

An edition with commentary of the *Batrachomyomachia*

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford

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CONTENTS

Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Note on abbreviations	ix
Introduction	1
I. Date and Authorship	1
II. Parody and Pastiche	23
III. Frogs and Mice	36
IV. Language and Style	51
V. Reception and Influence	82
VI. Text and Transmission	96
Text and apparatus criticus	117
Note on the apparatus	117
BATPAXOMYOMAXIA	119
Deleted lines	131
Translation	135
Commentary	145
Bibliography	357
Appendix A: images	367
Appendix B: lines omitted and retained in the principal MSS	369

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ABSTRACT

The thesis consists of three main sections: the Introduction, the text (with apparatus), and the Commentary.

The Introduction begins with a survey of the available evidence for the poem's date and authorship, before moving on to consider its generic affiliations and influences, focusing on two particular areas: its links with the ill-defined genre of *παρρηγία*, and its relationship to animal-narratives elsewhere in ancient literature (particularly fable) and visual art. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the poem's style and metre, a brief tour of its *Nachleben* up to the 13th century, and a summary of the notoriously tangled manuscript tradition.

The text is new, and differs substantially from both that of Allen (in the OCT) and of West (the most recent English edition). The apparatus, as explained in more detail on p. 117, is somewhere between the two: it takes into account the readings of only nine MSS from the 80-100 extant, and does not attempt to represent every single textual variation even among these nine, but it is much fuller than the minimalist apparatus of the Loeb. It aims to provide a useful source for scholars interested in the poem's many and serious textual cruxes, while remaining more succinct and user-friendly than the dense and sometimes baffling apparatus of Ludwig's monumental 1896 edition. The text is followed by an English prose translation: this makes no claims to beauty, and is simply intended as a relatively literal guide to the sense of the Greek.

The Commentary, finally, is twofold. Any commentary on the *Batrachomyomachia* will inevitably spend much space and ink on purely textual issues, and on the fundamental task of unearthing meaning from the dizzying range of wild and nonsensical variants available. Interspersed with these textual points, however, this commentary includes considerations of the poem not as a mechanics problem but as a sophisticated Hellenistic work of art – exploring its intertextualities, its characterisation, its dramatic effects, its dry sense of humour, and subjecting it to the serious literary analysis it has often been denied.

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My supervisor, Adrian Kelly, has improved this thesis on every level, from grand principles of organisation to the smallest possible matters of citation and typography. His diligence and attention to detail have saved me from errors too numerous and embarrassing to count, and I have also been glad of his support and encouragement at bleaker moments.

James Worthen was working on a study of the *Batrachomyomachia* at the time of his death, aged 22, on May 10th 2009. We never met, but in the initial months of the project I relied heavily on a short bibliography for the poem which he had compiled, passed down to me by Chris Pelling. It was the best possible starting-point for exploring the scholarship; consulting one rare volume, I found his stack request slip still tucked between the pages. I should like to thank him here for his help, and hope he approves of the finished product.

I am grateful to Gregory Hutchinson, Richard Rutherford, Tim Rood, and Jane Lightfoot, all of whom have read sections of the thesis and offered useful comments. Martin West allowed me to see the edition of the text he prepared while working on his 2003 Loeb of the poem; it has been invaluable throughout. I have profited from the erudition and advice of a large number of other scholars: Gail Trimble has been an especially frequent source of help, but I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Tim Whitmarsh, Ollie Thomas, Emma Aston, Claire Gruzelier, Patrick Finglass, and Andrea Rotstein.

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As always, my staunchest allies have been my parents, Christine and Thomas Hosty. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Note on abbreviations

All ancient works not named in full are abbreviated as in LSJ and Lewis & Short. The only exceptions to this are the *Batrachomyomachia* itself, which is *BM* throughout, and the Homeric epics: for these titles are not generally given, but books are identified by Roman numerals – upper-case for the *Iliad*, lower-case for the *Odyssey* (so e.g. II.295 = Hom. *Il.* 2.295, ix.240 = Hom. *Od.* 9.240).

Fragments are cited from the following editions unless stated otherwise.

Alcaeus: Voigt 1971	Epic Cycle: Bernabé 1996
Alciphron: Benner and Fobes 1949	Euboeus: Brandt
Alcman: <i>PMG</i>	Eudemus: Wehrli 1969
Anacreon: <i>PMG</i>	Hegemon: Brandt
anonymous Anacreontea: West 1993	Hesiod: Merkelbach and West 1967
Aratus: <i>Supp. Hell.</i>	Hipponax: West 1989
Archestratus: Olson and Sens 2000	Matro: Olson and Sens 1999
Archilochus: West 1989	Nicolaus Damascenus: <i>FHG</i>
Aristotle: Rose 1966	Panyassis: Matthews 1974
the Attic tragedians: <i>TrGF</i>	Pindar: Maehler 1975
Berossus: <i>FHG</i>	Porphyrius: Smith 1993
Bion: Gow 1952	Simonides: <i>PMG</i>
Callimachus <i>Aetia</i> : Harder 2012	Stesichorus: <i>PMGF</i>
Callimachus <i>Hecale</i> : Hollis 1990	Theophrastus: Wimmer 1866
the comic poets: <i>PCG</i>	Tyrtaeus: West 1989
Diocles Carystius: van der Eijk 2000	Xenophanes: Diels-Kranz

Eustathius' commentaries on Homer are cited from the editions of van der Valk 1971-87 (on the *Iliad*) and Stallbaum 1825-6 (on the *Odyssey*). Gregory Nazianzenus is generally from *MPG* unless stated otherwise; the *Christus Patiens* attributed to him, however, is from Tuilier 1969. The *corpus Hippocraticum* is from Littré 1839-61; Galen is from Kühn 1826, and the alchemist Zosimus from Berthelot and Ruelle 1888. Longus is from Dalmeyda 1934. The remains of Timotheus of Gaza's *On Animals* are those collated by Haupt 1869, 'Excerpta ex Timothei Gazaei Libris de Animalibus' (*Hermes* 3, pp. 1-30). Aesop is from Hausrath and Hunger, though the 'dodecasyllable' versions are from Chambry. George Choeroboscus is from Hilgard 1889.

The sign * has been used to show that a word or phrase appears in the same metrical *sedes* as the text under discussion. 'Homer 12x, *7x' means that this word or phrase appears twelve times in Homer, and that in seven of these cases it is in the same *sedes* as the example quoted.

I. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP

Any student of Greek parody knows that dealing with the BM is a frustrating business in which certainty may not always be ascertainable.

- Bliquez 1977, p. 25

A. DATE

i. References to the poem

The first secure references to the *BM* in extant literature both date from the second half of the 1st century AD:

HOMERI BATRACHOMACHIA
perlege Maeonio cantatas carmine ranas
et frontem nugis solvere disce meis (Mart. 14.183)

sed et Culicem legimus et Batrachomachiam etiam agnoscimus, nec quisquam est illustrium poetarum qui non aliquid operibus suis stilo remissiore praeluserit. (Stat. praef. ad *Silv.* 1)

From the joint evidence of these two passages we can conclude that there was at the time a light-hearted poem in circulation, known as the *Batrachomachia* or *Battle of the Frogs*, which was believed to have been written by Homer himself. Martial makes the attribution explicit in the title of his epigram; Statius does not, but the fact that he couples the poem with the pseudo-Vergilian *Culex* and then refers to 'our famous poets' puts it beyond reasonable doubt that he considered the *Batrachomachia* a work of Homer.¹ Martial Book XIV is unlikely to have been published earlier than AD 84 or later

¹ Although the titles given to Martial's epigrams are generally of later date (Lindsay 1903, p. 34ff.), those attached to the *Apophoreta* are very likely to be the poet's own (Leary 1996, p. 57), since he acknowledges in 14.2 that his provision of *lemmata* (on which see Kay 1985 p. 161) is unusual. Even were the title of 14.183 a late addition, however, Martial's views on the authorship of the *BM* are clear: 'Maeonian' in Latin poetry usually designates Homer (cf. Hor. *Od.* 4.9.5-6 *Maeonius... Homerus*, Ov. *Tr.* 2.377), and the epigram is part of an alternating sequence (183 *BM*, 184 *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, 185 *Culex*, 186 the works of Vergil) which only makes sense if the *BM* stands in the same relationship to Homer as the *Culex* does to Vergil. Indeed, Leary 1996, p. 248 argues from this epigram and Petr. 56.7-10 that the *BM* might have been a customary Saturnalia present.

than 95 (Leary 1996, pp. 10-11); the first three books of the *Silvae* were probably published between 90 and 95 (Nauta 2002, pp. 285-9).² This gives us a *terminus ante quem*, and a little more besides. Enough time must have elapsed between the *BM*'s composition and AD 85-95 for Martial and Statius – both men of letters – to regard it as an undoubtedly Homeric work. We can only speculate on how much time it would take for this to occur, but it is probably fair to suggest that the delay must have been at least fifty years, and perhaps longer.³ Can the boundary line be moved any earlier?

Plutarch's *Life of Agesilaus* contains a joke attributed to Alexander the Great, on hearing of Antipater's campaign against Agis III: ἔοικεν, ὦ ἄνδρες, ὅτε Δαρεῖον ἡμεῖς ἐνικῶμεν μὲν ἐνταῦθα, ἐκεῖ τις ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ γεγονέναι μυομαχία (15.4). Given that the joke depends on a contrast between two wars, alluding to the *BM* here would be a very elegant way of suggesting not only that Antipater's victory was a minor affair, but that it was effectively small-scale comic relief compared to a far more august model – the *Iliad* of Alexander's Persian campaign.⁴ On the other hand, it would be understandable for a

² *Batrachomachia* is well supported as an alternate name for the poem, and in fact seems to predate the longer form. It is used by several of the *Lives* of Homer, as well as the oldest extant manuscript, Z. See Ludwig pp. 11-12 for a brief summary of the evidence, or Glei pp. 23-33 for a more detailed discussion. If, as I suggest on pp. 49-50, other mock-epics pitted the mice against a range of foes, *-myo-* would have been superfluous; only once the *BM* became the sole survivor of its kind would the need have arisen to specify both forces involved.

³ The *Culex* might provide a useful analogue, since by Suetonius' time it was regarded as a genuine work of Vergil's (*Vita Vergili* 17-18), but unfortunately the question of its dating is also seriously vexed: see Güntzschel 1972, particularly the daunting 'Chronologische Übersichtstabelle' at the end (pp. 241-57). In addition, the situation with Vergil would have been slightly different; as a poet who had died within the last century, it is more plausible that a poem which emerged decades after his death could have been held up as a genuine work which had somehow escaped notice, overlooked in some box of papers. The appearance of a new poem by Homer, which would have had to pass mysteriously unnoticed for several centuries, might be expected to attract more comment.

⁴ Such an implication would hardly be surprising, given the theme of Homeric (specifically Achillean) self-identification that runs through Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*; cf. Mossman 1988.

‘mouse-war’ to become colloquial for an insignificant conflict, without any literary reference being intended: for mice as paragons of inconsequentiality, Glei compares Horace *A.P.*139 *nascetur ridiculus mus* (p. 31).⁵ Regardless, the anecdote itself is largely useless for purposes of chronology. As Wölke correctly points out (p. 58), it would not prove that Alexander had read the *BM*; only that Plutarch – or his *unbekannter Gewährsmann* – had. Since Plutarch’s *floruit* is almost exactly the same as Martial’s, this tells us nothing we did not already know.

Similarly, Plutarch *de Herod.* 43 mentions the claim that the Greeks at Plataea knew nothing of the battle until it was over, ὥσπερ βατραχομαχίας γινομένης, ἣν Πίγρης ὁ Ἀρτεμισίας ἐν ἔπεσι παίζων καὶ φλυαρῶν ἔγραψε – ‘as though it had been the Frog War which Pigres, Artemisia’s (brother?), wrote about in light-hearted and mocking verses’.⁶ Even if we do not accept Stephanus’ emendation of βατραχομαχίας to βατραχομομομαχίας, this is very likely a reference to the *BM*; Wölke’s suggestion (p. 54) that a *batrachomachia* might have been proverbial for a war fought with a lot of loud shouting rather than any actual military engagement is ingeniously argued, but ultimately unnecessary. Admitting that Plutarch probably knew the *BM* does not involve any concessions over the poem’s date, given that we already have the contemporary evidence of Martial and Statius for its existence and attribution.⁷

⁵ *Myomachia* would be unusual as a title for the poem. The only other possible instance is Proclus’ *Chrestomathy*, where among the poems attributed to Homer we find the βατραχομαχίαν ἢ μυομαχίαν, much later adjusted to simply βατραχομομομαχίαν; West brackets the second title. Given the apparent popularity of ‘animal epics’ in the ancient world (see Section III below), it is quite plausible that Alexander was referring to the literary or artistic *topos* of a mouse-war, but not to the *BM* as we know it.

⁶ On the mysterious Pigres and his relationship to Artemisia, see pp. 19-21.

⁷ It is also very likely that the reference to the ‘frog war’ is an interpolation; see p. 21.

There is one more potential ancient reference to the *BM*, although it is not literary but archaeological. On display in the British Museum is a large decorative relief, dated to 225-205 BC and signed by its sculptor, Archelaus of Priene. The scene depicted is the Apotheosis of Homer: the great poet sits on a throne at the bottom left, being crowned by two figures labelled as ΟΙΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ and ΧΡΟΝΟΣ. A variety of gods, Muses, and allegorical personifications are in attendance, and Zeus himself is seated at the very top. Homer's throne is flanked by two crouching figures, identified in the captions as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; and under the throne, on either side of a fallen book-roll, are two small animals.

One of these animals is unquestionably a mouse. The other is a mystery. When the relief was found in the 17th century, its surface was damaged along the bottom. In 1787-8 it was restored by Vincenzo Pacetti, who reconstructed the second animal as a frog, on the assumption that the two creatures were intended as a reference to the *BM*: Homer's two famous epics crouch at his sides, and his best-known minor work scampers around his feet. In 1908 the reconstructions were largely cleared away and the relief was restored to something more like its original state; by this stage, however, the idea of the frog had taken hold, and its presence continues to be invoked in scholarship (e.g. by Bliquez 1977). In fact, the animals seem originally to have been a pair of mice. Giovanni Battista Galestruzzi made an engraving of the relief in 1658, before Pacetti's tampering, which shows two mice; and Cuper 1683 refers to the 'mures prope ὑποπόδιον'.⁸ This leaves us with the question of whether we can legitimately construe a brace of mice, and no frogs, as a reference to the *BM*.

⁸ Some commentators, such as Wölke and Pinkwart, feel that there is enough left on the stone to see the outline of the second mouse: 'Gekrümmter Buckel, spitzer Kopf und langer Schwanz kennzeichnen auch das sehr zerstoßene rechte Tier eindeutig als Maus' (Pinkwart 1965, p. 59).

One such alternative was already being proposed by Cupper: ‘mures prope ὑποπόδιον, chartulas rodentes, vel notant Batrachomyomachiam ab ipso scriptam, vel invidios, instar murium corium, similesque res rodentium, ejus famam vellicasse et lacerasse’. He thought that the mice might represent critics like Xenophanes and Zoilus of Amphipolis, who had nibbled away at the great man’s works, but ultimately been unable to prevent his ascension to the status of divine poet; however, he concludes by favouring the *BM* argument. Three hundred years afterward, the suggestion of allegory earned Wölke’s approval: he argues that one of Homer’s scrolls has slipped to the floor and that ‘die kleinen, unwürdigen Mäuse’ are trying to destroy it, but in vain – ‘die Rolle ist unversehrt’ (p. 68). For critics as destructive rodents, he adduces Cicero *pro Balbo* 57: *in conviviis rodunt, in circulis vellicant, non illo inimico, sed hoc malo dente carpunt* (of those who criticise Balbus).

On the other hand, Wölke’s arguments against seeing the mice as a nod to the *BM* are not especially strong. He judges it suspicious that the *BM* is not mentioned among the captions on the relief’s base, whereas the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are clearly labelled; yet there is little available space below the relief, and the figures which are given captions are mostly those it would be hard to identify by any other means (for example, ΜΥΘΟΣ is an unremarkable youth carrying a wine-jug). He also argues that with the exception of Homer himself, the scene on the relief is entirely composed of allegorical figures, and that the appearance of two actual characters from a work by the poet would be out of place. We may fairly ask how else the *BM* should be allegorically represented, if not by mice. One need not assume that the mice below the throne are meant to ‘be’ Psicharpax or any of his fellows; the simplest way of symbolising a poem about mice would surely be to carve some mice. West opts for a very straightforward explanation, namely that the

mice are vermin, with no allegorical or literary significance at all: for the *topos* of poetry books being nibbled, he compares Juv. 3.207. This is possible, but ‘real’ nibbling mice (as opposed to mice *qua* carping critics) would surely offer a reminder of impermanence and the ravages of time – unexpected in a scene whose purpose is to stress that Homer’s works will last for all eternity.⁹

The evidentiary problems with the Archelaus Relief are only compounded by the confusion surrounding its date. The display board next to the relief in the British Museum dates it to 225-205 BC. A. H. Smith, who catalogued the piece for the Museum in 1892, assigned it on epigraphic grounds to the 2nd century BC. Doris Pinkwart placed it around 130 BC, on the basis of letter-forms and the details of objects and costumes depicted; West 1969, Gleis, and Wölke all follow her dating. Wackernagel declines to be specific, and merely offers ‘the end of the 3rd century or the the middle of the 2nd’. The discrepancy between the date advertised by the Museum and that found in most of the modern scholarship is puzzling. I must reluctantly follow Wackernagel: ‘ich bin nicht kompetent ein massgebendes Urteil über dieses Zeugnis zu fällen’ (p. 198). Nonetheless, the relief is over two centuries older than our earliest literary references to the *BM*.

Despite valiant efforts, no really convincing explanation has been put forward for why a pair of mice should make a cameo appearance on a relief celebrating Homer’s eternal fame, if they are not an allusion to one of his works. Archelaus of Priene must have associated mice with Homer to an extent that he gave them this place of no small

⁹ West 1969, p. 123 n. 35. The joke in the Juvenal passage is that the poems’ status as *divina... carmina* does *not* save them from being chewed by the *opici... mures*, ‘philistine mice’. Of the other parallels West puts forward, Lucian *Ind.* 17 argues that if a man buys books and fails to benefit therefrom, he is merely storing away τοῖς μυσὶ διατρίβας... καὶ ταῖς τίλφαις οἰκήσεις, ‘lodgings for mice and dwellings for worms’; *AP* 6.303 is a threat levelled by the epigrammatist against the mice who are ‘sharpening their teeth’ on his books. None of these provide any support for the suggestion that *immunity* to mice might be the sign of an immortal poet.

honour in his carving – perched at the feet of the deified poet, a few inches from the knees of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It is, *pace* Wölke, by no means ‘offenkundig, dass die Darstellung auf dem Archelaos-Relief mit der Batrachomyomachie nichts zu tun hat’ (p. 67). If Martial can refer to the poem simply as ‘the ballad of the Frogs’, there is no reason why the absence of a frog should remove the possibility of a reference to the *BM*, any more than we would say a picture of Achilles could not allude to the *Iliad* because there was no sign of Hector. It is possible, of course, that Archelaus knew of another mouse poem attributed to Homer; but only one poem relating to mice and/or frogs is ever listed under Homer’s name anywhere in ancient literature, and we should start from the assumption that it was this poem Archelaus had in mind.¹⁰

¹⁰ As explained below (pp. 49-50), it is possible that some or all of the other *-machia* poems which appear in lists of Homeric *carmina minora* also had mouse protagonists. But I suspect that, if so, the *BM* was the earliest of them; it was certainly the best known. It is very unlikely that Archelaus would have known of another animal epic attributed to Homer, but not of the *BM*.

ii. Intertext¹¹

The *BM* contains references and allusions to various works of Greek literature, and is in turn quoted or alluded to by many other works. Most of these cases will be dealt with in the commentary as they arise; this section will mention only those which are of relevance to establishing the poem's date.

Callimachus (mid-3rd c. BC)

It is clear that the *BM* poet had read Callimachus. Athene's speech at 177-96 is indebted to the story of Molercus in the *Aetia*, most obviously in the points she mentions as causes of complaint (stealing lamp-oil, preventing sleep, and chewing holes in clothes; in both cases it is the damage to clothing which is isolated as the biggest annoyance). μάγειροι at line 40 is a clever allusion to the *Hymn to Demeter* (see *ad loc.*), and line 3 was probably inspired by γὰρ ὅτε πρόωτιστον ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα | γούνασιν (*Aet.* fr. 1.21-2) as well as by its Homeric model, xix.401.

¹¹ Modern Classical scholarship is one long multiplication of intertexts, following the dictum of Hinds 1998 that there is 'no such thing as zero-interpretability' (p. 34), since all language automatically comes freighted with meaning acquired over the course of all its previous deployments. I do not deny this in principle, but for the study of a text like the *BM* – full of deliberate, self-conscious references to earlier models, which the poet is counting on his audience to recognise – some distinction is required between intertexts which deserve comment and those which do not: in the terminology of Fowler 2000, not all the *BM*'s intertexts need stories told about them (p. 13). Maciver 2012 suggests that 'a concept as broad as intertextuality will not do for a certain type of textual behaviour in Classical literature: the tight verbal imitation apparent in Alexandrian and Roman poetry' (p. 11). Lyne 1994 similarly acknowledges the problem of deciding when an intertext is 'readable and identifiable enough actually to constitute an intertext' (p. 189). Throughout this commentary I have used, for intertexts I judge readable and identifiable enough to tell a story about, the obsolete term *allusion*; it should not be inferred from my use of this word that I claim to understand the poet's intentions or to read his mind.

Aratus (mid-3rd c. BC)

The emergence of the crabs at the end of the *BM* may be an allusion to Aratus' discussion of weather-signs, where crabs and mice appear in the same list of storm-portents (1138-41): see *ad* 294-303. Conversely, it is tempting to read Arat. 946-7 as an allusion *to* the *BM*: the frogs are described via an amusing piece of epic periphrasis (πατέρες ... γυγίνων, 'fathers of tadpoles'), and are referred to as ὕδροισιν ὄνειαρ, 'a gift to water-snakes'. Giving the frogs a kind of genealogy would be very much in line with the *BM*'s technique of epicising its combatants (cf. 19-20); but Physignathus actually escapes the ὕδρος, and the parallel is nowhere near strong enough to justify trying to push the *BM*'s date back by almost another century.

Apollonius Rhodius (mid-3rd c. BC)

Several lines in the *BM* become funnier or more effective if the reader is familiar with the *Argonautica*. The choice of the Eridanus as a domain of the Frogs (20) may have been inspired by Apollonius' description of the river as impossible for birds to fly over (4.599-601; highly appropriate given the fate of the nameless frog in *The Frog and the Mouse*, p. 40 below). At line 72 Psicharpax is terrified by ἀηθείη while trying to reach land, which probably echoes the Argonauts scaring off the Stymphalian Birds with ἀηθείη while trying to reach land (2.1064-6). Most strikingly, *BM* 181 subverts the solemnity of *Argonautica* 4.475 to great comic effect. Occasional points of phrasing may also have been borrowed from Apollonius, such as γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν (7) and πάντες δ' οὐρανόθεν (196). On all these see further *ad locc*.

Moschus (mid-2nd c. BC)

Scholars have sometimes identified Psicharpax' journey across the pond on the frog king's back (65-81), which is explicitly compared in the text to the myth of Europa's abduction by Zeus (79), as a specific allusion to the narrative of Moschus' *Europa*.¹² This has important repercussions for dating: given Moschus' *floruit*, allusion here would mean the *BM* could not have been written before 150 at the earliest. There are two main points of comparison:

- i) the mouse's terrifying voyage was *not* like the journey of Europa (78-9)
- ii) the mouse trailed his tail in the water ἤϋτε κώπην (74).

The first point relies on the reader imagining Europa's voyage as a peaceful, idyllic interlude, as Moschus depicts it; the second looks like a comic reworking of Moschus' description of the girl's robe billowing in the wind 'like the sail on a ship' (ἱστίον οἷά τε νηός, 130).

Although no detailed literary treatments of the Europa-myth before Moschus survive, we know it was a popular theme in both literature and art from the archaic period onwards. Campbell 1991 lists the evidence for earlier versions in literature (pp. 1-7). Works titled *Eὐρώπη* are attributed to Eumelus (Σ on VI.131), Stesichorus (fr. 195), Simonides (fr. 562), and Aeschylus (fr. 99-101); Pausanias refers to ὁ δὲ ἔπη τὰ ἐς *Eὐρώπην* ποιήσας (9.5.8) without naming an author. Bowra 1961 describes versions of the scene depicted on Greek pottery dating from c. 550 BC: 'in one Europa looks at a flower while she rides; on the other she gallops gaily over the sea, while fishes tumble about the bull's hooves... In all these versions *the charming and constant element is the*

¹² E.g. Leopardi 1962 and West, who wrote in 1969 that '[this] passage is reminiscent of Moschus' *Europa*' (p. 123), but in 2003 went further and said explicitly that 'the poet alludes to the narrative of Moschus' famous epyllion *Europa*' (p. 271 n. 15).

completely untroubled air of Europa who rides on her remarkable beast as if she were going quietly over a meadow and not over the sea' (p. 125; italics mine). Clearly this aspect of the story did not originate with Moschus, and Wölke is quite wrong to suggest (p. 115) that 'es ist nicht unwahrscheinlich, daß Moschos der erste war, der Europas Ritt zu einer Idylle ausgestaltete'. It is likely that the detail of the robe acting like a sail was also known to earlier versions: a mantle or scarf billowing out behind Europa is already found on vases from the 5th and 4th c. BC.¹³ Certainly this single point of similarity is not enough to prove that the *BM* passage was intended to parody Moschus, particularly since there are no signs of textual allusion to or reminiscence of Moschus anywhere else in the poem.¹⁴

Bion (late 2nd c. BC)

The *BM*'s line-final $\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta'\ \epsilon\nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ (132) / $\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta'\ \epsilon\nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\epsilon$ (215), although a natural enough expression, is found very rarely elsewhere in Greek poetry; the only other example from before the 5th c. AD is Bion fr. 13.3 $\ast\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\epsilon$. It is possible that one poem adopted it from the other, but equally possible that both borrowed it from a source now lost, or that

¹³ E.g. Vienna, Kunsthist. Mus. IV 189, a stemless cup from Apulia dated to 440-430 BC; Malibu, Getty Mus. 81.AE.78, a calyx krater by Asteas dated to c. 340 BC (*LIMC* s.v. 'Europe I', 72 and 74 respectively). There is a Campanian bell-krater (Paris, Louvre K 239) from 350-40 BC showing Europa letting a fold of her robe hang from one raised arm, in a curious gesture which looks very much as though she is trying to create an impromptu sail (*LIMC* 75); but here the bull is evidently on land, standing still and surrounded by youths.

¹⁴ Wölke similarly concludes that Psicharpax' journey is an amalgam of literary tropes, rather than a reworking of any one particular predecessor: 'So gibt es kaum ein Motiv in dieser Partie der *BM*, das nur erklärbar wäre durch den Rückgriff auf eine bestimmte Gestaltung der Europasage' (p. 118). Campbell 1991 mentions the possibility that the *BM* and Moschus were both indebted to an earlier model, and suggests (p. 84) that Moschus' $\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\nu$ 'much-burdened' (83) and the *BM*'s $\phi\acute{o}\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\nu\ \xi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (78) could be allusions to the same original; this is possible, but the evidence is too scanty for proof.

both coined it independently; and even were the relationship direct, there would be no way to determine whether Bion had borrowed from the *BM* or *vice versa*.

Diodorus Siculus (mid-1st c. BC)

Describing how a giant snake killed two men sent to hunt it, Diodorus says καὶ τὸν μὲν πρῶτον ἀρπάζει τῷ στόματι (3.36.7): this is curiously similar to *BM* 113 καὶ τὸν μὲν πρῶτόν γε κατέκτανεν ἀρπάξασα, again describing how the first of a set of individuals was killed by a wild animal. The point is too flimsy to be marshalled in support of an argument for dating, however.

Statilius Flaccus (late 1st c. BC / early 1st c. AD)

The minor epigrammatist Statilius Flaccus provides our first definite example of an author alluding to an episode from the *BM*, rather than referring to the poem itself (as Martial and Statius do). His epigram on a crab (*AP* 6.196) –

ῥαιβοσκελῆ, δίχαλον, ἀμμοδυέταν,
ὀπισθοβάμον', ἀτράχηλον, ὀκτάπουν,
νήκταν, τερεμνόνωτον, ὀστρακόχροον
τῷ Πανὶ τὸν πάγουρον ὀρμηβόλος,
ἄγρας ἀπαρχάν, ἀντίθησι Κώπασος. 5

is very similar to *BM* 294-9, in which Zeus sends the crabs to drive off the rampaging mice. There is little chance of coincidence: in both cases we have a list of unusual adjectives describing the physical attributes of the crab(s), presented in asyndeton. It is striking that the two passages have no epithets in common other than ὀκτάπουν / ὀκτάποδες, suggesting deliberate variation was at work. The debt could apply in either direction, but Statilius' adjectives are noticeably more obscure: the *BM* uses several

words which are relatively common in Greek (στρεβλοί 295, βλαισοί 297), where Statilius has only *hapaxes* or very *recherché* vocabulary. ὀστρακόδερμος (*BM* 295) is a standard Greek term for a crustacean from Aristotle onwards; ὀστρακόχρως (*AP* 6.196.3) means the same, but is a *hapax*. The natural conclusion is that it was Statilius who was trying to avoid repeating terms which had already appeared in the *BM* passage, even when this meant coining new synonyms for established Greek words. His dates are uncertain, but Gow and Page 1968 conclude from a Latin translation of one of his epigrams, attributed to Germanicus, that he ‘must have flourished not much if at all later than the first decade A.D.’ (v. 2 p. 451).

The external evidence, therefore – in terms of references to the *BM*, whether explicit or allusive – certainly rules out a date any later than the 1st c. BC. If we accept the mice on the Archelaus Relief as a nod to the *BM*, the date is pushed back to the mid-2nd c. at the latest.

iii. Linguistic evidence

Study of the poem’s language has usually focused on separating the *BM* from Homer himself: Brodeau 1549 arguably led the way by pointing out that the word τροπαιον (*BM* 159) is unknown to both Homer and Hesiod, and does not appear in Greek until the 5th c. BC (p. 417). The presence of δέλτοισιν at 3 and ἀλέκτωρ at 192 also attracted suspicion at a very early stage, since neither writing-tablets nor the domestic cockerel were introduced to Greece until well after the Homeric period.¹⁵

¹⁵ Rothe 1788 (p. 13) and Goess 1789 (p. 15) both objected to the *BM*’s use of δέλτος. On ἀλέκτωρ see *ad* 192.

Van Herwerden set out to prove, on grounds of vocabulary, grammar, and metre, that the *BM* could not be a work of Homer or of the hypothesised Classical poet Pigres (on whom see pp. 19-21), and undoubtedly succeeded. His corrections to the text are generally without merit, and some of his arguments are entirely subjective, based on notions of what an early poet ‘could have written’ in an aesthetic sense – on 65-66 he exclaims with Ciceronian sarcasm ‘quam eleganter dictum est ἔβαινεν ἄλματι, quam bene χειρᾶς ἔχων κατ’ αὐχένος!’, which would not be a helpful analysis even were ἄλματι at 65 the correct reading – but he fires so many shots that a few bull’s-eyes are guaranteed. He rightly points out several post-Classical items of vocabulary (such as νῆξις at 68 and ἀκόλυμβος at 159), notes the use of speech-introduction formulae with τοῖος as alien to Homer, and overall amasses enough evidence to sink any notion of the *BM* as an archaic or Classical poem beyond hope of retrieval. However, because his concern is to disprove early authorship rather than actually to date the poem, he is not precise about dates: from his point of view, a word first found in Callimachus is no different to one first found in Galen, since both serve to demonstrate that the *BM* was not composed in the 5th c. BC. He calls the author ‘recentem poetastrum Alexandrinum, non veterem vatem Halicarnassium’ (p. 171), and his withering but vague conclusion (p. 176) calls the poem ‘conditum a nescio quo impostore, quales post Alexandri tempora vixerunt permulti, quo pluris aestimaretur a bibliopolis sub Pigretis nomine vendidatum esse suspicor idque fortasse haud ita diu ante aetatem, qua vixerunt scriptores qui eius faciunt mentionem, Plutarchum dico et quos initio nominavi scriptores Latinos’ (i.e. Martial and Statius).

Wackernagel, no admirer of the *BM*,¹⁶ went further, and tried to prove that the likeliest date on linguistic grounds was somewhere late in the 1st c. BC, or even into the 1st c. AD. If his arguments are correct, then another explanation must be found for Archelaus' mice. Some may be admitted without difficulty: he notes that the verb πλήσσω, used at 273 (οὐ μικρὸν πλήσσει Μεριδάραπαξ), is unknown to older Greek in the present tense except as part of a compound. The first example he lists is Call. *Del.* 306, which involves no concessions on our part. Several linguistic or semantic shifts he mentions seem first to occur in their later form in the Septuagint: for example, κρατεῖν meaning 'hold onto, hold' (*BM* 63, 233), as opposed to its Classical sense of 'have power over, master, surpass'; ἰσχυεῖν (*BM* 279) meaning 'be sufficient, able', rather than literally 'be strong'; and the existence of compound words in which a short -ο precedes an unelided vowel, such as the *BM*'s μονοήμερος (a word which otherwise first appears in the *Book of Wisdom*). The Septuagint is uncertainly dated and was probably written over more than one century, but its earlier parts may well date back to the 3rd c. BC, so none of these criteria can reliably be deployed to counter an early-2nd c. date for the *BM*.

More problematic is ἀπλοῦν. A relatively late development from the adjective ἀπλοῦς 'single' or 'simple', the verb has two possible meanings in Greek: 'simplify, make straightforward' (e.g. M. Ant. 4.26 ἀπλωσον σεαυτόν 'be simple'), and 'unfold, spread out, open up'. It appears at *BM* 81 in the latter sense, and again in the compound form ἐξαπλοῦν (but with the same meaning) at 106. ἐξαπλοῦν first occurs with the sense 'unfold' in Philo (1.302), i.e. early in the 1st c. AD; the simple form does not appear with this sense until later still (perhaps Paus. 4.11.2). Composition in the 2nd c. BC would

¹⁶ '...die unter dem Namen Batracho(myo)machie als angebliches carmen Maeonium zu unverdientem Ansehen und unverdientem Einfluß in der Weltliteratur gelangt ist' (p. 188).

make these words with this sense at least two centuries earlier than their next attested usage.

The argument which Wackernagel himself finds most compelling revolves around the *BM*'s use of the word *πτέρωνα*, which appears several times in the poem, always meaning 'ham'.¹⁷ This is unique: elsewhere in Greek it only ever means 'heel'. The one doubtful case is the nickname *πτερονκοπίς*, applied by Menander (fr. 276) to a parasite named Philoxenus, which Lobeck construed as 'ham-cutter' by reference to Plaut. *Capt.* 903; Wackernagel instead explains it as relating to the verb *πτερονκοπεῖν*, glossed by Pollux 2.197 and 4.122 as meaning 'to stamp one's heels in the theatre'. The usual word in later Greek for ham is *πέρωνα*, a transliteration of the Latin *perna*. The *BM*'s use of *πτέρωνα* can best be explained as a false epicisation of this latter word, on the model of the Homeric *πτολέμος* for *πολέμος* and *πτόλις* for *πόλις* (no doubt assisted by the fact that *πτέρωνη* meaning 'heel' does occur in Homer, at XXII.397). As Wackernagel points out (p. 197), various words relating to butchery and meat products made the jump from Latin into Greek, but generally not until the beginning of the Imperial period; the only exception he mentions is the word *ἄλλᾱς*, which Kretschmer 1909 explains as having been exported into Greece from the colonies of Magna Graecia some time in the 5th c. BC. *πέρωνα* itself does not appear until Strabo (3.4.11). On the other hand, its Latin equivalent *perna* is an old word (it appears in Plautus), and as a product involved in trade and commerce there is no reason why it should not have found its way

¹⁷ It appears once at 37, and then also as the first element in the names of various mice: *Pternotroctes* (29), *Pternoglyphus* (224) and *Pternophagus* (227, although I follow previous editors in deleting this line). It also appears at 46, during the interpolated extension to Psicharpax' speech (42-52); boasting that he does not fear man, the mouse claims that he will sometimes climb onto a bed and bite the tips of the occupant's fingers, *καὶ πτέρωνης λαβόμεν*. In this context it must carry its usual sense of 'heel', which is as good a reason as any to treat the line as suspect.

into Greek by the 2nd c. BC; we need only explain why it appears nowhere else in extant literature during the 2nd and 1st centuries, and this may partly be due to its banality.¹⁸

The argument from usage is not by itself convincing, since our historical record of the Greek language is so lacunose. Wackernagel himself admits (p. 191) that ‘es an sich ohne Beweiskraft ist, wenn ein Wort der Batrachomachie sonst nur bei einem späten Autor belegt ist’, since ‘das Fehlen in ältern Texten kann leicht auf Zufall beruhen’. The question is whether a text has *enough* vocabulary unknown to a particular period that we can safely discount it as a product of that period. Wackernagel’s main purpose, like that of van Herwerden, was to refute the notion that the *BM* could have been composed in the 5th c. BC or earlier: he was particularly aiming at Ludwich’s theory that it dated to around the time of Herodotus. Between his work and van Herwerden’s, there can no longer be any suggestion of placing the poem any earlier than the 3rd century BC, and probably no earlier than the 2nd.¹⁹ Beyond this point he admitted his doubts. On p. 198 he suggests that the poet ‘kann nicht lange vor der augusteischen Zeit gelebt haben’, but on the following page he acknowledges that the evidence does not point in any clear direction, and the final line of his analysis is more *cri de coeur* than resounding verdict:

¹⁸ There is a similar problem with ψίξ, ‘crumb’, which never occurs in its simplex form in the *BM* but is the root of the name Ψιχάριον. The word appears first in Plu. *Mor.* 77f, but its late arrival in literature would not be especially surprising.

¹⁹ The fact is worth restating, since an early date for the *BM* had supporters well into the 20th c. Lesky 1971 favours the mid-6th c. BC, and Dihle 1967 (p. 39, 312) and Bliquez 1977 both opt for the 5th c. (although by the time the revised edition of his book was published in English, in 1994, Dihle had altered his dating to the 3rd c.). Bliquez argues strongly in favour of Classical Athens as the poem’s point of origin, but overlooks some factual points: as well as dating the Archelaus Relief to ‘the late third (or perhaps early second) century’, without mentioning Pinkwart’s analysis, he says in the course of his description that ‘a frog and a mouse appear at the feet of the great poet’, although we can be certain (as explained above, p. 3) that the frog was only ever introduced by overimaginative reconstruction in the 17th century. He also relies heavily on interpolation in order to bypass the linguistic evidence for a later date, essentially claiming that any line containing Hellenistic elements must be a later addition. This Procrustean approach to the text really invalidates any attempt to date it at all.

‘wie soll man sich aus dem Dilemma helfen?’ (p. 199).²⁰ I do not find sufficient evidence in either Wackernagel or van Herwerden to disprove 2nd-c. authorship: the words which occur earlier than we might expect are few in number and domestic in nature, and it does not seem implausible that they should be found in the *BM* and then disappear from the literary record for another century or so.

Conclusion

The combined weight of linguistic and intertextual evidence demonstrates that the *BM* cannot have been written before the beginning of the 2nd c. BC, or perhaps the very late 3rd c. A definite *terminus ante quem*, meanwhile, is established in the late 1st c. BC by the epigram of Statilius Flaccus. Within this field, it is the dating and significance of the Archelaus Relief which will provide the deciding factor. None of the explanations put forward for the presence of two mice at the feet of Homer seem convincing, compared to the possibility that they represent the poem which was certainly considered a minor work of Homer by learned poets of the 1st c. AD. Assuming Pinkwart’s dating of the relief to 130 BC is more or less correct, we need only leave enough time for the *BM*’s origins to have become sufficiently muddled that it could plausibly have been attributed by Archelaus to Homer. I would therefore favour dating the *BM* to around 180 BC, with a margin of error of perhaps a decade either side.

²⁰ West 1969 overstates the case when he says ‘Wackernagel has proved that [the *BM*] cannot have been composed earlier than the first century B.C.’ (p. 123 n. 35).

B. AUTHORSHIP

The passages discussed in the previous section demonstrate that there were two competing ancient accounts of the *BM*'s authorship: the Homeric claim espoused by Martial and Statius among others, and that mentioned in Plutarch, which attributed it to the mysterious Pigres.

Doubts over the attribution to Homer existed even in antiquity. West assembles ten 'Lives of Homer' dating from the Roman and Byzantine periods; of the five of these which mention the *BM*, the earliest (the pseudo-Herodotean *Life*, which is likely to have been written before 160 AD, judging by a reference in Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks*) describes it as a genuine work of Homer, Hesychius' *Index of Famous Authors* says it is attributed (ἀναφέρεται) to Homer, and the other three all say explicitly that it is *not* Homeric.²¹ Renaissance scholarship did not regard the issue as settled: James Duport, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, discussed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in his *Gnomologia* (1660) before adding 'ignoscant mihi eruditi, si Batrachomyomachiam et Hymnos, utpote ambo dubiae et suspectae fidei Opuscula, hic omittam'. However, any notion of the *BM* as a genuinely Homeric work has been convincingly squashed as a side-effect of the same philological analysis described above; since it is impossible that the poem could have been written before the 3rd c. BC, it was demonstrably not composed anywhere near the time of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Pigres the Carian is something of a puzzle. His first appearance in relation to the *BM* is in the passage from *On the Wickedness of Herodotus* quoted above (p. 3), where he is

²¹ Pseudo-Plutarch's *On Homer* I, Proclus' *Chrestomathy*, and the second anonymous *Vita Scorialensis*. Of these ps.-Plutarch is almost certainly the oldest, although exactly *how* old is very difficult to determine. The second, more detailed work of the same title attributed to Plutarch, which does not mention any 'Homeric' poems except the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, may date from around the end of the 2nd c. AD (Hillgruber 1994).

described as Πίγρης ὁ Ἀρτεμισίας. This is ambiguous: the most natural meaning would be ‘son of Artemisia’, although Wyttenbach 1797 suggested that πολίτης should be added to give the meaning ‘fellow-countryman of Artemisia’. More detail is provided by the *Suda* s.v. Πίγρης:

Πίγρης, Κὰρ ἀπὸ Ἀλικαρνασοῦ, ἀδελφὸς Ἀρτεμισίας τῆς ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις
διαφανοῦς, Μανσώλου γυναικὸς· ὃς τῇ Ἰλιάδι παρενέβαλε κατὰ στίχον
ἐλεγεῖον, οὕτω γράψας·
μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος -
Μοῦσα σὺ γὰρ πάσης πείρατ’ ἔχεις σοφίης -
οὐλομένην...
ἔγραψε καὶ τὸν εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀναφερόμενον Μαργίτην καὶ
Βατραχομομαχίαν.

The *Suda* states explicitly that Pigres was the *brother* of Artemisia, and that he wrote three works: an extended version of the *Iliad* in elegiac couplets, the *Margites*, and the *BM*. However, the whole entry is deeply suspect, as it conflates two different historical Artemisias: the 5th-c. figure described by Herodotus and consequently by Plutarch, who fought for Xerxes at Salamis, and the 4th-c. wife of Mausolus who built the famous tomb in his honour. The only known connection between either of these women and an individual called Pigres is Herodotus 7.98, where a Carian admiral called Pigres son of Hysseldomus is mentioned just before a description of Artemisia I; Herodotus does not suggest that the two were in any way related, other than both being Carian (presumably why Wyttenbach hit on the notion of πολίτης). In addition, it is highly unlikely that any single author could have written both the *Margites* and the *BM*, since the current scholarly consensus on the *Margites* makes it genuinely old.²² The facts are best explained

²² See West p. 227. In the case of the *Margites* a useful *terminus ante quem* is provided by the fact that, according to Eustratius of Nicaea (CAG xx.320.36), the 5th-c. BC comic poet Cratinus alluded to it (fr. 368).

by Wölke's suggestion (p. 56) that the *Suda* knew of a Pigres who had written 'playful' or imitative epic – perhaps even the elegiac *Iliad* it describes – and that Herodotus was then mined for biographical detail, despite the Pigres in Book 7 being an entirely different individual.

In support of this argument, it has been pointed out that the passage in Plutarch which attributes the *BM* to Pigres is itself bizarre. Plutarch's point is that Herodotus depicts the Greeks as unaware of the Battle of Plataea until it was already over, 'as though it were the *Battle of the Frogs*...' There is no reference in the *BM* as we have it to any battle being fought unbeknownst to one or other side. Some scholars (e.g. Weland 1833) were so disturbed by this mismatch that they proposed the existence of a second *Batracho(myo)machia*, written by Pigres, in which the course of events was completely different, and which is now lost. A more plausible way of reading the passage is to take βατραχομαχία as meaning simply 'an insignificant military engagement', so the sense becomes 'the Greeks failed to realise that Plataea was occurring, as though it were beneath their notice'.²³ Even so, the syntax is perplexing, and the remark as a whole has very little relevance to either the narrative of the *BM* or the account of Plataea given by Herodotus.²⁴

²³ Ludwich argued in a slightly different direction, claiming that the essential point of the *BM* was its fairytale nature: 'das *tertium comparationis* liegt demnach in dem nahezu märchenhaft weltentrückten, schweigsamen, geheimnisvollen Thun, in der fast mystischen Stille und Exklusivität beider Handlungen' (p. 21). I find very little that is 'almost mystical' about the *BM*.

²⁴ Glei (pp. 25-7) discusses the problem at length, and proposes as a solution a kind of twofold interpolation. He suggests that Plutarch did not originally intend any literary allusion here; the reference to the *BM* was added at a later stage, perhaps having been accidentally transferred from a previous sentence, and the attribution to Pigres was a marginal note which eventually became incorporated into the text. This does nothing to resolve the issue of how 'Pigres' became associated with the *BM* in the first place, but does go some way towards making sense of Plutarch's description.

We can be almost certain that some kind of damage or tampering has befallen this puzzling sentence; in its current state it is barely comprehensible. As such, our earliest piece of evidence for Pigres the Carian as the author of the *BM* loses much of its credibility. It is very unlikely that any such individual as ‘Pigres, the brother of Artemisia’ ever existed – whichever Artemisia one chooses – and even more unlikely that he had anything to do with the composition of the *BM*. The compilers of the *Suda* may have known a garbled tradition that a poet named Pigres had composed an extended version of the *Iliad* in elegiac couplets; however, the biographical details of his life have been borrowed from an entirely different Pigres who appears in Herodotus, and the attribution of the *Margites* and *BM*, the two most famous faux-Homeric poems, to this shadowy individual smacks of desperation. The two principles behind Ludwig’s edition of the poem – that it had been composed in the 5th century BC, and that Pigres the Carian had been responsible – only barely supported each other’s weight; once one is removed, the other collapses entirely.²⁵

²⁵ See also the discussion in Bliquez 1977, pp. 13-16.

II. PARODY AND PASTICHE

For what relates to the Scope and Import of the Fable, I am not persuaded with Aristobulus, that Homer compos'd it only for the Diversion and Exercise of School-Boys; the Design appears to have been more momentous, it carries a Face of Instruction upon the Matter of Civil Government, and the Moral is plainly Political.

- from the preface to Parker 1700

The *BM* is most commonly identified by modern scholarship as a work of parody. The *Neue Pauly* calls it 'die einzige vollständig erhaltene und zugleich bedeutendste Homer-P[arodie]' (*DNP* s.v. 'Parodie'); the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* calls it 'this unfunny parody of epic battle narrative' (p. 39); Olson & Sens 1999 offer it as a particularly important example of the genre of epic parody (p. 12).²⁶ The picture is, of course, a little more complex than this. The *BM* certainly has points in common with the literary form known to the Greeks as *παρωδία*, but we should be cautious about equating this directly with the modern concept of *parody*; nor was *παρωδία* the only generic stream which flowed into our frog-haunted *λίμνη*.

The origins of the word 'parody' have been much rehearsed, but at least a brief tour is called for here. It first appears in Euripides, *IA* 1147, when Clytaemnestra expresses her intention to speak plainly to Agamemnon:

ἄκουε δὴ νυν· ἀνακαλύψω γὰρ λόγους,
κούκέτι παρωδοῖς χρησόμεσθ' αἰνίγμασιν.

Here it must mean something like 'oblique' or 'indirect',²⁷ but the presence of the root -ωδη ('-song') suggests that Euripides was not using the word in its original sense; songs

²⁶ *HE* s.v. '*Batrachomyomachia*', more helpfully, calls it 'a miniature epic poem'. The *BM* does not merit its own entry in *OCD*, but is mentioned s.v. 'Parody, Greek'.

²⁷ England 1891, p. 116: '*παρωδοῖς*' apparently *distorted*, or *distorting*. In this adj., which does not seem to occur elsewhere, the main significance lies in the *παρά*. Stockert 1992 offers 'dunkel

and singing have no relevance to Clytaemnestra's remarks. We may assume that it was not a word Euripides had made up for the purpose.²⁸ In the context of literary criticism, meanwhile, we do not find it until Arist. *Po.* 2.3, where Hegemon of Thasos is named as the founder of a new genre: Ἡγήμων δὲ ὁ Θάσιος ὁ τὰς παρωδίας ποιήσας πρῶτος.

The only extended ancient discussion of literary παρωδία which survives to us occurs in Athenaeus (15.698a-699c), and is apparently taken in large part from a passage in the twelfth book of Polemon's *πρὸς Τίμαιον* (2nd c. BC). This identifies Hipponax rather than Hegemon as the εὑρετής of the genre, but acknowledges that Hegemon was the first to enter παρωδίαί for a dramatic competition (εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας τοὺς θυμελικούς). Euboeus and Boeotus are singled out as famous παρωδοί: Athenaeus describes Euboeus as the most famous, with four books of παρωδίαί to his name, but also quotes an epigram of Alexander Aetolus which concludes ὃς δὲ Βοιωτοῦ / ἔκλυεν, Εὐβοίῳ τέρεται οὐδ' ὀλίγον. Hermippus, Epicharmus, and Cratinus are all given as examples of comic playwrights who use παρωδία in their plays (Cratinus specifically in his *Sons of Euneus*). All of this speaks to a literary form which is relatively well-defined, to the extent that one particular comedy can be singled out for making notable use of παρωδία. Elsewhere in the *Deipnosophistae* quotations are attributed to the παρωδός Matro of Pitane - Μάτρων ὁ παρωδός ἐν τῷ Δείπνῳ (2.62c), Μάτρων ἐν παρωδίαις (2.64c, 3.73e), κατὰ τὸν παρωδὸν Μάτρωνα (15.697f), etc.²⁹ – and to the otherwise unknown Sopater of Paphos (Σώπατρος ὁ παρωδός, 4.175c, etc.), who apparently wrote

andeutend, indirekt anklingend' for the sense, and compares the use of παράμους at A. *Cho.* 467 and E. *Pho.* 785 (p. 524).

²⁸ Rau 1967 compares Euripides' use of the words ἐπωδός (*Hec.* 1272) and προσωδός (*Ion* 359), in both of which the literal sense of the -ωδ- root seems to have faded.

²⁹ Ματρέας ὁ Πιταναῖος ὁ παρωδός (1.5a), who wrote about a dinner-party, is (as Olson points out in his Loeb edition *ad loc.*) plainly a mistake for this same Matro.

plays. There is one reference to Ξενοφάνης ὁ Κολοφώνιος ἐν παρωδαίαις (2.54e): if an original title, this would date the composition of works called παρωδαίαι back to the 6th c. BC, but it may of course have been applied later. Athenaeus records a passage of Matro which, in quasi-epic fashion, names several other poets – Euboeus, Hermogenes, more than one Philip, and Cleonicus: the fact that this group begins with Euboeus suggests that it was a catalogue of παρωδοί.

Comparison of the lines quoted by Athenaeus under the rubric of παρωδία yields some preliminary impressions. The passage of Hipponax he identifies as the first flowering of παρωδία is four lines of hexameter (Hippon. fr. 128) abusing the son of Eurymedon:

Μοῦσά μοι Εὐρυμεδοντιάδεα τὴν ποντοχάρυβδιν,
τὴν ἐν γαστρὶ μάχαιραν, ὅς ἐσθίει οὐ κατὰ κόσμον,
ἔννεφ', ὅπως ψηφίδι < > κακὸν οἶτον ὀλεῖται
βουλῇ δημοσίῃ παρὰ θῖν' ἄλός ἀτρυγέτοιο

Comic effect is created via the delivery of crude invective in a high epic, and indeed Homeric, style. Μοῦσά μοι ... ἔννεφ' imitates an epic proem. οὐ κατὰ κόσμον (*xx.181) and παρὰ θῖν' ἄλός ἀτρυγέτοιο (*I.316, 327, *x.179) are both Homeric phrases, and κακὸν οἶτον ὀλεῖται is clearly modelled on σὺ δέ κεν κακὸν οἶτον ὄληαι (III.417). The twenty-one lines of Hegemon quoted at 698d-699a (= fr. 1) demonstrate a similar technique: although direct quotation from Homer seems less concentrated than in the Hipponax fragment, the passage is full of Homeric reminiscence. In particular, μή τίς μοι κατὰ οἶκον Ἀχαιάδων νεμεσῆση (13) is a hybrid of ii.101 μή τίς μοι κατὰ δῆμον Ἀχαιάδων νεμεσῆση with τά μοι κατὰ οἶκον (*xix.18), and ὀλλύντων τ' ὀλλυμένων τε (8) combines ὀλλύντων τε καὶ ὀλλυμένων (IV.451 = VIII.65) and ὀλλύντας τ' ὀλλυμένους τε (*XI.83). The subject matter, meanwhile, is again 'low' and crude, with

abuse, mockery, and toilet humour (Hegemon comes under attack like an Iliadic hero, but he is pelted with πολλοῖσι σπελέθοισι, 'many lumps of shit').

Matro and Euboeus seem to have continued this approach, but made it more directly imitative than simply adaptive. Athenaeus (or Polemon) comments approvingly on a line and a half of Euboeus: μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθὸς περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο, κουρεῦ, / μήτε σὺ, Πηλείδη (fr. 2 = *Supp. Hell.* 412). This is *almost* an exact quotation from Homer, I.275-7, but κούρην 'girl' has been changed into the very similar κουρεῦ 'barber'. Matro's *Attic Dinner-Party*, of which a substantial amount survives, is full of jokes which work on the same principle: for example, Matro fr. 1.93-4 is based on Ajax' retreat at XVI.102-3, with a series of substitutions (ζωμός 'broth' for Ζηνός being particularly neat). The humour is learned and textual, depending for its effect on a more detailed knowledge of the Homeric poems than is required for Hegemon, but the essential comic point is the same: grandiose epic language and phrasing is used to describe undignified, low, or crude material. Alexander Aetolus' epigram commends its subject (it is not clear from the final lines whether Euboeus or Boeotus is meant):

... ἔγραψε δ' ὦνήρ
εὖ παρ' Ὀμηρείην ἀγλαΐην ἐπέων
πισσύγγους ἢ φῶρας ἀναιδέας ἢ τινα χλούνην
φλύοντ' ἀνθηρῇ σὺν κακοδαμονίῃ

'the fellow wrote skilfully, παρὰ the Homeric splendour of epic, of cobblers or shameless thieves or of some rascal spewing flowery wickedness' (5-8). παρὰ here is used in just the sense which must originally have given rise to the concept of παρ[ά]-ῶδή: 'based on', 'imitating', 'in the manner of'. The art of the παρωδός *ap.* Athenaeus, then, seems to lie in the disjunction between high style and low content.

παρωδία did not have to base itself on Homer. The technique employed by Matro and Euboeus had already been practised to great effect by the poets of Old Comedy: Aristophanes uses it repeatedly, but mostly with lines from tragedy as his models, rather than from epic (to take a favourite example, *Th.* 912 reworks *E. Hel.* 566 ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐς χέρας into the almost identical but much smuttier δάμαρτος ἐσχάρας).³⁰ The definition found in the Suda is taken from a scholion to *Ar. Ach.* 8: τοῦτο παρωδία καλεῖται ὅταν ἐκ τραγωδίας μετενεχθῇ λόγος εἰς κωμωδίαν. In an important work on comedy's use of language and motifs from tragedy, Rau 1967 demonstrated that there is a division in the scholia between the use of ἐκ (to denote an exact quotation) and παρὰ (to denote an adaptation), although he admits that this is not strictly observed, and ἐκ, ἀπό, and κατά are all found in the latter context from time to time (p. 9). *Ath.* 8.364b says that a passage of hexameter on dinner-party etiquette ἐκ τῶν εἰς Ἡσίοδον ἀναφερομένων Μεγάλων Ἠοίων πεπαρώδηται (although the ensuing lines are not indebted to Hesiod or the *Ehoiai* in any very obvious way). At 1.19d we hear of Matreas of Alexandria: ἐποίησε δ' οὗτος καὶ παρὰ τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους ἀπορίας καὶ ἀνεγίνωσκε δημοσίᾳ, διὰ τί ὁ ἥλιος δύνει μὲν κολυμβᾷ δ' οὐ, καὶ διὰ τί οἱ σπόγγοι συμπίνουσι μὲν συγκωθωνίζονται δ' οὐ... ('He composed parodies of Aristotle's *Problems* and read them out in public: 'why does the sun sink but not dive?', 'why do sponges soak up wine but never get drunk?'). The point of these appears to be that they borrow the format of the *Problems*, but ask stupid questions based on word-play rather than on any genuine scientific conundrum: again, serious manner married to unserious matter.

³⁰ For an example of comedy drawing on Homer for this kind of joke, cf. Cratin. fr. 352, χαλκίδα κυκλήσκουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ κύβηλιν – 'the gods call it a *khalkis*, but men a cheese-grater' – a slight adaptation of *xiv.*291, χαλκίδα κυκλήσκουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ κύμινδιν.

This is not the full extent of the semantic field covered by *παρωδία* and related words, as a few examples will suffice to demonstrate:

- At Luc. *Cont.* 14.5, Charon catches sight of Polycrates and asks Hermes 'who is this man I see, νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ; βασιλεὺς δέ τις εὐχεται εἶναι'. The line is formed from a combination of two Homeric phrases, *νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ (i.50, 198, xii.283) and *εὐχεται εἶναι (11x Hom.), with the non-Homeric but metrical βασιλεὺς δέ τις. Hermes comments εὖ γε παρωδεῖς, ὦ Χάρων. Charon's remark is not particularly funny or unexpected, and Hermes' praise seems to be directed at the skill with which he has composed a new 'Homeric' line from genuine Homeric elements.
- Aristonicus athetised XII.175-80 ὅτι παρῳδῶνται ἐκ τοῦ 'ἄλλοι δ' ἀμφ' ἄλλησι μάχην ἐμάχοντο νεέσσι' (XV.414), and marked for deletion the reference to the Atreid horses Aethe and Podargus at XXIII.295 ὅτι ἐντεῦθεν παρῳδῶνται τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν Ἑκτορος ἵππων, Αἶθων καὶ Πόδαργος. Here παρῳδέω seems to mean 'borrow from' or 'copy', again without any sense of comedy or incongruity.³¹
- Conversely, Porphyrius (3rd c. AD), when discussing Greek authors' love of 'stealing' from their predecessors, says Ἀλκαῖος δέ, ὁ τῶν λαιδῶρων ἰάμβων καὶ ἐπιγραμμάτων ποιητής, παρῳδῆκε τὰς Ἑφόρου κλοπὰς ἐξελέγχων (fr. 409F). Here the verb must have a sense much more like the modern 'parody' (see below), i.e. 'mock, criticise by imitation'.

³¹ There is perhaps a negative sense: 'plagiarise' might be a good English equivalent.

This list could be expanded at some length.³² However, if there is one common element to the various meanings of the *παρωδία*-family, it appears to be ‘reapplication’. The essence of *παρωδία* lies in taking something from A and altering it so it can be applied to B. This may be done by borrowing the style and vocabulary of epic and applying it to a crude comic narrative, as in our fragment of Hegemon; by borrowing a single line from Homer or Euripides and changing one or two words to give a new and ridiculous sense, as in Matro and often in Aristophanes; or even by borrowing lines from one point in an epic and reusing them, with adjustments, at a different point in the same epic (as in the *Iliad* scholia above). The disjunction may, but need not, result in comedy. Lucian’s Hermes compliments Charon on his *παρωδία* not because he has been amusing, but because he has neatly synthesised a new and appropriate line of hexameter from a box of Homeric scraps. Good *παρωδία* is witty, but need not be particularly funny.

In all of the above remarks I have taken care to use the Greek *παρωδία* rather than the English *parody*, because it needs to be made clear that the two words are not interchangeable. Certainly as literary techniques they have much in common, but their semantic fields are not coextensive. ‘Parody’ in English, as verb or noun, usually carries a sense of ridicule or mockery: popular authors are ‘parodied’ in order to draw attention to their stylistic quirks and infelicities; genres of film are ‘parodied’ in order to expose the tropes they exploit or overuse. The mockery may be affectionate and good-natured, but the parody is fundamentally a form of criticism.³³ This meaning is not unknown to

³² Householder 1944 is still the best detailed discussion. See also Lelièvre 1954, although I do not agree with some of his conclusions (for example, he considers the *BM* and Matro to be manifestations of the same basic comic technique, whereas I see Matro as engaging with Homer in a quite different way).

³³ Bertolín Cebrián 2008 overstates the case when he claims (pp. 7-8) that true parody is always political: ‘it denies certain values and intends to criticize an ideology perceived as tyrannical’. He

ancient literature, as shown by the quotation from Porphyrius above, but it is very rare: 'there does not seem to be a grain of evidence that any ancient παρωδίαι were designed to ridicule Homer' (Householder 1944, p. 3), and παρωδ- words are not generally used in contexts of mockery. An instructive English parallel would be Michael Frayn's *Twelfth Night; or, What Will You Have?*, which imagines a collection of Shakespearean nobles gathered at a 20th-century cocktail party:

*ESSEX: Ah, good Northumberland! Thou com'st betimes!
What drink'st? Martini? Champagne cup? or hock?
Or that wan distillate whose fiery soul
Is tamed by th' hailstones hurl'd from jealous heaven,
The draught a breed of men yet unengender'd
Calls Scotch on th' rocks?
NORTHUMBERLAND: Ay, Scotch, but stint the rocks.*³⁴

Any ancient critic would have labelled this instantly as παρωδία. 'High' diction and metre, associated with a great classic of English literature, is reapplied to a banal domestic scene, complete with strikingly un-Shakespearean vocabulary like *martini*; the tension between lofty style and low theme produces humour. Frayn's object in the above extract, however, is not to criticise Shakespeare. He is not suggesting that Shakespeare's history plays are themselves ridiculous, merely that their distinctive features *become* ridiculous when reused in an inappropriate context. Compare this with Housman's famous *Fragment of a Greek Tragedy*:

*CHO. Might I then hear at what thy presence shoots?
ALC. A shepherd's questioned mouth informed me that –
CHO. What? for I know not yet what you will say.*

suggests that young people compose parody as a way of rebelling against dominant model texts; 'when the younger group becomes empowered and accepts the model texts, their parody ceases'. Although this is undoubtedly *one* reason for the creation of parody, it seems counter-intuitive to suggest that it is the *only* reason.

³⁴ Reprinted in Brett 1984, pp. 311-13.

ALC. *Nor will you ever, if you interrupt.*
CHO. *Proceed, and I will hold my speechless tongue.*³⁵

or indeed with Ezra Pound's parody of Housman's own poetry:

*The bird sits on the hawthorn tree
But he dies also, presently.
Some lads get hung, and some get shot.
Woeful is this human lot.*³⁶

In each case the humour derives not from reapplication, but from exaggeration. Neither passage contains anything alien to the model text. Housman's *Fragment* mocks both the clunky translation of Greek idioms into literal English ('at what thy presence shoots') and the characteristic tragic device of forcing pointless lines into dialogue in order to preserve stichomythia. Pound's parody exaggerates the pervasive melancholy of *Last Poems* (the bird in the tree simply dies, without explanation) while preserving many of Housman's quirks of vocabulary ('lads' is particularly recognisable). This type of parody works by remaining so close to the original text that it can almost be mistaken for the 'real thing', rather than by consciously differentiating itself through the inclusion of incongruous language or themes.³⁷

The definition of parody has been much debated in modern criticism and theory, and this is not an appropriate place for a full examination of the question, but it may be helpful to make brief mention of Gérard Genette's theories on hypertextuality. Genette

³⁵ First published in *The Bromsgrovian*, 1883.

³⁶ Reprinted in Brett 1984, p. 195.

³⁷ John Gross' introduction to *The Oxford Book of Parodies* begins 'A parody is an imitation which exaggerates the characteristics of a work or a style for comic effect' (Gross 2010, p. xi). He takes the exaggerative, Housman/Pound style as the basic type of parody, and considers as more doubtful cases the sorts of works which would have seemed central to an ancient commentator. Gross says "While shepherds washed their socks by night' is also a parody, after another fashion"; Athenaeus would have considered it the very embodiment of *παρωδία*, as an imitation of a serious work in which key words are replaced with phonetically-similar but ridiculous equivalents.

1997 (p. 28) splits the overall category of textual allusion or ‘hypertextuality’ into six sub-categories, divided both by relation (whether the model text is actually altered, or simply imitated) and by mood (intent).

	RELATION	transformation	imitation
MOOD			
serious		<i>transposition</i>	<i>forgery</i>
playful		<i>parody</i>	<i>pastiche</i>
satiric		<i>travesty</i>	<i>caricature</i>

This is a valuable framework for considering ancient conceptions of *παρωδία*, which was in some ways a broader church than modern ‘parody’. For one thing, it offers a clear distinction between the techniques of the fragments discussed above: Hegemon is engaged primarily in imitation, Matro in transformation. Since the intent of both authors seems to have been comic but not critical (at least, not critical of the model text), we can group them under ‘playful’, meaning that under Genette’s rubric Matro is writing true *parody*, where Hegemon is writing *pastiche*. This is not intended to suggest that the Greeks themselves would have perceived any formal difference between the two: both are writing low comic narratives in a faux-Homeric style, and therefore both are writing *παρωδία*. The purpose of this short detour is rather to establish a more secure footing for analysis of the *BM*’s stylistic affiliations.

The *BM* is never described by any ancient source as *παρωδία vel sim.*, nor is it cited in any extant discussion of *παρωδία* (not that many survive). It makes no use of the Aristophanic art of significant adjustment to an extant line, except to swap the names of characters: 24 is an alteration of a speech-formula found 11x in Homer, and 137 is modelled on V.468 (see *ad locc.*). Its basic technique is similar to that of the Hegemon fragment: use of Homeric vocabulary, metre, and style, sometimes with the

appropriation of entire phrases from Homer, in order to create a pervasive atmosphere of heroic epic. It never derives humour from reworking a specific line of Homer, the technique Athenaeus commends in Euboeus; it does, however, occasionally use lines akin to Lucian's νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ; βασιλεὺς δέ τις εὔχεται εἶναι, which seem to have been 'assembled' from pieces of several different Homeric originals. These are discussed in detail on p. 55, but their existence might have led Lucian, at least, to comment εὖ γε παρωδεῖς.

Moving from technical to thematic criteria, the *BM* is of course an example of a 'low' theme being treated in 'high' style: the language of heroic epic is used to depict the deeds of small animals. Just as Euboeus' *Battle of the Bathmen* presumably involved attendants at a bath complex locked in inappropriately Iliadic conflict, the *BM* describes mice and frogs παρ' Ὀμηρείην ἀγλαΐην ἐπέων. Yet it lacks the element of overt, almost slapstick humour which is present in most of the works Athenaeus characterises as παρωδία. Matro's narrator squabbles with a fellow diner over a dish of red mullet (fr. 1.28-32); Hegemon's is pelted with shit by his neighbours. The παρωδός praised by Alexander Aetolus wrote about πισσύγγους ἢ φῶρας ἀναιδέας ἢ τινα χλούνην / φλύοντ' ἀνθηροῇ σὺν κακοδαμονίῃ; this implies characters with low social status, but also low *morals* – as though it were important that the poem's action involved shameless, undignified, or criminal behaviour.

It is this sense of pettiness which is largely absent from the *BM*. Although the Mice and Frogs are smaller than humans, they fight with a ferocity and a dignity that befits their human equivalents. The frog king Physignathus is characterised as cowardly and two-faced (see p. 39), Psicharpax the mouse is perhaps too keen on his food, but much of the poem's action is genuinely epic, if reduced in scale. Psicharpax' death-scene

is dramatic; Troxartes' lament for his dead son is touching; the battle is fierce and gory, with casualties and acts of heroism on both sides (so far as the damaged text permits us to see). There is no meanness, none of Alexander's *κακοδαίμων*.³⁸ The closest we come is with Athene's grumbling about interest payments at 184-5. The tiny size of the combatants is repeatedly mined for comedy, as at 7, 170-1, 240, 284; there is humour in their homely equipment (cabbage-leaves for shields, 163; walnut-shell knuckledusters, 265-6?), and in the gods' fear of their prowess (193-5, 278-9); but there is no obvious humour in their behaviour, at least not until the very end, when the mice are driven away in panic by the sharp claws of the crabs (301-2). The fundamental joke of the poem is exactly that it treats mouse and frog warriors as though they were as formidable and dangerous as Achilles or Hector.³⁹

To refer to the *BM* as a specimen of *παρωδία* is a supposition, but probably a fair one. *παρωδία* in ancient criticism was a term with wide-ranging applications, and the *BM*'s Homeric imitation combined with its harnessing of grand style to playful theme

³⁸ Though the distinction of Bertolín Cebrián 2008 between anti-establishment parody and socially conservative *παίγνια* is not persuasive, his description of the *BM* is an accurate one: 'the *Batrachomyomachia* relates the battles of frogs and mice in somewhat Homeric terms, but there seems to be no intention of degrading the heroes. Certainly enough, it might seem odd to us that frogs and mice would battle to death, but the little creatures are represented, nevertheless, in heroic terms and their efforts are not less appreciated than those of real heroes' (p. 4, p. 96).

³⁹ There is a separate question, although one we can hardly hope to settle on current evidence, of whether ancient audiences would have considered the *BM* funny. I record above (p. 23) the judgement of Easterling in the *CHCL* that it is an 'unfunny parody', but this is of course predicated on the expectation that it *should* be funny: the *BM* is a parody of Homer, parodies are written to be amusing, and so one that does not make us laugh is a failure. Yet *παρωδία* was not necessarily humorous, and modern literature offers ample proof that a story populated with talking animals is not automatically funny: Orwell 1945, Adams 1972, and Jacques 1986 all include comic elements, but in none is the fundamental fact of animals speaking like humans treated as a source of comedy. For the sake of transparency, I record here my personal impression that very little in the *BM* would have made an ancient audience laugh out loud, but that much of it would have brought a smile to the face of any reader familiar with the basic tropes and themes of epic (which is to say, in the ancient world, any reader). Martial's *frontem ... soluere* is, I think, accurate. In the end this is a question of individual taste, but in the Commentary I at least attempt to point out some of the jokes.

would probably have been enough to bring it under the umbrella – for Lucian, at least, if not for Athenaeus. It is in referring to the *BM* as a specimen of *parody* we must be more cautious. The predominant modern sense of the word, that of criticism via imitation, is almost entirely absent. There are exceptions: the confusion over life and death during the battle sequence (although itself badly obscured by the state of the text; pp. 109-15) is very likely an exaggeration of the *Iliad*'s tendency to resurrect minor characters and treat corpses as though they are alive, and the strange two-stage ending of the poem – Zeus' failed thunderbolt, followed by the arrival of the crabs – is certainly modelled on the conclusion of the *Odyssey*. The *BM*'s overall purpose, however, is not to poke fun at Homer. In Genette's terminology, its intent is playful rather than satiric; it belongs, like Hegemon, to the category of *pastiche*, or playful imitation – although its sense of humour is more gentle and less anarchic than Hegemon's seems to have been. Gross 2010 defines pastiche as 'a composition in another artist's manner, without satirical intent – an *exercice de style*', and such a description fits the *BM* well.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Schmitz 2007, discussing Genette's categories, gives the *BM* as his example of ancient pastiche (pp. 82-3). A curious feature of the *BM* which serves to distinguish it from almost all other works of its kind, whether ancient *παρωδία* or modern pastiche, is its lack of an author (cf. Kelly 2014, p. 1 n. 1). Our first references to it – the Archelaus relief, Martial, and Statius (see Section I above) – already present it as a work of Homer. This means either that its real author's name was lost very early in its transmission (within only a few decades of composition!) or that it was originally *published* as a work of Homer. The latter would cast a striking light on the poet's intentions. If he (or she) wanted the poem to be taken for a genuine Homeric composition, he would obviously not want to exaggerate Homeric characteristics or quirks beyond a certain level. Most modern parodies, even those which adhere very closely to the style and form of their model, include for comic purposes one or two abrupt lurches into the obviously unbelievable: indeed, this is often the 'punchline' of the work. That Martial and Statius considered the *BM* to be Homeric proves that nothing in it seemed to an ancient audience to be completely beyond the bounds of what Homer might have written. This serves as a useful check on our analysis of the poem; if something in the text appears ridiculous, it would presumably have seemed just as ridiculous to ancient readers (who were if anything more familiar with Homer than we are), and we therefore need to ask why it did not shatter the persistent illusion of Homeric composition.

III. FROGS AND MICE

quid Mures et Ranae eorumque certaminum commentum plane fabulosum ad Trojanos et Graecos Heroas?

- Maittaire, *Annales Typographici* v. 1 (1719), p. 183

The first talking animals in Western literature are the horses of Achilles, who temporarily gain the power of speech at the end of *Iliad* XIX in order to prophesy the death of their owner. Hesiod's *Works and Days* includes the cautionary tale of the cruel hawk who carries off the nightingale, proving that Hesiod's audience was familiar with the device of animals speaking to one another. Aristophanes mined the comic potential of animals behaving like humans, most extensively in *Birds*, and it seems that he was far from the only playwright to do so: we know of several other comedies named after animals, including Eupolis' *Goats* (frr. 1-34) and Archippus' *Fish* (frr. 14-34). In addition, the vast majority of the traditional fables that survive from ancient Greece have anthropomorphic beasts and birds as their protagonists.

Both mice and frogs are relatively common actors in animal fable. Below is a brief survey of their appearances in the fabular tradition, as culled from Perry 1965.⁴¹ Many of these are relatively late, but probably date back far earlier than their first textual attestation. Two – Babrius 31 and Perry 384 – will be considered separately and at greater length following the list.

⁴¹ This survey does not include every reference to mice in Perry, but concentrates on those fables in which a mouse or mice appear as principal actors. In a few cases, such as Perry 197, they are mentioned only as prey for larger animals. I preserve Perry's titles for the sake of reference, though they are of course not original.

i. Mice

Babrius 31, *The Mice and their Generals*: see below (~ Phaedrus 4.6)

Babrius 60, *Surfeited at Last*

Babrius 107, *The Lion and the Mouse*

Babrius 108, *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse*

Babrius 112, *The Battle of the Bull and the Mouse*

Phaedrus 4.2, *The Weasel and the Mice*

Perry 354, *The Mouse and the Blacksmiths*

Perry 384, *The Mouse and the Frog*: see below

Perry 454, *The Mouse and the Oyster*

Perry 561, *The Owl, the Cat, and the Mouse*

Perry 592, *The Cat as Monk*

Perry 613, *The Mice take Counsel about the Cat*

Perry 615, *The Mouse in the Wine Jar and the Cat*

Perry 619, *The Mouse in quest of a Mate*

Perry 692, *Bishop Cat*

Perry 716, *The Mouse and her Daughter, the Rooster and the Cat*

ii. Frogs

Babrius 24, *The Frogs at the Sun's Wedding* (~ Phaedrus 1.6)

Babrius 25, *Why the Hares Refrained from Suicide*

Babrius 120, *Physician Heal Thyself*

Phaedrus 1.2, *The Frogs Asked for a King*

Phaedrus 1.24, *The Frog who Burst Herself and the Cow*

Phaedrus 1.30, *The Frogs Dread the Battle of the Bulls*

Perry 43, *Two Frogs*

Perry 69, *Two Frogs were Neighbours*

Perry 90, *Viper and Watersnake*

Perry 141, *The Lion and the Frog*

Perry 189, *The Ass and the Frogs*

Hausrath 307, *The Puppy and the Frogs* (not in Perry; identified by Adrados & van Dijk 2000 p. 439 as 'a modern, anomalous fable')

Certain basic trends emerge from this material. Mice are used as exemplars of gluttony and its dangers (Babr. 60, 108, Perry 454, 615),⁴² but are also capable of shrewd judgement and common sense (Babr. 108, Perry 561, 613, 716); aged mice are especially wise (Phaedr. 4.2, Perry 692). The mouse is often a symbol of the advantages of being small or inconspicuous, especially when contrasted with larger and more powerful animals (Babr. 107, 112, Perry 619). Frogs are less consistently portrayed, but the most significant common thread seems to be a kind of *hubris*. The frog in Babr. 120 boasts of his divine skills; in Phaedr. 1.24 a frog over-reaches herself and dies, in Perry 69 a frog refuses to move to safety and is crushed, and in Phaedr. 1.2 the frogs' mockery of their first 'king' leads to divine punishment. Even Perry 141 is a comment on the disparity between the frog's loud voice and its lack of real strength; the moral is clearly directed at big talkers who cannot make good on their boasts. Babr. 25 suggests that frogs were considered notable for timidity, which Perry 90 supports; Phaedr. 1.2 refers to them as

⁴² For another example of the mouse as an incautious eater, cf. *AP* 9.310, an epigram by Antiphrilos in which a mouse eats gold dust and is so weighed down by it that he is caught and killed. Gow and Page 1968 (v. 2 p. 139) note that 'the theme is taken from life', with examples of the same motif in prose works (Plut. *Mor.* 526b, Pliny *NH* 8.222, Theophr. fr. 174.8).

pavidum genus, which may be a translation of Arat. 946 δέλαιαι γενεαί. Both a mouse and a frog encounter a lion (Babr. 107, Perry 141), but the mouse proves himself useful despite his tiny stature, whereas the frog is punished for his pretensions of grandeur. Babr. 108 and Perry 69 both employ the trope of two animals comparing their habitats, but the point is quite different: the country mouse decides that moving in with his neighbour would be too dangerous, despite the benefits, whereas the frog in the road stubbornly declines to move in with his neighbour even though he would be safer, and is promptly killed. *DNP* s.v. 'Frosch' notes that frogs in fable 'erscheinen sie als feige, dumm und überheblich'.

The portrayal of both species in the *BM* is entirely consistent with fable. Psicharpax is over-fond of his food (30-55, acknowledged by Physignathus at 57), and although the poem does not make it explicit, there is perhaps a suggestion that his desire to sample new foods contributes to his acceptance of the frog's offer and hence his death.⁴³ On the other hand, the Mice acquit themselves well in combat, despite their size; they not only rout the Frogs but by the end of the poem are undaunted by Zeus' thunderbolt. This race of tiny but courageous gluttons would have been instantly recognisable to an ancient audience accustomed to fable. The Frogs, although warlike at 160-7 and effective in the early stages of the battle, are eventually put to flight (269).⁴⁴ Physignathus, meanwhile, is arrogant and boastful (see *ad* 9-21, 13, 25-7), but fails to stand by his new ally when the water-snake materialises (84-6); there is some evidence that he fares badly in the battle (see *ad* 248). Beyond these generic similarities, however,

⁴³ Audiences familiar with the longer version of the *Fable of the Mouse and the Frog*, as in the *Life of Aesop*, would have been more likely to come to this conclusion; there the mouse agrees to ride on the frog's back because he has been invited to dinner.

⁴⁴ In addition, I understand both σκάζων ἐκ πολέμου ἀνεχάζετο (248) and οὐχ ὑπέμεινεν ἦρωας κρατερούς (258-9) as referring to frog warriors: see *ad locc.*

there are two fables in particular – *The Mouse and the Frog* and *The Mice and their Generals* – which seem of direct relevance to a discussion of the *BM*'s literary heritage.

iii. The Mouse and the Frog (Perry 384)

Although this story does not appear in the fable-books of either Phaedrus or Babrius, the two earliest 'literary' collections of Aesopic fables,⁴⁵ it turns up in the *Life of Aesop* and in nearly twenty different prose paraphrases in Mediaeval manuscripts. Boiled down to its common essentials, it runs as follows: a mouse once wanted to cross a river, and asked a frog for help. The frog tied the mouse to him with a piece of string and began to swim, but halfway across he treacherously dived beneath the surface, causing the mouse to drown. A passing bird saw the corpse floating on the surface of the water and snatched it up, dragging the frog along too.⁴⁶ The moral is usually given as 'people who seek to harm others do not escape punishment', or in some manuscripts the rather more catchy *qui aliis fodit foveam, ipse sepius incidet in eam*. In some versions, including that in the *Life of Aesop*, we learn that the mouse had first invited the frog to dinner; the frog returned the invitation, but drowned his guest *en route*. The *Life* also adds the detail that the mouse uttered a curse against the perfidious frog before he died.⁴⁷

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that the poet of the *BM* knew this fable, presumably in a version similar to that found in the *Life*; too many of the plot points recur for mere coincidence. Wölke considers, but correctly dismisses, the possibility that

⁴⁵ Almost nothing is known of either of these men. Phaedrus, we are told by the principal manuscript of his work, was a freedman of the Emperor Augustus; Babrius cannot be dated with any security.

⁴⁶ Sometimes the mouse does not actually die, and the bird is attracted by its frantic struggles to get away from the frog, meaning that the moral consequence is effectively the same.

