἐπὶ δὲ βλοσυροῖο μετώπου.

143. First deleted by Heyne in his edition of the *Iliad*, and ignored by the (subsequently discovered) *Mutina scholia* (Σ^Z). *Pace* e.g. Deiters (1858) 60–1 and Paley, the repetitious ὑπολαμπές ... λαμπόμενον does not imply interpolation but is wholly in our poet’s style, cf. §II.1.v. If we retain the verse, an advantage is that there is a separate adjective, λαμπόμενον, to attach to the gold: the shield was *subtly shining* (ὑπολαμπές, cf. previous n.) with τίτανος, ivory, and ἤλεκτρον, whereas it was simply *shining* (λαμπόμενον) with gold; ὑπολαμπές is ill-suited to gold, whereas λαμπόμενον is apposite. However, for φαεινῶι Peppmüller (1893) 3 suggests φαεινόν, agreeing with πᾶν, which would provide the contrast we need.

The main objection raised against the line is the apparently nonsensical **κυάνου πτύχες**, seemingly ‘layers of blue enamel’. First we must deal with κύανος (Myc. *ku-wa-no*, Hitt. *kuwanna*), for which our main source is Theophrastus. He records (*Lap.* 55) that it may denote several substances: the gemstone lapis lazuli, the crystalline azurite substitute for the gemstone (used as an enamel or pigment), and niello (for which see 141–3n.); cf. the bibliography at Deacy–Villing (2009) 116 n. 29. κύανος appears only a few times in Homer:

- (i) on Agamemnon’s breastplate it is distributed in ten οἶμοι interlaced with(?) twelve of gold and twenty of tin (*Il.* 11.24); on the shield a single central ὀμφαλός of κύανος is surrounded by twenty of tin (11.35). In both passages the darkness of κύανος is made explicit by the epithet μέλας. This κύανος is probably a dark metallic alloy (‘niello’ is perhaps too specific), the black providing an attractive counterpoint to the lighter metals.
- (ii) in Alkinoos’ palace a cornice of κύανος is found among decorations of bronze, gold, and silver (*Od.* 7.87). The blue-inlay frieze at Tiryns (cf. Helbig (1884) 79–83) has persuaded many that Homer has in mind a blue enamel.

But this is not certain: Carpenter (1946) 30–1 observes that when in Homer κύανος is used in reference to colour, the sense is always ‘dark’ (not azure), and more broadly he contests the legitimacy of the parallel between Alkinoos’ θριγκός and the Tiryns frieze.

- (iii) In Nestor’s hut Hekamede sets down a τράπεζαν | καλὴν κυανόπεζαν ἐύξοον (*Il.* 11.628–9); in the Pylos tablets we hear of *ku-wa-no* being used in furniture inlay (Ventris–Chadwick (1973) 332–5), and most scholars assume that blue enamel is intended both on the tablets and in the *Iliad*. Again, however, we cannot be certain.

Lapis lazuli, an exotic substance, would be a truly splendid adornment to Herakles’ shield; but, as well as its impracticality, it is difficult to reconcile with διελαύνω (cf. below). Chiarini (2012) 54–60 accepts the theory of Giumlia-Mair–Craddock (1993) that the original meaning of κύανος is a dark, copper-based alloy not unlike Japanese ‘shakudo’,³³² used for damascening (that is, encrusting one metal with another); the association of κύανος with lapis lazuli is, according to Chiarini, secondary, and it should not be introduced from Theophrastus into early poetry. The argument is persuasive. What, then, are πτύχες of this metal, and how are they related to the structure of the shield?

On etymological grounds we expect πτύχες to be folds of some sort, and in Homer πτύχες are always the cross-sectional *layers* of a shield (e.g. *Il.* 7.219–23, 7.247, 12.295–7, 13.804). The only ambiguous passage is the introduction to the ecphrasis of Achilles’ shield (*Il.* 18.478–82):

³³² Giumlia-Mair–Craddock also identify κύανος with *Corinthium aes* (cf. Plin. *HN* 34.6–8, etc.), but this is convincingly refuted by Jacobson–Weitzman (1995) (overlooked by Chiarini).

ποίει δὲ πρῶτιστα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε
 πάντοσε δαιδάλλων, περὶ δ' ἄντυγα βάλλε φαιινήν
 τρίπλακα μαρμαρέην, ἐκ δ' ἀργύρεον τελαμῶνα.
 πέντε δ' ἄρ' αὐτοῦ ἔσαν σάκεος πτύχες· αὐτὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ
 ποίει δαίδαλα πολλὰ ἰδυίησι πραπίδεσσιν.

Scholars disagree whether 481 refers to cross-sectional *layers* (presumably of leather, though see below) or instead to overlapping *strips* on the surface of Achilles' shield; cf. Edwards (1991) 201–2, Fittschen (1973) 6–7. The matter is complicated by 20.269–72, where the πτύχες of 18.481 are evidently taken to be transverse layers: Aineias' spear enters Achilles' shield and passes through two πτύχες of bronze before being stopped in the third, which is of gold; two πτύχες of tin remain, ἐπεὶ πέντε πτύχας ἤλασε κυλλοποδίων. But 20.269–72 are inapt and were suspect in antiquity: the verses take χρυσός (268) as 'the gold layer', whereas the poet's meaning seems rather to be 'the golden shield' (so Edwards); a rhapsode who did not understand the text before him sought to explain how 'the gold' stopped the spear by appealing to a technique of shield-construction that he knew from elsewhere in Homer, from passages such as *Il.* 7.245–8:

καὶ βάλεν Αἴαντος δεινὸν σάκος ἑπταβόειον
 ἀκρότατον κατὰ χαλκόν, ὃς ὄγδοος ἦεν ἐπ' αὐτῷ.
 ἔξ δὲ διὰ πτύχας ἦλθε δαΐζων χαλκὸς ἀτειρής,
 ἐν τῇ δ' ἐβδομάτῃ ρίνῳι σχέτο.

Many modern scholars have understood our πτύχες as *concentric bands*, encircled by Okeanos (314–17); they compare the οἶμοι on Agamemnon's corselet (*Il.* 11.24) and the χῶραι on the Chest of Kypselos (Paus. 5.17.9). Ped. p. 625.7–8 paraphrases the verse as συμμάδες ('channels') δὲ μέλανος (κυάνου) διὰ μέσου τοῦ χαλκοῦ ἐγγεγραμμέναι ἦσαν, and similarly Myres (1941) 21 believes that our πτύχες are grooves prepared to receive an inlay. But to ascribe the meaning 'band' or 'groove' to a word whose fundamental sense is

‘fold’ is arbitrary. In my view, πτύχες in Homer are always *layers*, even at *Il.* 18.481, which I take as a reference to the leather substructure of Achilles’ shield; the poet of 20.269–72 made the mistake of assuming that these layers were of metal, and he derived his three metals from 18.474–5. I do not see how the πτύχες at *Aspis* 143 could be bands, and still less how one can translate ‘plates’ (Most).

Moreover, meanings alleged for πτύχες besides ‘layers’ are hard to reconcile with **διὰ ... ἐλήλαντο**. Schwarz (1932) 43 takes διελαύνω as *ducere per aliquid*, translating the whole verse as *zoniae ex caeruleo factae per scutum ductae erant* (‘bands of kyanos had been drawn through the shield’). He bases this on the fact that in Homer ἐλαύνω can signify ‘draw (a wall or trench)’ (as at *Od.* 7.86, quoted at 139–40n. θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι); but this would be unparalleled for διελαύνω, and διὰ for ‘around’ is still odd (περί would be an easy emendation). Chiarini argues that if we take κύανος as a metal, and διελαύνω as ‘superimpose’ (into πτύχες), then all is clear: Herakles’ shield was built up on layers of metallic discs, and on top of these layers was the decorative surface described at 141–2. But again this translation of διελαύνω is baseless. Rather, we need to look to another sense of ἐλαύνω, ‘hammer out metal’ (LSJ s.v. III.1; cf. s.vv. ἐξελαύνω III, ἐξήλατος). We should understand διελήλαντο as ‘had been hammered out’ (the δια- being either intensifying or merely redundant) and take the verse as a loose appendage to the rest of the sentence, whose construction changes rather abruptly at κυάνου: ‘and layers of kyanos had been beaten out’, sc. by Hephaistos when making the shield.³³³ The purpose of the clause is to give us an extra detail about the construction of the shield, much like *Il.* 18.481 (on my interpretation). *Aspis* 143 is indeed probably a conscious

³³³ Cf. Welcker (1818) 558: ‘Sind den aber die Hesiodischen πτύχες nichts anders als die Schichten des Schilds, so ist die Stelle so zu fassen: Der ganze Schild strahlte im Kreis von Gyps [...], von Elfenbein, von Elektron, von Gold; (davon, nach einer nicht lobenswerthen Inversion, und) von blauem Stahl waren die Schichten.’ Similarly Graevius.

variatio of *Il.* 18.481, completely in our poet's style: the construction is altered from its Homeric model; a more 'exciting' verb is used; and an interesting, non-Homeric material is specified. I therefore think that 143 is genuine; the poet's motive for composing it was to establish yet another link with the shield of Achilles and, as usual, to surpass his model.

This metallic (rather than leather) core would make Herakles' shield very heavy, but the author of *Il.* 20.269–72 felt no qualms about giving Achilles' shield a weighty structure of five transverse metallic πτύχες, and the poet of the *Aspis* may indeed have felt that the heaviness of the object added to its heroic status (139–40n. χερσί). The Iliadic verses are clearly an early rhapsodic interpolation, and I think that they were known to our poet: they are his authority for a shield made up of superimposed layers of metal, and the fact that it is Achilles' shield is significant. Indeed, the appearance of διελαύνω in the *Aspis* may be a reminiscence of *Il.* 20.269–72, since the verb is used there (although with a different sense), ἀλλὰ δύω μὲν ἔλασσε διὰ πτύχας; the verb is not uncommon in the *Iliad*, however, and so this point cannot be pressed. Yet if the poet of the *Aspis* included 143 under the influence of *Il.* 20.269–72, we have valuable incidental evidence for the textual state of the *Iliad* in the early sixth century.

144–67. The central zone.

This is textually one of the most difficult parts of the poem. The main problems are:

- (i) the reading in 144;
- (ii) the relationship of the central image to 161–7;
- (iii) the authenticity of 150 = 163; 151–3; and 156–60.

Details are reserved for discussion *ad locc.* In my view, neither reading in 144 can be made to square entirely with the rest of 144–67, but δ' ἀδάμαντος is original. The primitive text—i.e. the poet's final version (§II.7.ii)—ran as follows:

ἐν μέσσωι δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην Φόβος οὐ τι φατειός,	144
ἔμπαλιν ὅσσοισιν πυρὶ λαμπομένοισι δεδορκώς·	145
τοῦ καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν πλῆτο στόμα λευκαθεόντων,	
δαινῶν, ἀπλήτων, ἐπὶ δὲ βλοσυροῖο μετώπου	
δεινὴ Ἔρις πεπότητο κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἀνδρῶν·	
σχέτλιος, ὅς ῥα νόον τε καὶ ἐκ φρένας εἴλετο φωτῶν	
οἵτινες ἀντιβίην πόλεμον Διὸς νῆι φέροιεν.	150
ἐν δὲ Προΐωξίς τε Παλίωξίς τε τέτυκτο,	154
ἐν δ' Ὀμαδός τε Φόνος τ' Ἀνδροκτασίη τε δεδήει.	155
ἐν δ' ὀφίων κτλ.	161

In 144 δὲ δράκοντος is a very early corruption, undoubtedly encouraged by 161–7. 145 accords best with a serpent but also with a Phobos (so it need not postdate δὲ δράκοντος). 149–50 originally referred to the activity of Phobos, but the masculine forms were corrupted to the feminine through assimilation to Eris: masculines must be restored. 151–3 are most likely an interpolation, as are 156–60. However, 150 and 154–5 should stay. 161–7 are not a pale echo of the central motif, if the central motif is a Phobos; indeed, they cohere thematically with a Gorgon, and so I regard them as organic to the original conception.

Once the text is stripped of later accretions, we see that the figures described in 144–55 form a coherent group, and it is a group inspired by the description of the aegis at *Il.* 5.739–42 (quoted at 144n. (vii)). We have the same order of Phobos and Eris, and the abstractions at *Aspis* 154–5 function as an expansion of the *Iliad's* Alke and Ioke. Cf. 144n. Φόβος.

144–53. Phobos and Eris.

144. ἐν μέσσωι: the central motif of a shield serves to identify the bearer and to terrify the enemy, and beginning from the most striking part of the object is thus a natural procedure (n. 271).

Most new tableaux described in the *Aspis* are introduced by ἐν + ἦν (*vel sim.*) (144, 161, 168, 178, 201, 214) or ἐν + pluperfect passive (207) of a verb of manufacture; cf. 191 ἐν ... ἔστασαν, 197, 204 ἐν (no verb). But there are also precise indications of spatial arrangement (141, 237, 314). On the contrast with *Iliad* 18 cf. §IV.3.i with n. 300.

δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην Φόβος: 'there was a Phobos made of adamant'; for the metal cf. 231n. The reading has no manuscript support: δὲ δράκοντος ἔην φόβος is reading of all the manuscripts, Σ^{par} p. 51, and Ped. p. 625.8–11; it would mean 'there was a terrifying serpent'. For δράκοντος φόβος as a periphrasis for φοβερὸς δράκων Russo (who accepts the manuscript reading) compares Eur. *Ph.* 1120 λέοντος δέρος = λάσιος λέων, but the text is not secure (cf. Mastronarde ad loc.). A better parallel is Eur. *HF* 700 δείματα θηρῶν = θῆρας φοβερούς (Russo, *Addenda* p. 219), cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 586 δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχη = δείματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀλγεινά. With δὲ δράκοντος the ε must remain light before δρακ-, but this is the invariable prosody with δρακ- in the epos and it is indeed our poet's own practice (*Aspis* 166, 233), being a relic of the syllabic *r*. Van Lennep and Rzach infer from Ovid's description of a snake at *Met.* 3.33–4, *igne micant oculi, ... triplici stant ordine dentes*, that he read δὲ δράκοντος; but the parallel is certainly not decisive.

Σ p. 30, however, have the following note: φόβος οὐ τι φατειός] ἐνταῦθα σωματοποιεῖ τὸν φόβον, ὥς ἂν ἐν τῷ μέσσωι ἐξ ἀδάμαντος ἦν, οὐδαμῶς δυνάμενος ῥηθῆναι. This points to a reading δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην Φόβος, which is explicitly signalled as a γράφεται-variant by

Σ^z and which has been overwhelmingly preferred by scholars since the mid-nineteenth century. The scholia vetera to the *Aspis* preserve traces of ancient scholarship (§III.3.iii; also the remarks following the Sigla), and δ' ἀδάμαντος is clearly a pre-medieval reading. The scholia's reading cannot, however, be supported by reference to 229, where the Gorgons are said to run ἐπὶ χλωροῦ ἀδάμαντος, i.e. across the adamantine surface of Herakles' shield: as with silver, bronze, and tin (cf. 141–3n.), it is not true that a mention of a substance in the ecphrasis requires advance preparation (and in any case, only the Phobos would be of adamant).

Possibly Philostratus read δ' ἀδαμάντος, for at *Her.* 692.32ff. he compares *Il.* 11.36–7 to the inferior analogous passage in the *Aspis*:

ἐρμηνεύων γὰρ οὗτός (sc. Hesiod) ποτε τὴν τοῦ Κύκνου (sic) ἀσπίδα, τὸ τῆς
Γοργοῦς εἶδος ὑπτίως τε καὶ οὐ ποιητικῶς ἤισεν, ὅθεν ἐπιστρέφων αὐτὸν ὁ
Ὅμηρος
τῇ δ' ἐπὶ μὲν Γοργῶ βλοσυρῶπις ἔστεφάνωτο
δεινὸν δερκομένη, περὶ δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε,
οὕτως τὴν Γοργῶ ᾔδει.

Since he does not quote the Hesiodic verses in question, most scholars assume that he has in mind *Aspis* 216–37; but 144–5 would be a closer parallel: note in particular that he speaks of a *singular* Gorgon, whereas at *Aspis* 216–37 there is a multiplicity of them.

Snakes, although not a Mycenaean decorative motif (Gray (1954) 8 n. 46), are a common device on Greek shields, in literature as in life (Chase (1902) 73–4, 119–21; Chiarini (2012) 63); on vases they appear quite often as the device on Kyknos' shield (cf. §III.3.i; 164–5n.). For snakes on literary shields cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 497, Eur. *Ph.* 1135, Virg. *Aen.* 7.658. What, though, would this **Φόβος** look like? Phobos appears later in the *Aspis* in an anthropomorphic guise (cf. (vi) below), and he is known to have received cult (cf. *LIMC*;

Calder (1963) 27–8);³³⁴ but beyond this, his status in the Greek pantheon is very marginal. The majority of scholars who opt for the scholia's reading understand the Phobos to be identical with the Gorgon, a common apotropaic motif in archaic weaponry from the late seventh century onwards (Burkert (1976) 19 n. 42; *LIMC* Gorgo, Gorgones). But the equation of Phobos with the Gorgon—argued for by Studniczka (1896) 58–62 and accepted by Weizsäcker (Roscher iii.2. 2386–95)—cannot be regarded as certain, not least because 'on extant monuments, only the anthropomorphic type [of Phobos] can be securely identified' (Shapiro (1993) 208); cf. *LIMC* Phobos. The identification Phobos = Gorgon is proposed largely on the basis that Gorgons are a popular shield device such as we might expect Herakles to have, and Phobos terrifies men much as does the Gorgon. 161–7 are also thought to cohere particularly well with a central Gorgon (cf. (iv) below and 161–7n.). Possibly significant is the presence in representations of the Kyknomachy of a Gorgon motif on the shield of Kyknos, a detail which may well be derived from the *Aspis* (§III.3.i), although that is such a common device that it would be dangerous to infer much from this.

The only other evidence for Phobos as a shield device that we have is the Chest of Kypselos, known to us indirectly through Pausanias (5.19.4): Φόβος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος τῇ ἀσπίδι ἔπεστιν, ἔχων τὴν κεφαλὴν λέοντος (cf. *Il.* 11.36–7, quoted at (vii) below). There is no chance that Pausanias misidentified the figure, since there was a label: οὗτος μὲν Φόβος ἐστὶ, βροτῶν [ἐστὶ βροτῶν edd. nonnulli: cf. Vollgraff (1933–4)] ὃ δ' ἔχων Ἀγαμέμνων. Sittl (1887) 183 takes the Phobos at the centre of Herakles' shield to be a lion-headed

³³⁴ Dawe (1972) emends Stes. fr. 166 so that Kyknos is building his temple of skulls in honour, not of Apollo (as transmitted), but of Phobos (Ἀπόλλωνι < Φοίβωι < Φόβωι), who may stand for Ares. Cf. Davies–Finglass (2014) 467, who 'would prefer not to have to adopt' Dawe's emendation. The author of the *Aspis* appears not to have known of the motif of the temple of skulls, for given his literary characteristics and intentions, 'we can be certain that he would have mentioned a temple of skulls had he heard of one' (Janko (1986) 57). For enemies of Herakles with similar tendencies to (Stesichorus) Kyknos cf. Janko (1986) 51.

anthropomorphic figure; but it is possible that Pausanias ‘was describing something like an archaic Gorgon with its basically lion mask’ (Boardman, *LIMC* VII.1, 393): in other words, the Kypselian Phobos may not truly have had a lion’s head. If correct, this would support the equation in the *Aspis* of Phobos and Gorgon, and it certainly allows us to dispense with the suggestion of Peppmüller (1893) 3 n. 1 of a *third* v.l. λέοντος in the *Aspis*. Schneider-Herrmann (1954) 61–2 also thinks of a lion-headed Phobos in profile, but the main evidence adduced in support, a proto-Corinthian lekythos, is weak.

If we wish to place a Gorgon at the centre of Herakles’ shield, we need to turn to literary and philological arguments. In the *Iliad* a Gorgon is found on Athena’s aegis (5.741–2) and on Agamemnon’s shield (11.36–7) (both quoted below under (vii)), and we can well imagine our poet wanting to create a point of contact between Herakles’ shield and those two impressive objects; the parallel between Herakles’ shield and the aegis would emphasise Herakles’ role as Zeus’ agent (§III.2.ii), and there is also a connection with Perseus (§IV.2.iii). Other arguments (principally those of Ranke) adduced in favour of the scholia’s reading are as follows:

- (i) it is appropriate for the poet, having said that the shield as a whole gleamed with various substances, to mention another of a different colour (grey); the indestructible adamant is moreover very suitable for the central boss.
- (ii) the emphasis on facial features in the following verses implies that only a head is depicted; it would not be possible to depict a snake’s head alone (161n.), so a Gorgon must be intended. This is not cogent: the poet could perfectly well imagine a snake depicted in full but describe only its face in detail.

- (iii) the Strife (or strife?) mentioned in 148 is a more natural accompaniment to an anthropomorphic abstraction than to a serpent; cf. 237.
- (iv) a snake here would be an unwelcome anticipation of 161–7, where a ring of twelve serpents is described. Conversely, a ring of twelve snakes would be a most appropriate accompaniment to a Gorgon's head (see 161–7n.). But Gorgons reappear in the poem too (216–37).
- (v) 149–50 (as emended below) are compatible only with Φόβος.

There are, however, certain advantages to keeping the manuscript reading:

- (vi) Reading δ' ἰδάμαντος obliges us to print Φόβος as a proper name. Phobos elsewhere in the *Aspis* acts together with Deimos as Ares' charioteer, evidently in human form (cf. 195–6n.). Homer allows the two distinct types to coexist in his poetic world (*Il.* 5.739; 4.440, 15.119). But within the compressed compass of the *Aspis*, and in particular within the same ecphrasis, is there really space for both? It depends how sensitive our poet was to these matters; I suspect not very, especially given that both types appear in the epic that he has constantly in mind.
- (vii) The Iliadic passages with which our poet wishes to establish a point of contact, (1) 5.738–42 and (2) 11.36–7, run in full as follows:

(1) ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὥμοισιν βάλετ' αἰγίδα θυσσανόεσσιν
 δεινὴν, ἣν περὶ μὲν πάντῃ Φόβος ἔστεφάνωται,
 ἐν δ' Ἑρις, ἐν δ' Ἀλκή, ἐν δὲ κρυόεσσα Ἰωκή,
 ἐν δέ τε Γοργεῖη κεφαλὴ δεινοῖο πελώρου
 δεινὴ τε σμερδνὴ τε, Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο.

(2) τῇ δ' ἐπὶ μὲν Γοργῶ βλοσυρῶπις ἔστεφάνωτο
 δεινὸν δερκομένη, περὶ δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε.

Far from supporting the equation of Phobos with the Gorgon, these passages show that they are—at least for the poet of the *Iliad*—distinct iconographical entities: the *Aspis* poet would not find a basis here for Phobos = Gorgon.

- (viii) Flashing eyes are characteristic of serpents, and ἔμπαλιν makes better sense of a sinuous serpent than it does of a Gorgon mask (145n.).

The arguments in favour of an adamantine Phobos seem to me far weightier than those for a serpent, and so I hold δ' ἀδάμαντος as the true reading.

