Wadham College University of Oxford

Homer Beyond Homer: A Comparative Approach to the Question of Oral Composition in Performance

Andrea Doda

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to compare three different poetic traditions whose origins are believed to have been influenced to a significant degree by oral composition in performance: the Ancient Greek, the Sanskrit, and the Old English. These traditions all belong to the Indo-European language family, with interesting parallels not only in the realm of themes and motifs, but also of diction and poetic turns of phrase. The aim of this study is to explore whether similar resemblances may also be found on the deeper level of composition. By taking into account the simplicity and complexity of different poetic units, I investigate (and, wherever possible, reconstruct) certain mechanisms and techniques for the production of poetry during composition-in-performance. The chief texts under scrutiny are four (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Beowulf*), where I explore three distinct poetic contexts: greetings and well-wishes in Chapter 1, traditional similes in Chapter 2, and battle scenes in Chapter 3. My results will hopefully show that, at least in these contexts, we may be able to understand how certain compositional techniques might facilitate the task of the singing poet, as he strived to produce sophisticated lines in his performance under the constant threat of metrical breakdown.

INTRODUCTION

A beginning

The production of a work of art is often described as a mysterious process, all the more fascinating precisely because of its invisibility. The public normally get the finished product to enjoy and react to. What lies *behind* the product is the realm of the critic: the chief question that the critic is called upon to answer is 'how did it happen?', to which a subsequent 'what did the author mean to achieve?' is usually added. In some fortuitous cases the creative process − the 'assembly line' − behind a work of art has somehow been recorded. In Peter Jackson's docuseries *The Beatles: Get Back,* we are gifted with the unique opportunity to witness a musician's creative process: we can see Paul McCartney improvise a tune on his bass, sing some random lyrics, and finally come up with an entirely new creation, the Beatles' 1969 single *Get Back*.

But this is the exception, not the rule. In most cases, the creative process has not been recorded and is left for the critic to reconstruct. This applies especially to ancient literature, given the chronological distance that separates the author from the modern critic, and is perhaps best exemplified by oral-derived works, whose composition circumstances are generally more elusive than those of their written counterparts. Yet, the prohibitive question 'What happens in the mind of [an oral] poet when poetry is created?'[1] has been asked, and answers have been attempted. This study is one such attempt, and is best described as an exploration of the mind of ancient oral poets.

Our aim is to investigate how centuries of improvisation have equipped oral bards with a technique for composition-in-performance: a complex kind of performance, during which the singer had to produce poetry and at the same time "contend with an audience that

[1] Paraphrasing Bozzone (2016), 1.

[was] coming and going, greeting newcomers, saying farewell to early leavers".[2] What we are looking for is a method for crafting sophisticated lines a.) under strict metrical constraints, b.) at a sustained pace, and c.) in front of an audience, with all their demands and expectations. All three elements should be considered when attempting to reconstruct a versification technique that lies behind the output of different poetic traditions.

This last point introduces another feature of this study: its comparative nature. The comparison, in this case, will be drawn within the Proto-Indo-European[3] family, encompassing three poetic traditions: the Greek, the Sanskrit, and the Old English. One might object that it is challenging enough to explore the composition technique of one tradition, let alone three. To this, we can reply that, as linguistic studies have shown, a comparative approach may not only unearth features and strategies common to all three poetic cultures, but also shed light on the nature of each single tradition: from the threads to the bundle, and back again. But before explaining the reasons behind this selection, it may be useful to take a closer look into the world of PIE scholarship.

Indo-European Comparative Studies: Proto-Language and Beyond

On hearing the phrase 'Indo-European studies', one immediately thinks of language and linguistic comparisons. In the 19th century, linguists realised that many modern and ancient languages (which originally developed across a wide geographical spectrum ranging from Northern India to Ireland) were related to each other and shared a common ancestor. Once it was shown that phonological and morphological changes could be studied scientifically, scholars began to reconstruct the (unattested) ancestor, or proto-language, by comparing the

[2] Lord (2019[3]), 14.
[3] Henceforth PIE.

evidence provided by the attested daughter languages. It was the birth of PIE studies, which expanded considerably between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, with notable scholars such as De Saussure, Grimm, Wackernagel, Schleicher, Pokorny, and Kuryłowicz (to name only a few) contributing to the reconstruction and description of PIE.[4]

It was not long before the comparative method, which had proven so effective in the field of linguistics, was applied to anthropology. If scholars could really reconstruct a proto-language on the basis of the evidence in the daughter languages, then it might also be possible to reconstruct an Indo-European proto-culture by collecting and comparing the anthropological traces recoverable in the daughter cultures. In this respect, the most important and productive scholar was undoubtedly George Dumézil, who famously proposed the so-called *trifunctional theory* to describe the ideology of the ancient Indo-Europeans.[5]

According to this model, the original PIE culture was segmentary in kind, i.e. an ideology which "organises the major ideas that it handles into a small number of sharply contrasted clusters".[6] Dumézil acknowledged three such clusters, or functions: F1, which embedded ideas related to sovereignty and sacred power; F2, pertaining to physical force and war; F3, connected to fecundity, prosperity, and related notions, such as peace, health, and sensual pleasure. PIE culture would then be based on the interaction between these three functions, around which the Indo-Europeans mapped their ideas and world vision. The trifunctional system, which disappeared or was irretrievably transformed after the PIE split, left its mark on the social structures, religion, and mythology of the daughter cultures:

[4] For a brief account of PIE linguistic scholarship, see Clackson (2007), 1–26.
[5] Dumézil (1938), his breakthrough article. For other references to the Dumézilian *oeuvre*, see Allen (2020), 10–24.
[6] Allen (2020), 13.

Dumézil detected trifunctional manifestations in the Indian social castes,[7] the three deities in the myth of the Judgement of Paris,[8] and the Roman priestly hierarchy.[9]

Such a schematic taxonomy of ideas may look like an oversimplification, and unsurprisingly the trifunctional theory was met with considerable resistance by experts in the various PIE branches.[10] But despite these remonstrations, Dumézil's work left an indelible mark in PIE studies, and paved the way for a new generation of anthropologists and historians of literature.

His ideas were taken up by Nicholas Allen,[11] who refined the trifunctional system into a pentadic one. Beside Dumézil's three functions, Allen postulated the existence of a fourth function, pertaining to "what is other, beyond, or outside";[12] F4, the 'alien' function, was then further divided into two sub-functions: F4+, a cluster of positively valued and often transcendent concepts, and F4-, the negatively marked Other, associated with death, destruction, and the like. He then proceeded to apply the pentadic structure to several literary manifestations, especially in the context of a comparison between the Homeric poems and the Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata*. Although his attempts to apply the five-function theory to these texts have been only partially successful, Allen's rapprochements between different episodes show convincingly that a single proto-epic lies behind both traditions.[13] To quote Allen's own words, since "behind the Greek and Sanskrit languages there lies a proto-language from which both descend and which accounts for the similarities", in the same way "behind the two epics there could lie a proto-narrative from which both descend".[14]

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[7] F1, priestly class; F2, warriors; F3, the productive class: farmers, breeders, merchants, and landowners.
[8] F1, Hera; F2, Athena; F3, Aphrodite.
[9] F1, *flamen dialis*; F2, *flamen martialis*; F3, *flamen quirinalis*.
[10] Of course, the notion of trifunctionality evolved over time. For a more recent account, see Sergent (1995), 328–41, and (1998), 9–13.
[11] Allen's most important publications have been conveniently assembled in Allen (2020).
[12] Allen (2020), 15.
[13] For the most impressive comparisons, see Allen (2020), 41–54, 102–13, 114–120, 191–208, 304–16.
[14] Allen (2020), 103. Note that, Allen prefers the term 'proto-narrative', as he discusses only narrative episodes, and not other poetic features such as metre or formulae. For a more detailed discussion on the question of a PIE proto-epic, see below, 275–6.

We should immediately stress that common origin is not the only way to account for the similarities between two traditions. Diffusion, as recognised by Allen himself,[15] played just as important a role in the shaping of both the Greek and Indian mythologies. In particular, Mesopotamian influences can be detected in Homer, as several studies have now shown beyond all reasonable doubt,[16] and we should not even rule out the possibility of direct borrowing from one to the other after the age of Alexander, a period in which the *Mahābhārata* was still being recited and composed. In the course of our analysis, it is important to bear in mind that not all that is found in Homer or the Sanskrit epics is of PIE origin. Still, a comparative approach that focuses on versification patterns must necessarily take into account features such as language and metre: the former element is shared by all the traditions analysed in this study, and the latter at least by Greek and Sanskrit. And since versification is intrinsically connected to language and metre, a study on versification techniques such as the present one will certainly benefit more from a PIE-centered approach than from comparisons with non-PIE traditions.

Although the field is rich in scholars that fostered the process of PIE cultural reconstruction (from Émile Benveniste[17] to Marcello Durante,[18] from Maria Patrizia Bologna[19] to Enrico Campanile),[20] Martin West's 2007 monograph is an endeavour which cannot go unmentioned. The work offers a global survey of PIE poetry, starting with an

[15] Allen (2020), 102.
[16] On Near Eastern influences in Homer, see M.L. West's seminal study *The East Face of Helicon* (1997). More recently, works by Bachvarova (2016), on Hittite Anatolia as a point of contact between Greece and Mesopotamia; Clarke (2019), whose title *Achilles Beside Gilgamesh* nicely mirrors Allen's 2020 collection *Arjuna-Odysseus*; and Metcalf (2020), on unreliable Near Eastern parallels, have all provided valuable contributions in this field. On the question of Near Eastern comparanda and comparative methodology, see Kelly and Metcalf (2021).
[17] Especially Benveniste (1945), on PIE medical doctrine, and (1969), on the cultural institutions of the Indo-Europeans.
[18] Durante (1958) is an analysis of the Homeric formula ἔπεα πτερόεντα with Vedic comparanda.
[19] See e.g. Bologna (1988), on PIE comparative mythology.
[20] While Campanile, Orlandi, and Sani (1974) and Campanile (1990a) deal with comparisons between Celtic and Indic and between Celtic and Greek, respectively, Campanile (1990b) attempts a general reconstruction of PIE culture.

account of the role of oral bards within their society and the poetic devices that they employed, and later moving on to the Indo-Europeans' mythological beliefs, from the upper gods to the conception of man and heroic prowess. It is an invaluable contribution for the development of PIE cultural studies, but just as Allen's work, it deals primarily with literary themes and mythical patterns, with little focus on phrases, formulae, and versification techniques within the single traditions.

Indeed, with the exception of Parry (whose work will be discussed in the next section), not much ink has been spent on the phraseological parallels between the various PIE traditions.[21] An attempt was recently made by Calvert Watkins (1995), who analysed the pan-Indo-European story pattern whereby a hero kills a dragon (or an otherwise reptilian adversary) with the aid of a particular weapon. Watkins' array of evidence is impressive, with material drawn from every corner of the PIE world, and his study has rightly been described as a "landmark book".[22] More importantly for us, the study focuses not only on the treatment of the serpent-killing motif in the daughter cultures, but attempts to reconstruct an original PIE serpent-killing formula, which lies behind similar phrases attested in most PIE-derived traditions. The basic formula '[HERO] slays [SERPENT]' is analysed in detail in the second part of the book, together with its reflexes and permutations in later cultures. In the first part, Watkins explores different aspects of PIE poetics, making valuable observations on subjects such as the formula, the epithet, and the strophic style.

Finally, John Foley's 1990 book *Traditional Oral Epic* is a detailed exploration of how metre shapes the poetic diction in three PIE traditions: the Homeric Greek, the South Slavic (already studied by Parry and Lord), and the Old English, with a focus on *Beowulf*. This, I believe, is the only study since Parry where the poetic diction of more than one PIE

[21] For Kuhn's reconstruction of **klewos ṇdgwhitom*, see below, 8.
[22] McCarthy (1999).

tradition has been analysed down to the level of phrases and formulae, in order to investigate its relationship to the relevant metre. Given the nature of his research, and the fact that two of the three traditions in question are included in this study, I should acknowledge that I am greatly indebted to Foley's work.[23]

The present study is fundamentally a comparative analysis of the *mechanics* of the poetic diction in different oral traditions, which, as far as I am aware, has not yet been pursued systematically: a technique for rapid versification-in-performance – a method for joining together different metrical units with a given semantic import – is what we will attempt to reconstruct in a number of clearly defined contexts, by comparing the evidence from three different traditions. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the texts that make up the Greek part of the study.[24] As Allen has shown, these poems can be profitably compared to the Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata*, whose so-called Battle Books (6–9) will constitute the bulk of the Indian material. Finally, the Old English *Beowulf* will be our main referent for the Germanic tradition.[25]

Sanskrit and Old English seem to offer the most promising milieu for a comparison with Homer. First of all, they provide a vast assortment of epic material, similar in size, style, and tone to the Homeric poems: a combination of features which is not easily found in other PIE cultures. Secondly, several interesting connections have already been spotted by earlier scholars. To take a single example from Sanskrit, the *svayaṃvara* (bridegroom selection) of Princess Draupadī (*MBh.* 1.174–88) features an archery contest which closely resembles the contest of the bow in *Odyssey* 21, where Odysseus wins back his throne and,

[23] Along similar lines, Whallon (1965) has attempted an analysis of heroic formulae in the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*, showing that the basic nature of the systems varies between the two traditions: while Homeric formulae are generally true to individual character, but indifferent to context, Old English formulae are not individualised, but are significally appropriate to context. Whallon (1969) further elaborates these notions and compares them to analogous phenomena in Old Testament poetry.
[24] For the use of Hesiod and the *Homeric Hymns*, see the relevant section below.
[25] For the use of Old Norse and the Old English corpus, see the relevant section below.

in a sense, reaffirms his marriage to Penelope. On the whole, our main texts share a wide variety of motifs, themes, and even typical scenes: messenger speeches, banquets, assemblies, armament scenes, and even depictions of bardic performances are found in abundance in all three traditions. The parallels become even more significant when we turn to phrases and formulae: scholars have long pointed out the correspondence between the Greek κλέος ἄφθιτον (*Il*. 9.413) and the Vedic *śrávas … ákṣitam* (*RV* I.9.7bc), with both going back to PIE **klewos ṇdg^{wh}itom* ('imperishable fame').[26] On the Germanic front, we should note the Old English formula *folces hyrde* ('shepherd of the people'), which is semantically comparable to the Homeric ποιμένα λαῶν, although the two phrases are not related etymologically as the previous pair. Many other parallels could be listed, in a potentially endless catalogue of resemblances.

Of course, there is no reason why such a research should be limited to Ancient Greece, Ancient India, and Early Medieval England. Other PIE traditions, such as the South-Slavic one, would be readily accommodated into this kind of study, and one may even attempt to analyse some non-PIE traditions with the same lens. Nor will this study exhaust all the possibilities offered by the selected literatures. Its scope encompasses only four texts, and these traditions have much more to offer than the works under discussion: the Sanskrit is particularly rich in this respect, as only one portion of one poem is dealt with here, and a second oral-derived national epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is virtually ignored.

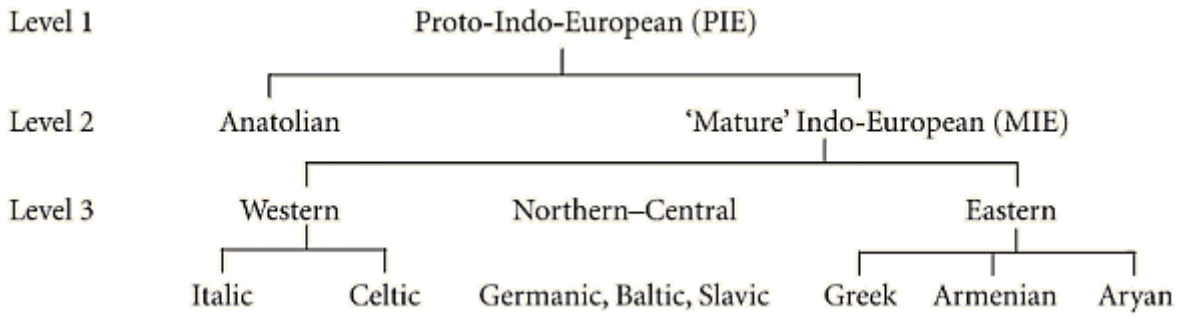
In accordance with Foley's principle of genre-dependence,[27] I have confined myself to epic poetry, broadly defined as an extended poetic narrative which deals with heroic achievements, and includes a significant degree of divine machinery and supernatural

[26] A correspondence first noticed by Kuhn (1853). See Watkins (1995), 173–8, for discussion and references. Note that the example comes from the collection of sacred hymns known as *Veda*, and not from the *Mahābhārata*.

[27] I.e. the integrity of genre should be observed in comparative studies between different traditions (Foley (1990), 3).

elements. But no one would prevent us from applying the conclusions of this research to genres other than epic: ancient hymns, I believe, would be a promising starting point for such an effort. Further avenues of research may also be pursued by interviewing contemporary oral bards and comparing their techniques to our discoveries on the ancient front. All these potential outcomes will be reviewed again at the end of this study in the light of our findings.

I have also adopted West's stemmatic approach to classify our results.[28] PIE linguists generally agree on a diachronic stratification of the proto-language: the first demarcation line is the split of the Anatolian branch (ca. 3500 B.C.), after which PIE unity continued for about three centuries before a second generalised split (ca. 3200).[29] The stage of the proto-language between the Anatolian split and the general disaggregation is called by West 'Mature Indo-European' (MIE). The speakers of what would become Ancient Greek and Indic are believed to have preserved some unity until ca. 2700–2500, a stage known as the Graeco-Aryan period. Below is a stemma taken from West's own book, which summarises what has been said so far:[30]



According to West's approach, what applies to language applies to culture, too. Therefore, if a parallel between Sanskrit and Greek is detected in the course of the discussion, it will be referred to the Graeco-Aryan stage of development. Parallels that connect either Sanskrit or

[28] M.L. West (2007), 19–21.
[29] According to Darden's model. See M.L. West (2007), 4–11.
[30] M.L. West (2007), 20.

Greek with Old English, or that involve all three traditions, will be ascribed to the MIE period.[31]

The outline of our study is rather simple. Ch. 1 will analyse greetings and well-wishes in the three traditions. The concept of compositional simplicity will be introduced here, with a special focus on Greek and Old English. In the second chapter we will explore the composition of elaborate similes in all three traditions. Finally, Ch. 3 will be devoted to a comparison of battle scenes in the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata*, with only a few Germanic contributions. The aim is the same throughout: to enter the mind of an ancient oral singer and reconstruct a plausible technique for composition-in-performance. In the Conclusion, our findings will be evaluated and further horizons of research will be suggested. But before beginning the discussion proper, it is convenient to introduce each of the three traditions separately.[32]

The Greek Tradition and Oral Studies

Although anticipated by the findings of several predecessors,[33] the first systematic appreciation of Homeric poetry as oral poetry is due to Milman Parry and his dissertation 'L'Epithète traditionnelle dans Homère' (1928), followed by other remarkable works.[34] Parry studied in detail a vast set of noun-epithet combinations in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, noticing that several of them could be organised into extended formulaic systems,

[31] The complications posed by horizontal transmission and non-PIE influences should always be born in mind. If not otherwise stated, 'PIE' will still be used to refer to the proto-language as a whole.
[32] Note that, since this study is chiefly intended for classicists, a basic knowledge of the plot of the Homeric poems and the metrical dynamics of the hexameter will be assumed. The fact that the study is mainly addressed to classicists implies that, to a certain extent, we will employ the other two traditions to shed light on the poetic mechanics of the Greek one. At the same time, I do believe that these traditions can dialogue with and illuminate each other, and that our findings will be of relevance to Indologists and Germanists, too.
[33] For a complete review of scholarship on Homeric orality, see Latacz (2015), 39–64, with Parry's forerunners at 39–51. For the most recent trend in Homeric scholarship as a whole, with particular reference to the formation of the poems, see Finkelberg (2018).
[34] Parry's publications have been collected by his son Adam in Parry (1971).

i.e. sets of repeated expressions, which were very often employed *irrespective* of the poetic situation. A typical example of this is the phrase πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς ('swift-footed Achilles'), that Homer uses to describe Achilles even when he is not being particularly swift: at *Il.* 1.399, to quote just one passage, the hero is 'swift-footed' even though he is sitting down by the Achaean ships. On account of this and many other instances, Parry realised that the poem's repeated phrases could not (or at least not solely) be motivated by artistic purposes. They were more profitably interpreted as fixed expressions which developed over time to suit the poets' compositional needs, especially the need for rapid versification in performance, which could only arise in an *oral* context.

He thus conceived the first definition of formula, described as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea".[35] Once the formula had been defined, a system could then be construed as a group of formulae endowed with a certain extension (i.e. a certain number of single formulae) and a very high degree of *economy* (or thrift). The latter concept was perhaps Parry's most valuable insight into Homer's poetic diction: for the sake of fluid versification, Homeric singers were bound to employ only a limited number of formulaic phrases. Too many formulae expressing similar concepts and with the same metrical shape would presumably have been too much of a burden for the performing poet, leading him to the verge of metrical breakdown. Thus, over the centuries the poets' diction evolved in such a way as to limit the number of phrases to 'one formula per meaning per metrical slot'. In other words, for a given metrical portion of the hexameter, there is normally only one formula to express a given essential idea.[36]

[35] Parry (1971), 272.
[36] This economy is not absolute, as recognised by Parry himself (1971), 155–6, but the overall tendency towards thrift cannot be denied. For a recent argument against thrift and for a Homeric 'poetics of the breaches' in formulaic economy, see Friedrich (2007), but note also Visser's response to this work (2011), which in his view did not engage sufficiently with the developments in formulaic studies after Parry.

Parry thus set up the formula as the basic building block of Homer's diction. His Homeric discoveries were then further bolstered by fieldwork in Yugoslavia, where Parry, with the aid of his assistant Albert Lord, studied and recorded the performances of Serbo-Croatian folk singers, and interviewed the poets themselves better to understand their compositional mechanisms. Many significant similarities were found between the Homeric and South Slavic traditions, not only in relation to formulaic usage, but also in terms of themes and typical scenes. In a sense, their work is the direct ancestor of the present study, inasmuch as Parry and Lord were the first to carry out a comparative analysis on the mechanisms of oral versification in two Indo-European traditions.

After Parry's untimely death in 1935, his findings were summarised and further elaborated by Lord in his *The Singer of Tales* (1960).[37] In this fundamental work, much emphasis is laid on the concept of composition and re-composition-in-performance, i.e. the notion that each song (though factually the *same* song) is recreated anew at each performance, with little variation and without the need for textual fixity.[38] The concept itself of 'text' is alien to oral traditions such as the South Slavic (directly documented by Parry and Lord) and the Homeric one, where the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are presumed to have originated. Each performance is a *unicum*, producing a unique 'song', which was and will never be replicated word for word in any other performance. All the same, that version can still be recognised as a precise song, or as a precise poem, because it deals with precise events in a traditional manner. The various versions of the same song are called 'multiforms' by Lord. Thus, *our Iliad* and *our Odyssey* are, in their deepest essence, two preserved multiforms of the ancient 'Iliad song' and 'Odyssey song', respectively.

[37] Lord (2019[3]).
[38] Lord (2019[3]), 67–70.

Though with considerable delay, the Parry-Lord Theory was finally appreciated by Homerists in the post-war period, and revolutionised the relevant scholarship, to the point where several academics nowadays are no longer willing to describe it as a 'theory', but as "the absolutely consistent reconstruction of the intrinsic conditions for Greek oral epic, based on its own structure".[39] This does not mean that some of its most hardline aspects could not be refined in the following years.[40]

In the 1950's and 1960's, Parry's theories began to gain wider acceptance,[41] and several scholars turned their attention to the study of formulaic flexibility. The works of Arie Hoekstra (1965) and Bryan Hainsworth (1968) provided the most important contributions in this respect.[42] In particular, the latter has argued that the Oral Theory in its crudest form works only in the case of noun-epithet formulae, the structure to which Parry devoted most of his analysis. But Homer's diction abounds in other kinds of formulaic material (e.g. temporal markers, phrases to describe a warrior's death, etc.), which need a more flexible model to be explained. Hainsworth, focusing on two distinct metrical shapes (– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ and ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑) showed how Homer's formulae could feature a certain degree of mobility, and could be subject to processes of modification, expansion, and separation. He also provided a novel definition for the formula to account for its flexible nature. Its *genus* is a repeated word-group whose components are somehow 'attracted' to each other on a principle of *mutual expectancy*. To put it differently, "in the poet's mental process the use of one word

[39] Latacz (2015), 54.
[40] For a detailed account of the history of oral studies in Homer and beyond up to the late 1980's, see Foley (1988).
[41] This happened through the work of, among others, Geoffrey Kirk and James Notopoulos. Kirk (1962) examines the composition, structure, and transmission of Homer's poetry and usefully describes the life-cycle of an oral tradition as divided into four constituent phases (originative, creative, reproductive, and degenerate), cf. Kirk (1962), 95–101. See also Kirk (1976). Notopoulos' 1949 and 1950 articles address the issue of oral composition in the light of Parry's theory, while Notopoulos (1960) examines the formulaic relationship between Homer and Hesiod and traces the development of the Achaean epic tradition.
[42] Formulaic flexibility is a phenomenon acknowledged in the Sanskrit tradition, too. Cf. von Simson (1982), 224.

[from a given word-group] creates a strong presumption that the other would follow":[43] as a result of this principle, certain frequently repeated word-groups crystallised over time into fixed phrases (e.g. Parry's noun-epithet formulae), while others, though still formulaic in character, retained some degree of flexibility.

On a more abstract level, Michael Nagler (1975) conceived of Homer's diction as a 'preverbal *Gestalt*', or mental template, of which the formula is but the surface realisation. This model, described as 'generative' by Nagler himself, removes some of the exceptions in Parry's theory, but is perhaps excessively abstract, as "the notion of the *Gestalt* itself defies closer definition",[44] and is not easily applicable in concrete terms.

Parry's acknowledgement of Homer's oral background introduced new issues and gave rise to new approaches that enriched our understanding of the poems. In this respect, Foley's notion of 'traditional referentiality' is particularly important. According to this model, Homer's poetic language is imbued with numerous, but latent references to a larger framework of traditional associations, that were presumably clear to ancient audiences, but which modern readers are called upon to decipher.[45] This approach, which is nowadays widely accepted, was taken up by several scholars, most notably by Adrian Kelly. His *referential* commentary on *Il*. 8 (2007) deciphers and explains the network of extra-semantic ideas to which a certain Homeric phrase is connected. To give an example, the expression εἴξας ᾧ θυμῷ ('yielding to his/her heart') is associated with an idea of potential or actual harm for the agent in question (normally also implying the agent's own awareness of it), which is not expressed in the semantics of the phrase itself. This extra-semantic meaning can be retrieved by analysing and comparing the other occurrences of the phrase, an effort that clearly shows its association with the ideas just mentioned; furthermore, the

[43] Hainsworth (1968), 36.
[44] McLeod (1975), 287.
[45] Foley (1999). See Kelly (2007), 2–6, for recent observations on traditional referentiality.

appreciation of its network of references may help make sense of this phrase even in contexts where its employment seems to be counter-intuitive (e.g. *Il*. 9.598).[46]

As for the issue of the poems' textualisation, we should mention the work of Gregory Nagy (esp. 1996a), who largely adopted Parry's conception of 'oral poetics', but posited a gradual process of fixation (the so-called 'evolutionary model') for the Homeric poems, as opposed to the dictation theory espoused by Lord. Further contributions have been provided by Jonathan Ready, both in terms of comparative efforts (2017) and dictation models (2019). This latter study admirably shows how the 'poem' that resulted from a dictation session was not solely the poet's work, but a joint effort of poet and scribe, with significance influence on the part of the patron, too.[47]

Unsurprisingly, the emergence of oralism as a fundamental notion has also attracted criticism. Several scholars today deny or significantly reduce the role of orality in the development of the epics,[48] on the grounds that the oral approach does not fully account for the undeniable artistry that permeates the poems. Furthermore, they also reject the idea that our epics should not be analysed with more 'traditional'[49] interpretive tools. Martin West, perhaps the most prominent anti-oralist, has recently argued that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were each composed by a single man and, more significantly, with the aid of writing.[50] Along similar lines, Bruno Currie believes that rather early on "individual poems may [have been] fixed enough to serve as an object of allusion", and is willing to detect in Homer patterns of intertextual allusions not unlike those found in Hellenistic and Roman literature.[51]

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[46] Kelly (2007), 6–9.
[47] I.e. the individual who commissioned the textualisation of an oral song. On Homeric orality and modern fieldwork, see also Jensen (2011).
[48] Cf. Kelly (2007), 1–2.
[49] I.e. Typical of written literature.
[50] M.L. West (2011), 15–78, but see González (2013), 68–9, for some sensible objections to the model of diffusion proposed by West. For the *Odyssey*, see M.L. West (2014).
[51] Currie (2016), 12.

What everyone seems to agree on, however, is that there existed, at some stage, a "most fluid period with no written text",[52] to use Nagy's terminology. In fact, even scholars who uphold a staunch anti-oralist view acknowledge that the content of the poems was the subject of oral lays transmitted from generation to generation before being fixed in a written form.[53] It is reasonable that this oral phase, which almost everyone presupposes in some form, played a crucial role in shaping the diction and structure of the epics even after the advent of writing. No scholar would categorically deny that Homer displays significant traces of orality. The real issue is how we interpret them. In this respect, I agree with Luigi Enrico Rossi's formulation of Homeric orality: the poems are not a "*documento* integrale di oralità, [...] bensì *testimonianza* di una fase orale".[54] In other words, the epics are not integrally oral works (or a written snapshot of an orally-composed poem), but present a remarkable amount of traces of an oral gestation, which would make an inquiry into oral verse-making worthwhile and profitable.

Hence the question that this study presupposes: can we reconstruct a technique of oral composition – and especially composition-in–performance – which could account for the production of the Homeric epics? Some scholars have already attempted an answer. Edzard Visser, for example, has produced a valuable study on the oral technique behind Homer's 'killing verses' (1987), i.e. lines where a warrior X kills an opponent Y in a Z way.[55] He first drew a distinction between determinants and variable elements: the former are necessary, metrically fixed units that are usually given priority of localisation within the verse, while the latter are secondary material used to fill in the metrical gaps left once the singer has placed the determinants. In the context of killing verses, Visser identified the determinants as the names of the killer and his opponents, which were more idiosyncratic

[52] Nagy (1996a), 42.
[53] M.L. West (1998), *Praefatio*, v.
[54] Rossi (1979), 120.
[55] See also Visser (1988).

and metrically cumbersome, and were thus dealt with first by the performing poet. Once the determinants had been mentally placed in the appropriate portion of the hexameter, the line was completed by adding the variables, such as the killing verb (expressed in several ways), the epithets of the heroes, the means of killing, etc.[56] Visser's model was expanded by Egbert Bakker and Florence Fabbricotti, who focused on the dative expressions for the term 'spear' in the epics (1991), and Andrew Riggsby, whose 1992 study applies Visser's technique to speech introductions. Bakker's analysis of the Homeric text in terms of 'intonation units' (i.e. "the largest linguistic unit that is still available in its entirety to consciousness [of both speaker and listener]") is also worth mentioning,[57] as well as Ronald Blankenborg's recent phonetics-based investigation of performative pauses in Homer.[58]

A further step into the mind of the oral poet was taken by Chiara Bozzone, who has introduced the useful notion of 'construction' in her dissertation on Homeric formularity (2014). Bozzone defines a construction as a "learned pairing of form and function",[59] which can capture anything from a fixed phrase or idiom to a flexible grammatical structure. To illustrate the concept, let us look at the so-called 'εἵλετο δ'(ε) construction', a grammatical structure whose *form* features εἵλετο δ' in the first foot of the hexameter, followed by an object that stretches until the main caesura, and an object modifier which completes the second half of the line:

εἵλετο δ'(ε) [(–)⏑⏑– (⏑)] object [(⏑)⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑]object modifier

A few textual examples are provided:

[56] Visser's model will be relevant for our analysis of battle scenes and similes.
[57] Bakker (1997), 48.
[58] Blankenborg (2022).
[59] Bozzone (2016), 95.

εἵλετο δ᾽ ἄλκιμον ἔγχος, ὅ οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει (*Od*. 17.4).

He took his strong spear, which fitted his palms.

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

He took two strong spears clothed in bronze.

εἵλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον, ἄφθιτον αἰεί (*Il*. 2.46).

He took the sceptre of his father, ever imperishable.

So much for the form; now the function: this construction is specialised for 'preparation scenes', in which a character puts on or takes up the equipment required for a task. On hearing a line starting with εἵλετο δέ, both a poet and a member of the audience must have had strong expectations as to its thematic content: a character is about to set off for some kind of enterprise. Supported by further examples and evidence from the field of cognitive science, Bozzone's theory is especially interesting, as it expands Hainsworth's principle of mutual expectancy beyond the boundaries of the formula.[60]

Bozzone's work is to be viewed in a wider framework of research where the grammar of oral traditions is analysed through the lens of cognitive linguistics. This approach has particularly blossomed after the turn of the century, as shown by the great number of recent contributions dedicated to this topic. Among the most interesting ones (at least for our purposes) is Cristóbal Pagán Cánovas and Mihailo Antović's 2016 study, where notions taken from the field of cognitive grammar (e.g. constructions, frames, instance-based language use) are applied to oral poetry and its categories (e.g. formulae, themes, and composition-in-performance). In the same year, the two authors co-edited *Oral Poetics and*

[60] Bozzone (2016), 96–7.

Cognitive Science, a collection of papers on the same topic: among these, it is worth mentioning Raymond Person's analysis of the analogies between the strategies of everyday speech and oral poetry by focusing on ring-composition structures,[61] as well as Anna Bonifazi's comparative study of particles in Greek and Serbo-Croatian epic.[62]

As this brief survey has shown, the question of Homer's orality is far from settled. Distinguished scholars are found on both sides of the oral-literate divide, which is at any rate best represented not as an absolute dichotomy, but as a continuum with several shades.[63] The present study, as we might expect, argues that Homer's oral background is deeply significant for a proper appreciation of the Homeric poems, and follows in the wake of Visser's and Bozzone's contributions "to the scientific investigation of creativity".[64] Its chief aim is to dig deeper into the mind of an ancient oral poet from a comparative perspective, in the belief that, if we manage to grasp at least a fragment of the singer's compositional mechanisms, our understanding of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* would be greatly improved.

As a final note, I should point out that we will also draw material from Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, the *Shield of Heracles*, and the four major *Homeric Hymns* (Demeter, Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite).[65] This will be done essentially to corroborate some of our Homeric findings, as these poems are taken to represent a common Early Greek epic pool of themes and phraseology (despite the different genres). These findings, of course, will be of lesser import than those retrieved exclusively from the Homeric poems. Whenever the Early Greek corpus is used, this will be appropriately signaled.

[61] Person (2016). For further details, see Person (2015).
[62] Bonifazi (2016).
[63] On the oral-written continuum, see Finnegan (1974); on its representation as a space, see Rankovic (2010).
[64] Bozzone (2016), 79.
[65] The system of abbreviations employed here for Classical texts follows that of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (OCD).

The Sanskrit Tradition

1. The poem and its tradition

Few scholars would dispute that the *Mahābhārata* came to light in a deeply oral culture. Although writing presumably arose in India at least as early as the 8th century B.C., poetry and wisdom remained oral for a long time afterwards: as Moriz Winternitz remarks, in Buddhist texts "wherever the preservation of the teachings of the Master and the sacred texts is spoken of", there is no mention of writing and reading, but only of "hearing and memorising".[66] The Sanskrit verbal root *śru* ('hear')[67] could in fact be used to symbolise the early centuries of the Indian civilisation, especially with reference to the Brāhman circles within which knowledge was preserved and transmitted: a word to describe a wise individual in Sanskrit is *bahuśruta*, lit. 'someone who has heard many things'. Orality was not only the normal state of affairs for centuries after the introduction of writing, but was actually a weapon for the priestly class to maintain their hegemony: if the sacred texts had been committed to writing and widely circulated, they would have become accessible to members of the lower castes, thus jeopardising the Brāhmans' monopoly on knowledge and religion.[68]

The fact that orality dominated almost every aspect of life in India for such a long time does not imply that it was a homogeneous phenomenon: a clear-cut distinction must be drawn between religious texts (the four collections of sacred hymns known as *Veda*) and secular literature. The transmission of the former was marked by the highest degree of accuracy: the hymns were heard and memorised word for word, and the utmost attention was paid to avoid errors in pronunciation, accent, and recitation mode. Under such

[66] Winternitz (1981), 33.
[67] From PIE **klew*, cf. Gr. κλύω.
[68] Winternitz (1981), 35.

circumstances, there was not much room for composition and especially *re*-composition-in-performance, and we can presume that the Brāhmans were not so much in need of a technique for rapid versification, as of methods to obtain the highest possible exactitude in the transmission process.[69] On the other hand, secular texts, and especially epic ones, were "exposed to numerous disfigurements", since "every teacher, every reciter, considered himself entitled to alter and to improve, to omit and to add".[70]

The epic *Mahābhārata* clearly falls into this latter category. Originally a song about a dynastic struggle between two sets of cousins, the poem was considerably expanded over the centuries, and the extant text is only "the end point" of a long "evolutionary process".[71] Its first composers and reciters were the *sūtas*, a class of bards closely associated with the Indian warrior caste, the *kṣatriyas*. Indeed, just as the *Veda* were the literary property of the Brāhmans, epic tales such as the *Ur-Mahābhārata* were firmly a *kṣatriya* possession, and it is certainly no coincidence that the original heroic nucleus of the poem, the Battle Books (6–9), is portrayed as narrated by a *sūta*, the warrior-bard Saṃjaya.[72] The poem was first expanded from within, i.e. by incorporating other heroic tales loosely connected to the nucleus, but the most drastic enlargement took place after the *Mahābhārata* fell into Brāhmaṇ hands. Once the epic had been spread among the people by itinerant singers known as *kuśīlavas*, the dominant priestly class was keen to gain possession of such a popular text, and the poem was therefore taken over by the Brahmanical tradition.

This passage had profound repercussions on the text. Religious and moralising sections, among which the famous *Bhagavadgītā*, were disseminated throughout the poem, "to such an extent that the *Mahābhārata* lost the character of an epic, since so much of its

[69] But the *Veda* may have undergone a process of post-performative ossification just like the Homeric poems.
[70] Winternitz (1981), 37.
[71] Brockington (1998a), 19.
[72] For the different narrative layers of the poem, see Brockington (2000), 202.

volume is didactic material".[73] To give a sense of the proportions of this alteration, the poem's longest book (12) is essentially a lengthy recapitulation of Brahmanical lore; to this day the *Mahābhārata* is a Hindu sacred text, sometimes referred to as 'the Fifth *Veda*'.[74] In the later stages of its development, after the poem had been committed to writing, further material was added to different sections on the principle of affinity, to the point where the *Mahābhārata* acquired an almost encyclopedic character and reached an outstanding length of 18 books and ca. 200,000 verses.[75]

As is clear, this process took place over several centuries.[76] Precise dates can only be surmised, but most scholars believe that the *Mahābhārata* was composed and redacted between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D., although many of its stories and legends reach back to the Vedic period (ca. 2000–750 B.C.). The epic tradition behind it was long alive before the poem was recognised and conceived as a unitary text. Commenting on its antiquity, Allen even describes a by-pass phenomenon, as a result of which the *Mahābhārata*, though overall later than the *Veda*, contains material that predates and by-passed the sacred hymns.[77] There has been some debate about the poem's epic character, with the Indian sources describing it as an *itihāsa* ('chronicle'), but on the whole its core content readily conforms to our definition of the genre. Just as its Homeric counterparts, the *Mahābhārata* has been attributed to a mythical composer, the seer Vyāsa ('compiler'), who, unlike Homer, is an active character in his own poem. But this attribution has never been taken seriously by modern scholars: our text is too vast and heterogeneous, and "in no case can we see the work of one author, indeed not even that of a shrewd collector or compiler".[78]

[73] Brockington (1998a), 21.
[74] Cf. Fitzgerald (1985).
[75] For the poem's evolution, see Brockington (1998a), 130–58.
[76] For a detailed account of the poem's evolution out of the various strands of the Indic oral tradition, see Jani (1990). For the *Mahābhārata*'s division into different evolutionary layers, see Yardi (1986), von Simson (1990), and Hellwig (2017).
[77] Allen (2020), 103.
[78] Winternitz (1981), 305.

The poem's structure is exceedingly complex, but its main plotline focuses on the war between two sets of princely cousins, the five Pāṇḍava brothers and the evil Kauravas.[79] The Pāṇḍavas are, in order of birth, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna (sons of Paṇḍu and Kuntī), and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva (sons of Paṇḍu and Madrī). Although born to human parents, the five brothers are actually children of the upper gods: Yudhiṣṭhira is the son of Dharma ('Duty'), Bhīma of the wind-god Vāyu, and Arjuna of the gods' king Indra, while the twins were sired by the Aśvins, two divine horsemen. Even in their youth at the royal capital Hastinapura, the rivalry between the cousins was evident; in particular, the eldest Kaurava Duryodhana, son of Paṇḍu's brother King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was envious of Arjuna's military skills and excellent reputation among the family elders.

In Book 1, after Yudhiṣṭhira is made Crown Prince, Duryodhana devises a plan to get rid of the Pāṇḍavas: he has a house of lac built by the architect Purocana, with a view to set it on fire while the Pāṇḍavas are inside. The five brothers are warned of Duryodhana's plot and escape from the house with their mother. While presumed dead, they travel to the land of the Pāñcāla king Drupada, where Arjuna wins the hand of Princess Draupadī after beating her suitors in an archery contest. Draupadī then becomes the common wife of all five brothers. After news of the marriage reach Hastinapura, the Pāṇḍavas are invited back to the royal palace, where the family elders split the kingdom and let the Pāṇḍavas establish their capital at Indraprastha. But Duryodhana's hatred for his cousins does not abate. In Book 2, Yudhiṣṭhira is deceived into a series of dice games at Hastinapura, as a result of which he loses his kingdom and, together with his family, is forced to spend twelve years in exile in the forest and a further one incognito among the people. During the dice game, the brothers are heavily insulted by the Kauravas, while Draupadī is almost disrobed in front of the court by Duryodhana's brother Duḥśāsana. Plotting revenge, the Pāṇḍavas spend twelve

[79] For a complete summary of the plot, see J.D. Smith (2009), xv–xviii.

years in the forest (Book 3), where they face several adventures, and a thirteenth in concealment at the court of the Matsya king Virāṭa (Book 4). In Book 5, the brothers return from exile and, determined to take back their kingdom, muster an army to meet the Kaurava forces at Kurukṣetra. Books 6 to 9 recount the eighteen-day long battle, which ends with the Pāṇḍavas' victory thanks to the help of the 'demigod'[80] Kṛṣṇa, and the complete annihilation of the Kauravas. In Book 10, three Kaurava survivors wreak havoc in the Pāṇḍava camp at night, and lamentations ensue (Book 11). After a long didactic interlude (Books 12–13), the remaining five books narrate the consequences of the Great Battle, culminating with the Pāṇḍavas' death and ascension to heaven (Book 18).

2. Sanskrit metre

Sanskrit metre shows some striking similarities to Greek metre in general, though not to Homer's dactylic hexameter.[81] The *Mahābhārata* contains essentially three kinds of metre, all of which are isosyllabic. By far the commonest of these is the *anuṣṭubh*, described in the broadest sense as an octosyllable with a rather rigid metrical coda.[82] An *anuṣṭubh* stanza (called *śloka*) is composed of four such octosyllabic half-lines, known as *pāda*. In the even *pādas*, the first four syllables are always metrically free, while the last four feature an iambic cadence (⏑–⏑x), with the final syllable being either short or long. In the odd *pādas*, we find a restricted range of metrical sequences, the most frequent of which is the *pathyā*:[83] four metrically free syllables followed by a sequence of iambus+trochee; the last syllable can be

[80] In the poem, Kṛṣṇa, an avatar of Viṣṇu, is actually a full-fledged god. Still, he is also presented in human terms (he is the king of the Yadavas, the cousin of the Pāṇḍavas, and Arjuna's charioteer), and in the Battle Books he does not show any particularly divine behaviour (with the exception of the later *Bhagavadgītā*) that differentiates him from the other heroes on the battlefield. Thus, in an imaginary epic *lingua franca*, the term 'demigod' would be the most fitting to describe this character.
[81] For a discussion of Graeco-Aryan metre, see M.L. West (2007), 46–51.
[82] Foley (1990), 56, calls *right justification* this stricter metrical rigidity in the later portion of different PIE metres, including the Homeric hexameter.
[83] Which accordingly means 'normal'.

either short or long (⏑⏑⏑⏑ ⏑−−x). There is normally a caesura between the odd and even *pādas*, which can sometimes be bridged. The metrical shape of a classic *anuṣṭubh* line is thus:

xxxx ⏑−−x | xxxx ⏑−⏑x

An *anuṣṭubh* stanza is made up of four such half-lines; occasionally six half-lines are combined into a triplet. The other metrical sequences in the odd *pādas* are called *vipulā* ('extended') and are much less common than the *pathyā*.[84] Note that, in this study, the *pathyā* sequence will be taken as the standard line, and our metrical analyses will be based on this typology of *anuṣṭubh*. Below is an example of a whole *śloka* (*MBh*. 9.1.1):

evaṃ nipātite karṇe samare savyasācinā
alpāvaśiṣṭāḥ kuravaḥ kim akurvata vai dvija.[85]

'Thus, once Karṇa had been killed by the ambidextrous in battle,
what did the few remaining Kauravas do, o brahman?'[86]

In the Critical Edition (CE) of the poem, numbers are assigned to *ślokas*, while the four *pādas* are distinguished by the letters *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, with the addition of *e* and *f* in the case of a triplet. My quotations will always bear a *longum* over long vowels, to facilitate the reader's scansion. The longum will *not* be present on vowels long by position and on *e* and

[84] They are: *Vipulā* 1a: x−⏑− ⏑⏑x; 1b: x⏑−−; 2: x−⏑− −⏑⏑x; 3: x−⏑− −−−x; 4: xxx−−⏑−x.
[85] All quotations from the *Mahābhārata* follow the Pune Critical Edition (1919–1966).
[86] All translation from Ancient Greek, Sanskrit, and OE are mine, unless otherwise stated.

o, which are always long in Sanskrit, as they derive from the original Indic diphthongs **ai* and **au*, respectively.[87]

To sum up, the two chief metrical constraints that a Sanskrit bard needed to meet were:

1. Construction of an eight-syllable metrical unit (resolution is never allowed).
2. Realisation of the appropriate metrical sequences in the relevant portions of the half-line (a closed syllable is treated as long).

Two more restrictions must be added: a) in both *pādas*, two consecutive short syllables in the 2nd and 3rd syllables are strongly avoided; b) in the even *pādas* a −⏑− sequence is generally avoided from the 2nd to the 4th syllables.[88]

The *Mahābhārata* consistently features two other metres, the *triṣṭubh* and *jagatī*, although these are much rarer than the *anuṣṭubh* stanzas, which make up 94% of the text. A *triṣṭubh* stanza is composed of four hendecasyllabic *pādas*, with a ditrochaic sequence at the end (−⏑−x) and a mandatory caesura after the 4th or 5th syllable. The *jagatī* consists of four dodecasyllabic *pādas*, with the same caesura as the *triṣṭubh* and a −⏑−⏑− ending sequence.

The *triṣṭubh* metre is most closely associated with the ancient hymns of the *Ṛgveda* collection, and its use in sections of the *Mahābhārata* may be due to its archaic flavour. Mary Carroll Smith (1975 and 1992) has indeed argued that the *triṣṭubh* clusters throughout the poem form a coherent whole and constitute the most ancient core of the epic, later

[87] Since PIE **a*, **e*, and **o* all coalesced into Sanskrit *a*, the diphthong in question may be the Indic reflexes of PIE **ei*, *oi*, or *ai*, and **eu*, *ou*, or *au*, respectively.
[88] Brockington (1998a), 117–30.

expanded by the *anuṣṭubh* stanzas. Smith's work is a landmark contribution to the question of the growth of the *Mahābhārata*, a topic which bears some important consequences on its orality. However, as mentioned above, we will focus on the commonest metre in this analysis and leave aside the *triṣṭubh* for the sake of concision.

3. The Sanskrit Formula

Since India was a predominantly oral society in the centuries when the *Mahābhārata* was being composed, scholars were ready to apply the main tenets of Oral Theory to the Sanskrit epics. Such endeavours were generally successful, and today the academic consensus maintains that both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* show significant traces of the oral composition phase.

John Brockington, one of the most prominent scholars in the field, has discussed the implications of Oral Theory in multiple studies, though mostly with reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In his monumental *The Sanskrit Epics*, however, he discusses at length the formulaic material in the *Mahābhārata*, which he takes as evidence of its originally oral composition.[89] His analysis shows that about 1/3 of the poem's *ślokas* contain formulae or formulaic structures, a proportion which rises dramatically in the Battle Books. Just as in Homer, formulae tend to cluster in the second half of the line, that is, in the 2nd and 4th *pādas* of a stanza. More significantly, the most conspicuous formulaic material is found in association with actions and situations which cannot but remind us of the Homeric poems: personal names with epithets, speech introductions and conclusions, weaponry and armament scenes, the fall of a warrior, etc. Some of these formulae are shared between the

[89] Brockington (1998a), 103–116.

two epics, but both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* also feature a set of expressions peculiar to each of them.

Brockington's analysis was preceded by Yaroslav Vassilkov's (1971 and 1973) and Pavel Grintser's works (1974), both of which made valuable contributions to the study of Sanskrit orality. Vassilkov noticed that the *Mahābhārata* features very few instances of 'obligatory' enjambment, as opposed to the extremely frequent 'unperiodic' kind, which is generally taken as a mark of oral composition.[90] Grintser analysed the poem's basic formula types, and argued against the application of metrical thrift to the *Mahābhārata*. In fact, the epic abounds in phrases and formulae with the same meaning which can be employed under the same metrical conditions. To give just one example, King Yudhiṣṭhira may be referred to in the nom./acc. interchangeably as *dharmaputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ* ('Yudhiṣṭhira son of Dharma'), *pāṇḍuputraṃ yudhiṣṭhiram* ('son of Paṇḍu'), and *kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ* ('son of Kuntī'), all expressions that fit the even *pādas* of a stanza. An almost complete lack of thrift is thus the most significant trait which differentiates the *Mahābhārata* from the Homeric poems.

Along similar lines, John D. Smith (1987) has affirmed the oral origin of the epic on the basis of its formulaic evidence, stressing the divide between the poem's narrative and didactic portions, which, as Grintser had noted, not only differ in terms of content, but also inasmuch as the they contain very different formulaic material. Thus, the Battle Books have their specific pool of heroic and warfare formulae, while "a significant number of the repeated phrases found in the didactic passages recur only in other similar didactic passages".[91] Rāmakaraṇa Sharma (1964), too, has acknowledged the significance of the oral traces in the poem: at the end of his survey of poetic elements in the *Mahābhārata*, he

[90] Cf. Kirk (1985), 31–7, for its use in Homer.
[91] J.D. Smith (1987), 609.

devotes a chapter to the techniques of oral poetry. This section was then expanded in his 1966 article, where he described traditional formulae as a fundamental tool for the poem's composition.

Finally, Sven Sellmer has been perhaps the Sanskrit scholar most receptive to the recent developments in the study of the Homeric formula. In his 2015 review of formulaic material in the *Mahābhārata*, he has applied to the Sanskrit *ślokas* Visser's technique for killing verses with very promising results. More information on his work will be provided in Ch. 3, where battle scenes in the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata* will be analysed in detail.

The most prominent Indologist who showed reluctance to apply the Parry-Lord theory to the Sanskrit poems has been Alf Hiltebeitel. In his own words, "the epics give us no reason to think of the stories going through a prior 'bardic' transmission".[92] He then gives prominence to a monumental written archetype and stresses the importance of literary composition for the origin of the extant *Mahābhārata*.[93] This seems unlikely, as the poem itself describes its evolution and expansions in terms of oral transmission only, and makes explicit references to its own multiforms (e.g. 1.1.61, 1.56.33). On the whole, Hiltebeitel's position is difficult to maintain, and the majority of Sanskrit scholars today believe that at least some form of Parry's theory should shape our understanding of both epics.

The Old English (and Germanic) Tradition

1. The poem and its tradition

[92] Hiltebeitel (2003), 123.
[93] Hiltebeitel (2003), 121–5.

Compared to the previous two, the Germanic tradition is both scantier in terms of actual works, and more distant in terms of poetic nature. Complete epic poems are extant only in Old Norse (*Poetic Edda*)[94] and Old English (*Beowulf*), with a few fragments found in these two traditions, as well as in Old Saxon and Old High German[95] (the OS religious epic *Heliand* is better taken as an exception). Furthermore, the Germanic alliterative verse differs significantly from the quantitative-syllabic metre of Greek and Sanskrit, and no significant phraseological parallels of the type κλέος ἄφθιτον/*śrávas ákṣitam* are recoverable in Germanic.

However, a much higher degree of closeness can be found when one looks for themes. Both *Beowulf* and the *Poetic Edda* feature typically epic material, which can be paralleled in Homer and the Sanskrit epics: divine councils, heroic feats, banquet scenes, lengthy voyages, and the like are as much at home in these poems as they are in the *Odyssey* or the *Mahābhārata*.[96] However, the comparability of the Germanic material with Homer varies from text to text. The extant Eddic poems do feature seemingly ancient formulae[97] and groups of repeated lines, but their shortness and relatively low formulaic frequency seem to indicate that their origin was not a matter of composition-in-performance. In addition, the blocks of repeated lines in the *Edda* do not perform the same narrative role as Homeric type-scenes, but are actually closer in nature to the refrain of medieval ballads. Martin West, incidentally, has described the style of the Eddic poems as "ballad-like".[98] On the whole, the poetic nature of the *Edda* (especially in terms of formulae and phraseology) appears to be so different from the Homeric poems that I believe it is wiser to follow the academic

[94] Although the epic nature of the *Edda* as a whole is not universally accepted (many of the Eddic poems are quite short, and a significant proportion of them is dialogic and non-narrative), their content is certainly epic, with a high degree of military deeds, heroic feats against mythical beasts, domestic feuds, and divine intervention.
[95] Henceforth, OE = Old English, ON = Old Norse, OS = Old Saxon, OHG = Old High German.
[96] Cf. e.g. Lord (1991), 133–9, profitably compares Beowulf's trip to Denmark and reception at Hrothgar's court to Odysseus' arrival in Scheria and interaction with the Phaeacians.
[97] Cf. Lönnroth (1981), on the pan-Germanic formula *jǫrð-upphiminn*.
[98] M.L. West (2007), 496.

consensus and join those scholars who believe that these poems, though oral, were almost certainly not composed in performance.[99]

Beowulf is another matter entirely. Not only does it contain themes and motifs that are frequently found in other traditions (e.g. the fight with the dragon),[100] but its length and high density of traditional phrases, formulae, digressions, and type-scenes make it look much more similar to the Homeric poems, with the result that, on a first reading, *Beowulf* conforms much better than the *Edda* to our idea of what an orally 'improvised'[101] poem should look like. The scholarly consensus reflects this, with most scholars considering *Beowulf* as at least an oral-derived text.[102]

The poem's date has long been subject of debate. Several dates between the 7th and the 11th century A.D. have been proposed, but no academic consensus could be reached. This is not the place to address this question in detail,[103] but I should mention that I favour a rather early date (late 7th–early 8th century) for the poem's composition, i.e. closer in time to the oral tradition from which it sprang. This is essentially for three reasons:

1. *Beowulf* closely adheres to the metrical phenomenon known as Kaluza's law,[104] which is believed to be a continuation of the Germanic poetic tradition.
2. I find it unlikely that a poem celebrating the Swedes and the Danes should have been composed (and preserved) in the age of the Viking raids against the Anglo-Saxons (which began in 793).[105]

[99] For the concepts of deliberative composition and memorisation, see Harris (1983), 193–4, and (2000), 227–8. For alternative views, see Kellogg (1990) and Mellor (2008). Bowra (1952), 216, still believes that improvisation may be "the fundamental method of performance" of heroic poetry as a whole, provided 'improvisation' is not taken to mean a "wild flood of words which flows from [the poet's] lips, but an orderly stream which his hearers find familiar in vocabulary and metre" (Bowra (1952), 220).
[100] Watkins (1995) and M.L. West (2007), 255–9.
[101] That is, composed in performance by means of a technique.
[102] For an exhaustive review of OE scholarship on this matter, see Fox (2020), 1–52.
[103] For a wider discussion and further references, see Johnston Staver (2005), 127–38.
[104] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), clxv.
[105] Johnston Staver (2005), 130.

3. On the basis of the available linguistic evidence, Robert Fulk has concluded that, if of Mercian origin (as seems probable), *Beowulf* is likely to have been composed between 685 and 725 AD.[106]

The poem has come down to us in only one manuscript, the famous *Cotton MS Vitellius*, which miraculously survived the fire of the Cotton Library in 1731.[107] Indeed, the fact that a poem whose story is deeply rooted in pre-Christian paganism[108] survived both the sieve of the Medieval copyists and natural catastrophes well into the age of print for us to study and appreciate in the modern era, is in itself miraculous and, all in all, a rather heroic feat.

The poem's plot is well known:[109] in the first part, the Geatish hero Beowulf and his comrades travel from the Scandinavian peninsula to Denmark and are gracefully received by the Danish king Hrothgar in his magnificent hall, called Heorot. At night, the monstrous creature Grendel, which had been plaguing the Danish court for twelve years, comes to Heorot and, after a fierce battle, is vanquished by the hero, who rips off one of his arms. Grendel then escapes into the night and crawls back to his monster-mere. The following day Beowulf is duly celebrated and rewarded by the Danes, but in the night, after everyone falls asleep, Grendel's mother arrives at Heorot to avenge her son: she snatches a Danish soldier and retreats to the mere. Once informed of that night's events, Beowulf rides to the monster's abode with a retinue of Geats and Danes. He then plunges into the mere, kills Grendel's mother with a giant sword, and beheads Grendel, whose body was lying in the lair after the monster died from his wounds. Beowulf re-emerges from the mere and is duly honoured by his hosts. After an exchange of gifts, Beowulf and his men bid farewell to Hrothgar and

[106] Fulk (1993), 390. The authors of the collection of essays *The Dating of* Beowulf*: A Reassessment* have reached a similar conclusion, cf. Neidorf (2014), 16–18.
[107] For the MS history, see Orchard (2003), 12–56.
[108] Though its tone is undeniably Christian, cf. Orchard (2003), 130–68.
[109] For a detailed summary of the plot, see Orchard (2003), xvii–xix.

travel back to the Geatish lands, where the hero is received and celebrated by his uncle King Hygelac. Fifty years elapse:[110] Beowulf has become king of the Geats after the deaths of Hygelac and his son. A fire-breathing dragon, angered by a thief who stole a cup from its hoard, wreaks havoc in the Geatish lands. The hero, though old, sets off to face the monster armed with a specially crafted shield. Helped by his kin Wiglaf, Beowulf dispatches the dragon, but is mortally wounded. The poem ends with Beowulf's funeral, as the Geats sing the praises of their king.

2. The Old English Formula[111]

Ever since Francis Magoun's application of the oral theory to OE,[112] scholars have been wondering how fit Parry's model is to describe the poetic dynamics of *Beowulf*. Although some initial reactions to Magoun's article were perhaps too brisk and simplistic,[113] it was soon realised that Parry's concept of formula could only be partially applied to the OE poetry: *Beowulf* is certainly not abundant in "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea", although in my view the importance of those which are there (e.g. *manna cynnes* 'of mankind'; *in geardagum* 'in days of yore') has been dramatically underestimated. At the same time, the repetitive and

[110] The poem's bipartite structure, long a cause of criticism, has been notably re-evaluated by Tolkien (1936) and subsequently studied in detail by other scholars. See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), lxxix–xci.
[111] It should be noted here that OE spelling is remarkably variable, with certain graphemes used interchangeably to represent a (more or less) identical sound: *þ* and *ð* are completely interchangeable, while *o* and *a* randomly appear in the same words, presumably representing a sound between [a] and [o]. These fluctuations are due to the sometimes difficult process of adapting the Latin script to the sounds of OE. OE editions tend to preserve the spelling of the scribes who copied the text, which means that, throughout the corpus, the same word might be found with different spellings: to provide an example, in *Beowulf* (whose manuscript was compiled by two different scribes), the hero's name might be found written as *Beowulf* (e.g. 1191a) or *Biowulf* (with an *i*, e.g. 1987b). The same applies to other words such as *aldorleasne*/*ealdorleasne* ('lifeless'), *ðegn*/*þegn* ('lord'), *ond*/*and* ('and'). For more details and further references, see Gneuss (1991), 27–9.
[112] Magoun (1953).
[113] Benson (1966), for example, goes as far as to argue that, since OE works composed by literate authors display formulaic material, too, formulae are not a useful tool to measure the oral degree of a poem.

traditional character of the poetry led scholars to devise a new definition of formula which would better suit the nature of *Beowulf*.[114]

In this respect, Donald K. Fry's work has been extremely influential, and nowadays his ideas and contributions are to be reckoned with by both ON[115] and OE scholars.[116] He observed that the various elements of Parry's definition of formula could not work for *Beowulf*:

> An Old English formula may consist of one long compound word rather than a "group of words." The formula may appear only once, not "regularly employed," but be closely related to other formulas from the same system. Since all Old English half-lines are metrically equivalent, "under the same metrical conditions" proves meaningless. And finally, Old English formulas seem to be related only in form, not in content, i.e., they do not "express a given essential idea".[117]

He thus devised a new definition for the OE formulaic system which reads as follows: "a group of half-lines, usually loosely related metrically and semantically, which are related in form by the identical relative placement of two elements, one a variable word or element of a compound usually supplying the alliteration, and the other a constant word or element of a compound, with approximately the same distribution of non-stressed elements".[118] A formula is then a member of such a system. To provide an example, two phrases such as *in geardagum* (*Beo*. 1b, 'in days of yore') and *æfter deaðdæge* (187a, 'after death-day') would be two members (essentially, two formulae) belonging to the same system. In each case, *gear-* and *deað-* are the variable elements that supply the alliteration, while *dag-*/*dæg-*

[114] For a survey of the relevant scholarship, see O'Brien O'Keeffe (1997).
[115] E.g. Harris (2008), 189–225.
[116] E.g. Niles (1983).
[117] Fry (1981), 172–3.
[118] Fry (1968a), 203–4.

constitutes the constant word or element of a compound. The semantic component of the formula is virtually ignored: *in geardagum* does not express the same idea as *æfter deaðdæge*. A sharp contrast can be drawn with a classical Parrian example: ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς and πόδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς belong to the same formulaic system precisely because they mean the same thing, i.e. 'swift-footed Achilles'. In Fry's view, the essence of the OE formulaic system lies not so much in the semantic content of the various phrases, as in its being subject to processes of *substitution*.

This definition was subsequently taken up and refined by Foley, who described the OE formula as "a recurrent substitutable phrase one half-line in length which results from the intersection of two compositional parameters—a morphemic focus at positions of metrical stress and a limited number of metrical formulas".[119] Once again, the most important elements in Foley's definition are "the morphemic focus at points of metrical stress" (*dag-*/*dæg-* in the example above) and its substitutable nature.

On a similar note, John Niles attempts to apply Fry's definition in a more rigorous manner and comes to define the formula as a "rhythmic-syntactic-semantic complex one half-line in length".[120] Niles' formula thus has a little bit of everything: the members of a formulaic system should have a similar rhythm (i.e. approximately the same succession of stressed and unstressed syllables), should have the same syntactic relationship (e.g. preposition + noun in the dative), and should have at least some minimal common semantic ground. Once again, the phrases *in geardagum* and *æfter deaðdæge* provide the perfect example, and are indeed taken from Niles' own Appendix.[121] Considering the formula as a tripartite complex, Niles claims that 63.2% of the first thousand half-lines of *Beowulf* are members of a formulaic system.[122]

[119] Foley (1980), 122.
[120] Niles (1983), 126.
[121] Niles (1983), 130.
[122] Niles (1983), 128.

On the opposite side of the academic spectrum, we should mention Lord's contributions to the OE formula (and theme). In *The Singer Resumes the Tale*, Lord defends the universal applicability of Parry's definition, arguing that its constituent elements are not language specific and can be readily translated into any poetic tradition, not only the Greek and South Slavic ones.[123] He also argues against Fry's definition of formula: in Lord's view, the elements 'regular use' and 'essential idea' are vital for a better understanding of the nature of the oral formula and should not be overlooked.[124] Finally, though virtually alone in this effort, Lord argues that *Beowulf*'s poetic language is endowed with thrift, in the same way as Homer's diction is thrifty according to Parry (i.e. given an essential idea, there is only one formulaic expression to fill a certain metrical slot).

This is in contrast with both Foley and Niles. The former, in his analysis of the alliterative verse, points out that the metrical nature of this line, displaying as it does a wide variety of sounds needed for alliteration, did not require the poet to be especially thrifty; on the contrary, OE poetry is characterised by a "one-to-many relationship between a traditional idea and its verbal expression".[125] Niles, too, sees no traces of thrift in *Beowulf*. Acknowledging first that *variation* is a key feature of OE poetry as a whole, he concludes that "thrift would have been precisely what was to be avoided":[126] if the poet was accustomed to use a wide range of synonyms to repeat the same idea over several lines,[127] a thrifty diction would have been more of an obstacle to him than a resource. Along similar lines, Russom argues for a lack of thrift in OE poetry, which should be viewed as the result of the poets' deliberate striving for artful variation.[128] As will become apparent, I tend to

[123] Lord (1995), 129–30.
[124] Lord (1995), 121–2.
[125] Foley (1990), 355.
[126] Niles (1983), 139.
[127] This is the essence of the OE poetic phenomenon known as variation, to which we will return.
[128] Russom (1978).

side with Niles and Foley on the question of thrift, but I also follow Lord in stressing the importance of a formula's semantic content.

More recently, Haruko Momma (1999) has opened new avenues for the study of OE poetic composition. Acknowledging syntax as a criterion to clearly distinguish poetry from prose, she demonstrates that different syntactic elements tend to take certain specific positions within the poetic line. These elements are arranged in a hierarchical order: stressed elements (i.e. semantically heavy words that carry prosodical stress) can take any position in the poetic clause; attached unstressed elements (i.e. words that do not carry prosodical stress, but are syntactically dependent on the immediately following elements)[129] are normally found in the first half of the clause, and when two or more of these elements are present, they must take a fixed order; finally attached unstressed elements (words that do not carry prosodical stress, but are syntactically *independent* of the immediately following elements)[130] are placed either before the first stressed element or between the first and the second stressed elements.[131] Momma's positional approach is particularly instructive for our purposes, and will be paralleled (to a certain degree) by our own analysis of battle scenes in the Greek and Sanskrit traditions.

Finally, it is worth mentioning Anita Riedinger's contributions to the question of OE orality and her innovative concept of *thematic formula*. Formulae, in Riedinger's definition, "signify themes", without directly expressing them, as "they are dependent for their full meaning upon a context external to the semantics of the formulas themselves".[132] For example, the fixed formula *wan under wolcnum* ('dark beneath the clouds') is connected in all its appearances[133] to a precise cluster of motifs: death or sleep, shadows, and a shining

[129] E.g. prepositions and demonstratives, as in the phrase *ofer monna cyn* (*Guth.* A 311a, 'over mankind').
[130] E.g. conjunctions, negations, and certain finite verbs, as in the phrase *gearo wæs Guðlac* (*Guth*. A 292a, 'Guthlac was ready').
[131] Momma (1999), 182–4.
[132] Riedinger (1985), 297.
[133] *Beo*. 651a, *DrR* 55a, *Guth*. B 1280a, *And*. 837a.

light. Although none of these motifs are semantically expressed in the formula, its invariable connection with them transforms it into a *signum* which evokes a wider but precise cluster of ideas. Riedinger's thematic formulae are thus an extremely interesting notion, especially if taken in connection with Foley's 'traditional referentiality' and Bozzone's 'constructions'.[134]

As is clear from this brief survey, we can observe a tendency in the studies on the OE formula: the various scholars who contributed to its definition thoroughly engaged with the Parrian concept of formula, but generally failed to appreciate the subsequent developments and refinements of the original definition in Homeric studies. As they strived to produce a definition which would account for the flexibility of the OE poetic language, similar efforts were being made on the Homeric front in the 1960's, with formulaic flexibility becoming the focus of a wide range of studies, most notably Hoekstra (1965) and Hainsworth (1968). Such efforts were often overlooked by Germanic scholars, with the important exception of Paul Acker (1998), who applied Hainsworth's findings to OE and ON. An approach which combines flexibility with semantics, and refrains from underestimating the significance of fixed formulae, is in my view the most productive way to analyse OE poetry, as we will see in Ch. 1.

3. Old English Metre

As already mentioned, the Germanic line is based on alliteration and consists of two half-lines, called verses (henceforth in the discussion of OE poetry, the term 'verse' will only refer to such half-lines). According to the traditional interpretation of Germanic metre,[135]

[134] See above, 17–18.
[135] Based on Sievers (1893). For other interpretations, see Foley (1990), 106–19.

each verse comprises two stressed positions (i.e., two stressed syllables), which are marked in bold in the following example:

***beag**a **bryt**tan*	*on **bearm scip**es* (*Beo*. 35)
The giver of rings	in the ship's lap.

The alliteration is compulsory in the line's 1st and 3rd positions (*beaga*, *bearm*), is permitted in the second (*bryttan*), but forbidden in the fourth (*scipes*): in other words, the line could not have been recast as ***on bearm scipes beaga bryttan*, for double alliteration is acceptable only in the first verse (a-verse), and never in the second (b-verse). A vowel can alliterate with any other vowel, although there is a tendency to avoid repetition of the same vocalic sound. The clusters *st-*, *sp-*, and *sc-* are treated as single sounds: they can only alliterate with themselves and not with a simple *s-* or '*s-* + consonant' cluster.

What kind of syllables can be stressed in OE? Generally speaking, any heavy syllable is stressable, including syllables which are long by position (e.g. ***bryt**-tan*). Resolution may happen where two light consecutive syllables take up a single metrical position (normally occupied by a single heavy stressed syllable), with the first one bearing the stress: e.g. *Beo*. 19a, *Scyldes **eafe**ra* ('Scyld's heir'). Prefixes are never stressed.

In Germanic, certain word-types were more prominent than others: nouns and adjectives were perceived as more conspicuous than a finite verb or a preposition. They were thus more likely to be stressed and to bear the alliteration. The following hierarchy of word-types may be helpful:

I: nouns, adjectives, infinitives, participles.

II: adverbs, finite verbs (excluding auxiliaries and the copula).

III: function words such as prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, finite forms of auxiliaries, finite forms of the copula.[136]

The lower the word-type, the less likely it is to be stressed and bear the alliteration; conversely, the higher word-types were usually placed in the most prominent positions within the line (the 1st, the 3rd, and to a lesser extent the 2nd).

To summarise what has been said so far, OE features a four-stress line based on alliteration, which affects only two or three of the four stressed positions (the 1st and 3rd mandatorily, the 2nd optionally). Certain word-types, such as nouns and adjectives, are more likely to be found in the stressed positions than others, and as a general rule, heavy syllables only can be stressed.

Such stressed syllables are called *lifts* (S is used here to represent them) and, as can be seen in the previous examples, they are accompanied by light unstressed syllables called *drops* (x). Thus the metrical shape of a verse like ***bea**ga **bryt**tan* is: Sx Sx. Compound words, which are extremely frequent in OE poetry, usually bear a secondary stress (s, underlined in the following example); thus, the metrical shape of a verse such as ***deorc deaþ**scua* (*Beo*. 160a, 'dark death-shade') would be S Ssx. Lifts, secondary lifts and drops, or combinations of them, constitute the feet of the verse (each verse has normally two feet). In ***bea**ga **bryt**tan*, for example, the two feet are both trochaic, and correspond to the two single words in the verse. According to Sievers, the main feet available are S, Sx, xS, Ssx, Sxs. Not all combinations of feet are possible, with the main verse types being the following five:

[136] From Russom (1987), 65.

Type A: Sx Sx (double trochee), e.g. ***beag****a* ***bryt****tan* (*Beo.* 35a)

Type B: xS xS (double iambus), e.g. *un****bliðe*** ***sæt*** (*Beo*. 130b)

Type C: xS Sx (iambus+trochee), e.g. *swa* ***fela fyre****na* [resolution] (*Beo.* 164a)

Type D: S Ssx, e.g. ***deorc deaþ****scu****a*** (*Beo*. 160a)

Type D_2: S Sxs, e.g. ***monig oft*** *gecwæð* (*Beo*. 857b)

Type E: Ssx S, e.g. ***secg****gen****de*** ***wæs***[137] (*Beo*. 3028b)

Type E_2: Sxs S, e.g. ***mor****þorbed* ***stred*** (*Beo.* 2436b)

Extrametrical unstressed syllables (for which (x) is used) may crop up at the beginning of the first foot of a verse (*anacrusis*), at the beginning of the second foot, or both:

E.g. 3001, *þe us* ***sec****eað* ***to***: (x)xS xS (first foot only)

They attack us.

2539, ***heard*** *under* ***helm****e*: Sx (x)Sx (second foot only)

Stern under his helmet.

2870, *ower* ***feor*** *oððe* ***neah***: (x)xS (x)xS (both feet)

Anywhere far or near.

[137] For the numerous subtypes, see Fulk (2017). What has been said applies to all Germanic poetry, from the ON *Edda* to the OS *Heliand*, with variations due to the features and evolutionary stage of the various languages. Cf. Russom (1998).

Bearing these concepts in mind, let us turn to the work of Geoffrey Russom, whose observations have brought about a radical revision of the traditional perspective. His interpretation is accepted in this study and will become relevant in our description of OE poetry. Its fundamental principle is that metrical constituents are abstracted from natural linguistic constituents; in particular, metrical positions are abstracted from phonological constituents (usually syllables), metrical feet from morphological constituents (words), and metrical lines from syntactic constituents (sentences). The norms that regulate metrical constituents are likewise abstracted from those which regulate the corresponding linguistic constituents. Each OE word pattern has a corresponding foot pattern. Russom lists nine foot patterns:

- Sx: e.g. ***dryh****ten*, 'lord'.
- Sxx: e.g. ***beal****dode*, 'encouraged'.
- S: e.g. ***god***, 'good'.
- x: e.g. ond, 'and' (unstressed monosyllable).
- xx: e.g. *oþþe*, 'or' (unstressed disyllable).
- Ss: e.g. ***feoh****gift*, 'treasure-gift'.
- Ssx: e.g. ***sorh****fulne*, 'sorrowful'.
- Sxs: e.g. ***mid****dangeard*, 'middle-earth'.
- Sxxs: e.g. **sib**begedryht, 'kindred band'.[138]

Since there are no iambic words in OE,[139] Russom rejects the xS foot of the traditional perspective, and reinterprets Sievers' types B (xSxS) and C (xSSx) as x/Sxs and x/Ssx,

[138] Russom (2017), 54.
[139] Except for stressed monosyllables preceded by an unstressed prefix, which count as two words in *Beowulf*.

respectively.[140] Just as before, not all combinations of two feet are acceptable to produce a verse.[141]

More importantly for us, Russom introduces the concept of metrical optimality. He lists a few syntactic-metrical norms (describing the implementation of the linguistic principles mentioned above) which constitute the optimal line. As Russom writes, these norms can be "thought of as violable rules that permit exceptions at a cost in complexity":[142] their violation is frequent and often inevitable,[143] and one should not overlook the consequences which derive from such an increase in complexity.

1. An optimal OE line has the SOV word-order of the Proto-Germanic sentence, with the prominent nouns and adjectives placed first and followed by a weakly stressed finite verb (such verb is usually found at the end of the line, where it must not alliterate).
2. An optimal verse has the syntax of a Proto-Germanic phrase, with the most prominent stressed word preceding any stressed word of lesser prominence.
3. An optimal verse has two primary word stresses S (and no other).
4. A single foot is generally realised as a single word.
5. The optimal foot pattern is Sx, a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, which is also the most frequent word pattern in OE.
6. A metrical position is normally occupied by one syllable. Phenomena such as resolution add to complexity.

[140] Russom (2017), 67, 75.
[141] Russom (2017), 60–1.
[142] Russom (2017), 56.
[143] Especially when two norms conflict with each other; in that case, the higher-level norm usually takes precedence over the lower-level one (Russom (2017), 58).

7. All syllables of stressed words occupy metrical positions; unstressed function words (including unstressed prefixes) may occupy metrical positions, but they may also be found outside the metrical pattern as extrametrical syllables.
8. Extrametrical syllables are most acceptable in types B (x/Sxs) and C[144] (x/Ssx), where they tend to proliferate around the initial light syllable x. In other types, they rarely appear before the first alliterating stressed syllable, lest they be confused with an initial light foot in types B and C.
9. In complex a-verses the two feet are usually demarcated by means of double alliteration. E.g. in a complex Sx/Ssx verse such as ***bæd****de* ***byre*** *geonge* (*Beo*. 2018a, 'urged on the young boys'), which violates several norms,[145] the two feet are marked by double alliteration in *b*-: the audience could thus perceive at performance-speed that the metrical shape of this verse was Sx/S(resolved)sx.[146]

For our purposes, Russom's most useful intuition is that metrical complexity affects not only verse-type frequency, but also *verse placement*.[147] In particular, the simpler[148] the metrical shape of a verse, the likelier it is to be found in a b-verse; conversely, the more complex verses tend to be placed in the a-verse.[149] For instance, an optimal verse such as *Grendles dæda* (*Beo*. 195b, 'Grendel's deeds')[150] is normally found in the second half-line, whereas a complex verse like *hæfde ða forsiðod* (*Beo*. 1550a, 'would have then perished') will

[144] And Russom's A3 Type (xx/Sx), too (Russom (2017), 86–7).
[145] It violates 2 (as it features the less prominent verb before the more prominent adjective and noun), 3 (three word stresses, here two primary and one subordinate), 4 (the second foot consists of a group of two words), 5 (a non-optimal foot pattern Ssx in the second foot), and 6 (resolution).
[146] Unlike Orchard (2003), 47, 61–2, who takes double alliteration only as an artistic device "to highlight certain portions of narrative".
[147] Russom (2017), 56.
[148] 'Simpler' means 'more adherent to optimality norms'.
[149] According to Russom's *principle of closure*, which says that metrically simpler elements tend to follow the metrically more complex ones. Russom (2017), 17.
[150] Only two words, two main stresses, no resolutions or extrametrical syllables.

generally be placed in the first half.[151] Of course, we are here dealing with tendencies, not absolute rules, as Russom carefully points out in his discussion of the various subtypes,[152] ranked from the simpler to the more complex. Russom's notions of *metrical* complexity will be taken over in Ch. 1, where the concept of *compositional* complexity will be introduced.

4. The Old English Corpus

Compared to the *Mahābhārata*'s 200,000 or the *Iliad*'s 15,000, *Beowulf*'s 3182 lines appear as a rather short run. Accordingly, material from other poems will be included more often than with the other traditions. For the concept of compositional simplicity (Ch. 1), we will draw on the OE poetic corpus at large, irrespective of date and genre. In our analysis of battle scenes (Ch. 3), martial fragments such as *The Battle of Maldon* and *The Fight at Finnsburh* will take precedence over other texts. Religious poems will be included in the chapter on similes (Ch. 2), where difficulties concerning their literate character and Latin models will be addressed. Still, given its length and epic character, *Beowulf* will constitute the bulk of our analysis throughout.[153] Occasional references will be made to the *Edda* and other ON material.

We should stress, however, that at least as far as the OE corpus is concerned, scholars have recently acknowledged the allusive art that pervades Anglo-Saxon poetry. Although *Beowulf* is not mentioned as a work of art in our extant sources and cannot be considered a 'classic' like Homer or the *Mahābhārata*, it is now believed that later poets such as the author of *Andreas* and Cynewulf engage in an artful game of allusions with *Beowulf*.[154] The

[151] A Russom's type A3 verse xx/Sx with two extrametrical syllables, three words, and only one main stress.
[152] Russom (2017), 61–88.
[153] The system of abbreviations for the OE corpus followed here is that of the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE). Cf. Mitchell, Ball, and Cameron (1975).
[154] Cf. Orchard (2016), 331–3 and Leneghan (2019). These authors will be addressed more in detail in subsequent chapters.

strategy of allusion, it might be argued, is more typical of works composed pen in hand. Furthermore, it is certain that the authors of our extant OE religious poems were literate, as they had to be able to read the Latin sources from which their own poems derive. On the whole, Anglo-Saxon literature "depicts the transition from an illiterate and secular society, which based its traditions on poetry composed orally and passed on in memory, to one in which literacy was introduced by a Christian religion which depended on the Book for its authority, and which encouraged […] the spread of reading and the written record".[155] But although *Beowulf* undoubtedly possesses a very high level of poetic artistry,[156] it still constitutes an idiosyncratic literary product when compared to the rest of the OE literature – John Niles even describes it as a "fish […] that has swum in from some other ocean"[157] – and, being the extant text that is closest to the oral tradition from which it derived, it remains the most promising terrain to explore when attempting a reconstruction of the mechanisms of oral composition.

We should also remark that, unlike the neighbouring Celtic and ON traditions, Anglo-Saxon society does not seem to have had a distinct class of courtly poets or itinerant bards. As several studies have now shown,[158] "poets were not special, chosen beings, but people who, among other things, composed verse".[159] Therefore, in the course of this study we will avoid entirely the term 'bard' in an OE context (as it is too redolent of itinerant performances), and take the term 'poet' to mean simply 'the author of a text in verse', with no reference to his professional class.[160]

[155] Orchard (1997), 103.
[156] On the artistry of the Beowulf poet, see Orchard (2020). For his subtle manipulation of the myths and legends of the Germanic tradition, see Neidorf (2022).
[157] I.e. other than the monastic setting to which the vast majority of the extant OE poetry derives. Niles (2019), 6.
[158] E.g. Frank (1993), Niles (2003), Thornbury (2014).
[159] Thornbury (2014), 4.
[160] For an analysis of the semantics of ἀοιδός (the Homeric word for poet) in Ancient Greece, see Maslov (2009).

Comparability of the Material

Now that all three traditions have been introduced, it is time to address the question of their comparability. How significant is the common denominator that would entitle us to set up this comparison? Although we have already acknowledged various kinds of resemblances, it is important to recognise that the three traditions, and the texts selected to epitomise them, bear some important differences.

Perhaps the most significant one concerns the poems' ancient reception. Both the Homeric epics and the *Mahābhārata* were considered as absolute masterpieces in their respective traditions, and were both attributed to mythical composers, Homer and Vyāsa, generally taken by their successors as unmatchable masters in the art of poetry. The latter is even believed to be an avatar of the god Viṣṇu and the original compiler of the sacred *Veda*. It is not an overstatement to say that these texts shaped the course of their literary traditions: carefully edited and commented upon, they became the model for generations of authors, both ancient and modern, and were often referred to as ethical and philosophical authorities. But this is not the case of *Beowulf*. Not only did this poem barely come down to us in a damaged manuscript, but no mention of it appears in the extant Anglo-Saxon sources.[161] In short, while Homer's poems and the *Mahābhārata* were classics in Antiquity as they are today, *Beowulf* is a classic only to us.

This difference is also reflected in the formal layout of the epics. The Homeric poems and the *Mahābhārata* are divided into books, which derive from the editorial work of hordes of ancient scholars and commentators, while *Beowulf* is not. More precisely, the *Mahābhārata* is divided into books (called *parvas*), which are in turn divided into chapters (*adhyāyas*). Certain groups of chapters form the so-called sub-*parvas*, roughly comparable

[161] Johnston Staver (2005), 130.

to Homer's 'episodes' such as the τειχοσκοπία or Diomedes' ἀριστεία.[162] Unlike its Greek and Indian counterparts, *Beowulf* is not organised into books or chapters. The only kind of division it features is that of fitts, i.e. numbered chunks of text that, for some reason, the two scribes who copied the poem separated by leaving a blank space between certain lines. *Beowulf* is thus composed of forty-three fitts and an initial prologue. Despite attempts to detect some logical principle behind the poem's fitt division,[163] in numerous cases the breaks are rather arbitrary, if not intrusive,[164] and we can safely assume that the fitts were not the result of the kind of scholarly work which affected the *Mahābhārata* and the Homeric epics.[165]

Metrically speaking, Homer and the *Mahābhārata* feature a more similar kind of metre. Of course, the Sanskrit *anuṣṭubh* is isosyllabic, while the hexameter is not; but on the whole, both metres can be described as a.) quantitative, since verses are based on a regular sequence of long and short syllables, b.) colometric, as a line is composed of shorter, but meaningful metrical units. The Germanic alliterative metre has no such characteristics. Based on stress patterns and alliteration rules, it cannot be divided into cola, and does not depend on any succession of long and short syllables.

If thus far the Greek and Sanskrit traditions seem to be more similar to each other than to the Germanic one, we should not be amazed. As we have seen, the ancestors of the Greeks and Indo-Iranians were long part of a single PIE sub-branch, known as Graeco-Aryan, and it is no surprise that their cultures and languages share more points of contact

[162] For example, the sixth book of the *Mahābhārata* (*Bhīṣmaparvan*, 'Book of Bhīṣma') contains 117 chapters: chapters 1–11 constitute the poem's 61st sub-*parvan* (*Jambūkhaṇḍavinirmāṇa*, 'Extension of the continent Jambūkhaṇḍa', chapters 12–13 make up the 62nd (*Bhūmiparvan*, 'Book of the Earth'), chapters 14–40 are the famous *Bhagavadgītā* ('The song of the God', the 63rd sub-*parvan*), and chapters 41–117 represent the 64th sub-*parvan* (*Bhīṣmavadha*, 'The Killing of Bhīṣma').
[163] Fox (2020), 77–97.
[164] E.g. Fitt 34 (between lines 2459 and 2460) disrupts the continuity of the poem's longest simile.
[165] For Beowulf's fitts, see Fulk (2006).

between them than with a third that was developing on the other side of the PIE world.[166] Despite this, important differences can be found even between the Greek and Indian traditions. The most striking one is perhaps the presentation of their heroes. As Nagy points out, the Indian epic tradition (including traditions other than the one from which the *Mahābhārata* sprang) tend to portray the life of their heroes as a trajectory towards deification and subsequent worship, with much effort put into "the highlighting of the hero's immortalisation and the shading over of his mortality".[167] In this respect, Homeric heroes are much more similar to their Germanic colleagues: they are never deified and in most cases their tragedy is enhanced by their mortal nature and by the essential gulf that separates them from the gods.[168]

In the light of all these differences, which embrace the most diverse aspects of the traditions, what basis is there for a comparison? First of all, genre: as already noted, all the works under discussion fall under the epic umbrella,[169] a genre characterised by heroic achievements, divine machinery, supernatural encounters, ancestral conflicts between peoples, voyages, and dangerous adventures. The Homeric epics and *Beowulf* readily conform to this description, as does the *Mahābhārata*'s heroic core, if we leave aside the didactic additions. Secondly, the Germanic, Indic, and Greek traditions are the only ones within the PIE family where extended pieces of 'ancient'[170] heroic epic have been preserved.

[166] This is true of both literary and cultural-ideological parallels. Cf. e.g. Pathak (2014) on the notions of kingship and epic.
[167] Nagy (1996a), 53–4. He also quotes Blackburn (1989), 30: "the *Mahābhārata* heroes, like the heroes of the Ālhā, do not die in battle, are not deified, and are not widely worshiped. They […] lack both the conditions and the need for deification". I would disagree with this statement, since the poem's five protagonists (the Pāṇḍava brothers) are the earthly incarnations of their divine fathers; in Book 18 they die (though not in battle) and ascend to Heaven by the intercession of the god Yama.
[168] We should note, however, that this is a peculiarly Homeric feature. In Greek myth and epic, certain heroes are indeed granted immortality or deified (cf. Heracles, Memnon). The relationship between the Homeric poems and the rest of the Early Greek epic tradition, and the question of how representative Homer really was of this tradition are still a matter of debate.
[169] For an analysis of this label, and the relationship between the magic-oriented shamanistic poetry and the more anthropocentric heroic poetry, see Bowra (1952), 6–8.
[170] 'Ancient' here means chiefly 'pre- or very early Christian' in the case of the Greek and Germanic traditions, and thus encompasses both Antiquity proper and the Early Medieval period.