⁴⁷ For more detail on this, see Commentary *ad* 92-8.

the *BM* might have inspired the fable (pp. 95-8).⁴⁸ Frogs are not obvious enemies for mice, and if the *BM* poet simply wanted to tell a story of a Homeric war between two rival tribes of animals, it is hard to see why he would have picked mice and frogs as his subjects; see below. On the other hand, the differing natures of the landlubberly mouse and the amphibian frog are obviously crucial to the point of the fable. It is easier, therefore, to assume that the mouse/frog connection originated with the fable and was borrowed by the *BM* than it is to postulate the reverse.⁴⁹

The main difference between fable and *BM* (apart from the replacement of the hungry bird with the mouse army which is necessary for the poem's Iliadic second half) is one of characterisation. In most versions of the fable, the frog's intentions are explicitly stated to have been malicious from the start; the retelling in elegiac couplets found in the 'verse Romulus' (attributed by Hervieux 1894 to Gualterus Anglicus, perhaps 12th c.) begins:

*Muris iter rumpente lacu, venit obvia Muri
Rana loquax, et opem pacta nocere cupit.*

The *BM* adds the device of the water-snake, which diminishes the frog's culpability. The poet may perhaps have wanted to make the situation a little more morally ambiguous,

⁴⁸ See also Merkle 1992 p. 121 n. 28.

⁴⁹ Frogs and mice are occasionally associated elsewhere. There is a folk-song (number 16 in the Roud Folk Song Index), first recorded in 1548, which tells the story of how a frog came to seek a mouse's hand in marriage; it has been covered by many 20th-century folk artists, most often under the title 'Froggy Went A-Courting'. In the standard version, the wedding is all set to go ahead when a cat arrives on the scene and devours the mouse bride (Miss Mousey) and her male guardian (Master/Uncle Rat); the frog flees, only to be rather unexpectedly eaten by a duck. However, it is hard not to see this as essentially a mutated form of the old fable: the frog 'betrays' his rodent friends by abandoning them to their fate, and is consequently eaten by a bird of prey, although the emphasis on poetic justice has been entirely abandoned, so that the frog's death comes across as something of a *non sequitur*. Intriguingly, during India's summer flooding in 2006, a photograph was taken of a mouse riding on a frog's back to escape the floodwater, suggesting that the original fable may actually have been based on observed behaviour: see Image 1.

so that the Frogs are less obviously at fault – a better match for the morality of the *Iliad*, which generally refrains from casting the Trojans as the ‘villains’ of the piece.⁵⁰

iv. The Mice and their Generals (Babrius 31; Phaedrus 4.6)

The two fabulists tell this story in slightly different ways. Of the two, Babrius’ version goes into more detail. After a long history of war with the Weasels, the Mice decided the reason for their lack of success was the absence of any conspicuous generals or commanders among their ranks, which led to disorder in the chaos of battle. They duly appointed the best among them (τοὺς γένει τε καὶ ῥώμῃ / γνώμῃ τ’ ἀρίστους, εἰς μάχην τε γενναίους), and then organised their army into squadrons and units, ὡς παρ’ ἀνθρώποις. In their next battle they were again defeated and put to flight; most of the mouse soldiers escaped safely into their holes, but the generals – who had been equipped with ceremonial headgear to make them more visible in the fray – could no longer fit through the entrances, and were seized by the Weasels and devoured. A helpful epimythium explains the point of the story: it is safer to be unknown than to be noticeable. Phaedrus omits the description of how the Mice came to the decision that they needed generals, and starts the story with the mouse army already fleeing in disarray (*cum victi mures mustelarum exercitu*); he also gives less detail about the generals’ fatal headgear, describing them simply as *cornua*, where Babrius specifies that the

⁵⁰ Wölke argued that since the snake’s appearance could not have been predicted, the frog is essentially blameless, and Psicharpax’ dying curse is ‘zumindest objektiv’ unjustified: ‘hat die Maus keinen Anlaß, sich hintergangen zu fühlen’ (p. 97). Having just been abandoned to a miserable death by someone who had offered him guest-friendship, Psicharpax may surely be pardoned for failing to maintain his objectivity. It is also notable that Physignathus lies about his own rôle in the death at 147ff., which puts him clearly in the wrong. See further *ad* 82-98.

insignia were λεπτὰ πηλίνων τοίχων / κάρφη, 'small fragments from mud-brick walls'.⁵¹

The basis of the *BM* is a synthesis of these two fables. *The Mouse and the Frog* must have been the inspiration for the poem as a whole, and explains the counterintuitive choice of frogs as an enemy for mice (on which see below). *The Mice and their Generals*, meanwhile, provides the crucial image of a mouse army going to war like human soldiers, complete with leaders, tactics, and appropriately sized equipment.⁵² Of these, the story of the mouse on the frog's back is not found before Aesop, but the warlike mice have a considerable history.

Phaedrus includes in his account the intriguing remark that the story of the battle, as opposed to its eventual outcome, is 'depicted in all the taverns' – *historia quot sunt in tabernis pingitur*. No archaeological evidence has yet been found for this sort of anthropomorphic narrative being used for interior decoration in the Greek world, so we can only take Phaedrus' word for it. What we do have, however, is a long tradition of scenes from animal stories appearing in Egyptian art. Brunner-Traut 1963 reproduces several (pp. 63-8), including a papyrus illustration of a finely-dressed mouse lady being waited on by several cats, a terracotta relief from the Greco-Roman period of a boxing match between a cat and a mouse, and – most significantly for our purposes – a scene

⁵¹ The popularity of mouse-and-weasel stories is suggested by Ar. V. 1181-5: when Aristophanes wants to conjure up an inappropriately childish story for a symposium, he opts for 'Once upon a time there was a mouse and a weasel...'. We may infer that the story of the mouse and the weasel would have been particularly well-known to his audience. Unfortunately Philocleon is cut off too soon for us to be able to tell which story was meant.

⁵² An alternative version of the fable (Hausrath 174 Ib) describes the mice δόρατα καὶ ἄρματα ἐξ ἀχύρων λαβόντες, a detail probably inspired by the arming-sequence in the *BM*.

from a papyrus of the Ramesside period (13th-11th centuries) depicting a mouse army, under the command of a mouse pharaoh in his chariot, laying siege to a cat fortress.⁵³

The War of the Mice and the Cats has been a popular story throughout history. It dates back at least as far as the Ramesside papyrus, and Brunner-Traut 1954 lists several Middle Eastern versions of the story from the 10th century AD up to the 20th; the image of the Mice laying siege to the Cats' castle was popular as a woodcut print in 16th and 17th century Europe, and turns up in the context of interior decor among the 12th-century murals of the Johanneskapelle in Püregg, Austria.⁵⁴ For much of Greek history it was the weasel, not the cat, which was the mouse's typical domestic predator, so we might expect Greek versions of this scene to depict mice laying siege to a weasel fortress.⁵⁵ In fact, no such image has survived anywhere in Greek or Roman visual art, but since 1983 we have had access to the next best thing – fragments of a mock-epic *Galeomyomachia*, or 'Battle of the Weasel and the Mice'.

⁵³ Regarding Egyptian mouse armies, Morenz 1954 draws attention to the curious episode in Herodotus (2.141), in which the Pharaoh Sethos (= Shabataka/Shebitku), faced with an Assyrian invasion of Egypt under Sennacherib (i.e. in the early 7th century BC), prays to his god Hephaestus for aid. He is rewarded with an army of mice, which swarm through the Assyrians' camp the night before the battle, chewing up their bowstrings, shield-straps, and other paraphernalia, and eventually force them to flee because of a lack of usable weaponry. Herodotus says that a statue of Sethos still stands in the temple of Hephaestus, depicted with a mouse in his hand. Morenz suggests that mice had no cultic significance in ancient Egypt, but Asheri et al. 2007 note that 'the μυγαλῆ, 'shrew-mouse, field-mouse' (/ichneumon) was associated with Horus of Letopolis and certainly enjoyed a cult at Buto' (p. 283). The Assyrian incursion seems in fact to have been halted by an epidemic which struck the army during its siege of Jerusalem (cf. J. AJ X 1.3.5). Since 'there is no evidence that the [Egyptians] associated [mice] with disease' (Lloyd 1988, p. 104), the mouse-statue may have been a simple thanksgiving offering to Horus, from which the story developed. Compare the anecdote in the A-scholia to I.39 about the Cretan colonists whose armour-straps were similarly chewed away by mice during the night, in this case as a sign from Apollo (n. 60, below, and Commentary *ad* 7).

⁵⁴ Although in this case it is a mouse castle that is being besieged by cats – in defiance of the usual *monde renversé* principle.

⁵⁵ See the succinct discussion of the 'cat problem', with bibliography, in Hopkinson 1984 (p.167).

iv. The *Battle of the Weasel and the Mice* (P.Mich.inv. 6946; Schibli 1983)

P.Mich.inv. 6946, dated by Schibli to the 2nd or 1st c. BC, contains two columns of text amounting to roughly forty partially or wholly legible lines, plus several other lines which only survive as traces. The stichometric sign for '400' which appears at one point shows that our text begins at line 361 of the poem; West assumes that the previous lines must have been on a different topic, since 'what we have is evidently the beginning of the story of the mice and the weasel' (p. 231), but this is partly because of the supplement he prints in the first line:

Μοῦσά μοι ἔννεπε]ε νεῖκο[ς] ὅπως [πολέμ]ου [κρυ]όεν[τ]ος

The restored text as printed by Schibli is less obviously a beginning:

]ε νεῖκο[ς] ...ως..[.....].οντες

Schibli himself suggests that some of the previous 360 lines may have dealt with the events which led up to the outbreak of the war.

What we have of the text is enough to establish that it was a mock-epic in the Homeric style. It makes heavy use of phrases from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: two lines (13 and 58) are speech-introduction formulae taken from the Homeric epics. Some of the echoes of Homer may be coincidental (e.g. πρῶτον γάρ μιν at 6, which appears in the same *sedes* at IV.480, but may also have been used in countless other hexameter works since lost), but elsewhere deliberate allusion is clearly at work. The passage at the end of the surviving text, in which the mice assemble for a council of war and are addressed by the elderly Myleus, makes plain its debt to *Od.* xxiv: the speech introduction ὁ σφιν ἔϋφρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν (58), used four times in the *Iliad* and six in the *Odyssey*, begins the speech of Halitherses at xxiv.453; and τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε Μυ[λ]εύς, ὃς [π]ᾶσι δ[ί]καζεν (55; note that -ᾶσι δ- is very doubtful) echoes xxiv.451

τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε γέρων ἥρως Ἀλιθέροης.⁵⁶ The line describing Trixus' grieving wife, meanwhile – τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμφιδρυφῆς ἄλοχος οἴκῳ ἐλέλειπτο (7) – is a slight reworking of II.700, with οἴκῳ replacing the toponym Φυλάκη (a debt which casts the slain Trixus in the rôle of the Iliadic Protesilaus). If anything, although the state of the text makes firm conclusions difficult, the *GM* seems to make more use of Homeric borrowings than does the *BM*: for example, only one of Homer's distinctive formulaic speech-introduction lines surfaces in the *BM* (24; see p. 54 below), whereas the scanty remains of the *GM* already provide us with two.

It is very probable that the existence of a faux-Homeric mouse-and-weasel epic, if not of the *GM* itself, predated the composition of the *BM*, and that the poet of the *BM* was not the first to hit on the idea of mice fighting like Homeric heroes in a hexameter narrative. The reference to the weasel at *BM* 9 and 128 is almost certainly an allusion to some such story; besides which, as Schibli points out, weasels are simply more natural opponents for mice than are frogs. If we assume, as we should, that the Greeks were familiar with the *topos* of the mouse army going to war against the weasel(s), probably having adapted it from Egyptian stories of the mice and the cat(s),⁵⁷ we may imagine that they put it to use both in visual art (Phaedrus' tavern-paintings) and in literature (poems like the *GM*); the *BM* represents a further modification.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The first half of the line recurs several times in Homer, but in this context it helps to reinforce the link between the two scenes. See further Commentary *ad* 99-121.

⁵⁷ For some suggestions of how an Egyptian story-pattern might have made its way to Greece, see Morenz 1954 and West 1969; the evidence is too slight for a means of transmission to be identified securely, but given the extent and duration of the contact between the two cultures, the notion that Egyptian folk-tales were being told in Greek taverns by the Hellenistic period is an inherently plausible one. On other Greek fables that may have originated in Egypt, see Brunner-Traut 1968.

⁵⁸ One advantage of this may have lain in simple logistics. Cats are not really a suitable Iliadic foe for mice, given the difference in size; the Egyptian artworks which show the two species interacting generally get round the problem by ignoring scale, so that (for example) the combatants in the boxing-match between the cat and the mouse are as tall as each other. Later

If the *BM* poet began with the intention to tell a mock-epic narrative in the style of an extant ‘Weasel-Mouse War’, but with a new opponent for the Mice to confront, the question presents itself: why frogs? As mentioned above, they are hardly an obvious choice. Although roughly the right size, they occupy an entirely different habitat, neither species regularly preys on the other,⁵⁹ and no Greek is likely to have been familiar with their ‘battles’ in the way that weasel/mouse encounters must have been a feature of domestic life. Was the poet inspired solely by the *Fable of the Mouse and the Frog*, or did he have some deeper reason for choosing frogs as antagonists?

The descriptions of mice and frogs in ancient sources do have some points in common: both are capable of swarming in large numbers (Plin. 8.104, frogs; 10.186, mice); both are associated with Apollo (Plu. 25.399f., frogs; Apollo’s title *Smintheus*, first at I.39, was linked to mice); both are prophets of bad weather (Arat. 946-7, frogs; 1137, mice); both are created abiogenetically from mud (Ov. *Met.* 15.375, frogs; D.S. 1.10.2 et al., mice; see further *ad* 7).⁶⁰ However, the two species are rarely associated. The only

depictions either use the same device, or show a large number of mice fighting against a single cat, and this seems to have been the method followed by the *Galeomyomachia*, which only mentions one weasel (at 54 γαλή[ς] ἐς φύλο[πι]ν αἰ[νή]ν, even given the damage to the text, the weasel is clearly in the singular). The *BM* poet is certainly conscious of the size difference, since we learn at 127-8 that the entire mouse army has made itself corslets from the hide of a single weasel. Frogs, however, are just about the right size to compete with mice on an equal footing.

⁵⁹ Some larger species of frog, such as bullfrogs, will eat mice, but these are not native to Europe. I have read that the Marsh Frog, *Pelophylax ridibundus* (on which see *ad* 12), will occasionally eat mice, but I have not so far been able to find any reliable evidence for the claim.

⁶⁰ The exact connection between *Smintheus* and mice was disputed. The A-scholia on I.39 record two different stories: in one, a temple is built to Apollo in the Mysian town of Chryse, because he withdraws a plague of mice he had sent on the townspeople; in the other, a band of Cretan colonists are sent a horde of mice as a sign that they should found a city (see Commentary *ad* 7). In the first story Apollo is honoured as *Smintheus* and in the second the city is called *Sminthia*, but in both the name comes from σμίνθοι as a dialect word for mice. Apollonius the Sophist gives a very similar story about a Rhodian festival called the *Smintheia*, commemorating Apollo and Dionysus destroying a plague of mice, and again mentions that mice are called σμίνθοι; he also notes that Aristarchus found it ἀπρεπές for a god to take his epithet ἀπὸ χαμαιπετοῦς ζώου (Bekker 1833, p. 143).

extant link between the two before the *BM*, other than in fable, is Herodotus' story of the Scythians' gift to Darius (Hdt. 4.131-2). The Scythians send a mouse, a frog, a bird, and five arrows, and invite Darius to draw his own conclusions; Darius assumes the gesture is one of submission, but his advisor Gobryas finds a more threatening (and apparently correct) interpretation. The fact that the three animals involved are exactly the same as those in the *Fable of the Mouse and the Frog* is probably coincidence, but it is interesting that Herodotus' Darius regarded a mouse and a frog as emblematic of earth and water, respectively.

The Trojan War was of course a conflict between a 'land' force (the Trojans, defending their native soil with their allies from the surrounding countryside) and a 'water' force (the Greeks with their thousand ships and their encampment along the seashore). Might the *BM* poet have been inspired by this to pit a mouse army – associated with earth, burrowing, and sometimes genesis from the ground – against an aquatic foe? If so, the equivalence was not one he chose to pursue: overall, the Mice map much more closely onto the Greeks than onto the Trojans. The Mice are the wronged party, moved to declare war after a crime committed against one of their own by a foreigner acting under the pretext of guest-friendship. The mouse troop-muster occurs before the Frogs', and is longer and more detailed. The Mice are the attacking force, and Physignathus' battle-plan at 153-7 specifies defensive fighting: the Frogs should make their stand ἄκροισι παρὰ χεῖλεσσιν and wait for the mouse assault.⁶¹ The battle is

⁶¹ See note *ad loc.* for a discussion of exactly what is envisaged here. The *Iliad* of course includes scenes in which a defending army with its back to the water is beset by a land force, but the frogs' amphibious nature prevents the parallel from being exact: they can (and do) flee into the water, whereas the Greeks are trapped. The sea in the *Iliad* is more a barrier than a refuge; the *BM*'s lake fulfils the same role as the city of Troy, as a zone in which the defending force can be confident of

eventually decided by the *aristeia* of a single mouse warrior (Meridarpax), as with Achilles in the *Iliad*, which puts the entire opposing force to panicked flight. As discussed in detail *ad* 215-221, the poet links the combat around the pond with the battle in *Il.* XXI in and around the Scamander; although the Trojans are not amphibious, in XXI they flee into a body of water which is sympathetic to their plight, and Achilles risks his life by following them in. Finally, Homer begins the first battle in the *Iliad* by comparing the uproarious charge of the Trojans, who move *κλαγγῇ τ' ἐνοπιῇ* τ' (III.2), with the silent advance of the Achaeans; as the *BM* poet acknowledges at 190, frogs were famous in antiquity as noisy creatures.⁶²

Overall, it seems most likely that the genesis of the *BM* lay in a poet familiar with a mock-epic version of the Weasel-Mouse War – either our *GM* or something like it – who also knew the *Fable of the Frog and the Mouse*, and was inspired (perhaps by one of the connections mentioned above) to pit the warrior mice against a new foe. It is also possible that the campaigns of the Mice did not end with the *Batrachomyomachia*. The list of works attributed to Homer in the *Suda* includes an *Arachnomachia* and a *Geranomachia*, each of which is notable for specifying only one of the forces involved; the *Suda* also mentions a *Psaromachia*, or ‘Battle of the Starlings’. Perhaps these were internecine wars; perhaps, as scholarship has tended to assume, the *Geranomachia* told the Homeric story of the conflict between the Cranes and the Pygmies (Wölke p. 99). But starlings and large spiders would make appropriately-sized and interesting foes for mice. The *BM* was also

safety. Cf. the panicked Trojans fleeing into the city at the end of *Il.* XXI, Andromache’s advice at VI.431-4, and Poulydamas’ at XVIII.273-83.

⁶² In support of the equation Greeks = Frogs, one might adduce Plato’s description of the peoples of the Mediterranean (*Phaedo* 109b) as living *ὥσπερ περὶ τέλμα μύρμηκας ἢ βατράχους*, ‘like ants or frogs around a pond’; however, since this category incorporates not just the Greeks but everyone ‘between the Pillars of Heracles and the River Phasis’, the Trojans would presumably be included as well.

known simply as the *Batrachomachia*, and indeed this may have been its original title (see p. 2 n. 2).⁶³ ‘The War of the Frogs’ is not really an adequate translation; the sense must be ‘The War *with* the Frogs’. Compare the two wars of the Olympian gods against the forces of chaos, the *Titanomachia* and *Gigantomachia*; in each case the audience is assumed to know that the gods are the defending army, so there is no need to specify *Titanotheomachia* or similar.⁶⁴ Once the crucial step had been taken of transferring the warrior mice from their traditional opponents, the cats/weasels, to fight against other species, we can readily imagine that there would have been a scramble for new and original armies to send against them. The *BM* may have been the first work to take this step; at any rate it was clearly the most successful.

⁶³ *Galeomyomachia* is not an ancient title, and was simply coined by Schibli on the model of *Batrachomyomachia*.

⁶⁴ Haeberlin 1896 objects to *Batrachomachia* as a title on the grounds that l. 6 portrays the mice as the heroes: ‘die siegreichen Mäuse sind die Haupthelden; darum ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass auf sie im Titel keine Rücksicht genommen sein sollte’ (p. 1389). Their status as heroes is exactly why the title does *not* need to mention them.

IV. LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Much care has been devoted to the narration of this trivial matter.

- Gow and Page 1968 *ad* Antiphanes 4 (AP 9.256)

A. THE *BATRACHOMYOMACHIA* AND HOMER

The *BM*, as one might expect from an imitative work, uses an array of distinctively

Homeric forms:

- forms of the verb εἰμί: ἐόντα (232, 276); ἐοῦσαν (117); ἔην (8); ἦεν (268)
- forms of personal pronouns: 2nd person dative singular τοι (16), genitive plural ὑμεῖων (194), dative plural ὑμῖν (139); 3rd person accusative singular μιν (276; the Doric form νιν is not used)
- ὅ, ἡ, τό as demonstrative pronoun: 11, 185
- 1st declension masculine genitive singular in -ας: Τρωξάρτας (28)
- 1st declension masculine genitive plural in -ων: αἰχμητῶν (291)
- 2nd declension genitive singular in -οιο: Ἡριδανοῖο (20), ἀπαλοῖο (66)
- extended 2nd declension dative plural ending in οἰσι(ν): δέλτοισιν (3), βατράχοισιν (6)
- the suffix -θεν denoting movement or action from a location: οὐρανόθεν (196, 200)
- use of the particle κέ (194)
- omitted augments: βάλε (241), πέσσε (242), πῆξεν (207)
- active infinitive ending in -μεν(αι): δαήμεναι (62), ἀμυνέμεν (279)

This conscious use of Homeric morphology is common to all Greek hexameter epic, from Panyassis through Apollonius and on into later epic poets like Oppian, and its deployment by the poet of the *BM* is hardly surprising.

Beyond the level of individual words, matters become more complex. The *BM* certainly makes use of formulae found in the Homeric epics, such as *πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ* at line-end (16; 7x Homer) or *ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα* (152; 5x Homer). The extent to which it reuses Homeric phrases and expressions, however, must be very carefully considered.

All Greek hexameter epic, from the Classical period through to the Second Sophistic and later, draws on Homer. In the 5th century BC, the principles of oral-formulaic composition may still have been known and followed. McLeod 1966 compiles a list of all the Homeric expressions which recur in the extant fragments of Panyassis (a contemporary, and supposedly a relative, of Herodotus). The list is a long one, considering we have only sixty-six lines of Panyassis left to us, and McLeod comments that traditional diction in Panyassis is ‘all-pervasive’ (p. 105); he raises, though stops short of endorsing, the suggestion that the poet was composing orally. Matthews 1974 lays greater stress on Panyassis’ originality (‘not a slavish imitator of Homeric diction’, p. 85), and draws attention to the way he modifies and adjusts Homer’s language. By the 3rd c. BC, we are confident that Callimachus and Apollonius were not composing oral poetry; when they quote or adapt Homer, therefore, we see this as sophisticated and deliberate engagement with a model text. When Callimachus produces *καδδραθέτην δ’ οὐ πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόν[ο]ν, αἶψα γὰρ ἦλθεν* (*Hec.* fr. 74.22), which is a neat hybrid of two lines from the *Odyssey* (*καδδραθέτην δ’ οὐ πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον, ἀλλὰ μίνυνθα*, xv.494, and *ἦ δ’ ἔθει οὐ μάλα πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον· αἶψα γὰρ ἦλθε*, xii.407-8), we do not accuse him of ‘formulariness’ or ‘slavish imitation’.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Hollis I think underrates this line. He says it is taken from two pieces of Homer, ‘chiefly *Od.* 15. 493ff. ... with a contribution from *Od.* 12. 407’. This neglects the fact that these are the only two

The potential double standard at work here is justly highlighted by Sens 2006. Discussing *BM* 64 ὅππων γηθόσυνος τὸν ἐμὸν δόμον εἰσαφίκηται, he points out its resemblance to [Hes.] *Sc.* 45 ἀσπασίως τε φίλως τε ἐὼν δόμον εἰσαφίκανεν, before commenting: ‘If one found (64) in a poem by Callimachus – to pick only the most obvious poet – one would have no trouble assuming that he had taken over and slightly adapted... the second hemistich of the Hesiodic verse, while ‘glossing’ the first hemistich, and in particular ἀσπασίως, with a different, semantically identical word, which he places in the *sedes* in which it occurs least often in early epic’ (pp. 240-1). On the other hand, had we encountered Call. *Hec.* fr. 74.22 in a fragment of, say, Rhianus – a 3rd c. BC poet on whose scarcely extant works the verdict of scholarship has not been kind⁶⁶ – we would probably dismiss it as an uninspired bit of Homeric patchwork. Hunter 1989 notes, on Apollonius’ use of Homeric language, that ‘quite lengthy passages of the [*Argonautica*] could, if taken out of context, be readily mistaken for an attempt to write in the Homeric manner’ (p. 40). There is no absolutely reliable distinction between cases where a Homeric expression is born of dull formulaicity, and where it is a symptom of the obsessive textual and allusive mastery we attribute to the great poets of the Hellenistic era.

instances of the phrase πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Callimachus is, I suspect, playing Homeric dominoes against himself; having set up an open πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον, he then places next to it the only possible overlapping piece from anywhere in Homer, a fact he would expect his readers to notice and admire.

⁶⁶ Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004 use him as an example of the straightforward, old-fashioned style of epic against which cleverer poets like Callimachus and Apollonius were in revolt: ‘the novelty of their approach [i.e. that of Call., A.R., and Theocritus] should not be underestimated, nor itself considered an inevitable product of an increasingly book-based culture, for contemporary with them we find other poetry which continued to follow the old ways of formulaicity: texts such as *SH* 946 or 947, perhaps by Rhianus, show us what we might otherwise miss’ (p. 248). Perhaps we should not dismiss him so quickly. Stephanie West, in Heubeck et al. 1988, comments favourably on his scholarship, which shows ‘acute observation of Homeric usage’.

Every single line in the *BM* contains at least some reminiscence of Homer, but the intensity of these reminiscences varies widely. Line 9, μῦς ποτε διψαλέος γαλήης κίνδυνον ἀλύξας, owes little to Homer but its metre: four of its six words (μῦς, διψαλέος, γαλήη, κίνδυνος) never appear in Homer at all. The only noticeably Homeric feature is ἀλύξας, which occurs 3x in the *Iliad* (XII.113, XIII.395, XV.287) and 3x in the *Odyssey* (ii.352, v.387, viii.353), always in line-final position. At the other end of the spectrum, three lines in the poem come close to being Homeric quotations:⁶⁷

24 τὸν δ' αὖ Ψυχάρπαξ ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε ~ τὸν δ' αὖ Λαέρτης κτλ. xxiv.327 (τὸν δ' αὖτ' Αἰνείας κτλ. XX.199; Ἀλκίνοος vii.298, 308, xi.347, 362, xiii.3; Εὐρύαλος viii.140, 400; Ἀντίνοος xvii.445; Αὐτόλυκος xix.405)

152 νῦν γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα ~ xxiii.130 τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω κτλ. (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω κτλ. IX.103, 314, XIII.735; νῦν αὖτ' ἐξερέω κτλ. XII.215)

272 ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὄρῳμαι ~ XIII.99 (= XV.286, XX.344, XXI.54)
 ὦ πόποι ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὄρῳμαι / iv.663 ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον
 ὑπερφιάλως ἐτελέσθη

There are also a handful of lines in the poem which, like the Callimachean line above, can be assembled entirely from Homeric fragments. *BM* 16, 136, 240, and 248 all belong

⁶⁷ 269 εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὅξυν νόησε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε is an exact quotation from Homer, but is almost certainly interpolated: see Commentary *ad* 268-83.

to this category (and are discussed in the commentary *ad locc.*), although it is noteworthy that none is a simple splice of two half-lines:

16 δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω / ξεινήϊα πολλὰ / καὶ ἐσθλά (πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά is also a unit)

136 κῆρυξ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε / φέρων / ῥάβδος μετὰ χερσίν

240 κείμενον ἐν δαπέδῳ / λίθον ὄβριμον, / ἄχθος ἀρούρης

248 σκάζων ἐκ πολέμου / ἀνεχάζετο, / τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς

These lines are exceptional in the *BM*. Much more often, lines contain a word or short phrase borrowed from Homer, augmented with original material. There are numerous cases in which a Homeric expression has been slightly adapted to prevent exact repetition: the phrases βέλει ὀξύεντι 194 and στιβαρὸν δόρυ 207 appear Homeric (cf. *ἔγχεϊ ὀξύεντι 7x, *δολιχὸν δόρυ 4x), but couple weapons with adjectives never used to describe them in Homer (see *ad locc.*), and Sens 2006 pointed out that καὶ δ' ἔπασεν πρηγνῆς 205 is identical in meaning and metre to Homer's *ἥριπε δὲ πρηγνῆς (V.58, xxi.296). At each of these points it would have been very easy for the poet to borrow an expression from Homer wholesale, and a close parodist like Matro would certainly have done so; that the poet does not tells us something about how he saw his work.

By way of a brief case study, we can consider speech-introduction formulae, one of the most distinctive features of epic diction, as they appear in the *BM*. There are eleven in total, and their variety – in terms of how they respond to Homeric usage – is representative of the poem as a whole.

ἔπος δ' ἐφθέγγετο τοῖον (12)

Borrowed from Call. *Del.* 265 *ἔπος δ' ἐφθέγγετο τοῖον. Marked out as post-Homeric by its use of τοῖος, a word never found in the speech-introduction formulae of archaic epic (Mineur 1984, p. 28), although it was embraced by the Hellenistic poets.⁶⁸ φθέγγεσθαι is known to Homer, but is never used as a verb governing direct speech.⁶⁹

τὸν δ' αὖ Ψυχάρπαξ ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε (24)

Fully Homeric but for the name; see above.

πρὸς τὰδε μειδήσας Φυσίγναθος ἀντίον ηὔδα (56)

ἀντίον ηὔδα is very common in Homer (*72x); πρὸς τὰδε is never found. The speech-introduction 'x said to him/her, smiling' appears 4x, but always in the form τὸν/τὴν δ' ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη (πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς X.400, xii.371; κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων IV.356; νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς VIII.38) – never with the simplex verb, and never in conjunction with ἀντίον ηὔδα. The simplex verb is used in the same *sedes*, however, in the frequent *closural* speech formula ὥς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ (11x).

τοίους ἐφθέγγετο μύθους (92)

Unique to the *BM*. As with ἔπος δ' ἐφθέγγετο τοῖον above, τοῖος and φθέγγεσθαι are never found introducing direct speech in Homer. The closest equivalent elsewhere in Greek poetry is *τοίῳ προσελέξατο μύθῳ, which appears at Theoc. 25.192 and A. R. 4.833 and may have been the poet's inspiration. One of the abbreviated versions of the *Homero-centones* – 'Conscriptio Γ' in Schembra 2007 – includes the half-line τοῖον δὲ

⁶⁸ Apollonius made particular use of it: Führer 1967, p. 14.

⁶⁹ Although Mineur 1984 (p. 27) draws attention to XXI.213 βαθέης δ' ἐκ φθέγγετο δίνης, which could easily be mistaken for an exception; in fact it is προσέφη in the previous line which governs the ensuing speech.

φθέγγατο μῦθον (532), which may indicate that the formula had currency in later hexameter epic.

εἶπέ τε μῦθον (109)

*5x in Homer.

εἶπέ τε τοῖα (138)

Unique to the *BM*.

εἶπεν ἀναστάς (146)

Never found exactly in Homer, but *εἶπε παραστάς occurs 5x (6x counting XXIII.617 ἔειπε παραστάς), and *ἀναστάς 8x; ἡμεῖψατ' ἀναστάς introduces Antilochus' speech at XXIII.542.

καὶ Ἀθηναίην προσέειπεν (173)

*προσέειπεν occurs 18x, almost always introducing direct speech in the next line (the only exception being III.386). The construction καὶ [name] προσέειπεν, on the other hand, is never found, either with Ἀθηναίην or any other name; the closest equivalent is καὶ μιν προσέειπεν at I.441. A.R. has ὥς φάτο· τὴν δὲ παρ᾽ ἄσσαν Ἀθηναίη προσέειπεν (3.17).

τὸν δὲ προσέειπεν Ἀθήνη (177)

Found only elsewhere in Greek literature at xvi.166. τὸν/τὴν δὲ προσέειπεν is never found with any other names either.

τοίην ἐφθέγγατο φωνήν (271)

Apparently a modification of the *BM*'s own τοίους ἐφθέγγατο μύθους (see above).

Although no more Homeric than the other version, this one was adopted eagerly by Nonnus, who uses *ἐφθεγγατο φωνήν (not found previously other than in the *BM*) 13x in the *Dionysiaca*, 9x in the very similar expression τόσῃν ἐφθέγγατο φωνήν.

Ἄρης δ' ἀπαμείβετο μύθῳ (277)

Very close to Homeric usage, but not exact. ἀπαμείβετο appears introducing speech in Homer 12x, never in this *sedes*; however, Homer has *ἀμείβετο μύθῳ and *ἡμείβετο μύθῳ 5x each. *ἀπαμείβετο μύθῳ appears at Theoc. 8.8, and is later used by Quintus Smyrnaeus (3.129).

The *BM*'s speech-introduction formulae, then, range from the commonly Homeric (εἰπέ τε μῦθον) to the completely un-Homeric (τοίους ἐφθέγγετο μύθους), taking in a form found once in Homer and never elsewhere (τὸν δὲ προσέειπεν) and several slight adaptations which echo or mimic, but do not exactly reproduce, Homeric expressions (εἶπεν ἀναστάς, ἀπαμείβετο μύθῳ). Adrian Kelly has called the last of these techniques 'deceitful formulaity' – that is, producing a line or half-line which looks like a Homeric formula, but never in fact appears in either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.⁷⁰ Fantuzzi 2001 discusses the centrality of the same technique to Apollonius' *Argonautica*. It must be distinguished from the related practice of re-using lines or phrases more or less *verbatim*, which (as discussed above, pp. 26-7) was common to many Greek authors. When Matro writes ἦλθον γὰρ κάκειϊσε, πολὺς δέ μοι ἔσπετο λιμός. | οὐ δὲ καλλίστους ἄρτους ἴδον ἢ δὲ μεγίστους (fr. 1.3-4), he changes no more from his Homeric models (vi.164 and X.436) than is necessary: λαός becomes λιμός and ἵππους becomes ἄρτους for the sake of the joke, and τοῦ becomes οὗ for reasons of syntax, but overall the point is to stay as close to Homer as possible.⁷¹ Hermes praises Charon for his

⁷⁰ In a paper presented to the Oxford University Classical Language & Literature Sub-Faculty Seminar, Hilary Term 2007.

⁷¹ κάκειϊσε is found for καὶ κείσε at vi.164 in some MSS, and Olson & Sens *ad loc.* conclude that Matro's text of Homer was among them.

Homeric παρῳδία at Luc. *Cont.* 14.5 (see p. 28) because he has coupled two intact phrases from Homer in the same line.

At the furthest extreme of the imitative spectrum we find the cento, a mode of composition which became particularly popular in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. In a cento one must make *exclusive* use of quotations from another work in order to construct a text with an entirely different meaning. The most notorious of these is Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis*, which uses fragments of Vergil to give an explicit description of a sexual encounter, and Quintilian mentions a cento produced by Ovid criticising bad poets (*Inst.* 6.3.97), but humour was not crucial to the effect: the *Homero-centones* of Eudocia Augusta retell Bible stories, and Hosidius Geta supposedly wrote a *Medea* using nothing but phrases from Vergil (Tert. *Praes. Her.* 39). Ausonius begins his cento by laying out the rules of the game: it is permissible to re-use an entire line from the source work, but not two in a row (*nam duos iunctim locare ineptum est, et tres una serie merae nugae*); generally speaking all lines in the cento should be formed by combining separate half-lines from the original; lines can be broken at any of the caesurae permitted in heroic verse. He admits that the composition of a cento is not the work of a true poet, but 'a task for the memory alone': *solae memoriae negotium sparsa colligere et integrare lacerata, quod ridere magis quam laudare possis*.

All these works share a common reliance on the reader's knowledge of the text being 're-used'. The *Cento Nuptialis* would seem like nothing more than an ineptly-written sex scene, full of inappropriate imagery and unnecessary periphrasis, to a reader who knew Latin but not Vergil. So too would the *BM* seem a charming conceit narrated in grandiose and disturbingly violent language to a reader unfamiliar with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But each type of imitative work places a different demand on the literate reader.

The true cento requires enough knowledge to appreciate that, for example, *tollit se arrectum* and *conantem plurima frustra* come from different points in the *Aeneid* (10.892 and 9.398) but gain a new sense in combination. The παρωδία of Matro requires recognition that in fr.1.45 σηπίη εὐπλόκαμος, δεινὴ θεὸς αὐδήεσσα the word σηπίη, ‘cuttlefish’, has replaced Homer’s Κίρκη (x.136, xi.8, xii.150). The *BM* requires perhaps the most sophisticated response of all: an awareness that although *κὰδ δ’ ἔπεσεν and *πρηνής both appear in Homer, they never appear together, their place being taken by a semantically and metrically equivalent alternative. The reader of the *BM* – much like the reader of Callimachus or Apollonius – must be able not only to recall what Homer does, but notice what he does not do.

B. METRE AND STYLE

As Wölke has observed, all discussions of metre in the *BM* are bound to be hindered by the state of the text.⁷² In his own analysis of the *BM*’s metre, he attempted to establish a consistent foundation by only taking into consideration those lines which he felt to be reasonably textually secure, and ignoring lines in which (for example) the two main manuscript families provided such wildly variant readings as to affect the metre. This, he claims, reduces the total number of lines under examination to around 210, out of a theoretical maximum of 312.⁷³ This both limits the material available for study, and forces the editor into a further series of justifications: how much variance has to exist in the transmission of a line before it must be exempted? The following analysis draws on 267 lines, representing all the 272 lines of the main text as printed, with only five

⁷² Wölke p.70. In all of what follows I have used the forward slash (/) to denote a break between feet, and a vertical line (|) to indicate caesura.

⁷³ The poem’s final line is 303, but there are several lines outside the usual numbering sequence.

exemptions: 252a-b, 273, 289, and 268. In these lines I am pessimistic about the resemblance of the printed text to anything the poet originally wrote (289 and 268 are syntactically impossible, 252b is nonsense, and 252a and 273 do not fit well in context; see *ad locc.*).

i. Structure by colon

The generally accepted model for dividing a hexameter line into cola is still that proposed by Fränkel. This model works on the basis that a line contains three caesurae (A, B, and C), and that each of these caesurae can appear in one of several positions, as follows:

A1 – after the princeps of the first foot

A2 – in the middle of the biceps of the first foot

A3 – at the end of the first foot

A4 – after the princeps of the second foot

B1 – after the princeps of the third foot (the ‘masculine caesura’)

B2 – in the middle of the biceps of the third foot (the ‘feminine caesura’)

C1 – after the princeps of the fourth foot

C2 – at the end of the fourth foot

An alternative system was put forward by Porter 1951, which reduced the available options. Porter discounted the A1 and A2 caesurae, which are non-existent in Callimachus and rare even in Homer, and kept only Fränkel’s A3 and A4, which he renamed A² and A¹ respectively. He made no changes to the B caesurae except to renumber them, so that Fränkel’s B1 and B2 became his B² and B¹. For the C caesurae, he

ignored Fränkel's C1, and introduced a replacement elsewhere in the line: the difference between the two systems here is most easily represented as a table –

<u>position</u>	<u>Fränkel</u>	<u>Porter</u>
after 4 th foot princeps	C1	--
at end of 4 th foot	C2	C ¹
after 5 th foot princeps	--	C ²

Ingalls 1970 examined both models and concluded that Fränkel's was in fact the more useful. Since both the A1 and A2 caesurae appear in the *BM*, Fränkel's system is employed in this commentary; however, I have kept Porter's C² caesura, which I have renamed C3 in order to align it with the rest of the numbering. This is because a significant number of lines in the *BM* which lack either a C1 or a C2 caesura *do* have a C3 (e.g. 13, 14, 29), and it seemed helpful to keep these separate from the much smaller group of lines (such as 6) which lack any of the three possibilities for C.

Determining the position of a caesura can be difficult. With the B caesura the case is usually clear, but some lines have multiple options for the A and C caesurae. For example, in 87 the A caesura could be taken as falling between κεῖνος δ' | ὥς (A3) or ὥς | ἀφ'έθῃ (A4); in the first line of the poem the C caesura could fall between σελίδος | χορὸν (C1) or χορὸν | ἐξ (C2). I have attempted to resolve as many uncertainties as possible via the following methods:

- A3 or A4 caesurae, as much more common, have always been preferred to A1 or A2 caesurae. If a line is listed with an A1 or A2, it definitely lacks any viable A caesura in either of the other positions (e.g. line 4).

- I have tried to avoid placing caesurae in positions which divide up words generally considered a single sense-unit for metrical purposes, such as article + noun or preposition + noun pairs, or words followed by enclitics. Occasionally the choice is between a caesura in such a position and no caesura at all: these cases will be discussed below.
- Precedence has generally been given to the so-called 'bucolic caesura' – that is, a C2 caesura which comes at the end of a dactylic foot. In a few cases, however, the bucolic caesura is much less natural in terms of a sense-pause than a different C caesura in the same line; again, these cases are discussed below.

Occasionally I have been reduced to purely subjective decisions about where a sense-pause seems to me to fall most 'naturally'. I hope that, even if other scholars disagree with my judgement, there are few enough of these cases that they will have little effect on the statistics.

ii. Medial (B) caesura

The *BM* shows a very slight preference for the B1 ('masculine') caesura. Of the 267 lines analysed, 136 are B1 and 131 are B2 – in other words, 49% B2, less than the *Iliad* (57% B2) and far less than Callimachus (74% B2).⁷⁴

The ratio of B2:B1 caesurae in hexameter is an interesting one, and the trends that appear are not altogether predictable. West 1982 gives 4:3 as the basic Homeric ratio (p. 36). The other authors in his survey can be categorised thus:

⁷⁴ These two figures are taken from Hopkins 1984. Porter does not specify how many of his line-types 9-12 (those lacking one or more of the normal caesurae) are B1 or B2, so the calculation cannot satisfactorily be carried out with his data: if one uses only his types 1-8, the results come out as *Iliad* 61%, Callimachus 70%, *BM* 50%.

1. Ratio higher than Homer's (i.e. a greater preponderance of B2 caesurae): 'the early Ionian elegists' (p. 45), Tyrtaeus, Apollonius, Callimachus, Euphorion, most Imperial poets (p.177).
2. Ratio roughly equivalent to Homer's: Theognis, Solon, Xenophanes.
3. Ratio lower than Homer's (i.e. the B1 caesura appearing as often as, or even more often than, the B2): Ion of Chios, Critias, Panyassis, Antimachus, the Attic tragedians, Archestratus, Matro, Timon, Aratus.

In other words, the impression which emerges (and which West appears to endorse)⁷⁵ is that during the 5th and 4th centuries the B1 caesura rose to dominance, but that with the Hellenistic poets it fell into disfavour and the B2 caesura multiplied far beyond anything in the Homeric texts (the proportion listed for Euphorion is 78%, for Bion's *Adonis* 80%). Were we to see the caesura as a straightforward chronological signifier, therefore, it would point to a pre-Hellenistic date for the *BM*, or at least a date very early in the Hellenistic period. On the other hand, works which seem to prefer the B1 caesura – post-Homeric epic like Panyassis, and hexameter parody like Archestratus and Matro – are natural stable-mates for the *BM*, and we cannot rule out the possibility that the poet was motivated by some real or perceived generic distinction. He may, for example, have been aware of the fashion for the B2 caesura, but have resisted the *Zeitgeist* in an attempt to make his work sound more authentically Homeric.⁷⁶

By contrast, the *BM* does share another feature associated with the Hellenistic 'refinement' of the hexameter, namely the insistence on a third-foot caesura. Early epic

⁷⁵ 'The ascendancy of the masculine over the feminine caesura in the later fifth century... continues through the fourth', West 1982, p.153.

⁷⁶ See the interesting discussion in Fantuzzi and Sens 2006, pp. 115-19, of the ways in which discrete 'traditional' and 'modern' styles of hexameter composition developed during the Hellenistic period.

sometimes shifts the medial caesura into the fourth foot (the ‘hephthemimeral’ caesura): 14 times per thousand lines in the *Iliad* and 22 per thousand in Hesiod, according to West 1982 (p. 36). Apollonius and Theocritus do this extremely rarely, Callimachus never.⁷⁷ All 267 lines of the *BM* surveyed have a viable caesura in either the B1 or B2 position.

Callimachus also avoids elision at the medial caesura, but this does not seem to have troubled the *BM* poet overly, since he allows it seven times: 65, 83, 148, 174, 178, 222, 234. Some of these are doubtful: in 83 (δ' | ὑπὲρ), 148 (δ' | ἐπνίγη), and 222 (τ' | ἐπορνύμενος) the problem could be avoided by putting the caesura before the elided particle, but both δέ and τε are usually treated as part of the preceding word for metrical purposes. At 178 one could read πῶ | | ποτ' ἐγὼ with a B1 caesura, but this seems to me less natural; and the fact that 65, 174, and 234 unambiguously have elision across the caesura suggests that the poet did not feel the rule was absolute.⁷⁸

iii. A caesura

Occurs as follows:

A4 151x

A3 88x

A2 17x

A1 5x

In some of these cases the caesura has to separate two words which would normally be considered a unit: 59 ἀμφίβιον | γάρ, 67 καὶ πρῶτον | μέν, 124 κνημίδας | μέν, 206 Τρωγλοδύτης | δέ, 224 Πτερογλύφον | δέ, 238 καὶ | τὸ μέτωπον, 271 κινήσας | δέ. I

⁷⁷ See Maas 1962, p.62; West 1982, p.153; Hopkinson 1984, p.52; Gow 1952, p.181.

⁷⁸ On the question of how strictly Call. himself obeys this rule, see Mineur 1984, pp. 44-45.

have chosen to count them among the figures above, but they could alternatively be counted as lacking A caesurae. The adjustment to the figures required by this would be slight: six are A4 lines, one is an A1.

Six lines lack any viable A caesura: 26, 28, 96, 151, 230, 245. Of these, four are unavoidable:

28 Τρωξάϱ/ταο πατ/ρος

151 ζητή/σωμεν ὄ/πως

230 Λειχοπί/νακα δ' ἔ/πεφνεv

245 ὀξύσ/χοινος ἔ/δυνε

The other two could be dispensed with by putting an A4 caesura between a word and its enclitic particle:

26 ἀνθρώ/ποις τε θε/οῖς

96 παγκρατί/ω τε πά/λη

but this would be a very unnatural type of caesura, and again, the previous four cases suggest that the poet did not regard an A caesura as an absolute requirement.

iv. C caesura

Occurs as follows:

C2 170x

C1 49x

C3 24x

Again, some of these divide word-units: 38 ἀπό | γλυκεροῖο (C1), 140 πτόλεμόν | τε μάχην τε (C3 – marginally preferable to ἐπὶ | πτόλεμον τε C1?), 259 ἀλλ' | ἐνι βένθεσι (C1).

In eight lines I find cause for serious doubt between the C1 and C2 caesura. In six of these, the sense-pause seems to me to fall more naturally in the C1 position: 1, 36, 65, 110, 179, 234. Adopting C2 in these cases, however, would produce a 'bucolic' caesura, and it may be that the Greek ear was sufficiently attuned to this distinctive break that it would have overruled the more intuitive sense of the line. In the remaining two lines (90, 112) the 4th foot is spondaic, and there seem to me to be no firm grounds for choice either way. In a further five lines I find cause for serious doubt between the C1 and C3 caesura: 136, 145, 162, 189, 267. In these cases neither sense-pause seems notably stronger or more pronounced than the other. Eleven lines lack a C caesura altogether: 6, 30, 120, 122, 139, 160, 174, 182, 272, 296, 300. Unlike with the A caesurae, none of these could be removed by separating pairs of words: in each case a single long word bridges each of the three viable caesura positions.

A well-known feature of Hellenistic hexameter, as mentioned above, is the 'bucolic' caesura, meaning a word-end that coincides with the end of a dactylic 4th foot (e.g. *BM* 1).⁷⁹ This is common in Homer (47% of lines), but becomes still more common in Callimachus (63%) and Apollonius (57%). In the *BM* it occurs in a minimum of 147/267 lines, i.e. 55%; this would increase to 153/267, or 57%, if the six doubtful cases described above were all considered as C2 lines.⁸⁰

To look at these data from another angle: discounting all doubtful lines and all lines in which one caesura is absent, the most common colon structure in the *BM* is

⁷⁹ The definition of the bucolic caesura varies even in ancient sources: see Uhlig 1883, p. 124 with notes. Some metricians count any instance of word-end between the 4th and 5th feet as bucolic caesura; I follow those who specify that the 4th foot must be a dactyl. On 'bucolic caesura' versus 'bucolic diaeresis', see West 1982b p. 292.

⁸⁰ Figures for all but the *BM* from West 1982a, p. 154.

A4-B2-C2, which occurs in 50 lines. The next most common, by some distance, are A4-B1-C2 (43x) and A3-B1-C2 (41x).

v. Word-end

Several other laws have been observed by scholars to govern the places in a hexameter line where words can or cannot end; they are collected below.

Hermann's Bridge: the fourth-foot biceps is normally undivided. Exceptions to this are rare in Homer (approximately one line in 550), and almost unheard-of in the Hellenistic poets and later.⁸¹ The *BM* violates it only once, at 63 κρᾶ/τει δέ με, which the poet may have considered a single sense-unit.⁸² 65 ἐδί/δου· ὁ δὲ can be discounted given that δέ attaches to the previous word for purposes of scansion, although the majority reading ὁ δ' ἔβαινε for ὁ δὲ βαῖνε *would* contravene the bridge (see *ad loc.*).

Meyer's First Law: words that begin in the first foot and end in the second usually end after the princeps, rather than in or after the biceps: so [- | uu] is permissible, but not [- uu |] or [- u | u]. Exceptions to this rule are very common in Homer (it is famously broken in the first line of the *Iliad*), but much rarer in the Alexandrian poets: there are about seventy in the whole of Apollonius, often with proper names or other exceptional cases, and only a handful in Callimachus.⁸³ The *BM* has eight violations: 28 (proper name), 85, 151, 215, 230, 238, 245, 254. There are more than a dozen other lines of the type ἀνθρῶ/ποις τε θε/οῖς, in which a monosyllable would break Meyer's First Law if it were counted as part of the previous word; however, such cases

⁸¹ West 1982a pp. 155, 178-9.

⁸² West 1982a notes that word-end in the fourth princeps 'mitigates' the violation of Hermann's Bridge (p. 155), although it is not clear why this should be so.

⁸³ The precise number is a matter of some debate; see Mineur 1984 p. 39.

do not seem to have been counted as violations by Callimachus (West 1982a, p. 155 n. 51).

Meyer's Second Law: words shaped [u –] are avoided before the medial caesura. This is really more of a preference than a law, even in the Hellenistic poets. The *BM* has ten violations: 27, 28, 91, 141, 151, 185, 224, 254, 271, 299.

Hilberg's Law: if the 2nd foot is a spondee, it is very rarely followed by a word-division. The *BM* has two glaring violations: 124 κνημῖ/δας μὲν / πρῶτον and 178 ὦ πάτερ / οὐκ ἄν / πῶ. There are then eight more cases in which the biceps of the 2nd foot is a monosyllable 'attached' to the following word: καί (62, 65, 110, 197, 300), τήν (102), ἡ (111), ὥς (252).

Naeke's Law: if the 4th foot is a spondee, it is rarely followed by a word-division. This is especially a Callimachean precept: Apollonius has 68 exceptions, Aratus 30, Callimachus none.⁸⁴ The *BM* has no compunctions about this whatsoever; in only 266 lines it has 25 definite exceptions, i.e. 9% of the poem.⁸⁵

Wernicke's Law: if the 4th foot is a spondee and is followed by a word-division – that is, if Naeke's Law is violated – its biceps is usually a syllable with a long vowel, rather than a short vowel lengthened by position. This rule is discounted if the syllable in question is a monosyllabic prepositive 'attached' to the following word (as at 208). The *BM* has only one exception, 243 (αὖθις / βαῖνεν).

A few miscellaneous tendencies observed in the Callimachean hexameter are gathered in Hopkinson 1984:

⁸⁴ Although see Mineur 1984, p. 38.

⁸⁵ 20, 53, 95, 108, 112, 125, 132, 147, 153, 157, 164, 166, 180, 218, 223, 226, 230, 233, 243, 254, 260, 262, 264, 274, 293. There are also five more doubtful cases, in which the biceps of the 4th foot is a monosyllable 'attached' to the following word: οὐκ (90), καί (118), εἰς (144), ἐκ (208), τήν (225).

- Avoidance of words which scan [– –] immediately after the main caesura, unless they are followed by bucolic caesura. The *BM* has seventeen exceptions (10, 25, 92, 107, 114, 125, 162, 165, 167, 169, 208, 225, 235, 236, 271, 277, 299).
- Monosyllables at line-end are always preceded by bucolic caesura. Only five lines in the *BM* end with a monosyllable (24, 68, 140, 200, 228), and of these only 140 lacks bucolic caesura.
- Callimachus dispenses entirely with weak final syllables as the first half of a resolved second biceps, and tends to avoid enclitics in this position. The *BM* uses weak final syllables in this position 8x (28, 85, 151, 230, 238, 245, 254, 280), and enclitics another 16x (26, 27, 59, 67, 91, 96, 185, 186, 206, 209, 224, 226, 239, 258, 271, 299).

There is a general tendency among the Alexandrian poets to avoid caesura after both the fourth-foot and fifth-foot princeps in a single line ('Tiedke's Law').⁸⁶ The *BM* seems to ignore this preference, with thirteen clear exceptions (8, 25, 90, 136, 145, 148, 162, 189, 191, 235, 263, 267, 276).⁸⁷

vi. Contraction and resolution

The *BM* is generally less dactylic than the major Hellenistic poets. In Apollonius, wholly dactylic lines (that is, dactyls in all of the first five feet) are very common, making up about 22% of the whole poem (see table below); in Callimachus' *Hymns* the equivalent figure is 23%. In the *BM* it is 35/266, or 13%.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Wölke p. 73.

⁸⁷ In a few other lines caesura is prevented by sense-units: 39, 258, 290, 301.

⁸⁸ By way of comparison, the figure for the surviving lines of Euphorion, as analysed by Cunningham 1977, is 11%.

A hexameter line admits 32 possible combinations of dactyls and spondees.

Homer only uses 22 of these, while Callimachus restricts himself to 21; Apollonius and Theocritus use 26 and 28 respectively.⁸⁹ The much shorter *BM* makes use of 23, listed here in descending order of frequency. For ease of reference, I have added in brackets the identifying numbers used by van Groningen 1953.

(3) *dsddds* 45x

(2) *sdddds* 37x

(1) *ddddds* 35x

(28) *sddsds* 21x

(23) *ssddds* 19x

(5) *dddsds*, (24) *dssdds*, and (30) *dsdsds* 16x each

(4) *ddsdds* 14x

(27) *sdsdds* 12x

(16) *sssdds* and (22) *ssdsds* 5x each

(19) *dssdsds*, (21) *sdssds*, and (31) *dsddss* 4x each

(6) *dddss*, (15) *ssddss*, and (25) *ddssds* 3x each

(9) *sdssss*, (12) *ssssds*, (17) *dsdsss*, (18) *dssdss*, and (20) *sdsdss* 1x each

never used: (7) *ssssss*, (8) *dsssss*, (10) *ssdsds*, (11) *sssdss*, (13) *ddssss*, (14) *sddsss*, (26)

dddsss, (29) *sdddss*, (32) *ddsds*

Mineur 1984 has a useful table summarising the preferred ratio of dactyls to spondees in a line for the major hexameter poets, which is reproduced here, with his values for the *Hymn to Delos* replaced by my own values for the *BM*. All values are percentages; those for the other poets were originally taken from La Roche 1898-99.

⁸⁹ Mooney 1912, p. 411; van Groningen 1953, p. 34.

	<u>Hom.</u>	<u>Hes.</u>	<u><i>h.Ap.</i></u>	<u><i>H. Hymns</i></u>	<u>A. R.</u>	<u><i>C. Hymns</i></u>	<u><i>BM</i></u>
4d + 1s	41.7	40.6	39.5	41.7	45.6	48.2	43.1
3d + 2s	30.6	32.0	31.8	28.5	27.0	24.3	34.1
5d	18.9	17.3	15.5	20.0	22.0	23.4	13.1
2d + 3s	8.1	9.1	11.3	8.6	4.6	4.1	9.0
1d + 4s	0.6	0.9	1.5	0.6	0.1	---	0.7

As Mineur puts it, ‘the impression of a more dactylic character in Callimachus’ verse is caused not so much by an overwhelming number of dactyls, but by (a) the complete absence of lines with 4 spondees and the extremely low percentage of the three-spondee verse, and (b) the distinct preference for the combination of 4 dactyls with 1 spondee’ (p. 35). As can be seen, the *BM*’s habits are closer to those of Homer (and the archaic texts generally) than of Callimachus: though it has a slightly higher preference for the 4d/1s line than does Homer, it has a significantly smaller proportion of fully dactylic lines even than the archaic epics, and it uses the 2d/3s and 1d/4s lines more than either of the Hellenistic poets tallied.

Mineur represents the same data in a different format, by position of spondees in the line; I have again removed his figures for the *Hymn to Delos* and added percentages for the *BM*.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Other figures originally taken from La Roche 1898-99 and O’Neill 1942.

Spondee in	Hom.	Hes.	<i>H. Hymns</i>	Call. (all)	A. R.	Arat.	<i>BM</i>
1 st foot	37.9	39.1	35.0	26.0	30.2	38.0	40.8
2 nd foot	40.3	45.9	45.9	48.7	43.4	41.0	44.9
3 rd foot	15.0	20.3	17.8	8.7	15.5	21.0	23.2
4 th foot	30.0	28.9	26.6	19.1	17.3	19.0	27.0
5 th foot	4.6	6.4	7.4	7.1	8.7	14.4	5.2

The 2nd foot is more commonly spondaic than any other across all the hexameter poets, and the *BM*'s use of it sits almost exactly halfway between Homer and Callimachus.

Perhaps more revealing is the relationship between proportions of spondaic 1st and 2nd feet: in Homer, Hesiod, Aratus, and the *BM* spondees appear in the 1st foot only slightly less often than in the 2nd, whereas in the *HHymns*, Callimachus, and Apollonius there is a pronounced difference. Mineur points out that Callimachus' low proportion of 3rd-foot spondees is linked to his taste for the B2 caesura (which can only occur in a dactylic 3rd foot); since, as we have seen, the *BM* uses the B1 and B2 caesurae almost equally, its relatively high proportion of 3rd-foot spondees is similarly predictable. Homer famously avoids the *σπονδειαζων* (a line with a spondaic 5th foot): only 5% of lines in Homer have a contracted 5th foot, and according to West 1982a this figure shrinks to 2% if one excludes those cases where an original pair of short vowels have been contracted into a single long vowel as part of the historical development of the Greek language (p. 37).

The Hellenistic poets seem to have deployed it with care: they use it slightly more often than Homer (or, in Aratus' case, noticeably more so), and often use *σπονδειαζοντες* in pairs or groups of up to four. The *BM*'s proportion, as shown, is almost equal to that of Homer, and none of the fourteen *σπονδειαζοντες* in the poem (24, 104, 113, 116, 125,

155, 163, 166, 197, 206, 214, 234, 253, 291) occur consecutively. Where Callimachus does use a 5th-foot spondee, he nearly always precedes it with four dactyls, and in both Callimachus and Apollonius the 4th foot of a σπονδειαίζων is always dactylic.⁹¹ The *BM*, by contrast, almost always has at least one other spondee in a σπονδειαίζων (the exceptions being 206, 214, and 253, which all scan *ddddss*), and twice allows a 4th- and 5th-foot spondee in the same line (125 and 166).

vii. Elision

Occurs a total of 172 times in the *BM*: with -ε (107x), -α (43x), -ι (13x), and -ο (8x). The words elided are usually particles or prepositions, δέ being much the most common (83x; next are ἄρα 11x, ἐπί 11x, ἀλλά 10x), but other types of word are sometimes elided too:

Verbs - πάλλετ[ο] 72; βούλετ[ο] 72; ἦγ[ε] 79; ἄγετ[ε] 120; ἐπεπείθοντ[ο] 197; ἑσταότ[α] 203; ἦμυν[ε] 234; ἦκ[ε] 288

Nouns - θαύματ[α] 58; νῶτ[α] 65; ἡϊόν[α] 221; ἔγκατ[α] 246; παῖδ[α] 262

Adverbs - μήποτ[ε] 63; ὅτ[ε] 67, 79; αὖτ[ε] 198; ἔτ[ι] 252, 301; οἴκαδ[ε] 262; τότε[ε] 270

Pronouns - ὑμέτερ[α] 55; μ[ε] 97, 179; ταῦτ[α] 99, 122

viii. Epic correction

Common in the *BM* (54x), although nearly always at word-end; the only exceptions are the short scansion of -οι- in ποιήσας 93 and ἐποίησαν 128. In the majority of cases the correction occurs with καί before a vowel (20x); word-final -αι and -οι are also susceptible (11x and 12x respectively, plus two instances of the monosyllable οἱ scanning

⁹¹ Hunter 1989, p. 42.

short). Less common is correption of -ει (3x), -ω (2x), -η (1x), μη (1x), and -ου (1x). This is in line with both Homeric and Callimachean practice, where correption other than of -αι and -οι is rare.⁹²

A correpted diphthong or vowel can occur at any of the following places in the line:

- 1st foot: first half (3x) or second half (6x) of resolved biceps;
- 3rd foot: first half (10x) or second half (10x, always καί) of resolved biceps;
- 4th foot: second half (14x) of resolved biceps;
- 5th foot: first half (5x) or second half (6x) of resolved biceps.

Correption never occurs in the 2nd foot.

ix. Hiatus

The confusion over what exactly is to be classed as hiatus has been well highlighted by Athanassakis 1970, pp. 129-30. I largely follow West 1982 here, and define it as any direct contact between two vowels occurring in different words, where neither vowel undergoes any change. That is, none of the cases of elision or correption discussed above count as hiatus, since the first of the two vowels has been changed; nor does a case like 28 Τρωξάρταο count as hiatus, since the two vowels occur in the same word. There *is* hiatus, however, at 19 ἀνεθρέψατο, ὕδρομεδούση, since neither the final -ο nor the initial υ- has been affected by the contact.

Hiatus thus defined occurs in the *BM* a total of 27 times, in the following positions:

- between princeps and biceps (11x)
- between the two syllables of a resolved biceps (7x)

⁹² Hopkinson 1984, p. 54.

- between feet (9x).

The use of hiatus between feet was generally avoided by Callimachus.⁹³ In the *BM* it is all but confined to the juncture between the 4th and 5th feet, where it occurs 7x; there is also one case between the 1st and 2nd foot (236), and one between the 2nd and 3rd (272). Unlike correption, the distribution of hiatus is not uniform throughout the poem. In the first 133 lines of text analysed (up to line 154), it occurs only 8x; in the remaining 134 it occurs 19x.

After a short closed vowel, hiatus usually occurs either at the bucolic caesura (19, 57, 141, 202, 203) or in a Homeric expression where the digamma would originally have kept the vowels separate (δέ οἱ 71, 236, 244; ἐμπληντο ἕκαστος 167; δὲ ἰδὼν 224; μέγα ἔργον 272). As Wölke puts it, ‘dies entspricht eleganterer Praxis’ (pp. 76-7). However, there are three instances which do not fall into either of these categories: 245 ἐκχυντο ἄπαντα, 278 οὐτε Ἄρηος (see *ad loc.*), 302 ἐτράποντο· ἐδύετο.

In the princeps, Callimachus only permitted hiatus to occur after a long vowel or diphthong if the foot was dactylic. The *BM* allows it in both dactylic (65, 189, 197, 246, 248) and spondaic (137, 152, 163, 195, 221, 281) feet. In the biceps, Homer allowed hiatus after a long vowel in the 1st and 4th feet. The Alexandrians allowed it only after the 4th (and Callimachus, as mentioned above, shunned it altogether). The *BM* has it twice, both times after the 4th foot: 132 (ἔνοπλοι· ὥς) and 157 (ἐκείνῳ εὐθύ).

⁹³ Maas 1962, p. 89; somewhat modified by Mineur 1984, p. 45.

x. Attic correption

There are 139 points in the *BM* at which a stop + liquid pair could ‘make position’ (i.e. where the preceding vowel is not innately long). At 78 of these points (56%) the vowel is lengthened; at the other 61 it remains short. As normal, there is a significant difference in the behaviour of vowels before word-initial and internal pairs: a final short vowel is lengthened before a word-initial pair in only 8/31 cases (26%), while a short vowel is lengthened before a pair in the same word in 70/108 cases (65%).⁹⁴

No real conclusions can be formed about the *BM*’s preferences for treatment of individual stop + liquid pairs, since the poem’s length means many pairs appear only once or twice, if at all. With that caveat, however, results are as follows.

- δλ, βμ, γμ, δμ, θμ, πμ, τμ, φμ, βν, τν never appear in the poem.
- θλ, τλ, κν never appear in a context where Attic correption would be possible, and therefore provide no data.
- κμ, χμ, γν, δν, θν, φν, χν, γρ always make position. This is as we would expect: γν and δν never allow correption (West 1982a, p. 17), and pairs with nasals or voiced plosives are typically less prone to it (p. 16). In Homer γρ never admits correption at all (Smyth 1897, p. 112).
- The only pairs which never make position (but appear in relevant contexts) are χλ and φλ; however, each appears only once, so this is not significant.
- All other pairs – βλ, γλ, κλ, πλ, πν, βρ, θρ, κρ, πρ, τρ – appear with corrected and uncorrected vowels alike. Correption with βλ and γλ is not Homeric, but

⁹⁴ Wölke pp. 77-83 compiled his own data on Attic correption in the *BM*. The discrepancies between our texts mean I have not attempted to build on his results, but for the sake of comparison I record them here. He expresses his results as ratios of lengthened:short vowels, rather than as percentages, and gives the ratios as 1:4.75 initially and 1.36:1 internally; translated into percentages, this is 17% initial lengthening and 64% internal.

appears in 1/3 and 2/3 cases respectively in the *BM*. For κλ, πν, θρ, κρ, πρ there is no obvious preference either way.⁹⁵ τρ admits correption significantly more often than not (27/40 times); its frequent appearance is partly due to forms of the word βατρᾶχος (16x), in which the first α is always short. πλ, meanwhile, always makes position internally (10x), but admits correption of a final vowel in the previous word (2x); βρ displays a similar tendency, although less clearly (of the five times it appears, it is internal and makes position 3x, initial and allows correption 2x).

xi. Enjambement⁹⁶

Parry 1929 laid the groundwork for a system of considering enjambement in hexameter epic, based on a division into three categories:⁹⁷

1. No enjambement – in which the end of the line coincides with the end of the sentence (meaning that the following line is a distinct sense-unit, introduced either by a co-ordinate conjunction or by asyndeton).⁹⁸
2. ‘Periodic’ enjambement – in which the sentence is syntactically complete by the end of the line, but after which further, syntactically unnecessary detail is added by a subsequent line or lines.

⁹⁵ Figures: κλ admits correption 2/6 times, πν 4/7 times, θρ 1/4 times, κρ 10/19 times, πρ 4/6 times.

⁹⁶ Not a metrical phenomenon, but included here as another topic of stylistic analysis, and for want of anywhere more natural to put it.

⁹⁷ Since then other scholars have approached the question in other ways: Bakker 1990 and Higbie 1990 are both important. For the purposes of comparison, however, I have adopted Parry’s simple three-type system, since most available analysis of enjambement elsewhere in Greek poetry uses it.

⁹⁸ Parry 1929, pp. 203–4.

3. 'Necessary' enjambement – in which more information is required before the sentence can be considered complete.

The following table is taken from Mineur 1984 (p. 31), and uses figures from Parry's original paper, Edwards 1971, and McLennan 1974; I have removed the data for the *Hymn to Delos* and added my own percentages for the *BM*.⁹⁹

	<u>1 (none)</u>	<u>2 (periodic)</u>	<u>3 (necessary)</u>
Homer	46.7	25.7	27.6
Hesiod, <i>Th.</i>	33.0	39.1	27.9
Hesiod, <i>WD</i>	43.0	27.2	29.7
Call. <i>Hymns</i> 1, 2, 3, 6	41.6	25.7	32.7
Ap. Rhod.	34.8	16.0	49.1
<i>BM</i>	51.5	25.0	23.5

The *BM*'s use of periodic enjambement is very much in line with both Homer and Callimachus, but it makes noticeably more use of end-stopped lines and noticeably less of necessary enjambement. Homer himself is not consistent: Parry originally compiled his data by sampling hundred-line extracts from different points in the poems and then

⁹⁹ Enjambement, depending as it does on the exact order in which lines are printed, is heavily influenced by the whims of the editor. Like the metrical figures above, these data were compiled from 267 lines, but a further seven lines had to be excluded from consideration because of lacunae: in my text 213, 221, 250, 257, 261, 266, and 286 all precede a lacuna. In each case it is impossible to judge whether the line should be counted as type 1 or type 2. In other words, percentage values for the *BM* are /260. It is only fair to mention that Janko 1982, pp. 30-1 also attempted to produce figures for in the *BM*, and arrived at rather different results: 43.2% no enjambement, 33.7% periodic, 22.7% necessary. This discrepancy is partly explicable by the fact that he used a longer text (303 lines); however, the division of enjambement into categories in this way is necessarily somewhat subjective, and presumably Janko and I disagree on exactly which lines fall into which group.

averaging the results, and the *BM*'s preference for type 1 lines is surpassed by xvii.1-100, which uses 55% type 1. But it is clear that overall the *BM* makes less use of enjambement than does either archaic or Hellenistic epic.

xii. Conclusions

The metre of the *BM* does not align precisely with the preferences of any particular author or period. It is less strictly governed than the Callimachean hexameter, which is usually held up as the pinnacle of Hellenistic refinement: it violates Meyer's First Law, ignores Naeke's Law altogether, and seems untroubled by various stylistic infelicities which Callimachus and (to a lesser extent) the other Alexandrians strove to avoid – hiatus between feet, or elision at the main caesura. On the other hand, it does show some symptoms of Hellenistic practice: the insistence on main caesura in the 3rd foot, for example, and a reliance on the bucolic caesura comparable to that of Apollonius.

Perhaps the most interesting metrical feature of the *BM* is its almost exact 1:1 ratio of B1 to B2 caesurae. From the limited remains of Panyassis and Antimachus, it seems likely that Classical epic made heavier use of the B1 caesura than had Homer, and that it was the Hellenistic poets who reversed this trend and favoured the B2. The *BM*'s practice obviously cannot prove anything about its date, since caesurae seem only ever to have been a fashion, and fashions need not be followed; but if it was composed at a time when the B2 caesura tended to dominate, we may perhaps imagine that the poet was (consciously or unconsciously) trying to make his work sound more authentically epic and old-fashioned by rejecting current modes of hexameter composition. The

strikingly spondaic character of its hexameter – certainly when compared to Callimachus, and even relative to Homer – would support such a proposition.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hunter 1999 on the Idylls of Theocritus (1, 2, 4, 5, and 6) which ‘are markedly more spondaic than the third-century norm’: ‘as these are ‘mimes’, it is tempting also to see an attempt to produce a less smooth, more ‘mimetic’ hexameter. If so, this would not be because the spondee is, in Greek eyes, closer to speech than the dactyl... but because the very deviation from contemporary poetic tendencies would effect distance from the artifices of ‘literature’’ (p. 19); and Schibli 1983 on the metre of the GM: ‘the caesurae of certain lines do not meet the standards of Kallimachean poetry, but then we hardly expect that a mock-epic poet, whose intention it was to approximate the language of the Homeric poems, would adopt the Alexandrian changes in the hexameter (the same applies to the poet of the *Batrachomyomachia*). In fact, the relatively frequent occurrence of a long eighth element before the bucolic diaeresis exaggerates epic practice and could reflect an intentional refusal of Kallimachean metrics’ (pp. 5-6).

V. RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE

Nicht nur in den Genrebildern antiken Lebens, wie sie uns die Komiker und Mimographen malen, tritt dann und wann ein Mäuslein auf.

- Keller 1909, p. 194

The *BM*'s popularity from about the 11th century onward is widely acknowledged; indeed, it becomes obvious once one considers the sheer number of MSS available to us (below, p. 96 n. 114). It may have been the first wholly Greek text ever printed: a single copy survives of a version printed at Brescia, probably by Thomas Ferrandus, which Proctor 1900 (p. 83) dates to c. 1474.¹⁰¹ This is not to say, however, that between the 1st c. (when Martial knew it as a Saturnalia present) and the 10th (when Z, our first MS, appears) the *BM* dropped out of sight entirely. Tracking it through the intervening period is akin to tracking one of its mouse protagonists; the poem makes little noise, but can pop up in some unexpected places.¹⁰²

As we might expect with a work attributed to Homer, canonical authors are already drawing on the *BM* in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Lucian in the *Timon* alludes to *BM* 191 (see Commentary *ad loc.*). Opp. *H.* 1.731 φῶτες ἀπηνέες, of men who kill

¹⁰¹ By way of comparison, the first printed Homer listed by Proctor (p. 49) was produced in Florence in December 1488. The surviving copy of Ferrandus' *BM* is in the University of Manchester Library, and can be viewed in full online via their digitised Rylands Collection; it is described by Proctor, pp. 83, 170-1, as well as by Dibdin 1814, pp. 53-55, who casts doubt on the early dating ('this work is probably of a date not earlier than 1490') but on no very secure grounds. It is generally agreed to be a poor example of the printer's art. The work which tends to be identified as the real *editio princeps* of the *BM* was printed by Laonicus Cretensis at Venice on 22nd April 1486: Proctor argues from the way it is composed, with black lines of original text alternating with glosses in red ink, that it was 'a trial or specimen, intended to test the type and the method of printing in two colours, preparatory to the issue of a series of service-books' (p. 74).

¹⁰² This section goes no further than the 13th c. Once it passed into print, the *BM*'s popularity only increased: it was repeatedly translated, and became the model for a range of (generally satirical and politically-motivated) mock epics with animal protagonists. The constraints of a thesis do not permit discussion of this stage of the poem's history in the present work; for an introduction, see Caterina Carpinato's appendix to Fusillo, and Braund 2011 on English translation and adaptation of the *BM* in the 17th and 18th centuries.

young birds, may be modelled on *BM* 115 *ἄνδρες ἀπτηνέες, of the men who killed Troxartes' second son; both Oppians also use the expression ἐνὶ βένθεσι (*BM* 259, Opp. *H.* 3.629, *4.444, Opp. *C.* *3.365), which occurs nowhere in extant literature before the *BM*. Two passages from Aelian's *De Natura Animalium* suggest awareness of the *BM*: 7.11.16, where the rare verb ἐπενήχετο is used of an animal's corpse floating on water, as at *BM* 107; and 5.22, which describes mice working together (συμμαχεῖν) to pull one of their number out of a *psykter* and save him from drowning, and has some coincidences of vocabulary with *BM* 220 in particular. (See *ad locc.* for more detail on both points.)

The first author we find making really systematic use of the *BM*, however, is the 4th-c. theologian and orator Gregory Nazianzenus. Gregory seems to have been something of a fan: he borrows vocabulary and phrasing from the poem far too often for coincidence. He is the only other Greek author to use the (very rare) adjective νεόπηκτος to refer to cheese, with the sense 'newly curdled' (*BM* 38, *MPG* 1369.9-10). He re-uses, either exactly or with minor adaptations, the phrases μόρον δ' οὐκ ... ὑπαλύξαι (*BM* 90), ἔκδικον ὄμμα (*BM* 97), νεκρὸν δέμας (*BM* 106), ἐς μόρον εἴλξαν (*BM* 115), ὥς δ' ἐνόησε (*BM* 215), and possibly οἶα μ' ἔοργαν (*BM* 181 in *a*); his description of a crab (*MPG* 576.11) is clearly influenced by the *BM*, particularly in λοξοβάμοισι ~ λοξοβάται *BM* 295. There is some sign that his fellow theologian Cyril of Alexandria (early 5th c.) also knew the *BM*: the phrase πολέμου πληθύν (169) appears in his commentary on Isaiah (*MPG* 70.229.1), and he may echo *BM* 200 δεινὸν ... πολέμου κτύπον in his ninth *Paschal Homily* (*MPG* 77.577.47).

As discussed *ad* 7, Claudian's *terrigenas imitata viros* (*DRP* 2.167) is probably based on the *BM*'s γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν μιμούμενοι. Nonnus has occasional reminiscences of the *BM*: εἰς μόρον ἔλκων makes an appearance at 20.151, and φόρτον ἔρωτος (4.118,

41.239) / ἐρώτων (3.116, 10.364, 48.162) is as likely to have been borrowed from *BM* 78 as from Anacreon fr. 115. At the end of the 5th c. Timotheus of Gaza refers to the chameleon by the alternative name φυσίγναθος (see *ad* 17). There is then a silence, and no more echoes of the poem reach us until we find Ignatius Diaconus in the first half of the 9th c. making clear reference to it in a letter to his friend Nicephorus the *chartophylax*. In a joking passage packed with military imagery and the vocabulary of (particularly Homeric) warfare, he threatens ἀκήρυκτόν σοι διὰ γλώσσης πόλεμον ἐπεγεροῦμεν κατ' οὐδὲν ἀνεκτότερον τῆς βατραχείου ἐκείνης καὶ μυοκτόνου παρεμβολῆς.¹⁰³ The joke is clearly that 'total war as unbearable as those mouse-slaying formations of the Frogs' is an underwhelming prospect, but the reference to our *BM* is sealed by his use of the rare adjective μυοκτόνος, which also appears at *BM* 159: Physignathus stirs the warlike passions of the other Frogs by boasting of the μυοκτόνον ... τρόπαιον they will set up. Ignatius' humour here relies not only on awareness of the *BM*'s existence, but on specific knowledge of its plot. Physignathus' belligerent confidence proves entirely unfounded, since the Mice rout the Frogs and drive them back into the pond; the bathos of Ignatius' threat is underscored by the fact that the 'mouse-slaying formations' of the Frogs collapse in short order. He might as well have said 'I shall confront you with the valour of warlike Lycaon against Achilles'. Both men must have known the poem well.

As we move into the era of the *BM*'s earliest MSS, evidence for its currency among writers and intellectuals increases. Methodius the Patriarch (early 9th c.), in his *Life of Theophanes the Confessor*, retails an anecdote about his subject silencing a population of noisy frogs in a lake; at one point he calls the frogs λιμνοχαρῶν

¹⁰³ Text as in Mango 1997, pp. 112-15. Of Nicephorus we know only what Ignatius tells us; Mango sums this up on pp. 21-22, and comments: 'His literary interests were similar to those of Ignatius, his prose style even more convoluted, and his handwriting minute and illegible'.

κνωδάλων (20.27), identified by Wilson 1971 as an allusion to *BM* 12 (see *ad loc.*).¹⁰⁴ George Choeroboscus (9th c.) cites the poem as an example of the dative plural μυσίν being scanned with a long υ (see *ad* 260). Arethas of Caesarea (9th-10th c.) borrows the frog name Ὑψιβόας as an adjective (*BM* 202; see *ad loc.*). φυσίγναθος turns up in the works of 12th c. authors Eustathius of Thessalonica and Nicetas Choniates (see *ad* 17). No less august a personage than Theodore II Ducas Lascaris, the 13th-c. Emperor of Nicaea, was a reader: he uses Physignathus the frog as an example of a character from Homer with a powerful voice, alongside Eurybates, the herald of either Agamemnon or Odysseus. Two works from the Byzantine period, however, are of particular importance in the reception of the *BM*, since involve both an imitative, mock-solemn style and mouse protagonists: the *Catomyomachia* of Theodore Prodromus (12th c.), and the anonymous 'Mouse Exercises', τὰ Σχέδη τοῦ Μυός, usually attributed either to Prodromus or to his approximate contemporary Constantine Manasses.¹⁰⁵

The first of these is very plainly written as a successor to the *BM*. Instead of mock-epic, it is mock-tragedy: nearly four hundred lines of iambic trimeter, complete with dialogue, brief stichomythia, a chorus (although no strophic passages), a messenger speech, and a concluding *deus ex machina* of sorts. There is no readily available English translation, although two separate German versions were published in 1968 (those of Ahlborn and Hunger); I give only a summary here.

¹⁰⁴ The anecdote in question is attached to several historical and mythological characters. According to Ael. *NA* 3.37, the hero Perseus prayed to Zeus after the croaking of the frogs around Lake Seriphus prevented him from sleeping, and Zeus struck them all dumb (a tale presented as an aetiological explanation for why the frogs of Seriphus made no noise). Suetonius, however, attributes the feat to the Emperor Augustus (Suet. *Aug.* 94).

¹⁰⁵ For discussion of the (inconclusive) arguments, see Mercati 1927. Hunger 1968, pp. 59-60 treats it as the work of Prodromus.

Two mice, Creillus (probably 'Meat-lover', from κρέας; Ahlborn translates 'Bratenliebhaber', Hunger 'Fleischerl') and Tyrocleptes ('Cheese-thief'), discuss the threat posed to their people by the cat. Both have lost loved ones: Creillus' daughter Lychnoglyphus ('Lamp-nibble') was devoured by the cat, as were Tyrocleptes' children Lardocopus ('Ham-biter') and Sitodaptes ('Grain-guzzle'). Creillus calls for war. Tyrocleptes is more cautious and timid, but Creillus declares that Zeus appeared to him in a dream – in the form of the wise old mouse Tyroleichus ('Cheese-licker') – and promised aid. He further explains that he scared Zeus into co-operation by threatening that if the god did not help, the mice would descend on his temple and devour all his offerings. Reassured, Tyrocleptes suggests calling an assembly. Creillus makes a long speech (127-180): he decries the cowardice of previous generations of mice in not making a stand, praises by contrast the bravery of his listeners, and boasts of his own ancestry (his family, the Chartodaptae or 'Paper-eaters', are known for valour and good counsel) and his suitability as a war leader. He ends by dismissing the mice and instructing them to gather for battle first thing in the morning.