οὐ τι φατειός: again at 161, *Th.* 310, and otherwise only Menophilus *SH* 558.6; cf. *Aspis* 230 οὐ φαταί. The sch. vet. to the *Theogony* passage explain the expression as οἶον οὐ ῥητὸν κατὰ ἀξίαν, ἢ οὐ φονεύσιμον· φάσαι γὰρ τὸ φονεῦσαι (cf. Apollon. Lex. 161.19, Hsch. φ 202, etc.), but the only possible meaning is ‘unspeakable’, i.e. too horrible to retail: the poet draws attention at the beginning of the ecphrasis to the paradox of describing that which is not to be spoken of; cf. Becker (1995) 36–40, and compare Virgil’s *non enarrabile textum* (*Aen.* 8.625). On the contrast of this phrase with the metrically identical οὐκ ὀνομαστός see Edwards (1971) 69–70.

145. ἔμπαλιν: if a snake is at the centre of the shield, this means ‘looking back towards its tail’; for this serpentine characteristic cf. e.g. Ov. *Met.* 3.68 *ille dolore ferox caput in sua terga retorsit*, Stat. *Theb.* 5.524–5 *aëra lambit | ore supinato*. But if we imagine instead a Gorgon, which is always frontally depicted, we must take ἔμπαλιν as ‘gazing back at the viewer’ (Studniczka (1896) 61–2). This interpretation is contested by Cook (1937) 206 n. 4 and Myres (1941) 23 n. 26, the latter with supporting examples of ἔμπαλιν = ‘backwards’, but it is a legitimate translation (cf. Schwarz (1932) 44).

ὄσσοισιν πυρὶ λαμπομένοισι δεδορκώς: cf. 72 (of Ares) πῦρ δ' ὥς ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπελάμπετο, *Il.* 19.16–17, 365–6 (interpolated?—see West (2001) 253–4). Serpents are often said to have eyes that burn with fire, cf. Gow on Theoc. *Id.* 24.18, West on *Th.* 826. δράκων, which semantically cannot be distinguished from ὄφις, is derived from **drk-*, the root of δέρκομαι: a serpent's gaze was its most distinctive and terrifying feature, cf. *Il.* 20.95, *Th.* 825–[8]; Snell (1953) 2–3. (For *Aspis* 236 ἄγρια δερκομένω cf. ad loc.) With δράκοντος in 144 we would also get an etymological play with δεδορκώς: the common root, which is recognised by grammarians (cf. Philox. Gramm. fr. 471 Theodoridis, with the editor's n.), is obvious from the aorist ἔδρακον.

Gorgon masks have prominent eyes, and attention is sometimes drawn to the monster's fierce look: *Il.* 8.349 (Hektor) Γοργοῦς ὄμματ' ἔχων, 11.36–7 Γοργῶ ... δεινὸν δερκομένη; cf. Watkins (1995) 447. I know of no explicit association of the Gorgon's eyes with fire, but 'a fiery look' is so common an idiom in epic for 'a terrifying look' (cf. esp. *Aspis* 72, quoted above) that there is no obstacle to our supposing that 145 was composed with a Phobos in mind; the fact that it fits with a δράκων does not diminish its appropriateness to a Phobos.

In Homer ὄσσε is found only in the nominative; the extension to oblique cases is seen as early as *Th.* 826 (s.v.l.), Sappho fr. 65; the datives ὄσσοισι and ὄσσοις occur at *Aspis* 426, 430.

146. Cf. 164, *Il.* 19.365 τοῦ καὶ ὀδόντων μὲν καναχὴ πέλε (suspect in antiquity, cf. West (2001) 254). The similarity of *Aspis* 146 and 164 has led scholars to regard one verse as intrusive, but I do not think that the poet would have shied from reusing such a phrase at close range (cf. §I.1.v). The ascription of both 146 and 164 to the same poet is particularly

likely when we consider the recurrent obsession with teeth (164–5, 235, 249, 389, 404; cf. 160), something our poet shared with the author of the *Doloneia* (*Il.* 10.375).

The Gorgon is frequently represented with prominent white teeth. The ancients sometimes speak of the grinding of snakes' teeth (164; Russo notes also Q.S. 12.461, Nonn. *D.* 4.361, 382, 397), but it would be curious to insist that a serpentine mouth was *full* of teeth; nor in art are snakes' teeth a prominent feature. 146 can surely have been composed only with a Gorgon in mind. Cf. 235–6a n.

πλήτο: the aorist is peculiar: it is odd to say that there *was* a monstrous creature and then to add that its mouth *was filled* with white teeth. What we expect is an imperfect or a pluperfect; the imperfect is regular throughout the rest of the ecphrasis (exceptions: 148, 167, where see nn.). Translators give the sense required when they render πλήτο as *was full of*, but πλήτο is in fact a preterite. It occurs 5× *Il.*, 4× *Od.*, and in each instance the aorist is appositely used in the context of a narrative. Of these nine Homeric occurrences of πλήτο only one closely resembles our passage: during the footrace at Patroklos' funeral games, the Lesser Aias slips over in a pile of dung, ἔκ δ' ὄνθου βοέου πλήτο στόμα τε ῥῖνάς τε (*Il.* 23.777). It seems that the poet had found a successful expression for a mouth being full of something but that he did not trouble, or that he found himself unable, to make this phrase grammatically congruent in its new surroundings.

Danek (2012) 108–10 notices this same phenomenon of unharmoniously transferred formulae in the *Doloneia*, which is now with near-universal consent regarded as post-Homeric (late seventh century?) and which displays several other points of contact with our poem (§III.1). More generally, however, early versifiers seem occasionally to have allowed themselves licence with regard to tenses: Hansen argues for such a liberty in *CEG* 465 (dated

to c.470), and Maas in the ed. princeps of the inscription in question compared *Il.* 2.43–4, where the imperfect βάλλετο is used among a series of aorists purely *metri gratia*. Similarly ἐνήνοθεν seems to be used for any tense, cf. *Aspis* 269 (discussed in §III.1).

στόμα: otherwise only of mouths belonging to creatures of human shape, except in metaphorical usage (*Il.* 10.8, 20.359; *Lfgre* s.v. B.2–3). If we read ἀδάμαντος in 144, there is nothing unconventional about the poet's use of στόμα; if we read δράκοντος, we would have an example of our poet personifying animals (n. 160).

λευκαθεόντων: all the manuscripts (except J^{pc}) articulate λευκὰ θεόντων, for which editors compare *IG* 14.1389 (= Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 1046; Roman period), line 83 ποίην ... χλωρὰ θέουσαν and Theoc. *Id.* 25.158 ὕληι χλωρὰ θεούσῃ (Meineke: χλωρᾷ ἐούσῃ codd.). Schulze (1934) 369 (an article first published in 1888) posits the existence a verb θέω 'shine', so that this would mean 'shining white' (λευκά being adverbial neuter plural); he observes that this would fit well with the emphasis on shininess in the surrounding verses. But Wackernagel (1925) rejects this hypothetical θέω, arguing instead that λευκαθέω is regularly formed with the suffix -αθ-; the word would be equivalent to the well-attested λευκα(ν)θίζω 'be white'. Cf. Schwyzer (1939–50) i. 703. λευκαθέω was previously a conjectural form, but λευκαθειοισα has now turned up in P.Oxy. 2819, fr. 4 (= *SH* 944), line 19, a commentary on an anonymous Hellenistic hexameter poem. It seems that λευκαθειοισα, which is apparently a lemma in this commentary, had a transitive force in the poem (so Lobel, ed. princeps); if this is correct, we must articulate λευκαθείοισα, since (unlike λευκὰ θέω) λευκαθέω could be used either intransitively or transitively. Wackernagel's λευκαθεόντων thus attains the status of certainty.

147. δεινῶν, ἀπλήτων: cf. the Keres at 250 δεινωτοὶ βλοσυροὶ τε δαφουνοὶ τ' ἄπλητοὶ τε. δειν- is the poet's default root to denote anyone or anything that is grim or terrifying;³³⁵ it occurs 17× in *Aspis* 57–480 (and once in the *ehoie*). It clusters in the ecphrasis, being applied most often to monsters and abstractions; twice it occurs in similes outside the ecphrasis. At 445 the poet goes out of his way to use the word (n. 335), but contrast 236 (cf. ad loc.).

The meaning of the un-Homeric ἄπλητος in early poetry is discussed by West on *Th.* 153 (cf. his note on *Op.* 148); it is also a supplement at [Hes.] fr. 17a.16. In the *Aspis* it appears again at 230 (v.l.), 250, and 268. West remarks that it is often best taken as equivalent, not to ἄπλατος 'unapproachable' (i.e. 'terrible'), but to ἄπλετος 'boundless'. However, for our poet the word clearly means 'monstrous'. ἄπλατος of snakes commended itself also to Pindar, who at *P.* 12.9 ἀπλάτοις ὀφίων κεφαλαῖς seems to combine this verse and *Aspis* 161 ὀφίων κεφαλαὶ δεινῶν. See further 161n. and §III.3.ii. Hirschberger (2000) 64 observes that in the fifth century ἄπλητος is used as a stock epithet for undesirables including Typhon (*Pi.* fr. 93.1), Ekhidna (*Bacchyl.* 5.62), and the Nemean Lion (*Soph. Tr.* 1093).

147–8. Cf. 236–7. The figure of Eris hovers (πεπότητο) over the forehead of the central Gorgon; the poet does not mean that Eris was floating above the shield, since that technical marvel is reserved for Perseus and its wondrousness is explicitly signalled (216–20). ἔρις with lower-case initial is theoretically possible (i.e. 'and Phobos was imbued with the characteristic of strife') but much less likely. The focus on the forehead suggests a Gorgon, since they are always represented *en face* (cf. 145n. ἔμπαλιν); the putative serpent's forehead would be very small, and hardly a feature to single out (cf. 144–67n. (iii)).

³³⁵ 52, 129, 426 Herakles; 71 Ares; 147 teeth of Phobos; 148, [160] Eris; 161, 166 snakes; 223, 236–7 Gorgons; 226–7 cap of Hades; [262] Keres; 404, 430 lions (roar, eyes); 445 Athena; 459 battle. In 445 the poet eschews τὸν δ' ἄρ' / καὶ μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδ- (25× *epos*) and opts instead for δεινὰ δ' ὑπόδρα ἰδ- (1× *Il.*, 1× *Hy.*): he did not wish to pass up an opportunity to use δεινός.

βλοσυροῖο: the uncommon word is a favourite with our poet, cf. 175, 191, 250; as Hopkinson on Call. *h.* 6.52 remarks, it is equivalent for our poet to ὀλοός, whereas in its two occurrences in the *Iliad*, ‘both “shaggy” and “grim” seem appropriate’. The word is also discussed by Leumann (1950) 141–8, whose theory that it is a back-formation from βλοσυρῶπις, originally referring to the face of an unknown animal (the vulture?), is criticised by Williams (1960). The parallel with *Il.* 11.36 Γοργῶ βλοσυρῶπις might suggest that the poet here has in mind a Gorgon, but at *Aspis* 175 βλοσυρός is used of lions and could certainly have been applied to a δράκων.

μετώπου: there is a variant προσώπου. Aristotle (*HA* 1.8, 491b9–12) claims that πρόσωπον can be used only of a human, but in practice this distinction is not observed, not even by Aristotle himself (cf. *HA* 2.8, 502a20; 2.11, 503a20). The words seem to be synonymous. προσώπου is probably just a scribal reminiscence of *Il.* 7.212 βλοσυροῖσι προσώπασι. But it is possible that an original προσώπου was corrupted to μετώπου (they are confused by the manuscripts at Ar. *HA* 491b12), perhaps by a scribe unaware that -ο remained light before προσωπ-. Quintus Smyrnaeus (3.539) and Nonnus (*D.* 18.244) probably read προσώπου, since they have *βλοσυροῖο προσώπου, but Apollonius Rhodius most likely read μετώπου, cf. *Arg.* 4.1437 ὅσσε δέ οἱ βλοσυρῶι ὑπέλαμπε (ὑπ’ ἔλαμπε Fränkel) μετώπωι—a passage which, with its mention of flashing eyes, and possible echo of *Aspis* 142 (see n.), seems indebted to these opening verses of the ecphrasis.

Ἔρις ... κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἀνδρῶν: Eris hovers over Phobos’ forehead because these concepts are closely linked with battle, cf. *Th.* 226–8, *Op.* 14, *Il.* 4.440–1, 11.3–12, 20.50. Inasmuch as Eris causes men to go to battle, the poet can say that she ‘marshals the throng of

men' (for this meaning of the verb, whose fundamental sense is 'put on the helmet', cf. *Aspis* 198, *Il.* 2.273; *Lfgre* s.v. B.1; Leumann (1950) 210).

The poet has in mind a winged Eris, a type that becomes common in the seventh century, probably owing to oriental influence; see *LIMC* Eris; Shapiro (1993) 51–61. Shapiro observes that none of Homer (e.g. *Il.* 4.440–5, 11.3–12), Hesiod (*Th.* 225–6; *Op.* 11–26, 804), or the Chest of Kypselos (Paus. 5.19.2) imagine Eris as winged; our poet's conception of her is indebted to contemporary iconography. Schneider-Herrmann (1954) 62–3 reproduces from Marinatos (1936) pl. XXIX a bronze Gorgon mask on whose ample forehead are depicted two snakes; the poet may well have visualised his Gorgon–Eris combination in a similar way.

πεπότητο: the pluperfect is equivalent to the imperfect, since the perfect can be used with present sense (*Od.* 11.222, *Il.* 2.90). Ranke tentatively proposed ἐποτᾶτο (cf. 222), but (as he notes) that would necessitate the anomalous scansion ὦΕρις.

κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἀνδρῶν: for κορύσσω cf. 198n. ἀνδρῶν is not given a specific referent, nor were any ranks of warriors depicted in this part of the shield (*pace* Myres (1941) 24). κορ. κλ. ἀνδρ. must therefore be taken as a standing epithet, 'Eris who marshals the ranks of men' (for κορύσσω cf. 198). For participial phrases denoting a consistent state and functioning as epithets cf. e.g. *Il.* 4.440, 5.518 ὦΕρις ἄμοτον μεμαυῖα, *Aspis* 24 Βοιωτοὶ ... ὑπὲρ σακέων πνεῖοντες, *Il.* 2.536, 3.8, 11.508 μένεα πνεῖοντες Ὕβαντες/Ἀχαιοί (cf. Rhian. fr. inc. 36 Powell; *SH* 942), 2.542 Ὕβαντες ... ὄπιθεν κομόωντες, *Il.* 2.323 etc. κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί.

κορ. κλ. ἀνδρ. looks like an aurally inspired variation on the *Iliad's* ὀφέλλουσα στόνον ἀνδρῶν, which is said uniquely of Eris at 4.445 (cf. *Op.* 14). If our poet indeed had the Iliadic

passage in mind, he may have been encouraged in his alteration of ὄφ. στ. ἄνδρ. by the nearby κορύσσεται (4.442).

149. The transmitted text makes this line refer to Eris. But nowhere else is it said of Eris that she terrifies men, merely that she causes them to go to battle (cf. 147–8n., and already Deiters (1858) 45). 149 must refer to Phobos: cf. esp. *Il.* 13.299–300 Φόβος | ... ὅς τ' ἐφόβησε τάλᾳφρονά περ πολεμιστήν. We should therefore read σχέτλιος, ὅς (proposed by Merkelbach (1956) 298). In their present position 147b–148 must be understood as a parenthesis; so Merkelbach, comparing *Th.* 88–90 (cf. *Aspis* 75–6, if genuine (n. 210), and 269). ‘Awkward’ parentheses are shown by Currie (2013) to be a regular feature of epic style.

The distance of 149 from 144 made assimilation to Eris—and therefore the corruption to σχετλίη, ἥ—inevitable. Transposing 149–50 to follow 144 is tempting since it would ease the syntax, but then 146 τοῦ would have to refer clumsily to Herakles.

νόον ... φρένας: when Zeus took away the φρένες of Iphikles, Iphikles acted irrationally and out of character (*Aspis* 89ff.), just as Glaukos did in the exchange of armour with Diomedes (*Il.* 6.234–6); the Phobos on the shield too has this terrifying effect on Herakles’ enemies. The closely related νόος and φρένες are difficult to disentangle (cf. Sullivan (1988), (1989)); they are paired also at *Il.* 18.419.

εἴλετο: see next n.

150. = 163. At 163 it is indispensable: the twelve serpents did not terrify everyone on earth, 162 ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων, merely those who fought Herakles. But 149 will make sense without 150, if we take εἴλετο in the previous verse as a gnomic aorist (‘Phobos, who takes away men’s wits’; cf. *Il.* 13.299–300, quoted on 149); and so 150 has been suspected. A

purely gnomic statement about a demonic power would not be out of place: compare Aphrodite's κεστὸς ἱμάς, on which θελκτήρια πάντα τέτυκτο· ἢ ἔνθ' ἔνι μὲν φιλότης, ἔν δ' ἥμερος, ἔν δ' ὀαριστύς ἢ πάρφασις, ἣ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων (*Il.* 14.215–18). But in the *Aspis* we are not faced with the general concept of terror, but with a specific apotropaic device adorning a specific object; we therefore want the effect of Phobos to be related closely to its context on Herakles' shield. 150 is needed for this reason.

It has, however, been thought that 150 should be ejected on syntactical grounds. In 163 the iterative optative is apt after the iterative imperfect φοβέεσκον (162); but if εἴλετο is gnomic aorist, the optative in 150 would be irregular. However, this is to take too rigid a view of the 'sequence of tenses': εἴλετο in 150 represents the thought that if ever anyone faced Herakles' shield and its Phobos, Phobos took away their wits (cf. Beetham (2002) for such a use of the aorist indicative). Cf. also Merkelbach (1956) 298 n. 4, '[d]er Aorist εἴλετο in 149 verträgt sich durchaus mit dem iterativen φέροειν in 150: während hier dem Dichter die sich wiederholende Handlung vor Augen steht (immer wieder kämpften Leute gegen Herakles), wird in 149 prägnant an den Augenblick gedacht, in welchem den Gegner Furcht überkommt; das kann der Grieche nur im Aorist denken.'

σχέτλιος: the tone of this word, which is etymologically derived from ἔχω, varies in early epic, from 'relentless, stubborn' to a term of light-hearted reproach. Here the harsher sense is obviously intended. Vanséveren (1998) offers a full study.

ἀντιβίην πόλεμον: for πόλεμος the meaning 'fighting', rather than 'war', is well established, cf. e.g. *Th.* 665. We should perhaps read ἀντίβιον, cf. *Il.* 3.435 ἀντίβιον πόλεμον πολεμίζειν ἢ δὲ μάχεσθαι. ἀντίβιον and ἀντιβίην seem originally to have been used respectively in the *figurae etymologicae* ἀντίβιον πόλεμον πολεμίζειν and ἀντιβίην μάχην

μαχέσασθαι (cf. *Lfgre* s.v.; differently Leumann (1950) 206–7). But *Il.* 8.168 ἐναντίβιον μαχέσασθαι (where we might have expected -ίην) suggests that the *figura* was not invariable; the poet of the *Aspis* may have regarded ἀντιβίην as an independent adverbial lexeme, and it is certainly the *difficilior lectio*.

Διὸς υἱῷ: as West on *Th.* 1002 notes, ‘Διὸς υἱός, standing alone, is restricted to Apollo and Heracles, and cannot be used indiscriminately of anyone fathered by Zeus’; cf. however *Herm.* 432 Διὸς ἀγλαὸς υἱός = Hermes. In the present passage the formula is chosen to emphasise the ill-advisedness of attacking the son of the supreme god.

151–3. Those who face Herakles and his shield do not live to tell the tale. The idea that the ψυχή departs at death under the earth and to Hades is commonplace, cf. *Aspis* 254–5, *Il.* 16.856 = 22.362, 23.100–1. But as seen already by Heinrich, these lines are not merely traditional but are inspired by the proem of the *Iliad*, where Achilles’ wrath caused many woes for the Greeks, πολλὰς δ’ ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν ὠϊωνοῖσιν τε πᾶσι. Both passages speak of ψυχαί going down to Hades because of a mighty hero, and both contrast the destiny of the intangible soul with the fate of the physical remains (ἠρώων / αὐτούς; τῶν ... αὐτῶν / ὅστέα); the *Aspis*’s enjambed αὐτῶν corresponds to the *Iliad*’s ἠρώων. But whereas the *Iliad* speaks of the victims’ corpses becoming carrion for the birds, in our passage their skin decomposes and their bones rot away; for the idea cf. e.g. *Il.* 4.174, *Od.* 1.161–2, 12.45–6, and esp. *Ap.* 368–9 ἀλλὰ σέ γ’ αὐτοῦ | πύσει γαῖα μέλαινα καὶ ἠλέκτωρ Ὑπερίων (though in the subsequent narrative only the sun’s effect is mentioned (370, 374); 368 καὶ turns out to present alternatives). The lurid details are wholly in keeping with the character of the *Aspis* (§II.1.vi) as is the refashioning of a fixed passage of the *Iliad*, a work whose proem was evidently as memorable

to archaic audiences as it is to modern ones. (In general, openings of works are more likely to be imitated than other parts: cf. Garner (1990) 6, 187–8.) The curious collocation τοῦ καὶ ... μέν is also characteristic of our poet (146n.).

But there is a serious difficulty in ascribing the lines to the *Aspis* poet, namely the present tenses 151 δύνουσ’ and 153 πύθεται. The poet did not imagine Herakles’ shield still to be in existence (n. 329), still less that Herakles was still alive and battling adversaries; and the historic present is alien to Greek epic narrative. It is possible to emend away δύνουσ’ (see on 151), but πύθεται would still remain. The poet is not always scrupulous with his use of tenses (cf. 146n. πλῆτο), but that he arbitrarily allowed himself the licence of present for past is hard to countenance. In my view, 151–3 were not originally designed to stand in this place. Either they are due to an interpolator who had a sympathetic understanding of the *Aspis*’s taste, or they were taken over wholesale by the main poet (from a previous poem of his own?—cf. 152–3n.) without due regard to their grammatical congruence (cf. §II.6.ii). A possible original context for 151–3 would be a speech in which someone was forewarned not to engage in combat with some mighty hero (not necessarily Herakles), ‘for his enemies are always vanquished, and their souls descend to Hades, etc.’ The first alternative is surely more likely, and so I bracket 151–3.³³⁶ The poet of the *Aspis* was not the only archaic singer to be enthralled by the *Iliad*. For another echo of the *Iliad*’s proem cf. perhaps [Hes.] fr. 204.118–19, and for a possible interaction between *Il.* 1.2 and *Od.* 1.4 cf. Rutherford (2001) 128.

151. τῶν ... αὐτῶν: αὐτός is sometimes used to denote the physical as opposed to the non-physical, cf. *Aspis* 253, *Il.* 1.4, *Od.* 11.602, Monro (1891) §252.1. But here αὐτῶν is

³³⁶ The deletion is due to Lehrs; but suspicions were raised first by the reviewer of Schlichtegroll (1788) in *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* 38 (1789) 276.

opposed to ὅστέα, which is odd since both things are physical. This unusual use of αὐτῶν is explained by the poet's imitation of the *Iliad* proem (see previous n.).