More importantly, our texts can all be described as oral-derived, inasmuch as they all feature conspicuous signs of orality, which bear an important testimony as to their origin. It is certainly no coincidence that Foley selects precisely these three traditions in a description of one of his four categories of oral poetry, 'voices from the past': "Especially when various kinds of witnesses offer evidence […] that texts like the Old English *Beowulf*, the Ancient Greek *Odyssey*, and the Indian *Mahābhārata* existed first in oral tradition and were only later written down, how can we ignore a formative chapter in their biography?".[171]

But their oral-derived character is not yet sufficient in itself. If we are to attempt a comparative analysis that focuses on versification techniques, then deeper similarities must be found to warrant such an effort. The fact that they all belong to the Indo-European family is certainly significant, because resemblances are more easily detected in genetically related cultures; but this is by no means the end of the story. The deeper similarities we are looking for can be found when one delves into the poetic language of these texts. Once again, the Greek and Indian traditions show a closer relationship. Much has been said on the artificiality of the Homeric *Kunstsprache*,[172] but the version of the Sanskrit language employed by the *sūtas* in the *Mahābhārata* is just as flexible and artificial: it is replete with non-standard gerund forms, idiosyncratic shifts in voice, unaugmented preterites, and non-standard case usage, with the genitive becoming the all-purpose oblique case.[173] Both poetic dictions thus mould their language in order to fit the metrical structure of the verse.

Epithets, patronymics, and the like abound in all our traditions, as we might expect. More importantly, the most clearly formulaic material occurs in akin passages in all three epics. We can take speech introductions as a fitting example: the common Homeric phrase τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς ('swift-footed Achilles said in reply')

[171] Foley (2002), 46.
[172] See references in Janko (1991), 8–19, and more generally Janko (1982).
[173] Brockington (1998a), 83–9.

has its formulaic counterparts in both Sanskrit: *somadatto bhṛśaṃ kruddhaḥ sātyakiṃ vākyam abravīt* ('fiercely furious, Somadatta told Sātyaki'); and OE: *Beowulf maþelode bearn Ecgþeowes* ('Beowulf spoke, the son of Edgetheow'). In other words, certain poetic contexts common to *all* our texts seem to be more suitable for the development of fixed formulae. As for themes and motifs, a single example will suffice: all three traditions are keen to enhance the brutality of war by evoking the image of carrion animals thirsty for blood and carnage. This is a common trope in OE poetry, normally referred to as the theme of the Beasts of Battle.[174] Wolves, ravens, and eagles eagerly keep watch on the battlefield to feast on the bodies of the slain, as the following example from *Beowulf* shows (3024b–27):

	ac se wonna hrefn	
fus ofer fægum	fela reordian,	3025
earne secgan	hu him æt æte speow,	
þenden he wið wulf	wæl reafode.[175]	

	And the dark raven,	
eager over the dying bodies,	will sing many things,	3025
and tell the eagle	how he succeeded in eating,	
when he with the wolf	defiled the corpses.	

Similar images can be found multiple times in the *Mahābhārata*.[176] A particularly telling one is the following (6.112.130–1):

[174] See Magoun (1955).
[175] All quotations from *Beowulf* follow Klaeber's text, as printed by Full, Bjork, and Niles (2008). Quotations from other OE poems are taken from Krapp and Dobbie's editions (1931 and 1936), unless otherwise stated.
[176] Cf. e.g. 6.55.12d, 6.55.124, 7.130.40, etc.

tad gajāśvarathaughānāṃ rudhireṇa samukṣitam	130ab
channam āyodhanaṃ reje raktābhram iva śāradam	130cd
śvānaḥ kākāśca gṛdhrāśca vṛkā gomāyubhiḥ saha	
praṇedur bhakṣyam āsādya vikṛtāśca mṛgadvijāḥ	

Fouled with the blood from the heaps of elephants, chariots, and horses,	130ab
the battlefield appeared completely covered, like a red autumn cloud.	130cd
Dogs, ravens, vultures, and wolves were there, and jackals, too,	
and horrible beasts and birds screamed as they approached the feast.	

These scenes cannot but remind us of the *Iliad*'s dogs and birds, portrayed as feasting on the bodies of the fallen in the proem (1.5), and later presented as a concrete prospect to warriors who are about to die (e.g. 22.354: ἀλλὰ κύνες τε καὶ οἰωνοὶ κατὰ πάντα δάσονται).

However, besides vertical inheritance and common PIE origin, we should always bear in mind the possibility that similarities between two or more traditions may be the result of typological parallels, which arose independently in different cultures, or horizontal diffusion, whereby a tradition absorbs motifs and modes of expression from a non-related culture.[177] This issue is particularly relevant in the comparative reconstruction of narrative sequences, where a given element may be taken alternatively as a universal or as a sign of a close relationship between two traditions. An effective test for shedding light on the issue is, I believe, the level of detail displayed by the similarities under scrutiny: the more detailed a parallel, the more likely it is that the two (or more) traditions inherited it from a common source.

[177] On horizontal diffusion, see M.L. West (2007), 20–4.

While comparing the Circe-Calypso scenes in the *Odyssey* to the scene with Hiḍimbā in the *Mahābhārata*, Emily West comments that "the [two] episodes *share too many salient features* […] to support claims that they are the product of coincidence, or parallel manifestations of universal archetypes".[178] Detail has been also discussed and upheld as a comparative principle by Jeffrey Tigay in the context of literary borrowings (1993),[179] and is also a methodological cornerstone in Stephanie Jamison's comparisons between the Homeric and Indic epics.[180] Accordingly, I will strive to show that the various comparisons proposed in this study are grounded in detail and affect the deep structure of the poetry and its diction. Wherever appropriate, I will also provide counterexamples either from non-PIE cultures or from texts which, despite belonging to the same tradition as Homer, the *Mahābhārata* and *Beowulf*, are presumed to have been only slightly (or not at all) affected by oral composition-in-performance.

On the whole, I believe that the similarities in the poetic language of these texts cannot be coincidence. They are most likely the traces of a PIE poetic diction and tradition to which all the daughter cultures should be referred. The oral-derived character of these works, together with their resemblances in terms of formulae and motifs, are significant enough for us to attempt to understand the precise way in which the ancient singers created this poetry.

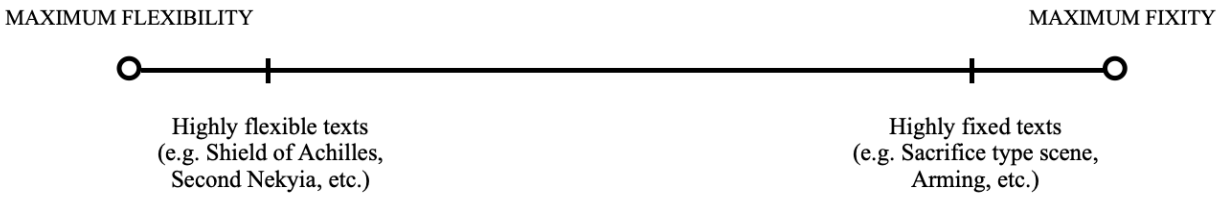
Methodological considerations

[178] E. West (2014), 170, emphasis added.
[179] Note, however, that Tigay's set of principles has been shown to be too stringent for many comparative efforts: Emily West has shown that a comparison between a set of narratives already known to be 'genetically' related to each other does not fully satisfies Tigay's criteria. Cf. E. West (2010b) and (2017).
[180] Cf. Jamison (1999), 228.

This section deals with the methodological premises of this study. For the sake of clarity and brevity, in what follows I will mainly refer to the Homeric poems, but the general observations that will be made are to be applied to the Sanskrit and OE traditions, too. Even on a first reading, it is evident that different sections of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* display varying degrees of fixity. This fixity is reflected in the semantic-syntactical structure of the verses, as well as in the arrangement of the narrative elements: certain scenes feature a higher formulaic density than others, certain narrative sequences are more rigid and patterned than the surrounding episodes. As often, it is better to picture this distinction as lying on a dynamic spectrum, rather than as a polar opposition. If we imagine a straight line whose right and left extremes represent the maximum degree of fixity and flexibility, respectively, most Homeric scenes will fall somewhere in between, sometimes closer to, sometimes further away from the two extremes.

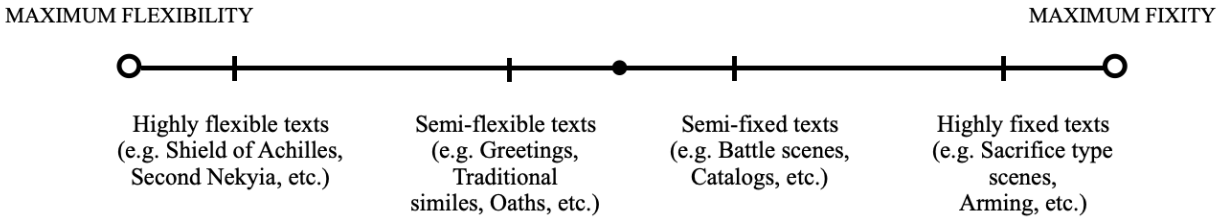
Close to the right end of the spectrum (i.e. the pole of maximum fixity) we will find fixed typical scenes such as the 'sacrifice'[181] or the 'arming',[182] i.e. scenes whose syntactic and constituent elements are so fixed and so consistently repeated in the same order that the scenes display minimal variation,[183] and it is reasonable to believe that they were treated by the singer as pre-made fully-formed blocs of lines. Conversely, toward the left end of the spectrum (i.e. the pole of maximum flexibility), we will find idiosyncratic and unparalleled sections which display a very low formulaic density and whose structure cannot be traced back to any repeated narrative template: to this area belong episodes such as the ekphrastic description of the Shield of Achilles[184] or the Second Nekyia.[185] Here is a visual representation of the spectrum:

[181] E.g. *Il*. 1.458–68, 2.421–31, *Od*. 3.447–63, etc.
[182] E.g. *Il*. 3.330–8, 11.15–46, etc.
[183] The fact that sometimes such minimal variation may be meaningful (e.g. Patroclus' inability to wield Achilles' spear which foreshadows his failure, cf. Janko (1991), 335) does not invalidate this classification.
[184] *Il*. 18.468–608, cf. Edwards (1991), 200–10.
[185] *Od*. 24.1–204, cf. Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992), 356–8.



Neither of these textual situations (referred to as 'texts' in the picture above)[186] offers much room for compositional analysis: on the one hand, highly fixed texts are far too rigid for us to get a glimpse of the poet's creativity; on the other, the numerous idiosyncrasies of their highly flexible counterparts would forestall an exploration of his formulaic techniques. What is relevant for us is the world in between, where formulae and creativity complement each other.

If we imagine a black dot lying at the exact centre of our spectrum line, two further typologies of texts will be found on either side of this dot: semi-flexible texts on the left (i.e. closer to the flexibility pole) and semi-fixed texts on the right (i.e. closer to the fixity pole).



[186] The usage of this term is an expansion of Ready's notion of oral texts, i.e. chunks of verse endowed with boundaries, cohesion, and coherence that are extricable from their immediate context. Cf. Ready (2019), 16–19.

As the term suggests, semi-flexible texts display a slightly higher degree of flexibility than semi-fixed ones, but still retain elements of fixity that provide them with a recognisably typical structure. In particular, semi-flexible texts are passages *where an essential fixed formulaic core is surrounded by thematically determined variable elements*. These elements are 'thematically determined' since they belong to a precise narrative situation (i.e. if the 'theme' is deployed, we would expect the presence of a given element), but are also 'variable', in the sense that their semantic content varies from instance to instance. To this category belong Homeric greetings, traditional similes, laments, oaths, and other kinds of scenes.

Conversely, semi-fixed texts such as close combat scenes or catalogues display *a variable core subject accompanied by a series of formulaic or semantically fixed elements*. Let us take two examples better to illustrate this distinction. In the case of oath scenes (a semi-flexible text), almost all characters swear by means of the formula μέγαν ὅρκον ὀμοῦμαι ('I shall swear a great oath') and its variations,[187] but the content of the oath, the gods or sacred objects called upon as witnesses, and the catastrophe that is to befall the perjurer (i.e. the surrounding elements) vary from instance to instance. On the other hand, battle scenes (a semi-fixed text) feature a series of formulaic actions (e.g. casting a spear, drawing one's sword, loosening the opponent's limbs, etc.) whose subjects and objects, as well as other minor elements, vary from instance to instance.[188]

[187] E.g. *Il*. 1.223, 9.132, *Od*. 5.178, etc.

[188] It is worth providing examples of how this categorisation can be applied to the other two traditions of this study. The Sanskrit one is closer in kind to Homer, and features all kind of texts: we may find highly flexible texts in some of the didactic portions of the *Mahābhārata* (e.g. the *Bhagavadgītā* at 6.23–40) and highly fixed ones in, e.g., the 'deployment of army' episodes (cf. 6.47.10–21, 65.1–11, 9.19–28, etc.), while oath and lament scenes and battle scenes may be taken as examples of semi-flexible and semi-fixed texts, respectively, just like in Homer. The OE tradition is more difficult to pin down. It does not feature highly fixed texts, as a result of its tendency toward variation. Varying degrees of fixity and patterning can be found in banquet scenes (a kind of semi-fixed text), greetings, and 'arrival at court' scenes (both of which can be regarded as semi-flexible texts). A highly flexible text can be identified in the idiosyncratic transition lines between the song of Hrothgar's court poet and the main narrative (*Beo*. 897–915).

Both semi-flexible and semi-fixed texts display a suitable combination of formularity and elasticity for us to conduct a study on the singer's compositional mechanisms. The fact that the performing poet was able or expected to produce different kinds of 'texts' presumably means that his technique had to be adaptable enough to be adjusted to different poetic situations. It is not unreasonable to believe that the poet did not have a single method of composition, but that each kind of 'text' required him to use different 'versions' of his technique, all of which, however, bear a common denominator. This common denominator, as we will see in detail at the end of this study, is the preeminence of the syntactical-positional structure of a line or group of lines over its semantic content. We will begin our survey by looking at greeting scenes, a semi-flexible text, and outline a potential technique for the composition of such texts (Ch. 1). Ch. 2 will be devoted to traditional similes,[189] a special kind of semi-flexible text with peculiar compositional mechanisms. Finally, we will move on to battle scenes in Ch. 3 and attempt to shed light on the poet's compositional instincts in the crafting of semi-fixed texts. Comparisons and evaluations of the evidence will be conducted in the Conclusion.

[189] For a more precise definition of 'traditional', see below, 118–19.

Chapter I

THE COMPOSITION OF WELL-WISHES IN EARLY GREEK AND OLD ENGLISH EPIC

Introduction

Greetings are one of the most fundamental forms of human contact. They mark the beginning of communication and, with their intrinsic predisposition toward reciprocity, pave the way for a fertile exchange between different people: it is through greetings that a human being acknowledges someone 'other' as their equal. But despite the universality of 'greetings' as a phenomenon, the original meaning of a given form of greeting may vary considerably from culture to culture. In some languages, it is simply an acknowledgement of someone else's presence or a shout to attract attention, as in the English *hello*, which apparently derives from OHG *halâ*, an imperative of *halôn* ('to fetch'), "used especially in hailing ferrymen".[1] Elsewhere, greetings may express respect and deference, implying that the speaker is ready to perform a service for their interlocutor: this is the case of Italian *ciao* (from Venetian *sciavo*, 'slave')[2] and Southern German *Servus* (essentially a Latin word). There are also several instances where the greeting is nothing but a wish for the person greeted: we may think of French *salut*[3] and Latin *salue*, an exhortation to be safe, as well as Latin *uale*, which invokes good health for the person involved. To this category belongs also the Greek χαῖρε (originally an invitation to rejoice and exult), which is the main key-word of this chapter.[4]

[1] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. *hallo.*
[2] Enciclopedia Treccani, s.v. *ciao*.
[3] Grand Larousse de la Langue Française, s.v. *salut*.
[4] On the prehistory of this word and its PIE cognates, see Wachter (1998).

Scenes where a character greets another and wishes them well are present in all the traditions considered in this study, although of course such scenes are not limited to Homer, Sanskrit, and OE. In Greek, the greeting type-scene (though this is not the most appropriate label, as we will see) has been most prominently analysed by Mark Edwards[5] and John Foley.[6] The former scholar calls this pattern of actions a type-scene and describes it as follows: "usually a person hands a cup of wine to another, and with words of welcome, farewell or honour (often δειδίσκετο or some other form of the verb, and χαῖρε) makes a prayer or wish for him".[7] Foley, however, despite using the term 'type-scene' in his discussion, notes that this pattern has a "less specific idea-structure" than, say, the Bath or Feast type-scenes;[8] furthermore, beyond the χαῖρε and δειδίσκετο forms, "there seems to be no core of verbal correspondence traditionally associated with the ideas in this pattern, no two- or three-line segment or collection of related phraseology that conventionally expresses Greeting".[9] For these reasons, I prefer to save the term 'type-scene' for patterns with a clearly defined formulaic structure and precise narrative links to other themes: examples of these are the Sacrifice type-scene, the Arming, the Bath, and the Feast.[10] The Greeting, on the other hand, is better described as a 'motif', a label which accounts for its greater structural flexibility.

Before providing a more precise definition of 'motif', it is important to acknowledge the significance of this distinction. The main reason why I have selected the Greeting pattern to illustrate a possible technique for composition-in-performance is its relatively high degree of flexibility. Had I taken a highly fixed text, i.e. a proper type-scene like the Sacrifice or

[5] Edwards (1975).
[6] Foley (1990), 257–65.
[7] Edwards (1975), 55.
[8] Foley (1990), 258. For Homeric type-scenes, see Arend (1933), described by Edwards (1975), 52, as "the Milman Parry in this area".
[9] Foley (1990), 261–2.
[10] The latter two are discussed by Foley (1990), 248–57; 265–78.

the Arming scene, my task would have been much harder, precisely because such themes do not offer much room for 'improvisation': as we have seen in the Introduction,[11] it is likely that these type-scenes were treated by singers as unified blocs of lines, with little need for modifications or developments. But in order to catch a better glimpse of the poet's mind at work, we need a 'semi-flexible text', i.e. an environment where general formulae and contextual material complement each other, that is, where fixed elements prop up, but do not pervade the course of the narrative. The Greeting pattern is ideal in this respect: it features a number of fixed units surrounded by a narrative that is thematically predetermined (i.e. a wish or prayer must be uttered), but not fixed in terms of content and phraseology.[12]

This is *in nuce* my conception of 'motif', which essentially reflects the description of semi-flexible texts given in the Introduction:[13] a *cluster of core ideas, generally formulaically expressed, surrounded by more variable, but largely predetermined material*. To be sure, the Greeting pattern discussed by Edwards and Foley does not fit exactly into this definition, since its core ideas (χαῖρε and especially the δειδίσκετο forms) are not formulaically expressed. This is why we will rather be looking at what I have called the 'well-wish' motif, focusing on the prayer or wish uttered by the characters, and not so much on what precedes them. The handing of the cup and the δειδίσκετο forms will not be our concern. In fact, I suspect that the 'cup' element is not as intrinsically connected to the subsequent well-wish as Edwards believes: its presence might rather be due to the context surrounding his examples, i.e. normally a banquet (which entails drinking) or a sacrifice

[11] See above, 54–5.
[12] That is, the prayer can be uttered by different characters on different occasions, and each time the poet can describe the whole scene with different words and phrases.
[13] For the sake of concision, in this chapter I will generally refer to semi-flexible texts as 'motifs'.

(which entails libations).[14] All of Edwards' five instances of the Greeting pattern take place during a feast or a sacrifice.[15]

The well-wish, on the other hand, does not need to be uttered after the handing of a cup: many of the passages we will analyse do not feature this element at all. In other words, it seems that the well-wish is a more distinct and cohesive unit than Edwards' pattern,[16] and the greeting proper χαῖρε is rather part of the former. Of course, it is in many cases juxtaposed to the handing of the cup and the δειδίσκετο forms, but this is because prayers and well-wishes are often made in the context of a feast. The greeting χαῖρε, I would argue, is at home in the well-wish motif, while the cup and the δειδίσκετο forms belong to the banquet scene.[17]

Leaving these issues aside, we should now turn to the aim of this chapter, that is, to illustrate some principles of versification in the circumscribed context of the well-wish motif. In the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, an Old Norse work on sound and figures of speech, the grammarian Óláfr Þórðarson writes that alliteration is a phenomenon which holds ON poetry together "just as nails hold a ship together" (96).[18] In the same way, we might conceive of the theme's main ideas as the nails which hold together the well-wish: the core ideas and the variable elements that surround them are the poet's mental landmarks whenever he chooses to employ this motif. In his mind, they are already linked together in a relationship which, paraphrasing Hainsworth's definition of formula,[19] we might describe as 'mutual expectancy of ideas': once a given idea has been verbalised into the hexameter, there is a strong presumption that another specific idea will follow.

[14] The OE evidence will bolster this idea.
[15] *Od.* 3.41–50 (feast), 4.59–64 (feast), 13.56–62 (feast and sacrifice), 15.150–9 (feast), 18.119–23, 151–2 (feast).
[16] Not least because the well-wish is entirely contained within a character's speech, while Edwards' Greeting type-scene combines both direct speech and third-person narrative.
[17] I.e. to the scene in general, not to the Feast type-scene analysed by Foley.
[18] For further details, see Clunies Ross (2005), 81–94.
[19] For Hainsworth's definition, see above, 13.

In the next section, we will analyse various examples of Homeric well-wishes and attempt to identify its core ideas and its peripherals, with the aim of getting a clearer picture of the motif's structure. We will also look at some ways in which a skilled singer could manipulate the components of the motif to suit his poetic ends. This will be followed by a comparative section on OE well-wishes: the two traditions will be shown to feature several similarities, from the general framework of the motif down to minute details. After a brief Sanskrit interlude, we will recapitulate our findings and then move on to illustrate a possible technique through which different examples of the same motif could be produced by an oral bard.

Homer

We begin from the very end of Homer's poetry, Book 24 of the *Odyssey*, just before the attack of the suitors' relatives. The servant Dolius and his sons come back from their work in the fields and find Odysseus ready to eat lunch with his father, son, and friends (387–90).[20] The hero invites them to sit down, and Dolius, overwhelmed by pleasure and surprise, addresses his master for the first time in twenty years (400–3):

ὦ φίλ᾽, ἐπεὶ νόστησας ἐελδομένοισι μάλ᾽ ἡμῖν
οὐδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ὀϊομένοισι, θεοὶ δέ σε ἤγαγον αὐτοί,
οὖλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε, θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν.
καί μοι τοῦτ᾽ ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ᾽ ἔϋ εἴδω…[21]

[20] On this scene, see Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992), 403–4.
[21] All quotations from the Homeric poems follow M.L. West's 1998 (*Iliad* 1–12), 2000 (*Iliad* 13–24) and 2017 (*Odyssey*) editions.

Dear friend, since you have returned to us, who so much wished your return, 400
but no longer thought it possible, and the gods themselves led you here,
I wish you health and greet you, may the gods grant you blessings.
And tell me this truly, so that I may know well…

In the text, four units have been underlined: χαῖρε, the greeting proper, is an element that is shared with Edwards' pattern described above; the formula θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν is the primary hallmark of Homeric well-wishes; finally, the 1st person pronoun μοι and a request in the imperative (ἀγόρευσον) complete the picture. These are the nails of the well-wish motif: a greeting, a god-given blessing, a 1st person pronoun (henceforth called the 'me' element), and a 2nd person injunction in the imperative or optative mood. The former two constitute the *core ideas* of the motif. At least one of them must be present in a given well-wish,[22] and they are generally formulaically expressed: χαῖρε, as we will see, is normally found at the beginning of a line, while θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν is a full-fledged formula with a defined system. The 'me' element and the imperative request are "the variable, but largely predetermined material" that surrounds the core, but we should bear in mind that, according to our definition, not all these elements need to be present in order to generate an instance of the well-wish motif.

In diametrical opposition to the passage quoted, compare Chryses' plea to Agamemnon and the Achaeans at the very beginning of the *Iliad* (1.17–21):

Ἀτρεῖδαί τε καὶ ἄλλοι ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,
ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ[23] δοῖεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχοντες
ἐκπέρσαι Πριάμοιο πόλιν, εὖ δ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι.

[22] Note that χαῖρε tends to disappear when a long one-line vocative formula opens the speech (cf. *Il.* 1.17 and *Od.* 7.146 below).
[23] For the prosodic peculiarities of this hemistich and Bentley's emendation, see Kirk (1985), 55.

παῖδα δ᾽ ἐμοὶ λύσαιτε φίλην, τὰ δ᾽ ἄποινα δέχεσθαι, 20
ἁζόμενοι Διὸς υἱὸν ἑκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα.

O sons of Atreus, and the rest of the well-greaved Achaeans,
may the gods who dwell on Olympus grant
that you sack Priam's city and return successfully to your homeland; 20
but release my daughter, and accept the ransom,
honouring the far-shooter Apollo, son of Zeus.

The nails of the theme are once again underlined: Chryses approaches the Achaean leaders and utters the appropriate blessing (ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ δοῖεν),[24] wishing that the Achaeans will capture Troy and return home victoriously; he then gets right to the point and asks Agamemnon to free his daughter Chryseis. The request appears in the optative this time (λύσαιτε),[25] with the 'me' element right in front of it (ἐμοί). The greeting χαῖρε is absent, but the cluster of other elements marks these lines as a clear instance of the well-wish motif.

In other cases, the 2nd person request is replaced by a wish or longing expressed in the 3rd person optative, in close proximity to the θεοὶ δοῖεν blessing. An exchange of well-wishes between Odysseus and Euryalus will illustrate this point (*Od*. 8.406–15):

ὣς εἰπὼν ἐν χερσὶ τίθει ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον
καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
'χαῖρε, πάτερ ὦ ξεῖνε, ἔπος δ᾽ εἴ πέρ τι βέβακται
δεινόν, ἄφαρ τὸ φέροιεν ἀναρπάξασαι ἄελλαι.[26]

[24] This time further specified by means of two epexegetic infinitives (ἐκπέρσαι, ἱκέσθαι). For Homer's chracterisation of Chryses through this speech, see Schein (2022), 98.
[25] On the use of the optative in this passage, see Latacz, Nünlist, and Stoevesandt (2009), 33.
[26] For 408–9, cf. *Il*. 4.362–3.

σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ ἄλοχόν τ᾽ ἰδέειν καὶ πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι
δοῖεν, ἐπεὶ δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχεις᾽.
τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
‘καὶ σὺ φίλος μάλα χαῖρε, θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν.
μηδέ τί τοι ξίφεός γε ποθὴ μετόπισθε γένοιτο
τούτου, ὃ δή μοι δῶκας ἀρεσσάμενος ἐπέεσσιν.

After these words, he placed the silver-studded sword in his hands
and, addressing him, he spoke winged words:
‘Greetings, old man and stranger, if a bad word has been spoken,
let the storms immediately carry it away.
May the gods grant that you see your wife and come to your homeland,
as for a long time you have suffered away from your dear ones.
Resourceful Odysseus spoke to him in reply:
‘Greetings to you, as well, dear friend, may the gods grant you blessings,
and may you never have need of this sword in the future,
which you gave me after making amends with words’.

The young Phaeacian prince had offended Odysseus by comparing him to a travelling merchant (158–64), but after the hero proves his athletic valour, he is urged to apologise and presents Odysseus with a silver-studded sword. His words of appeasement constitute the first well-wish in the passage: the greeting χαῖρε (408) and a version of the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula (410–11) with two epexegetic infinitives are the markers of the motif, but this time they are not followed by a 2nd person request. In its place, we find a 3rd person wish in the optative: ἄφαρ τὸ φέροιεν (409), just before the god-given blessing. Odysseus’ reply displays the same sequence (cf. 413, with χαῖρε and θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν in the same line),

but this time the 3rd person wish occurs after the formulaic marker θεοὶ δοῖεν: μηδέ … γένοιτο. The 'me' element, absent in Euryalus' speech, is found here at 415 (μοι).

Elsewhere the 3rd person wish is only juxtaposed to the 2nd person request, as in the scene where Odysseus arrives at the court of Alcinous and begins to entreat Queen Arete (*Od*. 7.146–151):

> Ἀρήτη, θύγατερ Ῥηξήνορος ἀντιθέοιο,
> σόν τε πόσιν σά τε γούναθ᾽ ἱκάνω πολλὰ μογήσας
> τούσδε τε δαιτυμόνας, <u>τοῖσιν θεοὶ ὄλβια δοῖεν</u>
> ζωέμεναι, καὶ παισὶν <u>ἐπιτρέψειεν</u> ἕκαστος
> κτήματ᾽ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γέρας θ᾽ ὅ τι δῆμος ἔδωκεν·
> αὐτὰρ <u>ἐμοὶ</u> πομπὴν <u>ὀτρύνετε</u> πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι…
>
> Arete, daughter of godlike Rhexenor,
> I have come to your husband and your knees after much suffering,
> and to these banqueters, <u>may the gods grant</u> that they
> live, and <u>may each of them pass down</u> to their children
> their household wealth, and the honour that the people paid in tribute to them.
> But please, swiftly <u>prepare an escort for me</u> to go home…

Here χαῖρε is absent, as at *Il*. 1.17–21, and this time the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula is not directed to the addressee, but to the banqueters of the Phaeacian court (cf. 148, τοῖσιν).[27] The formula's epexegetic infinitive (149, ζωέμεναι) is followed by the 3rd person wish in the optative (ἐπιτρέψειεν). Two lines below, an emphatic αὐτὰρ marks the transition from the wish to

[27] For the (less likely) function of ὄλβια as an adverb (with ζωέμεναι) rather than an accusative plural, see Garvie (1994), 194.

the 2nd person request, which is expressed in the imperative (ὀτρύνετε) and preceded by the 'me' element (ἐμοί).

We may now begin to sketch an outline of the motif. Its constituent elements have been acknowledged and, as we have seen, they tend to follow a rather definite order:

1. the greeting proper χαῖρε.
2. the blessing θεοὶ δοῖεν, in one of its formulaic manifestations.
3. a further wish in the 3rd person optative.
4. a 2nd person request in the imperative or optative.
5. the 'me' element.

1. and 2. are the core markers of the well-wish, i.e. at least one of them must be present when the poet employs this motif; the position of 4. and 5. is interchangeable: sometimes the 'me' element precedes the request (e.g. *Od*. 7.151), and sometimes follows it (e.g. *Od*. 8.425). This basic order is rather important for various reasons. First of all, it seems to indicate that, in the eyes of Homer's characters (and probably audience, too), the well-wish was essentially a verbal contract: the speaker wishes their interlocutor well in order to prompt them to perform a certain action in the speaker's interest. On certain occasions, the formulaic blessing may be accompanied by a further wish in the 3rd person, which *must* immediately precede or follow the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula: the speaker thus heightens the intensity of their plea, with the result that the interlocutor will be all the more inclined to comply with the request. Well-wishes are fundamentally an exercise of *captatio beneuolentiae*.

This impression is reinforced when we consider that the elements χαῖρε and ὄλβος are often found together in the *Homeric Hymns*, followed by a request in the imperative. As

Christopher Metcalf has noticed,[28] the greeting χαῖρε always precedes the request for happiness. We even find verbal parallels between our well-wishes and passages from the major hymns: *Od*. 24.402–3 (Dolius' well-wish to Odysseus) are repeated word for word at *h*. *Ap*. 467–8, where the unnamed Cretan chief addresses Apollo in human disguise;[29] similarly, a full well-wish line is found at *h*. *Dem*. 225 (καὶ σὺ γύναι μάλα χαῖρε, θεοὶ δέ τοι ἐσθλὰ πόροιεν) in the goddess' conversation with Metaneira.[30] The resemblances and parallels with these hymnic passages, where it was customary for the poets to beg the relevant gods for prosperity in exchange for their songs of praise, clearly indicate that, to Ancient Greek minds, any request for ὄλβος entailed some sort of reciprocity: prosperity could only be attained by performing some service in return. A similar mindset underlies our epic well-wishes: once a well-wish had been uttered, the poet's audience would very strongly expect a request to follow, not only because it was part of the traditional grammar of the poetry, but also because an instinct towards reciprocity was ingrained in their everyday relationship with the gods.

Secondly, the order of the constituent elements could be manipulated by skilled bards to achieve certain poetic effects, as in this scene from the *Odyssey* (6.175–82):

> ἀλλά, ἄνασσ', ἐλέαιρε· σὲ γὰρ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας 175
> ἐς πρώτην ἱκόμην, τῶν δ' ἄλλων οὔ τινα οἶδα
> ἀνθρώπων, οἳ τήνδε πόλιν καὶ γαῖαν ἔχουσιν.
> ἄστυ δέ μοι δεῖξον, δὸς δὲ ῥάκος ἀμφιβαλέσθαι,
> εἴ τί που εἴλυμα σπείρων ἔχες ἐνθάδ' ἰοῦσα.

[28] Metcalf (2015), 128 n.50. He also describes ὄλβος as "a central term in the Greek hymnic corpus". The concept of 'blessedness' can be also expressed in other ways (e.g. βίοτον θυμήρεα at. *h*. *Dem*. 494, or εὐδαιμονίην at *h*. 11.5). See Metcalf (2015), 126–7.
[29] On this scene and its Odyssean resonances, see Richardson (2010), 141–3.
[30] Cf. Richardson (1974), 228. Cf. also *h*. *Dem*. 135–40.

σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ τόσα δοῖεν ὅσα φρεσὶ σῇσι μενοινᾷς, 180
ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον, καὶ ὁμοφροσύνην ὀπάσειαν
ἐσθλήν…

But please, princess, take pity on me. After suffering many evils, 175
I first came to you, I know no other
of the men that hold this city and this land.
Show me the town, give me a rag that I may wear,
if perchance you took some wrapper for cloths when you came here.
May the gods grant all the things that you desire in your heart: 180
a husband and a household, and may they bestow
good harmony upon you…

We are here at the end of Odysseus' long speech to Nausicaa.[31] After the hero has prudently addressed the princess as a goddess (149–52) and summarised his vicissitudes (170–4), he moves on to the gist of his plea and asks her for help.[32] As we can see, the core marker θεοὶ δοῖεν is found at 180, with the further 3rd person wish ὀπάσειαν in the line below. This time, however, the 2nd person requests, together with the 'me' element, do not follow the god-given blessing: the imperatives δεῖξον and δός appear two lines above (178). This reversal of the traditional order of the elements charges Odysseus' words with a touch of urgency and human vividness. The hero, though verbally skillful, remains a castaway who has not drunk and eaten for days and has barely escaped the destruction of his raft (cf. 170–2). It is tempting to read this passage as a moment of human weakness on the part of Odysseus:[33] after the ingenious flattery of his address, he is now so eager to mention his immediate needs

[31] On which see Garvie (1994), 119–29.
[32] On this, cf. Heubeck, S. West, and Hainsworth (1988), 304–5.
[33] Cf. *Od*. 7.215–20, where Odysseus blames his "hateful belly" (στυγερῇ ἐπὶ γαστέρι), that compels him to ask for food and drink while at the Phaeacian court.

(clothes and shelter), that he initially forgets to frame his request with the traditional blessing. Only once the imperatives are uttered does he remember to employ the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula, which is an essential part of the well-wish verbal contract. A traditional audience, accustomed to identifying the unspoken connotations of the poet's words,[34] would surely perceive this inconcinnity.[35] This is but one example of how a skilled bard could enrich the portrayal of his characters simply by manipulating traditional structures.

Before considering other aspects of the motif, it is worth looking at one more peculiar example: Odysseus' farewell to Alcinous and the Phaeacian nobles (*Od*. 13.38–46):

> Ἀλκίνοε κρεῖον, πάντων ἀριδείκετε λαῶν,
> πέμπετέ με σπείσαντες ἀπήμονα, χαίρετε δ᾽ αὐτοί·
> ἤδη γὰρ τετέλεσται ἅ μοι φίλος ἤθελε θυμός,
> πομπὴ καὶ φίλα δῶρα, τά μοι θεοὶ Οὐρανίωνες
> ὄλβια ποιήσειαν· ἀμύμονα δ᾽ οἶκοι ἄκοιτιν
> νοστήσας εὕροιμι σὺν ἀρτεμέεσσι φίλοισιν.
> ὑμεῖς δ᾽ αὖθι μένοντες ἐϋφραίνοιτε γυναῖκας
> κουριδίας καὶ τέκνα· θεοὶ δ᾽ ἀρετὴν ὀπάσειαν
> παντοίην, καὶ μή τι κακὸν μεταδήμιον εἴη.
>
> Powerful Alcinous, most glorious among all men,
> make your libations and escort me safely, and greetings.
> Now what my heart desired has been accomplished:
> the escort and the dear gifts, which I hope the Uranian gods

[34] For Foley's notion of traditional referentiality, see above, 14–15.
[35] Odysseus' display of eloquence in the earlier part of this speech (cf. Garvie (1994), 119–20) does not contradict this point; on the contrary, the fact that he has spent most of his rhetorical energies at the beginning makes him (realistically) more vulnerable to making a slip at the end.

will bless for me. When I arrive, may I find my noble wife
at home with my friends unscathed.
You, who remain here, take delight in your wedded wives
and children. May the gods bestow upon you
all kinds of virtues, and may no evil be among your people.

Although at first sight it might not appear so, this is clearly an instance of the well-wish motif: the greeting χαίρετε (39) and a unique variant of the θεοὶ δοῖεν blessing (41–2) mark it out as such. What is striking about these lines is that here Odysseus addresses the well-wish to two different recipients: while χαίρετε is meant for Alcinous and his fellow Phaeacians, the phrase θεοὶ ὄλβια ποιήσειαν is a wish for Odysseus himself (cf. μοι). Accordingly, the other wishes in the optative are equally divided between the hero and the Phaeacian elite: εὕροιμι (43) is a unique 1st person hope, anticipated by μοι two lines above; ὀπάσειαν (45) and μή … εἴη are the usual 3rd person wishes for the addressee. The order of the elements is unconventional, too, with a 2nd person request and the 'me' element at the very beginning (39, πέμπετέ με), and a second injunction[36] in the 2nd person (44, ἐϋφραίνοιτε) after Odysseus' wish to himself. The combination of all these idiosyncrasies constitutes a radical departure from the basic structure and presumably made this passage a memorable instance of the motif for the audience to recognise and appreciate.[37]

In other instances of the motif, a further component comes to the fore. At *Od.* 18.105–11, Odysseus has just dispatched the beggar Irus and is congratulated by the suitors. Their praise takes the form of a well-wish divided into two parts. The suitors as a group voice out the god-given blessing (112–15):

[36] An encouragement to delight one's wife and children can hardly be described as a request in the speaker's interest. For a comparable instance, see below.
[37] On these lines, see Heubeck and Hoekstra (1989), 166–7, and, on Odysseus' prayer, Bowie (2013), 104.

Ζεύς τοι δοίη, ξεῖνε, καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι,
ὅττι μάλιστ᾽ ἐθέλεις[38] καί τοι φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ,[39]
ὃς τοῦτον τὸν ἄναλτον ἀλητεύειν ἀπέπαυσας
ἐν δήμῳ… 115

O stranger, may Zeus and the other immortal gods grant you
what you most desire, and what is dear to your heart,
since you have just stopped this insatiable man from wandering
among the people… 115

Then, after Antinous places a big portion of meat before Odysseus, the suitor Amphinomus offers him two loaves of bread and makes a solo toast, which constitutes the second part of the well-wish (122–3):

χαῖρε, πάτερ ὦ ξεῖνε· γένοιτό τοι ἔς περ ὀπίσσω
ὄλβος· ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε κακοῖς ἔχεαι πολέεσσιν.

Greetings, old man and stranger, and may you in the future
be prosperous; for now you are afflicted by many evils.

These last two lines, without the previous blessing, are then repeated at 20.199–200,[40] when the goatherd Philoetius addresses the as yet unrecognised Odysseus. As we can see, the

[38] Up until ἐθέλεις, these lines are found also at *Od*. 14.53–4, in a very brief well-wish from Odysseus to Eumaeus. The rest of 54 features the 'me' element: ὅτι με πρόφρων ὑπέδεξο. Note that what Odysseus most desires (ὅττι μάλιστ᾽ ἐθέλεις) is not what the suitors believe it to be; for the irony in these lines, see Steiner (2010), 173–4.
[39] Cf. *Od*. 6.180, analysed above.
[40] On Philoetius' speech, see Rutherford (1992), 220–1; for a contrast of these lines with those uttered by the suitors, see Russo, Ferrandez-Gallano, Heubeck (1992).

greeting χαῖρε opens the distich, while the phrase γένοιτο ὄλβος is perhaps a mixture of the 3rd person wish in the optative and the formulaic θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν. What is interesting, however, is the reference to future times, contained in the phrase ἔς περ ὀπίσσω (122). This new 'forever' element, as it were, was absent in the examples of the motif we have seen so far, but appears in an expanded form at *Od*. 13.59–62, where the hero bids farewell to Arete:

> χαῖρέ μοι, ὦ βασίλεια, διαμπερές, εἰς ὅ κε γῆρας
> ἔλθῃ καὶ θάνατος, τά τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώποισι πέλονται. 60
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ νέομαι· σὺ δὲ τέρπεο τῷδ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
> παισί τε καὶ λαοῖσι καὶ Ἀλκινόῳ βασιλῆϊ.
>
> Greetings, o queen, and rejoice forever until old age
> and death come, which are the lot of men. 60
> I am leaving now. Take delight in this house
> in your children and people, and Alcinous the king.

Here χαῖρέ opens the theme as usual, followed by a double 'me' element (59, μοι; 61, ἐγὼ) and a 2nd person injunction (61, τέρπεο), which recalls ἐϋφραίνοιτε in the farewell to Alcinous (44), as both are encouragements to take pleasure in life rather than proper requests.[41] The adverb διαμπερές ('through all time') is akin to ἔς περ ὀπίσσω at 18.122 (cf. also εἰς ὅ), in that it prefigures a life of happiness for the addressee until their death. The 'forever' element is marginal in Homeric well-wishes (it appears in only three out of twelve instances),[42] but as we will see, it will acquire relevance in the comparison with OE, together with the calls to enjoy human life to the fullest.

[41] Cf. Bowie (2013), 107.
[42] But cf. also μετόπισθε at *Od*. 8.414.

We should now pause and take a look at the statistics, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the motif's structure. In the twelve instances of the well-wish motif,[43] the greeting χαῖρε occurs eight times, while some form of the blessing θεοὶ δοῖεν is present nine times. These are the two core markers of the motif, i.e. they signal that the poet is employing the well-wish motif, just as the line αὐτὰρ ἐπεί ῥ' εὔξαντο καὶ οὐλοχύτας προβάλοντο ('after they had prayed and thrown the barley groats') marks the beginning of the sacrifice type-scene.[44] At least one of these markers is present in every Homeric well-wish. The figures for the peripheral elements are somewhat lower: the 2nd person request, including the injunction to live a happy life, appears in seven out of twelve instances; the 3rd person wish in the optative occurs six times, while the 'forever' phrase three times only. Finally, the 'me' element has a rather high 9/12 ratio, i.e. higher than the χαῖρε core marker, but this is hardly surprising: the 'me' element is semantically less pregnant than the others and metrically easier to accommodate into the hexameter.[45] Hence, its widespread use in almost every instance of the motif.

In terms of layout, the elements *tend* to appear in the following order:

1. the greeting proper χαῖρε.
2. [an optional 'forever' remark, always after the initial greeting].
3. the blessing θεοὶ δοῖεν, in one of its formulaic manifestations.
4. a further wish in the 3rd person optative, which might also precede the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula, as at *Od*. 8.409.

[43] I include in my reckoning the brief examples of *Od*. 14.53–4, 15.151–3, and 20.199–200. I also count *Od*. 8.406–15 as two instances, since two well-wishes are uttered by two different characters.
[44] *Il*. 1.458, 2.421, *Od*. 3.447.
[45] The 'me' element, however, owes its significance to the fact that it marks the whole well-wish exchange as a verbal negotiation in the speaker's own interest.

5. a 2nd person request in the imperative or optative, which might take the form of an injunction (cf. *Od*. 13.44 and 60).
6. the 'me' element, generally attached to the 2nd person request.

This is the outline of the motif, which, as we have seen, could be manipulated and even upset by the singer to achieve memorable poetic effects (cf. *Od*. 6.175–82 and 13.38–46). The greeting χαῖρε and the blessing formula are the two fixed elements which inform the structure of any given instance of the motif: it is reasonable to believe that an oral singer would place them first in his mental layout, organizing the rest of the passage around these unalterable *foci*. Once the bare structure of the well-wish had been laid out in his mind, the poet proceeded to adapt the variable elements to the narrative context: the 2nd person requests, 3rd person wishes in the optative, and the form of the 'me' element had to be changed from scene to scene, just like the vocatives with which the speaker addresses their interlocutor. In the fourth section of this chapter, we will see how the poet may adjust the flexible structure of the well-wish to various narrative situations. But before doing so, a brief comparison with OE well-wishes is in order.

Old English

Beowulf, as is well known, is much shorter than both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and its examples of the well-wish motif are accordingly fewer. The notion of theme in OE poetry has been discussed by notable scholars such as Magoun, Lord, and Foley.[46] But it was Fry's distinction between theme and type-scene that marked a fundamental step in the studies of

[46] Magoun (1955); Foley (1990), 329–58; Lord (1995), 137–66. For a more recent contribution, see Leneghan (2019).

OE formularity. In Fry's own words, the type-scene is a "recurring stereo-typed presentation of conventional details used to describe a certain narrative event, requiring neither *verbatim* repetition nor a specific formula content", while the theme is "recurring concatenation of details and ideas, not restricted to a specific event, verbatim repetition, or certain formulas, which forms an underlying structure for an action or description".[47] As Foley remarks, the fundamental difference between Fry's theme and type-scene is the narrative context (the *event* in the definition): "if the repeated collection of details is imbedded in an action-pattern, it is an example of Fry's type-scene; if it lacks such a narrative matrix, it is his theme".[48]

According to this definition, our well-wish motif would fall within the type-scene category, since in all its instances the repeated thematic nails are tied to a specific narrative event: an encounter between two characters, with one of them uttering a well-wish for the other. In what follows, I will therefore shift to Fry's terminology and employ the term type-scene to describe our well-wish passages. It is also fair to say that the notion of motif, which we have adopted for Homeric well-wishes, is not applicable to OE poetry. As acknowledged by Foley, themes and type-scenes in the OE tradition "reveal a definite, consistent narrative pattern, but little or no verbal correspondence".[49] That is, there is never a definite formulaic core that demarcates a theme from the surrounding narrative. And since in Homer the presence of an extended formulaic core was precisely the point of divergence between a type-scene and a motif, its absence in OE makes the whole notion of motif irrelevant. In other words, *all* themes in the OE tradition are motifs, according to our Homeric definition. For these reasons, I will henceforth refer to our well-wish passages as type-scenes.

[47] Fry (1968b), 53.
[48] Foley (1990), 334.
[49] Foley (1990), 357. With Foley, I believe that the lack of verbal correspondence in OE themes is due to two factors: a) "the inherent flexibility of the OE poetic *Kunstsprache*", and b) "the marked stylistic preference for the rhetorical figure of variation".

In what follows, we will analyse four well-wishes from *Beowulf* and one from *Andreas*, a poem that recounts the adventures of St. Andrew in the city of the Mermedonians.[50] The number of passages is not exceptional, but high enough, I believe, to draw conclusions about this type-scene and its function, especially considering the brevity of *Beowulf* compared to the Homeric corpus.

We begin from Beowulf's first meeting with Hrothgar after his voyage to Denmark. The well-wish in question is quite short, but significant, since it features the primary marker of this OE type-scene (*Beo*. 405–10, 426b–32):

Beowulf maðelode; on him byrne scan, 405
searonet seowed smiþes orþancum:
'Wæs þu, Hroðgar, hal! Ic eom Higelaces
mæg ond magoðegn; hæbbe ic mærða fela
ongunnen on geogoþe. Me wearð Grendles þing
on minre eþeltyrf undyrne cuð. 410

[…]

Ic þe nu ða,
brego Beorht-Dena, biddan wille,
eodor Scyldinga, anre bene,
þæt ðu me ne forwyrne, wigendra hleo,
freowine folca, nu ic þus feorran com, 430
þæt ic mote ana, minra eorla gedryht,
ond þes hearda heap Heorot fælsian".

[50] For an introduction to this poem and its relationship to *Beowulf*, see North and Bintley (2016), 15–129.

Beowulf spoke.	On him the corselet shone,	405
the intricate armour woven	by the smiths' skills.	
"May you be whole, Hrothgar,	I am Hygelace's	
kinsman and thane.	I have many courageous deeds	
undertaken in my youth.	To me this Grendel affair	
in my native land	became clearly known.[51]	410
[…]		
	Now I of you,	
ruler of the Bright-Danes,	wish to beg,	
protector of the Scyldings,	a single favour,	
that you do not refuse to me,	shield of warriors,	
noble friend of the people,	now that I come from afar,	430
that I might alone,	with my company of earls	
and this band of heroes,	cleanse Heorot".	

The speech is introduced by the common formula 'X *maðelode*', to which the poet appends a short digression on Beowulf's armour. After this, the hero hails Hrothgar with the main core marker of this type-scene: '*wæs þu* + [blessing word]' is the OE equivalent of Homer's θεοὶ δοῖεν formula.[52] The well-wish, whose alliterating word *hal* ('whole') recalls the Homeric hemistich οὖλέ τε καὶ μάλα χαῖρε (*Od*. 24.402),[53] is followed by three instances of the 'me' element: *ic* (407b, 408b) and *me* (409b). Beowulf has now shifted the focus onto himself and anticipates the request he will make to Hrothgar at 426. He then goes on to talk about his knowledge of Grendel's onslaughts at Heorot, and to review some of his past achievements (411–26a). At 426b, he finally asks for his boon: the killing of Grendel. The emphatic juxtaposition of the 1st and 2nd person pronouns that opens the second passage

[51] The theme's nails have been underlined as in the Homeric examples.
[52] Cf. Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), 141, where this phrase is described as a "common Germanic form of salutation", with other examples in OE prose.
[53] The verb οὔλω ('be whole') is found only here in Homer.

(426b, *ic þe*) is reversed when the hero verbalises his request at 429a (*ðu me*). The request, we should note, is expressed in the subjunctive (*forwyrne*)[54] and addressed to Hrothgar in the 2nd person.

Before drawing some general conclusions, let us look at one more example, this time from *Andreas*. Although this poem can be described as epic in nature, its Christian character has inevitably altered some of its traditionally heroic elements.[55] While in *Beowulf* the well-wish takes place between a king and a hero, in *Andreas* it is God that manifests himself to St. Andrew and greets him (914–17):

Wes ðu Andreas hal,	mid þas willgedryht,[56]	
ferðgefeonde!	Ic þe friðe healde,	915
þæt þe ne moton	mangeniðlan,	
grame grynsmiðas,	gaste gesceððan.[57]	

May you be whole, Andreas,	with your happy band,	
rejoice in your heart!	I will keep you safe,	915
so that they may not,	your evil foes,	
these grim smiths of affliction,	harm your soul.	

[54] It is indeed the verb of a subordinate clause.
[55] Note that *Andreas* is generally believed to be later than *Beowulf* (cf. Fulk (1993), 351; North and Bintley (2016), 97–115) and to have been composed by a literate author who had a Latin source text on which to draw. Furthermore, scholars have now detected a web of allusions and reactions to *Beowulf* on the part of the *Andreas* poet: the allusions range from phraseological parallels to larger narrative structures. Bearing in mind these complications, I believe that the conclusion we will reach about the OE poetic corpus in the next chapter (see below, 146–7) can also be applied to *Andreas*: since the OE poetic language is deeply steeped in the mechanics of the oral tradition that preceded the advent of writing, to the point where even the works a literate poet may reflect some of the oral compositional strategies of that tradition, we are entitled to look for traces of oral techniques in OE literate works. For the artistry of the *Andreas* poet, see Orchard (2016). For his allusive manipulation of *Beowulf*, see North and Bintley (2016), 62–80; for his imitation of themes and narrative sequences found in *Beowulf*, see Leneghan (2019) and Thomas (2019).
[56] For this line's metrical issues, see North and Bintley (2016), 259.
[57] The text follows the 2016 edition by North and Bintley.

As we can see, the same *wes ðu* formula is used here at the very beginning of the well-wish. Following a further blessing word (*ferðgefeonde*), we find once again the juxtaposition of the 1st and 2nd personal pronouns at 915b (*ic þe*). As for the request, after Andrew's reply (920–4), God entrusts the saint with the task of rescuing St. Matthew from the Mermedonians (936–40):

Aris nu hrædlice,	ræd ædre ongit,
beorn gebledsod,	swa þe beorht fæder
geweorðað wuldorgifum	to widan aldre,
cræfte ond mihte.	Ðu in þa ceastre gong,
under burglocan,	þær þin broðor is. 940

Arise now promptly,	and consider this plan at once,
blessed child,	inasmuch as the Bright Father may
reward you with wonderful gifts,	for the rest of your life,
with skill and power.	Go to that citadel
beneath the city-barriers	where your brother is. 940

The passage, as can be seen, is marked by 2nd person requests in the imperative: *aris* (936a), *ræd* (936b), and *gong* (939b) express God's interests in the verbal contract and, like in Homer, tend to come last in the type-scene. We may now begin to sketch a provisional layout of OE well-wishes: the core marker is the formula '*wes ðu* + [blessing word]',[58] which is followed by various instances of the 'me' element, often paired with a 2nd person pronoun, and especially by a 2nd person request in the imperative or the subjunctive. The similarities

[58] *Hal* is not the only blessing word that might occur in the formula. As we will see, this word is determined by the line's alliteration pattern and is therefore subject to variation from instance to instance.

with Homer are unmistakable: there, too, the well-wish follows a sequence featuring, in this order, a.) a blessing core marker, b.) instances of the 'me' element, and c.) a 2nd person request.

But this is not the end of the story. As the reader may have noticed, two further phrases were underlined in the passage quoted above: *beorht fæder geweorðað* (937b–38a, 'the Bright Father rewards'), and *to widan aldre* (938b, 'for the rest of your life'). Let us begin with the latter phrase: this is nothing but the 'forever' element that we have found three times in our Homeric analysis. Semantically, διαμπερές and ἔς περ ὀπίσσω express the same notion as *to widan aldre*, i.e. 'forever in your future life'. We have seen that, in Homeric well-wishes, the 'forever' element was negligible, appearing only in three out of twelve examples; in OE, on the other end, it is a prominent component of the type-scene, as this passage shows (*Beo*. 1168b–1180a):

Spræc ða ides Scyldinga:
"Onfoh þissum fulle, freodrihten min,
sinces brytta. þu on sælum wes,
goldwine gumena, ond to Geatum spræc
mildum wordum, swa sceal man dôn.
Beo wið Geatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
nean ond feorran [þa] þu nu hafast.
Me man sægde þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde
Hereri[n]c habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
beahsele beorhta; bruc þenden þu mote
manigra medo, ond þinum magum læf
folc ond rice þonne ðu forð scyle

metodsceaft seôn". 1180

	The queen of the Scyldings spoke:	
"Take this cup,	my noble lord,	
dealer of treasures!	May you be joyful,	1170
gold-friend of men,	and to the Geats speak	
with kind words,	as a man should do.	
Be gracious with the Geats,	remembering the gifts	
far and near	that you now have.	
To me someone said	that you for a son would like	1175
this leader of armies [Beowulf].	Heorot is cleansed,	
the bright beer-hall;	enjoy, while you can,	
your many treasures,	and to your own kinsmen leave	
the people and kingdom	when you forth must	
face what is fated for you.		1180

This well-wish takes place during the banquet to celebrate Beowulf's victory over Grendel: hence the element of the cup, which may remind us of Edwards' greeting pattern in Homer, but which in my view is rather a symptom of the festive context than a constituent element of a theme.[59] Halfway through the feast, Hrothgar's wife Wealhtheow comes forward to the bench where the king is sitting. She then hands him a cup and utters her well-wish.

This time the core marker *þu on sælum wes* (1170b, 'may you be joyful') is found in a b-verse; it is surrounded by several 2nd person imperatives (1169a, *onfoh*; 1171b, *spræc*; 1173a, *beo*), but the request proper is made only a few lines below. The emphatic 'me' element *me* (1175a) marks the shift from Hrothgar to the queen's sphere of interest: having heard that the king was considering adopting Beowulf as his son and heir (cf. 946b–948a),

[59] This applies to both Homer and OE.

she now urges the king to duly reward the Geatish hero, but at the same time asks him not to deprive her own children of their rightful inheritance. The 2nd person imperatives *bruc* (1177b) and *læf* (1178b) express her plea: Hrothgar should bequeath his treasures, people, and kingdom to his blood relatives. In terms of content, both these elements may ring a bell: *bruc* is semantically close to Homer's τέρπεο in the scene where Odysseus bids Arete to enjoy her family and people (*Od*. 13.61–2), while the inheritance issue recalls the hero's wish that Arete's dining companions may bequeath their wealth to their own children (7.150–1).

But the most striking similarities are found in the remarks about Hrothgar's future. At 177b Wealhtheow bids Hrothgar enjoy his wealth "while he can" (*þenden þu mote*), which essentially means 'for the rest of your life'. In case her point were not clear enough, the queen clears all doubts by making an explicit reference to Hrothgar's death: "when you must face what is fated for you". The compound *metodsceaft* has a Christian ring to it (*metod*, lit. 'destiny', is one of the ways to name God in OE), but is virtually the equivalent of Homer's εἰς ὅ κε γῆρας | ἔλθῃ καὶ θάνατος (*Od*. 13.59–60). The detailed resemblances between this passage and our Homeric evidence are too compelling to be ignored, and will be dealt with below.

Moving on with our OE survey, the 'forever' element also appears in our next scene, where Wealhtheow addresses Beowulf directly during the feast (1216–20a, 1224b–27):

Bruc ðisses beages,	Beowulf leofa,
hyse, mid hæle,	ond þisses hrægles neot,
þeo[d]gestreona,	ond geþeoh tela,
cen þec mid cræfte,	ond þyssum cnyhtum wes
lara liðe.	1220

[…]

	Wes þenden þu lifige,	
æþeling, eadig.	Ic þe an tela	1225
sincgestreona.	Beo þu suna minum	
dædum gedefe,	dreamhealdende.	

Enjoy this ring,	dear Beowulf,	
young man, with fortune,	and make use of this corselet,	
the treasures of a nation,	and prosper well,	
prove yourself with might	and to these boys be	
kind in counsel.		1220

[…]

	Be, as long as you live,	
prince, prosperous.	I wish you well	1225
of precious treasures.	To my children be	
generous in deeds,	master of joy.	

This time the well-wish begins with a sequence of 2nd person imperatives: *bruc* (1216a) was found in Wealhtheow's speech to Hrothgar (1177b); *neot* (1217b) is basically an equivalent of *bruc*, while *wes* (1219b) anticipates the queen's request proper seven lines below. *Geþeoh* (1218b) and *cen* (1219a) are general injunctions to live a happy life, just as ἐϋφραίνοιτε and τέρπεο in Homer. The core marker occurs after a parenthesis on Beowulf's worldwide glory (1220b–24a): *wes*, *æþeling*, *eadig* (1224b–25a) is only here split onto two different verses. The phrase is interrupted by our 'forever' element, *þenden þu lifige* ('as long as you live') which is clearly akin in kind to both *þenden þu mote* (1177b) and *to widan aldre* (*And*. 938b). At the end of the passage, we find the queen still pleading the cause of her children: at 1226b–27, she asks Beowulf to act as a sort of heroic mentor to Hrothgar's heirs. The 2nd

person request (*beo*) and the 'me' element (*minum*) are found together in the same verse (1226b).[60]

In the *Andreas* passage we also underlined a second additional element: *beorht fæder geweorðað* (937b, 'inasmuch as God rewards you'). This is what, purely in terms of content, we might call the OE god-given blessing: semantically, it overlaps with Homer's θεοὶ δοῖεν formula. In terms of thematic relevance, however, the two units are not comparable: the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula is a core marker of Homeric well-wishes, while phrases like *beorht fæder geweorðað* belong to the theme's periphery. To avoid confusion, I will term the OE unit simply as the 'God' element. This element appears in at least another OE well-wish (*Beo*. 946b–50, 953b–56):

	Nu ic, Beowulf, þec,	
secg bet[e]sta,	me for sunu wylle	
freogan on ferhþe;	heald forð tela	
niwe sibbe.	Ne bið þe [n]ænigre gad	
worolde wilna	þe ic gewеald hæbbe.	950
[…]		
	þu þe self hafast	
dædum gefremed	þæt þin [dom] lyfað	
awa to aldre.	Alwalda þec	955
gode forgylde,	swa he nu gyt dyde!	
	Now Beowulf, I you,	
best of men,	as a son would like to	

[60] Note once again the juxtaposition with the 2nd person pronoun *þu*.

love in my heart. Preserve well from now
this new relationship. To you there will be no lack
of the world's riches which I now control. 950

[…]

You yourself have
through deeds ensured that your fame lives
for ever and ever. May God the All-Ruler 955
reward you with good, as He now did!

Here Hrothgar addresses the hero in the morning after his vanquishing of Grendel. Among other compliments, the king graces Beowulf with a courteous well-wish. Of all the OE passages analysed thus far, this is the only one where the core marker '*wes ðu* + [blessing word]' does not appear, but the cumulative weight of the other elements leaves little doubt that this is an instance of the traditional type-scene: we find the 'me' element typically paired with the 2nd person pronoun (946b, *ic … þec*), and repeated in the dative at 947b (*me*), a verse which prefigures Hrothgar's 2nd person imperative in the line below (948b, *heald*). After some considerations on his own past generosity (951–53a), Hrothgar moves on to the bulk of the well-wish. The 'forever' phrase is found in relation to Beowulf's everlasting glory (955a, *awa to aldre*),[61] while the 'God' element closely resembles its counterpart at *And*. 937b–38a: *Alwalda þec gode forgylde* (955b–56a) has the same structure as *þe beorht fæder geweorðað wuldorgifum* ([name for God] + [2nd person pronoun] + [verb of reward] + [reward in the dative]).

Two more observations on this unit are in order. First of all, the 'God' element appears also at *Beo*. 316b–18a, in a passage which can be defined at best as an undeveloped well-wish. When the coast guard takes leave from Beowulf and his retinue, he makes a wish

[61] Cf. *And*. 938b, *to widan aldre*.

for his guests: "May the All-Ruling Father with grace hold you sound in your ventures" (*Fæder alwalda | mid arstafum eowic gehealde, | siða gesunde*). The fact that the same divine designation (*alwalda*) is used in all three passages concerned (*Beo*. 316b, 955b, *And*. 925b) may be significant. As we have seen, phraseological stability is quite rare in OE type-scenes: when verbal correspondences do take place, it is a strong sign that the element in question is traditional.

Secondly, the *Andreas* passage presents a striking peculiarity. In that scene, it is God himself that utters the well-wish for St. Andrew and, oddly enough, employs the 'God' element at 937b in the 3rd person. This is not a rhetorical figure, nor should the tripartite nature of the Christian God be brought forward as an explanation,[62] since throughout the passage God describes his own actions in the 1st person.[63] It is reasonable to believe that the weight of the tradition pressed the poet into using a 3rd person reference to God in the context of the well-wish,[64] even though God himself is the speaker in that scene. This slight incongruity yields further evidence in favour of the traditional character of the 'God' element.

Turning now to the statistics, let us attempt to get a clearer structure of the well-wish type-scene in OE poetry. As pointed out above, the core marker of this motif is the '*wes ðu* + [blessing word]' phrase: not only is it semantically essential, as it expresses a well-wish in itself just like the θεοὶ δοῖεν system in Homer, but is also phraseologically consistent, as it appears in four out of five OE well-wishes. The regularity of this phrase (essentially an OE formula) acquires an even greater relevance in Anglo-Saxon poetry, given the comparative rarity of fixed verbal correspondences in OE type-scenes.

[62] The fact that God appears in the shape of a child (912b) might lead some to take this theophany as a manifestation of the Son, and 937b as a reference to the Father.
[63] 915b, 931b, 933a, 941a, 949a, 966a, 969b, 970b, 975a.
[64] A specific narrative event, according to Fry's definition.

There are other elements that show a certain consistency, such as the 2nd person request (five times in five instances) and the 'forever' element (four times in five instances), but given their phraseological flexibility, they seem to be better placed in the category of the peripheral elements. The 'me' element, as in Homer, is found in all our instances, but its metrical adaptability and semantic weakness certainly lie behind these high figures. Finally, the 'God' element is present in only two of our five passages, but its occurrence in a further quasi-well-wish, its relative fixity, and other considerations on its traditional character give us reasonable assurance that it is a full component of this type-scene.

The order of these elements is not as fixed as that of Homeric well-wishes, and indeed there is no evidence that OE poets manipulated their positions to achieve their poetic goals. If we disregard some 2nd person imperatives that open a couple of our well-wishes (and which do not constitute the request proper), we obtain a relatively stable picture:

1. '*Wes ðu*' core marker.
2. 'Me' element.
3. 2nd person request.
4. 'God' element.
5. 'Forever' element.

4. and 5. are interchangeable, but always follow the first three components. Needless to say, the analogies to the structure of Homeric well-wishes is evident. If we add to this picture the detailed phraseological similarities between several of our passages, we might start wondering whether there is some sort of connection between the two traditions in their handling of the well-wish theme. After a brief parenthesis on Sanskrit, we will review the evidence at our disposal and propose some provisional conclusions.

Sanskrit Interlude

In the *Mahābhārata*, there is a very high number of well-wish scenes, and indeed it would be a huge enterprise to examine all of them. Unfortunately for us, Sanskrit well-wishes do not seem to share many points of contact with their Homeric and OE counterparts: in particular, they are not presented as verbal contracts. 2nd person requests do occur, but they are not as fundamental a component as in the *Odyssey* or *Beowulf*. As far as we can tell, wishing good fortune in Sanskrit does not prefigure a service for the addressee to perform.

Sanskrit well-wishes are marked by two formulaic expressions, whose phraseological fixity resembles that of Homeric noun-epithet formulae. The first of these is *bhadraṃ te* (*bhadraṃ vāṃ* and *bhadraṃ vo* for the dual and plural, respectively), which literally means 'prosperity for you!'. It is almost always found at the end of odd *pādas*,[65] as in the examples below, where Iravat approaches his father Arjuna (*MBh*. 6.86.11):

> so 'bhigamya mahātmānaṃ pitaraṃ satyavikramam
> abhyavādayad avyagro vinayena kṛtāñjaliḥ.
> irāvān asmi bhadraṃ te putraścāhaṃ tavābhibho.
>
> He went to his great-hearted father, genuinely virtuous,
> and steadfastly saluted him, with discipline and folded hands:
> "I am Iravat, may you prosper, I am your son, o illustrious hero".[66]

[65] Providing a suitable – –x cadence.
[66] For further examples, cf. *MBh*. 1.223.23, 2.69.18, 12.192.50, 12.313.10, etc.

The formulaic character of this phrase is so prominent that sometimes *bhadraṃ te* is used as a mere line-filler, with little or no semantic relevance, as at 6.60.60:

> tatra gacchāma bhadraṃ vo rājānaṃ parirakṣitum
> arakṣyamāṇaḥ samare kṣipraṃ prāṇān vimokṣyate.
>
> Let us run there, may you prosper, to protect the king;
> if left unprotected in battle, he will soon lose his life.[67]

The second well-wish formula is *svasti te* (*'stu*) (lit. 'fortune (be) with you'), normally found at the beginning of both odd and even *pādas*, as at 3.38.25cf:

> svasti te 'stv āntarikṣebhyaḥ pārthivebhyaś ca bhārata
> divyebhyaś caiva bhūtebhyo ye cānye paripanthinaḥ.
>
> May fortune be with you, among the celestials and the earthly princes, Bharata,
> and among the divine beings and all the others you will come across.

Sometimes the two formulae are combined in the same passage,[68] or even in the same line, as at 9.51.19cd, where a woman takes leave from a priest: *bhadraṃ te svasti te 'stu vrajāmy aham* ('May you prosper, may good fortune be with you, I am leaving').

Now, the compositional dynamics of these formulaic markers are akin to those found in Homer and OE poetry, i.e. they are linked to other formulae and ideas by a relation of mutual expectancy. In particular, *bhadraṃ te* shows a strong link to a '[name or adjective in

[67] Cf. also 6.88.18, 6.90.9, 8.35.5, 8.43.10, etc.
[68] Cf. 2.65.2, 3.38.24–5, 3.197.43–4, 10.9.55.

the nom.] + *asmi*, as in the example we have seen above;[69] the *svasti* system, which features some degree of extension,[70] is often paired with verbs meaning 'to go/leave' (e.g. *gam* or *yā*), normally in the future tense, as at 3.178.44cd: *svasti te 'stu mahārāja gamiṣyāmi divaṃ punaḥ* ('may fortune be with you, great king, I shall return to the sky').[71] But the overall structure of this theme in Sanskrit has very little in common with that of Homer and OE.

In terms of phraseological parallels, the evidence is even scantier. The Sanskrit insistence on verbs of departing may be compared to *Od*. 13.61, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ νέομαι, and perhaps to *Beo*. 316a, *mæl is me to feran* ('it is time for me to go'),[72] but these are isolated cases. As for the Greek core marker θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν, the only parallel I was able to detect in the *Mahābhārata* is found in a *triṣṭubh* line (13.18.55c): *dadātu devaḥ sa varān iheṣṭān* ('may the god give them the gifts they desire'). In short, Sanskrit well-wishes diverge from their Homeric counterparts in form, content, and structure: they are not verbal negotiations, do not feature significant phraseological parallels, and their basic structure is fundamentally different from that found in Homer and *Beowulf*. For these reasons, it is best to leave the Sanskrit evidence aside and move to a more rigorous comparison between Greek and OE.

A Classification of Units

In the seventh chapter of his *Epic Singers and Oral Traditions*, Albert Lord provides a detailed analysis of a story pattern found in both *Beowulf* and the *Odyssey*:[73] both heroes

[69] Cf. also 1.223.24, 3.80.19, 3.197.43, 3.198.12, 3.263.17, 8.24.134, 12.313.10, 13.2.78.
[70] Other formulae in the system are *svasti prāpnuhi* ('achieve good fortune') and *svasti bhavet* ('may fortune be there').
[71] Cf. also 3.148.39, 3.197.44, 7.52.5, 7.87.4, 10.9.55, 12.3.16, 12.136.168, 12.192.50, 12.319.8, 12.352.2, 13.123.18.
[72] Which moreover occurs in the incomplete well-wish scene dealt with above.
[73] Lord (1991), 133–9.

cross a body of water in a vessel they have built or have had built; when they reach land, they are met by a single indigenous character (a coast guard in *Beowulf*, Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*), who directs them to the palace of the local ruler; there the heroes are courteously entertained, but at some point they are both insulted without provocation by a member of the king's retinue (Unferth, Euryalus); once Beowulf and Odysseus prove themselves (the former by means of a long digression on his struggle with Breca, the latter by defeating the Phaeacian youths in the games), the joyful atmosphere is re-established and the feast ends when all go to bed. Although certain important differences cannot be denied, it seems clear that the same basic story pattern underlies both scenes. Lord's concluding words at the very end of the chapter are worth quoting in full:

> The *Odyssey* of Homer had no direct influence on *Beowulf*; the OE poet did not borrow from Homer. But they both belonged […] to the same oral epic narrative tradition. The story patterns in such a tradition are very old, amazingly stable, surprisingly alive, whether we observe them in the eighth century B.C., the eighth century A.D. […], or in our own time.[74]

An oral epic tradition, as is known, is largely structured around traditional units that are regularly employed by the poet; these include fixed formulae, formulaic expressions, motifs, themes, type-scenes, and wider story patterns. The story-patterns, as Lord writes, are "very old" and "amazingly stable", since certain *basic* narrative structures are found in different cultures with very little divergence.

Can this be applied to themes and type-scenes, too, and specifically to our well-wish theme?[75] I believe we can answer in the affirmative, at least in the case of some widely

[74] Lord (1991), 139.
[75] In this comparative section, I will simply use the term 'theme' to define our well-wish pattern, but in the context of their respective traditions, I believe that the labels 'motif' (in Homer) and 'type-scene' (in OE) more accurately describe their function as compositional units.

popular epic motifs. The ‘council of the gods’, for example, is a motif common to both the Greek and the Old Norse traditions,[76] while the Arming is found both in the Homeric and South Slavic epics.[77] But when two traditions share the same theme with, a.) an analogous basic structure, and b.) some significant phraseological parallels, then it is reasonable to suppose that they belong “to the *same* oral epic narrative tradition”.

This is precisely the case of our well-wish theme. In both its Homeric and OE manifestations, well-wishes are essentially verbal contracts, whereby the person who utters the wish is strongly expected to ask for something in return. They possess a phraseologically stable core (the χαῖρε/θεοὶ δοῖεν markers and the ‘*wes ðu* + [blessing word]’ construction), which is normally found at the beginning of the well-wish. One might object that these are universal characteristics of well-wishes: an invocation to (or mention of) a deity and a request for something in return for the well-wish may be plausibly found in many other cultures across the world. This, however, does not *seem* to be true. Our Sanskrit interlude has already shown that this is not the case even in all PIE traditions, but it may be helpful to bring a few examples from non-PIE cultures, as well. In the Finnish *Kalevala*, for instance, well-wishes do not seem to involve the gods (or God) at all, but they are rather marked by a refrain, as in the following excerpt (*Kal*. 24.443–57):

> Stay, my cabin, in good health,
> Health beneath your roof of planking.
> It will be a pleasure for me
> To come visiting here again.
> Stay, my porchway, in good health,
> Porchway with your floor of planking.
> It will be a pleasure for me

[76] Cf. e.g. *Vǫluspá* 6.1–4, 9.1–4, 23.1–4, 25.1–4; *Hymiskviða* 1; *Baldrs draumar* 1.
[77] Cf. Lord (2019[3]), 86–91.

To come visiting here again.
Stay, my farmyard, in good health,
Health where holy rowans grow.
It will be a pleasure for me
To come visiting here again.
Now I give you all good health:
Fields and forest with your berries,
Laneways with your flower-grown borders…[78]

Here, as Ilmarinien's bride bids farewell to her homeland, good health is wished upon a series of familiar landmarks: no gods are involved, nor is there any 2nd person injunction. The main marker of the well-wish seems to be the anaphora *jää terveheksi* ('stay in good health').[79]

To provide another example, in the Ancient Chinese *Book of Songs* (or *Shijing*), well-wishes are often associated with ancestors or descendants, as in the second stanza of *Ode* 220:

When all the ceremonies have been performed,
Grandly and fully,
'We confer on you great blessings,' [says the representative of the dead],
'And may your descendants [also] be happy!'.[80]

The poet here describes the appropriate performance of a ritual in honour of the ancestors.[81] As can be seen, the well-wish does not entail a request in the imperative or the optative, but

[78] Translation by Eino Friberg (2021).
[79] Cf. also *Kal*. 25.211–24.
[80] Translation by James Legge (1960[2]).
[81] Cf. Legge (1960[2]), 397.

explicitly links the recipients' blessing with the well-being of their descendants. A similar phenomenon appears in *Odes* 209 and 300.

Even in the relatively closer epic of Gilgameš we find a different well-wish structure. When Gilgameš and his friend Enkidu set out for the Cedar Forest, it is the hero himself that *asks* for the blessing of the young men of Uruk (II.265–7) and his mother, the cow-goddess Ninsun (III.28–30):

> Give me your blessing, so that I may go, 265
> [so that I may see your] faces [(again) in safety,]
> and come in through Uruk's gate [glad at heart!][82]

The young men's blessing appears at III.215–17 (echoing that of the Uruk elders at III.1–3, whose blessing had not been explicitly requested by Gilgameš):

> Come back in safety to the quay of Uruk! 215
> Do not trust, O Gilgameš, in the fullness of your strength,
> let your eyes be satisfied, strike a blow to rely on!

As can be seen, the well wish consists of a string of imperatives which, however, are better described as words of encouragement rather than as injunctions to perform an action in the speaker's interest. We find a few 3rd person injunction in another well-wish, when Enkidu utters a blessing for the harlot Šamḫat (VII.151–60):

> Come, [Šamḫat, I shall determine a destiny for you,]
> [my] mouth [that] cursed you shall return and bless [you:]

[82] Translation by George (2022). The only difference between this and the appeal to Ninsun seems to be the initial verb *u⌋sappīki* ('I beseech you') at III.28.

May [governors] and noblemen love you,
may he [that is one league (distant)] slap his thigh!
May he [that is two leagues (distant)] shake out his locks,
may no soldier [be slow] to undo his belt for you!
May he [give you] obsidian, lapis lazuli and gold,
multiple earrings shall be your gift!
To a man whose household [is well off], whose storage
[bins are heaped high,
may Ištar, [the most able] of the gods, send you in!

Enkidu's words (essentially a reversal of his curse at 102–31) contain a sequence of 3rd person blessings, with the goddess Ištar mentioned in the final well-wish. But despite the similarities, the differences between these instances and our Homeric and OE well-wishes remain significant: here the gods are never mentioned as a collective group of bless-givers, and more importantly, well-wishes in the Gilgameš epic lack the distinctive outline of their Greek and OE counterparts.

Of course, three examples are not an exhaustive sample. For now, let it suffice to say that, without attempting a full survey of world literature, our Greek and OE well-wishes are characterised by a shared detailed structure. It would not be surprising to encounter a well-wish connected with a divine invocation or a personal request in some non-PIE culture; what is presumably more difficult to find is a well-wish which precisely shares the elaborate structure of those that we have analysed so far in Ancient Greek and OE.

As we have seen, these two traditions feature well-wishes that are designed as verbal contracts with a fixed formulaic core. In both of them, this is followed by a 2nd person request, with the 'me' element emphasizing the fact that the appeal is made in the speaker's

interest. At times this 2nd person imperative might take the form of an injunction to be happy and enjoy life.[83]

This basic structure is then integrated by other recurrent elements. In Homer, we found that quite often a further wish in the 3rd person optative was appended to the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula, which has no counterpart in OE. But the two traditions do share some variable components: the 'forever' element is marginal in Greek, and rather common in OE, but is undoubtedly a traditional constituent of the well-wish theme. Furthermore, the 'God' element we found in *Beowulf* and *Andreas* is semantically equivalent to the Homeric θεοὶ δοῖεν core marker.

Some phraseological correspondences should also be noted. The 'God' element *Alwalda þec gode forgylde* (*Beo*. 955b–56a, 'may God the All-Ruler reward you with good') is essentially the OE translation of Homer's θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν. More importantly, as we have seen, Odysseus' words to Arete about her future death (*Od*. 13.59–60, διαμπερές, εἰς ὅ κε γῆρας | ἔλθῃ καὶ θάνατος) are strikingly similar to Wealhtheow's remarks to Hrothgar (*Beo*. 1179b–80a, *þonne ðu forð scyle metodsceaft seon*, 'when you must meet your destined death'). Finally, the Greek injunction τέρπεο (*Od*. 13.61) might be the relic of a common element which is abortive in Homer, but rather common in *Beowulf* (cf. 1177b, 1216a, 2162b).

In the light of these structural and phraseological similarities, it seems likely that the *Odyssey* and *Beowulf* preserve a version of an ancient theme that was present in the oral epic tradition from which they both derive. If this is true, it might also be the case that our well-wishes reflect compositional habits and instincts that were common to both traditions. In other words, an in-depth analysis of the various poetic units in a thematically determined context such as the well-wish may help us better understand the oral technique by means of

[83] E.g. *Od*. 13.44, 61; *Beo*. 948b, 1216–18.

which these scenes were composed. The thematic container of the well-wish already provides a flexible framework for the performing poet. We should therefore focus on the process by which an oral singer adapted this theme to a variable narrative context.

The general technique I have envisaged is based on the assumption that an oral singer, under the pressure of composition-in-performance, is bound to need moments of mental relaxation in order to think ahead to the next line or scene. He cannot exert his mind continuously, and with the same intensity, in the process of composition, but will have to rely on certain poetic elements which afford a sort of mental 'buffer-zone' during which he can rest and prepare mentally for what comes next. This, in very crude terms, is what distinguishes a performing singer from a writing poet:[84] the luxury of a mental break. An author that makes use of writing may pause and ponder at will, look for the *mot juste*, devise the next scene or group of lines, and organise his thoughts without facing the risk of metrical breakdown. A bard composing his verses in performance cannot indulge in such oases of peace: by and large, the flow of his versification cannot be stopped for him to ponder what lies ahead.[85] The best he can afford is a simple, ready-made verbal utterance that he has absorbed in his training and employed regularly; a phrase so fixed and instinctual that allows him a moment of mental relaxation and the possibility to look ahead *even during its verbalisation*. In other words, a writing poet might employ formulae; a performing singer *needs* formulae.

It is commonly maintained that Homeric formulae are ready-made units that facilitate the poet's versification process as he composes in performance.[86] This statement is true in its essence, but dramatically oversimplifies the rather complex process of composition. In

[84] As well as an oral poet that employs deliberative composition and memorisation. See above, 31.
[85] For further details on oral performances and the process of textualisation, see Ready (2019), 101–181.
[86] See references in Latacz (2015), 62.

what follows, we will take a step deeper and attempt to retrace the mental dynamics of a performing poet.

The singer's mind, as we have seen, must alternate between moments of compositional effort and relaxation. This alternation seems to be confirmed by contemporary fieldwork on oral traditions. In the context of the Mongolian *Janggar* epic, for example, singers alternate between sections sung in poetry and sections recited in prose (although the most skillful bards compose almost entirely in poetry). Still, it is interesting to notice that "highly traditional elements such as typical scenes will tend to be sung as poetry regardless of who performs them, while prose emerges between these units as the bard pushes his narrative forward".[87] A similar oscillation between prose and verse happens in the context of the Russian *byliny*, where "sometimes the bards forsake verse for prose, no doubt because the strain of poetical composition is too much for them".[88]

The oscillation between effort and relaxation seems to be reflected in the poetry the singer produces. In the case of Homer and *Beowulf*, we only possess the 'transcription' (in the broadest sense) of a performance: we have the text and its constituent units. We will therefore attempt to work backward and identify which textual units reflect which moments in the compositional process.

This endeavour, however, cannot be reduced to a binary opposition between formulae and non-formulae. The range of shades is much broader than that, but it is undeniable that certain poetic units are 'simpler' than others. Ideally, it would be best to picture this range as a continuum, with 'simple' at one end and 'complex' at the other, and the various textual units falling each somewhere in between the two extremes. But for the

[87] Foley and Chao Gejin (2012), 394.
[88] Bowra (1952), 221.

sake of clarity, we have adopted a more definite approach: in what follows, we will confine ourselves to three categories of units that may be pictured in terms of Ablaut grades:[89]

> Zero-grade: the units in this category are *ready-made units*, such as fixed formulae or frequent compounds (in the case of OE).[90] To provide an example, Homeric noun-epithets such as πόδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς belong to this category, or fixed phrases like πήματα πάσχ- (ω, εις, ει, ειν, ων, etc.), virtually always occupying the final adonic in the hexameter. In OE, fixed verses like *folces hyrde* ('shepherd of the folk') or compounds like *foldbuende*/*um* ('earth-dwellers') are zero-grade units.[91]
>
> E-grade: formulaic expressions, traditional constructions, partially fixed phrases, prosaic expressions belong in this category.[92]
>
> O-grade: all poetic material that is non-formulaic, unparalleled, idiosyncratic, and (where such label can be applied) innovative fall within this category. For example, a phrase such as λαοὶ δ' ὑπολίζονες ἦσαν (*Il*. 18.519), with a conspicuous *hapax legomenon*, is an o-grade unit. Similarly, unparalleled OE turns of phrase and compounds (e.g. *Beo*. 1024a, *beforan*

[89] To convey a notion of dynamic continuity, rather than rigid blocks.
[90] It is important to emphasise here that my conception of formula essentially follows Hainsworth's concept of *mutual expectancy* and Visser's notion of *lexical solidarities* between words (Visser (1988), 26–7, e.g. a noun and a limited range of epithets), whose constituent elements should be analysed in terms of semantic value (i.e. poetic intent, such as expressing the idea 'Ἀχιλλεύς') and prosodic structure (epithets with different metrical shapes such as δῖος, πόδας ὠκύς, etc., which accompany the semantic elements in different metrical contexts).
[91] Though abundant, no poetry is entirely formulaic. As Bowra (1952), 230, writes, "formulae are commonest when [the singer] is not very gifted or not quite himself or forced to sing on a subject which he has had little time to prepare", while normally the poetry seems to "leave something for the bard to do". The bard's idiosyncratic contributions are to be found in the next two categories.
[92] More on this below.

beorn beran, 'bring before the hero', or 1142b, *woroldrædenne*, 'the ways of the world') belong to this group.[93]

The zero-grade and the o-grades are easier to define, as they mark the two poles of compositional simplicity and complexity. The world in between is more nebulous and should be described more precisely. In broad terms, the e-grade category contains units that the poet constructed on the basis of analogy and which he presumably found rather easy to manage within the verse, though not as straightforwardly as the ready-made units of the zero-grade. Under this heading, I have listed four kinds of expressions, which will now be dealt with individually.

1. Formulaic expressions are phrases constructed by analogy on the basis of a fixed formula. A famous Homeric example is *Il*. 16.298, where the poet employs the unique στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς, an evident calque of the fixed formula νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς.[94] The newly-coined phrase has the same metrical structure of its model, and στεροπή is a word that is strongly associated with Zeus. It is thus presumable that the coinage did not require an enormous mental effort on the part of the performing singer, since its semantic content and metrical shape are close to those of the fixed formula; at the same time, it is certainly less immediate than the original, and should be placed one step higher on the complexity scale. Similarly, the unique OE verse *fyrena hyrde* (*Beo*. 750b, 'the shepherd of atrocities'), referred to the monstrous Grendel, is based on the common fixed formula *folces hyrde*, and should therefore be taken as a formulaic expression.

[93] For the complementary nature of formulaic and non-formulaic (or individual) expressions in Homer's diction, see Finkelberg (2004), 247.
[94] See Rossi (1979), 115–16. In that line (κινήσῃ πυκινὴν νεφέλην στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς) the poet apparently wished to avoid the repetition of νεφέλη.

2. Traditional constructions are semantically unparalleled expressions whose syntactic structure is employed repeatedly throughout the tradition (or related traditions) and endowed with a high poetic or cultural import. The '[name]+[epithet]' construction is a common example: the verse *heah Healfdene* (*Beo*. 57a), is not found in any other OE poem, but the frequency and conventional nature of this construction draw this unit toward the 'simple' end of the spectrum. Similarly, an unparalleled '[name]+[patronymic]' construction such as Ἀρήτη, θύγατερ Ῥηξήνορος ἀντιθέοιο must not have been to difficult to handle for the poet, given its traditional character. Another pan-Indo-European construction, known as the rising tricolon,[95] belongs to this category (cf. e.g. *Od*. 9.24, Δουλίχιόν τε Σάμη τε καὶ ὑλήεσσα Ζάκυνθος; *Beo*. 61, *Heorogar ond Hroðgar ond Halga til*; *MBh*. 8.17.8cd, *sātyakiś ca śikhaṇḍī ca cekitānaś ca vīryavān*).