In a short interlude, the mouse chorus expresses terrified prophecies of doom for the whole expedition. Morning comes, and the army sets out, with Creillus offering a final prayer to all the gods. Creillus' wife, left behind with the chorus, prays for her husband and son, both of whom are commanders in the battle; gradually her fears overtake her, and she begins to speculate on her fate if the mice are defeated. She worries she and her children will be enslaved, but the chorus reminds her gloomily that she is more likely to be *eaten*. A messenger arrives with bad news: her son, Psicharpax, has been killed by an arrow. She bursts into a storm of lamentation, while the chorus tries to calm her down. The messenger tells the rest of the story: two powerful mouse generals,

Psicholeiches ('Crumb-licker') and Colucoclopus ('Ham-robber'), had already led their forces against the cat and been annihilated, when Psicharpax was seized with berserker fury and grabbed a spear, intending to strike her down in revenge. She spotted him and pounced, snatching him up and devouring him.¹⁰⁶ Creillus' wife utters a curse against Zeus,¹⁰⁷ and then leads the chorus in a song of mourning for Psicharpax. Eventually a second messenger arrives and, after negotiating for a reward, announces that the cat is dead. It turns out that Creillus, enraged by his son's death, engaged her in single combat; as they struggled, a beam dropped from the roof above, crushing the cat's skull and killing her. The chorus ends the play by predicting years of peace and happiness for the mice now that their nemesis is no more.

The allusions in this work to Classical tragedy, especially to the *Persians*, are not a subject for the present discussion. What matters here is its obvious relationship to the *BM*. In both poems a bereaved mouse father summons an assembly, makes an impassioned speech, and declares war on the foe in revenge for his dead child. In both poems, too, Zeus intervenes at the last moment to tip the balance in favour of the losing side, although in the *BM* this means routing the mice in their hour of triumph, whereas in *Prodromus* it means granting them an unexpected victory. The device of giving the mice comic names based on their eating habits is an obvious tribute to the *BM*:

¹⁰⁶ This directly contradicts line 246, πέπτωκε τρωθεὶς ὁ Ψιχάρπαξ ἐν βέλει.

¹⁰⁷ Ahlborn translates this line - κακὸς κακῶς ὄλοιτο νῦν ὁ πυρφόρος (316) – as 'schimpflich soll der schlechte Orakelpriester zugrunde gehen', and notes on p. 94 that 'der Opferpriester ... hatte offensichtlich vor der Schlacht glückverheißende Voraussagen gemacht'. πυρφόρος was the term for the priest who maintained the sacred fire at Sparta (X. *Lac.* 13.2), but in tragedy was usually an epithet for one or other god. Here it is likely that Zeus is meant (as at S. *Ph.* 1198); no oracle or priest has been mentioned, and it was Zeus who promised victory to Creillus. The chorus' response - δέδουκεν ἡμᾶς δυσφορούσας τῷ λόγῳ - reinforces the wife's threat by reminding her that the mice have a way of taking vengeance on Zeus (i.e. attacking his temple offerings), which may even allude to Athene's complaints in the *BM* (see *ad* 177-96).

Prodromus generally takes care not to repeat any names, varying the forms even when the meaning is the same (*Pternotroctes* and *Lardocopus* both mean ‘ham-biter’), with the obvious exception of Psicharpax. This is no accident. In both poems the death of a Psicharpax drives his father into battle: although at the start Creillus is moved by the loss of his daughter, it is Psicharpax’ fate which prompts him to throw himself into combat (compare the *BM*, where Troxartes’ *aristeia* follows more or less directly from the *second* death of Psicharpax). Prodromus not only knew the *BM*, but intended his audience to recognise his debt to it; indeed, he has Tyrocleptes refer to the previous conflicts of the mice πρὸς τὸ στράτευμα τῶν γαλῶν καὶ βατράχων (72), an obvious tip of the cap to their two most famous literary opponents.¹⁰⁸

The *Catomyomachia* is also an apt companion for the *BM* in terms of style and genre. Like the *BM*, it uses very little explicit humour: nothing in the poem is ludicrous, beyond the basic conception of mice talking and making speeches like characters in Greek tragedy. Hunger correctly notes that in structure and content it is a tragedy in miniature (pp. 52-3), but fundamentally misunderstands the generic affiliations at work when he then claims that the main source of comedy is the cowardice of the mice: ‘die größte Diskrepanz ergibt sich zwischen dem Heldentum der tragischen Heroen und der

¹⁰⁸ Hunger 1968, pp. 40-3, has a more detailed list of linguistic parallels between the two poems. He notes that Tyrocleptes is guilty, in τῶν γαλῶν καὶ βατράχων, of an ‘auffällige Ungenauigkeit’ (p. 41), since the mice in the *BM* fought only against the frogs: I see this as an elision of two separate stories known to Prodromus, the *BM* and some version of the weasel-mouse war (possibly our *GM* or something like it, possibly just a fable or a tavern wall-painting). More puzzling is the following line, in which he reminds Creillus of how συμμάχων κράτιστον εἶχομεν νέφος. This has no relation to the plot of the *BM* as we have it; the only ‘allies’ in the poem are the crabs, who are on the frog side. Perhaps we should assume that Tyrocleptes is referring to a previous conflict against the frogs, not necessarily the *BM*: the allusion would still exist, via the very identification of frogs as a foe for warrior mice. Indeed, perhaps Tyrocleptes means a particularly terrible war in which the weasels did in fact ally with the frogs, and the mice in turn were forced to seek reinforcements; to suggest that such a war had taken place would be a playful way to imply that the history of the mice was more storied than we know.

notorischen Feigheit der Mäuse' (p. 53). As discussed above (p. 38), mice in Greek fable were *not* notorious for their cowardice: if anything, they were exemplars of recklessness. Hunger makes much of the numerous references to fear or panic in the *CM* (p. 54), but all are within the same tragic tropes he acknowledges that Prodromus is following. The mouse chorus at 185-94 is fearful for the fate of the expedition (ὦ ποῖον ἄλγος νῦν κρατεῖ με καὶ θλίβει...), but the Aeschylean chorus, its most obvious model, often expresses similar terrors (*Pers.* 115-6 ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων / φρὴν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ, *Sept.* 78 θρόομαι φοβερὰ μεγάλ' ἄχῃ). Tyrocleptes advises caution and secrecy in dealing with the cat, but the dialogue between a character who demands immediate action and one who is more wary or timid is impeccably tragic: we may think of Antigone and Ismene in Sophocles.¹⁰⁹ Creillus mentions the ἀσθένειαν καὶ κακίστην δειλίαν of previous generations (130), but in order to create a rhetorical contrast with the courage of his listeners; and the messenger reports that Psicharpax and Creillus were driven in turn by battle-fury to engage the cat in single combat. There is no comic inconcinnity between 'real' tragic heroes and cowardly mice: the mice *are* real tragic heroes. The humour lies in the elevation of small animals to heroic status, not in the diminution of tragic heroism to the level of mice. In much the same way as the *BM* poet probably varied the tale of the war between the mice and the weasel by introducing frogs as a new antagonist, Prodromus casts the same traditional story as mock-tragic, rather than mock-epic.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The trope itself of course stretches all the way back to the *Iliad*: Hector and Poulydamas, Achilles and Odysseus.

¹¹⁰ Hunger's argument that the *CM* is also a satire of contemporary Byzantine politics (pp. 55-8) is not relevant to the present discussion.

τὰ Σχέδη τοῦ Μυός (henceforth *StM*) are more of a puzzle. The text (best accessed in Papademetriou 1969) consists of 97 lines of Greek divided into two more or less equal sections, each of which has a short introduction and a concluding verse epigram. In the first half, an impetuous mouse makes a raid on the leftovers from a lavish meal. He disregards most of the delicacies on offer, and concentrates on ‘the head of a beautiful mullet’, τρίγλης ἀγλαομόρφου κρανίου (15). After a prolonged struggle between his greed for the mullet and his fear of the household cat, which he worries may be lurking nearby, his greed wins out and he pounces on the fish. He delivers an exultant speech delighting in his good fortune and congratulating himself on his heroic valour. At this moment the cat does indeed appear, and seizes him.

The second half resumes where the first left off, although the introduction seems to imply that time has passed for the audience: ἰδοὺ καὶ σήμερον... (47). The cat interrogates the mouse about his family and background. The mouse, having tried in vain to trick his way into being set free, explains that he is Elaeopotes (‘Oil-drinker’), son of Lardophagus (‘Ham-eater’) and Pastoleichus (‘Porridge-lapper’ or ‘Salt-licker’). The cat asks next why he is weeping, and, on the grounds that weeping and praying (προσευχόμενοι καὶ δακρύοντες, 62-3) is characteristic of monks, suggests sarcastically that the mouse is a monk: in which case, where is his ceremonial garb? The mouse eagerly confirms that not only is he a monk, he is the superior (καθηγέμων) of a monastic order, and that he has foregone his robes in order to set an ascetic example for his juniors. The cat asks whether he knows how to sing a psalm, and the mouse launches into a series of quotations or slight adaptations from genuine Biblical psalms, all of which are appropriate to his situation: in order, *Psalms* 6:1 (or 37:1), 37:9.1, 54:5, 37:5.1, (68:4.1), 37:18.2, 87:17.2. The cat is not impressed, and replies mockingly with another

series of short Biblical quotations combined in such a way to make clear that all the mouse cares about is food. Elaeopotes, realising he is outwitted, attempts a last-ditch defence: he argues that it was pious of him to avoid all the other foods and concentrate on fish, ἵνα φθάσω τῶν ἀρετῶν τὸ ἀκρότατον (87-8). The cat reproaches him with the damage he has done to the supplies of the *real* monks – eating their food, drinking their lamp-oil – and concludes by saying that if the mouse had worn his monastic garb, he would have escaped, but since he left it behind, his doom is sealed.

The purpose of this work is unclear. Schedography was a teaching method popular in 12th-c. Byzantium: a σχέδος was a specially-composed passage on which students would be asked to provide grammatical and literary commentary, parsing the words and identifying quotations or echoes of canonical works.¹¹¹ The *StM* are addressed to students – part one begins εἰ βούλεσθε, ὦ παῖδες, τραφῆναι τήμερον λογικῶς – and the duel of quotations between the mouse and the cat at 73-84 would have been an excellent ground for testing a student's recall of the Bible; the rest of the work contains enough obscure vocabulary and difficult word-forms to be of didactic value. Some scholars (Krumbacher 1891, Horna 1905, also Hunger 1968 pp. 59-60) have identified it as a 'Maushumoreske', a parody of Scripture and/or a satirical attack on the monastic lifestyle; others (Festa 1907, Mercati 1927) have seen it purely as a classroom text; Papademetriou 1969 sensibly points out that the two are not incompatible, and argues that the *StM*'s humour comes from the contrast between petty situation and elevated language.

¹¹¹ On schedography in general, Keaney 1971 is blunt: 'Nothing approaching an adequate treatment of schedographia in general ... exists' (p. 305 n. 11). *DNP* s.v. 'Schedographie' is scanty in the extreme. Papademetriou 1969, p. 210 n. 1 has a good detailed bibliography; Ciccolella 2005, p. 8 nn. 22 and 24 collects some more general works on teaching and learning in the latter centuries of Byzantium.

Certainly the *StM* have none of the fundamental dignity found in both the *BM* and the *CM*. Elaeopotes' actions are unheroic – in his initial assault on the leftovers he is ὁμοῦ λιχνευόμενος καὶ φοβούμενος (16-7), when captured he lies frantically in an attempt to escape, and we are left with the impression that his death at the paws of the cat is (as the cat concludes the work by telling us) a just reward for his behaviour. In this respect the *StM* are more closely affiliated with the παρωδίαί catalogued by Athenaeus (see above, p. 26), with Alexander Aetolus' πισσύγγους ἢ φῶρας ἀναιδέας ἢ τινα χλούνην / φλύοντ' ἀνθηρῇ σὺν κακοδαμονίῃ, than with the *BM*. However, the author clearly knew the *BM*, since in the introduction he refers to the mouse as κατὰ τὸν Ποιητὴν ἐμβασίχυτρον (see Commentary *ad* 137). Elaiopotes' response when seized by the cat is reminiscent of Psycharpax' reaction to the journey across the pond – he plucks at his whiskers and 'wets all the ground with tears' (41-3) – and at 32 he compares himself to a series of the heroes from the *Iliad* (Ajax, Achilles, Menelaus, and Nestor), which may allude to the Iliadic mice of the *BM*. The joke here is that Elaeopotes is *not* particularly brave: his courage is temporary, and collapses as soon as the cat appears. The cat's questioning at 50ff. seems to be modelled on Physignathus in the *BM*: having asked the mouse about his father, mother, life, and profession (πρᾶξις), he commands him to speak ἀπλῶς (51) and later reprimands him for lying (ἵνα τί ... δολίως φθέγγῃ, 56-7), which echoes *BM* 14 πάντα δ' ἀλήθευσον, μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω. The *StM* do not truly belong in the tradition of mock-heroic mouse literature embodied by the *GM*, *BM*, and *CM*, but they do help to demonstrate the continuing popularity of talking mice during the Byzantine period – a period in which the *BM* itself seems to have been in widespread circulation.¹¹²

¹¹² In addition, Papademetriou's discussion of the purpose of the *StM* casts an intriguing light on

Addendum: mice in the classroom

The M² scholia on the *BM* (Ludwich p. 198) begin with an introductory note which specifies that it is particularly well suited to a young audience: συγκέκρται γὰρ αὕτη παιγνίοις τε καὶ σπουδάσμασι, καὶ διατοῦτο (*sic*) μᾶλλον ἀρμόζει μείραξιν ἀπαλοῖς ἐπτοημένοις περὶ τὰ παίγνια, ὅσους δηλαδὴ ἔτι ἢ ἐγκύκλιος παιδευσίς γαλακτοτροφεῖ. The scholiast continues with a glowing description of its utility as a teaching aid: διδάσκει δὲ πρότερον, τίνα μὲν βατράχων τὰ βρώματα, ποῖα δὲ τοῖς μυσί, καὶ ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ ἱστορίας τινὰς καὶ διδασκαλίας ἠθικὰς εἴτουν παιδευτικὰς παραδίδωσι, τοῖς νέοις φράσιν ὠραίαν καὶ λεκτικὴν, ὅση τῇ ποιητικῇ χρήσιμος, καὶ ἱστορίαν καὶ μέτρον καὶ ἄλλα τὰ ὠφέλιμα καὶ τοῖς εἰσαγωγικοῖς τὰ ἐς ποίησιν χρήσιμα. As well as matter specific to the poem (the diets of frogs and mice – although see Commentary *ad* 31-55), the *BM* is clearly being envisaged as a tool for the study of poetry in general, teaching ‘narrative and metre and everything else useful’.

Ludwich developed the idea of the *BM* as a school text, pointing out both the evidence for the use of μῦθος in educating children – Ar. *Av.* 471, Pl. *R.* 2.377a, Hermog. *Prog.* 1.1 – and the nature of the *BM* scholia, which are mostly concerned with explanation of vocabulary and syntax and make repeated use of commands (e.g. *ad* 77 σημειῶσαι ὅτι αἱ λέξεις ἄλλως ἐλαμβάνοντο ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς καὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἄλλως,

the ways in which the *BM* might have been read. He notes (p. 214 n. 18): ‘The problems that a student would have to solve seem to be largely similar to those which confront the editor. The students could have been expected to recognize the few verses that conclude the prose in both parts of the *Schede*; they could also be drilled on some rare words included in the text such as υἱῶτο in line 50. But the main problem would be to recognize and identify the numerous literary allusions and quotations contained in the text – not an easy task, as evidenced by the increases of such identifications in each successive edition of the *Schede*, including the present one.’ Might Byzantine classes confronted with the *BM* have been asked not only to translate and parse it, as practice in Homeric grammar and syntax, but also to go through identifying the more or less complex allusions to Homer and Hellenistic literature which the bulk of this commentary will concern itself with recording?

ad 86 αλεύατο] κανόνισον, *ad* 187 ἀρηγέμεν] τὸ βοηθεῖν. κανόνισον) and questions (e.g. *ad* 91 θρίξ πόθεν γίνεται; *ad* 280a ὀβριμοεργον] ποῖον;). He also drew attention to the unusually early first printing of the *BM* (in the 1486 Venice edition, on which see above; he does not mention Ferrandus' edition), and to the evidence for the poem being used with students by great Renaissance educators like Philipp Melanchthon (p. 39), before noting that it had been published in educational editions even during the 19th c. Not all his arguments are equally strong – the point that the mice on the Archelaus Relief (above, pp. 4-7) are standing near 'die jugendlich kleine Gestalt des ΜΥΘΟΣ' is tenuous at best – but overall he draws a convincing picture of the *BM* as a familiar classroom text. The theory is further supported by an epigram preserved in a few MSS of the poem – the earliest probably being Neapolitanus III E 37 (D Ludwich, N Allen) from the 13th c. – and first published in Boissonade v. 2 (p. 472), which envisages it as a model for students' own compositions:

Ὅμηρος, αὐτοῦ γυμνάσαι γνῶσιν θέλων,
τῶν βατράχων ἔπλασε καὶ μυῶν μῦθον,
ἔνθεν παρορμῶν πρὸς μίμησιν τοὺς νέους.¹¹³

Irigoin 1962 drew on this epigram to conclude (p. 290) that the *BM* was part of a select group of literary texts which were given a permanent place on scholarly curricula throughout the Byzantine era, along with the *Iliad*, the *Works and Days*, and Aratus' *Phaenomena*. This is conjecture, however: although it was certainly known during the 9th c., we have no proof that it was being taught in schools.

The argument that the *BM* was a school text derives more from common sense than from a wealth of evidence: it would explain many features of the poem, particularly

¹¹³ Krumbacher 1891 (v. 2 p. 722) agreed with Boissonade in attributing it to Leo the Philosopher, but Wölke concludes (pp. 34-5) that its authorship is unknowable.

its unexpectedly prolific representation in the MSS and its beginner-level scholia. It would also help to explain the sheer scale of interpolation and interference to which it fell victim. Baumeister, as Wölke rightly states (p. 39), went too far in suggesting that the poem was actually used as a sort of open-source exercise in verse composition, and that students would have been encouraged to write their own lines and add them to the text; there is absolutely no evidence for the use of ‘Wikipoetry’ in the ancient or early modern curriculum, and the state of the text is not *quite* so bad as to necessitate any such assumption. However, if the *BM* were a set text, we might expect it to exist in many more copies than other, more revered works which would only have been found in the libraries of learned men. We might also expect a greater degree of textual adjustment, excision, and expansion, as schoolmasters tweaked the poem to suit their own ends – removing particularly obscure lines and replacing them with clearer equivalents, for example. Even the constitution of the MSS often seems to suggest school use: as well as being appended as a bonus in editions of Homer (among the *vett.* J, L, and Y are all examples), the *BM* is sometimes found alongside didactic and protreptic texts (the *Works and Days*, Plutarch’s *Sayings of the Kings and Generals*, the aphorisms of pseudo-Phocylides) and/or grammatical treatises. A codex like Palatinus 151 (15th c., P^u Ludwich, V¹⁰ Allen) – Euripides’ *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenissae*, Sophocles’ *Ajax* and *Electra*, Aeschylus’ *Persae*, the *WD*, and the *BM* – would have been of obvious value to a schoolmaster, as would Estensis 63 3.B.11 (15th-16th c., E^m Ludwich, E Allen): Dionysius Periegetes’ hexameter summary of the geography of Greece, the *WD*, a substantial portion of Theognis’ gnomic musings on justice and friendship, and the *BM* as the spoonful of sugar at the end.

VI. TEXT AND TRANSMISSION

mir ist keine antike Dichtung bekannt, die in byzantinischer Zeit immer wieder derart umfassend umgestaltet und durch Interpolationen entsteht worden ist wie der Batr.

- Wölke, p. 40

For a text in such notoriously poor repair, the *BM* is astonishingly well-represented in the manuscript tradition. There are at least as many extant MSS of the *BM* as there are of the *Odyssey*, and probably more: the exact number is itself the subject of some debate.¹¹⁴ The oldest of them – Baroccianus 50 – probably dates from the first half of the 10th century. The difficulty of establishing a secure text comes not from how little evidence we have, but from how *much*, and from the extraordinary degree of variation that exists between the different MSS.

As such, editors have generally been pessimistic about our chances of restoring the poem to its original glory. Allen's review of Ludwich puts the problem elegantly: 'The variants are of the most bewildering sort and unite every known category of corruption. Mr Platt, who has somewhere called the MSS. of the Homeric Hymns 'shameful', would be at a loss for parliamentary language in which to express his opinion of the tradition of the Batr.'. ¹¹⁵ Glei begins his introduction by stating bluntly that the traditional goal of textual criticism – reconstructing the original text, or something close to it – is impossible: 'die in allen bisherigen Ausgaben versuchte

¹¹⁴ Ludwich's 'Handschriftenverzeichniss' (pp. 40-52) lists 78 sources, although he includes several mysterious lost MSS only mentioned by earlier editions. Allen lists 73, including a 16th-c. MS (S¹) not mentioned by Ludwich. Wölke claimed on the first page of his introduction that 'eine völlig unsystematische Durchsicht von Handschriftenkatalogen' had turned up 28 more pre-1600 MSS not mentioned by either Ludwich or Allen! This brings the total over 100, and it is 'over a hundred' which has generally been reported since: cf. Glei in *DNP* s.v. 'Batrachomyomachia', Rotstein in *HE* ditto. Wölke does not itemise his 28 discoveries, and I have not yet had opportunity to investigate the problem in detail. The nine MSS which have been considered in the preparation of this thesis, at least, are securely attested by all editors.

¹¹⁵ Allen 1897, p. 166.

Rekonstruktion eines Originals oder Archetypus ist zum Scheitern verurteilt' (p. 17).

Ludwich himself set out to recover not the original text of the poem, but a hypothesised 'archetype' dating from around the 2nd c. AD; his assumptions in doing so are comprehensively dynamited by Wölke, pp. 7-25, who perceptively comments (p. 24) 'ein weiteres Motiv für Ludwich, einen Archetypus anzusetzen, der nicht identisch war mit dem Original, war sicher auch eine gewisse Resignation'. By interposing an archetype between the MSS and the author, Ludwich could permit weak or impossible readings that he could scarcely have attributed to 'Pigres'; rather than produce a poem of 5th c. BC standard, he only had to work back to a 2nd c. AD patchwork already showing the wear and tear of seven centuries.

The most important distinction in the *BM* paradosis is between the readings of two MS families, known as the Oxford (*a*) and the Florentine (*l*). Editors have differed on the membership of each family, but there is universal agreement that of our five earliest MSS – LPQSZ (see below) – *L* belongs in *l* and *PQ* belong in *a*. *Z* was placed in *a* by both Ludwich and Allen, but I follow Glei in regarding it, like *S*, as a special case requiring attention in its own right. The differences between *a* and *l* are numerous and striking: many lines present in *l* are absent in *a* (22-3, 42-52, 123, 170a-b...), many others are present in *a* but absent in *l* (61, 72, 77, 97a, 184a...). Glei argues that the two traditions are so different that *their* hypothetical archetypes must be the limit of the scholar's ambitions: 'Ziel der Edition kann es nur sein, den Text der Rezensionen *a* und *l* möglichst in der tatsächlichen Überlieferungsform vorzulegen' (p. 54). He consequently takes the unusual step of printing two separate texts of the poem, one based on each family.

This edition eschews any such strategy, and attempts to present a single text which – while admittedly still corrupt and lacunose in places – is at least relatively coherent and readable. If we are to rehabilitate the *BM* and bring it ‘into the fold’, as a work of Greek literature worth analysis and study rather than a mere curio, we must have a text with which to work; the study of the poem will be better served in this way than by offering up multiple versions, which only maximises the possibility for confusion and misunderstanding.

In preparing the text I have taken into consideration the readings of the following sources. The sigla used in the apparatus and commentary are those of Gleï, which are based on those of Ludwich; Allen’s sigla are entirely different, which makes comparison between editions a chore, so the following table is provided for reference. Dates are also taken from Gleï, with notes of discrepancies where relevant.

Date	MS	Gleï	Ludwich	Allen
10 th c.	Baroccianus 50	Z	Z	O ²
11 th c. ¹¹⁶	Parisinus suppl. gr. 663	Q	Π ^q	P ⁸
11 th c. ¹¹⁷	Parisinus suppl. gr. 690	P	Π	P ⁹
11 th c.	Scorialensis Ω I 12	S	Ω	S ²
11 th -12 th c. ¹¹⁸	Laurentianus 32.3	L	L	L ³
1202	Palatinus 45	Y	Y	Pal.
1276	Ambrosianus I 4 sup.	J	J	A ⁷
13 th c. ¹¹⁹	Vaticanus gr. 915	F	F	V ³
13 th c. ¹²⁰	Parisinus gr. 2723	T	t	P ⁵

¹¹⁶ Dated to 12th c. by Ludwich.

¹¹⁷ Dated to 12th c. by Allen, but to ‘entre 1075 et 1085’ by Rochefort 1950, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Date uncertain: see Wölke p. 11 n. 22. The ‘11th-12th c.’ date is that of Allen in his *Iliad*; in the OCT of the *BM* he opts simply for the 11th c. Erbse likewise says 11th-12th c. (p. xviii).

¹¹⁹ Dated to 14th c. by Ludwich.

¹²⁰ Date very confused: Ludwich says 12th c., Gleï 13th c., and Allen dates it specifically to 1282.

i. The ‘Oxford family’ (*a*): PQTY

Ludwich defined his ‘Oxf.’ family as consisting of six MSS: PQTY, as here, plus Z and M^s (Ambrosianus B 52, 15th-16th c., A² Allen); Allen maintained this group, and introduced the *a* siglum to refer to it. Gleason refined its membership: M^s has no particularly interesting readings not provided by one of the family’s older members, and Z, as argued below, is best considered in isolation.

a is generally more aligned with the subsequent tradition than are the other early MSS. *I* has several distinctive unique readings which occur in all its MSS but never recur elsewhere (e.g. ὀλισθηῖς 63, ὡς δέ μιν ἤδη 68, ἔριν 138, ἔλωμεν 157). Individual members of *a* are as likely to have unique readings as any other MSS, but it is extremely rare for PQTY to share a reading which then never resurfaces later: perhaps the only case is 156, where the *a* MSS have ὅπ(π)ως and all other families have some version of ὅς τις (although even here Harleianus 6301 has ὅππος, and readings like ὅπερ in Riccardianus 213 may preserve echoes of *a*).

Within the family, there is a definite tendency for PY to differ from QT. For example, 100a is present in PY, absent in QT; 214a, conversely, is present in QT but absent in PY; PY have αἶρω σ’ 63, ἀπαλοῖο 66, πρῶτα 124, ἦσαν 132, χεῖλεσιν 154, where QT have βαῖνε μοι, τρυφεροῖο, πρῶτον, ἔστησαν, and τείχεσιν. Particularly striking is 138, where PY have τοῖα, but QT have the bizarre and obviously wrong τοιάδε τοῖσδε. Other pairings are also found: at 53 TY have the unique ῥεφάνας where PQ have majority ῥαφάνους,¹²¹ and at 262a PT have the error γαβριούμενος – only otherwise found in M^s, and clearly a mishearing – for γαυρ(ι)ούμενος (QY and most others). There are too many counterexamples to conclude that Y was copied directly

¹²¹ The papyrus apparently agrees with TY: ρεφάν[.

from P and T from Q, but the PY/QT divide is certainly more pronounced than any other within *a*.¹²²

Q's text is of notably low quality; it contains many readings which are plainly incorrect or misspelled (13 ἐπι ἰώνα for ἐπ(ι) ἡ(ι)όνα; 17 ἡμεῖ for εἰμὶ; 27 κυκλήσκομε for κυκλήσκομαι; 36 πολλὸν σισαμότυρον for πολλὸν σησαμότυρον; etc.), and must have been written by someone whose acquaintance with Classical Greek was limited. Most of these are vowel errors (12 λημνοχαρῆς for λιμνο-, 16 ξηνίηα for ξεινήια, etc.), strongly suggesting that it was taken down from dictation, as such mistakes would be relatively unlikely when copying a written text. Many of the smaller mistakes have not been included in the apparatus, since they are neither permissible Greek nor found anywhere else in the paradosis: they are not even present in T, further suggesting that T's scribe was not drawing on Q as his only source.

ii. The 'Florentine family' (*I*): FJL

Ludwich's 'Flor.' has five members: FJL, plus two 15th-c. MSS, Laurentianus 32.4 (F^h, Allen's L⁴) and Palatinus gr. 181 (P^x, Allen's V¹¹). Allen's equivalent, *I*, preserves four of these, but adds the 13th/14th c. Ambrosianus L 73 (M^s Ludwich, A⁸ Allen) and moves J into the 'Roman' family, *c*.

The rationale behind separating J from FL is obvious: J is very much the black sheep of the family. It has a strikingly high number of readings which diverge wildly from those of FL. To give only a sample of the more obvious cases: it lacks lines 76, 219,

¹²² Glei (p. 56) adduces two readings to prove that T 'nicht von Q abhängt' (213, which is missing in Q but present in T, and 219, where Q has the Homeric ἀπέληγε μάχης but T follows all other early MSS in reading ἀπέληγεν ἐν ὕδασι), and one to prove that Y was not drawing exclusively on P (185, where QTY all have τόκον but P omits it).

and 280a, all of which are present in FL; it transposes 120-21 to follow 111, and 217 (with significant changes) to follow 218; it reads ἤγαγον at 91 for φέρον FL, πρᾶσσοφάγος at 247 for σιτοφάγος FL, γαυριάων at 262a for γαυρούμενος FL. It has various readings which are unique (the omission of 76; ἔλωμεν at 157 for otherwise universal βάλ(λ)ωμεν; βληθῇ at 194 where all other MSS have variations on τρωθῇ) or nearly (both the omission of 219 and the transposition/alteration of 217 are found only elsewhere in P^x). Nonetheless, it sides with FL on enough of the important diagnostic cruces (see below on S and Z) that it can sensibly be grouped with them.

J shows signs of an editor who was aware of the text's flaws and actively attempted to improve them, even if his choices were not always correct. It deletes the blatantly unmetrical 280a, which FLS leave intact. It repairs the metre at 13: FL have ἐπ' ἡϊόνας; τίς δέ σ' ὁ φύσας, which J fixes by reverting to the correct τίς ὁ φύσας, otherwise found only in Z. At 140 it is one of only a handful of MSS, including S but not FL, to print the metrically necessary πτόλεμόν for πόλεμόν. It seems to have tried to deal with the problem of the duplicated πρῶτον/πρώτην at 67-76 by transposing 74-5 to follow 67, although this causes as many difficulties as it solves (see Commentary *ad loc.*). The overall impression is of an alert scholar engaging with the textual tradition as he has it, and at several points making a genuine improvement. There is also some sign that F has been corrected later by an editor familiar with J: this is particularly apparent in the case of 120-1, which appear in their normal position in F but have been transposed to follow 111 in the margin, and 236, where J has the unique and somewhat counter-intuitive ἦπαρ for ἦτορ and F has been corrected to match.

The other two early MSS in the family are less interesting. L, the earliest, sometimes sides with *a* and/or Z rather than with FJ – for example, 26 (hab. FJS, car.

*a*LZ) or 116 (μόρον *a*LZ, δόμον F, δόλον J) – and sometimes goes off in a new direction, as at 218, where it has the near-unique κραιβοβάχος for κραιβοφάγος FJ, κουστοφάγος *a*S. It is also unique (apart from its descendant F^h) in omitting 252, and very nearly unique in reading the more Homeric variant πηλείωνος for -ωνα at 206. At 18, L's unmetrical ἐν βατράχων seems to be a half-way stage between βατράχων *a*Z and ἐν βατράχοις FJS. It shows very little sign of correction or later interference. F, conversely, has been heavily edited and corrected: Fusillo calls it 'ricco di errori, di correzioni, di glosse marginali e interlineari: una ricca elaborazione che talvolta, forse solo accidentalmente, coincide con la famiglia *a*' (p. 53). Glei likewise points out that 'die Übereinstimmungen [between F's corrections and *a*] können aber zufällig sein' (p. 58), and given F's relatively late date and the wide distribution of *a*'s readings, it is not particularly surprising that a corrector of F should have had access to a text which had more in common with the *a* tradition.

iii. Z and S

Z (O² in Allen) is the oldest complete MS of the *BM*; it was dated by Maas to the first half of the 10th c., and this was confirmed by Wilson in correspondence with Wölke (p. 37).¹²³ S (Ω in Ludwich, S² in Allen) probably dates from the 11th c.¹²⁴ Ludwich and Allen placed Z in the Oxford family alongside PQTY, but assigned S to a separate 'Spanish' family ('Span.' in Ludwich, *k* in Allen). Glei and West count both Z and S as independent *codices mixti*.

¹²³ See also Barbour 1966, p. 16.

¹²⁴ In favour of an 11th-c. date, de Andrès 1967, Sodano 1970; Hunger 1968 opts for 'kaum älter als das 12. Jahrhundert' (p. 58).

An interesting diagnostic of affiliation within the *BM*'s *paradosis* can be found in the distribution of absent vs. present lines. The table on p. 369 collates fifty sections of the poem (mostly single lines, but with some longer passages, adding up to a total of seventy-three lines) which are present in some but not all of *a**l**SZ*. Of these fifty, *Z* agrees with *a* – as in, *aZ* either both lack or both include the line(s) – 37x, and with *l* 11x; *S* agrees with *a* 28x, and with *l* 29x.

This may suggest that Ludwich and Allen's decision to count *Z* as part of *a* was a helpful one. However, if one looks generally at all significant variants, rather than specifically at omissions, the picture is rather different. In lines 1-60 of the poem, *Z*'s allegiances are as follows:

<u>Sides with <i>a</i> over <i>l</i></u>	<u>Sides with <i>l</i> over <i>a</i></u>	<u>Sides with neither</u>
6 ἀριστεύσαντες	10 παρέθηκε	1 πρώτης σελίδος
8 ἔχεν ante corr.	13 ἐπὶ ἡώνας (plural)	5 πάντα
12 πολύφημος	20 ὄχθαις	10 λίχνον
18 βατράχων	21 σὲ δ' ὄρω	13 τίς ὁ φύσας
19 ἀνεθρέψατο	32 ποιεῖς	15 ἄριστον
20 Ἡριδανοῖο	34 οὔτι	25 τὸ δ' ἄσημον
22-3 car.	35 τρισκοπάνιστος	30 ἔρριψε νέμεσθαι
24 ἀπαμείβετο	36 οὐδὲ	37 post 38
26 car.	36 πολλήν σισαμίδα	54 πράσων
28 νυ	53 κολοκύντας	57 δέ χ'
31 καὶ ἐδέσμασι	58 πολλὰ καὶ	60 ἐπὶ
40 θοίνας	59 νομήν	(11x total)
42-52 car.	60 ἐν	
55 ὑμέτερό	(13x total)	
58 ἐπὶ		
(15x total)		

This does not suggest a particularly strong identification between *Z* and *a*, particularly since some of the points in common between *Z* and *l* are major faultlines in the *l/a* divergence: σὲ δ' ὄρω versus σὲ βλέπω at 21, τρισκοπάνιστος versus δυσκοπάνιστος at

35, νομῆν versus ζωῆν at 59. The *structure* of Z's text is much more similar to that found in the *a* tradition, in terms of which lines it includes or omits, but at the level of individual readings what is really striking about Z is its difference from *both* the major families: it has a very high number of *Sonderlesarten*, many of which (like ἔρριψε νέμεσθαι at 30) are not only unique but radically different from what is found in all other MSS. (Several, as will be seen from the apparatus, I also judge to be correct.)¹²⁵

Z is a temptation for the editor, and a temptation to which Ludwich succumbed: Glei notes dryly 'Der Baroccianus 50 ... war Ludwichts Lieblingskind' (p. 59). Confronted with a good-quality MS from the early 10th century AD, well over a century older than our next oldest version of the text, the weary editor may find himself drawn more and more to the idea of siding with Z against a sea of troubles. This is obviously unwise; and yet there can be no doubt that Z is a valuable source. In the very first line of the poem, most editors have agreed that its πρώτης σελίδος is superior to the πρώτον Μουσῶν found in every single other extant MS. The really puzzling question is why so many of its readings disappeared so completely from the paradosis. Glei sees Z as an early attempt to restore an original text by combining the readings of the (already separate) *a* and *l* traditions, 'mit vielen gelehrten Zusätzen und sicher manchen gelungenen Verbesserungen' (p. 60), but this cannot be the whole picture. It is extremely unlikely that an editor confronted with two versions of a text, both of which began ἀρχόμενος πρώτον Μουσῶν χορὸν, would have corrected this to ἀρχόμενος πρώτης σελίδος. If

¹²⁵ For a more thorough demolition of Ludwich's decision to group Z with *a*, see Wölke pp. 25-28. Wölke notes acutely that Ludwich was not above sleight of hand in this regard: when listing the *Sonderlesarten* found in each MS (pp. 52-55), a list he presents as comprehensive, he gives Z's unique readings only up to line 69 and then caps them with 'einem lapidaren "u.s.w."'. Even so the list is not complete: he neglects both Z's transposition of 37 and its use of the genitive rather than the dative at 54.

Z's scribe was cherry-picking readings from the *a* and *l* branches, he must also have had access to a third branch of which his text is now the only survivor.

Supposing Z had two sources α and β , both with a mixture of correct readings and incorrect readings, we might posit (for example) that α had (correct) $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ at 1, (incorrect) $\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$ at 15, and some (incorrect) lost variant of $\tau\rho\iota\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ at 35, while β had (incorrect) $\pi\rho\tilde{\omega}\tau\omicron\nu$ Μουσῶν at 1, (correct) $\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\omicron\nu$ at 15, and (correct) $\tau\rho\iota\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ at 35. Z followed α in the first two cases and β in the third, and was then stored in a private library and removed from circulation for two or three centuries. α was lost; β continued to spawn new copies, and after a century and a half of repeated copying and adjustment, enough mutation had occurred to yield P and L. By the time Z was unearthed and fell into scholarly hands once more, the descendants of β were so widespread and canonical that traces of α looked like bizarre mutations, and were corrected to bring them into line with what was by this stage the *l* tradition. This is wholly speculative, and more of a thought experiment than a serious attempt at stemmatisation, but Z as ingenious amalgam of *a* and *l* cannot really explain the number of *Sonderlesarten*, and the degree of divergence from both *a* and *l* which they exhibit.

There is more justification in seeing S as an early attempt to reconcile the *a* and *l* traditions. The most striking thing about S, as will easily be seen from the table on p. 369, is its sheer number of lines. Of the seventy-three variable lines listed, *a* has 35, Z 37, *l* 42; S has 64. In some cases it very clearly gives an uncomfortable hybrid of two versions, the best example being 209-217. In this badly confused passage, explained in more detail *ad loc.* in the Commentary, *aZ* have five lines where *l* has eight; the only points of contact between the two streams are 209 and the first half of 213. S prints eleven lines – the eight from *l*, but with the three missing lines from *a* transplanted into the middle. The result is

nonsense, since it leaves a frog killing a mouse at 212-13a and then another frog becoming angry at this and attacking his ally at 214, but the scribe must have been searching for a way to resolve the difference between the two versions available to him. There is a similar problem with 256, which in *I* was moved to follow 261 and slightly rewritten to change the name of the character involved; S has both '256' (*a*'s version) and '261a' (*I*'s version) in its text, despite both being originally the same line.¹²⁶

Where there is difference over a reading, S generally follows *I*. Again, in lines 1-60:

<u>Sides with <i>a</i> over <i>I</i></u>	<u>Sides with <i>I</i> over <i>a</i></u>	<u>Sides with neither</u>
12 πολύφημος	8 ἔχον	1 πρώτως
19 ἀνεθρέψατο	10 πίνων	6 ἀριστεύοντες
20 ὄχθας	10 παρέθηκε	54 σεύτλοις
31 καὶ ἐδέσμασι	13 ἐπ' ἡ(ι)ονας	(3x total)
32 ποιῇ(ι)	18 ἐν βατράχοις	
34 οὐδὲ	20 ὠκεανοῖο	
(6x total)	21 σὲ δ' ὀρώ	
	22-23 hab.	
	24 ἡμειβετο	
	25 φίλε δῆλον	
	26 hab.	
	28 μοι	
	35 τρισκοπάνιστος	
	36 οὐδὲ	
	36 πολλὴν σισαμίδα	
	40 θοίνην	
	42-52 hab.	
	55 ὑμῶν	
	58 πολλὰ καὶ	
	59 νομὴν	
	60 ἐν	
	(21x total)	

¹²⁶ The same instinct to combine appears on a smaller scale at 260, where μύεσσι νέος παῖς *I* and μυσι μεριδάραξ *a* are synthesised into the unmetrical μυέσσιν νέος μεριδάραξ.

Ludwich saw it as a halfway stage between the ‘purity’ of Z and the heavy interpolation of L; Gleason suggests rather that it stands in the same relation to *l* as Z does to *a*. Yet the affiliation of S to *l* is much stronger than that of Z to *a*, and it completely lacks Z’s tendency to dramatic *Sonderlesarten*. Two of the ‘unique’ readings above are slight variants of the forms in *l*, ἀριστεύσοντες and τεύτλοις; only πρῶτως is genuinely new, and it is one of the very few points in the poem where S has a reading not found in any other early MS. (Another striking instance is 243, where all MSS have καὶ αὖθις or a close variant, but S and the rest of its ‘Span.’ family have καὶ οὕτως.) The picture of S most consistent with the evidence is an alert and thoughtful scribe, albeit one with no great instinct for verse, working from an MS in the *l* tradition as his principal source, but with access at least to an *a* text and probably to something else as well: at 239 S preserves ὠργισθη Z, which goes on to become the majority reading, but in the 11th c. had already become ὀργισθείς in *a* and been replaced with the corrupt (μ)ουνώθη in *l*. The scribe tended to keep *l*’s readings, except where something from *a* struck him as superior, but he did make a concerted effort to include as many as possible of the lines present in *a* which were missing from *l*.

iv. The papyrus

I have used Π to denote what is to date our only papyrus evidence for the *BM*:

P.Oxy.LXVIII. 4668 (39 3B.76/B(I)a), published by Wouters in 2003 and dated by him to the end of the 2nd or beginning of the 3rd c. AD. It preserves eight lines of the poem; I reprint below for reference the text with supplements as given by Wouters.

κ]οσμουντες χυτρ[ας αρτυμασι παντοδαποισιν	41
ο]υ τρωγω ρεφαν[ας ου κ]ραμ[βα]ς [ου κολοκυνθας	53
ου]δε πρασοις χλ[ωροις] επιβ[ο]σ[κομαι ουδε σελινοις	
ταυτα γα]ρ υμετε[ρ εσ]τιν εδεσμα[τα των κατα λιμνην	55
.....].ταδε μ[ειδησ]ας Φυσιγ[ναθος αντιον ηυδα	
ξεινε λιην αυχεις ε]πι γαστερ[ι εστι και ημιν	
πολλα γαρ εν λιμνη κ]αι επι χθο[νι θαυματ ιδεσθαι	59
c. 15	].....[

The text seems to side with the *a* tradition, most obviously in its omission of 42-52, but also in *πρασοις* 54 (not *τεύτλοις*) and *υμετε[ρ* 55 (not *ύμῶν*). There are two peculiarities. The first is the gap at the start of line 56, which on grounds of spacing and visible traces would best be filled by *τα]ῦτα δέ* - except that this would leave a space of about four characters' width. The only known reading fitting this requirement is *πρὸς ταῦτα δέ*, found in Parisinus 1310 (15th c., Π^x Ludwich, P¹ Allen); as Wouters notes, 'it is remarkable to find this unmetrical reading attested so early' (p. 106). The second puzzle is the six or seven letter-traces below 58, which do not at all correspond with 59 as it appears in the MSS, and indeed cannot be plausibly placed to anywhere else in the *BM*.

v. Numeration

'Irreführend ist auch unsere gegenwärtige Verszählung', notes Wölke (p. 6), before going on to suggest that if re-working systems of numeration in Classical texts were not such a frequent source of confusion and irritation, he would consider 'für eine Neuausgabe der *Batr.* also auch eine neue Verszählung für angebracht' (p. 7). I concur, and in fact I judge the benefits of corrected numeration worth the undoubted inconvenience involved. Only a few short passages are affected, and I list them here. I have also noted in the *apparatus criticus* when Ludwich's numbering differs from my own. For further explanation of

how the line numbers came to be muddled in the first place, see the Commentary on each passage.

<u>Line</u>	<u>Hosty</u>	<u>Ludwich</u>	<u>Allen</u>
σκιρτῆσαι κατὰ γαῖαν, ἐν ὕδασι σῶμα καλύψαι	60	61	60
στοιχείοις διττοῖς μεμερισμένα δώματα ναίειν	61	60	61
Ὡκαμείδης ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος· ἤριπε δ' εὐθύς	209a	214	---
αὐτὸς δ' ἐστήκει γαυρούμενος κατὰ λίμνην	262a	263	262a
οὗτος ἀναρπάξαι βατράχων γενεὴν ἐπαπείλει	263	264	263
ἀγχοῦ δ' ἔστηκεν μενεαίνων ἱφί μάχεσθαι	264	264a	264
κινείσθω τιτανοκτόνον ὀβριμοεργόν	280a	281	281
ὦ Τιτᾶνας πέφνες ἄριστους ἔξοχα πάντων	280b	281a	281a
κινείσθω· οὕτω γὰρ ἀλώσεται ὅς τις ἄριστος	281	284	284

Addendum: principles of the edition

Overall this edition sets its sights on the middle ground: reconstructing a plausible text via a combination of approved palaeographical principle and literary analysis, neither excising well-supported and coherent lines for being unserious (as Brandt had a tendency to do) nor composing new lines in order to improve the narrative (a temptation to which Ludwich repeatedly fell prey). So great is the confusion in the poem's final third, however, that any editor who wants to comment meaningfully on the text is forced to take a side on one important methodological issue. The key question is: what degree of surrealism are we prepared to allow the *BM*?

The founder of the 'surrealist' school of interpretation was arguably Glenn Most, whose 1993 article 'Die *Batrachomyomachia* als ernste Parodie' tackled various of the problems with the poem which had been isolated by scholars like Glei, and explained them as references to known cruxes of Homeric interpretation. The idea that the second

coming of Psicharpax may parody the apparent resurrection of Pylaemenes at XIII.658 is relatively well-established: it is suggested but dismissed by Glei (pp. 176-7), cautiously endorsed by Fusillo (p. 126), and mentioned by West in the introduction to his Loeb (p. 235). Most extended the principle, and used it to justify other apparent glitches, such as the mysterious Peleion at 206 and the confusing issue of Physignathus' military tactics (see *ad* 153-7). The article concludes: 'So zeigt das *Batrachomyomachia* auch das, was schon bei Homer, nur nicht so deutlich und nicht so lustig, vorlag' (p. 40). Sens 2006 and Kelly 2009 both continued this approach, with Kelly arguing that the reappearances of Psicharpax at 234, Troglodytes at 247, and Prass(ei)us at 252 – all characters who died earlier in the conflict – are intentional and parodic allusions not only to inconsistencies found in Homer, but also to the ancient scholarly discussion surrounding these inconsistencies.

The strategy of Most, Sens, and Kelly was profoundly welcome for its acknowledgement of the *BM*'s sophistication: they engaged with the text as a complex example of the ludic scholar-poetry characteristic of Hellenistic literature, rather than as a second-rate patchwork composed by a poetaster. However, if taken to extremes, the 'surrealist' school – which, put simplistically, states that a ridiculous or impossible event can be sustained in the poem's narrative *because* it is ridiculous or impossible – makes the job of repairing the text even harder than it would otherwise be.

I give a brief example. At 255, the helmet of one warrior – probably a mouse, although even this is not certain – is described as τετράχυτρον. This reading is found in Z, S, and all the major MSS of the *a* family except Y, which has τετράτρυτον. A few other variants, none of them strikingly plausible, appear in later MSS. The *l* family lacks this entire line, along with all the lines surrounding it, so cannot be called upon.

τετράχυτρος is a *hapax*, but a χύτρα is an earthenware pot, so the adjective should mean either 'the size of four pots' or 'consisting of four pots'. A helmet made out of χύτραι would align well with other wargear in the poem: the Mice make most of their equipment out of scavenged domestic implements. But a helmet as big as four pots, or made of four pots, would be oversized for a human. On a mouse it would be preposterous, essentially an overturned cauldron with a mouse underneath it. Either we need to look deeper for a meaning, or τετράχυτρον is a corrupt reading, and we must put our ingenuity to work and see if we can repair it.

However, there is a potential parallel in Homer for a helmet of excessive size. At V.743-4 Athene dons a helmet which is both τετραφάληρος and ἑκατὸν πολίων πρυλέεσσ' ἀραρυῖαν, 'fitted with fighting men of a hundred cities'. This puzzling expression was interpreted by the bT scholia as a way of implying that both Athene and her helmet are very big: εἰ δὲ ἡ κόρυς τοσαύτη, πόσον τὸ μέγεθος τῆς περικειμένης τὸ κράνος; ... οὐ γὰρ εἶπε τὸ μέγεθος αὐτοῦ ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς, κατ' ἔμφασιν δὲ ἔδωκε συλλογίζεσθαι. The *BM* poet elsewhere draws comedy from comparing his warriors, particularly the Mice, to very large and powerful characters from myth: at 7 they are like the Giants, at 171 like the Centaurs or Giants, and at 195 Athene warns that they are dangerous opponents even for a god. Could he have continued this strategy by giving one of his heroes a gigantic helmet, just like Athene wears in the *Iliad*?

A mouse cannot wear a helmet as big as four pots. The surrealist argument would acknowledge this as the point of the line. The *BM* poet has borrowed a trope from Homer, but vastly exaggerated it in order to produce a completely ludicrous image: we are supposed to laugh at the very fact that this line is impossible. Athene is a god and can support colossal wargear; the mouse is a mouse, and cannot. Cf. the case of

Psicharpax: in Homer, it is generally faceless soldiers like Chromius who reappear after being killed, and the most important character to do so is Pylaemenes – a king, but a very minor one. In the *BM*, it is Psicharpax, the hero of the poem's first half and one of the most significant characters overall, who resurfaces. This is as strikingly bizarre as if Patroclus had rejoined the fray without comment some time during *Il.* XX. We may forget Pylaemenes, but we cannot have forgotten Psicharpax. Again, the *BM* exaggerates a Homeric trope far beyond acceptable boundaries, so that we cannot gloss over it: we are forced to confront it in all its ridiculousness.

The difficulty for the textual critic should be apparent. Below is a (partial) list of points in the battle-narrative of the *BM*, all represented in a substantial number of early MSS, which seem on first acquaintance to require the editor's attention.

- Troglodytes or Trogletes (MSS vary) kills a frog at 206; another mouse kills another frog at 209; then the frog Ocimides, 'seized by ἄχος', kills Troglodytes (MSS unanimous) at 214. At 247 Troglodytes (Sitophagus FLS, Prassophagus J) reappears, involved in some sort of combat.
- Prasseius or Prassophagus attacks a mouse at 232, even though the mouse in question is already dead and the text acknowledges this. Psicharpax comes to the assistance of the dead mouse and kills Prasseius, Prassaeus, or Pelusius. At 252 Prassaeus (occasionally Troxartes) attacks another warrior.
- At 248, a character who has not been wounded 'retreats limping from the battle, sorely hurt'.
- At 253 Prass(ei)us hurls his ὀξύσχοινος, 'needle-reed', at another warrior; but the configuration of lines found in the paradosis makes the target of this attack Physignathus, his own king.

- At 274 Zeus apparently refers to the mouse champion Meridarpax simply as Harpax.

All of these violate Homeric precedent; many also violate basic common sense. Yet if we invoke the argument from surrealism, these exact violations make them defensible. No god in Homer ever refers to a character by an abbreviated form of his name, but Alcimedon, the henchman of Achilles, *is* renamed Alcimus by the narrator once he forms a duo with the similarly-named Automedon (see *ad* 274); so is the *BM* poet making this Homeric quirk more obvious and comic by putting it in the mouth of Zeus? If Ocimides at 214 is moved by vengeance, we would expect him to kill the same mouse who slew his comrade eight lines previous, hence Troglodytes at 206; but given the same Alcimedon/Alcimus issue, might Trogletes be another name for Troglodytes? Or, given the existence in Homer of pairs of characters with very similar names (Hippodamas and Hippodamus are both Trojans, Deipylus and Deipyrus are both Achaeans, etc.), might the *BM* be parodying this by having Ocimides kill a different character with almost the same name – suggesting that in the heat of the moment he gets the wrong mouse? Some names in Homer, such as Melanippus, are used for warriors on both sides of the battle; could Prasseius the frog attacking the king of the Frogs be an allusion to this apparent side-swapping, writ large for purposes of comedy?

Almost any logical inconsistency in the poem can be explained as a comic reference to Homer. If the same inconsistency is found in Homer, albeit ‘nicht so deutlich und nicht so lustig’, then the poet is exaggerating a Homeric flaw; if the inconsistency is *not* found in Homer, then the poet is creating humour by introducing an error where none existed in his model. This leaves the textual critic all but powerless. Unless a reading is literally syntactically incoherent – an adjective not agreeing with its noun, a

singular noun with a plural verb – it can be defended as parodic, no matter how bizarre or unconvincing it may seem. At some point any editor of the *BM* will have to set a personal standard for impossibility, and this will be largely a matter of subjective taste and familiarity with the poem. Some editors would find – indeed, have found – the central device of Psicharpax’ resurrection simply too ludicrous to endure; I am not one of them. At other points, however, I do find certain logical flaws insupportable and attempt to repair or resolve them. In the interests of honesty, I attempt to set out my principles below, the better for future commentators to disagree with them.

I start from the conviction that the basic argument of Kelly 2009 – that the *BM* permits certain characters to return from the dead as an allusion to various Homeric *topoi* – is correct. I do not think we need to sweep Psicharpax *redivivus* under the carpet by renaming him as Lychnarpax or anything else. This is because I find in the poem a consistent thematic interaction with the notion of uncertainty over life and death, particularly as it relates to Achilles’ battle in the river during *Il.* XXI. The points where this theme becomes relevant are discussed in detail *ad locc.* However, I also cleave to two particular maxims:

- i) The *BM* is internally consistent; it follows its own logic. The Mice and Frogs fight with appropriately-sized wargear which the poet describes in detail at 124-31 and 161-5; therefore, if the poem refers to a mouse or frog using equipment which would be preposterously oversized for them, like the four-pot helmet at 255 or the ‘rock like a millstone’ at 213a, something has gone wrong. Psicharpax drowns when he falls in water, and Physignathus refers to the Mice as ἀκολύμβους at 158; so if a character is depicted as fleeing by diving into the pond, he must be a frog. (The ‘surrealist’ counter-argument to the latter point would be: in *Il.* XXI the Trojans flee from

Achilles into the Scamander, not the most sensible refuge for a mob of armoured men; therefore the *BM* is exaggerating the foolishness of this decision by having a mouse, who is explicitly described as unable to swim, flee by throwing himself into water. I acknowledge that this is a possibility; I simply do not find it consistent with the sense of humour displayed elsewhere in the poem.)

ii) The *BM* derives its effect from varying and adjusting Homeric tropes, not from reversing them completely. An example of this point is 254, where a character's shield successfully resists the impact of a spear. This happens several times in Homer, but the character holding the shield is always a major, plot-significant hero: Antilochus at XIII.564-5, Menelaus at XIII.607 and XVII.44, Achilles at XX.267-8, etc. We never hear of a minor character stopping a spear with his shield. I therefore judge it likely that whoever is holding the shield at 254 is a significant character, rather than a stock warrior introduced simply for the purpose. This is an assumption, and Kelly has pointed out (*per litt.*) that there would be bathetic humour in the *BM* discarding the trope and having a completely irrelevant footsoldier manage a feat which in the *Iliad* is reserved for the A-list; it is, however, an assumption I am happy to make, because I judge the poet's interest to lie more in staying faithful to the 'rules' of Homeric battle – with his cast of tiny animals who have no place in a Homeric battle at all – than in deliberately flouting them.

The *BM* has not been studied as a sophisticated work of literature long enough for any kind of consensus to develop on this issue. Indeed, I do not believe any previous scholarship has articulated the terms of the debate. The text of the battle is obviously damaged and incomplete, whatever one's assumptions: ideology will dictate the *extent* of

an editor's intervention, not whether he intervenes at all. Generally speaking, the less one is prepared to permit the poet openly surreal and illogical sequences of action, the more one will have to intervene, and *vice versa*. Editors in the 19th and early 20th century tended strongly towards one extreme, and attempted to fix everything in the text that looked even slightly counterintuitive, often by ignoring the paradox altogether and making heavy use of supplements and conjectures. I find this approach unhelpful, but do not believe the poem is best served by going to the opposite extreme and explaining away every flaw as a symptom of authorial genius. I do not pretend to have solved the problem, and have no doubt that future editors will find me too interventionist, too *laissez-faire*, or both. My goal was simply to find a middle ground which permits the poem its characteristic intertextual humour, but also acknowledges the manifest truth that the text as we have it is unsatisfactory and requires repair.

Note on the apparatus

This apparatus does not pretend to completeness. The only really thorough collation of the *BM*'s manuscripts must for now remain the 1896 edition of Arthur Ludwich, to which scholars seeking more detail are directed; I rely heavily on its readings, and apologise for any errors I have inadvertently propagated. Ludwich's apparatus is, however, dense, confusing, and difficult to use. By sacrificing detail, I hope I have at least gained a measure of clarity. My model has been the stripped-down apparatus compiled by Martin West during preparation of his 2003 Loeb edition, which he very generously allowed me to see: like West I include only a selection of important differences (for example, I generally ignore all points where there is disagreement over the accentuation of a word) and a greatly reduced number of MSS (though unlike West I include the readings of S, which as discussed above makes an interesting half-way stop between the divergent *a* and *l* traditions). Allen's OCT apparatus, although generally less valuable, has been consulted in places.

I have supplemented Ludwich's work with autopsy examination of three MSS – the oldest, Z, which I inspected in the Bodleian, plus S and Y, for which I used the high-resolution digital scans published online by Harvard University's Homer Multitext Project (for S) and by the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg (for Y). I have regularly given the readings of Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, and West, where they disagree with my own: if one of these editors' names is not mentioned, it should be assumed that we are in agreement. Other scholars are mentioned only where they were responsible for a conjecture or solution. The exclusion of Glei from the apparatus implies no fault in his edition, but (as discussed above, p. 97) he prints two separate texts – the *a*-archetype and

the *l*-archetype; citing his readings therefore introduces much potential for confusion, as one has to distinguish between Glei-*a* and Glei-*l*.

I have taken one unusual step in compiling this apparatus. Where a manuscript siglum appears in square brackets – so [Z] – this means that Z has the reading in question in a secondary hand. I have *not* attempted to distinguish between corrections, interlinear/marginal additions, or any of the various other ways in which alternative readings may be added to a text. This is partly in the interests of simplicity, and partly because I rely so heavily on Ludwich, whose apparatus is not always clear and with whom I frequently disagree. I do not feel confident in, for example, following Ludwich's distinction between m2 and m3 without first having inspected the MS myself. Allen's apparatus is much less detailed and rarely clarifies matters. If one reading is attributed to Z and another to [Z], this means that the first reading seems to be the original, and the second has been added later. I am aware this deprives the reader of many useful data, and can only repeat, with apologies, my directions towards Ludwich; my defence is that I would rather present a little information about which I am confident than a lot of information which I have not been able to confirm.

Ludwich's more imaginative conjectures are generally not included, to save space. I have occasionally used the siglum Ω to indicate 'all but' the MS specified.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΜΥΟΜΑΧΙΑ

ἀρχόμενος πρώτης σελίδος χορὸν ἐξ Ἑλικῶνος	1
ἐλθεῖν εἰς ἐμὸν ἦτορ ἐπεύχομαι εἵνεκ' ἀοιδῆς,	
ἦν νέον ἐν δέλτοισιν ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ γούνασι θῆκα,	
δῆριν ἀπειρεσίην, πολεμόκλονον ἔργον Ἄρης,	
εὐχόμενος μερόπεςσιν ἐς οὐατα πᾶσι βαλέσθαι	5
πῶς μύες ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀριστεύσαντες ἔβησαν,	
γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν μιμούμενοι ἔργα Γιγάντων,	
ὥς λόγος ἐν θνητοῖσιν ἔην· τοίην δ' ἔχεν ἀρχήν.	
μῦς ποτε διψαλέος γαλέης κίνδυνον ἀλύξας	
πλησίον, ἐν λίμνῃ λίχνον παρέθηκε γένειον,	10
ὔδατι τερπόμενος μελιηδέϊ· τὸν δὲ κατεῖδε	
λιμνόχαρης πολύφημος, ἔπος δ' ἐφθέγγετο τοῖον·	
“Ξεῖνε, τίς εἶ; πόθεν ἦλθες ἐπ' ἡϊόνας; τίς ὁ φύσας;	
πάντα δ' ἀλήθευσον, μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω.	
εἰ γάρ σε γνοίην φίλον ἄξιον ἐς δόμον ἄξω·	15
δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω ξεινήϊα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά.	
εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ βασιλεὺς Φυσίγναθος, ὃς κατὰ λίμνην	
τιμῶμαι βατράχων ἡγούμενος ἤματα πάντα·	
καί με πατήρ Πηλεὺς ἀνεθρέψατο, Ὑδρομεδούση	
μιχθεὶς ἐν φιλότῃ παρ' ὄχθαις Ἑριδανοῖο.	20
καὶ σὲ δ' ὀρῶ καλόν τε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἔξοχον ἄλλων.”	21
τὸν δ' αὖ Ψυχάρπαξ ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε·	24
“τίπτε γένος τοῦμόν ζητεῖς; δῆλον δ' ἐν ἅπασιν	25
ἀνθρώποις τε θεοῖς τε καὶ οὐρανίοις πετεηνόις.	
Ψυχάρπαξ μὲν ἐγὼ κικλήσκομαι· εἰμὶ δὲ κοῦρος	

1 πρώτης σελίδος Z: πρῶτον μουσῶν aI, πρώτως μ- S **3** ἦν Ω: καὶ Q **5** πᾶσι aI/S (πᾶσιν Q): πάντα Z **6** ἀριστεύσαντες aLZ: -σοντες FJ[Z]; -οντες S **8** ἔχεν aJ (et Z ante corr.): ἔχον FLS[Z] **10** λίχνον Z: ἀπαλὸν aJ[S]; πίνων FLS παρέθηκε /SZ: προσέθηκε a, Allen, Fusillo, West **12** λιμνόχαρης JT: λιμνόχαρις FLPSYZ, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West; λημνοχαρῆς Q πολύφημος aSZ: πολύφωνος I **13** ἐπ' ἡ(ι)όνας /S, ἐπὶ ἡῶνας [Z] (ἰῶνας ante corr.): ἐπ' ἡ(ι)όνα a, West τίς ὁ φύσας JZ: τίς δέ σ' ὁ φύσας aFLS, West **15** ἄξιον aI/S: ἄριστον Z **18** βατράχων aZ: ἐν βατράχοις FJS, ἐν βατράχων L **19** ἀνεθρέψατο aSZ: ποτ' ἐγένετο I, Ludwich **20** ὄχθαις /Z[S]: ὄχθας aS, Allen, Fusillo, West Ἑριδανοῖο aZ[S]: ὠκεανοῖο /S, Fusillo **21** σὲ δ' ὀρῶ /SZ: σε βλέπω a **24** ἀπαμείβετο QTYZ: ἡμείβετο JLS; ἀμείβετο FP **25** δῆλόν τ' ἐν QTY, τ' om. F; δῆλον ἐστὶν P; φίλε δῆλον JLS[Z]; τὸ δ' ἄσημον Z; δῆλον δ' ἐν recc., Allen, Fusillo; τὸ δὲ δῆλον Franke, West **26** hab. FJS: car. aLZ, del. West

Τρωξάρταο πατρὸς μεγαλήτορος· ἡ δὲ νυ μήτηρ
 Λειχομούλη, θυγάτηρ Πτερνοτρώκτου βασιλῆος.
 γείνατο δ' ἐν Καλύβῃ με καὶ ἐξεθρέψατο βρωτοῖς, 30
 σύκοις καὶ καρύοις καὶ ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν.
 πῶς δὲ φίλον ποιῇ με, τὸν ἐς φύσιν οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον;
 σοὶ μὲν γὰρ βίος ἐστὶν ἐν ὕδασιν· αὐτὰρ ἔμοιγε
 ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποις τρώγειν ἔθος· οὐδέ με λήθει
 ἄρτος τρισκοπάνιστος ἀπ' εὐκύκλου κανέοιο, 35
 οὐδὲ πλακοῦς τανύπεπλος ἔχων πολὺ σησαμότυρον,
 οὐ τόμος ἐκ πτέρνης, οὐχ ἥπατα λευκοχίτωνα,
 οὐ τυρὸς νεόπηκτος ἀπὸ γλυκεροῖο γάλακτος,
 οὐ χρηστὸν μελίτωμα, τὸ καὶ μάκαρες ποθέουσιν,
 οὐδ' ὅσα πρὸς θοίνας μερόπων τεύχουσι μάγειροι, 40
 κοσμοῦντες χύτρας ἀρτύμασι παντοδαποῖσιν.
 οὐ τρώγω ῥαφάνους, οὐ κράμβας, οὐ κολοκύντας,
 οὐδὲ πράσοις χλωροῖς ἐπιβόσκομαι, οὐδὲ σελίνοις·
 ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμέτερ' ἐστὶν ἐδέσματα τῶν κατὰ λίμνην." 55
 πρὸς τάδε μειδήσας Φυσίγναθος ἀντίον ἠΐδα·
 "Ξεῖνε, λίην αὐχεῖς ἐπὶ γαστέρι· ἔστι καὶ ἡμῖν
 πολλὰ γὰρ ἐν λίμνῃ καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ θαύματ' ἰδέσθαι.
 ἀμφίβιον γὰρ ἔδωκε νομὴν βατράχοισι Κρονίων,
 σκιρτῆσαι κατὰ γαῖαν, ἐν ὕδασι σῶμα καλύψαι, 60
 στοιχείοις διττοῖς μεμερισμένα δώματα ναίειν.
 εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις καὶ ταῦτα δαήμεναι εὐχερὲς ἐστι·
 βαῖνέ μοι ἐν νώτοισι, κράτει δέ με μήποτ' ὀληαι,

28 νυ aZ: μοι LS; γε J; om. F 30 ἐξεθρέψατο βρωτοῖς a/S (δόμοις Q): ἔρριψε νέμεσθαι Z
 31 καὶ ἐδέσμασι aSZ (-σιν QY): ἐν ἐδέσμασι I 32 ποιῇ(i) aS: ποιεῖς IZ 33 ἐμοί γε FS, West;
 ἐμοὶ γη [F]J 34 οὐδὲ aS: οὔτι IZ (οὔ τί West) 35 τρισκοπάνιστος /SZ: δυσκοπάνιστος a,
 δισκοπάνιστος recc., West 36 οὐδὲ ISZ: οὔτε a πολὺ σησαμότυρον a: πολλὴν σισαμίδα /SZ
 37 post 38 Z 40 θοίνας aZ: θοίνην IS 53 ῥαφάνους /PQSZ: ῥεφάνας TY, ῥεφαν[Π
 κολοκύντας FLSZ: κολοκύνθας a[F]J 54 οὐδὲ PQTZ: οὐ /PSY, Allen, Fusillo πράσ(σ)οις aΠ,
 πράσων Z: τεύτλοις I, σεύτλοις S, Allen, Fusillo 55 ὑμέτερ' aΠZ: ὑμῶν IS 57 καὶ aJLS: δὲ χ'
 Z, δὲ καὶ F 58 πολλὰ γὰρ QTY, π. μὲν γὰρ P: π. καὶ ISZ; π. μάλ' recc., Allen, Fusillo ἐπὶ aΠZ:
 ἐν IS 59 νομὴν /SZ (νομὸν J): ζωὴν a 60 ('61' teste Ludwich) κατὰ a/S: ἐπὶ Z
 ἐν FLSZ: καὶ ἐν aJ 61 ('60' teste Ludwich) hab. a[F]SZ: car. I; del. West στοιχείοις QTZ,
 -χίοις Y: χοιείοις P; τειχείοις S δώματα P[ST]Y, -τῖ T: σώματα QSZ 63 βαῖνέ μοι /QSTZ:
 αἶρω σ' PY ὀληαι aSZ (ὀληται T ante corr.): ὀλισθηῖς I, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West

ὅπως γηθόσυνος τὸν ἐμὸν δόμον εἰσαφίκηαι.”
 ὥς ἄρ’ ἔφη καὶ νῶτ’ ἐδίδου· ὁ δὲ βαῖνε τάχιστα 65
 χεῖρας ἔχων τρυφεροῖο κατ’ αὐχένος ἄμματι κούφῳ.
 καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἔχαιρεν ὅτ’ ἔβλεπε γείτονας ὄρμους,
 νήξει τερπόμενος Φυσιγνάθου· ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ῥα
 κύμασι πορφυρέοισιν ἐκλύζετο, πολλὰ δακρύων
 ἄχρηστον μετάνοιαν ἐμέμφετο, τίλλε δὲ χαίτας, 70
 καὶ πόδας ἔσφιγγεν κατὰ γαστέρος, ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ
 πάλλετ’ ἀηθείη καὶ ἐπὶ χθόνα βούλεθ’ ἰκέσθαι·
 δεινὰ δ’ ὑπεστενάχιζε φόβου κρυόεντος ἀνάγκη. 73
 οὐχ οὕτω νῶτοισιν ἐβάστασε φόρτον ἔρωτος 78
 ταῦρος ὅτ’ Εὐρώπην διὰ κύματος ἦγ’ ἐπὶ Κρήτην,
 ὥς μῦν ὑψώσας ἐπινώτιον ἦγεν ἐς οἶκον 80
 βάτραχος, ἀπλώσας ὠχρὸν δέμας ὕδατι λευκῷ.
 ὕδρος δ’ ἐξαίφνης ἀνεφαίνετο, πικρὸν ὄραμα
 ἀμφοτέροις· ὀρθὸν δ’ ὑπὲρ ὕδατος εἶχε τράχηλον,
 τοῦτον ἰδὼν κατέδυσσε Φυσίγναθος, οὐ τι νοήσας
 οἶον ἑταῖρον ἔμελλεν ἀπολλύμενον καταλείπειν. 85
 δῦ δὲ βάθος λίμνης καὶ ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν.
 κεῖνος δ’ ὥς ἀφέθη, πέσεν ὕπτιος εὐθύς ἐφ’ ὕδωρ· 87
 πολλάκι μὲν κατέδυνεν ὑφ’ ὕδατι, πολλάκι δ’ αὖτε 89
 λακτίζων ἀνέδυνε· μόρον δ’ οὐκ ἦν ὑπαλύξαι. 90
 δευόμεναι δὲ τρίχες πλεῖον βάρος εἴλκον ἐπ’ αὐτῶ·
 ὕδατι δ’ ὀλλύμενος τοίους ἐφθέγγετο μύθους·

64 τὸν /S: πρὸς PYZ; εἰς QT 65 δὲ βαῖνε QSZ: δ’ ἔβαινε /PTY, Allen, Fusillo, West
 66 τρυφεροῖο /QST: ἀπαλοῖο PYZ, Ludwich, West κατ’ /QSTZ: δι’ P[T]Y ἄμματι FLPQSZ
 (ἄμμ- Yc): ἄλματι J[ST]Y; ἄρματι T κούφῳ a[S]Z: καλῶ /S 67 πρῶτον μὲν /SZ: τὸ πρῶτον a,
 Allen, Fusillo, West 68 ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ῥα aSZ: ὥς δὲ μιν ἤδη / (μιν J) 69 πορφυρέοισιν ἐκλύζετο
 aS: -οις ἐπεκλ- /Z δακρύων a/S (δ’ ἀκουσας Q): δ’ ἐβωστρεῖ Z 72 hab. a[F]SZ: car. /
 ἰκέσθαι PQZ: ἰδέσθαι STY 73 δεινὰ δ’ aSZ: δεινὸν (F?)JL ὑπεστενάχιζε TYZ: ὑποστενάχιζε
 P; ὑπεστονάχιζε JQS, West; ἐπεστονάχιζε FL 78-81 post 66 trai. Ludwich, West
 78 ἐβάστασε /STZ, -σεν QY: ἐβάσταζε P, -ζεν [Y] 80 μῦν ὑψώσας Althaus: μῦν ἀπλώσας /QZ,
 Allen, Fusillo; νῦν μ’ ἀπ- P[Y], νῦν ἀπ- ST, νῦν με ἀπ- [S], μ’ ἀπ. Y; ἔμ’ ἐπιπλώσας [T], recc.
 ἐπινώτιον /[T]Z: ἐπὶ νώτοις P, ἐπὶ νῶτον QST, ἐπὶ νώτοισιν Y 81 ἀπλώσας QTY (et Z ante
 corr.): ὑψώσας /S[Z], Allen, Fusillo; ὅτ’ εὔρατ’ P 82 ὕδρος a/S[Z]: ὕλλος Z ἐξαίφνης aS:
 ἐξαπίνης /Z, West πικρὸν /: δεινὸν aSZ 83 ἀμφοτέροις /S: πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς Z; πᾶσιν ὁμῶς a
 84 οὐ τι Allen (οὔτι PSTY, ὅτι Q): οὐχί /Z 85 ἀπολλύμενον καταλ(ε)ίπειν aSZ: ἀπολλύναι κατὰ
 λίμνην / 86 ἀλεύατο aS[Z] (ἀλεύετο Z ante corr.): ἔκφυγε / 87 ἐφ’ a[S]Z: ἐς LS, δ’ ἐς F, εἰς J
 89 ἐφ’ aFLSZ: ἐν J; ὑφ’ Bothe, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West 91 πλεῖον /Z: πλεῖστον aS
 (πλήστον Q) εἴλκον Z: ἔσχον P; ἦεν QS; ἦσαν [T]; εἴλκεν Y; ἦγον [Y]; φέρον FL; ἦγαγον J
 ἐπ’ αὐτῶ recc., Allen, Fusillo, West: ἐπ’ αὐτὸν aSZ, Ludwich; αὐτῶ J; om. FL 92 ὕδατι a: ὕδασι
 /SZ, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West τοίους ἐφθ. μύθους aS: μύθους ἐφθ. τοίους /Z

“οὐ λήσεις δολίως Φυσίγναθε ταῦτα ποιήσας,
 ναυηγὸν ρίψας ἀπὸ σώματος ὡς ἀπὸ πέτρης.
 οὐκ ἄν μου κατὰ γαῖαν ἀμείνων ἦσθα κάκιστε 95
 παγκρατίῳ τε πάλῃ τε καὶ εἰς δρόμον· ἀλλὰ πλανήσας
 εἰς ὕδωρ μ’ ἔρριψας. ἔχει θεὸς ἔκδικον ὄμμα.” 97
 ταῦτ’ εἰπὼν ἀπέπνευσεν ἐφ’ ὕδατι· τὸν δὲ κατεῖδεν 99
 Λειχοπίναξ ὄχθησιν ἐφεζόμενος μαλακῇσιν· 100
 δεινὸν δ’ ἐξολόλυξε, δραμὼν δ’ ἠγγεῖλε μύεσσιν.
 ὡς δ’ ἔμαθον τὴν μοῖραν ἔδν χόλος αἰνὸς ἅπαντας·
 καὶ τότε κηρύκεσσιν ἑοῖς ἐκέλευον ὑπ’ ὀρθρον
 κηρύσσειν ἀγορὴν ἐς δώματα Τρωξάρταο,
 πατρὸς δυστήνου Ψυχάρπαγος, ὃς κατὰ λίμνην 105
 ὕπτιος ἐξήπλωτο νεκρὸν δέμας, οὐδε παρ’ ὄχθαις
 ἦν ἤδη τλήμων, μέσσω δ’ ἐπενήχετο πόντῳ.
 ὡς δ’ ἦλθον σπεύδοντες ἅμ’ ἡοῖ, πρῶτος ἀνέστη
 Τρωξάρτης ἐπὶ παιδὶ χολούμενος, εἶπέ τε μῦθον·
 “ὦ φίλοι, εἰ καὶ μοῦνος ἐγὼ κακὰ πολλὰ πέπονθα 110
 ἐκ βατράχων, ἢ πείρα κακὴ πάντεσσι τέτυκται.
 εἰμὶ δ’ ἐγὼ δύστηνος ἐπεὶ τρεῖς παῖδας ὄλεσσα.
 καὶ τὸν μὲν πρῶτόν γε κατέκτανεν ἀρπάξασα
 ἔχθιστη γαλήν, τρώγλης ἔκτοσθεν ἐλοῦσα.
 τὸν δ’ ἄλλον πάλιν ἄνδρες ἀπηνέες ἐς μόρον εἴλξαν 115
 καινότεραις τέχναις ξύλινον δόλον ἐξευρόντες,
 ἦν παγίδα καλέουσι, μυῶν ὀλέτειραν ἐοῦσαν.
 ὃ τρίτος ἦν ἀγαπητὸς ἐμοὶ καὶ μητέρι κεδνῇ,
 τοῦτον ἀπέπνιξεν βάτραχος κακὸς ἐς βυθὸν ἄξας.