δύνουσ’: the variant δύμεναι (which underlies P's reading too) is adopted by Kinkel and Rzach, who believe that αὐτῶν is corrupt and should be replaced by a verb of motion, e.g. φοίτων or φοιτῶσ’: the souls of the slain wander(ed) off to go to Hades. φοίτων would give us the past tense we need (cf. 151–3n.), but that still leaves the present tense πύθεται, which would then be even odder next to this past tense. Moreover, Schwarz (1932) 46 points out that although βῆ ἵμεν and the like are common, βῆ δύμεναι would be unparalleled; he suggests plausibly that δύμεναι is a scribal reminiscence of *Il.* 6.411 *χθόνα δύμεναι. Lastly, as noted on 151–3, the enjambed αὐτῶν is intended by the poet to correspond to the *Iliad*'s verse-initial ἡρώων, and to eliminate it would remove the parallel that the poet has taken pains to construct.

152–3. ὅστέα δέ σφι περὶ ῥινοῖο σαπίσης | Σειρίου ἄζαλέοιο μελαίνῃ πύθεται αἶψα: περὶ ῥινοῖο σαπίσης is a genitive absolute in tmesis, ‘when the skin has completely rotted away’. If 153 is sound, Σειρίου ἄζαλέοιο = ‘while Sirius is blazing’, a temporal phrase of the type that ‘expresses a period of time to which the action belongs, without implying anything as to its duration’ (Monro (1891) §150). Guyet's Σειρὸς ὑπ’ ἄζαλέοιο (cf. *Suda* s.vv. Σείριος, Σείρ) is to be rejected, since there is no evidence outside the lexica for Σείρ, and still less can this form claim epic status.

The Greeks sometimes refer to the sun in connection with the decay of a corpse as a whole (e.g. *Ap.* 368–70, *Lyc.* 396–7), but bones are usually said to rot in the earth (see passages cited on 151–3). Sirius, whose baleful rising in mid-July was connected with the sultry heat of the summer, is noted for its power to scorch the skin: cf. *Aspis* 397, *Il.* 22.26–9

(Sirius is meant although not actually named), West on *Op.* 417. This makes it tempting to take *περὶ ῥινοῖο σαπείσης Σειρίου ἄζαλέοιο* as a parenthetical unit: the bones rot *when the skin has completely decayed while Sirius blazes*, i.e. the skin has been rotted by the scorching heat of Sirius, and the bones then decay in the (moist) earth. But this interpretation is open to two serious objections: (i) No celestial body, however baleful, can have an effect on a body in the ground. We would have to suppose that the bodies were left unburied for a while and that the bones were interred at a later stage, when the skin had rotted away: an improbable course of events. (ii) It requires us to impose an unacceptably stilted flow on the sentence; rhythm demands that *Σειρίου ἄζαλέοιο μελαίνῃι πύθεται αἴῃι* be taken together. Paley boldly conjectured *φαεινῇι πύθεται αὐγῇι* (or *αἴγλῃι*) (cf. A.R. 1.1282 **φαεινῇι λάμπεται αἴγλῃι*), which attractively connects Sirius with the decay of both the skin and the bones, while on the other hand allowing for the corpses to be left exposed to the elements from the moment of death: everything rots in the open air. The parallel with *Ap.* 368-9, however, weighs against Paley's conjecture. The black earth should stay. The poet has preferred to accumulate impressionistic detail at the expense of strict logic and consistency.

This also explains why it is only during the short period of the Dog Days that the bodies of Herakles' foes rot away; much more logical is the reference in other parallel passages to the *sun*. Some ancient authors conflate Sirius and the sun (cf. West on *Op.* 417), and it is possible that our poet did too. But let us suppose that he understood the distinction: why then Sirius? The answer is that the most dreaded and powerful object in the sky is Sirius; to enhance the power of his image, the poet therefore specifies the star whose rays are even more violent than those of the sun, even though its limited ascendancy makes it an unsuitable candidate. This thought process and tendency towards exaggeration would be typical of the poet of the

Aspis (§I.1.vi); so too van der Valk (1966) 456. I doubt however that 151–3 are really the main poet's work.

περὶ ... σαπείσης: περισήπομαι is not Homeric, but the simplex and κατασήπομαι are found.

μελαίνῃ ... αἶη: the earth is regularly 'black', but here the epithet is appropriate to its sinister function as domain of the dead. κελαινῇ is a minority variant for μελαίνῃ (the latter is the reading of the best witnesses). The closest parallel to κελαινῇ ... αἶη is *Il.* 16.384 κελαινῇ ... χθών. There is little to choose between the two on grounds of either palaeography or sense, but γᾶ̃α μέλαινα is a securely attested Homeric phrase; since αἶ̃α (always verse-final) takes the place of γᾶ̃α in places where γ- is metrically intractable (Reece (2009) 156–61),³³⁷ the balance tips slightly towards μελαίνῃ.

154–60. War personified.

For the relationship of these figures to Phobos and Eris see on 144–67. In my view, 156–60 are an interpolation and should be deleted (see *ad loc.*), but 154–5 should stay; they belong with the preceding Phobos in the central zone, not in a separate ring around the centre. The relationship between the central Phobos and the twelve serpents which represent its hair is not then weakened by a distracting intermediate band. 154–5 originally formed a sequel to 150 (i.e. what I take to be the poet's first version: see 151–3n.); the reconstruction is presented at 144–67n. The poet had in mind the description of the aegis at *Il.* 5.739–42 (quoted at 144n. (vii)).

³³⁷ For a possible account of the origins of αἶ̃α = γᾶ̃α cf. West (2007b).

154–5. The five abstractions associated with battle—Proioxis (Advance), Palioxis (Reverse), Homados (Din), Phonos (Slaughter; for the reading see 155n.), and Androktasie (Manslaying)—were depicted (ἐν ... τέτυκτο) on Herakles' shield; cf. esp. *Th.* 226–8, *Il.* 14.215–18 (quoted at 150n.). These five names should be printed with upper-case initials: they are personified figures. With lower-case initials (as in Rzach) they would refer, in a highly compressed manner, to people in combat (so e.g. παλίωξις = a group of men being driven back). In support of this second interpretation one might adduce *Od.* 11.612, where it is said that on Herakles' τελαμών were depicted ὑσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ' ἀνδροκτασίαι τε (*Od.* 11.612), i.e. actual instances of these events. But there the plurals are crucial, and they in fact *exclude* the possibility of concrete figures. Within the *Aspis* a full description of battle-combat is yet to come (237–70), which makes the cursory sketch here unwanted. The interpolator of 156–60, too, must have understood 154–5 as I do, since it would be odd if he had combined synecdochic φόνος etc. with the unambiguously human-shaped figures of Eris and Kydoimos.

Quite how we are to visualise these personifications is, however, most uncertain, since several are 'unknown either to Homer or to later writers and artists' (Shapiro (1993) 21). Particularly odd is the *visual* depiction of a sound (Homados), although the *Iliad* too has a personified Kydoimos (5.593). If the poet gave thought to how these abstractions might have been represented on Herakles' shield, he presumably imagined them as anthropomorphic figures like Eris (156–60) and those described at 248ff. But perhaps this question concerned him little. It is no clearer how we are supposed to picture the adornment of Aphrodite's κεστός ἱμάς (*Il.* 14.215–18, quoted at 150n.); similarly, it is said vaguely of the aegis that Phobos is 'hung all round it' (ἔστεφάνωται) and that Eris, Alke, and Ioke, as well as the

Gorgon's head, are 'on' (ἐν) it (*Il.* 5.739–42, quoted at 144n. (vii)). As Burkert (2005) 12–13 remarks in a judicious discussion of *Il.* 5.739–40 and 11.36–7, 'how should Phobos be spread around? This is a magical power, of course—but also a strategy of the poetic text with slight regard for the conventions of contemporary art.'

For the list of figures cf. *Il.* 5.739–42, *Th.* 228, *Od.* 11.612; the last two include Ἀνδροκτασίη. The parallel with *Odyssey* 11 is particularly intriguing, given that it is Herakles' belt that is there described and that there are other points of contact between the *Aspis* and that part of the *Odyssey* (§III.1). Yet the *Odyssey* may be relying on the *Theogony*: West (2014) 33, noting the parallel of *Od.* 11.612 with *Th.* 228, observes, '[t]he verse fits perfectly in the Hesiodic context, the list of Eris' offspring, and is less natural as an appendage to the wild animals represented on Heracles' baldric.'

154. ἐν ... τέτυκτο: 144n. *ad init.*

Προΐωξίς τε Παλίωξίς τε: Προΐωξίς (only here) is coined as an antonym of Παλίωξίς (3× *Il.*); for the history of the latter word see Dihle (1985). The long medial ι of Παλίωξίς may be etymologically justified (see *Lfgre* s.v.), but in Προΐωξίς it cannot be: the licence is borrowed from Παλίωξίς, and this is a further indication of the secondary status of Προΐωξίς.

155. Φόνος: the variant Φόβος crept in under the influence of 144, and the corruption is paralleled at *Th.* 228. Slaughter makes a more natural companion to Manslaying than does Terror.

ἐν ... δεδήει: the use of δαίω for the metaphorical blazing of battle and its din is well established (*Il.* 6.328–9, 12.35, 20.18, etc.); its application to a personified figure is unexpected

(cf. West ap. Russo, *Addenda* p. 220), but note *Il.* 2.93 μετὰ δέ σφισιν Ὅσσα δεδήει. The word may also have been chosen to evoke the fiery splendour of the shield (cf. 139–40n. παναίολον), particularly given that δαίω is used again in this sense at 165 τὰ δ' ἐδαίετο θαυματὰ ἔργα (so Heinrich).

156–60. Except for the variation ἐθύνεον / ὀμίλεον, 156–9 are identical with *Il.* 18.535–8. The default assumption that anything in the *Aspis* with a parallel in the *Iliad* must derive from the Homeric epic has, in this case, been decisively refuted by Solmsen (1965), whose arguments are built upon by Lynn-George (1978); for earlier moves in the direction of this diagnosis see Solmsen (1965) 2 n. 1, and for the corruption of the *Iliad*'s text by that of the *Aspis* cf. §III.3.ii. Solmsen's main reasons for regarding the *Aspis* passage as the original are that (i) the grotesque Ker is much more at home in the *Aspis* than in the *Iliad* and (ii) the formal introduction of the vignette is not consistent with the *Iliad*'s style of ἐν δ' ἐτίθει etc. (§IV.3.i). 156–9 indeed constitute a suitable sequel to 155, producing (as Solmsen observes) an effective anaphora of ἐν. The status of the verses in the *Iliad* is discussed in detail by Lynn-George; cf. also Edwards on *Il.* 18.535–8.

Solmsen also believes that 156–60 are an interpolation into the *Aspis*: we have recently had Eris (148), and the Keres will be treated later in full (248b–257). A rhapsode, inspired by 248b–257, seems to have composed an analogical passage to stand in this place; Lynn-George (1978) 400 points out the close correspondences of 249 ~ 160 (gnashing teeth), 250 δεινωποί ~ 160 δεινὸν δερκομένη, and (less strong) 250 δαφουνοί ~ 159 εἶμα ... δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν. If 156–60 contain elements that seem characteristic of the *Aspis* poet, particularly the verb θυνέω (156) and the gnashing of teeth (160) (cf. ad locc.), it is precisely because the interpolator has succeeded in his aim of pastiching his model. We should not allow ourselves

to be duped by this tactic; cf. 151–3n. The posteriority of 156–60 to 248b–257 is particularly clear from the fact that (as Ranke and Lynn-George observe) at 156–60 a lone Ker simultaneously drags three figures from the battlefield—a task which requires the multiple Keres of 248b–257 (cf. 156n.).³³⁸ I do not see any reason why the main poet of the *Aspis* should have expanded this portion of the poem with an inferior copy of what he had already composed, and I therefore hold 156–60 to be a secondary interpolation.

156. Ἔρις: 147–8n. Here she may not be winged.

Κυδοιμός: the din of battle, and hence closely associated with any combat: Kydoimos is led into battle by Enyo at *Il.* 5.593, and Aristophanes makes Kydoimos the subordinate of Polemos (*Pax* 255ff.); cf. also Emped. 31 B 128.1 D–K. There is however no known iconographical representation of the demon (Shapiro (1993) 267).

ἐθύνεον: the Homeric form of the word is θύνω, but ἐθύνεον is securely attested on a papyrus of the *Catalogue* ([Hes.] fr. 150.20), and it is perhaps also to be read at fr. 82.2.

θυνέω occurs several times in the poem (210, 257, 286), and its violent connotations (‘charged’; contrast the *Iliad*’s ὀμίλειον, ‘mingled’) seem in keeping with our poet’s taste for hyperbolic and violent language (§II.6.iii). However, 210 is very likely to be an interpolation too, and 286 possibly so;³³⁹ the use of θυνέω at 156 and 210 is probably due to an interpolator’s desire to integrate his work with the ethos of the rest of the poem. In the

³³⁸ It is amusing to find Rhode (1872) 22 remark that Homer (who, in Rhode’s view, composed *Il.* 18.535–8) described this lone Ker ‘satis dilucide et commode’: an example of the prejudice which privileges Homer over the *Aspis* (§I.2).

³³⁹ It is very tempting to delete 286, with its pointless and unexplained horsemen, leaving us with a neat join between 285 and 287: τοὶ δ’ αὖ προπάραιθε πόλῃος | ἥρεικον χθόνα διῖαν. The suggestion is anticipated by Rhode (1872) 26 (unlike him, though, I am not troubled by the ‘late’ feature of men on horseback, given the date of the *Aspis*).

present passage the temptation to use the word was particularly strong, since ἐθύνεον is found at 257, i.e. in the passage which seems to have served as a model for this one.

Κήρ: whether the poet imagines Ker in the form of a human or an animal (the former being more likely according to Vollkommer, *LIMC* VI.1, 14), she would have available only *two* limbs, making her actions here impossible (see next n.).

157–8. ἄλλον ... ἄλλον ... ἄλλον: the powerful triple anaphora of ἄλλος (for which cf. *Il.* 13.730–2, *Od.* 22.257–9 = 274–6; fivefold at *Il.* 7.473–5) is intended to mimic the relentless persistence of the Ker, but it creates a confused and impossible image (156–60n. *ad fin.*, and previous n.).

εἶλκε: in Homeric manuscripts the forms ἔλκ- and εἶλκ- are frequently variants, but the latter is to be preferred (West (1998–2000) i. XXVI–XXVIII, Janko on *Il.* 16.402–6). In the present passage εἶλκε is supported by the oldest medieval witness, a copy which—for all its orthographical shortcomings—was derived from an exemplar of high quality (n. 324).

159. **δαφoineὸν αἵματι φωτῶν:** Ker's cloak was stained with the blood of those fighting. δαφoin(ε)ός is properly a colour term, which (as usual with such words) is hard to define precisely. But folk etymology connected it with the root φον-; this association is visible already in the *Iliad* (16.159 αἵματι φοινόν ~ 162 φόνον αἵματος), and it is commonplace in the scholia (see *Lfgre* s.v. for details). Very probably, then, for this poet δαφoineός was connected with 'slaughter', making its use here particularly appropriate: 'slaughter-coloured with men's blood' (cf. 194). Sittl reports that, in accordance with the same macabre symbolism, executioners used to wear a red robe. Red colouring was used in burials as early as the Palaeolithic era, where again it is most plausibly interpreted as symbolising blood (Burkert (1985) 60 with n. 44).

160. Russo quotes with approval Heinrich's view that this verse refers to Ἀνδροκτασίη, but Heinrich's explanation, '[h]omines nimirum ἀνδροκτόνοι vultu et clamore ingenti terrorem facere solent', is weak. The verse surely refers to Ker, especially given the parallel 250 δεινωποί (cf. 156–60n.), and it must therefore be ejected along with 156–9 (see 156–60n.).

δεινὸν δερκομένη: cf. *Il.* 11.37 (the Gorgon on Agamemnon's shield, quoted at 144n. (vii)), 3.342, 23.815; also *Aspis* 236 ἄγρια δερκομένω.

καναχήισι τε βεβρυχῦα: this odd phrase must mean 'sounding with gnashings', sc. ὀδόντων; for the idea cf. 164, and for the fixation with teeth cf. 146n. The hand of an interpolator is clear to see here, because the verse is fully intelligible only in light of the much less crabbed 164; indeed, the obscurity of 160 probably motivated the corruption βεβριθυῖα (see below). Note also that the plural of καναχή is very rare, occurring in early literature otherwise only at *Pi. P.* 10.39. At 164 the poet imagines a supernatural sound emanating from the shield, and I suppose that the author of 160 intends the same, although he does not make this at all clear; possibly he means only that, to judge by the way she was depicted on the shield, Ker looked as though she were making a terrible sound.

βεβριθυῖα ('abounding in') is the majority reading, and βεβρυχῦα (< βρύχω)—clearly superior because of its associations with sound—is derived by some of the *recentiores* from the scholia (Σ p. 30, cf. Σ^{par} p. 52).³⁴⁰

³⁴⁰ Guyet, who was unaware of the evidence of the mss. and scholia, may be given credit for βεβρυχῦα ('strepitu gravis, hoc est, graviter imminens, incumbens'). He in fact proposed βεβρηχυῖα, since the relevant Hesychian gloss, β 443 βέβρυχεν· ἤχησε, was then read in the corrupt form βέβρηχεν; βέβρυχεν had to wait for Ruhnken (1782) 102. See further Ranke 186–7.

161–7. Twelve serpents.

Moving into the first ring around the central Phobos, we encounter twelve serpents who terrify Herakles' enemies; for snakes as an apotropaic device cf. 144n. In archaic art, particularly on vases from Cyrene and Attica, Gorgons are frequently surrounded by snakes which represent their hair. Studniczka (1896) 62–3 marshals persuasive evidence to suggest that the arrangement of the twelve snakes in a circle was symmetrical; his theory is further supported by a subsequently discovered sixth-century aryballos from Boeotia, painted by one Phithadas, whose 'chief decoration is a gorgoneion, probably bearded, and surrounded by nineteen snakes, symmetrically arranged' (Fowler (1898) 283, referring to Pollak (1897)); illustration also at Hoppin (1924) 21.

Herakles is famous for overcoming snaky foes, such as the Hydra or the serpents sent by Hera against him in the cradle. In the *Aspis* the hero displays these vanquished enemies on his shield, and they terrify his enemies instead (164–5; §IV.2.iii). The serpents thus serve a dual purpose.

This section is the first occasion (apart from the interpolated 160, see ad loc.) on which the poet makes explicit the supernatural qualities of the shield, cf. 164–5n.

161. The verse-pattern matches 168 ἐν δὲ συῶν ἀγέλαι χλούνων ἔσαν, suggesting unity of authorship (Deiters (1858) 55).

ὀφίων κεφαλαὶ δεινῶν: cf. 147n., and for ὄφις cf. 145n. The phrase is a periphrasis for 'terrible snakes', as shown by the subsequent description of the creatures' backs (166–7); for such periphrases cf. *Il.* 9.407, 11.158, 500, 23.260, [Hes.] fr. 204.118–19. At *Il.* 1.3–4 ψυχὰς ... ἡρώων there is an ancient variant κεφαλὰς (cf. Pfeiffer (1968) 147–8).

οὗ τι φατειῶν: 144n. Here it is an amplification of δεινῶν.

162–3. δώδεκα: a typical number in Greek epic (e.g. *Il.* 6.248, 9.123, 11.691) and in other cultures, especially in the Bible; cf. Fehling (1989) 231–2. There can be no allusion to Herakles' Twelve Labours, which were not codified until the fifth century. Probably the poet is simply describing a decorative schema he has seen in real life (cf. 161–7n.).

ταί: some editors place a colon before this word, taking ταί as a strict demonstrative, but the sentence flows better if we understand it as a relative pronoun, permissible in a restrictive relative clause, and punctuate instead with a comma.

ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων: mostly Hesiodic, as West on *Th.* 556 notes. The formula is equivalent to ἐπιχθονίους ἀνθρώπους, and it emphasises the lowliness of humans in comparison with gods. It also highlights the frailty of men in the face of Herakles and his awesome shield.

163. Cf. 150n. *Pace* Merkelbach (1956) 298 n. 4, οἵτινες does not cohere any less well with 162 φύλ' ἀνθρώπων than with 149 φωτῶν.

164–5. The serpents react to the stimulus of confrontation, gnashing their teeth and striking fear into Herakles' opponents; at *Il.* 19.365–8 (on which cf. 146n.) Achilles' grinding his teeth emphasises his heroic character. Terror is struck into enemies' hearts by the 'moving parts' on the literary shields in tragedy, cf. Hutchinson on Aesch. *Th.* 385–6 and Mastronarde on Eur. *Ph.* 1126–7. (For the snakes that encircle the Gorgons' girdles at *Aspis* 233b–236a cf. ad loc.) If the poet of the *Aspis* knew of real-life shields fitted with bells and rattles (cf. Myres (1941) 25–6), 164–5 is a fantastical elaboration of that device, a marvel made possible thanks to the shield's divine craftsmanship. Herakles' serpents only 'come alive' when required and

when attention is turned to them, much like the individual scenes depicted on the shield (§IV.4).

Intriguingly, on two sixth-century vases Kyknos' shield is represented with a snake or snakes emerging, as if in three dimensions, from its surface (Zardini (2009) 187 and figs. 75 (= *LIMC* Kyknos 168; c.500 BC), 93 (= *LIMC* 136; c.520), ?38 (= *ABV* 122.22 = *LIMC* 145; c.575–550)); perhaps these artists were inspired by the description of Herakles' shield but transferred the motif to Kyknos (§III.3.i).

164. Cf. 146n. Whose teeth are meant? Ranke, comparing *Il.* 10.394 (cf. 13.283), insists it is those of Herakles' enemies, in fear. But fear is not the only emotion that can make teeth chatter: Achilles' teeth do so from excited determination (*Il.* 19.365 (cf. 146n.), where sch. T remarks οὐχ ὥς Δόλων, referring to 10.394); at *Aspis* 235 teeth are ground from μένος; and of a steely boar whetting its tusks we are told that there arises a κόμπτος ὀδόντων (*Il.* 11.417–18, 12.149–50). Surely the poet means the teeth of the snakes.

165. **Ἀμφιτρωνιάδης**: this patronymic recurs at 416, 433, and 459. With the exception of 433 it is restricted in early hexameters to verse-initial position; this restriction is observed also in later hexameter verse, among which we should probably include P.Mich. inv. 1261 (attributed to Antimachus by Meliadò (2006)). In none of its occurrences in the *Aspis* is the reference to Amphytryon of literary significance: on the contrary, Zeus' paternity is far more relevant.

ἐδαίετο: 155n.

θαυματὰ ἔργα: θαυματός, a convenient metrical alternative to θαυμαστός, does not occur in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, but it is found in the Homeric Hymns (*Herm.* 80, 440; *h.* 7.34)

and at [Hes.] fr. 204.45. Its respect of the digamma might suggest that it is a traditional formula, although Janko (1982) 137 dissents, classifying it as ‘a formula, constructed on older models, that is characteristic of an advanced stage of the tradition’.