3. Partially fixed phrases, as the name suggests, are expressions composed of at least two elements, of which one is fixed and one is variable. To this category would belong most OE formulae as defined by Fry (a half-line composed of two parts: a variable element supplying the alliteration and a constant core).[96] The various expressions, which do *not* need to express the same essential idea, are then created by substituting the variable element in accordance with the alliteration pattern required. The '[gen. pl.] + *gehwylc*-' matrix is a perfect example of this: verses like *rinca gehwylcum* (*Beo*. 412b, 'for each of the warriors'), *dogra gewhylce* (1090a, 'on each day'), and *weana gehwylces* (1396a, 'in each of the woes') express each a different essential idea (conveyed by the variable element), but feature the same

[95] Whereby three items are listed, with only the last one qualified by an epithet. Cf. M.L. West (2007), 404–5.
[96] See above, 35.

fixed core. In Homer we may find a parallel in phrases where one of the constituents (almost) always occupies the same metrical slot in the hexameter. This is the case of expressions like τεῖνεν ὀπίσσω (*Il*. 3.311, 'pulled backward'), πολλὰ δ' ὀπίσσω (*Od*. 14.232, 'many later'), and ἔς περ ὀπίσσω (18.122, 'in the future'), where the adverb's strong attraction toward the end of the hexameter[97] made the poet's task easier in the crafting of this line.[98]

4. Prosaic expressions are simple, matter-of-fact phrases which, with a reasonable degree of certainty, we can assume were part of the poet's vernacular. This is virtually impossible with Homer, since no Greek prose from the 8th century B.C. has come down to us; but with due caution, it is an exercise we can attempt in OE, where prose texts abound. *Beo*. 59b provides an excellent example: *forðgerimed*, 'in succession', is found nowhere else in poetry, but akin phrases with the participle *gerimed*, 'reckoned', are very common in OE prose in connection with lists and enumerations. The list which *forðgerimed* is anticipating is found at 61: *Heorogar ond Hroðgar ond Halga til* (the sons born to Halfdane). Similar expressions are also found in ancient glosses and dictionaries, where difficult Latin phrases were translated for the sake of a more immediate fruition of the text. In the glosses to the *Ald. de laude uirginitatis* the Latin *sicut supputatur* (3719) is glossed as *swa is gerimed* ('so it is reckoned'). If one requires a prefix to parallel the *forð-* of our expression, the Latin-OE glossary found in the MS. *Cotton Cleopatra* A III provides *wæs togerimed* as a gloss to *adgregatur*. All this evidence combined is strong enough

[97] In its sixty Homeric occurrences, ὀπίσσω (with double sigma) is found at verse-end fifty-eight times.
[98] Note that partially fixed phrases differ from formulaic expressions inasmuch as the former do not have a model formula. No priority can be established between πολλὰ δ' ὀπίσσω and ἔς περ ὀπίσσω, while νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς is certainly the model for στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς.

to take *forðgerimed* as a common turn of phrase in OE everyday speech and consider it as a rather 'simple' unit on the complexity scale.[99]

This classification of units is of course artificial, but will come in handy when we approach the text itself. From a performative perspective, the zero-grade units would reflect the moments of minimum mental effort, while the o-grade ones are the verbal realisations of the singer's intensity peaks. Rather crudely put, it is during these peaks that the poet is more likely to produce what Jonathan Ready has called 'idiolectal' or innovative material, i.e. the individual poet's unique use of the epic diction. At the other end of the spectrum, it is at the moment of maximum relaxation that the singer is more likely to rely on Ready's 'shared' (or traditional) units.[100] The e-grade units are, in a way, a mixture of the shared and the idiolectal. Ready writes that "the shared and the idiolectal tend to entwine within a stretch of verse",[101] but it is my view that they may entwine even within a single poetic unit.[102]

We should also stress that, although this chapter deals chiefly with the Homeric poems and *Beowulf*, the categorization outlined above can also be applied to the Sanskrit epic. In the *Mahābhārata*, common formulae such as *kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ* ('Yudhiṣṭhira son of Kuntī')[103] or *viśāṃ pate* ('leader of people')[104] represent zero-grade units, while a formulaic expression like *dharmaputraś ca dharmavit* (*MBh*. 3.158.33d, 'the son of Dharma,

[99] In OE we may also make use of Russom's metrical norms (Introduction, 37–8) to discern what is simple from a compositional perspective. However, the complexity of a verse cannot be determined solely on a metrical basis.
[100] For Ready's preference of idiolectal and shared over innovative and traditional, respectively, see Ready (2017), 170– 91.
[101] Ready (2017), 188.
[102] Hainsworth's flexible formulae may be seen as occupying a middle ground between zero-grade and e-grade. In a verse like *Il*. 23.663 δέπας οἴσεται ἀμφικύπελλον, the separated formula will be harder for the poet to handle than the simple δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον; at the same time the strong bond of expectancy between the two words makes their unit simpler than any other found in the e-grade category, where no properly formulaic bonds exist.
[103] Cf. *MBh*. 1.135.7b, 2.71.3d, 3.3.1d, 4.32.24b, 5.6.4d, 6.47.26b, 7.81.46d, 9.11.56b, 10.10.7d, 11.27.13b, 12.38.31b, 15.4.13b, etc.
[104] Cf. *MBh*. 1.122.43b, 2.71.7b, 3.23.14b, 4.24.1d, 5.92.49d, 6.44.38b, 7.80.27b, 8.35.21b, 9.47.54d, 10.1.42d, 11.1.6d, 12.12.10d, 13.9.14b, 14.81.9b, 15.8.9d, 16.6.13b, 18.3.34b, etc.

wise in *dharma*'), based on the formula *dharmaputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ* ('Yudhiṣṭhira son of Dharma'),[105] constitutes an e-grade unit. Finally, a unique phrase such as *kaṇṭakair iva śālmalī* (7.144.4d, 'like cotton plants with their stings') is an o-grade unit.

Needless to say, our units were classified on the basis of the evidence at our disposal. In the vast oceans of tradition that went lost, we might have found that unique phrases such as ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν (*Od*. 6.183, 'harmonious in their thoughts') or *hof modigra* (*Beo*. 312b, 'court of the brave') were actually common fixed formulae, and would therefore slip from the o-grade down to the zero-grade in our classification. In the back of our minds, we should always be aware of the material limits that affect this research. But this is the common burden of ancient scholars (and Homerists in particular): we are forced to build palaces with the few bricks we have. On the basis of the material at our disposal, our classification seems to be accurate enough. It is now time to turn to the text and test its usefulness in retracing the dynamics of the compositional process.

Case Studies

We are now equipped with a precise narrative context (the well-wish and its constituent elements) and a classification of poetic units which may help us better understand the poet's technique. Let us begin with a passage from the *Odyssey* which we have already met (7.146–52, Odysseus' first speech to Arete):

> *Ἀρήτη, θύγατερ Ῥηξήνορος ἀντιθέοιο,*
> **σόν τε πόσιν** <u>σά τε γούναθ' ἱκάνω</u> <u>πολλὰ μογήσας</u>
> **τούσδε τε δαιτυμόνας**, <u>τοῖσιν θεοὶ ὄλβια δοῖεν</u> (N)

[105] *MBh*. 2.52.3d, 3.145.31d, 34d, 153.6b.

ζωέμεναι, **καὶ παισὶν** *ἐπιτρέψειεν* (N) *ἕκαστος*

κτήματ᾽ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι **γέρας θ᾽ ὅ τι** *δῆμος ἔδωκεν*. 150

αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ πομπὴν ὀτρύνετε (N) πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι

θᾶσσον, ἐπεὶ δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχω.[106]

Arete, daughter of godlike Rhexenor,

I have come **to your husband** and your knees after much suffering,

and to these banqueters: may the gods grant that they (N)

live, and *may each of them pass down* (N) **to their children**

their household wealth, and **the honour that** *the people paid in tribute to them*.150

But please, order (N) **an escort for me** to go home

quickly, since I have long suffered hardship away from my friends.

Odysseus' speech begins with a vocative which, as we have seen, is not paralleled in Homer, but is highly conventional and presumably caused the poet little trouble. He was probably already thinking ahead to the following lines, selecting the elements of the scenography to be mentioned by the hero: σόν τε πόσιν is the first o-grade unit, unparalleled in Homer in that position, but perhaps unconsciously echoing 5.449 (σόν τε ῥόον). It is followed by two fixed formulae (γούναθ᾽ ἱκάνω and πολλὰ μογήσας),[107] during which the poet catches his breath and proceeds to select the second element, the choriamb δαιτυμόνας (148), never found elsewhere in the accusative. At this point the poet activates the well-wish theme and its poetic ramifications. In his mind, a precise sequence of elements appears, which will work as a blueprint for the next four lines:

[106] The o-grade units are marked in bold, the e-grade ones are italicised, and the zero-grade ones underlined. The N signals a well-wish Nail. This kind of demarcation is maintained in the examples below.
[107] Already found together at 5.449, after σόν τε ῥόον.

1. Core-marker.
2. 3rd person wish.
3. ‘Me’ element with 2nd person request.

The formulaic core-marker θεοὶ δοῖεν gives the poet some respite: it is presumably here that he devises the infinitive ζωέμεναι (149) and selects the verb to express the general wish. When not in the perfect, the verb ἐπιτρέπω is regularly found after the main caesura:[108] this is where the poet mentally places it, filling the remaining gaps with the indirect object (καὶ παισίν) and a less challenging subject (ἕκαστος, normally found at verse-end). After this *tour de force*, with one o-grade and one e-grade unit within the same line, the poet falls back to a fixed formula to mention the object (150, κτήματ᾽ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι).[109] This is then expanded by the unexpected addition of γέρας, leading the poet to close the hexameter with a substitutable phrase ‘[subj./obj.] + ἔδωκεν’.[110] With the second element in the list now ticked off, the poet proceeds to compose the 2nd person request (151). A poetic instinct drives him to locate the imperative (here ὀτρύνετε) toward the middle of the line, either before or after the main caesura: this is the case in all our Homeric well-wishes with the exception of the highly idiosyncratic *Od*. 13.38–46. The ‘me’ element is placed after the initial αὐτὰρ (very often found at verse-initial position), yielding an initial choriamb. Once the well-wish constituents have been placed, the poet needs only to complete the line with the object (πομπήν), and a fixed formula (πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι). After this, in a last mental effort, he produces the disyllabic θᾶσσον, only to only to fall back on a long stretch of fixed material (φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχω)[111] after an intense sequence of one e-grade and three o-grade units, briefly interrupted by the formula πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι.

[108] Two exceptions out of thirteen occurrences: *Il*. 21.473, *Od*. 22.289.
[109] Cf. *Od*. 11.341, 22.370.
[110] Found twenty times in Homer.
[111] Cf. *Od*. 1.49, 8.411. Note that πήματα πάσχ- is itself a fixed formula.

Three observations are in order. First, the zero-grade and (to a lesser extent) the e-grade units tend to cluster in the second half of the line, while the o-grade ones are more abundant in the first half. This might indicate that the poet's instinct was to save his more intense effort for the opening of the hexameter, and then complete the line with traditional material.[112] Secondly, the o-grade units *tend* to (but need not) coincide with the fragments of phraseology that are more contextually relevant, conveying the core of the poet's message in a stretch of lines. In our passage, the portions which reflect the *hic et nunc* of the narrative, i.e. that are appropriate to this scene and not others (πόσιν, δαιτυμόνας, and πομπὴν ὀτρύνετε) are all part of o-grade units. Conversely, zero-grade units tend to accommodate less context-specific material which would fit different narrative situations. We may also notice that the stretches reflecting maximum compositional intensity are never too long, and tend to alternate quite regularly with the moments of relaxation. In particular, an extended tour de force such as 150–1 (from γέρας to ὀτρύνετε) is counterbalanced by a long zero-grade stretch at 152.

All these observations are significant precisely because they make sense from a performative perspective: we can follow the poet's mental movements in the extant text. Let us now make two further tests, one in Greek and one in OE, before concluding the chapter. We begin with the scene where Euryalus makes amends to Odysseus for his insults (*Od.* 8.406–15):

> ὣς εἰπὼν ἐν χερσὶ τίθει ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον
> καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
> 'χαῖρε, πάτερ ὦ ξεῖνε, (N) **ἔπος δ᾽ εἴ πέρ τι βέβακται**

[112] The fact that most noun-epithet formulae tend to occupy the second half of the hexameter was already noted by Parry. Cf. Parry (1971), 39.

δεινόν, **ἄφαρ τὸ *φέροιεν*** (N) *ἀναρπάξασαι ἄελλαι*.
σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ (N) **ἄλοχόν τ᾽ ἰδέειν** καὶ πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι
δοῖεν, ἐπεὶ δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχεις᾽.
τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
‘καὶ σὺ φίλος μάλα χαῖρε (N), θεοὶ δέ τοι ὄλβια δοῖεν (N).
μηδέ τι τοι ξίφεός γε ποθὴ μετόπισθε γένοιτο (N)
τούτου, **ὃ δή μοι δῶκας** *ἀρεσσάμενος ἐπέεσσιν*᾽.

After these words, he placed the silver-studded sword in his hands
and, addressing him, he spoke winged words:
‘Greetings, old man and stranger (N), **if a bad word has been spoken**,
let the storms take it and **immediately carry it away**. (N)
May the gods grant (N) that **you see your wife** and come to your homeland,
since for a long time you have suffered hardship away from your dear ones.
Resourceful Odysseus spoke to him in reply:
‘Greetings to you, as well, dear friend (N), may the gods grant you blessings (N),
and may you never have (N) **need of this sword** in the future,
which you gave me *after making amends with words*’.

The first two lines in the passage are thoroughly conventional: it is a rather long psychological buffer zone that paves the way for what comes next. After the initial χαῖρε (which activates the well-wish mindset), the poet begins to verbalise the notion ‘may the storm blow away any offense I have made’, which he was probably already entertaining in the previous two lines. The phrase ἔπος δ᾽ εἴ πέρ τι βέβακται (408), with a unique perfect form of βάζω, reflects this intensity peak, which is then expanded by the emphatic δεινόν in enjambement (409). The poet now plans to complete the line with relative ease, relying on the formula ἀναρπάξασα θύελλα (found four times in the *Odyssey*) and its association with

the verb φέρω. But for some reason (perhaps a compositional slip in the placing of the enjambement) he produces a plural verb (φέροιεν), which needs to be followed by a plural participle: with great versatility, he places the participle ἀναρπάξασαι and closes the line with ἄελλαι,[113] whose initial vowel is needed to shorten the diphthong of the participle.[114] With the optative φέροιεν still ringing in his head, the singer now deploys the θεοὶ δοῖεν marker. The formula this time is separated by two infinitives, one of which (ἄλοχόν τ' ἰδέειν) is unparalleled and context-specific (i.e. Odysseus is par excellence the hero who longs to see his wife again); the second (πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι) is a fixed formula that belongs to a more general system applied to other characters as well.[115] Here the poet retreats into traditional territory (410–11), after an impressive two-line long master stroke.

After the speech introduction (412), the poet this time decides to take a more ordinary approach: the well-wish markers are juxtaposed together in a single line (413), which gives him time to devise a 3rd person wish concerning the sword Euryalus just gave Odysseus. The unique ξίφεός γε ποθή (414) is followed by the fixed μετόπισθε γένοιτο (found twice in the *Iliad* at verse-end), and an e-grade unit (ἀρεσσάμενος ἐπέεσσιν)[116] completes the speech's last line after the relative ὃ … δῶκας (415). On the whole, this passage behaves exactly as the previous one: with only one exception, the o-grade units are concentrated in the first half of the hexameters, and contain the more contextually relevant material (the insult, Penelope, the sword). Furthermore, the portion of text that reflects the highest intensity peak in the compositional process (408–10) is preceded and followed by two fully conventional stretches of lines, which signal the poet's need for relaxation before and after his extreme effort.

[113] A word always found at verse-end in Homer.
[114] He thus produces a formulaic expression with a definite model.
[115] Cf. e.g. *Il.* 1.19.
[116] Though found only once, this unit is based on a phrase which the poet had used a few lines before (396, ἀρεσσάσθω ἐπέεσσι) and was probably still present in the back of his mind. The close repetition of certain phrases might well be taken as a further factor to determine their degree of complexity.

We should also notice that in both passages the various units tend to correspond very closely to the cola of the hexameter,[117] each unit taking up one or two cola. For example, *Od*. 7.147 is divided into four cola as follows: **σόν τε πόσιν** | σά τε γούναθ᾽ | ἱκάνω | πολλὰ μογήσας. In terms of units, the first o-grade part corresponds to the first *colon* σόν τε πόσιν. The second zero-grade unit covers the second and third cola in the line: these two cola are found together six times in Homer,[118] which is a strong indication that the poet conceived of them as a single compositional unit. Finally, πολλὰ μογήσας (a frequent formula) takes up the final adonic. Thus, the close correspondence between our units and the hexametrical cola constitutes a further element in favour of the compositional method described above.[119]

For our OE test, let us return to the scene where queen Wealhtheow addresses Beowulf directly (1224b–31b):

	Wes *þenden þu lifige* (N),	
æþeling, eadig (N).	*Ic þe an tela*	1225
sincgestreona.	**Beo þu suna minum** (N)	
dædum gedefe,	**dreamhealdende**.	
Her is æghwylc eorl	oþrum getrywe,	
modes milde,	**mandrihtne hol[d]**;	
þegnas syndon geþwære,	**þeod ealgearo**;	1230
druncne dryhtguman	*doð swa ic bidde*.	
	Be, *as long as you live* (N),	
prince, prosperous (N).	*I wish you well*	1225

[117] For a brief, but thorough treatment of the main caesurae in the Homeric hexameter, see Nünlist (2015), 118–19.
[118] *Il*. 18.457, *Od*. 3.92, 4.322 (middle); *Od*. 5.449, 7.147, 13.321 (active).
[119] Further examples will be provided in the Conclusion.

of precious treasures.	**To my children be** (N)	
generous in deeds,	**master of joy**.	
Here is each man	true to the other,	
mild in disposition,	**a protector to his lord**;	
the thanes are together	**the people prepared**,	1230
the warriors cheered by drink	*do as I bid*.	

Here the well-wish mindset, already anticipated by a sequence of 2nd person requests and blessings (1216–20a), is activated at 1224b by the marker '*wes þu* + [blessing word]'. The imperative *wes*, which significantly carries the alliteration (with 1224a, *windgeard, weallas*),[120] is strong enough to evoke a specific set of well-wish items: the 'forever' element and the 2nd person request. The first one is dealt with immediately, with the phrase *þenden þu lifige* echoing the previous *þenden þu mote* (1177b, 'while you can', in another well-wish type-scene). After the blessing word *eadig* (1225a), the poet indulges in some traditional phraseology while devising the 2nd person request: *an tela* is found in the past at 2855b,[121] while *sincgestreona* is a fixed compound.[122] The zero- and e-grade units provide a break for the poet to create a suitably momentous bidding: the imperative *beo* and the 'me' element *minum* surround the request's core *suna*, that carries the alliteration. Once again, the predicative *gedefe* is separated from the imperative 'be' and anticipates the resounding compound *dreamhealdende* (1227b). Neither phrase appears elsewhere in poetry, with the latter even being the only extant compound of the participle *healdend*. After the request, the poet shifts back to familiar territory with a sequence of three zero-grade verses (1228–29a): the notion of reciprocal trust had already been expressed at 1165a with identical language

[120] A rare occurrence, which does not happen at 1226b: it indicates that the poet was focusing on this imperative in the crafting on these lines.
[121] Given the limited amount of OE poetry that has come down to us, the fact that an expression is repeated twice in the same context is more significant than in other, more copious traditions.
[122] Cf. 1092b, *And*. 1656b.

(*æghwylc oðrum trywe*), while *modes milde* is a common formula.[123] This oasis of traditional material paves the way for another stretch of o-grade units: the verses from 1230 to 1231a are unparalleled in the OE corpus, and 1230a is particularly complex from a metrical perspective. The poet then closes the passage with a traditional phrase, though slightly modified by the addition of one letter: *doð swa ic bidde* is based on the imperative formula *do swa ic bidde*.[124]

As can be seen, the OE passage differs from its Greek counterparts inasmuch as its o-grade units are less consistently placed in the second half of the line. At the same time, Homer's regular alternation between simple and complex stretches is maintained by the OE poet, and the o-grade units tend to contain the more contextually relevant material: Wealhtheow's unique request to Beowulf and the reference to the wine-merry warriors.[125]

Conclusions

At the end of our survey, let us recapitulate this chapter's findings on our first kind of semi-flexible text. First of all, we have selected a thematically determined context, flexible enough to allow us to conduct an investigation into the oral singer's technique: unlike other type-scenes, the well-wish motif has proven ideal from this perspective, since its Homeric instances do not appear as ossified blocs of lines with little room for poetic alteration. We have seen that, in both Homer and OE, well-wishes are presented as verbal contracts which imply a request in the speaker's interest. They also display a similar structure, with a couple of formulaic core markers and a corollary of recurrent elements. Some of these elements, such as the 'forever' and the 'god' ones are shared between the two traditions: this factor,

[123] Cf. *Gen*.A 2758a, *Christ*C 1210a, *Jul*. 235a, *Gifts* 113a, *Part*. 9a, *Guth*.B 1210a.
[124] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), 196.
[125] Note that the well-wish takes place during a feast.

together with the presence of phraseological parallels, makes it reasonable to infer that this theme was a feature of the epic narrative tradition to which both the Homeric poems and *Beowulf* belong.

We have then asked ourselves how an oral singer might have been able to compose these scenes in the midst of a performance. The performative approach adopted here entails that the extant text will reflect to some extent the alternation between moments of creative intensity and relaxation, which the oral poet must have gone through while composing. In order better to understand this process, we have classified the various poetic units into three different categories, each representing a different step on the complexity scale: the zero-grade group contains ready-made fixed phrases, while its opposite, the o-grade category, accommodates the more idiosyncratic and unparalleled poetic material. We have also established a middle e-grade category, which includes conventional units with specific modifications. This classification was then tested against the extant texts.

What has this test revealed to us? A possible method of composition has emerged, based on the following principles:

1. In crafting a well-wish scene, the poet works with a compositional skeleton in mind: a set of items and ideas, in a generally stable order, guides the process from beginning to end. This is intimated by the prominence given to the core markers of the theme (e.g. the initial position of χαῖρε, the imperative *wes* carrying the alliteration,[126] etc.).
2. There is a tendency to save the greatest efforts for the context-specific material. At least in Homer, it appears that these were the items to which the poet drew his

[126] This is the case only in the passage tested above and *And*. 914a. At 407a, the imperative is first in the line. It is less emphatic at 1170b.

attention first, given the consistent placing of o-grade units in the first half of the line.

3. The singer knows how to time and rhythm his performance, relying on familiar material after (and before) his intensity peaks. This is shown by the fact that o-grade sequences are rather limited in scope, and followed by equally long relaxation moments.

These principles apply to both Homer and *Beowulf*. In Homer, we have also seen that the various units are bounded by the metrical caesurae and correspond rather closely to the cola of the hexameter, each unit taking up one or two cola. This is significant, as it indicates that the (factual) metrical blocks which build up the verse may reflect the (more abstract) compositional blocks in the poet's mind. *Beowulf* behaves in a similar way: although the notions of caesurae and cola cannot be applied to the Germanic alliterative verse, the OE verses (i.e. half-lines) can be thought of as the building blocks of the poetry. Once again, our units nicely correspond to the half-lines: the metrical structure of the text may therefore be a further element that bolsters our reconstruction of the poet's compositional process.

It is important to stress that, in the course of our analysis, the comparative perspective has shed light on certain elements whose importance we otherwise might have underestimated: to provide a single example, the 'forever' element is marginal in Homer, but its consistent presence in OE well-wishes yields its Homeric occurrences a much greater significance. More importantly, the fact that Homeric and OE poets might have shared not only a pool of story-patterns and motifs, but also a set of compositional principles, may indicate that the genesis of certain kinds of oral poetries, despite their differences in time and metre, was more homogeneous than we believe: common themes and phrases *may* be the symptom of a common method of composition.

The poetic mechanisms outlined above (which seem to be at work in all the well-wish passages, and not only the three analysed in detail) will now be applied to a different semi-flexible text. In the next chapter we will focus on simile composition in all three traditions under scrutiny. As is to be expected, traditional similes have different dynamics from the well-wish and will turn out to be a particular kind of semi-flexible text, but the performative approach and its principles will illuminate their genesis in the poet's mind.

Chapter II

SIMILE TECHNIQUES IN THREE INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

Introduction

The simile is one of the most universal figures of speech, in both poetry and prose. From the very beginning of complex thought, human beings must have drawn multiple comparisons in their mind, correlating an extraordinary item or phenomenon to an akin one which was more familiar and closer to their sphere of experience.[1] Once thought was verbalised, such correlation could be made explicit by means of connectives with the meaning 'like/as', thus creating the simile, or left implicit, in what later theorists would come to call metaphors. Eventually, after the development of sophisticated poetic traditions, the simile became a full-fledged poetic device, used in different contexts to perform a variety of different functions, from figurative enhancement to pathetic engagement. The full range of simile functions could hardly be exhausted in a single study.

From the Ancient Near East[2] to the literature of Native Americans,[3] from Southeast Asia[4] to our own Western culture, similes are one of the most widespread modes of communication in both literature and everyday speech. And on the basis of the literary evidence in the daughter languages, we can reasonably assume that the Indo-Europeans, too, employed this figure of speech to put their imagination into words: similes and other kinds of comparisons are found in about all the PIE-derived cultures. Scholars from different traditions have accordingly spent much ink in the analysis of this trope, though mostly in

[1] As well as noticing other features that would render the two items more similar or the same.
[2] Cf. the Book of Proverbs from the Bible. Meyers and Rogerson (2007), 286–7.
[3] Vizenor (1995).
[4] Nguyen (2012).

isolation from one another. An important exception is M.L. West, who in his survey of PIE poetry and myth, devotes a paragraph to similes, aptly defined as "a universal feature of poetry and colourful discourse".[5] In the present chapter, we will take into account similes in the three traditions that constitute the core of this study: Epic Sanskrit, Old English, and Homeric Greek.

Similes, at least those which belong to traditional families,[6] represent another kind of semi-flexible text. It should be stressed immediately that they are not equally prominent in the bodies of these traditions: as we will see, they are a fundamental poetic device in Homer and the *Mahābhārata*, but a marginal one in OE, where metaphors and kennings are far more common. Similarly, the Greek and OE offer us a vast repertoire of expanded or elaborate similes, whereas the Sanskrit only abounds in short, single-clause comparisons. In all three traditions, however, a distinction can be drawn between traditional and innovative (or idiosyncratic) similes. I have deliberately employed the term 'idiosyncratic', as I do *not* wish to suggest that similes which feature innovative material should be considered 'untraditional', that is, spurious or somehow alien to the original core of the works (and traditions) analysed. What I intend by 'traditional' here is a simile which belongs to a simile-family repeatedly and, to a certain extent, predictably employed by the poet(s) in a work or group of works, to the point where its sheer prominence makes it likely that it was part of the collective imagery of a certain culture, besides being the product of an individual genius. We can thus take the Homeric lion similes or the Sanskrit elephant similes as belonging to traditional families, because of their sheer number and compositional typicality; on the other hand, the famous Homeric image of the child destroying sandcastles on the beach (*Il.*

[5] M.L. West (2007), 95–9.
[6] 'Traditional' is here used in its special sense.

15.362–6) is striking and virtually unparalleled, and should be taken as 'idiosyncratic' according to my definition.

These distinctions are important to define the scope of this chapter, whose aim is to reconstruct *a basic technique for the production of elaborate similes* in these traditions. By 'elaborate simile', I intend a simile which focuses on the performance of an *action,* features more than one point of contact with the surrounding narrative and is *most often* built over more than one clause.[7] West, perhaps too precipitously, writes that this kind of similes are very rare outside the Greek (and Latin) tradition, and *Beowulf* 2444–62:[8] a thorough examination of the OE poetic corpus will prove him wrong. It is true, however, that neither the *Mahābhārata* nor the *Rāmāyaṇa* seem to contain any kind of elaborate comparisons, but an analysis of their similes will shed light on the poetic instincts which lie at the core of the technique.

We will then move on to OE (especially *Beowulf*, but other poems will be considered, too) and see how the instincts detected in Sanskrit manifest themselves within a precise technique for the composition of this special kind of semi-flexible text. Finally, we will apply our findings to Homer and his justly famous extended similes. In the paragraph devoted to him, the technique will be expounded in detail, with several case studies and exceptions drawn from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The two commonest *traditional* families, hunt similes and weather similes, will constitute the bulk of the Homeric analysis.

The Sanskrit Simile

[7] Examples will be provided in due course.
[8] M.L. West (2007), 95.

It is sensible to begin with Sanskrit, not only on account of its antiquity, but especially because in this tradition we can only detect the harbinger of the technique which will be described in the following sections. Similes in the Sanskrit epics have already been introduced: they are short and simple, very often confined to a single *pāda*; they sometimes extend to a whole line or even two, but never beyond the boundaries of one *śloka*. As in many other fields, Indian scholars, both ancient and modern, produced a meticulous analysis of the simile (*upamā*) and its components. Taking the brief simile 'Arjuna is like a lion in fierceness', the Indians distinguish between the subject of comparison (*upameya*, 'Arjuna' in the present case), the object of comparison (*upamāna*, 'the lion'), the linking word between the subject and the object (*aupamyavācaka*, 'like'), and the *tertium comparationis* or shared property (*upamānadharma*, 'in fierceness').[9] In Sanskrit the most common linking words are *iva, yathā, -vat,*[10] so that a common simile may appear as follows (*MBh*. 6.89.5):

sa gāḍhaviddho vyathitastottrārdita iva dvipaḥ	5ab
utpapāta tadākāśaṃ samantād vainateyavat.	5cd

Deeply wounded and trembling like an elephant afflicted by the goads,	5ab
he then completely flew upwards to the sky, as if [he were] the son of Vinatā.	5cd

However, in spite of the importance of the simile and the scrupulous rhetorical analyses devoted to them, a comprehensive study on their evolution within the epic tradition or their function in different contexts is still missing. Sharma has fully collected all the *upamāna* employed in the *Mahābhārata,* from the upper gods to the anthill, but has not produced a full analysis of the similes in context.[11] He notes, however, that epic "similes are simple,

[9] Sharma (1962), 15.
[10] But also adjectives meaning 'similar' in compounds, e.g. *-sama*, *-sadjysa*, *-upama*, etc.
[11] Sharma (1964).

mostly collected from the spheres of the Vedic gods, nature, and items of material culture",[12] which will certainly ring a bell with any Homerist: Homeric similes, too, are generally drawn from (violent) nature and (peaceful) human activities. Other Indologists, such as Brockington, have made useful observations on similes within broader discussions of figures of speech in the Sanskrit epics.[13] From a comparative perspective, scholars have simply remarked that the extended 'Homeric' type of simile is not present in either the *Mahābhārata* or the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[14] An important exception to mention is Allen, who has devoted an article to the relationship between a Homeric simile and a portion of epic narrative in the *Mahābhārata*,[15] while Ranero-Antolin has attempted an analysis on both the diction and the contextual function of similes in the same poem.[16] All in all, not much has been said about how these similes were composed, at what narrative junctures, and about their relationship with the surrounding context. This is not the aim of the present section, which in fact looks only for traces of poetic mechanisms that may shed light on the composition of elaborate similes in other traditions. But some interesting remarks on the issues just mentioned above have indeed been made and will constitute the starting point for our analysis.

First of all, we should bear in mind Ranero-Antolin's useful distinction between nominal and clausal similes. While the former feature a simple correlation between two distinct items or figures (as in the example above), in the latter the comparison is drawn not between two nouns, but two *actions*, which brings these similes much closer to my definition of 'elaborate similes'.[17] Clausal similes are usually introduced by the connective couple *yathā*/*tathā*, which corresponds neatly to the Homeric ὡς/ὥς. Still more useful (for our purposes) is the following remark on clausal similes: "many of the clausal similes in which

[12] Sharma (1964), 9.
[13] Brockington (1977), (1998a).
[14] Oldenberg (1922), 166.
[15] Allen (1996), 206–18.
[16] Ranero-Antolin (1999). See her Introduction for more details on the scholarship of Sanskrit similes.
[17] Ranero-Antolin (1999), 13.

the verb is repeated contain other words that are also repeated in both clauses", so that "the poet is seemingly trying to turn a nominal simile into a clausal one by merely repeating several parts of the first clause".[18] To illustrate this point, let us take *MBh*. 6.102.73, a simile which, strikingly enough, draws on the contextual narrative itself, in the midst of the Kurukśetra War:

> yathā kurūṇāṃ sainyāni babhañja yudhi pāṇḍavaḥ
> tathā pāṇḍavasainyāni babhañja yudhi te pitā.
>
> Just as the Pāṇḍava destroyed the armies of the Kurus in battle,
> So did your father destroy the armies of the Pāṇḍavas in battle.

As can be seen, the *so-Satz* (i.e. the clause with the subject of the comparison) follows the *wie-Satz* (the comparative clause proper) word for word, the only difference (apart from the subjects) being the compound *pāṇḍavasainyāni* (lit. the 'Pāṇḍava armies') instead of the 'noun + genitive' phrase *kurūṇāṃ sainyāni* ('the armies of the Kurus').[19] This phenomenon is by no means unparalleled, although it is not always taken to the extreme as in the example just presented: in most clausal similes of the Battle Books, there is a close adherence between the elements of the *yathā*-clause and those of the *tathā*-clause. I have termed this phenomenon the *principle of correspondence*; in other words, the sense that in a clausal simile the comparison is not limited only to the *upameya* and the *upamāna* (with their common property), but also affects other details in the simile, which are then mirrored semantically (and often morphologically) in the narrative. In the example above, we need only to look at the placement of the various elements in the two lines, which are arranged in

[18] Ranero-Antolin (1999), 21.
[19] The genitive *pāṇḍavānām* would have added an unacceptable ninth syllable to 73c.

exactly the same order, or at the circumstantial detail *yudhi* (‘in battle’), which is shared by both clauses, even though the poet was free to recast the verse as ****te pitā raṇe** with the same meaning ‘your father in battle’.

Once the principle of correspondence has been established, let us look at other, more significant instances, such as *MBh*. 7.19.31–2:

> tayor viṣaktayoḥ saṃkhye pāñcālyakurumukhyayoḥ
> droṇo yaudhiṣṭhiraṃ sainyaṃ bahudhā vyadhamaccharaiḥ
> anilena yathābhrāṇi vicchinnāni samantataḥ
> tathā pārthasya sainyāni vicchinnāni kvacit kvacit.
>
> While those two leaders were striving in battle, the Pāñcāla and the Kuru,
> Droṇa dispersed Yudhiṣṭhira’s army with his arrows in various ways.
> As the clouds are scattered by the wind in every direction,
> so the armies of the son of Kuntī [*pārthasya*] were scattered here and there.

Here Droṇa, the commander in chief (at this stage) of the Kaurava army, wreaks havoc among Yudhiṣṭhira’s soldiers, who are likened to a cloud bank scattered by the wind. One can immediately spot the correspondence between the two subjects, *abhrāṇi* (‘clouds’) and *sainyāni* (‘armies’) at the same point in the verse, as well as the repeated verb *vicchinnāni* (‘scattered’). This time, however, the poet varies the (metrically equivalent) adverbial phrases at 32b and 32d: *samantataḥ* (‘all around’) corresponds to *kva cit kva cit* (‘here and there’) in the following line. Finally, the initial instrumental *anilena* (‘by the wind’) expresses the agent of the cloud-scattering and is anticipated by the nominative *droṇo*, the agent of the army-scattering, at 31c, placed at very beginning of the verse just like *anilena*. The contextual interaction, in this case, works both upwards and downwards: the detailed

correspondence takes place between 32ab and 32cd, but the narrative agent, to which the simile agent corresponds, had already been introduced at 31c.

The attentive reader will have noticed that, in the similes analysed thus far, the verb (the essential feature of a *clausal* simile), has always been the same, conjugated in the same tense and mood. This is by no means the rule, as in most clausal similes the verbal tenses tend to be different: the narrative *tathā*-clause bears the perfect or imperfect, while the comparative (and generalising) *yathā*-clause is in the present, and sometimes even in the optative mood,[20] as in the following double simile (MBh. 6.58.57cd–59):

apaśyāma mahārāja raudrāṃ viśasanīṁ gadām
vimiśrāṃ keśamajjābhiḥ pradigdhāṃ rudhireṇa ca
pinākam iva rudrasya kruddhasyābhighnataḥ paśūn
yathā paśūnāṃ saṃghātaṃ yaṣṭyā pālaḥ prakālayet [opt.]
tathā bhīmo gajānīkaṃ gadayā paryakālayat. [impf.]

We saw, o great king, that cruel and deadly mace,
befouled with hair and marrow, and spattered with blood,
just like Rudra's bow as he butchers the cattle in rage.
Just as a herdsman drives on a herd of cattle with his staff,
so did Bhīma drive on that elephant army with his mace.

Once again the context is the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas: the Pāṇḍava hero Bhīma is battering the Kaurava elephant ranks with his formidable mace. The second *clausal* simile is prepared for by the first *nominal* one:[21] *paśūn* ('cattle') at 58d is echoed by

[20] Cf. the generalizing subjunctive in the Homeric similes.
[21] *Abhighnataḥ* is a genitive participle in agreement with *rudrasya*, and therefore not a finite verb.

paśūnām at 59a. The simile then behaves in accordance with the principle of correspondence with two matching instrumentals (*yaṣṭyā*, 'staff' and *gadayā*, 'mace'), two nominatives (*pālaḥ* and *bhīmo*), and a compound (*gajānīkam*, 'elephant army') which picks up a 'genitive + noun' phrase (*paśūnāṃ saṃghātam*, 'herd of cattle'). The final verbs mirror each other, too, the imperfect *paryakālayat* (note the metrically useful prefix *pari-*) echoing the optative *prakālayet*, which has been preferred to the indicative *prakālayati* on metrical grounds: it is syllabically shorter and features the iambic sequence required at the end of the second *pāda*.

The verb, however, need not be exactly the same. As shown in the following example, semantic affinity is enough to establish a correspondence. Towards the end of Book 6, the Kaurava patriarch Bhīṣma is violently attacked by Śikhaṇḍin, but his weapons have no effect on him, to the point where Bhīṣma exposes himself to his opponent's missiles. His paradoxical pleasure in receiving a shower of arrows is expressed in a striking simile (*MBh.* 6.112.99–100):

na ca te 'sya rujaṃ cakruḥ pitus tava janeśvara
smayamānaśca gāṅgeyas tān bāṇāñ jagṛhe tadā
uṣṇārto hi naro yadvajjaladhārāḥ pratīcchati 100ab
tathā jagrāha gāṅgeyaḥ śaradhārāḥ śikhaṇḍinaḥ. 100cd

But they [Śikhaṇḍin's arrows] did not cause your father's death, lord of men,
and the son of Gāṅga [Bhīṣma] laughed as he received them.
As a man afflicted by the heat welcomes a stream of water, 100ab
so did the son of Gāṅga welcome Śikhaṇḍin's streams of arrows. 100cd

Apart from the two compounds *jaladhārāḥ* ('stream of water') and *śaradhārāḥ* ('stream of arrows'), placed in the same position within the line, this simile is noticeable because the

verb *pratīcchati* (‘receives’) interacts with *jagṛhe* above (99d) and *jagrāha* below (100c), both meaning ‘take hold of/receive’).[22] The verbal root is different, but the semantic overlap was apparently sufficient for the poet to select this verb in order to produce his comparative interplay.

The principle of correspondence can also be observed in contexts other than outright warfare. Even in speeches and conversations between characters we can detect the tendencies so far described. At 6.79.5–6 the narrator Saṃjaya tells king Dhṛtarāṣṭra that his soldiers cannot compete with the Pāṇḍava army. Note that here the *yathā*-clause takes up a whole *śloka*:

gaṅgāyāḥ suranadyā vai svādubhūtaṃ yathodakam	5ab
mahodadhiguṇābhyāsāl lavaṇatvaṁ nigacchati	5cd
tathā tat pauruṣaṃ rājaṃs tāvakānāṃ mahātmanām	
prāpya pāṇḍusutān vīrān vyarthaṃ bhavati saṃyuge.	

As the sweet waters of the divine river Gaṅgā,	5ab
by virtue of being added to the great ocean, become briny,	5cd
so, my king, does the prowess of your great-hearted soldiers	
become useless against the valorous sons of Paṇḍu.	

There is a thick net of correspondences here. Though the syntax of the two clauses is different, we can immediately tell that the genitive noun-epithet phrase *tāvakānāṁ mahātmanām* (‘of your great-hearted soldiers’) is mirrored by the analogous *gaṅgāyāḥ suranadyā* (‘of Gaṅgā, the divine river’). The nominative *pauruṣam* (‘prowess’), the

[22] Note that *uṣṇārto* (‘afflicted by heat’) interacts with *smayamānaś* (‘laughing’) above: without this element, the simile would be oddly contradictory.

upameya, is an admirable martial value, and could not be prepared for by the neutral *udakam* ('water') at 5b; thus the positive epithet *svādubhūtam* ('sweet') was added to even out the relationship: the deep meaning of the simile can be paraphrased as 'however sweet, the waters are bound to grow briny…' reflecting 'however valorous, your soldiers cannot compete…'. The heroic sons of Panḍu (*pāṇḍusutān vīrān*) are linked in the simile to the great ocean (*mahodadhi*), while the juxtaposition of river and ocean on the one hand, and Kauravas and Panḍavas on the other, is expressed with a gerund in the *tathā*-clause (*prāpya*, lit. 'having approached'), and with an ablative compound in the *yathā*-clause (*-guṇābhyāsāl*, 'from being added to'). Finally, the verbal phrases feature two different roots, but the resulting semantic image is sufficiently akin: *vyarthaṃ bhavati* ('becomes useless') matches *lavaṇatvaṃ nigacchati* (lit. 'enters salinity', hence 'grows briny'). The correspondences are rather complex in this example, but despite the different context (a conversation between two characters), the general principles observed in the other examples seem to apply here, too.

In fact, they seem to apply even in some of the didactic portions of the poem, which are generally considered antithetic to the warfare sections. To take an example, the simile at 6.26.37 (the image of a fuel-consuming fire is used to illustrate the action-consuming fire of knowledge) is completely in accordance with the principle of correspondence, the various interactions being self-evident to the point where a full quotation would be redundant. What matters here is that this simile is immersed in the didactic context of the *Bhagavadgītā* (6.14–40), an ethical-religious sermon that the god Kṛṣṇa delivers to the Panḍava hero Arjuna before the battle begins. The didactic character of the surrounding poetry does not affect the rules that govern the formation of the simile. On the contrary, Ranero-Antolin argues that the *yathā*/*tathā* kind of comparison (as opposed to the *iva* one) is a syntactic structure

originally belonging to didactic works and later adopted by the epic bards.[23] The final chapter of her dissertation is a comparative analysis of the *Mahābhārata* and the didactic *Chandogya Upaniṣad*, which aims to shed light on the origins of clausal similes in epic poetry.[24]

Finally, it should also be remarked that, in the very few similes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* that I have examined, I was able to detect the same working principles that operate in the *Mahābhārata*. A single example will suffice (*Rām.* 2.74.20–1):[25]

jāhnavīṃ tu samāsādya vividhadrumakānanām	20ab
śītalāmalapānīyāṃ mahāmīnasamākulām	20cd
sacandratārāgaṇamaṇḍitaṃ <u>yathā</u> nabhaḥ kṣapāyām	
[amalaṃ virājate	
narendramārgaḥ sa <u>tathā</u> vyarājata krameṇa ramyaḥ	
[śubhaśilpinirmitaḥ.[26]	

Having come to the Jahnavi, with its groves of different trees,	20ab
its cool clear water and its shoals of large fish,	20cd
like the clear vault of heaven sparkles at night, embellished	
[with the moon and stars,	
that great road sparkled every step of the way to be enjoyed,	
[built by great artisans.	

[23] Ranero-Antolin (1999), 20–1.
[24] Ranero-Antolin (1999), 115–22.
[25] See also 2.98.17.
[26] The metre is *anuṣṭubh* in the first *śloka*, *jagatī* in the second. The text presented here follows the Baroda Critical Edition (1960–1975).

Here the poet describes the bright pavement of a newly built road at the point where it meets river Jahnavi, comparing it to the shining firmament. The obvious interactions concern the verbs *virājate* and *vyarājata*, present and imperfect, respectively, of the verb *vi-rāj* ('sparkle'), as well as the night sky (*nabhaḥ*) and the great road (*narendramārgaḥ*), both in the nominative. Note that the adjective *amalam* ('clear'), used of the sky at 21b, had already been employed to describe the surroundings of the great road (i.e. the river) at 20c in the compound *śītalāmalapānīyām* ('with fresh, clear waters'). Furthermore, the sky is portrayed as 'decorated' (21a, *maṇḍitam*) with multitudes of stars and the moon (*sacandratārāgaṇa-*), a description which points to the sphere of ornamental handicraft and is picked up by the reference to the great artisans (21d, *śubhaśilpinirmitaḥ*, note the past participle that echoes *maṇḍitam*) and to the enjoyment (*ramyaḥ*) felt when contemplating a work of art. The temporal locative *kṣapāyām* ('at night') and the adverb *krameṇa* ('step by step') do not have much in common and constitute a minor exception.

Such exceptions, however, are actually quite common in weather and animal similes, where we find temporal and geographical determinants which do *not* have a precise counterpart in the narrative. These elements are generally formulaic and recur very often when the poet decides to deploy a certain simile-type. In weather similes, details such as *tapānte* ('at the end of the summer'),[27] *śiśirātyaye* ('at the end of the winter'),[28] or *jalāgame* ('in the rainy season')[29] are extremely common, just as is the locative 'in the forest' (e.g. *vane*)[30] when animal similes are concerned. These frequent 'decorative' details are usually formulaic, and more importantly, seem to show a rather strict metrical economy, which (as we have seen) is not a feature of Indian epic.

[27] 6.50.20f, 7.114.60c, 8.15.30a, 9.13.22d, etc.
[28] 6.45.56b, 7.74.31d, 8.52.32c, etc.
[29] 6.58.12c, 7.16.49d, 8.11.8c, 9.21.17d, etc.
[30] Cf. 6.95.15b, 6.98.7d, 8.39.27d, etc.

Let us take the formula ‘at the end of the summer’ as an example. This concept can be expressed in several ways. The commonest is *tapānte*, whose relative length and metrical shape make it hard to place at the end of both the odd and the even *pādas* in the *anuṣṭubh* metre; the word is therefore pushed to the metrically freer beginning of the half-line (whether odd or even).[31] On the other hand, its shape is convenient to obtain the mandatory spondaic dimeter at the end of a *triṣṭubh* half-line, and that is indeed where we find *tapānte* when the poet decides to shift to this metre.[32] At the end of an *anuṣṭubh* even half-line, we find *śucisaṃkṣaye* (7.13.5b), though poets normally place this element earlier in the line. Here, beside *tapānte* at the beginning of a *pāda*, we also find *gharmānte* at the end of odd half-line[33] (whose metrical shape suits the iambic-spondee sequence there required), as well as *uṣṇaparyāye* (7.73.28c), if more syllables are needed. This formulaic system can be schematised as follows:

- *tapānte*: 1st half of both even and odd *pādas* in the *anuṣṭubh* metre, with *nidāghānte* as a four-syllable alternative (but normally *tapānte* is at verse end in the *triṣṭubh* metre, with *tapātyaye* being used in the other metrical slots).
- *śucisaṃkṣaye*: 2nd half of even *pādas* in the *anuṣṭubh* metre.
- *gharmānte*: 2nd half of odd *pādas* in the *anuṣṭubh* metre (together with the longer *uṣṇaparyāye*).

In the Battle Books, the only exception to this system is 9.10.20f, where *gharmānte* (and not *tapānte*) is found at the beginning of the half-line. We should bear in mind the existence of these decorative details, and especially their four main characteristics: a.) they do *not* take

[31] 6.50.20f, 6.101.1d, 7.76.28c, 7.91.19d, 7.98.38d, 7.135.52d, 7.144.8d, 7.155.27a, 9.13.22d. Only once is *nidāghānte* used at the beginning of a half-line (6.97.49c), where the poet needed a four-syllable word.
[32] 7.115.10a, 8.53.1d, 8.12.62d. At 7.138.21d we find *tapātyaye* at the beginning of a *triṣṭubh* half-line.
[33] 7.114.60c, 7.134.57c, 7.137.50c, 7.154.7c, 7.162.36c, 8.15.30a.

part in the simile-narrative interaction (cf. principle of correspondence), b.) they are normally 'ornamental' in kind, expressing a particular chronological or geographical dimension, c.) they are formulaic, d.) they seem to show a much higher degree of economy than other Sanskrit formulae. These observations will become relevant in the analysis of Homeric similes and their more formulaic constituents ('pattern elements').

This brief survey of similes in the Sanskrit epics has shown us some strong compositional tendencies. The principle of correspondence seems to be a significant ordering factor in the construction of clausal similes, an instinct to create an intricate net of interactions between the elements of the simile and those of the narrative. As is to be expected, not all similes fully conform to this principle. In our final example, some details in the simile could not be satisfactorily correlated with others outside of it. Similarly, at 7.64.53 Arjuna, as he ravages the Kaurava army, is compared to the rising sun that wipes away all darkness: there the simile locative *gagane* ('in the sky') finds no counterpart in the narrative. But when attempting to reconstruct a *basic* technique for poetic production, broad tendencies are important indicators that should not be neglected. And in this case, the tendencies are strongly in favour of the principle of correspondence, as far as clausal similes are concerned. In the next section, we will see how this principle may be applied in the OE epic tradition.

The Old English simile

1. Introduction

Unlike Epic Sanskrit and Homeric Greek, similes are not a prominent figure of speech in the OE corpus, and the secondary literature devoted to them is accordingly narrow. On the

one hand, scholars like Henry Wyld acknowledge that "similes are a very rare ornament of our old poetry", arguing for the preeminence of the metaphor: "The [average OE] poet does not merely feel that things are *like* something else, his mind bridges the gulf, and he sees the two things [that he is correlating] as identical".[34] In the latest edition of *Klaeber's Beowulf*, a similar contrast is drawn between metaphors and similes, with the remark that "only a few similes are to be found" in *Beowulf*.[35] On a different note, Eric Stanley, while agreeing with Wyld on the typically OE "intermingling of the symbol and the thing symbolised", talks about the "extensive use of similes" in Anglo-Saxon poetry.[36] This apparent contradiction can be easily solved if we take up again the distinction between short and elaborate similes. OE poetry abounds in the former: simple comparisons such as 'like a bird' (*Beo*. 218b, *fugle gelicost*, referred to a ship) or 'like water' (*And*. 953b, *wættre geliccost*, referred to blood) are frequently found in many different poems. Elaborate similes, on the contrary, are quite sporadic. But those that are there are particularly interesting to analyse. Given the relatively limited extent of the OE poetic corpus and the rarity of elaborate comparisons, it is not easy to identify beyond doubt traditional families of similes.[37] There is at least one exception, as we will see, and a possibly related special case. What we can ascertain so far is that short similes are formulaic: many of them, such as *fugle gelicost*, appear in different works,[38] and the template 'dat. + *gelicost*' is certainly productive and almost exclusively found in b-verses. Furthermore, these short similes can be easily expanded into elaborate ones by means of temporal or relative clauses, just as in Homer. But before building comparative bridges between the two traditions, let us see first what the text itself has to offer.

[34] Wyld (1968), 219.
[35] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), cxvi.
[36] Stanley (1968), 459.
[37] It may be objected that the Germanic tradition originally had no extended similes, and that the few ones that we find are owed to the later influence of Latin poetry, where long comparisons abound because of its dependence on Greek literature. However, the ON poems *Guðrúnarkviða* I (18.5–8, on jewelry) and *Hamðismál* (5.55–8, on weather) seem to confirm that the extended simile was a rarely deployed, but still available option for the Germanic poet. For a survey of similes in heroic poetry, see Bowra (1952), 266–80.
[38] *Beo*. 218b, *And*. 497b, *Phoen*. 585b.

The following analysis is based on a dichotomy between two different kinds of poetic elements, which I first envisaged while investigating traditional Homeric similes. In the case of OE poetry, a simile might be seen as consisting of two different, but complementary kinds of elements: 'context elements' (which we find in Homer, too) and 'simple elements' (which, as we will see, have a special Homeric counterpart).

By 'context element', I do not *only* mean an element of a simile which represents a simple one-to-one connection between simile-actor and narrative-character (or simile-action and narrative-action). We know that the lion, a traditional figure in Homeric similes, is always connected to a character in the *context* (usually a warrior); similarly, the lion's attack in the simile always mirrors a warrior's attack in the narrative context. Most of the 'context elements' that I intend to analyse go beyond this simple one-to-one relationship and feature a closer connection with the narrative context, sometimes verbal, sometimes factual, sometimes both. The same applies to OE similes: certain poetic units will bear a closer resemblance, or even interaction with the surrounding context, which goes beyond the main *tertium comparationis* between simile and narrative. In other words, context elements and their interaction with the narrative is where the *principle of correspondence* that we have seen in the *Mahābhārata* manifests itself.

'Simple elements',[39] on the other hand, are straightforward poetic units whose mental creation and verbal utterance does not require a particularly intense effort on the poet's part; he can thus rely on them as a psychological buffer zone after the inventive effort in setting up the comparison. Rather crudely put, in the process of simile composition, the poet's mind is under maximal strain while devising context elements (and their interplay with the narrative), and reaches maximal relaxation when dwelling on familiar simple elements. Let us turn to *Beowulf* itself in order better to illustrate this distinction.

[39] For the concepts of poetic 'simplicity' and 'complexity', see above, 99–104.

2. Elaborate similes in *Beowulf*

In the only complete epic poem of the OE tradition, there are just two elaborate similes, that is, similes that contain more than one clause.[40] The first one appears at 1605b–17:

	Þa þæt **sweord** ongan	1605
æfter heaþoswate	**hildegicelum**	
wigbil wanian;	þæt wæs wundra sum	
þæt hit eal **gemealt**	***ise*** *gelicost*,	
ðonne **forstes bend**	**fæder onlæteð**,	
onwindeð wælrapas,	**se** geweald hafað	1610
sæla ond mæla;	þæt is soð metod.	
Ne nom he in þæm wicum	Weder-Geata leod,	
maðmæhta ma,	þeh he þær monige geseah	
buton þone hafelan	ond þa hilt somod	
since fage;	sweord ær gemealt,	1615
forbarn brodenmæl;	wæs þæt blod to þæs hat,	
ættren ellorgæst	se þær inne swealt.	
	Then the **sword** began	1605
because of the battle gore	**in icicles of battle**,	

[40] This excludes 1571–2a, a simile which goes beyond the simple 'dat. + *gelicost*' structure, but is still too short to constitute a properly elaborate simile.

the war-blade to dissolve;	that was a unique wonder	
that it all **melted**,	most like **ice**,	
when **the bonds of frost**	**the Father releases**,	
unties the water-ropes,	he who has control	1610
over seasons and times;	that is the true God.	
He did not take in those abodes,	the leader of the Weder-Geats,	
greater treasures,	though he saw many there,	
except the head [of Grendel]	and the hilt, too,	
with jewels decorated;	the sword had melted already,	1615
burned up the patterned blade;	the blood was too hot for it,	
the poisonous foreign ghost	who had perished there inside.	

As can be seen, the simile proper (1609–11) has been emphasised in the text; context elements within the simile are marked in bold (together with their counterparts in the narrative), and simple elements are underlined. Here Beowulf has just severed Grendel's head (1590b), after killing his mother in the mere: as soon as the venomous drops of the monster's blood touch the sword, the blade melts like ice at the onset of spring. What happens when we try to look for interesting interplays between the simile and the surrounding narrative? The answer, as I have said, has been marked in bold: OE similes seem to interact with the context in an intricate network of relationships. Note that *fæder* at 1609b forms a single element with the pronoun *se* (1610b).

Forstes bend … onlæteð (1610) and *onwindeð wælrapas* (1611a)[41] mirror the melting of the sword (1608a, *hit eal gemealt*), while *ise* had already been anticipated by

[41] The latter is a variation of the former and, generally speaking, we would expect one to be 'simpler' than the other in compositional terms. This is not the case, as far as we can tell, with both phrases being unparalleled in the corpus and featuring unique compounds (e.g. *wælrapas*). The reason behind it is that this is no ordinary variation, but a *clausal* variation, much rarer than nominal ones, which does not vary a single

hildegicelum (1606b). The 'father' (i.e. God) finds its narrative counterpart several verse later, after the poet says that Beowulf brought back from the mere only Grendel's head and the hilt of his sword, since the blade had already been melted *by the venomous spirit* of the monster's blood (1615b–1617). We are here dealing with a contrastive pair, a polar opposition between simile and narrative, which we will see in Homer too: just as the venomous spirit of Grendel is responsible for the melting of the blade, so does the benign almighty Father cause the melting of the winter frost.

The rest of the simile is built on elements which can be defined as 'simple', in the sense described in Ch. 1,[42] and the poet can rely on them as a psychological buffer zone after the inventive effort in setting up the comparison. Unlike 1609–10a, the three subsequent verses (in the OE sense of half-lines) are basically formulaic and semantically typical: *geweald hafað* is paralleled at *Beo*. 79, 950b, 1087b–88, and especially 1727b, where the verse *he ah ealra geweald* ('he has control of all things') is referred to God, just as here; *sæla ond mæla* is a formula found at 1008b and (in an expanded form) 2057–8; *þæt is soð metod*, in addition to sharing the same structure as the more common (in *Beowulf*) *þæt wæs god cyning*,[43] is a formula in its own right, frequently found throughout the corpus.[44]

We can thus envisage a technique for simile production which hinges on a context-simple axis. The poet creates a significant interaction with the surrounding narrative by means of context elements, while relying on the simpler material to build the simile proper. This seems to apply also to the second, long simile of the poem, which has been

verse (as is most often the case), but an action which is extended along a whole line. Given the unconventional diction, it is probable that the poet set up the comparison and its variation within the span of a single mental effort, to later rely on the subsequent simple elements.

[42] I.e. Formulaic verses, verses depicting recurrent images, traditional structures (e.g. proper name with patronymic), and prosaic phrases.

[43] *Beo*. 11b, 863b, 2390b.

[44] E.g. *Gen*.A 1414b, 2793b, 2807b; *Exo*. 479b.

appropriately described by scholars as "something akin to a Homeric simile"[45] (*Beo*. 2428–71):

Ic wæs syfanwintre
freawine folca,
heold mec ond hæfde
geaf me sinc ond symbel,
næs ic him to life
beorn in burgum,
Herebeald ond Hæðcyn
Wæs þam yldestan
mæges dædum
syððan hyne Hæðcyn
his freawine
miste mercelses
broðor oðerne
Þæt wæs feohleas gefeoht,
hreðre hygemeðe;
æðeling unwrecen
Swa bið **geomorlic**
to gebidanne,
giong on **galgan**.
sarigne sang,
hrefne to hroðre,

þa mec sin(*c*)a baldor,
æt minum fæder genam;
Hreðel cyning,
sibbe gemunde;
laðra owihte,
þonne his bearna hwylc,
oððe Hygelac min.
ungedefelice
morþorbed strêd,
of hornbogan,
flane geswencte,
ond his mæg ofscet,
blodigan gare.
fyrenum gesyngad,
sceolde hwæðre swa þeah
ealdres linnan.
gomelum ceorle
þæt **his byre ride**
Þonne he gyd wrece,
þonne **his sunu hangað**
ond he him **help*e* ne mæg**,

[45] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), cxvi.

eald ond infrod **ænige gefremman**,

symble bið gemyndgad morna gehwylce 2450

eaforan ellorsið; **oðres ne gymeð**

to gebidanne burgum in innan

yrfeweardas, þonne se **an hafað**

þurh deaðes nyd dæda gefondad.

Gesyhð sorhcearig on his suna bure 2455

winsele westne, windge reste

reote berofene; ridend swefað,[46]

hæleð in hoðman; nis þær hearpan sweg,

gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.

XXXV[47]

Gewiteð þonne on sealman, sorhleoð gæleð, 2460

an æfter anum; þuhte him eall to rum,

wongas ond wicstede. **Swa** Wedra helm

æfter Herebealde heortan sorge,

weallinde wæg. **wihte ne meahte**

[46] I give the MS version of this line, though various emendations have been proposed. For *reote berofene* 'bereft of joy', Fulk, Bjork and Niles (2008[4]), 246, propose *reot*[*g*]*e berofene* 'dreary, empty', arguing that a Kentish spelling for Anglian **roete* (derivative of *rot*, 'glad') is unlikely. However, 'bereft of joy/pleasure' is a common idea in *Beo*. (cf. 850b, 1275a), while the *Wanderer* provides a very close parallel for these lines which cannot be overlooked (see below). *Wand*. 79a reads *dreame bidrorene* ('bereft of pleasure'), and the overall similarity of this line with *Beo*. 2457 suggests that this is the sense required here. Scholars have also proposed to turn the plural *swefað*, '[they] sleep', into the singular *swefeð* '[he] sleeps': since *ridend*, 'rider', may be both singular and plural, a singular verb would change the meaning of the overall phrase to 'the rider sleeps', i.e. 'the one who died on the gallows' (cf. Fulk, Bjork, Niles (2008[4]), 247). Once again the *Wanderer* comes to our aid, featuring a plural verb at 78b: *waldend licgað*. As will become clear, these lines, rather than referring to one of the simile's protagonists, constitute an OE elegiac theme; therefore, a generalising plural suits them better than an over-specific singular.

[47] The manuscript fitt division is inappropriately placed in the middle of the simile.

on ðam feorhbonan	**fæghðe gebetan**.	2465
No ðy ær he **þone heaðorinc**	hatian ne meahte	
laðum dædum,	þeah him leof ne wæs.	
He ða mid þære sorhge,	þe him sio sar belamp,	
gumdream ofgeaf,	**Godes leoht geceas**;	
eaferum læfde,	swa deð eadig mon,	2470
lond ond leodbyrig,	þa he of life gewat.	

I was seven winters old	when me the prince of treasures,	
the friendly leader of the folk,	took from my father;	
held and had me	**King Hrethel**,	2430
gave me wealth and banquets,	remembered the frienship;	
I was not by him in life	less loved,	
a man in the citadel,	than any of his sons,	
Herebeald and Haethcyn	or my Hygelac.	
For the eldest was,	unfittingly,	2435
by his brother's deeds	**a deathbed strewed**,	
when him Haethcyn	from a horn-bow	
his friend and lord	with an arrow struck,	
missed his target	and shot his kinsman,	
the one brother the other	with a bloody dart;	2440
that was an irreparable incident,	sorely wronged,	
heart-wearying in the chest;	however, he had to,	
the unavenged prince,	abandon his life.	
In the same way it is **sorrowful**	for **an old man**	
to endure	that **his son rides**	2445
young on **the gallows**:	then he recites a dirge,	
a sorrowful song,	while **his son hangs**	
to the raven’s joy,	and he **cannot him with help**,	

old and wise,	**any provide**;	
ever it is recalled	each morning,	2450
his son's journey to the otherworld;	**the other** he does not care	
to see to live	inside his court,	
his son and heir,	when **the first one has**	
through Death's compulsion	tested his deeds;	
he sees, in his sorrow,	in his son's chambers	2455
a wine-hall wasted,	a windy resting place	
bereft of joy;	the riders sleep,	
warriors in their graves;	there is not sound from the harp,	
no mirth in the courtyards,	such as was there long ago.	
He then goes to his bed,	moans a sorrowful song,	2460
one man on account of the other;	it appears to him all too spacious,	
the country and the dwelling.	So did the lord of the Wederas	
because of Herebeald	the sorrow in his heart,	
surging, endured:	**not at all could he**	
on that kind of murderer	**settle a feud**;	2465
nor the more **that warrior**	could he hate	
for his hateful deeds,	though to him he was not dear;	
he then with that sorrow,	when that pain on him befell,	
gave up the joys of life,	**choose the light of God**;	
to his heirs he left,	as does a prosperous man,	2470
the land and the town of the folk,	when he departed from life.	

The context of this comparison is not easy to explain. Before facing the dragon in the final episode of the poem, the aged Beowulf gives a speech to his Geatish companions. In the course of the sermon, he recounts an episode of his childhood, when at the age of seven he was adopted by king Hrethel and reared together with his sons, Herebald, Heathcyn, and Hygelac (2428–34). He then begins to talk about the domestic vicissitudes of his adoptive

family: in a tragic accident, the second-born Heathcyn had killed his elder brother Herebald, causing his father an unbearable grief (2435–43).[48] The bereft King Hrethel is thus compared by Beowulf himself to an old man (2444b, *gomelum ceorle*), whose son has been hanged, presumably after a fair trial. According to most commentators, the main point of comparison is that "in neither case may retribution be exacted":[49] King Hrethel cannot press for a *wergild* (2444a, *æðeling unwrecen*, 'the unavenged prince', and 2465b, *fæghðe gebetan*, '[he could not] settle the feud') because the murderer of his son is his own second-born; the old man is in the same situation, since his son is presumed to have been lawfully tried and sentenced. In my view, while I do acknowledge that this parallel exists between simile and narrative,[50] I would argue that the main *tertium comparationis* is the desperation and helplessness of the two fathers, as the forthcoming analysis will hopefully show.

First of all, we should notice that the simile is Homeric in both tone and form: as scholars have remarked, the repeated *swa … swa* which opens and closes the comparison is akin to Homer's ὡς … ὣς.[51] More importantly for us, the simile weaves multiple interactions with the surrounding narrative, much in the same way as traditional Homeric similes do. The old man (*gomelum ceorle*) is of course King Hrethel in the context of the simile, and Herebald is the hanged son mentioned at 2445b; the periphrasis to express his dead runs over two lines (2445b–6a), with the second verse being modelled on the common template '*geong* + prep. + place'[52] (though *galgan* is found only here in *Beowulf* and is necessary to express the young man's death).[53] The fatherly desperation, introduced at the very beginning of the simile (2444a, *swa bið geomorlic*, 'in the same way it is sorrowful', a word used only

[48] For a (somewhat expanded) Greek typological parallel, see Hdt. 1.35–45, the episode of Atys and Adrastus.
[49] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), 245.
[50] Though it is not explicitly stated in the simile.
[51] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), cxvi n2.
[52] Cf. 13a, *Jul.* 35a, *Phoen.* 355a, 647a.
[53] Cf. the same notion expressed at 2447b.

here in poetry) was anticipated by the reference to Hrethel's own sorrow (2442a, *hreðre hygemeðe*, 'heart-wearying in the chest'). These are the bare facts of the comparison. The remaining interactions are more sophisticated.

Lines 2448b–9 (*him helpan ne mæg … ænige gefremman*, 'he cannot provide any help') express the helplessness of the old man, unable to bring help to his son, and are later reflected in the narrative, when Beowulf says that Hrethel could not settle the feud for the death of Herebald (2464b–5: *wihte ne meahte … fæghðe gebetan*, note the similar syntactic structure and the verbal parallels). The second mention of the hanged son at 2451a (*eaforan ellorsið*) paves the way for the contrast between a potential second heir (2451b–53a, *oðres ne gymeð … yrfeweardas*) and the child he lost (2453b, *se an hafað*). This is then picked up at 2466a (*þone heaðorinc*), where Heathcyn, Hrethel's second-born, is once again brought up only to emphasise the contrast in his father's mind: Hrethel, as a father, cannot hate his son, but he does not love him, either (2466–7).

Other connections are easier to spot: *an æfter anum* (2461a, 'one man on account of the other')[54] is echoed two lines below by *æfter Herebealde*, while *wongas ond wicstede* (2462a), the properties forsaken by the hanged son in simile, are picked by *lond ond leodbyrig* (2471a), i.e. the possessions that King Hrethel left to his heirs, but *not* to Herebald.

Finally, *gewiteð þonne on sealman* (2460a, 'he then goes to his bed') is more obscure. To make sense of it, we need to resort to pan-Germanic myth. As Harris has shown in an impressive article, the sequence of events depicted in the simile (and in the narrative to which the simile refers) is a Germanic mythic pattern which is found more than once in Old Norse:[55] a son is killed or dies by accident, and the grieving father is either able or unable to get revenge. In the ON *Vǫluspá* the blind Hǫðr inadvertently kills his brother Baldr

[54] Given 2463a, this is the most reasonable translation, *pace* Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), 244, who prefer 'one after the other', i.e. 'in succession'.
[55] Harris (1994).

by hurling a mistletoe at him (32);[56] Óðin's son Váli was then born with the specific task of avenging his dead brother Baldr, a mission which he accomplished when he was just one night old (*Vǫl*. 32.7–8). In *Egils Saga* (242–57 [Ch. 78]) the poet Egill Skalla-Grímsson unexpectedly loses his son in a shipwreck during a routine voyage. The old poet then, after the funeral rites, takes to his room and locks himself in, determined to die.[57] His death is later prevented, but in the light of this comparison, we may infer that our own *gomel ceorl* retires to his quarters with the intention of starving himself to death. As Harris himself concludes, on the basis of other literary and cultural factors:

> The text presents the decision of the *gomel ceorl* in opposition to the opinion of a class of people who would *wait in this life*[58] [for another son], and a general knowledge of religion would favour the idea that 'not waiting here' for the replacement of a son is equivalent to a decision to join the family on the Other Side.[59]

In other words, the reference to the old man retiring to his bed chamber (2460a) is tantamount to a reference to his death; thus *gewiteð þonne on sealman* anticipates the departure of Hrethel himself, and can thus be explained as a context element in connection with 2469 (*gumdream ofgeaf, Godes leoht geceas*, 'he gave up the joys of life, chose the light of God') and 2471b (*he of life gewat*, 'he departed from life').

The remaining elements which enrich the simile are all rather 'simple', in the special sense we have given to this word.[60] The only apparently problematic segments are 2454b,

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[56] For the details of the myth, see *Snorri's Edda* 49.
[57] See Harris (1994), 51.
[58] My emphasis.
[59] Harris (1994), 55.
[60] Line 2445a, *to gebidanne*, is found in the *Paris Psalter* (83.9) and is common in prose (e.g. *Gospel of Nicodemus* 88) and found again at 2452a. 2446b, *gyd wrece*, common in (but not confined to) contexts of lament, is paralleled at *Beo*. 1065b, 1118a, 2108b, 2154b, and 3172a and, together with *sang sorgcearig* (cf. here 2447a, *sarigne sang*), 3150a–52a (in the lament for the hero's death). 2448a, *hrefne to hroðre*, is a reference to one of the bloodthirsty animals present in the theme of the beasts of battles (cf. *Beo*. 3024–7, and for the theme see Lord (1995), 137–66; cf. also its Sanskrit parallel, *MBh*. 6.55.12d: *gṛdhragomāyumodinī*, 'for the pleasure of vultures and jackals'); the template is 'dat. + *to hroðre*', cf. *Christ*A 414a, *Fates* 95b. 2449a, *eald ond infrod*, is paralleled at *Beo.* 1874a and is a common description for an old man. 2450a, *symble bið gemyndgad*, is a common prosaic turn of phrase (*AELS* (Edmund), 16; *ThCap* 1.307.18; *HomS*

dæda gefondad (whose meaning is obscure, but is paralleled at 2301b, *goldes gefandod*, with the sense 'to make trial of')[61] and 2455b–58a (describing the desolation of the hanged son's dwellings), for which no exact verbal parallels can be found. However, these lines are deemed by OE scholars to be elegiac in tone, and indeed the whole simile is taken as an elegiac interlude, commonly known as the 'Father's Lament'.[62] One of the most prominent tropes of OE elegy[63] is the theme of the 'ruined hall', which appears in various poems.[64] The closer parallel for 2455b–59a is found in the *Wanderer* (76–80a) and is worth quoting:[65]

Winde biwaune	weallas stondaþ,
hrime bihrorene,	hryðge þa ederas.
Woriað þa *winsalo*,	waldend licgað
dreame bidrorene,	duguþ eal gecrong,
wlonc bi wealle.	80

Blown against by the wind,	the walls stand,
covered in frost,	the buildings totter.
The wine-halls decay,	rulers lie [in death]
deprived of joy,	his band of warriors all perished,
bold by the wall.	80

24.1.1; *HomS* 41.43). For 2450b, *morna gehwylce*, cf. *Beo*. 88a, 1365a) and is based on the common template 'gen. pl. + *gehwylce*'. For 2452b, *burgum in innan*, see *Beo*. 1968b, *Guth.*B 1367b, *Jul*. 691b. For the compulsion of death, *deaðes nyd* (2454a), cf. *Christ*C 1041b, and especially *Guth.*B 934a. 2455a, *gesyhð sorhcearig*, is paralleled at *Beo*. 3152a and *Deor* 28a. The details of hall-merriment are all quasi-formulaic: for 2458b, *hearpan sweg*, cf. *Beo*. 89b, 2262b, 3023b; to the sound of the harp, *gomen* ('pleasure') is repeatedly associated: *Beo*. 1065a and especially 2263a, for the structure, cf. *Beo*. 13a. For 2459b, *swylce ðær iu wæron*, see *Beo*. 642a, 3168b. Finally, the sorrowful song, *sorhleoð gæleð* (2460b) is paralleled at 786a (*gryreléoð galan*).

[61] Cf. Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008[4]), 246.

[62] See Harris (1994).

[63] For OE elegy, see Harris (1982).

[64] For the theme of the ruined hall, see Fell (2006).

[65] For more details on *The Wanderer*, see Leslie (1966).

The verbal connections with our text have been underlined: *winsalo*/*sele* is found in both passages, as well as the references to the wind (2456b and *Wan*. 76a) and the joyless atmosphere (2457a, *reote berofene*, and *Wan*. 79a, *dreame bidrorene*). *Wan*. 78b and 79b mourn the death of the hall's previous inhabitants, just as 2457b–8a do in the *Beowulf* passage (cf. especially the parallel between *rid<u>end</u>* in *Beo*. and *wald<u>end</u>* in *Wan*.).[66]

Thus, in the light of this and other elegiac parallels, lines 2455b–58a are easily explained: even if they lack precise phraseological parallels, they can be taken as 'simple', as they are a manifestation of a recurrent elegiac theme. Furthermore, the verses considered are almost all of the Sx/Sx type[67] (or its variant Ss/Sx),[68] which Russom considers as the most basic metrical pattern:[69] thus to the semantic simplicity of these lines (which derives from their being a theme) one should also add Russom's metrical simplicity. The sum of both factors should make us confident that 2455b–58a are not complex from a compositional perspective, either. The simile, on the whole, works exactly like 1605–17: the poet seems to make the greatest mental effort when contriving the comparison's interaction with the context, and rely on simpler material for the construction of the simile.

3. Similes in the OE corpus

Since there are only two elaborate similes in the epic *Beowulf*, we should now turn to other non-epic works to bolster our conclusions. With the help of Stanley's article,[70] I was able to identify seven extended comparisons in the OE poetic corpus[71] (excluding *Beowulf* and the

[66] For other parallels, the reader is referred to the whole poem *Ruin*, as reconstructed by Leslie in Leslie (1961), and *Beo*. 2262–6, another elegiac portion of the poem known as the 'Lament of the Last Survivor'.
[67] 2456b, 2457a, 2458a.
[68] 2456a, 2457b.
[69] Russom (2017), 56.
[70] Stanley (1968).
[71] *Dan*. 270–8, 315–24 (found also at *Az*. 32–41), 335b–51a (found also at *Az*. 51b–66a), *Guth*.B 1269b–78a, *Pan*. 20b–31a, *Phoen*. 240b–59a, 299b–304.

four poems by Cynewulf).[72] One of them (*Pan*. 20b–31a) is rather peculiar, as it compares the panther's fur to the biblical Joseph's tunic, while another (*Dan*. 315–24) states that God will further the descendance of the people of Israel, who will be as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the beach. Since the scenes depicted in these two similes are not paralleled elsewhere in our corpus and are drawn from Judaeo-Christian tales, they are certainly not Anglo-Saxon in origin. On the other hand, *Dan*. 270–8, 335b–51a, and *Guth*.B 1269b–78a, together with *Beo*. 1605b–17 (the first simile we have looked at), are all characterised by the common theme of spring and summer weather, and could plausibly be taken as the representatives of a once much larger family of season similes. *Phoen*. 240–59a and 299b–304 are centered on human activities (farming and smithery, respectively), a theme which could also be traditional, especially when one considers the comparative evidence of technical similes in Homer.[73]

To turn back to our main purpose, the technique seems to work in five of these similes, and the two exceptions are either highly problematic (*Dan*. 270–8) or peculiarly untraditional (*Dan*. 315–24). On the whole, if we include *Beowulf* in our reckoning and still leave aside Cynewulf (for reasons to be explained in the next section), we will have nine extended similes with two exceptions. This preponderance is not as reassuring as that of traditional Homeric similes, but it is enough, I believe, to affirm a strong compositional tendency in OE poetry, especially considering the peculiar nature of some exceptions. For a full analysis of all similes, the reader is referred to Appendix I. In what follows, I will provide a particularly illuminating example.

One more *caveat* before we begin our analysis. Unlike *Beowulf* and the other few OE epic or elegiac works (and fragments), we are able to detect a specific Latin model for

[72] See below, 150–1.
[73] Cf. also the ON similes on jewelry and weather discussed above, 132n.37.

most of the religious poems of this tradition. This means presumably that the authors of these works were literate, as they had to be able to read Latin in order to draw on their models. Furthermore, they often engaged in games of allusion and imitation, as scholars now generally recognise.[74] Is it then a contradiction to look for traces of an oral composition technique in poems which are clearly not oral in origin? *In the case of OE*, I would answer this question in the negative. It has long been realised by scholars[75] that, even in religious works seemingly composed with the aid of writing, the poets tend to maintain the structures and style of the ancient oral tradition.[76] Formulae and recurrent phrases are found in plenty, to the point where Niles talks about the "parroting of formulaic tags" in literate OE poetry, commenting that "many learned authors have been known to use formulas, whether for atmosphere or rhetorical effect or because the poetic language itself is steeped in them".[77] This last sentence is particularly revealing: the poetic language, in the case of OE, is steeped in formulae and traditional structures, which are found at both ends of the oral-written continuum. For our purposes, it is therefore *not* a contradiction to look for traces of oral techniques in OE literate works: if a poet's habits were so indebted to the ancient tradition as to regularly borrow diction, phrases, and patterns from it, it may well be the case that his poetry will reflect some of the *oral* compositional strategies of that same tradition.

The example I would like to provide is drawn from the *Panther*, a poem which is part of the so-called OE *Physiologus*,[78] along with the *Whale* and the *Partridge*. The model for these poems is the Latin *Physiologus*, itself a translation of a Greek didactic text of Christian inspiration (presumably written in Alexandria in the 2nd century A.D.),[79] where various animals are described, with various anecdotes used to illustrate each beast's moral

[74] See above, 46.
[75] Most notably Benson (1966).
[76] To which *Beowulf* is much closer, in my view.
[77] Niles (1983), 149.
[78] For the OE *Physiologus*, see Krapp and Dobbie (1936), l.
[79] Cf. A. Scott (1998).

qualities. The simile presented below appears in the description of the panther and compares its fur to the colorful tunic of the biblical character Joseph. In the model (*Physiologus Latinus Versio* Y), the comparison is very simply stated: "[*panthera*] *omnimodo varius est sicut tunica Ioseph, et speciosus*" ('[the panther] is colorful in all sorts of ways, like Joseph's tunic, and beautiful'). The OE poet, on the other hand, develops this basic statement into an elaborate simile, with an intricate nexus of contextual interactions (*Pan*. 19–30a):

Ðæt is **wrætlic deor**,	wundrum scyne	
hiwa gehwylces;	**swa** hæleð secgað,	20
gæsthalge guman,	þætte **Iosephes**	
tunece wære	**telga gehwylces**	
bleom bregdende	þara **beorhtra gehwylc**	
æghwæs ænlicra	**oþrum lixte**	
dryhta bearnum,	**swa** þæs deores hiw,	25
blæc brigda gehwæs,	**beorhtra ond scynra**	
wundrum **lixeð**,	þætte wrætlicra	
æghwylc **oþrum**,	**ænlicra gien**	
ond fægerra	frætwum **bliceð**,	
symle sellicra.		30

That is a **wondrous animal**,	wonderfully bright	
with every hue ;	so great men say,	20
people holy in spirit,	that **Joseph's**	
tunic was,	of every dye	
varying in colours,	each of **those bright colours**,	
in **all respects unique,**	**shone for the other**	

children of the multitude,	so that animal's hue,
gleaming with all sorts of colours,	**brighter and fairer**,
wondrously **shines**,	so that of the wonderful [ornaments]
each for the other ornaments,[80]	**totally unique**,
and lovely,	shines forth,
always the best.	

The main point of the comparison is the ever-changing colours that characterise both the panther's fur (19a, *wrætlic deor*) and Joseph's tunic (21b–22a, *Iosephes tunece*), and the consequent beauty of both items. *Telga gehwylces*, 'of every branch [of colour]' (22b), in the simile introduction clearly echoes *hiwa gehwylces*, 'of every hue' (20a), two lines above. When the simile is developed, we notice that 23b *beorhtra gehwylc*, 'each of the those bright [colours]', is then reflected in the context by 26b *beorhtra ond scynra*, '[of those] bright and beautiful', a continuation of the previous *gehwæs* (25a, cf. *gehwylc* in 23b). The phrase *æghwæs ænlicra*, 'in all respects unique', (24a) interacts with *ænlicra gien*, 'totally unique' (28b), while the intermingling radiance of the fur is expressed by *oþrum lixte*, 'shone for the other' (24b), picked up by *oþrum … bliceð* at 28a.[81] The remaining two elements are simple phrases paralleled in the corpus: *dryhta bearnum*, 'of the children of the multitude [of colours]' (25a), appears at *Guth*.B 1130a and *Rid*. 41.4b, while *bleom bregdende* (23a) is part of a network of phrases meaning 'varying in colour',[82] instances of which can be found at *Dream* 22a and *El*. 758b.

As the reader may notice, this example is striking, given the accurate adherence of simile and narrative: the principle of correspondence has been thoroughly followed here.

[80] *Æghwylc* ('each') to be taken with the genitive plural adjectives *wrætlicra* ('wonderful'), *ænlicra* ('unique'), *fægerra* ('lovely') and *sellicra* ('best'). A genitive plural noun *frætwa* ('ornaments') is to be understood at 27b, taken from the dative plural *frætwum* at 29b. The 'ornaments' represent the panther's colorful fur.
[81] Cf. also the use of *lixeð* at 27a.
[82] Cf. *DOE*, s.v. *blēo*, 1.a.

The dichotomy between context and simple elements seems to work, too, as the two verses which are not part of the nexus of interactions contain elementary phrases which have several parallels in the rest of the corpus. Not all the other examples are as transparent as this one; however, as mentioned above, the context/simple technique works with most of them, and I refer the reader to Appendix I for a detailed analysis of the other OE similes.

We have thus seen how the principle of composition of Sanskrit simile surfaces in the context elements of the OE tradition: the adherence or interaction of context elements with the surrounding narrative is a product, I believe, of the same compositional instinct which shapes the course of Sanskrit similes. The main difference, of course, is that the OE tradition features extended comparisons, while the Sanskrit one does not. After a brief interlude to illustrate an OE counterexample, we will apply these results to Homer, and then weigh the significance of our overall results in the Conclusion.

4. A counterexample

As we will see with Homer, it may be useful to contrast the similes analysed so far with a *sui generis* counterexample. The simile I have selected for this purpose comes from the poem *Christ* B, written by the only OE poet who signed his own works: Cynewulf. Scholars have long been fascinated by this figure, whose biographical details are as scant as his name is prominent in Anglo-Saxon verse, and in the past have regularly ascribed to him many more poems than he actually composed. As of today, only four works are indisputably attributed to Cynewulf: *Christ* B, *Elene*, *Juliane*, and the *Fates of the Apostles*, all of which he signed by inscribing his name into the text in the form of runic letters.[83] The reason why

[83] *Guthlac* B might be ascribed to Cynewulf on grounds of diction and metre, but this attribution is disputed. Cf. Fulk and Cain (2013[2]), 146–52.

I have chosen to draw a contrast between Cynewulf and the other poems is not a belief that his works are the only ones in the corpus to have been composed with the aid of writing. In fact, most of the poems I have mentioned in the previous section draw on Latin models and are probably the work of literate poets. Nor is it true that Cynewulf does not follow in the wake of the previous OE poetic tradition: just like his anonymous colleagues, he makes use of formulaic tags and recurrent themes, and his poems' tone is not too far removed from that of other religious works of the same age (ca. 9th century).

The reason behind this selection is Cynewulf's uniqueness in the history of OE poetry:[84] as scholars have recognised, his individuality stands out within the tradition, especially in his treatment of diction and syntax,[85] and on the whole his works yield the impression that their author was a self-aware crafter of words, conscious of his own art and idiosyncrasies. On the whole, such a strong individual genius was more likely to rework various aspects of the traditional τέχνη (including similes) according to his artistic inclinations, than a poet who followed unwaveringly the precepts of the old oral tradition. For this reason, a contrast between Cynewulf on one side and the rest of the OE anonymous poets on the other may yield interesting results in relation to our technique for simile composition. The simile here presented is from *Christ* B (847b–866):

	Is us þearf micel	
þæt we gæstes wlite	ær þam gryrebrogan	
on þas gæsnan tid	georne biþencen.	
Nu is þon **gelicost**	swa we on laguflode	850
ofer cald wæter	ceolum liðan	

[84] Note that Cynewulf's works are generally believed to postdate *Beowulf*. Fulk (1993), 368, dates his career between 750 and 850, while according to the same author *Beowulf* was composed between 685 and 725.
[85] Cf. Shippey (1972), 165.

geond sidne sæ,	sundhengestum,
flodwudu fergen.	Is þæt **frecne stream**
yða ofermæta	þe we her on lacað
geond þas wacan woruld,	windge holmas
ofer deop gelad.	Wæs se **drohtað strong**
ærþon we to londe	geliden hæfdon
ofer hreone hrycg.	Þa us help bicwom,
þæt us to hælo	hyþe gelædde,
godes gæstsunu,	ond us giefe sealde
þæt we oncnawan magun	ofer ceoles bord
hwær we sælan sceolon	sundhengestas,
ealde yðmearas,	ancrum fæste.
Utan us to þære hyðe	hyht staþelian,
ða us gerymde	rodera waldend,
halge on heahþu,	þa he heofonum astag.

	There is a great need
that we the beauty of our soul,	before that terrible moment
at the time of death,	consider eagerly.
Now it really is like this:	we on the ocean
across the cold waters	sail in ships,
beyond the vast sea,	in ocean-steeds,
carried on flood-wood.	The **stream is dangerous**,
the waves immense,	on which we swing here
through this fragile world,	the windy waters
over the deep paths.	Our **condition was harsh**
before we to land	had sailed

over the rough surface. Then help came,
that us <u>to safety</u> <u>in a harbour led</u>,
the holy Son of God, and <u>gave us a gift</u>
so that we may recognise over the ship's sides
where we should moor our ocean-steeds,
the old horses of the waves, fast with the anchor.
Let us in that harbour settled our hopes,
that for us was opened by the Ruler of the firmament
holy in his glory as he went up to heaven.

This simile is found at the very end of *Christ* B, well after Cynewulf's runic signature (797–807a) and has been defined as "the most elaborate simile in our old poetry".[86] Here the course of human life is likened to a perilous sea voyage, where only God is able to escort the ship of human existence into safe waters.

As can be seen, the bits of traditional phraseology and the formulaic tags have been underlined in the text,[87] while the very few contextual interactions have been marked in bold: 852a, *geond sidne sæ* ('beyond the vast sea') clearly interacts with 855, *geond þas wacan woruld* ('throughout this fragile world'), while 853b, *is þæt frecne stream*, ('the stream is dangerous') might correspond to 856b, *wæs se drohtað strong* ('our condition was harsh').[88] The structure of the comparison, however, betrays an artful manipulation of traditional patterns. After the initial comparison statement (850–854), the narrative subjects of comparison intrude into the simile itself: first, the course of human life (855a), the main

[86] Wyld (1968), 199.
[87] For 850b, *on laguflode*, cf. *Gen*.A 127a. Line 851a, *cald wæter*, is found three times in *And*. (201a, 222b, 253a). Line 851b, *ceolum liðan*, appears also at *And*. 256b. The whole line 859 is found in exactly the same form in the *Paris Psalter* (106.29). For 860b *us giefe sealde*, cf. *Guth*.A, 100b (with *gæstum* in 100a). The other verses, with the exception of the context elements, are all not found elsewhere, and contain unique phrases and even a few unparalleled compounds (e.g. *sundhengestum*, *flodwudu*).
[88] Lines 859b *hyþe gelædde* and 864a *utan us to þære hyðe* do not interact with each other, as they both refer to the harbour at the end of the voyage, which is part of the simile.

narrative referent, and then God's salvation (860a), to which the successful harbouring of the ship corresponds in the simile. Such intermingling of narrative and simile does not seem to have parallels elsewhere, in either OE or Homeric elaborate similes. Even though Cynewulf does make use of traditional diction and imagery (mainly drawn from the see voyage theme),[89] the boundaries between the content of the comparison and the narrative context are blurred.[90]

Furthermore, the syntactic structure of the simile is rather complex, with five subordinate clauses of four different kinds,[91] the last of which is contained within the previous one (note also that the last two of them, 861–2, are against Germanic word order).[92] The relative lack of variation[93] makes the passage even more remarkable. The combination of all these factors marks this comparison as an exceptional piece of poetry whose author craftily reworked traditional structures and models, much like Virgil or Apollonius. As for our simile technique, we notice a stark contrast with the other comparisons analysed so far, where simile and narrative are strictly kept apart and the passage from one to the other is generally marked by comparative connectors; we may then reasonably assume that no oral singer steeped in his poetic tradition would have dreamed to treat a simile in such an idiosyncratic manner. Cynewulf, on the contrary, did not need a compositional technique to produce his similes, and in fact no traces of it can be detected in the passage.

The Homeric simile

[89] See Foley (1990), 336–44.
[90] Cf also 864–5, where the reaching of the safe harbour (*hyðe*), part of the simile, is attributed to the agency of God, outside the simile.
[91] Relative (854b), temporal (857a), relative (859a), final/consecutive (861a), and indirect question (862a).
[92] Contrast the generally paratactic structure of the similes examined in this chapter.
[93] Which, as we have seen, is a distinctive trait of OE poetry. Contrast the second Beowulfian simile analysed above which is comparatively rich in variation.