93 δολίως aZ: γε θεοὺς /S[Z], West **94** ναυηγὸν ρίψας aZ: ἐς λίμνην με(v) /S **96** ἀλλὰ
 πλανήσας a: ἀλλ’ ἀπατήσας /SZ, Ludwig **99** ταῦτ’ aSZ: ὡς /, Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo, West
101 hab. a/S: car. Z **102** τὴν μοῖραν PYZ: μοῖραν QS, μύραν T; τὸν μόρον / **103** ἐκέλευον
 /SZ: ἐκέλευσαν a, Allen, Fusillo **104** ἀγορὴν F[J]LPSTYZ: ἀγορὴν δ’ JQ, ἀγορὴνδ’ Allen, Fusillo
106 ὄχθαις JL[P?]Z: ὄχθας aFS (et P ante corr.), West **107** ἐπενήχετο /QSTZ: ὑπενήχετο PY
109 τε a/S: δὲ Z **111** ἢ πείρα κακὴ: ἢ πείρα aZ; οἷς μοῖρα κακὴ /; ἀλλ’ ἢ μοῖρα S
112 δ’ ἐγὼ δύστηνος /SZ: δὲ νῦν ἐλεεινὸς a, West (δὲ νῦν ἐγὼ ἐλεηνὸς Q) **113-14** υἱέα μοι
 πρῶτον μυοφόρβος δορπήσατο | θῆρ μεγάλη κλονέοντα πτέρναν σιάλοιο τυχοῦσα [Z]
113 γε JL: om. aFS **114** ἐχθίστη /S: ἐχθιστος a, Allen ἔκτοσθεν QTY (et S ante corr.):
 ἔκτοσθε FL[S]; ἔντοσθεν P; ἔντοσθε J ἐλοῦσα a: λαβοῦσα /S **115** ἐς μόρον /PTYZ: μόρον QS
 εἴλξαν FJS: ἔκταν PQYZ; ἦξαν L; om. T **116** δόλον JS: μόρον aLZ: δόμον F
117 del. Wachsmuth, Allen **118** ὃ τρίτος ἦν: ὃς τρίτος ἦν Janko; ὃς δ’ ἔτ’ ἦν West ὃ /YZ: om.
 PQST ἦν PQYZ: δ’ ἦν FLST; δ’ αὖ J ἐμοὶ καὶ μητέρι κεδνῇ aSZ: ἐπεὶ μοῦνος ἐλέλειπτο /
119 ἀπέπνιξεν YZ, -ηξεν Q, -ιξε PST: ἀπέκτεινε / βάτραχος κακὸς /S: φυσίγναθος aZ, Allen,
 Fusillo ἐς βυθὸν ἄξας aSZ (εἰς S): ἐς βυθὸν αἶξας West; ἐξοχος ἄλλων /

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ὀπλίζεσθε καὶ ἐξέλθωμεν ἐπ' αὐτούς." 120
 ταῦτ' εἰπὼν ἀνέπεισε καθοπλίζεσθαι ἅπαντας.
 κνημίδας μὲν πρῶτον ἐφήρμοσαν εἰς δύο μηρούς,
 ῥήξαντες κυάμους χλωρούς, εὐ δ' ἀσκήσαντες, 125
 οὓς αὐτοὶ διὰ νυκτὸς ἐπιστάντες κατέτρωξαν.
 θώρηκας δ' εἶχον καλαμοστεφῶν ἀπὸ βυρσῶν,
 οὓς γαλήην δείραντες ἐπισταμένως ἐποίησαν.
 ἀσπίς δ' ἦν λύχνου τὸ μεσόμφαλον· ἡ δέ νυ λόγχη
 εὐμήκης βελόνη, παγχάλκεον ἔργον Ἄρηος· 130
 ἡ δὲ κόρυς τὸ λέπυρον ἐπὶ κροτάφοις ἐρεβίνθου.
 οὕτω μὲν μύες ἦσαν ἔνοπλοι· ὥς δ' ἐνόησαν
 βάτραχοι ἐξανέδυσαν ἀφ' ὕδατος, ἐς δ' ἓνα χῶρον
 ἐλθόντες βουλὴν ξύναγον πολέμοιο κακοῖο.
 σκεπτομένων δ' αὐτῶν πόθεν ἡ στάσις ἢ τίς ὁ μῦθος, 135
 κῆρυξ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων ῥάβδον μετὰ χερσίν,
 Τυρογλύφου υἱὸς μεγαλήτορος Ἑμβασίχυτρος,
 ἀγγέλλων πολέμοιο κακὴν φάτιν, εἶπέ τε τοῖα·
 "ὦ βάτραχοι, μύες ὕμιν ἀπειλήσαντες ἔπεμψαν
 εἰπεῖν ὀπλίζεσθαι ἐπὶ πτόλεμόν τε μάχην τε. 140
 εἶδον γὰρ καθ' ὕδωρ Ψυχάρπαγα, ὃν περ ἔπεφνε
 ὑμέτερος βασιλεὺς Φυσίγναθος. ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε
 οἳ τινες ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀριστῆες γεγάατε."
 ὥς εἰπὼν ἀπέφηνε· λόγος δ' εἰς οὐατα πάντων
 εἰσελθὼν ἐτάραξε φρένας βατράχων ἀγερώχων· 145
 μεμφομένων δ' αὐτῶν Φυσίγναθος εἶπεν ἀναστάς·

120-1 post 111 [F]J **120** ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' /S: ἀλλ' ἄγε Z; ἀλλ' ἄγ' PQY; ἀλλ' T ὀπλίζεσθε aSZ: ὀπλιζώμεσθα a (-ωμεθα Y, -όμεθα T, ωπληζώμεσθα Q) **122** car. Y καθοπλίζεσθαι PQSTZ: καθοπλισθῆναι / **124** πρῶτον /QSTZ: πρῶτα PY ἐφήρμοσαν εἰς δύο μηρούς /SZ (ἐς FJ): περὶ κνημίσιν ἔθεντο a (κνήμισιν Y, κνημήσιν Q, κνήμησιν T) μηρούς codd.: μοίρας Barnes, Ludwich, Allen, West **125** εὐ δ' ἀσκήσαντες /S: καὶ περὶ κνήμισιν ἔθεντο Z; καὶ κνήμας ἐκάλυπτον PQT (καὶ om. P); κνημίδας ἐκάλυπτον Y **127-8** hic /Z: post 131 aS **127** καλαμοστεφῶν a: καλῶν εὐτρεφῶν /S[Z] (εὐτραφῶν [Z]; εὐταφῶν F; καλὸν J); καλαμορραφῶν van Herwerden, Ludwich, West, καλαμοστρεφῶν Bothe, alii alia **128** ἐποίησαν aS: ἐφόρησαν /Z **129** ἦν λύχνου recc.: ἦν αὐτοῖς λύχνου a/SZ **130** εὐμήκης βελόνη Z: εὐμήκεις βελόναι a/S **131** κροτάφοις ἐρεβίνθου aZ (-φοῖσιν Z): κροτάφοισι καρύου /S (καρύων J) **132** οὕτω FLSTY: οὕτως PQZ; ὥς J μὲν aFSZ: om. JL ἦσαν /PSYZ: ἔστησαν T, -ισαν Q **133** ἀφ' JLQSTY: ἐφ' FP; ἐξ Z δ' /QSY: om. PTZ **134** ξύναγον /SZ: σύναγον a **135** μῦθος a: θρύλλος /SZ, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo **136** ῥάβδον aZ: σκήπτρον /S, Ludwich **138** πολέμοιο /PSYZ: om. QT φάτιν PSYZ, φάτην QT: ἔριν / τε /SZ: δὲ PQY; om. T τοῖα PY: τοιαῦτα Z; τοιάδε τοῖσδε QT; μῦθον /S **139** ὦ aJLZ: om. FS **140** εἰπεῖν /SZ: εἶπον a πτόλεμόν JS: πόλεμόν aFLZ **141** ὄνπερ ἔπεφνε a[J]S, ὃν περ Allen, Fusillo: ὃν κατέπεφνε(v) FLZ; τὸν κατέπεφνε Brandt, Ludwich; τὸν περ ἔπεφνε West **143** οἳ /QSZ: εἴ PTY γεγάατε /STYZ, γεγάαται P: γεγώνεται Q **144** πάντων /S: μυῶν aZ

“ὦ φίλοι, οὐκ ἔκτεινον ἐγὼ μῦν, οὐδὲ κατεῖδον
 ὀλλύμενον· πάντως δ’ ἐπνίγη παίζων παρὰ λίμνην,
 νήξεις τὰς βατράχων μιμούμενος· οἱ δὲ κάκιστοι
 νῦν ἐμὲ μέμφονται τὸν ἀναίτιον· ἀλλ’ ἄγε βουλήν 150
 ζητήσωμεν ὅπως δολίους μύας ἐξολέσωμεν.
 νῦν γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα.
 σώματα κοσμήσαντες ἔνοπλοι στῶμεν ἅπαντες
 ἄκροισι παρὰ χεῖλεσσιν, ὅπου κατάκρημνος ὁ χῶρος·
 ἡνίκα δ’ ὀρμηθέντες ἐφ’ ἡμέας ἐξέλθωσι, 155
 δραξάμενοι κορύθων, ὅς τις σχεδὸν ἀντίος ἔλθῃ,
 ἐς λίμνην αὐτοὺς σὺν ἐκείνῳ εὐθὺ βάλωμεν.
 οὕτω γὰρ πνίξαντες ἐν ὕδασι τοὺς ἀκολύμβους
 στήσομεν εὐθύμως τὸ μυοκτόνον ὧδε τρόπαιον.”
 ὥς εἰπὼν συνέπεισε καθοπλίζεσθαι ἅπαντας. 160
 φύλλοις μὲν μαλαχῶν κνήμας ἕως ἀμφεκάλυψαν,
 θώρηκας δ’ εἶχον καλῶν χλοερῶν ἀπὸ σεύτλων,
 φύλλα δὲ τῶν κραμβῶν εἰς ἀσπίδας εὖ ἥσκησαν,
 ἔγχος δ’ ὀξύσχοινος ἐκάστῳ μακρὸς ἀρήρει,
 καὶ ῥα κέρα κοχλιῶν λεπτῶν ἐκάλυπτε κάρηνα. 165
 φραξάμενοι δ’ ἔστησαν ἐπ’ ὄχθαις ὑψηλῇσι
 σείοντες λόγχας, θυμοῦ δ’ ἔμπληντο ἕκαστος.
 Ζεὺς δὲ θεοὺς καλέσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα,
 καὶ πολέμου πληθὺν δείξας κρατεροὺς τε μαχητάς,
 πολλοὺς καὶ μεγάλους ἡδ’ ἔγχεα μακρὰ φέροντας, 170
 οἷος Κενταύρων στρατὸς ἔρχεται ἡὲ Γιγάντων,

147 ἔκτεινον /PSYZ: ἔκτανον QT **148** δ’ aZ: om. /S **149** τὰς aZ: τῶν S **151** μύας aFLZ: μῦς JS ἐξολέσωμεν Ω: ὀλέσωμεν Z **152** νῦν γὰρ /QSTZ: τοὶ γὰρ PY, Ludwich, τοιγὰρ Allen, Fusillo, West **153** ἐν ὅπλοις JPY: ἔνοπλοι FLQSTZ **154** χεῖλεσσιν FS, -εσιν JLPY: τείχεσσιν Z, -εσιν T, -ησιν Q **156** ὅς τις /SZ (ὥς τις F): ὅππως PY, ὅπως QT ἀντίος ἔλθῃ F, -ον ἔλθῃ Z, -ος ἔλθοι JLS: ἦλθον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς a (ἔλθωσ’ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς [Y]) **157** ἐκείνῳ aSZ (ἐκείνων T, ἐκύνῳ Y): ἐκείναις recc., Allen, Fusillo; ἔντεσιν / βάλωμεν Ω (βάλλ- T): ἔλωμεν J **158** ἐν ὕδασι /S: ἐκείνους aZ **160** ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας ὅπλοις κατέδησεν ἅπαντας /S (-δυσεν F; -δυσαν J) συνέπεισε aZ (συνεπησε Q): ἀνέπεισε recc., Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo **161** κνήμας ἕως ἀμφεκάλυψαν recc.: ἕως om. aFLSZ; τε κνήμας ἀμφ- J; ἀμφὶ κνήμας ἐκάλυψαν Ludwich, West **162** καλῶν χλοερῶν a (χλωρῶν [Z], χλορῶν ante corr.): χλωρῶν πλατέων /S: καλοὺς χλοερῶν West, fort. recte σεύτλων aZ: τεύτλων /S **163** τῶν om. QT **165** καὶ ῥα κέρα Stadtmüller, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo: καὶ ῥα PQSTZ; καὶ κέ ῥα Y; καὶ κόρυθες /, West κοχλιῶν λεπτῶν ἐκάλυπτε κάρηνα aSZ: κοχλῖαι κάρην ἀμφεκάλυπτον / **166** ὄχθαις /SZ: ὄχθης a, West ὑψηλαῖσι TZ: ὑψηλῇσι(v) /PQSY, Ludwich, West **167** ἔμπληντο Q: ἔμπληστο Z; ἐμπέπληστο PY; ἐπέπλητο T; ἐπλητο /; ἔμπληστο S; ἔμπλητο Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo **171** hab. aZ: car. S ἡὲ TZ: ἡδὲ /Q; ἦτε P; εἴτε Y

ἡδὺ γελῶν ἐρέεινε τίνες βατράχοισιν ἄρωγοὶ
 ἢ μυσὶν ἀθανάτων· καὶ Ἀθηναίην προσέειπεν·
 “ὦ θύγατερ, μυσὶν ἄρ’ ἐπαλεξήσουσα πορεύση;
 καὶ γὰρ σοῦ κατὰ νηὸν αἰεὶ σκιρτῶσιν ἅπαντες 175
 κνίσῃ τερπόμενοι καὶ ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν.”
 ὥς ἄρ’ ἔφη Κρονίδης· τὸν δὲ προσέειπεν Ἀθήνη·
 “ὦ πάτερ, οὐκ ἂν πῶ ποτ’ ἐγὼ μυσὶ τειρομένοισιν
 ἐλθοίμην ἐπαρωγός, ἐπεὶ κακὰ πολλὰ μ’ ἔοργαν
 στέμματα βλάπτοντες καὶ λύχνους εἵνεκ’ ἐλαίου. 180
 τοῦτο δέ μοι λίην ἔδακε φρένας οἶον ἔρεξαν·
 πέπλον μου κατέτρωξαν ὃν ἐξύφηνα καμοῦσα
 ἐκ ῥοδάνης λεπτῆς καὶ στήμονα μακρὸν ἔνησα,
 καὶ τρώγλας ἐτέλεσαν· ὁ δ’ ἠπητής μοι ἐπέστη
 καὶ πρᾶσσει με τόκον· τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον ἀθανάτοισιν· 185
 χρησαμένη γὰρ ἔνησα καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ἀνταποδοῦναι.
 ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὥς βατράχοισιν ἀρηγέμεν οὐκ ἐθελήσω.
 εἰσὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ αὐτοὶ φρένας ἔμπεδοι, ἀλλὰ με πρῶην
 ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιοῦσαν ἐπεὶ λίην ἐκοπώθην,
 ὕπνου δευομένην οὐκ εἶασαν θορυβοῦντες 190
 οὐδ’ ὀλίγον καταμῦσαι· ἐγὼ δ’ ἄϋπνος κατεκείμην·
 τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀλγοῦσαν, ἕως ἐβόησεν ἀλέκτωρ.
 ἀλλ’ ἄγε παυσώμεσθα θεοὶ τούτοισιν ἀρήγειν,
 μή κέ τις ὑμείων τρωθῇ βέλει ὀξυόεντι·
 εἰσι γὰρ ἀγχέμαχοι, εἰ καὶ θεὸς ἀντίον ἔλθοι· 195

172 δ’ ἐρέεινε QT **173** μυσὶν ἀθανάτων /S: μυσὶ τειρομένοισι a, Ludwig; μυσὶ τερπόμενοι Z
 Ἀθηναίην προσέειπεν /SZ, Ἀθήνην pr- PY: προσέειπεν Ἀθήνη QT **174** ἄρ’ ἐπαλεξήσουσα / (ἄρ’
 L, ἦ ρ’ Ludwig): ἄρ ἐπαρρήξουσα [S] (ἐπαλήξ- ante corr.); ἄρα βοηθήσουσα a (ἦ ῥα Z, Allen,
 Fusillo); ἦ ρ’ ἀπαλεξήσουσα West πορεύση /SZ (et Q?): πορεύη PY (πορεύου T) **175** αἰεὶ om.
 J **176** ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν aZ (-μασιν QY, ἐδεύσμασι π.-iv T): θυσιάων ἐδέσμασιν /S
 (θύσων J?) **179** ἐπαρωγός aZ: ἄρωγός / (ἄρρ- S) μ’ om. /Y **181** μοι FLST: μου JPQYZ
 οἶον JLZ (et S ante corr.): οἶα μ’ aF (et S post corr. teste Ludwig, sed οἷς lego) ἔρεξαν /SZ:
 ἔοργαν a **183** μακρὸν Z: λεπτὸν Ω, Fusillo (-ῆς T, -ῆν Y) ἔνησα aSZ: ἔοργα / **184** καὶ
 τρώγλας ἐτέλεσ(σ)α(ν) aS, ἐνέδησα Z: τρώγλας τ’ ἐμποίησαν /, Allen, Fusillo ὁ δ’ ἐπητής μοι
 ἐπέστη aS (ὁ δέπειτής P, ὁ δὲ πήτης Q; ἠπητής recc., Thom. Mag.): τούτου χάριν ἐξώργισμαι / (οὐ
 χάρ- J); φίλον δέ μου ἦτορ ἰάνθη Z, Ludwig **185** hic Z: post 186 a/S, Fusillo τόκον QSTY:
 τόκοις FLZ; τόκος J; om. P τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον /SZ (τόδε J, τό γε S, West; ῥή- F): τό γ’ ἔρρι πόνον P (τό
 γε ρηπομέν’ Q, τό γε ρίπονον T, τό γ’ ἐρίπονον Y) **186** ἔνησα /SZ (et Q?): ὕφηνα PTY
187 ἀρηγέμεναι Vaticanus gr. 2222, Allen (ἀρωγήμεναι J) οὐκ ἐθελήσω a[J]Z: βουλήσομαι FLS
 (et J ante corr.); βουλήσω Laurentianus XXIII 1, Allen **188** πρῶην a[J]S: πρῶτον FLZ
191 καταμῦσαι aJL: καμῦσαι FSZ **192** τὴν Ω: τὴν δε QT ἐβόησεν aSZ: ἐφώνησεν /
 (φώνησεν J) **193** θεοὶ om. QT **194** hab. a/S: car. Z κέ /QTY: καί PS ὑμείων PQSY (ὑμμ-
 L): ἡμείων FT (et J?) τρωθῇ FLPQY (τρωθῆναι T): βληθῇ J **195** ἀγχέμαχοι aJS: ἐγχέμαχοι
 FL; ἀγέρωχοι Z εἰ καὶ θεὸς ἀντίον ἔλθοι aS (καὶ εἰ θεὸς /; ἀντίος L): ἄλκιμοι ἀγχιμαχηταὶ Z

πάντες δ' οὐρανόθεν τερπόμεθα δῆριν ὀρῶντες."	
ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη· καὶ τῇ γε θεοὶ ἐπεπείθοντ' ἄλλοι.	
πάντες δ' αὐτ' εἰσῆλθον ἀολλέες εἰς ἓνα χῶρον·	
καὶ τότε κώνωπες μεγάλας σάλπιγγας ἔχοντες	
δεινὸν ἐσάλπιγξαν πολέμου κτύπον· οὐρανόθεν δὲ	200
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης βρόντησε, τέρας πολέμοιο κακοῖο.	
πρῶτος δ' Ὑψιβόας Λειχήνορα οὔτασε δουρὶ	
ἔσταότ' ἐν προμάχοις κατὰ γαστέρα ἐς μέσον ἦπαρ·	
καδ' δ' ἔπεσεν πρηνῆς, ἀπαλὰς δ' ἐκόνισεν ἐθείρας.	204
Τρωγλοδύτης δὲ μετ' αὐτὸν ἀκόντισε Πηλείωνα,	206
πῆξεν δ' ἐν στέρνῳ στιβαρὸν δόρυ· τὸν δὲ πεσόντα	
εἶλε μέλας θάνατος, ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ σώματος ἔπτη.	
Σευτλαῖον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε βαλὼν κέαρ Ἐμβασίχυτρος,	209
Ωκιμίδην δ' ἄχος εἶλε καὶ ἤλασεν ὀξυσχοίνῳ	214
Τρωγλοδύτην ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος, ἥριπε δ' εὐθύς.	213
...	
οὐδ' ἐξέσπασεν ἔγχος· ἐναντίον ὥς δ' ἐνόησε	215
Κοστοφάγον φεύγοντα, βαθείαις ἔμπεσεν ὄχθαις,	218
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγεν ἐν ὕδασιν· ἤλασε δ' αὐτόν	219
χορδῆσιν λιπαρῆσί τ' ἐπορνύμενος λαγόνεσσιν·	222
κάππεσε δ', οὐκ ἀνένευσεν, ἐβάπτετο δ' αἵματι λίμνη	220
πορφυρέῳ, αὐτὸς δὲ παρ' ἡϊόν' ἐξετανύσθη.	221
...	

196 τερπόμεθα /PY: -όμεθα QST, -ώμεσθα Z **197** καὶ τῇ γε Allen, Fusillo, καὶ τῇ γε Z: τῇ δ' αὐτ'(ε) a/S, West (τῇ δ' ἄρ Y) θεοὶ ἐπεπείθοντ' Z: ἐπεπείθοντο θεοὶ PQY, West (πεπείθ- L, πεπίθ- FS, ἐπείθ- J; ἐπείθοντο οἱ θεοὶ T) **198** εἰσῆλθον ἀολλέες Z: ἀολλέες εἰσῆλθον aS (ἦλθετον FL, ἦλθον J) **200** ἐσάλπιγξαν a (et Z ante corr.?), ἐσάλπιξαν S: ἐσάλπιζον JL (-αν F) **203** προμάχοις a: προμάχοισι /SZ κατὰ γαστέρα ἐς μέσον ἦπαρ Ω: καθ' ἥπατος ἔγκατα χυτο J **206** τρωγλοδύτης /S[Z]: τρωγλήτης a (et Z ante corr.) πηλείωνος L, Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo, West **208** δ' ἐκ σώματος JPSY: δὲ σώματος FL; δ' ἐκ στόματος TZ; δ' ἐστόματος Q **209** σευτλαῖον aZ (σευτλεον Q): σευτλαῖος /S ἐμβασίχυτρος aZ (ἐνβα- Z, ἐμμα- T ut vid.): ἐμβασίχυτρον /S **209-217** in commentariis edisserentur **210-22** del. Allen (! – 'nam 210, 213, 213a, 217 plane Byzantini, ceteri cum eis videntur stare') **214** hic a: post 213a S; car. /Z **213** hic PY: post 214a TZ; post 212 /S[Z]; car. Q ἥριπε δ' εὐθύς PTY: ἤλασε δ' ἔγχος Z; τρώσεν ἐπιφθὰς /S[Z] (ἔφθη τρώσας vel οὔτασ' ἐπιφθὰς Kelly, JHS 2009) **215** post 213 PTYZ: post 214a QS; car. /Z] οὐδ' QSTZ: ὁ δ' PY, Fusillo ὥς δ' ἐνόησε aZ (δ' ενωσεν Q, δε νόησεν T): ἥριπε δ' εὐθύς S ἐναντίβιον δ' ἐνόησεν West **218** κοστοφάγον recc., [Z]: κουστοφάγον QY, -ος ST, -οι P; Κρουστοφάγον West; κραμβοφάγος FJ; κραμβοβάχος L φεύγοντα PYZ: φεύγων /QST βαθείαις /Z, -αις δ' PY: βαθείης ST; βαθήεις Q **219** car. J ἀπέληγεν ἐν ὕδασιν /PSTYZ (-λησεν T): ἀπέληγε μάχης Q (et recc.), Fusillo **220-22** del. Fusillo **222** post 219 trai. Hosty: post 221 aSZ; car. / (del. Brandt, secl. West) ἐπορνυμένος ST (et recc.): ἐπορνυμένου PQYZ, West **221** παρ' ἡϊόν' a/S (παρήϊον PY, παρήϊον Q): παρ' ἡϊόνεσσιν Z

Τυροφάγον δ' αὐτῇσιν ἐπ' ὄχθαις ἐξενάριξεν.	223
Πτερνογλύφον δὲ ἰδὼν Καλαμίνθιος ἐς φόβον ἦλθεν, ἦλατο δ' ἐς λίμνην φεύγων τὴν ἀσπίδα ῥίψας.	225
Φιτραῖον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνεν ἀμύμων Ἐμβασιχύτρος,	226
χερμαδίῳ πλήξας κατὰ βρέχματος· ἐγκέφαλος δὲ ἐκ ῥινῶν ἔσταξε, παλάσσετο δ' αἵματι γαῖα.	228
Λειχοπίνακα δ' ἔπεφνεν ἀμύμων Βορβοροκοίτης,	230
ἔγχει ἐπαῖξας· τὸν δὲ σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψεν. Πρασσεῖος δ' ἐσιδὼν ποδὸς εἵλκυσε νεκρὸν ἐόντα, ἐν λίμνῃ δ' ἀπέπνιξε κρατήσας χειρὶ τένοντα.	
Ψυχάρπαξ δ' ἤμυν' ἐτάρου περὶ τεθνηῶτος καὶ βάλε Πρασσεῖον μήπω γαίης ἐπιβάντα,	235
πῖπτε δέ οἱ πρόσθεν, ψυχὴ δ' Αἰδόσδε βεβήκει. Κραμβοβάτης δ' ἐσιδὼν πηλοῦ δράκα ῥίψεν ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ τὸ μέτωπον ἔχρισε καὶ ἐξετύφλου παρὰ μικρόν. ὠργίσθη δ' ἄρ' ἐκεῖνος, ἐλὼν δ' ἄρα χειρὶ παχείῃ κείμενον ἐν δαπέδῳ λίθον ὄβριμον, ἄχθος ἀρούρης,	240
τῷ βάλε Κραμβοβάτην ὑπὸ γούνατα· πᾶσα δ' ἐκλάσθη κνήμη δεξιτερῇ, πέσε δ' ὕπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι. Κραυγασίδης δ' ἤμυνε καὶ αὖθις βαῖνεν ἐπ' αὐτόν τύψε δέ μιν μέσσην κατὰ γαστέρα· πᾶς δέ οἱ εἴσω ὀξύσχοινος ἔδυνε, χαμαὶ δ' ἐκχυντο ἅπαντα	245
ἔγκατ' ἐφελκομένῳ ὑπὸ δούρατι χειρὶ παχείῃ.	246
Τρωξάρτης δ' ἔβαλεν Φυσίγναθον ἐς ποδὸς ἄκρον·	250

223 αὐτῇσιν ἐπ' ὄχθαις aZ (αὐταῖσιν TZ, αὐτέσι Q; ἐπ' ὄχθης PY, ἐπόχθης QT, ἐπ' ὄχθης West): ἐπ' ὄχθαις λιμνήσιος FLS; δὲ ἰδὼν λιμνήσιος J **224** δ' ἐσιδὼν aZ (εἰσιδ- Y): δὲ ἰδὼν /S, Allen, Fusillo, West φόβον /PYZ: βάθος ST; βυθὸν Q **226** car. / φιτραῖον recc.: φυτραῖον Q; λιτραῖον PSYZ, Allen, Fusillo; λιμναῖον T; Λιστραῖον Ambrosianus B 52 et al., Ludwich; Ὑγραῖον West ἔμβασιχύτρος Ω: βορβοροκοίτης Z **228** βρέχματος /Z: βρέγματος aS, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West **230** λειχοπίνακα aZ (ληχ- Q; -πίνακας Y): λειχοπίναξ /S, Allen, Fusillo ἔπεφνεν aZ: ἔκτεινεν /S, Allen, Fusillo ἀμύμων Βορβοροκοίτης a: -ων ἔμβασιχύτρος Z; -ονα βορβοροκοίτην /S, Allen, Fusillo **232** πρασσεῖος T, πράσειος P, πρασίας Q, πράσσιος Y; πρασ***ς Z; πρασσαῖος recc., Ludwich, Allen; πρασσοφάγος /S[Z] **233** ἀπέπνιξε aZ (ὑπ- Y; -ῆξε Q): ἀπέθηκε /S **234** car. T λειχάρπαξ F ἐταρου περὶ τεθνηῶτος Z: ἐτάρων περὶ τεθνηῶτων Ω **235** πρασσεῖον S, πρασεῖον P (et Z ante corr.?), πράσσιον Y, πράσιον [Z]: πρασσαῖον T, Ludwich, Allen; πηλούσιον / **236** πρόσθεν /SZ: προπάροιθε a (-ρυθεν Q) ψυχὴ aZ: ἦτορ FLS; ἦπαρ [F]J Αἰδόσδε βεβήκει a (αἰδος δὲ Y): ἐκτοσθε(ν) βεβήκει /S; ἐκ στόματος ἔπτη Z **237** κραμβοβάτης aZ: πηλοβάτης /S ἐπ' αὐτῷ ST **238** ἔχρισε Ω: ἐπληξε Z **239** ὠργίσθη SZ: ὀργισθεῖς a; μουνώθη JF, ουνώθη L; θυμώθη recc., West δ' ἄρ' ἐκεῖνος aSZ (δ' ἄρ JTY): δ' ἄρα κείνος FL δ' ἄρα Z: δὲ γε PQSY, δέχε T; δὲ / **240** δαπέδῳ PY: γαίῃ /SZ; πεδίῳ QT **241** κραμβοβάτην aZ: πηλοβάτην /S ὑπὸ a/: κατὰ S; παρ Z **243** καὶ αὖθις a/Z (καῦθις P, καὶ αὖθις Q): καὶ οὔτος S; καὶ ἰθὺς Stadtmüller, West **244** πᾶς /SZ: πᾶσα PQY; πάντα T **245** ὀξύς σχοῖνος a ἔδυνε aS: δύνε /Z **246** ἐφελκομένῳ aSZ: ἐφειλκυμένῳ F, ἐφειλκυσ- L; ῥηγνυμένου J **250** post 246 trai. Stadtmüller ποδὸς Z: πόδα /PQSY; πόδας T

...	
σκάζων ἐκ πολέμου ἀνεχάζετο, τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς·	248
ἦλατο δ' ἐς τάφρους, ὅππως φύγη αἰπὺν ὀλεθρον.	249
Τρωξάρτης δ' ὡς εἶδεν ἔθ' ἡμίπνουν προπεσόντα,	252
ἥκαί οἱ τ' ἐπέδραμεν αὖθις ἀποκτάμεναι μενεαίνων·	252a
Πρασσεῖος τ' δ' ὡς εἶδεν ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ ποταμοῖο τ'	252b
ἦλθε διὰ προμάχων καὶ ἀκόντισεν ὀξύσχοινον·	253
οὐδ' ἔρρηξε σάκος, σχέτο δ' αὐτοῦ δουρὸς ἀκωκὴ·	
τοῦ δ' ἔβαλε τρυφάλειαν ἀμύμονα καὶ ἑτετράχυτρον τ'	255
δῖος Ὀριγανίων, μιμούμενος αὐτὸν Ἄρηα,	
ὃς μόνος ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀρίστευεν καθ' ὅμιλον·	257
...	
ῥήμησεν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' αὐτόν· ὁ δ' ὡς ἶδεν οὐχ ὑπέμεινεν	258
ἥρωος κρατερὸν μένος, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ βένθεσι δύνει.	259
ἦν δέ τις ἐν μυσὶν Μεριδάρπαξ, ἔξοχος αὐτῶν,	260
Κναίσωνος φίλος υἱὸς ἀμύμονος ἀρτεπιβούλου	261
...	
οἴκαδ' ἰών, πολέμου δὲ μετασχεῖν παῖδ' ἐκέλευεν·	262
οὗτος ἀναρπάξαι βατράχων γενεὴν ἐπαπείλει·	
ἀγχοῦ δ' ἔστηκεν μενεαίνων Ἴφι μάχεσθαι	
καὶ ῥήξας καρύοιο μέσσην ῥάχιν εἰς δύο μοῖρας	265
φράγδην ἀμφοτέροισι κενώμασι χεῖρας ἔθηκεν	
...	
οἱ δὲ τάχος δείσαντες ἔβαν πάντες κατὰ λίμνην·	267
καὶ τότε' ἀπολλυμένους βατράχους ᾤκτειρε Κρονίων,	270

249 ἦλατο δ' <αἰψ'> ἐς τάφρον West metri gratia τάφρους PTY: τάφρον /QSZ, West φύγοι PY, West **252** car. L Τρωξάρτης JZ: πρασσαῖος FST, Allen, Fusillo, West; πρασαῖος PY, -αίως Q **252a** hab. /Z: car. aS; del. Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo, West αὔτις FZ **252b** hab. Z: car. a/S; del. Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo, West **253-59** hab. aSZ: car. / (sed 256-7 ad '261a-b' permutati sunt); 258-9 del. Fusillo **253** ὀξύσχοινον PYZ: ὀξεί σχοίνω QST **255** τοῦ δ' S: οὐδ' aZ, Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo **257** βατράχοισιν aSZ: μύεσσιν / ἀρίστευε(v) /QST (αρή- Q): ἀρίστευσε(v) PYZ καθ' ὅμιλον ἀρίστευσεν P **258** ἶδεν TZ; εἶδεν PQSY **259** car. T, del. Allen ἥρωος κρατερὸν μένος Z: ἥρωας κρατερούς PQY, West, κραταιούς S ἐνὶ βένθεσι δύνει Z: ἔδου βένθεσι Y, βένθες P; ἔδυν' ἐν βένθεσι S, ἐνδυνεν β- Q; ἐνδου βένθεσι Ludwig, West; secl. Gleii **260** μυσὶν Μεριδάρπαξ: μυσι μ- a (μυσι πτ- T); μύεσσιν νέος μ- S; μυσι παῖς M- Ludwig, Allen, Fusillo; μύεσσι νέος παῖς / αὐτῶν Z: ἄλλων Ω, Ludwig, Allen, West **261** Κναίσωνος Ludwig, Allen, West (secl. Fusillo): κναίσωνος P, κνέσωνος Q; κραιίσωνος YZ; κρίσων ὡς T; ἀγγέμαχος FS; ἐγγέμαχος JL **262** hab. aSZ: car. /, del. Fusillo ἰών aS: ἰδών Z; ἶεν [Z], Allen πολέμου δὲ Z: πολέμοιο aS ἐκέλευεν PSTY: ἐκέλευσεν QZ **263** ('264' teste Ludwig) hab. aSZ: car. / γενεὴν Z: γένος PQSY; γενόμενος T **264** ('264a' teste Ludwig) hab. Z: car. Ω **265-68** hab. aSZ: car. / **265** καρύοιο Ilgen: καρῖο Z; καρύου PS; καροίου Q; καρήου Y; om. T **266** κενώμασι Z: καὶ ἐν ὤμοισι S; καὶ ἐν ὀμμασι(v) PY; καὶ ἐννόμοισι Q; καὶ ἐνώμοι T **267** hic QSTZ: post 268 PY

κινήσας δὲ κάρη τοίην ἐφθέγξατο φωνήν·
 “ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι
 † οὐ μικρόν με πλήσσει Μεριδάρπαξ ὃς κατὰ λίμνην †
 ἀρπάζειν βατράχους ἐπαπειλῶν· ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
 Παλλάδα πέμψωμεν πολεμόκλονον ἢ καὶ Ἄρηα, 275
 οἳ μιν ἐπισχίσουσι μάχης κρατερόν περ ἐόντα.”
 ὥς ἄρ’ ἔφη Κρονίδης· Ἄρης δ’ ἀπαμείβετο μύθω·
 “οὔτ’ ἄρ’ Ἀθηναίης Κρονίδα σθένος οὔτε Ἄρης
 ἰσχύσει βατράχοισιν ἀμυνέμεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον.
 ἀλλ’ ἄγε πάντες ἴωμεν ἀρηγόνες· ἦ τὸ σὸν ὄπλον 280
 κινείσθω· οὔτω γὰρ ἀλώσεται ὅς τις ἄριστος, 281
 ὥς ποτε καὶ Καπανῆα κατέκτανες ὄβριμον ἄνδρα 282
 καὶ μέγαν Ἐγκελαδόν τε καὶ ἄγρια φῦλα Γιγάντων.” 283
 ὥς ἄρ’ ἔφη, Κρονίδης δὲ βάλε πολόεντα κεραυνόν· 285
 πρῶτα μὲν ἐβρόντησε, μέγαν δ’ ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον, 286
 ...
 ἦκ’ ἐπιδινήσας· ὁ δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπτατο χειρὸς ἀνακτος. 288
 πάντας μὲν ῥ’ ἐφόβησε βαλὼν τ’ ἐπὶ τοὺς δέ τε μύας†
 ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὥς ἀπέληγε μυῶν στρατός, ἀλλ’ ἔτι μάλλον 290
 ἴετο πορθήσιν βατράχων γένος αἰχμητῶν.
 καὶ νῦν κεν ἐξετέλεσσεν, ἐπεὶ †μέγα ὥς θεὸν ἦεν,† 268
 εἰ μὴ ἀπ’ Οὐλύμπου βατράχους ἐλέησε Κρονίων, 292

271 κάρη /P: κάρην QSTYZ **272** ἔργον ἐν a (ἐν om. T): θαῦμα τόδ’ /SZ, Allen, Fusillo ὀρώμαι a/S (post corr. in T): ὀρώμεν TZ **273** del. Allen, Fusillo, secl. West ὃς om. / **274** ἀρπάζειν βατράχους coniecti: ἄρπαξ ἐν βατράχοισιν a, Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo, West; ἤλασε βατράχους Z; αἶρειν β- F; κτείνει β- J; ἐναίρειν β- LS ἐπαπειλῶν Z: βλεμεαίνων JL, -αίνει S; μενεαίνων F; ἀμείβεται a, West **275** ἦ a: ἡδὲ FLS[Z]; ἴδ’ J καὶ ἄρηα aS: καὶ ἄρην FLZ; ἄρηά τε J **276** ἐπισχίσουσι a: ἀποσχίσουσι JL, -ήσωσιν Z, -σχίσουσι S; ἀποχθήσουσι F κρατερόν /: κρατεροί aZ; κρατερῶ S ἐόντα /: ἐόντες aZ; ἐόντε S **277** ἄρης codd. (om. T): “Ἡρη Baumeister, West **278** οὔτ’ ἄρ [F]Z: οὐ γὰρ a/S οὔτε LPSY: οὔτ’ FJQZ; οὔτε γ’ T **279** ἰσχύει Z, Allen, Fusillo ἀμυνέμεν Z: ἀρηγέμεν Ω (-μεναι F) αἰπὺν... ἀρηγόνες om. / **280** ἀλλ’ ἄγε /PT: ἀλλά γε QSY; ἀλλά Z ἀρηγόνες a/ (αρηγῶτες Q): ἀρήγειν Z; ἀμυνέμεν S **281** (‘284’ teste Ludwich) hab. aZ: car. /S γὰρ om. Q **282** hab. aSZ: car. / ὥς QZ: ὃς PTY; ὦ S καὶ καπανῆα TYZ: καὶ κατὰ νῆα P, καὶ κατανῆαν Q; κατὰ νῆα S κατέκτανες PQSY: κατέκτανεν Z, κατέκτενεν T **283** καὶ μέγαν Ἐγκελαδόν τε Barnes: καὶ μέγαν ἐγκελάδοντα a, Allen (ὥς μέγ- T), Fusillo; καὶ κελάδοντα πεδήσας /S (-δοντ’ ἀπέδ- F; πέδη**ς S) **285** δὲ λαβὼν Ludwich: δὲ βαλὼν Z, Allen, Fusillo; δ’ ἔβαλ(λ)ε Ω ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν Z: πολόεντα κεραυνόν FLS (Q?), -εντι κεραυνῶ JPTY **286** secl. West (286-88 del. Kühn) πρῶτα μὲν /PQYZ: πρῶτον μὲν S; ἦ καὶ ἐπιδινήσας T μέγα JT **288** ἐπιδινήσας [Z]: ἐπιδ**νησας ante corr. **289** μὲν ῥ’ /S: μὲν τ’ aZ ἐπὶ τοὺς δέ τε μύας (τε om. Z) Ω: βατράχους τε μύας τε recc., Allen, Fusillo, West **291** ἴετο /S: ἔλπετο a, Allen, Fusillo; ἔπλετο Z γένος βατράχων ἀγερώχων / **268** huc trai. West: post 267 aSZ; car. / νῦν κεν QSY: νῦν κ’ P; νέκουν T, -κύν [T]; νύκτ’ Z ἐξετέλεσσεν recc., -λεσαν T: -λεσσαν QS, West, -λεσαν PYZ μέγα QSTZ: μέγαν PY ὥς θεὸν PSYZ, θεῶν Q, θεὸς T: οἱ σθένος recc., Ludwich, West **292** secl. West ἐλέησε om. T

ὅς ῥα φθειρομένοισιν ἄρωγους εὐθύς ἔπεμψεν.
 ἦλθον δ' ἐξαίφνης νωτάκμονες, ἀγκυλοχῆλαι,
 λοξοβάται, στρεβλοί, ψαλιδόστομοι, ὀστρακόδερμοι, 295
 ὀστοφυεῖς, πλατύνωτοι, ἀποστίλβοντες ἐν ὤμοις,
 βλαιοσί, χειροτένοντες, ἀπὸ στέρνων ὀρόωντες,
 ὀκτάποδες, δικάρηνοι, ἀτειρέες, οἱ δὲ καλεῦνται
 καρκίνοι, οἳ ῥα μυῶν οὐράς στομάτεσσιν ἔκοπτον
 ἠδὲ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας· ἀνεγνάμπτοντο δὲ λόγχοι. 300
 τοὺς καὶ ὑπέδεισαν πάντες μύες οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔμειναν,
 ἐς δὲ φυγὴν ἐτράποντο· ἐδύετο δ' ἥλιος ἤδη,
 καὶ πολέμου τελετὴ μονοήμερος ἐξετελέσθη. 303

293 ῥα a: τις /SZ; τοῖς Stadtmüller, Fusillo εὐθύς aZ: αὐτὸς /S, West; om. Q φθειρόμενοισιν /S: τοῖς βατράχοισιν Z; τότε βατράχοισιν a (τότ' ἐν T, Allen) **294** ἀγκυλοχῆλαι recc.: -χεῖλαι a/S, Allen (-οι J); ἀγκυλοχεῖλοι Z **296** hab. aZ: car. /S **297** χειροτένοντες aS (-τέροντες Y ante corr., -τόνοντες S, -τονοῦντες T): χειροτένοντες /Z, Allen, Fusillo ὀρόωντες S: ὀρώντες /; εἰσὸρώντες Z, ἐσορώντες a, Allen, Fusillo (-ώντες Q, -ῶντο Y) **298** δικάρηνοι codd.: δικέραιοι Clarke, West ἀτειρέες Nauck: ἀχείρες codd., Allen, Fusillo (ἀχειλέες Y) **299** οἳ ῥα νυ στομάτεσσιν οὐράς ἔκοπτον F στομάτευσον J **300** ἠδὲ /SZ: ἦ P; ἦ καὶ QTY ἀνεγνάμπτοντο /PS: ἀνεγνάμπτοντο QTYZ **301** τοὺς καὶ aZ (τοὺς δὲ καὶ Q): οὓς καὶ /S; τοὺς δὲ Baumeister, Allen, Fusillo πάντες aS: δειλοὶ /Z, Allen, Fusillo οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔμειναν Z (et S ante corr.?): οὐδέ τ' ἔμ- a[S] (τ' om. Q); οὐδ' ὑπέμ- / **302** ἐδύετο /QST: δύετο P, -ται Y; ἐδύσσετο Z

Deleted lines

σκηπτοῦχον βασιλῆα καὶ ἐν πολέμοισι μαχητὴν	22
ἔμμεναι· ἀλλ' ἄγε θᾶσσον ἔην γενεὴν ἀγόρευε	23
οὐδέποτε πτολέμοιο κακὴν ἀπέφυγον αὐτήν,	42
ἀλλ' εὐθὺς μετὰ μῶλον ἰὼν προμάχοισιν ἐμίχθην.	
ἄνθρωπον οὐ δέδια καὶ περ μέγα σῶμα φοροῦντα,	
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ λέκτρον ἰὼν ἄκρον δάκτυλον δάκνω,	45
καὶ πτέρνης λαβόμεν, καὶ οὐ πόνος ἵκανεν ἄνδρα,	
νήδυμος οὐκ ἀπέφυγεν ὕπνος δάκνοντος ἐμεῖο.	
ἀλλὰ δύω μάλα πάντα τὰ δεῖδια πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν,	
κίρκον καὶ γαλήν, οἳ μοι μέγα πένθος ἄγουσιν,	
καὶ παγίδα στονόεσσαν, ὅπου δολόεις πέλε πότμος·	50
πλεῖστον δὴ γαλήν περιδείδια, ἥ τις ἀρίστη,	
ἥ καὶ τρωγλοδύνοντα κατὰ τρώγλην ἐρεεῖνει.	52
οὐρὴν μὲν πρῶτ' ἔπλασ' ἐφ' ὕδασι νῆτε κώπην	74
σύρων, εὐχόμενος τε θεοῖς ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι·	75
ὕδασι πορφυρέοισι δ' ἐκλύζετο, πολλὰ δακρύων·	
καὶ τοῖον φάτο μῦθον ἀπὸ στόματος τ' ἀγόρευσεν·	77
καὶ χεῖρας ἔσφιγγε καὶ ὀλλύμενος κατέτριζε	88
ποινὴν ἀντέκτισιν τ' ὀρθὴν ὅς κ' ἀποδώσει	97a
τοῖς τίσουσι σε μυῶν στρατῶ οὐδ' ὑπαλύξεις	98

[22-23] car. aZ: hab. /S[Z]; serv. Allen, Fusillo

[42-52] car. aΠZ: hab. /S[Z]

[74-77] del. Ludwich (74-76 del. Draheim, Fusillo; secl. West 74-76, del. 77); serv. Allen

[74] μὲν /PQST: δὲ YZ; om. West πρῶτ' TYZ: πρῶθ' [S]; πρῶτον PQ; πρῶτην J; πρῶτιστον FLS ἔπλασ' [T]Z, Allen: ἐπέλασεν P; ἐπλάσεν Q; ἤπλωσεν [S]T; ἐπλησσεν Y; ἔπλωσεν West; om. /S ἐφ' aZ: ἐν /S [75] τε a/S: δὲ Z, Allen [76] car. J ὕδασι a[F]Z: κύμασι /S πορφυρέοισι δ' ἐκλύζετο a[F], -οισιν L, Allen, -οις F: -οις ἐπεκλ- Z δακρύων /QSTZ: δ' ἐβόα P[T]Y; δ' ἐβωστρεῖ [P], Allen, West [77] car. /: hab. aSZ ἀπὸ aS: γ' ἐκ Z

[88] del. Althaus, secl. West; serv. Allen, Fusillo καὶ χεῖρας aZ: χεῖρας δ' /S ὀλλύμενος a: ἀπολλύμενος /SZ

[97a] car. /: hab. aSZ (sed alia manu transfixus est in Z) ποινὴν τ' T (et recc.) [98] serv. Ludwich, West τοῖς τίσουσι σε aS (τήσουσιν Q; με P): ***ισουσι Z ante corr. ?; ποινὴν σὺ τίσεις /Z; τοὶ δὴ τίσονται σε Ilgen, ποινὴν αὖ τίσεις σὺ Barnes, alii alia

καί ῥα κραιπνότατος μοίρας μυσὶν ἄγγελος ἦλθεν	100a
σώματα κοσμήσαντες ἐν ἔντεσι δαιδαλέοισιν	121
καὶ τοὺς μέν ῥ' ἐκόρυσσεν Ἄρης πολέμοιο μεμηλώς	123
ὥς βατράχων στρατὸς ἔβρεμεν εὖτε Γιγάντων	170a
καὶ μῦες κενταύρων μεγαλαύχων ἦσαν ὅμοιοι	170b
καὶ πολὺ με πράσσει· τούτου χάριν ἐξώργισμαι	184a
μή τις καὶ τρωθῇ λόγχῃ δέμας ἢ ἐμαχαίρῃ	194a
καὶ δ' ἦλθον κήρυκες, τέρας πολέμοιο φέροντες	198a
δούπησεν δὲ πεσών, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' αὐτῷ	205
Ὠκαμείδης ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος· ἤριπε δ' εὐθύς	209a
Ἄρτοφάγος δὲ Πολύφωνον κατὰ γαστέρα τύψεν	210
ἤριπε δὲ προηνῆς· ψυχὴ δὲ μελέων ἔπτη	211
Λιμνόχαρις δ' ὥς εἶδεν ἀπολλύμενον Πολύφωνον	212

[100a] car. /QST: hab. [F]P[T]YZ; serv. Ludwich

[121] car. aZ: hab. FLS[Z]; serv. Allen, Fusillo

[123] car. aZ: hab. /S; serv. Allen, Fusillo

[170a] car. aZ: hab. /S [170b] car. aSZ: hab. /

[184a] car. /Z: hab. aS

[194a] car. a: hab. /SZ μή τις καὶ λόγχῃ τυπῇ /S: μη κε τις τρωθῇ λόγχῃ Z ante corr.?

[198a] car. aZ: hab. /S

[205] car. aZ: hab. /S; serv. Allen, Fusillo

[209a] ('214' teste Ludwich) car. a/S: hab. Z

[210-12] car. aZ: hab. /S[Z] (211 car. J) [211] ἐξέπτη Ω: ἀπέπτη [Z]

πέτρῳ μυλοειδέϊ· τὸν δὲ σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψεν	213a
ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἔσπασεν ἔγχος· ἐφωρμήθη δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ	214a
Λειχήνωρ δ' αὐτοῖο τιτύσκετο δουρὶ φαεινῷ	216
καὶ βάλεν οὐδ' ἀφάμαρτε καθ' ἥπαρ· ὡς δ' ἐνόησε	217
Ὑδροχάρις δ' ἔπεφνεν Πτερνοφάγον βασιλῆα	227
Τρωγλοδύτης δ' ὡς εἶδεν ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο	247
ἔσχατος δ' ἐκ λίμνης ἀνεδύσετο, τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς	251
Μεριδάρπαξ ὄρχαμος μιμούμενος αὐτὸν Ἄρηα	261a
ὃς μόνος ἐν μύεσσιν ἀρίστευεν καθ' ὅμιλον	261b
αὐτὸς δ' ἐστήκει γαυρούμενος κατὰ λίμνην	262a
εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὁξὺ νόησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε	269

[213a] post 213 /S[Z]

[214a] post 214 QST: post 209a Z; car. /PY

[216-17] car. aZ: hab. /S[Z] (sed 217 post 218 J)

[227] car. aZ: hab. /S

[247] del. Stadtmüller, Fusillo; serv. Ludwich, Allen, West τρωγλοδύτης aZ (τρωγλω- TY), Allen: σιτοφάγος FLS, West; πρασσοφάγος J δ' om. Z, add. [Z] ἴδεν FZ; εἶδε J ἐπ' Ω: παρ' J

[251] car. L: hab. aSZ; serv. Ludwich (Κηρί δαμασθεῖς conj.), West (sed τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς secl.) ὤκα δὲ λίμνην εἰσαλτο τειρόμενος δεινῶς F, τειρόμενος δεινῶς εἰσαλτο [Z], ἤλλατο τειρόμενός περ δεινῶς J δ' om. PQT, West λίμνης δ' P; λίμνος T ἀνεδύσετο PY: -σατο QSTZ

[261a-b] car. aZ: hab. / (cf. 256-7); 261a hab. S [261a] ὄρχαμος Ω: κύδιμος J ἀρίστευεν J: -ευε FL

[262a] car. Z: hab. Ω αὐτὸς aS: αὐτοῦ / γαυριούμενος κατὰ λίμνην aS (γαβρι- PT): γαυρού- FL; γαυριάων J

[269] del. Althaus; serv. Ludwich, Allen, Fusillo; 268-9 post 291 trai. West

κινείσθω τιτανοκτόνον ὀβριμοεργόν	280a
ὦ Τιτᾶνας πέφνες ἄριστους ἔξοχα πάντων	280b
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα κεραυνὸν δειμαλέον διὸς ὄπλον	287

[280a] ('281' teste Ludwich) car. aJZ: hab. FLS **[280b]** ('281a' teste Ludwich) car. aZ: hab. /S

[287] car. a/Z: hab. S

THE CLASH OF THE FROGS AND MICE

As I begin my first column, I call upon the chorus from Helicon to come into my heart and assist with my song (which I have just now set down in the tablets on my knees), beseeching them to bring to the ears of all mankind the dreadful strife, war-goaded work of Ares – how the Mice went rampaging among the Frogs, emulating the deeds of those earth-born men, the Giants, as the story among mortals has it; and this was how it began.

A mouse once, thirsty from escaping the imminent danger of a weasel, put his muzzle greedily to the surface of a pool, delighting in the honey-sweet water; but he was spotted by a pond-lover of great renown, who made a speech as follows:

“Stranger, who are you? Whence have you come to this shore? Who was your father? Tell me all truly, nor let me catch you in a lie. For if I judge you a worthy friend, I shall take you to my home; and I shall give you gifts of guest-friendship, many and splendid. I myself am King Physignathus, and all across this pond I am honoured as lord of the Frogs for all my days; and my father Peleus reared me, having joined in love with Hydromedousa beside the banks of the Eridanus. And I see that you too are of noble bearing, and outstanding among others in valour.”

And at this Psicharpax answered him, and said:

“Why do you ask after my descent? It is well-known to all: to men, and gods, and winged birds. I am called Psicharpax; and I am the son of a great-hearted father, Troxartes; and my mother is Leichomyle, daughter of King Pternotroctes. She bore me in Calybe, and nourished me with foodstuffs, with figs and walnuts and all sorts of good things to eat. But how can you make me your friend, when my nature is nothing like yours? Your life is spent in the water; yet it is my way to gnaw on whatever I find in the

homes of humans. I never miss the thrice-baked loaf in its lovely round basket, the fine-robed scone thick with cheese and sesame, the slice of ham, the liver clad in white, the cheese new-curdled from sweet milk, the splendid honey-cake – which even the gods crave – nor anything else that cooks concoct for mortal banquets, adorning their dishes with all manner of condiments. I do not gnaw on radishes, or cabbages, or pumpkins; I do not graze on green leeks, or on celery – no, these are the foodstuffs of you pond-dwellers.”

At this Physignathus smiled, and said in reply:

“Stranger, you harp too much on your belly. We too have all kinds of wonders to behold, both in the pond and on shore. For Cronus’ son granted to the Frogs a twofold domain: to jump about on land and to hide ourselves in water, since we were allotted two spheres in which to dwell. If you wish to learn about all this, it is easily done: climb on my back and hold on tight, so you do not meet your end, and you will make a joyful arrival at my home.”

He spoke, and offered his back: the mouse climbed on at once, holding his paws in a gentle grip around the frog’s delicate neck.

Now at first he was delighted, while he could still see shore nearby, and he enjoyed Physignathus’ swimming. But when he began to be drenched by dark waves, he wept copious tears and cursed his foolish change of heart, and tore at his fur, and clutched the frog’s belly with his back paws: his heart quailed at this new terror, and he longed to reach the land; and he groaned terribly, gripped by chilling fear. It was nothing like the way the bull bore upon his back his lovely burden, when he carried Europa over the waves to Crete – the way the frog carried the mouse to his home, raised up on *his* back, his yellow-green body stretched out in the white water.

Suddenly, a water-snake appeared, a dreadful sight for both of them: it reared its neck straight up from beneath the surface. Physignathus saw it, and dived – not thinking what a comrade he was leaving behind to perish. He dived to the depths of the pond, and dodged a black fate. But the mouse, shaken off, at once fell backwards into the pool. Several times he sank beneath the water, and each time he came up again, kicking: but he could not evade his doom. His saturated fur grew heavy and dragged him down; and as he expired in the water, he spluttered out these words:

“Physignathus, this treacherous act of yours will not be forgotten! You have cast me from your body like a shipwrecked sailor from a rock. You would not have got the better of me on land, you villain, in the *pankration*, or the wrestling, or the foot-race; but you deceived me and flung me into the water. But God has a vengeful gaze.”

With these words he gasped out his life in the water. But he was seen by Leichopinax, who was sitting on the soft grass at the pond’s edge: he gave a terrible cry, and ran and told the Mice. When they learnt of Psicharpax’ fate a dreadful rage came upon them all. At once they told their heralds to summon a general assembly just before dawn, at the house of Troxartes, the unhappy father of that same Psicharpax whose dead body was stretched out on its back on the surface of the pond; no more, poor creature, was he on the banks, but floating out among the waves.

When they gathered in haste at dawn, the first to stand up was Troxartes, filled with anger for his son. He made this speech:

“Friends, though I alone have suffered great wrongs at the hands of the Frogs, the crime is a threat to all of us. I am wretched, for I have lost three children: the first was caught and killed by a loathsome weasel, who snatched him outside his hole; the second, meanwhile, cruel humans lured to his doom with their latest trickery, a wooden snare

they discovered which they call a 'trap' – a destroyer of mice. The third was the sole remaining joy for me and his noble mother, but a wicked frog has drowned him by dragging him down to the deep. So come now, arm yourselves; let us march out against them."

He said all this, and persuaded them all to take up arms. First they fitted greaves around two of their thighs, made by splitting and carefully working green beans which they had set on and gnawed during the night. They had corslets of straw-belted scraps of hide, which they had skinned from a weasel and skilfully crafted. Each one's shield was the lid of a lamp; and the spear was a long needle, an all-brazen work of the war god. The helmet on each one's temples was the shell of a chick-pea.

In this way the Mice armed themselves; but when the Frogs noticed, they came up out of the water and gathered in one place to convene a council of woeful war. And while they were investigating the source of the upheaval, and what the fuss was, a herald approached them, carrying a sceptre in his paws – Embasichytrus, the son of proud-hearted Tyroglyphus, bringing a dreadful declaration of war. He spoke as follows:

"O Frogs, the Mice have trouble in store for you; they have sent me to bid you arm for the strife of battle. For they have seen Psicharpax in the water, slain by your King Physignathus. So come: fight hard, all those of you who are champions among the Frogs."

Having said this, he departed; but when his speech fell upon the ears of all the noble Frogs, it shook them to their hearts. And as they began to criticise him, Physignathus stood up and said:

“Friends, I did not kill the mouse, nor did I see him perish! No doubt he drowned while playing by the pond, trying to copy the swimming of the Frogs; and now these wicked Mice are blaming me, in my innocence. No, let us rather take counsel for how we may destroy the treacherous Mice. In fact, I shall tell you what seems to me the best plan: let us all clothe our bodies in armour and make a stand on the edges of the banks, where the ground is precipitous; and when they come out and charge at us, let us grab by the helmet anyone who tries to close with us, and throw them straight into the pond with this other one. This way we will drown in the water these non-swimmers, and rejoice as we set up here a trophy of our slaughter of the Mice.”

He said all this, and convinced them all to take up arms. They wrapped the leaves of mallows around their shins, and they had corslets made from fine green sea-beet; they skilfully fashioned cabbage-leaves into shields, and a long sharp reed served each of them as a spear; and the shells of tender snails covered each one’s head. They stood in formation on the steep banks, brandishing their spears, and each was full of spirit.

But Zeus summoned the gods to starry Heaven, and showed them the muster of battle and the mighty combatants, many in number and great in stature, carrying their long spears, just like the army of the Centaurs or the Giants when it marches forth. He laughed happily and asked which of the immortals would aid the Frogs, and which the Mice; and he said to Athene:

“Daughter, will you go out to defend the Mice? Certainly, all of them are constantly scampering about your temple, delighting in the fat of the sacrifice and all the good things to eat.”

Thus spoke the son of Cronus; but Athene said to him:

“Father, I would never go down as a saviour to the Mice if they were in difficulties, since they have done me all sorts of wrongs – damaging my garlands, and the lamps for the sake of the oil. And one thing in particular which they did struck at my heart: they nibbled at my robe, which I worked hard to weave from fine weft, and I spun a long warp, and they made holes in it; and the mender is after me for payment, and is charging me interest – most terrible for immortals; since I borrowed for my spinning, and I can’t pay *that* back. But even so, nor would I be willing to help the Frogs. They’re not well-behaved themselves: no, the other day I came back from battle, since I was quite exhausted, and though I needed sleep they wouldn’t let me close my eyes for a second, with all the noise they made. I lay there sleepless, with my head aching, until the cock crowed. So please, you gods, let’s stop this talk of helping them, in case one of you gets hurt by a sharp arrow; they’re tough fighters, even if a god should come against them. Let’s all enjoy watching the struggle from on high.”

She spoke thus, and the other gods were persuaded.

But meanwhile the warriors all came together in one place; and then the mosquitoes, carrying great trumpets, blared out the dreadful sound of battle; and from Heaven Zeus the son of Cronus thundered, as a sign of savage war.

First of all Hypsiboas struck Leichenor with a spear in the gut, right through the liver, as he took his stand in the front rank: he fell face-forward, and his delicate whiskers were defiled in the dust. Next Troglodytes made a cast at Peleion, and fixed the sturdy spear in his chest; as he fell black death claimed him, and the soul fled from his body. Embasichytrus hit Seutlaeus in the heart, and slew him; but grief seized Ocimides, and he struck Troglodytes through the neck with his sharp reed, and he collapsed at once.

(...)

...but he did not pull the spear free; when he caught sight of Costophagus opposite him in flight, he charged down the steep banks, but did not stop even in the water: he stabbed him, making a lunge at his guts and his gleaming flanks. And Costophagus fell, and did not rise back up; he stained the pond with his crimson blood, and his body was stretched out next to the shore.

(...)

...and he slew Tyrophagus on the bank itself. But when Calaminthius saw Pternoglyphus, he fell into a panic, and jumped into the pond to escape, flinging away his shield. And blameless Embasichytrus slew Phitraeus by striking him on the forehead with a stone: his brains dribbled out from his nostrils, and the earth was spattered with blood. And blameless Borborocoites slew Leichopinax, rushing at him with his sword; and darkness covered his eyes. Prasseius saw this and dragged him off by his foot, though he was dead, and drowned him in the pond, holding him by the back of the ankle with one hand.

But Psicharpax came to the defence of his dead comrade and hit Prasseius before he could get back on land; he fell down forwards, and his soul went down to Hades. Crambobates saw this and hurled a clump of mud at Psicharpax, and it smeared across his face and blinded him for a moment. The mouse was enraged, and snatched up in his mighty paw a great rock lying on the ground, a burden on the soil, and hit Crambobates with it below the knee: his whole right shin was shattered, and he tumbled backwards into the dust. But Craugasides came to his aid, and charged in his turn at Psicharpax, and stabbed him in the middle of the belly: the sharp reed drove all the way inside, and

all his guts slithered out onto the ground when the frog tore free the spear with his sturdy hand.

Troxartes hit Physignathus on the tip of his foot...

(...)

...he withdrew from battle, limping, and was badly hurt; and he flung himself into the ditch, to escape utter destruction. But when Troxartes saw him still staggering along half-alive, he rushed <at him> again, determined to kill him; and <when> Prasseius <saw this> he made his way through the front ranks and hurled his sharp reed: but it did not break his shield, and the point of the spear stuck there. Then godlike Origanion, fighting like Ares himself, hit him on his well-wrought helmet, made from four pots' plunder (?); he alone of the Frogs was distinguishing himself in the fray.

(...)

...and he charged at him; but when he saw this, he did not hold his ground against the hero's fierce assault, but plunged into the depths of the pool.

There was among the Mice a certain Meridarpax, outstanding above the rest, the dear son of blameless Cnaeson the bread-thief...

(...)

...he went home, but told his son to take part in the battle. He now was threatening to take the tribe of Frogs by storm. He stood nearby, eager to fight his hardest, and broke a walnut into two halves along its middle ridge, and put his paws into both cavities for protection (?) ...

(...)

...and at once they were terrified and all fled into the pond. But at this point the son of Cronus took pity on the Frogs as they were being slaughtered; he shook his head and made this remark:

“Ah, misery! This is a great exploit I see before my eyes: <I am alarmed by Meridarpax, who> threatens to overrun the Frogs. Let us at once send battle-rousing Pallas, or even Ares, who will stop him fighting, however strong he is.”

Thus spoke the son of Cronus; but Ares said in reply:

“Neither the strength of Athene, son of Cronus, nor of Ares will be enough to ward off utter destruction from the Frogs. No, let us all go down to aid them; or launch your own weapon – for that way their greatest champion will be defeated, just as once you slew Capaneus, that mighty man, and huge Enceladus and the wild tribes of Giants.”

He spoke thus; and the son of Cronus hurled his smoking bolt. First he thundered, and shook great Olympus...

(...)

...whirled it, and threw; and it flew from his lordly hand. His throw frightened all of them, <Frogs and Mice>; but not even then did the Mouse army check its assault – no, it strove even harder to destroy the spear-wielding race of the Frogs. And they would have managed it, since <their strength was extraordinary>, if the son of Cronus had not taken pity from Olympus on the Frogs, and at once sent helpers to them in their distress.

Suddenly there came a tribe with backs like anvils and curved claws; slant-walking, crooked, with mouths like scissors and shells for skin; made of bones, with flat backs and gleaming shoulders, bandy-legged with clutching arms, peering forth from their chests; eight-footed and two-headed, indestructible – the ones who are called crabs;

they snapped with their mouths at the tails of the Mice, and their hind and front paws, and bent their spears back. All the Mice were terrified of them, and held their ground no longer, but turned about in flight; and now the sun was setting, and the one-day festival of battle was at an end.

1-8: proem

Both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* begin with an appeal to the Muse for inspiration. Hesiod addresses the Muses in the first line of the *WD*, and in the *Theogony* goes so far as to describe how they met him face-to-face and conferred the gift of poetry upon him. Ten of the *Homeric Hymns* begin by invoking the Muse or Muses: *h.Hom.* 4, 5, 9, 14, 17, 19, and 20 (single, unnamed Muse); 32 and 33 (Muses, plural); 31 (Calliope). In the 6th century BC the device was already familiar enough for Hipponax to employ it comically (fr. 128). All these share one crucial feature: the poet appeals to the Muse(s) for direct assistance, usually requesting that they ‘speak’ or ‘sing’ in his place (ἐννεπε, ἀεῖδε *vel sim.*) in order to guarantee the accuracy of his account. The Muse is essentially a metonymic substitute for the concept of poetic truth.¹²⁷

The major Hellenistic poets moved away from this concept. Callimachus’ *Aetia* presents Apollo in the role of instructor, telling the poet to keep his Muse λεπταλήην (fr. 1.24). Aratus begins the *Phaenomena* with a proem addressed to Zeus (1–18); he salutes the Muses in passing - χαίρουτε δὲ Μοῦσαι | μελίχλαι μάλα πᾶσαι – but makes no appeal for their aid or favour, although one of the alternative proems in circulation is more traditional (fr. 83 ἀμφί μοι ἠελίοιο περικλειτοῖό τε μήνης | ἔσπετέ μοι, Μοῦσαι, discussed by Maass 1892). Apollonius invokes Erato at the beginning of *Argonautica* 3,

¹²⁷ Dodds 1951, pp. 80-2; Tigerstedt 1969, pp. 72-6. More generally on archaic proems, see e.g. Bassett 1923, Lenz 1979, Strauss Clay 1983 pp. 9-53, Race 1992; on the ‘introit’ in Greek literature see Wheeler 2002.

the book which deals with Medea's love for Jason, and a nameless Iliadic θεά at 4.1, but the proem of the whole work makes no reference to the Muses, only to Apollo.¹²⁸

In calling on the 'chorus from Helicon' in his first line, therefore, the *BM* poet seems to hark back to a more archaic model. Yet he asks the Muses for aid not in composition, but in performance; the song itself has already been written down (ἐν δέλτοισιν... θῆκα, 3). This foregrounding of the text as written artefact is distinctively Hellenistic (Posidippus 118, 122, Call. *Aet.* fr. 7.13-14; cf. Gutzwiller 2007, pp. 43-9), but is never elsewhere combined with the Homeric *topos* of the invocation to the Muses. The placement of σελίδος / χορὸν confronts us with the clash between the Hellenistic milieu of scrolls and columns, and traditional forms of oral performance.

Some scholars have seen this juxtaposition as inherently comic. Fusillo calls it 'il primo scarto comico' (p. 87), and Wölke argues that the image is more trivial than one might expect from an epic proem, subverting the audience's expectations in the very first line: 'bereits hier beginnt die Parodie' (p. 85). Yet it is an entirely reasonable response to two conflicting realities: a 'Homeric' epic must begin in an unimpeachably Homeric manner, but the *BM* poet relies on the written word. For the poet to call on the Muses to inspire him would be dishonest or ridiculous, since he admits openly that he wrote the poem out in advance (see *ad* 3), but to abandon the appeal to the Muses altogether would

¹²⁸ The best survey of the chronological development in the relationship between poet and Muse is that in Morrison 2007, pp. 73-90. Morrison invokes the important notion of *dependence*: Homer and Hesiod portray themselves, in slightly different ways, as dependent on the Muse(s) for their ability to produce poetry. Later authors attempt to shake off this reliance and stand on their own two feet, with varying degrees of success. Apollonius, in particular, begins boldly but seems to slide further into doubt and *aporia* as his epic develops, forcing him back to a more traditional plea for divine assistance: Feeney 1991 pp. 90-2, Hunter 1993 p. 105. Set against this backdrop, the *BM* proem is strikingly confident (see *ad* 3). The poet has composed his work without assistance, and does not even imply that he will be *unable* to perform it should the Muses fail to heed his request. He would be glad of their support, but the difference they will make is one of quality, not of performance versus silence.

violate Homeric style. Hence this neat compromise, which would hardly have disgraced Callimachus. In its first line the poem already demonstrates a sophisticated approach to the problem of producing faux-archaic epic within a Hellenistic literary context.

Glei (p. 113) compares Apollonius' description of the Muses as ὑποφήτορες... αἰδοῖς. The expression is notoriously controversial; again, Morrison 2007 has a good discussion (pp. 288-93). Towards the end of this section he makes the intriguing suggestion, adducing Cat. 68b.5-6, that the Muses are acting as Apollonius' *scribes*: he is telling the story, they are taking it down so that it can be read by others (hence 'intermediaries'). If this is correct, the *BM* proem would form an exact reversal of the Apollonian model: 'Apollonius is characterising the Muses as contributing to the production of the narrative, but in a subsidiary 'technical' role, facilitating the creation of the text, rather than inspiring it, or supplying its content' (p. 293) – so too is the *BM* poet, once we substitute the word 'performance' for 'creation'. See also Call. *Aet.* fr. 7 for a similarly artful way of weaving the traditional appeal to divinities (in this case the Graces) into a poetic form that has no use for the classic model of divine inspiration. Cf. Dodds 1951, p. 80: 'if we consider the occasions on which the *Iliad*-poet himself appeals to the Muses for help, we shall see that it falls on the side of content and not of form. *Always he asks the Muses what he is to say, never how he is to say it*' (emphasis mine). Fowler 2002, p. 142 discusses the *BM* proem from a similar perspective: 'the juxtaposition of the two modes [Homeric and Callimachean] highlights a gap between reality and poetic presence'.

The rest of the proem displays a similarly playful attitude to the tropes of poetic beginnings: see *ad* 1, 3, 7-8.

1 **ἀρχόμενος:** suggests both Hes. *Th.* 1 Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεῖδεν and the formula ἄρχομ' αἰεῖδεν common to eight of the extant *Homeric Hymns*: *h.Hom.* 2, 9, 11, 13, 16, 22, 26, and 28. *h.Hom.* 25 begins Μουσάων ἄρχομαι.

πρώτης: some form of *πρώτος* is often found at the start of an epic, as a temporal marker: e.g. I.6 ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα, Hes. *Th.* 44 πρῶτον κλείουσιν ἀοιδῇ, A. R. 1.23 πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφέης μνησώμεθα. The poet announces where in the wider continuity of events he will 'first' begin to sing (cf. Race 1992, pp. 21-2). The *BM* follows this convention, but with the twist that *πρώτης* refers to the poet's position in his *text*; he cannot choose a point of departure, because only one is available to him – the one written on his tablets. Again, a traditional motif of oral performance is adapted for use with a text that has been codified in advance and has no room left for manoeuvre: where is there now to start but the beginning of page one?

πρώτης σελίδος *Z* is *lec. diff.*; all other MSS have πρῶτον Μουσῶν *vel sim.* Μουσῶν could easily have begun as a gloss on χορόν, whereas σελίδος would be a very unlikely addition.

σελίς in a literary context refers to either a column of text in a papyrus roll, or more generally to a page or section of writing (Turner 1980, p. 5). It is post-Classical, appearing first in the 3rd c. BC. The poet has written his work on δέλτοι, 'tablets', rather than on a scroll (see below); whether he has actual columns in mind is impossible to determine. Most surviving examples of writing-tablets from the ancient world are too narrow to fit more than one column of text on a single leaf. P. Rainer VI, the source of Call. *Hec.* fr. 260, is a wooden board 52cm wide and contains four columns side-by-side (Lloyd-Jones & Rea 1968); but this, as Wölke points out (p. 258), is unlikely to have been bound into a notebook. I translate 'page', but at any rate Posidippus 118.5 γραψάμεναι

δέλτων ἐν χρυσέαις σελίσιν provides adequate and more or less contemporary evidence that a δέλτος could have σελίδες. See further the discussion in Wölke, pp. 257-8; Ludwich p. 319 collects some other σελίδες from the world of epigram.

χορὸν ἐξ Ἑλικῶνος: consciously anti-Homeric – the Muses in Homer live on Olympus (II.491, XI.218, etc.), and only appear on Helicon from Hes. *Th.* 2 onwards.

2 **ἐλθεῖν εἰς ἐμὸν ἦτορ:** the closest parallel for this image appears in the Sibylline Oracles, where the poet addresses Zeus as the source of his prophetic words - σὺ γὰρ εἰς ἐμὸν ἦτορ ἔθηκας | αὐδὴν ἀμβροσίην (12.294-5). For the epic notion of a god or divinity ‘entering into the heart’, cf. XVII.210-11. Ludwich comments on the unusual phrasing: ‘Dass der gesamte *Chor* vom Musenberge in eigener Person in sein *Herz* komme, hat schwerlich jemals ein Dichter gebetet’ (pp. 319-20).

ἐπεύχομαι: ‘I pray’ *vel sim.* is identified by Race 1992, p. 28 as characteristic of a cultic, rather than rhapsodic, opening. This contrasts with the typically rhapsodic ἀρχόμενος, and serves to draw our attention to the ‘current’ performance: ‘unlike rhapsodic hymns, which consistently maintain an impersonal tone and envision generalized performances, [cultic hymns] are often concerned with a specific occasion’ (*ibid.*). Although the *BM* poet envisages his work reaching ‘the ears of all mortals’ (5), his proem is narrowly focused on one particular instance of performance: the performative context is more strongly envisaged than in Homer or Hesiod, or even in Callimachus.

3 **ἦν:** after the quasi-hymnic features of the first two lines (ἀρχόμενος, ἐπεύχομαι) we are provided with what looks like a traditional ‘hymnic relative’ – ‘I sing of the god, *who...*’. The *BM* upsets our expectations by having ἦν refer not to the subject of the poem,

but to the poem itself. Instead of drawing our attention to a divinity, the poet directs us towards the work he has created: it is on his literary skill, rather than any higher power, that our eyes should be focused.

Cf. Magnelli 2006, pp. 196-7 on the proem to Nicander's *Theriaca*: 'Nicander, far from simply leaving out the mention of any god, replaces it with the secular and self-confident ῥεῖα, thus stating that he needs nothing else than his own skill and erudition – an almost ironical statement: nobody would believe that writing elegant hexameters on such an unfriendly matter and in such an abstruse style was an 'easy' task!... This is not a mere difference from Hesiod and Aratus; it rather implies the purpose of explicitly abandoning their path, and is better understood as belonging to a period in which such an ironical, detached and self-conscious attitude was already established as an important feature of Hellenistic poetry.'

ἦν νέον... Θῆκα: this line suggests both the Homeric τὸν ῥά οἱ Εὐρύκλεια φίλοις ἐπὶ γούνασι θῆκε (xix.401; see below) and Callimachus' καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρῶτιστον ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα | γούνασιν (*Aet.* fr. 1.21-2). Ludwich's θήσω for θῆκα assumes aid in composition, whereas it is the act of *performance* for which divine aid is being sought (above, *ad* 1-8).

δέλτοισιν ἐμοῖς: a δέλτος is a writing-tablet, often bound in sets to form a kind of notebook. It is sometimes a symbol of the poet in Hellenistic literature – most famously in the *Aetia* prologue, but also in the proem to Meleager's *Garland*, which says of Nossis ἥς δέλτοις κηρὸν ἔτηξεν Ἑρως (*AP* 4.1.10); but from what we know of its construction, it would have been unsuitable for any permanent composition, since the writing surface was only made of wax (Blanck 1992, pp. 46-51). Callimachus had just begun his work when Apollo came to him, but the *BM* is complete, and we would expect

a poet to have his finished work on some more lasting medium, such as a βίβλος (cf. Posidippus 118).

It is possible that the poet is not actually *reciting* from δέλτοι: all he says is ‘the song which I *recently set down* in tablets on my knees’, which could be a reference to the process of composition, with no implication that the tablets are in front of the poet’s eyes at this moment. Alternatively, we could see the line as a determined allusion to Call. – sacrificing strict sense for the sake of the parallel – or as a sly suggestion that the *BM*, as a ‘playful’ work, is unworthy of being recorded on papyrus. Wax tablets were characteristic of the schoolboy (e.g. Herod. 3.14, Poll. 10.57, *AP* 12.162); we have a set of seven tablets containing passages from the animal-fables of Babrius, apparently written out as exercises by a student some time in the 3rd century AD (Hesseling 1892-3). The δέλτοι would then comically undercut the solemnity of the proem, reminding the reader that the epic they have begun is really only a παίγνιον. Harder 2012 v. 2 p. 57 acknowledges the same ambiguity in Callimachus’ case: the δέλτος on the knees could be a symbol either of a poet writing, or a child learning. Note in this context that the Homeric model for this line, xix.401, describes the infant Odysseus being placed on the knees of his grandfather: does the image of a baby hero humorously suggest that what we have here, appropriately scratched on learner’s tablets, is a baby epic?

4 This line is syntactically divorced from its context, and may be either a general summary of the poet’s theme (war) or a specific reference to the story he is going to tell (*the war*, the one between...).

δῆριν ἀπειρεσίην: ‘boundless strife’, perhaps modelled on *γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην at XX.58. The Iliadic passage marks the opening of divine hostilities, and since the *BM*’s

proem emphasises the enormous scale and magnitude of the conflict (see below on 7), the intertext may be intentional. This line is quoted, without source, by the 12th-c.

Etymologicum Magnum s.v. δῆρις.

πολεμόκλονον: lit. 'battle-thronging', so 'waking the turmoil of battle'; used also at 275. It appears in the Sibylline Oracles (5.253), where it describes the sound of a σάλπιγξ, and fr. 55 of the anonymous *Anacreontea* (as an epithet of Athene). Both these texts are hard to date, but probably postdate the composition of the *BM* (see Lightfoot 2007 and *DNP* s.v. 'Anacreontea', respectively). In later centuries, from Manetho 6.47 (3rd c. AD) onwards, the epithet became quite popular, usually as a description of Ares: this suggests that even if it was not a new coinage here, the *BM*'s use of it may have been influential.

ἔργον Ἀρηος: *XI.734, **h.Ven.* 10. See also note on 130. The expression is not altogether natural: the 'work of Ares' should be war, as in the examples just mentioned, but this yields the sense 'war-rousing war'. Rossbach proposed πολεμόκλονου, so 'the work of war-waking Ares'; Glei *ad loc.* explains the accusative as enallage. It is perhaps acceptable to see a semantic distinction between δῆρις, 'conflict' *in abstracto* – as at xxiv.515, where δῆριν ἔχουσι means that Odysseus and Telemachus are in opposition, not that they are physically attacking each other – and the πόλεμος, the actual battle which results from it. The middle section of the poem depicts military hostility (via the speeches of the generals and the arming of both sides), which is the work of Ares, and leads to the clash of forces and the bloodshed described in the final section.

5 **μερόπεσσιν:** meaning still unknown, but used by Homer as an epithet of ἄνθρωποι, and by poets at least from Aeschylus onwards simply to mean 'mortals';

discussed by *LFGE* s.v. μερόπες and Kirk 1985 *ad* I.250. The dative plural μερόπεσσι(ν) is a rare and self-consciously elevated form, used once by Homer (II.285), and then only at A. *Supp.* 95, Call. *Hec.* fr. 298.2, and A.R. 4.536; it also appears several times in the Sibylline Oracles. The tone is one of grandiose, vatic pronouncement.

There may also be an extremely subtle joke here. μέροψ has a rarer meaning – a species of bird, probably *Merops apiaster*, first at Arist. *HA* 626a.9. The Aristotelian passage describes creatures which prey on bees, and mentions several types of birds, including the μέροψ, as well as τελματιαῖοι βάτραχοι, marsh-frogs. As discussed in the Introduction, the creature absent from the *BM* is the bird which in the original fable appears and carries off the frog. We could therefore see a learned pun: when the poet announces his intent to tell the story to μερόπεσσιν, does he mean men, or birds – the same birds who know Psicharpax' ancestry at 26?

6 **ἀριστεύσαντες**: the poet is explicit from the start that the Mice will have the upper hand in the combat, although he conceals the 'twist ending': the reader initially assumes that the Mice will emerge victorious, whereas the poem ends with their panicked retreat from the crabs. The battle scene as we have it does not in fact display any particular bias towards the Mice in terms of casualties – only with the *aristeia* of Troxartes and the coming of Meridarpax at 250ff. does it become explicit that the Frogs are being worsted. On the other hand, there is a pervasive sense that the Mice are acquitting themselves more *nobly*: see especially on 248 and 252 below.

7 Presumably a reference to the Gigantomachy, the only mythological conflict in which the Giants were involved, which was a popular theme in both literature and art: see e.g.

Mayer 1887, Vian 1951 and 1952. Homer mentions the race of Giants at vii.58-60 and the story of Otus and Ephialtes at V.385-6 and xi.305-20; Hesiod may allude to it at *Th.* 954-5. It appears in vase-paintings as early as the end of the 7th c. BC, and Euripides includes it in his description of the sculptural decorations at Delphi (*Ion* 205ff.). Many of the Hellenistic and Roman poets describe or allude to it: e.g. Call. *Del.* 171ff., Hor. *Od.* 2.12, Ov. *M.* 1.184ff. Claudian wrote a *Gigantomachia* (Hall 1985, pp. 404-9), and it is very likely that at least one epic on the theme was known to the poet of the *BM*. There *may* also have been an association between giants and comedy/parody: Polemon (*ap.* Athenaeus 698a-699c) claims that among the παρωδίαι with which Hegemon took first prize at Athens was a *Gigantomachia*.

On a literary level, there is obvious point in the proem of a short comic work likening its protagonists to great and terrible monsters. By comparing his mice to giants, the poet effectively elevates his own creation to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the monumental *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: if tiny creatures can do great deeds, why should a tiny poem not win great renown? An ironic concern with length and grandeur was characteristic of Hellenistic poetics, and Callimachus famously warned his readers μηδ' ἅπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶτε μέγα ψοφέουσιν ἀοιδὴν | τίκτεσθαι (*Aet.* fr. 1.19-20). Innes 1979 sees Gigantomachy as the ultimate in epic grandeur, 'the most extreme example of the 'thundering' style opposed to that of the slender elegance of Callimachus' (p. 166), and discusses how the Roman poets used it as the hypothetical highest point on the stylistic ladder they persistently declined to climb. The *BM*'s proem can be seen as a different way of engaging with the same principle. Callimachus refuses to imitate Zeus' thunder, Propertius and Ovid modestly profess themselves unsuited to writing Gigantomachies; the *BM* poet audaciously declares that he *is* up to the task of writing a Gigantomachy,

but proceeds to do it in less than three hundred lines with a cast of small animals. Just as the Mice achieve deeds on a par with the ἔργα Γιγάντων, the *BM* will thunder quite as loudly as a work a hundred times its size.

The exaggeration of mice into threats on an epic scale is found elsewhere in ancient comedy: see most obviously Call. fr. 54c (Harder 2012, v. 2 p. 444: ‘Molorcus’ battle with the mice could appear to a reader as a homely equivalent of Heracles’ battle with the Nemean lion’), but also *AP* 11.95, where a mouse is a ‘second Heracles’, and Mart. 11.18.17-18, where a mouse is feared *tamquam sus Calydonius*.

γηγενέων: ‘earth-born men’ as an epithet for the Giants, the children of Gaia, has a special relevance here. The belief that mice were spawned naturally from the earth was widespread in antiquity, mentioned by D.S. 1.10.2, Macr. *Sat.* 7.16.2, and Varro *rer. rust.* 1.8.5; the first two both associate it particularly with Egypt. It may also lie behind Aesop’s fable of ‘the Mountain in Labour’ (alluded to by Hor. *A.P.* 139). Ael. *NA* 12.5, Str. 13.1.48, and the A scholiast on I.39 all report a story about a group of Cretan colonists who were told by Apollo to build their city at the place where the ‘earth-born’ (γηγενεῖς) would come forth to make war on them. While camping in the Troad, they were set upon by a swarm of mice, who chewed up their shield-straps and bowstrings; realising that these were the ‘earth-born’, they founded the city of Hamaxitus, and built a temple to Apollo Smintheus the mouse-god. Strabo seems to suggest that Callinus was the original source for the anecdote. A Roman variation on the same story is mentioned by Cicero, *Div.* 2.27.59; see also Herodotus’ tale of the Assyrian invasion of Egypt halted in its tracks by a mouse army (Introduction p. 44 n. 53).

The comparison between mice and Giants has an obvious comic point, given the relative sizes of the two races, but the poet of the *BM* probably knew that ‘earth-born’

was a legitimate epithet for both.¹²⁹ The Giants' own identity as children of Earth dates back at least to Hes. *Th.* 183-6. The phrase *γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν appears three times in the *Argonautica* (3.1048, 1338, 1347), describing the armed warriors who spring from the ground to fight Jason at Colchis; the line itself suggests x.120 μυρίοι, οὐκ ἄνδρεςσιν ἐουκότες, ἀλλὰ Γίγασιν (of the Laestrygonians).

An unexpected echo of this line appears in Claudian, *DRP* 2.167 *terrigenas imitata viros*. The context is Pluto forcing his way upwards through the passageways of the earth on his way to ambush Proserpina in Sicily, a journey which is compared to soldiers digging underneath the wall of a fortress before springing triumphantly out 'in imitation of the earth-born men'. The relevance to mice, who burrow their way into houses, is obvious, and *terrigenas imitata viros* is a Latin translation of the *BM*'s *γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν μιμούμενοι (although Claudian must be referring to the Spartoi, rather than the Giants, for the simile to make sense). Gruzelier 1993 p. 196 points out that 'the compound adjective *terrigenae* is frequent in similar contexts (e.g. *Ov. M.* 3.118, *Luc.* 4.553, *Stat. T.* 4.441, *Cl. Bell. Goth.* 31)', and the resemblance may be coincidental; but since Claudian *could* have read the *BM*, we cannot rule out deliberate allusion here.