166. στίγματα δ’ ὥς ἐπέφαντο ἰδεῖν: the snakes had dappled markings; for this characteristic cf. e.g. *Il.* 12.202 αἰόλον ὄ(π)φιν (on αἰολ- cf. 139–40n. παναίολον), Alcman. *PMGF* 1.66 ποικίλος δράκων (a bracelet) (~ Pi. *P.* 8.46), Stes. fr. 19.35–6 αἰολοδε[ίρ]ου ... Ὑδρας, Soph. *Tr.* 834 αἰόλος δράκων, Nonn. *D.* 25.452 στικτὸν ὄφιν, and more specifically Pi. *P.* 4.249 ποικιλόνωτον ὄφιν (~ Eur. *IT* 1245), Nonn. *D.* 13.192 στικτὰ ... νῶτα δρακόντων, Virg. *Aen.* 5.87–8 (*anguis*) *caeruleae cui terga notae maculosus et auro | squamam incendebat fulgor*; Davies–Finglass on the Stesichorus passage refer also to Headlam on Herodas 3.89.

ὥς marks the statement as metaphorical (‘it was as if...’), cf. 70 πῦρ δ’ ὥς ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπελάμπετο. For the pleonastic ἐπέφαντο ἰδεῖν (‘appeared to sight’) cf. e.g. *Il.* 16.194, *Th.* 700–1. In the context of the ecphrasis, however, with its shifting focalisation, this phrase serves to include both the audience of the poem and the enemies of Herakles who gaze with terror on his shield. Cf. 139–40n. θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

δεινοῖσι δράκουσι: this section of the ecphrasis is rounded off in ring composition with 161 ὀφίων ... δεινῶν (§II.1.v).

167. Punctuate heavily at the end of 166 and take 167 as loosely appositive to the previous clause, understanding a change from dative δράκουσι to nominative δράκοντες; so Hermann (1835) 197, comparing *Aspis* 183. Some edd. (Heinrich, van Lennepe) instead read κυάνεα (neut. pl., with *-ā metri gratia*), which they construe with either στίγματα or νῶτα; we could even read κυανέοις (placing a colon after νῶτα).

κυάνεοι κατὰ νῶτα: for κύανος and κυάνεος cf. 141–3n.; the poet may be thinking of the material itself, or else just referring to a dark colour of serpents, as at *Anacreont.* 17.10–11 West ὀφρῦς κυανωτέρη δρακόντων (compared by Sittl). Cf. next n. For the grammar cf. [Hes.] fr. 204.136 δεινὸς ὄφις, κατὰ νῶτα δα[φοιν-; κυάνεος is in verse-initial position in the similar *Il.* 11.26 and 39, passages known to our poet. These ecphrastic serpents were in the mind of Theocritus at *Id.* 24.14, cf. Fantuzzi–Hunter (2004) 263–4.

μελάνθησαν δὲ γένεια: in Greek art from the seventh century onwards—and particularly from the early sixth—snakes are frequently represented with beards (Ogden (2013) 155–61), and the poet evidently means that this part of their anatomy was darker than the rest of their bodies, including their backs (black is darker than κύανος: 143n.).

The aorist μελάνθησαν is unexpected, but it recurs (no less anomalously) at 300. Russo suggests that here (and at 146 πλήτο) the poet simply lacked the necessary form of the verb. This seems correct for μελάνθησαν, although I account for πλήτο differently (146n.).

168–77. Combat of boars and lions.

The poet describes a new ring around the Phobos’s snaky hair in which is depicted a stand-off between lions and boars. In early art the two animals are frequently represented in combat with one another, cf. Studniczka (1896) 67 n. 5, Chiarini (2012) 79–81. Chiarini thinks of a series of individual face-offs, each between a single lion and a single boar, and she cites in support a sixth-century lebes whose rim is decorated with five such groups. But this does not fit with στίχες or ὀμιληδόν (170), which imply serried ranks. The poet apparently pictures a symmetrical composition of lions ranged on one side balanced by an equal number of boars on the other, as illustrated in the reconstruction at Studniczka (1896) 75. (Studniczka

however depicts the boars in the process of being attacked, even though 173 ἀπουράμενοι ψυχάς and 175 τεθνηῶτες make clear that all three animals are already dead.) Such an arrangement would be wholly in accord with the poet's favourite technique of contrastive juxtaposition (§II.1.vi).

The only uncertainty concerns the positioning of the dead lion and the two boars (172–5). In my view 175 ὑπὸ βλοσυροῖσι λέουσι expresses agency, not position (see *ad loc.*): the boars are not *lying dead underneath* lions, they are *lying, having been killed by* lions. But where are the dead animals placed? Myres (1941) 26–7 thinks that the frieze is interrupted three times, but his interpretation of the Greek is impossibly strained. Probably the lion's corpse is at the 12 o'clock position, and the two boars are on the ground either side of it (172 ἀμφί). This constitutes a single focal point of the scene—something for which the poet had a literary motivation (see below)—and the frontmost boar and lion on the advance are stepping over the corpses; compare the positioning of the dead hero Ankaïos and the dead hound Hormenos in the Calydonian Boar hunt scene on the François Vase.

It is no accident that the boar–lion scene occurs here in the poem. The poet wants to move from the abstract horrors of war so far described in the *Aspis* to a concrete instantiation of combat, and he progresses from bestial level before moving to the divine plane (§IV.3.ii). The choice of boars and lions is deliberate: to the epic mind these are the two most fearsome species, and they may be presented as equally formidable adversaries (*Il.* 5.782–3, 7.256–7, etc.; cf. Camerotto (2005) 121). The typology of the two species is shared with the main narrative of the poem: Herakles is compared to a lion (402–4 (genuine, cf. §II.3); 426–32), and also to a boar (386–92). When in epic, as in most Greek art, lions and boars are depicted together, the lion is portrayed as the victor (Vermeule (1979) 88–91; Camerotto

(2005) 117–38, 132–3). But this typology cannot be applied to the *Aspis*, where Herakles the boar prevails against Kyknos just as does Herakles the lion against Ares. Indeed, in 168–77 the animals are equally formidable—both fearless, both eager for the fray, and both refusing to give ground. The ecphrasis and the main narrative alike regard the two species as equally matched, which supports the notion of the poem’s unity and the idea that 168–77 were composed by the same poet as the battle description; this has an important bearing on our view of the textual status of 386–92 (cf. n. 85). The fact that our poet’s typology of boars and lions does not match that of the *Iliad* should caution us about being excessively rigid in constructing ‘rules’ in traditional referentiality (cf. n. 55).

Similes involving lions and boars are common in the *Iliad* (for a list see Scott (2009) 193–6), although in only one instance are the animals paired, *Il.* 16.823–8; that this comes in the Patrokleia is significant, given the poet’s special familiarity with that portion of the *Iliad* (§III.1). The poet must also have thought of the Nekyia and Herakles’ τελαμών (cf. 154–5n.), on which were depicted ἄρκτοι τ’ ἄγρότεροί τε σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες (*Od.* 11.611, with the same hemistich as *Aspis* 177); for the *Aspis*’s knowledge of the Nekyia cf. §§II.6.ii (with n. 145), III.1. The Shield of Achilles describes two lions taking down a bull (*Il.* 18.579–81), and *Aspis* 168–77 may be some sort of counterpart to that, although the points of contact are few.

There are, however, specific links with the characters in the *Aspis*. First, an allegedly indomitable lion and a terrifying boar figure among Herakles’ conquests; Herakles, who cannot wear his lion-skin in the *Aspis* (§III.2.iii), is here by way of compromise displaying on his shield the foes he has already vanquished, as he does the snakes (161–7n.), as a kind of

warning to future enemies—just as he explicitly warns off Kyknos by reminding him of one of his past triumphs (357–67).

Second, this scene foreshadows the action of the poem: the lions and boars stand—only, of course, with hindsight for the audience, but already at this point for the poet—for Herakles and Ares, and the dead animals over which the two sides fight represent Kyknos, the cause of their enmity. It is common for warriors to be likened to lions or boars (cf. e.g. Camerotto (2005)), but the poet makes the parallels particularly close. There is only one focal point in the frieze (cf. above), and the equation of animals with warriors is promoted by the poet himself by his application of human terminology to the animals (cf. 170n.).

The scene was memorable to the Athenian Lydos, who shows unparalleled familiarity with the *Aspis* (§III.3.i) and who in the late sixth century painted an oinochoe (Berlin 1732 = *ABV* 110.37; Tiverios (1976) pls. 57–9; Shapiro (1984a) pl. 68 fig. 2) on which Herakles and Ares fight (uniquely) over the corpse of Kyknos; on the register below is a boar–lion combat that is surely inspired by (though not slavishly faithful to) *Aspis* 168–77; cf. London B 329 (c.520–500 BC) = *ABV* 334.1, a hydria with a Kyknomachy on the top lip and a boar–lion combat on the bottom register; for such interactions with art cf. §III.3.i. That this association occurred also to Lydos not only confirms the unity of the ecphrasis with the Kyknomachy from the earliest times: it also gives welcome ancient support to the parallelism which has just been argued for.

The scene is permeated by tension: the animals glare at each other and are eagerly straining to join battle (169); their hair bristles in anticipation (170). Both sides are apparently on the move (170 ἤϊσαν), but they do not seem to have engaged in combat after the earlier bout which led to the three fatalities. In an effective heightening of suspense, the poet does

not tell us at once why the two sides were locked in combat: he reserves this for later (172–4). The atmosphere of anticipation is mimetic of the suspension of narrative action occasioned by the ecphrasis (§IV.4). But after explaining why the boars and lions were fighting, the poet tells us that they were still more (ἔτι μᾶλλον) keen for battle. Why *still more*? By stating the *casus belli*, the poet has, as it were, reminded the animals of their fallen comrades and incensed their warlike spirits still further. The action moves forward, at least in psychological terms, even though the scene remains static. For criticism of the view that ecphrases equate to ‘narrative pauses’ see §IV.4.

168. Cf. 161n.

συῶν ... χλοούνων: the meaning of the adjective is uncertain (castrated? solitary? foaming at the mouth? making its bed in the grass?); cf. *Lfgre*. It is possible that the poet himself had no precise notion of its significance, but as an epithet reserved for the wild boar (κάπρος) it serves at least to distinguish the boar from the domestic hog, which is what συς alone would mean (cf. Edwards on *Il.* 17.21–2; Franco (2006)). The paroxytone accent (for the expected –ῶν) is supported by ancient authorities (Choerob. in *Theod.* 408.27–30 Hilgard, *EM* 812.47–8, *Et. Gud.* 567.48; cf. Eust. *Il.* 772.48–50), who explain that it follows from the supposed etymology χλόεννος ‘making its bed in the grass’.

ἀγέλαι: in Homer only of grazing animals, as the word’s derivation from ἄγω would suggest; the extended application of the term to wild animals is typical of our poet (cf. n. 160) and his linguistic ambitions. It anticipates the usage of ἀγέλη in later Greek with reference to other non-agrarian animals (e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 168, of birds).

169. **ἐς σφέας δερκομένων:** for terror inspired by an animal’s stare cf. 145n., and see *Lfgre* s.v. δέρκομαι B.I.1, II.5 (giving the sense of ἐσδέρκομαι here as ‘furchterregend’). Of

the boar described in a later simile the poet says ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι ἔϊκτον (390), while the lion paws the ground γλαυκίῳ ὄσσοις (430). Glinting eyes are typical features of these animals, cf. e.g. *Il.* 13.474, *Od.* 19.446 (boars); *Il.* 20.172 (~ *Aspis* 430), *Od.* 14.131–2 (lions).

κοτεόντων θ' ἱεμένων τε: cf. 403 (lions) ἀλλήλοισι κοτέοντες. The poet does not limit himself to physical characteristics of the animals but shows interest in their psychology too, as with the later boar (387) and lion (429). This is not uncommon with lions in early epic, cf. *Lfgre* s.v. λέων B.1c; for boars cf. e.g. *Il.* 13.471, 475.

170–1. The animals are equally matched, and the situation is tense, cf. 168–77n.

170. **ὀμιληδὸν στίχας ἥσαν:** as Russo 11 observes (cf. also above, n. 160), the poet here gives human characteristics to the boars and lions, since in the *Iliad* ὀμιληδόν and στίχας are reserved for human warriors. Cf. 173, 176 nn.

τῷ γε: The variants τῶν γε and τοί γε, preferred by some editors, are banalisations arising from a failure to appreciate that the mixture of dual and plural forms is normal epic style (cf. e.g. *Il.* 1.338, 21.115, *Od.* 14.193–5). Here the dual enhances the division between the sides, since it separates the animals sharply into two opposing camps.

171. **οὐδέτεροι:** also at *Th.* 638; cf. *Il.* 14.18 οὐδετέρωσε, which can however be articulated οὐδ' ἐτέρωσε.

φρίσσον γε μὲν αὐχένας ἄμφω: the boar in the simile also bristles (391); it is a stereotyped characteristic of the animal (*Il.* 13.473, *Od.* 19.446). But it is not said again of a lion until Theoc. *Id.* 25.244; the *Aspis* poet has applied it here to lions because he wants to stress the equal opposition represented by each side (cf. 168–77n.).

172. **λίς**: semantically indistinguishable from λέων. The oxytone accent (supported by Aristarchus) is to be preferred to the circumflex, cf. Chandler (1881) §566.

ἀμφι: for the probable signification see 168–77n.

173. **δοιοί**: for pairs in the *Aspis* cf. 211b–212, 233–4, 303; Edwards (1971) 165 n. 53 introduces another twosome by emending 302 λαγός to λαγώ.

ἀπουράμενοι ψυχάς: the participle includes the lion, and this is possible grammatically if we put a comma after δοιοί (Hermann (1835) 197–8)—despite the now slightly strained word order. The difficulty is the sense of ἀπουράμενοι: Hermann takes it in its proper middle sense and understands, ‘ein Löwe und zwei Eber lagen da, die einander das Leben geraubt hatten’, whereas others take it as passive, ‘having been deprived of their life’ (Buttmann (1843) 145; Kuenneth (1901–2) i. 14; Schwyzer (1939–50) i. 738; Russo). Kuenneth observes that the poet elsewhere uses middle participles with passive force, cf. 363 οὐταμένου σάκεος, 402 κταμένης ἐλάφοιο (there are Homeric parallels for both), and this makes ‘having been deprived of their life’ preferable. Hermann’s implicit assumption that these were the only three animals hitherto involved in combat is arbitrary.

For the extension of ψυχή from human to animal subjects cf. 170 and 176 nn.; this, however, is not an innovation but is found already in the *Odyssey* (14.426, boar) and the *Catalogue* (fr. 204.139, snake).

173–4. The grim detail of blood dripping down to the earth is very much in keeping with the poet’s macabre style, cf. esp. 267–8 and §II.1.vi. The blood drips from both the lion and the boars.

κελαινόν | αἶμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζ': cf. 268. *κελαινόν | αἶμ'* shows separation and inversion of the well-established formula *αἶμα κελαινόν* (cf. 382–3 *ἀλαλητῶι | θεσπεσίωι*, with §II.1.v). This adapted formula must be derivative, since formulae are never designed to straddle two verses. Moreover, in *αἶμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζ'* (174, 268)—a pseudo-formula unique to the *Aspis*—*ἔραζε* is elided, against the custom of all other early epic. When therefore our poet devised this untraditional formula, he also deviated from established conventions of versification. This is an important index of his attitude towards the formulaic language.

174. αὐχένας ἐξεριπόντες: ‘having fallen with respect to their necks’ (*αὐχένας* is accusative of respect). As O’Sullivan remarks (*Lfgre* s.v. *ἐκρίπτω* B.II.1), this phrase ‘prob(ably) expresses both the idea of the boars’ having fallen in general and of their necks’ having fallen away, been twisted away from the normal position i(n) relat(ion) to the body in life’.

175. τεθνηῶτες ὑπὸ βλοσυροῖσι λέουσι: ‘killed by’, rather than ‘lying underneath’, grim-faced (cf. 147–8n.) lions. *Pace* e.g. van Lennep, in Homer *ὑπό* + dative may express agency, cf. George (2005) 61–7. An explanation of the boars’ demise, as providing the reason for the conflict, is needed more than a specification of the animals’ precise position, a detail we have already been given by 172 *ἀμφί*.

176–7. For the ring composition with 168–9 cf. §II.1.v.

176. τοῖ: as Janko (1982) 262 n. 3 remarks, in the epos ‘οἱ predominates over τοῖ wherever possible, indeed seems to have replaced it’; moreover, there are only seven cases in the epos where τοῖ and ταί begin the line, ‘except in *Aspis* throughout the poem (176, 239, 278, 282, 283, 298, 345). Contrariwise οἱ is limited to 280–310 (7×), a vexed passage.’ The linguistic

oddity of these τ-forms points to a single author for the two halves of the ecphrasis (cf. §IV.3.i).

ἔτι μᾶλλον: 168–77n. *ad fin.*

μάχεσθαι: much more often used of human combat than of animal, and thus contributing to the poet's scheme of humanising the lions and boars (cf. 170, 173 nn.); the same extension is found also at 387. But as with animal ψυχάι (173n.), this is not an innovation by our poet (cf. *Lfgre* s.v. μάχομαι B.I.1c).

Russo notes that this is one of six verses in the poem with a hephthemimeral caesura (cf. 251, 314, 323, 377, 423).

177. χλοῦναί τε σύες: 168n.

χαροποί τε λέοντες: the rare word χαροπός, which occurs, significantly, in the description of Herakles' belt at *Od.* 11.611 (quoted on 168–77), is an epithet of wild animals that is of uncertain meaning (flashing-eyed? savage?) and now known to be of Mycenaean pedigree; see *Lfgre*, with extensive literature. It probably meant different things to different singers. If the poet thought that χλοῦνης signified 'wild' (cf. 168n.), perhaps he intended χαροπός as a balancing epithet, 'fierce' or similar.

178–90. Combat of Lapiths and Centaurs.

Continuing with the progression along the spectrum from beast to man (§IV.3.ii), the poet describes the combat of the Lapiths and Centaurs. The occasion for this is the Centaurs' drunken attempt to seize Hippodameia at her wedding to Peirithoos (*Od.* 21.295–304, etc.).³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Aelian's claim (*VH* 11.2) that a pre-Homeric poet, one Melesander of Miletus, wrote on the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs has zero probability.

The Lapiths overcome those who would upset civilised order and snatch what is not rightfully theirs; their more civilised nature is emphasised by their more developed weaponry, cf. 178n.

In §IV.2.iii I have argued that we are supposed to draw a parallel between the civilised Lapiths and Herakles on the one hand, and the uncouth Centaurs and Kyknos/Ares on the other. The equation of Herakles with the Lapiths is further suggested by the appearance on the Lapiths' side of Theseus (182). Before the early sixth century, Theseus had a marginal status in panhellenic mythology; but probably not long after the *Aspis* was composed, his fame began to spread. Like Herakles, he was credited with the vanquishing of brigands and monsters. Assuming that the development was already under way by the time that the *Aspis* was composed,³⁴² this ecphrastic Theseus is in effect an avatar of Herakles. Herodorus, active around 400 BC, even says (fr. 25a Fowler) that it was expressly in order to meet Herakles that Theseus was journeying to Trachis when he stumbled across the Lapith–Centaur battle already in progress; if this story was already current in the early sixth century, the audience would have been even more inclined to associate Herakles and Theseus. See further §IV.2.iii, and for Herakles and Theseus together fighting Centaurs in art see Shefton (1962), esp. 338–44, 365–7 (no examples earlier than the François Vase, however, on which see next paragraph).

The Centauromachy features on the François Vase (Florence, Mus. Arch. 4209 = *ABV* 76.1), which was painted by Kleitias around 570. The figures are labelled, and although the names of the Lapiths do not match closely (179–82n.), the correspondences with the Centaurs are considerable (185–7n.). The poet's inclusion of Theseus, as well as the otherwise

³⁴² Herakles and Theseus may have been paired as early as the *Nostoi*, if Paus. 1.2.1 is indeed to be related to this epic; cf. West (2013) 276–7.

unknown Hoplon/Hopleus, shows a particularly close link between the poem and the object, cf. 182 and 187 nn. Russo argues that Kleitias knew the poem itself and indeed misunderstood *Aspis* 186; but this last point is no longer certain (see ad loc.), and we cannot be sure that the vase is directly ‘dependent’ on the poem. In particular, it should be noted that several of the combatants’ names given on the vase—Ἀντίμαχος, Ὑλαῖος, Πύρ(ρ)ος, Θέρανγρος, Ὀρόσβιος—find no analogue in the poem (for the mysterious Ἄκριος cf. 186n.). The painter may have invented the names, or else derived them from elsewhere. Wachter (1991) 104–7 goes too far in emending the poem to match the vase. The *Odyssey* presupposes the existence of a poetic account of the combat of Lapiths and Centaurs (cf. above), and Nestor’s brief allusion to the Lapiths (*Il.* 1.262–[5]) also suggests the existence of songs about them. It seems more likely that Kleitias and the *Aspis* were drawing independently on the lost source(s) on which all these passages are based.

Kleitias portrays individual groups of combatants, rather than two separate lines converging. The poet’s technique is different: as with the lion–boar scene (168–77n.), he rigidly separates the two sides into opposing serried ranks (cf. 184 ἐτέρωθεν). The reason is twofold: first, the poet adheres to his technique of contrastive juxtaposition (§II.1.vi); and second, when listing names it is much easier for him to keep the Lapiths and Centaurs separate. On the catalogue as a supposedly ‘Hesiodic’ feature cf. §II.5.i and n. 117.

For the Centauromachy on the François Vase see Minto (1955); the best photographs are in Shapiro–Iozzo–Lezzi (2013); the inscriptions and names are discussed by Wachter (1991), esp. 104–7. Chiarini (2012) 81–96 is helpful on what we know from other sources of the named fighters, both those in the poem and those on the vase.

178. **Λαπιθάων αἰχμητάων:** = *Il.* *12.128. The Lapiths, clad in armour (183) and brandishing spears (178, 190), are equipped with more civilised weaponry than their pine-wielding opponents (188, 190). Similarly, by the fifth century the Giants no longer fight kitted out like human warriors, but bearing boulders and tree-trunks; cf. West on *Th.* 186.

179–82. Compare Nestor’s catalogue of Lapiths (*Il.* 1.262–[5]), which mentions Peirithoos, Dryas, Kaineus, Exadios, and Polyphemos; Theseus is probably a later addition to this company, cf. 182n. All but Polyphemos appear in the *Aspis*. On the François Vase we find, just as in the *Aspis*: Theseus, Antimakhos, Kaineus, Hoplon (presumably identical with the Hopleur at 182), and Dryas; as Beazley (1986) 32 says, Peirithoos was surely included, although his name is no longer visible. This is not a particularly close match, and it strengthens the supposition that Kleitias had some other source besides the *Aspis* and *Iliad* for the names of the Lapiths (cf. 178–90n.); so too the *Iliad* and *Aspis* probably draw on a common source, rather than the *Aspis* being dependent on the *Iliad* (cf. 178–90n.).

179. The so-called ‘augmented triad’, a sub-species of ‘Behaghel’s Law’ is a common feature of Homeric, and indeed of Indo-European, verse (West (2007a) 117–19). But here we have a *decreasing* threefolder, a much rarer verse-form. There is only one example in the Catalogue of Ships, and only three in the *Theogony* (West (2004) 35).