1. Introduction

The Homeric similes, like their Sanskrit counterparts, have been subject to meticulous scrutiny. Scholars have analysed their formal structure and their impact on the narrative, and speculated on their function in relation to the poems' overall structure. Since Fränkel's seminal work,[94] it has been realised that the similes' contribution to the narrative goes beyond their direct point of comparison, and that similes can illuminate the narrative in a variety of different ways.[95]

As many have observed, the length of similes may vary considerably in the poems and, as we have seen, a first important distinction has been drawn between short and developed similes. The former usually fit within a *colon* or hemistich and, according to Edwards,[96] have much in common with formular epithets. For instance, we may take *Od*. 9.292 (ἤσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, οὐδ' ἀπέλειπεν), where the comparison is limited to the phrase underlined and the narrative resumes immediately after it. Many of the Sanskrit comparisons that we have seen in the previous section can be equated to Homer's short similes. On the other hand, the developed similes, absent in the Sanskrit epics, may run for several lines, portraying complex scenes with usually more than one actor involved. Our analysis will focus on the building of these longer comparisons.

In terms of content, similes are generally divided into three major groups: animal similes, nature similes, and technical similes.[97] Redfield is certainly right to mark a functional distinction between the first two groups and the last: while the former are generally violent in nature and reinforce the tone of its context (especially the brutal Iliadic

[94] Fränkel (1921).
[95] Shorey (1922), 246, focusing only on the explicit point of comparison and stressing the irrelevance of the other details, takes too narrow an approach. A similar prioritisation of the *Vergleichspunkt* has been recently advocated by Erbse (2000), 259. See below for a more detailed discussion of this issue.
[96] Edwards (1991), 25.
[97] Similes that portray human activities.

warfare),[98] the latter stand in contrast to the military context by comparing a peaceful act to the bloodshed of war.[99] Significantly for us, given the sheer abundance of animal and weather similes in Homer, Edwards concludes that "this kind of subject-matter [...] is likely to be traditional".[100]

For these reasons (i.e. their frequency and traditional character), I have decided to focus specifically on these two categories. First of all, hunt similes, i.e. similes where a human or animal hunt is portrayed, and set in a particular environment that Redfield defines as ἀγροῦ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχατιήν:[101] a liminal territory between the urban landscape and outright wilderness, where the human and animal struggle takes place.[102] And secondly, nature and weather similes, the other great traditional category: violent winds, sudden fires and snowstorms, clouds and waves, which usually reflect the mass movement of troops, or the irresistible impetus of a single warrior against the enemy hordes.[103] My aim is to consider whether, in such traditional, yet specific poetic contexts, we can envisage a technique of poetic construction which enabled the singer to produce long, elaborate similes.[104] Since one is often more likely to achieve significant results when the scope of one's research is not too broad, I have deliberately restricted my focus to hunt and nature similes only, but this does not exclude that the conclusions we will reach may apply to other types of similes. Given the nature of this study, I will not be able to discuss in detail all of the ninety-five similes that I have collected from the Homeric poems.[105] But I am confident that by the end of this

[98] As Buxton (2004), 146–9, argues, similes play a different role in the *Odyssey*, where warfare is marginal and relief from battle scenes is less needed.
[99] Redfield (1975), 190.
[100] Edwards (1991), 36.
[101] A frequent Odyssean formula (4.517, 5.489, 18.358, 24.150).
[102] Redfield (1975), 191–2.
[103] I have only included in this analysis the similes where the atmospheric phenomena and natural elements are the protagonist of the comparison. Similes such as *Il*. 5.499–502, where winds are present, but the main *Vergleichspunkt* is connected to human activities, have not been considered.
[104] Tree similes probably constitute another traditional family, but their number (seven extended comparisons: *Il*. 4.482–7, 12.132–4, 13.178–80, 13.389–91 (=16.482–4), 14.414–17, 17.53–8) is insufficient for us to reconstruct proper traditional patterns.
[105] Details on the remaining similes can be found in Appendix III.

chapter the principles of the technique will have been illustrated with sufficient clarity, and shown to apply to the overwhelming majority of the similes taken into account.

The existence of a precise compositional technique for Homeric similes could be extremely significant, when we consider that similes have been described as featuring "non-traditional usages and vocabulary".[106] Shipp, in his study on Homeric diction, noticed a disproportionate concentration of linguistic anomalies in similes[107] and concluded that they were generally composed later than the main narrative.[108] The question arises: were the similes produced in a radically different way to the narrative, or can they be traced back to the same tradition of versification?

This question has not been seriously addressed in recent scholarship. Scholarly efforts have rather been devoted to the interaction and patterning of similes. Moulton,[109] for example, has shown how Homeric similes and simile-patterns contribute to the characterisation of the protagonists, or the development of some of the poems' main themes.[110] However, the question of the oral production of similes has been largely ignored. An answer was attempted only by William Scott, who provided some valuable observations on the placement of similes,[111] but failed to consider in detail how the bard's mind worked in a simile-context and its vicinity. This section is intended as a contribution to this inquiry.

2. Pattern and context elements

[106] Edwards (1991), 24.
[107] Cf. Moulton (1974), 384.
[108] Shipp (1972[2]), 221.
[109] Moulton (1977).
[110] For simile patterns, see also Podlecki (1971), Magrath (1982).
[111] W.C. Scott (1974), 12–53. Notopoulos (1957) had already commented on the oral character of the Homeric simile.

Even on a casual reading of Homer, it is noticeable that, in every simile, some elements show a closer resemblance or even interaction with the narrative context that surrounds the simile, while others are farther removed from the context and display recurrent imagery that often draws on formulaic language. In this chapter, I will try to generalise this intuitive distinction by defining the former as 'context elements' and the latter as 'pattern elements'.[112] The former have already been described in the OE section, and in Homer they perform the same function as they do in that tradition: simile elements (even beyond the main *tertium comparationis*) that interact with the surrounding narrative context to produce artful interplays.

Turning to the patterns, these can be defined as sets of elements that often recur in hunt similes and can be recognised as traditional.[113] In Scott's words, they may be said to represent the 'simileme' of hunt similes: an archetypal model-simile which underpins all the single hunt or nature similes found in the Homeric text, and contains all the elements that appear in the textual similes.[114] According to the particular context, the oral poet would select which elements of the 'simileme' to deploy (or omit), in order to produce a single instance of hunt/nature simile. Along these lines, we may say that the sum total of pattern elements constitutes the 'simileme' of hunt and nature similes.

Each main actor in the hunt or the natural environment has their own pattern. A set of specific actions or attitudes (with a string of typical verbs) is ascribed to the lion, the hounds, the winds, the waves, etc. Pattern elements may also be found in the description of the wilderness in which the hunt takes place, or of the time span within which the action of

[112] For their relationship to the OE 'simple elements', see above, 133.
[113] It is also important to bear in mind the distinction between patterns and pattern *elements*: the former are the general set of actions and attributes ascribed to a certain entity; the latter are the individual phrases that constitute a pattern.
[114] W.C. Scott (2009), 18–21. We may also compare pattern elements to Ready's 'features' of a simile 'scenario' (2017), 205–23, though Ready shifts the focus from the type of simile (lion similes, wind similes, etc.) to the *activity* represented in it. Thus a lion raiding a farm constitutes a scenario appropriate to certain circumstances, while a lion feasting on a carcass is another scenario that befits different circumstances.

the simile occurs. What is interesting about pattern elements is that they often seem to constitute formulaic systems, showing a sufficient degree of extension, and also a tendency towards economy.[115] Sometimes pattern elements can be grouped into full formulaic systems, sometimes they seem to presuppose systems 'in their prime', that is, in the process of developing into full formular systems.[116]

Looking back to our classification of compositional units for semi-flexible texts,[117] the pattern elements correspond to our zero- and e-grade units:[118] the more fixed and formulaic elements, such as νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ or ὄρεος κορυφῇσι, belong to the former category, while recurrent, but non-formulaic patterns (e.g. *Il*. 11.416, θήγων λευκὸν ὀδόντα)[119] fall within the latter. The more idiosyncratic context elements (i.e. *context elements that go beyond a one-to-one connection between simile actor and narrative actor*) represent our o-grade units. Throughout the chapter, we will often come back to the relationship between pattern and context elements, on one side, and our compositional units on the other.

Pattern elements should remind us of the 'ornamental' details that we have found in the *Mahābhārata* similes. Elements such as 'at the end of the summer' or 'in the forest', which are typical of Sanskrit comparisons, can be easily likened to Homer's geographical and temporal markers such as νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ or ἐν ὕλῃ. These Sanskrit 'ornaments' are formulaic, and show a higher degree of thrift than other Sanskrit formulae. More importantly, they do not partake in the web of interactions with the surrounding narrative

[115] Their economy is not perfect, but Parry himself, in A. Parry (1971), 155–6, had already recognised that formulaic economy in Homer is not absolute.
[116] *Contra* W.C. Scott (2009), 27, who prefers to analyse the components of a 'simileme' as non-formulaic material.
[117] See above, 99–104.
[118] Generally formulaic material *in the context of similes* may best be taken as beloning to the e-grade category, since the poet, while composing a certain simile, was presumably more at ease handling the patterns that belonged to the relevant simileme, rather than that from other poetic contexts.
[119] The image of the boar's white tusks is found also at *Il*. 12.149 and 13.474–5, but is not expressed formulaically.

under the aegis of the principle of correspondence. In short, they perform exactly the same function as pattern elements in Homer. We can also be confident that, had Sanskrit bards developed short comparisons into extended simile scenes as their Homeric and OE colleagues, we would find further kinds of pattern elements related to the simile *agents*, akin to those illustrated in the next few paragraphs. But since Sanskrit similes almost never transcend the boundaries of a single stanza, and are most often confined to a single line or half-line, the actions of the simile protagonists (lions, elephants, etc.), though predictable, will always have some contextual relevance, and will never be simple patterns detached from the context.

Turning now to the main protagonists of Homer's similes,[120] we should immediately stress the importance of the lion. Both ancient and modern commentators agree that this animal embodies the most noble impulses of humanity.[121] Since antiquity, the lion was defined by the scholiast as the ἀλκιμιώτατον ζῷον, the heroic animal *par excellence*, "le singulier en face du collectif, celui qui se bat seul contre un groupe indifférencié".[122] Just as the hero is individualised and distinguished from the soldiery, so does the lion stand out among his prey and rivals.[123] Unsurprisingly, the lion is almost always connected to a hero in the narrative and his actions usually mirror the hero's attack against a group of enemies.[124] Among the actions specific to the lion, we might mention his wanderings in the wilderness (marked by verbs like εἶμι and ἔρχομαι),[125] or his attack on the prey (ἁρπάζω and

[120] This introductory discussion makes no claim to exhaustiveness. For a complete list of pattern elements in hunt similes, see Appendix II.
[121] Schnapp-Gourbillon (1981), 58. See however Zenzen (2018), 64, who remarks that lions may sometimes be used as paradigms of inhumanity (cf. *Od*. 9.291–3: Polyphemus is likened to a lion after his brutal feast of human flesh).
[122] Schnapp-Gourbillon (1981), 43.
[123] Friedrich (1981), 121.
[124] Among the minor predators, we should mention wolves (which are never singled out for their heroic deeds, but are always depicted as hunting in packs), jackals, and leopards.
[125] *Il*. 10.185, 11.115, 173, 415, 12.301, 15.325, 18.320, 20.167, 21.573–8, 24.43; *Od*. 4.338, 6.131, 134, 22.403.

cognates).[126] The lion is frequently hungry (πεινάων),[127] fierce (σίντης)[128] and, as befits a heroic animal, confident of his strength (ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς).[129]

The boar shares some of the lion's traits (like the valour or the flashing eyes), but on the whole it is best to take him as a lion in a minor key. The difference between the two animals has been acknowledged by Schnapp-Gourbillon, who rightly points out that the boar is always chased, and never chases. Whereas the lion attacks and provokes the men,[130] the boar generally "reste cantonné dans le lieux sauvages et ne pénètre nullement sur le territoire des hommes".[131] Nevertheless, the boar remains a positive referent for the Homeric heroes and, like the lion, is connected to a series of typical actions: the sharpening of its tusks (θήγων λευκὸν ὀδόντα),[132] its sidelong attacks (δοχμώ τ' ἀΐσσοντε),[133] etc.

The second main character of hunt similes is the prey, which can be divided into wild (deer) and farm prey (cattle, sheep). The latter are usually more passive: as the lions' favourite victims, farm animals generally suffer the predators' attacks and do not seem to possess a set of typical actions which can be developed into proper patterns. Deer, on the other hand, are portrayed as the exact opposite of lions. As Stephanie West has argued, if lions symbolise a superior might and physical force, deer represent the lack of these qualities.[134] Hence their usual employment as paradigms of cowardice, physical

[126] *Il*. 5.556, 12.305, 13.199, 16.355, 17.62.
[127] *Il*. 3.25, 11.550, 12.299–300, 16.758, 17.660, 18.162.
[128] *Il*. 11.481, 16.353, 20.165.
[129] *Il*. 13.471, 17.728; *Od*. 6.130.
[130] Though see Alden (2005) for some observations on lion hunting in Homeric similes. Note also that lions and boars frequently occur together in the same simile (cf. *Il*. 8.338) and, on those occasions, lions can be chased too.
[131] Schnapp-Gourbillon (1981), 49.
[132] *Il*. 11.416–17, 12.149, 13.474–5.
[133] *Il*. 12.148; *Od*. 19.451 (hunt scene).
[134] Heubeck, S. West and Hainsworth (1988), 213.

helplessness, and hasty flight (cf. *Il*. 4.243–5). The patterns usually associated with deer include swift running[135] and comments on their vulnerability.[136]

The final actor of hunt similes are the dogs and the men, usually introduced together in a single phrase. Their chief role is to protect farm animals from the lions' attacks (the typical verb is σεύω); less frequently, we find them involved in a boar hunt, attempting to surround a wild boar. Although they are most often paired, dogs and men may also have patterns of their own. A typical human pattern found in hunt similes is that of the inexperienced shepherd,[137] while the dogs' physical qualities are often portrayed by reference to their teeth (καρχαρόδοντε).[138]

In the case of nature similes, the main protagonists are unsurprisingly the natural elements. The winds, blowing from the four cardinal points, are usually presented by name (Νότος from the South, Βορέας from the North, Εὖρος from the East, and Ζέφυρος from the West). Their main typical verb is κινέω, their stirring of sea waves and trees being a common trope in these similes.[139] Fires are generally portrayed as they ravage forests and human settlements, an occurrence usually marked by the verb φλέγω and cognates.[140] The sea waves are noticeable for their loud roar[141] (*Il*. 2.210, βρέμεται),[142] as they arch up (13.798, κυρτὰ φαληριόωντα)[143] and thunderously roll against the shore (4.425, χέρσῳ ῥηγνύμενον).[144]

As mentioned above, we may find other kinds of pattern elements. References to the forests, mountains, and plains where the simile is staged are frequent and formulaic. Some of the phrases used to describe the wilderness are also found outside the realm of similes,[145]

[135] *Il*. 4.244, 11.118, 476, 13.104.
[136] *Il*. 13.104, *Od*. 4.334.
[137] *Il*. 10.485, 15.325, 632–2, 16.354.
[138] *Il*. 10.360, 13.198.
[139] *Il*. 2.144–9, 395, 4.423, 16.298.
[140] *Il*. 2.455, 17.738, 18.211, 23.52. Cf. also 20.492.
[141] A property they share with the winds: *Il*. 14.399, 15.627, 17.739.
[142] Cf. *Il*. 4.425.
[143] *Il*. 4.426, 9.7.
[144] *Il*. 2.210, 14.394, 17.264–5, *Od*. 5.402–3.
[145] Cf. ἐν οὔρεσιν at *Il*. 24.614; ῥωπήϊα πυκνὰ at *Od*. 14.473.

but I see no reason to doubt that such geographical markers are an integral part of the similes. Similar considerations apply to time indicators. For example, the phrase νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ appears only once outside a simile in its five occurrences.[146] This is striking, when we consider that there are plenty of nights in the main narrative of both epics.[147] Yet, this phrase is almost exclusively used to indicate nights in similes and seems to be distinctive to simile-contexts. I would hold that the same is true (to varying degrees) of the geographical markers mentioned above. Phrases like ἐν οὔρεσιν or ἀνὰ ῥωπήϊα πυκνὰ are certainly found in the main narrative, but their extensive employment in similes shows how peculiar they are to this particular poetic context. Other marginal pattern elements can be found in the incompetent shepherd, who leaves his flocks and herds at the mercy of wild predators,[148] and in nature similes, the distant observer who reacts to the portentous phenomena he is witnessing (e.g. *Il*. 8.559, γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν),[149] often relegated to the very end of the simile.

Now, context and pattern elements are generally complemented by other formulaic phrases, usually taken from the world of human warfare which hunt similes most often reflect. For a brief illustration, I will now analyse a very short simile, highlighting both the context and the pattern elements within it (*Il*. 16.756–8). The context elements are in bold, the pattern elements are underlined, the generically formular elements are marked in italics:[150]

τὼ περὶ Κεβριόναο <u>λέονθ'</u> ὡς **δηρινθήτην**,

ὥ τ' <u>ὄρεος κορυφῇσι</u> **περὶ κταμένης <u>ἐλάφοιο</u>**,

[146] The only exception is *Od*. 4.841.
[147] Cf. in the *Iliad*, 2.1–2, books 9–10, book 24, etc.; in the *Odyssey*, 6.1–10, 7.344–7, 23.241–6, etc.
[148] *Il*. 10.485, 15.325, 15.632, 16.364.
[149] *Il*. 4.275, 455, 13.493, 21.347. Cf. Richardson (1993), 81.
[150] I will maintain this kind of visual demarcation throughout this discussion. The small font marks words outside the simile proper.

ἄμφω πεινάοντε, *μέγα φρονέοντε* **μάχεσθον**.

The two of them [Patroclus and Hector] **fought around Cebriones** like **two lions**,
that on mountain peaks **around a dead doe**,
both hungry, *proud in spirit*, **fight**.

As can be seen, the simile expansion begins at 757, introduced (as often) by a relative clause. The phrases ὄρεος κορυφῇσι (describing the environment) and ἄμφω πεινάοντε (a comment on the lions' hunger) are pattern elements, recurring with a high degree of frequency in other hunt similes.[151] The element ἐλάφοιο is also pattern, denoting as it does one of the traditional actors of the hunt, but in this case the phrase in which it is enclosed bears contextual connotations:[152] περὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο corresponds to περὶ Κεβριόναο, the dead (cf. κταμένης) warrior around whom Hector and Patroclus, the two lions of the simile, are fighting. This element goes beyond the simple one-to-one connection Cebriones-deer, because a.) it verbally echoes περὶ Κεβριόναο, b.) specifies that the deer is dead, just like Cebriones, c.) envisages a fight happening *around* the dead body of the deer-Cebriones. These three characteristics, made explicit by the context element, transcend the simple connection 'deer equals Cebriones' and create a dynamic interplay between the simile and the narrative context. Similarly, the *dual* μάχεσθον (a context element with pattern reverberations) echoes δηριηθήτην at 756 and anticipates 760–1, a couple of lines where the fight is described in full, with the name of the *two* warriors emphatically stressed. Finally, the simile is completed by the formulaic phrase μέγα φρονέοντε, drawn from the Iliadic battle scenes.[153]

[151] The phrase ὄρεος κορυφῇσι in similes: *Il.* 3.10, 5.554, 12.282, 13.179, 16.824, *Od.* 10.113; for the lion's hunger, see note 127 above.
[152] Note that pattern elements that bear a contextual interaction are both marked in bold and underlined.
[153] *Il.* 8.553, 11.296, 325, 13.156, 16.258, 824, 22.21.

3. The technique

How could such similes be produced by an oral bard? The basic technique I am about to illustrate is indebted to Visser's analysis of 'killing verses' in Homer,[154] whose aim, as we have seen in the Introduction, was to reconstruct a technique by which an oral poet could easily improvise lines in which a hero kills or wounds another warrior ('X kills Y' as essential idea). In broad terms, Visser made a distinction between determinants (a necessary, metrically fixed[155] element that is usually given priority in its localisation within the verse) and variable elements (secondary material used to fill the metrical gaps left after the localisation of the determinants). In the battle lines explored by Visser, the determinants are the names of the warriors involved (the killer and the killed), while the peripherals should be identified in the killing verb (expressed in several ways), the epithets of the heroes, the means of killing, etc.

In the realm of traditional similes, the determinants may be found in the context elements mentioned above, as they are less predictable and more variable[156] than their pattern counterparts, and are therefore given precedence of localisation within the simile. Conversely, the pattern elements (which are more stable and formulaic) would be the peripherals. I have come to this conclusion by observing how the context elements a.) *usually* occupy the first position in the line, and b.) are *usually* found at the beginning or the very end of the simile.[157] Therefore, the composition technique for hunt similes that I have envisaged may be summarised as follows:

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[154] Visser (1988).
[155] Note that formulae, when taken together with their system, are metrically variable (as strange as it may sound!), as formulaic systems offer more than one option to express the same idea.
[156] Like the heroes' names in the killing verses.
[157] Both are hints that these elements tend to be prioritised in the construction of a line or simile.

1. Simile statement (the *wie-Satz*, “as a lion”, etc.)
2. First contextual interplay by means of context elements.
3. Construction of the simile by means of pattern elements and, secondarily, formulae taken from the world of Iliadic warfare.
4. Second contextual interplay, in the vicinity of the *so-Satz*, by means of context elements.
5. *So-Satz*, “so did the hero…”.

Needless to say, such schematisation is extremely mechanical and is intended to offer only a basic account of the technique employed by the Homeric bards. Nevertheless, let us take a particularly clear example, selecting a simile of average length (four lines). In this scene, the Achaean and Trojan armies meet for the first time, and their tumultuous clash is compared to the noise of two rivers that run into each other in a valley (*Il*. 4.446–7, 450–6):

οἳ δ᾽ ὅτε δή ῥ᾽ **ἐς χῶρον ἕνα** ξυνιόντες ἵκοντο,
σύν ῥ᾽ ἔβαλον ῥινούς, σὺν δ᾽ **ἔγχεα** καὶ **μένε**᾽ ἀνδρῶν…
[…]
ἔνθα δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ οἰμωγή τε καὶ εὐχωλὴ πέλεν ἀνδρῶν
ὀλλύντων τε καὶ ὀλλυμένων, **ῥέε** δ᾽ αἵματι γαῖα.
ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε χείμαρροι **ποταμοὶ** κατ᾽ ὄρεσφι **ῥέοντες**
ἐς μισγάγκειαν συμβάλλετον ὄβριμον ὕδωρ
κρουνῶν ἐκ μεγάλων *κοίλης ἔντοσθε χαράδρης*,
τῶν δέ τε **τηλόσε δοῦπον** ἐν οὔρεσιν ἔκλυε ποιμήν,
ὣς **τῶν μισγο**μένων γένετο **ἰαχή** τε φόβος τε.

When they came together onto **a single place**,

they hurled their shields together, their **spears** and the **fury** of men.

[…]

There the terrible cries and the shouts of triumph mingled,

as men slew and were slain, the ground **ran** with blood.

As when two wintry **rivers**, **flowing down** from the mountains,

hurl their ponderous waters into a single basin

from their great springs *within a hollow stream*,

and **far away** on the mountains a shepherd hears **their roar**.

Such were their **tumult** and flight, as they **fell upon each other**.

The simile begins with the placing of the simile subject in a prominent position: the winter torrents (452) correspond to the two armies as they clash (446). Here, the simile subject χείμαρροι ποταμοὶ builds the first link with the contextual narrative, reflecting the Greeks and the Trojans falling upon each other. This is followed by a small pattern element (κατ᾽ ὄρεσφι). After the establishment of the simile subject and a brief pattern interlude, a contextual interaction takes place: ῥέοντες (452), though usually associated with rivers, verbally reflects ῥέε and "seems directly to echo the flowing blood of the previous verse";[158] the prominent ἐς μισγάγκειαν (*hapax legomenon*) is not only picked up by μισγομένων at 456, but clearly mirrors the clashing place of the two armies as expressed at 446 (ἐς χῶρον ἕνα). Similarly, the phrase συμβάλλετον ὄβριμον ὕδωρ is a very close simile rendition of 447 (note that the same verb is used), with the water corresponding to the armies' weapons and the adjective ὄβριμον recalling the frequent warfare formula ὄβριμον ἔγχος.[159] The mid-part of the simile is then built on pattern and formulaic elements: the springs of 454 are traditionally associated with mountain rivers,[160] while κοίλης ἔντοσθε χαράδρης is based on

[158] Kirk (1985), 384.
[159] The same phrase is found in the *Hom. Hymn Herm*. 4.519.
[160] Cf. *Il*. 2.523, 20.9, *Od*. 6.124.

an Odyssean formulaic phrase with a substitutable genitive.[161] The second contextual interaction is placed at the beginning of the simile's last line (455, τῶν δέ τε τηλόσε δοῦπον), which is picked up in the following line after the resumptive ὥς, with the article τῶν and the reference to noise (ἰαχή). The second half of the line is then filled in with two final patterns: another reference to the mountains (ἐν οὔρεσιν) and the distant observer (ἔκλυε ποιμήν).

An even more transparent example can be found in the middle of Book 10,[162] where the Achaean leaders come to the wall and find the sentinels duly keeping watch in the night. The sentinels are then compared to watchful dogs (*Il*. 10.181–7):

> **οὐδὲ μὲν εὗδοντας** φυλάκων **ἡγήτορας** εὗρον,
> ἀλλ' **ἐγρηγορτεὶ** σὺν τεύχεσιν εἵατο πάντες.
> ὡς δὲ **κύνες** περὶ μῆλα **δυσωρήσωνται** ἐν αὐλῇ
> θηρὸς ἀκούσαντες κρατερόφρονος, ὅς τε καθ' ὕλην
> ἔρχηται δι' ὄρεσφι, *πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ἐπ' αὐτῷ* 185
> ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ κυνῶν, **ἀπό τέ σφισιν ὕπνος ὄλωλεν**.
> ὣς τῶν νήδυμος **ὕπνος ἀπὸ βλεφάροιιν ὀλώλει**…
>
> They did **not** find the leaders of the **sentinels asleep**,
> but, **wide awake**, they all sat with their weapons.
> Like **hounds** around the flock **keep watch** in the steadings
> after they heard a fierce-hearted beast, which down the forest
> goes in the mountains, and *on it a great tumult arises* 185

[161] *Od*. 2.424, 15.289, 21.417.

[162] I am aware that Book 10 is considered spurious by most scholars. However, Lord (2019[3]), 205–6, emphasises the thematic connections between the *Doloneia* and the rest of the poem and concludes that Books 10 and 11 are interchangeable, neither being more appropriate than the other as a sequel to Book 9. Furthermore, although he does not ascribe this book to the *Iliad* poet, Hainsworth (1993), 155, believes that Book 10 was composed "by a poet familiar with the traditional art of the ἀοιδή". Therefore, as I deem the *Doloneia* to be still part of the tradition, I see no reason to exclude passages from Book 10 as inappropriate pieces of evidence.

of men and hounds, and **sleep dissolves from them**.

So **from their eyelids had sweet sleep been dissolved**.

As we can see, the context element δυσωρήσωνται (*hapax legomenon*)[163] is placed in the first line of the simile, reflecting lines 181–2, where much emphasis is laid on the watchfulness of the Achaean sentinels (οὐδὲ μὲν εὕδοντας, ἐγρηγορτεί). Then, the poet proceeds to construct the simile by resorting to pattern elements and a single formular phrase (πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ἐπ' αὐτῷ), an adaptation of the warfare-formula πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.[164] Psychologically, this pattern section may be explained as a sort of buffer zone in which the oral poet relies on traditional formulaic elements, while contriving in his mind a second non-formulaic contextual interaction, which is placed in the very last hemistich of the simile: the context phrase ἀπό τέ σφισιν ὕπνος ὅλωλεν[165] interacts with νήδυμος ὕπνος ἀπὸ βλεφάροιιν ὀλώλει in the following line (187).

It is important to notice that our compositional units for semi-flexible texts are easily accommodated into the pattern-context distinction, which is specific to similes. The o-grade units broadly correspond to the more idiosyncratic context elements: δυσωρήσωνται and ἀπό τέ σφισιν ὕπνος ὅλωλεν in the present simile. Pattern and generally formulaic elements encompass both e-grade and zero-grade units: the former are to be found in the semantically recurrent, but non-formulaic phrases such as θηρὸς ἀκούσαντες κρατερόφρονος, the lone verb ἔρχηται, and the modified formula πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ἐπ' αὐτῷ; zero-grade units are

[163] Borrowing Ready's heuristic tools (2017), 70–3, we can say that poets used contextual interactions to introduce idiolectal material into their performance (i.e. material that belonged uniquely to a poet and was not shared with other bards in the region), given the non-traditional language that often characterises context elements.

[164] *Il*. 2.810, 4.449, 8.59, 63; *Od*. 24.70.

[165] Note that this context element is not part of the ὕπνος formular system.

the fixed ἐν αὐλῇ,[166] ὅς τε καθ' ὕλην,[167] δι' ὄρεσφι,[168] and ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ κυνῶν.[169] It will be noticed that, unlike the well-wishes examined in Ch. 1, this simile does not feature a systematic alternation of o-grade and e-/zero-grade units, as the poet has chosen to concentrate the simpler units into the building of the inner simile (lines 184–6).[170] We will see that, in the case of more complex similes, the bard will revert to a more regular alternation of compositional units.

A third example to bolster our conclusions is in order. In Book 5, Diomedes has been accorded by Athena a special kind of sight, which enables him to recognise the gods who fight on the battlefield. At 593 he sees Ares walking alongside Hector, leading the Trojans into battle. His reaction is compared to that of a man who chances upon a raging torrent and is forced to turn back (596–600):

τὸν δὲ **ἰδὼν ῥίγησε** βοὴν ἀγαθὸς **Διομήδης**·
ὡς δ᾽ ὅτ᾽ **ἀνὴρ ἀπάλαμνος**, ἰὼν πολέος πεδίοιο,
στήῃ ἐπ᾽ ὠκυρόῳ ποταμῷ ἅλαδε προρέοντι
ἀφρῷ μορμύροντα **ἰδών**, **ἀνά τ᾽ ἔδραμ᾽ ὀπίσσω**,
ὣς τότε Τυδείδης **ἀνεχάζετο**… 600

When **he saw** him [Ares], **Diomedes** great in the war-cry **shuddered**;
as when **a helpless man**, who traverses a great stretch of plain,
stops by the bank of a fast-flowing river that runs to the sea
seeing that it roars with foam, and **runs back away from it**,
so did the son of Tydeus then **retreat**… 600

[166] *Il*. 4.433, *Od*. 2.300, 18.237, always at verse-end.
[167] *Il*. 3.151, 13.102, *Od*. 9.120.
[168] See Appendix II for the formulaic system of this phrase.
[169] *Il*. 12.47.
[170] This issue will be discussed again in the Conclusion.

Apart from the initial reference to the πεδίον, a common element in nature similes,[171] the whole comparison is built around the description of the river (ὠκυρόῳ ποταμῷ, cf. 7.133), flowing towards the sea (ἅλαδε προρέοντι)[172] and thundering with foam (ἀφρῷ μορμύροντα, cf. 18.403), all of which are standard features of a Homeric stream and can therefore be taken as pattern elements. At the very beginning and the very end of the line the contextual interactions take place: the unparalleled phrase ἀνά τ᾽ ἔδραμ᾽ ὀπίσσω is echoed by ἀνεχάζετο at 600, while ἰδών (599) was anticipated already at 596. The verbs ῥίγησε and στήῃ share the same notion of tense immobility; the helpless man (ἀνὴρ ἀπάλαμνος) is of course Diomedes. The adjective ἀπάλαμνος (only here in Homer) is certainly a context element. The audience at this point would certainly remember that Athena had instructed Diomedes not to fight against any deity (since he could now see them with his god-given eyesight) with the exception of Aphrodite (5.130–2): there is nothing Diomedes can do against Ares under the present circumstances. And if this connection might seem too tenuous, it is the hero himself who immediately reminds his men (601–6) that no human should confront a god: the final line of his speech (606, εἴκετε, μηδὲ θεοῖς μενεαινέμεν ἶφι μάχεσθαι) is an invitation to desist before an insurmountable power and nicely reflects the memorable adjective ἀπάλαμνος, which was probably still echoing in the mind of the audience. In the next paragraphs, we will see other examples of contextual interactions between lines that are quite far apart.

We may thus begin to envisage a composition technique for the production of hunt similes which:

[171] The phrase itself is found at *Il*. 4.244 (simile), 23.475, 521 (simile), always in the same position within the verse.
[172] Cf. *Il*. 12.19, *Od*. 10.351, Hesiod *Th*. 757, *Hom. Hymn Ap*. 3.24, 145.

a.) hinges on the interaction between context and pattern elements,

b.) gives priority of location to the former and tends to fill the gaps (or build the simile proper) with the second.

The building of the simile, we should remember, is what the Sanskrit epics lack. In the *Mahābhārata*, most comparisons consist solely of context elements, as it were. There is no further development beyond the single clause and therefore the bricks that the Homeric bards employ to construct their similes are simply non-existent in Sanskrit. However, the principle of correspondence surfaces in Greek, too: the context elements weave several kinds of relationships with the surrounding narrative. But since the Homeric singer's aim is to sketch a whole vignette, the correspondences cannot all be crammed together in a single line, as is often the case in the *Mahābhārata*. These verbal and semantic matches, as we will see, are challenging from a mental perspective, and the bard undoubtedly felt the pressure to contrive them at a sustained pace while building a simile. In order to do so (i.e. to portray a whole scene with a number of impressive details to be reflected in the surrounding context), he needed to rely on traditional, ideally formulaic material. A stock of pattern elements suitable for different kinds of recurrent similes was probably developed to serve this end. In our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we may possibly see the traces of this process.

Unsurprisingly, not all similes are as transparent as those analysed above. In some, the contextual interplay may be more subtle, in others the pattern elements may be harder to identify. Sometimes pattern and context elements may overlap, as at *Il*. 5.92 where a river is depicted as it shatters the young men's works: πολλὰ δ'ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἔργα κατήριπε κάλ' αἰζηῶν. The portrayal of a violent nature destroying human settlements is a pattern in nature

similes,[173] but *in this case* it acquires contextual relevance by mirroring word for word the actions of Diomedes in the narrative (93): ὣς ὑπὸ Τυδεΐδῃ πυκιναὶ κλονέοντο φάλαγγες (note especially the ὑπό-construction). Nor is it true that context elements must necessarily feature idiosyncratic or unformulaic language: at *Il*. 5.864, the phrase οἵη δ᾽ ἐκ νεφέων is both formulaic[174] and pattern, but the presence of φαίνεθ᾽ ὁμοῦ νεφέεσσιν in the narrative (867) makes it *contextually* significant.

Finally, at least nine similes cannot be explained by this technique, in that they feature elements which are neither context nor pattern (nor even remotely formulaic), but their other idiosyncrasies may justify them as peculiar exceptions. At any rate, a basic technique for the building of traditional similes seems to exist, mechanical though it may be. Once again, I stress that such a method should not be seen as a rigid compositional rule, but as a basic tool that oral bards could manipulate according to their needs. In order to illustrate the mechanics of the method, I shall now analyse some of the simpler similes of average length.

4. Case Studies

An interesting example can be found at *Il*. 5.554–60, where Aeneas kills two minor Achaean warriors, the brothers Crethon and Orsilochus. The youths are compared to a couple of young lions, in one of the very few similes which end with the death of the ἀλκιμώτατον ζῷον:

οἵω τώ γε **λέοντε δύω** ὄρεος κορυφῇσιν

[173] Cf. *Il*. 16.392, 17.738. The concept is frequently found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*: 244, 325, 409.
[174] Cf. *Il*. 11.62.

ἐτραφέτην ὑπὸ μητρὶ βαθείης τάρφεσιν ὕλης, 555
τὼ μὲν ἄρ' ἁρπάζοντε βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα
σταθμοὺς ἀνθρώπων κεραΐζετον, *ὄφρα καὶ αὐτώ*
ἀνδρῶν ἐν παλάμῃσι κατέκταθεν *ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ·*
τοίω **τὼ χείρεσσιν ὕπ' Αἰνείαο** δαμέντε
καππεσέτην… 560

As **two lions** on the peak of a mountain
are raised by their mother in the thicket of the deep forest, 555
and snatch cattle and strong sheep
as they ravage the steadings of men, *until they, too,*
at the hands of the men are killed *with the sharp bronze*.
In this way **the two of them**, slain **at the hands of Aeneas**,
fell down… 560

The pattern elements, expressing the mountains, the forest, the lions' attack and their ravaging of the shepherd's stalls have been underlined. As we can see, they tend to crowd in the middle of the simile and, where context elements surface, in the second half of the line. Similarly, the formulaic line-filler ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὼ[175] and the killing formula κατέκταθεν ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ[176] are found at the very end of the line.

As for the context, the dual forms are significant, as they establish a connection with a closely related pair of warriors. The phrase ἀνδρῶν ἐν παλάμῃσι, not formulaic in itself,[177] mirrors the mention of Aeneas' hands at 559 (χείρεσσιν ὑπ' Αἰνείαο) and should be considered a context element. But it is the reference to the lions' upbringing (ἐτραφέτην ὑπὸ

[175] *Od*. 14.45, 20.296, 23.171.
[176] Cf. *Il*. 9.458, 23.412, *Od*. 4.700, 13.271.
[177] Cf. *Il*. 5.594, Ἄρης δ' ἐν παλάμῃσι.

μητρί) that creates the most interesting interplay with the context. In the immediately preceding lines, as often in battle scenes, the poet has provided a biographical digression about the two warriors, where their growth (550, ἠβήσαντε) and the connection with their father (τῶν ῥα πατήρ, cf. 543–9) had been stressed. It is not far-fetched to take the portrayal of the two young lions, reared by their mother, as a reflection of the pitiful comment on the two young heroes in the main narrative, enhancing the emotional parallel between the animal and human worlds, where young beings are killed in their prime.[178] The fact that the mother, and not the father, of the lions is mentioned in the simile simply shows the poet's attention to nature and his generally realistic depiction of the animal world:[179] the Homeric bards knew that the cubs were reared by the lioness, and not by the lion.

The same considerations apply to the *Odyssey*: the technique works there as it works in the *Iliad*. Let us take the scene where Odysseus appears to Nausicaa after his shipwreck (6.130–6) and is compared to a hungry lion:

βῆ δ' ἴμεν ὥς τε **λέων** ὀρεσίτροφος ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς,
ὅς τ' εἶσ' **ὐόμενος καὶ ἀήμενος**, ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
δαίεται· αὐτὰρ ὁ **βουσὶ** μετέρχεται ἢ ὀίεσσιν
ἠὲ μετ' ἀγροτέρας ἐλάφους· **κέλεται δέ ἑ γαστὴρ**
μήλων πειρήσοντα καὶ ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν.
ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς κούρῃσιν ἐϋπλοκάμοισιν ἔμελλεν
μείξεσθαι, γυμνός περ ἐών· **χρειὼ γὰρ ἵκανεν**.

He went as a mountain-dwelling **lion**, relying on its strength,
that goes **battered by rain and wind**, its eyes

[178] For further remarks on the pathos of this simile, see Kirk (1990), 116.
[179] Cf. Zenzen (2018), 61, where Homer's depiction of leonine behaviour is described as "verhaltensbiologisch zutreffend".

blazing; but it pursues cattle and sheep

or wild does. **Its belly urges it**

to make an attempt at the flock and enter the densely built steading.

So was Odysseus about to join the fair-haired girls, 135

naked though he was, for **need had come upon him**.

Here the mentions of the lion's strength and flashing eyes, and of the prey[180] he is pointing have been underlined as pattern elements (note the lion-specific verbs εἶσι and μετέρχεται). The physical condition of the lion (ὑόμενος καὶ ἀήμενος) interplays with 137 below (σμερδαλέος δ' αὐτῇσι φάνη κεκακωμένος ἅλμῃ), but is also a reference to the general narrative that precedes the simile: Odysseus' shipwreck (5.225–493, esp. 455–7: Odysseus drenched with water and brine). At 133, the phrase κέλεται δέ ἑ γαστὴρ is particularly important. On a contextual level, it reflects χρειὼ γὰρ ἵκανε (136) and anticipates Odysseus' γαστήρ-speech to Alcinous at 7.207–25. But together with ὑόμενος καὶ ἀήμενος, it also sets the overall mood of the simile: as Friedrich has recognised, κέλεται δέ ἑ γαστὴρ is a unique phrase modelled on the more frequent and heroic κέλεται δέ ἑ θυμός.[181] The emphasis on the lion's basic instincts[182] and wretched state, reflecting Odysseus' condition, is remarkable: this is one of the very few lion similes which do not glorify their heroic referent, but highlights his abjection and distance from the human world. Once again, the context elements of the simile have been employed by the poet to introduce an element of surprise,[183] unusual for a lion simile, which makes the whole scene particularly striking and introduces

[180] The prey which the lion runs after obviously mirror Nausicaa and her maids whom Odysseus is about to address.

[181] Friedrich (1981), 123.

[182] Significantly, the γαστὴρ is never mentioned in the pattern of the lion's hunger.

[183] This element acquires ominous connotation when the reader recalls the simile at 102–9, where Nausicaa and her maids are compared to Artemis and her retinue of nymphs, as they hunt in the mountains (κατ' οὔρεος, cf. ὀρεσίτροφος of the lion at 130): how is Odysseus going to approach Nausicaa? Thus a context element may interact with previous portions of the text to create a sense of threat that vanishes only when Odysseus decides to beseech Nausicaa from afar (149–85). See Garvie (1994), 107.

one of the themes that will recur throughout the poem (Odysseus' insistence on the γαστὴρ, cf. also 17.286).[184]

The simile could well have ended at 133,[185] but is followed by line 134, which features two pattern elements (a mention of the prey and the attack on the stalls). The poet here follows the model of *Il*. 12.299–306, another lion simile where the whole line is repeated (301) after a traditional mention of the urging θυμός (300). It seems likely that, in a simile context, these two elements (the urging θυμὸς/γαστὴρ and the attack on the shepherd's stalls) were closely associated in the mind of the Homeric bard(s), which explains why, after mentioning the urging element, the poet felt the need to complete the sentence with a further clause that does not add much to the simile (134, ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν). In general, it seems that certain elements, by virtue of repetition in performance, came to attract other elements by default.[186] Connections such as this are another aspect of the technique which should be explored further.

Of course, not all similes conform exactly to the scheme outlined above, which presents only the most basic version of the technique. Sometimes the contextual interplay is confined to the end of the simile, as at *Il*. 2.455–8:

> ἠΰτε πῦρ ἀΐδηλον ἐπιφλέγει ἄσπετον ὕλην 455
> οὔρεος ἐν κορυφῇς, **ἔκαθεν δέ τε φαίνεται αὐγή,**
> ὣς τῶν ἐρχομένων ἀπὸ χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο
> **αἴγλη παμφανόωσα** δι᾽ αἰθέρος οὐρανὸν ἷκεν.

[184] The phrase κέλεται δέ ἑ γαστὴρ represents one of the very few cases where a context element does not correspond to an o-grade unit. The phrase is a modifed formula and, according to our definition in Ch. 1, belongs to the e-grade category, but the contextual resonances of γαστήρ, which reach far beyond the present scene, are so momentous as to make it a context element.
[185] The three instances of κέλεται δέ με θυμὸς (*Il*. 10.534, 19.187, *Od*. 4.140) all lack a subsequent infinitive.
[186] Hainsworth (1968), 36.

As a destructive fire burns up a vast forest
on top of a mountain, and **its light appears far off**,
in this way, as they marched, from their divine bronze
the light shone up through the air and reached the sky.

This is the first of a remarkable series of five similes describing the Achaean army and their leaders as they march through the plain. Here the poet focuses on the gleaming of their armour, which is compared to that of a devastating fire. The beginning of the simile is wholly built on pattern elements: the fire, together with its typical verb ἐπιφλέγει, the boundless forest, and the mountain tops. The contextual interaction takes place only in the final hemistich of the simile: ἔκαθεν δέ τε φαίνεται αὐγή, a phrase surprisingly unparalleled in Homer, is picked up by αἴγλη παμφανόωσα two lines below.

The opposite is true, as well. Certain similes feature a close correspondence with the narrative only at the beginning, as in the following example (*Il*. 11.172–8)

οἳ δ' ἔτι κὰμ μέσσον πεδίον **φοβέοντο βόες** ὥς,
ἅς τε **λέων ἐφόβησε** μολὼν ἐν νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ
πάσας, **τῇ δέ τ' ἰῇ** *ἀναφαίνεται αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος*,
τῆς δ' ἐξ αὐχέν' ἔαξε λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν
πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δέ θ' αἷμα καὶ ἔγκατα πάντα λαφύσσει·
ὣς **τοὺς** Ἀτρείδης ἔφεπε κρείων **Ἀγαμέμνων**
αἰὲν ἀποκτείνων **τὸν ὀπίστατον**· οἳ δ' **ἐφέβοντο**.

Again in the middle of the plain **they fled** like **cattle**,
which a **lion routs**, coming in the dead of night;
[it routs] **all of them**, **but for a single one** *sheer death appears*,
it breaks its neck *first*, clinging at it with its strong teeth,

and then gulps down all the blood and the entrails.

So did powerful **Agamemnon** son of Atreus pursue **them**,

always killing **the last one**, and they **fled**.

Here the simile verb ἐφόβησε (173) mirrors the narrative verbs φοβέοντο (172) and ἐφέβοντο (178), while the marked distinction between the victim and the rest of the herd in the simile (174, πάσας· τῇ δέ τ' ἰῇ) is then reflected in the narrative at 177–8, where Agamemnon is said to rout indiscriminately all the Trojan soldiers (τούς), while killing *only* the last of them (τὸν ὀπίστατον), like the lion in the simile. The rest of the simile (175–6) is built entirely on pattern or formulaic warfare phrases.

Elsewhere, albeit rarely, similes may show a remarkable adherence to the narrative from start to finish, as at *Il*. 17.725–34:

ἴθυσαν δὲ **κύνεσσιν** ἐοικότες, οἵ τ' **ἐπὶ κάπρῳ** 725

βλημένῳ **ἀίξωσι** πρὸ κούρων θηρητήρων·

εἶος μέν τε θέουσι *διαρραῖσαι μεμαῶτες*,

ἀλλ' ὅτε δή ῥ' ἐν τοῖσιν ἐλίξεται ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς,

ἄψ τ' ἀνεχώρησαν *διά τ' ἔτρεσαν ἄλλυδις ἄλλος*.

ὣς **Τρῶες εἶος** μὲν ὁμιλαδὸν **αἰὲν ἔποντο** 730

νύσσοντες ξίφεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν,

ἀλλ' ὅτε δή ῥ' Αἴαντε μεταστρεφθέντε κατ' αὐτούς

σταίησαν, τῶν δὲ τρέπετο χρώς, **οὐδέ τις ἔτλη**

πρόσσω **ἀίξας** περὶ νεκροῦ δηριάασθαι.

They **pressed forward** like **hounds**, that on **a wounded boar** 725

fall upon before the young hunters;

for a while they run after it, *eager to pierce it through*,

but when it turns back against them, relying on its strength,
they draw back and *run this way and tha*t.
So did the **Trojans for a while pursue them** in throngs,
stabbing at them with their swords and double-pointed spears,
but when the two Ajaxes stopped and turned back against them,
their skin turned [pale], and **no one dared**
to **rush forward** and fight for the corpse.

In the narrative, the Trojans initially rush against the two Ajaxes, who are about to rescue Patroclus' body; but when the two heroes turn back to face them, the Trojan hordes are scattered in flight. With at least one context element per line, the simile anticipates step by step the progression of events as they unfold in the narrative: the hounds run eagerly towards the boar (εἴως μέν τε θέουσι), just like the Trojans towards the Ajaxes (730, εἶος μὲν ὁμιλαδὸν αἰὲν ἔποντο); *but when* (ἀλλ' ὅτε δή, 728 and 732) the two Ajaxes and the boar turn back (compare ἑλίξεται with μεταστρεφθέντε κατ' αὐτούς, 732), both hounds and Trojans are forced to cease their attack (for the latter, see 733–4). Such a close correspondence of simile and context, with but a few moments of psychological respite, is unique in Homer and should be recognised as a poetic *tour the force*: a remarkable achievement which must have struck the audience with its vividness and detailed exactitude.

A final peculiarity of traditional similes that needs to be addressed is their potential contrast with the context. A singer might deliberately choose to craft a comparison where the situation sketched and its characters contradict the surrounding narrative. A compelling example is *Il*. 4.273–83:[187]

ἦλθε δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Αἰάντεσσι κιὼν ἀνὰ οὐλαμὸν ἀνδρῶν.

[187] Cf. also 18.207–13.

τὼ δὲ κορυσσέσθην, ἅμα δὲ νέφος εἵπετο πεζῶν·

ὡς δ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς **εἶδεν νέφος αἰπόλος ἀνήρ** 275

ἐρχόμενον κατὰ πόντον ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς,

τῷ δέ τ᾽ ἄνευθεν ἐόντι **μελάντερον ἠΰτε πίσσα**

φαίνετ᾽ ἰὸν κατὰ πόντον, ἄγει δέ τε λαίλαπα πολλήν,

ῥίγησέν τε ἰδών, ὑπό τε σπέος ἤλασε μῆλα.

τοῖαι ἅμ᾽ Αἰάντεσσι διοτρεφέων αἰζηῶν 280

δήϊον ἐς πόλεμον πυκιναὶ **κίνυντο φάλαγγες**

κυάνεαι, σάκεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσι πεφρικυῖαι.

καὶ τοὺς μὲν **γήθησεν ἰδὼν κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων**…

He came to the Ajaxes as he went through the throngs of men.

They were arming themselves, a cloud of foot-soldiers followed them.

As when from a look-out place **a goatherd sees a cloud** 275

coming across the sea under the blast of Zephyrus,

in the distance to him **darker than pitch**

it appears as it comes across the sea, bringing on a great storm;

he shudders at its sight and leads the flock into a cavern.

In this way around the Ajaxes the thick **phalanxes** of Zeus-nurtured youths 280

marched into gruesome war,

dark, bristling with their shields and spears.

And **at their sight**, **powerful Agamemnon rejoiced**…

In the middle of his military inspection, Agamemnon comes to the contingents from Salamis and Locris, led by the two Ajaxes, and is pleased to find them ready for battle. The soldiers chomp at the bit, eager for war, and are compared to the ominous approach of a stormy cloud (νέφος). The simile, itself announced by the striking use of νέφος as a metaphor (274),[188]

[188] Note that νέφος occurs in the same metrical slot in both 274 and 275.

features some interesting pattern elements: the repetition of κατὰ πόντον reinforces the menacing tone of the comparison, while the attentive reader (or listener) may recall that the final hemistich, ὑπό τε σπέος ἤλασε μῆλα, though harmless here,[189] appears twice in the Polyphemus episode in *Odyssey* 9.[190] But the real strength of the simile lies in the contextual interactions: the threatening ἐρχόμενον, emphatically placed at the beginning of 276 and reflected by κίνυντο at 281,[191] the unique simile-within-the-simile of 277 (μελάντερον ἠΰτε πίσσα) is mirrored by κυάνεαι at 282. The contrast with the narrative is subtly prepared for by the poet, with the repetition of the verb for seeing at the beginning (εἶδεν) and the end (ἰδών) of the simile. But unlike the αἰπόλος ἀνήρ, who is terrified by the approaching storm (ῥίγησεν), Agamemnon joyously welcomes (γήθησεν) the lust for war of the Achaean soldiers. Is this a hint at the heroic stature of Agamemnon, who rejoices in a situation where ordinary people like the αἰπόλος ἀνὴρ are frightened?[192] Be that as it may, the contrast between simile and narrative is striking, and enhances the prowess of the Greek contingent.[193] This artful contradiction should also remind us of the contrastive pair employed by the *Beowulf* poet (1617a),[194] a technique which may well have been common to both traditions.

On a final note, it is interesting to remark that, as the similes become longer and more sophisticated, and the contextual interplays show a marked increase in complexity, the configuration of the similes resembles more and more that of the well-wishes examined in Ch. 1, i.e. they feature a rather consistent alteration of complex and simpler units, as opposed

[189] Although, as Adrian Kelly has suggested to me, it still partakes in the contrast: the frightened shepherd leads them into safety, while the happy leader ('shepherd of the host') allows his generals to take their troops into danger.
[190] *Od*. 9.237, 337. It is worth bearing in mind that, even if *our Odyssey* is probably later than the *Iliad* on linguistic grounds, episodes from both poems may well have been recited to the epic audience in the same period.
[191] The sense of motion is implicit in δήϊον ἐς πόλεμον.
[192] For a recent treatment of this topic, see Porter (2019).
[193] For the artful use of contrasts between simile and narrative beyond the compositional level, see Bray (2022).
[194] See above, 136. Cf. also *MBh*. 6.112.99cd–100ab, above at 125.

to the more basic similes analysed in the previous section.[195] In this comparison, for example, e-grade (ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς and τῷ δέ τ᾽ ἄνευθεν ἐόντι) and zero-grade units (ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς,[196] κατὰ πόντον,[197] λαίλαπα πολλήν,[198] and σπέος ἤλασε[199]) alternate with their o-grade counterparts (i.e. the context elements) in almost every line. The reason behind this is evident: as the poet intersperses his simile with a higher number of o-grade context elements, his buffer zones (made of simpler e-/zero-grade pattern elements) shrink and the simile's overall structure comes to resemble that of a well-wish, with a regular interchange of units.

5. Complex interplay

Some similes are characterised by context elements which interact with narrative sections or phrases located several lines before or after the simile.[200] However challenging such a feat may seem within an oral context, a talented bard certainly possessed the ability to express a certain notion in the narrative with the aim of evoking it more fully and forcefully in the simile (or vice versa).

This kind of distant interaction may be seen in similes such as *Il.* 16.352–7: here the verb διέτμαγεν (denoting the scattering of a flock) has no counterpart in the narrative until 374, fourteen lines after the end of the simile, where the poet describes the scattering of the Trojans with the phrase ἐπεὶ ἂρ τμάγεν.[201] Numerous other examples can be found. At *Il.* 5.136–42, Diomedes' renewed attack is compared to that of a lion who has been only grazed, but not fatally wounded by a shepherd (138, χραύσῃ … οὐδὲ δαμάσσῃ); this is exactly what

[195] There the 'inner' simile displayed a concentration of simple units.
[196] Cf. *Od*. 4.524.
[197] Cf. *Il.* 23.230.
[198] Cf. *Il.* 17.57.
[199] Cf. *Od*. 9.237, 337.
[200] We have had a taste of this at *Il*. 5.596–600 and *Od.* 6.131.
[201] M.L. West (2011), 319–20.

happened to Diomedes in the preceding episode, where Pandarus (95–110) struck him with his arrow, but failed to vanquish him. The simile-line expressing the making of the wound (138) has its counterpart at 106 (τὸν δ᾽ οὐ βέλος ὠκὺ δάμασσεν), but what really matters is that the simile overall reflects in detail a situation which was expressed some thirty lines before.

Even more remarkably, at *Il*. 16.752–3 the poet likens Patroclus to a lion ravaging a sheepfold as he routs the Trojan ranks. But contrary to the surrounding narrative, in the simile the lion is vanquished: ἔβλητο πρὸς στῆθος. Patroclus will not be wounded until 807, but Janko is right in seeing here "the foreshadowing of his doom".[202] A simile's context element, with no correlation to the immediate context, anticipates and interacts with the subsequent narrative, and not with a single phrase or action, but with a whole scene which constitutes the climax of the book. While the previous instances featured an interplay with a distant context, here we can see an interaction with distant *events*.

Bowie has rightly spotted an instance of this in Book 3 of the *Iliad*. When the two armies finally meet each other after the Trojan catalogue, the dust raised by the marching soldiers is compared to the mist poured by the South wind on a mountain peak (10–14):

> εὖτ᾽ ὄρεος κορυφῇσι Νότος **κατέχευεν ὀμίχλην** 10
> **ποιμέσιν οὔ τι φίλην, κλέπτῃ δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω**·
> *τόσσόν τίς τ᾽ ἐπιλεύσσει ὅσον τ᾽ ἐπὶ λᾶαν ἵησιν*·[203]
> ὣς ἄρα τῶν ὑπὸ ποσσὶ **κονίσαλος ὄρνυτ**᾽ †ἀελλής†
> ἐρχομένων…
>
> As when on a mountain top Notus **pours mist**, 10

[202] Janko (1991), 405.
[203] For parallels of this traditional image, cf. *Il*. 16.589, 21.251.

hateful for the shepherds, **but better than night for the thief**,
and one can only see as far as he can throw a stone,
in this way did **the dust rise up** in a whirl under the feet
of the marching soldiers…

Line 11 is Homer's only reference to the thief (as opposed to the oft-mentioned pirate)[204] and is particularly noticeable. To make sense of it in compositional terms, we need to look beyond the immediate context of the comparison. The first scene that follows the simile (15–20) features a panther-clad Paris who haughtily brandishes two spears and provokes the Achaeans into battle, only to shamefully quail when Menelaus comes forward. According to Bowie, the contrast of 11 is meant to introduce the figure of the Trojan prince: "Paris' sudden appearance has in fact been subtly prepared for in the preceding simile: the shepherd and thief neatly sum up the trajectory of his career, from the exposed child, brought up by a herdsman and his wife, who as a shepherd conducted the Judgement on Mount Ida [...], to the thief of Menelaus' wife".[205] It is presumable that the audience was well acquainted with these vicissitudes and, as soon as they heard the juxtaposition of shepherd and thief, their thoughts must have run to Paris, with the expectation of seeing him in action not long thereafter. In this case, it appears, a simile context element has been deployed to create a precise expectation in the audience and pave the way for the appearance of one of the poem's main characters, if not its only real 'villain'.[206]

The potential of this technique is fully exploited at 18.318–23, a simile where the poet compares the mourning Achilles to a bereft lion:

πυκνὰ μάλα στενάχων, ὥς τε **λὶς ἠϋγένειος**,

[204] Bowie (2019), 94.
[205] Bowie (2019), 94.
[206] Thersites is a minor Achaean counterpart.

ᾧ ῥά θ᾽ ὑπὸ **σκύμνους** ἐλαφηβόλος ἁρπάσῃ ἀνήρ

ὕλης ἐκ πυκινῆς, ὃ δέ τ᾽ **ἄχνυται ὕστερος ἐλθών**, 320

πολλὰ δέ τ᾽ ἄγκε᾽ ἐπῆλθε μετ᾽ ἀνέρος **ἴχνι᾽ ἐρευνῶν**,

εἴ ποθεν **ἐξεύροι***· μάλα γὰρ δριμὺς* ***χόλος*** *αἱρεῖ·*

ὣς ὃ **βαρὺ στενάχων** μετεφώνεε Μυρμιδόνεσσιν.

Moaning incessantly as **a well-maned lion**,

whose **cubs** a deer hunter has snatched away

from the thick forest, and **it grieves because it came too late**, 320

and traverses many glens **following** the man's **tracks**,

if it **may find him**, and *a keen* ***anger*** *takes hold of it*.

Thus, **moaning heavily**, he spoke to the Myrmidons.

This simile is remarkable for two reasons. First, it is one of only two hunt similes in the *Iliad* which do not occur in battle scenes (the other being 24.41–3). Second, the implications of its context elements are striking and deserve deeper scrutiny. Apart from the obvious πυκνὰ μάλα στενάχων (316), picked up at 322,[207] the other context elements interact not with the immediate context, but with the poem's overarching narrative and, specifically, with Achilles' heroic vicissitudes. As Edwards remarks, the lion has failed to help its cubs and come too late to their rescue, just as Achilles was unable to protect Patroclus and took action only once his death had already occurred. In the simile, the lion is blind with rage (δριμὺς χόλος αἱρεῖ)[208] and immediately sets off to take revenge, tracking the hunter's footsteps (319): a detail which anticipates Achilles' pursuit of Hector in Book 22. Significantly, the

[207] It is unclear whether πυκνὰ μάλα στενάχων is part of the simile or the narrative. Its position makes the latter option more probable, but the close repetition βαρὺ στενάχων (just after the resumption of the narrative marked by ὣς) might indicate that the poet conceived of it as part of the simile, but located it before the initial ὡς on account of this participle's strong attraction to the main caesura of the hexameter (eleven Homeric occurrences).

[208] Cf. 337, χολωθείς.

tracking down of a prey reappears at 22.192 (ἀνιχνεύων, of a hound pursuing a stag), in a simile mirroring Achilles' chase of Hector. This example is unique: no other simile is so closely related to the development of the epic narrative. Its context elements are not designed to interact with the surrounding context, but encapsulate the main threads of Achilles' story from Book 9 (Achilles' refusal to take action and return to war) to Book 22 (the achievement of the hero's revenge).[209]

Though there is no exact parallel of such a simile, an analogous strategy may have been employed by the *Odyssey* poet. At 4.333–40 Menelaus predicts Odysseus' return to Ithaca, and his brutal slaughter of the suitors, comparing him to a lion who butchers a couple of fawns in its lair:

ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ **κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρὸς** ἐν **εὐνῇ**
ἤθελον **εὐνηθῆναι ἀνάλκιδες αὐτοὶ ἐόντες**.
ὡς δ᾽ ὁπότ᾽ ἐν ξυλόχῳ **ἔλαφος <u>κρατεροῖο λέοντος</u>** 335
<u>νεβροὺς</u> κοιμήσασα νεηγενέας γαλαθηνούς
<u>κνημοὺς</u> ἐξερέῃσι <u>καὶ ἄγκεα ποιήεντα</u>
<u>βοσκομένη</u>, **ὁ** δέ τ᾽ ὦκα <u>ἐὴν εἰσήλυθεν **εὐνήν**</u>,
ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ τοῖσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφῆκεν,
ὣς **Ὀδυσεὺς κείνοισιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσει.** 340

Oh me, in **the bed of a strong-hearted man**
they wished to **sleep**, though **they are weak themselves**.
As when **in <u>a strong lion</u>'s** <u>woody lair</u> <u>a doe</u> 335

[209] We should also note that the theme of χόλος is central to Book 18, where the object of Achilles' anger shifts from Agamemnon to Hector. The theme is first introduced at 18.107–113, (another anger-based simile which the hero employs to frame the wrath caused by Agamemnon and his subsequent appeasement towards the king), and is then picked up in the comparison we have just discussed, which directs Achilles' χόλος against Hector. As Christopher Metcalf has suggested, these two similes both illustrate the continuity of the hero's anger, and mark the shift from the first to the second object.

puts to bed her new-born tender fawns

and looks for glens and grassy valleys

to pasture, but **the lion** soon comes back to its **lair**

and **for both of them works a shameful death**, 340

so will **Odysseus for them work a shameful death**.

This simile, which generally conforms to the principles of the technique,[210] has drawn the attention of commentators for one incongruous detail. As Stephanie West writes, it is the doe (ἔλαφος, which has no correlation to the narrative context) that puts her newborns to sleep into the lion's lair, and since the narrative referents of the fawns are the suitors themselves, the poet seems here to hint that the suitors' parents share to some extent the responsibility of their sons' wrongdoing.[211]

This sentiment finds no other expression until the very end of the poem, where the suitors' parents come to fore, determined to avenge the murder of their sons. In the assembly of Book 24, the seer Halitherses reproaches the suitors' parents (454–62), explicitly blaming their baseness (ὑμετέρῃ κακότητι), which led them to disregard his and Mentor's advice: a clear reference to the scene in Book 2, when both men tried in vain to persuade the Ithacans to drive out the suitors.[212] The crucial difference between the two scenes is that in the former the family relations of the Ithacans and the suitors are not made explicit, while at 24.455–7 Halitherses expressly says that the parents' passive attitude towards their *sons* (ὑμετέρους παῖδας) was one decisive factor that provoked their murder. Thus, the notion of the parents'

[210] The interplay between κοιμήσασα and εὐνηθῆναι is evident, as is the connection between εὐνῇ (333, a man's bed) and εὐνήν (338, an animal lair), and that between the two genitives κρατεροῖο λέοντος (333) and κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρός (335). Line 339 is closely related to 340, while the insistence on the fawns' vulnerability (νεηγενέας γαλαθηνοὺς) may reflect the deer-like feebleness of the suitors (ἀνάλκιδες). The only unclear element is the verb ἐξερέῃσι. The whole simile is quoted at 17.126–30, where Telemachus reports Menelaus' speech to Penelope.

[211] Heubeck, S. West and Hainsworth (1988), 213.

[212] See Heubeck, Fernandez-Galliano, and Russo (1992), 409, for the detailed correspondences between the two scenes.

guilt, though not widespread, is present in the *Odyssey*, and it is not unreasonable that the poet wished to hint at it by means of the ἔλαφος element in the simile of Book 4.

Similarly, we cannot help noticing a subtle reference to the future of Troy in the star simile of *Il*. 22.26–31: Achilles, compared to the malicious star Sirius, is said to bring "much fever (or heat) to the wretched mortals" (31, φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν). De Jong is right in pointing out that this detail prefigures the evils that Achilles will heave upon Priam's family (the king is here watching the approach of the Achaean hero from the walls) and Troy itself, whose fate had already been foreshadowed in two previous similes depicting a burning city (17.737–42, 18.207–14).[213] The context element δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν not only anticipates the mythical narrative of Troy, but is also cleverly employed by the poet in a context other than character speech, which makes it particularly emphatic: Priam himself will use it in his subsequent speech to Hector (76), as he begs his son to desist from any resistance against the superhuman Achilles.[214]

We have thus seen how the basic technique can be stretched to encompass other subtle kinds of contextual interaction. The sophistication of the interplay was bound to increase gradually with the development of the tradition and the ability of the single bards. If we were to delineate a relative chronology for the development of the basic technique, we may suppose that singers initially devised contextual interplays only with the surrounding narrative. Gradually, their experiments with versification and simile construction led them to develop forms of interaction with *distant* narrative elements (some twenty lines before or after the simile). Then, the focus of the interaction may have shifted from elements first to narrative *events* (cf. *Il*. 16.752–3, foreshadowing Patroclus' death), and later to the narrative's overarching structure, as in the simile of *Iliad* 18. This, of course, is only a

[213] Cf. the burning heat brought by the fever at 22.31.
[214] De Jong (2012), 66.

tentative chronology, which we may venture to reconstruct out of the few traces that we find in the poems. Any such attempt is bound to be conjectural to the highest degree. Yet, the fact remains that the basic technique could be manipulated by talented bards to produce complex forms of interaction with distant (but significant) portions of the narrative.

6. Exceptions

It is now time to address the similes that cannot be explained solely by means of our technique. Rather crudely put, these exceptions feature elements which are neither context nor pattern, and the various anomalies they contain may lead us to interpret them as peculiar irregularities that confirm the rule. I should immediately emphasise that these issues of diction and interpretation do not resolve the problem of the similes' exceptional nature: they *remain* full-fledged exceptions in relation to my theory. But their anomalies may help us understand why they lie outside the capacity of the technique: if the poet took an idiosyncratic approach to diction and imagery in a simile, it is more likely that such approach affected his method of composition, too, which cannot be reconstructed by means of *basic* rules. In what follows, I shall address in detail only three of the nine[215] exceptions, analysing their peculiarities in relation to the technique; for the others, I refer the reader to Appendix III.

[215] We should briefly address the issue of the only *verbatim* repeated hunt-simile (*Il*. 11.550–5 = 17.659–64). If we believe that both occurrences were produced by the same poet and constitute an individual simile that the singer adapted twice in different contexts, this repeated simile should be counted among the exceptions, as it contains elements that cannot be explained by means of the technique. If however, as some scholars do, we take it as a quasi-typical scene (like the feast or the arming scenes), the whole simile should be considered a traditional (and therefore *unexceptional*) portion of text, and its anomalous elements could be explained as belonging to a conventional pattern (cf. W.C. Scott (1974), 127–40). The question remains open, but we should acknowledge that, even if this simile is taken to be exceptional, the overall number of exceptions would only rise to ten (out of ninety-five).

To begin with, let us take a short exceptional simile (the others are generally above the average length), which already presents some of the difficulties that we will find in its longer counterparts (*Il*. 17.132–7):

> **Αἴας** δ' **ἀμφὶ Μενοιτιάδῃ** σάκος εὐρὺ καλύψας
> ἑστήκει, ὥς τίς τε **λέων περὶ οἷσι τέκεσσιν**,
> ᾧ ῥά τε νήπι' ἄγοντι συναντήσωνται ἐν ὕλῃ
> ἄνδρες ἐπακτῆρες· ὃ δέ τε σθένεϊ βλεμεαίνει, 135
> πᾶν δέ τ' ἐπισκύνιον κάτω ἕλκεται *ὄσσε καλύπτων*·
> ὣς Αἴας **περὶ Πατρόκλῳ** ἥρωϊ βεβήκει.
>
> **Ajax** covered **the son of Menoetius** with his broad shield
> and stood still, as **a lion around its cubs**,
> which, as it is leading them in the forest, is confronted
> by hunters; it exults in its strength 135
> and draws down its entire brow *covering its eyes*.
> In this way did Ajax come **around the hero Patroclus**.

This simile can generally be explained by the rules of the technique, the only exceptional elements being the verb συναντήσωνται and the phrasing at 135. We should first consider the various *hapax legomena* of the simile: the verb συναντάω and the adverb κάτω are found only here in the *Iliad*, while the noun ἐπισκύνιον is unique in Homer. Secondly, we witness an idiosyncratic use of some formulaic expressions, such as σθένεϊ βλεμεαίνει, found only twice in the indicative,[216] while in the other four occurrences[217] the poet prefers the participle βλεμεαίνων. More significant here is the employment of the expression ὄσσε καλύπτων, a

[216] *Il*. 17.22.
[217] *Il.* 8.337, 9.237, 12.42, 20.36.

warfare formula which in all its other occurrences[218] features an aorist indicative verb (κάλυψε) and metaphorically stands for the darkness enveloping the eyes of a dying warrior. In this case *only* does the formula take on the literal meaning of 'hiding' or 'covering' one's eyes. Furthermore, the very image of the lion covering its eyes with its brow is unique and caused no little perplexity among ancient commentators, who speculated about the intent of such a peculiar movement.[219]

We should note that all the elements described above have no correspondence whatsoever with the narrative and cannot be taken as context elements.[220] Needless to say, on account of their anomalies, they are not traditional or recurrent elements, either, and should not be described as patterns. Thus, the simile cannot be explained exclusively on the model of the preceding examples. But the fact that it transcends the boundaries of the basic technique does not mean that it is due to interpolation or that it does not belong to the original text. A tentative hypothesis may be that the author of this simile was a singer particularly inclined to 'experimentation', given the large number of idiosyncrasies in the passage: perhaps he employed the basic technique just as much as he needed it to set up the simile, and then developed it in a highly creative manner according to his artistic aims.

On a similar note, *Il*. 16.383–93 works perfectly in technical terms, with the exception of the moralising parenthesis in the middle of the simile:

> ἴετο γὰρ βαλέειν· τὸν δ᾽ ἔκφερον **ὠκέες ἵπποι**.
> ὡς δ᾽ ὑπὸ λαίλαπι πᾶσα *κελαινὴ βέβριθε χθών*
> ἤματ᾽ ὀπωρινῷ, ὅτε λαβρότατον χέει ὕδωρ 385
> Ζεύς, ὅτε δὴ ἄνδρεσσι κοτεσσάμενος χαλεπήνῃ,

[218] *Il*. 4.461, 503, 526, 6.11, 13.575, 14.519, 15.578, 16.316, 325, 20.393, 471, 21.181.
[219] Edwards (1991), 76.
[220] The correspondence between καλύπτων and καλύψας at 132 is ambiguous, since the same verb is employed to express two completely different actions.

οἳ βίῃ εἰν ἀγορῇ σκολιὰς κρίνωσι θέμιστας,
ἐκ δὲ Δίκην ἐλάσωσι, θεῶν ὄπιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες,
τῶν δέ τε πάντες μὲν ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες,
πολλὰς δὲ κελιτὺς τότ᾽ ἀποτμήγουσι **χαράδραι**, 390
ἐς δ᾽ ἅλα πορφυρέην **μεγάλα στενάχουσι ῥέουσαι**
ἐξ ὀρέων **ἐπικάρ**, μινύθει δέ τε ἔργ᾽ ἀνθρώπων.
ὣς **ἵπποι** Τρῳαὶ **μεγάλα στενάχοντο θέουσαι**.

He [Patroclus] strove to strike [Hector], but his swift horses led him away.
As under a storm the whole *black earth is burdened*
on an autumn day, when the most violent water is poured 385
by Zeus, when, provoked by men, he is enraged,
because in the assembly by force they decide crooked laws,
and drive Justice away, taking no care of the gods' vengeance.
All the rivers are filled in their flow,
the torrents destroy many a hillside, 390
and **moan loudly as they flow** to the surging sea
headlong from the mountains, and the works of men perish.
Thus did the Trojan **mares moan loudly in their run**.

Here Hector is being driven away from Patroclus' onslaught by his swift horses, who are then compared to the rivers and torrents flowing rapidly downstream on an autumn day. As can be seen, the simile is perfectly within the capacity of the technique (especially the final correspondence between 391 and 393), with the exception of 386–8, an ethical remark on the punishments that Zeus inflicts to mortals who behave unjustly. The sentiments of these lines, with Zeus depicted as the guardian of justice, have no parallels in the *Iliad*[221] and are

[221] And indeed very few in the *Odyssey*. See Allan (2006), who stresses the continuity between the ethical attitude of the Iliadic gods and that of their Odyssean counterparts. For a different view Burkert (1997), 259.

actually redolent of Hesiod. Indeed "the Hesiodic parallels and rarity of references to such beliefs in the *Iliad*, where Zeus cares above all for guests and suppliants, have led many to suspect this simile".[222] I am not sure whether this provides reason enough for excision, but it is a fact that when these lines are removed, the simile is unproblematic and entirely explainable by reference to the technique.[223] We might take it as a half-exception, given that 386–8, even if original, display an ethical attitude that is alien to the traditional similes we have been analysing.[224]

Moving on to the longer hunt similes, let us consider *Il.* 12.41–50:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἔν τε κύνεσσι καὶ ἀνδράσι θηρευτῇσιν
κάπριος ἠὲ λέων στρέφεται σθένεϊ βλεμεαίνων.
οἳ δέ τε *πυργηδὸν σφέας αὐτοὺς ἀρτύναντες*
ἀντίον ἵστανται καὶ *ἀκοντίζουσι θαμειάς*
αἰχμὰς ἐκ χειρῶν· τοῦ δ' οὔ ποτε *κυδάλιμον κῆρ* 45
ταρβεῖ, οὐδὲ φοβεῖται, – ἀγηνορίη δέ μιν ἔκτα –
ταρφέα τε **στρέφεται** *στίχας ἀνδρῶν πειρητίζων*,
ὅππῃ τ' ἰθύσῃ, τῇ εἴκουσι στίχες ἀνδρῶν·
ὣς Ἕκτωρ ἀν' ὅμιλον ἰὼν **εἰλίσσεθ'**[225] ἑταίρους

[222] Janko (1991), 365.
[223] It would also attain a nearly average length of six lines.
[224] This is not to say that the *Iliad* poet is alien to ethics. As Stoevesandt has shown, the theme of the Trojans' guilt becomes more prominent in the second half of the poem, as Hector's death (to which the fall of Troy is intimately linked) looms ever closer. Stoevesandt (2004), 247–8, takes the simile discussed above (about the violation of Zeus' laws) together with 21.521–5 (the simile of the burning city), arguing that the poet, through the simile medium, might have hinted at the connection between the Trojans' moral transgressions (cf. Paris and Pandarus) and the fall of their city. If that was indeed the poet's aim, it is even less surprising that he transcended the boundaries of the traditional technique at 16.386–8 in order to make this subtle ethical point. Taking this simile together with *Il.* 3.10–14 (on Paris) and 21.521–5 (cf. also 17.737–42), the sequence shepherd/thief-unjust city-burning city may make us wonder whether the poet is carefully deploying idiosyncratic elements (both context units and untraditional material) in his similes to subtly condemn the Trojans' actions and shape our interpretation of them.
[225] The vulgate has ἐλλίσσεθ' here (printed by West), which is not appropriate for a Trojan leader and is contradicted by the following ἐποτρύνων, (cf. Hainsworth (1993), 323). Nicanor discussed the variant εἰλίσσεθ', but rejected it; Fränkel (1921), 67n., accepts it as the obvious reading. I believe it should be

τάφρον ἐποτρύνων διαβαινέμεν… 50

As when among the hounds and hunters
a wild boar or a lion turns about exulting in its strength.
They *close in like a wall*
and *stand before it, hurling many*
spears from their hands; its *glorious heart* never 45
shudders, nor does it fear – its valour brings about its doom –,
it quickly **turns this way and that**, *trying to break the ranks of men*,
and wherever it makes an onrush, the ranks of men give way.
Thus did Hector **turn about** as he went through the crowd, urging
his comrades to cross over the ditch… 50

Apart from its length and unusual reliance on warfare formulae, the only real difficulty of this simile is line 48. Fränkel thought that 47–8 were "wenig geschickte Verse" and suggested that they had been added to an older simile (41–6) by the singer in order to adapt it to the following narrative.[226] Yet the connection with the context is really nebulous: Hector is not encircled by his enemies as 41–2 seem to imply,[227] and his comrades do not fall back before him as the hunters do before the lion. Furthermore, the combination ὅππη-τῇ is found nowhere else in Homer. One would be tempted to athetise 48,[228] explaining it as a gloss by a scholar who was paraphrasing the action in 47; the gloss may have later made its way into the text. Without it, we would rid the simile of its linguistic oddities, its contextual

preferred, as it nicely picks up στρέφεται at 47 (as often the so-Satz does, cf. Shorey (1922), 252) and is more appropriate to Hector. It does create a violent enjambment at 49 (but see Erbse (2000), 262, for instances of Homeric sense-pause after the fifth trochee); yet, this is less surprising in a passage characterised by harsh run-on-lines (44, 51).

[226] Fränkel (1921), 66.

[227] Fränkel (1921), 67, sees Hector as encircled by the Achaean ditch before him and his reluctant men behind.

[228] Cf. Fränkel (1921), 66. Bentley deleted it, cf. M.L. West's apparatus (1998).

incongruity, and its exceptional status with regards to the technique. But certainty is here beyond reach.[229]

7. Counterexamples

Having dealt at length with the exceptions, it is now helpful to return to the statistics. Out of ninety-five hunt and nature similes in Homer, only nine require an explanation which clearly transcends the capacity of the technique (with an exception rate of ca. 9.5%). But as we have seen, these similes are immersed in a highly idiosyncratic context, which features different kinds of anomalies; this is not tantamount to saying that these passages should be excised as unoriginal, but the fact that they are clearly *beyond* the 'Homeric norm' in so many respects helps us understand why they are also beyond the technique of simile-construction which we have illustrated. The other eighty-six similes can be explained (to varying degrees) by means of the technique. The main point of differentiation is the kind of contextual interaction that the similes present, which can be more or less complex. This variation in the degree of complexity may be taken diachronically to reflect the gradual development of the techniques of versification and structuring employed by generations of bards.

In order to further bolster these conclusions, it might be useful to contrast these traditional similes with two others: an 'untraditional' one[230] and one which was crafted by an undoubtedly literate poet. The first one (*Il*. 4.140–6) is the famous simile of the Maeonian (or Carian) woman who dyes some ivory with purple, to which Menelaus' wound by Pandarus is compared:

[229] We should note, however, that the simile is still explainable in terms of complex and simple units, as the o-grade phrases are regularly interspersed with zero- and e-grade counterparts.
[230] See above for the precise meaning I give to this term, 108.

αὐτίκα δ᾽ ἔρρεεν αἷμα κελαινεφὲς ἐξ ὠτειλῆς·
ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε τίς τ᾽ ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μιήνῃ
Μῃονὶς ἠὲ Κάειρα, παρήϊον ἔμμεναι ἵππων –
κεῖται δ᾽ ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἠρήσαντο
ἱππῆες φορέειν, βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,
ἀμφότερον κόσμός θ᾽ ἵππῳ ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος –
τοῖοί τοι, Μενέλαε, μιάνθην αἵματι μηροὶ…

Immediately the dark blood gushed from the wound.
As when a woman stains ivory with purple,
from Maeonia or Caria, to be the cheek-piece of a horse –
it lies in the chamber, many horsemen want
to bear it, but it is an ornament for kings,
bringing beauty to the horse and glory to the horseman –
in this way, Menelaus, were your thighs stained with blood…

As noted by Kirk, "the bare facts of the comparison [underlined above] are briefly stated in the first two verses", while "the next three expand on the desirability of the finished royal possession".[231] The rest of the simile is unconventional in both diction and imagery: the phrases employed have no parallels elsewhere in Homer, and we also find one *hapax legomenon* (ἄγαλμα). There is not even the slightest trace of patterns. The simile as a whole is untraditional, in the sense that the situation it portrays and the elements it features are not recurrent in the poems.[232] The technique, as stressed more than once, was aimed to explain the compositional progression of *traditional* comparisons, a category from which technical

[231] Kirk (1985), 345–6. Bowra (1952), 278, along similar lines, writes that "the last two lines leave the original situation behind and complete the picture for its own sake".
[232] For the (idiosyncratically sophisticated) function of this simile in the metaphorical effeminazation of Menelaus, see Oliensis (2019).

similes, with their colorful palette of domestic details and *minutiae* of everyday life and craft, should be excluded.[233] Here Kirk's suggestion that the precise toponymical description of the craftswoman (Μηονὶς ἠὲ Κάειρα), as well as the dyeing process, might be owed to personal observation is interesting from a compositional point of view: for the production of technical similes, the poet did not need to draw on the stock elements of the hunt and nature 'similemes', but was probably quite content (and compositionally at leisure) to turn the details of his life into poetry.[234]

The second simile is taken from the *Aeneid* (2.494–500) and, as often in Virgil, is indebted to a precise Homeric model (i.e. *Il*. 5.87–93):

> Fit uia ui; **rumpunt** aditus primosque trucidant
> immissi Danai et late loca milite complent.
> Non sic, aggeribus **ruptis** cum spumeus amnis
> exiit oppositasque euicit gurgite moles,
> fertur in arua **furens** cumulo, camposque per omnis
> cum stabulis armenta trahit. uidi ipse **furentem**
> caede Neoptolemum…[235]

> Violence makes a way; the Greeks **break** through the passages and slay
> the first victims as they pour in and fill the place with their ranks.
> Not like this, when a foaming river floods over its **shattered** banks
> and in its whirls overcomes the barriers on both sides,
> it rushes **furiously** across the plain in a mass, and through all the fields

[233] It is interesting to note that here even our theory of compositional units does not apply, as there is an abnormal concentration of o-grade units without simpler moments for respite.
[234] For a discussion of these local details (typical of the *Iliad*, but never found in the *Odyssey*), see M.L. West (2011), 20–7, who concludes the poet's personal experience must lie behind these geographical references (concentrated in the central-western coast of Asia Minor).
[235] Quotations from Virgil follow Mynors' 1969 edition.

drags away the cattle with their stalls. I myself saw Neoptolemus,

raging in the carnage… 500

In Homer, Diomedes in the middle of his ἀριστεία (a single hero's display of prowess) is compared to a river that bursts over its banks and floods the nearby countryside.[236] In the *Aeneid*, the subject of comparison are the Greeks who sweep the Trojan resistance as they make their way into the city. As can be seen, the points of contact with the narrative beyond the equation *Danai-amnis* have been marked in bold. They are not many and are limited to the verb *rumpere*, present in both simile and narrative, and the adjective *furens*, referred to Neoptolemus at 92.[237] The phrase *fertur in arua* is paralleled in another simile (5.215: *fertur in arua uolans*), while *spumeus* is an epithet apparently coined by Virgil himself and generally applied to both the rivers and the sea.[238] The rest of the simile cannot be explained in terms of the pattern-context dichotomy. Virgil was here presumably aiming to follow and rework his model, placing Homer's simile in a different context, and without giving too much thought to the mechanics of a technique for composition-in-performance which he did not need. His version of the comparison inevitably bears some points of contact with the narrative, but lacks the multiple interactions and the formulaic material that we have seen in the Homeric similes (and which the Homeric bards sought and relied on, respectively). An analysis of other Virgilian similes will undoubtedly yield similar results.[239]

8. Homeric Conclusions

[236] Note that this simile is entirely traditional and works well with the technical principle illustrated.
[237] Cf. Austin (1964), 194.
[238] Cf. 7.465, 12.524, and for the sea cf. e.g. 8.671–2.
[239] For a classification of similes in Virgil, see Wilkins (1921).

We have thus seen how, on the one hand, the oral technique here illustrated is most clearly identifiable in comparisons which show a distinctively traditional character (i.e. hunt and nature similes), as opposed to the more ingenious and unique technical ones. At the same time, later poets, who could rely on the writing technology and did not versify in performance, certainly made no use of this technique, whose traces are indeed absent in their works (cf. the *Aeneid* passage quoted above). What we can conclude, so far at least, is that a technique for the composition of *traditional* elaborate similes seems to emerge from the textual evidence, mechanical though it may be. But we have also seen how the Homeric bards were able to transcend its boundaries and manipulate it to produce different kinds of poetic effects.[240]

One of the most important aspects we can observe is the combination of tradition and innovation in simile-composition. We have seen how the singers rely on traditional elements for the construction of the simile: the patterns are but fragments of traditional imagery and diction. At the same time, we should also acknowledge the bard's own artistry in creating new interactions with the narrative by means of context elements, which often contain peculiar language and innovative material. In short, the patterns generally embody the tradition, while the contexts elements express the creativity of the single poet.

We have also seen that our technique is on the whole easily accommodated into the framework of compositional units proposed in Ch. 1 for semi-flexible texts, with the pattern elements corresponding to our zero- and e-grade units, and the more idiosyncratic context elements generally (but not always) constituting the o-grade units. The more basic examples tend to relegate o-grade context elements to the edges of the comparison, and build the inner simile by means of e- and zero-grade pattern elements. In the more complex instances, the

[240] For a comparable trespass of traditional boundaries in a different (predominantly oral) culture, see Čolaković (2019).

contextual interactions are scattered throughout the simile and consequently its overall structure features the same alternation between o-grade moments of mental effort and e-/zero-grade oases of relaxation.

It should be said, however, that traditional similes constitute a particular kind of semi-flexible text. Although their constituent elements can be classified into zero-, e-, and o-grade units just like well-wishes, compositional categories such as the principle of correspondence and the pattern-context distinction can only be applied to similes, and are irrelevant in other kinds of semi-flexible texts. Furthermore, similes have a minimal fixed core (the particles ὡς and ὥς, which function as compositional signals), because their constituent elements are not linked to a motif (as in the case of well-wishes), but are determined by the surrounding narrative. For all these reasons, similes are better taken as a special kind of semi-flexible text: their flexibility is even higher as their fixed core units (i.e. the context elements, the backbone around which the simile is built) vary in accordance with the narrative.[241] These points will be taken up and further discussed in the Conclusion.

Finally, the acknowledgement of these compositional mechanisms, and in particular of context elements, may affect the long-standing discussion on the function of Homeric similes at large. Before Fränkel's fundamental work,[242] the extended Homeric similes were generally seen as contributing very little to the narrative beyond the explicit point of comparison (*Vergleichspunkt*). In Fränkel's own words, the details which make up the simile vignette were only taken as mere *Geschwätz* or *Dekoration*,[243] with little narrative import. Set against this somewhat limited interpretation, Fränkel's study showed that, in order to understand the deep function of a simile, one should consider its entire content (and not only

[241] For these reasons, although similes can be classified as a special kind of semi-flexible text, they do not constitute a motif according to our definition (see above, 60): 'a cluster of core ideas, generally formulaically expressed, surrounded by more variable, but largely predetermined material'.
[242] Fränkel (1921).
[243] Fränkel (1921), 1.

the explicit *tertium comparationis*): more specifically, he argued in favour of the existence of multiple connections (*weitere Beziehungen*)[244] between simile and narrative, so that the former illuminates the latter in a variety of different ways.

Although Fränkel's view has since attracted several followers[245] and asserted itself as the dominant interpretive key to Homeric similes, it still received a fair share of scholarly criticism, both at the time[246] and recently, with Erbse arguing for a *Vergleichspunkt*-based interpretation as late as 2000.[247] His overall analysis is more sophisticated than those of the beginning of the 20th century: in Erbe's view, the details of a simile are not just *Geschwätz*, but collectively constitute the *Vergleichspunkt*.[248] Still, Erbse takes too narrow an approach when arguing that the detection of an intricate relationship of echoes between simile and narrative is the result of subjective speculation and bound to reflect the personal sensibility of each scholar. In his view, there is no possibility whatsoever to glimpse the poet's intentions, not even "durch Rekonstruktion von Assoziationen", and we should therefore confine our analysis only to what is conceptually explicit and fixed in the text ("die begrifflich fixierte Aussage", i.e. the *Vergleichspunkt*.[249]

Such view, which would by itself invalidate the findings of entire schools of Homeric scholarship,[250] is far too limited and, if taken to the extreme, would downgrade the literary critic to the role of a mere compiler of other people's *Aussagen*. In the case of traditional Homeric similes, however, it so happens that we *are* able (at least to attempt to) reconstruct the poet's intentions. Fränkel's *weitere Beziehungen* between narrative and simile are significant not only from a purely literary perspective, but also in compositional terms. A

[244] Fränkel (1921), 5.
[245] Cf. e.g. Edwards (1991).
[246] Shorey (1922).
[247] Erbse (2000).
[248] Erbse (2000), 258.
[249] Erbse (2000), 259.
[250] Take, for instance, Segal's psychological interpretation of the *Odyssey* (1962).

precise composition technique which hinges on various degrees of interaction between the simile scene and the surrounding context would indicate that the Homeric bards did strive to create a web of connections when producing a simile. It was not only a matter of artistic value: the bards found these connections compositionally *useful*. In many cases (cf. e.g. *Il.* 10.181–7) the simile's context elements are found almost exactly repeated in the main narrative, and we may surmise that, once a context element had been devised within a simile,[251] the singer's pressure to place that same concept in the narrative would have been greatly diminished, and this would in turn have enabled the singer to focus on the next narrative step in a more leisurely fashion. In other words, a compositional *raison d'être* for Fränkel's *Beziehungen* may constitute a further confirmation that we are justified in exploring the relationship between similes and their context beyond the explicit point of comparison.