8 ὥς λόγος... ἔην: the syntax is ambiguous: is the λόγος known among men the tale of the Mice, or that of the Giants? The former is more likely, since ἔργα in 7 is non-specific. The triumph of the Mice is not being compared to any particular tale about the

¹²⁹ The Giants were traditionally conceived when Gaia was fertilised by the drops of blood which fell to earth following Cronus' castration of Uranus (*Hes. Th.* 178ff.). Similarly, Macrobius (7.16.2) claims that the mice of Egypt spring from 'the earth and the rain': *perfecta autem in exordio fieri potuisse testimonio sunt nunc quoque non pauca animantia quae de terra et imbre perfecta nascuntur, ut in Aegypto mures, ut aliis in locis ranae serpentesque et similia...* The fact that frogs feature among the other animals brought forth in this way is probably coincidence.

Giants; the comparison is one of general might and prowess (the Mice were as powerful as giants), rather than of narrative. The *BM*'s audience would not have been familiar with the story, which the poet himself had concocted (see Introduction, p. 49), but to claim otherwise - as Glei correctly comments (p. 115) – adds to the proem's parodic effect. The coming conflict is treated as a famous mythical episode, akin to the Trojan War or the Calydonian Boar-Hunt.

ἀρχήν: echoes ἀρχόμενος 1, giving the eight lines of the proem a form of ring-composition, but with the difference that we have moved from the start of the *work* to the start of the *narrative*. A hymnic proem of this sort would often conclude with a final appeal for divine favour: cf. i.10 τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, Arat. 1.16 χαίροιτε δὲ Μοῦσαι. That the *BM* dispenses with any such appeal, instead making the transition straight into μῦς ποτε διψαλέος, acknowledges its position between epic and fable (see below), and once again advertises its refusal to follow any one proemic model.

9-21: encounter; first speech of Physignathus

The beginning of the narrative belongs entirely to the world of fable: there is no indication of specific time or place, only the storytelling particle ποτε 'once upon a time', and both protagonists remain nameless. Cf. Ar. V. 1182 οὕτω ποτ' ἦν μῦς καὶ γαλῆ, Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.79 *olim rusticus urbanum murem mus*, and see also Race 1992, p. 14. It is only with the quasi-Homeric speech-introduction at 12 that the epic stream flows into the channel as well. Physignathus' speech is Homeric in content – a declaration of his parentage and an offer of guest-friendship – but his emphasis on his own status, coupled with the aggressive μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω (see on 13), characterises him as arrogant and

somewhat overbearing. This is in keeping with the presentation of his species in fable: see Introduction pp. 38-9.

9 διψαλέος: the scholiast on Z adds the explanatory note ἐκ φυγῶν 'from his flight' (confirmed from autopsy); unfortunately Ludwig's collation of the scholia misreports this as ἐκ σφυγμῶν, a medical phrase found otherwise only in Galen, and attaches it to λίχνον in line 10.

γαλέης: a weasel, rather than a cat; the word only takes on the meaning 'cat' some time in the 4th c. AD (Hehn 1911). Wölke pp. 101-2 has a brief discussion of the issue, with some other useful bibliography (n. 15). On the more general problem of the domestic cat in Ancient Greece, see Hopkins 1984, p. 167 with bibliography. The reference is likely an allusion to the traditional story of the conflict between the Mice and the Weasel(s), if not to the *Galeomyomachia* itself: see Introduction, pp. 42-6. The poet plays on his audience's familiarity with the more usual version of the 'mouse-war' *topos* to conjure up a sort of epic continuity, in which his mice have fought previous battles against the weasel menace.

10 Punctuation after πλησίον (Ludwich, West) gives the meaning 'thirsty after escaping the imminent danger of a weasel', and is supported (*contra* Allen, who punctuates after ἀλύξας) by Homeric usage (cf. viii.6-7, xx.105-6), as well as Call. *Epigr.* 1.11-12. For πλησίος used to suggest that a threat is uncomfortably close, cf. e.g. D. S. 22.9.5 θεωροῦντες πλησίον ὄντα τὸν κίνδυνον; the sense here is presumably that the mouse had a narrow escape. For prepositions used pleonastically with a compound verb, as here ἐν λίμνῃ... παρέθηκε, cf. e.g. ἐν δαίτησι παρέσται X.217; some other examples are

collected by Ludwich (p. 324). There is an echo of Homer's description of Tantalus, *ἔσταότ' ἐν λίμνῃ· ἥ δὲ προσέπλαζε γενεῖω* (xi.583); Sens 2006 may be correct to argue that we are meant to contrast the mouse eagerly drinking his fill with Tantalus' perpetual thirst (p. 235).

λίμνη: the setting for the rest of the poem's action: Psicharpax drowns while being carried across it, and the ensuing battle takes place on its bank. The poet never makes clear exactly what sort of body of water is meant. Homer uses *λίμνη* to refer to deep water, as of the sea (XIII.21, 32, XXIV.79, iii.1) or of the River Scamander (XXI.317); to the pool in which Tantalus is punished (xi.583); and to several named bodies of water – the Boibeian (II.711), Cephisian (V.709), and Gygaean (II.865, XX.390-1) *λίμναι*. All three of these are generally understood to have been standing lakes (*HE* s.v. 'Boibe', 'Kephisian Lake', and 'Gygaean Lake' respectively). The only Homeric instance of *λίμνη* referring to a river, therefore, is the Scamander passage: the river claims that Achilles' armour will lie *νειόθι λίμνης*, covered in mud. Richardson 1993 *ad loc.* takes the sense to be 'the mud of the river bed', but LSJ seems to envisage a pool of water left by the river after it has flooded the surrounding area. The bT scholia comment only *πρὸς τῷ κατωτάτῳ τῆς θαλάσσης*. Certainly Homeric usage points strongly towards *λίμνη* being a pool (of whatever size), rather than a flowing river. In keeping with the miniature scale of the whole poem, this *λίμνη* is undoubtedly a small one, and I have accordingly translated 'pond' throughout.

The M² scholia (Ludwich p. 198) comment: *ἰστέον ὅτι τὰ μὲν πράγματα καὶ ὁ πόλεμος περὶ τοῦ Ἡριδανόν ποταμὸν κεῖται ἐς λίμνην τινὰ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποταμοῦ πλημμύρουν καὶ συνισταμένην*. This is clearly an attempt to reconcile the *λίμνη* with the mention of the Eridanus at 20, but no such attempt is needed: the frog's

description of his birthplace is a heroic *topos*, and does not require the Eridanus to be in the immediate vicinity.

λίχνον: ‘greedy’, either for food or with a more general sense of ‘eager, acquisitive’. A suitable epithet for a mouse (Ludwich compares *AP* 6.302.5 τῷ τί μεταλλεύεις τοῦτον μυχόν, ὦ φιλόλιχνε, 9.86.1 παμφάγος ἐρπηστὴς κατὰ δώματα, λιχνοβόρος μῦς; he might have added 9.410.1 σμίνθος, ὁ παντοίης δαιτὸς λίχνος), although not Homeric (first at *E. Hipp.* 913 and fr. 1063.8). In *Babr.* 60 a λίχνος μῦς drowns in soup: Babrius was later than the *BM*, but the fable was almost certainly older, and the *BM* poet may have been influenced by λίχνος in an earlier version. Here (*pace* Ludwich) it describes Psicharpax’ thirst, rather than his general character: it continues the image begun with διψαλέος in the previous line.

The majority reading ἀπαλόν is hard to explain as a textual error. ἀπαλός is common in Homer as a quality applied to parts of the body (11x), and is used that way by the *BM* at 204 and 213. An editor who objected to λίχνον as either undignified (for the first appearance of a hero) or un-Homeric might have used ἀπαλόν as a convenient, if bland, substitute; the reverse would be very unlikely. πίνων FLS can easily be discarded as an attempt at clarification of the sense.

παρέθηκε: appears *13x in Homer (i.139, 141, etc.). προσέθηκε(ν) appears at line-end once (ix.305), and in tmesis once (xvi.291), but never in this *sedes*. Homer’s παρέθηκε(ν) almost always appears in contexts to do with food, most commonly the repeated line σῖτον δ’ αἰδοίη ταμίη παρέθηκε φέρουσα (7x), but in such contexts it is always the food that is being ‘put before’ the guest(s), rather than a person’s hand being ‘put to’ the food. προσέθηκε, which is a far more common word in Greek – 32,341 *TLG* database hits for προστίθημι, as against 9,376 for παρατίθημι – would therefore have

been a logical (if incorrect) correction for an alert copyist, particularly given the influence of the Homeric *προσέπλαζε γενεῖω* quoted above.

11 ὕδατι... μελιθεῖ: as Glei points out (p. 117), although many things in Homer can be ‘honey-sweet’, water is not one of them. The elevation of the mouse’s standard drink via an epithet normally used of wine continues the parodic strategy begun in the proem. ὕδωρ in the *BM* always scans with a long *υ* except at 141. This is contrary to Homer, where the *υ* is consistently short except at the start of the sixth foot and in some other specific circumstances (Chantraine *Gramm.* v. 1 p. 104; Williams 1978, p. 92), and Williams notes in addition that scanning ὕδατι with short *υ* in Hellenistic epic is ‘exceptional (as at Theoc. *Id.* 16.62)’.

τερπόμενος: see *ad* 68.

12 λιμνόχαρης: ‘λίμνη-lover’, an extremely rare word, probably the poet’s own coinage (cf. names like Νικοχάρης ‘loving victory’, Τιμοχάρης ‘loving honour’,¹³⁰ as well as Lucian’s κλινοχαρής ‘bed-loving’ (*Trag.* 131) and M. Ant. 1.16 ὄχλοχαρής ‘delighting in crowds’). It only otherwise appears in Methodius’ *Life of Theophanes the Confessor* (early 9th c.), where it has been identified as a deliberate reference to the *BM*: Wilson 1971 calls it ‘a surprising echo of classical literature’ (p. 36). The vast majority of MSS have λιμνόχαρις, but ‘pond-lover’ is both more plausible than ‘grace of the pond’ and the meaning assumed by the scholia, which gloss it as ὁ ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ χαίρων,

¹³⁰ Both extant from the Classical period. Νικοχάρης was an Athenian comic poet of the 5th-4th c. BC, identified by Arist. *Po.* 1448a as the author of the *Deilias*, a parody of the *Iliad*. A Τιμοχάρης is mentioned in Lycurgus’ *Against Leocrates* (4th c. BC). See also both names’ entries in *LGPN*.

τερπόμενος ἐν λίμνῃ, *vel sim.* See further Wölke pp. 258-9. Its second appearance in the poem (212) is an interpolation: see note *ad loc.*

The word fills the role of a noun here, but this is not the most natural reading of the line. A reader without the benefit of modern orthography would probably read λιμνόχαρος Πολύφημος, ‘marsh-loving Polyphemus’, and assume that they were being given the name of the frog: only at 17 would they realise their error. This contributes to the intertext with the Homeric Polyphemus, below – for a few lines, the reader thinks Psicharpax has actually encountered a second Polyphemus.

What sort of frog is Physignathus? Wölke is confident: ‘der Teichfrosch (*rana esculenta*) aber, der hier gemeint sein muß und der für die Alten der Frosch par excellence war...’ (p. 263). *Pelophylax* kl. *esculentus* is the Edible Frog, a hybrid of two other very similar species, the Marsh Frog (*Pelophylax ridibundus*) and the Pool Frog (*P. lessonae*). It is the Marsh Frog which Sommerstein 1996 (p. 176) identifies as the inspiration for the frog chorus of Aristophanes. Arnold 2002 (p. 271) records that none of these three species is found in Greece, but that the Greek Marsh Frog, Balkan Frog, or Balkan Water Frog – properly *P. kurtmuelleri*, though Arnold uses its older designation *Rana balcanica* – is almost identical to *P. ridibundus*; the likeness is so strong that the distinction was only established in 1991, and is not universally acknowledged. (Arnold also notes that the Greek Marsh Frog habitually flees into water when threatened: p. 96.) Obviously the distribution of species may have changed greatly since the 2nd c. BC, and *P. ridibundus*, *esculentus*, and *kurtmuelleri* are so similar that the poet is very unlikely to have known one from the other; but to avoid any charge of equivocation, this commentary will operate on the principle that Physignathus and his warriors are fine Greek specimens of *P. kurtmuelleri*. For the taxonomic strife which rages yet over the

frogs of Europe, see Uzzell *et al.* 2009 with extensive bibliography. It is pleasing to note that *Pelophylax* – ‘Mud-guardian’ – would have made an excellent name for a frog in the *BM*.

πολύφημος: the adjective sets up the ensuing intertext between the frog’s speech of welcome and that of the Homeric Cyclops (see below), and is certainly correct. Glei (p. 118) suggests that *I*’s πολύφωνος may have begun with a scribe or critic who failed to understand the allusion, and assumed that a word meaning ‘loud’ or ‘noisy’ was meant: frogs in Greek are traditionally talkative (cf. Ar. *Ran.* and *ad* 191). For πολύφωνος meaning ‘noisy’, cf. e.g. Aratus 1.1002 κρώζῃ πολύφωνα κορώνῃ.

ἔπος δ’ ἐφθέγγατο τοῖον: on this wholly un-Homeric speech introduction, see p. 56 above.

13 **ξεῖνε, τίς ... φύσας:** there is an obvious allusion here – signposted by πολύφημος (12) – to the Cyclops’ opening address to Odysseus (ὦ ξεῖνοι, τίνες ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ’ ὕγρα κέλευθα; ix.252), which immediately suggests that Physignathus is an individual of whom the mouse hero should be wary. Glei (p. 119) identifies this line as the point at which ‘verlassen wir die reine Fabelwelt und treten in die des Epos ein’. There is also a broader engagement with the *Odyssey* and Homeric identifications: the pattern in the *BM* – “Who are you [A], stranger [B]? Where are you from [C]? Who was your father [D]? Tell me the truth [E]” – is based most closely on τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν· [A] πόθι τοι πόλις [C] ἥδ’ ἐ τοκήεις [D]; (6x *Od.*). It is hardly surprising that these questions should begin a speech of enquiry to a stranger, but the link is reinforced by the juxtaposition in four cases with an injunction to truth or accuracy, [E]:

ἀλλ’ ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον (i.169)

καί μοι τοῦτ' ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ' ἐϋ εἰδῶ (xiv.186-7, xxiv.297-8)

εἰπέ μοι εἰρομένῳ νημερτέα μηδ' ἐπικεύσης (xv.263)

Physignathus takes things unusually far by following up with the clumsy μὴ ψευδόμενόν σε νοήσω (14), a warning which hardly fits the respect due from one *basileus* to another. The closest parallel is Eumaeus to the disguised Odysseus, μήτε τί μοι ψεύδεσσι χαρίζεο (xiv.387), where both participants are of low social status; the only time a *basileus* is told not to lie is Sthenelus' angry riposte to Agamemnon, μὴ ψεύδε' (IV.404), where the sense is closer to 'do not misrepresent the situation' than to 'do not attempt to deceive me'. Draheim consequently bracketed the line, arguing that it anticipated threats which do not materialise; Glei, with greater sensitivity, argues that it serves to characterise the frog as overbearing and 'puffed up' (p. 120; see the introductory note on 9-21 above).

ξεῖνε: a common term of address in Homer (67x); it appears in contexts ranging from friendly greeting (i.123) to suspicion (vii.237) or outright hostility (viii.159, xvii.478). It is almost always used by the host, rather than the guest, although there are exceptions (e.g. Odysseus to Eumaeus at xiv.53); here it serves to make clear the frog's view that Psicharpax is a visitor to his territory. Physignathus uses it again at 57.

ἐπ' ἡϊόνας; τίς ὁ φύσας There are two points of uncertainty here: whether the word for 'shore' is singular (*a*) or plural (*IZ*), and whether to read τίς ὁ φύσας (*JZ*) or τίς δέ σ' ὁ φύσας (*aFL*). Further confusion is introduced by the spelling of the noun (ἡϊον- or ἡϊον-), which affects the scansion. Cutting through the mass of variants in the MSS, there are only two metrically viable options: ἐπ' ἡϊόνας; τίς ὁ φύσας (Allen) and ἐπ' ἡϊόνα; τίς δέ σ' ὁ φύσας (Brandt, West).

Homer uses ἥϊών in both singular and plural, but always scans it as ἥϊ-. τίς ὁ φύσας follows better from the abrupt πόθεν ἦλθες..., forming a triad of abrupt questions in asyndeton (cf. E. fr. 1: ποίαν σε φῶμεν γαῖαν ἐκλελοιπότα | πόλει ξενοῦσθαι τῇδε; τίς πάτρας ὄρος; | τίς ἔσθ' ὁ φύσας; τοῦ κεκήρυξαι πατρός;). *I*'s reading probably resulted from ἥιονας becoming a trisyllabic word (ἥόνας), which would have left the line obviously short; the superfluous δέ σ' would then have been added to fill the gap.

16 The line hints at various Homeric originals, most obviously the repeated line-ending *πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ (7x), *ξεινήϊα πολλὰ (iv.33), and *δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω (XIV.238). The overall effect contributes to the underlying impression of Physignathus as arrogant and convinced of his own superiority: δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω is spoken by Hera as part of her bribe to Sleep, and the tone is more one of a superior coaxing a minion than of an offer of hospitality.

17 εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ ... λίμνην: Glei (p. 120) aptly compares this grandiose statement (εἰμί + name + relative pronoun) to the language of divine epiphany (*h.Ap.* 480, *h.Bacch.* 56, *h.Cer.* 268) as well as to Odysseus' dramatic revelation at ix.19; but the closest Homeric parallel is in fact Nausicaa at vi.196, which has a certain ironic relevance – Nausicaa welcomes the exhausted Odysseus out of the water onto dry land, Physignathus invites the thirsty Psicharpax off dry land and into the water.

Φυσίγναθος: 'Puff-cheek'. Not found before the *BM*, the word has an afterlife. It appears in Timotheus of Gaza's Περί ζώων as an alternative name for the χαμαιλέων (5.14, 47.2). Eustathius of Thessalonica uses it twice in his commentaries on the Homeric

epics: *ad Il.* 1.214.12, referring to a sort of bread (i.e. ‘cheek-filling’), and *ad Od.* 1.365.15 as a synonym for ‘full’ (of Odysseus’ bag of winds). Φυσίγναθος ἀντίον ἠΰδα, from *BM* 56, is quoted in the *Et. Mag.* s.v. γνάθος. The 12th-century historian Nicetas Choniates borrows it to describe the symptoms of illness, in a passage which borrows several distinctive words and phrases from the *Iliad*: οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ κλινήρης ἦσθα καὶ ὑπὸ πάθους φυσίγναθος, ἀνῆλθες ἄν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν κύδει γαίων καὶ δεινὸν βλεμεαίνων καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ὑποτοπάζων ὁ λαβραγόρας... (*Oration* 8.78). This is particularly interesting because the passage describes a braggart who is sure of his own superiority, a characterisation which matches the *BM*’s Physignathus quite closely; even if this was not intentional, Nicetas was almost certainly using the *BM* as his source, given the concentration of Homeric vocabulary.

In all of the above cases the word is used simply as an adjective. The character himself is acknowledged in a striking passage from the *Defensio caelibatus* of the 13th-century emperor of Nicaea Theodore II Ducas Lascaris: describing how his voice is unsuited for declaiming or singing, Theodore remarks Εὐρυβάτης οὐκ εἰμί, οὔτε καθ’ Ὅμηρον ὡς Φυσίγναθος. In other words, his two examples of mighty-voiced characters in Homer are Eurybates – who may be assumed to have a powerful voice, given his status as herald – and Physignathus. Not only is this proof that Theodore both knew the *BM* and knew it as a work of Homer, it strongly suggests that his copy of the text had πολύφωνος at 12, since otherwise there would be no reason to deploy Physignathus as an exemplar of vocal force.

Φυσίγναθος is also given as a nickname of an individual in Mazaris’ *Journey to Hades*, a satirical work from the 15th c. Mazaris makes heavy use of Homeric quotation and comic vocabulary (Barry *et al.* 1975, p. vii), and probably knew the *BM*, but there is

no special point to the allusion: the name may simply refer to the physical appearance of the (unidentified) individual in question.

- 18 **ἡγούμενος:** explanatory after τιμῶμαι: 'I am honoured *as the ruler* of the Frogs...' **ἤματα πάντα:** a common Homeric line-ending (*26x).

19-20 **καί με πατήρ ... φιλότητι:** from a Homeric perspective, this positions Physignathus as Achilles, son of Peleus and 'Hydromedousa' – 'water-ruling', not such a bad epithet for Thetis. He is hardly Achillean in the rest of the poem, and the joke was probably suggested by the fact that 'Peleus' can be taken as meaning 'Muddy', an obviously suitable name for a frog. Olson and Sens 1999, p. 10 suggest that 'son of Peleus' in Euboeus' *Battle of the Bathmen* – μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο, κουρεῦ, / μήτε σύ, Πηλεΐδη (SH 412) – may likewise be a joke on 'son of Mud', although the fact that this Peleides is a frog adds an extra relevance. Glei sees an additional reference to the notion that frogs were born from mud (see *ad* 7, and Introduction p. 47).

- 19 **ἀνεθρέψατο:** has good MSS support and is *lec. diff.*; ποτ' ἐγείνατο is an obvious correction, perhaps based on a suspicion that for a father to 'bring up' his son was not Homeric. Children in Homer are usually brought up by nurses (vii.12, xix.354) or by their mother (xxiv.389), for their father's sake (XIX.326), and ἀνατρέφω is not found in Homer; but cases like Cisseus at XI.223 prove that a *pater familias* could legitimately be described as 'bringing up' a child. *l's* reading is dubious on grounds of sense: ἐγείνατο appears in Homer five times, 3x of the mother and 2x of the father, but γείνομαι used of a man can only mean 'beget' – an act which should not logically be taking place after

μίγνυμι (unless we are to be very specific about timing). In Hesiod *μιχθεῖς ἐν φιλότῃ* is always followed by main verb τέκε: the one possible exception is fr. 10(a).23-4, which uses ἐγείνατ', but of the *woman*. 'Having lain with him, she bore...' makes sense; 'having lain with her, he begat...' does not. Note that Homer uses γείνομαι and μίγνυμι of a father only once (vii.61) and they are in parataxis: τῇ δὲ Ποσειδάων ἐμίγη καὶ ἐγείνατο παῖδα.

20 μιχθεῖς ἐν φιλότῃ: a standard Homeric expression for sex (II.232, XXIV.130, xix.266). This exact form of the phrase is not Homeric, but the phonetically identical feminine form appears in Hes. *Th.* (923, 941, 944, 980). Since all of these uses occur during the poem's catalogue of the divine and heroic offspring born to various Olympians, there may be a further suggestion here of Phrygians' delusions of grandeur.

παρ' ὄχθαις: the first appearance of a recurring problem in the paradosis over forms of ὄχθη. The word appears seven times in the poem, and in four of those cases there is disagreement between the major MSS:

20 παρ' ὄχθαις IZ	παρ' ὄχθας aS
106 παρ' ὄχθαις JLZ	παρ' ὄχθας aFS
166 ἐπ' ὄχθαις ISZ	ἐπ' ὄχθης a
223 ἐπ' ὄχθαις ISZ	ἐπ' ὄχθης a

Here and at 106 the question is whether παρὰ should take the dative or the accusative; I favour the dative in both instances. παρ' ὄχθαις is not Homeric, occurring first in Alcaeus fr. 325.4. Homer uses both παρ' ὄχθας (9x) and παρ' ὄχθησιν (2x). Elsewhere in the *BM* παρ(ά) takes acc. 2x (148, 238), dat. 2x (34, 154), and is unclear once (221 παρ'

ἡϊόν' ἐξετανύσθη). However, Monro 1891 states that, unlike in Homer, 'in later Greek the Dat. with παρὰ is almost wholly confined to persons' (pp. 175-6). Had the poet written ὄχθαις, ὄχθας would have been a logical correction, as both more Homeric and in line with later Greek syntactical habit. Had the poet written ὄχθας originally, it is harder to see why the un-Homeric form ὄχθαις would have intruded. On the latter two cases, see *ad* 166.

Ἡριδανοῖο: *lec. diff.*, compared to ὠκεανοῖο *IS* (*17x in Homer). The Eridanus is not mentioned by Homer, and first appears in Hesiod (*Th.* 338, son of Tethys and Oceanus). The most important mythological role of the Eridanus was as the river into which Phaethon, son of Helios, fell after being struck with a lightning bolt. It was often identified with the River Po, and Vergil made it one of the rivers of the underworld (*V. A.* 6.659). The scholia on 18 explain that the waters of the Eridanus were unusually warm, as a result of Phaethon's fall, and that it was therefore a specially suitable breeding-spot for frogs. Apollonius, however, makes it a noisome marsh (λίμνης... πολυβενθέος, 4.599) over which birds cannot fly (4.601-2). There may be an allusion here to the standard version of the fable, in which the frog is eventually carried off by a hungry bird (see Introduction, p. 40); what more ideal home for frogs than a marsh no bird can approach?

Bliquez 1977 points out that the Eridanus was also the name of a stream which flowed through Athens (first in Pl. *Critias* 112a), sections of which remain visible today; the open-air stretch that runs through the Kerameikos is still home to a population of frogs.¹³¹ He uses this to support his theory that the *BM* is an Athenian poem: to a local

¹³¹ 'The extensive grounds of Kerameikos are marshy in some spots; in spring, frogs exuberantly croak their mating songs near magnificent stands of lilies' (from a review of the Kerameikos on

audience, the Eridanus would have suggested both a mythical river with vaguely epic connotations, and the frog-haunted stream they all knew well. However, any reader familiar with Apollonius would have appreciated the Eridanus as a well-chosen home for frogs, and the Athenian connection is unnecessary. The B^s scholiast on this line comments simply ἀπό τινος λίμνης ὁ Ἡριδανὸς ἐξέρχεται, ἐν ᾗ πολλοὶ βάτραχοί εἰσιν (Ludwich p. 218), which sounds like a reference to a real body of water rather than any mythological explanation; but the vagueness of the gloss (τινος λίμνης) implies supposition on the scholiast's part. If he had understood a reference to the Athenian Eridanus, he would presumably have written as much.

21 καὶ σὲ δ' ὁρῶ ... ἄλλων: *ἔξοχον ἄλλων is Homeric (9x, including at XX.184; see *ad* 60). The closest parallel here is the disguised Athene to Telemachus, i.301-2: καὶ σύ, φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ' ὁρῶ καλὸν τε μέγαν τε, ἄλκιμος ἔσσι' (= iii.199-200, where they were rejected by Aristophanes and Aristarchus). Athene compares Telemachus' outward appearance to his inner nature; Physignathus, on the other hand, claims to be able to *see* that Psicharpax is ἄλκιμος. This may be intended to suggest that Physignathus has at best an imperfect understanding of the heroic virtues, since at XIII.278 Idomeneus singles out being ἄλκιμος as a quality that is revealed only in the press of battle. In any case, Draheim's deletion of the line is unwarranted.

[22-3] These lines are absent from Z (where they have been added in the margin by a later hand) and the *a* family of mss., and are deleted by Ludwich and West. Their most

the Fodor's travel website: <http://www.fodors.com/world/europe/greece/athens/review-187234.html>, retrieved 3rd Feb 2012). I saw one or two of these frogs myself on a trip to Athens in March 2009.

obvious purpose is to bring Physignathus' speech back to the point, ending on the same question with which he began, thereby clarifying the transition into Psicharpax' answer; a critic might have felt that the mouse's opening remark, τίπτε γένος τοῦμὸν ζητεῖς, was too far removed from the frog's τίς ὁ φύσας. However, it is puzzling that Physignathus should declare his confidence in Psicharpax' identity as a σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεὺς shortly after asking whether he is a φίλος ἄξιος. There is sense in 'are you a person of good birth? For I see that you are handsome and valiant'; less in 'are you a person of good birth? For I see that you are a king'. There is also no suggestion anywhere else in the poem that Ps. is a βασιλεὺς, although he is of royal blood (29).

24-55: speech of Psicharpax

The most obvious intertext here is the speech of Glaucus at VI.145-211; to Diomedes' challenge, Glaucus responds Τυδείδῃ μέγαθυμῆ, τί ἦ γενεὴν ἐρεεῖνεις; and goes on to describe his descent at length. Glaucus in the *Iliad* makes the famously foolish decision to exchange his golden armour for Diomedes' bronze, and given that Psicharpax is shortly to be undone by a similarly unwise decision, the parallel is not inappropriate. It is worth noting, however, that more or less the same question is asked of Achilles by the young Paeonian warrior Asteropaeus at XXI.153.

The similarities between this scene and the Asteropaeus episode are worthy of brief examination, since they will be relevant to a textual issue later in the poem.

Iliad

the kingly son of Peleus
confronts a young warrior
on the bank of a river.
He asks: "who are you,
and where are you from?
Unhappy are they whose children
fight against me."
Asteropaeus replies:
"Why do you ask about my descent?"
and describes his family background.
After a battle,
Achilles kills Asteropaeus and
leaves his body floating in the water.

BM

the kingly son of Peleus
confronts a young warrior
on the shore of a pond.
He asks: "who are you?
Where are you from?
Who is your father?"
Psicharpax replies:
"Why do you ask about my descent?"
and describes his family background.
After a journey,
Physignathus 'kills' Psicharpax and
leaves his body floating in the water.

The combination of the unusual 'why do you ask...?' exchange, found only here and in VI, with the location (beside a body of water) and the eventual fate of the slain victim, make it very likely that the *BM* poet was writing with this episode in mind, although undoubtedly he intended other scenes – Diomedes and Glaucus, Polyphemus and Odysseus – to be in the mix as well.

24 τὸν δ' αὖ... φώνησέν τε: an authentic Homeric speech-introduction formula (Ix *Il.*, 10x *Od.*); it does not appear anywhere else in extant hexameter poetry, and so (considered in light of the rarity with which Homeric formulae are simply transposed into the *BM*; Introduction, p. 55) increases the intertextual resonance of the following passage.

25-7 Glei (p. 124) acknowledges the puzzling logic of this answer: even if the frog has heard the *name* Psicharpax, it does not follow that he will *recognise* Psicharpax when he

meets him face to face (in much the way the Phaeacians, e.g., despite having heard tales of Odysseus' fame, have no idea what he looks like).

It is perhaps better to see this as a nettled response to Physignathus' gauche and patronising speech. Minchin 2002 discusses 'counter-questions' in the *Odyssey* as a method for either stalling or derailing a question which the speaker is not (yet) prepared to answer, and comments: 'underlying these kinds of exchanges between speakers is an acute awareness of social ranking. The people who can respond to a question with a counter-question are those who can safely (in terms of social hierarchy) withhold a response. These people will be ranked at the same level or very close to the first speaker' (p. 21). In the *Iliad*, both Glaucus and Asteropaeus respond with a counter-question because of the battlefield context: since each is literally preparing to duel his interlocutor to the death, it would be unforgivably submissive to give a polite and obliging answer. A show of resistance must be made, even though the requested information is then provided. In the *BM* Physignathus is proposing guest-friendship, not combat, but he does so in an offensive manner which implies (at least to a Homerically literate reader) that Psicharpax is his social inferior. Consequently, the mouse challenges the social template imposed on him via a counter-question intended to make clear that he considers himself the frog's equal.

25 **τίπτει:** an archaic epicising form scarcely found between Homer and the Hellenistic poets.

τὸ δὲ δῆλον ἅπασιν: two Iliadic heroes declare that their genealogy is widely known (πολλοὶ δέ μιν ἄνδρες ἴσασιν): Glaucus at VI.151, and Aeneas at XX.214. As we have seen, Glaucus' exchange with Diomedes is a significant intertext throughout this

section of the *BM*; Aeneas' exchange with Achilles will prove important later (see *ad* 60, 64).

26 Although missing from most of the *vett.*, the line is effective and witty: besides the obvious humour of the ascent from men to gods to *birds*, the highest of them all – a mouse's-eye view of creation (cf. *Ar. Av.* 467ff.) – and the general undesirability of a mouse's family being 'known to birds', there may be cruel intertextual humour at work (Sens 2006, pp. 237-8). οὐρανίοις πετεηνοῖς echoes *ὕπουρανίων πετεηνῶν (XVII.675), where the comparison of Menelaus to an eagle hunting a rabbit reflects ironically on Psicharpax' declaration of his own fame, encoding within it an image of birds bringing death to small furry animals, while Hesiod's *καὶ οἰωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς (*WD* 277) appears in a similarly deadly animal context. If 26 is an interpolation, it shows that such interference in the *paradosis* was not always clumsy, but its omission would leave the claim in 25 strangely weak: Homeric usage suggests that a line which ends δῆλον δ' ἐν ἅπασιν is incomplete without qualification (cf. *V.2-3* ἴν' ἔκδηλος μετὰ πᾶσιν / Ἀργείοισι, *vii.51-2* ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμείνων / ἔργοισιν).

27 **Ψιχάρπαξ:** 'Crumb-snatcher'. Only otherwise found in Prodrōmus' *Catomyomachia*, where it is re-used as a name for a mouse warrior, presumably in tribute to the *BM*. ψίξ appears first at *Plut. Mor.* 77f (Introduction p. 17 n. 18), where a mouse feeds on crumbs of bread left by the philosopher Diogenes; it is tempting to see this as inspired by the *BM*.

28 Τρωξάρταο: ‘Gnaw-bread’. Psicharpax’ father may be the current ruler of the Mice, although he is never explicitly acknowledged as such: he is married to the daughter of King Pternotroctes (29), and acts as Physignathus’ opposite number in the corresponding assembly-scenes. He enjoys some success in the battle, and is probably responsible for forcing Physignathus to retreat (see *ad* 250); whether he survives to the end of the poem is unclear. The name is not reused by any later authors.

29 Λειχομύλη: ‘Lick-mill’, *hapax*. The only female mouse mentioned in the poem is given an appropriately gendered name: the mill in Homer is worked by women (e.g. vii.104, xx.106), and is evidently frequented by mouse ladies as well. Nic. *Th.* 446 refers to a μύος ... μυληβόρου.

Πτερονοτρώκτου: ‘Ham-nibble’, *hapax*. Psicharpax’ pride in his ancestry is demonstrated by the way he, like Glaucus, mentions more than just the previous generation. Like the references to the weasel at 9 (see note) and 128, King Pternotroctes contributes to an impression of the Mice as a tribe with their own epic history: we may imagine that Psicharpax’ grandfather was famed for exploits of his own.

30 ἐν Καλύβη: Ludwich and West both print the capital; *contra* Allen, Brandt, Fusillo, and Glei. As a Homeric hero, we would expect Psicharpax to give the name of his homeland (Glaucus VI.152 ‘there is a city, Ephyre’; Asteropaeus XXI.154 ‘I am from Paeonia far away’). The only known town or city called Calybe is the one founded by Philip II of Macedon north of Byzantium (Strabo 7.6.2), and there is no particular reason Psicharpax should hail from there. Wölke regards this as a flaw (‘mit einem Ort, den niemand kennt, kann man nicht prahlen’, p. 224), and prefers to read καλύβη as ‘ein

einfacher Ziergarten (lateinisch opus topiarum) mit kleinen Lauben' (p.225). In fact καλύβη much more commonly means a poor dwelling: cf. Thuc. 2.52 (the badly-ventilated shanties occupied by Athenian country-folk visiting the city), Theoc. 21 (the hut of the impoverished fishermen), Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 10.17 (Cincinnatus' farm cottage). The only significant exception is A.R. 1.775, the 'new-built chambers' of maidens promised in marriage. Moschopoulos glosses the *BM*'s use with τὸ μικρὸν ὀσπήτιον. Psicharpax was undoubtedly born in a hut or a cottage; but it is both more Homeric and more amusing for him to describe it as though it were the great mouse city of Cottage, introducing an appropriate note of epic grandeur.

ἐξεθρέψατο βρωτοῖς: Z has in many ways the better reading here: it is *lec. diff.*, and βρωτοῖς 'foods, edible things' is weak alongside ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν 'all kinds of things to eat' in the following line (Ludwich p. 331 called it 'unhaltbar', although his ἔκρυσψ' ἐννεμέθεσθαι is not an improvement). The metre, however, is impossible. Young mice are weaned at 3-4 weeks and then fend for themselves, and mice were renowned in antiquity for their rapid rate of reproduction: Arist. *HA* 6.37 580b ἡ δὲ τῶν μυῶν γένεσις θαυμασιωτάτη παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα ζῷά ἐστι τῷ πλήθει καὶ τῷ τάχει. Might Z's reading have arisen from an attempt to represent observed behaviour?

31-55 Psicharpax' lengthy digression on dietary matters may originally have been suggested by Glaucus and Aeneas, his epic models, each of whom delivers a similarly long-winded excursus on his family history (VI.150-211, XX.200-41). However, it also serves to align the *BM* with one of the major traditions within Greek comic literature. The Greeks derived great amusement from depictions of gluttony: long and enthusiastic catalogues of delicious food were a *topos* of Middle Comedy, as is obvious from the

extant fragments of authors like Alexis and Antiphanes. Archestratus and Matro had, in their different ways, already hit on the idea of recasting such catalogues using Homeric metre, style, and vocabulary, creating what Sens 2006 identifies as a sub-genre of ‘gastronomic parody’. By falling into Homeric rhapsodies over his lunch, Psicharpax becomes a member of this same category (Sens 2006, pp. 225-6).

More specifically, there was comic precedent for the rejection of ‘natural’ foods like vegetables in favour of processed foods like bread and cake. In Teleclides fr. 34 a character expresses a preference for the *πλακοῦς*, mentioned at *BM* 36: *φιλω πλακοῦντα θερμόν, ἀχράδας οὐ φιλω, | χαίρω λαγώοις ἐπ’ ἀμύλῳ καθημένοις*. In both Archestr. fr. 60 and Matro fr. 1 the narrator dismisses fruits and vegetables but again lavishes praise on the *πλακοῦς*; Archestr. fr. 20 casts further scorn on vegetable-eaters as not knowing how to enjoy the good things in life. Wölke argues (pp. 225-33) that the line Ps. draws is between rich and poor diets: he eats like a wealthy man, while the frog eats like a pauper – in other words, Ps. is engaging in social snobbery. If so, we might expect him to omit mention of figs (31), traditionally associated with a poor or simple diet: Alex. fr. 167.15, Archestr. fr. 60.14-15, Pl. R. 372c-d. Crates of Thebes, discussing the ideal city and the plain foods that will be found there, lists *θύμον καὶ σκόρδα ... καὶ σῦκα καὶ ἄρτους* (*Supp. Hell.* 351.5).

The division is fundamentally inherited. Already in *The Mouse and the Frog* we find the mouse offering *ἄρτος, τυρός, μέλι, ἰσχάδες καὶ ὅσα ἀγαθὰ* (W recension) or *ἄρτος, κρέας, τυρός, ἐλαῖαι, ἰσχάδες* (G recension). This will have been nothing more than a summary of foods mice were observed to prefer. Mice are omnivorous (Ar. *Ach.* 762 mentions *ἀρωραῖοι μύες* apparently uprooting garlic, and *Geoponica* 4.15.5 recommends using lupins to keep mice off one’s vines), but have a strong preference for

sweet processed foods; no mouse in a Greek house would have preyed on ῥαφάνους or κράμβας if πλακοῦς was available (although the Mice do gnaw green beans to make greaves for themselves at 125).

Conveniently for the poet, this overlapped to a great extent with the sorts of foods praised by the gluttons of Middle Comedy, enabling him to recast the fable's simple list as a lip-licking comic catalogue. Frogs, meanwhile, are almost exclusively carnivorous, but this seems not to have been universally understood in antiquity: although Aristotle mentions frogs eating bees (*HA* 626a.9), Archestratus fr. 60 refers to the Syracusans, οἱ πίνουσι μόνον βατράχων τρόπον, οὐδὲν ἔθοντες. That the *BM* poet associated frogs with vegetables is amply demonstrated by names like Calaminthius (224) and Origanion (256), although only Costophagus (218) refers explicitly to diet. To a Greek who had never made any close observation of frogs, but was accustomed to the sight of them in gardens and vegetable-patches, they would naturally have been herbivorous; and this too fitted well with the comic *topos* of vegetables as uninteresting to a true gourmand. Psicharpax is being a snob, but his snobbery is gastronomic, not socio-economic.

This passage as a whole, though inaccurate, was perceived as educational: the M² scholiast comments διδάσκει δὲ πρότερον τίνα μὲν βατράχων τὰ βρώματα, ποῖα δὲ τοῖς μυσὶ. School-texts were often of questionable scientific value; as Kneebone 2009 puts it, 'we know that [Oppian's] *Halieutica* was used in antiquity as a school-text, but it would be very difficult even to identify, let alone catch a fish based solely on the information provided in the poem' (p. 33).

31 **σύκοις καὶ καρύοις:** Wölke claims (pp. 225-7) that the mention of figs and nuts supports his interpretation of the *καλύβη* as a gazebo (see above), since snacks would naturally be found in such a building; but both foods were extremely common in the ancient world, and will have been eaten everywhere from palaces to hovels.

παντοδαποῖσιν: a favourite word of the poet's: he uses it to conclude a line here, at 41, and at 176. This may be down to sheer metrical convenience, since it extends from the bucolic caesura to the end of the line.

32 **πῶς δέ ... ὁμοῖον:** Glei (p. 126) sees this as an arrogant rhetorical turn, in the heroic mode; it may of course be a genuine question.

34 **ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποις:** may owe something to Xenophanes' famous complaint (fr. 11.2) that Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods *ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνειδέα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν*.

35 Clearly modelled on xvii.343 ἄρτον τ' οὔλον ἐλὼν περικαλλέος ἐκ κανέοιο. It may be significant that the Homeric context is Telemachus providing the beggar-Odysseus with (generous) scraps from the table, which has obvious relevance to mice scavenging food from humans.

τρισκοπάνιστος: δυσκοπάνιστος is presumably a mistake for δισκοπάνιστος, which appears in the *recc*. Both forms are exceedingly rare: δισ- is a *hapax legomenon*, and τρις- appears only once elsewhere, in a letter written by Theodore II Ducas Lascaris (*Ep.* 117). Given that Lascaris clearly knew the *BM* (*ad* 17), we can conclude that his copy had τρις-, but this is no guarantee of the word's authenticity. Wölke pp. 260-1 discusses

κοπανίζω, concluding that it refers to some form of milling process, and that δισ- is therefore more plausible on technical grounds, but he admits that the *BM*'s author may have lacked any detailed understanding of the bread-making process and that his terminology may consequently be inexact. The basic meaning is clearly that the bread is of high quality. I favour τρις- largely because, although Homer himself makes little use of τρις- compounds, there is a tradition in which τρι(σ)- lends a sense of epic grandeur or intensity - τρισμάκαρ (VI.154), τρισάθλιος (S. OC 372), τρισευδαίμων (B. 3.10), τρίσπονδαι χοαί (S. Ant. 431) – which does not exist for δισ- words.

(For an example of the 3x modifier in a context relating to abundant food, cf. iv.86 τρις γὰρ τίκτει μῆλα. The scholiast on this line comments: τινὲς γελοίως γράφουσι 'δὶς γὰρ τίκτει'. πῶς γὰρ ἰδιὸν τι λέγει περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ προβάτων; A similar instinct towards plausibility may have motivated the change to δισ- in 35.)

36 **πλακοῦς**: some sort of bun or cake. Not Homeric: it appears in Aristophanes and in various comic fragments, and seems to have been regarded as a special delicacy (see *ad* 31-55).

τανύπεπλος: 'with delicate robe': appears several times in Homer – of Helen (3x), Thetis (2x), Lampetie (1x), and Odysseus' sister Ctimene (1x). Here and in the following lines, the comic technique of bestowing heroic epithets on foodstuffs is strongly reminiscent of the gastronomic παρωδία employed by Matro in his *Attikon Deipnon*: cf. Matro fr. 1.18 καρηκομόωντας ἀκάνθαις, or 1.33-4 ἦλθε δὲ Νηρῆος θυγάτηρ, Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα, σηπὶν εὐπλόκαμος, δεινὴ θεὸς αὐδήεσσα.

πολὺ σῆσαμότυρον: 'thick with sesame and cheese': to be preferred to πολλήν σισαμίδα or its variants, which probably crept in as a gloss for *hapax* σῆσαμότυρον.

Sesame and related foodstuffs were ubiquitous in gastronomic lists, especially in comedy. Hippon. fr. 26a refers to ‘seasoning a pancake with sesame’, τηγανίτας σησάμοισι φαρμάσσων. Ar. *Ach.* 1092 lists among the trappings of a party ἄμυλοι, πλακοῦντες, σησαμοῦντες, ἵτρια, and V. 676 includes τυρόν, μέλι, σήσαμα in a catalogue of delicacies; πλακοῦς and σησαμῇ are paired again at P. 869, where both are preparations for a wedding-feast. (Cf. also Amphis fr. 9, Anaxandrides fr. 42, Antiphanes fr. 140, Ehippus fr. 13...)

37 Ludwich follows Z in transposing the line to follow 38, giving the sequence bread – πλακοῦς – cheese – meat – μελίτωμα. There is clearly some echo of the standard Greek banquet here: Greek feasts began with bread (cf. Archestr. fr. 5; it is also the first foodstuff mentioned by Matro in the *Attikon Deipnon*) and finished with sweet snacks, τραγήματα, such as fruit and cakes. This does not help with 37-38, however. Where cheese is listed in comic banquet-catalogues, it tends to appear among condiments (olive oil, herbs, etc.) rather than as a dish in its own right. Perhaps the most useful comparison is the G recension of the *Life of Aesop*: in the *Fable of the Mouse and the Frog*, the mouse offers his guest ἄρτος, κρέας, τυρός, ἐλαῖαι, ἰσχάδες – effectively, a starter (bread), a main course (meat), condiments (cheese and oil), and dessert (figs). I therefore prefer to leave the order the way it stands in all the other MSS, especially since Z’s order puts οὐ τυρός immediately after σησαμότυρον, which is a little clumsy. One could adduce Hes. WD 589-91 as support for ‘bread, dairy products, meat’, but the connection between the *BM* and the *Fable* is much stronger.

ἐκ πτέρωνης: the meaning ‘ham’ is unique to the *BM*; elsewhere in Greek πτέρωνη always means ‘heel’. The form is probably due to an epicisation of πέρωνα, Lat. *perna*,

which is not found in Greek until Strabo but may well have existed earlier (Introduction, p. 16).

λευκοχίτωνα: first found here; another faux-heroic epithet à la Matro, which should by Homeric precedent mean ‘white-armoured’ (cf. χαλκοχίτων, XIII.685 ἔλκεχίτωνες, XVI.419 ἀμιτροχίτωνας; xiv.489 οἰοχίτων’ is ambiguous). This has a certain humorous resonance with the liver as a target for fatal blows in the *Iliad* (e.g. XI.576). There may also be a joke on A. *Pers.* 115 μελαγχίτων φρήν, ‘dark-shrouded heart’, in that here we have another bodily organ ‘shrouded’ in colour but in the bathetic context of the dinner-table.

38 νεόπηκτος: ‘new-curdled’, another rare word: appears before this only in the Hippocratic corpus, where it means ‘new-baked’ (Hp. *Mul.* 2.206). Gregory Nazianzenus uses it several times, but the debt to the *BM* is most obvious at 1369.9-10 νεόπηκτος οἶα τυρός.

39 Quoted and attributed to Homer by the Lh scholiast on Ar. *Eq.* 345, explaining χρηστός as a term for a foodstuff which has been well-prepared.

μελίτωμα: ‘honey-cake’. Not a normal inclusion in comic food-lists, although it does appear in medical writers (e.g. Diocl. fr. 183a.65 μαλάχη, λάπαθα, λινόζωστις, μελιτώματα – a list of purgatives!) and more than once in Longus (3.9.3.2, 4.16.3.3, 4.26.1.4).

τὸ καὶ μάκαρες ποθέουσιν: cakes were used in Greco-Roman religion as offerings to the gods: *DNP* s.v. ‘Libum’.

40 Neither the matter nor the vocabulary of this line is epic. *θοίνη* ‘banquet’ appears first in the Hesiodic *Scutum* (114), is relatively common in Euripides, but is avoided by both Callimachus and Apollonius. The incongruity is emphasised by *μερόπων*, which is distinctively grand and epic (see *ad* 5); in a single line, the high style of epic and the domesticity of comedy collide.

μάγειρος here seems to mean just ‘cook’. The word often means ‘butcher, meat-seller’, but Psicharpax evidently does not restrict his attentions to meat, and *τεύχουσι* suggests a degree of craft beyond slicing ham, as does *κοσμοῦντες* in 41; see further Rankin 1907. The *μάγειρος* is a common figure in the fables of Aesop and ubiquitous in Middle and New Comedy – Anaxilas wrote a work called *Μάγειροι* (fr. 19), and a *μάγειρος* features in more than one play by Menander. It almost never appears in tragedy, epic, or ‘serious’ poetry, with one striking exception: Call. *Cer.* *106. The context is relevant. Triopas is lamenting the ceaseless hunger with which Demeter has cursed Erysichthon, and lists all the animals he has devoured. His list concludes *καὶ τὰν μάλουριν, τὰν ἔτρεμε θηρία μικκά* (110). The identity of the *μάλουρις* is much-debated (Hopkinson 1984 pp. 166-7), but the *θηρία μικκά* certainly include mice. **μάγειροι* in the *BM* reminds us of this fortuitous alignment – a gastronomic catalogue and a reference to mice occurring side-by-side in a ‘serious’ hexameter work! There is conceivably also an allusion to Arist. *Pol.* 1282a.22 *καὶ θοίνην ὁ δαιτυμὼν ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁ μάγειρος*, ‘the guest (is a better judge) of a banquet than the cook is’. A reader who recalls this line will see Psicharpax briefly as an additional, and delighted, ‘guest’ at the banquet.

41 ‘Adorning dishes with all kinds of seasonings’, of the *μάγειροι*.

χύτρας: another word found often in comedy and very rarely in any other sort of verse. The sense is a little strained: a χύτρα is a large earthenware pot (see *ad* 255; large enough to contain a newborn baby at *Ar. Th.* 505), such as might be used for broth or stew. Here it seems to be used as synecdoche for the *contents* of the pots, rather like ‘dishes’ in English. A mouse falls into a χύτρα of soup and drowns in *Babr.* 60; see *ad* 10, and Introduction p. 38.

ἀρτύμασι: ‘seasonings’ or ‘condiments’. First in the fragments of Aeschylus (fr. 306), but rare before the *BM*.

παντοδαποῖσιν: see *ad* 31.

[42-52] This eleven-line extension of Psicharpax’ heroic boast is missing from *aZ* and our solitary papyrus, and is certainly interpolated; editors are unanimous in deleting it. We might well banish it on grounds of quality alone. The passage as a whole separates the remarks on the mouse and frog diets, which belong next to each other: after 52 οὐ τρώγω ῥαφάνους becomes a *non sequitur*. The description of the mouse biting the human yet apparently not waking him from his sleep is nonsensical: although *Tim. Gaz.* 38 claims that mice are notorious for biting sleepers (*Haupt* 1869 p. 22), it is hard to envisage a scenario in which even a heavy sleeper would remain unconscious through being bitten by a mouse, nor is it clear why a mouse would regard this as an achievement. δύω at 48 is followed by three different fears (the hawk, the weasel, and the trap; these lines may have been based on *Troxartes*’ speech at 113-9, where the Frogs are the third evil after the weasel and the trap). The use of the Homeric line-ending ἦ τις ἀρίστη at 51 seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the syntax (in Homer it appears only in lines like *xvi.348*, ἀλλ’ ἄγε νῆα μέλαιναν ἐρούσσομεν, ἦ τις ἀρίστη – ‘come, let us drag down a

black ship, (*the one which is the best we have*). In addition, the scansion of some lines is difficult: 44 requires modification if it is to scan (the most efficient being the removal of περ and the adoption of the minority reading δείδια for δέδια), and 45 requires δάκτυλον to scan as a molossus. 46 would also be the only point in the poem in which epic correction does not occur with καί before a vowel.

53-55 Glei objects to these lines on several grounds.

- 42-52 obviously do not belong between 41 and 53, since they separate the two related discussions of diet. *a* omits 42-52; the fact that *l* includes 42-52 means that the *Urtext* of *l* must have omitted 53-55, and moved straight from 52 to 56. 53-55 must then have been added back into the *l* tradition through contamination with *a*. (p. 129)
- The foods listed in 53-55 are also eaten by men, whereas Psicharpax said at 34 that the Mice eat everything men do. (p. 132)
- Frogs are carnivorous. (p. 133)

The last point has been dealt with above *ad* 31-55; ancient sources show little understanding of what frogs really eat, and the *BM* poet obviously associates frogs and vegetables. The second point is based on a misinterpretation of the Greek: Psicharpax' reference to ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποις distinguishes between foods found *outside*, in the natural world, and those (like bread, cheese, and cooked meat) which only exist in areas populated by humans. The first gives too much credit to the author of 42-52, assuming that the anonymous interpolator would have been prepared to add eleven lines of rather inept Greek to the poem but would have had too much literary sensitivity to add them in an inappropriate place. 34-41 enumerate the habits of the Mice, 53-55 those of the Frogs;

therefore it is perfectly possible that our interpolator would have seen fit to add eleven more lines on the Mice between these two passages, disregarding their thematic connection.

(For the binomial nomenclature of the vegetables mentioned in 53-4 I depend on the useful 'Index of Foods and Drugs' in Potter 1988, pp. 344-54.)

53 **ῥαφάνους:** 'radishes', *Raphanus sativus*. Π's ρεφάν[is supported only by TY ῥεφανας. The papyrus probably had ῥεφάν[ους, which is an alternative spelling, although there is no particular reason to prefer it. ῥαφάνη, feminine, is extremely rare and only attested in later authors (first in Erotian, 1st c. AD), and is almost certainly a mistake here.

κράμβας: 'cabbages', *Brassica cretica*. Found rarely outside medical texts, where it is common in lists of healthy foods (e.g. Hp. *Vict.* 54.50 διαχωρητικοὶ δὲ καὶ καθαρτικοὶ ἐρεβίνθων, φακῆς, κριθῆς, τεύτλων, κράμβης...). The Frogs fashion shields from cabbage-leaves at 163, and a frog called Κραμβοβάτης, 'Cabbage-treader', appears at 237.

κολοκύντας: 'gourds, pumpkins', *Cucurbita maxima*. Again common in medical texts.

54 **οὐ(δὲ) πράσοις:** 'nor leeks' (*Allium porrum*), read by *a* and the papyrus (and Z, as the variant πράσων). *I* reads οὐ τεύτλοις 'nor beets'. Although Z and the papyrus both have οὐδέ, some *a* MSS already have οὐ, which spoils the metre; the same error in *I* may have resulted in the substitution of τεύτλοις. Both plants lend their names to frogs elsewhere in the poem – Σευτλαῖος (209), Πρασσεῖος/Πρασσαῖος (see *ad* 232). As Wölke

discusses (p. 232), the σεῦτλον/τεῦτλον is likely to be the wild vegetable known today as ‘sea beet’, *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima*, rather than one of the more cultivated varieties.

σελίνοις: unlike the other vegetables mentioned, celery (*Apium graveolens*) has an impeccable epic pedigree: it appears at II.776 and v.72. Dsc. 2.175.1.1 claims that wild celery was called βατράχιον (although the modern classification *Batrachium* is a subset of the genus *Ranunculus*, and refers to water-crowfoot).

55 The syntax is unusual: ‘these are your (ὕμετερ’) foodstuffs, of (you) lake-dwellers’. ὑμῶν *IS* may have been an attempt to remove the tautology, but the testimony of the papyrus supports ὕμετερ’. Cf. expressions like [Pl.] *Hp.Ma.* τὴν ὕμετέραν τὴν τῶν σοφιστῶν τέχνην, lit. ‘your art, the one of (you) sophists’.

56-64: second speech of Physignathus

56 **μειδήσας:** μειδάω in Homer has a variety of emotional charges, but is almost exclusively positive: where it occurs as the immediate response to a speech (always in the phrase ὥς φάτο, μειδῆσεν δ(έ)... – 11x), it suggests affection (e.g. Calypso to Odysseus at v.180), amusement (e.g. Hera to Aphrodite at XIV.222), or some combination of the two (e.g. Zeus to Athene at V.426). Kelly 2007 is more precise: ‘[the phrase] is used where the status or self-conception of the smiler is positively reinforced by the interlocutor’s speech or action’ (p. 388). Physignathus is amused, but not offended, by the mouse’s opsophagetic monologue: we may deduce, drawing on Kelly’s analysis, that Psicharpax’s undignified harping on food actually reassures the frog of his

own epic dignity and majesty. Wölke, who interprets this entire exchange as aggressive social competition (see note above), sees Physignathus as expressing contempt; this view is apparently followed by Gleis, who refers to ‘einem überlegenen Lächeln’ (p. 134), but is unjustified. The one use of μειδάω in a context of contempt or mockery in Homer is Hera to Artemis at XXI.491. On smiles in Homer, particularly the *Odyssey*, see generally Lateiner 1995.

ἀντίον ἡὔδα: *72x in Homer. Kelly 2007 (pp. 217-20) again discusses this expression, and concludes that it ‘connotes the character’s perturbation, and introduces a speech which gives a troubled (and usually unintentionally revealing) justification for an eventually unsuccessful determination’. Physignathus is not perturbed *per se*, but ἔστι καὶ ἡμῖν 57 is perhaps a little defensive: he seems to feel the need to point out that it is not only the Mice who have access to πολλὰ... θαύματ’, and in this sense his response is indeed ‘unintentionally revealing’. He consequently determines to show Psicharpax the lifestyle of the Frogs, but the appearance of the water-snake renders this spectacularly unsuccessful. The *BM* poet, in combining two speech-formulae which in Homer would have contradictory connotations, in fact builds a sophisticated picture of the frog king’s reaction – outwardly amused, but secretly also somewhat piqued.

57 **ξεῖνε:** see *ad* 13.

λίην: in Homer can mean either ‘very much’ (e.g. xiii.243) or ‘too much’ (e.g. xiv.496); the context suggests the latter sense (the point being that Psicharpax’ obsession with food is blinding him to the other delights of the frog lifestyle). There may be an allusion to iv.367-74: Menelaus’ companions are faint with hunger (ἔτειρε δὲ γαστέρα λιμός) when the sea-deity Eidothea appears to him and begins to speak: νῆπιός εἰς, ὦ

ξεῖνε, λίην τόσον ἤδὲ χαλίφρων... Cf. also Telemachus at iii.227 and xvi.243 (λίην γὰρ μέγα εἵπες); Glei compares Hes. *Th.* 26, where γαστέρες οἶον is used scornfully, but see above *ad* 56. Note also the importance of food and appetite to the *Odyssey*: Bakker 2006 calls the poem ‘full of ravenously hungry bellies and meals that go terribly wrong’ (p. 12).

ἡμῖν: possessive, anticipating θαύματ’ in 58: ‘we too have...’

58 **πολλὰ γὰρ**: required after καὶ ἡμῖν (57), and has greater Homeric precedent (*XXII.51, *iv.164) than πολλὰ καί, which is never verse-initial in early epic; it has better MS authority than πολλὰ μάλ’.

59 **ἀμφίβιον**: ‘partaking in two different spheres’, with broader sense than the English ‘amphibious’: for example, it is used of Teiresias by Lucian (*Astr.* 11), and of the soul by Plotinus 4.8.4. In the sense ‘existing both on land and in water’ it is rare before the *BM*, but cf. Berossus fr. 1a.47 (describing the sea-monster Oannes) and Ar. Byz. *Epit.* 2.37.2 (of humans spending time both on land and in water).

νομήν: ‘distribution, allotment’. The scholia gloss with ζωήν, πολιτείαν, or τροφήν, but this meaning is not otherwise attested (Wölke, pp. 262-3). An almost exact parallel for the *BM*’s use, which the poet may well have had in mind, occurs in Aesop’s *Fable of the Viper and the Water-Snake* (Perry 90; cf. *ad* 82), in which frogs play a rôle: two snakes battle for control of a particular spring, agreeing that ἡ τε τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τῆς γῆς νομή should be granted to the winner. The notion of Zeus allotting the Frogs a twofold νομή recalls Achilles’ story of the two *pithoi* at XXIV.527-33.

Κρονίων: the first acknowledgement in the poem that the animals recognise the Olympian gods. This is a commonplace of fable: cf. Phaedr. 1.2, where the frogs ask Jupiter for a king, or Babr. 48, where a dog greets a statue of Hermes.

60 σκιρτῆσαι: both Homer's uses of σκιρτάω occur within the same passage (XX.226–9), describing the semi-divine horses of Erichthonius – the only 'amphibious' animals in the *Iliad*, since they possessed the power of running across land and water alike. The context is Achilles' pre-battle dialogue with Aeneas, a scene already present in the *BM*: Aeneas' claim at XX.214 that there are many who know his *γενεή* is obviously relevant to Psicharpax' boast that his *γένος* is *δῆλον ἅπασιν* (see ad 25), and *BM* 62 begins *εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις καὶ ταῦτα δαήμεναι*, a phrase found only twice in Homer – once at VI.150 in the conversation between Glaucus and Diomedes (see ad 24–55), and once at XX.213. σκιρτάω is used again at 175, this time of the Mice.

61 'dwelling in homes which are part of two different spheres (*στοιχείους*)'. This line appears in Z and the *a* family, but is missing from *l*. Ludwich's edition reports incorrectly that it is absent in Z: I have confirmed its presence by autopsy, although Z has the erroneous minority reading *σῶματα* for *δῶματα*. (The accentuation seems to have been corrected from original *σῶ-*, which may be a relic of the accurate reading.)

Editors have been almost unanimous in deletion. Althaus' dismissal is representative: 'cum enim verba ἀμφίβιον ἔδωκε νομήν (v. 59) versibus 60 et 61 duplici modo explicentur, [v. 60] simpliciter et perspicue, [v. 61] docte et obscure, hunc versum a grammatico quodam additum esse satis probabile est' (p. 21). This is exactly the reason the line should be kept. 61 is not a gloss or an explanation of 60: if anything, it is harder

to parse, as shown by the scholia, which append comments like ἤγουν τῇ γῇ καὶ τῷ ὕδατι (Σ M^sO^s *ad* 60; Ludwich p. 233). The *BM*'s shorter interpolations tend to clarify and make explicit, and frequently re-use Homeric phraseology: cf. 22-3 (providing a clearer ending to Physignathus' speech), 77, 121. This line would not be a natural addition by an editor who found 59-60 obscure. On the other hand, the fact that 61 adds no new information could very easily have led to its deletion: we know that the Alexandrian editors of Homer were concerned about repetitive or tautologous lines (Lührs 1992, e.g. pp. 88-9).

Interestingly, this line contains an unusual concentration of words relating to textual scholarship. στοιχεῖον often meant 'letter' or 'word'; δισσός was used to identify a line as 'twofold' and hence 'ambiguous'; and μερισμός was a standard term for parsing or division, e.g. of a sentence into words (definitions taken from the invaluable 'Glossary of Grammatical Terms' in Dickey 2007). It seems odd that a line which could so easily be accused of δισσολογία should begin στοιχείοις διττοῖς. Was the *BM* poet intentionally spoofing the concerns of Homeric editors over tautologous lines, with a line that ironically then fell victim to exactly the same mode of criticism he was trying to parody?

δῶματα ναίειν: appears only once elsewhere in hexameter poetry, *Hes. *Th.* 303, of the monstrous Echidna. As a beast who is half human and half serpent, she has an obvious relevance to the amphibious Physignathus and his two spheres of existence.

62 Based on the Homeric VI.150 = XX.213 (see note on 60 above). εὐχερής, conversely – here meaning 'easy' – is not a Homeric word.

63 **κραται:** this meaning ('hold onto'), found again at 233, became common only in the Hellenistic period: see Introduction, p. 15.

ὄληαι: from ὄλλυμι; narrowly preferable to ὀλισθηῖς (from ὀλισθάνω). The most important points, apart from its better representation in the *vett.*, are that ὄληαι appears at *III.417 when Aphrodite threatens Helen that she will perish miserably 'caught between both sides' – obviously relevant to Psicharpax, Physignathus, and the two spheres of land and water (61) – and that it is used by Gregory Nazianzenus of the Homeric dangers of the ocean:

τίς Σκύλλης σκοπέλους σε διεκπλώνοντα κελεύει
σπεύδειν εἰς Ἰθάκην μή πως πάρος ἐνθάδ' ὄληαι;
τίς δ' ὀλοήν σε Χάρυβδιν ἀπηνέα... (1562.8-10)

ὀλισθάνω is Homeric (XX.470, XXIII.774), but not in the form ὀλισθηῖς. There is an obvious argument for ὄληαι having been corrupted by the proximity of εἰσαφίκηαι in the following line, but it is telling that – among widespread discussion of ὄληαι in Homer, a form which was clearly felt to require explanation – the lexicon of pseudo-Zonaras glosses ὄληαι ὀλεσθηῖς (the late Greek form of the passive subjunctive). Furthermore, among the glosses in the *BM* scholia (φθαρεῖς, φθαρείης) the V-scholion has ἀπολεσθηῖς. I suspect that ὀλισθηῖς began as a gloss, and that by peculiar coincidence a miscopied vowel transformed it into a viable alternative reading from a completely separate verb.

64 **γηθόσυνος:** the intertextual resonances of this word are discussed by Sens 2006, pp. 239-40. The two most important Homeric models are XIII.29 (the sea parts joyfully before Poseidon as he drives from his underwater palace to the Achaean camp) and

v.269 (Odysseus sets off joyfully on his raft). Both describe journeys across water: moreover, the first will warn an alert reader that the home of a frog, like that of a sea-god, may be problematic for a land-dweller to reach, while the second foreshadows the fact that Psicharpax' 'vessel' will not prove reliable.

εἰσαφίκηαι: 1x Homer, at *XX.306: Poseidon counsels Aeneas not to fight against Achilles, μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον Ἀἴδος εἰσαφίκηαι. Physignathus' presumably honest wish is freighted with Poseidon's warning, and thereby anticipates what will prove to be Psicharpax' destination as well (Glei p. 136: 'Die Homerremineszenz... wirkt angesichts der folgenden Ereignisse schon fast makaber'). The line as a whole skilfully blends reminiscences of several different Homeric passages to create a new unit which appears innocent, but is heavily laden with ominous hints that the coming journey will not end well for the mouse. Sens 2006 (p. 240-1) also points out its similarity to [Hes.] Sc. 45 ἀσπασίως τε φίλως τε ἐὼν δόμον εἰσαφίκανεν: see Introduction, p. 53.

65-81: the journey across the pond

This passage alludes explicitly to the myth of Europa's abduction by bull-Zeus: a helpless rider is carried across the waves by a swimming creature. The poet exploits the difference between the two scenes for pathos and comedy – where Europa's ride was tranquil and idyllic (an aspect of the myth which does not, *pace* Wölke and others, appear to have originated with Moschus: see Introduction, pp. 10-11), Psicharpax' is uncomfortable and frightening. There may also be a debt to the story of Nessus and Deianeira, as a journey across water which goes disastrously wrong partway. It is

assumed, as in the fable, that the mouse cannot swim, and that falling into the water is a death sentence; Physignathus later specifies that the Mice are ἀκολύμβους (158). The poem never specifies exactly where the frog's house is located: Glei assumes an island (p. 135), since the mouse could hardly be expected to visit an underwater palace like Theseus in B. 17, but it may simply be on the other side of the pond, making a crossing by water more efficient (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 188-96).

65 καὶ νῶτ' ἐδίδου: Glei compares Mosch. *Eur.* 100 καὶ οἱ πλατὺ δείκνυε νῶτον, but the verbal parallels are not particularly suggestive, and it is not surprising that both passages should employ the image of an animal offering its back. The use of plural for singular with νῶτον is found in poetry from II.308 onwards.

ὁ δὲ βαῖνε τάχιστα: referring to Psicharpax. Preferable to majority ὁ δ' ἔβαινε, since it preserves Hermann's Bridge, which would otherwise be violated (Introduction, p. 68; noted by Wölke p. 72).

Ludwich, perturbed by the lack of a object for βαῖνε and by the lack of explanatory detail, added his own plus-verse, 65a ἡὺν ἐπὶ πλωτῆρα καὶ ἤρχετο ναυτίλλεσθαι. This is obviously unnecessary; as Glei points out, νῶτ' can serve perfectly well.

66 τρυφεροῖο κατ' αὐχένος: the obvious debt is to the recurring Homeric line ἀντικρὺ δ' ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος ἦλυθ' ἀκωκή (XVII.49, XXII.327, xxii.16). *ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος appears (without variation) at BM 213: this or the Homeric usage clearly influenced 66, as PY read ἀπ. δι' αὐχ. here as well, which is nonsensical in context. Both ἀπαλός and τρυφερός can plausibly be used to describe parts of the body (e.g. τρυφερῶ

χρωτὶ *AP* 5.151.6, τὰν ἀπαλάν ... παρειὰν *A. Supp.* 70), although only ἀπαλός appears in Homer. Although ἀπαλός is arguably *lec. diff.* (Hesychius glosses it μικρός, τρυφερός), the influence from the Homeric line is a decisive factor: it is likely that Z's reading came from a similar contamination to that which caused PY's.

ἄμματι κούφω: 'with a light grip'. Psicharpax' delicacy at this early stage both contrasts humorously with the way he later clings to the frog (ἔσφιγγεν, 71), and lends the image a peculiarly erotic colouring which heightens the parallel with the Europa episode: his arms are twined gently around the frog's 'soft throat'. The erotic charge between Europa and the bull, even before its true identity is revealed, is present in Moschus (Campbell 1991, pp. 91-4) and probably originated earlier; the *BM* may be poking fun at this, or simply hinting at the disparity between the two scenes which will later be made explicit at 78-9. ἄμμα, from ἄπτω, is anything tied or linked – often a knot, but sometimes used of wrestling holds (e.g. *Plu. Alc.* 2.2). It seems to have caused confusion, and a significant number of MSS read ἄλματι 'with a leap': but the reference is to the mouse taking hold of the frog, not getting onto his back. καλῶ *IS* for κούφω is manifestly unsatisfactory: it may have been assumed that an actual physical knot or tie was meant.

67-76 The first really serious textual difficulty in the poem.

Most of the problems with this passage are found in lines 74-6. First of all, there is the question of sense: what is Psicharpax doing? The main verb in line 74 varies across the MSS: QZ have ἔπλασ(εν), from πλάσσω 'mould, form'; P has ἐπέλασεν, from either πελάζω 'bring near to' or ἐπελαύνω 'drive upon'; Y has ἐπλησεν, presumably from πλήσσω 'strike'; and T has ἤπλωσεν, from ἀπλόω 'unfold, spread out' (cf. 81), although

a later hand has corrected to ἔπλασ', the reading of Z. Some of these options make more sense than others, but all seem to require οὐρήν as their direct object. Most are unmetrical: only Z's version scans correctly. *IS*, meanwhile, dispense with a verb in favour of πρώτιστον (FLS) or simply πρώτην (J); only in *LS* is the scansion permissible.

75 begins with the participle σύρων, 'trailing'. In *IS* this is necessary to govern οὐρήν in the previous line. In *aZ* it gives additional detail: Psicharpax is moulding, driving, striking, etc. his tail upon the water, 'trailing it like a κώπη'. A κώπη is the handle of an implement, often an oar, and is frequently used by synecdoche for the oar itself. The word appears 6x in Homer, twice (x.129 and xii.214) referring to oars. West translates 'steering-oar', but κώπη does not normally denote a steering-oar, for which the proper word is πηδάλιον (5x Homer). Deploying a rudder in stormy conditions would be sensible on a boat, as it would help prevent the vessel being driven too far off course; fierce pressure would be needed to resist the wind's strength, which might explain ἐπέλασεν. On a frog, which is presumably swimming in the right direction of its own accord, the purpose is less apparent. Is Psicharpax trying to steer his mount back towards land? Or is he using his tail as an oar proper, to speed their progress by paddling? The image is confused and unclear: if the mouse is 'driving' or 'striking' his tail on the water he should not also be 'trailing' it, which sounds like the action of a relaxed passenger (cf. the mouse in Image 1), and it is not obvious what he hopes to achieve either way.

75-6 are unlikely to be original. ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι 75 is a curious echo of ἐπὶ χθόνα βούλεθ' ἰκέσθαι 72, and 76 is more or less identical to 69. The precise degree of similarity varies: of the early MSS, only *S* makes the two lines exactly the same, but in *I*

there is almost no difference (πορφυρέοις ἐπεκλύζετο 69 versus πορφυρέοιςιν ἐκλύζετο 76). Both *a* and Z seem to have taken steps to repair the problem. Z reads:

69 κύμασι πορφυρέοις ἐπεκλύζετο πολλά δ' ἐβώστρει

76 ὔδασι πορφυρέοις ἐπεκλύζετο πολλά δακρύων

while *a* reads:

69 κύμασι πορφυρέοιςιν ἐκλύζετο πολλά δακρύων

76 ὔδασι πορφυρέοιςι δ' ἐκλύζετο πολλά δ' ἐβόα

That these changes were introduced by editors trying to resolve the repetition is strongly suggested by *a*: Q, one of the earliest MSS in the family, has δ' ἀκουσας at 69 – which can only be a mishearing of δακρύων, given Q's track record of phonetic errors – followed by δακρύων at 76 as well, with δ' ἐβόα nowhere to be seen. Z's δ' ἐβώστρει at 69 actually produces impossible Greek, since ἐβώστρει is then immediately followed by ἐμέμφετο without any conjunction. In a few cases corrective work has been performed on 72 as well: STY read ἰδέσθαι for ἰκέσθαι, although this can hardly sit alongside ἐπὶ γαῖαν.

If we dispense with 75-6, can we retain 74? Clearly an original verb has been reinterpreted in a host of different ways. The only variant which scans, ἔπλωσ' [T]Z, is nonsense: 'at first he formed his tail upon the water like an oar' seems to suggest that Ps. is moulding his tail into a new shape, as though it were clay (although Allen prints this without protest). Editorial ingenuity has yielded various options with respectable sense and metre: Ludwich offers οὐρὴν πρῶτ' ἐπέλασεν ἐφ' ὕδασι κτλ., 'first he put his tail on the water', in support of which one could mention Odysseus entering the water at xiv.350-1, ἐπέλασσα θαλάσση | στῆθος (SB glosses ἦγουν ἐξέτεινε); West prints the very plausible ἔπλωσεν, from πλέω, giving the sense (with 75) 'first he sailed trailing his

tail on the water like an oar'. Gleii, who disarmingly admits of 74 'es nützt nichts, aber es macht Spaß', suggests that the image of Ps. trailing his tail belongs with the pleasant first stage of the voyage, rather than the traumatic second stage, and that it should precede 69. There is some MS support for this, since J (uniquely) has 74-5 immediately after 67: but this cannot have been an informed transposition, since it has the unfortunate effect of presenting a Ps. who is εὐχόμενος ... ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι even while he is νήξει τερπόμενος. In all likelihood J's scribe was motivated by concern over πρῶτην in 74, which appears strangely late, and acted to restore chronology by bringing it next to πρῶτον in 67.

74-6 are plainly wrong, and attempts to salvage them in whole or part are doomed to failure. They must have originated, as Ludwich saw (p. 345), with a marginal note which mistakenly became incorporated into the text proper at an early stage (at any rate before the 10th c., since in Z the problem is fully developed and attempts have been made to repair the damage by differentiating 76 from 69). Like Gleii, I am reluctant to deprive the *BM* of the charming image of Psicharpax as a mouse Sebastian Flyte, trailing his tail in the cool water as he reclines on the frog's back; but 75-6 are impossible, and 74 is already nonsense in our earliest MS. Good sense can best be gained from the *paradosis* by deleting all three lines and having 78 follow immediately from 73.

67 γείτονας ὄρμους: seemingly indebted to Call. *Del.* 290 *γείτονες ὄρμοι.

*γείτονος ὄρμου appears twice in Nonnus: 41.119, 131.

68 νήξει: a very early use of the noun νήξις 'swimming': the only possible earlier occurrence is Ar. Byz. *Epit.* 2.501.11.

τερπόμενος: already used by the *BM* once in this *sedes*, at 11. In both cases Psicharpax is enjoying water. This becomes significant once one takes into account that this form of the verb appears only once in Homer – at *xii.52, of Odysseus enjoying the singing of the Sirens. The intertext is sophisticated: Psicharpax is *τερπόμενος* twice, both times on or around water, yet the water which delights him is a threat to his survival. This contributes to the ominous foreshadowing which an alert Homeric reader would have been able to detect throughout the early stages of the poem, as also at 64 (see above).

ἀλλ' ὅτε δῆ: a very common Homeric line-opening, never found in this *sedes*. *l's* ὡς δέ μιν ἤδη may have been a syntactical misunderstanding: *κλύζω* is more often passive than active in Homer (ἐκλύσθη δὲ θάλασσα XIV.392, ix.484, ix.541; active only κύματ' ἐπ' ἠϊόνος κλύζεσκον XXIII.61), and if a scholar misinterpreted ἐκλύζετο as a passive with active meaning here ('washed'), a direct object would be necessary.

69 κύμασι πορφύρεοισιν: only otherwise (without -v) at *h.Hom.* 28.12; like most of the shorter *Hymns*, this resists dating (Richardson 1974, p. 3), and so borrowing in either direction is possible. A κύμα is πορφύρεον 5x in Homer (I.481-2, XXI.326, ii.428, xi.243, xiii.85), but only ever in the singular.

πολλὰ δακρύων: although a relatively obvious phrase, this appears only twice in Greek poetry: here and in the *Tetrasticha iambica* of Ignatius Diaconus (1.25.2). This is interesting only because we know Ignatius had read the *BM* (see *ad* 159), and this is further evidence for his borrowing from it.

70 ἄχρηστον μετάνοιαν: lit. 'his useless change of heart'. The phrase has been judged too obscure by many scholars: attempts at emendation generally revolve around ἄνοια 'folly' (so μὲν ἄνοιαν Brandt, τότε ἄνοιαν Stadtmüller, etc.). The MSS are unanimous, and we must at least attempt to defend their reading.

There seems to be a reminiscence here – perhaps a deliberate invocation – of the epimythium to Aesop's *Fable of the Songbird and the Bat* (Perry 48). A caged songbird (βώταλις, unidentified) explains that she sings only at night, not in the day, because it was while singing in the day that she was originally captured. A bat tells her that it is too late to be cautious now: she should have been on her guard before she was caught. The epimythium given is ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀτυχήμασι μετάνοια ἀνωφελὴς καθέστηκεν.

Here we have a similar situation – the mouse, in difficulties, realises too late that he should have acted differently – and the reappearance of the phrase 'useless μετάνοια'. The sense, however, is a little different. The songbird is told that *regretting a decision* – μετά-νοια, literally 'after-thought' – is pointless once the decision has been made. Ps. is described as ἐμέμφετο, 'blaming his μετάνοια'.

Discounting textual corruption, of which the MSS show no trace, there are two possibilities. Either the poet has adapted the meaning of the word, and taken μετάνοια to mean the mouse's decision to leave dry land (hence a 'change of heart' from his previous policy – cf. 32); or the μετάνοια here is his realisation that he has acted unwisely. If the latter, then the poet has essentially condensed the moral of *The Songbird and the Bat* into three words. Psicharpax regrets his decision to leave shore, and then almost at once realises that it is too late for such μετάνοια, and castigates himself for it. We have here a character from fable who is himself familiar with fable: because Ps. has 'read' *The Songbird and the Bat*, he knows as well as any reader of Aesop that ἐπὶ τοῖς

ἀτυχήμασι μετάνοια ἀνωφελὲς καθέστηκεν! The second reading is certainly in keeping with the literary and intertextual sophistication displayed elsewhere in the poem, and to my mind fits the sense better. If μετάνοια refers to the original decision to accept the frog's offer, ἄχρηστον 'useless, pointless' is not really *le mot juste*; we would expect 'foolish' or 'rash'. West translates 'cursed his unavailing change of heart', which is ambiguous. For a similar expression of the pointlessness of μετάνοια, cf. Antiphon's *First Tetralogy* 4.12.

τίλλε δὲ χαίτας: cf. τίλλοντό τε χαίτας, once each in Homer (*x.567) and A.R. (*1.1057). West translates χαίτας as 'fur', which is appropriate given that Ps. lacks hair *per se*.

71 πόδας ἔσφιγγεν: 'clenched his feet'. Like a rider on horseback, Ps. grips the frog's flanks with his feet in an attempt not to fall off.

ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ: *3x Homer, *2x A.R. In Homer the phrase is only used in the context of warlike emotions (I.188, XIX.366, XXI.571), which makes it funnier that Psicharpax' ἦτορ is quivering with fear.

72 πάλλετ': πάλλω is used of a ἦτορ ('tremble') at XXII.452, of Andromache.

ἀθηεΐη: 'unaccustomedness', a rare word, first at Th. 4.56.1. Its only poetic use before the *BM* is A.R. 2.1064, of the Argonauts scaring off the Stymphalian Birds with the ἀθηεΐη of their clamour, which probably inspired this line: the context is an attempt to make land (νῆσον ἰκώμεθα, 2.1066, cf. ἐπὶ χθόνα ... ἰκέσθαι) in difficult circumstances.

73 ὑπεστένάχιζε: extremely rare. It appears at *II.781 of the earth ‘groaning beneath’ the Achaean army; other than in quotations of the *Iliad* passage, the verb is only otherwise found in the 6th-c. AD encomium of the Hagia Sophia by Paulus Silentarius (*190). The *BM* poet seems to have ignored the sense ‘under’ and treated the word as equivalent to ὑποστένω, which means simply ‘groan’ (S. *El.* 79).

φόβου κρυόεντος ἀνάγκη: obviously based on *φ. κρ. ἐταίρη (IX.2), although there is no particular allusive significance.

[74-77] See above *ad* 67-76, and below *ad* 78-81.

78-81 These four lines, in which the comparison between the mouse and Europa is made explicit, were unnecessarily transposed by Ludwich to follow 66.