Καινέα τ’ ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα: Kaineus began life as a woman but was metamorphosed into a man by Poseidon, and in his new form he was made invulnerable; cf. *EGM* ii. 159–62. Kleitias knows of Kaineus’ invulnerability, for he depicts the Centaurs crushing him into the

earth with boulders.³⁴³ The metamorphosis of Kaineus was recounted in the *Catalogue* ([Hes.] fr. 87), and since I believe that the poet of the *Aspis* knew the *Catalogue* in its entirety (§III.1), I assume that he knew of Kaineus' invulnerability too. (If the *Iliad* knew of it, the detail is ignored, 1.264.) There is no explicit mention of Kaineus' supernatural aspects in the *Aspis*, but his invincibility and consequent supremacy may be hinted at in the otherwise unparalleled detail that he is the Lapiths' ἄναξ, a position normally occupied by Peirithoos. Perhaps the poet felt that invulnerability was an unsuitable feature to introduce into a catalogue whose two sides he wishes to present as balanced and evenly matched (cf. 183, 185 nn.).

180. **Ὀπλέα:** otherwise unknown, except (presumably) on the François Vase, cf. 179–82n. Chiarini (2012) 88 suggests that his speaking name, alluding to the more developed weaponry of the Lapiths (cf. 178n.), is the reason why on the François Vase he alone of the Lapiths is depicted in full panoply.

Ἐξάδιόν τε: the scholia on *Il.* 1.264/5 note that instead of the Homeric form Ἐξάδιος, some of the 'younger poets' wrote Ἐάδιος. As Severyns (1928) 107 points out, no example of this is known, unless someone divided the present verse as Ὀπλέα τε Ἐάδιόν τε: a valuable datum for assessing ancient scholarship on the *Aspis* (cf. §III.3.iii).

181. Mopsos, son of the seer Ampyx (or Ampykos) and himself a famed seer, is included as one of the Argonauts; the tradition of his involvement in the expedition may be as old as Eumelos (if indeed P.Oxy. 3698 is rightly ascribed to Eumelos by Debiassi (2003)), and thus perhaps known to our poet. The reason for his inclusion here in company with the Lapiths is

³⁴³ For the motif compare the Trojan Kyknos, whose skin was invulnerable (thanks, again, to Poseidon) and whom Achilles killed by crushing his head with a rock (*Cypr. Arg.* 10b); cf. West (2013) 115–16, with 116 n. 46).

obscure, but seers often become attached, with seeming haphazardness, to various sagas—they are felt to be a necessary element in any exploit, and there is only a limited number of suitably illustrious diviners available. The epithet **Τιταρήσιον** may allude to Ampyx's father Tita(i)ron (cf. sch. A.R. 1.65, Tz. ad Lyc. 881), or else to the river Titaressos in Thessaly (cf. *Il.* 2.749–55); a homeland round Dodona, which is where (according to the *Iliad* passage) the Titaressos flows, would be appropriate for a seer. **ῥζον Ἄρηος** is metaphorical, intended merely to convey Mopsos' warlike nature. Note finally that Τιτα]ρήσιος ῥ[ζ]ος, cited as a parallel by Russo from what is now *SH* 429.21, is no longer considered a secure reading.

182. Theseus is involved in the battle because of his friendship with Peirithoos; on this see Walker (1995). The verse is identical with *Il.* 1.265. It is poorly attested in the *Iliad* and is ignored by the scholia, and many editors regard it as spurious and perhaps as inserted from the *Aspis* itself; cf. West (2001) 186, Von der Mühll (1952) 24 n. 29. Its status in the *Aspis* has also been called into question: Meyer (1892) 374–6 thinks that it ought to be deleted in order to equalise the number of verses in each catalogue (5:5, rather than 5:6). This is not a safe criterion, however: when, for example, the poet is clearly contrasting and juxtaposing Ares and Athena, the ratio is 6:4 (or, more likely, 6:5—cf. 199n.).

More serious is the question whether the verse is an 'Athenian insertion' in the *Aspis*, as it has been suspected of being in the *Iliad*. The *Aspis* was very popular in Athens (§III.3.i), and, like 'Athenian insertions' into the *Iliad*, the present verse may have been added so as to give the city and its hero a more prominent role in early myth; note in particular the patronymic Αἰγείδης, which links Theseus with one of the mythical kings of Athens.³⁴⁴ We do not know

³⁴⁴ The growing pan-Hellenic prestige of Theseus is evident from the fact that on the Chest of Kypselos—i.e. in near-contemporary Corinthian art—his mother Aithra was pictured being taken to Troy alongside Helen (cf. the 'Athenian insertion' *Il.* 3.144). Aithra's rescue by Demophon and Akamas

how early Theseus' association with the Centaurs is, though 'it might be as late as the sixth century' (Walker (1995) 13); art does not take it earlier than the François Vase (cf. 178–90n. *ad fin.*). Kleitias included Theseus in the combat, perhaps on the strength of *Aspis* 182 itself, or more likely because of some common source (cf. 178–90n.). The verse was perhaps interpolated from the *Aspis* into the *Iliad* (for such textual disturbances cf. §III.3.ii); again, however, a non-extant poem could be the source. Cf. Herter (1936) 222–3, who includes references to earlier discussions; id. (1939) 289–386, *RE* Suppl. xiii. 1045–1238; Brommer (1982); Kearns (1989) s.v. Theseus.

183. ἀργύρεοι, χρύσεια περὶ χροῖ τεύχε' ἔχοντες: the Lapiths were depicted in silver, but their armour was of gold. Strictly the poet is referring to Hephaistos' craftsmanship (cf. 188: the real-life Centaurs knew nothing of golden boughs), but he is also playfully slipping between ecphrasis and reality; the 'real-life' Lapiths' armour would presumably have been of bronze, but gold is at least a possible material. For other such whimsical ambiguities see §IV.4.

Grammatically, the nominatives are loosely appositive to the preceding accusatives, cf. 167n. There is nonetheless some awkwardness, and 183 may be an authorial afterthought, composed for the sake of balance on the model of 188, where the nominatives are regular after 184 Κένταυροι.

Russo prefers Z's εἴματ' to the rest of the tradition's τεύχε', which he sees as banalising. Like Solmsen, however, I reverse his analysis: εἴματ' is a corruption of τεύχε', helped by the

is assumed in the *Cypria*, *Sack of Troy* and *Little Iliad*; cf. Alc. *PMGF* 21, Stes. fr. 90.21–5. As Finglass (2013) 38 remarks, if the brothers' inclusion in the war is indeed due to Athenian interpolation, '[i]t would follow that such interpolation was taking place early enough in the sixth century to influence archaic poets from outside Athens such as Stesichorus, and perhaps even earlier, depending on the date that we posit for the [*Sack of Troy* and *Little Iliad*].'

gloss ἔσθῆς (Σ p. 31) and *Il.* 18.517 ἄμφω χρυσεῖω, χρύσεια δὲ εἵματα ἔσθην (of Ares and Athena on Achilles' shield). Only from the fifth century onwards are Lapiths in Greek art invariably naked or lightly clothed; before this, they ranged from being unarmed to wearing a full panoply, and on the François Vase they are partially armed. There is therefore no objection to their wearing armour here. Russo, however, suggests that the Lapiths had only εἵματα, not τεύχεα, because they had just been at Hippodameia's wedding. This is over-subtle: this combat could very well be taking place at a later stage of the hostilities, 'e si puo immaginare che nel frattempo i Lapiti si fossero equipaggiati' (Chiarini (2012) 91). For τεύχεα 'suits of armour' around the skin cf. *Il.* 22.322, West on *Op.* 150.

184. The Centaurs are not explicitly said to be horse-shaped until Pindar (fr. 166); but early poets must have known about this, since artists such as Kleitias, as well as those from the Geometric period and even earlier, give Centaurs equine features. It is no surprise that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* suppress this supernatural detail, though it is slightly odd that the poet of the *Aspis* does not think it worth mentioning; perhaps he just took it for granted.

Κενταυροὶ: this was probably the everyday word for the creatures in the poet's time, cf. *Il.* 11.832, *Od.* 21.295, 303; Φῆρες (*Il.* 1.268, 2.743) is imported from Aeolic (cf. West (1988) 160, Hoekstra (1965) 152).

ἠγερέθοντο: the imperfect ought to mean that the warriors 'were gathering', which would mean that battle could not have been joined (unless they were re-grouping?). But bards may have confused forms of ἀγείρω and ἐγείρω (Janko (1992) 35 n. 65; West (2001) 23), so that the poet may here intend 'were rousing themselves to battle around'.

185-7. Catalogue of Centaurs. Those found also on the François Vase are Asbolos, Petraios, and Melankhaites (cf. 186n.); some names are lost, and there may have been further

overlap (cf. Wachter (1991) 104–7). The names of those Centaurs who have speaking names convey the creatures' wild disposition: Rocky (Petraios); Sooty (Asbolos); Savage (Agrios; cf. 186n.); Mountain-man (Oreios); Blackhair (Melankhaite; cf. 186n.); the two sons of Pineman (Peukeides), one of whom is called Oakman(?) (Dryalos).³⁴⁵ Mimas and Perimedes are exceptions.

185. μέγαν Πετραῖον: he reappears, fighting Herakles, on a kantharos of c.550 BC, Berlin F 1737 = *ABV* 173.1 (cf. *Paralipomena* 72, *Beazley Addenda* 49).

Ἄσβολον οἰωνιστήν: on the François Vase his name has an initial aspirate; on the Berlin kantharos (see previous n.), where he appears alongside Petraios, it is unaspirated, as we would expect; for incorrect aspirates on the François Vase cf. Wachter (1991) 102 n. 72.

Of Asbolos' augury we know nothing more, and it is not evident in iconography (*LIMC* IV.1, 450–1); perhaps this detail was invented by the poet *ad hoc* to give the Centaurs a counterpart to Mopsos (cf. 181n.); this would accord with his obsession with balance in this section (179n.). It certainly seems odd that the uncouth race of Centaurs should have in their ranks a professional seer; but even the *Odyssey's* Cyclopes had a diviner-in-residence, Telemos (*Od.* 9.508–10).

Ovid (*Met.* 12.307–8) probably had *Aspis* 185 in mind when he included *augur Asbolos* in his catalogue of Centaurs. (Roscher's conjecture, based on the present verse, for the transmitted *Astylos/-us* is surely right (*pace* Lawson (1910) 250 n. 2): 'Townsmen' is a singularly inappropriate name for a Centaur, cf. Bömer's note to the Ovid passage.)

³⁴⁵ The tree-based names should perhaps be interpreted in the context of Hesiod's Bronze Race, which was born ἐκ μελιῶν; cf. West (1978) 174.

186. Ἄγριον Οὔρειόν τε Μελαγχαίτην τε Μίμάν τε: the transmitted text is Ἄρκτόν τ' Οὔρειόν (or Θούριόν) τε μελαγχαίτην τε Μίμαντα, which poses several problems. First, Kleitias labels one of his Centaurs 'Melankhaïtes', implying that he took the word as a proper name, not an epithet. Kleitias does not always follow his presumed poetic model closely (cf. Snodgrass (1998) 119–20), but Diodorus (4.12.7), too, knows of a Centaur called Melankhaïtes. Hence West (1961) 140 attractively conjectures Μελαγχαίτην τε Μίμάν τε; for the short-form accusative he compares [Hes.] fr. 236 ἦ δὲ Θόαν (for Θόαντα) τέκεν υἱόν. The rarity of this form of the accusative will have motivated the corruption.

The second problem is the name Arktos: the other Centaurs' speaking names emphasise their rough, uncivilised nature (185–7n.), and in such a list the animal 'Bear' is out of place—especially given the *equine* nature of Centaurs. The François Vase depicts one Ἄκριος. I believe that this stands for Ἄγριος and that in the *Aspis* we should emend Ἄρκτόν τ' to Ἄγριον (for the omission of the copula after the first name in the verse cf. West on *Th.* 245); this would add to the Centaurs' ranks a suitably named comrade, 'Savage', who is moreover known to us from elsewhere ([Apollod.] 2.5.4). The emendation is argued for in full in Mason (2014).

Οὔρειόν τε: the proper name, as against the majority reading Θούριον ('raging'), is now given additional support by P and V. The corruption presupposes the insertion of the copula after Ἄρκτον (APKTONTOYPIONTE > APKTONΘOYPIONTE).³⁴⁶

Μίμάν τε: the only mention of Mimas the Centaur; the name is applied to various other mythical figures. In view of this Mimas' inherently uncouth nature, his closest analogue is the

³⁴⁶ This resolves the confusion of Chiarini (2012) 93 n. 150, who fails to realise that Ped. p. 628.27–8 Ἄρκτον τὸν ὀρητικόν is a gloss on Ἄρκτον θούριον. Cf. n. 328.

giant of the same name slain by Ares or Zeus (A.R. 3.1227, Eur. *Ion* 215). At Mason (2014) 30 I suggest that the names of a pair of Centaurs, Agrios and Oreios, have been transferred to those of a pair of giants (or vice versa); the same may have happened with Mimas.

187. On Dryas/Dryops/Dryalos and his possible relation to the Dryopes cf. Fontenrose (1959) 40.

188. Cf. 183n., and for the verse-pattern cf. 292.

189–90. The poet rounds off his scene by summarising the salient points; it is not quite ring composition, however. Observe also how, once the poet has described the figures statically, it is as though they come alive for him and begin advancing towards each other. For this technique cf. 168–77n. and §IV.4.

189. **καί τε**: cf. Ruijgh (1971) §735, '[l]'emploi de τε pourrait s'expliquer parce qu'il s'agit d'un fait mythique'; he deems the variants **καί γε** 'moins probable' and **οἷ τε** (B) 'possible sans plus'. **καί** is also supported by Π₃₉.

συναίγδην: 'hurtling together' (< αἶσσω), adverb; the violent *hapax*, worthy of our poet (§II.6.iii), is now further supported against **συναίκτην** (an imagined verb) by Π₃₉. Apollonius Rhodius has **καταίγδην** (*Arg.* 1.64, a passage echoing this one), **μεταίγδην** (2.95), and **αἶγδην** (2.826) (Paley).

ὥς εἰ ζωοὶ περ ἔόντες: for the insistence on the figures' life-like nature, and the breaking of the ecphrastic illusion, cf. 194 and 244, §IV.6. West on *Th.* 584 ζωοῖσιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν notes that '[i]n Geometric art, realistic portrayal is not attempted' and concludes that 'this formula was presumably coined in the subsequent period'.

190. **ἔγχεσιν ἤδ' ἐλάτῃς**: 178n.

αὐτοσχεδὸν ὠριγνῶντο: the two sides are stretching and straining towards each other, but they have not yet managed to make contact. The same state of imminent contact is implied for the lions and boars (168–77, 170–1 nn.), and the serpents depicted on Agamemnon's corselet ὀρωρέχαιο προτὶ δειρήν (*Il.* 11.26), suggesting that the idea of animals in art somehow striving to be in motion was already a conceit. For narrative suspense in the ecphrasis cf. §IV.6.

191–206. The divine plane.

The next three scenes, although formally distinct, should be taken as a group. They describe the three gods most directly involved in the poem: Ares, Athena, and Apollo. We have heard little of them till now (Ares: 59–61, 70–2, 98–101, 108–14; Athena: 125–7; Apollo: 68–9), and one reason for the poet's inclusion of these verses is to integrate the gods more fully into the poem. More specifically, the ecphrastic deities foreshadow the action of the narrative and reduce the abruptness of its course (§IV.4).

Ares and **Athena** are not involved with the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs (§IV.3.i). Rather, their martial preparations are related to the Kyknomachy that follows the conclusion of the whole ecphrasis. The poet is planning ahead. The gods' juxtaposition in the ecphrasis suggests their thematic opposition (§II.1.vi), Ares as the hateful aspect of war and Athena as its more acceptable incarnation. For this contrast, which seems in large part to be due to the *Iliad*,³⁴⁷ cf. e.g. Nicgorski (2003) 291–2, with bibl.; for the characterisation of Ares in the

³⁴⁷ Another sign of the *Aspis*'s closeness to that epic. In the *Telegony* Athena and Ares clash in battle but are separated by Apollo; 'Athena is Odysseus' regular supporting deity, but her worsting of Ares in battle must have been inspired by the episode in *Il.* 5.814ff. where she helps Diomedes to defeat him' (West (2013) 298). Is it conceivable that Apollo—hardly integral to that grouping in the *Telegony*—was suggested to Eugammon by the *Aspis*, where he is a natural member of the trio?

Aspis see §III.2.ii. The most relevant iconographical parallel known to me is a black-figured amphora of c.500 BC (Richmond, Virginia Museum 60.11 = *Paralipomena* 250). As Nicgorski (2003) 292–3 says, the unusual arrangement

highlights only the two fully armed, warlike deities in a powerful centrifugal composition. [...] Violent Ares surely strikes an aggressive pose with spear raised [cf. *Aspis* 193]. He moves energetically to the left, but his face is obscured by his shield and is therefore left to the viewer's imagination. Athena also assumes a combative posture with her protective aegis fully extended and her spear raised [cf. *Aspis* 199–200]. An impressive figure wearing an Attic helmet [cf. *Aspis* 199] that reveals her face, she strides confidently to the right—the direction of movement in Greek battle scenes that is usually associated with the victorious.

Of particular significance is the fact that the other side of the amphora depicts a Kyknomachy.

As for **Apollo**, he does not involve himself directly in the *Aspis*'s combat, hence he is not here described in martial aspect. Rather, his scene relates to a stage of the combat that lies still further in the future, the after-party. Apollo's joyous dance with the Muses exemplifies the pleasures of life on Olympus, pleasures which depend on the assurance of the gods' own safety; thus even Zeus danced on Olympus when the threat of the Titans had been diffused (Eumel. fr. 8 *GEF* (= *Titanomachy* fr. 6 *PEG* = 5 *EGF*) μέσσοισιν δ' ὠρχεῖτο πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε). By defeating Kyknos Herakles will ensure the sanctity of Apollo's two shrines at Delphi and Pagasae, and Apollo will thus have cause to rejoice. For the dance in heaven see 201–6n.

191–6. Ares and his attendants.

191–2. The poet begins with a description of Ares' horses, for which cf. *Il.* 5.355–69, 15.119, *h.* 8.7–8; the god's name appears first in the genitive, and only in 193 does he take centre stage in the nominative. Through this teasing device the poet builds suspense, and the

climax is emphasised by the accumulation of impressive epithets in 192. Special attention had earlier been paid to Ares' steeds (61–5), and so the initial focus on his horses is not otiose.

191. βλοσυροῖο: 147–8n.; only here used of Ares.

ποδώκεες ἔστασαν ἵπποι: for the introductory formula cf. §IV.3.i, and for the expression cf. 195–6 παρὰ ... ἔστασαν. The horses are static, poised (as it were) for the action of the main narrative, but idle for the time being.

192. χρύσειοι: an example of the poet's slippage between ecphrasis and reality (§IV.4). Ostensibly this refers to the horses' trappings or manes, which would be of gold because their owner is a god: compare the chariot of Athena at *Il.* 5.720–32, and cf. Macleod on *Il.* 24.20; the idea is apparently an Indo-European motif, cf. West (1988) 155. Yet 'gold' could also be a reference to the materials used by Hephaistos for dramatic effect.

ἐναρσφόρος οὔλιος Ἄρης: a breach of the principle of formulae economy, cf. Ἄρης ἄατος πολέμοιο (*Aspis* 59, 3× *Il.*), Ἄρης ἀκόρητος αὐτῆς (*Aspis* 451). As Edwards (1971) 63 notes, the last is formed by analogy with *Il.* 13.621 *δεινῆς ἀκόρητοι αὐτῆς; but we now know that the extension had already occurred in the *Catalogue*, fr. 10a.53, and it is a possible restoration also at Tyrt. fr. 19.4. The unique βρισάρματος οὔλιος Ἄρης (441; cf. *h.* 8.1)³⁴⁸ is not yet another breach, since, unlike the other three, it serves for postconsonantal position. οὔλιος Ἄρης may be based on οὔλος Ἄρης, which comes only in the Diomedea (*Il.* 5.461, 717); for the poet's special familiarity with that part of the epic cf. §III.1, but note that βριή]πυρος οὔλιος Ἄρης is now attested at [Hes.] fr. 10a.69, which weakens the connection.

³⁴⁸ The epithet reflects the Indo-European idea that a god is a weighty being (*Il.* 5.838–9, *h.* 7.18; cf. West (2007a) 133). βρισάρματος is formed on the model of ἐρυσάρματος and may well be a coinage of the *Aspis* poet's. If so, Pindar (fr. 70b.26) and the (very late) *Hymn to Ares* (1) will be indebted to this passage (cf. §III.3.ii); these are the only recurrences of the word.

Even so, ἐν. οὐλ. Ἄρης seems to be an innovation by the poet of the *Aspis*, ‘chosen here in order to put Ares in as poor a light as possible, the story being told from the point of view of Herakles’ (Edwards (1971) 71). Edwards does not make his point explicit, but the significant detail is that the taking of spoils by a god from a mortal is an improper practice, again unique to Ares (194n.).

For the form ἐναρσφόρος (also at Alc. *PMGF* 1.3, as a proper name, and possibly to be recognised in Myc. *e-na-po-ro*) see Leumann (1926); we might have expected ἐναρσφόρος (so some mss.) or ἐναρηφόρος (the latter is in fact attested). Leumann’s insistence that ἐναρσφόρος is based on specific Homeric *loci* is, however, not necessary; and if the Mycenaean evidence can be trusted, it is not so recent a formation as he supposed.

The prosody of Ares’ name in Hesiod is discussed by Paulson (1887) 122.

193. For the two asyndetic participles cf. 451 ἀλλὰ μέγα ἰάχων, φλογὶ εἵκελα τεύχεα πάλλων (where Hecker, however, conjectured τ’ ἔγχεα), *Od.* 9.395 σμερδαλέον δὲ μέγ’ ὤιμωξεν (adduced by West ap. Russo, *Addenda* p. 222); 243 (codd.) would provide another instance.

αἰχμήν ἐν χείρεσσιν ἔχων: the spear, although used by many warriors, is associated closely with Ares and is in a sense his signature weapon, both in the *Iliad* (5.594 *al.*) and in art (cf. *LIMC* II.1, 490). Perhaps he requires two hands because of the weapon’s heroic bulk (cf. 139–40n. χερσί).

πρυλέεσσι κελεύων: no specific ranks of warriors are intended; the poet simply means that Ares had adopted the pose that he would use in order to spur on combatants. Perhaps he

looked as though he were shouting, like the women on the city walls (242–3) (cf. 206 λιγὺ μελπομένης εἰκυῖαι).

194. αἶματι φοινικόεις: the (false) etymological connection to φόν- is evidently felt by the poet (cf. 159n.).

ὥς εἰ ζωοὺς ἐναρίζων: cf. 189n. This is ‘a curious phrase and hardly very felicitous since the antonym which suggests itself to ζωοὺς in this context would be “dead”, but what the poet means is *vivos, non fictos*’ (Solmsen (1965) 5). Cf. *Il.* 18.418 (the robots), [539]. ἐναρίζων probably came to the poet’s mind because of 192 ἐναρσφόρος (cf. §II.6.vi).