Conclusion

At the end of our survey of PIE similes, it is time to draw some general conclusions. On a first level, the similes in the three traditions have been shown to have multiple thematic connections: in Greek, OE, and Sanskrit the comparisons which are generally recognised as 'traditional' all focus on natural elements and animal behaviour (cf. hunt similes in Homer and Sanskrit, and weather similes in the three traditions). But the similarities between the traditions are not confined to theme alone.

Virtually all the similes analysed here feature a complex exercise of parallel thought: a comparison between actions and events which goes beyond the single shared property of the two items. This is clear even in the short Sanskrit comparisons, where the principle of

[251] The same applies *vice versa* to the context elements that follow their narrative counterparts.

correspondence affects almost all elements of a simile beyond the *upamānadharma* (or common property). As we have seen, this instinct of creating a precise web of correspondences between simile and narrative surfaces in the extended comparisons of Homeric and OE poetry. In Greek, we made a distinction between the traditional, quasi-formulaic pattern elements (which do not partake in the game of mirrors with the narrative) and the more idiosyncratic context elements, which not only repeat or reflect the surrounding context (as in Sanskrit), but engage with it in a variety of different interplays which add depth and meaning to the main narrative. Context elements (a sharper, more refined manifestation of the principle of correspondence) are present in OE, too, where however we argued in favour of a context vs. *simple* dichotomy. It would actually be hard to find proper patterns in the Homeric sense of the word, given the very small number of elaborate similes in the OE corpus and the non-colometric nature of Anglo-Saxon verse. At the same time, OE simple elements serve the same function as the Homeric patterns: they are *simple*,[252] and the poet can rely on them as a mental buffer zone after the inventive effort in setting up the comparison. In the Sanskrit similes, we found a number of repetitive details which share the same function and several features of Homer's pattern elements. But given the compressed nature of Indian comparisons, these Sanskrit patterns are generally ornamental comments on the geographical and temporal dimension of a given simile. Still, their existence side by side other elements which interact with the context encourages us to build a further comparative bridge between the Greek and Sanskrit similes.

It might be objected that this comparison is not as strong as we purport it to be, since apparently we had to resort to different heuristic tools in each tradition to explore their compositional background: in Sanskrit our analysis focused on the principle of correspondence, while in Greek and OE we detected a productive opposition between

[252] See above, 99–100.

context and pattern elements, and context and simple elements, respectively. In fact, a generalizing model is easily obtained from the material we have been looking at. Sanskrit, as we have seen, does have pattern elements: they are less frequent and less prominent than in Homer because of the similes' brevity,[253] but they perform the same function, and we may reasonably assume that, if the Sanskrit bards had ventured to produce extended similes, these would have been very close in nature to their Homeric counterparts. In the case of OE, we simply do not have enough extended similes to build full-fledged patterns, but we can certainly detect simile families (e.g. weather, arts-and-crafts), and once again, if we had a higher number of elaborate comparisons in the OE corpus, it is very likely that they would show patterns in the same way as Greek and Sanskrit do. In short, the model is the same in all three traditions, but our terminology has been adapted to each compositional environment because of differences in length and frequency.

The technique for the composition of traditional similes in different PIE cultures thus reflects the mental activity of the oral bard: it shows what the poet was aiming at when deploying the 'simile card' (i.e. to create an interaction between two 'worlds' that would impress the audience), and how he managed to achieve it. As can be seen in other poetic contexts, the process of composition flowed through moments of high mental effort (in the case of extended similes, the time frame when context elements are devised) and moments of mental rest (when the poet relied on traditional and recurrent pattern elements). The oscillation between peaks of concentration and oases of relief enabled the singer to produce elaborate similes in the flow of the performance.

[253] The Homeric poems, too, feature 'limited' comparisons, longer than a colon, but confined to one or two lines such as *Il*. 16.756–8 or 21.346–7. On the whole, they are more similar to their extended counterparts than to the *Mahābhārata* similes, in that they mostly feature a context-pattern opposition, and do not simply consist of a string of elements mirroring the surrounding narrative, as is the case in Sanskrit. The same seems to be true of the very few OE 'limited' similes (i.e. longer than a verse, but shorter than two lines) that I was able to collect (e.g. *Beo*. 1571–2a).

We may even venture to envisage a timeline of simile composition in PIE poetry. Once the principle of correspondence was established as a prominent poetic feature in short comparisons (cf. Sanskrit), it was retained in a different form (i.e. context elements and interactions) in other traditions where elaborate similes were later developed (e.g. Homeric Greek). And even in poetic cultures where similes gradually lost ground to other kinds of figures of speech in terms of prominence (Old English), the technique, or at least a revised version of it, seems to have been a useful compositional tool. But even if we leave all evolutionary hypotheses aside, the traces that we have been looking at confirm that there must have been a technique for simile composition which hinged on the axis of what was traditional and what was new. Further analysis in the field of similes and comparisons may shed light on the expressive habits that informed the poetic language of these ancient cultures, and open new avenues for the exploration of the mind of PIE oral singers.

On the Homeric front, we have also seen how the existence of this technique may help us re-evaluate the nature of the similes. The existence of a compositional technique for traditional Homeric comparisons would mitigate Shipp's comments on their non-traditional character:[254] however many linguistic and metrical idiosyncrasies a simile may contain,[255] they still must have been very much steeped in the Homeric tradition, if a precise mechanism of composition can be reconstructed from them. Furthermore, the presence of context elements and the web of interactions that they entail is a strong suggestion that the relationship between simile and narrative is rather complex, as argued by Fränkel, and not confined solely to the explicitly stated *Vergleichspunkt*.

We have now examined two different semi-flexible texts: well-wishes and traditional similes. Both of them feature a core around which the rest of the text is built and both feature

[254] See above, 157.
[255] Idiosyncrasies which are partly accounted for by context elements.

an alternation between units of varying complexity. Similes, however, display certain dynamics which are not found in well-wishes: the distinction between pattern and context elements, as well as the principle of correspondence, are confined solely to the realm of traditional comparisons. It is now time to move on to a different kind of text. The next chapter will be devoted to the analysis of battle scenes, and analyse the compositional mechanisms of a semi-fixed text.

Chapter III

BATTLE SCENES IN HOMER AND THE *MAHĀBHĀRATA*

Introduction

"An age which believes in the pursuit of honour will naturally wish to express its admiration in a poetry of action and adventure, of bold endeavours and noble examples".[1] This is how Maurice Bowra explains the origins of heroic poetry. Needless to say, battles and duels provide the perfect scenario for a display of military prowess, with seamless sequences of "bold endeavours" and "noble examples" that at once entertain and set a model for the audience to look up to. This is true of most epic traditions and the Indo-European is no exception. Although the theme of warfare has been variously interpreted across the PIE spectrum, at least two of the most ancient traditions preserve extended battle scenes where the tides of the fight and the frames of individual clashes are described in remarkable detail: in India, the account of the great Kurukṣetra War constitutes the bulk of the epic *Mahābhārata* (Books 6–9), while in Greece, battle scenes[2] make up more than half of the *Iliad*. These two poems, it was argued, show considerable traces of oral gestation, and as will become clearer in the following section, battle scenes are generally considered by scholars as a fertile soil for a study of composition techniques. Their repetitive and intrinsically formulaic nature may provide us with a ready access into the mind of the oral performer much more than any other poetic context, and it is thus no surprise to find a chapter on battle scenes at the core of this study.

[1] Bowra (1952), 3.
[2] In the broad sense of the word, including separate duels and battle preparations.

Battle scenes represent the main semi-fixed text in the course of our survey. While well-wishes and traditional similes had been defined as semi-flexible (with a more or less fixed core surrounded by variable elements), close combat sequences are on the whole much more rigid: the main locus for variation are the subject and (sometimes) the object of the action, i.e. almost identical actions are performed by different agents and directed against different victims.

This higher degree of fixity has important repercussions. First of all, our close combat scenes do not lend themselves to the kind of complexity test that we have conducted in the case of similes and well-wishes. Given their strongly formulaic and repetitive nature, an analysis of the constituent elements of close combat scenes would essentially yield an almost continuous string of zero-grade units, interspersed here and there with e- and o-grade segments. The vast majority of the poetic units that inform our battle scenes are found elsewhere in the *Iliad* and *Mahābhārata*, respectively, and are generally formulaically expressed: to provide just two examples, a phrase like προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος ('[he] let fly his far-shadowing spear') is found eleven times in the *Iliad*, and the same can be said of the Sanskrit *athānyad dhanur ādāya* ('then having taken up another bow…'), which occurs forty-eight times in the Battle Books of the *Mahābhārata*.[3] We will therefore approach the compositional aspect of semi-fixed texts from a different angle, but the technique proposed in this chapter will be found to share the same basic principle as that reconstructed for semi-flexible texts.[4]

The different degree of fixity also prompts us to speculate about the relationship between semi-flexible and semi-fixed texts. More definite conclusions will be reached once our warfare sequences have been explored in detail, but it is reasonable to believe that poetic

[3] Cf. Finkelberg (2004), 243, who writes that, in battle scenes, "it is the formulaic patterns for throwing the spear, hitting the shield, and so on that are invariable, whereas the names of the participants vary".
[4] See below, 293–4.

sections such as battle scenes, catalogues, and genealogies were originally more flexible, and were subject to a process of gradual ossification catalysed by the frequent use of these texts in composition. This issue, together with other aspects of our technique, will be thoroughly discussed in the Conclusion.

The present chapter follows the same outline as its predecessor. After a review of the relevant scholarship, we will analyse battle scenes and verses in the *Mahābhārata*. This section is followed by a brief interlude on Germanic poetry, with a discussion of the features and issues of warfare sequences in this tradition. We will then move on to Homer and explore the different kinds of battle scenes in the *Iliad* and the structure of various clusters of verses. A final comparison of our Homeric findings with the Sanskrit material will close the chapter.

Scholarship Past and Present

Any analysis of Homeric battle scenes owes a great debt to Bernard Fenik's seminal work on this topic (1968). In the wake of Milman Parry's contributions to the question of Homeric verse-making (which were beginning to enjoy wider acknowledgement in the 1960's), Fenik set out to demonstrate that both the poems' single lines and broader scenes were crafted according to the same compositional principle: *the repetition of standard units*. Verse-making and scene-making are thus two sides of the same coin: the importance of phrase formulae at verse level is reflected by that of "typical situations related in essentially the same language" at scene level.[5]

This was shown by highlighting and examining combat patterns and sequences of standard details in six warfare books from the *Iliad* (5, 11, 13, 17, 16, and 8). Typical situations such as the 'reproach pattern' (a Trojan prerogative, whereby a Trojan leader

[5] Fenik (1968), 1.

upbraids another, urging him to fight harder),[6] or the 'a-b-c' combat pattern (where a warrior X kills a warrior Y, then a third warrior Z casts his spear at X, but misses him and kills another warrior W instead),[7] together with many others, clearly show that "the patterns are […] analogous to the formulae", in that they "supply the poet with ready-made compositional building blocks".[8] Battle scenes are thus formulaic not only in the sense that they contain several repeated phrases and standard expressions, but also from a higher, narrative perspective: the poet structures his narrative strategy around typical patterns just as he crafts his individual lines by relying on formulaic expressions.

Fenik is fully aware that patterns are not rigid, mutually exclusive constructions: they generally feature a high degree of variation and may share certain individual details, with the poet sometimes making use of full-fledged *mixed* patterns.[9] The flexibility of narrative patterns, just as the flexibility of formulae, does not invalidate, but reinforces the author's findings: formulae and patterns, though operating at different levels, are two related aspects of one single principle of composition.

Fenik's study is relevant not so much for its chronological priority: earlier attempts at identifying standard patterns in the *Iliad*'s battle scenes are still worth mentioning. Charles Beye, for example, had already identified the so-called ABC pattern (not to be confused with Fenik's a-b-c sequence discussed above),[10] a tripartite standard way of describing a killing, whereby (A.) the encounter's basic information is given (e.g. X killed Y), followed by an anecdote (B.), generally focusing on the victim's biography, with contextual information about the mechanics of the killing (C.) provided at the end. Pattern and typical sequences had thus been recognised already as an integral element of battle scenes; still, Fenik's work

[6] Fenik (1968), 26.
[7] Also known as 'miss-pattern'. Cf. Fenik (1968), 127.
[8] Fenik (1968), 45.
[9] Fenik (1968), 92.
[10] Beye (1964).

represents the first *systematic* effort to recognise and classify the patterns that underpin Homer's battle narratives, and more importantly, to explain in detail their compositional function.

Fenik's study was followed eleven years later by Joachim Latacz's (1977) monograph on Homeric warfare.[11] With a focus on the long-debated question of the *Iliad*'s realism, Latacz provides a phase-by-phase analysis of Homer's battle scenes, in order to show how fundamental the role of the common masses was in the dynamics of the fight.[12] He also offers useful insight on the compositional front. Comparing the poet to a photographer (*Kamerabenutzer*) who looks down on the battlefield with his lenses and camera,[13] Latacz describes the compositional principle of selection: although the singer may focus only on certain moments and details of the battle, he still manages to keep the image of the general mass battle in the front of the audience's mind by means of certain signals (*Selektionssignale*).[14] For example, the word πρῶτος at the beginning of a line (e.g. *Il*. 4.457) signals that the poet is about to provide a detailed account of a number of single encounters; similarly, the adverb ἔνθα, when employed in the context of *Einzelkampfschilderung*, loses its locative force and simply indicates that the poet's focus is moving from one encounter to the next.[15] These and other signals (which the audience were presumably able to decipher) confirm that the phenomenon later described by John Foley (1999) as traditional referentiality is present and detectable in the *Iliad*'s battle scenes, too.

Following in Latacz's footsteps, Egbert Bakker (1997) has made another important contribution on the nature of Iliadic warfare. Describing Homer's versification as a sequence

[11] Other meaningful contributions in the field are Albracht (1886) and Kirk (1968), though some of its premises and conclusions (e.g. the *Iliad* as an unreliable source for historical warfare practices) are contested by Latacz (1977).
[12] Latacz (1977), 209–12.
[13] Latacz (1977), 78.
[14] Latacz (1977), 75–95.
[15] Latacz (1977), 83–4.

of intonation units (with each unit representing a single focus of consciousness),[16] Bakker acknowledges the fundamental role played by enclitic particles and conjunctions in marking intonational boundaries between units. Furthermore, these particles have also a more pragmatically directional function:[17] in Bakker's own words, "the Greek language provides a number of particles and other devices that enable speakers to let their listeners keep track of the flow of discourse in which they find themselves, by inviting them to make a stop, or look forward, jointly with the speaker".[18]

Each particle signifies a specific kind of movement within the flow of battle discourse.[19] Thus, δέ is employed to *mark steps* in Homeric discourse and can be taken as the "primary sign of continuation and progression in Homeric Greek", corresponding to the conjunction 'and' in modern English.[20] At *Il*. 11.211–14,[21] for instance, Hector cuts his way through the battle ranks, urging his soldiers to fight back the Achaeans:

> Ἕκτωρ δ᾽ ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε,
> πάλλων δ᾽ ὀξέα δοῦρα κατὰ στρατὸν ᾤχετο πάντῃ
> ὀτρύνων μαχέσασθαι, ἔγειρε δὲ φύλοπιν αἰνήν.
> οἳ δ᾽ ἐλελίχθησαν καὶ ἐναντίοι ἔσταν Ἀχαιῶν.
>
> Hector leapt down from the chariot with his weapons,
> wielding sharp spears, he went everywhere through the army
> urging them to fight, and roused the terrible din of battle.

[16] Bakker (1997), 50. Note that Bakker's intonation units most often coincide with the hexameter's metrical *cola*.
[17] Note that both these functions transcend the semantic content of each particle.
[18] Bakker (1997), 61.
[19] These observations can of course be applied to other contexts than battle scenes, but the fast-paced, straightforwardly sequential nature of battle scenes provides Bakker with the ideal scenario and a broad pool of examples to corroborate his findings.
[20] Bakker (1997), 62.
[21] A portion of Bakker's own example.

They turned around and faced the Achaeans.

Note that each narrative step is marked by the particle δέ, which signals the activation of a new piece of information in the consciousness of the listeners. While δέ signifies progression, the discourse marker of *inclusion* is the conjunction καί, generally used to "coordinate two elements into a single idea that may (but need not) be expressed in one intonation unit".[22] In other words, unlike its progression counterpart, καί does not shift the focus to a new idea, but *prolongs* the focus on the current one.[23]

Bakker identifies and comments on other discourse markers, too. The particle δή, for example, is used as a marker of evidentiality, with the idea verbalised by the speaker receiving its input from the surrounding environment, i.e. "from what is evident and clear";[24] the particle μέν, on the other hand, has a preparatory function, creating the expectation that further, more salient information is to be added to the present one.[25] This directional, almost guide-like function of particles (and other parts of speech) in oral poetry is to be born in mind, as it will prove extremely relevant in our analyses of battle sequences.

In terms of battle verse-making, however, one of the most significant contributions was provided by Edzard Visser (1987). As discussed in the previous chapter, Visser has proposed a model for the crafting of killing verses (i.e. verses where a warrior X kills an opponent Y in a Z way) by means of which the oral bard could face the pressure of rapid composition-in-performance. His theory is based on a distinction between determinants and variable elements. The former are necessary, metrically rigid elements, such as the names of the killer and the killed, with which the poet deals first while composing his killing verse. Only once the determinants have been placed does the poet fill up the line with variable

[22] Bakker (1997), 71.
[23] Bakker (1997), 72, with examples.
[24] Bakker (1997), 75.
[25] Bakker (1975), 81.

elements (i.e. secondary, flexible material), such as the killing verb, the weapon employed by the killer, epithets, patronymics, etc. Vizsser's model can be illustrated by taking *Il*. 5.43 as an example:

> Ἰδομενεὺς δ' ἄρα Φαῖστον ἐνήρατο, Μήονος υἱὸν.
>
> Idomeneus killed Phaestus, son of a Maeonian man.

Here, in Visser's view, the poet would begin the composition of the line by locating the metrically cumbersome names of the killer (Ἰδομενεύς) and his victim (Φαῖστον) at the beginning. After the placement of the two determinants, he would then pick a certain form of the killing verb (in this case ἐνήρατο)[26] from a rich and perfectly thrifty inventory,[27] place it after the victim's name, and finally complete the line with an epithet (Μήονος υἱόν) and a particle (δ' ἄρα). Visser offers of course many other examples of this technique, providing a reliable and effective model for the composition-in-performance of killing verses. His work has been greatly influential, with scholars elaborating on his conclusions[28] or applying them to different poetic contexts.[29]

More importantly for us, Sven Sellmer (2015) has found that a version of Visser's technique may lie behind the composition of killing verses in the *Mahābhārata*, too. In his study, Sellmer initially analyses different kinds of repetitions, from hemistichs and sub-*pādas* units to full *ślokas*, and proceeds with a detailed analysis of Sanskrit formulaic structures and a discussion of what he terms a "stepwise approach to versification",[30] which

[26] Note that the verb is still 'necessary' for the completion of the killing verse, but is less metrically fixed than the names of the killer and his victim.
[27] Visser (1988), 31. Other forms of the killing verb range from the elided monosyllable ἔλ' to the long pentasyllabic ἐξενάριξε and the formula ὑπό γούνατ' ἔλυσε.
[28] Bakker and Fabbricotti (1991), focusing on the dative expressions for the term 'spear' in the epics.
[29] Riggsby (1992), who applies Visser's model to speech introductions.
[30] Sellmer (2015), 139.

is essentially an application of Visser's technique to the *Mahābhārata* killing lines. Let us take *MBh*. 7.13.35ab as an example:

> senāpatiḥ suśarmāṇaṃ śīghraṃ marmasvatāḍayat
>
> The general quickly hit Suśarman in his vital parts.

It is not difficult to see that, just as in the Iliadic example, here, too, the names of the killer (*senāpatiḥ*) and his victim (*suśarmāṇam*) must have been the first elements located by the poet. He then probably selected the appropriate killing verb (here *atāḍayat*)[31] and placed it at the very end of the verse and finally filled up the line with two variable elements: an adverb (*śīghram*) and a reference to the spot hit by the killer (*marmasu*).

This compositional analogy would in itself be significant enough to carry out a comparative analysis of battle sequences in the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata*, with the aim of hopefully transcending the boundaries of the single verse. We should acknowledge that, unlike Visser (who focuses mostly on individual lines), Sellmer does attempt to describe the compositional techniques of entire distichs, with some interesting results.[32] The following analysis shares the same aim: to identify and describe some of the mechanisms of versification employed by the poets to compose sequences of verses in the context of battle scenes.

Sanskrit Warfare

1. Preliminary remarks and narrative framework

[31] Once again out of a wide range, including verbal forms such as *avidhyat*, *vivyādha*, *jaghāna*, etc.
[32] Sellmer (2015), 159–89.

Any analysis of battle scenes in the *Mahābhārata* is no light effort, given the sheer size of the material at our disposal. Books 6, 7, 8, 9 (about 45,800 lines) are thought to constitute the original core of the poem and tell of the final clash between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas in the plain of Kurukṣetra.[33] Other warfare sequences can be found elsewhere in the poem, such as Book 4 (during the Pāṇḍavas' stay at Virata's court) and Book 10 (the night raid at the Pāṇḍava camp). For the sake of manageability, I have chosen to limit my analysis to Books 6–9, which constitute a unified, self-contained nucleus extensive enough for significant tendencies to surface. Certain cuts were made even in the core books: as a rule, I have focused solely on those sections which feature proper battle scenes. This leaves out, for example, the famous *Bhagavadgītā* (Kṛṣṇa's ethical sermon to his friend and *protégé* Arjuna) in Book 6, or the second part of Book 9, where the birth of the hermit Sārasvata is narrated in a digression. Conversations and other non-warfare lines have been likewise excluded from our statistics. The resulting assortment is what I have termed (and shall refer to throughout this chapter) as the *Mahābhārata* warfare corpus: a collection of verses from authentic warfare sequences which will hopefully help us better to understand and classify the compositional strategies adopted by the poet in the crafting of battle scenes. The same approach has of course been adopted in the case of the *Iliad* (albeit with minor differences); as a result, a corresponding Homeric warfare corpus has been constructed. For further details on the nature and extension of these corpuses, I refer the reader to Appendix IV.

Before we begin, a few hermeneutic caveats are in order. First of all, as in the case of similes, we should stress that the keyword to this chapter is *tendencies*. Absolute rules are rarely to be found in literature, and even less so in the study of oral poetry. But recurrent and statistically supported patterns are still significant, as they reveal certain *basic* mechanisms that may help us shed light on the poet's technique for verse construction. As long as the

[33] Cf. Winternitz (1981), 296–7.

passages which do not conform to our patterns are not regarded as spurious, but as a manifestation of the tradition's flexibility and the poet's artistry, a tendency-oriented analysis is a potentially rewarding tool.

Secondly, although this chapter is confined to battle scenes, this by no means entails that our findings cannot be applied to other poetic contexts. Future studies will perhaps demonstrate that battle and, say, feast scenes share the same underlying structure. The scope of this analysis is restricted to warfare sequences for the sake of conciseness and manageability, but the same approach might prove fruitful in other scenes, genres, or even poetic traditions. In other words, I do not believe that battles are inherently unique and different from other kinds of scenes, but they do constitute a self-contained, evidently traditional, and easily recognizable pool of verses that can be effectively used to illustrate tendencies and patterns that may be less noticeable elsewhere.

Finally, we should spend a few words on the overarching narrative of the core books. Books 6–9 narrate the eighteen-day long battle of Kurukṣetra, where the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas slaughter each other in their final clash. At the beginning of Book 6, the poem's mythical author Vyāsa endows Saṃjaya (an advisor of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra) with the gift of divine vision: the counsellor is then able to see all things that happen on the battlefield and relates them to the blind king in Hāstinapura: the account of the battle is thus a long direct speech by the narrator Saṃjaya to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.[34] This section of the poem has a clearly discernible structure: toward the end of each book, the main commander of the Kaurava army is killed by the Pāṇḍavas, who do not hesitate to use foul play in order to defeat their enemy.[35] We thus have a succession of commanders that lead the Kauravas for varying periods of time and meet their death on the battlefield. For the first ten days (Book 6), the

[34] Unsurprisingly, the Battle Books abound in vocatives such as *rajan* ('king') or *mahārāja* ('great king'). These line-filling vocatives, together with compound words that describe different kinds of troops, have been fully studied by von Simson (1982).
[35] Each of the four books is named after the corresponding commander.

Kauravas are led by Bhīṣma, the great-grandfather of both sets of cousins, who is killed by Arjuna with the help of Śikhaṇḍin: Bhīṣma had earlier sworn not to face Śikhaṇḍin in battle due to his past existence as a woman called Ambā, and refuses to put up any resistance when the Pāṇḍavas send Śikhaṇḍin against him. In the following five days (Book 7), the Kauravas entrust themselves to Droṇa, the old preceptor of the cousins, until he is decapitated by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the Pāṇḍavas' brother-in-law. Once again, the Pāṇḍavas resort to trickery and deceive Droṇa into believing that his dear son Aśvatthāman has died in battle: upset at the news, Droṇa lays down his weapons in order to meditate and is killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna while detaching himself from the sensual world. On the next day (Book 8), the Kaurava prince Duryodhana appoints Karṇa, the Pāṇḍavas' half-brother, as commander-in-chief: he then dies on the seventeenth day at the hands of his rival Arjuna, who strikes him down while he is busy disentangling the wheel of his chariot from the ground. Finally, the Pāṇḍavas' maternal uncle Śalya is appointed commander for the final day (Book 9): after he is slain by Yudhiṣṭhira, the Kaurava army is routed, while Duryodhana will meet his death in a final mace duel against Bhīma (the second-born Pāṇḍava brother).[36]

2. Close combat in the *Mahābhārata*

The basic versification unit in Sanskrit epic is the *pāda* (i.e. the half-line), but it seems reasonable to assume that the poet of the *Mahābhārata* generally conceived of a single narrative idea as encompassing a whole *śloka*: each distich expresses an idea (whether an action or a state) that is complete in itself, and necessary enjambement between distichs is virtually absent from the battle books. The narrative proceeds from *śloka* to *śloka*, with each

[36] This summary is not exhaustive and is only intended to provide the reader with a narrative map better to locate the episodes that will be discussed in the following sections.

couplet adding a bit of information that was not present in the previous distich: in terms of verse construction, the poet's basic compositional unit is the *śloka*.

In our battle scenes, the narrative mostly consists of a sequence of distichs that describe a character's actions and reactions. A perfect example of an average battle sequence can be found at 7.17.9–11:

> tena śabdena vitrastā saṃśaptakavarūthinī
> niśceṣṭāvasthitā saṃkhye aśmasāramayī yathā.
> vāhāsteṣām vivṛttākṣāḥ stabdhakarṇaśirodharāḥ 10ab
> viṣṭabdhacaraṇā mūtraṃ rudhiraṃ ca prasusruvuḥ. 10cd
> upalabhya ca te saṃjñām avasthāpya ca vāhinīm
> yugapat pāṇḍuputrāya cikṣipuḥ kaṅkapatriṇaḥ.
>
> Terrified by the sound, the band of sworn warriors
> stood motionless on the battlefield, as though it were made of iron.
> Their animals, rolling their eyes, their ears and heads immobile, 10ab
> without a movement expelled dung and urine. 10cd
> And they [the warriors], after regaining their senses and mustering their ranks,
> together hurled heron-feathered arrows at the son of Pāṇḍu.

As can be seen, certain pronouns have been underlined throughout the passage: they are all declined forms of the pronoun *saḥ, sā, tad*, which is the Sanskrit reflex of the PIE demonstrative **so*, *sā* (< **seh₂*), *tod* (Gr. ὁ, ἡ, τό). Below is a full declension of the pronoun in Sanskrit, with its Homeric Greek and PIE counterparts.[37]

[37] The PIE reconstruction is by Beekes (2011), 228.

Masculine:

Sg.	**Sanskrit**	**Greek**	**PIE**	Pl.	**Sanskrit**	**Greek**	**PIE**
Nom.	*saḥ*	ὁ	**so*	Nom.	*te*	οἱ	**toi*
Acc.	*tam*	τόν	**tom*	Acc.	*tān*	τούς	**tons*
Gen.	*tasya*	τοῦ/τοῖο	**(to)syo*	Gen.	*teṣām*	τῶν	**tesom* (?)
Dat.	*tasmai*	τῷ	**tosmōi*	Dat.	*tebhyaḥ*	τοῖς/τοῖσι	**toimus*
Abl.	*tasmāt*	-	**tosmōd*	Abl.	*tebhyaḥ*	-	**toios* (?)
Instr.	*tena*	-	**toi* (?)	Instr.	*taiḥ*	-	**toibhi*
Loc.	*tasmin*	-	**tosmi*	Loc.	*teṣu*	-	**toisu*

Feminine:

Sg.	**Sanskrit**	**Greek**	**PIE**	Pl.	**Sanskrit**	**Greek**	**PIE**
Nom.	*sā*	ἡ	**seh₂*	Nom.	*tāḥ*	αἱ	**seh₂i* (?)
Acc.	*tām*	τήν	**the₂m*	Acc.	*tāḥ*	τάς	**teh₂ns*
Gen.	*tasyāḥ*	τῆς	**(t)eseh₂s*	Gen.	*tāsām*	τῶν/τάων	**tesom* (?)
Dat.	*tasyai*	τῇ	**tesyeh₂ei*	Dat.	*tābhyaḥ*	ταῖς/τῇσι	**teh₂mus*(?)
Abl.	*tasyāḥ*	-	**tosmōd*	Abl.	*tābhyaḥ*	-	**toios* (?)
Instr.	*tayā*	-	**toi* (?)	Instr.	*tābhiḥ*	-	**teh₂bʰi* (?)
Loc.	*tasyām*	-	**tesyeh₂i*	Loc.	*tāsu*	-	**teh₂su* (?)

Neuter:[38]

Sg.	Sanskrit	Greek	PIE	Pl.	Sanskrit	Greek	PIE
Nom.	*tad*	τό	**tod*		*tāni*	τά	**teh₂*

[38] From the genitive downward, the neuter and the masculine share the same forms.

Acc.	*tad*	τό	**tod*	*tāni*	τά	**teh₂*

The Sanskrit dual is here given separately, as it makes little morphological sense to compare it to its Greek counterpart:

	Masc.	**Fem.**	**Neut.**
Nom./Acc.	*tau*	*te*	*te*
Gen./Loc.	*tayoḥ*	*tayoḥ*	*tayoḥ*
Dat./Abl./Instr.	*tābhyām*	*tābhyām*	*tābhyām*

Even on a first reading, any passage from the *Mahābhārata* will strike the reader for its conspicuous use of this pronoun. My view is that the *saḥ*, *sā*, *tad* pronoun performs a function that transcends its grammatical nature, i.e. a simple demonstrative. This is evident from the fact that this pronoun is often redundant, since the noun it is supposed to substitute is mostly found within the same *śloka*, as at 7.165.23:

> sa mahāstrair mahārāja droṇam ācchādayad raṇe
> nihatya sarvāṇyastrāṇi bhāradvājasya pārṣatah.
>
> He, o great king, covered Droṇa with great weapons in battle,
> after destroying all the other missiles of the son Bhāradvāja, Prsata' child [subj.].

Or 8.8.37–8:

> sa śaraughārdito nāgo bhīmasenena saṃyuge
> nigṛhyamāṇo nātiṣṭhad vātadhvasta ivāmbudaḥ.

tām abhyadhāvad dviradaṃ bhīmasenasya nāgarāṭ
mahāvāteritaṃ meghaṃ vātoddhūta ivāmbudaḥ.

It, wounded by Bhīma with a swarm of arrows, the elephant in battle,
although held back, did not stay steadfast, as a cloud shattered by the wind.
Bhīma's great pachyderm struck it, the elephant,
Like a wind-driven cloud [strikes] another cloud blown by the wind.

In these passages, the pronouns and corresponding nouns have been underlined. They are both found within the same couplet, and the pronoun has evidently no demonstrative force: in the first example, the poet is not talking about 'that particular' descendant of Pṛṣata, but is simply referring to Dhṛṣṭadyumna, 'the grandson of Pṛṣata'. Similar considerations apply to the elephants in the second passage. The evident redundancy of these pronouns is a hint that their main function (at least in battle scenes) is not to be found in their original demonstrative nature. I believe that the poet employs them to guide the audience through the fluctuating chaos of single duels: an endless sequence of actions and reactions where the perspective drifts from character to character with almost every *śloka*. To use Bakker's words, these pronouns are there to help the audience keep track of the flow of discourse, as the poet shifts his focus from one idea to the next. Two elements in particular support this proposition:

1. As can be seen in the passages quoted, the pronouns are generally found at the beginning of the distich (and almost always within the first *pāda*): a clue for the audience to immediately grasp the direction of the action (i.e. whether to expect a subject or an object, from what perspective the action will be described, what kind of verb to expect, etc.).

2. As we will see in the next section, these pronouns are used only in close combat scenes, and *not* (or not as systematically) in general battle sequences, where the poet aims to convey a sense of overwhelming chaos and a rhythmical scansion of consecutive ideas would be counterproductive.

To illustrate these points, let us look at a further example (8.18.26–30):

tasya tīkṣṇair mahāvegair bhallaiḥ saṃnataparvabhiḥ
vyahanat kārmukaṃ rājā[39] tūṇīraṃ caiva sarvaśaḥ.
sa chinnadhanvā samare khaḍgam udyamya nānadan
vaiḍūryotpalavarṇābhaṃ hastidantamayatsarum.
bhrāmyamāṇaṃ tatas tam tu vimalāmbaravarcasam
kālopamaṃ tato mene sutasomasya dhīmataḥ.
so 'carat sahasā khaḍgī maṇḍalāni sahasraśaḥ
caturviṃśan mahārāja śikṣābalasamanvitaḥ.
saubalas tu tatas tasya śarāṃś cikṣepa vīryavān 30ab
tān āpatata evāśu ciccheda paramāsinā. 30cd

His bow with sharp, greatly violent, well-polished arrows
he destroyed, o king, and the quiver completely.
And he, his bow rent asunder, wielding his sword in battle, screaming,
– [the sword's] hue resembed that of lotus or a gem, with its ivory hilt–.[40]
That wielded [sword] of wise Sutasoma, as bright as the brightest sky,

[39] This word appears as a nominative in the manuscript, but it is likely that the vocative *rājan* is meant here.
[40] It is not uncommon for epic *ślokas* to lack a main verb.

he thought it similar to fate.

Wielding his sword, he moved rapidly in a thousand circles,

in twenty-four ways, great king, that man greatly endowed

[with strength and wisdom.

But the valiant son of Subala let fly his arrows at him, 30ab

and as they flew, he rapidly cut them down with his mighty sword. 30cd

These lines represent a portion of the duel between the Kaurava advisor Śakuni (here referred to as Saubala, 'son of Subala') and the Pāṇḍava ally Sutasoma. As can be seen, the underlined pronouns are almost always found at the beginning of the line (26a, 27a, 29a) or within the first *pāda* (28a, 30a); sometimes they might also be placed in the third *pāda* (e.g. 30c), in those infrequent, but still sizeable cases where the poet moves his focus onto a new idea within the same *śloka*. The pronouns mark the shifts of focus from one character to the other and scan the rhythm of the battle for the audience's sake. It is also clear that particles such as *tataḥ* (cf. e.g. 28a, 28c), *atha*, *api*, and *tu* (cf. e.g. 28a, 30a) perform a similar function: although their status is not entirely clear, Sellmer rightly writes that they "typically signal the beginning of a new action".[41] In particular, it seems that "*tu* and *api* introduce a new subject, whereas *tataḥ* marks the start of a new action".[42] Unlike Greek, in Sanskrit these particles are not obligatory, and many *ślokas* simply do without them. At the same time, they are found quite frequently in our *Mahābhārata* corpus. Following Sellmer, I believe that "this situation is probably simply due to the fact that in a fighting scene, more often than in other contexts, the narrative focus switches between different heroes (where *tu* comes in handy) and between different actions (where *tataḥ* is a natural choice)".[43] Similar considerations can be applied to our *saḥ*, *sā*, *tad* pronouns.

[41] Sellmer (2015), 147.
[42] Sellmer (2015), 162.
[43] Sellmer (2015), 162.

On the whole, the evidence seems to suggest that these pronouns were used in battle scenes as verbalised mental signposts to provide the audience with some guidance as the poetic discourse flowed on. For this reason, throughout this chapter I shall refer to them as *directional pronouns*, a definition that hopefully reflects their role as guiding markers.

A further basic feature of our verses is the emergence of certain tendencies in the placement of finite verbs. First of all, finite verbs are regularly placed in the second line of a *śloka* (i.e. *pādas* c and d), although this is not an absolute rule: in the following examples, the reader will find several verbs in *pādas* a and b, too. More importantly, regardless of their *śloka* line, the poet of the *Mahābhārata* seems to have had certain favourite positions in which to place his finite verbs. The commonest of these is the very beginning of a *pāda*, i.e. a space that is not metrically fixed, where the poet could express the main action of the distich (a semantically fundamental element) without needing to worry about quantitative sequences. For the sake of concision, I will henceforth refer to a verb found at the beginning of an odd *pāda* as standing at 1stB (i.e. 'first beginning'), while a verb placed at the beginning of an even *pāda* will be standing at 2ndB (i.e. 'second beginning').[44] Accordingly, the end of odd *pādas* will be termed 1stE (i.e. 'first end'), and the end of even *pādas* (that is, the end of a line) will be called 2ndE (i.e. 'second end').

Another favoured position for the placement of finite verbs is the very end of a line (or 2ndE).[45] When this happens, however, there is a strong tendency (ca. 83% of cases in Books 7–9 of the corpus)[46] for the finite verb to contain the final iambic cadence entirely

44 Note that I include in 1stB and 2ndB those cases where the first syllable of the *pāda* is a pronoun and the immediately following syllables are covered by the verb. This approach does not change much from a performative point of view, as the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th syllables of the *pāda* are still metrically free. It also has the advantage of bringing together the tendencies observed thus far: placing both the directional pronoun and the finite verb at the beginning of the verse.

45 When at 2ndE, perfect verbs in the 3rd person singular are always compounded with the particle *ha* (an intensive) or the conjunction *ca* ('and') in order to obtain the desired cadence. These cases are counted statistically as one word.

46 This figure does not consider fossilized formulae (e.g. the speech introduction *idaṃ vacanam abravīt*, lit. 'spoke this speech'). Verbs compounded with particles (e.g. *athānadat*, 'and then screamed') are counted as one word.

within itself: for example, a verb like *atāḍayat* (‘struck’), which displays an iambic (⏑–⏑⏑) metrical structure, will most often be found at 2ndE, although the poet could have easily placed at 1stB or 2ndB, had he so wished. This also means that disyllabic and trisyllabic finite verbs are rarely found at 2ndE.[47]

A passage such as 9.13.34–39 will illustrate these observations:

sudharmā tu tato rājan bhāradvājaṃ mahāratham
avākiraccharavrātaiḥ sarvakṣatrasya paśyataḥ.
tatastu suratho 'pyājau pāñcālānāṃ mahārathaḥ 35ab
rathena meghaghoṣeṇa drauṇim evābhyadhāvata. 35cd
vikarṣan vai dhanuḥ śreṣṭhaṃ sarvabhārasahaṃ dṛḍham
jvalanāśīviṣanibhaiḥ śaraiścainam avākirat.
surathaṃ tu tataḥ kruddham āpatantaṃ mahāratham
cukopa samare drauṇir daṇḍāhata ivoragaḥ.
triśikhāṃ bhrukuṭīṃ kṛtvā sṛkkiṇī parilelihan
udvīkṣya surathaṃ roṣād dhanurjyām avamṛjya ca
mumoca tīkṣṇaṃ nārācaṃ yamadaṇḍasamadyutim. 38ef
sa tasya hṛdayaṃ bhittvā praviveśātivegataḥ
śakrāśanir ivotsṛṣṭā vidārya dharaṇītalam.

But Sudharman then the great warrior grandson of Bharadvāja
covered with swarms of arrows before all the other warriors.
And then Suratha, too, the great warrior of the Pāñcālas in battle 35ab
with his greatly resounding chariot rushed against the grandson of Droṇa. 35cd
And drawing his mighty, stout bow, capable of all tasks,

[47] The commonest exception is the imperfect *abhyayāt* (‘went’), often found at 2ndE.

he covered him with arrows that resembled venomous snakes.
And with Suratha, the great warrior who came in fury,
the grandson of Droṇa grew angry, like a rod-struck snake.
Frowning, licking his lips,
looking angrily at Suratha, caressing the bowstring,
he let fly an arrow, as bright as Yama's staff. 38ef
After piercing his heart, it [the arrow] cut through him with great might,
just as the lightning bolt hurled by Śakra tearing apart the earth.

In this passage, which narrates the fight between Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman and some Pāñcāla warriors, all finite verbs have been underlined. They all fall into one of the favoured position: either the beginning of a *pāda* or the end of a line, in which case the verb contains in itself the iambic cadence (35d, *abhyadhāvata*; 36d, *avākirat*).

It is important to stress once again that we are here illustrating a tendency, not an absolute rule, and that our *Mahābhārata* corpus does feature several exceptions. Still, if we look at the text from a statistical perspective, we find that about 71% of finite verbs in our corpus are placed in one of the favoured positions (i.e. more than two out of three). It might be objected that, since a *śloka* line can be divided into four parts (1stB, 1stE, 2ndB, and 2ndE), it is not surprising that the vast majority of finite verbs should fall in three of these four positions. However, we should not conceive of a line as rigidly divided into four sections. A verb such as the perfect *mumoca* ('cast') may theoretically be placed in eight different positions within a line,[48] but in practice it is only found in three: 1st to 3rd syllable (1stB), 9th to 11th (2ndB), 13th to 15th (with the particle *ha* at 2ndE).[49] It is therefore a

[48] 1st to 3rd syllable, 2nd to 4th, 3rd to 5th, 4th to 6th, 9th to 11th, 10th to 12th, 11th to 13th, 13th to 15th.
[49] There are three exceptions (out of thirty-four appearances in our corpus): 7.131.9a and 150.94c (3rd to 5th), and 8.34.38c (2nd to 4th).

remarkable feature of the text that finite verbs are so regularly placed in the preferred positions just described.[50]

Having discussed the poet's use of directional pronouns and placement of finite verbs, it is now time to look more closely at verse construction in battle lines. How does the poet drive the action forward in his warfare *ślokas*? In our corpus, we observe that very often the main action in a distich (generally conveyed with the finite verb) is accompanied by another action, which the poet expresses by means of participles or gerunds. The poet first seems to devise the main axis of action in the distich: [subj.] + [finite verb] + [obj.].[51] This schema is then expanded by adding information concerning either the subject or the object: the subject/object may be doing something *at the same time* as the finite verb (in which case the poet will employ a *present participle*, active or middle), or may have done something *before* the action expressed by the main verb: the poet will then use a *gerund* in the case of the subject[52] and a *past active participle* for the object.[53] Conversely, subject and object might find themselves at the receiving end of the secondary action,[54] i.e. something has been done to them before the main action (with the poet resorting to *past passive participles*), or is being done to them at the same time as the main action (*present passive participles*). This construction strategy of coupling the distich's main action (i.e. the finite verb) with a

[50] An exception to this pattern is represented by periphrastic perfects. This formation features an expanded version of the verbal root (with the suffixes *-aya-* and *–ām*) with the addition of the full perfect forms of one of the following verbal roots: *as* ('be'), *bhū* ('become'), and *kṛ* ('make'). They generally bear a causative connotation. For example, the root *pat* means 'to fall'; with the addition of the causative suffix *-aya-* and the further suffix *–ām* to the full grade of the root, we obtain the form *pātayām*. To this, the perfect form of, e.g., *as* is added, yielding *pātayām āsa* (lit. 'caused to fall', i.e. 'cut down'). Periphrastic perfects differ from their finite counterparts in two respects: first, they are never located at 2ndE, since their metrical structure does not feature the required iambic cadence; secondly, they are often found at 1stE. I suspect that, just as the other finite verbs, the Sanskrit bards instinctively placed periphrastic perfects at the beginning of a *pāda*. However, given their convenient metrical shape, with time these forms came to be used to realise the common ⏑−−X at the end of the first *pāda*. For these reasons, periphrastic perfects are treated here as a special case and are not included in our statistics on verbal placement. Cf. Aklujkar, Torella, Mastrangelo (2012), 161.

[51] Of course, this is just *one* basic structure, though by far the commonest.

[52] Past active participles are used more sparingly.

[53] This latter construction is found much more rarely.

[54] That is, the action not expressed by the main verb.

secondary action expressed by means of infinite verbal forms (participles or gerunds) will be referred to as *double progression*. We will now look in detail at some textual examples.

Gerunds (or absolutives) express an action that the subject has performed *before* the action of the main verb: they are roughly equivalent to aorist active participles in Greek.[55] Its two commonest formations feature the zero grade of the verb with the addition of the suffix *-tvā* to bare verbal roots, and *-ya* to prefixed roots. Thus, the bare root *gam* ('go') will yield the gerund *gatvā*, while the gerund of the prefixed root *abhi-gam* ('go around') will be *abhigamya*. Sanskrit gerunds have their preferred positions within the line, too. Just as their finite-verb counterparts, they are often found at 1stB and 2ndB (but very rarely at 2ndE). However (and unlike finite verbs), the most frequent position for gerund placement is 1stE (ca. 37% of all corpus occurrences):[56] it is probable that Sanskrit bards were eager to rely on the −− or −⏑ cadences of gerund formations to close the odd *pāda* with the usual ⏑−−x sequence. There is also a slight tendency for dissyllabic and trisyllabic gerunds to be placed at 1stE, while polysyllabic ones are more often found at 1stB or 2ndB. On the whole, the poet tends to locate his gerunds in the first line of the *śloka* (i.e. in *pādas* a and b), as shown in the following example (6.50.38):

tatastasmād avaplutya gajād bhārata bhārataḥ
khaḍgapāṇir adīnātmā atiṣṭhad bhuvi daṃśitaḥ.

Then Bharata's grandson, o grandson of Bharata, having jumped down from the elephant, sword in hand, that noble soul stood on the ground holding his arms.

[55] Aklujkar, Torella, Mastrangelo (2012), 89–91.
[56] 1stB and 2ndB gerunds combined amount to ca. 43%.

This a perfect instance of double progression: the gerund at 1stE in the first line and the finite verb at 2ndB in the second have been underlined. In fact, the sequence [Ger. 1stE in ab] + [Finite verb 1stB/2ndB in cd] is an extremely frequent template for verse construction in our corpus.

Present active participles work in the same way, but are much freer in their placement than gerunds. At 7.170.11ab, for example, the participle *paśyatām* ('looking at', genitive plural) is found at 2ndE, while at 8.40.26, the participle *prajvalann* ('blazing', nominative singular) opens the distich:

> prajvalann iva vegena saṃrambhād rudhirekṣaṇaḥ
> aśobhata maheṣvāso dhṛṣṭadyumnaḥ kṛtavraṇaḥ.
>
> As though blazing with great might, his eyes blood-red with anger,
> shone Dhṛṣṭadyumna the great archer, utterly wounded.

Unlike gerunds and past passive participles,[57] present active participles are also very frequently located in the second line, and especially in the fourth *pāda*, where they often become part of fixed formulae (e.g. *prahasann iva*, 'as though laughing').[58]

Past passive participles, on the other hand, are especially common in the first *pāda*. When the poet describes a hero as 'having been struck', for example, the participle frequently appears in the distich's first half-line (and often near the beginning), as at 7.171.47:[59]

[57] These *may* be located in the second line, but proportionally are more often found in the first.
[58] E.g. 6.43.21d, 49.15d, 7.146.28d.
[59] Present passive and middle participles (ending in *-māna* and *-āna*) are somewhere in between present active and past passive participles in their behaviour.

so 'tividdho maheṣvāso nānāliṅgair amarṣaṇaḥ

yuyudhānena vai drauṇiḥ prahasan vākyam abravīt.

The great archer in fury, pierced through with various kinds of missiles

by Yuyudhāna, the son of Droṇa spoke these words with a laugh.

In other cases, when the poet wishes to express his character's anger, the participles *kruddhaḥ* and *rabdhaḥ* (with their variations) are regularly placed at the end of the first *pāda* (cf. 6.43.35):

bāhlīkaṃ tu raṇe kruddhaṃ kruddharūpo viśāṃ pate

abhyadravad ameyātmā dhṛṣṭaketur mahārathaḥ.

Bāhlīka [obj.], furious in battle, o lord of men, by fierce-looking

Dhṛṣṭaketu [subj.], the great-hearted warrior, high on his chariot, was attacked.

Participles may also be used independently of any other element in the sentence, with the poet resorting to locative absolute[60] constructions, as at 6.82.2:

tasmiṃstathā vartamāne tumule saṃkule bhṛśam

bhīṣmaḥ śāṃtanavastūrṇaṃ yudhiṣṭhiram upādravat.

Then, while the tumultuous battle raged on with great violence,

Bhīṣma son of Śāṃtanu attacked Yudhiṣṭhira.

[60] Virtually equivalent to the Greek genitive absolute. Sanskrit has also a genitive absolute, but in our corpus the locative predominates.

These are but a few of the various permutations through which the Sanskrit bards realised their double progression strategies. The *basic* principle can be outlined as follows: [gerund/participle in the first line] + [finite verb in the second line]. Of course, the two items may also be inverted, and it is not rare to find a sort of triple progression, with a gerund, a finite verb, and a participle all in the same *śloka*.[61] Two finite verbs may also be found, albeit much more rarely than in Homer, as we will see. But the basic structure, supported by the statistics within our corpus, seems to be the one that we have just outlined.

Taking together the three strands of verse construction (i.e. directional pronouns, verb placement, and double progression), we obtain a clearer picture of the mental frameworks on which our Sanskrit bards relied to fashion their close combat *ślokas*. At 6.50.34–9, we find a perfect example that illustrates all three phenomena:

tato bhīmo mahārāja **naditvā** vipulaṃ svanam
sāsir vegād **avaplutya** dantābhyāṃ vāraṇottamam.
āruroha tato madhyaṃ nāgarājasya māriṣa 35ab
khaḍgena pṛthunā madhye bhānumantam athācchinat. 35cd
so 'ntarāyudhinaṃ **hatvā** rājaputram ariṃdamaḥ
gurubhārasahaskandhe nāgasyāsim apātayat.
chinnaskandhaḥ *sa* **vinadan** papāta gajayūthapaḥ
ārugṇaḥ sindhuvegena sānumān iva parvataḥ.
tatas*tasmād* **avaplutya** gajād bhārata bhārataḥ
khaḍgapāṇir adīnātmā atiṣṭhad bhuvi daṃśitaḥ.
sa cacāra bahūnmārgān abhītaḥ **pātayan** gajān

[61] Cf. 7.120.47, 6.83.37 (with double present active participle), 8.8.24 (past passive and present active participles).

agnicakram ivāviddhaṃ sarvataḥ pratyadṛśyata.

Then Bhīma, o great king, **giving out** a resounding scream,
sword in hand, with might **leaping** between the tusks of the great elephant,
climbed the back of the elephant-king, my lord, 35ab
and with his broad sword split Bhānumat in two. 35cd
He, **having killed** the king's son at close hand, the killer of foes
into the massive shoulders of the elephant thrust his sword.
With its shoulders shattered, *it* fell **screaming**, the great elephant,
like a mountain peak torn down by the violence of a river.
Then Bharata's grandson, o grandson of Bharata,
having jumped down from *the* elephant,
sword in hand, that noble soul stood on the ground holding his arms.
He fearlessly pushed his way through, **cutting down** elephants,
and like a wandering wheel of fire, appeared everywhere.

These lines recount the elephant duel between Bhānumat and the Pāṇḍava Bhīma. Gerunds and participles are marked in bold, while directional pronouns have been italicized and finite verbs underlined. Throughout the passage, particles and directional pronouns (36a, 37a, 38a, 39a, 40a) guide the audience from action to action in the meanders of the duel. Finite verbs are regularly placed in their favoured positions, and are always coupled with infinite gerunds and participles. We may observe basic examples of double progression at 36 and 38 (both featuring a gerund at 1stE in the first *pāda*), and also 37, although the finite verb is found in the same line as its infinite counterpart. *Ślokas* 34 and 35 are peculiar, as they describe two different actions with two different finite verbs (*āruroha*, *acchinat*), accompanied by two gerunds (*naditvā*, *avaplutya*); but instead of linking each gerund with a finite verb, the poet

has here decided to place *both* infinites before their finite counterparts. Finally, 39 features a particular kind of triple progression, with two finite verbs and one participle.

Needless to say, we should bear in mind that we are here analysing only general tendencies. In our corpus, we may find entire passages where these trends do not appear.[62] Still, the passage just quoted is at once a clear example of the *basic* mechanisms for verse construction and a transparent illustration of how a skilled poet could manipulate those very structures to achieve variation (cf. e.g. 34–35 and 39). All these elements and the issues related to them will be discussed again, after a detailed analysis of Homeric close encounters. For the moment, in order to complete our picture of Sanskrit battle scenes, we will move on to the general sequences of our corpus.

3. General scenes in the *Mahābhārata*

As has been mentioned above, battle scenes in the *Mahābhārata* are not a monotonous sequence of close encounters. The poet achieves variation by interspersing the duels with conversations (which can take up entire chapters),[63] and general battle scenes. A brief analysis of the latter is in order.

General scenes, as the name suggests, do not narrate the battle from the perspective of a single hero, but view the action from a more distant, collective point of view. The poet zooms out of the *hic et nunc* of the battle and strives to convey a sense of generalised chaos. But it is not only in terms of content that general scenes are distinguishable from single duels. Formally, too, they differ in several respects. First of all, in general scenes the poet makes *no* systematic use of particles or directional pronouns: his aim is clearly to remove

[62] E.g. 6.78.14–16.
[63] Cf. e.g. the nine chapters of the sub-*parvan Pratijñāparvan* (7.52–60), where the poet focuses on his characters' reaction to the death Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna.

any trace of orderly progression and enhance the turmoil of the battle as a whole. Double progression strategies are also normally avoided. Secondly, general scenes are easily recognisable for their featuring of repeated ideas or motifs,[64] which are normally absent from the accounts of individual fights. These ideas normally contain a word or formulaic phrase that functions as a motif marker: for example, the marker of the 'tumult' motif is the word *śabdaḥ* ('noise', cf. also its variant *svanaḥ* with the same meaning), while the 'confusion' motif is marked by the formula *na prajñāyata kiṃ cana* ('nothing could be distinguished'). All of this can be best illustrated with an example. One of the most complete general sequences is found at 6.55.5–19:

prāvartata tato yuddhaṃ tumulaṃ lomaharṣaṇam 5ab
asmākaṃ pāṇḍavaiḥ sārdham anayāt tava bhārata. 5cd
dhanuṣāṃ kūjatāṃ tatra talānāṃ cābhihanyatām
mahān samabhavacchabdo girīṇām iva dīryatām.
tiṣṭha sthito 'smi viddhyenaṃ nivartasva sthiro bhava
sthito 'smi praharasveti śabdāḥ śrūyanta sarvaśaḥ.
kāñcaneṣu tanutreṣu kirīṭeṣu dhvajeṣu ca
śilānām iva śaileṣu patitānām abhūt svanaḥ.
patitānyuttamāṅgāni bāhavaśca vibhūṣitāḥ
vyaceṣṭanta mahīṃ prāpya śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ.
hṛtottamāṅgāḥ kecit tu tathaivodyatakārmukāḥ 10ab
pragṛhītāyudhāścāpi tasthuḥ puruṣasattamāḥ. 10cd
prāvartata mahāvegā nadī rudhiravāhinī
mātaṅgāṅgaśilāraudrā māṃsaśoṇitakardamā.

[64] Used here in its broadest sense, not the narrow one employed for Homer's well-wishes in Ch. 1.

varāśvanaranāgānāṃ śarīraprabhavā tadā
paralokārṇavamukhī gṛdhragomāyumodinī.
na dṛṣṭaṃ na śrutaṃ cāpi yuddham etādṛśaṃ nṛpa
yathā tava sutānāṃ ca pāṇḍavānāṃ ca bhārata.
nāsīd rathapathastatra yodhair yudhi nipātitaiḥ
gajaiśca patitair nīlair giriśṛṅgair ivāvṛtam.
vikīrṇaiḥ kavacaiścitrair dhvajaiśchatraiśca māriṣa 15ab
śuśubhe tad raṇasthānaṃ śaradīva nabhastalam. 15cd
vinirbhinnāḥ śaraiḥ kecid antapīḍāvikarṣiṇaḥ
abhītāḥ samare śatrūn abhyadhāvanta daṃśitāḥ.
tāta bhrātaḥ sakhe bandho vayasya mama mātula
mā māṃ parityajetyanye cukruśuḥ patitā raṇe.
ādhāvābhyehi mā gaccha kiṃ bhīto 'si kva yāsyasi
sthito 'haṃ samare mā bhair iti cānye vicukruśuḥ.
tatra bhīṣmaḥ śāṃtanavo nityaṃ maṇḍalakārmukaḥ
mumoca bāṇān dīptāgrān ahīn āśīviṣān iva.

And so the battle unfolded, tumultuous and terrifying,[65] 5ab
between us and the Pāṇḍavas, because of your ill-counsel, o son of Bharata. 5cd
From the bows groaning and the hand-protections being struck
a great noise arose, such as that of crumbling mountains.
“Stop! I am steady, you know! Turn back and stay still!
I am still, make your cast!”, these words were heard everywhere.
The sound of the golden corselets, of the diadems and the banners,
was like that of mountain peaks that crumble down.

[65] Lit. ‘causing the body hair to stand on end’.

Heads were falling, and arms with their ornaments,
writhing as they touched the ground, in their hundreds and thousands.
Some warriors, beheaded, their bows still strung, 10ab
those great men stood there, holding up their arms. 10cd
A rushing river sprang up, flowing with blood,
red with elephant limbs and heads, its mud made of flesh and blood,
brimming with the bodies of men, horses, and elephants,
flowing towards the sea of the other world, to the joy of vultures and jackals.
Such a battle, o king, was never seen or heard of before,
as that of your children against the Pāṇḍavas, o descendant of Bharata.
There was no space for chariots to drive in, with warriors slain in battle
and fallen elephants, like dark mountain peaks, it [the ground] was covered.
With the bright armours scattered around, the banners and parasols, o king, 15ab
the battlefield shone, just as the vault of the heavens in autumn. 15cd
Some warriors, struck by the darts and tormented by pangs of death,
fearlessly attacked their enemy in battle, holding up their arms.
"Father, brother, friend, kin, my companion, uncle,
do not forsake me", other warriors screamed, slain in battle.
"Here, come closer, do not leave, what do you fear? Where are you going?
I am standing here in battle, have no fear", others cried.
There Bhīṣma son of Śaṃtanu, his bow ever strung,
let fly his blazing arrows, like venomous snakes.

As the reader may notice, particles and directional pronouns are virtually absent throughout the passage; there are a few exceptions, of course (e.g. 10a, 15c), but it is undeniable that here the poet makes no systematic use of this tool. Furthermore, almost each *śloka* contains a motif that is typical of general battle sequences. After a loose introduction (5),[66] the poet

[66] The phrase *prāvartata tato yuddhaṃ tumulaṃ lomaharṣaṇam* is a common formula. Cf. 6.48.5ab, 69.37ab, 7.163.25ab, 8.37.38ab, 9.24.50ef, etc.

describes the 'tumult'[67] of the battle, marked by the typical *śabda* word (6a), and gives a direct speech example of the words shouted out by the fighting soldiers (7, the 'cries of men' motif).[68] Then, after a reiteration of 'tumult' (8, cf. the marker *svanaḥ*), at 9–10 the 'arms and heads' motif provides a vivid image of human members being pitilessly severed throughout the battlefield.[69] At 11, the poet employs one of his commonest stock-ideas: the 'river of blood' motif (cf. the *nadī rudhiravāhinī* marker), whereby the bloodshed reaches such gigantic proportions that an actual river of gore and corpses starts flowing through the battlefield.[70] Its description may extend for several lines: here it only takes up two *ślokas* (11–12), typically characterised by hemistich-length compounds. At 13, the poet makes some general comments on the massacre underway, remarking that such a gruesome fight had 'never been seen or heard of' by anyone before (with the formulaic *na dṛṣṭaṃ na śrutaṃ* marker).[71] Distichs 14 and 15 feature two very common general battle motifs: at 14, the earth is described as completely covered by human and animal bodies (the marker is the past participle *āvṛtam*),[72] while in the following *śloka* the battlefield is said to shine with the bright weapons of the dead warriors.[73] At 16, the poet's focus lingers on 'some' soldiers (the marker here is *kecid* at 1stE),[74] whose desperate screams are reported in the next two *ślokas* (another instance of the 'cries of men' motif). General scenes are most often interrupted by a sudden zoom-in movement toward the perspective of a single hero. This shift is generally marked by a particle, a directional pronoun, or (as in this case), by the locative adverb *tatra*

[67] Typical motifs are here marked by single inverted commas. For the 'tumult' motif, cf. 6.82.22cd, 88.26ab, 7.147.36ab, 8.7.6cd, 9.27.22ab, etc.
[68] Cf. 6.114.79ab, 7.113.13ab, 136.9ab, 8.33.48ab, 9.22.68ab, etc.
[69] Cf. 6.58.39ab, 7.64.36ab, 65.26ab, 120.33ab, 8.8.5ab, etc.
[70] Cf. 6.89.25ab, 99.33ab (reaching an extension of six distichs), 7.83.29ab, 8.36.29ab, 9.8.29ab, etc.
[71] Cf. 7.24.60ab, 30.13ab, 163.37ab, 8.35.51cd, 9.22.15cd, etc.
[72] For the 'earth covered' motif, cf. 6.85.31ab, 89.27cd, 7.88.13ab, 8.56.39ab, 9.8.13ab, etc.
[73] For the 'earth shines' motif, marked by the perfect *śuśubhe*, cf. 6.53.20cd, 7.88.12ab, 131.118ab, 8.36.8ab, 9.8.20ab, etc.
[74] Normally, the indefinite pronoun *apare* ('others') responds to the initial *kecid* ('some'). Together, they mark the 'some warriors, other warriors' motif. Cf. 6.44.38ab, 66.18ab, 7.65.21ab, 8.19.64ab, 9.24.15ab, etc.

placed at the beginning of the line:[75] at 19, the general scenes end and the poet resumes his frame-by-frame narration from the perspective of a single hero (here the Kaurava commander Bhīṣma).

It should be noted that not all these motifs belong exclusively to general sequences. Some of them, such as the 'nothing could be distinguished' and the 'never seen or heard' ones, are sometimes present in close encounters, too,[76] albeit more infrequently. They are still most often found in sequences like 6.55.6–19, and their combination with other typical motifs yields our general scenes its distinctive character.

At the same time, the passage we have just discussed does not contain *all* of the motifs typically found in general scenes. Among the commonest ones not found in 6.55.6–19 is the 'fighter vs. fighter' motif: here warriors belonging to a certain class (e.g. foot-soldiers, horsemen, elephants, chariots, etc.) are said to engage in close combat with enemy warriors of the same class. At 6.53.10–13, for example, we get a sequence of horsemen fighting horsemen (10), chariots fighting chariots (11), elephants fighting elephants (12), and foot-soldiers fighting foot-soldiers (13):[77]

hayārohair hayārohāḥ pātyante sma mahāhave	10ab
ṛṣṭibhir vimalāgrābhiḥ prāsair api ca saṃyuge.	10cd
rathī rathinam āsādya śaraiḥ kanakabhūṣaṇaiḥ	
pātayāmāsa samare tasminn atibhayaṃkare.	
gajārohā gajārohān nārācaśaratomaraiḥ	
saṃsaktāḥ pātayāmāsus tava teṣāṃ ca saṃghaśaḥ.	
pattisaṃghā raṇe pattīn bhiṇḍipālaparaśvadhaiḥ	

[75] Cf. Homeric ἔνθα.
[76] Cf. e.g. 7.24.60ab, 9.24.53ab, etc.
[77] For further examples, cf. 6.89.29, 99.30ab, 7.128.3ab, 162.4ab, 9.8.10ab, etc.

nyapātayanta saṃhṛṣṭāḥ parasparakṛtāgasaḥ.

And horsemen rushed against horsemen in the great battle	10ab
with bright-pointed spears and darts on the battlefield.	10cd
Chariot warriors approaching with gold-inlaid arrows	
attacked chariots in that awesomely terrible battle.	
Elephants against elephant warriors with missiles, arrows, and spears	
rushed in formation, theirs and yours all at once.	
Foot-soldiers in battle foot-soldiers with javelins and hatchets	
attacked with joy, wounding each other.	

It is also frequent that, once a first sequence of 'fighter vs. fighter' has been given, the poet enhances the battle chaos by mixing up the various classes of fighters in a second sequence. In the case of 6.53.14–17, the poet depicts a fight of chariots against foot-soldiers (14), elephants against horsemen (15), foot-soldiers against elephants (16), and foot-soldiers against horsemen (17).[78]

General battle scenes abound also in similar sequences where the poet's focus shifts from one class to the other, describing their actions one-by-one, as at 6.91.26–30.[79] Here the poet's attention lingers first on the elephants (26–7), and then moves in order onto horses (28), foot-soldiers (29), and chariots (30):

prabhinnāśca mahānāgā vinītā hastisādibhiḥ
parasparaṃ samāsādya saṃnipetur abhītavat.
madāndhā roṣasaṃrabdhā viṣāṇāgrair mahāhave
bibhidur dantamusalaiḥ samāsādya parasparam.

[78] Cf. 6.71.24, 89.20ab, 7.144.30ab, 8.16.34ab, 36.6ab, etc.
[79] Cf. 6.66.14–15, 67.36–9, 7.161.18–19, 8.19.54–6, 33.50–3, etc.

hayāśca cāmarāpīḍāḥ prāsapāṇibhir āsthitāḥ
coditāḥ sādibhiḥ kṣipraṃ nipetur itaretaram.
pādātāśca padātyoghaistāḍitāḥ śaktitomaraiḥ
nyapatanta tadā bhūmau śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ.
rathinaśca tathā rājan karṇinālīkasāyakaiḥ 30ab
nihatya samare vīrān siṃhanādān vinedire. 30cd

Dropping their fluid, the great elephants, well trained by their riders,
rushing against each other, made their attacks without fear.
Blind with fury, full of anger, with their pointed tusks in the great clash
they butchered each other with their ivory teeth, rushing in together.
The horses, covered in plumes, mounted by spearmen,
urged on by their riders, flew swiftly against each other.
The foot-soldiers, struck down by foot-soldiers with spears and javelins
fell to the ground in their hundreds and thousands.
And chariot-warriors, with darts and arrows 30ab
hitting the valiant heroes in battle, gave out lion roars. 30cd

Other common motifs typically found in general scenes are ‘dust’ (marked by *rajas* (‘dust’), with the poet focusing on the dense layers of dust raised by the fighting warriors),[80] and ‘father and son’, where, amidst the confusion and savagery of the slaughter, various relatives slay each other, apparently forgetful of their kinship bonds.[81] ‘Divine spectators’ (gods and wise spirits) may watch the battle in dismay.[82] ‘Beasts of battle’ also deserves to be mentioned, since the presence of wolves and carrion birds on the battlefield is a trait that the

[80] Cf. 6.66.11, 111.38, 7.162.26, 129.23, 9.21.42, etc.
[81] Cf. 6.44.2, 7.31.19, 144.40, 147.16, 9.24.12, etc.
[82] Cf. 6.43.81, 48.62, 8.11.27, 12.14, 9.12.42, etc.

Sanskrit tradition shares with the Germanic one.[83] A prolonged focus on the arms employed by the warriors, resulting in long lists of weapons and missiles,[84] is also found in the other two traditions under investigation. As we will see, it constitutes one of the main motifs in Homer's general battle scenes.

We have thus discussed in detail the various strategies through which the Sanskrit bards crafted their battle scenes. A fundamental distinction was made between general battle scenes, which view the action from a distant perspective and contain certain recurring motifs, and close encounters. We have also analysed various features (e.g. the use of directional pronouns, the position of finite verbs, the employment of participles and gerunds to drive the action onward), that gave us a clearer picture of the poet's instincts and mechanisms in the construction of his battle verses. Now, after a brief section on the Germanic tradition, we will move on to analyse Homer's battles with the same lens.

Germanic Interlude

Unfortunately, the extant Germanic corpus does not feature extended battle scenes, although fragments from the OE and OHG traditions seem to indicate that warfare poetry was a widely cultivated genre. The most relevant of these fragments is the 325-line long *Battle of Maldon*, a poem celebrating a clash between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons that took place near Maldon, Essex.[85] The poem's precise date is unknown, but it must surely be later than 991 AD, the year when the actual battle was fought. The poem was thus composed in a period (the late 10th century) when writing technology was already firmly established in

[83] See above, 51–2.
[84] Cf. 6.44.13, 50.53, 7.131.34, 8.16.33, 36.3, etc.
[85] For an introduction to this poem, see Robinson (2001), 289.

England; still, it provides the oral comparativist with interesting material, both thematically and phraseologically.

The battle begins with the approaching of the two armies, an event which is accompanied by references to carrion birds (106b–7a, *hremmas wundon | earn æses georn*, 'ravens circled, and eagles hunger for carrion'), shouting and tumult (106a, *þær wearð hream ahafen*, 'there a shout was raised', 107b, *wæs on eorþan cyrm*, 'uproar was on the earth'), and various kinds of weapons (108–10: spears, bows, shields). The atmosphere closely resembles that of the general warfare scenes in the *Mahābhārata*, but the initial clash is cut short, with the poet shifting his attention to individual duels. Here, just as in the Sanskrit epic, the identity (and relations) of the killer and/or the killed are highlighted, as well as the weapon with which the fatal blow is dealt (113–15):

Wund wear[ð] Wulfmær,	wælræste geceas;	
Byrhtnoðes mæg,	he mid billum wearð,	
his swustersunu,	swiðe forheawen.[86]	115

Wulfmaer was wounded,	choosing rest in war,	
the kin of Byrhtnoth;	he with the sword was,	
his sister's [Byrhtnoth's] son,	with violence cut down.	115

All these elements – the name of the wounded, his kinship, and the fatal weapon – are paralleled in Sanskrit battle scenes, and as we will see, have their counterparts in the Homeric ones, too. In terms of syntactic structures and directions, the author of the *Battle of Maldon* is rather sparing in his use of pronouns,[87] and as most OE poets, is not fond of

[86] Quotations from the *Battle of Maldon* follow Griffith's 1991 edition.
[87] In OE the PIE pronouns **so, sā, tod* appear as *se, seo, þæt*.

participial constructions, with the narrative proceeding paratactically from indicative to indicative. At times, we might find consecutive and relative clauses in the indicative, as in the following example (130–9):

Wod þa wiges heard,	wæpen up ahof,	130
bord to gebeorge,	and wið þæs beornes stop;	
Eode swa anræd	eorl to þam ceorle,	
ægþer hyra oðrum	yfeles hogode.	
Sende ða se særinc	suþerne gar,	
þæt gewundod wearð	wigena hlaford:	135
he sceaf þa mid ðam scylde,	**þæt** se sceaft tobærst,	
and þæt spere sprengde,	**þæt** hit sprang ongean.	
Gegremod wearð se guðrinc:	he mid gare stang	
wlancne Wicing,	**þe** him þa wunde forgeaf.	

A warrior stern in the fight waded forth,	raised his weapon,	130
his shield for protection,	and stepped up against the hero.	
He advanced vehemently	the earl against the countryman,	
each of them for the other	devised evil.	
The warrior from the sea [the Viking]	cast a southern spear,	
so that he was wounded	the lord of men.	135
He then shoved it with his shield,	**so that** the shaft was shattered,	
and the spear-head burst,	**so that** it sprang backwards.	
Angered was the warrior;	he struck with his spear	
the bold Viking,	**who** had given him the wound.	

The subordinating conjunctions and pronouns have been marked in bold. As is clear, the poet very rarely resorts to hypotaxis: out of twenty verses, only three feature subordinate clauses, while the remaining seventeen are a testament to the poet's overwhelmingly paratactic strategy. Finite verbs at the beginning and the end of the lines have been underlined only to show a potential parallel with the *Mahābhārata*. Although the placement of the verbs seems to conform to the Sanskrit tendencies, we should note that the effects of Germanic word order (with its marked preference for finite verbs to be placed at the end of the sentence) might be swelling our figures. In other words, the high frequency of verse-final verbs is probably not owed to the poet's compositional strategies, but to the nature of the language in which the poetry was crafted. Additionally, while we may draw helpful analogies between the quantitative metres of Homer and the *Mahābhārata*, the OE alliterative verse is too distant in kind for us to indulge in a proper metrical comparison, let alone speculate about its genetic relationship to the hexameter and the *śloka*. The correspondences between the two traditions, though interesting, should not be pressed too far.

From a thematic and phraseological point of view, the *Maldon* fragment abounds in episodes and expressions that remind us of both Homer and the *Mahābhārata*. The phrase *feores hi ne rohton* (260, 'they reckoned not of their lives') is semantically equivalent to the Sanskrit *tyaktvā prāṇān* ('neglecting their lives', *MBh*. 7.70.33c, 112.10c, etc.), while at 208 the Anglo-Saxon warriors display the same 'death-or-glory' sentiment as their Homeric and Indian counterparts: the phrase *lif forlætan oððe leofne gewrecan* ('give up their lives or avenge their lord') is easily paralleled at *MBh*. 6.114.64d (*prepsur mṛtyor agre jayāya vā*, 'wishing to achieve absolute death or victory') and *Il*. 21.578 (ἠὲ ξυμβλήμεναι ἠὲ δαμῆναι).[88] Similarly, Ælfwine's proud declaration of his bloodline in mid-battle (*Mald*.

[88] Note the presence of the disjunctive 'or' in all three examples.

216–19) is bound to remind us of the exchange between Diomedes and Glaucus at *Il*. 6.119–236.[89]

The OHG tradition has preserved another interesting fragment,[90] the *Hildebrandslied* (68 lines), a tragic account of the clash between Hildebrand and his son Hadubrand, who is not aware of his opponent's identity. Most of the extant text covers the protagonists' verbal exchange before the duel begins at 63. The fragment's final lines seem to introduce a close description of the fight between father and son (63–8). The *Hildebrandslied* is a unique example of its genre, as no other warfare poem has been preserved in OHG poetry.[91] But its presence still makes this tradition outshine its OS cognate, where no extended battle scenes are to be either found extant or suspected on the basis of fragments. As for the ON tradition, battle sequences abound in skaldic poetry, but are conspicuously absent from the *Poetic Edda*. Furthermore, the skaldic scenes are generally short and somewhat general in kind,[92] and overall, seem ill-suited for a frame-by-frame analysis of the kind we have made with the *Mahābhārata* and (to some extent) the *Battle of Maldon*.[93]

In conclusion, the Germanic material is rather scanty. On the basis of our evidence, we can say that warfare poetry seems to have been a popular genre in the Germanic tradition. Fragments such as the *Battle of Maldon*, the *Battle at Brunnanburh*, *Waldere*, and the *Hildebrandslied* clearly show that extended and detailed battle sequences were an integral part of this kind of poetry. Various parallels with the Sanskrit and the Homeric traditions may even lead us to posit a common PIE pool of themes and stock-phrases associated with

[89] Cf. also Aeneas' proclamation at *Il*. 20.208–41.
[90] Other two OE fragments, the *Battle of Finnsburh* (48 lines) and the *Battle of Brunanburh* (73 lines), seem to belong to warfare poems, but they are more general in kind and, at least in the extant portions of the texts, do not feature detailed descriptions of individual encounters.
[91] For an introduction to this poem and an assessment of its literary value, see Hatto (1973) and Norman (1973).
[92] Cf. e.g. Arn *Hardr* II, ESk *Run* 8 II, Sturl *Hákfl* II. Note that skaldic poems are integrated into the prose of the Icelandic sagas, which do feature lengthy battle sequences. These would certainly be worth analysing in detail, but since they are examples of *prose* narrative, they remain outside the scope of this study.
[93] For an introduction to skaldic poetry, see Clunies Ross (2005), 40–68.

battle scenes. But given the paucity of the extant material, as well as the metrical nature of Germanic verse, we should be wary of drawing a direct connection between this tradition and the other two under investigation (at least as far as battle scenes are concerned). In fact, a more fertile terrain for comparison is offered by Homer's *Iliad*, to which we will presently turn.

Homeric Battles

1. Preliminary remarks

As in the case of the *Mahābhārata*, the precise boundaries of the corpus analysed here will be indicated in Appendix IV. For the moment, let it suffice to say that all major battle books of the *Iliad* have been included, from the end of Book 4 to the whole of Book 8, from Book 11 to Book 17, and finally Books 20 and 21. Single duels such as that between Menelaus and Paris in Book 3, or the final encounter between Achilles and Hector in Book 22 are also part of our warfare corpus. It is important to stress at the beginning that only the battle scenes from these books have been taken into account, and that our statistics will therefore not consider scenes like the Διός ἀπάτη in Book 14 or the scene in Nestor's hut from Book 11. Idiosyncratic military encounters such as the Theomachy in Books 20 and 21, or the clash between Achilles and the River God in Book 21 have also been excluded from our reckoning. Similes, direct speeches, biographical anecdotes, and divine scenes, although they are undeniably an integral part of battle sequences, are not part of the corpus, since our attention will be focused almost exclusively on the military aspects of our scenes.

Given the difference in size between the two poems, it is not surprising that our Greek corpus is considerably shorter than its Sanskrit counterpart: about 3,500 Iliadic lines

have been examined against almost 22,000 from the *Mahābhārata*. But leaving dimensions aside, our analysis will show that the Homeric and the Sanskrit bards employed the same strategy in the crafting of their battle scenes, in terms of both construction and versification.

Certain differences are still worth pointing out. For instance, while the bow remains the dominant weapon in the *Mahābhārata*,[94] it is the spear that takes this palm in the *Iliad*.[95] Successful blows, i.e. blows that reach the aimed target, tend to be more effective in the *Iliad* than in the *Mahābhārata*: when a Homeric warrior is struck, he either dies or is so gravely wounded that he must temporarily leave the battlefield.[96] In the *Mahābhārata*, the major heroes can take up to a hundred blows and still remain steadfast with their body covered in arrows and blood: two formulaic similes are employed to portray this condition, *śvāvidhaṃ śalalair iva* ('like a porcupine with its quills'),[97] and *puṣpitā iva kiṃśukāḥ* ('like *kiṃśukāḥ* trees in bloom'),[98] respectively.

Finally, the Homeric poet has at his disposal a further ploy to relieve his audience from the monotony of the slaughter. Conversations and general scenes are elements shared by both the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata*. What the Sanskrit epic lacks, at least in the Battle Books, is divine machinery: no god ever intervenes in the battle, and apart from unique exceptions such as 6.114.87–100 (where Bhīṣma is urged to let himself die by some divine instigator) and 8.63.30–62 (a very brief council scene), the involvement of the gods in battle is essentially limited to the theme 'Divine Spectators' that we have discussed in the Sanskrit section of this chapter. On the contrary, divine machinery is all-present in the Homeric

[94] To the point where the most prestigious bows are even named. Arjuna's Gāṇḍīva and Rāma's Kodaṇḍa are perfect examples of this. Homer's treatment of bows and archers is more ambivalent: at times, archers can be criticised for their cowardice, as they do not fight their opponents in close combat (cf. e.g. *Il*. 11.385, where τοξότα is used as an insult by Diomedes). Still, skilled archers like Teucer are appreciated and complimented in the epic (cf. e.g. 8.266–91), and Odysseus boasts of his own archery as an honorable military skill before the Phaeacians at *Od*. 8.215–20. On the subject, see Hainsworth (1993), 268–9.
[95] The sword is a secondary weapon in both poems.
[96] E.g. Diomedes at *Il*. 5.100–20, Agamemnon at 11.251–68, Hector at 14.418–39.
[97] *MBh*. 7.44.20d, 106.45d, 143.16d.
[98] E.g. *Mbh*. 6.44.43f, 7.18.14d, 8.20.16d, 9.8.24d. The flowers of *kiṃśukāḥ* trees (*Butea monosperma*) are noticeable for their bright, blood-like hue.

poems, with the gods descending to the battlefield, aiding their *protégés*, and in certain extreme cases, even impairing (Poseidon at *Il*. 13.434–4) or killing a mortal enemy (Ares at 5.842–4).[99] Very often divine scenes are used to provide comic relief in the midst of a lengthy battle scene. No Sanskrit bard could have composed a scene such as the domestic exchange of affection between Aphrodite and Dione at *Il*. 5.370–415. Homer does, and divine scenes are certainly one of the means by which the poet achieves variation among the Iliadic bloodsheds.[100] Verbal exchanges and general battle sequences, as stated above, appear in both traditions. We will begin our analysis of Homer's warfare scenes from the latter, and later move on to the individual duels.

2. Homer's general scenes

In the *Mahābhārata*, we have seen that battle scenes of general confusion are as a rule (but not always) clearly identifiable and distinct from the account of individual encounters: they are made up of a series of specific motifs, and unlike the descriptions of single duels, make no use of the directional pronouns *saḥ*, *sā*, *tad*. Such scenes can be short, but the longer examples may extend for several dozens of lines. In Homer, general confusion scenes share only one of these three characteristics: they feature consistent motifs[101] (though less predictably and formulaically than in Sanskrit), but are generally quite short, and in terms of style and compositional strategies, are not clearly detached from the frame-by-frame accounts of the battle, with much intermingling taking place between the two modes of narration. The first general confusion scene in the *Iliad* illustrates all these points (4.446–

[99] According to M.L. West (1988), 169, Homer's overall depiction of the gods is influenced by Near-Eastern models and has no roots in PIE mythology. For further details, see M.L. West (1997), 107–16.
[100] For a recent survey on the role and behaviour of the Homeric gods, see Myers (2019).
[101] Described as "'atmosphärische' Beschreibungs-Elemente" by Latacz (1977), 189. For an account of these scenes, see Latacz (1977), 187–90.

52). The Greek and the Trojan armies have clashed for the first time in the poem, and a general description ensues:

οἳ δ᾽ ὅτε δή ῥ᾽ ἐς χῶρον ἕνα ξυνιόντες ἵκοντο,
σύν ῥ᾽ ἔβαλον ῥινούς, σὺν δ᾽ ἔγχεα καὶ μένε᾽ ἀνδρῶν
χαλκεοθωρήκων· ἀτὰρ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι
ἔπληντ᾽ ἀλλήλῃσι, πολὺς δ᾽ ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.
ἔνθα δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ οἰμωγή τε καὶ εὐχωλὴ πέλεν ἀνδρῶν
ὀλλύντων τε καὶ ὀλλυμένων, ῥέε δ᾽ αἵματι γαῖα.

When they came together onto a single place,
they hurled their shields together, their spears and the fury of men
dressed in bronze; the bossed shields
were filled with each other, and a great uproar arose.
There the terrible cries and the shouts of triumph mingled,
as men slew and were slain, the ground ran with blood.

The scene is quite short: eleven lines, if we include in our reckoning the five-line long simile that begins at 452 and marks the passage from the general overview to the description of single encounters. But despite its brevity, this excerpt contains many of the motifs that recur in the poem's general confusion scenes. After the formulaic meeting line (446), a version of which is also employed before close combats,[102] the poet's focus shifts to three elements: the weapons clashing with each other (447–9), the warriors' shouts and the general tumult of warfare (449–51) and the ground drenched with blood (451). All of these can be easily paralleled in Sanskrit: the 'weapon' theme, marked by a breakneck list of weapons, will

[102] The line is οἳ δ᾽ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες, found eleven times in the *Iliad*.

certainly remind the reader of the long catalogues of arms typical of the Sanskrit epic. The 'tumult' theme, whose main marker is the phrase πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει,[103] nicely corresponds to the *śabda*-lines in the *Mahābhārata*. Finally, the formula ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα[104] can be taken as a most restricted version of the Sanskrit 'river of blood' theme.

As already mentioned, not all these elements must appear for a general confusion scene to be identified as such, but they do tend to recur frequently in this kind of loose battle descriptions. Apart from 8.60–5 (where the passage just quoted is repeated word by word), the Greek 'river of blood' and 'weapon' themes are found together at 15.710–15, a general confusion scene introduced by a different version of the meeting line: after the initial ἀλλ' οἵ γ'ἐγγύθεν ἱστάμενοι ἕνα θυμὸν ἔχοντες (710), the poet gives a long account of the weapons employed by the soldiers and their effects (711–15, in order: axes, hatchets, swords, and spears), with a description of the swords scattered across the battlefield that has much in common with similar images in the *Mahābhārata*.[105] The scene ends with a version of the 'river-of-blood' formula (715, ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα μέλαινα), after which the focus shifts back to the individual characters (716, Ἕκτωρ δὲ…).

Similarly, at 15.312–17 one of the 'tumult' formulae (312, ὦρτο δ' ἀϋτή) is followed by a different version of the 'weapon' theme, where arrows and spears, and their effects are described (313–17) before the poet turns his attention to Apollo and the aegis. At 16.373–6, on the other hand, we encounter another 'general confusion' motif: after a reference to the tumult of battle (373, ἰαχῇ τε φόβῳ τε), the 'dust' theme marks off this passage as a general confusion scene (ὕψι δ' ἀέλλη | σκίδναθ' ὑπαὶ νεφέων).[106]

[103] Note that this line is also used in close combat and preparatory scenes, cf. *Il.* 2.810, 8.59, 21.313 (slightly modified).
[104] This phrase is also found in close combat scenes at *Il.* 20.494.
[105] E.g. 7.88.9–11, 97.21–2, 114.17cd.
[106] For other instances of the 'dust' theme, cf. *Il.* 3.13–14, 11.151–2.

'Dust', we should remember, is also one of the general confusion themes in Sanskrit.[107] But the parallels with the *Mahābhārata* are by no means limited to dust and tumult. At 17.360–3, for example, the catalogue of weapons is replaced by a brief reference to the bodies of the slain warriors, with a 'river of blood' brushstroke at the very beginning (360–1, αἵματι δὲ χθὼν | δεύετο πορφυρέῳ). The detail of the scattered corpses, though found nowhere else in the *Iliad*, is bound to remind us of the long descriptions of the Kurukṣetra plain covered in bodies and human limbs.[108] The inception of the battle at *Il.* 11.51–2 provides another interesting analogy. Following an instance of the 'tumult' theme (50, ἄσβεστος δὲ βοὴ γένετ' ἠῶθι πρό) is an explicit reference to different kinds of soldiers in the Trojan army: at 51 the poet's focus is on the foot-soldiers (πρυλέες),[109] shifting later to the horsemen (52, ἱππῆες) that follow them. This detail, if taken together with its other appearances,[110] does seem to be an abridged version of the foot-soldiers perspective and horsemen's perspective motifs that we have found in the *Mahābhārata*.

As already observed, Homer's general confusion scenes are quite short when compared to their Sanskrit counterparts: the average length of the passages discussed so far oscillates between three and five lines. The most important exception to this trend is found at 17.397–425, a long general sequence of the struggle over Patroclus' body (with an interlude on Achilles' lack of awareness of his friend's destiny). The scene begins with a reference to the chaos surrounding the body (397, μῶλος), followed by an instance of a recurrent motif (398–401):

οὐδέ κ' Ἄρης λαοσσόος οὐδέ κ' Ἀθήνη

[107] E.g. 7.70.26cd, 7.73.52cd–53, 8.21.36ab, etc.
[108] Cf. e.g. 7.68.6ab, 88.10cd–12, 8.14.50, 33.54.
[109] Although this term appears at 49.
[110] Cf. also *Il.* 2.810 and 8.59, where a reference to foot-soldiers and horsemen (πεζοί θ' ἱππῆές τε) is followed by an instance of the 'tumult'.