In Z and the MSS of the *a* family, they follow [77] καὶ τοῖον φάτο μῦθον ἀπὸ στόματος τ’ ἀγόρευσεν, and are therefore direct speech attributed to Psicharpax; in *I* they follow 76, and are presumably to be taken as authorial comment. Ludwich’s transposition assumes that the latter interpretation is correct, and with this we must agree. Although there is nothing wrong with the image of the mouse himself making the wry poetic comparison – ‘this journey is hardly like Europa’s...’ – it is hard to suppose that he speaks 80-81: not only would he be referring to a journey he is currently undergoing with a past tense verb (ἦγεν),¹³² but he would have to be describing himself as μῦν, ‘the mouse’! Characters in Homer sometimes refer to themselves in the third

¹³² ‘Es ist einfach ein Act der Verzweiflung, wenn man ἦγεν hier... als Imperf. *de conatu* deuten will’ (Ludwich p. 348). An inceptive imperfect is possible, but still gives an unnatural sense.

person – e.g. Odysseus at II.259 – but always by name. The equivalent here would be Achilles referring to himself as ‘the Thessalian’ or ‘the man’.

A scribe somewhere in the *a*-tradition clearly realised the problem, and attempted to solve it by correcting $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\nu$ to $\nu\tilde{\upsilon}\nu$ (and later $\nu\tilde{\upsilon}\nu \mu'$), but this is wishful thinking. Z’s $\mu\tilde{\upsilon}\nu$ is correct; the problem lies with 77, the speech-introduction. It is one of only three speech-introductions in the poem to occupy an entire line (along with 24 and 56), and the only one not to include a proper name, making it a plausible candidate for interpolation. In its oldest form (that found in Z), it is metrically suspect, lacking a third-foot caesura. A further warning sign is the absence of a closing formula, pointed out by Wölke (p. 19). Most direct speech in the *BM*, as in Homer, ends with a closural phrase such as ‘so he spoke’: 99, 122, 144, 160, 177, 197, 277, 285. Such a phrase is absent after only three passages of speech: 13-21, 25-55, and 78-81. In the first two cases the need for a closing formula is removed by the fact that a reply follows immediately (cf. I.83-5, 91-3, 120-22, etc.), but after an isolated speech like this Homeric practice would demand closure.

The addition of an explicit speech-introduction line after ‘a verb or phrase which either merely implies speaking, or indicates in addition the tone, the contents, or the purpose of the speech’ (Bolling 1922, p. 213) was very common in the Homeric MSS: West 2001 classifies such cases as type 6(a) interpolations (pp. 12-13). A substantial number of MSS follow *a* in reading $\delta' \epsilon\beta\acute{o}\alpha$ for $\delta\alpha\kappa\rho\acute{\upsilon}\omega\nu$ at 76 (see above), and $\delta' \epsilon\beta\acute{\omega}\sigma\tau\omicron\rho\epsilon\iota$ (from Z’s version of 69) is recorded as a *graphetai* variant in P. If we assume that *a*’s archetype had $\delta' \epsilon\beta\acute{o}\alpha$, this could have been misinterpreted as a speech verb, and 77 then added as a ‘clarification’; in *IS*, $\delta\alpha\kappa\rho\acute{\upsilon}\omega\nu$ attracted no such misconception, and 78-81 were left as authorial commentary. This leaves unsolved the problem of why Z,

which has δακρύων at 76, also has the interpolated 77; we would have to conclude that Z was influenced by an already-extant *a*-archetype.

Once 77 is removed there is no reason for transposition (which has no support in the MSS): 78-81 can stand as plausibly after 67-73 as before them. Indeed, juxtaposition of 81 with 67 presents a syntactical problem – the subject of 80-81 is βάτραχος, but ἔχαιρεν in 67 refers to the mouse. For ὕδατι λευκῶι, see below on 81. Ludwich attempted to explain the problems with this passage by reconstructing the layout of the text in an early MS (p. 348), but the results are speculative at best.

78 **ἐβάστασε:** βαστάζω appears twice in Homer - *xvi.405 (same form), of Odysseus picking up his bow, and xi.594, of Sisyphus pushing the rock. The former is significant if we consider the parallels between the *Mnesterophonia* and the death of Psicharpax which are activated later in the poem (see on 138, 152). In both cases, ἐβάστασε is a prelude to the killing which will dominate the rest of the narrative. The poet may also have been influenced by Aesop, who uses βαστάζω frequently, particularly of characters carrying things on their backs: cf. Aesop. 201 ὄνος ξύλα βαστάζων διέβαινέ τινα λίμνην, or 108 τὸν οἶκον βαστάζουσιν, of the snail.

φόρτον ἔρωτος: quoted by Servius (on *Aen.* 11.550 *caroque oneri timet*), and attributed to Anacreon. The parallel is not a strong one – *carum onus* does not mean the same thing as φόρτος ἔρωτος – and Wölke (p. 59) suggests that Anacreon's use of the phrase may have been in the context of a water-crossing; this would have made Servius more likely to think of it when commenting on the *Aeneid* passage (Metabus fearing for his infant daughter Camilla when he comes to a river in torrent), and would also make it more plausible that the *BM* poet might have intended a specific allusion. φ. ἔρωτος /

ἐρώτων goes on to be used several times by Nonnus (e.g. 3.116, 4.118), who may have adopted it from the *BM*.

79 The *BM* poet will have had access to a range of treatments of the Europa-myth which are now lost to us: see Introduction, p. 10. In some versions of the myth, the bull was a courier sent by Zeus, rather than an actual metamorphosis: Aeschylus' Europa specifies that Zeus managed to abduct her αὐτοῦ μένων, 'remaining where he was', i.e. on Crete (fr. 99.3); the bull seems to have wandered off happily into a field (99.1). Euripides' *Phrixus* may also have relied on this version (fr. 820). ταῦρος leaves it unclear which the *BM* poet had in mind.

80 **ύψώσας; ἀπλώσας** *codd.* In 81, Z and the *a* family then repeat ἀπλώσας, while *l* has ύψώσας. Althaus saw the answer, transferring ύψώσας into 80 and leaving ἀπλώσας intact in 81: 'raising the mouse on his back, the frog carried him to his home, stretching out his pale body in the white water'. The repetition is obviously wrong, and having the participles the other way round, as in *l*, produces nonsense; to describe the frog as 'stretching out the mouse on his (i.e. the frog's) back' produces a very peculiar image, and 'raising his pale body in the white water' is equally bizarre. Wölke boldly attempts to defend *l*'s reading by arguing that ὠχρόν δέμας refers to Psicharpax (p. 263): he objects that ὠχρός means 'pale yellow', and that *Rana esculenta*, the Edible Frog, is green. We are to imagine instead that the mouse has turned pale with fear (like the Homeric hiker at III.35) – though Wölke himself admits that a mouse's fur would make any such change invisible. This is quite unnecessary: the green frogs of Europe (see *ad* 12) generally have darker-coloured backs, but throats and underbellies of a pale yellow-

green or white colour, perfectly described by ὠχρός (see Image 2). The image is in fact a very precise one, since it is the frog's underbelly that is 'stretched out in the water'; its back, complete with mouse passenger, remains at least nominally dry.

81 ὕδατι λευκῶ: in keeping with his transposition of this line before 67, West translates 'clear water' (cf. λευκῇ... γαλήνῃ x.94). However, 'white' is used of water in motion by Homer (XXIII.282, v.70, xii.172), Hesiod (WD 739), and later authors (e.g. Theog. 1.447-9), and this is the sense required here.

82-98: the death of Psicharpax

As in the fable (Introduction p. 40), the frog dives beneath the water, leaving the mouse to drown; unlike the fable, however, this is prompted by the appearance of a water-snake. Why the author of the *BM* chose to introduce this element is a matter for debate. It may be that for the frog to dive beneath the water deliberately and maliciously, as he does in most versions of the fable, was too far from the *BM*'s heroic models; to desert an ally, while deprecated, is at least *possible* in Homer (Odysseus at VIII.92-8; Hector at XVI.367-9; in a sense also Deiphobus at XXII.293-5), whereas to actively betray an ally is not. Physignathus' crime becomes one of omission rather than commission. Glei argues (p. 141) that the snake's arrival actually exempts Ph. from responsibility, making his action pragmatic, if unheroic: but an ancient audience who knew the fable would have been expecting to see the frog as the villain of the piece, and it is telling that when Ph. is accused by the mouse herald, he reacts by lying about his involvement (147-8) rather than by attempting to justify his actions. See also *ad* 147-59.

Psicharpax' most obvious epic predecessor in these lines is Odysseus, who more than once comes close to drowning, but there are other precedents: A. *Pers.* 274ff. and the struggles of the nameless sailor in Timotheus' *Persae*. The *BM* poet may also have drawn on Theoc. 1; although the exact circumstances of Daphnis' death are unclear, we last see him being 'washed by the flood' (ἐκλυσε δίνα 140; perhaps recalled at *BM* 69 κύμασι πορφυρέοις ἐπεκλύζετο), and Segal 1974 concludes that he 'dies by drowning' (p. 24). See also *ad* 97.

82 ὕδρος: the majority reading is certainly correct, with numerous parallels for a ὕδρος as the enemy of frogs. Perry 90 (Introduction p. 38) describes how the frogs allied with an ἔχις in his battle against the water-snake διὰ μῖσος τοῦ ὕδρου, and Ael. *NA* 12.15 records that βάτραχος ὕδρον μισεῖ καὶ δέδουκεν ἰσχυρῶς; see further Ludwig pp. 349-50. The snake in question was probably the European grass snake, *Natrix natrix*, which is a strong swimmer and hunts frogs and toads (Arnold 2002, p. 218; Wölke pp. 122-25). The ὕδρος responsible for Philoctetes' wound at II.723 is evidently a different species, since its bite is poisonous. I do not understand the suggestion of Murray 1907 that the *BM*'s ὕδρος is 'perhaps some otter-like animal' (p. 51). Z has ὕλλος, but it is not clear what sort of animal this is: Cyran. 39 identifies it as a kind of fish (not mentioned in Thompson 1947).

An obvious literary precedent for the sudden, terrifying appearance of a snake from the water is the Laocoön motif: the loss of texts like the *Iliou Persis* and Sophocles' *Laocoön* means we cannot determine whether the *BM* poet was making a more specific allusion. There may also be a reference to Calchas' prophecy in *Iliad* II, where a terrible δράκων emerges from beneath an altar and devours nine sparrows, although there are

no similarities in vocabulary between the two episodes and the snake in the *BM* does not eat anyone.

πικρὸν: perhaps marginally preferable simply as *lec. diff.*, and *l* has the better reading in 83 as well (below). *πικρὸς οἶστος is common in Homer, though there is probably no specific allusion. πικρός appears as an attribute of sea-water in *Od.* (iv.405-6 πικρὸν... ὀδμήν, of Proteus' seals; v.322-3 ἄλμην | πικρήν, spat out by Odysseus), but since the pond is freshwater (μελιθεῖ 11) this is unlikely to have been an influence. The image of a 'bitter sight' is distinctively Euripidean (cf. *Supp.* 945, *Hipp.* 809, *Or.* 952, etc.).

83 ἀμφοτέροις: πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς *Z* makes little sense, and πᾶσιν ὁμῶς *a* was probably an attempt to correct it. *Z*'s reading may have been a corruption of some other reading now lost, but *l* has the most plausible surviving version.

τράχηλον: 'neck', not Homeric; first securely in Euripides (e.g. *Supp.* 716), but reconstructed in the fragments of Hipponax (fr. 103]λάσας τὸν τράχ[ηλον).

84-5 The exact sense of these lines is obscure. We might expect 'not realising *that* he was leaving his comrade to perish'; but the Greek says 'not realising *what sort of* comrade he was leaving to perish'. The expression is not paralleled in early epic. The implication seems to be that had Physignathus known some crucial fact about Psicharpax, he would have acted differently. We cannot argue that he did not realise Psicharpax' status or importance, since these were explained to him in detail at 25-9. Does he fail to realise that the mouse cannot swim? Unlikely, given his instruction κράτει δέ με μήποτ' ὄλῃαι at 63. There may be a general sense that Ps. would have been a good friend to Ph. had he lived: cf. XVII.150-1, where Glaucus (NB) angrily tells Hector Σαρπηδόν' ἄμα ξεῖνον καὶ

ἑταῖρον | κάλλιπες before going on to remind him that Sarpedon was a great ally (πόλλ' ὄφελος) to both Hector and the city ζωὸς ἐών. There is a kind of Homeric pathos in the notion of potential wasted – compare the deaths of Scamandrius at V.50-8 or Xanthus and Thoön at V.152-8 – and the emphasis on Psicharpax' quality accentuates the magnitude of Physignathus' cowardice in leaving him to die.

85 ἀπολλύμενον καταλ(ε)ίπειν: ἀπολλῦναι κατὰ λίμνην *l* is less accurate, in that Physignathus is not personally killing Psicharpax, merely abandoning him to die. Homeric precedent also supports the majority reading: καταλείπειν appears only once, at *xi.72, when the dead Elpenor begs Odysseus not to abandon his corpse μή τοί τι θεῶν μῆνιμα γένωμαι (xi.73). At 98 Psicharpax threatens that his corpse *will* bring the gods' wrath on Physignathus, and indeed it is the sight of the body that prompts the Mice to declare war.

There is little sign in the *BM* of assonance being used for poetic effect, but the noticeable concentration of *l* sounds in 85-6 may suggest Psicharpax slipping off the frog's back.

86 Objected to by some editors (Althaus, Ludwich) as tautologous after 84, but present in all MSS, and should be retained. ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν *aZ* is more Homeric (*4x) than ἔκφυγε *l* (only V.22 ὑπέκφυγε κῆρα μ.), which also requires καί to scan long before a vowel, uniquely in the poem (aside from [46]). ὑπέκφυγε would solve this problem, but is represented nowhere in the MSS.

87 κείνος: i.e. Psicharpax.

πέσεν ὕπτιος: a very distinctive Homeric badge (*XV.647, *XVII.523, *ix.371, *xviii.398), not otherwise found in hexameter until Opp. *H.* 2.211 **πέσῃ ὕπτιος*. The *BM* uses the variant **πέσε δ' ὕπτιος* at 242.

ἐφ' ὕδωρ: 1x Homer (*iv.213) where ἐφ' belongs with the preceding *χερσί*. The first of three points in this passage at which the *BM* uses ἐπί of water in an unexpected way: Psycharpax falls ἐφ' ὕδωρ (87), sinks ἐφ' ὕδατι (89), and finally expires ἐφ' ὕδατι (99). In two cases there is significant disagreement among the MSS:

87 ἐφ' ὕδωρ *aZ*; ἐς ὕδωρ *IS* (εἰς *J*)

89 ἐφ' ὕδατι *cett.*; ἐν ὕδατι *J*

99 ἐφ' ὕδατι *aS*; ἐν ὕδα(τ)ι *IZ*

In each case the *a* reading is both more widespread and *lec. diff.*; ἐς and ἐν would be plausible corrections. Herwerden proposed ὑφ' at 87 and 99, and Bothe at 89; West keeps ἐφ' at 87 but reads ὑφ' at 89 and ἐν at 99. I find ἐφ' defensible at 99 (Psycharpax dies while floating *on* the water's surface, where he will later be seen by Leichopanax) and perhaps also at 87 (he falls into the water but does not immediately sink), but bizarre at 89 ('sink onto the water' is hard to justify). However, the most common use of καταδύω in Homer is in the recurring line ἥμος δ' ἡέλιος κατέδυ καὶ ἐπὶ κνέφας ἦλθε(ν) (I.475 *et al.*). The sense of ἐπὶ κνέφας ἦλθε is 'the twilight came on', with κνέφας the nominative subject of ἐπέρχομαι; but the line could easily have been read as 'when the sun sank and came (ἦλθε) into shadow (ἐπὶ κνέφας)'. ἐπί cannot really support the sense 'into', but the poet might have been misled into thinking that in Homeric Greek one could talk of things sinking ἐπί a substance. It is very hard to explain how else ἐφ' ὕδατι 89 could have become so universal in the early MSS, especially compared with the much more intuitive ἐν ὕδατι. The fact that the *BM* paradosis has ἐπί with water as a majority

reading at three separate points in the same passage suggests a quirk of the poet's syntax, rather than three identical and unnatural errors.

[88] West brackets the line; I follow Althaus in deleting it. *a's* καὶ χειῖρας ἔσφιγγε is metrically dubious, and suspect after καὶ πόδας ἔσφιγγεν at 71. Unlike the vivid description at 89-91, this is unconvincing: 'clenching his hands/paws' does not sound like the behaviour of a drowning man *or* mouse, and ὀλλύμενος (as well as echoing *ἀπολλύμενον 85) is superfluous given ὕδασι δ' ὀλλύμενος 92. κατέτριξε is more or less a *hapax legomenon*, appearing only elsewhere at Eustathius Macrembolites 11.15.4 (12th c. BC). The simplex verb τρίζω is used of dead souls at xxiv.5, 9, and the baby sparrows devoured by the snake at II.314; but Psicharpax is not yet dead, and the snake has apparently lost interest.

89 **πολλάκι μέν... πολλάκι δ' αὖτε:** apparently an equivalent to the Homeric ἄλλοτε μέν... ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε. Wölke discusses the expression in detail (p. 120); in the form πολλάκις μέν... πολλάκις δέ it dates back at least to Herodotus (e.g. 1.74).

ἐφ' ὕδατι: see *ad* 87.

90 **λακτίζων:** 2x Homer, *xviii.99 (Irus) and *xxii.88 (Eurymachus). In both cases it is their suffering which is stressed: unlike Iliadic heroes, who tend to die instantly or survive with only a flesh wound, Irus and Eurymachus writhe in undignified agony. Despite the *BM's* light-hearted subject matter, Psicharpax's death-struggle is graphically portrayed.

μόρον ... ύπαλύξαι: adapted by Gregory Nazianzenus, *μόρον οὐχ ύπάλυξας (1483.7) and *μ. οὐχ ύπάλυξαν (772.10).

ύπαλύξαι: 1x Homer, *XII.327: Sarpedon tells Glaucus that no mortal can escape death. Glaucus was one of Psicharpax' models earlier in the poem, but there is no specific contextual relevance here. More interesting are *ύπάλυξας XI.451, where Odysseus taunts Socus by telling him οἰωνοὶ | ὤμησται ἐρύουσι (453-4) – exactly what *does* happen to the drowned mouse in the fable, with ἐρύω in its more literal sense of 'carry off' – and *ύπάλυξεν iv.512, which follows a description of the death of Ajax son of Oileus, the only hero from the *Iliad* to die by drowning.

91 The image is probably indebted to Odysseus (v.321 εἴματα γὰρ ἐ βάρυνε); Psicharpax' frantic bobbing (not Homeric: see Wölke pp. 119-20) adds an appropriate note of pathos, since he, unlike Odysseus, is indeed going to drown. There may also be inspiration from the πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἀλιβαφῇ of Aeschylus' drowned sailors at *Pers.* 274-7, whose cloaks float around them in a similar way: the text is insecure (Garvie 2009, pp. 153-4) but the overall meaning is clear. The hair of the slain Euphorbus at XVII.51 is wet with blood, αἵματι οἱ δεύοντο κόμαι.

πλεῖον ... ἐπ' αὐτῷ: Psicharpax' wet fur 'dragged on him *through* its increased weight', effectively an accusative of respect. The expression seems to have caused confusion in the MSS, and both *a* and *l* attempt to turn βάρος into a direct object by substituting forms of ἔχω, ἄγω, or φέρω (the fur *put a greater weight on him*), but Z's reading is *lec. diff.* and more vivid, as well as more closely reproducing the Homeric image of the clothes pulling Odysseus down.

92-8 In the motif of the dying curse, the *BM* poet found a fortuitous coincidence of his two main models. Two Homeric heroes die foretelling harm for their killer: Patroclus (XVI.851-4) and Hector (XXII.358-60). The final remark by a doomed or dying protagonist is also characteristic of fable – e.g. Babrius 27, 43, 115, 129, 143, and esp. 60, where the speaker is a drowning mouse – and the version of the *Fable of the Mouse and the Frog* found in the *Vita Aesopi* includes a curse: ὁ δὲ πνιγόμενος ἔλεγεν· “ἐγὼ μὲν ὑπὸ σου νεκρωθήσομαι, ἐκδικήσομαι δὲ ὑπὸ ζῶντος” (cf. *BM* 98 ἐκδικον).¹³³ The poet was perhaps also influenced by Timotheus’ *Persae*, which couples a vivid description of drowning with an anguished final curse by the victim (in Timotheus’ case, directed against the sea itself).

Prophecies of death are not restricted to Homer’s heroes: Achilles’ horse Xanthus foretells his doom at XIX.404-17. On this passage Edwards 1991 notes: ‘Wise or prophetic speaking animals are familiar from folktale and fable, and from epic in other cultures... but are unexpected in the severely unsupernatural *Il.*’ (p. 283). Kirkpatrick & Dunn 2000 comment that the device ‘verges... on comedy or fable’ (p.30). Xanthus is the only speaking animal anywhere in Homer, and this adds an extra level of resonance to the *BM* scene: in prophesying Physignathus’ death, Psicharpax is behaving both like a dying

¹³³ Hausrath 302. This is the reading of *Vita W*, the *recensio Westermanniana*; the alternative *Vita G* has the briefer νεκρὸς ὦν ζῶντά σε ἐκδικήσω. It is possible that the *Vita Aesopi* may have taken this detail from the *BM*; its dating is highly uncertain (*DNP* s.v. ‘Aisop-Roman’ for discussion and bibliography). Adrados and van Dijk 1999 point out that divine justice is rarely responsible for the aggressor’s downfall in fable; the cunning of the smaller or weaker animal is normally what brings about the reversal (although *The Fable of the Eagle and the Fox*, Hausrath 1, is another notable exception). Merkle 1992 has a sensible discussion of the relationship between the *BM* and the fable (p. 121 n. 28), and concludes ‘eine Priorität der *Batrachomyomachie* ist sicherlich auszuschliessen’; he suggests that, although the original version of the fable clearly influenced the *BM*, the *BM* may in turn have influenced the *Vita* – passing on, among other things, the mouse’s dying curse (p. 124). Even if the curse did originate with the *BM*, however, the dying character who delivers a parting *sententia* is impeccably fabular. (The curse is also found in the dodecasyllable version of the fable, Chambry 246, but this may be later than the *Vita*.)

hero and like an epic animal. Cf. *ad* 204, where the poet again juxtaposes heroic and animal imagery in the death of a single character.

The prophecy is in fact only ambiguously fulfilled. The Frogs are ‘punished’ by the mouse assault, but the gods play no role in bringing this to pass, and indeed intervene to prevent the final rout; and although the damage to the battle-narrative makes it impossible to be certain, there is no evidence that Physignathus himself is killed in the fighting.

92 **ὔδατι:** ὔδαω occurs 9x in the passage 65-99. In five of these cases the MSS are unanimous in reading the singular (81, 83, 87, 89, and 97 - though in the case of 87 and 89 there is disagreement about the preposition, as discussed above); in two (74 and 76) all MSS have the plural. Only here and at 99 is there a lack of consensus, with *IZ* reading the plural ὔδασι and *a* the singular ὔδατι in both instances. The singular is to be preferred both times, since the *BM* typically applies the plural to water in *general*, as a domain (33 σοὶ μὲν γὰρ βίος ἐστὶν ἐν ὔδασιν, 60 ἐν ὔδασι σῶμα καλύψαι, 158 πνίξαντες ἐν ὔδασι); the poet seems to have used the singular to mean ‘the water of the pond’.

τοίους ἐφθέγγατο μύθους: has the appearance of a genuine speech-introduction formula (see Introduction p. 56), but is not in fact found in Homer or anywhere else in Greek epic.

93 The *sententia* that a criminal may escape the notice of men but not of gods is typical, occurring in fable (e.g. Aesop 67 καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐπιιοκοῦντες λάθωμεν, ἀλλὰ τὸν γε θεὸν οὐ λήσομεν), in poetry (e.g. Pi. O. 1.63-4 εἰ δὲ θεὸν ἀνὴρ τις ἔλπεταί | <τι> λαθέμεν ἔρδων, ἀμαρτάνει), and in oratory (e.g. Isoc. 1.16.1 μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν

ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσεις). Cf. Gerber 1982, p. 106. The *BM*'s wording is close to *AP* 10.27, attributed to Lucian (ἀνθρώπους μὲν ἴσως λήσεις ἄτοπον τι ποιήσας, | οὐ λήσεις δὲ θεοὺς οὐδὲ λογιζόμενος), especially if one were to follow *l* in reading γε θεοὺς for δολίως; however, *l*'s reading may have been influenced by the epigram, and δολίως is certainly *lec. diff.* Technically speaking Physignathus has not acted δολίως (see above), but Psicharpax's exclamation at 95-6 suggests he does not realise this. For λανθάνω with a participle but no accusative object, cf. *A. Eu.* 256, *Hdt.* 8.5, etc.

94 ναυηγὸν ῥίψας: 'casting me shipwrecked from your body as though from a rock'. The unusual image suggests a shipwreck victim who has managed to cling to a rock or crag, as Odysseus does at v.428, but who is then pushed back into the water by an enemy. The point must be to stress the frog's responsibility: a shipwreck is an accident, but deliberately to drown a struggling victim is murder. ἐς λίμνην με *l* is a lame and unmetrical attempt to clarify the sense.

ὥς ἀπὸ πέτρης: 1x Homer (*XIII.137), of a stone torn from a rock face by a river in flood: there is an obvious relevance to the image of being swept away by water. Otherwise only in Opp. *H.* 2.337, during the Homeric battle between the crayfish and the muraena.

The mysterious *οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης occurs in Homer at XXII.126 and xix.163: for discussion and bibliography, see West 1966 pp. 167-9 and Heubeck 1988 *ad* xix.163. Richardson 1993 *ad* XXII.126 examines the way the Iliadic usage conjures up an image of peacetime lovers in the middle of war; this would have some relevance here given the erotic colouring of the pond-journey (see *ad* 66), but the verbal parallel is very slight.

95 **κάκιστε:** gives a distinct tragic colouring; the insult is used heavily by both Euripides and Sophocles (E. *Hipp.* 959, *Andr.* 719, etc.; S. *Tr.* 1137, *OC* 866, etc.).

96 **παγκρατίω τε πάλῃ τε καὶ εἰς δρόμον:** the order of events here echoes that mentioned by Odysseus at viii.206, ἦ πύξ ἢ ἐπ' ἀλῆι ἢ καὶ ποσσίν – although the post-Homeric *pankration*, first mentioned by Pindar, has replaced straightforward boxing, and a different term has been used for foot-racing. The same order is used at viii.103, although with the further addition of jumping, πύξ τε παλαιμοσύνη τε καὶ ἄλμασιν ἢ δὲ πόδεσσιν; if there is one land event in which a mouse could not reasonably expect to beat a frog, it is of course jumping.

πλανήσας: 'having led (me) astray'. *πλανάω* appears once in Homer, XXIII.321, in Nestor's advice to Antilochus: he first compares chariot-racing to keeping a ship on course ἐρεχθομένην ἀνέμοισι (317), and then warns that when a driver makes a reckless turn, ἵπποι δὲ πλανόωνται ἀνὰ δρόμον. Both comments are relevant to the plight of Psicharpax, who has already been portrayed as 'sailing' in bad weather, and now finds that his 'horse' has failed him: after the mention of *pankration*, wrestling, and racing, we are reminded of another athletic competition, in which Psicharpax has (like Eumelus in the *Iliad*) come to a disastrous end.

97 **ἔχει θεὸς ἔκδικον ὄμμα:** Glei (p. 144) rightly dismisses the suggestion that the *BM* poet was familiar with Christianity, since Psicharpax' last words are firmly within Homeric parameters: see above on 92-8, Griffin 1978, and Allan 2006. The confidence in divine justice is also characteristic of Hesiod (e.g. *WD* 240ff.). The phrase ἔκδικον ὄμμα is used four times in the *Christus Patiens* attributed to Gregory Nazianzenus, who knew

the *BM* (Introduction, p. 83). The whole *sententia* is quoted almost exactly by an anonymous Greek chronicle of the 16th c., describing the death of Patriarch Joachim I of Constantinople in 1504; when Joachim died his rival Pachomius, whom he had previously ousted from the throne, resumed his old position, leading the chronicle to remark ἔχει γὰρ Θεὸς ἔκδικον ὄμμα.¹³⁴

[97a-98] The majority of MSS preserve both lines; *I* has in their place the hybrid line ποινὴν σὺ τίσεις μυῶν στρατῶ οὐδ' ὑπαλύξεις, which looks like an attempt to restore sense. A later hand has brought Z into line with this by crossing out 97a and altering the first half of 98: the original reading is mostly obscured, but the surviving traces are very compatible with τοῖς τίσουσι.

If this couplet is original, it has become corrupted. Neither line is metrically viable – 97a lacks a medial caesura – and the syntax is impossible. The intended sense seems to be ‘you will pay a penalty and a just retribution (ἀντέκτισιν τ' ὀρθήν) to the mouse army, and will not escape’, making the conclusion of Psicharpax’ curse more relevant to subsequent events. The couplet is unnecessary, and weakens the effect of the impressively ominous 97, but Homeric precedent does require a dying prophecy to be specific about details: Patroclus at XVI.851-4, Hector at XX.358-60. ἀντέκτισις is a late word, otherwise first found in Philo Judaeus (1st c. AD); Apollonius’ *Lexicon Homericum* uses it to gloss ποινή, raising the possibility of an interlinear gloss which became interpolated here. Line-final ὑπαλύξεις is noticeably similar to *ὑπαλύξαι at 90. Either

¹³⁴ The work is identified by *TLG* simply as *Ecthesis chronica*; the sentence in question occurs at 99.21. It is translated in M. Philippides, *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople, 1373-1513* (Brookline, Mass., 1990), which I have not seen.

both lines should appear in the text, or neither should: given their incoherence I follow Fusillo and delete both.

99-131: the mouse assembly; speech of Troxartes; preparations for war

This sequence draws heavily for its structure (though not its language) on the two Ithacan assemblies in the *Odyssey*, as shown below.

BM 101-22

Leichopinax ran to tell the Mice what had happened, and they were all enraged. They *ordered the heralds to summon an assembly* [A] at the house of Troxartes, Psicharpax' father. When everyone arrived *at dawn* [B], *the first speaker was the mouse whose son had been killed* [C]; he addressed the assembly *angered for his son* [D]: "*Friends* [E], although I alone have suffered, this is a warning of evil for us all. I am wretched; I have lost *three sons* [F]. *Let us go to war* [G]." With these words he *persuaded them to arm themselves* [H].

ii.1-24: the first assembly on Ithaca

As soon as it was dawn [B], Telemachus got up and *ordered the heralds to call the people to assembly* [A]. Once they had assembled he went there himself, and Athene made him the object of universal admiration; the elders made way for him. *The first speaker was a man whose son had been killed* [C] while travelling with Odysseus, Aegyptius. This man had *three other sons* [F], but the dead Antiphus was always on his mind. He addressed the assembly *weeping for his son* [D]...

xxiv.412-68: the second assembly on Ithaca

Rumour flew through the town with the bad news. The people gathered at the palace of Odysseus and carried out the corpses, before going to the meeting-place. *The first speaker*

was a man whose son had been killed [C] by Odysseus, Eupeithes. He addressed the assembly *weeping for his son* [D]: “*Friends* [E], Odysseus has done us terrible wrong by killing so many of our young men. *Let us take revenge* [G] before he has a chance to escape, or we will be disgraced.” Medon and Halitherses both made opposing speeches, but the majority of the listeners *were persuaded to arm themselves for battle* [H].

The *Galeomyomachia* also included a mouse council of war, presumably held before marching against the weasel. Though incomplete, the *GM* contains clear linguistic reminiscences of the assemblies in *Od.* ii and xxiv: the only character anywhere in Homer to be given both the speech-formulae τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε and ὁ σφιν εὖ φρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν to introduce a single speech, as with Myleus in the *GM* (55/58), is Halitherses (ii.157/160, xxiv.451/453). More tenuously, *GM* 54 ἡγερέθοντο appears in the same *sedes* at xxiv.468 and only 2x elsewhere in Homer. The *BM*, as usual, prefers to avoid exact linguistic imitation, but its assembly-scene is no less clearly Homeric. On the *GM*’s relationship with the *BM* see Introduction, pp. 45-6.

Troxartes’ speech, which also alludes to Priam’s grief over Hector in the *Iliad* (see below *ad* 112-9), crucially marks the transition from vengeance on Physignathus – the moral objective of the fable – to the more epic goal of vengeance on the entire race of the Frogs. The Achaeans similarly declare war on the whole Trojan people for the crime of an individual (Glei p. 149), and all the suitors are damned in the *Odyssey* regardless of grade of iniquity, but it is not clear that we are meant to see any criticism or examination of this fact in the *BM*: the poet does not draw sustained attention to Troxartes’ ἐκ βατράχων (111), and the inconsistency is elided rather than highlighted. Indeed, the speech as a whole is more passionate than tightly argued: T. claims that his son’s death is

a πεῖρα κακῇ πάντεσσι (111) but does not expound on this, instead stressing his personal grief before abruptly concluding ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ὀπλίζεσθε (120).

There are several possible explanations. The corresponding speech of Physignathus at 147-59 is rhetorically sophisticated and convincing (see *ad loc.*), although its central claim – that Psicharpax drowned by accident while trying to swim in the pond – is a self-serving lie. We may be meant to contrast this with the honest emotion and lack of sophistry in Troxartes' speech: cf. e.g. the speeches of Achilles and Agamemnon in *Il.* XIX, where Achilles' blunt but honest admission of error is followed by Agamemnon's shifty, evasive rhetoric. Less charitably, we can see Troxartes as attempting another kind of manipulation in *deliberately* glossing over the relevance of his son's death to Mouse society as a whole. The speech as it stands is missing a conclusion: 'friends, although I alone have suffered (110), we are all in danger (111); here are the ways I have suffered (112-19); therefore let us all take up arms (120)'. The expected linking element, demonstrating how the deaths of T.'s sons are a misfortune to the community as well, is not present. The generally positive portrayal of mice in fable and specifically in the *BM* (see Introduction p. 38) may lead us to suppose that this is an impassioned failure of objectivity, but it is interesting that T.'s speech essentially summarises the two criticisms of the Trojan War implicit in the *Iliad*: he seeks to punish *all* the Frogs, not just Physignathus, and expects *all* the Mice to rally to his aid – much as the Atreidae condemn *all* the Trojans (VI.55-60) and assume that *all* the Achaeans will support them (I.152-60, IX.337-41).

99 **ταῦτ' εἰπών:** this and ὥς εἰπών are both found as unanimous readings elsewhere in the poem (ταῦτ' εἰπών 122, ὥς εἰπών 144, 160), although only the latter is

Homeric. Some support for the former is provided by D. L. 5.41, where the last words of Theophrastus are followed by the remark ταῦτα, φασίν, εἰπὼν ἀπέπνευσε. It is rare for ἀποπνέω to be used in the sense ‘die’ without a direct object (see below), and the similarity here makes it very likely that Diogenes (3rd c. AD) was echoing the *BM*.

ἀπέπνευσεν: ‘breathed his last’. In Homer ἀποπνείω ‘breathe out’ always has a direct object, and is used of death twice, with θυμὸν (IV.524, XIII.654). For this usage (referring to death, but with no direct object) cf. Nic. Dam. fr. 66.345 (1st c. BC), and above.

ἐφ’ ὕδατι: see *ad* 87 for the preposition, and *ad* 92 for the singular. Here ἐφ’ *a* is more apt than at 87 or 89, since it is significant for the plot that Psicharpax dies *on* the water and remains floating on the surface, where he can be seen by Leichopinax. For the expression cf. e.g. Call. *Ap.* 109 πολλὸν ἐφ’ ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει, and also the version of the *Fable of the Frog and the Mouse* found in the *Vita Aesopi*: κειμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος (133).

100 Λειχοπίναξ: ‘Lick-plate’. A πίναξ can be almost any flat man-made object, but a platter for food (i.141) is a hungry mouse’s most likely target. A mischievous allusion to Callimachus’ *Pinakes* is possible, but the other mouse names in the poem are devoid of any such literary humour. The name is re-used by Alciphron in *Ep.* 3.8, one of a series of letters to parasites, all of whom have appropriate compound names: Τραπεζολεϊκτής, Τρεχέδειπνος, etc. Various names in Alciphron echo elements from the *BM*: Ludwig collects them on p. 98, but particularly striking are Ὠκίμων 3.37 (Ὠκίμῃδης *BM* 214) and Βορβορόζωμος 3.42 (Βορβοροκοίτης *BM* 230). Only Leichopinax is actually repeated, however.

Leichopanax reappears in the battle: he is killed by Borborocoites at 230, sparking a struggle over his corpse.

ὄχθησιν ἐφεζόμενος μαλακῇσιν: probably based on xx.58 *ἐν λέκτροισι καθεζομένη μαλακοῖσιν (of Penelope); for μαλακός of the natural world, cf. v.72 λειμῶνες μαλακοί.

[100a], 101 These lines cannot coexist. 101 (everywhere but Z) is clearly preferable to 100a (Z, some *a* MSS), as the majority of editors have seen. The syntax of 100a is unusual: ἄγγελος ἦλθεν is a common expression in Homer (9x, *6x), but never with direct object, as here. μοίρας is suspect given μοῖραν at 102. 101 is also more sophisticated in its use of Homer, since δεινὸν δ' ἐξολόλυξε recalls iv.767 *ὥς εἰποῦσ' ὀλόλυξε and extends the connection between Leichopanax and Penelope begun at 100.

ἐξολόλυξε: a very rare word, perhaps the poet's coinage; only otherwise found in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (3rd c. AD), 10.19.1.

102 **χόλος αἰνός:** in Homer (XXII.94) the anger is that of a snake who waits by his hole; given that mice are also hole-dwellers, there may be humour here (particularly since a snake has just been indirectly responsible for Psicharpax' death). The phrase is also used by A.R. 1.614, of Aphrodite. ἔδυ χόλος + acc. is Homeric (*IX.553, *XIX.16).

103-4 Indebted to a couplet used twice in Homer to begin an assembly-scene (II.51, ii.7, modified II.443): αὐτὰρ ὁ (αἶψα δὲ ii.7) κηρύκεσσι λιγυφθόγγοισι κέλευσε | κηρύσσειν ἄγορῇ δὲ κάρη κομόωντας Ἀχαιούς. See *ad* 99-121.

103 ἐκέλευον: better represented in the early MSS, and used several times in Homer of collective approval of a decision (iv.673, vii.226, etc.). ἐκέλευσαν is used only at XXIII.823, of the Achaeans calling a halt to the duel between Ajax and Diomedes. It is a little superfluous for ‘all the Mice’ to instruct heralds to convene an assembly, rather than (as at xxiv.420) simply gathering in assembly themselves, but the poet is perhaps concerned more with Homeric atmosphere than with strict logic here.

ὑπ’ ὄρθρον: presumably here just ‘before dawn’, though ὄρθρος often means ‘the last part of the night’ rather than dawn itself (Hes. WD 577, Pl. Lg. 951d).

This is the first indication in the poem of a time-frame. 99-100 suggests that Leichopinax spotted Psicharpax almost immediately after he drowned; if he ran at once to the Mice, this would imply that the entire first section of the narrative took place at night-time. Alternatively we can assume that the assembly was gathered before dawn on the day *following* the death, or that hours elapsed between the death and Leichopinax’ discovery of the body. Certainly the second half of the poem takes place during a single day: the Mice assemble at dawn, and the battle is described at 303 as μονοήμερος.

104 κηρύσσειν ἀγορήν: the majority of MSS have κηρύσσειν ἀγορήν δ’, as at *II.51, i.e. ‘call (the Mice) to assembly’. However, almost all the *vett.* – *a* (except Q), *l* (as a correction in J), SZ – have simply ἀγορήν, ‘announce an assembly’: this supplies the otherwise absent direct object, and is more interesting as a variation from Homer.

δῶματα: as we move into the *BM*’s Iliadic second half, the poet generally becomes less concerned with the ‘real world’ (with the notable exception of the two arming sequences). The Mice and Frogs are depicted more consistently as straightforward Homeric heroes, and there is less discussion of their non-human aspects.

There is no indication of where Troxartes' δώματα are located or how they are constituted. If Calybe is both a genuine cottage or hut and a mouse city (see *ad* 30), the other mice must gather from elsewhere in the cottage, rather than e.g. from neighbouring buildings, but this is not made clear and does not seem to interest the poet.

105 πατρός δυστήνου Ψιχάρπαγος: ambiguous, but more likely to mean 'the unhappy father of Psicharpax' given the association between δυστήνος and bereaved fathers (see below on 112, where Troxartes calls himself δύστηνος). The dead are not usually δυστήνος in Homer, although cf. XI.80.

106 ἐξήπλωτο: 'was spread out, unfolded', from ἐξαπλόω: cf. 81.

νεκρὸν δέμας: although νεκρός is used adjectivally as early as Pindar (fr. 203) and δέμας is sometimes used of dead bodies in tragedy (e.g. *S. Ant.* 205), the two words almost never appear in combination: only otherwise in the *Christus Patiens* attributed to Gregory Nazianzenus, 853 and 2314. The echo of *ὥχρον δέμας (81) is probably accidental.

παρ' ὄχθαις: see *ad* 20.

107 ἐπενήχετο: impf. of ἐπινέχομαι 'swim/float upon'. Ael. NA 7.11.16 may allude to this line: an eagle once swooped down to feed on an octopus sunbathing on a rock. However, it became entangled in the octopus' tentacles and was dragged into the water, so that νεκρὸς ἐπενήχετο τῇ θαλάττῃ ὁ αἰτὸς. The verbal similarity could be coincidence, but this story – for which Aelian does not give a source – is in a sense a reversal of the *Fable of the Frog and the Mouse*: a bird pounces on aquatic prey, but rather

than the frog being pulled *out* of the water, it is the eagle (like the mouse) who is ensnared and drowned. Aelian hints at the fable's existence by commenting μυρία μὲν δὴ τοιαῦτα πάσχουσιν ὄρνιθες,¹³⁵ before making the relationship explicit: he gives his story a moral, claiming that such a fate lies in store for anyone who tries to harm another, τεύχων ὡς ἐτέρῳ τις ἐὼ κακὸν ἥπατι τεύχει. This is a rephrasing of the epimythium normally attached to the fable (see Introduction, p. 40). Aelian effectively simplifies the *Fable of the Frog and the Mouse*, reducing its players from three to two, while maintaining the moral lesson at its heart. He almost certainly knew the fable in its original form, but the presence of the (rare) verb here suggests that he knew the *BM*'s version as well. See also Ach. Tat. 1.1.3.2, describing Europa's journey to Crete: ἐν τῇ θαλάττῃ ταῦρος ἐπενήχετο. Given the relevance of the Europa-myth to the *BM* (see *ad* 65-81) there may be an allusion here too, although this is less secure.

πόντω: adds a note of epic grandeur. μέσσω ... πόντω recalls *μέσσω ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντω, 4x Homer, 3x referring to the wreck of Odysseus' ship.

108 ἄμ' ἡοῖ: *10x Homer. The closest parallel here is xiv.266-7 = xvii.435, οἱ δὲ βοῆς ἄϊοντες ἄμ' ἡοῖ φαينوμένηφι | ἦλθον, of the people gathering in a city to repel raiders: here too civic outrage leads to a vengeful counterattack (and the original aggressors are driven to panic).

109 εἶπε τε μῦθον: *5x Homer: see Introduction p. 57.

¹³⁵ Scholfield 1959 translates 'birds in fact suffer countless misadventures of this kind', but one could equally well read 'birds have been involved in many other such stories'.

110 **κακὰ πολλὰ πέπονθα:** *κακὰ πολλά is common in Homer (13x), but this phrase appears only at *xvii.284: the disguised Odysseus tells Eumaeus that he has suffered much κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ (xvii.285). It is not clear what Troxartes means: although he has evidently suffered κακὰ πολλὰ in losing three sons, his other losses were not ἐκ βατράχων. Either κακὰ πολλὰ here means ‘great evil’ rather than literally ‘many evils’, or we are to assume that Psicharpax’ death is not the first breach between the two tribes. See *ad* 99-121.

111 **ἡ πείρα κακὴ πάντεσσι:** *aZ*’s version, which also appears at *Etym. Magn.* 667.39 s.v. *πειρα*, is unmetrical: that of *S* requires the final –α of *μοῖρα* to scan long unnaturally. *I*’s version is metrical, but gives a bizarre sense: ‘although I alone have suffered many wrongs at the hands of the Frogs, for all of whom there is an evil fate’. εἰ καὶ in 110 thus goes unanswered. The sense of 111 must be ‘the Frogs pose a threat to all of us, not just to me’; nothing else would adequately complete the thought from 110. I follow most editors in printing this hybrid form, which is not attested in any MS but fits both metre and sense. Presumably at some stage in the *I* tradition the syntax was misunderstood, and the definite article ἡ was interpreted as a relative pronoun and altered to agree with βατράχων; this would have made nonsense of *πειρα*, and *μοῖρα* would have been an intelligent guess given e.g. XIII.602 *μοῖρα κακὴ θανάτοιο τέλος δέ.

πειρα: glossed by the scholia as a replacement *metri gratia* for either ἔργον or βλάβη. Moschopoulos gives more detail: *πειρα* σημαίνει δύο· τὴν ἀπόπειραν καὶ δοκιμήν, καὶ τὴν βλάβην. ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὴν βλάβην σημαίνει.

πάντεσσι τέτυκται: *XIV.246.

112-19 Troxartes' lament is strongly reminiscent of Priam: ὦ μοι ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέκον υἱὰς ἀρίστους / Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ' οὐ τινὰ φημι λελεῖφθαι (XXIV.255-6 ~ XXIV.493-4). He too lists three sons he has lost, although unlike Troxartes he names them. Aegyptius at ii.15-24 (see above) is a less accurate match: in his case the 'three sons' trope refers to his three *surviving* sons.

112 εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος: *ἐγὼ δύστηνος begins Andromache's lament for Hector at XXII.477. It is perhaps also worth noting E. Hipp. 337ff., where Phaedra lists her mother's and sister's misfortunes before concluding τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὥς ἀπόλλυμαι (341). Both δύστηνος and ἐλεεινός *IZ* are associated with bereaved fathers in general and with Priam in particular: δυστήνων δέ τε παῖδες ἐμῷ μένει ἀντιόωσιν (VI.127 = XXI.151), τον δ' ὁ γέρων ἐλεεινὰ προσηύδα (XXII.37), πρὸς δ' ἐμὲ τὸν δύστηνον ἔτι φρονέοντ' ἐλέησον (XXII.59), ὥμωξεν δ' ἐλεεινὰ πατὴρ φίλος (XXII.408), ἐγὼ δ' ἐλεεινότερός περ (XXIV.504). Troxartes is described as πατὴρ δύστηνου Ψιχάρπαγος at 105.

113-14 Absent in Z, which has a three-line gap in their place: slight discolouration suggests that original text may have been washed off, although the operation has been performed extremely carefully and no visible traces remain. A later hand has added in the gap two verses which give the required sense but show no understanding of the hexameter. Ludwich, in keeping with his general overconfidence in Z, nevertheless tried to reconstruct the text on the assumption that this was the original reading.

113 Echoed in Diodorus Siculus' account of the hunting of a giant snake (3.36.7):

Introduction, p. 12. This may be coincidence, but Diodorus' *floruit* (mid-1st c. BC) makes it possible that he knew the *BM*.

114 See *ad* 9. The detail that the weasel snatched the mouse 'outside his hole', if not merely common sense, may be an allusion to the *Fable of the Mice and the Weasel*, in which the weasel is only able to kill the mice who are prevented by their oversized headgear from retreating into their holes. Allen's decision to print ἔχθιστος, the reading of *a*, is curious: γαλήη is always feminine.

115 ἄνδρες ἀπηνέες: ἀπηνής is Homeric (11x) but only ever in the singular. Opp. *H.* 1.727-31 perhaps draws on this line to describe birds mourning their young, stolen by *φῶτες ἀπηνέες ἢ δράκοντες (731): in both cases 'cruel men' along with natural predators are identified as threats to young animals.

εἰλξαν: ἔκταν *aZ* is Homeric (*X.526), but makes much less sense after ἐς μόρον and is more likely as a gloss or correction. ἐς μόρον ἔλκω is not found before the *BM*, but is later used by both Gregory Nazianzenus (594.2, 1494.5) and Nonnus (*D.* 2.12 and esp. 20.151 *εἰς μόρον ἔλκων).

116-17 Often identified (e.g. Wölke p. 136 n. 11, Glei *ad loc.*) as modelled on Call. *Aet.* fr.

54c.¹³⁶ The parallels, however, are not significant:

¹³⁶ Glei says that Barnes 1711 had already noticed the similarity between *BM* 116-17 and the Callimachus passage. He does not give a citation, and I have been unable to find any such note. Barnes certainly noted the similarities to Callimachus in *BM* 180 (p. 19), as well as suggesting a link between *BM* [51] and Call. *Cer.* 110 (pp. 4-5); in each case, since he believed the *BM* to be

BM 116-7 καινότεραις τέχναις ξύλινον δόλον ἐξευρόντες,

ἦν παγίδα καλέουσι, μῶν ὀλέτειραν ἐοῦσαν

Call. fr. 54c.16-17 ...ἔπει σμίνθοις κρυπτὸν ἔτευχε δόλον·

ἐν δ' ἐτίθει παγίδεσσιν ὀλέθρια δείλατα δοιαῖς...

Troxartes' sons have been slain by what we may assume were the two most familiar mouse-killers to an ancient audience: the weasel and the trap. The fact that the word δόλος recurs in two separate descriptions of a trap is not surprising, especially given the Homeric precedent (see below). The only really noticeable verbal similarity is ὀλέθρια/ὀλέτειραν, and here it is equally likely that the *BM* poet had in mind XVIII.114 νῦν δ' εἴμ' ὄφρα φίλης κεφαλῆς ὀλετῆρα κιχείω. Although the *BM* is certainly indebted to Callimachus in general (p. 8) and the Molercus episode in particular, there is little evidence for specific verbal allusion here. See further *ad* 117.

Adrian Kelly has suggested (*per litt.*) that the three deaths of Troxartes' sons programmatically represent the poet's generic influences: the weasel stands for animal epic, the trap for Callimachus and hence the Hellenistic literary aesthetic, and the frog for fable. I am not sure that the poet himself would have compartmentalised his debts so precisely; in particular, I do not think he would have regarded animal epic and fable as completely distinct. If we assume that the *GM* or something very like it already existed, this would have appeared to a Hellenistic audience as a clever literary treatment of a story-motif familiar from fable (particularly *The Mice and their Generals*, Introduction p. 42, but also from the other fables which involved enmity between mice and weasels).

The *BM* poet was elevating a different mouse-fable, *The Mouse and the Frog*, to the same

genuinely archaic, he assumed that Callimachus was the imitator. The two 'mousetrap' passages, however, do not seem to have been connected before Wölke.

level of literary (mock-) solemnity. He would therefore not have seen the ‘frog’ of fable as an influence separate from the ‘weasel’ of beast-epic, which itself originated in fable. It is also strange that, in a programmatic statement of his models, there should be no place for the *Iliad* itself. Kelly’s idea is a very appealing one, but I prefer to see Troxartes’ sons as a more straightforward bid to establish frogs as a third ‘canonical’ nemesis for mice, along with weasels and the works of men.

116 ξύλινον δόλον: *aZ* have μόρον, as do the scholia on both *E. Or.* 788 and *S. Ant.* 100 (a rare citation of the *BM* in ancient scholarship on Classical literature), but this has almost certainly been imported by mistake from 115. δόλος meaning ‘trap’ is found from Homer onwards (viii.276, the net which catches Aphrodite and Ares; viii.494, the Trojan Horse); cf. Harder 2012, v. 2 p. 449. Ludwich reads *ξύλινος δόλος at *Orac. Sib.* 11.135, again referring to the Trojan Horse; Geffcken 1902 reads δόμος, but either way a borrowing from the *BM* is likely.

117 Although this line sounds suspiciously like an explanation of the kenning ξύλινον δόλον, it is found in all MSS and there is no compelling reason to delete it. The long -α in παγίδα is unusual, but has parallels in Homer (West 1982a pp. 38-9; see also Olson and Sens 1999 p. 40).

παγίδα: first securely attested in Aristophanes (*Av.* 194, 527), of bird-traps. We have no evidence for the introduction of the mousetrap to Greece, although Callimachus was clearly familiar with them. That Troxartes regards them as an innovation (καινοτέραις τέχναις, 116) may be an attempt to give a sense of the ‘mythic past’ – in the same way Homer’s warriors can throw stones no modern man could lift, the *BM*’s

Mice live in those bygone days when the mousetrap was still new-fangled technology.

Livrea 1979 suggested that the story of Molorcus in Call. fr. 54c was an *aition* for the invention of the mouse-trap, which would increase the Callimachean resonances here; but Harder 2012 points out (v. 2 p. 439) that ‘strictly speaking Molorcus only seems to prepare the mouse-traps ... there are no indications that he invents them’.

ὀλέτειραν: ‘destroyer’, a rare word; the masculine ὀλετήρ appears once in Homer (XVIII.114, above) and once in Alcman fr. 93. μυὸς ὄλεθρος, a ‘mouse-death’, was proverbial (Philem. fr. 211, Men. fr. 219), and μυῶν ὀλέτειραν echoes it, perhaps intentionally. The point of the expression is not wholly clear: Ael. NA 12.10 says it comes from the fact that the bodies of mice which die of natural causes gradually dissolve into thin air, and the *Paroemiae* of Diogenianus add εἴρηται δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπράκτως ἀποθανόντων (6.66). Nic. Th. 735 μυιάων ὀλετήρος is phonetically similar, although this may be coincidence.

118 ὁ τρίτος ἦν ἀγαπητός: a witty allusion to ii.365, *μοῦνος ἐὼν ἀγαπητός (of Telemachus). *ἀγαπητός also appears at iv.817, in a passage which bears a faint structural similarity to this one. The MSS are confused: the majority reading ὁ τρίτος δ’ ἦν is unmetrical, but ὁ τρίτος ἦν ZY or τρίτος δ’ ἦν QT are both viable, as is Janko’s conjecture ὅς τρίτος ἦν. West’s ὅς δ’ ἔτ’ ἦν is ingenious but unnecessary.

119 ἀπέπνιξεν: the same verb is used in the ‘dodecasyllable’ version of *The Mouse and the Frog* (246): αὐθις δὲ ὁ μῦς εἰσελθὼν ἀπεπνίγη. *l*’s less vivid ἀπέκτεινε(ν) looks like banalisation or an imported gloss.

βάτραχος ... ἄξας: the reading of S, a hybrid of two quite different versions but more plausible than either. ἔξοχον ἄλλων is used negatively once in Homer (v.118, of the gods), but the notion of pre-eminence in being κακός is unnatural: the *BM* uses it at *21 and (adapted) at *260, and it would be an obvious if banal correction here – Physignathus did not technically ‘drag (Ps.) down to the deep’. Such a description better suits the fable, in which the mouse is literally tied to the frog with string, though the imprecision is understandable in this emotive speech.¹³⁷ Φυσίγναθος, however, is much more logical as an interlinear gloss on βάτραχος κακός than *vice versa*, besides which the *IS* reading continues the sequence of thought better: ‘my first son was killed by a weasel, my second by a trap, and now my third by a wicked frog’. Gregory Nazianzenus offers additional support: 912.3 *κακὸν ἐς βυθὸν ἔρπειν.

ἄξας: from ἄγω. West follows one late MS in reading ἄξας, but the change is unnecessary.

120 ἄλλ’ ἄγεθ’: *15x in Homer, always (as here) in a speech of persuasion.

ἐξέλθωμεν: this form of the verb is used only once in Homer: viii.100, of Alcinous beginning the athletic contests. It may therefore add to the intimations that the coming battle is a rather less serious engagement than those of the *Iliad*: cf. *ad* 302-3.

[121] Missing in *aZ* and undoubtedly a later creation: it serves no real purpose, and has been spliced together from the first half of 153 and the second half of VI.418. Althaus

¹³⁷ The meaning ‘having *carried* him out into the *deep water*’ is possible but less likely: ἐς βυθόν normally means ‘into the depths’, as at e.g. A. *Supp.* 408, S. *Aj.* 1083.

thought it had been inserted to patch up a lacuna ('versus genuinus periit'), but Troxartes' speech can end at 120 without difficulty.

[123] Missing in *aZ*; a puzzling (and pointless) line which I follow Ludwich and West in deleting. Ares' direct involvement in events at this stage would make nonsense of the later scenes on Olympus where the gods discuss whether to take sides, so the sense has to be allegorical (as e.g. at II.381). Wölke (p. 141) judged this defensible, since the *BM* later uses ἔργον Ἀρης (130) in a similar way; but for an allegorical Ares to be πολέμοιο μεμηλώς like an Iliadic hero (XIII.297, 469) is bizarre.

124-31 κνημίδας μὲν πρῶτα begins the standard Iliadic arming sequence which appears in more or less complex forms at III.330-8 (Paris), XI.17-46. (Agamemnon), XVI.131-44 (Patroclus), and XIX.369-91 (Achilles). Having adopted the 'traditional' beginning, the *BM* goes on to use entirely different language, but largely follows the order of this sequence – omitting the sword and reversing the last two items:

<u>Iliad</u>	<u>BM</u>
greaves (κνημίδας)	greaves (κνημίδας)
corslet (θώρακα)	corslet (θώρακας)
sword (ξίφος)	shield (ἀσπίς)
shield (σάκος, ἀσπίδα)	spear (λόγχη)
helmet (κυνέην, τρυφάλειαν)	helmet (κόρυς)
spear(s) (ἔγχος, δοῦρε)	

The arming sequence at III.330-8 was a crux of Hellenistic scholarship. Zenodotus, perhaps disturbed by the fact that Paris never uses his sword, emended the order to

greaves, corslet, helmet, shield, spear. He was criticised for this by other scholars, who objected that shield-bands cannot be fitted over a helmet (e.g. Σ A *ad Il.* XI.32). Rengakos 2001 suggested that Apollonius responds to Zenodotus' adjustment in Aietes' arming sequence at *Arg.* 3.1225ff. (corslet, helmet, shield, spear, with no mention of a sword). Kelly 2014 points out that the *BM*'s response is arguably more sophisticated again: it follows Zenodotus (and hence Apollonius) in omitting the sword and placing the spear directly after the shield, but acknowledges the more practical concerns of the scholiasts by making sure the helmet does not precede the shield. As a result, the Mice arm in a sequence which is subtly different to that of either a Homeric or Apollonian hero. On arming scenes in Homer, see generally Armstrong 1958; also Kirk 1985 *ad* 330-8.

Glei (p. 152) also notes that where Homer describes the *action* of his heroes arming, the *BM* describes the *state* of being armed. Since there are multiple mice, to maintain the style of 124 might suggest that they were all arming in perfect unison!

124 ἐφήρμοσαν εἰς δύο μηρούς: *a*'s version (which requires πρῶτα PY *metri gratia*) is an almost exact quotation of III.330 *et al.*, but with ἔθεντο for ἔθηκε. *a*'s credibility is diminished by the general confusion of its MSS over this line and 125: only P's version is metrically viable, and περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθεντο 124 is unlikely to have been followed by κνήμας ἐκάλυπτον 125. *IZ*'s reading has generally been judged impossible, since κνημῖδες are not worn on the thighs; Barnes' suggestion of εἰς δύο μοῖρας – based on 265 and governed by ῥήξαντες in the next line – has been widely followed (although Fusillo, notably, retains μηρούς without comment). However, this leaves ἐφήρμοσαν without a secondary object, which is strange in its transitive use (cf. Hes. *Op.* 76, X. *Ages.* 8.8.1). The leg of a mouse is mostly thigh, with only a very vestigial 'shin' before the foot

(see Image 3). For a mouse to wear greaves on its shins would require tiny pieces of material that would offer no protection: we would expect mouse leg-armour to come partway up the thigh. δύο μηρούς also makes clear something not stated in the poem so far, i.e. that the Mice will fight standing on their hind feet: it would be pointless to say a human warrior strapped greaves to his 'two legs' or similar, but the Mice *are* only attaching greaves to two of their legs, since the other two will be occupied with spear and shield (129-30). For all these reasons I prefer to keep the transmitted text, as a line which neatly adapts the business of Homeric arming to the peculiarities of mouse anatomy.

125 **κυάμους:** probably the broad (or fava) bean, *Vicia faba* (*DNP* s.v. 'Bohnen', LSJ s.v. κυάμος). Mentioned in Homer (see on 131). The part used by the Mice must be the pod, as the bean itself would not be an obvious choice for armour and would also be hard to 'break': the Mice are splitting open the pods and using their leathery skin. A broad bean pod is far too long to provide greaves for a single mouse, which explains why further crafting is required (126) and also makes Barnes' conjecture in 124 less likely.

εὗ δ' ἀσκήσαντες: a noun after κυάμους is unlikely, since it would confuse the syntax of οὗς in the following line, and therefore *l*'s reading (for which cf. 163) is to be preferred. *a*'s version may have been suggested by κνήμας ἀμφεκάλυψαν at 161.

126 **ἐπιστάντες κατέτρωξαν:** the expression refers to the Mice gnawing the bean pods into sections small enough to be worn on their hind legs (see above). Glei (p. 153) suspected corruption by proximity with ἐπισταμένως 128, calling this sense of ἐφίστημι

‘ein recht schwacher Sinn’; but the MSS are unanimous, and the transmitted reading is not weak enough to justify interference. κατέτρωξαν is used again at 182 to describe the Mice damaging Athene’s dress.

127-8 These lines appear after 131 in *a*, but this would violate the *BM*’s observance of the Homeric arming-sequence, as well as failing to correspond properly with 161ff.

127 **καλαμοστεφών:** *hapax*: the scholia offer either ‘twined around with reeds’, ἐστεμμένων ἐν τῷ καλάμῳ, or ‘stretched across reeds’, ἐν καλάμοις τεταμένων (i.e. ‘dried’?). *Z*’s reading has been crossed out and replaced with καλῶν εὐτραφών, no improvement on *I*’s metrically impossible καλῶν εὐτρεφών. Editors have suggested various conjectures, of which van Herwerden’s bold καλαμορραφών ‘stitched with reeds’ (p. 167) is the least unconvincing.

Whatever epithet originally stood here must have described either the quality of the skin, or the means by which the Mice turned it into armour. Simply cleaning and drying animal skin produces rawhide, which would make very ineffective armour: dry rawhide is not particularly pliable and would not fit the body well. If the Mice have made true leather, they must also have tanned the hide – a process which requires tannin, traditionally extracted from the bark or leaves of a number of plant species. κάλαμος is a non-specific term used of many different types of plant (LSJ s.v. lists eight). The most logical purpose for κάλαμος in manufacturing hide armour would be as a source of tannin, but this presupposes an extraordinary level of organised industry for a tribe which in the previous line was crafting greaves by nibbling them down to size.

στεφάνη and στεφανόω are sometimes used in Homer of wargear. Terror *περὶ* ... ἐστεφάνωται Athene's aegis (V.739); Menelaus' helmet at X.30 is a στεφάνη, and the face of the Gorgon on Agamemnon's shield is 'circled', ἐστεφάνωτο, by the bands of metal around it. None of these involve a breastplate. The θώρηξ in Homer is usually commended either for its workmanship (πολυδαίδαλος III.358 etc., δαίδαλεος VIII.195, πυκινός XV.529) or its brightness/polish (νεοσμήκτος XIII.342, φαεινότερος πυρρός αὐγῆς XVIII.610). The special θώρηξ of Achilles at XVI.133-4 is ποικίλος ἀστερόεις, which combines both qualities. In the Achaean advance at XIX.361 the corslets are κραταιγύαλοι, 'strongly-hollowed'. Where details of a corslet's materials are given, it is simply χάλκεος (e.g. XIII.371), with two exceptions: the incredibly ornate θώρηξ of Agamemnon at XI.24-8, decorated with forty-two 'circles' of precious metal (discussed by Hainsworth 1993 *ad loc.*); and that of Asteropaeus, given as a consolation prize to Eumelus at XXIII.560-2, which is bronze ὃ περὶ χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο / ἀμφιδεδίνηται. Gray 1954 thought that this meant the entire piece was plated in tin, but Richardson 1993 *ad loc.* finds in favour of a band of tin overlay running around the corslet.

Both Asteropaeus and Eumelus are connected to Psicharpax: see *ad* 24-55 and 96. If *καλαμοστεφέων* is correct (which is by no means certain), *κάλαμος* is most likely envisaged as some sort of embellishment or accessory added to the leather of the corslets: perhaps practically, as a fastening mechanism akin to the ζωστήρ of the Iliadic warrior (cf. Leaf 1883), or perhaps for purely decorative purposes like Asteropaeus' tin overlay. A wide piece of straw, tied around the waist, would make a war-belt of about the right size for a mouse, and the θώρηξ could then plausibly be described as 'straw-encircled' or 'straw-bound'.

ἀπὸ βυσσῶν: slightly unexpected, given that the Mice have skinned one weasel (128), and therefore have only one hide. The sense must be ‘*pieces* of hide’: if *καλαμοστεφίων* carries the meaning suggested above, then the weasel’s original hide has already been modified. See also *ad* 162.

128 Continuing the adherence to Homeric norms, we are given a kind of provenance for the corslet (but not for the other items): Paris’ corslet was borrowed from his brother Lycaon (III.332-3), Agamemnon’s was a gift from the Cypriot hero Cinyras (XI.19-20), and Patroclus’ is described as ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο (XVI.133-4). The corslets of the Mice also used to ‘belong’ to someone else, though since a mouse could hardly reuse armour taken from a weasel, the image has to be altered somewhat. Ernesti’s objections (‘sed ex una mustela quomodo tot muribus thoraces?’) are a triumph of practicality over poetry.

ἐποίησαν: makes better sense with ἐπισταμένως than ἐφόρησαν *IZ*, especially of corslets: wearing armour, certainly leather armour, is not really a matter of skill.

129 The distinction between interior and exterior spheres seen already in the discussion of foodstuffs (see *ad* 31-55) continues here: the Mice make use of man-made objects for their wargear (lamp-lids, needles), whereas the Frogs’ armoury is exclusively drawn from the natural world. All the earlier MSS have ἀσπίς δ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς λύχνου, producing a seven-foot line; the *recc.* solve the problem by dropping αὐτοῖς.

μεσόμφαλον: the term is not mentioned elsewhere in ancient sources, but was presumably a lid which fitted over the central opening in a lamp and made it harder for the oil reservoir to spill or catch fire. Hero of Alexandria refers to the central hole as the ὀμφαλός of the lamp (*Pneu.* 2.24.16). Lamp-covers could be made of clay (Radt 1986, p.

46; Howland 1958, p. 79 and n. 72) or metal (Perlzweig 1963, plate 14); Radt also describes wooden plugs which could be used to block the central hole (p. 45), but these would have been the wrong shape to serve as shields. A small, slightly dished circle of hard material would have made a very convenient mouse-sized equivalent to the round shields seen in artistic depictions of Homeric heroes; metal would have been of more practical use than clay, but the frog shields are made of cabbage (163), so the arms race is hardly a heated one.

Theft of oil from lamps was a crime associated with mice in the ancient world. The mice in Call. fr. 54c infuriate the peasant by dipping their tails into the lamp-oil and licking it off, and Ar. Byz. mentions the same habit (*Epit.* 2.368.1); ‘Lamp-nibble’ is the name of a mouse in the *Catomyomachia* (p. 86), and the cat in τὰ Σχέδη τοῦ Μυός criticises the mouse for draining the oil from the monks’ lamps. Howland 1958 mentions mice as decorations on lamps (p. 79; no. 364), and the bronze lid in Perlzweig 1963, which dates from the Roman period, is in fact adorned with a particularly lovable mouse. (Perlzweig identifies the μεσόμφαλος with the raised indentation found in the floor of some lamps, like the punt in a wine-bottle (plate 13), but it is hard to see how this could have served as a shield without the mouse being forced to wield the entire lamp.)

130 εὐμήκης βελόνη: nearly all MSS other than Z have the plural εὐμήκεις βελόναι, despite the surrounding singulars.

παγχάλκεον: a nice piece of parodic elevation, with a grand epithet usually reserved for heroic weaponry in epic and tragedy (e.g. viii.403, A. *Th.* 591, E. *Heracl.* 276, S. *Ant.* 143).

ἔργον Ἄρηος; the previous use of this phrase at 4 matches Homeric usage in referring to combat in general (cf. also Hes. *WD* 145-6, A.R. 2.989, *et al.*); its use here to mean a physical object is unique. The joke is perhaps that, unlike a spear, a needle is not in fact designed for combat.

131 ἐπὶ κροτάφοις ἐρεβίνθου: -οῖσι καρύου (καρύων) *I.* Both chickpeas and nuts would yield plausible helmets for mice, but the former is certainly correct. XIII.589 compares Paris' arrow rebounding from Menelaus' breastplate to the κύαμοι μελανόχροες ἢ ἐρέβινθοι which scatter during threshing. The Mice have already used κύαμοι for their greaves: what could be more appropriate for the armour of Homeric mice than the only two vegetables which actually appear during a Homeric battle-scene? (*I*'s reading may have arisen from a concern that chickpea shells were not solid enough to serve as helmets, to which one can only reply that the Frogs' cabbage-leaves have little chance of standing up to a bronze needle.)

132-167: declaration of war; third speech of Physignathus; the Frogs arm themselves

132 ἔνοπλοι: Barnes conjectures ἐν ὅπλοις *metri gratia*, but correption at the bucolic diaeresis is not technically required (Glei, p. 155; cf. 157 ἐκείνῳ εὐθύ), particularly not in a text which frequently violates Callimachean 'best practice' (see Introduction, p. 80), and does not justify altering a unanimous reading.

ὥς δ' ἐνόησαν: *ὥς δ' ἐνόησε, as well as appearing in 215 and the spurious 217, is used only by Bion and Gregory Nazianzenus (1484.5; see Introduction, p. 83).

133 ἐξάνεδυσαν: a relatively rare verb used in the *Odyssey* to describe a herd of seals emerging onto dry land (iv.405), an image which the poet may be attempting to suggest here. The notion of the amphibious Frogs emerging from the pond to hold their council is reminiscent of the rivers and nymphs assembling on Olympus at the beginning of *Il.* XX.

ἐς δ' ἓνα χῶρον: suggests ἐς χῶρον ἓνα, 2x Homer (IV.446 = VIII.60), of the Greek and Trojan armies colliding at the start of a day's fighting. It foreshadows the battle to come, but the reuse of a violent phrase to describe a peaceful assembly may also be deliberate variation: cf. *ad* 170.

134 βουλήν ... πολέμοιο: from a Homeric perspective a βουλή πολέμοιο is almost an oxymoron, as πόλεμος and βουλή in the *Iliad* are the two opposing spheres in which a man can excel: whenever the words appear near each other they tend to be contrasted (II.202, II.273, XII.213, *et al.*). On the other hand, the concept of a council of war in response to enemy action is obviously Iliadic – the Greeks hold one at the beginning of Book IX, the Trojans at XVIII.245-313.

135 Like the arming-sequence at 124-31, the resurrections in the poem's final third, and the potential reference to *dissologia* at 61, this line seems to allude to an issue of Homeric scholarship. The *Etymologicum Genuinum* A s.v. μῦθος records: μῦθος· ἡ στάσις· παρ' Ὅμηρῳ ἅπαξ εἴρηται ἐν φ' Ὀδυσσειᾶς, οἷον “μύθου ποιήσασθαι ἐπισχεσίην” (xvi.71). It then gives two parallels: a fragment of Anacreon (fr. 8) which uses μυθιῖται as a synonym for στασιασταί, and a corrupt line from Panyassis (fr. 29) which has been restored as διχθάδιός ποτε μῦθος· ἄναξ μετεμέμβλετο λαῶν.

Matthews 1974, pp. 135-6 argues that μῦθος in the *Odyssey* passage has nothing to do with στάσις, since the expression means something like ‘putting forward the offer of a pretext’ (supported by Fernández-Galiano *ad loc.* in Russo *et al.* 1992), and that Anacreon’s use of μυθιῆται referred to a specific political party in Samos and was not a general term for partisans; he also suggests, however, that Anacreon’s term may have passed into more widespread use, and that Panyassis may have come to know μῦθος as a synonym for στάσις while on Samos. At any rate, the author of the *Etym. Gen.* considered μῦθος a Homeric *hapax* for στάσις, and it seems likely he had inherited this belief from earlier scholarship: the V-scholia on xxi.71 comment μύθου] νῦν τῆς στάσεως, and quote the Anacreon fragment.

In *BM* 135, the Frogs are shown ‘investigating whence came the στάσις or what the μῦθος was’. In other words, they are philologists: like the scholars of Alexandria, they are exploring the origins of the word στάσις (never found in Homer) and the meaning of μῦθος (its possible Homeric equivalent). The joke is not sustained, and the following lines do not build on the identification between Frogs and scholars (although 138 does include a reference to a genuinely unique usage in Homer), but it is the most concise of the poem’s nods to contemporary academic study of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and demonstrates once again how familiar the poet must have been with that world.

θρύλλος, ‘uproar’, is a much later word – not securely attested until Epiphanius of Salamis’ *Panarion* (4th c. AD) – and would have been a good substitution for an editor who missed the joke and thought μῦθος was too far from the required sense; the scholia generally gloss μῦθος as referring to the ‘report’ of the impending war, like φάτιν at 138 (e.g. Σ Λ^d ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ αἰτία τῆς κινήσεως αὐτῶν).

136 A hybrid of two Homeric half-lines: κῆρυξ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε (*viii.62, 261) and ἔχε δὲ ῥάβδον μετὰ χειρσί (*xxiv.2). The arrival of the herald with a declaration of war, on the other hand, is post-Homeric, and first appears in Thucydides (1.29; cf. Lateiner 1977). The *BM* poet needed to give his Frogs fair warning of battle, in order to enable the following speech and arming sequence.

ῥάβδον: in Homer the σκῆπτρον is the symbol of kings, sometimes carried by heralds; the ῥάβδος is a magical implement held only by gods and those with supernatural powers, except at xii.251, where it is a fishing-rod.

μετὰ χειρσί: a characteristically Homeric expression (20x); 6x in the *Hymns*, 2x in Hesiod, and only very sparingly elsewhere in Greek lit. (1x each in Sophocles, Callimachus, Theocritus, and Aratus). It is also used by Matro (fr. 1.31).

137 An adaptation of V.468 Αἰνείας υἱὸς μεγάλῃτορος Ἀγχίσαιο, although the *BM* puts the father's name first.

Τυρογλύφου: 'Cheese-carver', *hapax*.

Ἐμβασίχυτρος: 'Pot-explorer'. The sense of ἐμβαίνω here is ambiguous: it could mean 'one who climbs *on* pots' (cf. V.199 ἵπποισι καὶ ἄρμασιν ἐμβεβαῶτα), 'one who climbs *into* pots' (cf. the famous maxim ποταμῷ οὐκ ἔστιν δις τῷ αὐτῷ ἐμβῆναι, Heraclit. 91), or even 'one who swims in pots' (ἐμβασις is a bath in e.g. Arist. fr. 236; cf. Babr. 60, ζωμοῦ χύτρῃ μῦς ἐμπесών...). The word recurs only in Τὰ σχέδη τοῦ μύος (see Introduction, pp. 90-1), whose author clearly understood it as referring to the mouse's greed: the work begins with the injunction οἶδατε δὲ ὡς τὸ ζῶον λίχνον ἐστὶ καὶ κατὰ τὸν Ποιητὴν ἐμβασίχυτρον.

Embasichytrus goes on to achieve noteworthy success in the battle scene, killing Seutlaeus at 209 and Phitraeus at 226. That the *embassy* to the Frogs is undertaken by *Embasichytrus* is pleasing coincidence: the English word is descended from Lat. *ambactus* ‘servant’ rather than from ἐμβάινω.

138 **φάτιν: aZ**, vs. ἔριν *l.* Glei (p. 156) declared this problem insoluble, but there is good reason to prefer *aZ*’s reading. φάτις in Homer is used with the required sense of ‘news, report’ only of the Suitors’ deaths (xxiii.362). Physignathus’ speech (see below on 152) casts the frog king as Odysseus immediately after the *Mnesterophonia*, balancing the identification of Troxartes with Eupeithes; the use of φάτις here reinforces the allusion. ἔρις is κακή occasionally in Homer (iii.161, III.7, XI.529), but the ἔρις π(τ)ολέμοιο always means a battle *in progress* (e.g. XIV.389, XVII.253).

140 **εἰπεῖν**: the unmarked change of subject would be too abrupt if Embasichytrus were meant: the sense must be ‘the Mice have sent you instructions to arm’, not ‘the Mice have sent *me* to tell you to arm’. Cf. X. *An.* 7.1.31 καὶ νῦν μοι δοκεῖ πέμψαντας Ἀναξιβίῳ εἰπεῖν ὅτι..., ‘and I think now we should send to Anaxibius to say...’. εἶπον *a* would require a following τε.

πτόλεμόν τε: found only in a tiny minority of MSS, but necessary *metri gratia* for the majority πόλεμόν τε.

141 **ὅν περ**: emphatic rather than concessive: ‘the same Psicharpax whom...’

142 ἄλλὰ μάχεσθε: ἄλλὰ used to introduce a suggestion (Denniston p. 9): ‘so come now...’. The poet may have been inspired by *Il.* XV: during a battle at the water’s edge, Hector calls ἄλλὰ μάχεσθ’ (XV.494), though not in this *sedes*, and Ajax tells the Greeks that Hector invites them not to dance, *ἄλλὰ μάχεσθαι (XV.508). The *BM*’s expression preserves the syntax of one and the metrical position of the other.

143 A real declaration of war would hardly address itself only to ‘whichever of you among the Frogs are the champions’. Perhaps the *BM* is satirising the general absence of the rank-and-file in the *Iliad*, but the poet has more likely fallen back on the nearest Homeric equivalent to this scene – Hector’s challenge to the Achaean heroes (ὕμῃν δ’ ἐν γὰρ ἔασιν ἀριστῆες Παναχαιῶν VII.73).

144 εἰς οὐατα πάντων: Glei objects to *I*’s reading as ‘Nichtssagend’, and argues that since Homer has a repeated line describing a shocked reaction to a speech - ὥς ἔφαθ’ · οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ (III.95 *et al.*) – the poet could have used it: ‘daß er es nicht tut, beweist, daß er etwas anderes sagen wollte’ (p. 158). The *BM*, of course, is characterised by its reluctance to adopt whole lines from Homer, preferring in most cases to use original phrasing (see Introduction, p. 55). μυῶν *aZ* is no less otiose (‘the word of the Mice’), and the syntax is clearer if the possessive genitive follows the relevant noun directly: cf. Q. S. 8.253 *εἰς οὐατα Τρώων. Conjectures such as Nauck’s οὐατ’ ἀμύμων are unnecessary. The poet may have been influenced, consciously or not, by his own use of ἐς οὐατα πᾶσι βαλέσθαι in 5.

145 ἐτάραξε φρένας: a tragic, rather than Homeric, expression: E. *Ion* 1538 and *Hipp.* 969, S. *Ant.* 1095.

ἀγέρωχων: *5x *Il.* of the Trojans, *1x of the Rhodians; the Mysians are also *ἀγέρωχοι at X.430. This contributes to the identification of the Frogs (the defenders) with the Trojans: see Introduction, pp. 48-9.

146 The fact that the Frogs react to Embasichytrus' message by turning on their king is ominous, especially given that the Mice were unanimous in their support of Troxartes. Physignathus rescues the situation, but the poet is already setting up the generally poor performance by the frog champions during the battle. Cf. the way public discontent signals Paris' culpability, e.g. when his refusal to give Helen back (VII.362-4) is followed by Idaeus' comment ἢ μὴν Τρῳῆς γε κέλονται (393).

ἀναστᾶς: *8x Homer, in the *Iliad* usually of a hero standing up to speak (e.g. I.387, XXIII.542; cf. XXIV.11). As the mouse arming scene has already suggested, and as the battle will make clear, the poet envisages both Mice and Frogs standing on their hind legs to talk and fight.

147-59 Glei (p. 159) calls Physignathus' speech 'ein psychologisches und rhetorisches Meisterstück'. This is generous, but the Frog King certainly turns the situation round with impressive speed: five lines after being blamed for murder, he is rallying his forces for a counterattack on the δολίους μύας. Glei correctly notes that he technically avoids untruth: οὐκ ἔκτεινον ἐγὼ μῦν, οὐδὲ κατεῖδον ὀλλύμενον is perfectly accurate. On the other hand, his subsequent suggestion that the mouse drowned while 'playing around' and 'trying to swim like the Frogs' – which introduces the undertone of contempt for

non-swimmers which he makes more explicit later in the speech – is hardly sympathetic, and the speech as a whole gives the impression of a slippery demagogue attempting to hide behind a smokescreen of anti-mouse rhetoric, rather than a king defending himself nobly against false accusations.

Greek literature shows a consistent connection between swimming and civilisation (Hall 1994): the ability to swim is a prized signifier of good Greek masculinity, and those who cannot survive in the water are regularly characterised as barbarous, effeminate, or in some way inferior. The reader is not necessarily meant to share Physignathus' scorn for τοὺς ἀκολύμβους, but the frog king *is* participating in a long-established literary tradition by denigrating non-swimmers.

147 ὦ φίλοι: echoes the beginning of Troxartes' speech at 110, reinforcing the parallelism between the two sequences.

οὐκ ἔκτεινον ἐγὼ μῦν: Ph. affects complete ignorance of the crime he is meant to have committed. He continues this strategy at 157 with ἐκεῖνω: see *ad loc.*

148-9 παίζων παρὰ λίμνην ... μιμούμενος: a clever piece of rhetoric which couples a suggestion of Psicharpax' youthful folly with a note of jingoistic pride calculated to appeal to his audience: the Mice, envious of the Frogs' amphibious nature, try and swim like they do. The implication is that Ps. paid the price for his own recklessness. Haeberlin 1896 (p. 1393-4) saw an allusion here to fr. 4.2 of the *Titanomachy* attributed to Eumelus or Arctinus (*ap. Athen.* 7.5.32), νήχοντες παίζουνσι δι' ὕδατος ἀμβροσίω. Wölke (p. 217 n. 19) rightly calls this 'unverständlich'.