Ares is only standing at the edges of the battle, giving orders, but he has still become splashed with blood, perhaps in an earlier bout. Nonetheless, the poet describes him as a man-slayer. Ares is almost unique among the gods in being credited with the killing of human beings: in the *Diomedea* he kills Periphas and begins to despoil him (*Il.* 5.842–8); immediately after this he rushes at Diomedes μεμῶς ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἐλέσθαι (*Il.* 5.852 ~ *Aspis* 453 (Ares rushes at Herakles) κακκτάμεναι μεμῶς). He also slew Halirrhothios ([*Apollod.*] 3.14.2); the subsequent course of events in the stories of both Halirrhothios and Periphas shows that the direct, hand-to-hand killing of a mortal was considered a transgression of acceptable Olympian practice. Ares is also spoken of in some epitaphs as having ‘slain’ the deceased warrior, cf. e.g. *CEG* 145 = *GVI* 73 (c.600?), *CEG* 27 = *GVI* 1224 (c.540–530). In the *Aspis* itself he is described as ἀνδροφόνος (98; cf. *Il.* 4.441,³⁴⁹ 24.804b = *Aethiopsis* fr. 1) and

³⁴⁹ At *Il.* 4.439–41 we find a nexus of motifs also present in the *Aspis*: the martial opposition of Ares and Athena; Deimos and Phobos as attendants of Ares (cf. also 463–6); and personified Eris. Although all these elements recur in the *Iliad*, they are never again found in combination with one another. In view of the shared use of Ἄρεος ἀνδροφόνου, it seems certain that our poet knew this very passage of the *Iliad*.

will attempt to kill a mortal (424ff.), something which is not θέμις (447). The ecphrasis foreshadows the narrative.

It is a different matter for a god to strike down a transgressor from afar, with arrows or a thunderbolt, as Zeus does in [Hes.] fr. 30.15–18; similarly, in Sophocles' *Niobe* (fr. **441a) we find Apollo 'pointing out to Artemis the next girl for her to shoot' (Barrett ap. Carden (1974) 172). Apollo's fatal defeat of Phorbas in a boxing-match (*Aethiopsis* fr. 4) is not really comparable to these murderous acts of Ares', since Phorbas was an impious villain and Apollo did not act out of blood-lust; nor would he ever despoil a victim.

195–6. Deimos and Phobos, both sons of Ares (*Th.* 934), are paired at *Il.* 4.440–1, and act as their father's charioteers at 13.299–300 and 15.119–20. They are imagined as anthropomorphic figures, and this Phobos is therefore quite distinct from the Gorgon mask at the centre of Herakles' shield (cf. 144n.); cf. *LIMC* Phobos; *ABV* 110.37 ('late'); *ARV* 126.23 (c.510). They are included here because they will escort the wounded Ares back to Olympus (463–6). However, before Kyknos' death, Ares himself acts as Kyknos' charioteer, and Deimos and Phobos leap into action from nowhere. Their mention here softens that abruptness, cf. 191–206n.

Deimos and Phobos stand next to Ares in the chariot, eager to enter the fray themselves. This is consistent with the *mêlée* fighting implied by 193 πρυλέεσσι: in such situations, charioteers weave around the battlefield with their champion on board; in formal duels, the two sides drive near to one another before the champions alone dismount, as at 340ff.

195. **δίφρου ἐπεμβεβαώς**: again at 324; ἐπεμβεβαώς otherwise in the epos only at *Il.* 9.582.

The manuscripts have δίφρωι, but the parallel with *Aspis* 324, where the tradition is unanimous for -ου, shows that it should be restored here too; cf. also Nonn. *D.* 48.310 ἐπεμβαίνουσα δὲ δίφρου. The corruption probably arose through misreading the word as ἐμ- (so Z), after which the dative would be expected (e.g. Eur. *Ph.* [2]).

Except in representations of the Kyknomachy, Ares is only rarely depicted on a chariot (Chiarini (2012) 97); this confirms our suspicion that the poet has shaped the present passage in conformity with the action of the poem (cf. 191–206n.).

δὲ Δεῖμός τε: the scansion δῆ is due to Deimos' name originally being digammated (< *δ_{FEI}-, cf. *DELG* s.v. δείδω).

196. πόλεμον καταδύμεναι ἀνδρῶν: cf. 195–6n. For the idiom of 'plunging into' battle cf. *Il.* 3.241, 5.140, 18.134 *al.* The fact that the poet says that Deimos and Phobos were eager to enter the battle of *men* shows that 191–200 do not refer to the Centauromachy (cf. §IV.3.i)—unless we suppose that the poet is being particularly careless. For πόλεμος = 'battle' cf. 150n.

197–200. Athena.

The tableau of Athena 'Promakhos' is a counterpoint to that of Ares: both deities are on the point of going to battle and both hold a spear. Athena will succeed whereas Ares will fail, but this is only subtly hinted at (197). The poet's aim seems instead to be to present them as well-matched opponents, the contrasting faces of war (cf. 191–206n.).

197. As with Ares' epithets (192), the adjectives describing Athena, though traditional (cf. *Il.* 4.515, *Od.* 3.378), are appropriate. **Διὸς θυγάτηρ** brings before us Zeus, who sanctions the slaying of Kyknos (328–9, 383–5); the mention of him here implies his support for Athena

and her mission. Although it seems that **ἀγελείη** properly means ‘leader of the host’ (cf. West on *Th.* 318), it is not certain what it signified for the poet (cf. Hainsworth (1993) 29): if ‘bringer of spoils’, it would refer to her enabling Herakles to strip Kyknos’ corpse (328–9, 467–9); if ‘leader of the host’, to her commanding role in the Kyknomachy.³⁵⁰ For the omission of the verb ‘to be’ cf. 270b παρὰ δ’ εὐπυργος πόλις ἀνδρῶν and also 133–4 (for the text of 135 cf. n. 62). **Τριτογένεια** was perhaps of unknown meaning to the poet himself; for ancient opinion see *LfgreE* (Triton-born? born from the head? third-born?).

198. μάχην ἐθέλουσα κορύσσειν: cf. 148, *Il.* 2.273 πόλεμόν τε κορύσσω. Guyet and Graevius hold that κορύσσω instead means ‘stir up, kindle’ (cf. [Hes.] fr. 190.2, and for further examples Fries on [Eur.] *Rh.* 933 ἀλκὰς κορύσσοντ’), but Athena’s action here must be intended as a counterpart to Ares πρυλέεσσι κεύων (193).

199–200. Athena is identified by her insignia: spear, helmet, and aegis (cf. e.g. *Il.* 5.738–47).

199. Metrically problematic in its transmitted forms: χρ- makes the preceding syllable heavy, leaving us with no caesura. There are several variables to be weighed:

ἐν: elsewhere in the *Aspis* we find ἔχω ἐν (188, 193, and 292), but also once the straight dative (214). The balance tips towards retaining ἐν, although we cannot insist on this.

χειρί: χειρί and χερσί are often variants in manuscripts (cf. West on *Th.* 174), including the closest formal parallel, *Od.* 21.59 τόξον ἔχων ἐν χειρὶ/χερσὶ παλίντονον ἠδὲ φαρέτρην. But Ares’ spear required him to use both hands (χείρεσσιν in 193 is secure), and if the poet

³⁵⁰ In place of ἀγελείη the oldest medieval copy has ολοῖ (sic), which led Peppmüller (1889a) 669 to conjecture ὀλοῖ ἦν. But the rest of the tradition’s ἀγελείη is now further supported by a papyrus; ολοῖ is almost certainly an unintentional scribal substitution rather than a reflection of genuine tradition: the poet would not wish to describe Athena by the same root he had purposely chosen in order to denigrate Ares (cf. 192n.).

wanted to emphasise the parallel between the deities, he would have made Athena apply a double grip.

χρυσέην: χρῦσ- is the proper prosody in early epic, but χρῦσ- is well attested in fifth-century lyric; it probably arose through metanalysis of epic formulae whose scansion was ambiguous (cf. Braswell on *Pi. P.* 4.4). In the *Aspis* χρῦσ- is certain at 125, 142, 183, 190, 192, 203, 220, 226, 271, 297, 313; the only place we could understand χρῦσ- is 188 χρυσέας ἐλάτας, but synizesis obviates the need for such a remedy. Hermann (1802) removes the troublesome word by emending to φαεινὴν τε τρυφάλειαν (cf. *Il.* 10.76); but the mention of the material (whose point of reference is poised, with pleasing ambiguity, between ecphrasis and reality: §IV.4) is surely wanted; Hermann (1835) 198 has apparently abandoned his youthful conjecture.

Considering all these difficulties, the most elegant and least drastic solution is Bentley's ἐν χερσὶν (ἰδὲ) χρῦσέην [τε] τρυφάλειαν.

But an alternative—and to my mind, preferable—possibility is that two verses have been compounded into one; it is indeed strange that Athena should be *holding* her helmet, although she is setting out to battle already (200); cf. Σ^{par} pp. 52–3 Ἀθηνᾶ ... ἔχουσα κοντάριον ἐν χερσίν, ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ τε φοροῦσα χρυσὴν περικεφαλαίαν κτλ., which is probably no more than an inference by the scholiast from the text we have. Other scholars have been troubled too: Goettling conjectured ἔγχος ἔχουσ' ἐν χειρὶ καρήατι τε τρυφάλειαν. Peppmüller (1893) 7 n. 1, after paraphrasing 'Athene in voller Rüstung, die Lanze in der Hand, den Helm auf dem Haupt', comments on 'Haupt': 'Eine tadellose Darstellung hätte dies Wort der Concinnität halber hinzugesetzt, aber unsere Überlieferung enthält es nicht' (it is not clear whether he blames the poet or the accidents of transmission). Muetzell (1833) 262

n. supposed that the second half of each verse had fallen out (the second would begin: χρυσέην τε τρυφάλειαν), but as a more economical reconstruction I suggest an intercalation of this sort:

ἔγχοις ἔχουσ' ἐν χερσὶν ἀκαχμένον αἶθοπι χαλκῶι,
ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ κεφαλῇ κᾶλῃν χρῦσέην τρυφάλειαν κτλ.

For κᾶλῃν (the regular prosody of the word in epic) an alternative would be βριαρήν (cf. *Il.* 19.381), or (for the beginning of the second verse) κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμωι κᾶλῃν/βριαρήν.

200. αἰγίδα: there is uncertainty in the epic tradition whether the aegis is a shield or a cloak, cf. Kirk on *Il.* 2.446–51. Here, however, Athena straps the aegis to her body over her shoulders, as a warrior would his shield (cf. *Il.* 18.204; 139–40n. χερσί), suggesting that in this passage the poet conceives of it as a cloak-like item. Later, however, when Athena shakes the aegis—and (unconventionally) it inspires *courage* rather than fear (343–4)³⁵¹—it is more natural to imagine it as a hand-held shield.

ῥμοις: Hoekstra (1965) 93–4 observes that the dual ῥμοιῖν may have been replaced in arming formulae by ῥμοισι(v) (cf. *Aspis* 128), although it has been retained in the genitive for the sake of the metre; if that is correct, the use of ῥμοις in the present verse, where ῥμοιῖν cannot be substituted, is an indication of advanced stage of the poet's diction.

ἐπὶ δ' ὤχετο φύλοπιν αἰνῆν: not a battle depicted elsewhere on the shield, but cf. 193n.; the poet is instead preparing for the Kyknomachy, cf. 191–206n.

³⁵¹ Compare the changed significance of bloody rain (384, if the verse is genuine): in the *Aspis* it is a good omen, whereas in the Iliadic model (16.459) it presages Sarpedon's unhappy death. Cf. Russo 19–20. On the phraseology of the verse cf. §II.6.iii.

201–6. The divine choir.

For the significance of this scene see 191–206n. In a similar scene in the *Iliad* there is no mention of dancing (1.601–4); in fact, the gods never dance in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* (Griffin (1977) 48) and the admission of dancing gods may be taken as a sign of a less austere poetic ethos. Olympians do, however, dance in the *Hymn to Apollo*: on his arrival on Olympus Apollo strums the κίθαρις and the Muses sing, while the Graces and the Horai lead the dance, in which they are joined by the Olympians Aphrodite and Artemis; Ares and Hermes ‘sport’ (παίζουσι) (*Ap.* 181–206). It is not clear in the *Aspis* which gods dance, but presumably there is a ring of dancers around Apollo if he is able to be ‘in the middle’ (201); for this arrangement cf. e.g. *Il.* 18.603, *Aphr.* 120, Calame (1977) i. 77–84.

This scene may hint at Herakles’ connection to music, which is known primarily through iconography from the late archaic period onwards (*LIMC* IV.1, 810–11) and which extends in the Hellenistic period to Herakles’ being called by Apollo’s title Μουσαγέτης, and in the second century BC to the building in Rome of a temple to *Hercules Musarum*. Cf. *RE* viii. 574–8, Robert (1920–6) ii. 643–4. If the theme was firmly established by c.510, it is not rash to extend it back to the early sixth century. Some scholars indeed (e.g. Thomson (1920) 17) have suggested that Herakles’ association with the Muses is presupposed by his patronage of athletes, whose victories were celebrated through a κῶμος with a μέλος; this would take *Hercules Musarum* back to at least the time of Archilochus (cf. fr. 324). Note also the dedication by the piper Ekhembrotos at Delphi in 586 (*Paus.* 10.7.4–6), although Boardman warns that this was ‘not necessarily because H(erakles) was professionally an appropriate receptor’ (*LIMC* VII.1, 810).

Representations of Apollo among women (including Muses) first begin in Attic black-figure of the last quarter of the sixth century (*LIMC* II.1, 268), but on the Chest of Kypselos there was a scene of Apollo at the centre of a chorus of Muses whom he directed (Paus. 5.18.4). For a probable connection between the god and the epic poet see 206n.

201. ἱερὸς χορὸς: not just the dancing-place, but an actual dance (*Lfgre* s.v. χορός 2b). Only here does it have the epithet ἱερὸς (it is the gods' dance), but it is θεῖος at *Od.* 8.264.

ἐν δ' ἄρα μέσσωι: prior to his performance at the Phaiakian feast, Demodokos κῖ' ἐς μέσον and was surrounded by youths δαήμονες ὀρχημοῖο who began to dance (*Od.* 8.262–4); cf. also the v.l. at *Il.* 18.604–5, with Revermann (1998). It is also as the god to whom the triumph of Herakles is most significant that Apollo takes centre-stage, as did Zeus after leading the gods to victory in the *Titanomachy* (cf. 191–206n.). The god in the middle ought to be dancing; although he is not said explicitly to do so in the *Aspis*, he might have strutted around keeping time, as he does at *Ap.* 202, καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάζ. For this schema cf. the black-figure olpe at Wilson College, Pennsylvania, dated to c.520 and illustrated at Pinney–Ridgway (1979) 56 no. 25 (reproduced by Lonsdale (1993) 55, who at 286 n. 25 compares for the musician's pose Paris E 861 (c.560) = *ABV* 90.1, cf. *Beazley Addenda* 24).

202. ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε: = *Il.* *18.570; this is not likely to be a mere coincidence.

203a. χρυσεῖη φόρμιγγι: again a playful slippage between ecphrasis and reality (§IV.4), since Apollo's lyre was imagined to be gold (*P.* 1.1ff.), as was his plectrum (*Ap.* 184–5, *Pi.* *N.* 5.24, *Eur.* *HF* 351), and Hephaistos might have used gold for this part of the shield decoration.

203b–205a. Undoubtedly an interpolation, as first seen by Bauermeister (1815) 18. The verses interrupt the logic of the scene: we have been told that Apollo was playing the lyre,

and the next detail ought to be the other gods' participation in the entertainment (as in the *Hymn to Apollo*, cf. 201–6n.). 203b–205a add irrelevant and distracting detail that is seemingly more concerned with the permanent characteristics of the gods' home than with any representation on the shield. It is most unlikely that the original poet would have marred his otherwise neat and well-ordered composition with so miserable an intercalation. The defence offered by van der Valk (1953) 275 and (1966) 473–4 is inadequate.

203. θεῶν δ' ἔδος ἄγνός Ὀλυμπος: this probably started life as a gloss, explaining where the scene was taking place. Various improbable conjectures (collected by Rzach) attempt to make the phrase less banal, but they are, in my view, mis-spent ingenuity.

The formula ἄγνός Ὀλυμπος does not recur; αἰπὺς Ὀλυμπος is expected, cf. *Il.* 5.367, 868, *Ap.* 109. But in a description of the divine choir on Olympus reverence and religious awe are appropriate (cf. 201 ἱερὸς χορός), and it seems that the poet has recast the standard formula in order to describe Olympus in a manner that transcends the merely topographical.

Nonetheless, I share Sittl's unease with Ὀλυμπος, since names are very likely to intrude as glosses, and I am prepared to see this as a secondary corruption. Sittl conjectured (ἔδος) ἄγνὸν ἔλαμπε; we might also read ἀσφαλὲς αἰεῖ (cf. *Od.* 6.42), since the interpolator has departed from the description of art and moved to general *sententiae* about Olympus (cf. previous n.).

204. ἐν δ' ἀγορή: ἀγορή never means 'market-place' in early epic; it is the same as its cognate ἀγών, 'gathering-place' (205).

περὶ δ' ὄλβος ἀπείριτος ἔστεφάνωτο: the interpolator's intent is uncertain. The phrase could mean the gods were 'attended by uncounted blessings'; for the vagueness of στεφανόω

cf. 154–5n. Van der Valk (1966) 474 n. 100 adduces Pi. fr. 129.7, where of phorminx-playing souls in the underworld it is said παρὰ δέ σφισιν εὐανθῆς ἅπας τέθαλεν ὄλβος. But the problem with the *Aspis* passage is that gods are not themselves ὄλβιοι: rather, it is they who dispense blessings to mortals. Alternatively, the sense could be that material riches were piled up around the gods, enclosing their company in a ring; cf. *Herm.* 249–51 πολλὸς δὲ χρυσός τε καὶ ἄργυρος ἔνδον (i.e. inside Hermes' cave) ἔκειτο, | πολλὰ δὲ φοινικέοντα καὶ ἄργυφα εἵματα νύμφης, | οἷα θεῶν μακάρων ἱεροὶ δόμοι ἐντὸς ἔχουσιν (Ranke 361; Sittl); cf. also *Od.* 4.71–5 (and 141–3n. *ad fin.*).

ἀπείριτος, which may here have a predicative force (Edwards (1971) 51–2), is often combined with ἐστεφάνωτο or -αι (cf. West on *Th.* 878), but ἐστεφάνωτο does not seem particularly well suited for ὄλβος; the poet is probably adapting a formula such as ἀμφὶ δ' ὄμιλος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο (*Aphr.* 120).

205a. ἀθανάτων ἐν ἀγῶνι: 'in the assembly(-place) of the gods'; this 'filler'-verse is particularly flat after ἐν δ' ἀγορή, and is evidently designed to patch the interpolation onto the pre-existing 205b (cf. §II.7.ii).

205b. θεαὶ δ' ἐξήρχον αἰοιδῆς: the song seems just to be beginning, a detail which fits with the ecphrasis's recurrent theme of imminent action (§IV.6). For ἐξάρχω as a technical term in music, dance, and lament cf. e.g. *Il.* 18.606, *Od.* 4.19 (μολπή), Archil. fr. 120 (μέλος), *h.* 27.18 (χοροί), *Il.* 18.51 *al.* (γόος); the term is discussed by Athenaeus (5.180d–e), who quotes *Aspis* 205b–206. Pausanias tells us that on the Chest of Kypselos (cf. 201–6n.) were depicted αἰδουσαι Μοῦσαι καὶ Ἀπόλλων ἐξάρχων τῆς ᾠδῆς.

206. Μοῦσαι Πιερίδες: the localisation of the Muses on Pieria seems to be due to Hesiod (*Th.* 53, *Op.* 1); for Homer they are 'Olympian'. The 'Pierian Muses' were by the time of the

Aspis a commonplace (Solon fr. 13.2, Sappho fr. 55.3, 103.5). But it has a greater significance in the *Aspis*, a work which is to some degree aligned with the Hesiodic tradition (§§II.5, II.7.i). In the *Theogony* the Muses danced around in response to Hesiod's song. The poet of the *Aspis* is analogous to his own poetic Apollo; if, then, the Muses respond appreciatively to the sound of Apollo's song, they also show their approval of the poet's work.

λιγὺ μελομένης εἰκῶται: not 'shrilly', but 'clearly', an obviously desirable quality for a singer (as for a syrinx: cf. 277); at 233 λιγέως seems to mean 'piercingly', as its conjunction with ὀξέα suggests. μέλομαι combines elements of both singing and dancing.

207–15. The harbour.

Next is described a harbour in whose waters fish are being chased by dolphins; on the shore sits a fisherman about to cast his net. The text is problematic: in 209–12 we are told first that many dolphins were rushing through the harbour, chasing after fish (209b–211a), and second that two dolphins were chasing fish (211b–212). Martin (2005) 168–70 thinks that we are dealing with 'big and small variants of the same theme, subjected to the sort of free-wheeling expansion or telescoping typical of live performance'; for criticism of such an approach cf. §II.7.ii. It is also special pleading to defend this repetitiousness on the basis that the second image 'zooms in on' the first. Only one of πολλοὶ δελφῖνες or δοιὼ δελφῖνες can be original to a coherent conception, and we are dealing with interpolation, not an expansion by the original composer. Capone (1971–2) surveys most of the solutions that have been proposed (add Merkelbach (1956) 299–300), of which the most important are these:

- (i) delete 210–11 (Deiters (1858) 22–4; Flach).

The deletion of 209b–211a is the best option. First, the dolphins have an epithet of material (cf. on (ii)). Second, the two dolphins are in keeping with the poet's predilection for pairs elsewhere (cf. 173n.); the counter-example at 316–17 of the πολλοὶ κύκνοι swimming on the surface of Okeanos is not troubling, because that zone extends for the whole circumference of the shield, not a small portion of one of the smaller inner bands: a mere two swans there would be underwhelming. And thirdly, the pictorial detail of the dolphins spouting (211 ἀναφυσιόωντες) seems very much in character for our poet (§II.1.iv). The plus-verses seem to be an early interpolation, but they were apparently not known to the rhapsode who inserted 207–209a + 211b–213 (or rather, something very similar to them) after *Il.* 18.608 (in Π₃₄). But they were read by Quintus Smyrnaeus, who in his description of Achilles' shield includes silver dolphins which νηχομένοις εἶδοντο (5.96 ~ *Aspis* 211a νηχομένοις ἴκελοι) and Moschus (*Eur.* 47 *νηχομένην ἰκέλη); cf. §III.3.ii.

How does this scene fit into the scheme of the ecphrasis? It breaks the thematic rise from beast to man to god (§IV.3.ii) and is at first blush an embarrassment for those who seek coherent ordering in the ecphrasis; it would seem more in place after 167 or 177. Studniczka (1896) 69–76 thought that the harbour scene owed its presence here to an artist's depiction of the life of Perseus: the first scene showed Danae and Perseus being hauled from the water by Diktys, the second Perseus' flight from the Gorgons (cf. 216–37a); the poet has kept the juxtaposition but removed its logic. This ingenious theory may well be correct (although it should be noted that Gorgons are sometimes combined with aquatic themes, presumably because they dwell πέριγν κλυτοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ (*Th.* 274); cf. Chiarini (2012) 106 n. 193). But if this is true, the poet has not followed such a model closely: he has made the harbour his own,

adding dolphins and fish, elements which can hardly have been present in the artistic prototype on which poet was drawing: they would have distracted from the main characters.