τόν γε ἰδοῦσ᾽ ὀνόσαιτ᾽, οὐδ᾽ εἰ μάλα μιν χόλος ἴκοι.
τοῖον Ζεὺς ἐπὶ Πατρόκλῳ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ ἵππων 400
ἤματι τῷ ἐτάνυσσε κακὸν πόνον.

Neither would Ares rouser of armies, nor Athena
blame it [the chaos] after seeing it, not even if they were greatly angered.
Such was evil toil of men and horses 400
that Zeus stretched above Patroclus that day.

In order to render more vividly the magnitude of the battle, the *Iliad* poet often refers to the amazement that the Olympian warfare gods (or an unnamed external observer) would feel if they witnessed the clash in person. The marker of this trope (which is not confined to scenes of general confusion)[111] is the optative ὀνόσαιτο, which clearly marks the poet's zoom-out movement, leading the audience to observe the scene from a more distant and privileged perspective. The *hic et nunc* of the battle is blurred in favour of an abstract comment on the gods' presumed reaction to the slaughter.

These lines are then followed by an extended reflection on Achilles' ignorance of his friend's fate and Thetis' failure to foretell the death of Patroclus to her son (401–11). The scene resumes at 412–13, with another general statement on the warriors clashing over the corpse (οἳ δ' αἰεὶ περὶ νεκρὸν … ἐγχρίμπτοντο καὶ ἀλλήλους ἐνάριζον). The focus then shifts to the soldiers' own mind: some Achaean, representing the sentiment of the whole army, spurs on his comrades urging them to get hold of the body and bring it back to the ships (414–19). His speech is mirrored by that of an unnamed Trojan, who likewise urges his companion to fight until the very end. (420–3). Such an exchange does not happen

[111] Cf. 4.539, 13.127.

elsewhere in our warfare corpus,[112] but is particularly appropriate for this extended scene and may remind us of the 'cries of men' theme we have encountered in Sanskrit. Direct speeches such as *MBh*. 7.132.26ab (*hatāharata gṛhṇīta vidhyata vyavakṛntata*, 'get them, kill them, seize them, strike them, destroy them!') or 6.55.17ac (*tāta bhrātaḥ sakhe bandho vayasya mama mātula | mā māṃ parityaja*, 'O father, brother, friend, kin, comrade, uncle, please do not desert me!') are perhaps less sophisticated, but certainly analogous instances of what we have termed the 'cries of men' theme.[113]

The general scene finally comes to an end at 424–5, with a particularly elaborate version of the 'tumult' theme:

> ὣς οἳ μὲν μάρναντο, σιδήρειος δ᾽ ὀρυμαγδὸς
> χάλκεον οὐρανὸν ἶκε δι᾽ αἰθέρος ἀτρυγέτοιο. 425

> Thus they fought, and iron tumult
> reached up to the brazen sky through the barren air. 425

From there, the poet's focus shifts onto Achilles' horses and their charioteer Automedon. The longest general scene thus amounts to twenty-eight lines (eighteen if we exclude the Achilles interlude): it is still far from the lengthy overviews of the *Mahābhārata*, but it certainly stands out in comparison to its Homeric counterparts. On the whole, the evidence seems to suggest that, despite their discrepancies in terms of length, general battle scenes in the Homeric poems and the *Mahābhārata* share the same basic structure: a string of recurrent motifs that privilege the vague over the particular and can therefore be applied to almost any

[112] Although anonymous speakers voicing the feelings of the collectivity do appear elsewhere in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: e.g. *Il*. 2.271, 3.297 and 319, 7.178, *Od*. 10.37, 13.167.
[113] Cf. Edwards (1991), 102–3.

battle scene regardless of the narrative context. The Sanskrit bards certainly make wider use of this kind of sequences, probably because they had no divine stock-scenes at their disposal (which, as we have seen, were a favourite of Homer's) and could only rely on conversations and general overviews to achieve variation in their battle narratives.

3. Close combat in the *Iliad*

Moving on to the analysis of close combat scenes, the reader will immediately notice certain undeniable similarities between the two epics. A detailed comparison will be offered in the next section, but for the moment we can say that Homer seems to have adopted a very similar building strategy for the construction of his battle scenes. The three pillars of Sanskrit verse-construction are all present in the *Iliad*.

First of all, just as their Indian colleagues, the Homeric bards made wide use of directional pronouns. Let us take a particularly transparent example (*Il*. 8.261–6):

τὸν δὲ μετ᾽ Ἀτρεῖδαι, Ἀγαμέμνων καὶ Μενέλαος,
τοῖσι δ᾽ ἔπ᾽ Αἴαντες, θοῦριν ἐπιειμένοι ἀλκήν,
τοῖσι δ᾽ ἔπ᾽ Ἰδομενεὺς καὶ ὀπάων Ἰδομενῆος
Μηριόνης, ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλίῳ ἀνδρειφόντῃ,
τοῖσι δ᾽ ἔπ᾽ Εὐρύπυλος, Εὐαίμονος ἀγλαὸς υἱός·
Τεῦκρος δ᾽ εἴνατος ἦλθε παλίντονα τόξα τιταίνων…

After him [Diomedes] came the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus,
and with them the two Ajaxes, clothed in battle strength,
and with them Idomeneus and Idomeneus' squire
Meriones, equal to murderous Enyalius,

and with them came Eurypylus, the noble son of Euaemon; 265

Teucer was the ninth to come, stringing his curved bow.

In this scene, some of the main Achaean heroes launch a common attack on the Trojan ranks after Diomedes' input (253–60). The successive waves of the charge are marked by directional pronouns placed at the beginning of the lines; in this case, our attention moves onto different characters in each line, with the pronouns scanning this quasi-rhythmical shift of focus. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this phenomenon is that Homer employs the very same kind of pronoun as the Sanskrit bards, i.e. the old PIE pronoun **so, sā, tod*, which in Attic-Ionic is realised as ὁ, ἡ, τό. The analogy between the two traditions is remarkable: at 261, the Greek τόν corresponds morphologically to Sanskrit *tam*, which we have found at the beginning of so many epic *ślokas*; the same applies to the anaphoric τοῖσι in the following lines, which corresponds to Sanskrit *taiḥ*. Not all the pronouns in the **so, sā, tod* declension show such a *close* correspondence between Sanskrit and Ionic (e.g. the datives *tasmai* and τῷ),[114] but Homer does seem to use them in the same way as his Indian counterparts: they serve a directional function, marking fast-paced shifts of focus and helping the audience to keep track of the flow of discourse.

According to Bakker, pronouns (which in Homeric Greek are almost always coupled with particles) in the nominative, such as ὁ δέ or αἱ δέ, are used for the reintroduction or reactivation of agents in the discourse.[115] This is certainly part of their role, but oral guidance is also provided by pronouns in the accusative and the oblique cases, as in the example just discussed. It might be objected that such a profusion of pronouns as that in the passage quoted is owed to the fact that Homer is giving a catalogue of heroes, with the verb postponed until the very last item on the list (i.e. Teucer, 266). But the use of directional

[114] Although the final *-ai* of the Sanskrit pronoun goes back to PIE **-ōi* just as its Greek counterpart.
[115] Bakker (1997), 65.

pronouns is in fact an all-pervasive feature of Homeric diction and gains especial relevance in battle scenes, which are characterised by a fast-paced narrative and frequent shifts of focus. Examples of this abound throughout our warfare corpus. *Il*. 21.17–21 represents a particularly illuminating instance:

> αὐτὰρ ὁ διογενὴς δόρυ μὲν λίπεν αὐτοῦ ἐπ᾽ ὄχθῃ
> κεκλιμένον μυρίκῃσιν, ὃ δ᾽ ἔνθορε δαίμονι ἶσος,
> φάσγανον οἷον ἔχων, κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ μήδετο ἔργα·
> τύπτε δ᾽ ἐπιστροφάδην, τῶν δὲ στόνος ὄρνυτ᾽ ἀεικὴς 20
> ἄορι θεινομένων, ἐρυθαίνετο δ᾽ αἵματι ὕδωρ.

> But the Zeus-nurtured hero left the spear there on the bank,
> leaning on the tamarisks, and he leapt in like a god,
> holding only his sword, and in his heart he pondered cruel deeds;
> he stabbed all around him, and the shameful groans arose of them 20
> as they were killed by the sword, the water grew red with blood.

In these lines, we find Achilles in the midst of his onslaught, chasing the Trojans along the banks of River Scamander. The poet's focus fluctuates between four different objects in the span of five lines. We begin with Achilles (ὁ διογενὴς), with the pronoun ὁ marking the shift from the river that had been the focus of the previous lines (15–16). The hero lays down his spear on the riverbank (17): the weapon is then qualified by means of a participle in the following hemistich (κεκλιμένον). The phrase κεκλιμένον μυρίκῃσιν marks a pause in the flow of discourse, as the poet's attention lingers on the resting missile. It is not a long break, nor does the participle mark a particularly harsh shift of focus from Achilles; but it is apparently substantial enough for the poet to feel the need to reactivate the agency of the

hero with a pronoun-particle combination: with ὃ δ᾽ ἔσθορε, we turn back to Achilles as he leaps in fury against the enemy. The focus does not change for the next three hemistichs (20–21), where the hero remains the sole agent of the poet's narrative. A shift in focus takes place in the second part of line 21, with the pronoun τῶν drawing the audience's attention from Achilles to his victims. The fourth shift is marked by particles alone: the image of the waters befouled with blood is introduced only by δέ. As will become apparent, Homer is less systematic in his use of directional pronouns than his Sanskrit counterparts. We may presume that, once Greek developed mandatory particles to link its sentences, directional pronouns became less indispensable for the bards to construct their battle lines.

Another major difference is that, on the whole, Greek pronouns are not redundant. In the *Mahābhārata*, as we have seen, pronouns start off the new sentence, but the noun or name they are supposed to replace is often found later within the same *śloka*. In Homer, this happens much more rarely: in both the examples discussed so far, pronouns behave as their name would suggest and the noun they refer to is not found in the same sentence. There are some exceptions, however. At *Il*. 4.502, for example, a new sentence begins with the article-pronoun combination ἣ δέ, with the rest of the line featuring no other feminine element in the nominative (ἑτέροιο διὰ κροτάφοιο πέρησεν 'pierced through to the other temple'). The noun (and subject of the sentence) then appears in the following verse: αἰχμὴ χαλκείη (503, 'the bronze point').[116] Perhaps significantly, most instances of pronoun redundancy are to be found when the poet describes the trajectory of a weapon or the damages caused by its blow.

Despite these differences, however, the use of these pronouns is generally analogous in both the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata*: they are normally placed at the beginning of verses

[116] Cf. also *Il*. 5.66–7, 302–3, 508–9, 519–20, 7.17–18, 260–1, 8.53, 13.146, 597, 16.611, 17.527, 20.276–7.

or sentences in both traditions,[117] and they seem designed to facilitate the audience's cognizance of the poetic flow amidst various (and often swiftly alternating) shifts of focus. A clear example of this in Greek is found at the end of the anecdotal element of Beye's ABC pattern (which informs several Iliadic killings).[118] The death of Phereclus (*Il.* 5.59–66) will illustrate this point:

Μηριόνης δὲ Φέρεκλον ἐνήρατο, Τέκτονος υἱὸν
Ἁρμονίδεω, ὃς χερσὶν ἐπίστατο δαίδαλα πάντα
τεύχειν, ἔξοχα γάρ μιν ἐφίλατο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη·
ὃς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τεκτήνατο νῆας ἐΐσας
ἀρχεκάκους, αἳ πᾶσι κακὸν Τρώεσσι γένοντο
οἵ τ᾽ αὐτῷ, ἐπεὶ οὔ τι θεῶν ἐκ θέσφατα εἴδη.
τὸν μὲν Μηριόνης, ὅτε δὴ κατέμαρπτε διώκων,
βεβλήκει γλουτὸν κατὰ δεξιόν…

Meriones slew Phereclus, son of Tecton
son of Harmon, who with his hands knew how to make all kinds
of fine works, and was especially loved by Pallas Athene.
He was the one who built the balanced ships for Paris,
the beginning of all evils, which brought evil to all the Trojans
and himself, because he did not know the oracles of the gods.
This man did Meriones, after he caught him in pursuit,
strike in his right buttock…

[117] The rigid structure of the epic *śloka* makes it infrequent for a change of subject (or shift of focus) to take place in mid-line, which is conversely rather common in Homer. The elasticity of the hexameter in contrast to the *anuṣṭubh* distichs will be discussed in the next section.
[118] Cf. Beye (1964), 347–8.

The first line in the passage is Beye's element A, where the basic information about the killing is provided: Meriones slew Phereclus, son of Tecton. After the killing verse, a relative pronoun introduces the anecdote (Beye's B element), with some biographical details about Phereclus' life (60–4). The poet's attention thus shifts from the killing to the victim's past life and the audience's focus follows in the flow. In order to signal his shifting back to the present slaughter (i.e. the progression from B to C in Beye's schema), the poet almost always places a pronoun in the accusative at the end of the anecdote (in this case τόν, 65), after which the killing's contextual information is provided (65–6).[119] The pronoun plays here a more pivotal role than its simple semantics would indicate: the poet employs it to signal the end of a motif and the transition to a different micro-scene. In Foley's words, the pronoun τόν is a "familiar sign" given by the poet for the audience to "read",[120] and we can say with some confidence that the audience, after hearing an accusative pronoun at the end of an anecdotal section, would probably have some strong expectations about the content of the next few lines: they knew that a killing described in detail was in order. This kind of pronouns, then, act as a sort of road signs, indicating the direction that the narrative will take and providing guidance for the audience better to follow the flow of discourse (which is particularly intricate in battle scenes): the same observations, as we have seen, can be applied to Sanskrit.

In the case of the epic *śloka*, we have seen that the finite verb has certain favourite positions where it is most commonly found: at the beginning of *pādas* and, in some cases, at the end of the line. Once again, Homer seems to display similar tendencies in the construction of his battle verses. A series of attacks from the Greek heroes at the end of Book 14 is particularly illuminating (*Il*. 14.511–22):

[119] For further examples, cf. e.g. *Il*. 4.501, 5.45, 55 (with the enclitic pronoun μιν), 6.27, 11.126, 16.577, 17.309, etc.
[120] Foley (1996), 25.

Αἴας ῥα πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος Ὕρτιον οὖτα
Γυρτιάδην, Μυσῶν ἡγήτορα καρτεροθύμων·
Φάλκην δ᾽ Ἀντίλοχος καὶ Μέρμερον ἐξενάριξε·
Μηριόνης δὲ Μόρυν τε καὶ Ἱπποτίωνα κατέκτα·
Τεῦκρος δὲ Προθόωνά τ᾽ ἐνήρατο καὶ Περιφήτην.
Ἀτρείδης δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔπειθ᾽ Ὑπερήνορα ποιμένα λαῶν
οὖτασε κὰλ λαπάρην, διὰ δ᾽ ἔντερα χαλκὸς ἄφυσσεν
δῃώσας· ψυχὴ δὲ κατ᾽ οὐταμένην ὠτειλὴν
ἔσσυτ᾽ ἐπειγομένη, τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσ᾽ ἐκάλυψεν.
πλείστους δ᾽ Αἴας εἶλεν, Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς υἱός·
οὐ γάρ οἵ τις ὁμοῖος ἐπισπέσθαι ποσὶν ἦεν
ἀνδρῶν τρεσσάντων, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς ἐν φόβον ὦρσεν.

First Ajax son of Telamon struck Hyrtius
son of Gyrtius, leader of the strong-hearted Mysians.
Then Antilochus killed Phalces and Mermerus,
Meriones cut down Morys and Hippotion,
Teucer killed Prothoon and Periphetes,
and then Atreus' son Hyperenor shepherd of people
struck in the flank, the bronze drew out his guts
cutting through them, and his soul through the open wound
rushed out in haste, and darkness covered his eyes.
Ajax, the swift son of Oileus, killed the most,
for no one was his match in pursuing
the fleeing men, when Zeus roused terror upon them.

In these lines, all finite verbs except one (520, εἶλεν) fall into one of the three favourite positions we have detected in the *Mahābhārata*.[121] Of course not all passages are as unequivocal as this one. If we turn to the statistics, we find that about 63% of the verbs in our warfare corpus are located either at the end of the line or at the beginning of a hemistich, i.e. almost two out of three. This figure is not as high as the one we have determined for the *Mahābhārata*, but it does show a clear preponderance towards certain positions in terms of verb placement.

That these tendencies are oral in nature (i.e. derive from a method for verse construction that was presumably of help to the oral bard in performance) is shown by the fact that the further we move away from Homer, the lower our verb-placement percentage becomes. In a sample of about 1,200 lines from the first three books of Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica*, our figure falls to ca. 54%;[122] in a similar sample from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (Books 28–30),[123] it even plummets to 35%, although certain peculiarities of the Nonnian hexameter should be taken into account.[124] The overall impression is thus that the *Iliad*, at least as far as battle scenes are concerned, mirrors the *Mahābhārata* in this respect, too. In

[121] Just as the Sanskrit *śloka*, one should not picture the hexameter as rigidly divided into four sections (or cola). A verb such as κατέκτα could theoretically be placed in five different positions within the hexameter (between the 1st and the 2nd feet, between the 2nd and the 3rd, between the 3rd and the 4th, between the 4th and the 5th and at verse-end), but in fact it is only found in two of these throughout Homer: six times at verse-end and once at the end of the first hemistich (*Il.* 15.432, i.e. between the 2nd and 3rd feet).

[122] At first sight, this might look like a rather high figure, but in fact it is much less noticeable than one might think, if we take into account the nature of Quintus' poetry. The *Posthomerica* has been repeatedly noticed for their "strong and pervasive adherence to the Homeric model" (Ferreccio (2022), 214), albeit with some elements of innovation. Quintus' style is so imitative of his model's that his epic is not only "Homeric (or hyper-Homeric) in its every aspect, from language and formulaic composition, to imagery, plot sequences, and narrative functions, [but] the poem explicitly marks itself out as Homeric" (Maciver (2018), 71). At *PH* 12.306–13 he even goes as far as to actively pretend to be Homer himself (cf. Greensmith (2018), 261–2). It is therefore not surprising that even in his battle scenes, described as "simple variations, passablement monotones sur un schéma scolaire tiré de l'*Iliade*" (Vian (1959), 86), his imitation in terms of verb placement should be so accurate as to *almost* equal the percentage that we have found for Homer's own verbs.

[123] Quintus and Nonnus have been selected as counterexamples inasmuch as their poems are the only ones that feature extended battle scenes in the whole of post-Homeric Greek literature.

[124] Nonnus' accentuative approach disqualifies him from employing proparoxytone words at the end of the hexameter (cf. Magnelli (2016), 362–4). This means that he could not employ verbs such as ἐξενάριξε or κάλυψε at verse-end. But a figure so much lower than 50% is still remarkable and, if anything, these considerations further reinforce the point: the more 'artificial' the hexameter, the less the oral tendencies will manifest themselves.

the next section, we will attempt an explanation to account for the percentage difference between the two poems. For the moment, we may content ourselves with observing that both epics share the same tendencies in terms of verb placement.

Turning now to the question of narrative progression, we find once again some noteworthy parallels with Sanskrit. In the *Mahābhārata*, we have noticed a strategy that we called *double progression*: an action, expressed by the main finite verb, takes place contextually with some other action indicated by an infinite verb form. This mode of narrative progression is predominant in the *Iliad*'s battle scenes, too; but whereas in Sanskrit the main infinite verb form was found to be the gerund (closely followed by past passive participles), in Homer its place is taken by all kinds of participles (active, passive, middle, present, aorist, perfect). The basic narrative construction form in our battle scenes will thus be [participle] + [finite verb], or [finite verb] + [participle], as shown in the following passage (*Il.* 13.182–90):

Τεῦκρος δ᾽ ὁρμήθη **μεμαὼς** ἀπὸ τεύχεα δῦσαι·
Ἕκτωρ δ᾽ **ὁρμηθέντος** ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῷ,
ἀλλ᾽ *ὃ* μὲν ἄντα **ἰδὼν** ἠλεύατο χάλκεον ἔγχος
τυτθόν, *ὃ* δ᾽ Ἀμφίμαχον, Κτεάτου υἷ᾽ Ἀκτορίωνος
νισόμενον πόλεμόνδε κατὰ στῆθος βάλε δουρί·
δούπησεν δὲ **πεσών**, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ.
Ἕκτωρ δ᾽ ὁρμήθη κόρυθα κροτάφοις **ἀραρυῖαν**
κρατὸς ἀφαρπάξαι μεγαλήτορος Ἀμφιμάχοιο·
Αἴας δ᾽ **ὁρμηθέντος** ὀρέξατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ…

Teucer sprang up, **eager** to take off his [Imbrius'] armour;
Hector, **as he ran**, hurled his shining spear at him,

but *he*, **having seen** it in advance, <u>avoided</u> the bronze spear
by a little, and *he* [Hector] Amphimachus, son of Cteatus son of Actor,
as he went into battle, <u>struck</u> in his chest with the spear.
He <u>thundered</u> **as he fell**, and the armour <u>clattered</u> about him.
Hector <u>sprang up</u> to snatch the helmet, closely **fitted** around his temples,
from the head of great-hearted Amphimachus.
Ajax, **as he ran**, <u>thrust at him</u> with his shining spear…

These lines depict Teucer's onrush to despoil the dead Imbrius (killed at 187–8) and Hector's subsequent killing of Amphimachus, with Ajax' intervention. As can be seen, the directional pronouns have been italicised,[125] while the main finite verbs are underlined (with 5/8 falling in one of the favourite positions) and the infinite ones marked in bold.[126] The results are remarkable: out of nine lines, the double construction scheme is used to express the action in seven of them. It is also noticeable that, just as the gerund in Sanskrit, the participles in Greek are often found at the end of the first hemistich. Indeed a frequent construction pattern for battle verses is [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE], found four times in this passage (183, 184, 186, 190). This must have been a traditional template for verse construction even outside battle scenes, since it constitutes the basic structure of many formulaic speech-introduction verses: lines such as ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱσταμένη προσέφη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (*Il.* 2.172), τὸν καὶ φωνήσας προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (14.41) or τὸν δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (1.148) all share this basic template.

But let us turn back to our battle scenes and take a further example (*Il.* 15.572–8):

ὣς **εἰπὼν** *ὃ* μὲν αὖτις <u>ἀπέσσυτο</u>, *τὸν* δ᾽ <u>ὀρόθυνεν</u>·

[125] Note that several agents are also activated by placing their names in the nominative at the beginning of a verse or sentence: a common phenomenon in Homer.
[126] This kind of demarcation will be maintained in the next three quotations.

ἐκ δ᾽ ἔθορε προμάχων καὶ ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῷ

ἀμφὶ ἓ **παπτήνας**· ὑπὸ δὲ Τρῶες κεκάδοντο

ἀνδρὸς **ἀκοντίσσαντος**. *ὃ* δ᾽ οὐχ ἅλιον βέλος ἦκεν,

ἀλλ᾽ Ἱκετάονος υἱὸν ὑπέρθυμον Μελάνιππον

νισόμενον πόλεμόνδε βάλε στῆθος παρὰ μαζόν.

{δούπησεν δὲ **πεσών**, *τὸν* δὲ σκότος ὄσσ᾽ ἐκάλυψεν.}

Having spoken, *he* [Menelaus] pulled back, but roused *him* [Antilochus].

He leapt out of the first ranks and hurled his shining spear

looking about him; the Trojans shrank back

before the man **who cast his spear**. *He* did not hurl his missile in vain,

but Melanippus, the proud son of Hicetaon,

as he went into battle, struck in his chest by the nipple.

He thundered as **he fell**, and darkness covered *his* eyes.

In this passage, Antilochus rushes on against the Trojan ranks, after having been urged on by Menelaus (the pronoun ὃ at 572 and the first two verbs refer to him). Here the double progression strategy is used five times (572, 573–4, 574–5, 577, 578), but only one features the [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE] schema (578). In two of the other four instances, we find a different kind of construction: a finite verb in the second part of a verse with a participle at the end of the 1st hemistich of the following line (573–4, 574–5).[127] This is also a very common construction schema, which, as we will see, features also certain interesting variations. Line 573 is interesting for a different reason: προμάχων is a noun, but is found in one of the most favoured positions for participle placement in battle lines and its

[127] As a result, 574 and 575 do have a [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE] shape, although the participles in those lines do not refer to the corresponding finite verbs.

morphological shape recalls that of a participle, too: one might wonder how words such as this sounded and felt in the mind of a performing poet.[128]

Interesting results are also found when we take subordinates into account. At *Il*. 5.95–8, Pandarus wounds Diomedes hitting his shoulder with an arrow:

> *τὸν* δ᾽ ὡς οὖν ἐνόησε Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱὸς
> **θύνοντ**᾽ ἀμ πεδίον, πρὸ ἕθεν **κλονέοντα** φάλαγγας,
> αἶψ᾽ ἐπὶ Τυδείδῃ ἐτιταίνετο καμπύλα τόξα
> καὶ βάλ᾽ **ἐπαΐσσοντα**, **τυχὼν** κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον…
>
> When the noble son of Lycaon saw *him* [Diomedes]
> **raging** in the plain, **routing** the ranks before him,
> he immediately aimed his curved bow at Diomedes
> and struck him **as he rushed on**, **hitting** him in the right shoulder…

The first two lines in this passage constitute a temporal clause (cf. ὡς) whose action precedes that of the main verb (ἐτιταίνετο). Considering the presence of the two participles (θύνοντα and κλονέοντα), semantically, this sentence corresponds to the frequent Sanskrit construction [active participle with verb of motion] + [gerund of verb of perception at 1stE] (e.g. 6.50.62a, *tam āyāntam abhiprekṣya*, 'having seen him come').[129] It may be just a coincidence that our Greek verb of perception (though a finite verb in a temporal clause) is found at the end of the first hemistich; but it is certainly interesting to notice that, although ἐνόησε could happily sit at the end of the hexameter, it is found there only twice in the

[128] Note that, if προμάχων had the same value as a participle, line 573 would a perfect example of the [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE] schema.
[129] Note the pronoun *tam* at verse-beginning, nicely corresponding to τόν in the Greek.

Iliad[130] (and once after the hephthemimeral caesura).[131] In its other fifteen Iliadic appearances, it is always found at the end of the first hemistich.[132] It might be tempting (although it should not be pushed too far) to see the reflections of an ancient compositional instinct whereby verbs of perception (either finite or infinite) in a temporal structure preceding the main verb were often placed at the end of the first hemistich.[133] What is certain is that the Homeric battle scenes display a much higher proportion of subordinates than our Sanskrit corpus. In order better to illustrate this, let us look at a final passage (*Il*. 5.321–33):

ἀλλ᾽ *ὅ* γε τοὺς μὲν ἑοὺς ἠρύκακε μώνυχας ἵππους
νόσφιν ἀπὸ φλοίσβου, ἐξ ἄντυγος ἡνία **τείνας**,
Αἰνείαο δ᾽ **ἐπαΐξας** καλλίτριχας ἵππους
ἐξέλασε Τρώων μετ᾽ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιούς·
δῶκε δὲ Δηϊπύλῳ, ἑτάρῳ φίλῳ, ὃν περὶ πάσης
τῖεν ὁμηλικίης, ὅτι οἱ φρεσὶν ἄρτια ἤδη,
νηυσὶν ἐπὶ γλαφυρῇσιν ἐλαυνέμεν. αὐτὰρ *ὅ* γ᾽ ἥρως
ὧν ἵππων **ἐπιβὰς** ἔλαβ᾽ ἡνία σιγαλόεντα,
αἶψα δὲ Τυδείδην μέθεπε κρατερώνυχας ἵππους
ἐμμεμαώς· *ὃ* δὲ Κύπριν ἐπώχετο νηλέϊ χαλκῷ,
γινώσκων ὅ τ᾽ ἄναλκις ἔην θεός…

But *he* [Sthenelus] kept his own single-hoofed horses
away from the confusion, **tying** the reins to the chariot rail,
and **making a rush** against Aeneas' fair-maned horses,

[130] *Il*. 5.665, 15.395.
[131] 15.453.
[132] Of these, eight are temporal clauses: 3.396, 5.95, 711, 7.17, 11.248, 20.419, 21.49, 418.
[133] This, of course, is not always the case: cf. e.g. *Il*. 15.395.

he drove them out of the Trojan ranks among the well-greaved Achaeans.
He gave them to Deipylus, his dear comrade, whom most of all
of his age he honoured, because they had a similar character,
to take them to the hollow ships. But *the* hero,
mounting on his horses, grasped the shining reins
and immediately drove the strong-hoofed horses after Diomedes
eagerly; *he* [Diomedes] went after Cypris with the pitiless bronze,
knowing that she was a weak goddess…

In these lines, which recount Sthenelus' capture of Aeneas' horses, all verbs fall in one of the three preferred positions: we may observe a [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE] schema at 328 and a sequence of participle and finite verb over two different lines (323–4) that may remind us of the common Sanskrit construction [gerund 1stE in ab] + [finite verb 1stB/2ndB in cd]. What is striking about this passage is that it displays a remarkable number of subordinate clauses: a relative (325) with a causal clause within it (326), and a declarative at 331. Such a high concentration of subordinates is very rarely found in our *Mahābhārata* corpus, and we will further explore this discrepancy in the next section. For the moment, it is worth noticing that, even when the flow of discourse is broken down into smaller clauses, the verb placement tendency that we have observed seems to still be at work: τῖεν is placed at the beginning of 326, while ᾐδη is at the end of the same line, and ἔην is found at the beginning of the second hemistich in 331.

Once again, it is important to stress that we are dealing with broad tendencies, and not rigorous rules. There is plenty of passages where our results may not be applied. At *Il*. 20.481–4, for example, Achilles strikes Deucalion with his sword and proceeds to wreak havoc amidst the Trojan ranks:

ὃ δὲ φασγάνῳ αὐχένα θείνας

τῆλ᾽ αὐτῇ πήληκι κάρη βάλε· μυελὸς αὖτε

σφονδυλίων ἔκπαλθ᾽· ὃ δ᾽ ἐπὶ χθονὶ κεῖτο τανυσθείς.

αὐτὰρ ὃ βῆ ῥ᾽ ἰέναι μετ᾽ ἀμύμονα Πείρεω υἱόν…

Hitting his [Deucalion's] neck with the sword

hurled the head away, helmet and all; and the marrow

gushed out of the vertebrae. He lay stretched out on the ground.

But he went after the noble son of Peires.

Here the [participle] + [finite verb] structure is used sparingly, while no finite verb is located in one of the favoured positions. Passages such as this are exceptional, but by no means untraditional: in what follows, we will comment on the greater degree of flexibility of Homer's hexameter as opposed to the Sanskrit *śloka*. For the moment, we may conclude this section by remarking that our Homeric warfare corpus seems to display tendencies that are very similar, if not identical, to what we have observed in the *Mahābhārata*.

Conclusions and Comparisons

The numerous similarities between the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata* cannot be denied.[134] Both poems certainly have their idiosyncrasies. As mentioned above, the Sanskrit heroes are generally much more resistant in battle than their Greek counterparts, to the point where their fights take on an almost super-human character: Arjuna and Duryodhana may be struck dozens of times and still stand their ground, while Hector and Patroclus are realistically cut down after one or two blows. In the *Mahābhārata*, the poet often focuses on the destruction

[134] For a discussion of battle scenes from a PIE perspective, see M.L. West (2007), 470–503, who comments on some of the motifs which we have discussed (weapon clash, focus on different classes of soldiers, beasts of battle).

of a warrior's military accoutrements and retinue (bow, banner, parasol, chariot, charioteer, etc.), a trait which is absent from the *Iliad*. Sequential attacks where a party of named heroes strike a single opponent, each with a specific number of arrows, are also a typically Indian trait that is not shared with Homer's epic. Similarly, sequences such as the Iliadic 'reproach pattern' are not found in the *Mahābhārata*.

Still, if one looks closely, these differences are secondary developments that do not conceal the fundamental compositional analogies. The series of Greek attacks at *Il*. 6.29–33, for example, has much in common with the long list of duels that we find at, e.g. *MBh*. 6.68.1–10: in both scenes, the poet simply describes the action with a finite verb and gives the name of the attacker and his victim, without lingering further on the developments of each duel. At times, the parallels are too precise and detailed to be the result of mere chance. Let us take a look at this close combat sequence (*Il*. 5.290–4):

ὣς φάμενος προέηκε, βέλος δ᾽ ἴθυνεν Ἀθήνη 290
ῥῖνα παρ᾽ ὀφθαλμόν, λευκοὺς δ᾽ ἐπέρησεν ὀδόντας·
τοῦ δ᾽ ἀπὸ μὲν γλῶσσαν πρυμνὴν τάμε χαλκὸς ἀτειρής,
αἰχμὴ δ᾽ †ἐξελύθη† παρὰ νείατον ἀνθερεῶνα.
ἤριπε δ᾽ ἐξ ὀχέων, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ…

Thus speaking, he let it [the spear] fly, Athena directed the weapon 290
against the nose next to the eye, and pierced his white teeth.
The stubborn bronze cut through the base of his tongue,
the spear point came out by the lower part of the chin.
He fell from the chariot, the weapons clattered about him…

Here Diomedes is dealing Pandarus his fatal blow. The action follows a common pattern:[135] first the poet describes the casting of the missile (290–1), then shifts the focus to weapon itself, narrating the wounding from its perspective (292–3, note that the spear is the subject), and finally concludes the encounter with the fall of the slain warrior, expressed with a fixed formula (294, ἤριπε δ᾽ ἐξ ὀχέων). Let us now compare these lines with a sequence from the *Mahābhārata* (7.132.14–15):

sa tayābhihato bhīmaścakampe ca mumoha ca
prāpya cetaśca balavān gadām asmai sasarja ha.
sā pāṇḍavena prahitā bāhlīkasya śiro 'harat 15ab
sa papāta hataḥ pṛthvyāṃ vajrāhata ivādrirāṭ. 15cd

He, struck by it [a spear], Bhīma was shaken and fell unconscious,
then, after regaining his consciousness, the great warrior hurled a mace at him.
It, cast by the Pāṇḍava, cut down Bāhlīka's head, 15ab
and he fell dead to the ground, like the greatest peak struck by a lighting. 15cd

This sequence, where the poet narrates Bāhlīka's death at the hands of Bhīma, follows the same pattern as its Greek counterpart: first, the deadly missile is cast (14cd), then the factual killing is viewed from the perspective of the weapon (15ab), with the victim's fall closing the encounter (15cd).[136] It is hardly a coincidence that the two poems share these sequences with such a high degree of exactitude.

In other cases, we get the impression that one tradition has developed to its full potential a motif that has remained in its embryonic stage in the other. The frequent

[135] Cf. e.g. 4.459–62, 17.309–11, 20.486–7, etc.
[136] Cf. 7.67.53–6, 101.61–2, 8.10.28–30, etc.

employment of biographical anecdotes in the *Iliad* has been mentioned several times: before describing the death of a warrior, the poet dwells on the victim's past, enhancing the pathos of the killing. This motif is not found as regularly in the *Mahābhārata*, but is generally reserved for significant deaths: at 6.86.6–14, we hear of the birth of Arjuna's son Iravat, and the vicissitudes that led him to fight at Kurukṣetra; he then dies at 69–70, after a long duel with the monstruous Alambuṣa.[137] The biography motif is therefore present in both traditions, but the Sanskrit poets employ it sparingly, while Homer makes a more systematic use of it.

However, the similarities that we have analysed in this chapter concern the deep structure of the text. We have seen that, as far as close combat scenes are concerned, the Sanskrit and Homeric traditions share some fundamental aspects of verse construction. In particular, we have seen that in both traditions:

1. The poets make use of the directional pronoun **so, sā, tod* to endow their close encounters with order and rhythm and help the audience keep track of the flow of discourse.

2. The poets tend to place their finite verbs in certain favoured positions: the beginning of hemistichs and the end of the line.

3. The poets often drive on the narrative by coupling finite verbs with infinite verbal forms, such as gerunds and participles (some of which

[137] Cf. 7.121.32, the death of Jayadratha, the aim of Arjuna's revenge, which is anticipated by a long biographical anecdote on the victim (16–29).

also have a favoured location within the verse). This strategy has been termed *double progression*.

Of course, these are only *basic* mechanisms for crafting close combat lines. Our poems were certainly composed by skilled wordsmiths, who knew how to balance repetition and variation, and could manipulate the basic tools of their craft to achieve an exceptional variety of related permutations. But as we have remarked, a better understanding of basic strategies may help us deepen our insight into the art of oral versification and verse construction. Close combat scenes, more than any other poetic context, seem to point to an inherited set of compositional instincts and tools whose effects surface in our extant texts. To a lesser degree, interesting commonalities can be identified in general battle scenes, conceived as sequences of typical warfare motifs. In this case, however, the poet of the *Mahābhārata* makes a wider use of this kind of scenes than Homer, both in terms of frequency and length of individual instances.

Now, these observations cannot be applied to all ancient traditions. Adrian Kelly has analysed battle narratives in Ancient Near-Eastern sources, coming to the conclusion that these scenes are fundamentally different in nature from their Homeric counterparts. While Homer "narrativizes and aesthecises" his battles, spending "a great deal of energy on battle narratives" for the benefit of an audience who "found descriptions of combat pleasing and interesting in themselves",[138] the Ancient Near-Eastern battle sequences are characterised by a journal style that overlooks the single moments of the fight.[139] Brevity and lack of detail about individual duels are the key-markers of these narratives, and even when the poets attempt to provide a closer and more specific account of the fight (cf. e.g. the *Qadesh* poem

[138] Kelly (2014), 41.
[139] Cf. Kelly (2014), 42–4.

for Ramesses II or the *Annals of Sennachrib*), they never achieve the "characterisational force or dramatic variety"[140] of Homeric battles.[141]

Other PIE sources feature (or are likely to have featured) detailed accounts of military encounters. The Germanic tradition, for example, is rich in fragments and titles which indicate that warfare and battle narratives had a prominent place in the poetry of those peoples. But as far as we can tell from the extant portions of text, Germanic battle scenes display none of the three pillars of verse construction that we have identified in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Iliad*: directional pronouns are absent and verb placement seems in general to follow the principles of Germanic word order.[142] More importantly, narrative progression in our extant sources is almost exclusively paratactic, and only very rarely are finite verbs coupled with participles:[143] Germanic poets made no systematic use of double progression.

It seems then that, on the basis of our evidence, we might posit the existence of a common warfare proto-narrative, to use N.J. Allen's concept,[144] from which both our *Mahābhārata* and *Iliad* ultimately derive. Such a step would be perhaps too hasty, if we ascribed this conjecture to the PIE period proper, but Indic and Greek were interwoven, both linguistically and culturally, for much longer than with other PIE branches: common linguistic features (e.g. the augment) are evidence for a long period of Graeco-Aryan

[140] Kelly (2014), 51.
[141] The *Iliad* seems to be even more developed than the *Mahābhārata* from this point of view, as it even contains quasi-ironic reflections of the conventions that shape its battle-scenes. In particular, the narrative of the great chariot-race at 23.262–652 is very close in kind to that of our warfare sequences, with the poet's focus shifting from a general overview (362–78) to detailed encounters between two riders (379–447). But the harmless and peaceful context of the race creates a poignant contrast with the deadly realities of the battlefield. For a detailed commentary on this scene, see Richardson (1993), 214–19.
[142] Nevertheless, Momma's 1997 analysis on the (more or less fixed) position of certain elements in OE poetic clauses might indicate that a similar kind of positional instinct was part of the Germanic poets' technique.
[143] An example can be found at *Beo*. 710–11a (the beginning of the fight with Grendel): *ða com… Grendel gongan*, ('then came… Grendel walking').
[144] Cf. Allen (2020), 103.

unity.[145] Given the striking parallels in terms of overarching narrative, battle patterns, motifs, phrases, formulae, and (as we have seen in this chapter) compositional tendencies, I am not wary of contemplating a common proto-narrative that lies behind our extant texts.[146]

From a compositional perspective, these conclusions might be further bolstered if we could postulate some kind of genetic relation between the poems' two metres: the Homeric hexameter and the Sanskrit *śloka*/*anuṣṭubh*. While there is little doubt that the latter is a development of the ancient PIE octosyllable (xxxx ⏑–⏑x),[147] the prehistory of the hexameter is more controversial. Nagy derives it from an original pherecretean (a catalectic octosyllable: xx–⏑⏑–x), itself a reflex of the ancient PIE metre, that was expanded internally by adding dactylic feet after the Aeolic basis. The hexameter would then develop with the hardening of the Aeolic basis into ––, and the equation of two short syllables with one long (which meant that dactyls, –⏑⏑, could be optionally replaced by spondees, ––, and vice versa).[148] Nagy's hypothesis is sophisticated and well-argued, but is open to important objections: first of all, he derives the hexameter from the catalectic pherecretean, and catalectic metres, which were normally reserved for the closure of strophes, are unlikely to have been employed for stichic use; secondly, the insertion of dactylic feet was probably not available as a device for internal expansion in early metrical systems, since dactyls are themselves an innovation that needs to be explained.[149]

[145] Cf. M.L. West (2007), 6–11. Further details can be found in Kretschmer (1896), 168–70, and Durante (1976), 18–30. For another example of a possible Graeco-Aryan reflex, see Jamison (1994), whose analysis combines the narrative (the Homeric *Teichoscopia* and *MBh*. 3.252–6) and the societal aspects (marriage by abduction in PIE culture). See also Jamison (1999), where the question of Greek and Indic marriage is again taken up, with further comparison between Penelope and Draupadī. More recent Graeco-Aryan comparative efforts can be found in E. West (2004), (2006), (2010a), and (2014), Garbutt (2006), and Fries (2016).
[146] In the previous two chapters, as we have seen, my conclusions were much more cautious.
[147] Cf. Watkins (1995), 19–21, and M.L. West (2007), 45–58. Campanile (1990b), 142–69, however, rejects the idea that the poetry of the Indo-Europeans was based on rigid metrical schemes, and takes peculiar linguistic categories (archaisms, altered word order, epithets, metaphors, etc.) as the only formal features of PIE poetry.
[148] Nagy (1974), 39–50.
[149] These observations were made by Berg (1978). Cf. also Kiparsky (2018), 105.

I prefer to follow Paul Kiparsky's proposal and derive the hexameter directly from the ancient PIE metre.[150] In his view, the hexameter derives from the combination of two iambic octosyllables. Thanks to syncopation (i.e. an exchange in the position of light and heavy syllables within the verse),[151] each ⏑–⏑–⏑–⏑– octosyllable became –⏑⏑–⏑⏑––. With the rise of the equation – = ⏑⏑, this process yielded the hexameter metrical pattern.[152] This approach is particularly convincing because it explains certain metrical anomalies in Homer (e.g. hexameters beginning with a cretic) and peculiar juxtapositions (e.g. hexameters and iambics in the inscription on Nestor's cup). From our perspective, Kiparsky's theory would further bolster our hypothesis: if the forebears of the Homeric and Sanskrit poets worked with the same metre (or two very close variants of the same metre), it is more likely that certain instincts and mechanisms should be preserved in the derived metres (and the corresponding traditions).

Leaving genetic relations aside, it should be noted that the Greek – = ⏑⏑ equation and the resulting disappearance of isosyllabism made the hexameter a much more flexible metre than its Indic counterpart. This is evident in the flowering of subordinate clauses in our Iliadic corpus, as shown by the following example (21.1–5):

ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ πόρον ἶξον ἐϋρρεῖος ποταμοῖο
Ξάνθου δινήεντος, ὃν ἀθάνατος τέκετο Ζεύς,
ἔνθα διατμήξας τοὺς μὲν πεδίονδ᾽ ἐδίωκε
πρὸς πόλιν, ᾗ περ Ἀχαιοὶ ἀτυζόμενοι φοβέοντο

[150] A first Graeco-Indic analysis of the hexameter was attempted by Meillet (1923), 57–71, who did not consider this metre to be of PIE origin. On the topic, see also M.L. West (1973) and (2018), and Tichy (2010). Maslov (2011), too, makes some interesting considerations on the history of the hexameter (and the phenomenon of plosive reduction) in relation to the famously difficult hemistich λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἤβην (*Il*. 16.857, 22.363).
[151] For a fuller definition and a discussion of syncopation as a PIE metrical phenomenon, see Kiparsky (2018), 86.
[152] Cf. Kiparsky (2018), 107–13.

ἤματι τῷ προτέρῳ, ὅτε μαίνετο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ. 5

But when they came to the ford of the fair-flowing river,
the eddying Xanthus, which immortal Zeus sired,
he cut some away and pursued them in the plain
towards the city, where the astonished Achaeans had fled
the previous day, when shining Hector raged. 5

Here the main verb (3, δίωκε) is surrounded by two subordinate clauses on either side: in the lines above, we find a temporal (1) which further ramifies into a relative clause (2); on the other side, we have a relative (4) followed by a temporal subordinate (5). This kind of clausal intricacy is unparalleled in the *Mahābhārata*, where the only subordinates used with some frequency are the relative ones.[153] The greater flexibility of the hexameter might also be part of the reason why our *Mahābhārata* corpus shows a higher degree of regularity in terms of verse placement (ca. 71% vs. 63% of verbs falling into one of the favoured positions). Short verbs such as βάλε or ἔλε, which take up only two morae, have a much wider range of possible locations, and the greater manageability of the hexameter meant that even longer verbs could be more easily placed away from the favoured positions, with the poet casting the rest of his verse accordingly. But despite the metrical differences, the common tendencies remain noticeable.

One of the most significant results of this survey is that we may now venture to reconstruct certain mental frameworks which the poets regularly employed in the construction of close combat verses. We have seen that a common Sanskrit schema is a combination of a gerund at the end of the first *pāda* and a finite verb at the beginning of the

[153] *MBh*. 7.163.26–7 represents a unique cluster of subordinates.

third or fourth *pādas*: [gerund 1stE in ab] + [finite verb 1stB/2ndB in cd]. The framework might be represented as follows:

a || b	[initial pronoun] + […] + [Gerund 1stE] || […]
c || d	[finite verb/…] + […] || [finite verb/…] + […]

In the *Iliad*, on the other hand, we found that the [participle 1stE] + [finite verb 2ndB/2ndE] schema was particularly popular. A graphical representation of this framework could be:

[initial pronoun] + […] + [participle 1stE] || [finite verb/…] + [finite verb/…]

As can be seen, the two frameworks are different, but are based on the same principles of construction. With outer skeletons such as these ingrained in his memory, the poet had only to select the semantic content of the verbal foci (i.e. decide what was going to happen in the next frame of action) and then fill the remaining portions with names and other details: as we have seen in Ch. 1, the former are almost always zero- or e-grade units, and within the repetitive context of battle scenes, the vast majority of the latter are zero-grade units, too. In conclusion, regular templates for verse construction are a fundamental tool to facilitate the process of versification.

The Sanskrit and Greek traditions have thus been found to share not only a pool of narrative patterns and expressions: the similarities between them run deeper and affect the very techniques with which the poets crafted their semi-fixed battle scenes. Directional pronouns, verb placement trends, and double progression strategies seem to indicate that the poet of the *Mahābhārata* and that of *Iliad*, in some way, thought alike. And perhaps, as

speculative as it might sound, they were both heirs to one ancient tradition of oral song-crafting.

CONCLUSION: ORAL TECHNIQUES AND BEYOND

In his research on Finno-Karelian kalevalaic poetry and Old Norse eddic poetry, Frog has proposed the concept of 'multiform' (originally formulated by Lauri and Anneli Honko)[1] as a tool to investigate the compositional aspects of those poems. A 'multiform' is defined as "a collocative system made up of specific verbal units (lexemes, formulae) and/or sets of these within function-specific (semantically, syntactically and/or metrically conditioned) equivalence classes that together form a coherent indexical system in the memory of an individual".[2] In other words, multiforms are mental frameworks that: a.) are made up of specific units, each of which belongs to sets of verbal material whose members are in a relation of equivalence with each other,[3] and b.) are easily catalogued in an individual's memory archive.[4] As Frog recognises, there exist different types of multiforms ('crystallised series', 'verbal core', etc.), but in order to provide an immediately understandable example, 'open-slot' multiforms are particularly apt. He gives *Alvíssmál* 29 as an example:

Segðu mér þat, Alvíss
– ǫll of røk fira
vǫrumk, dvergr, at vitir –
hvé sú nótt heitir

[1] Honko (1995) and (1998).
[2] Frog (2016), 7.
[3] As Frog (2016), 10, writes: "certain open-slot formulae are associated with equivalence sets of other formulae that can complete a metrical unit like a line". For example, the kalvalaic open slot formula *sano* ('said') + [subject] is associated with various six-syllable formulae (e.g. *vanha Väinämöinen* 'old Väinämöinen', *seppo Ilmarinen* 'smith Ilmarinen', *Ahti saarelainen* 'Ahti the islander', etc.), which form an equivalence set.
[4] This notion of multiform is of course different from that described by Lord (2019[3]), 106, where 'multiform' denotes a variant of a song derived from composition-in-performance. Nagy (1996b), 107–52, employs this latter notion to explain textual variants in the Homeric poems. For further observations on multiformity, see Nagy (2001).

in Nǫrvi kennda 5

heimi hveriom í.[5]

Say to me this, Alvíss

– all the fates of men

I see, dwarf, that you know –

what that night is called

that born of Nǫrr 5

in all the worlds.[6]

In this eddic poem, Thor asks the dwarf Alvíss ('all-know') how certain concepts and elements (sun, moon, sky, night, etc.) are called in different mythical worlds (those of the gods, the elves, the giants, etc.). All of Thor's questions share the same structure: the only variable element is the noun that is to be defined, placed by Thor in the fourth line of the stanza (*nótt*); this is followed by a line-filler that carries the alliteration at 5 (*Nǫrvi*). In the poem's 15th stanza, Thor asks about the sun:

Segðu mér þat, Alvíss

– ǫll of røk fira

vǫrumk, dvergr, at vitir –

hvé sú sól heitir

er séa alda synir 5

heimi hveriom í.

Say to me this, Alvíss

[5] Quotations from the *Poetic Edda* follow Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason's 2014 edition.
[6] Translation by Frog.

– all the fates of men
I see, dwarf, that you know –
what that sun is called
that is seen by the sons of men
in all the worlds.[7]

As can be seen, this time the noun that is to be defined is *sól*, which is accompanied by a different descriptive phrase, with *séa* carrying the alliteration.

Without attempting fully to apply the concept of multiform to our three traditions – Frog himself acknowledges that multiform analysis is more suited to short and stanzaic epic forms such as the kalevalaic and eddic ones –[8], we might say that, in the compositional effort, our poets seem to have relied on mental templates quite akin to Frog's multiforms. These mental templates display different degrees of flexibility, which vary in accordance with content repetitiveness. In the case of semi-flexible texts such as well-wishes (Ch. 1), the content of the poetic utterance is not repetitive, but is thematically determined. Here the poet seems to have worked with a mental template that displays a number of thematic slots that need to be filled around a fixed formulaic core (in well wishes, this is to be found in the greeting χαῖρε and the θεοὶ δοῖεν formula).[9] The general theme of each slot is predetermined (e.g. the 'forever' remark, the 'me' element, the 3rd person wish, and the 2nd person request) but its exact content varies from instance to instance: at one time, Odysseus asks to be sent home at full speed and wishes that the Phaeacians delight in their wives and children (*Od.* 13.38–46), at another Chryses wishes that the Greeks sack Troy and begs them to give him back his daughter (*Il.* 1.17–21). This kind of mental structure bears significant resemblances

[7] Translation based on Frog's.
[8] Frog (2016), 7.
[9] As we have seen, not all slots are present in each well-wish instance.

to Frog's 'verbal core' multiforms, where "a potentially minimal core element is socially stable while the surrounding tissue in which it is packed may vary".[10]

Since the verbal material of the slots in semi-flexible texts is not repetitive, its constituent units can be analysed and placed on a simplicity-complexity continuum. To make this continuum more manageable, we have split it into three macro-categories, borrowed from the linguistic notion of Ablaut. The simplest and most fixed units were placed in the zero-grade group, while the most complex and idiosyncratic ones were categorized as o-grade elements. The e-grade category covers the middle ground between the two poles, but it is important to stress that this is not a nebulous grey area: the e-grade has been thoroughly defined as consisting of formulaic expressions, traditional constructions, partially fixed phrases, and (where these can be identified) prosaic expressions. We have also seen that complex and simple units generally alternate in the course of our well-wishes, as shown in the examples of Ch. 1, as well as the following (*Il.* 1.17–21):

Ἀτρεῖδαι τε καὶ ἄλλοι ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,
ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ δοῖεν (N) Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
ἐκπέρσαι Πριάμοιο πόλιν, *εὖ δ' οἴκαδ' ἱκέσθαι·*
παῖδα δ' ἐμοὶ λύσαιτε φίλην, *τὰ δ' ἄποινα δέχεσθαι*, 20
ἁζόμενοι Διὸς υἱὸν ἑκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα.[11]

O sons of Atreus, and the rest of the well-greaved Achaeans,
may the gods (C) who dwell on Olympus grant that you

[10] Frog (2016), 9. His examples from the *Kalevala* are interestingly centered on demands and requests in dialogues.
[11] The o-grade units are marked in bold, the e-grade ones are italicised, and the zero-grade ones underlined. The C signals a well-wish core marker.

sack Priam's city and *return successfully to your homeland*;

but release my dear daughter, and *accept the ransom,* 20

revering the far-shooter Apollo, son of Zeus.

After a formulaic vocative (17)[12] and the employment of the well-wish marker (ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ δοῖεν), followed by another frequent formula (Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες),[13] the poet seems to make a mental effort to verbalise the more contextual elements: the content of the wish (ἐκπέρσαι) and the second person request (παῖδα δ' ἐμοὶ λύσαιτε φίλην), together with the final participle (ἀζόμενοι), are all o-grade units that suit this narrative context and no other. The first one is followed by a short oasis of relaxation (a zero-grade formula, i.e. Πριάμοιο πόλιν,[14] and an e-grade amplification of a common formula by means of an adverb, i.e. εὖ δ' οἴκαδ' ἱκέσθαι), during which the poet presumably devises the following laborious stretch of two o-grade and one e-grade[15] units, before returning to familiar zero-grade ground in the last line of the passage.[16]

In Ch. 2, we have moved on to a different kind of semi-flexible text and analysed a number of traditional similes (i.e. similes whose descriptive background is found repeatedly throughout a given tradition's corpus). In Homer, we have focused on nature- and hunting-comparisons, while in OE and Sanskrit several kinds of similes were taken into consideration. All of our traditions seem to have in common a poetic mechanism that I have termed the 'principle of correspondence', which can be defined as a simile's tendency to mirror the details of the narrative even beyond the immediate point of comparison. We have found that the principle of correspondence applies equally to all three traditions, from the

[12] *Il*. 23.272, 658.
[13] Found thirteen times in Homer.
[14] Found ten times in Homer.
[15] The phrase ἄποινα δέχεσθαι is a formulaic expression, i.e. a unique variation of the frequent formula δέχθαι ἄποινα.
[16] Both Διὸς υἱὸν and ἑκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα belong to common formulaic systems.

brief comparisons of the *Mahābhārata* to the longer and elaborate similes found in Homer and the OE corpus. In the latter two traditions, the poets seem to have developed the similes further by means of compositionally straightforward elements.

In Homer, these were either generally formulaic elements (normally taken from the realm of warfare which similes most often reflect) or *patterns*, a set of actions and characteristics typical of the traditional simile's protagonists or temporal and locative markers repeatedly found in a simile family. The OE corpus unfortunately has not preserved an amount of extended similes high enough for us to reconstruct proper patterns,[17] and only generally 'simple elements' could be identified. Our analysis was therefore based on a distinction between context elements (i.e. the units in elaborate similes that closely interact with the narrative and express the principle of correspondence) and pattern/formulaic elements in Homer, and between context and simple elements in OE. The final results were noteworthy, as we were able to identify a precise compositional tendency: in the shorter and more immediate comparisons, the poet generally begins and ends his similes with context elements, and relies on pattern/formulaic elements for the construction of the simile's bulk; the longer and more complex comparisons, on the other hand, display a familiar alternation between context and pattern elements.

When compared to an ordinary semi-flexible text like well-wishes, traditional comparisons seem to work in a similar way: besides a fixed core (which in the similes is represented by the *wie*-particles ὡς/ἠΰτε and the *so*-particle ὥς, encompassing the comparison proper), the poet has a certain number of mental slots that need to be filled, and while devising the most effective way to do so, he relies on more familiar poetic elements. The main difference between well-wishes and traditional similes is that the main slots are

[17] Although even in the OE tradition there seem to be traces of simile families, such as weather or human activity comparisons.

not determined by an overarching theme, but by the surrounding narrative, as shown in the following example (*Il*. 17.736–41), where the battle between the Greeks and the Trojans is compared to a raging fire that devastates a city:

[ἐπὶ] δὲ [πτόλεμος] [τέτατό] [σφιν]
[ἄγριος ἠΰτε πῦρ], [**τό τ' ἐπεσσύμενον**] [πόλιν ἀνδρῶν]
(ὄρμενον ἐξαίφνης) (**φλεγέθει**), (μινύθουσι δὲ οἶκοι)
((*ἐν σέλαϊ μεγάλῳ*)), [**τὸ δ' ἐπιβρέμει**] (ἶς ἀνέμοιο)·
ὣς μὲν τοῖς ἵππων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων 740
[ἀζηχὴς ὀρυμαγδὸς ἐπήϊεν] ἐρχομένοισιν.[18]

[War] [was stretched] [between them],
[as a wild fire] that [**rushes upon**] [a city of men],
(suddenly rising), and (**burns it**), and (the houses are destroyed)
((*in a great blaze*)); and (the force of the wind) [**roars upon it**].
In this way did [the ceaseless tumult] of horses and warriors 740
[fall upon] them as they made their way.

In this comparison of average length, the context elements appear at the beginning and end of the simile proper,[19] while its middle is made up of pattern and formulaic elements.[20] As can be seen, context elements *that go beyond a one-to-one connection between simile actor*

[18] The same visual representation as in the previous example was adopted. In addition, context elements and their referents in the narrative were placed between square brackets, pattern elements between round brackets, and generally formulaic elements between double round brackets.
[19] The fire (πῦρ) reflects the chaos of the war (πτόλεμος), while the city of men (πόλιν ἀνδρῶν) represent the victims of its outbreak, i.e. the Greek and the Trojans (σφιν). The verb that describes the sudden movement of the fire (ἐπεσσύμενον) clearly interacts with the verb that expresses the onset of the war (ἐπιτέτατο, note the prefix). Finally, the battle noise (ὀρυμαγδός) is mirrored by the onomatopoeic verb ἐπιβρέμει in the simile, which also looks forward to the verb associated with the tumult (ἐπήϊεν, with the same prefix).
[20] For ὄρμενον ἐξαίφνης, cf. *Il*. 21.14, in a simile where fire appears, too. Verbs with the φλεγ- root are typical of fire both within and outside similes (cf. e.g. 21.13, 365). For σέλαϊ μεγάλῳ, cf. the similar σέλᾳ πυρός phrases at *Il*. 8.563, *Od*. 21.246, and *Th*. 867. For ἶς ἀνέμοιο, cf. *Il*. 15.383, *Od*. 9.71, etc.

and narrative actor tend to correspond to o-grade units, while generally formulaic elements and patterns normally constitute e-grade and zero-grade units.[21] This is hardly surprising: context elements, as we have seen, are often made up of untypical or idiosyncratic material, which tallies precisely with our definition of o-grade units. This correspondence, however, is not absolute: in two cases (out of nine) the tendency is breached. At 737 the context element πόλιν ἀνδρῶν is a formulaic zero-grade unit, while the pattern verb φλεγέθει is not found elsewhere *in this form and position*, and is therefore an untypical o-grade unit.

Another example will reinforce this conclusion.[22] At *Il.* 21.345–8, Hephaestus checks the onrush of Scamander with his fire, and the poet compares the suddenly dry plain to a garden dried up by the wind:

πᾶν δ' [ἐξηράνθη] [πεδίον], σχέτο δ' ἀγλαὸν [ὕδωρ]·
ὡς δ' ὅτ' (ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης) [**νεοαρδέ' ἀλωὴν**]
[**αἶψ' ἀνξηράνῃ**], (**χαίρει δέ μιν ὅς τις ἐθείρῃ**),
ὡς [ἐξηράνθη] [πεδίον] πᾶν…

The whole plain was dried up, the bright waters were checked.
As when (Boreas in autumn) a [**recently watered garden**]
[**suddenly dries up**], (**and the man who tends to it rejoices**).
So was the whole [plain] [dried up]…

[21] As mentioned above (156), e-grade units are to be found in semantically recurrent, but non-formulaic phrases (e.g. Il. 10.485, μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν), while zero-grade units correspond to fixed formulaic patterns.
[22] Cf. also the similar analysis of *Il.* 10.181–7, see above, 168–9.

In this brief comparison, the context elements crowd up in the middle,[23] while the pattern/formulaic ones are found at the edges.[24] Once again the context element are made up of o-grade units (note especially the adjective νεοαρδέα and the verb ἀνξηράνῃ, both *hapax legomena*), while the pattern ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης is a formulaic zero-grade unit. The only exception is the o-grade χαίρει δέ μιν ὅς τις ἐθείρῃ, which belongs to the loose pattern of the distant observer in natural element similes.

To recapitulate, well-wishes and traditional similes behave in a similar way:

1. They both display a fixed core and a number of poetic 'slots' that need to be filled.
2. The precise content of these slots is somehow predetermined…
3. …but varies from instance to instance.
4. Since their content is not repetitive, the constituent units of these semi-flexible texts can be placed in a simplicity-complexity continuum and classified accordingly.

However, traditional similes differ from well-wishes as follows:

1. The content of its 'slots' is not determined by a theme, but by the course of the surrounding narrative.
2. Similes display a further compositional mechanism, i.e. the principle of correspondence, which is expressed in a distinction between content

[23] The recently watered garden in the simile reflects the plain in the narrative, with the adjective νεοαρδέα also interacting with the river's waters at 345 (ὕδωρ). The verb ἀνξηράνῃ in the simile shares the same root with ἐξηράνθη in the narrative.
[24] For ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης, cf. *Od*. 5.328. For χαίρει δέ μιν ὅς τις ἐθείρῃ, cf. *Il*. 8.559, 13.493.

and pattern elements – this is peculiar to the relationship between simile and narrative, and is therefore not applicable to well-wishes.

3. The categories of the simplicity-complexity continuum are *generally* well accommodated into the context-pattern dichotomy typical of similes only.

For these reasons, it is better to take traditional similes as a special kind of semi-flexible text. Their basic working principle is the same, but similes have in addition certain compositional mechanisms that set them apart from well-wishes.

In Ch. 3, we moved on to a different typology of text. As defined in the Introduction, battle sequences are semi-fixed texts: the crucial difference between semi-fixed and semi-flexible texts is the repetitiveness of their content. While a qualitative analysis of poetic units could be attempted in the case of well-wishes and similes on account of their diverse poetic content, the same cannot be done with our warfare corpus. Let us take an example to illustrate this point (*Il*. 16.342–7):

Μηριόνης δ' Ἀκάμαντα κιχεὶς ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισιν
νύξ' ἵππων ἐπιβησόμενον κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον·
ἤριπε δ' ἐξ ὀχέων, κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀχλύς.
Ἰδομενεὺς δ' Ἐρύμαντα κατὰ στόμα νηλέϊ χαλκῷ
νύξε· τὸ δ' ἀντικρὺ δόρυ χάλκεον ἐξεπέρησεν
νέρθεν *ὑπ' ἐγκεφάλοιο, κέασσε* δ' ἄρ' ὀστέα λευκά…

Meriones caught Acamas with his swift feet
and stabbed him in his right shoulder as he was about to climb onto his horses.
He fell from the chariot, and darkness poured over his eyes.

Idomeneus Erymas in the mouth with his pitiless bronze 345
stabbed; the bronze spear pierced him through
beneath the brain from below, and *shattered* his white bones…

As is evident, if we attempt to classify the poetic units in battle scenes, we will *most often* obtain an almost endless stream of zero-grade units, interspersed with some other kind of conventional poetic material (347). After all, it could hardly be otherwise: Homer's battle scenes consist of a limited range of items and actions that are repeated over and over again throughout sixteen warfare books. In such a familiar and formulaic context, the poet does not need so much to *devise* idiosyncratic units[25] as to arrange the traditional material that he already has at his disposal. Hence the syntactic templates that we have discussed at the end of Ch. 3. He may structure his lines in the following way:

[initial pronoun] + […] + [participle 1stE] || [finite verb/…] + [finite verb/…]

Cf. *Il*. 11.447: τῷ δὲ μεταστρεφθέντι μεταφρένῳ ἐν δόρυ πῆξεν.
As he turned, he thrust his spear into his back.

Else he may adopt a different structure, such as this one which stretches over two lines:

Line 1: [initial pronoun] + […] + [participle 1stE] || […]
Line 2: [finite verb/…] + […] || [finite verb/…] + […][26]

Cf. *Il*. 5.620–1: αὐτὰρ ὃ λὰξ προσβὰς ἐκ νεκροῦ χάλκεον ἔγχος

[25] Once again this is not an absolute, cf. e.g. Fenik's discussion of phantasmata in Fenik (1968), 61–2.
[26] This template is particularly frequent in Sanskrit; see above, 279.

ἐσπάσατο…

But he, setting his feet on it, from the corpse the bronze spear pulled out…

Or this chiastic one:

[initial pronoun] + [finite verb 1stE] || [finite verb] […]

Cf. *Il*. 12.261: τὰς οἵ γ' αὐέρυον, ἔλποντο δὲ τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν…

They tore at these [the buttresses], and hoped [to raze] the Achaeans' wall…

These templates, as we have seen in Ch. 3, share some basic features, such as the use of directional pronouns at the beginning, and certain tendencies in the placement of participles and finite verbs. To achieve variation, the poet may use different templates at different times, and even combinations thereof. Of course not every occurrence in our warfare corpuses can be reduced to a syntactic template, but templates do constitute a significant element in the poet's compositional technique.

It is reasonable to suppose that, in the prehistory of the Graeco-Aryan tradition, warfare scenes were not too dissimilar from semi-flexible texts, such as well-wishes or similes. When devising a stretch of battle lines, the poet might have had a fixed core (possibly the killing verb) and a range of mental slots that had to be filled (e.g. the weapon used to deal the blow, participial phrases for actions such as dodging, turning, or leaping, the descent of darkness around the eyes of the slain, etc.). Originally, these slots may have been non-repetitive, i.e. their content varied from instance to instance as in well-wishes or similes. But through the sheer frequency of the killing motif, which unsurprisingly features

in abundance in a warfare poem such as the *Iliad*,[27] the same phrase became gradually associated with a certain slot, until the slots turned into ready-made units and became interchangeable with each other, irrespective of the narrative context.[28] As a result, the semi-flexible mental template collapsed, and the bards devised other ways to arrange the now almost totally formulaic material. This gradual process of ossification is akin to that hypothesised for formular economy by Luigi Enrico Rossi:[29] after an initial stage of overabundance, the amount of formulae progressively shrinks as the epos becomes more and more canonical, with the most stable formulaic systems being linked to the most prominent and *frequently featured* characters. All these considerations are of course speculative in nature, but it is a reasonable evolutionary model for the transition of semi-flexible texts into semi-fixed texts.

Just as the open-slot mechanisms described in the case of well-wishes and similes, syntactic templates, too, constitute a compositional multiform, although they belong to a higher level of abstraction. The templates identified for semi-flexible texts are based on *content*, while those found in battle scenes are *syntactic* in nature, given that the content of those scenes almost totally belongs to the same qualitative category. But it is important to stress that they all have a common denominator: they are all multiforms, in the most general sense of the word, i.e. collocative systems with a core and periphery, with certain hierarchical structures within them, and certain completion mechanisms. The fact that different kinds of multiforms are used in accordance with the rigidity of the poetic context is not an obstacle for our reconstruction;[30] it is rather a testimony to the extraordinary *flexibility* of the poets' compositional strategies, by means of which some of the most

[27] And more in general, in a tradition where martial prowess played such a prominent role.
[28] Which, as we have seen, is not the case with the slots in well-wishes and similes.
[29] Rossi (1979), 117, following Parry (1971), 180.
[30] As is evident in Frog's article, different kinds of multiforms are also used in different parts of the *Kalevala* and the *Poetic Edda*.

exceptional products of world literature came into being. Their extraordinary quality is not only the result of individual artistry, but it also derives from a complex, sophisticated, and flexible technique.

One might object that, to a certain extent, both ordinary conversations and written literature may rely on multiforms. In my view, the crucial difference lies in the pervasivity of multiforms in oral-improvised poetry: as in the case of formulae, a literate author, or a person engaged in a normal conversation, may employ multiforms, while an oral poet needs multiforms, and will make a more *systematic* use of these structures. Although there is no room here to discuss this question in detail, it is always useful to bear in mind Foley's insightful description of oral poetries: "oral tradition works like language, only *more so*".[31]

What do these results tell us about our general notion of how the Homeric poems were composed and textualised? As is known, various models of textualisation have been put forward. The dictation model first proposed by Lord,[32] with the main poet dictating his text to an exceptional audience (possibly a wealthy patron and a scribe) under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. slow recitation to enable the scribe to record the text, a particularly long and exhaustive performance, etc.), is still generally accepted today, as Jonathan Ready's recent book demonstrates.[33] Two main alternatives have been suggested: the first is Nagy's evolutionary model, which hypothesises a gradual fixation of the poems over several centuries with the crucial catalyst of the Panathenaic festival playing a major role in the process;[34] the second is Martin West's (rather implausible)[35] notion that a single author composed each poem pen in hand.[36]

[31] Foley (1999), 6, emphasis added.
[32] Lord (2019[3]), 159–67.
[33] Ready (2019), 100–4.
[34] Nagy (1996a), 30–112.
[35] For the implausibility of West's model, see González (2013), 68–9.
[36] M.L. West (2011), 15–78.

Our study is not chiefly concerned with the issue of textualisation. As stated in the Introduction,[37] some form of oral background for the Homeric poems has been acknowledged even by scholars who view Oral Theory with skepticism. We have concerned ourselves with some of the dynamics of this oral phase, regardless of the exact way in which Homer's songs became written texts. Still, our conclusions have some relevance in this debate. If certain compositional strategies are reconstructable on the basis of our *extant* texts, then it is plausible that the oral element plays a far greater role in the poems' dynamics than West thought. The employment of techniques for composition-in-performance can of course be reflected in texts that are close in time and space to an oral tradition, but that were composed by means of writing, as the widespread use of formulae in OE biblical poems clearly shows.[38] This may be the case with Homer, too, but the fact that such strategies can be identified and recovered in a variety of different poetic contexts (similes, well-wishes, battle scenes, etc.) is a further factor which pushes the scale of probability towards either Nagy's or Lord's textualisation scenario.

One might also wonder what the comparative perspective has added to this study, since the results summarised thus far chiefly concern the Homeric poems. What have the comparisons with Sanskrit and Old English given us? First of all, the statement just made about the results of this research is not entirely true. Despite the evident Homerocentric nature of this study, several compositional mechanisms that we have identified in the Greek tradition are applicable to Sanskrit and OE, as well. The classification of units described in Ch. 1 is found (to varying degrees) both in *Beowulf* and the *Mahābhārata*, the principle of correspondence is present in all three traditions, while Greek and Sanskrit share a number

[37] See above, 16.
[38] See above, 146–7.

of warfare syntactic templates. Each tradition illuminates the compositional aspects of the others.

From a purely Homeric point of view, our comparison of Greek and Sanskrit warfare scenes in Ch. 3 has shown that Homer's structuring of battle sequences goes back to a far more ancient model, which was presumably employed by oral poets in Graeco-Aryan times. The undeniable similarities in the detailed description of the action on the battlefield, the alternation of different poetic 'moments' within the warfare narrative (close encounters, general sequences, conversations, war councils, divine machinery, etc.), and the design of battle lines proper are a strong indication that battle scenes in the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata* derive from a common (probably Graeco-Aryan) source. This conclusion has of course important repercussions on our knowledge of the prehistory of the Homeric epics, which would have gone unnoticed without the comparative perspective. And although the Greek and Sanskrit traditions are much closer to each other than they are to their Germanic counterpart, without the aid of OE the chapter on well-wishes would not have come into being, given that such scenes are virtually limited to two formulae in the Sanskrit epics.

Turning back to M.L. West's stemmatic representation of PIE culture,[39] we can see that some of our results are to be referred only to the Eastern branch of the latest development of Indo-European history, while others are applicable to what West terms 'Mature' Indo-European (i.e. after the split of the Anatolian branch). The former of course derive from our analysis of the parallels between Greek and Sanskrit, while the latter are owed to the comparison between Graeco-Indic material and the OE tradition. In order to gain a general insight into the PIE poetic culture, all three traditions are necessary. Detailed and tightly structured battle scenes might be typical of Greek and Sanskrit only, but other compositional strategies such as the principle of correspondence or the alternation between poetic unities

[39] See above, 9.

of varying complexity seem to be shared by a wider ensemble of traditions. This is perhaps the most important outcome of our comparative efforts: the reconstruction of compositional mechanisms and techniques common to several PIE traditions, which was one of the aims of this study.

However, as stated in the Introduction, there is no empirical reason to confine ourselves to boundaries that were chosen only to make this research more manageable. Greek, Sanskrit, and OE share several narrative patterns, motifs, and phraseological items, and have preserved poems long and complex enough for us to attempt an analysis of their poets' techniques. Still other traditions, both within and outside PIE boundaries, are certainly worth considering. The Armenian epic of David of Sassoun and the Ossetic Nart sagas are of particular relevance, as they belong to the same Graeco-Aryan sub-branch as Greek and Sanskrit, and will probably provide further insight into its narrative and compositional dynamics. Long chivalric epics from the late medieval period, such as *La Chanson de Roland*, *El Cantar de mio Cid*, and the *Nibelungenlied* will offer valuable *comparanda*, as already recognised by Lord.[40] Other poetic forms like the Russian bylina or the Icelandic *rímur* may also be of interest to the compositional comparativist. If we move beyond the PIE world, a study on Finnish kalevalaic poetry or Ancient Near-Eastern epic would surely unearth similarities and differences, but more importantly, it may shed further light on the way originally Indo-European poetries and cultures were affected by those of their neighbours. This is very much a *desideratum*, as it would help us better understand how vertical transmission from their ancestors and horizontal diffusion from neighbouring peoples combined to shape the identity of several PIE daughter cultures.[41]

[40] Lord (2019[3]), 198–221.
[41] For some sensible reflections on cross-cultural contacts, see Kelly and Metcalf (2021), 12–15, where the authors point out that Greek literature reflects both Indo-European and Near-Eastern influences, often in the same context.

Nor have we exhausted all the possibilities of research within the traditions considered in this study. In Greek, compositional analysis of Hesiod's poems and the *Homeric Hymns* in relation to Homeric practices would probably be an intriguing avenue to pursue. In the vast world of Indic epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been virtually ignored in our study. Since formulaic analysis has been successfully attempted in the case of both Sanskrit epics,[42] it would be interesting to see how they resemble and differ from each other in their treatment of the poetic material from a compositional perspective. Finally, a comparison with the Vedic Hymns, and perhaps even the Iranian *Gathas*, would certainly give us a clearer picture of Indo-Iranic poetic practices.

Even in terms of genres, motifs, typical scenes and story patterns, there is much that still needs to be explored. It would be interesting to see how similarly other semi-flexible texts behave when compared to well-wishes. On a preliminary survey, it seems that the poet devises his oath scenes and laments in a comparable way, employing a fixed quasi-formulaic core and then adding certain thematically determined elements around it. Comparatively, the *Mahābhārata* would once again offer the best parallels: oaths and sacrifices are found in abundance from Book 1 to Book 14,[43] while laments for the dead are especially common in the Battle Books and those that immediately follow them.[44] The Iliadic biographies of soon-to-be-killed warriors are also a promising area of investigation, as they seem to contain recurrent motifs and possess a fairly stable structure. This time, however, not much can be gained from a comparison with the *Mahābhārata*, where only a handful of warfare biographies are found. For semi-fixed texts, the most natural point of comparison would be catalogues and genealogies (e.g. the catalogue of ships in *Il.* 2 or the pseudo-Hesiodic

[42] For the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see. Brockington (1998b) and (1999).
[43] Cf. e.g. *MBh*. 2.68.20–2, 7.125.24–5, 14.56.10, etc.
[44] Cf. e.g. the sub-section of Book 7, called *Pratijñāparvan* (52–60), where the death of Abhimanyu is lamented, or Book 11 (*Strīparvan*, 'Book of the Women'), where the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava women mourn their fallen husbands, brothers, and sons.

Catalogue of Women), which are rigid and repetitive enough for the poet to have used syntactic templates in their composition. As we might expect, genealogies and catalogues of various sorts abound in Sanskrit epic, which once again represents a fundamental point of comparison.

These remarks on future horizons of research are an apt conclusion to our journey through Indo-European poetries. The exploration of the oral poet's mind has allowed us to reconstruct *some* of the mechanisms, thought-processes, and techniques that served the poet in crafting his lines, scenes, and narrative patterns. Without them, the process of composition-in-performance would have probably turned into a nightmarish ordeal for the singing poet, and metrical breakdown would have been too close a danger for heroic epic to come into being. The technique seems to have relied on mental structures (or even multiforms) which, *pace* Frog, we can apply with due caution to longer non-stanzaic epics. It was flexible, so that different poetic texts with varying degrees of rigidity could be produced. More importantly, it never harnessed the master poet's creativity; it was rather an instrument in his hands, a basic poetic clay that he could mould into countless shapes to serve his artistic needs, as we have seen so clearly in the case of similes and well-wishes. Its mechanic nature would not have been an obstacle for Homer, Vyāsa, or the *Beowulf* poet, but a catalyst for the fullest expression of their artistry.

This study is of course speculative to some extent. Although we have tried to base our conclusions on textual evidence, no real record of ancient poetic performances has come down to us. Future scholars will surely find it easier to reconstruct the cultures, mentalities, and indeed the compositional dynamics of our era, given the wealth of records, documents, and testimonies that technology has enabled us to preserve. Perhaps the reconstruction of an artist's creative process, whether a novelist taking notes for their next oeuvre, or a musician randomly shaping some of their bass guitar riffs into a world hit, will seem a pointless

diversion for them. As for us, we can only make reasonable and careful guesses to explore the mind of ancient poets; but our evident limits should not deter us from trying to get back to where the Indo-European poets once belonged.

Appendix I

EXTENDED SIMILES IN THE OLD ENGLISH POETIC CORPUS

This Appendix illustrates the evidence on OE similes that have been cited, but not thoroughly discussed in Ch. 2. The information appears in a precise order: after the citation of the passage and a brief description of its context, the original Latin source is provided with a quotation of the relevant simile; the OE passage is then quoted in full with an English translation. Next, we find a list of the simile's context elements (on the left) and their respective counterparts in the narrative (on the right), linked by the symbol ~. They are followed by a word or phrase which describes their basic interaction. Finally, the simile's simple elements are displayed, together with a list of their other occurrences in the OE corpus. The abbreviation 'cf.' indicates that the unit is not exactly repeated, but a very close version of it appears in the text that follows.[1]

- ***Guthlac* B 1269b–78a**:

The breath of the dying Saint Guthlac is compared to the pleasant smell of flowers in the summertime.

Source: Felix, *Vit. Guth*. 50.156: *uelut melliflui floris odoratus de ore ipsius processisse sentiebatur*. ('A smell was perceived coming from his [Guthlac's] mouth like that of a honey-flowing flower').

[1] If both exact repetitions and close variants of an element are found in the corpus, the references of the former will be given first. All references following the abbreviation 'cf.' represent close variants.

	Ða to þam wage gesag,	
heafelan onhylde,	**hyrde** þa gena	1270
ellen on innan.	Oroð stundum teah	
mægne modig,	him of muðe **cwom**	
swecca swetast.	Swylce on sumeres tid	
stincað on stowum	**staþelum fæste**	
wynnum æfter wongum	**wyrta geblowene**,	1275
hunigflowende,	swa þæs halgan wæs	
ondlongne dæg	oþ æfen forð	
oroð up hlæden.		

	He [Guthlac] fell against the wall,	
bent down his head,	still it **made him strong**	1270
his courage within.	At times he took a breath,	
the virtuous man,	and from his mouth **came out**	
the sweetest smell.	Just like in the summertime	
they smell, **in their places**	**firm with their roots**,	
delightfully across the fields,	**plants in bloom**	1275
and honey-flowing,	in this way the breath of the **saint**	
all day long	until the evening	
was drawn up.		

Context elements:

stincað~cwom swecca: smell.

on stowum staþelum fæste~hyrde […] *ellen on innan*: firmness.

wynnum, *hunigflowende~swetast*: delight.

wyrta geblowene~mægne modig: subject.[2]

Simple elements:

on sumeres tid: *Dan*. 347a, *Az*. 63a, *Phoen*. 209a.

æfter wongum: cf. *Rim*. 7a, *Gen*.A 1882a, *Rid*. 31.14a, *Rid*. 83.10.

- ***Daniel* 335b–336, 345–51a:**[3]

The sending of God's angel to the furnace where Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah have been placed by order of King Nebuchadnezzar is connected to the fall of a warm rain shower in the summertime. We should note that, in the narrative, the angel renders the furnace "breezy and pleasant", and the simile technically compares the new climate in the furnace to the summertime drizzle. However, given the verbal parallels, it is inevitable to link the angel's arrival to the sending of the rain.

Source: *Latin Vulgate Bible*, *Dan*. 3.49–50: *angelus autem Domini descendit* […] *et fecit medium fornacis quasi uentum roris flantem*. ('But the angel of the Lord came down […] and made the middle of the furnace as if a dewy wind were blowing through it').

ða **of roderum** wæs 335
engel ælbeorht **ufan onsended**…

[2] This label refers to the simile's main subject.
[3] For the relationship between *Daniel* and *Azarias*, see below.

[…]

Þa wæs on þam ofne,	þær se **engel** becwom,	345
windig and wynsum,	wedere gelicost	
þonne hit <u>on sumeres tid</u>	**sended weorðeð**	
dropena drearung	<u>on dæges hwile</u>,	
wearmlic wolcna scur.	Swylc bið wedera cyst,	
swylc wæs on þam fyre	frean mihtum	350
halgum to helpe.		

	Then from the skies	335
an all-bright angel was	**sent down**…	

[…]

Then in the oven it was,	where the **angel** came,	345
breezy and pleasant,	most like weather	
when <u>in the summertime</u>	**it is sent**	
a drizzle of drops	<u>during the day</u>,	
a warm shower from the skies.	Such is the best weather,	
such it was in that fire	by the power of the Lord	350
to help the holy men.		

<u>Context elements</u>:

sended weorðeð~ufan onsended: sending.

dropena drearung~engel: subject.

wolcna scur~of roderum: provenance.

<u>Simple elements</u>:

on sumeres tid: *Guth*.B 1273b, *Az*. 63a, *Phoen*. 209a.

on dæges hwile: cf. *Beo*. 2320b, *Az*. 64b.

- ***Phoenix* 240b–59a**:[4]

The rebirth of the phoenix is compared to the fruits of the cyclical harvest.

Source: Lactantius, *De Ave Phoenice* 97–100: *aetherioque procul de lumine concipit ignem* | *flagrat et ambustum solvitur in cineres*. | *quos velut in massam cineres umore coactos* | *conflat*; *et effectum seminis instar habet*. ('It [the phoenix's body] catches fire from the aethereal light, | blazes up, and once it is completely burnt, it dissolves into ashes. | Such ashes, blended together by moisture, | are kindled and it has an effect like that of a seed').

	Þonne **bræd** weorþeð	240
eal edniwe	**eft acenned**,	
synnum asundrad,	sumes onlice	
swa mon to ondleofne	**eorðan wæstmas**	
on hærfeste	ham gelædeð,	
wiste wynsume,	ær wintres cyme,	245
on rypes timan,	þy læs hi renes scur	
awyrde under wolcnum;	þær hi wraðe metað,	

[4] This simile works somewhat like *Il*. 18.318–23 (see above, 185–7), in that it reflects and interacts with the whole structure of the poem, and not only its immediate surroundings. The connections between the context elements and the narrative are therefore further specified in the relevant section. The interactions are sometimes rather confusing and inexact, but there is no doubt that, with this simile, the author attempts to create a complex interplay with different portions of his poem.

fodorþege gefean,[5]
mid ofermægne
wintergewædum.
eorla eadwela
þurh cornes gecynd,
sæd onsawen.
on lenctenne,
weceð woruldgestreon,
þurh agne gecynd
foldan frætwe.
gomel æfter gearum,
flæsce bifongen.

þonne forst ond snaw
eorþan þeccað
Of þam wæstmum sceal
eft alædan
þe ær clæne bið
Þonne **sunnan glæm**
lifes tacen,
þæt þa **wæstmas** beoð
eft acende,
Swa se **fugel weorþeð**,
geong edniwe,

all renewed,
separated from its sins,
just as a man for his sustenance
during the harvest
a pleasant meal,
in the ripe season,
destroys them under the sky.
the joy of receiving food ,
with their overwhelming force
with wintry garments.
the happiness of men
through the nature of grain,

Then its [the bird's] **flesh** becomes
born a second time,
in a somewhat similar way
the **fruits of the earth**
brings home,
before winter comes,
lest the shower of rain
In that they find assistance,
when frost and snow
cover the earth
Out of those fruits will
be born again
whose pure seed

[5] This element is neither context nor simple and, as such, cannot be explained on the basis of our technique. It is however the only exception in this simile.

was earlier sown.	Then **the gleam of the sun**	
in the spring,	a token of life,	
awakens the world's riches,	so that **those fruits**	255
through their own nature	**are brought forth again**.	
the treasures of the earth.	In this way **the bird**,	
aged after its years,	**young a second time**,	
is clothed in flesh.		

Context elements:

eorðan wæstmas/*woruldgestreon~bræd, fugel*: subject.[6]

on rypes timan~weder bið fæger (182b): preparation time.[7]

of þam wæstmum~of þam wyrtum (474a): provenance of reward.

eorla eadwela eft alædan~meotudes cempan … wic gestaþelad (471b, 475b)/*leane* (476b): reward.[8]

clæne … onsawen~synnum asundrad: purification.

sæd~æples gelicnes (230b): embryonic state.[9]

sunnan glæm~sunnan segn (288a): sun.[10]

[6] The simile's subject (the fruits) are linked to both the Phoenix as a whole (*fugel*) and its flesh (*bræd*), as the parallel constructions at 240b–41 and 257b–58 seem to indicate.
[7] The earlier part of the simile is slightly confusing, as it is not exactly clear why a random human being (243a) is brought into the picture. However, the mention of the ripe season (late summer to early autumn) seems to interact with the Phoenix summertime preparations (182–7) before its conflagration. Winter (which in the simile is when the seeds of the fruits are still beneath the soil) theoretically represents the period when the Phoenix is only an embryo growing beneath the ashes.
[8] The theme of the Phoenix's beneficial service to human kind pervades the whole poem: at 470–6, the bird is said to build a nest where holy men will enjoy a recompense for their deeds. Since in the simile the Phoenix is clearly linked to the fruits of the harvest, the joy (*eadwela*) that humans (*eorla*) experience from the fruits (*of þam wæstmum*) may anticipate the benefits (*leane*, i.e. a place to dwell in, cf. *wic*) which the 'champions of the Lord' (*meotudes cempan*) obtain from the Phoenix's nest (*of þam wyrtum*).
[9] The seeds likely represent the embryonic state of the Phoenix after its conflagration (cf. 230b, *æples gelicnes*, 'something like an apple'), whose growth was thoroughly described in the lines that immediately precede the simile.
[10] At 287b–289, the poet recapitulates the process of rebirth and says that the bird is renewed (287b, *bið him edniwe*) by the sign of the sun (288a, *þære sunnan segn*).

wæstmas beoð eft acende~bræd weorþeð […] *eft acenned/fugel weorþeð* […] *geong edniwe*: rebirth.

Simple elements:

to ondleofne: cf. *And*. 160b.

on hærfeste: *Met*. 58a, *Men*. 177b.

ham gelædeð: cf. *Sat*. 88b, 503b, 551b.

wiste wynsume: cf. Hom. Fr. I 22a, *Phoen*. 194a, 529a.

ær wintres cyme: cf. *El*. 1227b, *Dan*. 587b, *Phoen*. 107b, *MSol*. 522b.

renes scur: cf. *Dan*. 575b, *Gen*.B 808a.

awyrde under wolcnum: cf. *Gen*.A 1058a, 1438a, 1702a, *Beo*. 8a, 714a, 1770a, *Dream* 55a, *Christ*A 225a, *Phoen*. 27a, *Guth*.B 1280a, etc.

wraðe metað: cf. *El*. 84b, *Guth*.B 922b.

forst ond snaw: cf. *Dan*. 377b, *Az*. 104a, *Men*. 204b–5a.

mid ofermægne: *Beo*. 2917b, cf. *Gen*.A 2117a, *El*. 64b.

eorþan þeccað wintergewædum: cf. *And*. 1255b–6a.