150 τὸν ἀναίτιον: the two characters in Homer to protest of being criticised when they are ἀναίτιος are Paris (XIII.775 – cf. *ad* 146) and Eurycleia (xx.135), although neither passage has much similarity to this one. Patroclus also calls it characteristic of Achilles to blame someone who is ἀναίτιος (XI.654).

151 δολίους μύας: although we may have sympathised with Physignathus' protestations of innocence, this is blatant misrepresentation, and proves that his concerns go beyond simply clearing his name.

152 This line comes unusually close to verbatim repetition from Homer, who has several ways of starting a line that concludes ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω (IX.103, 314, XIII.735), νῦν αὖτ' ἐξερέω (XII.215), and τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω (xxiii.130). The last of these is also found at 152 in a substantial minority of MSS, including PY, and has been followed by most editors, presumably on the basis that the poet is engaged in quotation. This is not the *BM*'s habit (Introduction, pp. 54-5): indeed, if we read τοιγὰρ here, 152 becomes the only line in the poem to be copied exactly from Homer. The verdict of the *vett.* favours νῦν γὰρ, which makes the line original and is certainly correct. For a similar case, see 272, where the Homeric reading dominates even in the *vett.* and the original is preserved only in *a*.

This is not to say that the poet does not intend us to recall the Homeric equivalents, especially xxiii.130. As discussed *ad* 99-121, a major model for the mouse council of war is the Ithacan assembly at xxiv.412-71, in which a bereaved father proposes vengeance on his son's killer. Odysseus' speech at xxiii.130-40, which he begins by telling his listeners ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα, is a pre-emptive attempt to deal with

that attack. The *BM* puts the scenes in a more natural order: first the father (Troxartes) proposes an attack, then the killer (Physignathus) responds. Physignathus is temporarily cast in the role of an Odysseus facing the wrath of the mouse-Ithacans, in contrast with the poem's earlier identification of him as the Polyphemus to Psicharpax' Odysseus (see *ad* 12). See also *ad* 138, and Hosty 2014.

153-57 It is not clear what Physignathus has in mind. χείλεσσιν (154) suggests that the Frogs are to take their stand on the very edge of the pond; they can then seize any mouse who 'comes out to attack us' (155) and hurl him into the water to drown. Since the Mice can hardly be envisaged as coming out of the pond, the sense must be that the Frogs will form with their backs to the edge and respond to mouse assaults by bundling the attackers *through their own lines* and over the precipice behind them. The final third of the poem, chaotic as it is, clearly shows that the battle is envisaged as taking place right on the pond's edge. A military strategy which depends on allowing the enemy to pass through one's front line is unorthodox, but the poet may have seen it as the only way for the Frogs to use their amphibious nature to advantage while also allowing an Iliadic land battle. The emphasis on defence is reminiscent of Poulydamas' advice at XVIII.273-83 (especially σὺν τεύχεσι θωρηχθέντες ἰστησόμεθ' ἄμ πύργους, 277-8), but Homer makes clear that Poulydamas' plan was the correct one (312-13), whereas Physignathus' plan results in the Frogs being routed.

153 **σώματα κοσμήσαντες:** reused in the later creation of 121 (see *ad loc.*).

ἐν ὅπλοις: necessary despite minority attestation, since otherwise κοσμήσαντες stands alone ('adorning our bodies'); Ps. needs to specify what adornment he has in mind. Cf. 132.

154 ἄκροισ παρ χείλεσσιν: suggestive of Hector's horses at XII.51-2, who refuse to jump the ditch around the Achaean camp (ἐπ' ἄκρω / χείλει ἐφεσταότες).

κατάκρημνος: the first extant use of this word in Greek, although the verb κατακρημνίζω 'hurl down a precipice' appears in the Classical period (e.g. X. *Hell.* 2.1.32.7, D. *de falsa legatione* 327.7).

155 ἐξέλθωσι: Homeric usage (e.g. IX.576, XXII.237) suggests that this refers to the Mice coming forth from their cottage-city, as does the fact that Troxartes uses the same verb at 120 (ἐξέλθωμεν); alternatively it could mean 'come out of formation', i.e. 'break ranks'.

156 δραξάμενοι κορύθων: this peculiar image can only be a reference to III.369-72, where Menelaus grabs Paris by the helmet (κόρυθος, 369) and drags him away. Given the possible identification between criticism of Paris and criticism of Physignathus at 146, it is striking that Physignathus reverses the parallel: seizing the Mice by their helmets casts the Frogs in the role of wronged party avenging themselves on their aggressor, and therefore dovetails with his overall rhetorical strategy of portraying the mouse attack as unjustified.

ὅς τις σχεδὸν ἀντίος ἔλθη: modelled on XX.363 *ὅς τις σχεδὸν ἔγχεος ἔλθη. *a*'s reading has been affected by proximity to 155.

157 **σὺν ἐκείνῳ:** referring to Psicharpax, of whom Ph. is still feigning ignorance (see *ad* 147). Ludwich's suggestion that Embasichytrus is meant is rightly dismissed by Glei, p. 160. Some later MSS have σὺν ἐκείναις, referring to the helmets; *I* has the unmetrical σὺν ἔντεσιν, which some editors attempted to preserve with modifications. Glei endorses Baumeister's suggestion that a single original line (δοξαζάμενοι κορύθων ἐς λίμνην εὐθὺ βάλωμεν) might have become split across two lines during transmission, but alteration is unnecessary: the difficulties with 156-7 are much less severe than those with the other doublets Glei mentions (97a-98, 184-184a).

158 **ἐν ὕδασι:** ἐκείνους *aZ* was presumably transferred from ἐκείνῳ in 157.

159 **μυοκτόνον:** normally a name for the herb wolfsbane (*Aconitum*), e.g. Nic. *Al.* 36, although it is used of a weasel in Babrius 135. Literally 'mouse-killing': here the sense is perhaps 'pertaining to the deaths of mice' – but since wolfsbane is a tall and visually striking plant, it is possible that the Frogs will actually make their trophy out of it, just as their armour is made out of plant matter (161-5). The word is used in Prodrōmus' *Catomyomachia* (354), and as part of a reference to the *BM* by Ignatius Diaconus, *Epistle* 41.6 (Introduction p. 84).

τρόπαιον: the custom of setting up a trophy is post-Homeric; the word is first attested in Aeschylus (*Th.* 277, 956), and not the *BM* itself as some works claim (e.g. Pritchett 1974, p. 249), although the Greek historians mention trophies of battles from earlier centuries (Paus. 3.2.6 says that the Dorians erected a trophy to mark their capture of Amyclae in the 8th c. BC). The objects appear in art from the first half of the 5th c. BC (Pritchett 1974, p. 246).

160 Almost identical to 122. Given the close structural parallels between the two arming sequences, it is not implausible that the poet would have used a faux-Homeric ‘stock line’ to introduce both, although were this the case we might expect him to use *exactly* the same line. The entirely different version in *IS* has Ph. putting the armour on his troops personally.

161-5 The Frogs’ arming-sequence is shorter than that of the Mice, just as in Homer the longer version of a type-scene always comes first: compare III.332-9, where Paris takes seven lines to arm and then Menelaus only one. However, the order is the same: greaves, breastplate, shield, spear, helmet. See *ad* 124-31.

161 **μαλαχῶν:** mallow, *Malva silvestris*.

κνήμας ἔας ἀμφεκάλυψαν: κνήμας ἀμφεκάλυψαν, found in most early MSS, is unmetrical. (Ludwich incorrectly groups Y with the *recc.*; I have confirmed by autopsy that it has the same reading as the rest of the *vett.*) J has τε κνήμας ἀμφ., which was probably an early attempt to correct the metre; a 14th-c. MS has τὰς κνήμας ἀμφ., ditto. One MS, the 15th-c. Laurentianus XXXI 20 (N in Ludwich, L¹ in Allen) has the verb in tmesis, ἀμφὶ δὲ κνήμας ἐκάλυψαν. Ludwich endorsed this but deleted δέ, and West follows him. It seems relatively unlikely that such a reading would have survived only in a single late MS, and forms of ἀμφικαλύπτω are very common at line-end in Homer (24x). I print, but without any particular conviction, the reading of the *recc.* as at least metrical and widely attested.

162 Although in general there is little repetition between the mouse and frog arming scenes, this line is curiously similar to its equivalent at 127:

127 θώρηκας δ' εἶχον καλαμοστεφῶν ἀπὸ βυρσῶν

162 θώρηκας δ' εἶχον καλοὺς χλοερῶν ἀπὸ σεύτλων

This is the only point where the Frogs' arming echoes that of the Mice: compare the variation between the Mice donning their greaves at 124 and the Frogs donning theirs at 161. Given the mystery of καλαμοστεφῶν and the slightly counterintuitive plural βυρσῶν (see *ad* 127), it is tempting to see some sort of corruption at work here, but if so it has left no trace in the *paradosis*. The poet may, of course, have echoed his own phrasing from the earlier line by accident.

καλῶν χλοερῶν: in both *a* and *l* the double adjective is odd; West's καλοὺς has no MS support, but may well be right, since attraction could easily have caused the error. A θώρηξ is never described as καλός in Homer, but the greaves in the previous line are καλάς 5x. If correct, this may have contributed to the confusion over καλαμοστεφῶν / καλῶν εὐτρεφῶν in 127.

164 ὀξύσχοινος: the spiny rush, *Juncus acutus*.

ἀρήρει: pluperfect of ἀραρίσκω, though with imperfect sense here. Homeric spears 'fit the hand' of their user 3x with this verb (III.338, XVI.139, xvii.4); here by extension the image seems to be that the spear 'fits' or 'is suited to' the wielder (LSJ s.v. ἀραρίσκω V).

165 καί ῥα κέρα: Z and most of *a* have just καί ῥα, presumably through haplography. Glei (p. 162) believes *l*'s unmetrical καί κόρυθες κοχλῖαι κάρην'

ἀμφεκάλυπτον was an attempt to fix the problem by importing κόρυς from 131; the repetition of line-final ἀμφικάλυπτω (161) certainly suggests a repair job.

166 ὄχθαις ὑψηλῆσι: The *vett.* are divided between Ionic ὄχθης (*a*) and Attic ὄχθαις (*ISZ*), exactly as at 223; neither word is Homeric, and both endings are rare in Homer (Chantraine *Gramm.* v. 1 p. 202). There is more agreement on ὑψηλῆσι(ν) – once in Homer, V.560, and never elsewhere in Greek – over the *hapax* ὑψηλαῖσι (TZ). The *BM* has already used ὄχθαις at 20 (see *ad loc.*) and 106. The obvious temptation for an editor or copyist would be to bring the endings into line, rather than to differentiate them, and hence I favour this mismatched reading: cf. xxii.471-2 πάσαις | δειρῆσι.

167 σείοντες λόγχας: a neat, metrically equivalent variation of the dual σείοντ' ἐγχείας (III.345)

ἔμπληντο: the MSS have an almost comical variety of readings; this one makes grammatical sense and is found in a relatively early MS. ἕκαστος can take a plural in Homer (e.g. V.878).

168-201: the gods in conference; speech of Athene

The assembly on Olympus is the poem's most straightforwardly comic episode: Glei's *DNP* entry calls it the 'parodistisches Glanzstück'. Its humour derives (i) from Athene's mundane complaints, which echo the sorts of grievances a mortal might have nursed against the mouse and frog tribes; and (ii) from the gods' unwillingness to intervene in the combat through fear of injury (a joke which reappears at the very end of the poem,

278-9). Both of these features are exaggerations of Iliadic tropes: the contrast between the grim and savage warfare of the mortal heroes and the petty concerns of the Olympians has been noted at least since Xenophanes (see *ad* 34), and the gods' worry that they may be wounded in the fighting could be interpreted as a progression from Homer – having learnt to their cost at Troy that they *can* be hurt in melee, they are now rather more circumspect about involving themselves. The vocabulary of this passage seems especially reminiscent of *Il.* VIII, the book it most obviously inverts: where in Homer Athene is eager to help the Greeks and Zeus sternly forbids it, in the *BM* Zeus laughingly encourages her to take a side and Athene expresses her dislike for both armies (see *ad* 174).

168 εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα: *XV.371 = *ix.527, and *xii.380. Only the last involves actual movement (Helios going 'up to starry heaven'); the other two show characters (Nestor and Polyphemos) stretching their hands *toward* heaven in prayer. For Zeus calling gods to heaven, where we might expect to find them already, cf. the assembly at the beginning of *Il.* XX – Poseidon emerges from the sea, the rivers and nymphs from their various domains – or Hes. *Th.* 390-1: Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητῆς | ἀθανάτους ἐκάλεσσε θεοὺς ἐς μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον. In both cases the gathering anticipates a coming battle.

169 πολέμου πληθύν: 'the throng of war': although πληθύς is a Homeric word (17x), this is not otherwise found as an expression for massed troops except in Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on Isaiah (4th-5th c. AD; see *ad* 200).

κρατερούς τε μαχητάς: another apparently original phrase, perhaps borrowed by Tryph. 526 κρατεροί τε μαχηταί.

170-1 The poet once again exploits the humour of comparing unusually small combatants to unusually large ones (cf. 7): the Mice and Frogs are *μεγάλους* like Centaurs or Giants. The simile, enclosed as it is by *δείξας ... γελῶν*, may be focalised through Zeus himself; one would expect the ruler of Olympus to be more alarmed by an army massing 'like the Giants', and his lack of concern perhaps anticipates the reversal described below (*ad* 172).

170 **ἔγχεα μακρὰ:** only once in Homer, *III.135. Iris calls Helen to the walls to witness the Trojan and Achaean armies sitting down quietly with their *ἔγχεα μακρὰ* stuck in the ground. There is obvious irony in a depiction of armies preparing for battle alluding to a depiction of armies who have made a truce and stopped fighting (as well as the less literary joke that neither side's *ἔγχεα* are *μακρὰ* at all). *ἔγχεϊ μακροῖ* is common at line-end (7x).

[170a-b] These lines are found only in *I*, and are certainly not original. They serve as an expansion of 171, casting the Frogs as the Giants and the Mice as the Centaurs, despite the fact that these two races never seem to have fought each other anywhere in Greek mythology. 170a is lacking a foot; 170b requires the second syllable of *μῦες* to scan short, which is impossible in context (although Kelly suggests *per litt.* that the problem could be solved by reading the contracted plural *μῦς*, as in e.g. Antiphanes fr. 193).

172 ἡδὺν γελῶν ἐρέεινε: Zeus' amusement at the approaching conflict has an Iliadic precedent in his reaction to the (bathetic) Theomachy at XXI.389-90. This caused consternation among later writers, and some scholiasts tried to explain his laughter as joy at seeing the gods contend περὶ ἀρετῆς (Griffin 1978, p. 6). Perhaps in response to this kind of exegesis, the *BM* poet makes clear that Zeus is being malicious. 'Sweet laughter' in Homer usually appears in contexts of cruelty, mockery, or *Schadenfreude*: cf. II.270, XI.378, XXI.508, XXIII.784, xviii.111, xx.358, xxi.376. 'This mirth proceeds from a delighted sense of one's own superiority' (Griffin 1980, p. 6); 'there is extremely little amiable laughter or smiling in either epic' (Halliwell 2008, p. 53). Cf. *S. Aj.* 79 οὐκ οὖν γέλως ἥδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελᾶν;

The last two cases from the *Odyssey* in particular, where sweet laughter prefigures an oncoming reversal of fortune, may suggest not only that Zeus' laughter is cruel, but that he is being *too* dismissive: he is joking about a conflict which, by the end of the poem, will have rampaged almost beyond his own ability to restrain it. As Richardson 1993, p. 85 notes, the Theomachy is framed by the laughter of Zeus: he laughs at the start of the encounter, and it ends with him laughing at the distressed Artemis. This effectively 'brackets' the episode as a comic contrast to the struggles of the mortal combatants. The *BM*'s battle likewise begins with Zeus laughing, but at its conclusion he is reduced to an alarmed ὦ πόποι (272): by this stage no-one on Olympus is laughing. On the use of laughter to frame the Theomachy, see further Halliwell 2008, pp. 67-9, especially p. 69: 'the laughter of the gods in *Iliad* 21 ... [is] representative of the divine at a moment of self-sufficiency in its own eternal conditions of existence'. The self-sufficiency of Olympus, intact throughout the *Iliad*, is severely rattled by the prowess of the Mice.

173 **μυσὶν ἀθανάτων:** the hyperbaton *τίνες ... ἀθανάτων* ‘which of the immortals’ must have caused confusion, as *a* imports *μυσὶ τετρομένοισι* from 178. *μυσὶ τεροπόμενοι* Z makes little sense, and was probably influenced by 176.

174 A literate reader would expect Athene to be eager to assist: when Homer’s Zeus tells her to involve herself in a situation, she does so *πάρος μεμαυῖαν* (IV.73, XIX.349, xxiv.487). In each case she is motivated by obvious favouritism for the Greeks and for her preferred heroes, and when Zeus gives her *carte blanche* at XXII.186, she immediately springs into action. It takes us by surprise when Homer’s most reliably interventionist and partisan deity first announces her dislike of both armies, and then advises all the other gods to stay back on Olympus where it’s safe. See further *ad* 193.

ὦ θύγατερ: the Olympians address each other more casually in the *BM* than in Homer, where neither this nor *ὦ πάτερ* (178) are ever used between gods: Athene only addresses her father as *ὦ πάτερ* with a string of following epithets (VIII.31, XXII.178, i.45 = i.81 = xxiv.743), and even Zeus to Athene is never quite this brief, although *Τριτογένεια φίλον τέκος* comes close (VIII.39 = XXII.183). At 278 Ares calls Zeus simply *Κρονίδη*, which is also unparalleled in Homer: Hera, who speaks more freely to Zeus than most, calls him *αἰνότατε Κρονίδη* even when angry.

ἄρ’ ἐπαλεξήσουσα: *ἦ ῥα* in the interrogative sense is always clause-initial in Homer, although it sometimes follows the vocative (*Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ ῥα...* V.421, V.762, VII.446, VIII.236). Interrogative *ἄρα* is more mobile (e.g. *A. Ch.* 297), but is not Homeric. However, the confusion between the different senses of both *ἄρα* and *ἦ ῥα* is apparent from the inconsistent accentuation in the MSS, and since *ἄρα* is perfectly common in Homer, *μυσὶν ἄρα...*? would probably have sounded natural to the poet (though *ἄρ(α)*

would be unmetrical here). The rare ἐπαλέξω is used at VIII.365 when Athene recalls coming down from heaven to assist Heracles (who is τειρόμενον; cf. 178); βοήθεω is not Homeric, and would have been an obvious gloss. West reads ἦ ῥ' ἀπαλεξήσουσα: the verb appears 2x in Homer, but there and in later literature it always requires an accusative or genitive of the thing warding off, whereas ἐπαλέξω takes only a dative of the person defended.

175 **καὶ γάρ:** explanatory (Denniston pp. 108-9): 'for indeed...'. Zeus gives the reason for his assumption that Athene will want to help. He seems to feel that Athene will be well-disposed towards the Mice as occupants of her temple, even though they feed on her offerings: contrast the *Catomyomachia* (p. 86), where Creillus uses mouse attacks on temple offerings as a threat to gain leverage over Zeus.

σκιρτῶσιν: 'skip about'. The same verb was used of the Frogs at 60. It again describes the frolicking of mice at Arat. 1133.

176 **κνίση:** the sense here is probably the fat itself (e.g. I.460, xviii.45) rather than its smell (e.g. I.66), since mice would have little use for the *scent* of meat. For mice raiding religious offerings in a modern context, cf. John Betjeman's poem *Diary of a Church-Mouse*.

ἐδέσμασι παντοδαποῖσιν: repeated from 31, but θυ(σι)άων ἐδέσμασιν *l* is metrically impossible. Chalcondyles' ἐδέσμασιν ἐκ θυσιάων is an attempt to fix *l*, rather than a genuine reading.

177-96 Athene's speech is certainly indebted to Callimachus' *Aetia* and the story of the mouse-trap (fr. 54c), although the condition of the latter text makes it difficult to establish how extensive and detailed the allusions are.

Callimachus

The mice *stole oil from the lamps* [A]... and danced on the peasant's head, *preventing him from sleeping* [B]. But *the thing that most annoyed him was that one night they chewed holes in his clothing* [C].

BM

"The Mice damage my garlands and *my lamps for the sake of the oil* [A]. But *the thing that most annoyed me was that they chewed holes in a dress I had made* [C]. Yet the Frogs are no better; they croaked loudly all night, *preventing me from sleeping* [B]."

Obviously the crimes committed by mice will have remained fairly constant across different times and places, but the repetition of point C is particularly noticeable: in both cases a list of customary misdeeds culminates in a single outrageous incident, and in both cases this incident involves clothing being nibbled.

Athene making her own dress is a clear reference to her status as patron goddess of crafts, as well as more specifically to VIII.385-6, where she takes off the dress ὃν ῥ' αὐτὴ ποιήσατο καὶ κάμει χερσίν (cf. ὃν ἐξύφηνα καμουῖσα at BM 182; πέπλον μου κατέτρωξαν may also be a deliberate echo of VIII.385 *πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν). It is not clear whether we should envisage the Mice attacking it in Athene's chambers on Olympus or in her temple on Earth, but the latter is more likely. At VI.289-311 the Trojan women take a fine robe and place it in the temple of Athene as an offering, and the Greater Panathenaea involved the statue of the goddess being dressed in a newly-woven robe (Barker 1992 pp. 112-17; Mansfield 1985). After Zeus implies that his daughter

would be pleased to see the Mice scampering around her altar, she lists three things which might be found in a sanctuary of Athene and which mice damage: garlands, lamps, and finally the ceremonial *peplos*.

177 ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Κρονίδης: although ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη is Homeric (19x), following it with its subject is not: this construction appears first at *h.Dem.* 59 ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Ἑκάτη, but remains rare, as Hellenistic authors unanimously followed Homeric practice. The phrase appears 24x in A.R., 1x in Call., 1x in Mosch., never with the subject following. Quintus Smyrnaeus seems to have felt fewer compunctions: he uses ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη 27x, 10x with following subject (although this is never a proper name, and is usually an indefinite pronoun, e.g. ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Τρώων τις 12.562).

179 κακὰ πολλὰ μ' ἔοργαν: based on κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργε (*3x Homer). There may be humour in the fact that the Homeric phrase is always used to justify intervention in a situation (V.175, VIII.356, XVI.424), whereas Athene uses it here to explain why she is *not* going to intervene. In Homer the proposed intervention always fails, which may additionally foreshadow Zeus' difficulties in halting the mouse advance.

180 στέμματα: 'garlands', as used in religious ceremonies and sacrifices.

λύχνους: see *ad* 129.

181 τοῦτο δέ μοι: the *a* and *l* families are each evenly split between μου *Z* (possessive with φρένας) and μοι (ethic dative). The Homeric precedent for this line (V.493: δάκε δὲ φρένας Ἑκτορι μῦθος) suggests the latter. The expression ἔδακε φρένας 'gnawed the heart' is grandiose, and also used by Lucian in a passage of

epic/tragic pastiche (*JTr.* 1.8). One might see an allusion to Simonides fr. 6 West, where the North Wind ἀνδρῶν δ' ἀχλαίνων ἔδακεν φρένας, since Athene's new dress now has holes in it.

οἶον ἔρξααν: never in Homer, but *2x in the *Argonautica* (4.475 and 558). There is a likely allusion to the former passage, where the dying Apsyrtus, spurting blood, stains red the veil and πέπλος of Medea. The crime which Athene refers to here similarly involves irreparable damage to a πέπλος, though the *BM* comically deflates the drama of Apollonius' murder scene; when Jason kills Apsyrtus, the Fury notices οἶον ἔρξααν. Rereading this after *BM* 181 suggests that Jason's outrage against natural justice is not the butchery of his wife's brother, but the fact that he ruins Medea's dress! οἶά μ' ἔοργαν *a* is clearly an accidental import from 179, perhaps with influence from XXII.347 *οἶα ἔοργας or A.R. 4.380 *οἶα ἔοργα. Gregory Nazianzenus' use of *οἶά μ' ἔοργεν (1027.9) may suggest that his copy of the *BM* already had *a*'s reading (in the 4th c. AD!), or he may have arrived at it independently.

182 καμοῦσα: 'with much toil'; cf. e.g. E. fr. 461 οὐκ ἂν δύναιο μὴ καμῶν εὐδαιμονεῖν.

183 Athene explains the amount of work she put into the construction of her dress: she used a fine weft (ῥοδάνη), which would have made the weaving process slower, and 'spun a long warp' (στήμονα) – i.e., she spun a long continuous thread from the distaff. μακρόν *Z* is to be preferred over λεπτόν (*cett.*), which was likely transferred from λεπτής. Wölke correctly states that the expression refers to the quantity of yarn spun, but argues wrongly that στήμονα μακρόν cannot mean 'much yarn', and conjectures

πλεῖστον. Classical textile manufacture used a drop spindle (Pekridou-Gorecki 1989, pp. 13-37; cf. Catullus 64.311ff.), on which yarn has to be spun as a single long thread: producing a thread of any great length would have been tedious and difficult work, requiring the warp to be wound onto the spindle repeatedly without allowing it to snap, so it is quite correct for Athene to regard a στήμονα μακρόν as a significant investment of effort. On cloth manufacture in ancient Greece, see Barker 1992.

184-6 The text is badly confused at this point. Z has the following:

καὶ τρώγλας ἐνέδησα, φίλον δέ μου ἦτορ ἰάνθη	184
καὶ πράσσει με τόκοις· τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον ἀθανάτοισιν.	185
χρησαμένη γὰρ ἔνησα καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ἀνταποδοῦναι.	186

This suffers from two major deficiencies. 184 (‘and I bound up the holes, and my heart was comforted’) is a baffling direction for the speech, which is otherwise concerned entirely with Athene’s grievances: why, in a speech about the ways the Mice have wronged her, should Athene specify that she repaired the damage they caused? The effect is to deprive her complaint of any force: ‘I put all this hard work into my dress, and the Mice ruined it – but I fixed it again, so that was alright’. Meanwhile, πράσσει in 185 lacks a subject. Neither Ludwich’s τρώκταις nor his ἰάφθη improves matters. *a* reads:

καὶ τρώγλας ἐτελεσ(σ)αν· ὁ δ’ ἐπητής μοι ἐπέστη	184
καὶ πολὺ με πράσσει(ν)· τούτου χάριν ἐξώργισμαι.	184a
χρησαμένη γὰρ ἔνησα καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ἀνταποδοῦναι	186
καὶ πράσσει με τόκον· τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον ἀθανάτοισιν.	185

l has roughly the same reading for 186 and 185, but combines *a*’s 184 and 184a into a single unmetrical line:

184a and 185 look as though they may have been designed to serve the same purpose ('and (s)he charges me money/interest, and I am unhappy about it'), and 184a is the less interesting line: τούτου χάριν ἐξώργισμαι 'this is why I am angry' looks like padding. West accordingly prints 184 as it appears in *a* and follows it with 185, making ἡπητής the subject of πρᾶσσει με τόκον 'charges me interest'; he deletes 184a altogether.

I agree with this solution, but the translation requires care. An (ἡ)πητής is a mender; the word appears almost nowhere in Greek literature, but Phrynichus the Atticist (2nd c. AD) condemns it in favour of the more ancient ἀκεστής. Conversely, Thomas Magister gives it as the ποιητικώτερον form of ἀκεστής, quoting in support Ὅμηρος ἐν μυοβατραχομαχίᾳ· ὁ δὲ ἡπητής ἐπέστη, and adds that the common word is ῥάπτης (Thom. Mag. Ἐκλογή s.v. ἀκεστής). It is plausible that Athene would have hired a professional mender to repair the holes in her dress, which would probably have been more difficult and technical work than making the dress in the first place (and is of course also a comic image: the goddess of weaving is forced to call in a professional). It is also plausible that the mender would be charging interest on an unpaid bill. It is *not* plausible for Athene to have borrowed money for her weaving (χρησαμένη ... ἔνησα) *from the mender*. An ἡπητής has no business providing loans. The sequence of thought, therefore, must be understood as:

- the Mice made holes in my dress
- the mender, whom I called in to fix the dress, is now chasing me for payment, and is charging me interest on the bill
- interest is a particularly serious problem for an immortal (because it never stops accumulating: see *ad* 185)

- I had to borrow money even to afford the original materials for the dress: I therefore don't have any money to pay off the mender. (Or, perhaps: I had to borrow money to afford the materials, and I can't even pay *that* back, so I'm in no position to pay the mender as well.)

The confusion stems from γάρ in 186, which looks as if it should be explaining πράσσει in 185: 'the mender is charging me interest, *because* I borrowed to make the dress'. This is very unlikely, unless this particular ἡπητής moonlights as a moneylender. In fact γάρ explains ἐπέστη in 184. In 186 Athene gives the reason why she has not yet been able to pay off the mender, and why interest on her repair bill is therefore still accumulating: she was too broke even to afford the dress in the first place. West's translation gives the impression that the ἡπητής is pursuing the original loan for materials.

Z's reading is therefore the closest to the truth: the only problem is the mysterious intrusion of φίλον δέ μου ἦτορ ἰάνθη, seemingly imported from iv.840, which destroyed both sense and syntax. *a* must have fallen victim to the exact misunderstanding outlined above. Puzzled as to why an ἡπητής was charging interest, a helpful scholar correctly realised that two separate payments were involved – one for the materials, one for the repairs – and tried to clarify this by hashing together the filler line 184a and moving 185 to follow 186. *I*'s version seems to be a further modification in which the troublesome ἡπητής was removed altogether by splicing together 184 and 184a, suggesting that 184a must have entered the paradosis relatively early (i.e. earlier than the oldest MSS in both *a* and *I*).

185 **τόκον:** attested in the sense ‘interest’ at least since Ar. *Nub.* 18, and both singular and plural are widely found. After *πράσσω* ‘charge’ we would expect the accusative, however, which favours *a*: the *recc.* correct τόκοις *IZ* to τόκους.

τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον: τὸ δέ is narrowly preferable to τό γε, the reading of *S* and probably of *a* (although in the *a* tradition the phrase became wholly corrupted, and the MSS scramble to make sense of it). τό here is a demonstrative pronoun: in Homer τό γε is never clause-initial, and in later authors it occurs only when τό is a definite article with a following noun (e.g. E. *Or.* 797 τό γε δίκαιον ὧδ’ ἔχει, *Ion* 674-5 τό γε στόμα | δοῦλον πέπεται, B. 13.50 τό γε σὸν [κλέος]). Clause-initial demonstrative τὸ δέ, on the other hand, is common in Homer: cf. particularly I.563 *τὸ δέ τοι καὶ ῥίγιον ἔσται. It is interesting that *S* preserves τό γε ῥίγιον: if, as suggested on pp. 105-6, the scribe of *S* had access to texts from both the *a* and *I* traditions, he should have been confronted with a choice between τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον *I* and something like *P*’s τό γ’ ἔρρι πόνον, at which point he would have sided with *I*. Either this was a very alert (false) correction, or he knew an *a*-text in which the phrase had not yet been scrambled.

ῥίγιον in Homer (5x) is usually used of the worse alternative to a course of action (e.g. I.325, xx.220); it appears once (xvii.191) with the literal meaning ‘colder’. Unless the comparative sense is being ignored here, there must be a joke on eternal life and interest payments: debt is even worse for an immortal, because the interest never stops accumulating!

186 **ἔνθησα:** Given that the expense involved was presumably that of buying the raw wool, it would be more intuitive for Athene to say she borrowed for her spinning (*ISZ*) than for her weaving (*a*).

ἀνταποδοῦναι: the same form appears in one version of the *Fable of the Mouse and the Lion*, referring to the mouse chewing (τρώγων) the lion's bonds during the night (*Fabulae Dosithei* 2.8). There is no obvious reason for allusion here, but the poet may have been influenced by memory of the fable.

187 **οὐκ ἐθελήσω:** βουλήσομαι *I* is unmetrical.

ἀρηγέμεν: *1x Homer (VIII.11). The context – Zeus forbidding the gods to aid either side – is obviously relevant, and subverted here: Athene declares of her own free will that she does not *want* to aid either side.

188 **φρένας ἔμπεδοι:** 'they are not stable (in respect of) their minds', i.e. 'they are not sensible'; based on -ες ἔμπεδοι 3x Hom., although with an accusative of respect rather than with φρένες as subject. That the poet alters, rather than directly reproducing, Homer's construction suggests the same concern for *variatio* displayed elsewhere (e.g. at 144). The sense must be that the Frogs, by croaking all night, do not behave 'sensibly' like responsible neighbours: cf. xviii.215 οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι, where Penelope accuses Telemachus of being an irresponsible host. At VI.352 Helen levels the same charge at Paris, meaning that he is a coward: this may be beneath the surface in the *BM*, given the identification between frogs and cowardice (Introduction pp. 38-9) and their behaviour during the battle.

πρῶην: 'the other day' better fits the subsequent tone of a specific anecdote than πρῶτον 'when I *first* got back...'

189 **ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιοῦσαν:** Athene returns from battle (perhaps even from Troy), but unlike the weariless gods of Homer, she is exhausted and wants a nap. The gods in Homer do sleep (e.g. I.606), but it seems to be more of a formality to mark the end of the day than because they experience any actual fatigue. It is not clear where the poet envisages Athene trying to sleep: if she had repaired to her chamber on Olympus we would have the amusing image of a frog chorus even among the halls of the gods, but the earlier references to the depredations of the Mice, coupled with the Lucian parallel at 191, perhaps make it more likely that she is resting in one of her temples (cf. Aphrodite at viii.362-6).

It is particularly funny that Athene, of all the gods, should be tired: her epithet Atrytone, found first at II.157, literally means ‘unwearied’ or ‘tireless’. Cf. her introduction at A. *Eu.* 403, ἦλθον ἄτρυτον πόδα.

ἐκοπώθην: the verb κοπώω ‘weary’ is not securely attested before this in Greek literature, but the noun κόπος is used in the sense ‘fatigue, exhaustion’ at least as early as E. *Ba.* 634.

190 **ὑπνου δευομένην:** perhaps a deliberately bathetic version of *θυμοῦ δευομένην ‘lacking life’ (III.294, XX.472).

191 **οὐδ’ ὀλίγον καταμῦσαι:** Lucian alludes to this line at *Tim.* 9, where Zeus complains about the din (θορύβου) of business and about the temple-robbers, who ‘do not let [him] close [his] eyes for a moment’ (οὐδὲ ὀλίγον καταμύσαι ἡμῖν ἐφιασι). Like Athene, his complaints are directed at people making noise (the Frogs) and trying to steal things (the Mice), although in his case it is the latter who stop him sleeping. Frogs

are criticised again for preventing sleep at Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.14-15, although the context is a traveller in a boat, making the presence of a frog chorus more natural.

192 τὴν κεφαλὴν: the acc. of respect is standard in Greek expressions of this kind: cf. e.g. Theoc. 3.52 ἀλγέω τὰν κεφαλάν.

ἐβόησεν: ἐφώνησεν FL is unmetrical, φών- J presumably an attempt to correct it.

ἀλέκτωρ: neither this word nor the more prosaic ἀλεκτρούων appear in Homer, except as a proper name (the daughter of Alector is mentioned at iv.10). *DNP* s.v. 'Huhn (Hahn)' dates the introduction of the domestic cockerel into Greece to the 6th c. BC, although an oinochoe dated to around 700 BC ([Zürich 1974] no. 199) has two cockerels decorating its neck. Again, Athene is presumably referring to an earthly cockerel, rather than one on Olympus.

193 At more than one point in the *Iliad* a god recommends non-interference in mortal affairs. The most obvious model is Athene to Ares at V.31-4 (cf. especially νῶϊ δὲ χαζώμεσθα V.34), but there Homer makes clear that she is acting to remove an advantage from the Trojans, rather than out of any genuine concern for neutrality: τὸν μὲν ἔπειτα καθεῖσεν ἐπ' ἡϊόεντι Σκαμάνδρῳ / Τρῶας δ' ἔκλιναν Δαναοί (35-6). She spends the rest of the episode eagerly involved in the battle. At VIII.10-16 Zeus forbids the gods to assist either side, and Athene explicitly acknowledges that the injunction is an unwelcome one (VIII.33-4): she and Hera attempt to bypass it at VIII.374-96. The consistent impression in Homer is that the more warlike Olympians are straining at the leash to involve themselves, and are only kept in line by fear of Zeus. As noted above on

174, there is humour in Athene, one of the most belligerent and openly biased of the immortals, being the one to advise (seriously!) that this particular battle is just too dangerous.

παυσώμεσθα: the sense is 'let us stop (all this discussion of) helping the armies' (so Wölke p. 151), dispelling the objection that the gods have not yet begun to help either side, which spawned suggestions like ἄγε φεισώμεσθα (Brandt) and ἄγ' ἐπισχώμεσθα (Ludwich).

194 Absent in Z, replaced by a version of 194a (see below).

ὑμείων: hints at Athene's high opinion of her own prowess, even as she counsels prudence: she could have said ἡμείων (as she does in some later MSS).

ὀξύεντι: *8x Homer, and a clear badge of Homeric affiliation. ὀξύεις is found only in Homer (though reconstructed in Hesiod fr. 196) and in later epicising authors like Nonnus. According to LSJ, a derivation from ὀξύη 'beech' is likely ('with beech shaft' *vel sim.*), but the *BM* poet probably assumed – as the scholia on this line do – that it was an epic alternative to ὀξύς. *LFGE* makes no mention of the 'beech' interpretation, translating simply '*sharp, pointed, epith. of spears*'.

Here again we see the *BM*'s concern for *variatio* in its quasi-Homeric formulae: ὀξύεντι is used 10x of an ἔγχος or ἔγχεα in Homer and 1x of a δόρυ, but never of a βέλος.

[194a] Found only in *I*. A slight variation appears in place of 194 in Z. The line is metrically invalid unless adjusted, and the syntax is tortured: 'lest a body be struck' is a strange way to express the thought. One possibility is that βέλει in 194 was judged

inappropriate given ἀγχέμαχοι in 195, and that this line was created so that close-combat weapons would be specified instead.

195 ἀγχέμαχοι: ‘close fighters’, an epithet of the Mysians at XIII.5, which may have suggested its use to our poet (Μυσῶν τ’ ἀγχεμάχων). The point is presumably that, instead of scattering when a god joins the fray, the Mice and Frogs would continue to fight at close quarters. This suggestion of unusual courage, which seems a comic exaggeration here, is largely borne out by the end of the poem: the Mice press their attack even after a near miss from a thunderbolt. ἀγέρωχοι Z is unmetrical; FL have the otherwise unattested ἐγχέμαχοι.

196 πάντες δ’ οὐρανόθεν: perhaps a nod to the start of the voyage in the *Argonautica*, πάντες δ’ οὐρανόθεν λεύσσον θεοὶ... (1.547). Here too all the gods look down from heaven on the beginning of a great endeavour: recalling Apollonius lends the opening of hostilities an additional parodic grandeur. At the start of *Il.* VIII, when Zeus bans intervention (see above on 193), he tells the other gods that all of them together (πάντες, 18, 20) will not be able to drag him οὐρανόθεν (19, 21): an echo is possible, given the emphasis here on the gods’ powerlessness.

197 Neither version of this line is metrically flawless: in the majority -ντο in the fifth-foot princeps has to scan heavy before θ-, while in Z a σπονδειαζων concludes with a two-syllable word. Wölke notes (p. 267) that the former is ‘schwer zu ertragen, jedoch möglich’, while the latter is a more serious problem: the *BM* has thirteen other σπονδειαζοντες (Introduction pp. 73-4), none of which end with a bisyllable. However,

Wölke judges convincingly in favour of Z overall: not only is Z correct in the following line, but καὶ τῇ γε better draws attention to Athene's achievement in persuading the rest of the Olympians. θεοὶ ἄλλοι is a very common line-ending in Homer (19x), which may have contributed to its popularity here.

198 πάντες δ' αὖτ' εἰσῆλθον ἀολλέες: π. δ' ὁμῶς ἀολλέες εἰσῆλθον *a* (ἦλθ(ετ)ον *l*) is unmetrical. Focus here switches back to the combatants, despite Gleí's arguments (pp. 172-3) that this line refers to the gods gathering in some location from which they can watch the battle: he follows Kullmann 1956 in seeing a comic/parodic approach to the epic *topos* of the gods as spectators. However, ἐς χώρον ἕνα appears 2x Homer, both times describing the marshalling of rival armies and preceding a major outbreak of hostilities (IV.446, VIII.60); ἀολλέες appears 26x, always in the *Iliad* referring to soldiers, usually in large numbers (exc. XXIII.674) and in a battlefield context. In the *Odyssey* it is used with more variation, but again, always of significant numbers of individuals (e.g. xi.228, xx.40), and never of gods.¹³⁸ This military language, coupled with the transitional sense of αὖτ' and the obvious fact that the gods are already *in* one place, suggests strongly that the Mice and Frogs are meant. Van Herwerden is typically exasperated: 'nisi vero hic poeta fuit omnium hominum stolidissimus, non addidit alterum versum, quia dii concionantes iam erant ἀολλέες ἐν ἐνὶ χώρῳ' (p. 165).

For the somewhat abrupt change of subject with αὖτε, although not an exact parallel, cf. ii.203. Eurymachus addresses Halitherses: 'we do not fear Telemachus, for all his words, nor do we care for any soothsaying of yours, old man – you will declare it to

¹³⁸ 4x in A.R.: 2.132 (bees), 2.497 (Argonauts), 3.255 (female slaves), 4.1182 (women).

no avail, and will be hated all the more. And *his possessions* (i.e. Telemachus') will be consumed...', χρήματα δ' αὖτε κακῶς βεβρώσεται.

[198a] Only in *I*. Unmetrical and unnecessary. τέρας πολέμοιο has been lifted from 201.

199-201 The outbreak of hostilities is most directly indebted to the beginning of the Theomachy proper at XXI.385. We have already heard that Zeus is amused by the conflict (172 ~ XXI.389-90). Here we have a terrible noise (δεινὸν ... κτύπον 200 ~ μεγάλῳ πατάγῳ XXI.387) and the sound of trumpets (ἐσάλπιγξαν 200 ~ *σάλπιγξεν XXI.388 – the only use of the verb in Homer). Iliadic warfare makes no use of trumpets: other than here, they appear only in another simile (XVIII.219). The line was consequently much debated in antiquity (Richardson 1993, pp. 86-7), increasing the likelihood that the *BM* poet is alluding to it deliberately.

The Theomachy is both the most impressive battle in the *Iliad* (the earth shakes and Hades cries out in terror, XX.61ff.) and the least consequential (no serious wounds are inflicted, Artemis has her ears boxed, and Apollo and Hermes both refuse to participate). Indeed, it could be considered the episode in which the *Iliad* itself most closely approaches parody; Leaf 1902 calls it 'a parody of serious fighting' (*ad* XXI.390), and in Leaf and Bayfield 1898 it is 'no better than a ridiculous harlequinade, where the highest gods and goddesses descend to poor buffoonery' (p. 500). This dichotomy is aptly transferred to the *BM*, which derives much of its comic point from a similar disjunction between the unimportance of the conflict and the grandiose manner of its introduction and description.

The *BM* follows Homeric precedent in its transition from general to specific: an opening description of the magnitude of the conflict, often focusing on the noise made by the armies (199-201), shifts into specific description of who killed whom, signposted by the word *πρῶτος* (202). This model occurs at e.g. IV.446ff., the first battle in the poem (noise of the clash, 449-456; *πρῶτος*, 457), XII.375ff. (*ᾠρτο δ' αὐτὴ* 377, *πρῶτος* 378), XVI.294ff. (*ὄμαδος δ' ἀλίσστος ἐτύχθη* 296, *πρῶτος* 307).

199 κώνωπες: apart from the water-snake, the mosquitoes are the only animals in the *BM* who do not belong to either of the two armies. They were clearly chosen for the role of trumpeters because of their distinctive drone, which is remarked on as irritating to a light sleeper by Clytaemestra at A. Ag. 891-3. Fraenkel 1962 *ad loc.* collects other instances, although omits the *BM*: the most relevant of these are Tertullian *sustine... culicis tubam et lanceam* (*adv. Marc.* 1.14) and St Jerome's comment that the gnat/mosquito (*culex*) *habet... tubam vocis* (*in Psa.* 91). Either of these could have been influenced by the *BM*. See also the Horace passage mentioned *ad* 191, which links *culices* and frogs as obstacles to sleep.

Glei *ad loc.* adduces Ar. *Nub.* 165 *σάλπιγξ ὁ πρωκτός ἐστιν ἄρα τῶν ἐμπίδων*, but the image of the mosquitoes literally holding mosquito-sized trumpets (which are, in keeping with the *ἔγχεα μακρὰ* of the combatants, *μεγάλας*) fits the *BM*'s style much better than a fart joke.

200 δεινὸν ... πολέμου κτύπον: a striking phrase which seems to be the *BM*'s own, although *δεινός ... κτύπος* in a military context appears as early as Tyrtaeus fr. 19.14. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homiliae Paschales* 9.1.22 - *ὁ πάνδεινος τοῦ πολέμου κρότος, καὶ*

κτύπος ἐνόπλιος – may be a deliberate echo, given Cyril’s date and his use of πολέμου πληθὺν elsewhere (see above on 169).

οὐρανόθεν δέ: δέ at line-end, when not denoting ‘motion towards’ (Οὐλύμπων δέ I.425, πεδίων δέ VI.393), is rare in Homer, but cf. VI.64, VIII.75, XI.97 = XX.399, XIII.162, XV.140, XXI.7, XXI.498, XXIII.791, XXIV.90.

201 βρόντησε: thunder heralds not only the Theomachy (XX.56) but Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors (xx.103, xxi.413); in the latter case it is referred to as a τέρας (xx.101, 114). We are thus reminded that this conflict also originated with a need for vengeance, although the relationship between the *BM* and the *Mnesterophonia* is not a straightforward one: see *ad* 138, 152. Zeus uses thunder to send a message elsewhere (VIII.75, 170, XV.377, XVII.595); thunder accompanies a hurled thunderbolt at VIII.133 and xii.415 = xiv.305, and is sent by Hera and Athene at XI.45-6. But only the Theomachy and the *Mnesterophonia* are significant enough to warrant a peal of thunder at the outbreak of combat itself.

πολέμοιο κακοῖο: although this phrase appears at *I.284, there is a more exact parallel at 159-60 of the fourteenth *Sibylline Oracle*: οὐρανόθεν δείξει περικτελλομένοις ἐνιαυτοῖς, / φάλκην, ἐσσομένοιο τέρας πολέμοιο κακοῖο. The *Oracles* are even harder to date than the *BM* itself (cf. Lightfoot 2007, p. x), but the fourteenth book is considered late – certainly Roman rather than Hellenistic – and therefore is more likely to have borrowed from the *BM* than *vice versa*. Zeus marks the resumption of hostilities in *Il.* XI by sending down Eris, who holds in her hands a πολέμοιο τέρας (XI.4): elsewhere a rainbow is described as a portent of war or storms (ἐξ οὐρανόθεν τέρας ... ἧ πολέμοιο, XVII.548).

202-69: the battle

Zeus' thunderclap heralds not only the outbreak of hostilities, but the beginning of the poem's most difficult and damaged section. Centuries of interpolation and interference have rendered the last third of the narrative confused – at places completely disjointed – and the episodic nature of Homeric battles, which even in the *Iliad* can sometimes resemble a casualty list, makes it very hard to reestablish a coherent sequence of events. Our one advantage is that, unlike in Homer, the names of the combatants are inextricably linked to their allegiance; although 'Chromius' could be a Greek or a Trojan, 'Ham-carver' is unmistakably a mouse. On the special problems of 202-303 for the editor, see Introduction, pp. 109-15.

The *BM*'s battle is not modelled on any specific Homeric engagement, although individual sections have Iliadic counterparts (see especially on 242-6). It uses a mixture of formulaic epic phraseology and original material. There are signs that the poet may have drawn particularly on some passages of the *Iliad*: for example, the duel between Hector and Ajax at VII.244ff. yields within a few lines οὐτασε δουρί (*BM* 202), οὐδ' ἔρρηξεν (254), ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγε (219), χειρὶ παχείῃ / κείμενον ἐν (239-40), ἦκ' ἐπιδινήσας (288), and ἐξετανύσθη (221). But the *BM* is not deploying these fragments systematically in order to create a meaningful allusion to the duel – one merely gains the sense that he may have had that passage in mind (or in front of him) when writing. The poet is conscious of the ways in which Homeric phrases come freighted with context – he knows, for example, that a warrior who moves διὰ προμάχων always does so under the influence of strong emotion (see *ad* 253) – but he rarely attempts to call specific Iliadic

combats to the reader's mind, opting instead for a generalised impression of Homeric carnage.

One exception to this is Achilles' battle by the River Scamander in Book XXI. This must have occurred to the poet as the only fight in the *Iliad* to take place beside (and in) a body of water, discounting the battle at the ships, which technically occurs on the shoreline but in which water does not feature. As discussed above (see on 24-55), Achilles' major opponent in this episode, the Paeonian Asteropaeus, is an important model for Psicharpax: this parallel recurs in the battle when Psicharpax re-emerges (at 234). If the reconstruction of events proposed below is correct, at one point a mouse hero charges into the pond after his opponent (see *ad* 218-22), much as Achilles plunges into the river to pursue the Trojans. Also of significance is XXI.54-9, where Achilles catches sight of Lycaon and remarks that next his dead opponents will be rising up to fight him again. The *BM*'s battle, especially from 232 onwards, takes him at his word. Lycaon has returned from the dead only symbolically: Achilles says he has escaped the $\nu\eta\lambda\epsilon\epsilon\varsigma$ $\eta\mu\alpha\sigma$, which elsewhere in Homer always refers to one's death (see Richardson 1993, p. 58). The *BM* takes the logical next step and literally resurrects Psicharpax. If we recall Achilles' speech, we can see the riverbank in the *Iliad* as (literally) a liminal space, in which the boundaries between life and death are blurred: this makes it only appropriate that, in the thick of the battle by the pond, neither the *BM*'s characters nor its poet can maintain any clear sense of who is alive and who dead.

From here to 260, at which the arrival of Meridarpax concludes the battle scene proper, the commentary is divided into shorter episodes. Each episode begins with a summary of the overall structural problems – ordering, omitted lines, and other questions which must be resolved in order to gain a general understanding of the

narrative; more specific notes, on literary parallels or on minor textual variants, are then lemmatised as normal. For the typical motifs of Homeric battle, see especially Fenik 1968, Saunders 2004; on the ambiguities of life and death in the *BM*, see Most 1993 and Kelly 2009.

202-208: the deaths of Leichenor and Peleion

A neat pair of deaths to begin the battle – one mouse and one frog. Each is three lines long and fully described, both times with the killer's name, the victim's name, a verb of striking, a weapon, the location of the wound, and a 'result' line describing the victim's fall. The two are only loosely syntactically linked (μετ' αὐτὸν 206), but correspond well and certainly belong together.

202 Ὑψιβόας: 'Loud-caller'. Reused as an adjective (the opposite of ταπεινόφωνος 'low-voiced') by Lascaris, *Ep.* 188.2, on whom see above *ad* 17, and by Arethas of Caesarea (late 9th – early 10th c. AD, in his *Ad Eustathium Sidensem de mutatione sedum*: Westerink 1968, p. 300). Both men almost certainly knew the word from the *BM*. For frogs as notorious noisemakers in the ancient world, see *ad* 191.

Λειχήνορα: apparently 'Lick-man', one of the stranger names in the *BM*. In -άνωρ or -ήνωρ compounds (33 in Locker 1944), the second element means either literally 'man' (e.g. λυσήνωρ, epithet of wine, Tryph. 449), 'husband' (e.g. λιπесάνωρ, of Helen, Stesich. 26.5), or an abstract concept of 'manly virtue' (e.g. the Homeric ἀγαπήνωρ 'loving manliness', of heroes). None of these meanings are really appropriate here: it is hard to see why licking men would be regarded as a typical attribute of a mouse. The MSS are in agreement, except for minor spelling variations. We should perhaps assume

that the poet had in mind epithets like μεγαλήνωρ ‘great-spirited’ (Pi. *Fr.* 109) or ὑπερήνωρ ‘arrogant’ (Hes. *Th.* 995), which could be interpreted as ‘with a spirit inclined to x’, and that Λειχήνωρ really means ‘lick-hearted’ – a mouse epithet for bravery, commending one who licks boldly and with determination. Non-literary names like Κυδήνωρ ‘Glory-hearted’ (attested several times in LGPN) support this sense. West translates ‘Lickhart’, apparently on the same logic. Glei *ad loc.* comments merely ‘Lecken und Schlecken sind charakteristische Tätigkeiten der Maus’.

Note also that the Greek Elephenor and the Trojan Agenor appear in close proximity to Echepolus (see below) in the *Iliad*’s first battle, at IV.463 and 467 respectively.

203 ἐν προμάχοις: though a typical expression in the *Iliad* (ἐν(ι) προμάχοισι(ν) 11x, *7x), this must allude to the poem’s first named casualty, Echepolus the Trojan, who is described as ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι (IV.458) when he is killed by Antilochus. Cf. on 199-201.

ἐς μέσον ἥπαρ: reused by Q. S. 11.34. Homeric warriors are occasionally struck in the liver (XI.579, XIII.412, XVII.349, XX.469; Eurymachus at xxii.83), but the closest parallel for this phrase is Hecabe at XXIV.212: τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἥπαρ ἔχοιμι...

204 καὶ δ’ ἔπεσεν ... ἐκόνισεν: a sophisticated allusion to the Homeric half-line καὶ δ’ ἔπεσ’ ἐν κονίῃσι μακῶν (4x), which is usually used of *animals*: XVI.469, x.163, xix.454.¹³⁹ The death of Pedasus, in particular, is the point at which the *Iliad* draws closest

¹³⁹ The exception is Irus at xviii.98: the use of a half-line reserved for animals helps emphasise the indignity of his fate (Levine 1982, p. 201).

to the battle-narrative of the *BM*: a named animal is killed in battle and expires with an apparently heroic formula, ἀπὸ δ' ἔπτατο θυμός (not in fact used outside these three animal-lines, but resembling expressions like ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων παμμένη, XVI.856 = XXII.362). The *BM*'s first casualty encapsulates the tension which lies at the heart of the whole poem and provides much of its humour (see Introduction, pp. 33-4): the 'presence' of Echepolus in 203 establishes that Leichenor is a Homeric hero; the 'presence' of Pedasus in 204 reminds us that he is also an animal.

καὶ δ' ἔπεσεν is also used once of a human in Homer, at XI.676: Nestor recalls how he killed Itymoneus, who was struck while ἐν πρώτοισιν. This makes its use here doubly appropriate, since Leichenor is killed ἐν προμάχοις. Sens 2006 points out that although καὶ δ' ἔπεσεν πρηνής is never found in Homer, a phrase with exactly the same meaning and metrical pattern is: ἤριπε δὲ πρηνής (V.58, xxii.296). Again the *BM* poet avoids direct imitation (Introduction, p. 55).

ἀπαλὰς δ' ἐκόνισεν ἐθείρας: for the defilement of hair in the dust, cf. XVI.795-6, XXI.407. The latter (Ares' hair) extends the connection with the Theomachy (see above), since there Ares is the first to fall: poetically it provides a succinct image of beauty and delicacy giving way to turmoil, apt for the outbreak of hostilities. The poet may also have been inspired by A.R. 4.1303 θέμεναι κονίησιν ἐθείρας. ἐθείραι in Homer are always horses' manes or horsehair plumes: the word is first used of human or divine hair at *h.Bacch.* 4 (Dionysus) and *h.Ven.* 228 (Tithonus). The context usually stresses the length and movement of the hair (περισσεύοντο 'was shaken around' XIX.382, XXII.315, *h.Bacch.* 4; κατέχυντο 'flowed down' *h.Ven.* 228), and so I prefer to translate, as West does, 'whiskers' rather than 'fur' here.

[205] Only in *I*. It would be very uncharacteristic for the *BM* to reuse even a stock Homeric line intact (see *ad* 152), and this one is unwelcome in context; after the image of Leichenor's whiskers being defiled by dust, δούπησεν δὲ πεσών moves us backwards in time. There is the additional detail that the *BM* never otherwise mentions body armour during the battle, only shields and helmets; and that the armour worn by the combatants, being made of either leather (the Mice) or vegetables (the Frogs), should not really 'clatter' on impact.

206 Τρωγλοδύτης; the first of two parallel problems. Here, Troglodytes or Trogletes kills a frog, and Troglodytes is then killed by Ocimides at 213. At 232, Prasseius or Prassophagus drowns a mouse; at 235 Prasseius, Prassaeus, or Pelusius is killed by Psicharpax; and at 252b Prassaeus (occasionally Troxartes) attacks an opponent.

The *BM* never otherwise uses similar names in close proximity. The situation at 232-52b is logically convoluted, since the frog at 252b has to return from the dead if he is the same as the frog at 235, and it is easy to see how an editor would have tried to correct the 'problem' by changing the name (cf. *ad* 234). However, many editors overcompensated: in *IST* the frogs at 232 and 235 are *also* differentiated, even though the narrative clearly requires them to be the same. 206-213 has fallen victim to similar hypercorrection. There is no reason 206 and 213 cannot involve the same warrior, but the instinct that led to Prasseius becoming Prassophagus at 232 and Pelusius at 235 has turned Troglodytes into Trogletes at 206: apparently the exact repetition of a name in the same passage attracted suspicion. Parodic engagement with Homer's similar names (e.g. Antiphus/Antiphonus, Elasmus/Elatus; cf. von Kamptz 1982) is possible but unlikely, since

these pairs do not seem to have attracted comment in antiquity (with the exception of Alcimedon/Alcimus: see *ad* 274).

Although Τρωγλήτης is *lec. diff.* (only otherwise as a misspelling for τρωγλίτης, a type of bird), I print Τρωγλοδύτης as better attested (unanimous at 213) and less likely to be the result of error. ΣΖ glosses 206 ο τας τρώγλας της γης (*sic*); this in itself is ungrammatical, but a note such as ἡ τρώγλη τῆς γῆς could easily have resulted in the creation of a name Τρωγλήτης.

ἄκόντισε Πηλείωνα: ἄκοντίζω in Homer normally takes the genitive (e.g. XIV.402), but the acc. is much better represented in the *BM* paradosis, and ἄκοντίζω + acc. of the target is found from Classical times (e.g. Hdt. 1.43.6 ἄκοντίζων τὸν ὕν). The epithet Peleion appears 48x in Homer, always referring to Achilles. If the *BM*'s use is also a patronymic, the victim here must presumably be either Physignathus (see on 19), who reappears at 250, or a previously unmentioned brother; it is perhaps more likely, given the lack of further identification, that Πηλείων is a separate figure who also derives his name from πηλός 'mud' (cf. Ὀρiganίων at 256). Olson and Sens 1999 see the same joke at work in the fragment of Euboeus which addresses Πηλεΐδη (*Supp. Hell.* 412): 'the Homeric Πηλεΐδη is most likely to be taken as if it were derived from "mud"' (p. 10). For patronymic formations in Homer which do not actually refer to the father's name, cf. Simoeisius son of Anthemion at IV.473ff., named because his mother bore him by the river Simoeis.

207 στιβαρὸν δόρυ: Homeric στιβαρός qualifies ἔγχος, σάκος, or φάσγανον, but never δόρυ. The exact phrase appears only in fr. 28.9 of the anonymous *Anacreontea*, though cf. A.R. 3.1355–6 στιβαροῖς ... δούρασι, and Q. S. 1.236 δόρυ στιβαρόν. Sens 2006

points out that δολιχὸν δόρυ (XIII.162 *et al.*) would have preserved both the metre and the joke (the weapons involved in the battle are very small), and concludes that the poet introduced the variation simply to avoid repeating Homer: see Introduction, p. 55.

τὸν δὲ πεσόντα: although the phrase appears 3x in Homer (IV.463, XVII.346 and 352), once during the opening of battle in Book IV which is alluded to at 202-3, the *BM* poet may also have been influenced by the murder of Astyanax in the *Little Iliad*: τὸν δὲ πεσόντα / ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή (fr. 21.4-5). This suggests that he may have had access to archaic epics beyond simply the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

208 μέλας θάνατος: another Homeric adaptation: θάνατος is μέλας 5x in Homer, but only in the phrase μέλανος θανάτοιο (cf. also the θανάτου/-οιο μέλαν νέφος, 2x). The poet could also be adapting Hes. *WD* 155-6: θάνατος δὲ καὶ ἐκπάγλους περ ἔοντας | εἶλε μέλας (Sens 2006, p. 233). The exact phrase εἶλε μέλας θάνατος appears elsewhere only in an anonymous funerary epigram from the *Anthologiae Graecae* *Appendix*, 2.510.

σώματος: the majority reading for στόματος TZ; Q, the oldest member of *a*, has δ' ἐστόματος ἔπνη (*sic*), which is obviously confused but suggests original στόματος. The ψυχή in Homer leaves the body either through the wound (e.g. XIV.518-19) or generally ἐκ ῥεθέων (XVI.856, XXII.362). The identity of the ῥεθέα is debated: ῥέθος in the singular means 'face', but ΣAbT *ad* XXII.68 gloss the plural as 'limbs', and this meaning is followed by most translators (cf. Janko 1992 *ad* XVI.855-8, Chantraine *Dict.* s.v. ῥέθος; *contra* Clarke 1999, pp. 133-4, who argues that ῥεθέα in Homer always means 'mouth'). However, Dionysius Thrax (ap. ΣAbT above) thought Homer meant τὸ πρόσωπον, and IX.409, XXII.467 suggest that a ψυχή can depart through the mouth.

Sens 2006 notes the disagreement, and suggests that ἐκ σώματος is a 'virtual gloss' (p. 234), but the same could hold true for ἐκ στόματος. The *BM*'s own scholia offer no comment either way. The majority reading is preferable here because (Q)TZ require στόματος to scan as a dactyl, which would be clumsy.

209-214: the deaths of Seutlaeus and Troglodytes

A badly confused passage requiring care over numeration (cf. Wölke pp. 2-4). Ludwich's apparatus misrepresents Z: two different lines are amalgamated into a hybrid, and 214a is incorrectly reported as absent. I have been forced to introduce a new line number, 209a, to refer to a line present only in Z which Ludwich misidentifies as a variant form of 214. The main families print the passage as follows:

Z: 209, 209a, 214a, 213, 215

a: 209, 214, (214a,) 213, 215 (214a car. PY)

l: 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 213a, 216, 217

S: as *l*, but with 214, 214a, 215 between 213a and 216

Z is nonsense. *l* has several unmetrical lines (211, 213, 213a); the presence in 212 of two frogs called Limnocharis and Polyphonus is suspect given *l*'s λιμνόχαρις πολύφωνος at 12 (see *ad loc.*; defended by Kelly 2009, pp. 48-9); and 212-13a are inept, since a frog lifts a πέτρῳ μυλοειδέϊ (cf. VII.270) and strikes his opponent δι' αὐχένος (cf. XVI.587 αὐχένα). 216-17 are largely repeated from XIII.159-60 (see below). *S* retains all these problems, with the additional error that Ocimides (frog, 214) responds angrily to the killing of Troglodytes (mouse, 213a). Only *a* can be sustained, with the removal of 214a, an unwelcome inheritance from *Z* which QT print without understanding (ετλασεν Q, ἔχισ

T). *I*'s version appears in Z as a marginal replacement, and was probably a later creation: it displays the family's characteristic concern with alternating casualties.

209 Σευτλαῖον ... Ἐμβασίχυτρος: *I* swaps the endings, so that Seutlaeus kills Embasichytrus, but this is against the Homeric precedent for the structure [acc.] δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε [nom.] (V.69, VI.12, VI.29, xxii.268), as well as a general preference for the object to fall before ἔπεφνε in this *sedes* (e.g. XVI.487).

Σευτλαῖον: 'Beet-y', *hapax*, from σεῦτλον / τεῦτλον 'sea-beet' (see *ad* 54).

βαλών: a missile attack, as in Homer.

κέαρ: the uncontracted form of the word is not Homeric (first found in Pindar and Aeschylus). Strikes to the heart are rare in Homer: XIII.442, XVI.481.

[210-12] Whereas in *aZ* the victims are M, F, F, *I*'s sequence – with the transposition in 209 and the addition of 210-11 – runs M, F, M, F. 212 is then a bridge to make sense of 213, which clearly shows a mouse being killed (and thereby continues the pattern 'correctly'). Such alternation has Homeric precedent: the first seven casualties in *Il.* IV alternate perfectly between Trojans and Greeks (IV.457ff.). But it is by no means an absolute rule in Homer, and there is no reason the *BM* poet should have felt compelled to obey it.

214 Ὠκιμίδην: from ὠκιμον, 'basil', continuing the association between frogs and vegetables found at 53-5, 161-5, and Σευτλαῖον 209. Like Peleion in 206, it is impossible to tell whether it is a genuine patronymic, or merely formed like one. (West preserves the ambiguity by translating the two names as 'MacMudd' and 'MacBasil'.)

213 ἀπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος: here the phrase appears in its appropriate battlefield context, as at XVII.49 (= XXII.327, xxii.16). This can almost be seen as a 'correction' to 66: see *ad loc.*

ἤριπε δ' εὐθύς: τρῶσεν ἐπιφθὰς *I* continues the work of 212 by supplying a main verb. ἐπιφθὰς (from the post-Classical ἐπιφθάνω 'reach first, attain') anticipates the spurious 213a.

εὐθύς: we might expect the Homeric form ἰθύς, favoured also by Apollonius, although a degree of flexibility is suggested by Aratus' use of εὐθύς (2x, ἰθύς never).

215-221: the death of Costophagus

One of the battle's two most complex episodes, along with 230-46. *aZ* read 215, 218-22; *I* lacks 215, but adds 216-17 in its place. *S* has all eight lines 215-22.

In all MSS a warrior notices Coustophagus fleeing, ἔμπεσεν down the banks, and kills him in the water. This must, *contra* West, be a mouse. 'Coustophagus' is meaningless, but later MSS have Κοστοφάγον (from κοστός, either *Saussurea lappa* or *Calamintha*: *LSJ* s.v. κοστός, Carnoy 1959 s.v. *costos*; *ΣZ* κοσ(τος?) βοτανῆ), and Κραμβοφάγος *I* was probably an attempt to make the name less obscure. ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγε(ν) in Homer refers to injured warriors who press the attack (VII.263, XI.255); here the mouse is hampered not by injury but by the pond's shallows. The obvious precedent is Achilles, who leaves his spear on the bank of the Scamander (XXI.17) and charges into the water (a hostile element) in pursuit of the Trojans. ἔμπεσεν describes the mouse's headlong charge down the bank (cf. XVI.81), but was misunderstood as a verb of flight by *I*, which made Κραμβοφάγος φεύγων its subject. It is not remarkable that a frog should continue to flee 'even in the water'.

The name of the pursuer is missing. In *aZ* the subject of the verbs in 215-19 is Ocimides, who is the wrong species. 216-17 solve the problem by introducing Leichenor, but are not original, being copied almost exactly from XIII.159-60; Allen blames their omission on homoeoteleuton (ὥς δ' ἐνόησε 215 / ὥς δ' ἐνόησε 217), but 217 deliberately repeats the phrase so the transition to 218 is unaffected. Leichenor was killed at 202-4: this guarantees nothing in the *BM*, and if the original line(s) here did have Leichenor, he would be the first of the poem's resurrections (Kelly 2009, p. 50). This would be apt in context, making him both Achilles in the Scamander and Achilles' foe Lycaon, who 'rises from the dead' at XXI.49-63.

215 ἐξέσπασεν: ἐκσπάω appears 2x in Homer, of a spear pulled from a corpse (VI.65) and a shield (VII.255). Either is possible here, but the former is more likely: the line's subject (Leichenor?), in his haste to pursue Costophagus, leaves his spear in his previous victim's body (cf. XXI.17), setting up ἦλασε at 219 (see *ad loc.*)

ἐναντίον: 'opposite'. A little unexpected: in Homer it usually has the sense 'face-to-face', of a confrontation or a direct meeting (e.g. XX.257 πρὶν χαλκῷ μαχέσασθαι ἐναντίον). Homeric usage would suggest that Costophagus is running towards the subject, but this does not fit with subsequent events (see above). The poet may have taken cases like I.534, where the gods all stand up σφοῦ πατρὸς ἐναντίον, as having a purely locative sense: the gods stood up *in front of* Zeus, i.e. where he could see them. *LFGE* suggests that the word's original sense was 'wer im Gesichtskreis ist' (s.v. ἐναντίος), and later Greek uses the word to mean 'in the sight of': cf. X. *Cyr.* 3.3.345, where τὰναντία τινί are the things a person can see.

Alternatively, one can follow Allen in punctuating after ἐναντίον. The word is then best understood as an adjective with ἔγχος, 'hostile' (cf. e.g. *A. Th.* 375), giving the overall sense that the subject did not pull out the spear which had been thrown *at* him (and which had lodged in his shield?). The reconstruction of this passage proposed above makes it much more likely that the spear belongs to the subject of the line, and although ἐναντίον is never clause-initial in Homer, I favour punctuation as printed. The postponement of δέ is unusual but acceptable in poetry, and has an obvious metrical purpose: see Denniston pp. 187-8 for a list of similar postponements, many of which are even more pronounced.

ὥς δ' ἐνόησε: see *ad* 132.

218 Κοστοφάγον: see *ad* 215-221.

φεύγοντα: only a few individual heroes in the *Iliad* are described as φεύγοντα (as distinct from general retreats): Scamandrius at V.56, Hypsenor at V.80, Phylacus at VI.36, Deiochus at XV.342, Hippodamas at XX.402. All but Deiochus are Trojan, and all but Hypsenor are killed by a spear to the back; Hypsenor may have been the model for Costophagus, as he is pursued by Eurypylus and struck down with a sword. Iliadic heroes do also retreat with other verbs, e.g. μεταστρεφθέντα (of Thoön at XIII.545).

ἐμπεσεν: tumbling into liquid was characteristic of (over)confident mice: Babrius 60 ζωμοῦ χύτρῃ μῦς ἐμπεσών, Diogenian. 1.72 ὅτι μῦς τὸ ζῶον ἐμπεσών εἰς τὴν πίσσαν, Ael. *NA* 5.22 ἐς τοὺς ψυκτῆρας ὅταν οἱ μῦες ἐμπέσωσιν.

219 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγεν: the negation of ἀπολήγω in the *Iliad* usually has an aggressive sense: cf. XIII.230, XVII.565, XX.99, XXI.577, plus *BM* 290 and *ad* 215-21 above.

ἤλασε δ' αὐτόν: in combat, Homeric ἤλασε(ν) almost always refers to a close-range attack, usually with a sword (cf. Saunders 2004, p. 5). The only exception is XX.259, where Aeneas 'drives' (ἤλασ') his spear against Achilles' shield: the subsequent description makes it clear that the two heroes are still fighting at range, and have not yet closed with each other. Swords are not mentioned in the arming-sequences at 122ff. and 160ff., but the standard equipment of a Homeric warrior includes one.

αὐτόν is identified by different scholia as Co(u)stophagus (a frog), Troglodytes (a mouse), and Ocimides (another frog), suggesting that confusion over this passage set in early.

222 Absent in *I*, and removed or suspected by many editors: Brandt deleted it, West printed it in cruces. Yet it is a sophisticated line, and does not have the look of an interpolation. It is discussed by the scholia, which explain that it describes a frog rolling around (in his death throes?) on the shore, a meaning ἐπόρνυμι cannot really support. There is agreement, however, that Costophagus is being referred to. The scholiasts were confused because in their texts 222 followed 221 αὐτὸς δὲ παρ' ἡϊόν' ἐξετανύσθη, 'he was stretched out on the shore', which forced them to an unnatural interpretation of ἐπορνυμένου. In fact the difficulty is simple to resolve. We transpose 222 to precede 220, and for ἐπορνυμένου PQYZ adopt the reading of ST (and the majority of the *recc.*), ἐπορνύμενος. 222 then refers to the attack made against Costophagus by the mouse who has pursued him into the shallows: 'he stabbed him, rushing at his guts and his glistening flanks'.

λιπαροῖσι: 'sleek', 'shining', 'oily'. When used of body parts in Homer, almost always refers to feet (e.g. II.44, XIV.241): the exception is xv.332 λιπαροὶ κεφαλὰς καὶ

καλὰ πρόσωπα. Here it proves that the warrior denoted by αὐτόν in 219 is a frog, since a frog's flanks do indeed gleam with moisture as if oiled. There is a certain humour in the appropriation of a grand epic term for smooth, beautiful skin, characteristic of the feet of heroes and goddesses, to mean 'slimy like a frog'. Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 639-40 with Olson *ad loc.*, where λιπαράς is both a flattering epithet for Athens and a description of fish fried in oil.

λαγόνεσσιν: λαγών is unknown to early epic, but λαγόνεσσι(ν) became a fairly common form in later epic: Oppian and Nonnus both use it repeatedly.

220 οὐκ ἀνένευσεν: there may be a play here on the identical aorists of ἀνανεύω 'refuse' (2x Hom., XVI.250 and 252) and ἀνανέω, a very rare verb meaning 'swim up, surface'. The latter, which must be the intended sense, appears in Greek for the first time here.

A curious echo of this line occurs at Ael. *NA* 5.22: ἐς τοὺς ψυκτῆρας ὅταν οἱ μύες ἐμπέσωσιν, ἀνανεῦσαι καὶ ἀνελθεῖν οὐ δυνάμενοι, τὰς ἀλλήλων οὐράς ἐνδακόντες εἴτα ἐφέλκουσι τὸν δεύτερον ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ δεύτερος τὸν τρίτον. οὕτω μὲν δὴ καὶ τούτους ἀλλήλοις συμμαχεῖν καὶ ἐπικουρεῖν ἢ σοφωτάτη φύσις ἐξεπαίδευσεν. It is striking that one of the only other uses of ἀνανέω in Greek literature should concern mice falling into water, particularly given the military vocabulary (συμμαχεῖν καὶ ἐπικουρεῖν). There is no obvious reason for an allusion here, but Aelian (who reuses words from the *BM* elsewhere: see *ad* 107) may have been writing with this passage in mind.

ἐβάπτετο δ' αἵματι λίμνη: water is dyed red with blood in Homer only during the Scamander episode (see above): XXI.21 ἐρυθθαίνετο δ' αἵματι ὕδωρ. A Persian

commander at A. *Pers.* 316, thrown from his ship in the storm, ‘dyes red’ his beard (πορφυρᾷ βαφῇ).

221 ἐξετανύσθη: used of Hector at *VII.271, who is flattened by a thrown rock but in the next line gets back to his feet (αἶψ’ ὤρθωσεν Ἀπόλλων). It therefore contrasts with οὐκ ἀνένευσεν 220: we are specifically told that the frog falls and does not rise, and then his body is described with an Iliadic verb borrowed from a context where a fallen warrior *does* rise.¹⁴⁰ We can see this as an extension of the whole battle’s play with resurrection and impermanent death: see *ad* 230-46. ἐκτανύω is also used of the wounded Eurypylus at XI.844, a fallen tree at XVII.58, and Hector’s corpse at XXIV.18.

παρ’ ἡιόν’: in light of the above, probably ‘by the shore’ (but still floating in the water), rather than West’s ‘on the strand’.

223-229: the death of Tyrophagus, the flight of Calaminthus, the death of Phitraeus

Three relatively simple incidents, each self-contained and syntactically disconnected from the others. The only significant structural difference between MSS is that *l* omits 226 and replaces it with 227 Ὑδροχάρης δ’ ἔπεφνεν Πτερνοφάγον βασιλῆα: instead of Embasichytrus killing Phitraeus with a stone, it is Hydrocharis who kills Pternophagus. As at 209-12, we see *l*’s preoccupation with balancing the fortunes of the two armies: Tyrophagus (M) is killed, Calaminthus (F) flees in terror, Pternophagus (M) is killed, and then Borborocoites (F) is killed at 230 (see below). 227 is unmetrical, however, and

¹⁴⁰ The same form is used at *h.Bacch.* 38, of the grapes spreading out around the mast.

we would expect the object to fall before ἔπεφνεν (see on 209).¹⁴¹ The other variations between MSS are largely cosmetic and will be discussed below as they arise.

Tyrophagus' death was apparently the second half of a pair. His killer is not named in 223, and αὐτῆσιν ἐπ' ὄχθαις suggests a contrast: if T. was killed 'on the bank itself', presumably another mouse was killed somewhere else. The logical candidate would be the slayer of Costophagus, who is still in the lake. If Costophagus' death was immediately avenged by a frog, perhaps throwing a spear from the bank while the target was defenceless in the pond, we would have a satisfying correspondence between two adjacent episodes:

1. A mouse (Leichenor?) kills a frog with his spear on land, then pursues Costophagus into the pond and kills him too.
2. A frog sees this, hurls a spear to kill ?Leichenor in the pond, and then kills Tyrophagus αὐτῆσιν ἐπ' ὄχθαις.

Both sequences, though speculative, would involve a single warrior killing two opponents in succession, one in each of the poem's spheres of action. If correct, at least one line must have been lost between 221 and 223, perhaps two.

Calaminthius' retreat is un-Iliadic. Except during general routs (e.g. the Greeks in Book VIII), retreats in the *Iliad* occur in two forms: minor warriors who flee before a rampaging opponent and are immediately killed (e.g. Hippodamas before Achilles at XX.401-2); or major heroes who are forced to make a tactical withdrawal due to being

¹⁴¹ The presence of 'King Ham-eater' is an unwanted complication. Homeric usage permits multiple βασιλεῖς, but the frogs seem to have a single king, Physignathus; the ruler of the mice is never explicitly identified, but is most likely Troxartes (who is married to the daughter of King Pternotroctes, perhaps the previous monarch). For an additional mouse king to turn up here and then die with so little fanfare would be surprising, and the similarity of the name to *Πτερονοτρώκτου βασιλῆος at 29 is suggestive.

outnumbered (Aeneas at V.571-2) or wounded (Diomedes at XI.396-400, Peneleus and Leitus at XVII.597-604). Turning and running from single combat means death, although in Hector's case his death is somewhat delayed. Iliadic precedent would demand that if Calaminthus flees Pternoglyphus, he should at once be struck down from behind, and yet if the text is complete he gets away unscathed. This provides a note of comedy, particularly in the classic motif of abandoning the shield (see below *ad* 225), and acknowledges the trope of frogs as cowardly (Introduction pp. 38-9) which has already appeared in Physignathus' reaction to the water-snake.

The death of Phitraeus is entirely independent from its context, and seems to be nothing more than a showcase for some impressive Homeric gore; its most direct inspiration was probably Hector's killing of Epeigeus at XVI.577-80, as discussed below. It is worth noting that, in the poem as we have it, Embasichytrus is the only named warrior to kill multiple opponents (he slew Seutlaeus at 209) – although the reconstruction proposed above suggests there were originally more – and that his death is never mentioned. He was also the mouse who carried the declaration of war to the Frogs at 136ff. The *BM* is not long enough to allow individual heroes fully to establish themselves as 'champions', but it shows some favour towards those characters who appeared in the pre-battle narrative: this becomes more relevant with Leichopinax in the next segment.

223 Since Tyrophagus is a mouse, the subject of ἐξενάριξεν cannot be the same as that of ἦλασε 219: keeping 222 in its transmitted position does nothing to resolve the difficulty. At least one line has dropped out here, naming the frog who kills Tyrophagus, and perhaps identifying a first victim: see above.

Τυροφάγον: ‘Cheese-eater’; Τυρογλύφον ‘Cheese-nibble’ *I*. The latter is suspect given the proximity of Πτερογλύφον in the following line. Tyroglyphus is the father of Embasichytrus at 137; Tyrophagus was the name given in Greek Christianity to a particular week of fasting during Lent, although the *BM* is unlikely to have been an influence there.

ἐξενάριξεν: 8x Homer, occasionally in relevant contexts. At IV.488 it is used of Simoeisius, whose body is compared to a felled poplar that lies by a river (ποταμοῖο παρ’ ὄχθας); at VI.36 it is used of Melanthius, whose death occurs immediately after that of Phylacus, killed while fleeing (just as Tyrophagus’ death follows that of a fleeing combatant). Λιμνήσιος *I* leaves the sentence without a verb.

224 Πτερογλύφον: ‘Ham-nibble’, *hapax*.

δὲ ἰδών: δ’ ἐσιδών *aZ* occurs twice more in the next fifteen lines (232, 237), and in each case the MSS are almost unanimous; a very few read ἐπιδών. δὲ ἰδών is Homeric, but might have been seen as a mistake by scribes with no knowledge of the digamma. Both of these factors make δὲ ἰδών *lec. diff.*, and so despite *I*’s generally poor showing in this section of the poem, we should follow its reading here (although Allen went too far in correcting the other two uses of δ’ ἐσιδών to δὲ ἰδών as well).

Καλαμίνθιος: ‘Minty’, from καλαμίνθη ‘catmint’ (genus *Nepeta*).

ἐς φόβον ἦλθεν: perhaps modelled on *ἐν φόβον ὤρσε (XI.544, XIII.362).

225 τὴν ἀσπίδα ῥίψας: Abandoning one’s shield in battle was both a *topos* of cowardice and, at least in Athens, an offence under the law (cf. Lys. 10.1, And. 1.74, Ar. *Pax* 1186). The humour here, much like that in Archil. fr. 5, derives from the fact that no

Homeric hero ever does so: a warrior in the *Iliad* can be separated from his armour only by death (or by direct divine intervention, as in the case of Patroclus at XVI.803). This same phrase appears in Anacreon fr. 36b, ἀσπίδα ῥίψας ποταμοῦ καλλιρόου παρ' ὄχθας. The context is intriguingly similar, and there may have been a more detailed allusion here which is now lost to us (especially given the *BM*'s use of παρ' ὄχθας at 20 and *106).