Moreover, the way in which the poet has adorned his harbour is far from haphazard. First, in keeping with the atmosphere of the poem, it shows us the brutal world of warfare, a misfortune which affects all strata of life from voiceless fish (cf. 212n.) to articulate, technologically advanced man (213–15). The whole scene is pregnant with action: the fisherman is *about to* cast his net, and the dolphins are *chasing* (but have not yet caught) the fish; on this stylistic feature cf. §IV.6. Second, I suggest that the dolphins represent Apollo scattering his enemies, and hence Herakles defeating Kyknos. The dolphin was sacred to Apollo: after manifesting himself before the Cretan sailors in the *Hymn to Apollo* in the form of this animal, he demanded ‘delphic’ cult, cf. *Ap.* 493–5; the god’s principal shrine, whose sanctity is at issue in the *Aspis* (476–80) is thus intimately connected with the dolphin. (On Apollo Delphinios see Fontenrose (1988) 122–3, Graf (1979).) Moreover, as part of the poet’s sophisticated strategy to denigrate them, Kyknos and Ares utter no articulate sound in the poem (§II.2.ii); this could well be reflected in the epithet ἑλλοπας (212) which is applied to their counterparts, the fish.

The poet is generous with the details he provides about the shield: the harbour (that is, the water) was of tin (208), the dolphins of silver (212), the fish of bronze (213); Solmsen would also introduce a golden net (215n.). Silver, more precious than bronze, is used for the largest, most powerful, and visually most spectacular creatures; bronze suffices for their quarry, and tin—the lowest value metal—for the ‘background’: so van der Valk (1966) 465 n. 68. Silver dolphins are also a fitting avatar of Apollo ἀργυρότοξος. Cf. §IV.6.

As for iconography: the parallels collected by Chiarini (2012) 106–10 are not particularly close, although it is certainly possible to see where the poet might have derived individual motifs. Regarding the reception of the poem, it should be noted that in representations of the Kyknomachy dolphins sometimes appear on the shield of Ares (Zardini (2009) nos. 27 (= *ABV* 296.7; c.550–525 BC), 89 (= *LIMC* 99; 525–500), very likely because of the influence of the poem on the artists (cf. §III.3.i).

The closest literary parallel is to be found at *Il.* 21.22ff., where Achilles scatters the enemy: ὥς δ' ὑπὸ δελφῖνος μεγακήτεος ἰχθύες ἄλλοι (ἔλλοι van Leeuwen) | φεύγοντες πιμπλᾷσι μυχοῦς λιμένος εὐόρμου | δειδιότες· μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει ὄν κε λάβησιν. If, as seems likely, the *Aspis* poet has this passage in view, there is further support for my suggestion that the *Aspis*'s dolphins represent 'Team Apollo', since there is precedent for likening the victorious warrior to a dolphin and his vanquished foes to fish. It is also significant that this simile refers to Achilles triumphant, given the Herakles–Achilles parallels drawn elsewhere in the poem (§III.1). For the generally violent connotations of fish similes see Scott (1974) 75. The scene from the *Aspis* was known to Antiphanes in the fifth century (cf. 213–15n.) and also to Theocritus (*Id.* 1.39–44, cf. Gow ad loc.). It is also found, in the compressed form described at (iv) above, in Π₃₄: a rhapsode interpolated it after the description of Okeanos (*Il.* 18.607–8) because of its contextual similarity (cf. §III.3.ii). As already noted, the interpolator seems not to have known 209b–211a, although that is not to say that they had not yet come into existence.

207. ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὐόρμος: = *Od.* *4.358, *9.136; cf. *Il.* 21.23, quoted in previous n. The apparent placidity of the water contrasts with the vigorous and violent activities taking place

within them. There is an analogy with the disturbance of Apollo's sanctuary caused by Kyknos and Ares (cf. esp. 61–5, 99–100).

ἄμαιμάκετοιο θαλάσσης: elsewhere in early epic the adjective is restricted to the Chimaera, and nowhere in Homer is it applied to the sea (Edwards (1971) 49); cf. however Pi. *P.* 1.16 πόντον κατ' ἄμαιμάκετον, and more loosely *lyr. adesp.* *SLG* S414(b).4–5 ἄμαιμ[ακ]έταν πόντοιο | []ρίπᾶν (Pindar, according to van der Weiden (1986); doubted by D'Alessio (2000) 253 n. 76). The adjective is thought to denote the irresistible natural force of the sea, and, although the water is undulating (209 κλυζομένωι), the epithet is used paradoxically in relation to a harbour that is 'good for mooring'.

208. κυκλοτερής: the harbour describes an arc on the shield, following the contours of the circular object (cf. 139–40n. σάκος); it does not mean that the harbour extends for the entire circumference of the shield, as is shown by *Il.* 4.124 κυκλοτερὲς ... τόξον. But a real-life harbour might be described as κυκλοτερής (as an equivalent to κοῖλος) because it is naturally curved, cf. *Od.* 10.92 λιμένος κοῖλοιο. For pleasing ambiguities of this sort in the ecphrasis §IV.4.

πανεφθου κασσιτέριοι: πάνεφθος is a strengthened form of ἄπεφθος, 'refined' (similarly παναίολος, πανάργυρος). The tin (first mentioned here, cf. 141–3n.) is 'completely pure' because it comes from the divine forge; cf. Aineias' greaves containing *aurum recoctum* (~ πάνεφθος) (*Verg. Aen.* 8.624). Π₃₄'s ἔανοῦ is a mere slip by a scribe under the influence of *Il.* 18.613 *ἔανοῦ κασσιτέριοι.

209. κλυζομένωι ἕκελος: 'washing', not 'engulfing', cf. Theoc. *Id.* 1.40. The pattern of waves depicted on the shield makes it look as though the water is in motion.

210. **τῇ καὶ τῇ:** West ap. Russo, Addenda p. 221 notes that wherever else this combination occurs, ‘it is so placed that the arsis falls on the first and third words’, which means that the rhythm is not rough (as it is here).

ἐθύνεον: taken by Capone (1971–2) 17 as proof of the genuineness of the verse, since this peculiar form (for which cf. 156n.) occurs at 156, 210, 257, 286. But 156 is certainly interpolated, and 286 possibly so (cf. 156n.); there are other reasons for rejecting 209b–211a (cf. 207–15n.); this leaves us with just one occurrence of a word alleged to be a favourite of the *Aspis* poet’s. In fact, we might use this evidence to identify 156–60 and 209b–211a as the work of the same interpolator: 156–60 are a weak paraphrase of a passage whose more skilful prototype is to be found later in the poem, just as 209b–211a are a less elegant form of 211b–212. θυνέω was used both times by this interpolator.

211. **ἀναφυσιόωντες:** the dolphins are spouting, a delightful pictorial detail that is very much in keeping with the style of the *Aspis* poet (§II.1.iv). Aristotle (*PA* 669a7) uses the verb of whales expelling air through their blow-hole. Editors compare *Ov. Met.* 3.686, where sailors transformed into dolphins *acceptum patulis mare naribus efflant*.

212. **ἀργύρεοι δελφῖνες:** for the metal cf. 207–15n.

ἐφοίβειον: as transmitted, the verb presents a crux. Most manuscripts, together with the *Etymologicum Genuinum*, offer ἐφοίτων, which would mean ‘were going after’; verbs of motion in the epic language do not always need a preposition. But it is rather flat. Better is West’s ἐφοίμεον (ap. Russo, Addenda p. 221); one hesitates, however, since the compound is not attested (as West admits), and also because οἰμάω is found only in the future or aorist. *Ped.* p. 631.15–17 glosses ἐθoίνων; although the active form is not acceptable (Hermann (1835) 198), the middle ἐθoινῶντ’ (Ranke) is an easy emendation. This, however, gives the

wrong sense, as does Π₃₄'s hapax ἐφοίνεον (? 'made (blood-)red'; cf. *Lfgre* s.v.): the dolphins are chasing the fish but have not yet caught them (207–15n.), and still less are they feasting on them. We need a word meaning 'chased', 'scattered', 'terrified', and as Von der Mühl (1956) points out, the last is supported by the parallel passage in *Iliad* 21, where the fish scurry and hide δειδιότες (207–15n.). F's ἐφοίβον (the copyist is aware of the metrical problem) and Σ^z's ἐφοίβων (signalled as a variant reading as against ἐφοίτων) would give the right sense. But the -οι- requires explanation. Von der Mühl persuasively argues that in the *Kunstsprache* -οι- could be used for -ο- if metrically necessary; ἐφόβεον (∪ ∪ ∪ ∪) would be intractable (though synizesis could be countenanced, producing an anapaest), and it was perfectly legitimate for a sixth-century poet to elongate the second syllable through this expedient.

ἔλλοπας ἰχθύς: ἔλλοψ and ἔλλός are standard epithets of fish, although the significance of the word (mute? scaly?; see *Lfgre*, *DELG*) for the *Aspis* poet is not clear; for literary reasons 'mute' would be the most fitting option (207–15n.). Note also that in the closest Iliadic counterpart to this passage (quoted on 207–15) for the transmitted ἰχθύες ἄλλοι van Leeuwen conjectured ἐλλοί, comparing (among other passages) this one; if that conjecture is correct, that would give a further indication of the poet's indebtedness. But we must guard against circular reasoning.

213–15. The fisherman adds a third and unexpected element to the scene, which had hitherto appeared to be a straightforward analogy of the Kyknomachy; on Studniczka's theory about his original significance see 207–15n. The fisherman's presence does not merely humanise the scene (Russo): it also demonstrates the technological superiority of man over beasts, since he catches his prey by means of an artifice. The difference between humans and animals, and more- and less-civilised species more generally, is a recurrent theme in the poem

(§§II.2.ii, IV.3), and the scenes of the ecphrasis progress from beast to man (§IV.3.ii). Here the man's technologically more advanced state is shown by his use of advanced equipment, just as the Lapiths' superiority to the Centaurs is shown through their more sophisticated weaponry (178–90n.).³⁵² Moreover, the cruelty of life is further emphasised: even if the fish escape the predatory dolphins, they have another foe to contend with. The *Aspis* poet presents a grim and brutal view of the world.

Fishing is a banausic activity usually confined by older epic taste to similes (*Il.* 16.406–8, 21.407, 24.80, *Od.* 12.251–4, 21.384–8); men resort to fishing with rods when in a dire situation (*Od.* 4.368–9). Σ p. 32 deem the admission of the existence of the net (ἀμφίβληστρον) to be νεωτερικόν (note though that fishing with a δίκτυον is mentioned in the *Odyssey* 21 passage). An ecphrasis is in some respects akin to a simile, and the mention of fishing in it hardly shows that the *Aspis* poet has lapsed from 'good epic taste'. Another 'late' feature is riding on horseback (286, on which however cf. n. 339).

Antiphanes echoes these verses at fr. 192.1–2 K–A ἰχθύσιν ἀμφίβληστρον ἀνὴρ πολλοῖς περιβάλλειν | οἰηθεῖς, μεγάλην δαπάνην μίαν εἵλκυσε πέρκην and thus provides valuable evidence for the early integrity of the *Aspis*; they were known also to Theocritus (*Id.* 1.39–44).

213. **ἐπ' ἀκτῆς**: the correction of –αῖς is owed to Peppmüller (1889b), who compares *Od.* 5.82 = 151 ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, and is supported by B's επακτις (probably an itacistic error for –ῆς, but possibly representing –αῖς).

³⁵² Cf. the two technological similes which underscore Odysseus' victory over the uncultivated Cyclops (*Od.* 9.384–6, 391–4).

214. **ἔζετ' ἄνῆρ ἄλιεύς**: the hiatus of the transmitted ἦστο ἄνῆρ is defended by the weak analogies of *Il.* 16.403 ἦστο ἄλεις (originally digammated) and [Hes.] fr. dub. 343.14 ἦστο, Ἀθηναίης (where the pause attenuates it); other (often uncertain) hiatuses in Hesiod are reviewed by West (1966) 96. Various emendations are possible, but none is immune to criticism. Of ἦστ' ἄνῆρ (Schulze (1892) 460) and ἄνῆρ ἦσθ' (Gerhard (1816) 176; also independently Peppmüller (1893) 8) it should be noted that most often in the epos the artificially lengthened form of ἄνῆρ (for which cf. West (1982) 38; short-alpha forms in the *Aspis* at 42, 129) is restricted to verse-final position; this is the rule in the Hesiodic corpus (*Aspis* 408, *Op.* 297, fr. 275.1; cf. Paulson (1887) 120), and in the exceptions in the *Iliad* (12.382, 23.112) and *Odyssey* (6.184, 16.45) the ἄ- is at least in arsis (as it would not be here). Gerhard's conjecture also unattractively separates the profession from ἄνῆρ; contrast *Il.* 4.485 ἄρματοπιγὸς ἄνῆρ, 11.86 δρυτόμος περ ἄνῆρ (the enclitic of course does not count), 21.257 ἄνῆρ ὀχετηγός, *Od.* 9.391 ἄνῆρ χαλκεύς. The worst that can be said against ἔζετ' ἄνῆρ (Bentley) is that it is quite a departure from the paradosis, but it seems a small price to pay for restoring regularity in both metre and word order. The anomaly has been allowed to remain by editors because of the prejudicial assumption that the poet is inept (§I.2). Fick (1890) 6 endorsed Bentley's conjecture.

δεδοκημένος: for the theme of imminent action see 207–15n. and §IV.6.

εἶχε δὲ χερσίν: the fisherman needs both hands to cast a net; this is a rare occasion on which we can dismiss with confidence the variant χερσί (cf. 199n.).

215. **ἰχθύσιν ἀμφίβληστρον**: the dative ἰχθύσιν is censured by Deiters (1858) 24 ('molestissimum est et vix ferri potest') and doubted by Solmsen ('durum: eratne χρύσεον?'); it is also infelicitous after 214 χερσί, a word with which it is juxtaposed but not connected

(cf. 141n. τιτάνωι). But ἰχθύσιν is not only supported by Antiphanes (213–15n.), it is also necessary: the fisherman had a net in readiness for precisely those fish that were fleeing the dolphins, intending to catch them just when they thought they had escaped danger (213–15n.). Solmsen's conjecture is moreover doubtful because it is the poet's practice to specify the material in verse-initial position in the verse *following* the noun (cf. n. 295).

ἀπορρίφοντι ἔοικώς: the only other use in the epos of ἔοικώς with a future participle is at *Od.* 11.608 (Herakles) αἰεὶ βαλέοντι ἔοικώς; the connection to Herakles and to the Nekyia is significant (§III.1). For the 'suspended animation' cf. 207–15n. and §IV.6.

216–37a. Perseus and the Gorgons.

The relevance of this scene to the poem and its hero is discussed in §IV.2.iii; here we are concerned with parallels in art and with the development of the myth. Both aspects are well surveyed by Hirschberger (2000); see also *EGM* ii. 248–59, with further references.

There are two fundamental types of Gorgon: the gorgoneia (masks), and the full-bodied Gorgons. Both varieties are found in the *Aspis*: the gorgoneion comes at 144 (cf. ad loc.) and the full-bodied monsters in the present passage. There is no agreement about the origin and priority of the two types. As Ogden (2008) 37 notes,

The Medusa tale may have come first and inspired the development of gorgoneia as a spin-off. Gorgoneia may have come first and inspired the development of the Medusa tale as an explanatory back-formation. Or gorgoneia and the Medusa may have had separate origins but converged with each other, Medusa's decapitated head becoming identified with bodiless gorgoneia.

The existence of full-bodied Gorgons with 'lion-mask' faces presupposes the convergence of the two kinds, and this seems already to have happened by the early seventh century (cf. *LIMC* Gorgo, Gorgones 229–30). The *Aspis*, however, keeps the two categories separate.

Probably this is a conscious decision: the poet wanted both to associate Herakles' shield with the aegis (144n.), and also to use Perseus and his exploits as a paradigm for Herakles (§IV.2.iii); he therefore needed both kinds to be available.

As Peppmüller (1893) 9 and Müller [1834] (1873) 35 have remarked, with this scene one feels very strongly that the poet is closely describing from autopsy an artistic representation of Perseus pursued by the Gorgons; cf. esp. 227, 233b–236a nn., and note that the theme of Perseus in flight was included on the Chest of Kypselos (Paus. 5.18.5). For connections with early art cf. Chiarini (2012) 111–20; for Perseus' treatment in ancient art more generally, Schauenberg (1960); and for Studniczka's theory about the iconographical connection of this scene to the harbour, 207–15n. The poet transcends the limits of plastic depiction, however, by adding a detail that no mortal craftsman could achieve: Perseus actually takes off from the surface of the shield (217–18). Not only is Hephaistos superior to all other smiths: poetry is superior to physical art.

The myth of Perseus slaying Medusa was certainly current from at least the early seventh century. On the artistic side the earliest attestation is a famous relief pithos in the Louvre (CA 795 = *LIMC* Perseus 117), dated to c.675–650, on which Medusa is depicted with an equine body (for the savage connotations of which cf. 178–90n.). As for literature: the *Iliad* knows of Perseus (14.319–20), but it does not associate the gorgoneion with full-bodied Gorgons. The *Odyssey* (11.633–5) speaks of an unattached Gorgon's head, which may, though need not, presuppose Perseus' role as Gorgon-slayer (cf. *EGM* ii. 248 n. 32). The decapitation is detailed in Hesiod (*Th.* 270–83), whose allusiveness shows that Perseus' legend was already well established. Other important literary references to Perseus that predate the *Aspis* are to be found at [Hes.] fr. 129.10–15 and 135; cf. also Stes. fr. 281, [Hes.] fr. 363A (*Megalai*

Ehoiai). By the time of the *Aspis* the Perseus legend was widespread, and art shows it to have been a popular story.

On the relationship of this scene to Eur. *El.* 452–69 cf. §III.3.ii.

216. ἡυκόμου Δανάης τέκος: for the metronymic cf. 229n., where the prosody of Danae's name is also discussed.

ἵππότη Περσεύς: ἵππότης is regarded by Risch (1954) as a vocative in origin (Quattordio Moreschini (1984) dissents;³⁵³ cf. Meier-Brügger (1989); Brillante (1996), (2001)). In epic it is invariably used as the nominative in place of the intractable cretic ἵππότης. Yet why should Perseus be 'chariot-driving', when (as Sittl notes) in art he was only very occasionally depicted on horseback? And indeed here he travels around by means of his πτερόεντα πέδιλα (220). Σ p. 32 recognise the difficulty but offer an absurd explanation: ἔοικε κατὰ τοὺς γλωσσογράφους ἵππότην ἀκούειν τὸν φυγάδα· ἐπεὶ ὁ πάππος Ἀκρίσιος ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν· οὐ γὰρ εἰσάγεται ἵππῳ χρώμενος ὁ Περσεύς. This baseless gloss was repudiated already by Hesychius (1 854; see Latte's app. crit. for parallels in ancient scholarship), who attributes it to οἱ νεώτεροι.³⁵⁴

The reason for designating Perseus as 'horse-riding' would seem rather to lie in the traditional reference of ἵππότης. This word, which is confined to the fifth foot of the hexameter, is used in early epic poetry only of heroes who belong to an older generation and have disyllabic, spondaic names; its congener ἵππηλάτα is also restricted to such characters (although note that the reading of the proper name in [Hes.] fr. 228, which is qualified by ἵππηλάτα, is uncertain), and is most often preceded by γέρον. The heroes in question

³⁵³ I owe this reference to Dr A. D. Kelly, who offered valuable criticism of this whole note.

³⁵⁴ On this scholium cf. also Martano (2004a) 135 n. 22, who on the basis of κατὰ τοὺς γλωσσογράφους posits the existence of two 'levels' of ancient commentary on the *Aspis*—one intended for scholars, the other for the learned public.

belong at least one generation earlier than that of the heroes fighting at Troy; their association with horse-riding may be due to memory of the older Mycenaean style of fighting from chariots, ‘combined with the notion that older men (cf. Idomeneus in *Iliad* 13) are less sure on their feet in battle, and require rescue through that means more often’ (Kelly, pers. comm.). They play no part in the main narrative (aged Nestor excepted),³⁵⁵ appearing only in inset stories. Cf. Delebecque (1951) 38–9, 164–5.

In the *Aspis* Herakles and Iolaos belong to the generation that is the subject of the main narrative; they therefore have the same status in their poem as do the principal heroes of the *Iliad* in their epic, whereas Perseus is parallel to those legendary heroes who in the *Iliad* belong to the previous generations. Perseus is Herakles’ great-grandfather, and he is being held up as a model for the poem’s main hero (§IV.2.iii). It seems likely that ἵππότης Περσεύς (otherwise unattested) is used by the poet of the *Aspis* in order to structure mythical time, and to express Perseus’ paradeigmatic relationship to Herakles: here, in other words, ἵππότης has nothing really to do with horse-riding. The fact that Perseus’ name has the Mycenaean termination -εύς, as do those of all the heroes in the *Iliad* described as ἵππότης (again, except Nestor), also encouraged the extension of the system to this name.

217–18. Perseus floats in mid-air, ‘neither touching the shield with his feet nor far from it’; this miraculous attribute is made possible by the divine skill of the shield’s craftsman, whose wondrous manufacture is explicitly mentioned so as to justify the outlandishness of the claim (219n.).

³⁵⁵ For his connection with horses, and in particular for his advice about and reminiscences of chariot-fighting, cf. Richardson on *Il.* 23.301–50. The *Iliad* explicitly signals the incongruity of his being an active member of the expedition (1.250–2), as if to excuse the presence of a man with the anachronistic specialism of chariot-fighting.

Some scholars have suggested that the poet had in mind a physical device that supported the figure of Perseus. In particular, Goettling ascribes the *Aspis*'s conceit to the influence of the Hellenistic era; as a (very fragile) parallel he adduces the story of how in the third century magnets were used in order to make a statue appear to float in mid-air inside a temple (Plin. *HN* 34.42). But this ridiculous brand of positivism is to be rejected: the poet is describing something such as no human metal-worker could achieve, and there is no reason why he could not have dreamt it up himself. It derives of course from the detail that Perseus was flying with his winged sandals, and a fantastical extension of this would be to say that he really was suspended in mid-air.

θαῦμα μέγα φράσσασθ': 139–40n. θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι. The closest verbal parallel is *Ap.* 415 φράσσασθαι μέγα θαῦμα, and Janko (1982) 33 suggests that *Aspis* 218 and *Ap.* 415 represent a transitional stage from formulae in which θαῦμα μέγα is tightly integrated, to the use of μέγα θαῦμα alone. The poet brings himself into the frame, since it is he (presumably) who is 'contemplating' this marvel. This is the strongest case in the *Aspis* of the author drawing attention metapoetically to his own craft; cf. Francis (2012) 131.

219. Hephaistos is mentioned here for the first time in the ecphrasis; he had been spoken of already in connection with Herakles' breastplate (123). The god is specified as the shield's maker again at 244, 297, 313, and 319, and only in the last passage are we told that the shield was commissioned by Zeus; cf. §IV.2.i. In the present passage the mention of Hephaistos serves to justify the floating Perseus (217–18n.).