þurh cornes gecynd: cf. *Phoen*. 256a, *OrW* 46b, *Glor*. I 13a, 57a.

on lenctenne: cf. *Met*. 29.66a, *El*. 1226b.

lifes tacen: Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 2, 3.105.7.[11]

þurh agne gecynd: cf. *Phoen*. 252a, *OrW* 46b, *Glor*. I 13a, 57a.

foldan frætwe: *Men*. 207a, cf. *Phoen*. 150b, 508a.

[11] This phrase is found only in prose, but the construction '[gen. sg.] + *tacen*' is very productive in OE poetry. Cf. e.g. *Dan*. 488a, *And*. 88b, *El*. 85a, 184b, 1120b, *Phoen*. 510b, etc. The combination of these two factors is probably enough for this phrase to be considered as a simple element.

- ***Phoenix* 299b–304**:

In the description of the phoenix's appearance, the poet compares its eyes to a gemstone set in a golden vessel.

Source: Lactantius, *De Ave Phoenice* 137: *ingentes oculos credas geminos hyacinthos*. ('You would take its massive eyes for two hyacinths').

	…ond þæt nebb lixeð	
swa glæs oþþe gim,[12]	**geaflas scyne**	300
innan ond utan.	Is seo **eaggebyrd**	
stearc ond hiwe	**stane** gelicast,	
gladum gimme,	þonne **in goldfate**	
smiþa orþoncum	biseted weorþeð.	

	…and its beak gleams	
like glass or like a gem,	its **jaws shine**	300
inside and outside.	The **nature of its eyes**	
is strong and piercing,	most like a **stone**,	
a joyous gem,	when **in a golden vessel**	
by the skill of smiths	it is set.	

Context elements:

stane~eaggebyrd: subject.

[12] This short simile paves the way for the longer one that begins at 302b, just like the metaphor at *Il*. 4.274 anticipates the proper simile in the line below.

in goldfate~geaflas scyne/ fugel fæger (291a): animal and material container.[13]

Simple elements:

gladum gimme: *Phoen*. 92a; cf. *Phoen*. 289a.

smiþa orþoncum: cf. *Beo*. 406b.

biseted weorþeð: cf. *Gen*.A 2207b, *And*. 156b, 208b.

The remaining extended similes in the OE poetic corpus (excluding Cynewulf's poems) are *Dan*. 273–8 and 315–24, which seem to lie outside the capacity of the technique. The poem *Azarias* deals with the same material as Daniel and, in certain sections, the two poems even share the same diction. The status of *Azarias* as a fully separate composition and the relationship between the two poems are still a matter of debate,[14] but for our purposes it is sufficient to say that the similes at *Dan*. 315–24 and 335b–51a are essentially repeated word for word at *Az*. 32–41 and 51b–66a, respectively. The two versions of the same similes count as one in our reckoning.

Of the two similes that cannot be explained by the technique, *Dan*. 315–24 compares the future descendance of the Jews to the stars in the sky or grains of sand, and closely follows its Latin model in the Vulgate Bible (*Dan*. 3.36). The other comparison at *Dan*. 273–8 is particularly problematic, as it essentially anticipates *Dan*. 335b–51a: both similes describe the interior of the furnace after the coming of the angel and compare it to the pleasant summertime weather. In fact, the *Daniel* poet has the angel come down twice from

[13] The golden vessel encircles the gem and must correspond to the phoenix itself, or the phoenix's face, in which the eyes are set. In the long description of its appearance (291a–319), the bird is described as "fair in hue" (291a), while the only reference to its face occurs at 300b, where its jaws are said to shine. The material of the vessel may thus interact with the shiny quality of the phoenix's face.
[14] Cf. Krapp and Dobbie (1931), xxxii–iii, (1936), xxxiii–iv; Fulk and Cain (2013[2]), 167–8.

the sky (237–8, 335b–39a) and twice accomplish the climatic miracle, followed by the simile (273–8, 340b–51a). This inconcinnity drove earlier scholarship to consider lines 279–364 of *Daniel* as an interpolation,[15] but more recently the section has been taken as an example of OE poetic recapitulation.[16] In short, the two similes compare the same narrative event to the same atmospheric phenomenon with different diction, but while the first (273–8) lies outside the scope of our technique, the second (335b–51a) behaves in accordance with its principles.

[15] Cf. Krapp and Dobbie (1931), xxxii.
[16] Cf. Fulk and Cain (2013[2]), 167.

Appendix II

PATTERNS AND METRICAL SHAPES

The aim of this Appendix is to list all the patterns and pattern elements in traditional similes, showing how they can often be grouped into full or partial formular systems. V and C at the beginning or end of a phrase indicate that the phrase begins or ends with a vowel or a consonant, respectively.[1] The pattern elements are arranged in alphabetical order; where a certain element appears in more than one grammatical case (with cases expressing different syntactic functions and therefore different essential ideas), the list begins with the nom./acc., and then moves to the gen. and the dat. Breaches of formular economy are marked in bold.[2]

Animal parts

Jaws

μετὰ γαμφηλῇσιν	C⏑⏑−−−⏑C
μετὰ γναμπτῇσι γένυσσιν	C⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑C
ὑπὸ γαμφηλῇσι λέοντος	V⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑C

[1] Not all the following elements feature consonantal and vocalic equivalents; nevertheless, the V/C indicator has been applied to all metrical shapes for the sake of completeness (as Visser (1988) does).
[2] Note that, for the sake of completeness, the patterns presented here have sometimes been supplemented with material from Homeric hunt *scenes* (*Il*. 9.539–49, 18.578–86; *Od*. 19.428–54), descriptions of natural elements, and similes outside the nature and hunt families.

Pairs

στῆθός τε παρήϊα	C−−⏑⏑−⏑V
πλευράς τε καὶ ἰσχία	C−−⏑⏑−⏑V
ἰσχία τε γλουτούς τε	V−⏑⏑−−−⏑V

Animal strength

ἀγηνορίη δέ μιν ἔκτα	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
ἐή τέ μιν ὤλεσεν ἀλκή	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V
τῶν τε σθένος οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν	C−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C

Hunters:

Hounds

n./a.	κύνα	C⏑⏑V
	κύνες	C⏑⏑C
	κύνες πόδας ἀργοί	C⏑−⏑⏑−−V
	κύνας ἀργιόδοντας	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C
	καρχαρόδοντε δύω κύνε	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑V
gen.	κυνῶν ὕπο καρχαροδόντων	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C
dat.	σὺν κυσί	C−⏑⏑V

	ἐν κυσὶ θηρευτῇσι	V−◡◡−−−◡V

Männerbund[3]

n./a.	κολοσυρτὸν ἰόντα	C◡◡−◡◡−◡V
	ὅμιλον ἀολλισθήμεναι ἀνδρῶν	V◡−◡◡−−−◡◡−−C
	κολοσυρτὸν ἐπερχόμενον πολὺν ἀνδρῶν	C◡◡−◡◡−◡◡−◡◡−−C
dat.	ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὁμίλῳ	V−−◡◡−−V

Men

n./a.	νομεύς	C◡−C
	ἄνδρες	V−◡C
	ποιμήν	C−−C
	βουκόλον[4]	C−◡◡C
	θηρητήρ	C−−−C
	αἰζηοί	V−−−V
	βώτορας ἄνδρας	C−◡◡−◡C
	αἰπόλος ἀνήρ	V−◡◡−◡C
	θηρήτορας ἄνδρας	C−−◡◡−◡C
	ἄνδρες ἐπακτῆρες	V−◡◡−−◡C
	ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι	C−◡◡−−−V

[3] This is a formular system in its prime: the essential idea is there, but the diction is not yet completely formulaic.

[4] Formular economy is only partially breached here. If both words occupy a single foot, they are a metrical doublet; but if ποιμήν stands in a biceps (i.e. ποι- | -μήν, across foot boundaries), then it cannot be replaced by βουκόλον and the two words do not constitute a doublet.

	ἐλαφηβόλος ἀνήρ[5]	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C
gen.	αἰζηῶν	V−−−C
	ἀρηϊθόων αἰζηῶν	V⏑−⏑⏑−−−−C
	πρὸ κούρων θηρητήρων	C⏑−−−−−−C

Men and hounds

n./a.	κύνες τε καὶ ἄνδρες	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C
	κύνας ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρας	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C
	κύνες τ' ἄνδρές τε νομῆες	C⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑C
	κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί	C⏑−⏑⏑−−−−C
	κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−−V
	ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−−V
gen.	ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ κυνῶν	V−−−⏑⏑−C
dat.	κύνεσσι καὶ ἀνδράσι θηρευτῆσι	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑V

<u>Lack of wind</u>:

νηνεμίης	C−⏑⏑−C
ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C

[5] *Il*. 18.319: these two words are separated by a dactyl, but we might suppose that this phrase was originally devised to be used at verse-end.

Lair

n./a.	ἐλθὼν εἰς εὐνήν	V−−−−−C
	ἐὴν εἰσήλυθεν εὐνήν	V⏑−−−⏑⏑−−C
gen.	ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς	V−−−−−C
	ἐξ εὐνῆφι θορόντα	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑V

Lion character:

Fierceness[6]

δῃῶν	C−−C
γλαυκιόων	C−⏑⏑−C
πῦρ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι δεδορκώς	C−−−−⏑⏑−−C
ὀφθαλμὼ δ' ἄρα οἱ πυρὶ λάμπετον	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε | δαίεται[7]	

Hunger

σίντης/ν	C−−C
πεινάων	C−−−C
μέγα πεινάοντα	C⏑⏑−−−⏑V
κρειῶν ἐρατίζων	C−−⏑⏑−−C

[6] This overlaps with ‘boar’.
[7] This is hard to analyse metrically, as it extends over two lines. The same applies to similar elements below.

	ἄμφω πεινάοντε	V−−−−−⏑V
	ἐπιδευὴς | δηρὸν ἔῃ κρειῶν	

Strength

	ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς	V−⏑⏑−−C
	σθένεϊ βλεμεαίνει	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V

Tracking

	ἀλλά τ' ἀνιχνεύων	V−⏑⏑−−−C
	μετ' ἀνέρος ἴχνι' ἐρευνῶν	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C

Natural elements in simple form:

Clouds

n./a.	νέφος	C⏑⏑C
	νέφεα	C⏑⏑−V
	πυκινὴν νεφέλην	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	νέφεα σκιόεντα	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
gen.	ἐκ νεφέων	V−⏑⏑−C
	ὑπαὶ νεφέων	V⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ἐκ νεφελάων	V−⏑⏑−−C

dat.	νεφέλῃσιν	C⏑⏑−⏑C

Field[8]

ἀγρῷ	V−−V
πέδονδε	C⏑−⏑V
ἂμ πεδίον	**V−⏑⏑−C**
ἐν πεδίῳ	**V−⏑⏑−V**
πολέος πεδίοιο	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−V

Fire

πῦρ	C−C
καπνός	C−⏑C
ὀλοὸν πῦρ	V⏑⏑−−C
δήϊον πῦρ	C⏑⏑−−C[9]
πῦρ ἀΐδηλον	C−⏑⏑−⏑C
αἰθόμενον πῦρ	V−⏑⏑−−C
θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ	C−⏑⏑−−C

Forest

[8] Here, despite the different grammatical cases, the basic idea is ‘on/through a field’.
[9] On the scansion of δήϊον, see Hainsworth (1993), 147.

n./a.	δάσκιος ὕλη	C−◡◡−−V
	ἄσπετον ὕλην	V−◡◡−−C
	βαθεῖα/βαθέην … ὕλη/ὕλην	
gen.	ὕλης ἐκ πυκινῆς	V−−−◡◡−C
	βαθείης ἐκ ξυλόχοιο	C◡−−−◡◡−◡V
dat.	ἐν ὕλῃ	V◡−−V
	καθ' ὕλην	C◡−−C
	ἐν ξυλόχῳ	V−◡◡−V
	ξύλοχον κάτα	C◡◡−◡◡V
	ἐν ἀξύλῳ ὕλῃ	V◡−◡◡−−V[10]
	ἐν νέμεϊ σκιερῷ	V−◡◡−◡◡−V
	χῶρον ἀν' ὑλήενθ’	C−◡◡−−−C
	ἀνὰ ῥωπήϊα πυκνά	V◡−−−◡◡−◡V
	διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην	C◡−◡◡−◡◡−−C
	βαθέης ἐν τάρφεσιν ὕλης	C◡◡−−−◡◡−−C

Hills and promontories

n./a.	πρών	C−C
	ἄκρας	V−−C
	πρώονας ἄκρους	C−◡◡−−C
	ἠλίβατος πέτρη	V−◡◡−−−V
	ἀκταὶ προβλῆτες	V−−−−−C[11]

[10] In the text, the phrase appears as ἐν ἀξύλῳ ἐμπέσῃ ὕλῃ (*Il*. 11.155), but it makes a perfectly good metrical unit even without the intervening verb, and is here analysed as such.
[11] Virtually a doublet of the previous one.

	πολλὰς δὲ κλιτῦς	C−−−−−C
dat.	ἀκτῇ ἐφ᾽ ὑψηλῇ	V−⏑⏑−−−V
	ἀκτῇ ἔπι προὐχούσῃ	V−⏑⏑−−−⏑V
	προβλῆτι σκοπέλῳ	C−−−⏑⏑−V
	πέτρῃ ἔπι προβλῆτι	C−⏑⏑−−−⏑V

Mountain

n./a.	αἰπὺ δ᾽ ὄρος	V−⏑⏑−C
	ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφάς	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
gen.	ἐξ ὀρέων	V−⏑⏑−C
	ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς	V⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ὄρεος μεγάλοιο	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
	οὔρεος ἀζαλέοιο	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἀφ᾽ ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς	V⏑−−−⏑⏑−C
dat.	οὔρεσιν[12]	V−⏑⏑C
	ὄρεσφιν	V⏑−⏑C
	ἐν σκοπιῇ	V−⏑⏑−V
	ἐν οὔρεσι	V⏑−⏑⏑V
	ἐν οὔρεσιν	V⏑−⏑⏑C
	ἐν ὄρεσσιν	V⏑⏑−⏑C
	δι᾽ ὄρεσφι	**C⏑⏑−⏑V**
	κατ᾽ ὄρεσφι	**C⏑⏑−⏑V**

[12] Phrases ending with a movable ν may end either with a vowel or with a consonant. Here, I analyse them as they appear in the text of traditional similes.

	κατ᾽ ὄρεσφιν	C⏑⏑–⏑C
	ὑψόθ᾽ ὄρεσφι	V–⏑⏑–⏑V
	ὄρεος κορυφῇσιν	V⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑C
	οὔρεος ἐν κορυφῇς	V–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–C
	ἐπ᾽ ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν	**V⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑C**
	ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν	**V⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑C**

Sea[13]

n./a.	κατὰ πόντον	C⏑⏑–⏑C
	πόντον ἔπι	C–⏑⏑–V
	ἐς δ᾽ ἅλα πορφυρέην	V–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–C
	πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἰχθυόεντα[14]	C–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑V
gen.	πολιῆς ἁλός	C⏑⏑–⏑⏑C
	ἐφ᾽ ἁλὸς πολιῆς	V⏑⏑–⏑⏑–V
	πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης	C⏑–––⏑⏑––C
dat.	πόντῳ	C––V[15]

Sea Foam

[13] In the case of *Sea*, a common element throughout both poems, I have only included the members of the formulaic system which appear in the nature similes. For the ‘sea’ formulaic system in Homer, see references in Edwards (1988), 17.

[14] Cf. also the phrase ἐπὶ πόντον … ἰχθυόεντα (*Il*. 9.4, as far as nature similes are concerned), which is hard to analyse metrically (unlike ἐν ἀξύλῳ […] ὕλῃ above), as the words πόντον and ἰχθυόεντα cannot be juxtaposed in a dactylic hexameter. This separated formula, however, is rather common in the *Odyssey* in non-simile contexts (4.381, 424, 470, 10.458, 540).

[15] This element has sometimes the same meaning as κατὰ πόντον (above), whose metrical structure is C⏑⏑–⏑C.

n./a.	ἄχνη	V−−V
	ἀλὸς ἄχνην	V◡◡−−C
dat.	**ἄχνῃ**	**V−−V**
	ἀφρῷ	**V−−V**

Star

n./a.	ἄστρα	V−◡V
	ἀστήρ	V−−C
	Αὔλιος ἀστήρ	V−◡◡−−C
dat. s.	ἀστέρι καλῷ	V−◡◡−−V
	ἀστέρ᾽ ὀπωρινῷ	V−◡◡−−−V
dat. p.	μετ' ἀστράσι	C◡−◡◡V
	πολλοῖσι μετ᾽ ἀστράσι	C−−◡◡−◡◡V[16]

Storm

n./a.	ἄελλαι	V◡−−V
	λαίλαπα πολλήν	C−◡◡−−C
dat.	ἀέλλῃ	V◡−−V
	ὑπὸ λαίλαπι	V◡◡−◡◡V
	βαθείῃ λαίλαπι	**C◡−−−◡◡V**
	κελαινῇ λαίλαπι	**C◡−−−◡◡V**

[16] In this case, a distinction between dative singular and plural seems appropriate, as the two groups express two profoundly different ideas.

ἐρεμνῇ λαίλαπι	V⏑−−−⏑⏑V

Valleys

κνημούς	C−−C
διὰ βήσσας	C⏑⏑−−C
βαθέ᾽ ἄγκεα	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑V
πολλὰ δέ τ' ἄγκε᾽	C−⏑⏑−⏑V
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς	V−⏑⏑−−−C
ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσσας	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C
ἄγκεα ποιήεντα	V−⏑⏑−−−⏑V
διά τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσσας[17]	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V

Waves

κῦμα	C−⏑V
κύματ᾽	C−⏑C
κύματα	C−⏑⏑V
μέγα κῦμα	**C⏑⏑−⏑V**
τρόφι κῦμα	**C⏑⏑−⏑V**[18]
κῦμα κελαινόν	C−⏑⏑−⏑C

[17] Though not exact metrical doublets, in Homer this phrase and the preceding one are virtually doublets, covering the second half of the hexameter. Virtual doublets are marked elsewhere, too.
[18] Although Hainsworth (1993), 260 (on *Il.* 11.307), says that this is "a unique expression which provides the metrically necessary two initial consonants", μέγα κῦμα would fit here, too: the continuant μ- in Homer can and does lengthen a preceding short vowel (cf. *Od.* 5.435). For this reason, μέγα κῦμα and τρόφι κῦμα are regarded as metrical doublets.

	κύματά τε τροφόεντα	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
	κῦμα θαλάσσης[19]	C−⏑⏑−−C
	θαλάσσης κῦμα	C⏑−−−⏑V
	κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης	C−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−−C
	μέγα κῦμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑C
	Winds (General)	
n./a.	ἄνεμος	V⏑⏑−C
	ἄνεμοι	V⏑⏑−V
	ἴς ἀνέμου	V−⏑⏑−V
	ἴς ἀνέμοιο	V−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἄνεμος ζαής	V⏑⏑−−−C
gen.	λιγέων ἀνέμων	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ἀργαλέων ἀνέμων	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	παντοίων ἀνέμων	**C−−−⏑⏑−C**
	ζαχρειῶν ἀνέμων	**C−−−⏑⏑−C**
	Winds (Personal Names)	
Bor.	Βορέης	C⏑⏑−C[20]

[19] This can be seen as the point of contact between the *Sea* and the *Waves* essential ideas, and seems to behave as a single phrase in the final adonic (and not as two different elements 'wave + sea'). The juxtaposition was then further developed by resorting to both the *Sea* (in the genitive) and *Wave* (in the nominative or accusative) formulaic systems, creating a sort of conflated 'sea+wave' system. The members of this system are listed here.

[20] At *Il.* 9.5, the shape is c – – c.

	μένος Βορέαο	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἄνεμον Βορέην	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	κραιπνὸν Βορέην	C−−⏑⏑−C
	ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης	V⏑−−−⏑⏑−C
	Βορέης ἄνεμος μέγας	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
	Βορέης αἰθρηγενέτης	C⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−C
gen.	Βορέω	C⏑⏑−V
	Βορέαο	C⏑⏑−⏑V
	πρὸς Βορέαο	C−⏑⏑−⏑V
	αἰθρηγενέος Βορέαο	V−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
dat.	Βορέῃ	C⏑⏑−V
	Βορέῃ ἀνέμῳ ἀκραέϊ καλῷ	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−−V
Eur.	Εὖρός	V−⏑C
Not.	Νότος	C⏑⏑C
gen.	Νότου	C⏑−V
	πρὸς Νότου	C−⏑⏑V
	ἀργεστᾶο Νότοιο	C−−−⏑⏑−⏑V
Zeph.	Ζέφυρος	C⏑⏑−C
	Ζέφυρος μέγας	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
	Ζέφυρον κελαδεινόν	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C
	Ζέφυρός τε δυσαής	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C[21]
gen.	Ζεφύρου	C⏑⏑−V

[21] Though this and the previous one occupy the same space in the hexameter, I would not take them as doublets since the latter includes a conjunction (τε) and could not be replaced by the former without altering the structure of the sentence.

	Ζεφύροιο	C⏑⏑−⏑V
	Ζεφύροιο δυσαέος	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
dat.	Ζεφύρῳ	C⏑⏑−V

Nature damaging human settlements:

μινύθουσι δὲ οἶκοι	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V
μινύθει δέ τε ἔργ᾽ ἀνθρώπων	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−−C
ἔργα κατήριπε κάλ᾽ αἰζηῶν	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−−C[22]

Night-time:

νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ	C−⏑⏑−−V
ἐν νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ	V⏑−⏑⏑−−V
μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ	C⏑−−−⏑⏑−−V

Predator/Boar:[23]

Boar[24]

[22] The digamma is active in the text.
[23] All mentions outside short similes. ‘Leopard’ appears only as πάρδαλις.
[24] Though expressed in different cases, the boar is here always seen as the object of the verb.

	κάπριον	C−⏑⏑C
	ἐπὶ κάπρῳ	V⏑⏑−−V
	σῦν ἀκάμαντα	C−⏑⏑−⏑V

Jackals:

	θῶες	C−⏑C
	δαφοινοὶ θῶες	C⏑−−−⏑C
	ὠμοφάγοι μιν θῶες	V−⏑⏑−−−⏑C

Lion

n./a.	λῖν	C−C
	λὶς ἠϋγένειος	C−−⏑⏑−⏑C
	αἴθωνα λέοντα	V−−⏑⏑−⏑V
	λέων ὀλοόφρων	C⏑−⏑⏑−−C
	λέων ὀρεσίτροφος	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
gen.	λέοντος	C⏑−⏑C
	κρατεροῖο λέοντος	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C

Pairs

n./a.	κάπριος ἠὲ λέων	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
gen.	συὸς ἀγρίου ἠὲ λέοντος	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C
dat.	ἐπ' ἀγροτέρῳ συῒ καπρίῳ ἠὲ λέοντι	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V

Unspecified

n./a.	θῆρε	
gen.	κραταιοῦ θηρός	C⏑———⏑C
	θηρὸς κρατερόφρονος[25]	C——⏑⏑—⏑⏑C
dat.	θηρὶ	

Predator Attack:

Arrival

βουσὶν ἐπελθών	C–⏑⏑––C
ἐν βουσὶ θορών	V⏑–⏑⏑–C
μήλοισιν ἐπελθών[26]	C––⏑⏑––C
ἀγέληφι μετελθών	V⏑⏑–⏑⏑––C
εἶσ' ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν	V–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–C
βουσὶ μετέρχεται ἢ ὀίεσσιν	C–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑C

Fence-jumping

αὐλῆς ὑπεράλμενον	V––⏑⏑–⏑⏑C

[25] *Il*. 10.184: the words are separated by ἀκούσαντες, but they can be analysed as a single formula.
[26] *Il*. 10.485: the words are separated by ἀσημάντοισιν, but they can be analysed as one unit.

βαθέης ἐξάλλεται αὐλῆς	C⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−−C

Snatching

βοῦν ἁρπάσῃ	C−−⏑⏑V
ἥρπαξε μετάλμενος	V−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
τὼ μὲν ἄρ' ἁρπάζοντε	C−⏑⏑−−−⏑V
ὑπέκ μήλων αἱρεύμενοι	V⏑−−−−−⏑⏑V
ἁρπάξαντε φέρητον	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑C
αἶψα διαρπάζουσιν	V−⏑⏑−−−⏑C

Predator Killing:

Biting

ὃ δάπτει	V⏑−−V
δαρδάπτουσιν	C−−−⏑C

Eating

βοῦν ἔδει	C−⏑⏑V
δαῖτα λάβῃσιν	C−⏑⏑−⏑C
μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑V
λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑C

Neck-Breaking

συνέαξε	C⏑⏑−⏑V
ἐξ αὐχένα ἄξῃ	V−−⏑⏑−⏑V
τῆς δ' ἐξ αὐχέν' ἔαξε	C−−−⏑⏑−⏑V

Tasting innards

βοῶν ἐκ πῖαρ ἐλέσθαι	C⏑−−−⏑⏑−−V
ἀπαλόν τέ σφ' ἦτορ ἀπηύρα	V⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑V
αἷμα καὶ ἔγκατα πάντα λαφύσσει	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V

Prey:

Cattle[27]

gen.	ἕλικος βοός	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
	βοὸς ἀγραύλοιο	C⏑⏑−−−⏑V
	βοσκομένης ἀγέλης	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
dat.	περὶ μῆλα[28]	C⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἀμφὶ βόεσσι	V−⏑⏑−⏑V

[27] Mentions of cattle excluding *Predator Attack*.
[28] Same as *Field* above.

	ἐν πρώτῃσι βόεσσι	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἐν εἰλιπόδεσσι βόεσσι	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V

Deer

n./a.	νεβρόν	C−⏑C
	νεβρούς	C−−C
	ἔλαφον κεραόν	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ἀγροτέρας ἐλάφους	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ὑψίκερων ἔλαφον μέγαν	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
gen.	ἐλάφοιο	V⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἐλάφοιο ταχείης	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C
	περὶ κταμένης ἐλάφοιο	C⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
dat.	ἐπὶ νεβρῷ	V⏑⏑−−V
	ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑V

Pairs

	ἢ ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἠὲ βοῶν ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μέγ' οἰῶν[29]	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−−C
gen.	πόρτιος ἠὲ βοός	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
dat.	αἴγεσιν ἢ ὀΐεσσι	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V

Unspecified

[29] Virtually a doublet of the previous one.

gen.	ἀπὸ σώματος	V⏑⏑–⏑⏑C
dat.	μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι	C⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑V

Younglings

n./a.	σκύμνους	C––C
	νήπια τέκνα	C–⏑⏑–⏑V
dat.	περὶ οἷσι τέκεσσιν	C⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑C

<u>Sea crushing against the shore:</u>

χέρσῳ	C––V
ποτὶ χέρσον	C⏑⏑–⏑C
αἰγιαλῷ	V–⏑⏑–V
ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυηχέϊ	V⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑V

<u>Sea bellowing</u>:

προσερεύγεται ἀκτῇ	C⏑⏑–⏑⏑––V
ἐρεύγεται ἤπειρόνδε	V⏑–⏑⏑–––⏑V
δεινὸν ἐρευγόμενον	C–⏑⏑–⏑⏑–C
ἐρευγομένης ἁλὸς ἔξω	V⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑––V

Shepherd driving sheep:

ὑπό τε σπέος ἤλασε μῆλα	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
εἰς εὐρὺ σπέος ἤλασε πίονα μῆλα	V−−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V

Shepherd's stalls:

n./a.	σταθμοὺς κεραίζων	C−−⏑⏑−−C
	σταθμοὺς ἀνθρώπων κεραίζετον	C−−−−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑C
gen.	σταθμοῖο	C−−⏑V
	ἀπὸ σταθμοῖο	V⏑−−−⏑V
	ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο	V⏑⏑−−−⏑V
	βοῶν ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο	C⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑V
dat.	ἐν αὐλῇ	V⏑−−V
	σταθμῷ ἔνι	C−⏑⏑−V
	κατὰ σταθμούς	C⏑−−−C
	σταθμῷ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−V

Pasture

βοτάνης	C⏑⏑−C
ἐκ βοτάνης	V−⏑⏑−C

Suddenness of winds:

n./a.	ἐλθών	V−−C
	ἐλθόντ᾽ ἐξαπίνης	**V−−−⏑⏑−C**
	ὄρμενον ἐξαίφνης	**V−⏑⏑−−−C**
gen.	ὀρνυμένοιο	V−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ὀρνυμένοιο νέον	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C

Wind Blast:[30]

n./a.	ἀνέμοιο δὲ δεινὸς ἀήτη	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V
gen.	Ζεφύρου ὕπο	C⏑⏑−⏑⏑V
	ὑπὸ φρικὸς Βορέω	V⏑−−−⏑⏑−V
	ὑπὸ λιγέων ἀνέμων	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−C
	ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς	V⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−C
	ἀνέμοιο δυσαέος ὀρνυμένοιο	V⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−⏑V
	ἐξ ἀνέμοιο πολυπλάγκτοιο ἰωῆς	V−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−−⏑⏑−⏑C
	Ζεφύροιο | ὀρνυμένοιο νέον	
dat.	πνοιῇ ὕπο	C−⏑⏑−V
	πνοιῇ ὕπο λιγυρῇ	C−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−V
	πνοιῇσιν λιγυρῇσι	C−−−⏑⏑−⏑V
	πνοιῇ Βορέω ἀλεγεινῇ	C−−⏑⏑−⏑⏑−−V

[30] Only material from traditional similes.

The following groups are not entirely formulaic. As '*Männerbund*' above, they may be seen as systems 'in their prime' with a fixed essential idea; but unlike '*Männerbund*', their diction is too diverse and a metrical analysis would not make much sense. Nevertheless, they certainly constitute recurrent patterns and should be listed among their pattern counterparts.

Arching waves:

κυρτά
κορθύεται
κυρτὸν ἐὸν κορυφοῦται

Boar character:

Bristling

δέρματι λαχνήεντι
φρίξας εὖ λοφιήν
φρίσσει δέ τε νῶτον ὕπερθεν

Sidelong attack

δοχμώ τ' ἀΐσσοντε
λικριφὶς ἀΐξας

Tusks

λευκῷ ὀδόντι

θήγων λευκὸν ὀδόντα

αὐτὰρ ὀδόντας | θήγει

Uprooting forest

περὶ σφίσιν ἄγνυτον ὕλην | πρυμνὴν ἐκτάμνοντες

πολλὰ δ' ὅ γε προθέλυμνα χαμαὶ βάλε δένδρεα μακρά

Deer character:

Fear

τεθηπότες ἠΰτε νεβροί

πεφυζότες ἠΰτε νεβροί

Running in wilderness

καρπαλίμως δ' ἤϊξε

πολέος πεδίοιο θέουσαι

αὔτως ἠλάσκουσαι ἀνάλκιδες

ἤλυξε πόδεσσι | φεύγων

Weakness

οὐδ' ἄρα τίς σφι μετὰ φρεσὶ γίγνεται ἀλκή

οὐδ' ἔπι χάρμη

Distant observer in nature similes:[31]

ἔκλυε ποιμήν

γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν

γάνυται δ' ἄρα τε φρένα ποιμήν

χαίρει δέ μιν ὅς τις ἐθείρῃ

Drinking as an aim in the wilderness:

πιόμεναι

ἐθέλουσι δὲ πιέμεν ἄμφω

Hunting noise:

ἔγχεσι καὶ φωνῇ

[31] It is basically an expansion of *Men* above. What is interesting about this element is that it is almost always found in the very last hemistich of the simile. The only exception is *Il*. 4.273–83, where the observer, usually a marginal detail, becomes the protagonist of the simile and turns into a context element.

κυνύλαγμον ἀκούσῃ

πολλὰ μάλ' ἰύζουσιν

τῶν δέ θ' ὑπὸ ἰαχῆς

Incompetent shepherd:

ποιμένος ἀφραδίῃσι

σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος

μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν

νομεὺς οὔ πω σάφα εἰδώς

River:[32]

n./a. ὦκα ῥέων

ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες

χείμαρροι ποταμοὶ … ῥέοντες

πλήθων ποταμὸς… | χειμάρρους

gen. διιπετέος ποταμοῖο

ἰφθίμων ποταμῶν

dat. ὠκυρόῳ ποταμῷ

[32] This pattern, as we have it in our extant texts, was probably on the verge of turning into a full-fledged formulaic system. The cluster of ideas is coherent and extensively developed, with the notions of the *swift-flowing* stream and the river's *fullness* expressed in a variety of different ways. However, it remains difficult to analyse metrically, as the ideas are often juxtaposed over two lines or separated by several words, in both the nominative and the dative case.

ποταμῷ πλήθοντι… | χειμάρρῳ

Sea pouring out things:

ἀποπτύει δ᾽ ἁλὸς ἄχνην

πολλὸν δὲ παρὲξ ἅλα φῦκος ἔχευεν

Zeus as weather god:

ἐκ Διὸς οὖρον

ὑπὸ βροντῆς πατρὸς Διός

ὀπαζόμενος Διὸς ὄμβρῳ

ὅτ᾽ ἐπιβρίσῃ Διὸς ὄμβρος

ὅτε τε Ζεὺς λαίλαπα τείνῃ

Appendix III

EXTENDED SIMILES IN HOMER

This Appendix is intended to provide technical information about all the extended traditional similes that have not been discussed in Ch. 2 or the Conclusion. It follows the same principles as Appendix I on the OE poetic corpus: after a brief introduction, the full text of the simile and surrounding narrative is provided with an English translation; this is followed by a catalogue of the simile's context elements, linked to the corresponding narrative unit by the symbol ~, and their basic interaction is described by means of a word or short phrase; finally, the simile's pattern and formulaic elements are displayed, with a full list of their other occurrences in Homer.[1] The abbreviation 'cf.' indicates that the unit is not exactly repeated, but a very close version of it appears in the text that follows.[2] Note that, if an element is both pattern and context, it is listed as a context element.

- ***Il.* 2.142–49:**

Agamemnon's defeatist words shock the Greek army: their reaction and sudden motion is compared to a windy storm over sea and land.

> ὣς φάτο, τοῖσι δὲ **θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ὄρινεν**
>
> πᾶσι μετὰ πληθὺν, ὅσοι οὐ βουλῆς ἐπάκουσαν.
>
> κινήθη δ' **ἀγορὴ** φὴ **<u>κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης</u>**,

[1] Other texts belonging to the Early Greek Hexameter corpus (i.e. Hesiod, *Homeric Hymns*, *Shield of Heracles*) will occasionally be referenced.
[2] If both exact repetitions and close variants of an element are found in the corpus, the references of the former will be given first. All references following the abbreviation 'cf.' represent close variants.

πόντου Ἰκαρίοιο·[3] τὰ μέν τ' **Εὖρός τε Νότος τε** 145

ὄρορ' *ἐπαΐξας* **πατρὸς Διὸς** ἐκ νεφελάων.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **κινήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήϊον** ἐλθὼν,

λάβρος ἐπαιγίζων, **ἐπί τ' ἠμύει ἀσταχύεσσιν**,

ὣς τῶν πᾶσ' **ἀγορὴ κινήθη**…

Thus he spoke and **stirred the hearts in the chests**

of all in the multitude who had not listened to his plan.

The **assembly** was shaken like **the great waves of the ocean**,

the Icarian sea, which **Eurus and Notus** 145

rouse as they *rush down* from the clouds of **Father Zeus**.

As when **Zephyrus** comes and **shakes a deep-standing crop**,

violently rushing through it, and **bends down its ears**,

in such a way the whole **assembly was shaken**…

Context:

κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης/βαθὺ λήϊον~ἀγορή: subject.

Εὖρός τε Νότος τε/Ζέφυρος~κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (100): stirring agent.[4]

ὄρορε~ὄρινεν: stirring verb.

πατρὸς Διός~Ζεύς μέγα Κρονίδης (111): ultimate origin.[5]

κινήσῃ~κινήθη: shaking verb.

[3] This element is neither context nor pattern/formulaic and lies outside the capacity of the technique. Henceforth, these elements will be marked as 'null' in a footnote. These local details might be owed to the poet's personal experience. Cf. M.L. West (2011), 20–7.

[4] Agamemnon is also the understood subject of the verbs φάτο ('spoke') and ὄρινε ('stirred') at 142.

[5] This element possibly interacts with the character of Zeus, who sent a deceitful dream to Agamemnon at the beginning of the Book (2.3–6) to set in motion the following events: just as the winds that shake the sea waves come from Father Zeus in the simile, so in the narrative does Agamemnon stir the hearts of his soldiers by inspiration of Zeus.

ἐπί τ' ἠμύει ἀσταχύεσσιν~θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν: discouragement of individuals.[6]

Formulaic:

ἐπαΐξας: a participle often employed as a line-filler in battle scene; it is found in second position in ten[7] out of fourteen occurrences in Homer.[8]

Pattern:

ἐκ νεφελάων: cf. *Il*. 5.864, 11.62, 15.170, 15.625.

ἐλθών: a typical verb for winds in traditional similes (cf. *Il*. 2.395, 17.57).

λάβρος ἐπαιγίζων: *Od*. 15.293, *Hom*. *Hymn Ap*. 435 (both of winds).

- ***Il*. 2.207–10:**

The army's noise is compared to the roar of the sea-waves.

οἳ δ' ἀγορήνδε
αὖτις ἐπεσσεύοντο νεῶν ἄπο καὶ κλισιάων
ἠχῇ, ὡς ὅτε **κῦμα** πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
αἰγιαλῷ **μεγάλα βρέμεται**, *σμαραγεῖ δέ τε πόντος*. 210

To the assembly

[6] This connection might at first appear weak, but it is reinforced by the repeated dative ending (-εσσιν) and by the presence of the pronoun ὅσοι (lit. 'as many as…'), which individualises the soldiers in the multitude (143, μετὰ πληθύν) just like the ears of corn (ἀσταχύεσσιν) in the field (λήϊον).
[7] *Il*. 2.146, 3.369, 5.98, 5.235, 10.348, 369, 11.361, 13.546, 687, 23.64.
[8] The remaining four are *Il*. 5.323, 584, 12.191, 17.293.

they rushed back from the ships and huts

clamorously, as when the **<u>waves</u>** of the loud-roaring sea

growl loudly <u>against the shore</u>, and *the sea thunders*. 210

<u>Context</u>:

κῦμα~οἵ: subject.

βρέμεται~ἠχῇ: clamour.

<u>Formulaic</u>:

σμαραγεῖ δέ τε πόντος: cf. *Il*. 2.463 (in simile).

<u>Pattern</u>:

πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης: *Il*. 1.34, 6.347, 9.182, 13.798, 23.59, *Od*. 13.85, 220.

αἰγιαλῷ μεγάλῳ: cf. *Il*. 4.422, 425, 14.394.

- ***Il*. 2.394–8:**

Agamemnon's speech rouses the Achaeans, whose shout is compared to the roar of a sea-wave.

ὣς ἔφατ', **Ἀργεῖοι** δὲ μέγ' **ἴαχον**,[9] ὡς ὅτε **<u>κῦμα</u>**

[9] In the simile, there is no explicit verb expressing the waves' roar, but we clearly must understand an implied ἰαχῇ after κῦμα.

ἀκτῇ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ, ὅτε **κινήσῃ Νότος** ἐλθών, 395

προβλῆτι σκοπέλῳ· τὸν δ' οὔ ποτε **κύματα** λείπει[10]

παντοίων ἀνέμων, ὅτ' ἂν **ἔνθ' ἢ ἔνθα γένωνται**.

ἀνστάντες δ' **ὀρέοντο κεδασθέντες** κατὰ νῆας…

Thus he spoke, and **the Argives shouted** aloud, as when **a wave**

[roars] against a high cliff, when **Notus** comes and **drives** it, 395

a jutting crag; the **waves** never leave it

from all the winds, as **they move here and there**.

They **were roused**, stood up and **scattered** among the ships…

Context:

κῦμα/κύματα~Ἀργεῖοι: subject.

κινήσῃ~ὀρέοντο: stirring verb.

Νότος~Ἀγαμέμνων (369): stirring agent.

ἔνθ' ἢ ἔνθα γένωνται~ κεδασθέντες: scattering.[11]

Pattern:

ἀκτῇ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ: cf. *Il*. 2.396, *Od*. 24.82, *Hom*. *Hymn* 7.3.

προβλῆτι σκοπέλῳ: cf. *Il*. 2.395, *Od*. 24.82, *Hom*. *Hymn* 7.3.

παντοίων ἀνέμων: *Il*. 17.56, *Od*. 5.293, 305, cf. *Il*. 5.525, 13.334, 795, etc.

[10] Null.

[11] Although in the simile the idea of scattering is referred to the winds, it has likely influenced the subsequent thought of the poet, who applied it to the Greeks (whose explicit referent in the comparison is the waves).

- ***Il*. 2.455–8:**

The gleam from Achaeans' armours is compared to a blazing fire.

ἠΰτε **πῦρ ἀΐδηλον ἐπιφλέγει** ἄσπετον ὕλην 455
οὔρεος ἐν κορυφῇς, **ἔκαθεν** δέ τε **φαίνεται αὐγή**,
ὣς τῶν **ἐρχομένων** ἀπὸ **χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο**
αἴγλη παμφανόωσα δι' αἰθέρος **οὐρανὸν** ἷκεν**.**

As a **destructive fire burns up** a vast forest 455
on a mountain top, and the **gleam appears far off**,
so, as they **marched**, **from their bronze divine**
the **bright-shining gleam** through the air reached up to the **sky**.

Context:

πῦρ ἀΐδηλον~χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο: origin of light.

ἐπιφλέγει~ἐρχομένων: movement.

ἔκαθεν~οὐρανόν: distance.

φαίνεται αὐγή~αἴγλη παμφανόωσα: subject.

Pattern:

ἄσπετον ὕλην: *Il*. 23.127, 24.784, cf. *Il*. 15.273, *Od*. 5.470.

οὔρεος ἐν κορυφῇς: cf. *Il*. 3.10, 16.757, 824, etc.

- ***Il.* 3.23–8:**

Menelaus, upon seeing Paris in the Trojan ranks, rejoices as a lion that chances upon a prey.

ὥς τε **λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας**,
εὑρὼν ἢ ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα
πεινάων· μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει, *εἴ περ ἂν αὐτὸν* 25
σεύωνται ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί·
ὣς **ἐχάρη Μενέλαος Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα**
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν **ἰδών**.

As a **lion rejoices** when he **chances upon a huge carcass,**
coming on a horned stag or a wild goat
in his hunger: it eats it eagerly, *even if* 25
quick hounds and strong youths hasten against him,
so **Menelaus rejoiced** when he **saw godlike Paris**
with his eyes.

Context:

λέων~Μενέλαος: subject.

ἐχάρη~ἐχάρη: joy.

μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι~Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα: victim.

κύρσας/εὑρών~ἰδών: discovery.

Formulaic:

εἴ περ ἂν αὐτόν: *Il*. 2.597.

Pattern:

ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα: *Il*. 15.271.[12]

πεινάων: cf. *Il*. 11.481, 16.758, 18.162, 20.165, etc.

μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει: typical verb for lion, cf. *Il*. 11.114, 175, 15.636, 24.43.

σεύωνται: typical verb for men and hounds, cf. *Il*. 11.293, 415, 549, 15.272.

ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί: cf. *Il*. 11.414, 549, 17.282, etc.

- ***Il*. 4.73–8**:

Athena darting down from Olympus is compared to a shooting star.

ὣς εἰπὼν **ὤτρυνε** πάρος μεμαυῖαν **Ἀθήνην**,
βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων ἀΐξασα.
οἷον δ' **ἀστέρα ἧκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω** 75
ἢ **ναύτῃσι τέρας** ἠὲ **στρατῷ εὐρέϊ λαῶν**
λαμπρόν, τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἀπὸ σπινθῆρες ἵενται·[13]
τῷ ἐϊκυῖ' ἤϊξεν ἐπὶ χθόνα Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη…

Thus he spoke and **spurred on Athena**, who was already eager.
She leapt and darted down from the ridges of Olympus,

[12] Both elements of this pair are found separately: the stag at *Il*. 11.475 and 16.158, and the goat at *Od*. 14.50.
[13] Null.

just as **a <u>star</u>** which **the son of devious-minded Cronus sends** 75

as a **sign** to **sailors or a vast army of soldiers**,

<u>a bright star</u>; and thick sparkles radiate from it.

Just like this did Pallas Athena dart down to the earth…

<u>Context</u>:

ἀστέρα~Ἀθήνην: subject.

ἦκε~ὤτρυνε: sending verb.

Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω~πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε (68): sender.[14]

ναύτῃσι/στρατῷ εὐρέϊ λαῶν~ἐς στρατόν/μετὰ Τρῶας καὶ Ἀχαιούς (70): recipients of message.

τέρας~πειρᾶν (71): purpose.

<u>Pattern</u>:

λαμπρόν: a common epithet for stars, cf. *Il*. 5.6, 22.30, etc.

- ***Il*. 4.243–6:**

Agamemnon rebukes the hesitating Achaeans by comparing them to innocent fawns.

τίφθ' οὕτως **ἔστητε τεθηπότες** ἠΰτε **<u>νεβροί</u>**,

αἵ τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν **ἔκαμον** <u>πολέος πεδίοιο θέουσαι</u>,

[14] Zeus is responsible for the sending of both the star and Athena (68–72), and is the subject of the verb ὤτρυνε (73).

ἑστᾶσ', οὐδ' ἄρα τίς σφι μετὰ φρεσὶ γίνεται ἀλκή; 245

ὣς **ὑμεῖς** ἕστητε **τεθηπότες**….

Why do you **stand there in fright** like **fawns**

that after **tiring** themselves as they run in a broad plain 245

stand still, and there is no strength in their hearts.

In this way **you** stand in fright…

Context:

νεβροί~ὑμεῖς: subject.

ἔκαμον~τεθηπότες: cause of stillness.

ἑστᾶσι~ἕστητε: stillness.

Pattern:

πολέος πεδίοιο θέουσαι: cf. *Il*. 11.118, 11.474, 13.104.

οὐδ' ἄρα γίνεται ἀλκή: cf. *Il*. 13.104.

- ***Il*. 4.420–7**:

The Achaean ranks are compared to the roaring sea.

δεινὸν δ' ἔβραχε χαλκὸς ἐπὶ στήθεσσιν ἄνακτος 420

ὀρνυμένου. […]

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυηχέϊ **κῦμα θαλάσσης**

ὄρνυτ' ἐπασσύτερον Ζεφύρου ὕπο **κινήσαντος–**

πόντῳ μέν τε *πρῶτα κορύσσεται, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα*

χέρσῳ *ῥηγνύμενον* μεγάλα βρέμει, ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἄκρας

κυρτὸν ἰὸν κορυφοῦται, ἀποπτύει δ' ἁλὸς ἀχνην–

ὣς τότ' **ἐπασσύτεραι** Δαναῶν **κίνυντο φάλαγγες**…

The bronze clattered terribly on the lord's chest

as he rose. […]

As when against the loud-echoing beach **the sea-waves**

rise one upon another driven **by the blast** of Zephyrus;

first it crests on the sea, *and then crashing* against the shore, it roars loudly;

against the cliffs it rises overarching and spews out the sea-foam.

So **one upon another** did the Danaan's **ranks throng**…

Context:

κῦμα θαλάσσης~φάλαγγες/Διομήδης (411): subject.[15]

ὄρνυτο~ὀρνυμένου: rising verb.

ἐπασσύτερον~ἐπασσύτεραι: incessant motion.

κινήσαντος~κίνυντο: confusion.

Formulaic:

[15] The main protagonist of the simile (i.e. the wave/s) seems to interact with both the single character of Diomedes and the collective Achaean army. The noun is singular (κῦμα, and not κύματα as *Il.* 2.396) and its verb (ὄρνυτο) reflects Diomedes' military movements (ὀρνυμένου), but the adjective (or adverb) ἐπασσύτερον suddenly shifts to the image of a series of waves crashing one upon another and interacts with the thronging Achaean ranks (427). We might take Diomedes as the first wave that rises up on the ocean, followed by the subsequent breakers which represent the Greek battalions.

πρῶτα κορύσσεται: *Il*. 4.442.

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα: common line-filler at verse-end, cf. *Il*. 3.723, 4.442, 9.68, 11.304, 622, etc.

Pattern:

ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυηχέϊ: cf. *Il*. 2.210, 4.425, 14.394.

Ζεφύρου ὕπο: cf. *Il*. 4.276, 13.334, etc.

πόντῳ: cf. *Il*. 4.276, 278.

χέρσῳ: cf. *Il*. 2.210, 4.422, 14.394.

μεγάλα βρέμει: typical verb for waves, cf. *Il*. 2.210, 14.399.

ἄκρας: *Il*. 17.264, cf. *Il*. 8.557, 12.282, 16.299.

κυρτὸν ἰὸν κορυφοῦται: cf. *Il*. 9.7, 13.799.

ἀποπτύει: typical verb for sea, cf. *Od*. 6.95 (cf. also *Il*. 9.7).

ἁλὸς ἄχνην: cf. *Il*. 11.307, *Od*. 5.403.

- ***Il*. 5.4–7:**

Athena makes Diomedes bright as a star.

δαΐέ οἱ ἐκ κόρυθός τε καὶ ἀσπίδος ἀκάματον **πῦρ**,
ἀστέρ' ὀπωρινῷ ἐναλίγκιον, *ὅς τε μάλιστα* 5
λαμπρὸν **παμφαίνῃσι** *λελουμένος Ὠκεανοῖο*.
τοῖόν οἱ πῦρ **δαΐεν** ἀπὸ κρατός τε καὶ ὤμων.

From his [Diomedes'] helmet and shield **gleamed untiring fire**,
like **the late-summer star**, which *most of all* 5

shines bright after *its bath in the ocean*.

Such was the **fire** that gleamed from his head and shoulders.

Context:

ἀστέρ' ὀπωρινῷ~πῦρ: subject.

παμφαίνῃσι~δαΐεν: brightness.

Formulaic:

ὅς τε μάλιστα: cf. *Il*. 11.123, 499, 23.159, etc.

λελουμένος Ὠκεανοῖο: cf. *Il*. 7.422, 18.489, *Od*. 5.275.

Pattern:

λαμπρόν: cf. *Il*. 22.30.

- ***Il*. 5.85–94:**

Diomedes in battle is compared to a raging river.

Τυδείδην δ' οὐκ ἂν γνοίης ποτέροισι μετείη, 85

ἠὲ μετὰ Τρώεσσιν ὁμιλέοι ἦ μετ' Ἀχαιοῖς.

θῦνε γὰρ ἀμ πεδίον **<u>ποταμῷ πλήθοντι</u>** ἐοικώς

<u>χειμάρρῳ</u>, ὅς τ' <u>ὦκα ῥέων</u> **ἐκέδασσε γεφύρας**,

τὸν δ' **οὔτ'** ἄρ τε **γέφυραι ἐεργμέναι ἰσχανόωσιν**

οὔτ' ἄρα **ἕρκεα ἴσχει** ἀλωάων ἐριθηλέων

ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης, ὅτ' ἐπιβρίσῃ Διὸς ὄμβρος,

πολλὰ δ' **ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἔργα κατήριπε κάλ' αἰζηῶν**·

ὣς **ὑπὸ Τυδείδῃ** πυκιναὶ **κλονέοντο φάλαγγες**

Τρώων, **οὐδ**᾽ **ἄρα** μιν **μίμνον πολέες** περ ἐόντες.

You would not have known on which side **Tydeus' son** was,

whether he fought with the Trojans or the Achaeans.

He **raged** through the plain like **a river swollen**

in winter, which **destroys the dams** as it rapidly flows.

The **dams** are not **strong enough to contain it**,

nor **is it checked** by **the fences** of the luxuriant vineyards,

as it suddenly comes, when Zeus' rain pours heavily.

And beneath it many beautiful works of men perish.

Just like this were the thick **ranks of the Trojans routed by Tydeus' son**,

and did not **hold him back**, **many** though they were.

Context:

ποταμῷ πλήθοντι~Τυδείδην: subject.

ἐκέδασσε~θῦνε: raging verb.

γεφύρας/ἔρκεα/ἔργα κάλα~φάλαγγες: victims.

οὔτ' ἐεργμέναι ἰσχανόωσιν/ἴσχει~οὐδ᾽ ἄρα μίμνον: no resistance.

ὑπ' αὐτοῦ~ὑπὸ Τυδείδῃ: agent.

κατήριπε~κλονέοντο: destruction verb.

πολλά~πολέες: quantity.

αἰζηῶν~Τρώων: possessors.

Pattern:

χειμάρρῳ: typical epithet for rivers, cf. *Il*. 4.452, 11.493, 13.138.

ὦκα ῥέων: cf. *Il*. 4.452, 16.389, *Od*. 19.207.

ἀλωάων ἐριθηλέων: cf. *Il*. 5.499, 13.588, 18.57.

ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης: *Il*. 9.6, 15.325.

ἐπιβρίσῃ Διὸς ὄμβρος: *Il*. 12.286, cf. *Il*. 11.493.

- ***Il*. 5.134–43:**

After Athena renews his strength, Diomedes is compared to a lion that eagerly falls upon its prey.

Τυδείδης δ' ἐξαῦτις ἰὼν προμάχοισιν ἐμίχθη,
καὶ πρίν περ θυμῷ μεμαὼς **Τρώεσσι** μάχεσθαι·
δὴ τότε μιν τρὶς τόσσον **ἔλεν μένος**, ὥς τε **λέοντα**,
ὅν ῥά τε **ποιμὴν** ἀγρῷ **ἐπ' εἰροπόκοις ὀΐεσσιν**
χραύσῃ μέν τ' αὐλῆς ὑπεράλμενον, **οὐδὲ δαμάσσῃ**·
τοῦ μέν τε **σθένος ὦρσεν**, ἔπειτα δέ τ' **οὐ προσαμύνει**,
ἀλλὰ κατὰ σταθμοὺς **δύεται**, τὰ δ' ἐρῆμα φοβεῖται·[16]
αἳ μέν τ' *ἀγχιστῖναι ἐπ' ἀλλήλῃσι κέχυνται*,
αὐτὰρ ὃ **ἐμμεμαὼς** βαθέης ἐξάλλεται αὐλῆς·
ὣς **μεμαὼς** Τρώεσσι μίγη κρατερὸς Διομήδης.

[16] Null.

Again **Tydeus's son** went and joined the first ranks,

who even before was eager to fight **the Trojans**.

Then a **fury** three times as intense **took hold** of him like **a lion**

which **a shepherd** in a field among his **fleecy sheep**

grazes as it leaps into the stalls, but **does not vanquish**.

He **rouses its fury**, and then he **no longer wards it off**,

but **hides** in the steading, and the abandoned sheep are frightened

they fall together upon each other,

but the lion **in its eagerness** leaps out of the yard.

With such **fury** Tydeus' son fell upon the Trojans.

Context:

λέοντα~Τυδείδης: agent.

ποιμὴν~Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱὸς (95): wounder.[17]

εἰροπόκοις ὀΐεσσιν~Τρώεσσι: victims.

χραύσῃ οὐδὲ δαμάσσῃ~βάλε … οὐ βέλος ὠκὺ δάμασσεν (98, 106): non-fatal wound.

σθένος ὦρσεν~ἔλεν μένος: renewed fury.

οὐ προσαμύνει/δύεται~ποῦ τοι τόξον (171): shrinking.[18]

ἐμμεμαώς~μεμαώς: eagerness.

Formulaic:

[17] At 95–110, Pandarus wounds, but does not kill Diomedes, just as the shepherd does not vanquish the lion.
[18] This element probably reflects the subsequent development of the narrative: after failing to kill Diomedes, Pandarus finds himself with no chariot and presumably retreats among the ranks of the Lycians, where he is caught and spurred on by Aeneas (166–216).

ἀγχιστῖναι: a warfare term, cf. *Il*. 17.361, *Od*. 22.118, 24.181, 449.

ἐπ' ἀλλήλῃσι κέχυνται: *Od*. 22.389, cf. *Od*. 5.329.

Context:

ἀγρῷ: cf. *Il*. 13.473, 17.54, *Od*. 5.329.

αὐλῆς ὑπεράλμενον: cf. *Il*. 5.142, 12.305.

βαθέης ἐξάλλεται αὐλῆς: cf. *Il*. 5.138, 12.305.

κατὰ σταθμούς: cf. *Il*. 16.642, 19.377, etc.

- ***Il*. 5.161–4:**

Diomedes kills two Trojans like a lion devours a heifer.

> ὡς δὲ **λέων** ἐν βουσὶ θορὼν **ἐξ αὐχένα ἄξῃ**
>
> **πόρτιος ἠὲ βοός**, ξύλοχον κάτα βοσκομενάων,
>
> ὣς **τοὺς** ἀμφοτέρους **ἐξ** ἵππων **Τυδέος υἱὸς**
>
> **βῆσε** κακῶς ἀέκοντας…
>
> As **a lion** falls upon the cattle and **breaks the neck**
>
> **of a heifer or an ox** grazing in the woods,
>
> so **Tydeus' son pushed both of them** from their horses
>
> violently, against their will…

Context:

λέων~Τυδέος υἱός: subject.

ἐξ αὐχένα ἄξῃ~ἐξ βῆσε: killing verb.

πόρτιος ἠὲ βοός~τούς: victims.

Pattern:

ἐν βουσὶ θορών: cf. *Il*. 10.485, 15.630, 16.487.

ξύλοχον κάτα: cf. *Il*. 10.183, 13.102, *Od*. 4.335, etc.

βοσκομενάων: common for animals in similes, cf. *Il*. 15.691, 17.62, *Od*. 4.338.

- ***Il*. 5.519–27:**

Encouraged by their leaders, the Greek soldiers stand their ground like a bank of clouds in the mountains against the winds.

τοὺς δ᾽ **Αἴαντε δύω καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ Διομήδης**
ὤτρυνον Δαναοὺς πολεμιζέμεν· οἳ δὲ καὶ αὐτοί
οὔτε **βίας** Τρώων ὑπεδείδισαν οὔτε **ἰωκάς**,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔμενον, **νεφέλῃσιν** ἐοικότες, ἅς τε **Κρονίων**
νηνεμίης **ἔστησεν** ἐπ᾽ ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν
ἀτρέμας, ὄφρ᾽ εὕδῃσι[19] **μένος Βορέαο** καὶ **ἄλλων**
ζαχρειῶν ἀνέμων, οἵ τε **νέφεα σκιόεντα**
πνοιῇσιν λιγυρῇσι **διασκιδνᾶσιν ἀέντες**·
ὣς **Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον** οὐδὲ φέβοντο.

[19] Null.

The **two Ajaxes, Odysseus and Diomedes**

urged on the Danaans to fight; and they themselves

did not fear the **violence** and the **onrush** of the Trojans,

but **stayed their ground** like **clouds** which the **son of Cronus**

sets in the windless air on the high mountains

motionless, while the **fury of Boreas** and the **other furious winds**

is asleep, which **the shady clouds**

blowing with their clear blasts **scatter about**.

So did **the Danaans check the Trojans inflexibly** and did not flee.

Context:

νεφέλῃσιν/νέφεα σκιόεντα~Δαναοὶ: subject.

Κρονίων~Αἴαντε δύω καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ Διομήδης: stopping agents.

ἔστησεν ἀτρέμας~μένον ἔμπεδον: stillness.

μένος Βορέαο~Αἰνείαν μένος ἐσθλὸν ἔχοντα (516): leader of opposing force.

ζαχρειῶν ἀνέμων~Τρῶας: opposing force.

διασκιδνᾶσιν ἀέντες~βίας ἰωκάς: attempt at dispersion.

Pattern:

νηνεμίης: cf. *Il*. 8.556.

ἐπ᾽ ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν: *Od*. 19.205, cf. *Il*. 2.456, 10.185, 12.146, etc.

πνοιῇσιν λιγυρῇσι: cf. *Il*. 13.590, 23.215.

- ***Il*. 5.864–7:**

As he flies up to the sky, Ares is compared to the dark air on a windy day.

οἵη δ' **ἐκ νεφέων ἐρεβεννὴ φαίνεται ἀήρ**

καύματος ἐξ, ἀνέμοιο δυσαέος ὀρνυμένοιο, 865

τοῖος Τυδείδῃ Διομήδεϊ **χάλκεος Ἄρης**

φαίνεθ' ὁμοῦ νεφέεσσιν, ἰὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν.

Like the **air appears dark from the clouds**

after the day's heat when the furious wind rises up, 865

in this way did **brazen Ares appear** to Diomedes, son of Tydeus,

as he flew up to the vast sky **with the clouds**.

Context:

ἐκ νεφέων~ὁμοῦ νεφέεσσιν: presence of clouds.

ἐρεβεννή ἀὴρ~χάλκεος Ἄρης: subject.

φαίνεται~φαίνετο: appearing verb.

Pattern:

καύματος ἐξ: cf. *Il*. 16.365, *Hom*. *Hymn Dem*. 70.

ἀνέμοιο δυσαέος ὀρνυμένοιο: cf. *Il*. 7.64, 13.334, etc.

- ***Il*. 7.61–6:**

The warriors' thick ranks are compared to the black sea that ripples under Zephyrus' blast.

τῶν δὲ **στίχες** εἵατο **πυκναί**

ἀσπίσι καὶ κορύθεσσι καὶ ἔγχεσι **πεφρικυῖαι**.

οἵη δὲ Ζεφύροιο ἐχεύατο[20] πόντον ἔπι **φρίξ**

ὀρνυμένοιο νέον, **μελάνει δέ τε πόντος** *ὑπ' αὐτῆς*,

τοῖαι ἄρα **στίχες** εἵατ' Ἀχαιῶν τε Τρώων τε… 65

Their **ranks** were **thick**,

bristling with shields, helmets, and spears.

Like the **ripple** spreads over the sea as soon as

Zephyrus rises, and **the sea blackens** beneath it,

such were **the ranks** of the Achaeans and Trojans… 65

Context:

φρίξ~πεφρικυῖαι: bristling.

στίχες πυκναί~μελάνει πόντος: darkness of subject.[21]

Formulaic:

ὑπ' αὐτῆς: cf. Il. 11.629, 20.277, 398, 24.190, etc.

Pattern:

Ζεφύροιο ὀρνυμένοιο νέον: cf. *Il*. 4.423, 5.865, etc.

[20] This is the verb of the simile's subject, but does not seem to be reflected in the narrative.
[21] Kirk (1990), 241, takes the blackness and thickness of the ranks and sea as the main point of contact between simile and narrative.

πόντον ἔπι: cf. *Il*. 4.276, 278, 19.378, etc.

- ***Il*. 8.338–41:**

Hector slaughters the Greeks as a hound chases a boar or a lion.

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε **κύων συὸς ἀγρίου ἠὲ λέοντος**
ἅπτηται **κατόπισθε**, *ποσὶν ταχέεσσι* **διώκων**,
ἰσχία τε γλουτούς τε, **ἑλισσόμενόν τε δοκεύει**, 340
ὣς Ἕκτωρ **ὤπαζε** κάρη κομόωντας **Ἀχαιούς**…

As when **a hound a wild boar or a lion**
grazes **from behind pursuing** it *with its swift feet*,
and touches its flanks or quarters, but **waits for it to turn around**, 340
so did **Hector pursue** the long-haired **Achaeans**…

Context:

κύων~Ἕκτωρ: subject.

συὸς ἀγρίου ἠὲ λέοντος~Ἀχαιούς: victims.

κατόπισθε διώκων~ὤπαζε: verb of pursuit.

ἑλισσόμενόν τε δοκεύει~ἐρητύοντο μένοντες (345): turning.[22]

Formulaic:

[22] As anticipated in the simile, the Greeks turn around at 345 and Hector carefully wheels about (348).

ποσὶν ταχέεσσι: *Il*. 22.8, 173, 230.

ἅπτηται: common action for predator, cf. *Il*. 12.305, 17.62, etc.

ἰσχία τε γλουτούς τε: cf. *Il*. 20.170, *Od*. 22.404.

- ***Il*. 8.554–61:**

The campfires of the Trojans are compared to the stars in the sky.

πυρὰ δέ σφισι καίετο **πολλά**.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ **ἄστρα** φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην 555

φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ·

ἔκ τ' ἔφανεν πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι

καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερράγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,[23]

πάντα δέ **τ' εἴδεται ἄστρα**, γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν,

τόσσα μεσηγὺ νεῶν ἠδὲ Ξάνθοιο ῥοάων 560

Τρώων καιόντων **πυρὰ φαίνετο** Ἰλιόθι πρό.

Many fires burned for them.

As when in the sky **the stars** around the bright moon 555

appear clearly, when the air is windless;

all the mountain-tops are seen, the jutting peaks,

and the glens; from the heavens the vast air is cleft beneath.

All stars can be seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart.

Like this between the ships and the streams of the Xanthus 561

the fires kindled by the Trojan **appear** before Ilion.

[23] M.L. West takes 557–8 to be interpolations.

Context:

πυρὰ πολλά~πάντα ἄστρα: subject.

φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα/εἴδεται~φαίνετο: manifestation.

Pattern:

ἐν οὐρανῷ: *Il*. 22.318.

φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην: cf. *Theog*. 18, *Hom. Hymn Herm*. 99, *Hom. Hymn*. 31.6, 32.8.

ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ: cf. *Il*. 5.523.

8.557–8: cf. *Il*. 16.299–300.

γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν: cf. *Il*. 4.455, 21.347.

- ***Il*. 9.4–8:**

The Greeks' discouragement is compared to the stormy sea.

ὡς δ' ἄνεμοι δύο πόντον **ὀρίνετον** ἰχθυόεντα,
Βορρῆς καὶ Ζέφυρος, τώ τε Θρῄκηθεν ἄητον, 5
ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης· ἄμυδις δέ τε **κῦμα κελαινόν**
κορθύεται, πολλὸν δὲ παρὲξ ἄλα φῦκος ἔχευεν·
ὣς **ἐδαΐζετο θυμὸς** ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν Ἀχαιῶν.

As two winds **rouse** the fishy sea,
Boreas and Zephyrus, which blow from Thrace 5
and suddenly arrive; at once **the black waves**

crest up, and much sea-weed is poured along the sea.

In this way **was the heart shaken** in the chest of the Achaeans.

Context:

ὀρίνετον~ἐδαΐζετο: shaking verb.

κῦμα κελαινόν~θυμός: subject.

Pattern:

ἄνεμοι: cf. *Il*. 5.499, 11.156, 12.157, etc.

πόντον ἰχθυόεντα: cf. *Il*. 19.378 (also 4.276, 278).

Βορρῆς καὶ Ζέφυρος: cf. *Il*. 5.524, 21.346, *Od*. 5.295, etc.

ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης: *Il*. 5.90, 15.325.

κορθύεται: cf. *Il*. 4.426, 13.799.

πολλὸν δὲ παρὲξ ἅλα φῦκος ἔχευεν: typical verb for sea, cf. *Od*. 6.95 (cf. also *Il*. 4.426).

- ***Il*. 10.360–4:**

As they pursue Dolon, Odysseus and Diomedes are compared to two hounds chasing their prey.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **καρχαρόδοντε δύω κύνε** *εἰδότε θήρης* 360

ἢ κεμάδ' ἠὲ λαγωὸν ἐπείγετον ἐμμενὲς αἰεὶ

χῶρον ἀν' ὑλήενθ', ὃ δέ τε **προθέῃσι** μεμηκώς,

ὡς **τὸν Τυδείδης** ἠδ' ὃ πτολίπορθος **Ὀδυσσεύς**

λαοῦ ἀποτμήξαντε **διώκετον ἐμμενὲς αἰεί**.

As when **two sharp-fanged hounds** *experienced in hunting* 360
relentlessly press on a fawn or a hare
on the wood-covered ground, and **it runs before them** bellowing,
so did **Tydeus' son** and the city-sacker **Odysseus**
relentlessly pursue him [Dolon], keeping him away from his people.

Context:

καρχαρόδοντε δύω κύνε~Τυδείδης/Ὀδυσσεύς: subject.

ἢ κεμάδ' ἠὲ λαγωόν~τόν: victim.

ἐπείγετον~διώκετον: chasing verb.

ἐμμενὲς αἰεί~ἐμμενὲς αἰεί: relentlessness.

προθέησι~λαιψηρὰ δὲ γούνατ' ἐνώμα (358): flight.[24]

Formulaic:

εἰδότε θήρης: cf. *Il*. 2.823, 5.11, 549, 12.100.

Pattern:

χῶρον ἀν' ὑλήεντα: *Od*. 14.2, cf. *Il*. 13.199, 17.134, etc.

μεμηκώς: typical verb for animals, cf. *Il*. 4.435, 16.469.

[24] At 358–9, Dolon begins to flee before the two heroes.

- ***Il*. 10.485–7:**

Diomedes is compared to a lion as it slays the Thracians in their sleep.

ὡς δὲ **λέων** μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν ἐπελθὼν, 485
αἴγεσιν ἢ ὀΐεσσι, *κακὰ φρονέων* **ἐνορούσῃ**,
ὣς μὲν **Θρήϊκας ἄνδρας ἐπῴχετο Τυδέος υἱός**…

Like a **lion** comes upon the unguarded herds 485
of goats or sheep and *with evil intent* **assails them**,
so did **Tydeus' son attack the Thracian soldiers**…

Context:

λέων~Τυδέος υἱός: subject.

αἴγεσιν ἢ ὀΐεσσι~Θρήϊκας ἄνδρας: victims.

ἐνορούσῃ~ἐπῴχετο: attacking verb.

Formulaic:

κακὰ φρονέων: *Il*. 7.70, 12.67, 16.373, 783.

Pattern:

μήλοισιν ἐπελθών: cf. *Il*. 5.161, 15.630, 16.487.

ἀσημάντοισιν: cf. *Il*. 15.325, 632, 16.354.

- ***Il.* 11.61–6:**

As he rallies his men, Hector is compared to a shining star.

> Ἕκτωρ δ' ἐν πρώτοισι φέρ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' ἐΐσην·
> οἷος δ' ἐκ νεφέων **ἀναφαίνεται Αὔλιος ἀστήρ**
> **παμφαίνων**, τοτὲ δ' αὖτις **ἔδυ** νέφεα σκιόεντα,
> ὣς Ἕκτωρ ὁτὲ μέν τε μετὰ πρώτοισι **φάνεσκεν**,
> ἄλλοτε δ' **ἐν πυμάτοισι** κελεύων· πᾶς δ' ἄρα χαλκῷ
> **λάμφ'**…

> **Hector** carried his round shield among the first ranks,
> Like **the shepherd's star appears** out of the clouds
> **bright**, and then again it **hides** beneath the clouds,
> so did Hector **appear** now among the first ranks,
> now **in the rear**, shouting orders. All in bronze
> he **shone**…

Context:

ἀναφαίνεται~φάνεσκεν: appearance.

Αὔλιος ἀστήρ~Ἕκτωρ: subject.

παμφαίνων~λάμπε: brightness.

ἔδυ~ἐν πυμάτοισι: sinking in the rear.

Pattern:

ἐκ νεφέων: *Il*. 5.864, 15.170, 625, cf. *Il*. 2.146.

νέφεα σκιόεντα: *Il*. 5.525, 12.157, *Od*. 8.374, 11.592.

- ***Il*. 11.113–21:**

Agamemnon chases the Trojans, who are compared to a doe running away from a lion.

ὡς δὲ **λέων ἐλάφοιο ταχείης** νήπια τέκνα
ῥηϊδίως συνέαξε λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν,
ἐλθὼν εἰς εὐνήν, *ἁπαλόν τέ σφ' ἦτορ ἀπηύρα·* 115
ἢ δ' εἴ πέρ τε τύχῃσι μάλα σχεδόν, **οὐ δύναταί σφιν**
χραισμεῖν, αὐτὴν γάρ μιν *ὑπὸ τρόμος αἰνὸς ἱκάνει*,
καρπαλίμως δ' ἤϊξε διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην
σπεύδουσ', ἱδρώουσα[25] **κραταιοῦ θηρὸς ὑφ' ὁρμῆς**·
ὣς ἄρα τοῖς οὔ τις **δύνατο χραισμῆσαι** ὄλεθρον 120
Τρώων, ἀλλὰ καὶ **αὐτοὶ ὑπ' Ἀργείοισι φέβοντο**.

As a **lion** the innocent younglings **of a swift doe**
catches and easily breaks with its strong teeth
after it came to the den, *and rips out their soft heart*; 115
even if she happens to be close, **she cannot**
help them; for a *terrible tremor takes hold of her*.
Swiftly she darts through the deep thickets and the woods

[25] Null.

sweating in her effort away **from <u>the strong beast</u>**'s **onrush**;

so there was no one **who could save** from death 120

the Trojans, but **they ran in fear from the Argives**.

<u>Context</u>:

λέων/κραταιοῦ θηρός~Ἀγαμέμνων (107): the author of the carnage.

ἐλάφοιο ταχείης~αὐτοί (the Trojans): subject.

οὐ δύναταί σφιν χραισμεῖν~δύνατο χραισμῆσαι: helplessness.

καρπαλίμως δ' ἤϊξε~φέβοντο: flight.

ὑφ' ὁρμῆς~ὑπ' Ἀργείοισι: oppressing force.

<u>Formulaic</u>:

ἀπαλόν τέ σφ' ἦτορ ἀπηύρα: a martial formula, cf. *Il*. 21.201, 24.50.

ἢ δ' εἴ πέρ τε τύχῃσι: cf. *Il*. 22.191.

μάλα σχεδόν: cf. *Il*. 5.607, 9.304, *Od*. 9.23, 10.441, 13.161, 18.146.

ὑπὸ τρόμος αἰνὸς ἱκάνει: cf. *Il*. 7.205, 20.44.

<u>Pattern</u>:

νήπια τέκνα: *Il*. 2.136, 17.223, 22.63, etc.

συνέαξε: cf. *Il*. 5.161, 11.175.

λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν: *Il*. 11.173, 17.63.

ἐλθὼν εἰς εὐνήν: cf. *Il*. 15.580, 22.190, *Od*. 4.338.

διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην: *Od*. 10.150, 197, cf. *Il*. 13.199, 15.606, etc.

- ***Il.* 11.153–9:**

In the midst of his ἀριστεία, Agamemnon is compared to a fire devastating a forest.

ἀτὰρ κρείων **Ἀγαμέμνων**

αἰὲν ἀποκτείνων **ἕπετ'** Ἀργείοισι κελεύων.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **πῦρ ἀΐδηλον** ἐν ἀξύλῳ **ἐμπέσῃ** ὕλῃ, 155

πάντῃ τ' εἰλυφόων ἄνεμος φέρει, οἳ δέ τε **θάμνοι**

πρόρριζοι **πίπτουσιν** ἐπειγόμενοι πυρὸς ὁρμῇ·

ὣς ἄρ' ὑπ' Ἀτρείδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι **πῖπτε κάρηνα**

Τρώων…

But the **strong Agamemnon**

followed in his incessant carnage shouting orders to the Achaeans.

As when **a devastating fire falls upon** a wood-covered forest, 155

the wind in its whirls carries it everywhere, and the **bushes**

fall uprooted, pressed hard by the fury of the fire.

So at the hands of Atreus' son Agamemnon **the heads fell**

of the Trojans…

Context:

πῦρ ἀΐδηλον~Ἀγαμέμνων: subject.

ἐμπέσῃ~ἕπετο: attacking verb.

θάμνοι~κάρηνα: victims.

πίπτουσιν~πῖπτε: falling verb.

Pattern:

ἀξύλῳ ὕλῃ: cf. *Il*. 10.184, *Od*. 4.335, etc.

πάντῃ τ' εἰλυφόων ἄνεμος φέρει: cf. *Il*. 20.492 (also 8.549, *Od*. 5.330).

πρόρριζοι: cf. *Il*. 11.415 (tree simile).

ἐπειγόμενοι πυρὸς ὁρμῇ: cf. *Il*. 21.362.

- ***Il*. 11.292–5:**[26]

Hector rallies the Trojans against the Greeks as a hunter unleashes his hounds against a wild animal.

ὡς δ' ὅτε πού **τις θηρητὴρ κύνας ἀργιόδοντας**

σεύῃ ἐπ' ἀγροτέρῳ συῒ καπρίῳ ἠὲ λέοντι,

ὣς **ἐπ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν σεῦε Τρῶας μεγαθύμους**

Ἕκτωρ Πριαμίδης… 295

As when **a hunter his bright-fanged hounds**

drives against a wild boar or a lion,

so **against the Achaeans did Hector drive the great-hearted Trojans**,

the son of Priam… 295

Context:

[26] This simile is very short displays a perfect application of the principle of correspondence in a way that is reminiscent of Sanskrit similes. See above, 122–3.

θηρητήρ~Ἕκτωρ: subject.

κύνας ἀργιόδοντας~Τρῶας μεγαθύμους: unleashed mass.

σεύῃ~σεῦε: driving verb.

ἐπ' ἀγροτέρῳ συῒ καπρίῳ ἠὲ λέοντι~ἐπ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν: victims.

- ***Il.* 11.304–9:**

Hector is compared to the winds scattering the clouds as he routs the Greeks.

τοὺς ἄρ' **ὅ** γ' ἡγεμόνας Δαναῶν **ἔλεν**, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
πληθύν, ὡς ὁπότε **<u>νέφεα</u> <u>Ζέφυρος</u> στυφελίξῃ** 305
<u>ἀργεστᾶο Νότοιο</u>, <u>βαθείῃ λαίλαπι</u> τύπτων,
πολλὸν δὲ <u>τρόφι κῦμα κυλίνδεται</u>, **ὑψόσε δ' ἄχνη**
σκίδναται <u>ἐξ</u> **ἀνέμοιο πολυπλάγκτοιο** <u>ἰωῆς</u>·
ὣς ἄρα πυκνὰ **καρήαθ' ὑφ' Ἕκτορι δάμνατο** λαῶν.

He [Hector] **killed** these leaders of the Danaans, and then
the **multitude**, as when **<u>Zephyrus</u> batters <u>the clouds</u>** 305
striking <u>in the deep storm</u> of <u>bright Notus</u>;
<u>many a swollen wave rolls about</u>, and **up the sea-foam**
is sprayed <u>by the blast</u> **of the much-wandering wind**.
So thickly **were the heads** of the soldiers **cut off by Hector**.

<u>Context</u>:

νέφεα~πληθύν: victims.

Ζέφυρος/ἐξ ἀνέμοιο πολυπλάγκτοιο~ὅ/ὑφ' Ἕκτορι: subject.

στυφελίξῃ~ἔλεν: attacking verb.

ὑψόσε ἄχνη~καρήατα: top of the victim.

σκίδναται~δάμνατο: destruction verb.

Pattern:

ἀργεστᾶο Νότοιο: *Il*. 21.334, cf. *Od*. 12.289, 13.111.

βαθείῃ λαίλαπι: cf. *Il*. 11.747, 12.375.

τρόφι κῦμα κυλίνδεται: cf. *Od*. 5.296, 14.315.

ἐξ ἰωῆς: cf. *Il*. 4.276, 5.865.

- ***Il*. 11.324–6:**

Odysseus and Diomedes wreak havoc among the Trojans as two wild boars among the hounds.

> **τὼ** δ' **ἀν' ὅμιλον** ἰόντε **κυδοίμεον**, ὡς ὅτε **κάπρω**
> **ἐν κυσὶ θηρευτῆσι** *μέγα φρονέοντε* **πέσητον**. 325
> ὣς ὄλεκον Τρῶας…
>
> **The two of them** [Odysseus and Diomedes] went and **fell upon the soldiery**,
> like **two boars on the hunter's hounds** *with proud spirit* **fall upon**. 325
> In this way they killed the Trojans…

Context:

κάπρω~τώ: subject.

ἐν κυσὶ θηρευτῇσι~ἀν' ὅμιλον: victims.

πέσητον~κυδοίμεον: attacking verb.

Formulaic:

μέγα φρονέοντε: *Il*. 11.296, 16.758, 824, 22.21, etc.

- ***Il*. 11.414–20:**

The Trojans surrounding Odysseus are compared to hounds and hunters hedging in a wild boar.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **κάπριον** ἀμφὶ **κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί**
σεύωνται, ὃ δέ τ' εἶσι βαθείης ἐκ ξυλόχοιο 415
θήγων λευκὸν ὀδόντα μετὰ γναμπτῇσι γένυσσιν,
ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἀΐσσονται, ὑπαὶ δέ τε κόμπος ὀδόντων
γίνεται, οἳ δὲ μένουσιν ἄφαρ[27] *δεινόν περ ἐόντα*,
ὥς ῥα τότ' ἀμφ' **Ὀδυσῆα** διίφιλον **ἐσσεύοντο**
Τρῶες. 420

As when **the hounds and the stout youths close about**
a boar, that comes out of the deep forest 415
sharpening its white tusk around its crooked jaws,

[27] Null.

they dart around it, and beneath the clattering of its tusk

is heard, and they await it steadily, *terrible though it is*.

In this way did **the Trojans close around Odysseus**

dear to Zeus. 420

Context:

κάπριον~Ὀδυσῆα: victim.

κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί~Τρῶες: subject.

σεύωνται~ἐσσεύοντο: encirclement.

ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἀΐσσονται~ἀΐξαντα (423): springing about.

Formulaic:

δεινόν περ ἐόντα: cf. *Il*. 1.352, 4.534, 5.625, 8.284, 9.627, etc.

Pattern:

εἶσι βαθείης ἐκ ξυλόχοιο: *Il*. 21.573, cf. *Il*. 18.320.

θήγων λευκὸν ὀδόντα: cf. *Il*. 13.474–5, *Od*. 19.393, 465.

μετὰ γναμπτῇσι γένυσσιν: cf. *Il*. 13.200, 16.489, cf. also *Il*. 11.669, 24.359, etc.

ὑπαὶ δέ τε κόμπος ὀδόντων γίνεται: *Il*. 12.149.

- ***Il*. 11.473–86:**

The wounded Odysseus, surrounded by the Trojans, is compared to a stag encircled by jackals, which are then routed by the intervention of a lion, as the Trojans are by Ajax.

ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αὐτόν

Τρῶες ἔπονθ', ὡς εἴ τε **δαφοινοὶ θῶες** ὄρεσφιν
ἀμφ' ἔλαφον κεραὸν βεβλημένον, ὅν τ' **ἔβαλ' ἀνὴρ**
ἰῷ ἀπὸ νευρῆς· τὸν μέν τ' ἤλυξε πόδεσσιν
φεύγων, ὄφρ' **αἷμα λιαρὸν** καὶ *γούνατ' ὀρώρῃ*,
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τόν γε δαμάσσεται ὠκὺς ὀϊστός,
ὠμοφάγοι μιν **θῶες** ἐν οὔρεσι δαρδάπτουσιν
ἐν νέμεϊ σκιερῷ· ἐπί τε **λῖν** *ἤγαγε δαίμων*
σίντην· **θῶες** μέν τε **διέτρεσαν**, αὐτὰρ ὃ δάπτει·
ὣς ῥα τότ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσῆα δαΐφρονα ποικιλομήτην
Τρῶες ἔπον πολλοί τε καὶ ἄλκιμοι, αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἥρως
ἀΐσσων ᾧ ἔγχει ἀμύνετο νηλεὲς ἦμαρ·
Αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἠΰτε πύργον,
στῆ δὲ παρέξ· Τρῶες δὲ **διέτρεσαν** ἄλλυδις ἄλλος.

Around him [Odysseus]

they **poured** like **blood-thirsty jackals** in the mountains
around a wounded horned stag, that **a man shot**
with a shaft from its string-bow; it has escaped, fleeing
with its feet, as long as its **warm blood** and *its knees have strength*;
but when *the swift arrow has the better of it*,
the jackals that eat raw flesh begin to devour it
in a shady grove; but *there a god leads* **a lion**
hungry, **the jackals run in fear**, and the lion eats it.
In this way **around wise, resourceful Odysseus**

the Trojans poured, many and strong, but the hero
springing with his spear warded off his doom.
Ajax came, carrying his shield like a tower,
and stood by him; the Trojans **fled in fear** this way and that.

Context:

δαφοινοὶ θῶες~Τρῶες: subject.

ἀμφ' ἔλαφον κεραόν~ἀμφὶ αὐτόν: victims.

βεβλημένον/ἔβαλε~οὔτησε (434): wound.[28]

ἀνήρ~Σῶκον (440): wounder.

αἷμα λιαρόν~αἷμα (458): blood.[29]

λῖν~Αἴας: intervening agent.

διέτρεσαν~διέτρεσαν: flight.

Formulaic:

ἰῷ ἀπὸ νευρῆς: *Il*. 11.664, *Shield of Heracles* 409.

γούνατ' ὀρώρῃ: *Il*. 9.610, 10.90, 22.388, *Od*. 18.133.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τόν γε: *Il*. 16.187, 453, *Od*. 12.197, 13.271, 21.205.

δαμάσσεται ὠκὺς ὀϊστός: cf. *Il*. 5.278.

ἤγαγε δαίμων: *Od*. 7.248, 14.386, 24.149.

Pattern:

[28] Odysseus has been wounded by Socus at 434–8.
[29] At 458–9, the poet focuses on Odysseus' blood.

ὄρεσφιν: cf. *Il*. 11.479, 13.571, 16.158, etc.

ἤλυξε πόδεσσι φεύγων: cf. *Il*. 4.244, 11.118, 13.104.

ἐν οὔρεσι: cf. *Il*. 11.474, 13.571, 16.158, etc.

δαρδάπτουσιν: cf. *Il*. 11.481, 16.159.

ἐν νέμεϊ σκιερῷ: cf. *Il*. 10.362, *Od*. 4.335, etc.

σίντην: cf. *Il*. 3.25, 16.353, 20.165, etc.

δάπτει: cf. *Il*. 11.479, 16.159.

- ***Il*. 11.492–7:**

As he routs the Trojans, Ajax is compared to a mighty river that uproots several trees and casts them into the ocean.

ὡς δ' ὁπότε **πλήθων ποταμὸς πεδίονδε κάτεισιν**
χειμάρρους κατ' ὄρεσφιν, ὀπαζόμενος Διὸς ὄμβρῳ,
πολλὰς δὲ δρῦς ἀζαλέας, πολλὰς δέ τε πεύκας
ἐσφέρεται, πολλὸν δέ τ' **ἀφυσγετὸν** *εἰς ἅλα βάλλει*, 495
ὣς **ἔφεπε κλονέων πεδίον** τότε **φαίδιμος Αἴας**,
δαΐζων **ἵππους τε καὶ ἀνέρας**.

As when **a swollen river flows into the plain**
in winter down from the mountains, fed by Zeus' rain,
many a dry oak, and many pine-trees
it carries away, **and much filth** it casts into the sea; 495
in this way did **bright Ajax follow and drove them in the plain**
slaughtering **horses and men**…

Context:

πλήθων ποταμός~φαίδιμος Αἴας: subject.

πεδίονδε~πεδίον: location.

κάτεισιν~ἔφεπε: motion.

δρῦς, πεύκας, ἀφυσγετόν[30]~ἵππους τε καὶ ἀνέρας: victims.

ἐσφέρεται~κλονέων: carrying verb.

Formulaic:

εἰς ἅλα βάλλει: cf. *Il*. 11.722.

Pattern:

χειμάρρους: cf. *Il*. 4.452, 5.88, 13.138.

κατ' ὄρεσφιν: cf. *Il*. 11.474, 22.139, etc.

ὀπαζόμενος Διὸς ὄμβρῳ: cf. *Il*. 12.286, cf. *Il*. 5.91.

- ***Il*. 12.145–52:**[31]

Polypoetes and Leonteus in battle are compared to two boars uprooting a forest.

ἐκ δὲ **τὼ ἀΐξαντε** πυλάων πρόσθε **μαχέσθην**,

[30] Note the *anaphora cum polyptoto* (πολλὰς, πολλὰς, πολλὸν) that connects the three objects.
[31] Cf. Hainsworth (1993), 334: "The poet's picture of the action does not stand still during the simile, but via the image of the boars passes from movement to sound".

ἀγροτέροισι σύεσσιν ἐοικότε, τώ τ' ἐν ὄρεσσιν
ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ κυνῶν **δέχαται** κολοσυρτὸν ἰόντα,
δοχμώ τ' **ἀΐσσοντε** περὶ σφίσιν ἄγνυτον ὕλην
πρυμνὴν ἐκτάμνοντες, ὑπαὶ δέ τε **κόμπος** ὀδόντων
γίνεται, εἰς ὅ κέ τίς τε *βαλὼν ἐκ θυμὸν ἕληται*. 150
ὣς τῶν **κόμπει** χαλκὸς ἐπὶ στήθεσσι φαεινός
ἄντην βαλλομένων…

The **two of them sprang up** and **fought** before the gates
like **two wild boars** that in the mountains
await a band of men and hounds that is coming,
springing sideward they tear the wood
cutting at the root, and beneath the **clatter** of their tusks 150
is heard until *someone shoots them and takes their lives*.
In this way did the shining bronze **clatter** on their chests
as they were hit in the front…

Context:

ἀγροτέροισι σύεσσιν~τώ: subject.