τὼς γάρ μιν: τὼς γάρ is a non-Homeric but 'Hesiodic' combination: cf. 478 τὼς γάρ μιν, 20 (i.e. *Catalogue*) τὼς γάρ οἱ διέκειτο, *Th.* 892 τὼς γάρ οἱ φρασάτην. Its occurrence in

478 might be adduced in support of the authenticity of 477–80, which is impugned by some scholars but defended, rightly, by Janko (1986) 44–7.

220. πτερόεντα πέδιλα: the earliest iconographical representation of these is on a neck amphora of c.675–650 (*LIMC* Perseus 151). For a study of the motif in early art cf. Yalouris (1953), who shows that winged sandals are restricted to gods, demons, and certain speedy heroes—as well of course as being an attribute of Perseus. Cf. also Cursaru (2013).

For the verse cf. *Op.* 541 ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶ πέδιλα βοὸς ἵφι κταμένοιο | ἄρμενα δήσασθαι. Homer speaks of sandals ὑπὸ feet, Hesiod and *Aspis* poet of them ἀμφί. The *Works and Days* passage is noteworthy because it uses the verb Homer does, δέομαι, but nonetheless with a different preposition.

221. ὥμοισιν δέ μιν ἀμφί: a chiastic variation of 220 ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσίν. μιν is difficult: we would expect a dative, to match ὥμοισιν; hence Goettling's οἱ. But Paley's justification satisfies: 'the syntax is ἀμφί μιν (ἐπ') ὥμοις, which may be explained as a dative of place'. There is perhaps also analogical pressure from verses such as *Od.* 11.570, 23.46 *δέ μιν ἀμφί. Moreover, μιν is supported by one of the most recently published papyri.

μελάνδετον ἄορ: Hesiod (*Th.* 283) equips Perseus with a sword. In art from the late sixth century onwards the straight sword gives way to a harpe; in literature the first attestation of the curved weapon is in Aeschylus (fr. 262).

μελάνδετον is enigmatic; it is used in a similar context at *Il.* 15.713 πολλὰ δὲ φάσγανα καλὰ μελάνδετα κωπήεντα. The D-scholia on the *Iliad*, as well as Ped. on the present passage, offer the explanation 'wrought from iron'; for iron weaponry cf. *Aspis* 128. Other scholars think it refers to the dark colour of the hilt (so Guyet, comparing Hsch. μ 649; Sittl,

arguing for an apotropaic function). Chiarini (2013a) suggests that its sense is metaphorical: ‘black with the blood of slaughter’, Perseus having just slain Medusa. This seems doubtful, given that elsewhere in this scene the poet is concerned with the actual materials from which the figures and objects were made: 220 χρύσειον (Perseus), 222 χαλκείου ἐκ τελαμῶνος; the latter seems intended to balance the μελάνδετον ἄορ, in which case μελάνδετον could not be merely metaphorical but would need to denote the material from which the τελαμών was made. It is therefore preferable to interpret μελάνδετον as ‘iron-wrought’. For ‘black’ iron cf. *Op.* 151.

The prosody of ἄορ is variable, and the poet uses ἄορ at 457. The long α began life in oblique cases (compare the back-formation of ἀνήρ from ἀνέρι), and, as Schulze (1892) 206 notes, in the older epic texts ἄορ is not found in place of ἄορ in the nominative: this is the first instance.

ἔκειτο: the blade’s work is done, and it lies sheathed rather than drawn—just as on Berlin F 1682 = *ABV* 5.4 (cf. *Paralipomena* 2.8; *Beazley Addenda* 2) (dated to 625–575).

222. χαλκείου ἐκ τελαμῶνος: χαλκείου is now attested in Π₅₃, and, unlike the variant χάλκεον, it balances the distribution of epithets between ἄορ and τελαμών.

ὃ δ’ ὥς τε νόημ’ ἐποτᾶτο: Perseus flew *speedily*, like a god; for parallels in Greek literature cf. Janko on *Il.* 15.80–3 (further passages in Sittl). Similarly, in Norse mythology Hugi (‘Thought’) could outpace anyone. Cf. also Shakespeare, *Henry V* III.Pr.1–3, ‘Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies | In motion of no less celerity | Than that of thought’.

223–4. The Gorgon’s head ‘covered’, i.e. was as large as, the whole of Perseus’ back.

κάρη δεινοῖο πελώρου, | Γοργόυς: cf. *Il.* 5.741–2 Γοργεῖη κεφαλὴ δεινοῖο πελώρου (= *Od.* 11.634–5, in accusative). For the verse-pattern of genitives cf. Panyassis fr. 7 Βεμβινήταο πελώρου δέρμα λέοντος, with Matthews (1974) 44, 46.

224. ἀμφὶ δέ μιν κίβισις θέε: the purpose of this sack, which is slung around Perseus' body (early representations show it hanging from one arm: *LIMC* VII.1, 347), is evidently 'to serve as a secure toxic container for the head' (Ogden (2008) 44). As Pfeiffer on Call. fr. 531 notes (with ample documentation), poets and prose authors alike seem to use κίβισις only in relation to Perseus' haversack.

μιν = κάρη δεινοῖο πελώρου, not Perseus (as Guyet takes it): we have already been told where the Gorgon's head was supported on Perseus' body (223–4), but not that the monster's head was stowed in the κίβισις.

θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι: 139–40n.

225–6. θύσανοι δὲ κατηϊωρέοντο φαεινοί | χρύσειοι: the κίβισις has golden tassels which hang down like those of—significantly, cf. §IV.2.iii—the aegis (*Il.* 2.448, 5.738). It is deliberately left open whether we are supposed to refer the detail that the tassels were golden to the 'real-life' Perseus, or rather to understand it as a feature of the ecphrastic item (cf. §IV.4).

αἰωρέομαι occurs in the epos otherwise only at 234 (ἄπο-) and at Asius fr. 13.5 (simplex). The orthography κατηϊωρέοντο, which I have introduced into the text, is more likely to be correct for the date of *Aspis* than the transmitted -εῦντο (West (1998–2000) i. XXII–XXIII, Janko (1992) 34); the -ευ- in an inscription of the early sixth century adduced by Wachter

(2012) 73 seems to be isolated. Similar adjustments in spelling are to be made at 234 (cf. ad loc.), 249, 293, 296, 302, 309, 334, 460.

227. The ‘cap of Hades’ is a folkloric item (D1361.12 in Stith Thompson), consistently associated with Perseus (e.g. Pherec. fr. 11 Fowler; [Apollod.] 2.4.2). It is donned by Athena at a crucial moment in the *Diomedea* (*Il.* 5.844–5), where its power of invisibility (Ἀΐδης < ἄ-φιδ- ‘making unseen’, at least by popular etymology) allows her to confer on Diomedes victory over Ares, since Ares will not be able to see her. But despite the close connections between the *Diomedea* and *Aspis* (§III.1), we should not suppose that the *Aspis* poet borrowed the cap from the *Iliad*: its connection with Perseus is more organic, since his myth is ‘especially rich in folktale motifs’, and the cap’s (unique) appearance in the *Iliad* ‘departs from the usual divine means of invisibility, namely covering with cloud or mist’ (Kirk on *Il.* 5.884–5).

Perseus is consistently depicted with some sort of headgear, as early indeed as the Louvre relief (for which cf. 216–37a n.), although its precise appearance varies: sometimes, for example, it resembles a petasos, sometimes it looks like Hermes’ cap. Not is it clear what function the cap originally served in Perseus’ mission: either it was intended to enable him to remain undetected on the approach to Medusa, or else to render him invisible in his escape from her sisters; cf. Ogden (2008) 45, 51, who thinks that the present passage supports the idea that it prevented Medusa from gazing at and thus petrifying him. Later appearances of the Ἄϊδος κυνέη in literature are collected by Olson on *Ar. Ach.* 387–90.

κεῖτ’: cf. 221 ἔκειτο.

νυκτὸς ζόφον αἰνὸν ἔχουσα: the poet is keen to stress the sinister power of the magical object and applies to it a sonorous phrase; verbally the closest parallel I can quote is Q.S. 1.639

αἶνόν ὑπὸ ζόφον. Similarly at *Ach.* 390 Aristophanes describes the Ἄϊδος κυνῆ with the nonce-epithet σκοτοδασυπυκνόθριξ, a word which focusses on this same quality—though with rather less solemnity.

228. αὐτός δὲ σπεύδοντι καὶ ἐρρίγοντι ἐοικώς: Perseus is in a hurry to escape (cf. 222), and he is shuddering with terror at his dread pursuers. ἐρρίγοντι (the form occurs only here in Greek literature) is a perfect participle, and we would expect -ότι; some regard it as an Aeolism (Russo compares 379 and 412 κεκλήγοντες), but it might simply be an analogical form based on the preceding σπεύδοντι and coined *metri gratia*.

For the almost redundant αὐτός cf. AHS on *Ap.* 155 (cf. *Ap.* 181). It is perhaps worth countenancing αὐτὸς μὲν (Rhode (1872) 20), to balance ταὶ δέ in the next verse.

229. Περσεὺς Δαναΐδης: Perseus had already been described as ‘the child of Danae’ (216), and here a full metronymic is used. These are alien to Homer: cf. sch. D.T. 369.20 Hilgard ἀπὸ δὲ μητέρων οὐ σχηματίζει πατρωνυμικὸν εἶδος ὁ Ὅμηρος, ἀλλ’ οἱ μεταγενέστεροι ποιηταί, ὥς Ἡσίοδος [*Aspis* 479] Λητοίδην εἰπὼν τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν νεωτέρων. Moreover, ‘[m]atronymics are used only of people fathered by gods, nearly always Zeus’ (West on *Th.* 1002); in the *Aspis* note again 467 Ἀλκμήνης υἱός and 479 Λητοίδης. Perseus’ father is Zeus, but Διὸς υἱός cannot be used in the epos for just any son of the supreme god (cf. 150n. Διὸς υἱί), of whom there were of course many; that is sufficient to explain why only the hero’s mother is mentioned here. But 467 Ἀλκμήνης υἱός is harder to explain on these grounds: it surely reflects the poet’s pro-Theban bias (§I.1), since it emphasises the importance of Herakles’ birth-city; in addition, we may detect the influence of the *Catalogue*’s Alkmene-*ehoie*, with its honorific focus on that heroine (cf. esp. *Aspis* 4–10, with Davidson (1998)).

The prosody Δᾱναΐδης is purely *metri gratia* (contrast 216 Δᾱνάης).

ἐπιταίνεται: Perseus was stretching out as he exerted himself in haste; σπεύδειν is one of the glosses offered at Hsch. τ 969, and cf. *Il.* 22.23 τιταινόμενος πεδίοιο (of a horse). As with our ‘at full stretch’, the image is derived from running, since running is the activity most analogous to that of the sandal-wearing Perseus in flight.

At *Th.* 209 the prosody is τιταίνω, but that seems to be for the sake of the etymological play on 207 Τῆτῆνας: cf. Paulson (1887) 126, Troxler (1964) 33.

ταὶ δὲ μετ’ αὐτόν: cf. 248 αἱ δὲ μετ’ αὐτούς, 315 οἱ δὲ κατ’ αὐτόν. These slightly ungainly phrases are peculiar to the *Aspis*. They serve a very limited function, namely as transitions *within* scenes of the ecphrasis: here the poet shifts focus from Perseus to the Gorgons; at 248 he turns to another part of the battlefield; and at 315 he moves from a general description of the Ocean to the swans on its surface.

230. Γοργόνες: not named here, but from *Th.* 276 we learn that Medusa’s sisters are called Sthen(n)o and Euryale. Perhaps their names were not yet canonical: according to Pausanias (5.18.5), in this scene on the Chest of Kypselos Perseus was the only figure to be labelled.

The remodelling of the oblique cases of Γοργώ as n-stems (for which cf. μείζω / μείζονα) is paralleled at *Cypr.* fr. 30.1, after which it becomes regular; contrast *Th.* 274 Γοργούς (accusative plural). The plural is not used in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, where the Gorgon is still a vague and nameless monster (216–37a n.). Note however that for Γοργοῦς at *Il.* 8.349 Zenodotus read Γοργόνος.

ἄλητοί τε καὶ οὐ φαταί: 147, 144 nn.; φατός = φατειός.

ἐρρώοντο: the word suggests rapid or violent movement.

231a. ἰέμεναι μαπέειν: cf. 304 ἰέμενοι μαπέειν (~ [Hes.] fr. 156.29), an echo that suggests the work of the same poet. The infinitive μαπέειν is based on μάρπτω ('Cypriot', according to Ruijgh (1957) 166); the form without ρ occurs in the *Aspis* also at 252 μεμάποιεν (contrast 245 μέμαρπεν). The ρ-less by-form is essential to the ending -έειν, which is restricted in the epos to light monosyllabic roots (βαλ-, φαγ-, ἰδ-, etc.) and stands before either a consonant or a caesura. Moreover, as Nikolaev (2013) has shown, -έειν is not a feature of genuine Hesiod; it is, however, found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and several further times in the *Aspis* (240, 252, 304, 332, 337). 'In all instances where -έειν is followed by a vowel, the infinitive ending stands before the main caesura of the third foot'; the *Aspis* 'thus faithfully replicates the Homeric state of affairs' (Nikolaev (2013) 87). This alignment is an indication both of the poem's lateness and of its indebtedness to the East Ionic diction exemplified in the *Iliad*.

The Gorgons are eager to catch Perseus but have not yet done so, nor will they ever succeed in their task; for imminent or deferred action in the ecphrasis cf. §IV.6.

231b–236b. Deiters (1858) 24–30 declared this section to be a later insertion (cf. Rhode (1872) 20). Not all the reasons are sound—Rhode, for instance, deletes 233b–236a 'praesertim quum Gorgones dracones in zonis habentes non nisi hoc loco inveniantur', an absurd comment (cf. on 233b–236a). But many have been troubled by the triple repetition of ἐπὶ δέ in these verses, and this is not a trivial concern. Yet all the verses are so much in the poet's manner that they must be his own work. Nonetheless, if some are indeed an afterthought, the most likely candidates are, in my view, 231b–233a: whereas the poet would have insisted from the outset on describing the figures of the scene in detail, the sound-effects are not

indispensable. It is as an afterthought, too, that he seems to have added sound-effects to the wedding procession (§II.7.iii).

Attempts to associate the sounds caused by the Gorgons with the terrifying bellows of Stheno and Euryale (Hirschberger (2000) 63; Ogden (2008) 54–5) are at best adventurous.

231b–233a. The Gorgons run over the surface of the shield, and as they do so they make it resound loudly with their steps. This fantastical claim, '[o]utrageous beyond anything we can imagine in a Homeric ekphrasis' (Lamberton (1988) 142), is striking and unforgettable. For a possible connection between this din and that at 61–5 cf. §IV.2.iii, and for the poet's fondness for sound-effects cf. §§II.1.iv, IV.6.

231b. χλωροῦ ἀδάμαντος: adamant, mentioned already at 144 (cf. also 141–3n.), may be a folk-memory of steel from a time when it was known only vaguely; cf. West on *Th.* 161, where the adjective applied to the metal is πολίος 'pale'. The colouring of adamant supports an identification with iron, which in epic bears the epithet πολίος. χλωρός, like most colour terms in Greek, is problematic; cf. Irwin (1974) 31–78, esp. 75–7, who takes it in the present passage as equivalent to πολίος.

232–3a. βαινουσέων: a single-word genitive absolute (understand 'Gorgons'); cf. 65 ἵππων ἱεμένων, 'languide interiecta' (Wolf). At 65, however, there is at least a noun: the present passage is still more stylistically compressed.

ἰάχεσκε: the frequentative, which for this verb is found only here in Greek, shows that the pursuit of Perseus is endlessly repeated and never-ending; cf. on 231a.

The imperfect of this verb here scans ἰάχ-; on the prosody of ἰάχω in Hesiod cf. Paulson (1887) 124, who notes that ἰάχ- occurs at 382 (and *Th.* 69, 678), whereas the short ι is found

again at 436 and 451 (note also ἰαχή at 404, 441, *Th.* 708). (There are no examples from the fragments.) ἰάχον is found three times in the *Iliad*.

μεγάλωι ὀρυμαγδῶι: = *Il.* *21.256; cf. *Aspis* 401 πολλὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει, an Iliadic clausula.

ὀξέα καὶ λιγέως: the metal resounds shrilly. ὀξύς is used of piercing sound again at 243; for λιγύς cf. 206n. According to 'Apollodorus' (2.4.2), the Gorgons were themselves of metal; if this was in the poet's consciousness, the clang of metal on metal will explain why there is an emphasis on the shrillness of the sound (Ogden (2008) 54). But this connection is certainly not necessary to understand the detail, since even the bare feet or shoes of the hastening (cf. 230 ἐρρώνοντο) monsters would raise a sufficiently impressive din.

233b–236a. The Gorgons are girt in belts that are encircled by two snakes. This is a very widespread motif in art: Chiarini (2012) 118 draws special attention to the left handle of the François Vase and to the pediment of the Temple of Artemis in Corfu (= *LIMC* Gorgo, Gorgones 289), constructed c.590; compare also, from about fifty years later, the Amasis Painter's image of Medusa on London B 471 = *ABV* 153.32.

234. ἀπηωρέοντ': 225–6n. Ranke reports that Monac. gr. 283 (saec. xvi) in fact has ἀπηωρέοντο in the second hand—presumably a happy accident, unless introduced from an older copy no longer known.

ἐπικυρτώνοντε κάρηνα: the two pairs of serpents each raise their heads in readiness to attack their mistress's enemy, much as the serpents on Herakles' shield rally when hostile action is taken against the hero whose shield they adorn (164–5). On the tongues and teeth mentioned in 235 cf. on 235–6a.

ἐπικυρτώοντε is hardly a Boeotianism; it is instead much more likely to have been formed through the standard process of diectasis (Edwards (1971) 118).

In the epos κάρηνα is not used straightforwardly to mean ‘heads’. It can refer to peaks and to cities, and it is employed in periphrases such as ‘heads of oxen’. Only here, in 236, in one passage of the *Catalogue*, and at *h.* 28.8 (undatable) does κάρηνα refer to the physiological ‘head’ of a person or animal. The passage from the *Catalogue* is fr. 133.4–5 αἱ δέ νυ χαῖται | ἔρρεον ἐκ κεφαλῶν, ψίλωτο δὲ καλὰ κάρηνα, where a desire for *variatio* after κεφαλῶν is probably the reason for the innovation. This innovation is one which the *Aspis* poet has adopted as standard usage (whether or not he derived it from the *Catalogue* itself).

235–6a. To what do these verses refer? Nearly all editors, as well as e.g. van der Valk (1953) 271 and Dodds on Eur. *Ba.* 695–8, relate them to the snakes; that was also evidently how Quintus Smyrnaeus took them, for he says in his parallel scene that through the hair of the Gorgons were entwined δράκοντες | αἰνὸν λιχμῶντες (5.39–40, cf. 12.458). Only a few scholars have tried to relate the verses to the Gorgons themselves. The grammatical ambiguity is exacerbated by the fact that the Gorgons have in common with the snakes a prominent tongue and teeth, and a terrible stare (cf. 145n., and below). Guyet takes τώ γε as accusative and understands *the snakes were licking the two Gorgons*, an improbable interpretation. But Ranke records that Levezow (1833) 17 took τώ as nominative, referring to the Gorgons: ‘Jene (die Gorgonen) züngelten Beide’. Sittl and Peppmüller (1893) 10–11 support this interpretation, and there are weighty arguments in favour of it.

First, grammar: τώ γε coheres better with the Gorgons (cf. next n.). Secondly it seems that the poet intended to progress from toe to head in his description of the Gorgons: first we hear of their running (229–33a), i.e. their feet; then of the serpents around their waists

(233b–234); next—on this interpretation, at least—of their mouths (235), followed by their eyes (236a); and lastly of the terror that surmounted their heads (236b–237a). Since there is no doubt in the last instance that the *Gorgons*’ heads are in question, it makes best sense if 235–6a concern them too: we then preserve the flow and logic of the progression. And thirdly the snakes are clearly a subordinate detail in the image; it seems better therefore to keep the Gorgons themselves in focus, as a counterpoint to the extended description of Perseus in the first part of this scene. If 235–6a relate to the snakes, we have no description of the Gorgons’ gaping mouths and fearsome eyes, features on which the poet dwelt with such intense interest at 145–7.

λίχμαζον δ’ ἄρα τῷ γε: the licking is easy to relate to the serpents, but even more characteristic of Gorgons with their over-sized lolling tongues.

The most recent duals, δράκοντε | δοιῶ ... ἐπικυρτώνοντε (233–4), referred to the serpents, but it is not difficult to think back to the two sisters of Medusa, and in fact τῷ γε would be superfluous if it referred to the snakes: it marks instead the shift to a new subject (Peppmüller (1893) 11). Note also that the feminine dual is very rare, so τῷ would be expected for the female monsters just as well as for the (masculine) serpents.

μένει δ’ ἐχάρασσον ὀδόντας: for the poet’s fixation with teeth cf. 146n. It would be natural for the poet to have the teeth of the enraged Gorgons—teeth are of course a very prominent feature of the gorgoneion—come to life and make a grinding sound. The snakes might do this also, but their efforts would necessarily be underwhelming next to those of the Gorgons.

236a. ἄγρια δερκομένω: for the terrifying look of the Gorgon (and snake) cf. 145n.; if the poet were in fact thinking here of serpents, there would also be a play on δράκοντε and δερκομένω (145n.).

In early poetry a terrifying look is often described as δεινός; in the *Aspis* alone cf. 160, 262, 426, 445. Moreover, our poet's favourite adjective is δεινός (147n.). In 236, however, the Gorgons are described as ἄγρια δερκομένω, the only time ἄγρια is used adverbially in the epos (though cf. e.g. Mosch. 1.11, [Opp.] *Cyn.* 2.55). Contrast the ecphrasis on Agamemnon's shield, in which we find the Gorgon δεινὸν δερκομένη (*Il.* 11.37). But δεινός occurs later in the present verse, and the poet of the *Aspis* was perhaps sensitive to the infelicity of using the word twice *within the same line*, and so found an alternative for the first instance in which it was to occur. (Note that in none of the examples of 'careless repetition' catalogued in §II.1.v does the repetition occur within the same verse; and in §II.6.iii I suggested that at 297 = 313 περίφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο the poet wished to avoid saying κλυτὰ ἔργα περικλυτοῦ.)

236b–237a. δὲ δεινοῖσι καρήνοισι | Γοργείοις: for the prosody δὲ δεινοῖσι cf. 195n.

καρήνοισι | Γοργείοις is based on Γοργεῖη κεφαλὴ (cf. 223–4n.); the present formula is demonstrably innovative, not merely by virtue of its splitting and inversion, but also because of the novel use of καρήνοισι (234n.).

ἔδονεῖτο μέγας φόβος: some editors (e.g. Heinsius (1603, but not 1622); Sittl) print Φόβος. But a fully personified Phobos would clutter this scene, both in literary and artistic terms. And no supplementary Terror is needed: 'Das Gorgonenbild ist selbst ein Symbol des mit ihm verbundenen Schreckens' (Peppmüller (1893) 10).

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