δέχαται~μαχέσθην: fight.

ἀΐσσοντε~ἀΐξαντε: springing.

κόμπος~κόμπει: sound.

Formulaic:

βαλὼν ἐκ θυμὸν ἕληται: *Il*. 5.317, 346, 11.381.

Pattern:

ἐν ὄρεσσιν: cf. *Il*. 5.523, *Od*. 19.205, etc.

ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ κυνῶν: cf. *Il*. 11.549, 15.272, 17.110, etc.

κολοσυρτὸν ἰόντα: cf. *Il*. 13.472, 15.588.

δοχμώ: cf. *Od*. 19.451.

ἄγνυτον ὕλην πρυμνὴν ἐκτάμνοντες: cf. *Il*. 9.541–2.

ὑπαὶ δέ τε κόμπος ὀδόντων γίνεται: *Il*. 11.417.

- ***Il*. 12.299–308:**

Sarpedon's urge to attack the Achaean wall is compared to that of a lion that attempts a raid in the herdsmen's stead.

τὴν ἄρ' ὅ γε πρόσθε σχόμενος δύο **δοῦρε** τινάσσων,
βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ὥς τε **λέων ὀρεσίτροφος**, ὅς τ' ἐπιδευὴς
δηρὸν ἔῃ κρειῶν, **κέλεται δέ ἑ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ**
μήλων περιήσοντα καὶ ἐς **πυκινὸν δόμον** ἐλθεῖν·
εἴ περ γάρ χ' εὕρῃσι παρ' αὐτόφι βώτορας ἄνδρας
σὺν κυσὶ καὶ **δούρεσσι** φυλάσσοντας περὶ μῆλα,
οὔ ῥά τ' ἀπείρητος μέμονε σταθμοῖο δίεσθαι,
ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἄρ' ἢ ἥρπαξε μετάλμενος, ἠὲ καὶ αὐτός
ἔβλητ' ἐν πρώτοισι θοῆς ἀπὸ χειρὸς ἄκοντι·
ὣς ῥα τότ' ἀντίθεον **Σαρπηδόνα θυμὸς ἀνῆκε**
τεῖχος ἐπαΐξαι διά τε ῥήξασθαι **ἐπάλξεις**.

Carrying it [shield] in front of it and shaking **two spears**
he went like **a mountain-dwelling lion**, that has been
long hungry for meat, *its proud spirit urges* it
to make an attempt **at the sheep** and get inside the **thick steading**,
and even if it finds **herdsmen** *there*
keeping watch over the flock with hounds and spears,
it has no intention to leave the stall *without making an attempt*,
but either it leaps and snatches its prey, or it
is shot in the first ranks by a javelin from a swift hand.
In this way did **his spirit urge godlike Sarpedon**
to rush onto **the wall** and destroy the **battlements**.

Context:

λέων ὀρεσίτροφος~Σαρπηδόνα: subject.

κέλεται δέ έ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ~θυμὸς ἀνῆκε: the urging spirit.

μήλων/πυκινὸν δόμον~τεῖχος/ἐπάλξεις: victims.

δούρεσσι~δοῦρε: spears.[32]

Formulaic:

εἴ περ γάρ χ' εὔρῃσι: cf. *Il*. 11.116.

παρ' αὐτόφι: cf. *Il*. 20.140, 23.640.

οὔ ῥά τ' ἀπείρητος: *Od*. 2.170.

[32] This element is not typical of hunt similes and it may have been mentally triggered by the detail of Sarpedon's two spears at 299.

ἔβλητ' ἐν πρώτοισι: *Il*. 11.675.[33]

θοῆς ἀπὸ χειρὸς ἄκοντι: *Il*. 11.675.

Pattern:

ἐπιδευὴς κρειῶν: cf. *Il*. 3.25, 16.353, 20.165, etc.

μήλων πειρήσοντα καὶ ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν: *Od*. 6.134.

βώτορας ἄνδρας: *Od*. 14.102, 17.200, etc.

σὺν κυσί: cf. *Il*. 3.26, 11.325, etc.

φυλάσσοντας περὶ μῆλα: cf. *Il*. 10.183.

μέμονε δίεσθαι: cf. *Il*. 18.161–2.

σταθμοῖο: cf. *Il*. 17.110, *Od*. 16.156, etc.

ἥρπαξε μετάλμενος: cf. *Il*. 5.138, 142.

- ***Il*. 13.101–6:**

The disguised Poseidon compares the Trojans to fearful does.

οἳ τὸ πάρος περ

φυζακινῆς ἐλάφοισιν ἐοίκεσαν, αἵ τε καθ' ὕλην

θώων παρδαλίων τε λύκων τ' ἴϊα πέλονται

αὔτως ἠλάσκουσαι ἀνάλκιδες, οὐδ' ἔπι χάρμη.

ὣς **Τρῶες** τὸ πρίν γε μένος καὶ χεῖρας **Ἀχαιῶν** 105

μίμνειν οὐκ ἐθέλεσκον ἐναντίον…

[33] This element may also anticipate Sarpedon's insistence on the leaders' deserved primacy and is found repeatedly in his subsequent speech to Glaucus (cf. 12.315, 321, 324).

They who earlier

looked like **fearful does**, that in the forest

become the prey of jackals, leopards, and wolves,

fleeing in vain in their weakness, and have no strength;

in this way earlier **the Trojans** the fury and hands **of the Achaeans** 105

did not want to face…

Context:

φυζακινῆς ἐλάφοισιν~Τρῶες: subject.

ἅϊα πέλονται~μίμνειν οὐκ ἐθέλεσκον: defeat.

θώων παρδαλίων τε λύκων~Ἀχαιῶν: enemy.

Pattern:

καθ' ὕλην: cf. *Il*. 3.151, 10.184, *Od*. 9.120, etc.

ἠλάσκουσαι ἀνάλκιδες: cf. *Il*. 4.244, 11.118, 11.474.

οὐδ' ἔπι χάρμη: cf. *Il*. 4.245.

- ***Il*. 13.198–202:**

The two Ajaxes lift and carry the dead Imbrius like two lions carry their prey away from the hounds.

ὥς τε **δύ' αἶγα λέοντε** κυνῶν ὕπο καρχαροδόντων

ἁρπάξαντε φέρητον ἀνὰ ῥωπήϊα πυκνά

ὑψοῦ *ὑπὲρ γαίης* μετὰ γαμφηλῇσιν **ἔχοντε**,

ὥς ῥα τὸν **ὑψοῦ ἔχοντε δύω Αἴαντε** κορυστά

τεύχεα συλήτην.

As **two lions** snatch **a goat** from the sharp-fanged hounds

and carry it in the deep thicket

holding it high *over the ground* in their jaws,

so did **the two warlike Ajaxes hold him** [Imbrius] **high** and

despoiled him of his armour.

Context:

δύο λέοντε~δύω Αἴαντε: subject.

αἶγα~Ἴμβριον (197): victim.

ὑψοῦ ἔχοντε~ὑψοῦ ἔχοντε: act of lifting.

Formulaic:

ὑπὲρ γαίης: cf. *Il*. 13.504, 565, Hes. *Op*. 551.

Pattern:

κυνῶν ὕπο καρχαροδόντων: cf. *Il*. 10.360, 11.292.

ἁρπάξαντε φέρητον: cf. *Il*. 5.556, 16.355, etc.

ἀνὰ ῥωπήϊα πυκνά: cf. *Il*. 11.119, 15.606, 23.122 etc.

μετὰ γαμφηλῇσιν: cf. *Il*. 11.416, 16.489.

- ***Il*. 13.242–5:**

The armoured Idomeneus is compared to a lightning bolt.

βῆ δ' ἴμεν **ἀστεροπῇ** ἐναλίγκιος, ἥν τε *Κρονίων*
χειρὶ λαβὼν ἐτίναξεν[34] *ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου*
δεικνὺς σῆμα βροτοῖσιν, **ἀρίζηλοι** δέ οἱ αὐγαί·
ὣς **τοῦ** χαλκὸς **ἔλαμπε** περὶ στήθεσσι θέοντος. 245

He went like **a lightning bolt** that the *son of Cronus*
takes in his hand and shakes *from shining Olympus*
showing a sign to mortals, and its sparks are conspicuous.
In this way did the bronze **shine** on his chest as **he** [Idomeneus] ran. 245

Context:

ἀστεροπῇ~τοῦ: subject.

ἀρίζηλοι~ἔλαμπε: brightness.[35]

Formulaic:

Κρονίων: cf. *Il*. 1.528, 5.522, 8.175, etc.

[34] Null.
[35] This simile is peculiar for two reasons: first, the main *tertium comparationis* (the brightness that is common to both Idomeneus' armour and the lightning bolt) is uniquely left implicit, and secondly, it is built solely on pattern-formulaic elements.

χειρὶ λαβών: *Il*. 11.238, 12.452, 19.396, etc.

ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου: *Il*. 1.532, *Od*. 20.103.

δεικνὺς σῆμα βροτοῖσιν: cf. *Il*. 2.353, 4.76, 381, 9.236, etc.

Pattern:

ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαί: *Il*. 22.27.

- ***Il*. 13.333–8:**

The confusion of the battle is compared to the mist of a dust cloud.

τῶν δ' **ὁμὸν ἵστατο νεῖκος** ἐπὶ πρυμνῆσι νέεσσιν·
ὡς δ' ὅθ' ὑπὸ λιγέων ἀνέμων *σπέρχωσιν ἄελλαι*
ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε τε **πλείστη κόνις** ἀμφὶ *κελεύθους*, 335
οἵ τ' **ἄμυδις κονίης μεγάλην ἱστᾶσιν ὀμίχλην**,
ὣς ἄρα τῶν **ὁμόσ'** ἦλθε μάχη…

Their strife rose equal about the ships' sterns.
As when by clear winds *the storms are driven*,
on a day when **the dust is most dense** *on the pathways*, 335
and **they raise together a deep cloud of dust**.
So was their battle **equal**…

Context:

ἄμυδις~ὁμὸν/ὁμόσε: indiscriminate nature of the event.

πλείστη κόνις/κονίης μεγάλην ὀμίχλην~νεῖκος: subject.

ἱστᾶσιν~ἵστατο: setting-up verb.

Formulaic:

σπέρχωσιν ἄελλαι: cf. *Od*. 3.283, *Hom*. *Hymn* 33.7.

ἤματι τῷ ὅτε: *Il*. 2.351, 3.189, 9.439, etc.

κελεύθους: found at verse-end in thirty-seven out of thirty-nine Homeric occurrences.

Pattern:

λιγέων ἀνέμων: *Il*. 14.17, 15.620, cf. *Il*. 2.397, etc.

- ***Il*. 13.471–6:**

Idomeneus stands his ground against the Trojans as a boar faces a band of men and hounds.

ἀλλ' **ἔμεν'**, ὡς ὅτε τις **σῦς** οὔρεσιν ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς,
ὅς τε **μένει** κολοσυρτὸν ἐπερχόμενον πολὺν ἀνδρῶν
χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, φρίσσει δέ τε νῶτον ὕπερθεν,
ὀφθαλμὼ δ' ἄρα οἱ πυρὶ λάμπετον· αὐτὰρ ὀδόντας
θήγει, *ἀλέξασθαι μεμαὼς* κύνας ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρας· 475
ὣς **μένεν Ἰδομενεὺς** δουρικλυτός…

He **stood his ground** as a **boar** in the mountains, relying on its strength,

as it **awaits** a band of men that comes against it

in a deserted place, its back bristles above,

its eyes flash with fire, and it sharpens

its tusks, *eager to fight off* the hounds and the men. 475

So did the famed spearman **Idomeneus stay his ground**…

Context:

σῦς~Ἰδομενεύς: subject.

μένει~ἔμενε/μένεν: awaiting the enemy.

Formulaic:

ἀλέξασθαι μεμαώς: *Il*. 1.590, 5.779.

Pattern:.

οὔρεσιν: *Il*. 4.455, 12.132, 24.614, etc.

ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς: *Il*. 5.229, 17.61, 728, *Od*. 6.130.

κολοσυρτὸν ἐπερχόμενον πολὺν ἀνδρῶν: cf. *Il*. 12.148, 15.588.

χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ: *Il*. 17.54, cf. *Il*. 5.137, etc.

φρίσσει δέ τε νῶτον ὕπερθεν: cf. *Il*. 9.548, *Od*. 19.446.

ὀφθαλμὼ δ' ἄρα οἱ πυρὶ λάμπετον: cf. *Il*. 20.172, *Od*. 19.446, etc.

ὀδόντας θήγει: cf. *Il*. 11.416, *Od*. 19.393, 465.

κύνας ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρας: cf. *Il*. 11.414, 549, 17.282, etc.

- ***Il*. 13.492–5:**

The Trojan army follows Aeneas as a flock of sheep follow their ram.

λαοὶ ἕπονθ', ὡς εἴ τε **μετὰ κτίλον ἕσπετο μῆλα**
πιόμεν' ἐκ βοτάνης· **γάνυται** δ' ἄρα τε φρένα ποιμήν·
ὣς **Αἰνείᾳ** θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι **γεγήθει**,
ὡς ἴδε λαῶν ἔθνος **ἐπισπόμενον ἑοῖ αὐτῷ**. 495

The soldiers followed like **a flock follow the ram**
from the pasture to drink; the shepherd **rejoices** in his heart.
In this way did **Aeneas'** heart **rejoice** in his chest
as he saw the crowds of soldiers **following him**. 495

Context:

κτίλον~Αἰνείᾳ: leader.

ἕσπετο μῆλα~λαοὶ ἕποντο/ἐπισπόμενον: the led multitude.

γάνυται~γεγήθει: rejoicing.

Pattern:

πιόμεναι: cf. *Il*. 16.825.

ἐκ βοτάνης: *Od*. 10.411.

γάνυται δ' ἄρα τε φρένα ποιμήν: cf. *Il*. 8.559, 21.347.

- ***Il.* 13.795–801:**

Hector and Paris leading the Trojans are compared to a windstorm that rouses the sea-waves.

οἳ δ' **ἴσαν** ἀργαλέων ἀνέμων ἀτάλαντοι **ἀέλλῃ**, 795
ἥ ῥά θ' *ὑπὸ βροντῆς πατρὸς Διὸς* **εἶσι** πέδονδε,
θεσπεσίῳ δ' ὁμάδῳ ἁλὶ μίσγεται, ἐν δέ τε πολλά
κύματα *παφλάζοντα* πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
κυρτὰ **φαληριόωντα**, **πρὸ μέν τ' ἄλλ', αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄλλα**·
ὣς **Τρῶες πρὸ μὲν ἄλλοι** ἀρηρότες, **αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄλλοι**, 800
χαλκῷ **μαρμαίροντες** ἅμ' ἡγεμόνεσσιν ἕποντο.

They [Hecotr and Paris] went like the **storm** of harsh winds 795
which *beneath the thundering of Father Zeus* **falls upon** the plain,
with an ominous crash it merges with the ocean, and *many*
seething **waves** in the loud-roaring sea
bend in **their white foam**, **some in the front, and others after them**.
So did the **Trojans**, closed in ranks, **some in the front, others after them**, 800
follow their leaders **shining** with bronze.

Context:

ἀέλλῃ~οἵ: subject.

εἶσι~ἴσαν: advancement.

πολλὰ κύματα~Τρῶες: the led multitude.

φαληριόωντα~μαρμαίροντες: brightness.

πρὸ μέν τ' ἄλλ', αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄλλα~πρὸ μὲν ἄλλοι, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄλλοι: succession.

Formulaic:

ὑπὸ βροντῆς πατρὸς Διός: cf. *Od*. 20.121, *Theogony* 141.

θεσπεσίῳ δ' ὁμάδῳ: *Il*. 16.295, cf. *Il*. 19.81.

ἁλὶ μίσγεται: cf. *Od*. 1.162, 5.374.

παφλάζοντα: cf. *Il*. 5.599, 18.403, 21.325.

Pattern:

ἀργαλέων ἀνέμων: *Il*. 14.254, *Od*. 11.400, cf. *Il*. 17.56, *Od*. 5.293, etc.

πέδονδε: cf. *Il*. 7.66, *Od*. 5.329, etc.

πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης: *Il*. 1.34, 6.347, 9.182, etc.

κυρτά: cf. *Il*. 4.426, 9.7.

- ***Il*. 14.16–21:**

Nestor's indecision is compared to a sea-wave that holds aloft and does not break back or forth.

> ὡς δ' ὅτε **πορφύρῃ <u>πέλαγος</u>** <u>μέγα κύματι κωφῷ</u>
> **ὀσσόμενον** <u>λιγέων ἀνέμων</u> *λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα*
> **αὖτως**, οὐδ' ἄρα τε προκυλίνδεται[36] οὐδ' **ἑτέρωσε**

[36] Null.

πρίν τινα **κεκριμένον** *καταβήμεναι* ἐκ Διὸς οὖρον,

ὣς ὃ **γέρων ὥρμαινε δαϊζόμενος** κατὰ θυμὸν

διχθάδι'…

As when **the sea surges** greatly with a dull-sounding wave,

but **awaits** the rapid journey of shrill winds

just as it is, it does not break **to either direction**,

until a fair wind from Zeus *comes down* to **settle the question**.

In this way did **the old man ponder**, **torn** in his mind

between **two courses** of action…

Context:

πορφύρῃ~ὥρμαινε: material and psychological stirring.

πέλαγος~γέρων: subject.

ὀσσόμενον αὔτως~δαϊζόμενος: indecision.[37]

ἑτέρωσε~διχθάδια: adverbial ambiguity.

κεκριμένον~δοάσσατο κέρδιον: decision-making process.

Formulaic:

καταβήμεναι: this infinitive is always found in this position in Homer (cf. *Il*. 12.65, *Od*. 10.432).

λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα: *Il*. 15.620.

[37] Also note the participial ending in both forms.

Pattern:

μέγα κύματι κωφῷ: cf. *Od*. 5.388, 23.235.[38]

λιγέων ἀνέμων: *Il*. 13.334, 15.620, etc.

ἐκ Διὸς οὖρον: *Od*. 5.176, 15.297, 475, cf. also *Il*. 5.91, 11.493, etc.

- ***Il*. 14.393–401:**

In this multifaceted simile, the cry of the fighting soldiers is compared to the roar of sea-waves, fire, and wind.

οἳ δὲ ξύνισαν μεγάλῳ **ἀλαλητῷ**.
οὔτε **θαλάσσης κῦμα** τόσον **βοάᾳ** ποτὶ χέρσον
ποντόθεν **ὀρνύμενον** πνοιῇ Βορέω ἀλεγεινῇ·
οὔτε **πυρὸς** τόσσός γε †ποτι **βρόμος αἰθομένοιο**
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς, ὅτε τ' **ὤρετο** καιέμεν ὕλην,
οὔτ' **ἄνεμος** τόσσόν γε *περὶ δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν*
ἠπύει, ὅς τε μάλιστα μέγα βρέμεται *χαλεπαίνων*,
ὅσση ἄρα **Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν** ἔπλετο **φωνή**
δεινὸν ἀϋσάντων, ὅτ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν **ὄρουσαν**.

They came against each other with a great **crash**.
The **sea-waves** do not **roar** so loudly against the shore,
as it **rises** from the sea under the harsh blast of Boreas.

[38] This is also a conflation of two phrases (πέλαγος μέγα, found at *Od*. 3.179, 321, and the commoner μέγα κῦμα, found sixteen times in Homer), which is then completed by the adjective.

Nor is the **bellowing** of a **burning fire** ever so loud

in the mountain glens, when it **rises** to burn up the forest.

Nor so loudly does **the wind** *among the towering oak-trees*

roar, when it howls highest in *its anger*.

So loud was **the voice of the Trojans and Achaeans** 400

who gave out a terrible cry and **fell upon** each other.

Context:

θαλάσσης κῦμα/πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο/ἄνεμος~ οἵ/Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν: roaring subject.

βοάᾳ/βρόμος/ἠπύει~ἀλαλητῷ/φωνή δεινὸν ἀϋσάντων: loudness.

ὀρνύμενον/ὤρετο~ὄρουσαν: rising of subject.

Formulaic:

δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν: *Il*. 23.118, *Od*. 9.186, etc.

χαλεπαίνων: with one exception (*Il*. 20.133), this verb is always found at verse-end in Homer.

Pattern:

ποτὶ χέρσον: cf. *Il*. 2.210, 4.422, 425.

ποντόθεν: cf. *Il*. 4.276, 278, 19.378, etc.

πνοιῇ Βορέω ἀλεγεινῇ: cf. *Il*. 13.590, 23.215.

οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς: *Il*. 3.34, 11.87, 16.766, etc.

καιέμεν ὕλην: cf. *Il*. 20.491.

μέγα βρέμεται: cf. *Il*. 2.210, 4.425.

- ***Il*. 15.271–80:**

The Greeks in pursuit are compared to hunters chasing a stag; just as they are turned away by the sudden appearance of a lion, so are the Greeks frightened by Hector's renewed attack.

οἳ δ' ὥς τ' ἠ' ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἠ' ἄγριον αἶγα
ἐσσεύοντο κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται·
τὸν μέν τ' ἠλίβατος πέτρη καὶ δάσκιος ὕλη
εἰρύσατ',[39] οὐδ' ἄρα τέ *σφι κιχήμεναι αἴσιμον ἦεν*,
τῶν δέ θ' ὑπὸ ἰαχῆς **ἐφάνη λὶς ἠϋγένειος** 275
εἰς ὁδόν, αἶψα δὲ **πάντας ἀπέτραπε** *καὶ μεμαῶτας*·
ὣς **Δαναοὶ** εἵως μὲν ὁμιλαδὸν **αἰὲν ἕποντο**
νύσσοντες ξίφεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν,
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ἴδον **Ἕκτορ' ἐποιχόμενον** στίχας ἀνδρῶν,
τάρβησαν… 280

They [the Greeks] were **like hounds and farmers**
who **pursue** a horned stag or a wild goat.
A steep cliff and the shady forest
give it shelter, as it was not *fated for them to catch it*.
Because of their crying a **well-maned lion appears** 275
on their way, and quickly **turns them away**, *eager though they are*.
So did the **Danaans ceaselessly follow** in throngs until that time,

[39] Null.

stabbing with their swords and elastic spears.

But when they saw Hector **rushing against** the ranks of men,

they **were frightened**… 280

Context:

ἐσσεύοντο~αἰὲν ἔποντο: pursuit.

κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες~Δαναοί: subject.

ἐφάνη εἰς ὁδόν~ἐποιχόμενον: sudden appearance.

λὶς ἠϋγένειος~Ἕκτορα: the sudden attacker.

πάντας ἀπέτραπε~τάρβησαν: deterrence.

Formulaic:

σφι κιχήμεναι αἴσιμον ἦεν: cf. *Il*. 21.495.

καὶ μεμαῶτας: cf. *Il*. 9.655, *Od*. 22.172.

Pattern:

ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα: *Il*. 3.24.

ἠλίβατος πέτρη: *Il*. 2.396, *Od*. 9.243, etc.

δάσκιος ὕλη: *Od*. 5.470, *Hom*. *Hymn Dem*. 387, etc.

ὑπὸ ἰαχῆς: cf. *Il*. 17.66, 111, etc.

- ***Il*. 15.323–6:**

The Greeks are routed by Apollo and Hector as herds and flocks are chased by two wild beasts.

οἳ δ' ὥς τ' ἠὲ **βοῶν ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μέγ' οἰῶν**
θῆρε δύω κλονέωσι μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ
ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος, 325
ὣς **ἐφόβηθεν Ἀχαιοὶ** ἀνάλκιδες…

As a **herd of cattle or a great flock of sheep**
two beasts harass in the dead of the black night
coming suddenly when the herdsman is not there, 325
so were **the Achaeans frightened**…

Context:

βοῶν ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μέγ' οἰῶν~Ἀχαιοί: the scared subject.

θῆρε δύω~Ἀπόλλων (326), Ἕκτωρ (329): the tormentors.[40]

κλονέουσι~ἐφόβηθεν: tumultuous rout.

Pattern:

μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ: *Il*. 11.173, 22.28, 317, *Od*. 4.841.

ἐλθόντ' ἐξαπίνης: *Il*. 5.91, 9.6.

σημάντορος οὐ παρεόντος: *Il*. 10.485, 15.632, 16.354.

[40] As recognised by Janko (1991), 262, the detail of the two beasts reflects the combined efforts of Apollo and Hector.

- ***Il.* 15.381–4:**

The Trojans attack the Achaean wall as the waves climb up the walls of a ship in a storm.

οἳ δ' ὥς τε **μέγα κῦμα** θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο

νηὸς ὑπὲρ τοίχων καταβήσεται, ὁππότ' *ἐπείγῃ*

ἶς ἀνέμου· ἣ *γάρ τε μάλιστά* γε κύματ' ὀφέλλει·[41]

ὣς **Τρῶες** μεγάλῃ ἰαχῇ **κατὰ τεῖχος ἔβαινον**…

As when the **great waves** of the wide-traversed sea

over the walls of a ship climb up, when the force of the wind

drives them, which greatly raises them high.

So did **the Trojans** with a great shout **climb up the wall**…

Context:

μέγα κῦμα~Τρῶες: subject.

νηός~νηυσίν (388): ships protected by the wall.

ὑπὲρ τοίχων καταβήσεται~κατὰ τεῖχος ἔβαινον: climbing over the wall.

Formulaic:

ἐπείγῃ: cf. *Il.* 5.501, 11.157, where this verb is associated with the force of natural elements in similes.

[41] Null.

γάρ τε μάλιστά: *Il*. 23.156, 24.334.

Pattern:

θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο: *Od*. 4.432, 12.2.

ἴς ἀνέμου: *Il*. 17.739, *Od*. 13.276, etc.

- ***Il*. 15.579–82:**

Antilochus rushes against Melanippus as a hound against a wounded fawn.

> **Ἀντίλοχος** δ' ἐπόρουσε **κύων** ὥς, ὅς τ' **ἐπὶ νεβρῷ**
> βλημένῳ **ἀΐξῃ**, τόν τ' ἐξ εὐνῆφι θορόντα 580
> θηρητὴρ **ἐτύχησε βαλών**, *ὑπέλυσε δὲ γυῖα·*
> ὣς **ἐπὶ σοὶ**, **Μελάνιππε**, **θόρ**' Ἀντίλοχος μενεχάρμης…
>
> **Antilochus** sprang as a **hound**, that **upon a** wounded **fawn**
> **leaps**, which as it jumps out of its lair 580
> a hunter **has shot** and *loosened its limbs*.
> Thus did Antilochus **spring upon you, Melanippus**…

Context:

κύων~Ἀντίλοχος: subject.

ἐπὶ νεβρῷ~ἐπὶ σοὶ Μελάνιππε: victim.

ἐτύχησε βαλών~βάλε (577): shooting the victim.

ἀΐξῃ~θόρε: leap of the attacker.

Formulaic:

ὑπέλυσε δὲ γυῖα: *Il*. 16.341, 23.726.

Pattern:

βλημένῳ: cf. *Il*. 11.475, 17.726.

ἐξ εὐνῆφι θορόντα: cf. *Il*. 22.190.

θηρητήρ: cf. *Il*. 9.544, 17.726, etc.

- ***Il*. 15.586–9:**

When faced by Hector in battle, Antilochus (who has just slain Melanippus) flees like a wild animal that has killed a hound or a herdsman.

> ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἄρ' ἔτρεσε **θηρὶ** *κακὸν ῥέξαντι* ἐοικώς,
> ὅς τε κύνα **κτείνας** ἢ βουκόλον ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν
> **φεύγει**, πρίν περ ὅμιλον ἀολλισθήμεναι ἀνδρῶν·
> ὣς **τρέσε Νεστορίδης**…
>
> But he fled like **a beast** that *has wrought some mischief*,
> that **after killing** a hound or a cowherd among the cattle
> **flees** before a band of men gather together.
> So did **the son of Nestor** [Antilochus] **flee**…

Context:

θηρί~Νεστορίδης: subject.

κτείνας~βάλε (577): act of killing.

φεύγει~τρέσε: flight.

Formulaic:

κακὸν ῥέξαντι: *Il*. 5.374, 21.510, *Od*. 17.567.

Pattern:

κύνα: *Il*. 10.360, 11.292, etc.

βουκόλον: cf. *Il*. 4.275, 11.292, etc.

ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν: cf. *Il*. 16.488, 18.579, etc.

ὅμιλον ἀολλισθήμεναι ἀνδρῶν: cf. *Il*. 12.148, 13.472.

- ***Il*. 15.603–6:**

As he rages on the battlefield, Hector is compared to a destructive fire.

…ἔγειρεν

῞**Εκτορα** Πριαμίδην, μάλα περ μεμαῶτα καὶ αὐτόν.

μαίνετο δ' ὡς ὅτ' Ἄρης ἐγχέσπαλος ἠ' **ὀλοὸν πῦρ** 605

οὔρεσι **μαίνηται**, βαθέης ἐν τάρφεσιν ὕλης.

He [Zeus] roused

Hector son of Priam, already eager himself.

He **raged** like Ares wielder of spears or **a destructive fire** 605

rages in the mountains in the depths of a forest.

Context:

ὀλοὸν πῦρ~Ἕκτορα: subject.

μαίνηται~μαίνετο: raging verb.

Pattern:

οὔρεσι: cf. *Il*. 11.474, 13.571, 16.158, etc.

βαθέης ἐν τάρφεσιν ὕλης: cf. *Il*. 5.555.

- ***Il*. 15.618–22:**

The Greeks hold back Hector and the Trojans as a massive cliff resists winds and waves.

ἴσχον γὰρ πυργηδὸν ἀρηρότες, ἠΰτε **πέτρη**

ἠλίβατος μεγάλη, πολιῆς ἁλὸς *ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα,*

ἥ τε **μένει** λιγέων ἀνέμων **λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα** 620

κύματά τε τροφόεντα, τά τε προσερεύγεται ἀκτῇ·

ὣς **Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον** ἔμπεδον…

They [the Greeks] held him [Hector] and closed in like a wall, as a **cliff**,

steep and high, *by* the grey sea,

which awaits the rapid attack of clear winds

and the swollen waves, which breaks against the shore.

In this way did **the Danaans await the Trojans** firmly…

Context:

πέτρη~Δαναοί: subject.

μένει~μένον: resistance verb.

λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα~Τρῶας: attacker.

Formulaic:

ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα: cf. Il. 8.318, 9.201, 10.221, etc.

Pattern:

ἠλίβατος μεγάλη: cf. *Il*. 15.273, 16.35, *Od*. 9.243, etc.

πολιῆς ἁλός: *Il*. 1.352, 13.352, 19.267, etc.

λιγέων ἀνέμων*: Il*. 13.334, 14.17, etc.

κύματά τε τροφόεντα: *Od*. 3.290, cf. *Il*. 11.307.

προσερεύγεται ἀκτῇ: cf. *Il*. 2.210, 14.394, etc.

- ***Il*. 16.297–302:**

The Greeks repel the Trojans from the ships as Zeus drives a cloud away from a mountain peak.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' **ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς** ὄρεος μεγάλοιο
κινήσῃ πυκινὴν νεφέλην στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς,
ἔκ τ' ἔφανεν πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι
καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερράγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,
ὣς **Δαναοὶ νηῶν** μὲν **ἀπωσάμενοι δήιον πῦρ**
τυτθὸν ἀνέπνευσαν…

As when **from the high peak** of a great mountain
Zeus the thunder-gatherer drives a thick cloud,
all the mountain-tops are seen, the jutting peaks,
and the glens; from the heavens the vast air is cleft beneath.
Thus did **the Danaans drive the dreadful fire from the ships**
and gained some respite…

Context:

ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς~νηῶν: the liberated item.

στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς~Δαναοί: subject.

κινήσῃ~ἀπωσάμενοι: pushing verb.

πυκινὴν νεφέλην~δήιον πῦρ: item pushed away.

Pattern:

ὄρεος μεγάλοιο: cf. *Il*. 4.275, 16.392.

16.299–300: cf. *Il*. 8.557–8, cf. also Il. 12.282, *Hom. Hymn Ap*. 22, 144.

- ***Il*. 16.352–7:**

As the Greeks attack the Trojans, they are compared to a pack of wolves that wreak havoc among the sheep.

ὡς δὲ **λύκοι ἄρνεσσιν ἐπέχραον ἠὲ ἐρίφοισιν**
σίνται, ὑπὲκ μήλων αἱρεύμενοι, αἵ τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι
ποιμένος ἀφραδίῃσι **διέτμαγεν**, *οἳ δὲ ἰδόντες*
αἶψα διαρπάζουσιν **ἀνάλκιδα θυμὸν ἐχούσας**· 355
ὣς **Δαναοὶ Τρώεσσιν ἐπέχραον**· οἳ δὲ φόβοιο
δυσκελάδου μνήσαντο, **λάθοντο δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς**.

As hungry **wolves assail lambs or kids**,
snatching them from the flock, and the sheep in the mountains
are dispersed due to the shepherd's thoughtlessness; *when they see them* 355
they quickly snatch them, as **they have a helpless spirit**.
So did the **Danaans assail the Trojans**. They remembered
the terrible sound of fear, and **forgot their strong spirit**.

Context:

λύκοι~Δαναοί: subject.

ἄρνεσσιν ἢ ἐρίφοισιν~Τρώεσσιν: victims.[42]

ἐπέχραον~ἐπέχραον: havoc.

διέτμαγεν~τμάγεν (374): dispersion of the victims.

ἀνάλκιδα θυμὸν ἐχούσας~λάθοντο δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς: helplessness.

Formulaic:

οἳ δὲ ἰδόντες: cf. *Il*. 8.76, 15.85, *Od*. 4.43, etc.

Pattern:

σίνται: *Il*. 11.481, 20.165, etc.

ὑπὲκ μήλων αἱρεύμενοι: cf. *Il*. 5.556, 13.199, etc.

ἐν ὄρεσσι: *Il*. 5.523, *Od*. 19.205, etc.

ποιμένος ἀφραδίῃσι: cf. *Il*. 10.485, 15.325, 632.

αἶψα διαρπάζουσιν: cf. *Il*. 5.556, 13.199, etc.

- ***Il*. 16.364–7:**

The clamour of the routed Trojans is compared to the progress of a stormy cloud.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' *ἀπ' Οὐλύμπου* **νέφος ἔρχεται** *οὐρανὸν εἴσω*

αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς λαίλαπα τείνῃ, 365

ὣς τῶν **ἐκ νηῶν** γένετο **ἰαχή τε φόβος τε**

[42] Note the similarities in the grammatical endings of the first hemistichs in lines 352 and 356.

οὐδὲ κατὰ μοῖραν **πέραον** πάλιν.

As when *from the Olympus* **a <u>cloud</u> flies** *into the sky*
from the clear aether, <u>when Zeus sends out a storm</u>, 365
such **from the ships** were their [the Trojans'] **cries and fear**,
and in no good order **they retreated**.

<u>Context</u>:

νέφος~ἰαχή τε φόβος τε: subject.

ἔρχεται~πέραον: verb of motion.

αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης~ἐκ νηῶν: provenance.

<u>Formulaic</u>:

ἀπ' Οὐλύμπου: cf. *Il*. 14.298, 309, 18.616, etc.

οὐρανὸν εἴσω: *Il*. 8.549, 11.44.

<u>Pattern</u>:

ὅτε τε Ζεὺς λαίλαπα τείνῃ: cf. *Il*. 12.286, 14.19, etc.

- ***Il*. 16.487–91:**

Patroclus finally manages to slay Sarpedon, who is compared to a proud bull killed by a lion.

ἠΰτε **ταῦρον ἔπεφνε λέων** ἀγέληφι μετελθὼν

αἴθωνα μεγάθυμον[43] ἐν εἰλιπόδεσσι βόεσσιν,

ὤλετό τε *στενάχων* **ὑπὸ γαμφηλῇσι** λέοντος,

ὣς **ὑπὸ Πατρόκλῳ** Λυκίων **ἀγὸς** ἀσπιστάων 490

κτεινόμενος μενέαινε…

As a **bull is killed by a lion** that falls upon the herd,

a gleaming proud-hearted bull among the cattle with their rolling gait,

it dies *bellowing* **in** the lion's jaws,

thus was **by Patroclus the leader** of the shield-bearing Lycians 490

[Sarpedon] **killed** in his rage…

Context:

ταῦρον~ἀγός: subject.

ἔπεφνε/ὤλετό~κτεινόμενος: killing verb.

λέων~Πάτροκλος (480): killer.

ὑπὸ γαμφηλῇσι~ὑπὸ Πατρόκλῳ: means/agent of death.

Formulaic:

στενάχων: cf. *Il.* 1.364, 4.153, etc.[44]

[43] Null.

[44] The nominative masculine singular of στενάχω is always found before the main caesura in eleven Homeric occurrences.

Pattern:

ἀγέληφι μετελθών: cf. *Il*. 5.161, 15.630, etc.

αἴθωνα: cf. *Il*. 11.548, 18.161.[45]

εἰλιπόδεσσι βόεσσιν: *Il*. 15.547, *Od*. 8.60.

ὑπὸ γαμφηλῇσι λέοντος: cf. *Il*. 11.416, 13.200.

- ***Il*. 16.751–4:**

As he falls upon Cebriones, Patroclus is ominously compared to a lion that meets its fate.

> ὣς εἰπὼν ἐπὶ Κεβριόνῃ ἥρωϊ βεβήκει
>
> οἶμα **λέοντος** ἔχων, ὅς τε σταθμοὺς κεραΐζων
>
> **ἔβλητο** *πρὸς στῆθος*, ἑή τέ μιν ὤλεσεν ἀλκή·
>
> ὣς ἐπὶ Κεβριόνῃ, **Πατρόκλεις**, ἆλσο μεμαώς.
>
> Thus he spoke and went against the hero Cebriones
>
> with the pace of a **lion**, that while ravaging the steadings
>
> **is shot** *in the chest*, killed by its own strength.
>
> Thus, **o Patroclus**, **you** fell upon Cebriones…

Context:

λέοντος~Πατρόκλεις: subject.

[45] It is significant that the bull that represents Sarpedon is here graced with an epithet normally associated with the lion in hunt similes.

ἔβλητο~βάλε (807): shooting verb.[46]

Formulaic:

πρὸς στῆθος: *Il*. 4.108, 11.144, etc.

Pattern:

σταθμοὺς κεραΐζων: cf. *Il*. 5.557.

ἐή τέ μιν ὤλεσεν ἀλκή: cf. *Il*. 12.46.

- ***Il*. 16.765–71:**

In this complex simile, the fighting Hector and Patroclus are associated with two winds that shake the trees and drive their branches against each other, as Trojans and Greeks do in the narrative.

ὡς δ' **Εὖρός τε Νότος τ' ἐριδαίνετον ἀλλήλοιιν** 765
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς βαθέην **πελεμιζέμεν** ὕλην
φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν,
αἵ τε **πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον** *τανυήκεας ὄζους*
ἠχῇ θεσπεσίῃ, πάταγος δέ τε ἀγνυμενάων,
ὣς **Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες** 770
δῄουν…

[46] As Janko (1991), 405, recognises, this detail foreshadows Patroclus' doom.

As **Eurus and Notus compete with each other** 765

in the mountain glens **shaking** a deep forest,

the oaks the ash-tree, and the cornel with its thin bark,

which against each other hurl *their long branches*

with an awe-inspiring sound, crashing as they break into each other.

So did **the Trojans and the Achaeans fell upon each other** 770

and fought…

Context:[47]

Εὖρός τε Νότος~Ἕκτωρ μέν/Πάτροκλος δέ (762–3): close encounter subjects.

ἐριδαίνετον ἀλλήλοιιν πελεμιζέμεν~ἴεντ' ἀλλήλων ταμέειν (761): duel attack.[48]

αἵ~Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοί: the fighting retinue.

πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον~ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες: combat verbs.

Formulaic:

φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν: cf. *Od*. 5.64, 239, 7.115, 11.589.[49]

τανυήκεας ὄζους: cf. *Il*. 14.385, 16.473, *Od*. 10.439, 11.231.[50]

ἠχῇ θεσπεσίῃ: *Il*. 8.159, 12.252, etc.

πάταγος δέ τε ἀγνυμενάων: cf. *Il*. 13.283.

Pattern:

[47] The simile possibly reflects the narrative transition from the duel between Hector and Patroclus (761–3, note the dual ἐριδαίνετον in the simile) to the general fight between Greeks and Trojans (763–4).
[48] Note the mirroring syntactical structure.
[49] It is very common for trees to be named in a rising tricolon (i.e. *x*, *y*, *z* with epithet).
[50] As recognised by Janko (1991), 407, τανυήκης is normally an epithet for swords: the image of sword-like branches, taken from the language of warfare, is particularly striking, since this simile is reflecting an ongoing battle narrative.

οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς: *Il*. 3.34, 11.87, etc.

βαθέην ὕλην: cf. *Il*. 2.455, 23.127, etc.

- ***Il*. 16.823–8:**

Patroclus dies at the hands of Hector as a proud boar is killed by a lion.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **σῦν ἀκάμαντα λέων ἐβιήσατο χάρμῃ**,
ὥ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇσι *μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον*
πίδακος ἀμφ' ὀλίγης, ἐθέλουσι δὲ πιέμεν ἄμφω, 825
πολλὰ δέ τ' ἀσθμαίνοντα λέων ἐδάμασσε βίηφι,
ὣς **πολέας πεφνόντα Μενοιτίου ἄλκιμον υἱόν**
Ἕκτωρ Πριαμίδης σχεδὸν **ἔγχεϊ θυμὸν ἀπηύρα**.

As when **a lion assails an untiring boar in combat**,
the two of them *fight proudly* on a mountain peak
around a small pond of water, as they both wish to drink; 825
but the lion with its strength overwhelms the boar fighting for its breath.
Thus did **Hector** son of Priam, close by **with his spear, take the life**
of the strong **son of Menoetius**, **who had slain many** [warriors].

Context:

σῦν ἀκάμαντα~Μενοιτίου ἄλκιμον υἱόν: victim.

λέων~Ἕκτωρ: subject.

ἐβιήσατο~οὖτα: first killing verb.

κατὰ στίχας~χάρμῃ: fighting location.

πολλὰ δέ τ' ἀσθμαίνοντα~πολέας πεφνόντα: previous valour.[51]

ἐδάμασσε~θυμὸν ἀπηύρα: second killing verb.

βίηφι~ἔγχεϊ: means.

Formulaic:

μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον: *Il*. 16.758.

πίδακος ἀμφ' ὀλίγης: cf. Il. 9.14, 16.3, 21.257.[52]

Pattern:

ὄρεος κορυφῇσι: *Il*. 3.10, 16.757, etc.

ἐθέλουσι δὲ πιέμεν ἄμφω: cf. *Il*. 13.493.

- ***Il*. 17.61–9:**

The Trojans do not dare to confront Menelaus in battle as the shepherds cannot bear to face a lion.

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε **λέων ὀρεσίτροφος** ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς

βοσκομένης ἀγέλης βοῦν ἁρπάσῃ *ἥ τις ἀρίστη*,

τῆς δ' ἐξ αὐχέν' ἔαξε λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν

[51] Note the syntactic structure and the endings.
[52] All in similes, though not hunt or natural element comparisons.

πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δέ θ' αἷμα καὶ ἔγκατα πάντα λαφύσσει

δηῶν· ἀμφὶ δὲ τόν γε **κύνες ἄνδρές τε νομῆες** 65

πολλὰ μάλ' ἰύζουσιν ἀπόπροθεν, **οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν**

ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι, μάλα γὰρ *χλωρὸν δέος αἱρεῖ*·

ὣς **τῶν** οὔ τινι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν **ἐτόλμα**

ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι Μενελάου κυδαλίμοιο.

As when **a lion that dwells in the mountains**, relying on its strength,

snatches the *best* heifer from a pasturing herd,

it first breaks its neck with its strong teeth

and then greedily swallows the blood and the entrails,

fiercely; all around it **the hounds and the shepherds** 65

scream loudly from afar, **but are not willing**

to face it, *and green fear takes hold of them*.

In this way **no one [of the Trojans]** in his heart **dared**

to face glorious Menelaus.

Context:

λέων ὀρεσίτροφος~Μενελάου: attacker.

κύνες ἄνδρές τε νομῆες~τῶν: subject.

οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι~ἐτόλμα ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι: lack of courage.

Formulaic:

ἥ τις ἀρίστη: cf. *Il*. 4.211, 6.209, 7.50, etc.

χλωρὸν δέος αἱρεῖ: *Il*. 7.479, 8.77, etc.

Pattern:

ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς: *Il*. 5.299, 13.471, etc.

βοσκομένης ἀγέλης: cf. *Il*. 5.162, 15.691, etc.

ἐξ αὐχέν' ἔαξε: cf. *Il*. 5.161, 11.114, etc.

λαβὼν κρατεροῖσιν ὀδοῦσιν: *Il*. 11.114, 175.

αἷμα καὶ ἔγκατα πάντα λαφύσσει: *Il*. 11.175, 18.585.

δηῶν: cf. *Il*. 20.172, *Od*. 19.446.

πολλὰ μάλ' ἰύζουσιν: cf. *Il*. 15.275, 17.111, etc.

- ***Il*. 17.108–13:**

Menelaus reluctantly abandons Patroclus' body as a lion is forced away from a shepherd's steadings.

αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἐξοπίσω ἀνεχάζετο, λεῖπε δὲ νεκρόν,
ἐντροπαλιζόμενος ὥς τε **λὶς ἠϋγένειος**,
ὅν ῥα κύνες τε καὶ ἄνδρες ἀπὸ σταθμοῖο δίωνται
ἔγχεσι καὶ φωνῇ· τοῦ δ' *ἐν φρεσὶν ἄλκιμον ἦτορ*
παχνοῦται, ἀέκων δέ τ' **ἔβη ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο**·
ὣς **ἀπὸ Πατρόκλοιο κίε** ξανθὸς **Μενέλαος**.

He retreated, left the corpse
turning back as **a well-maned lion**
that hounds and men from the steadings drive

with their spears and shouts, its *strong heart in the chest*

freezes, and against its will it **walks away from the steadings**.

In this way did blond **Menelaus walk away from Patroclus**.

Context:

λὶς ἠϋγένειος~Μενέλαος: subject.

παχνοῦται ἀέκων~ἐντροπαλιζόμενος: hesitation.

ἔβη~κίε: verb of motion.

ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο~ἀπὸ Πατρόκλοιο: item abandoned.

Formulaic:

ἐν φρεσίν: *Il*. 2.201, 9.313, etc.

ἄλκιμον ἦτορ: *Il*. 5.529, 16.209, etc.

Pattern:

κύνες τε καὶ ἄνδρες: *Il*. 11.549, 15.272, etc.

ἀπὸ σταθμοῖο: cf. Il. 12.304, 17.112, etc.

δίωνται: cf. *Il*. 12.304, 22.189.

ἔγχεσι καὶ φωνῇ: *Il*. 15.275, 17.66, etc.

- ***Il*. 17.263–6:**

The onrush of the Trojans is compared to the sound of a river crashing on the shores before the sea.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' *ἐπὶ προχοῇσι* διιπετέος ποταμοῖο
βέβρυχεν μέγα κῦμα *ποτὶ ῥόον*, ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἄκραι
ἠϊόνες βοόωσιν ἐρευγομένης ἁλὸς ἔξω, 265
τόσσῃ ἄρα **Τρῶες ἰαχῇ** ἴσαν.

As *at the mouth* of a rain-swollen river
the great waves roar *against the current*, and all around the steep 265
cliffs thunder as the sea bellows nearby.
With **such clamour the Trojans** went.

Context:

μέγα κῦμα/ἠϊόνες~Τρῶες: subject.

βέβρυχεν/βοόωσιν~ἰαχῇ: noise.

Formulaic:

ἐπὶ προχοῇσι: cf. *Od*. 5.243, 11.242, 20.65.

ποτὶ ῥόον: cf. *Il*. 12.33, 16.151, 21.147, etc.

Pattern:

διιπετέος ποταμοῖο: *Il*. 16.174, 21.268, etc.

ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἄκραι: *Il*. 4.425.

ἐρευγομένης ἁλὸς ἔξω: cf. *Il*. 15.621, *Od*. 5.403, 438.

- ***Il*. 17.281–5:**

Ajax turns and fights the Trojans as a boar turns and scatters a band of hunters with their hounds.

ἴθυσεν δὲ διὰ προμάχων **συὶ εἴκελος** ἀλκὴν
καπρίῳ, ὅς τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι **κύνας θαλερούς τ' αἰζηούς**
ῥηϊδίως ἐκέδασσεν ἑλιξάμενος διὰ βήσσας·
ὣς υἱὸς Τελαμῶνος ἀγαυοῦ φαίδιμος **Αἴας**
ῥεῖα μετεισάμενος Τρώων **ἐκέδασσε φάλαγγας**. 285

He pushed forward through the first ranks, strong like **a wild boar**, that in the mountains **the hounds and strong youths easily scatters**, **turning around** in the glens;
so did noble Telamon's son, **bright Ajax**,
turn and easily scatter the Trojan **ranks**. 285

Context:

συὶ καπρίῳ~Αἴας: subjects.

κύνας, αἰζηούς~φάλαγγας: victims.

ῥηϊδίως ἐκέδασσεν~ῥεῖα ἐκέδασσε: scattering verb with adverb.

ἑλιξάμενος~μετεισάμενος: turning participle.

Pattern:

ἐν ὄρεσσι: cf. *Il*. 11.479, 13.571, etc.

διὰ βήσσας: cf. *Il*. 22.190, *Od*. 10.275, etc.

- ***Il*. 18.161–4:**

The two Ajaxes are not able to drive Hector away from Patroclus' body as a lion is not easily scared away from a carcass by the shepherds.

> ὡς δ' **ἀπὸ σώματος οὔ** τι **λέοντ' αἴθωνα δύνανται**
>
> **ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι** μέγα πεινάοντα **δίεσθαι**,
>
> ὣς ῥα τὸν **οὐκ ἐδύναντο** δύω **Αἴαντε κορυστά**
>
> **Ἕκτορα Πριαμίδην ἀπὸ νεκροῦ δειδίξασθαι**.

> As from **a carcass the shepherds who live in the field cannot**
>
> **drive away a bright**, hungry **lion**,
>
> so **the two armed Ajaxes could not**
>
> **frighten Hector son of Priam away from the body**.

Context:

ἀπὸ σώματος~ἀπὸ νεκροῦ: dead body.

λέοντ' αἴθωνα~Ἕκτορα Πριαμίδην: attacker.

οὔ δύνανται δίεσθαι~οὐκ ἐδύναντο δειδίξασθαι: helplessness.

ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι~Αἴαντε κορυστά: subject.

Pattern:

μέγα πεινάοντα: cf. *Il*. 3.25, 11.481, etc.

- ***Il*. 20.490–4:**

Achilles rages on the battlefield as a wind drives a fire through a dry forest.

> ὡς δ' ἀναμαιμάει[53] βαθέ' ἄγκεα θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ 490
> οὔρεος ἀζαλέοιο, βαθεῖα δὲ καίεται ὕλη,
> **πάντῃ τε κλονέων ἄνεμος φλόγα εἰλυφάζει**,
> ὣς **ὅ** γε **πάντῃ θῦνε** σὺν ἔγχεϊ δαίμονι ἶσος
> κτεινομένους **ἐφέπων**…
>
> As a superhuman fire rages through the deep valleys 490
> of a dry mountain, the deep forest burns,
> and **the wind rolls along the flame driving it everywhere**.
> So did **he** [Achilles] **run everywhere** with his spear like a god
> **pursuing** his dying victims…

Context:

πάντῃ~πάντῃ: location.

[53] Null.

κλονέων φλόγα εἰλυφάζει~πάντῃ θῦνε ἐφέπων: onrush.

ἄνεμος~ὅ: subject.

Pattern:

βαθέ' ἄγκεα: cf. *Il*. 22.190, *Od*. 4.337, etc.

θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ: cf. *Il*. 12.177, 441, etc.

οὔρεος ἀζαλέοιο: cf. *Il*. 16.297, *Od*. 9.481, etc.

βαθεῖα δὲ καίεται ὕλη: cf. *Il*. 14.397.

- ***Il*. 21.573–80:**

Agenor awaiting Achilles is compared to a leopard facing a mighty hunter.

ἠΰτε **πάρδαλις** εἶσι βαθείης ἐκ ξυλόχοιο
ἀνδρὸς θηρητῆρος ἐναντίον, οὐδέ τι *θυμῷ*
ταρβεῖ οὐδὲ φοβεῖται, ἐπεὶ κυνύλαγμον ἀκούσῃ·
εἴ περ γὰρ *φθάμενός μιν ἢ οὐτάσῃ ἠὲ βάλῃσιν*,
ἀλλά τε καὶ *περὶ δουρὶ* πεπαρμένη[54] **οὐκ ἀπολήγει**
ἀλκῆς, **πρίν γ' ἠὲ ξυμβλήμεναι ἠὲ δαμῆναι**·
ὣς Ἀντήνορος υἱὸς ἀγαυοῦ δῖος **Ἀγήνωρ**,
οὐκ ἔθελεν φεύγειν, **πρὶν πειρήσαιτ' Ἀχιλῆος**.

As **a leopard** walks out of the deep forest

[54] Null.

against a hunter, *in its heart* it neither

shudders nor feels fear, when it hears the noise of the hunters;

even *if one of them anticipates it with its thrust or throw*,

still, though pierced *by the spear*, **it does not let go of its**

strength, until **it closes in with one of them or is defeated**.

In this way **godlike Agenor**, son of noble Antenor,

did not wish to flee before facing Achilles.

Context:

πάρδαλις~Ἀγήνωρ: subject.

θηρητῆρος~Ἀχιλῆος: enemy.

οὐκ ἀπολήγει ἀλκῆς~οὐκ ἔθελεν φεύγειν: courage.

πρίν γ' ἠὲ ξυμβλήμεναι ἠὲ δαμῆναι~πρὶν πειρήσαιτο: willingness to test opponent.

Formulaic:

θυμῷ: *Od*. 18.330, 390, etc.

φθάμενός μιν ἢ οὐτάσῃ ἠὲ βάλῃσιν: conflation of warfare phrases φθάμενος βάλε (cf. *Il*. 5.119, 13.387) and οὐτάσαι οὐδὲ βαλεῖν (cf. *Il*. 11.659, 826, 13.764, 14.424, 16.24).

περὶ δουρί: *Il*. 1.303, 5.653, etc.

Pattern:

εἶσι βαθείης ἐκ ξυλόχοιο: *Il*. 11.415.

ταρβεῖ οὐδὲ φοβεῖται: *Il*. 12.46.

κυνύλαγμον ἀκούσῃ: cf. *Il*. 18.586 (hunt scene on Achilles' shield).

- ***Il*. 22.25–32:**

Achilles in the Trojan plain is compared to an ominous late-summer star.

τὸν δ' ὃ γέρων Πρίαμος πρῶτος ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
παμφαίνονθ' ὥς τ' **<u>ἀστέρ'</u>** ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο,
ὅς ῥά τ' <u>ὀπώρης εἶσιν</u>, <u>ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαί</u>
φαίνονται <u>πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ</u>,
ὅν τε **κύν' Ὠρίωνος** *ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσι·*
<u>λαμπρότατος</u> *μὲν ὅ γ' ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,*
καί τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν *δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν·*
ὣς τοῦ χαλκὸς **ἔλαμπε** περὶ στήθεσσι θέοντος.

Old Priam was the first to see him [Achilles] with his eyes
sweeping across the plain and **gleaming** like a **<u>star</u>**
that <u>comes in the late summer</u>, <u>its light is clearly seen</u>
and **is evident** <u>among many stars</u> <u>in the dead of night</u>,
which they call <u>the dog of Orion</u>.
It is **<u>the brightest</u>** <u>star</u> and *it is an ominous sight*,
bringing much fever for *wretched mortals*.
Thus his bronze **shone** around his body as he ran.

<u>Context</u>:

ἀστέρα/κύν' Ὠρίωνος~τόν: subject.

φαίνονται~παμφαίνοντα: conspicuousness.

λαμπρότατος~ἔλαμπε: brightness.

καί τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετόν~τοῦτο δὴ οἴκτιστον πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν (76): effect of subject.[55]

Formulaic:

ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσι: *Il*. 18.487, 22.506, etc.

κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται: cf. *Il*. 21.322, 23.455, etc.

δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν: *Il*. 22.76, 24.525, etc.

Pattern:

ὀπώρης εἶσιν: cf. *Il*. 5.5, 16.385.

ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαί: *Il*. 13.244.

πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι: *Il*. 22.317.

νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ: *Il*. 11.173, 15.324, etc.

λαμπρότατος μὲν ὅ γ' ἐστί: cf. Il. 5.6 (star simile).

- ***Il*. 22.188–93:**

In his pursuit of Hector, Achilles is compared to a hound chasing down a fawn.

῞**Εκτορα** δ' ἀσπερχὲς κλονέων **ἔφεπ'** ὠκὺς **Ἀχιλλεύς**·

[55] As recognised by De Jong (2012), 66, line 31 looks forward to Priam's speech (76), which uses the same formula and foreshadows the death of Achilles.

ὡς δ' ὅτε **νεβρὸν** ὄρεσφι **κύων** ἐλάφοιο **δίηται**

ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς διά τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσσας, 190

τὸν δ' εἴ πέρ τε **λάθῃσι** *καταπτήξας* ***ὑπὸ θάμνῳ***,

ἀλλά τ' ἀνιχνεύων *θέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρά κεν εὕρῃ*,

ὣς Ἕκτωρ **οὐ λῆθε** ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.

Swift **Achilles kept pursuing Hector** without a pause.

As when **a hound chases the fawn** of a deer in the mountains

springing from the lair through valleys and glens. 190

Even if **it escapes** *hiding under a bush*,

the hound tracks it down and *runs incessantly until it finds it*.

So Hector **could not escape** from swift-footed Achilles…

Context:

κύων~Ἀχιλλεύς: subject.

νεβρόν~Ἕκτορα: victim.

δίηται~ἔφεπε: pursuit.

λάθῃσι~οὐ λῆθε: attempted escape.

ὑπὸ θάμνῳ~ὑπὸ πύργους (195): possible shelter.

Formulaic:

καταπτήξας ὑπὸ θάμνῳ: cf. *Il*. 17.677.

θέει ἔμπεδον: *Il*. 13.141, *Od*. 13.86.

ὄφρά κεν εὕρῃ: cf. *Il*. 13.141, 18.322.

Pattern:

ὄρεσφι: *Il*. 10.185, 19.376, etc.

ἐλάφοιο: *Il*. 8.248, 11.113, etc.

ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς: cf. *Il*. 15.580.

διά τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσσας: cf. *Il*. 20.490, *Od*. 4.337.

ἀνιχνεύων: cf. *Il*. 18.321, *Od*. 19.436.

- ***Il*. 22.317–19:**

The gleam of Achilles' spear is compared to that of the Evening star.

> οἷος δ' **ἀστὴρ** εἶσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ
>
> *Ἕσπερος*, ὃς **κάλλιστος** ἐν οὐρανῷ ἵσταται **ἀστήρ**,
>
> ὣς **αἰχμῆς ἀπέλαμπ'** εὐήκεος…
>
> As **a star** moves among other stars in the dead of night,
>
> *the evening star,* which **is the most beautiful star** in the sky,
>
> thus was **the gleam from its sharp spear-point**…

Context:

ἀστήρ~αἰχμῆς ἀπέλαμπε: brightness of subject.

κάλλιστος~καλόν (314): beauty of subject.[56]

[56] As De Jong (2012), 136, remarks, "the word καλὸς is used six times within ten lines". The poet's concentration on Achilles' beauty is also reflected in the simile.

Formulaic:

Ἕσπερος: cf. *Il*. 23.226, *Od*. 13.93–4 (of the Morning Star).

Pattern:

εἶσι: typical verb for star movement, cf. *Il*. 22.27, 23.226, *Od*. 13.94.

μετ' ἀστράσι: *Il*. 22.28.

νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ: *Il*. 11.173, 15.324, etc.

ἐν οὐρανῷ: *Il*. 8.555.

- ***Il*. 24.40–4:**

Apollo compares Achilles' fury against Hector to the ruthlessness of a lion.

ᾧ οὔτ' ἄρ **φρένες** εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὔτε νόημα
γναμπτὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, **λέων** δ' ὡς ἄγρια οἶδεν,
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ **μεγάλῃ τε βίῃ καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ**
εἴξας εἶσ' ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν ἵνα *δαῖτα λάβῃσιν*.
ὣς **Ἀχιλεὺς ἔλεον** μὲν **ἀπώλεσεν**…

His [Achilles'] **mind** is not pious, nor are his thoughts
flexible in his heart, but he only knows savagery as a **lion**
that **to its great strength and proud heart**
yields and falls upon the men's cattle to *get itself a meal*.

Thus has **Achilles abandoned** piety…

Context:

λέων~Ἀχιλεύς: subject.

μεγάλη τε βίῃ καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ~φρένες: subject's feelings.

εἴξας~ἀπώλεσεν: yielding to one's passion.

Formulaic:

δαῖτα λάβῃσιν: cf. *Od*. 4.532, 10.124 (especially), etc.

Pattern:

εἶσ' ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν: cf. *Od*. 6.132, 9.405.

- ***Od*. 4.791–3:**

Penelope's anguish is compared to that of a cornered lion.

ὅσσα δὲ **μερμήριξε λέων** ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὁμίλῳ

δείσας, ὁππότε μιν δόλιον περὶ κύκλον ἄγωσιν,

τόσσα μιν **ὁρμαίνουσαν** ἐπήλυθε νήδυμος ὕπνος…

As many things as a **lion ponders** in a crowd of men,

frightened, when they draw about it their treacherous circle,

so many things she **pondered**, when sweet sleep came over her [Penelope]…

Context:

μερμήριξε~ὁρμαίνουσαν: pondering verb.

λέων~Πηνελόπεια (787): subject.

δείσας~789–90.[57]

Pattern:

ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὁμίλῳ: cf. *Il*. 12.148, 15.588.

περὶ κύκλον ἄγωσιν: cf. *Il*. 12.47.[58]

- ***Od*. 5.328–30:**

Odysseus' raft carried by the waves and winds is compared to clusters of thistles carried away by Boreas.

ὡς δ' ὅτ' **ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης φορέῃσιν ἀκάνθας**

ἅμ πεδίον, *πυκιναὶ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλῃσιν ἔχονται*,

ὡς **τὴν ἅμ πέλαγος ἄνεμοι φέρον** ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα… 330

As when **Boreas in autumn carries thistles**

throughout the plain, and *they thickly stick to each other*.

[57] Penelope is afraid that her son might be killed by the suitors. Her fears are made explicit at 789–90.
[58] As recognised by Fränkel (1921), 67, both *Il*. 12.47 and *Od*. 4.792 depict a encircling hunt technique where "die Jäger umschließen in lückenlosem Ring den gestellen Löwen oder Keiler".

Thus **along the sea did the winds carry it** here and there… 330

Context:

ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης~ἄνεμοι: subject.

φορέῃσιν~φέρον: carrying verb.

ἀκάνθας~τήν: the carried item.

ἂμ πεδίον~ἂμ πέλαγος: location.

Formulaic:

πυκιναὶ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλῃσιν ἔχονται: cf. *Il*. 5.141, *Od*. 22.389, 24.8.

- ***Od*. 5.366–70:**

The scattered planks of Odysseus' rafts are compared to a heap of chaff dispersed by the wind.

ὦρσε δ' ἐπὶ **μέγα κῦμα** Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,
δεινόν τ' ἀργαλέον τε, κατηρεφές, ἤλασε δ' αὐτόν.
ὡς δ' **ἄνεμος ζαὴς ἴιων θημῶνα τινάξῃ**
καρφαλέων·[59] τὰ μὲν ἄρ τε **διεσκέδασ'** *ἄλλυδις ἄλλα·*
ὣς τῆς **δούρατα μακρὰ** διεσκέδασ'… 370

Poseidon the earth-shaker roused **a great wave**,

[59] Null.

a terrible, dreadful, overarching wave, and drove it against him.

As **a <u>stormy wind</u> shakes up a heap of** dry

chaff and scatters it *this way and that.*

So did it [the wave] **scatter the big planks** [of the raft]… 370

<u>Context</u>:

ἄνεμος ζαής~μέγα κῦμα: shaking agent.

ἴιων θημῶνα~δούρατα μακρά: victim.

τινάξῃ~κῦμα τινάξῃ (363): shaking verb.[60]

διεσκέδασε~διεσκέδασε: scattering verb.

<u>Formulaic</u>:

ἄλλυδις ἄλλα: *Il*. 13.279, *Od*. 9.458, etc.

- ***Od*. 19.204–8:**

Penelope's tears are compared to the melting of the mountain snow.

τῆς δ' ἄρ' ἀκουούσης **ῥέε δάκρυα**, **τήκετο** δὲ **χρώς**.

ὡς δὲ **χιὼν κατατήκετ'** <u>ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν</u> 205

ἣν τ' <u>Εὖρος</u> **κατέτηξεν**, ἐπὴν <u>Ζέφυρος</u> **καταχεύῃ**,

τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς **<u>ποταμοὶ</u>** πλήθουσι **<u>ῥέοντες</u>**,

ὣς τῆς **τήκετο** καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ **χεούσης**…

[60] The simile certainly reflects Odysseus' anticipation five lines above.

As she listened, **her tears flowed** and **her skin melted**.

As **the snow melts** in the high mountains, 205

which Eurus **melts down**, after Zephyrus **poured it**;

and **as it melts**, **the flowing rivers** are fed.

In this way did **her fair cheeks melt as she shed tears**…

Context:

χιών~χρώς: subject.

κατατήκετο/κατέτηξεν/τηκομένης~τήκετο: melting.

καταχεύη~καταχεύη: pouring verb.

ποταμοὶ ῥέοντες~ῥέε δάκρυα: flowing of liquid.

Pattern:

ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν: *Il*. 5.523, 12.146, etc.

Εὖρος: cf. *Il*. 2.145, 16.765, etc.

Ζέφυρος: cf. *Il*. 2.147, 9.5, etc.

ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες: cf. *Il*. 5.87, 16.389.

- ***Od*. 22.401–6:**

Odysseus, spattered with blood after killing the suitors, is compared to a blood-befouled lion that has just eaten a cow.

ηὗρεν ἔπειτ' **Ὀδυσῆα** μετὰ κταμένοισι νέκυσσιν

αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον, ὥς τε **λέοντα**,

ὅς ῥά τε βεβρωκὼς βοὸς ἔρχεται ἀγραύλοιο·

πᾶν δ' ἄρα οἱ **στῆθός τε παρήϊά τ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν**

αἱματόεντα πέλει, δεινὸς δ' *εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι·* 405

ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς πεπάλακτο **πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθεν**.

She [Eurycleia] found **Odysseus** among the corpses of the slain suitors,

befouled with blood and gore like a **lion**,

that, after its meal, turns back from a cow that lives in the fields;

its chest and cheeks on either side

are completely covered in blood, and it is *terrible to behold*. 405

Thus were Odysseus' **feet and hands above them befouled**.

Context:

λέοντα~Ὀδυσῆα: subject.

στῆθός τε παρήϊά τ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν~πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθεν: body parts and adverb.

αἱματόεντα πέλει~αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον: bloody defilement.

Formulaic:

εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι: *Il*. 9.373, *Od*. 23.107.

Pattern:

βεβρωκώς: cf. *Il*. 17.542 (same image), 22.94 (of a snake in a simile).

βοὸς ἀγραύλοιο: *Il*. 17. 521, 24.81, etc.

ἔρχεται: typical verb, cf. *Il*. 11.415, 21.573, etc.

The exceptions are *Il*. 12.41–50, 278–86, 15.624–8, 630–6, 16.383–93, 17.132–7, 747–51, 19.376–8, 20.164–73. As discussed earlier,[61] *Il*. 11.550–5 (= 17.659–64) is a peculiar case, but not a full-fledged exception.

[61] See above, 190n.215.

Appendix IV

BATTLE SCENES IN THE *ILIAD* AND THE *MAHĀBHĀRATA*

This Appendix aims to provide a full list of the portions of text on which the statistics discussed in Ch. 3 are based.

[1] The Sanskrit corpus starts from the beginning of the Kurukṣetra battle (*MBh*. 6.1) and ends when the Kaurava forces are definitively routed (9.28). The Homeric corpus ranges from the duel between Paris and Menelaus (*Il*. 3) to that between Achilles and Hector (22). Of course not all the poetry contained within these boundaries has been considered: only lines pertaining to general warfare sequences and close combats are part of our corpuses, and in particular, the statistics on verb placement are based *only* on close combat lines. Conversations, similes, and all other kinds of digressions have been excluded. In Homer, idiosyncratic and untypical warfare scenes such as the Iliadic Theomachy in Books 20 and 21 or Achilles' fight with the River Scamander in Book 21 have also been excluded. A full list of the portions of text that belong to the corpuses is given first, and is followed by a catalogue of motifs (with examples) with which the poets decorate their fight scenes.

The Sanskrit corpus

MBh. 6: 1.3–26; 1.29–34; 2.2–30; 43.1–45.63; 46.41–56; 47.10–48.1–11; 48.17–34; 48.38–70; 49.5–40; 50.3–51.36; 52.1–54.31; 54.43–4; 55.3–40; 55.47–55; 55.57–66; 55.71;

[1] See above, 228 and 263.

57.1–36; 58.8–59.23; 60.1–8; 60.11–34; 60.36–56; 60.63–66; 60.70–78; 65.1–70.12; 70.17–35; 71.1–36; 73.1–19; 73.25; 73.31–35; 73.44–50; 73.53–75.2; 75.9–59; 77.11–33; 77.36–78.3; 78.7–57; 79.12–80.51; 82.1–44; 83.1–84.35; 85.14–86.3; 86.16–44; 86.48–82ab; 86.84–86; 87.2–25; 87.29–89.7; 89.11–90.8; 90.12–46; 91.20–92.2ab; 92.12–77; 95.26–51; 96.1–21; 96.25–51; 97.8–57; 98.6–99.38; 100.1–101.2ab; 101.7–102.30; 102.38–59; 102.62–65; 102.70–76; 104.2–23; 104.27–40; 104.48–9; 105.5–14; 105.28–106.1c; 106.3–19; 106.22–107.14; 107.16–55; 109.1–110.46; 111.4–12; 111.16–17; 111.21–112.81; 112.84–102; 112.107–113.31; 113.34–114.30; 114.34–50; 114.53–4; 114.62–85; 114.101–111.

MBh. 7: 6.1–10; 6.15–42; 7.1–23; 7.30–6; 12.17–13.80; 14.4–10; 14.13–15.39; 15.41–8; 17.1–4; 17.7–27ab; 17.30–18.1; 18.4–19.21; 19.25–20.53; 21.7–10; 21.28–9; 24.1–61; 25.3–55; 26.2; 26.9–29; 26.9–27.3; 27.6–30; 28.2–18; 28.36–42; 29.1–39; 30.3–28; 31.1–72; 32.15–20; 33.12–34.13; 35.1–2; 35.8–36.35; 37.2–23; 38.4–10; 38.20–1; 38.26–9; 39.9–39.20ab; 39.22–40.24; 41.3–7; 41.18–20; 42.2–44.9; 44.11–30; 45.5–14; 45.16–26; 46.3–47.10; 47.12–16; 47.31–8; 48.1–13; 48.22–31; 63.1–11; 63.19–32; 64.3–60; 65.3–66.2; 66.8–20; 66.22–9; 66.31; 66.34–67.43; 67.51–68.66; 70.1–23; 70.25–51; 71.2–21; 71.24–31; 72.1–35; 73.5–8; 73.11–74.35; 74.41–54; 74.56–75.9; 75.12–19; 75.28–76.15; 76.18cd–42; 77.22–35; 78.1–5; 78.21–35ab; 78.36–79.33; 81.2–44; 81.45cd–83.22; 83.24–84.28; 85.3–13; 85.19–33; 85.35–7; 85.39–40; 88.1–2; 88.5–24; 88.36–59; 90.6–50; 91.1cd–11; 91.16–92.27; 92.29cd–93.35cd; 95.30–96.13; 96.19–45; 97.12–28; 97.33–45ab; 97.53–55; 98.22–54ab; 98.56–99.28; 100.5–12; 100.16–22; 100.28–101.22; 101.24–54; 101.59–71; 101.74–102.8; 102.25–26; 102.52–9; 102.63–8; 102.71cd–79; 102.87–103.32; 103.49; 104.9–33; 106.17–54; 107.2–9; 107.16–39; 108.17–34; 107.36–108.15; 108.17–34; 110.28–

111.16cd; 111.17–112.17; 112.20–37; 112.44–5; 113.4–114.68; 114.76–7; 114.80–94; 116.1–13ab; 117.1–2; 117.19–42; 117.45–7; 117.51–4; 117.62–118.3; 118.16–22; 118.27–8; 118.31–9; 118.49; 120.2; 120.6cd–10ab; 120.31–73ab; 120.74–82; 121.1–15; 121.30–48; 122.2cd–12; 122.27–8; 122.42–72; 122.81–8; 128.1–34; 129.5–35; 130.11–36; 131.1; 131.8–9; 131.15–25; 131.30–55; 131.63–78; 131.89–133; 132.1–31; 132.33–42; 134.9–11; 134.15–29; 134.33–4; 134.38–53; 134.60–1; 135.17–22; 135.24cd–26; 135.28–9; 135.34–53; 136.1–137.1; 137.3–44ab; 137.48–51; 139.1–8; 139.16–19; 139.28–140.2ab; 140.3cd–141.14; 141.16–142.13; 142.16–145.45; 145.64–147.2; 147.8–22; 147.30–148.20; 148.60–149.2ab; 149.9–35ab; 149.36–7; 150.19–62; 150.64–151.5; 151.12–17; 152.1–8; 152.13–32; 152.37–153.1; 153.4–40; 159.1–2; 159.8–22; 161.1–4ab; 161.5cd–6; 161.10–41; 161.46–164.22; 164.33–48ab; 164.53–55; 164.57–63; 164.70–88; 164.93–7; 164.105–56ab; 165.1–6; 165.8–27; 165.35–9; 165.46–56; 165.58–64ab; 165.65–89; 170.1–4; 170.8–25; 170.43–4; 170.52–171.15ab; 171.18–24; 171.34–47; 171.49–60; 171.66–172.4; 172.13–16; 172.23–42; 172.91–3.

MBh. 8: 7.3–22; 7.27–11.27ab; 11.32–41; 12.3–14; 12.17–8; 12.26–33ab; 12.35–51; 12.70–1; 14.1–26; 14.59–64; 15.5–12; 15.19–34; 16.7–17.49; 17.55–93; 17.95–18.43; 18.50–2a; 18.58–19.75; 20.5–21.1; 21.15–37; 31.10–12; 31.36–7; 32.3–22; 32.25–33.10; 33.13–36; 33.40–34.6ab; 34.10–11; 34.27–42; 35.4–37.16; 37.19–39.30; 39.34–40.79ab; 40.86–123ab; 40.125–30; 42.1–23ab; 42.28–40ab; 42.42–56; 43.76–8; 44.3–45.28ab; 45.33–45; 45.52–4; 45.68–9; 45.71–3; 55.10–44; 55.42–4; 55.46–73; 56.7cd–57.2; 57.9–13; 58.1–59.45; 62.1–8; 62.16; 63.1–30; 63.63–73ab; 66.45–60; 67.6–11; 67.30–4.

MBh. 9: 7.1–8; 7.19–34; 7.41–9.1; 9.4–10.1; 10.6–44; 10.50–11.5; 11.8–12.34; 12.36cd–15.15; 15.26–58ab; 15.59cd–66; 16.1–6; 16.52–85; 17.1–12; 17.14–18; 17.25–39; 20.1–22.16; 22.20–32; 22.37cd–57ab; 22.60–88; 24.1–38; 24.40; 24.42–26.2; 26.26–27.19; 27.21–46ab; 27.50–4; 28.1–18.

Motifs typically found in general sequences:

'Nothing could be distinguished': e.g. 6.43.78cd, *na prājñāyata kiṃ cana*. ('nothing was distinguished').

'Divine spectators': e.g. 7.85.33ab, *tatra devāḥ sagandharvāḥ pitaraś cābruvan*…[2] ('then the gods, the sages, and the ancestors said…').

'Earth covered': e.g. 7.146.8ac, *patitaiś cāmaraiś caiva śvetacchatraiś ca bhārata | babhūva dharaṇī pūrṇā*. ('and with fallen plumes and white parasols, heir of Bhārata, | the earth was covered').

'Earth shines': e.g. 7.88.12, *śaśāṅkasaṁnikāśaiś ca vadanaiś cārukuṇḍalaiḥ… | babhau bhārata medinī*. ('and with the beautiful ear-ringed heads, fair as the moon… | the earth shone').

'Tumult': e.g. 8.37.47a, *abhavat tumulaḥ śabdo*. ('there was a tumultuous turmoil').

'Never seen or heard': e.g. 6.55.13ab, *na dṛṣṭaṃ na śrutaṃ cāpi yuddham etādṛśam*. ('such a battle was never seen or heard of').

'List of weapons': e.g. 8.16.9–10ab, *dhanṃūṣi bāṇān parighān asitomarapaṭṭiśān*… ('bows, arrows, iron bars, swords, javelins, and tridents…').

[2] This element is often found also in close combat scenes.

‘Chariot vs. Chariot’: e.g. 8.33.58ab, *rathino rathibhiḥ sārdhaṃ citraṃ yuyudhur*…[3] (‘chariot-warriors fought against chariot-warriors…’).

‘Focus on chariots’: e.g. *adṛśyanta sasūtāś ca sāśvāḥ sarathayodhinaḥ ekena balinā rājan vāraṇena hatā rathāḥ*.[4] (‘with their charioteers, horses, and warriors the chariots were seen, destroyed by one strong elephant, o king’).

‘Some warriors, other warriors’: e.g. 9.8.7–8: *dhanvinaḥ puruṣāḥ ke cit* […] *nāgaṃ rathavarāṃś cānye parivārya*… (‘some people with their bows […] others, after surrounding the elephant and the best chariot-warriors…’).

‘Cries of men [direct speech]’: e.g. 7.136.9ab, *hata praharatābhītā vidhyata vyavakṛntata*. (‘kill, attack fearlessly, hit him, destroy him’).

‘Cries of men [indirect speech]’: e.g. 6.44.44ab, *saṃbabhūvur anīkeṣu bahavo bhairavasvanāḥ*… (‘many woeful cries were heard among the ranks…’).

‘Father and Son’: e.g. 7.144.40c, *avadhīt samare putraṃ pitā*…[5] (‘in battle the father killed his own son…’).

‘Heads and Arms’: e.g. 6.55.9ab, *patitāny uttamāṅgāni bāhavaś ca vibhūṣitāḥ*… (‘fallen heads and beautiful arms…’).

Motifs typically found outside general sequences:

‘Battle’: e.g. 6.43.46d, *tato yuddham avartata*. (‘then the battle raged…’).

‘Marvel of Beings’: e.g. 7.121.40ab, *tataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vismayaṃ jagmur uttamam*. (‘then all beings fell into the utmost amazement’).

‘Equal fight’: e.g. 6.79.26c, *viśeṣa na sma vividur*… (‘they saw no difference’).

[3] This item also includes other categories of warriors (‘Foot-soldiers vs. foot-soldiers’, ‘Elephants vs. elephants’, ‘Horsemen vs. Horsemen’) and combinations thereof.
[4] This item also incldues other categories of warriors.
[5] This item also involves other kinds of relatives.

‘People screamed’: e.g. 6.51.11d, *tata uccukruśur janāḥ*. (‘then the soldiers screamed…’).

‘X made Y invisible’: e.g. 6.60.38c, *adṛśyaṃ samare cakre*. (‘he made him invisible in battle’).

‘Many-to-one Arrow Attack’: e.g. 7.145.15cd–17ab, *dhṛṣṭadyumnaṃ raṇe karṇo vivyādha daśabhiḥ śaraiḥ | pañcabhir droṇaputras tu svayaṃ droṇaś ca saptabhiḥ | śalyaś ca navabhir bāṇais tribhir duḥśāsanas tathā | duryodhanaś ca viṃśatyā śakuniś cāpi pañcabhiḥ…* (‘in battle Karṇa hit Dhṛṣṭadyumna with ten arrows, | the Droṇa’s son hit him with five, Droṇa with seven, | Śalya with nine shafts, Duḥśāsana with three, | Duryodhana with twenty, and Śakuni again with five…’).

‘One-to-Many Arrow Attack’: e.g. 8.39.14cd–16ab, *sātyakiṃ pañcaviṃśatyā prāvidhyata śilāśitaiḥ | śrutakīrtiṃ ca navabhiḥ sutasomaṃ ca pañcabhiḥ | aṣṭabhiḥ śrutakarmāṇaṃ prativindhyaṃ tribhiḥ śaraiḥ | śatānīkaṃ ca navabhir dharmaputraṃ ca saptabhiḥ | athetarāṃs tataḥ śūrān dvābhyāṃ dvābhyām atāḍayat*. (‘[he] hit Sātyaki with twenty-five sharp arrows, Śrutakīrti with nine, Sutasoma with five, | Śrutakarman with eight, Prativindhya with three, | Śatānīka with nine, Dharmaputra with seven, | and then hit the other warriors with two shafts each’).

With the exception of the last three items, which refer to or describe actual military actions, the lines that belong to motifs in the latter list are not included in the verb placement statistics provided in Ch. 3. This is because they are generally self-contained units separated from the close combat context.

The Homeric corpus

Il. 3: 1–35; 324–82.

Il. 4: 427–39; 446–52; 457–75; 478–82; 488–509; 514–44.

Il. 5: 1–32; 37–102; 106–109; 111–115; 134–6; 144–61; 165–71; 239–43; 274–7; 280–4; 290–313; 318–48; 431–40; 443–5; 493–9; 506–22; 533–43; 561–97; 607–12; 615–33; 655–71; 677–85; 689–92; 699–714; 841–67.

Il. 6: 1–21; 27–46; 61–7; 72–6; 102–23.

Il. 7: 1–4; 8–23; 244–75.

Il. 8: 53–69; 75–93; 97–102; 112–39; 157–62; 167–73; 212–28; 245–74; 277–81; 300–4; 309–38; 343–50.

Il. 11: 49–71; 84–113; 122–31; 143–55; 159–72; 179–81; 211–18; 231–69; 273–6; 280–6; 291–2; 296–305; 320–4; 328–9; 333–47; 349–62; 368–80; 396–404; 411–14; 420–30; 434–41; 446–50; 456–65; 472–4; 485–92; 497–511; 516–23; 531–48; 566–87; 592–6.

Il. 12: 37–41; 50–3; 60–1; 80–8; 105–32; 137–46; 152–6; 162–4; 173–200; 251–69; 277–8; 290–9; 329–43; 351–4; 370–409; 413–21; 424–32; 442–7; 450–1; 457–71.

Il. 13: 126–37; 145–9; 155–73; 177–8; 182–98; 202–19; 328–34; 339–45; 361–3; 370–4; 383–9; 394–414; 417–28; 434–46; 455–63; 468–71; 477–81; 487–92; 496–523; 526–71; 576–88; 593–620; 640–63; 671–94; 699–703; 709–13; 719–26; 754–69; 788–95; 802–10; 833–7.

Il. 14: 378–86; 388–94; 402–14; 419–33; 440–53; 458–70; 475–9; 486–90; 493–501; 506–22.

Il. 15: 300–23; 327–33; 339–47; 352–62; 367–72; 377–81; 385–90; 406–10; 414–25; 429–37; 442–67; 478–86; 500–2; 514–26; 528–30; 535–47; 565–9; 572–9; 583–6; 591–2; 615–18; 623–4; 644–61; 667–79; 687–90; 694–718; 726–33; 742–6.

Il. 16: 267–9; 275–97; 303–27; 330–52; 358–64; 367–84; 394–406; 410–22; 426–8; 458–82; 502–14; 527–38; 548–56; 562–72; 577–82; 586–9; 593–4; 597–604; 606–17; 632–

3; 637–66; 684–8; 692–707; 710–17; 720–21; 726–45; 751–2; 755–6; 762–5; 772–808; 812–23; 829–30; 855–9; 862–7.

Il. 17: 1–4; 7–12; 43–53; 70–5; 82–91; 106–9; 114–20; 123–33; 138–42; 188–98; 210–20; 233–8; 256–63; 267–8; 274–81; 286–301; 304–27; 342–50; 352–89; 397–401; 412–15; 516–20; 525–38; 540–7; 553–5; 567–71; 574–5; 578–86; 591–3; 597–622; 624–9; 673–4; 682–5; 694–708; 722–5; 735–6; 760–1.

Il. 20: 75–83; 156–64; 176–8; 259–93; 379–83; 386–9; 393–403; 407–8; 413–25; 438–49; 455–90; 494–5; 499–503.

Il. 21: 1–12; 17–22; 26–36; 49–54; 64–74; 114–22; 136–9; 144–9; 161–84; 200–14; 520–2; 540–52; 571–4; 590–611.

Il. 22: 273–8; 289–97; 306–8; 312–17; 322–31; 361–3.

Motifs typically found in general sequences:

'External spectator': e.g. 17.366, οὐδέ κε φαίης… ('nor would you say…').

'Coming together': e.g. 4.446, οἳ δ' ὅτε δή ῥ' ἐς χῶρον ἕνα ξυνιόντες ἵκοντο.[6] ('when they came together to one place…').

'Tumult': e.g. 17.424–5: σιδήρειος δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς | χάλκεον οὐρανὸν ἶκε. ('the iron tumult reached up to the brazen sky').

'River of blood': e.g. 8.65, ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα. ('the earth flowed with blood').

'Dust': e.g. 16.374–5, ὕψι δ' ἀέλλη | σκίδναθ' ὑπαὶ νεφέων. ('dust was scattered high under the clouds').

[6] This element is often found also in close combat scenes.

‘List of weapons’: e.g. 8.61–2, σύν ῥ' ἔβαλον ῥινούς, σὺν δ' ἔγχεα καὶ μένε' ἀνδρῶν χαλκεοθωρήκων. (‘They threw their shields together, their spears, and the fury of bronze-armoured men’).

‘Weapon flash’: e.g. 4.432, τεύχεα ποικίλ' ἔλαμπε. (‘the beautifully-wrought weapons shone…’).

Motifs typically found outside general sequences:

‘Man vs. man’: e.g. 4.472, ἀνὴρ δ' ἄνδρ' ἐδνοπάλιζεν.[7] (‘man fell upon man’).

‘X would have… if Y had not…’: e.g. 17.70–1: ἔνθά κε ῥεῖα φέροι κλυτὰ τεύχεα Πανθοΐδαο | Ἀτρεΐδης, εἰ μή οἱ ἀγάσσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων. (‘then the son of Atreus would have easily taken the glorious weapons of the son of Panthous, | had not Phoebus Apollo begrudged him…’).

‘Men of today’: e.g. 5.304, οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσίν. (‘such as mortals are today’).

‘First and last’: e.g. 11.299, ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξενάριξεν… (‘then whom did [he] kill first, whom last…’).

‘As long as… but when…’: e.g. 8.66, ὄφρα μὲν ἠὼς ἦν καὶ ἀέξετο ἱερὸν ἦμαρ | τόφρα μάλ' ἀμφοτέρων βέλε' ἵπτετο, πῖπτε δὲ λαός. | ἦμος δ' Ἠέλιος μέσον οὐρανὸν ἀμφιβεβήκει… (‘as long as daybreak lasted and the sacred day waxed, | so long the missiles hit their targets and men fell on both sides. | But when the sun went up to mid-sky…’).

‘Three times… (the fourth time…)’: e.g. 16.702–5, τρὶς μὲν ἐπ' ἀγκῶνος βῆ τείχεος ὑψηλοῖο | Πάτροκλος, τρὶς δ' αὐτὸν ἀπεστυφέλιξεν Ἀπόλλων… ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος… (‘three times did Patroclus leap on the edge of the high wall,

[7] As in Sanskrit, this item includes also ‘Chariot vs. Chariot’.

| three times did Apollo push him back… But when for the fourth time he rushed upon it like a god…').

With the exception of 'First and Last' and 'Three times… (the fourth time…)', which refer to or describe actual military actions, the lines that belong to these motifs are not included in the verb placement statistics provided in Ch. 3. This is because they often contain verbs in the subjunctive or optative,[8] and are generally self-contained units separated from the close combat context.

[8] The statistics provided concern the indicative mood.

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