226 Absent in *I*, which has the less satisfactory variant 227 (see above, on 223–9).

Φιτράϊον: Embasichytrus' second victim, after Seutlaeus at 209. The majority of the *vett.* have Λιτράϊον, 'equivalent to a λίτρα', which can be either a silver coin, a measure of weight, or a measure of capacity. None of these has any obvious relevance to frogs. Φιτράϊον is the reading of the *recc.*, presumably from the Homeric φιτρός 'wooden log'. Logs, especially the speckled variety, have some traditional support as a location for frogs, so this is at least plausible; Q, the oldest member of *a*, has Φυτράϊον, which would be a natural mishearing (especially given Q's recurring problem with vowel sounds, p. 100). Λιμναῖον, found in one early MS, is also possible. West's Ὑγραῖον 'Damp' is an ingenious conjecture based on Ὑδροχαρις in 227, but 226 and 227 are not similar enough for us to assume they sprang from a single original in this way.

δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνεν: see *ad* 209.

228 **χερμαδίω:** a distinctively Homeric weapon, very rare elsewhere in Greek literature (between Homer and the *BM*, only mentioned by Tyrtaeus and Aeneas Tacticus). It usually inflicts a non-fatal injury, and the target is either finished off with a second strike (e.g. V.582-5) or carried away wounded (e.g. VIII.321-34). A blow with a

χερμαδίων is lethal only twice, at XVI.578 and 587: the former was probably the inspiration here, since Hector hits Epeigeus in the head and shatters his skull.

βρέχματος: βρέγ- is much the more common spelling (and is used at Call. *Aet.* fr. 177.28), but βρέχ- is Homeric (V.586). Cf. Q. S. 13.155 καί πού τις βρεχμόν τε καὶ ἐγκέφαλον συνέχευε.

229 Line-final ἐγκέφαλος δέ in Homer is always followed by ἔνδον ἅπας πεπάλακτο ‘was all spattered inside’ (XI.98, XII.185, XX.399). Sens 2006 pp. 232-3 points out that although here the verb is ἔσταξε ‘dripped’, παλάσσετο appears immediately afterward, as though acknowledging the Homeric model. He also notes that πεπάλακτο is interpreted by the AbT scholia on XI.98 as a synonym for διεβρέχετο ‘soaked, grew wet’: the scholiast seems to have envisaged something like subdural haematoma (φησὶν οὖν τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἐμπεπλησθαι τοῦ αἵματος· σφιγγομένου γὰρ τοῦ δόρατος ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀστέου ἔξω προελθεῖν εἴργεται τὸ αἶμα, ἔσω δὲ ἐπισυνάγεται, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν πληγέντων λίθῳ...). It is not clear whether Sens believes the *BM* poet knew this scholion (or an equivalent discussion). If so, παλάσσετο could be understood as a kind of correction to Homer: instead of the brain ‘spattering inside’, an image which clearly confused some ancient critics, here it more naturally spatters the ground. On the other hand, the line can equally well be explained by a characteristic concern for expressions which allude to and yet differ from Homeric models: the debate over the meaning of πεπάλακτο is not crucial to the effect.

The real point lies in the substitution of ἔσταξε, rather than the removal of πεπάλακτο. στάζω is used 3x by Homer, always to refer to nectar and ambrosia: XIX.39, 348, and 354. The most significant of these is XIX.39 στάξε κατὰ ῥινῶν (as Sens

observes). Where Thetis drips nectar into the nostrils of the dead Patroclus to preserve his corpse, Phitraeus' brains, in a blackly comic reversal, drip *out* of his nostrils. There is also a more general interaction with the theme of live and dead characters: nectar and ambrosia are the food of the gods, and are only used on mortals twice during the *Iliad*, in these two almost consecutive passages – Patroclus (who is dead) and Achilles (who is alive). Parodically, this could be interpreted as another instance of Homer failing to distinguish between living and dead characters, making allusion to it in this episode of the *BM* especially relevant.

230-46: the death of Leichopinax and the struggle over his corpse

The *BM* may already have brought one character back from the dead (see *ad* 218-22), but here matters are clearer: in most MSS (all the *vett.* except F) it is Psicharpax who appears at 234, kills one frog (235-6), injures another (237-42), and is slain by a third (243-6).

There is good reason to see this as deliberate. The *BM*'s battle has several points in common with Achilles' rampage at XXI.1-210, which begins with Lycaon 'rising from the dead' (see *ad* 202-69). The mouse Leichopinax is killed at 230-1, but the other combatants do not seem to realise this: he is first of all drowned (ἀπέπνιξε, 233) in the pond by Prasseius, νεκρὸν ἔόντα, and then defended (ἤμυν', 234) by Psicharpax. This suggests intentional parodic engagement with Homer's accidental resurrections, e.g. Pylaimenes (killed at 5.576-79 but alive at 13.658) or Hypsenor (killed by Deiphobus at XIII.411-12 and then carried off βαρέα στενάχοντα at 423).¹⁴² The *BM* acknowledges that

¹⁴² Hypsenor's fate was a notorious crux: Fenik 1968, p. 132, Janko 1992 *ad loc.*, Kelly 2007, pp. 397-8. Aristarchus read στενάχοντε at XIII.423, and two thousand years later we find Ludwig proposing νεκρώσαντα at *BM* 232. Cf. also Kelly 2009, p. 48 on 'the *Iliad*'s penchant for

death in Homer is sometimes problematic, and goes out of its way to draw attention to the problems.

Furthermore, 237-46 correspond unusually closely with a specific Iliadic combat: IV.517-35. In each case A hurls a rock, shattering B's right shin (κνήμη(ν) δεξιτερή(ν) IV.519, *BM* 242); B falls back in the dust (ὑπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι(ν) IV.522, *BM* 242); C responds by striking A in the middle of the belly (γαστέρα τύψε μέσσην IV.531, τύψε ... μέσσην κατὰ γαστέρα *BM* 244). This close remodelling is unique in the *BM*, and makes obvious the major difference: both passages involve a disembowelment, but in Homer it is B (Diores) who is disembowelled (ἐκ δ' ἄρα πᾶσαι ἰ χύντο χαμαὶ χολάδες 525-6), while in the *BM* it is A (Psicharpax), χαμαὶ δ' ἔκχυντο ἅπαντα / ἔγκατ' (see *ad* 245). Only five other warriors in the *Iliad* are disembowelled (XIII.507-8, XIV.517-8, XVII.314-5, XX.418, XXI.179-82); the last of these is Asteropaeus, one of Psicharpax' models earlier in the poem (see *ad* 24-55) and Achilles' major mortal opponent during the Scamander episode. Psicharpax' second appearance ends with the death he should have had before. Asteropaeus is gutted and left in the water at XXI.179-204: Psicharpax is left in the water at 99, and then gutted at 245.

230 This line follows exactly the same structure as 226: [acc.] δ' ἔπεφνεν ἀμύμων [nom.]. Although we might incline to suspect this in a text as heavily patched and interpolated as the *BM*, repetition within a very short passage is Homeric: cf. e.g. VIII.309-10, which are almost identical to 300-1. Both lines clearly existed in proximity from an early stage, as shown by *Z*, which accidentally swaps the names around.

addressing characters who are already dead', such as 'Akhilleus' final τέθναθι (22.365) to Hektor τεθνηῶτα (22.364)'.

Λειχοπίνακα δ' ἔπεφνεν ἀμύμων Βορβοροκοίτης: Λειχοπίναξ δ' ἔκτεινεν

ἀμύμονα Βορβοροκοίτην *I*, perhaps in an attempt to preserve alternation after 227.

Unfortunately this then makes nonsense of 232. Ludwich's edition reaches its apoapsis here, and almost breaks free altogether from the gravitational field of the MSS: he adds two entire lines of his own composition, 230a-b.

231 τὸν δὲ σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψεν: 11x Hom. (*Iliad* only), never elsewhere in hexameter epic (although τὴν δέ etc. appears at *h.Ap.* 370). Appears also in the spurious 213a (see on 209–14).

232 Πρασσεῖος: see *ad* 206. The name used here and at 235 and 252b must have been some version of 'Leeky', for which *I*'s Πρασσοφάγος 'Leek-eater' and Πηλούσιον 'Muddy' (?) were unimaginative replacements. -σσ- is necessary *metri gratia*; the prevalence of -σ- variants may be due to the simplex noun. -αῖος is more common as a suffix for personal names in Homer than -εῖος (von Kamptz 1982, pp. 118-20), but -εῖος is better attested (allowing for spelling mistakes) at 232/235; -αῖος at 252b was probably an early attempt to deal with the resurrection, before wilder solutions were introduced in *I*.

ποδὸς εἴλκυσε: grabbing at the feet in the *Iliad* is always done in an attempt to retrieve a dead body. This may be to rescue an ally (Coön at XI.258), to strip the armour from an enemy (Idomeneus at XIII.383), or – in a display of unusual brutality – to mutilate the corpse: Hector tries to drag away Patroclus at XVII.125-7 in order to cut off his head and throw his body to the dogs.

One trope of Homeric warfare notably absent from the *BM* is the stripping of armour. It is not clear why the poet omitted this: although the different equipment used

by the two sides makes it impossible for a frog to adopt a mouse's armour or vice versa, there is no reason armour should not be taken as a trophy. We could read Prasseius' action as a symbolic 'claiming' of the body, akin to Hector's attempts on Patroclus, but in this case ἀπέπνιξε (233) would not be apt. Nor is there any possibility that Leichopanax is being 'finished off', since we are explicitly told he is a corpse (νεκρόν). The intended sense can only be that P. does not realise L. is dead. On its own this would be little more than a piece of grim slapstick: in context, it feeds significantly into this episode's overall theme of uncertain or disputed death.

233 Generally dismissed as interpolation by editors on grounds of sense, but it appears in all our early MSS with very little difference other than *I*'s ἀπέθηκε for ἀπέπνιξε, and should be retained: see above.

κρατήσας χειρὶ τένοντα: 'holding on to the tendon (τένων) with his hand'. The expression is both highly specific and bizarre in context. The obvious Homeric parallel is XVII.290: Hippothoos drags at Patroclus by the foot (ποδὸς ἔλκε) in an attempt to capture his body for the Trojans, 'binding the tendons at the ankle (παρὰ σφυρὸν ἀμφὶ τένοντας) with his shield-strap'. This detail is unique in Homer, although Glaucus was apparently killed by Ajax in the *Aethiopis* while attempting the same tactic on the fallen Achilles.¹⁴³ The *BM*'s version is more problematic. An individual attempting to drown a victim holds onto the head, the neck, or even the back. To hold onto the foot would be pointless unless Prasseius is dangling Leichopanax over the edge of a precipice with his head in the water, and even then it is obscure why he should be holding onto a single

¹⁴³ Fenik 1968 p. 233. Our summaries of the *Aethiopis* specify only that Ajax killed Glaucus while defending the body of Achilles (first at Apollod. *Epit.* 5.4): Fenik assumes, plausibly, that the 6th-c. BC amphora mentioned below illustrates the scene as it happened in that poem.

tendon: 'tendons are usually plural unless ἄμφω, ἀμφοτέρω suggest the dual' (Edwards 1991, p. 90).

Either an Iliadic half-line has been very clumsily adapted, which does not align with the sophistication the poet otherwise displays in his use of Homer, or some other intertext is at work. I suspect an allusion to the myths surrounding the *birth* of Achilles. Although the story of Thetis immersing her infant son in the Styx does not appear until Statius (*Th.* 134), the back of the ankle had been Achilles' weak point since much earlier. Statius' passing reference to the Styx makes it very unlikely that the motif was his own invention. A Chalcidian amphora from the first half of the 6th century BC depicts Achilles dead with an arrow through his heel, and Glaucus tying a strap to his ankle (Pfuhl 1955, fig. 13); Burgess 2009 sensibly points out that the body also has an arrow buried in its side, so this Achilles was clearly not invulnerable everywhere but the ankle, but nonetheless concludes 'in both early literature and art a lower leg wound to Achilles is emphasized' (p. 13; see also Burgess 1995, Heslin 2005 pp. 166-9). There is no evidence for the *tendo calcaneus* in the human ankle being called the 'Achilles tendon' in antiquity - Hp. *Fract.* 11 calls it simply ὁ τένων ὁ ὀπίσθιος - but there is only one mythological context in which it would be significant for a character to be immersed in water while being held by a single tendon.

The *tendo calcaneus* and the ankle in general form the centre of a complicated knot of imagery relating to the life and death of Achilles. His mother holds him by it when she attempts to make him immortal; Hippothoos tries to drag off his comrade Patroclus by attaching a strap to his ankle; after he defeats Hector, he pierces the dead man's ankle tendons and threads a strap through them (XXII.396-8) in order to mistreat the body; when he himself is killed, Glaucus again tries to drag him away via tying a strap round

his ankle. In the darkly comic description of Prasseius ‘drowning’ the dead Leichopinax κρατήσας χειρὶ τένοντα, the *BM* poet combines all of the above symbolism into a single surreal image. Both parties represent Achilles at different points in his tale: Prasseius is the wrathful Achilles defiling the corpse of Hector, while the unfortunate Leichopinax is both the baby Achilles being dipped in the Styx and the dead Achilles being hauled away by Glaucus.

234 Ψιχάρπαξ: attempts to correct this name appear already in the *vett.*, with F’s nonsensical Λειχάρπαξ. Modern editors were more inventive: Λυχνάρπαξ (Ludwich), Ψωμάρπαξ (Bothe 1835), Ψηγμάρπαξ (Pierron 1875). On this resurrection as a parodic strategy, however, see *ad* 230-46 and Introduction pp. 109-10.

δ’ ἤμυν’ ἐτάρου περὶ τεθνειῶτος: based on XVIII.173 οἱ μὲν ἀμυνόμενοι νέκυος πέρι τεθνηῶτος (of Patroclus); περὶ here must have the more causal sense ‘on behalf of’. All the major MSS except Z have ἐτάρων ... τεθνειώτων, which is possible – Psicharpax could be coming to fight for his dead comrades in general – but if we take this line as part of the scene’s extended play on the concept of ‘dead’, the singular is more likely. Leichopinax is killed by Borborocoites (230); Prasseius, apparently not realising he is dead, kills him again (232); then Psicharpax – who himself should not be alive – comes to his ‘defence’, as though he is *still* not dead despite having been killed twice.

235 Πρασσεῖον: see *ad* 232. *I* has the variant Πήλουσιον, presumably from πηλός; the fact that at Hdt. 2.141 the mouse horde halts the army of Sennacherib under the walls of Pelusium (Introduction p. 44 n. 53) is almost certainly coincidence.

μήπω γαίης ἐπιβάντα: more vivid and relevant than the space-filling *κατὰ νηδύος ἐς μέσον ἤπαρ* of *IZ*, which may have been copied from 203. Presumably Prasseius dragged Leichopinax partway into the shallows to ‘drown’ him. Glei condemns *a*’s reading as the work of the hypothetical interpolator from 233, keen to depict amphibious combat, but given the amount of evidence to suggest that the battle was always envisaged as taking place on the boundary between land and water (Physignathus’ strategy at 154-5, the repeated Scamander parallels, the emergence of the crabs which concludes the poem), there is no reason the original author should not have included such references himself.

236 πρὸσθεν: *προπάροιθε* *a* disrupts the metre.

ψυχὴ δ’ Αἰδόσδε βεβήκει: a hybrid of two Homeric expressions, **ψυχὴ δ’ Αἰδοσδε κατῆλθεν* (x.560 = xi.65) and **κηρὶ δαμείς Αἰδόσδε βεβήκει* (iii.410 = vi.11). *ἦτορ δ’ ἔκτοσθε βεβήκει* *l* is a peculiar image, since *ἦτορ* in Homer and elsewhere is always the physical organ: not even at the *Iliad*’s most graphic moments do hearts burst out of chests. *ψυχὴ δ’ ἐκ στόματος ἔπτη* *Z* is reused from 208 (see *ad loc.*).

237-8 The tactic of hurling mud to blind an opponent is not Homeric. The phrasing is also curious: in all MSS other than *Z* Crambobates ἔχρισε his opponent’s face with the mud. *χρίω* in Homer means ‘anoint’, almost always referring to the olive oil applied as part of the bathing process: it is also used of ambrosia 3x (XVI.670, 680, xviii.194) and once of the poison Odysseus went to Ephyre to seek for his arrows (i.262). This suggests a careful, deliberate action, whereas here the sense must be more like ‘smear’ or ‘splatter’.

The most obvious connection between mud and blindness is an unexpected one: at *Ev.Jo.* 9:6 Jesus heals a blind man by anointing his eyes with mud, ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς. Greek medical literature makes occasional reference to the practice of anointing with mud: cf. Galen (Kühn 1826 12.177) πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ κνήμας καὶ μηροὺς ... καὶ στέρνα τῷ πηλῷ τῆς γῆς ταύτης χριόμενοι σαφῶς ὠφελοῦντο. If it was known as a folk cure in the ancient world, the *BM* and John could be alluding to the same custom – the joke in the *BM* being that Crambobates ‘anoints’ Psycharpax with mud as though he were trying to heal him, when in fact the action is aggressive. It is tempting to speculate that smearing the eyes or face with mud might even have been known as a cure for blindness, making the use of mud to blind someone in battle particularly ironic. Alternatively the poet could have been looking for a vivid verb to describe mud spattering across someone’s face, and the reminiscence of medical vocabulary could be pure accident. ἔπληξε Z is unlikely to be correct: not only is it very poorly attested, but it would be an obvious replacement for *lec. diff.* ἔχρισε.

237 Κραμβοβάτης: Glei complains that ‘Cabbage-treader’ is ‘für einen Frosch völlig unpassend’, while Πηλοβάτης *I* (‘Mud-treader’) is ‘ein äußerst treffender Name’ (p. 192), but this objection is part of a wider attack on Ludwich’s neglect of *I* and is not in itself a strong point: given the association between frogs and vegetables at 53-55 (which Glei regards as interpolated; but see also Ocimides at 214), more or less any name with ‘cabbage’ in would work, and presumably frogs are as prone to climb on cabbages as on any other plant. Πηλοβάτης is suspect given its proximity to πηλοῦ.

δράκα: δράξ ‘handful’ is a late word, securely attested nowhere before the *BM*: it appears in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, the Septuagint, and the fragments of Heraclides

Ponticus, none of which can be dated accurately. Its verb, δράσσομαι, dates back to Homer.

239 ὠργίσθη: ὀργισθεῖς *a.* (μ)ουνώθη *l* is probably an error for θυμώθη *recc.*: if ΘΥΜΩΘΗ were miscopied as ΟΥΝΩΘΗ, as in L, the M could have been added in an attempt to produce a real Greek word (Kühn 1883, p. 25).

χειρὶ παχείῃ: *18x Hom., 4x followed immediately by κείμενον. The most obvious debt is to VII.264-5 = XXI.403-4, λίθον εἴλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ / κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ μέλανα τρηχύν τε μέγαν τε; see below.

240 The complex structure of this line, which chains together several different Homeric phrases, has been well discussed by Vine 1986; it is not, however, an ‘altogether typical line’ (p. 384), since the density of Homeric echoes is in fact relatively unusual in the *BM*. Every single word or phrase appears in the same *sedes* somewhere in Homer:

((κείμενον) (ἐν δαπέδῳ))		((λίθον) ὀβριμον),		((ἄχθος) (ἀρούρης))	
*xi.577		*ix.305		*2x	
*16x	*3x	*3x		*5x	*8x

The line is a cento – a patchwork of Homeric fragments assembled to give a new sense. Vine, who deplores ‘speculative claims as to which ‘effects’ a poet may have ‘intended’’, sees this as evidence of the complex imitative technique at work behind the *BM* as a whole, but argues that it is irrelevant whether the poet knew what he was doing. If the poet were participating unconsciously in a highly-developed system of phonetic and metrical reminiscence, we might expect lines like this to occur more frequently.

I prefer to see deliberate variation at work here. Three separate duels have been ‘mined’ for inspiration:

- V.297ff. Diomedes vs. Aeneas: χερμάδιον λάβε χειρὶ (302) ... τῷ βάλεν Αἰνεΐαο κατ’ ἰσχίον (305) ... ἐρείσατο χειρὶ παχείῃ (309)
- VII.263ff. Ajax vs. Hector: λίθον εἴλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ / κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ (264-5) ... τῷ βάλεν (266) ... βλάψε δέ οἱ φίλα γούναθ’· ὃ δ’ ὕπτιος ἐξετανύσθη (271)
- XXI.403ff. Athene vs. Ares: λίθον εἴλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ / κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ (403-4) ... οὔρον ἀρούρης (405) ... τῷ βάλε (406) ... ἐκόνισε δε χαίτας (407)

The significance of these three is demonstrated by the fact that they are the only occurrences in Homer of the phrase τῷ βάλε(ν). In each, a warrior is hit and knocked to the ground by a massive stone, but is subsequently rescued by the intercession of another party. All three scenes have provided elements to the *BM*’s hybrid version, but the poet has taken care not to copy directly: Aeneas is hit in the joint of the hip, Hector in the knees, Crambobates in the shin; Aeneas drops to one knee, Hector falls but immediately rises, Crambobates (like Ares) sprawls backwards in the dust. The presence of these original models in the background of the new text enhances the reader’s enjoyment. ἄχθος ἀρούρης in Homer means ‘a *burden* on the earth’, in the sense of something lacking value, rather than simply ‘a *weight*’ (XVIII.104, xx.379). Here, it plays off against *οὔρον ἀρούρης at XXI.405. The stone Athene picks up is a boundary-marker, placed for a specific reason; Psicharpax’ weapon is useless – just a stone. This is because a stone a mouse could lift would be no good for any practical purpose. Psicharpax is wielding a pebble. ἄχθος ἀρούρης works on a surface level as a comically exaggerated description of a very small object, but on the intertextual level it reminds literate readers of another, larger rock flung in a similar situation by a much larger combatant. *Pace* Vine,

this is not the product of unconscious metrical patterning so much as a careful, multilayered, and intentional allusion to a model text.

ἐν δαπέδῳ: to be preferred over the more Homeric ἐν πεδίῳ (*14x Hom.; cf. esp. VII.265, XXI.404) as *lec. diff.*, given the *BM*'s preference for slight adjustment to Homeric expressions, as well as accentuating the joke: the phrase is used elsewhere in Homer only at xi.577, of the giant Tityus, who ἐπ' ἐννέα κεῖτο πέλεθρα. Another separate reference to enormous size is added to the mix, further widening the gap between Psicharpax' tiny stone and the grandiose epic imagery with which it is described.

241 Κραμβοβάτην: see above on 237.

ἐκλάσθη: used of a leg wound at XI.584, but it is the arrow-shaft (δόναξ) which snaps, not the bone.

242 πέσε δ' ὕπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι: *πέσεν ὕπτιος and *ὕπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι are both Homeric (4x and 5x respectively), but *πέσεν ὕπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι occurs only at xviii.398, a passage with some odd coincidences of sense and vocabulary:

Od. xviii.387-98

Eurymachus becomes angry (ἐχολώσατο, 387) and throws an improvised weapon (a footstool) at Odysseus, who ducks down by the knee (πρὸς γούνα, 395) of Amphinomus. The stool hits a wine-pourer on the right hand (χεῖρα | δεξιτερήν, 396-7); the wine-jug falls to the ground (πρόχοος δὲ χαμαί, 397) and the servant falls backwards into the dust (πέσεν ὕπτιος ἐν κονίῃσι, 398).

BM 239-46

Psicharpax becomes angry (ὠργίσθη, 239) and throws an improvised weapon (a stone) at Crambobates, who is hit below the knees (ὕπὸ γούνατα, 241). His right shin is broken (κνήμη δεξιτερή, 242) and he falls backwards into the dust (πέσε δ' ὕπτιος ἐν κονίησι, 242). Craugasides rushes in and stabs P. in the stomach, and P.'s guts pour out onto the ground (χαμαὶ δ' ἔκχυντο, 245).

Although the verbal reminiscences are less explicit than those of the Peirus/Diores combat discussed above *ad* 230-46, the patterning is curiously similar. The difference from IV.517-26 is that Psicharpax, the original attacker, is the one who is disemboweled, rather than his victim Crambobates. Here Psicharpax again comes off worse than Homeric precedent would suggest: Eurymachus is not punished for his assault on the servant (until xxii.82-8, where he is killed by Odysseus and spills food on the ground as he falls, ἀπὸ δ' εἶδατα χεῦεν ἔραζε, perhaps significantly); Psicharpax, his counterpart, is killed on the spot.

243 Κραυγασίδης: 'son of Croaker', *hapax*. As with Peleion at 206, it is unclear whether this is a genuine patronymic (from Κραύγασος?) or simply formed as such.

αὐθις: Stadtmüller's ἰθὺς has been widely accepted on grounds of sense; we have not seen Craugasides attack Psicharpax previously. But αὐθις can mean 'in turn' (not in Homer, but e.g. S. *OT* 1403), which would be appropriate given that this is the longest coherent sequence of attacks anywhere in the *BM*. Compare XVII.312-3: with his ally Schedius slain by Hector, Αἴας δ' αὖ Φόρκυνα δαΐφρονα Φαίνοπος υἱὸν Ἰπποθόω περιβάντα μέσσην κατὰ γαστέρα τύψε (see note on 244 below).

244 Modelled on XXI.117, τύψε κατὰ κληῖδα παρ' αὐχένα, πᾶν δέ οἱ εἶσω, of Achilles executing Lycaon. Yet another strand is added to the interwoven relationships between the *BM* battle and the Scamander episode: a literally resurrected character (Psicharpax) is killed using vocabulary borrowed from a metaphorically resurrected character (Lycaon).

οἱ: Wolf conjectured μιν, based on e.g. XI.263 νύξε δέ μιν κατὰ χεῖρα μέσῃν. The mistake is hard to explain textually, and may have arisen from a genuine misunderstanding: the two lines in Homer in which a warrior is struck 'in the middle of the belly' both begin with a dative – τῷ ὃ γε γαστέρα τύψε μέσῃν IV.531, and Ἴπποθόῳ περιβάντα μέσῃν κατὰ γαστέρα τύψε XVII.313. In neither case does the dative actually refer to the victim, but a scholar (or even the poet?) might have believed this to be a quirk of Homeric syntax.

245 χαμαὶ δ' ἔκχυντο ἅπαντα | ἔγκατ': a clever reworking of Homer's ἐκ δ' ἄρα πᾶσαι | χύντο χαμαὶ χολάδες (IV.525-6, XXI.180-1). The meaning is identical, but the prefix is restored to its verb, a different word is used for 'entrails' (ἔγκατα rather than χολάδες, which consequently changes the gender of πᾶς – although ἔγκατα preserves the alliteration of k-sounds crucial to the original), and the one repeated word is positioned in a different *sedes*. Brilliantly, the Homeric expression is only used twice in the *Iliad*, for the deaths of Diores and Asteropaeus – the two scenes on which the second death of Psicharpax is closely modelled. The clause neatly encapsulates the sophistication with which the *BM* poet manipulates both the language and the narrative tropes of Homer into new configurations.

246 ἐφέλκομένω ... χειρὶ παχείῃ: ἐφέλκω is used of a spear only once in Homer, at XIII.597, describing the shaft *dragging* from Helenus' wounded hand as he retreats from combat. Here a warrior *uses* his hand to drag the spear out of his victim.

247-59: the *aristeia* of Troxartes?

A problematic passage at every level, and incoherent in the paradosis. We may start by bracketing 247, which occurs ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο – there is no river in the *BM* – and 251, which is nonsense (an injured frog emerges from the pond, although the Frogs have been out of the pond since 133) and probably originated with a mutation of 248. FJZ attempted to correct the latter so that the frog jumps *into* the pond, but the results are unmetrical (and ἥλλατο J is Byzantine). 252b must also be removed or repaired, since it introduces the Boeotian River Ismenus.

The linchpin of this passage is 250, secure across the MSS, in which Troxartes personally lands a blow on Physignathus, his son's 'killer' – a dramatic and effective climax for the battle. Since 250 involves a foot-wound, it is logical to assume, with Stadtmüller and West among others, that 248 depicts its consequence, and that the σκάζων character is Physignathus. This adds a neat Homeric joke (see *ad* 248). 248 cannot follow 250 directly and no extant line fills the gap, so a lacuna is required. 249 follows well from 248. At 252 a warrior notices another 'still advancing half-dead': the subject is either Prasseius (who died at 236) or Troxartes, while the object appears to be Physignathus, who is plausibly ἡμίπνουν but dubiously προπεσόντα. If Prasseius is correct, his target must be a mouse: Kelly 2009, pp. 47-8 sees Prass(ei)us attacking Physignathus as parodic engagement with the *Iliad*, since stock names like Melanippus and Orsilochus appear on both sides of the conflict, but there is little sign of this side-

swapping causing difficulty or even comment among ancient readers, and for a frog to attack his own king mid-battle (without narratorial comment!) would have been more confusing than satirical (Introduction, p. 113). But if Physignathus is not the target, we are short a replacement, since no other character has been wounded since Crambobates at 241-2. The best solution is to make Physignathus the half-dead target and Troxartes his vengeful attacker; but if we follow most editors in deleting 252a-b, Troxartes is left wielding an ὀξύσχοινος, which is not a mouse weapon.

The text printed here presents good sense – Troxartes wounds Physignathus, tries to kill him, but is intercepted by Prasseius and Origanion – and uses only one lacuna. Its main disadvantage is the need to print most of 252b in cruces: 253 requires a frog subject, but even if we accept Prasseius' second coming, he should be nowhere near the Ismenus. Clearly this passage has fallen victim to centuries of adjustment and interpolation, and we are unlikely ever to cure it fully; but the crucial narrative points are that it is King Physignathus who limps away at 248, and his nemesis Troxartes who comes under attack at 253-7.

250 ἐς ποδὸς ἄκρον: cf. ἐς πόδας ἄκρους XVI.640, of Sarpedon's fallen body. The only character in the *Iliad* to be wounded in the foot is Diomedes at XI.377, but there is obvious relevance to the death of Achilles, particularly given the 'son of Peleus' equivalence discussed above (see *ad* 19-20). ποδός is found only in Z, but majority πόδα produces a very harsh hiatus (Introduction, pp. 75-6).

248 σκάζων ἐκ πολέμου: *XI.811 (Eurypylus' thigh wound).

ἀνεχάζετο: 7x Homer, always of a warrior giving ground against superior force or numbers: Diomedes (*V.443 and *600), Odysseus (*XI.461), Ajax (XV.728), Patroclus (*XVI.710), Menelaus (*XVII.108), Hector (XVII.129).

τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς: *V.352 (Aphrodite scratched on the wrist). Already a comic exaggeration in Homer: Aphrodite has been hurt so slightly that Athene is able to mock her by suggesting she scratched her wrist on a brooch-pin, περόνη (V.425). The cowardly Physignathus, like Aphrodite, flees battle with a minor wound – but he *has* been wounded by a household object associated with clothing and female spheres of activity, a needle, βελόνη (130).

249 ἦλατο: the same verb used of the fleeing Calaminthus at 225.

τάφρους: necessary *metri gratia*, although τάφρον seems more natural. The word is always singular in Homer, and in the *Iliad* always refers to the ditch which helps defend the Achaean camp; the tragedians seem to have envisaged several separate trenches (cf. *E. Rh.* 111, *S. Aj.* 1279). No such feature has been mentioned in the *BM* so far and the Frogs have not constructed any fortifications, so a human-sized ditch is probably meant. Furthermore, as discussed above, a frog would be more likely to seek out a ditch full of water as a refuge from aggressive mice. Are we dealing with some sort of network of trenches for drainage or irrigation? LSJ cites *PHal.1.97* and *PSI6.597.5* (an error for *PSI6.595.7*) as examples of the word's use to mean 'irrigation-ditch', but in neither case are the ditches mentioned specifically for irrigation purposes. Yet it seems a safe assumption that a Greek would have been happy to call irrigation-ditches τάφροι. Unless the poet has created a system of defensive trenches for the Frogs which he has not seen fit to mention so far, this is the most likely explanation for the unusual plural: the

frog jumps into 'the ditches' as a collective network, much as we could say a fugitive escaped into 'the sewers'. τάφρον would then have been an obvious correction.

αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον: *13x Homer; the *BM* uses it again at 279. The closest match here is XIV.507 = XVI.283 *ὅπη φύγοι αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον, which may explain the presence of φύγοι in PY and a few other MSS: the vivid subjunctive (conveying the assumed thought of Physignathus ὅπως φύγω, Schwyzer pp. 670-1, Smyth §2197) is both better represented and more suitable.

251-70 Greatly abbreviated in *I*. Two sizeable pieces of text, 253-9 and 264-8, are missing entirely; 261a-b are imported from 256-7, but with Meridarpax replacing Origanion and the Mice replacing the Frogs. This probably had its roots in an attempt to simplify the passage: instead of the confusion over the fate of Physignathus/Troxartes (see above), Physignathus jumps into the pond and we cut almost at once to the arrival of Meridarpax. A scribe who felt that 253-9 were 'in a most unpromising state of mutilation' (the judgement of Buckley 1851, p. 346) might have taken drastic action to restore the thread of the narrative. However, several things have gone badly wrong. Troxartes rushes at the wounded Physignathus (who is already in the pond), eager to kill him, and then vanishes; Meridarpax, meanwhile, appears with great fanfare – four lines are devoted to his introduction – stands rejoicing κατὰ λίμνην (which seems unlikely), and then vanishes in his turn, having never struck a blow. The conditional protasis at 269 is isolated, and the sense throughout is extremely dubious.

252 **ἡμίπνουν:** the first use of this word in extant Greek. It appears next in Galen (2nd c. AD).

252a **†καί οἱ†**: conjunctive καί cannot follow ὥς εἶδεν in 252, and emphatic καί ('rushed at him *too*') is not Homeric in this position.

ἐπέδραμεν: ἐπιτρέχω in the *Iliad* is often used of a follow-up assault: e.g. IV.524, V.617, XIV.421.

ἀποκτάμεναι μενεαίνων: not Homeric, but cf. κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων (*6x) and ἀποκτάμεναι μεμιάσιν (*XX.165). The latter describes men attempting to kill a lion, which might have appealed to the poet who elsewhere borrows phrases used of animals in Homer (cf. *ad* 204).

253 **ἦλθε διὰ προμάχων**: a neat, metrically equivalent replacement for the Homeric βῆ δὲ διὰ πρ. (9x) or θῦνε διὰ πρ. (3x). βῆ δὲ διὰ προμάχων always appears in contexts of a warrior moved by strong emotion: usually anger or sorrow for one or more fallen comrades (IV.495, V.562, 681, XVII.3, 87, XVII.124, 592), once fear for a living ally (V.566), and once inspiration from Apollo (XX.111). This line almost certainly therefore describes a vengeful attack by a frog, which reinforces the connection with 252.

καὶ ἀκόντισεν ὀξύσχοινον: cf. IV.490 ἀκόντισεν ὀξεί δουρί, which may have contributed to (unmetrical) ὀξεί σχοίνω QT. Homer knows the accusative object as well as the dative: XXII.265 ἀκόντισαν ὀξέα δοῦρα.

254 **οὐδ' ἔρρηξε σάκος**: combines οὐδ' ἔρρηξεν χαλκός (*3x Homer, always in significant duels: Menelaus vs Paris, Ajax vs Hector, and Menelaus vs Euphorbus) with οὐδὲ διὰ πρὸς | ῥῆξε σάκος (XXI.164-5, of Achilles' duel with Asteropaeus – NB!). Cf. also XX.267-8 οὐδὲ ... ἔγχος | ῥῆξε σάκος, of Aeneas attacking Achilles. οὐδ' ἔρρηξεν χαλκός III.348 attracted scholarly comment, since some MSS read χαλκόν, as though

‘bronze’ referred to the shield rather than the spear. Kirk 1985 *ad loc.* agrees with the AbT scholia that χαλκός is preferable, since χαλκῶ in the next line means Menelaus’ spear. The BM’s version could perhaps be seen as a correction of the ambiguity: since σάκος can only be the object of ἔρρηξε, the meaning ‘nor did [it] break the shield’ is the only viable interpretation.

This is the first point in the poem in which the armour of either side has proven of any use, and is followed by the description of the helmet, below.

σχέτο: used of shields stopping spears e.g. at VII.248, XX.272.

δουρὸς ἀκωκή: *8x Homer, only once in the context of a spear being blocked: XX.260, where Achilles wards off the spear of Aeneas.

255 **τοῦ δ’:** οὐδ’ *aZ* means that Origanion misses completely, which deflates the description of him as ‘excelling in the melee’ at 257; one could construct a surrealist argument (see above, pp. 109-16) for this as deliberate bathos, but I find the joke unsatisfactory. ‘Origanion, who was excelling, missed’ would have comic point as a subversion of expectations; ‘Origanion missed, he who was excelling’ just seems awkward. οὐδ’ would also be a very natural corruption given *οὐδ’ in the previous line.

τρουφάλειαν: there are precedents both for a τρουφάλεια breaking apart (XIII.577) and for one resisting a blow (XI.352). However, the only Iliadic helmet to be described in this much detail (two epithets) during a combat scene – as opposed to an arming scene, where equipment is typically described at greater length – is the τρουφάλεια of Hector at XI.352, which successfully deflects the spear of Diomedes. When a lesser warrior’s helmet breaks, it is usually a κόρυς (e.g. IV.459, VI.9) or a κυνέη (e.g. XII.183, XVII.294).

ἀμύμονα: for inanimate objects being ἀμύμων, cf. xxii.442 ἀμύμονος ἔρκεος, XV.463 ἀμύμονι τόξῳ. Again, it would be strange for an ἀμύμων helmet to break in the next line, but one could adduce i.29 ἀμύμονος Αἰγίσθιοιο.

καὶ τετράχυτρον: *aZ* again agree, but the sense is very difficult. ‘Of four pots’ capacity’ would be vast (see Introduction, pp. 110-12), and ‘made out of four pots’ is meaningless. Helmets in Homer can be τετραφάλῃρος or τετράφαλος; in each case it is hard to see why a *hapax legomenon* would have replaced a legitimate Homeric word in the paradosis. West follows Buckley 1851’s suggestion of τετραλέπυρον, ‘four shells thick’ (cf. 131), which is plausible but has no textual support at all.

The single closest parallel for this line is Hector at XI.353: ἐρύκακε γὰρ τρυφάλεια | τρίπτυχος αὐλῶπις. This provides some support for the interpretation in which Troxartes is stunned at 258, but does not help with the adjective: τετράπυτρον, an amusing improvement on Homer’s version and a conceivable source for τετράχυτρον, is unmetrical.

Beans and pulses were among the types of foodstuff that might be held in a χύτρα (on which see Sparkes 1962, p. 130), and χύτραι of boiled vegetables or lentils were sometimes used as cheap religious offerings: cf. Ar. *Pax* 923-4 with Olson 1998 *ad loc.* Could this sense lie behind the *BM*’s *hapax*? Homeric wargear is often constructed out of multiple layers of material, e.g. Hector’s τρίπτυχος helmet, the five folds of the shield of Achilles at XVIII.481. Has this helmet been built using the *contents* of four χύτραι – i.e. with chickpeas stolen from four separate pots? A high-quality piece of mouse armour might have required the armourer to make multiple foraging trips in order to gather enough materials, especially since one mouse can only plausibly steal one chickpea at a time. The sense would be deeply obscure, and hard even for an

audience more familiar with Greek cookery to parse, but it is the only possible conclusion without resorting to conjecture. Lycius' decision to print Τετράχυτρον – a name, 'Four-pot', presumably a greedy mouse – does not help, since it cripples the syntax: ὠρμησαν 258 has an object in αὐτόν, and cannot sustain ἀμύμονα ... Τετράχυτρον as well. Ludwich's suggestion of printing Τρυφάλειον ἀμύμονα καὶ Τετράχυτρον, as *two* names, begins to look like carelessness.

256-7 These lines appear after 262 in *I*, although in forms altered to fit the new context – δῖος Ὀργιανίων becomes Μεριδάρπαξ ὄρχαμος, and βατράχοισιν becomes μύεσσιν (see above *ad* 251-70). The description is reminiscent of Hector at XV.605ff., who is likened to Ares and whom Zeus πλεόνεσσι μετ' ἀνδράσι μῶνον ἐόντα / τίμα καὶ κύδαινε. In Hector's moment of triumph at the end of XII, when he breaks through the Achaean wall, he is described as shouting καθ' ὅμιλον (XII.467), one of only three times Homer uses this phrase in this *sedes*. (The other two, XIII.498 and 560, have no obvious relevance.)

μιμούμενος αὐτὸν Ἄρηα: ἴσος Ἄρηι is used several times in the *Iliad*, but in a text like the *BM* we may suspect some comic purpose: Ares' martial record in Homer is, of course, poor (see *ad* 277). For a post-Homeric hero to 'imitate Ares' is not altogether commendable. Unfortunately the collapse of the text makes it impossible to determine Origanion's eventual fate, but the joke would become obvious if he did in fact fail to wound Troxartes.

257 This reinforces the impression given in previous lines that the battle is turning against the Frogs.

258 cannot follow 257 directly: the attack at 255 has not yet been resolved, and if 258-9 belong together (as they seem to; see below), the αὐτόν who is targeted at 258 must be a frog, since he flees into the pond. In 257 the attacker is Origanion, so the target is a mouse (presumably Troxartes). I follow West in printing a lacuna, which leaves open the question of Troxartes' fate: does he survive Origanion's spear-cast? If so, he is probably also the subject of ὤρμησεν 258 (he counterattacks the warrior who tried to kill him); if he is wounded or killed, ὤρμησεν must refer to another mouse who comes to avenge him.

If Troxartes is disabled, the narrative suggests a much longer Homeric sequence: a warrior (Troxartes/Patroclus) charges into battle, disables an enemy champion (Physignathus/Sarpedon), is himself disabled by another champion (Origanion/Hector), and is avenged by the coming of the hero who finally routs the foe (Meridarpax/Achilles). The reminiscences of Hector in 256-7 and 258 provide some support, and Patroclus' death is prefigured by a blow to his τρυφάλεια (XVI.794-5). The praise of Origanion at 257 seems to prepare the way for some impressive exploit. If Troxartes is *not* disabled, fewer lines are required to fill the lacuna, and the incompetence of the Frogs is writ comically large; even their best warrior fails to kill his target – but the arrival of Meridarpax is less impressive, since the Mice are already dominating the field. The equivalences between Origanion and Hector are striking (see especially *ad* 259), and I suspect that Troxartes was either stunned or killed outright by the spear to his helm, clearing the field for the dramatic final *aristeia* of Meridarpax.

258 οὐχ ὑπέμεινεν: XIV.488 (Acamas οὐχ ὑπεμεινεν ἐρωήν / Πηνελέωο ἀνακτος, one of the few points in the *Iliad* at which a warrior simply runs from his opponent).

*οὐχ ὑπομῆναι is used in relation to Hector at XVII.174 (see above); *οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε appears at XVI.814 and i.410.

259 A frog (presumably Origanion) retreats from combat.

Does this line follow 258 directly? The syntax is certainly acceptable: 'he did not stand up to / the mighty heroes'. The problem is that ὤρμησεν 258 does not align well with ἥρωας κρατερούς 259. If Origanion is being attacked by one opponent, it is strange to say that he did not withstand the *heroes*, and ὤρμησαν appears only in a handful of minor MSS. The metre is also impossible in most versions. ἔνδυ, the solution of Ludwich and West among others, is never found in extant Greek.

Z and S both have viable solutions, with the minor metrical corrections of κρατερόν for καρτερόν and κρατερούς for κραταιούς respectively. S preserves the Homeric βένθεσι λίμνης (*XIII.21, 32, of Poseidon's underwater residences), but Z has more advantages: it resolves the problem with the number of attackers, aligns with XIV.488 (above – in both cases it is the 'force' or 'onrush' of a hero which is not resisted), and has some parodic point. Line-final δύνε is paralleled at XVII.194, where Hector withdraws from combat and dons the armour of Achilles. Even in Homer this passage is mildly comic: Glaucus angrily accuses Hector of being afraid to face Ajax; Hector retorts that this is nonsense, orders his men to fight harder, and leaves the battle (ἀπέβη ... δηϊοῦ ἐκ πολέμοιο, XVII.188-9). Here Origanion (painted as a frog Hector, *ad* 257) also leaves the battle, but instead of clothing himself in new armour, he clothes himself in *water*, by hiding in the depths of the pond. He makes explicit the action which Hector's behaviour in *Il.* XVII seems to hint at.

Some additional support for Z is provided by Oppian of Apamea and Gregory Nazianzenus, both of whom go on to use *ἐνὶ βένθεσι (Opp. C. 3.365, Greg. Naz. 1012.9). Oppian of Anazarbus uses *ἐνὶ βένθεσι λίμνης, which can be taken as evidence either way.

260-67: the *aristeia* of Meridarpax

The emergence of the mouse warrior Meridarpax leads to the rout of the Frogs. This motif is obviously Iliadic: both Patroclus and Achilles put the opposing army to flight by joining the battle. The description of his eagerness to storm the Frogs at 264 is particularly reminiscent of Achilles' battle-lust from *Il.* XIX onwards (e.g. XX.2 μάχης ἀκορήτον). Wölke objects that Meridarpax' late arrival is unmotivated: 'ist weder ersichtlich ... wieso der größte Held der Mäuse bisher nicht am Kampf teilgenommen hat, hatte doch vorher eine allgemeine Mäuseversammlung stattgefunden' (p. 273), and Glei *ad* 262 suggests that this might have been explained in a missing line. The problem is illusory. We might compare the *aristeia* of Diomedes in the *Iliad*: hostilities begin at IV.446; we are shown a hundred lines of bloody but indecisive fighting, in which Greeks and Trojans alike are killed; and then V.1 - ἔνθ' αὖ Τυδεΐδης Διομήδεϊ... – introduces both Diomedes' rampage and the first Greek advance. It would be strange to complain that Diomedes has not played any part in the fighting so far. Cf. West 1966: 'Zeus now has his *aristeia*. We need not suppose that he had really been abstaining from the fight' (p. 349), or Mondy 1986: 'No Homeric commentator discussing Diomedes' extraordinary actions during his *aristeia* has ever accused him of laxity during the previous ten years of combat' (p. 41).

260 Four characters in Homer are introduced with the formula ἦν δέ τις, none of them notably heroic: Dares the Trojan (V.9), Dolon (X.314), Euchenor the son of Polyidus (XIII.663), and the cruel suitor Ctesippus (xx.287). In all cases except Euchenor ἦν δέ τις is followed, as here, by ἐν + dative plural, denoting the group to which the character belongs (Trojans, suitors). The *BM*'s use is deliberate: the three Iliadic passages all stress the relationship between parent and child. Dolon is introduced as the son of a wealthy father and the only brother to five sisters. Euchenor's father was a seer, who warned him that he would die if he went to Troy: this is amusingly reversed by the revelation at 262 that Meridarpax' father Cnaeson went home but ordered his son to fight.

The cleverest and most complex interaction is with V.9ff. Dares is the first name mentioned in Diomedes' *aristeia*, but is not himself a combatant: he is the father, ἀμύμων like Cnaeson at 261, and it is his sons who confront Diomedes. His first son, Phegeus, is killed; the second, Idaeus, flees in terror, and is rescued by Hephaestus ὥς δέ οἱ μὴ πᾶγχυ γέρον ἀκαχήμενος εἶη (V.24). The *BM* reverses its model on a succession of levels. In each case a blameless father has a son or sons skilled in war. In the *Iliad*, Diomedes begins his *aristeia* by killing one of the sons; in the *BM*, it is the son who begins the *aristeia*. In the *Iliad* ἦν δέ τις introduces the father and the victim; in the *BM* it introduces the son and the victor. The *Iliad* passage reminds us of the tragedy of sons who fail to come home from war, via the poignant detail that Hephaestus rescues Idaeus for his father's sake; in the *BM* the father *sends* his son to war, and then goes home. Finally, the defeat of the sons of Dares is immediately followed by a conversation between Ares and Athene, in which Athene cunningly recommends that they both distance themselves from the fighting (so that the Greeks can triumph). Meridarpax' rampage is also followed by a divine council of war, in which Zeus recommends sending

either Ares or Athene to prevent the Mice from triumphing, and Ares claims that neither's strength will be sufficient!

ἐν μυσὶν Μεριδάρπαξ: the most obvious problem with *IZ* is that, once we remove 261a, the new mouse hero goes unnamed until 274 (or, in *I*, is never named at all). Ludwig proposed the hybrid solution ἐν μυσὶ παῖς Μεριδάρπαξ, which Allen adopted, but there is no need to alter *a*'s reading substantially: we need only add the –v to force the long scansion of ι, which would otherwise be unusual (Wölke p. 270).

‘Die Langmessung des υ hat Generationen von Kritikern in Atem gehalten’ (Glei p. 198). In brief: George Choeroboscus (9th c. AD) refers to a claim made by the grammarian Herodian (2nd c. AD) that μῦς, alone of nouns in –υς, keeps long υ in the dative plural; criticising this claim, he points out εὐρίσκομεν δὲ αὐτὸ, φημὶ τὸ μυσίν, ἔχον τὸ υ ἐκτεταμένον καὶ συνεσταλμένον ἐν τῇ Βατραχομουμαχίᾳ (p. 139.1-2). At every other appearance of the dative plural of μῦς in the *BM* – 173, 174, 178, and [100a] – the υ is unambiguously short. As such, Choeroboscus’ comment *can* be taken as evidence for long υ here. The only real interest in the reference, however, is the fact that Choeroboscus knew the *BM*; the text he used may have had lines we are lacking. Nor does this prove that the text changed between Herodian and Choeroboscus, since Herodian may simply not have known the poem. *a*'s reading requires long υ; Herodian, in the 2nd c. AD, regarded this as not just acceptable but correct; we would therefore be wrong to dismiss the reading on such grounds.

αὐτῶν: *lec. diff.*, and probably correct. Homer has ἔξοχον ἄλλων 9x; ἔξοχος αὐτῶν appears only once, at XIV.118 (of Diomedes’ grandfather Oineus). αὐτῶν is grammatically permissible here, since the other Mice have just been mentioned.

261 Κναίσωνος: Z and *a* are split between two similar forms, κραίσωνος and κναίσωνος, but only the latter has any obvious meaning ('Scratcher', from κνάω). Κρίσωνος could potentially refer to κρίσιον, 'thistle', but this sounds more like a frog's name than a mouse's. *I*, interpreting ἀρτεπιβούλου as a proper name (see below), imports ἀγχέ-/ἐγχέμαχος from 195.

ἀρτεπιβούλου: 'preying on bread'. This unique word would serve either as a name for a mouse ('Breadthief') or as an epithet. Some evidence for the former is provided by Alciphron 3.3, addressed to Ἀρτεπίθυμος 'Bread-lover': this would not be the first time Alciphron had drawn on the *BM* to inspire a proper name (see *ad* 100). West treats ἀρτεπιβούλου as an epithet of Cnaeson. Wölke recommends taking it as the name and printing κραίσωνος in cruces; however, he objects to 'Scratcher' as a name for a mouse, on the finicky grounds that κνάω is not used of the activities of mice. One problem with this is that he refers only to *biting*: 'κνάω ... wird, soweit ich sehe, nicht vom Nagen der Maus gebraucht. Das heißt, wie auch in der Batr. zu sehen, δάκνω bzw. τρώγω' (p. 273). Mice are quite as capable of scratching as of gnawing.

Homer sometimes gives two generations of ancestry in a single line: e.g. II.704-5 Ποδάρκης ... Ἰφίκλου υἱὸς πολυμήλου Φυλακίδαο, 846-7 Εὐφημος ... υἱὸς Τροϊζήνοιο διοτρεφέος Κεάδαο. However, in these cases the oldest generation is always given via a patronymic adjective (Φυλακίδαο, Κεάδαο), which neither Κναίσωνος nor Ἀρτεπιβούλου can reasonably be. I therefore follow West in taking 'preying on bread' as a second epithet: compare Dares at V.9 (see *ad* 260), who is ἀφνειὸς ἀμύμων. There may be a certain humour in the juxtaposition of 'blameless' with a word meaning literally 'one who makes plots against bread'.

262 Absent in *I*. This line, as has been widely seen, must refer to Cnaeson. It plays on the relatively common Iliadic trope of the young man who fights at Troy while his father waits at home for his return (e.g. Xanthus and Thoön at V.152ff.); here a father has apparently refused to fight, and gone back home instead. See further *ad* 260. We can only speculate on Cnaeson's reasons: most comic would be simple cowardice or laziness, but the example of Euchenor at XIII.663ff. raises the possibility that Cnaeson was a mouse seer, and predicted his son's success in the same way Polyidus foresaw his son's death. Cf. also the famous case of Echepolus (discussed by Arist. *Pr.* fr. 165), who gave Agamemnon the horse Aithe as a bribe, so that he would not have to go to Troy himself (XXIII.296ff.). The change of subject from 261 is violent; like most editors I assume a lacuna.

ἰών: with the previous line missing, the syntax is an open question, but ἰών is more common and textually more probable: ἔεν may have been added at a stage when the line was already isolated, in a bid to repair it.

ἐκέλευεν: we would perhaps expect the aorist, which makes the imperfect marginally *lec. diff.*, but this is a very weak argument. For the imperfect of κελεύω in a similar context, cf. XVIII.13, Achilles of Patroclus: ἦ τ' ἐκέλευον ἀπώσασθαι δῆϊον πύρ...

263-4 As at 280-4, differing editorial practice has added to the obscurity here. All MSS except Z have after 262 (261b, in *I*) some variation on the line αὐτὸς δ' ἔστηκεν γαυρούμενος κατὰ λίμνην. Z alone has an extra line between 264 and 265, ἀγχοῦ δ' ἔστηκεν μενεαίνων ἱφί μάχεσθαι. Ludwig numbers the former as 263, and the latter as 264a; Gleason and West treat both as variants of the same line, 263, and note that in Z 263

follows 264. This creates the impression of transposition where no transposition has really occurred. The lines have no more in common with each other than do (for example) 232 and 237, and ought to be kept separate; if they did originate from a single line, they have diverged widely enough that it is not helpful to treat 264a as a transposed variant of 263. Unfortunately, if one keeps Ludwich's numeration, the *BM* ends up with a line 264a but no line 263. Allen simply presents οὗτος ἀναρπάξει... as 263 and ἄγχοῦ δ' ἔστηκεν... as 264, and lists αὐτὸς δ' ἔστηκεν... as '262a'; this is the best solution, and at the risk of introducing further confusion into the scholarship I have followed his example.

[262a] γαυρ(ι)οῦμενος κατὰ λίμνην is unmetrical and makes little sense: κατὰ λίμνην elsewhere in the poem always means 'in the pond' (17, 55, 105) or 'into the pond' (267).

263 ἀναρπάξει: in Homer and early epic the verb always has the more literal sense 'snatch up, carry off' (*LFGE* s.v. ἀρπάζω), but it appears in a military context meaning 'take by storm' as early as *Hdt.* 8.28.8. See below *ad* 274.

γενεήν: only in *Z*, but necessary; γένος *cett.* is unmetrical.

264 ἔστηκεν is much better after ἐπαπείλει (clarifying the specific action by which Meridarpax made manifest his threatening intentions) than after 262 (where ἐκέλευεν still refers to Cnaeson, making the syntax ambiguous).

263 ἄγχοῦ: in Homer ἄγχοῦ is always line-initial and almost always (24 of 28x) occurs before δ' and a form of ἴστημι (ἵσταμένος, -η), which fits well with δ' ἔστηκεν.

μενεαίνων ἴφι μάχεσθαι: cf. V.606 *μενεαινέμεν ἴφι μ.

264-8 Absent in *I* (see above), producing a jump from 263 to 269 which is both ungrammatical and nonsensical: the Frogs are suddenly shown in flight, without any further explanation.

265 Lit. 'breaking the middle ridge (ῥάχιν) of the nut into two parts', i.e. breaking the nutshell *along* its raised seam, leaving him with the two half-shells. It is not apparent why Meridarpax needs to improvise new weaponry, nor indeed what he plans to do with the shells (see *ad* 267).

καρύοιο: Ilgen's correction for καροῖο Z and καρύου *a*, both unmetrical (although μέσσην *recc.* fixes the problem with *a*). καρύον is mentioned by Psicharpax as a mouse foodstuff at 31. It can be almost any kind of nut: LSJ lists walnuts, sweet chestnuts, filberts, and almonds, although most of these would generally be identified by an adjective. At 266 Meridarpax puts the half-shells on his fists; walnuts would be rather large for this purpose on a mouse, but not impossibly so. A walnut kernel is divided into two very clear halves around a middle seam, but these would not yield the κενώματα required, and ῥάχιν properly means a ridge or raised section. If a walnut is correct, we may be meant to admire the mouse's strength: a human would normally require a tool to crack a walnut, but Meridarpax, like Homeric warriors who lift huge boulders, can do it with his paws alone.

ῥάχιν: used only once in Homer (IX.208), of the chine of a pig carved by Achilles for his guests; there is no obvious significance to this, except perhaps to reinforce the connection between the two heroes.

266 φράγδην: *hapax*, glossed by the scholia as πεφραγμένως, φρακτικῶς, *vel sim.*

Clearly the sense is something to do with protection or defence; to be understood as an adverbial accusative of manner (Goodwin §1608; cf. Schwyzer II p. 87). Perhaps surprisingly, given the obscurity of the word, the MSS are almost unanimous, with only minor variations in spelling: the only alternative offered is φράχθην, which appears as a *graphetai* variant in S.

κενώμασι: ‘empty spaces, hollows’. κένωμα is not a Classical word, appearing first in a fragment of Eudemus (4th c. BC; fr. 81). *a* is visibly confused: Q has the nonsensical καὶ ἐννόμοισι, PY make a guess at καὶ ἐν ὄμμασι(ν). S and the *recc.* have variants on καὶ ἐν ὤμοισι(ι) ‘and on his shoulders’, but there is no real reason Meridarpax should want to put his hands on his own shoulders.

267 West rightly posits a lacuna before this verse. It is by no means clear in 265-6 what Meridarpax proposes to *do*: we need at least another couple of lines of description. Even the cowardly frogs of fable would be unlikely to flee simply because someone cracked a nutshell. Z and some of the *a* MSS have this line after 268, but the syntax is unsatisfactory – κεν + aorist requires a conditional protasis, not οἱ δὲ ... ἔβαν.

Editors have generally assumed that Meridarpax aims to use the shells as boxing gloves or knuckledusters: ‘quasi cestu armatus tanquam pugil ranas aggrediatur’ (Baumeister p. 39), ‘per affrontare uno scontro di pugilato’ (Fusillo p. 130). Glei objects that striking weapons of this kind would be ‘machtlos’ compared to the missile weapons used in the combat so far, but this is not necessarily true. Much of the fighting has taken place at close quarters, as in the *Iliad*, and nutshells could be used like the Mediaeval

buckler, as a combination weapon – protecting against enemy spears while also allowing the wielder to deliver devastating punches.

If the knuckleduster interpretation is correct, it is the battle scene's first major divergence from the techniques of Iliadic combat: Homer's warriors fight with their fists only in sport. Since Meridarpax' *aristeia* ends the battle proper, we could perhaps see an allusion to the funeral games at the end of the *Iliad*, which include a boxing match, but this is tenuous and there are no verbal or structural parallels to support it. Allusion to the (lethal) boxing match in A.R. 2 is possible, but again unlikely: the two scenes have nothing in common beyond the basic device of a character putting something on his hands. The intention may have been straightforward bathos. Just as the Mice will later resist a thunderbolt but be driven away by crabs, it is somewhat undignified for the Frogs to be vanquished in the end by fisticuffs.

Ludwich (*ad loc.*) offers a more elaborate explanation. He notes the complaint of Althaus (p. 21) that if the Frogs flee into the pond at 267, there is no need for Zeus to intervene on their behalf: the Mice cannot follow them anyway. Instead of deleting 267, he argues that Meridarpax uses the half-shells as flotation devices – allowing him to assault the Frogs in their own element! This can hardly be right. Meridarpax puts his *hands*, χεῖρας, into the shells: Ludwich acknowledges this, referring to 'Handkähne', 'hand canoes'. Yet he *also* sees the mouse using the shells as weapons: 'Meridarpax benutzte sie nicht allein als Hieb Waffen, sondern auch wie kleine Kähne als Transportmittel' (p. 408). This obliges the unfortunate warrior to perform a single-arm handstand on an upturned nutshell in the middle of a pond, while punching with the other arm at the frogs, all of whom have chosen to remain on the surface and be punched rather than diving to the depths (Physignathus' instinctive response to danger at 86).

268-83: the second conference on Olympus

The first of two divine interventions in the battle. Althaus' objection – that the Frogs should not be ἀπολλυμένων (270) if they are already κατὰ λίμνην (267) – may be dismissed: cf. *Il.* XXI-XXII, where the ongoing Trojan rout is hindered (XXI.6-7) or helped (XXI.599-611) by partisan gods. 267 means that the Frogs are retreating, not that they have retreated.

There is a more serious problem with the syntax. At 268-71 and 290-3 an intervention is introduced via the unfulfilled conditional 'x would have happened if y had not occurred'; the text preserves two conditional protaseis, 269 and 292, with very similar meanings, but only one apodosis, 268. Glei argues that both passages are separate versions of the same scene, and that Zeus originally intervened only once (p. 205). Fusillo sees the duplication of the intervention motif as deliberate and comic (*ad* 289-93). West keeps both interventions, but only one conditional. The problem is compounded by 269, an exact quotation from Homer (VIII.131), and by 268, which in most of the *vett.* is ungrammatical (ἐξετέλεσ(σ)αν ἐπεὶ μέγα(ν) ὥς θεὸν ἦεν).

West's transposition must be right: 268 follows very badly from 267, and very well from 291. Its subject is therefore μῶν στρατός 290. The transposition must have occurred after the corruption of the line's second half to μέγα(ν) ὥς θεὸν ἦεν, which cannot refer to a στρατός but could (if corrected) refer to Meridarpax; since at 291 Meridarpax has not been mentioned for some time, an editor might have pushed the line back to conclude his *aristeia*. If μέγα οἱ σθένος were original, therefore, the *recc.* would not have kept it in this place; any lost copy which preserved μέγα οἱ σθένος would have preserved 268 after 291, where it fits so naturally that at least some MSS would have

adopted it. μέγα οἱ σθένος must rather be an intelligent correction for the visibly impossible μέγα ὥς θεόν, which must in its turn have been an early error for some reading now lost. I consequently print the phrase in cruces. 269 was added to serve as a protasis for the dislocated 268, since 292 could not be dislodged without crippling 293.

270 ὥκτειρε Κρονίων: borrowed by Opp. *H.* 2.674, where mankind destroys itself with ceaseless warfare εἰσόκε ῥαιομένην γενεήν ὥκτειρε Κρονίων: in both cases the thing pitied is a race suffering the effects of war.

271 κινήσας δὲ κάρη: *3x Homer, most notably at XVII.442, where Zeus is moved by pity – ἐλέησε Κρονίων, cf. 292 – for another group of animals: the horses of Achilles. The horses weeping for Patroclus is one of the only instances in the *Iliad* of animals behaving like humans (see Introduction p. 36), and the use of this phrase in a similar context is almost certainly a deliberate allusion. κάρην (Z and most of *a*) stems from a misanalysis of the word as 1st declension. Note that Ludwich's apparatus mistakenly claims κινήσας to be missing from the original text of Z, and added by a later hand; in fact Z originally had κινήσα, and only the final sigma has been added.

272 ἔργον ἐν *a* is original (cf. iv.663 ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ὑπερφιάλως ἐτελέσθη): θαῦμα τόδ' *IZ* makes the line wholly Homeric (4x), and hence is more likely to have found its way into the paradosis. As discussed on pp. 54-5, the *BM* poet avoids fully Homeric lines.

273-4 A difficult pair of lines. 273 is unmetrical and somewhat implausible; Zeus claims that Meridarpax ‘strikes him not a little’, and the mouse is apparently κατὰ λίμνην, which is a bad place for a mouse (unless one finds merit in Ludwich’s ‘hand canoe’ suggestion, above). Allen and Fusillo both remove the line; but this leaves 274 isolated, which is only possible if one adopts the *a* reading and treats Ἄρπαξ as a proper name. The presence of 273 in all MSS suggests that there was originally a line here, with the sense ‘I am alarmed by the deeds of Meridarpax’, but that it became mutilated beyond repair at a very early stage in transmission.

274 Ἄρπαξ ἐν βατράχοισιν ἀμείβεται *a*: ἐναίρειν βατράχους βλεμεαίνων *I*, -αίνει *S*; ἤλασε βατράχους ἐπαπειλῶν *Z*. One of the strangest puzzles in the poem. Most editors have followed *a*; but is Ἄρπαξ an alternative, shorter form of Μεριδάρπαξ? Or is Zeus calling the mouse a ἄρπαξ, a robber, and if so, why?

There is no trace in Homer of either gods or mortals referring to a hero by an abbreviated form of his name. Von Kamptz 1982 discusses the case of Alcimedon/Alcimus (see *ad* 206), but this is the narrator’s abbreviation, not one in the mouth of a character; for a true parallel to Meridarpax/Harpax we would need Zeus to refer to Antilochus as Lochus, or to Diomedes as Medes. Weissenfels 1872 (p. 14) thought there was humour in Zeus effectively providing an etymological explanation for the mouse’s name, but this seems contrived. Etymological jokes work by drawing attention to a feature of the character’s name which might otherwise pass unnoticed, as with Athene’s play on ‘Odysseus’ at i.62, τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο. Given that character names in the *BM* depend for their humour on the reader being able to identify their elements and ‘translate’ the name, having Zeus call ‘Portion-robber’ a ‘robber’ seems too laboured

to be a pun. (Fusillo comments *ad loc.* ‘forse c’è un gioco ironico da parte di Zeus nel chiamare Rubabocconi solo con il suffisso verbale ἄρπαξ’, but does not expand on what the point of the joke might be.)

If there is a pun here, it must hinge on an ambiguity in ἄρπαξ or associated words. A ἄρπαξ can be violent: at Opp. C. 3.304 it and κίρκος are given as the common names for a particularly swift species of wolf, and the sense is clearly that this wolf dashes in to seize its prey. ἄρπαζω can be used in a military context of seizing and occupying a position (e.g. X.An. 4.6.11), and a few lines ago ἀναρπάζω was used to mean ‘take by storm, overrun’ (264). I suggest that the line may originally have read ἀρπάζειν βατράχους ἐπαπειλῶν *vel sim.* The joke here would be fairly effective: Zeus claims that Meridarpax, ‘Portion-snatcher’, is threatening to *storm* the Frogs – taking the ἄρπαξ part of his name and giving it a more aggressive spin. *I*’s version would then be a simple gloss, with ἐναίγειν inserted to explain the (unusual) sense of ἀρπάζειν; in *a* the verb was misarticulated as ἄρπαξ ἐν, and then the line was modified to make sense. *Z*’s version, which is unmetrical, is both the least satisfactory and the hardest to explain, but ἦλασε may be a relic of another attempt to clarify ἀρπάζειν.

275 Παλλάδα: in Homer she is always ‘Pallas Athene’; the first secure use of ‘Pallas’ alone as a name for the goddess is *h.Dem.* 424 (Richardson 1974 *ad loc.*).

πολεμόκλονον: see *ad* 4.

ἦ καὶ Ἄρηα: Ἄρην is an incorrect form of the accusative, discussed by Hutchinson 1985, p. 49, who finds ‘no evidence for it in literary papyri, or in inscriptions earlier than the Christian era’: he argues for Ἄρεα at [Hes.] Sc. 425. ἰδ’ Ἄρηα τε J is unmetrical.

276 ἐπισχῆσουσι: better in terms of sense than ἀποσχῆσουσι *vel sim.* ἐπέχω means to stop or hinder x from doing y, whereas ἀπέχω generally means to keep x away from y (e.g. VI.96 αἶ κεν Τυδέος υἱὸν ἀπόσχη Ἰλίου ἰοῖς). It is too late to keep Meridarpax away from the battle; the point is to stop him from fighting.

κρατερόν περ ἔόντα: *aZ* have κρατεροί περ ἔόντες. This may have been a simple misunderstanding based on οἱ ... ἐπισχῆσουσι – κρατεροί as referring to Athene and Ares, rather than to Meridarpax – but the presence of μὴν for μιν in QT (and probably originally in Z) suggests that one version of the narrative may have had this line describing the Mice in general, rather than specifically Meridarpax. This is interesting given the ἐξετέλεσσεν/-αν variation at 268, but the evidence is too confused for any real conclusions.

277 ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Κρονίδης: see *ad* 177.

Ἄρης: the sense of Baumeister's Ἡῤῥῃ is obvious, given that the speaker refers to 'the strength of Athene or Ares' at 278. Hera is also a more Homeric counselor for Zeus (e.g. IV.50ff., XVI.439ff.). Yet aside from T, which omits the word altogether, the MSS are unanimous. No serious poem could depict Ares warning Zeus that 'the strength of Ares' will not be enough, but the *BM* is not a serious poem. Ares' performance in the *Iliad* is unimpressive: after being wounded by Diomedes and Athene he is harshly criticised by Zeus as a two-faced whiner (V.889), and he suffers an even more embarrassing defeat at XXI.403ff. when Athene flattens him with a rock. Cf. Kirk 1990 *ad* V.890-1: 'Ares, whenever he is most fully personified in *Il.*, represents the worst and least heroic side of warfare'. The *BM* poet has already used the joke that the gods are alarmed by the

fighting prowess of the two sides (193-5). It would be both appropriate and amusing to show the god of war reluctant to stand up to the rampaging Mice.

The use of the third person helps echo the structure of 275, as well as Homeric lines like XX.358 οὐδέ κ' Ἄρης, ὅσπερ θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐδέ κ' Ἀθήνη... Aside from the points at which they actually confront each other, Athene and Ares are often acknowledged as the joint patrons of war: Zeus calls battle the concern of 'swift Ares and Athene' at V.430, and at XIII.127 and XVII.398 a fight is so fierce that 'neither Ares nor Athene could have scorned it'. Here Ares *himself* acknowledges that the Mice cannot be stopped by 'Ares or Athene'.

278 οὐτ' ἄρ': all MSS but Z have οὐ γάρ, which can hardly begin a remark of this sort. Cf. V.333 οὐτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίη οὔτε πτολίπορθος Ἐνυώ.

οὔτε Ἄρης: the hiatus seems to have caused concern across the families. Final -ε before a form of Ἄρης in Homer would normally be elided (e.g. V.863, XV.605), but line-final Ἄρης is always scanned with short α, so neither variant is strictly within Homeric practice. It is possible that the poet was fooled by the hiatus in e.g. iv.87 οὔτε ἄναξ into thinking this was a Homeric quirk.

279-80 *l* contracts these lines into the single hybrid ἰσχύσει βατράχοισιν ἀρηγέμεν· ἦ τὸ σὸν ὄπλον, almost certainly through *saut du même au même* (ἀρηγέμεν > ἀρηγόνες).

279 ἰσχύσει: ἰσχύει Z is an easy error.

ἀμυνέμεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον: see above *ad* 249. Here the model is XVIII.129

*ἐτάροισιν ἀμυνέμεν αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον, again in the context of a speech advising caution:

Thetis warns Achilles not to risk returning to battle until he has new armour. Here Ares is warning Zeus that a single god will not be enough to stop the mouse assault. *al* have ἀρηγέμεν, which was probably influenced by ἀρηγόνες in the next line; ἀρήγω + acc. is rare and not Homeric, though it appears occasionally in the Attic tragedians (e.g. A. *Th.* 119, E. *Tr.* 777).

280-4 The second part of Ares' speech was unnecessarily muddled by Lycius' edition of 1566. *aZ* have the following, with minor variations:

ἀλλ' ἄγε πάντες ἴωμεν ἀρηγόνες· ἢ τὸ σὸν ὄπλον
κινείσθω· οὕτω γὰρ ἀλώσεται ὅς τις ἄριστος,
ὥς ποτε καὶ Καπανῆα κατέκτανες ὄβριμον ἄνδρα
καὶ μέγαν Ἐγκελαδὸν τε καὶ ἄγρια φύλα Γιγάντων.

l has:

ἰσχύσει βατράχοισιν ἀρηγέμεν· ἢ τὸ σὸν ὄπλον
κινείσθω τιτανοκτόνον ὄβριμοεργόν (FL; car. J)
ῶ Τιτᾶνας πέφνες ἄριστους ἔξοχα πάντων
καὶ Κελάδοντα πεδήσας ἰδ' ἄγρια φύλα Γιγάντων.

Although *l* is plainly unsatisfactory, Lycius decided to salvage its version of the κινείσθω line. He followed some of the *recc.* in inserting μέγα after κινείσθω to produce a hexameter, albeit one lacking a medial caesura, transplanted it into the equivalent position in *aZ* (after ἢ τὸ σὸν ὄπλον), and numbered it 281; he then moved the correct version, κινείσθω· οὕτω γὰρ κτλ., to follow ἄγρια φύλα Γιγάντων, and numbered it 284. The two lines should never have appeared in the same text: only the MSS of the Ven.¹ family have both lines, and in those '281' appears between 282 and 283.

Unfortunately, Lycius' numbering has remained in use, so that κινείσθω· οὕτω γὰρ κτλ. – which has never been transposed, and remains where *aZ* correctly placed it – is always

identified as 284. I have corrected the numeration: in my text the *aZ* version appears as 281, and the poem simply lacks a line 284. Wölke discusses the same problem on pp. 6-7.

280 ἀρηγόνες: ἀρηγών is used twice in Homer, both times of divine assistance to mortals (IV.7, V.511), and then never again until the *BM*. It became popular in later epic, and is used repeatedly by Oppian and Nonnus, as well as by Gregory Nazianzenus. Given that all these works show signs elsewhere of drawing on the *BM* for vocabulary, our poet may have been responsible for resurrecting the word and making it available to the later epic tradition. ἀρήγειν *Z* is plausible, but by far the easier reading, and hence a more likely correction.

281 ἀλώσεται: in Homer and elsewhere normally means ‘caught’ rather than ‘defeated’ or ‘killed’, but expressions like λευγαλέω θανάτω ... ἀλῶναι XXI.281 make the shift an obvious one (cf. *LFGE* s.v. ἀλῶναι). The meaning could be that the bolt will break the mouse assault, and hence allow their best warrior to be taken in *battle*, but the following reference to Capaneus seems to suggest that Zeus will shoot to kill (which he does not in fact do).

ὅς τις ἄριστος: *6x Homer. The phrasing is a little awkward: we might expect a thunderbolt to target one particular mouse (e.g. Meridarpax) rather than ‘whichever is the greatest’ (used in Homer when there is doubt over who is meant, e.g. VII.50, xi.179).

282 Καπανῆα: one of the Seven against Thebes, slain with a thunderbolt for boasting that not even Zeus could stop his assault. He is deployed in tragedy as an emblem of *hubris* and its punishment (e.g. *S. Ant.* 127ff., *E. Ph.* 1172ff.). The reminder of this heroic

precedent makes it all the funnier when the subsequent thunderbolt *does* fail to stop the Mice. His son Sthenelus is the right-hand man of Diomedes in the *Iliad*, with whom Meridarpax shares some similarities (see above *ad* 260-7).

κατέκτανες: *xxii.29 (the outraged Suitors to Odysseus after the death of Antinous). The Homeric passage has no obvious relevance here, although αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος in xxii.28 suggests that the *BM* poet may have had this passage in mind when writing Ares' speech.

ὄβριμον ἄνδρα: nowhere before the *BM*, the closest equivalent being ἀνδρῶν ὀβριμῶν at A. *Th.* 794, where it describes the Seven. The *BM* poet is presumably alluding either to Aeschylus, or to another account of the siege of Thebes which used the same expression. Quintus went on to make repeated use of this phrase in the *Posthomerica* (8x, *5x).

283 καὶ μέγαν Ἑγκελαδὸν τε καὶ: Κελάδοντα πεδήσας ἢ δ' *I*, corrected to ἰδ' in the *recc.*, is unmetrical. We know of no mythical Celadon whom Zeus bound (although a River Celadon is mentioned by Nestor at VII.133), and in a discussion of the thunderbolt it is unclear why binding should be relevant anyway.

The name Ἑγκελάδος is always 2nd declension elsewhere in Greek literature, and Barnes' Ἑγκελαδὸν τε for *codd.* Ἑγκελάδοντα is certainly right. Enceladus was a giant, first mentioned by Euripides, who says that Athene defeated him (*HF* 908-9). In later accounts he went some way to usurping Typhoeus' position as leader of the Giants, and in Callimachus' *Aetia* he is apparently buried under Sicily (fr. 1.36 with Harder *ad loc.*), the fate traditionally reserved for Typhoeus. *LIMC* identifies the *BM* as the first source for Enceladus as an opponent for Zeus, although dates it too early (4th-3rd c. BC): the poet

may have been drawing on a tradition which already existed, or he may simply have been inexact. It is worth noting that at E. *Cyc.* 6-8 Silenus claims to have killed Enceladus on Dionysus' behalf, which suggests that the details of the giant's fate were somewhat labile.

The link between Mice and Giants has been made before (7, 171), and the reference here may be a deliberate echo of the proem, producing a kind of ring-composition: having been told at 7 that the Mice were like the Giants, we finally see them filling the role of Giants by causing alarm on Olympus. Cf. also Harder 2012 *ad* Call. fr. 54c.14: 'through these reminiscences the mice are raised to the level of mythical monsters, human or otherwise', and *ad* fr. 54c.33, where she sees the trap which crushes the mouse under a weight as an allusion to the imprisonment of Typhon/Typhoeus under Aetna.

καὶ ἄγρια φῦλα Γιγάντων: *vii.206. ἄγρια φῦλα is used only otherwise by Homer at XIX.30, where Thetis says she will drive away the ἄγρια φῦλα / μυίας; given the similarity to μύας, there may well be a joke here.

285-303: the end of the conflict

The curious two-stage ending of the poem – in which Zeus' first intervention fails, forcing him to adopt a different strategy – is strongly reminiscent of the end of the *Odyssey*.

Od. XXIV.528-48

Odysseus' party charged at the Ithacans, who *would all have been killed* [A, 528] *if Athene had not intervened* [B, 529-30] by shouting for the battle to stop. The Ithacans *were terrified* [C, 533], and fled towards the city. Odysseus *continued his assault* [D, 538], but Zeus threw a thunderbolt, and Athene *again intervened* [E, 541] by telling O. to abandon the attack. *This brought the conflict to an end* [F, 545-7].

BM 267-303

The Mice charged at the Frogs, who *would all have been killed* [A, 268] *if Zeus had not intervened* [B, 269/292] by throwing a thunderbolt. The warriors *were terrified* [C, 289], but the Mice *continued their assault* [D, 290-1], so Zeus *again intervened* [E, 293] by sending the crabs. *This brought the conflict to an end* [F, 303].

This commentary cannot risk a diversion into modern scholarship's bloody and eternal war over the authenticity of the *Odyssey* finale; the case for the defence is well summarised by Heubeck *ad* xxiii.297 (and pp. 353-4) in Russo *et al.* 1992, while one of the best prosecutions is brought by S. West 1989. Aside from the famous discussion of xxiii.296 as the τέλος/τέρας of the epic, there is little evidence for ancient criticism of the last six hundred lines: as Heubeck points out (p. 343), we do not even know whether Aristarchus and Aristophanes thought the final section was spurious, and if they did, we do not know why they thought so. Eustathius' rebuttal is directed at the debate over xxiii.296, not at attacks on the quality of the final book. The scholia on *Od.* xxiv are extremely scanty and offer nothing of use. Many modern scholars have found the action of xxiv rushed, confusing, and unsatisfactory, but we have no direct evidence that any

ancient readers shared their concerns. We cannot therefore say with confidence that the *BM* ‘parodies’ the ending of the *Odyssey* – in other words, that the sequence first intervention > failure > second intervention is meant to seem ridiculous and hence reflect critically on the same sequence as it occurs in Homer. That the *BM*’s ending *alludes* to the *Odyssey*’s seems almost certain, and there is undoubtedly humour in the thunderbolt – which to a reader of Homer is the ultimate and irresistible expression of the will of Zeus, the ‘nuclear option’ to which gods and men alike must yield – failing to halt a gang of mice, who *are* then driven off in terror by crabs. It is not clear, however, that the poet regarded the end of the *Odyssey* itself as implausible or ridiculous.

A possible reference to the xxiii.296 controversy does occur in the poem’s final line, with the duplication of τέλος-words (τελετή ... ἐξετελέσθη); but τελετή does not properly mean a conclusion, and there are more serious problems here, on which see *ad loc.*

285-8 Zeus is depicted hurling a thunderbolt only twice in Homer: VIII.133-6., at Diomedes, and xxiv.539-40, at Athene.¹⁴⁴ In both cases, as here, he aims to frighten rather than to harm; and in both cases his overall object is to prevent a military assault from succeeding. An audience familiar with *Od.* xxiv, as noted above, would certainly expect the deployment of a thunderbolt to bring about the end of the poem, and would probably have been amused by the way the poet subverts this.

The syntax here is tangled. In most of the *vett.*, Zeus throws the bolt (βάλε) at 285, thunders ‘first’ at 286, whirls the bolt and throws it (ἤκ’ ἐπιδινήσας) at 288. The first

¹⁴⁴ There are multiple references in the *Odyssey* to the thunderbolt with which Zeus destroys Odysseus’ ship, but these are all focalised through Odysseus.

problem is that the bolt is thrown twice, and Ludwich consequently adopted δὲ βαλὼν (only in Z) and corrected to δὲ λαβὼν. This is hard to explain, since if λαβὼν had become βαλὼν – a common enough mistake – there would have been no reason for all other MSS to modify it further to βάλε. The participle is if anything more natural than the indicative here. 285 must rather be a summary of an action which is then described in more detail: ‘then Zeus threw the bolt: (which is to say,) first he thundered, etc.’.

More serious is the second problem: 288 follows very poorly from 286. ἦκ’ ἐπιδινήσας should follow a participle (e.g. VII.269, IX.538 λαβὼν αἰείρας), and after two main verbs (ἐβρόντησε ... δ’ ἐλέλιξεν) we would expect another conjunction. 287 (S, *recc.*) is an interpolation designed to fix the problem by inserting a new direct object for 288: it is significant that the entire line is an extended way of saying ‘the lightning bolt’, and also that it lacks any third-foot caesura. A few MSS read ἦ καὶ for ἦκ’, which is unmetrical and leaves the sentence without a verb of throwing. Kühn deleted 286-8 entirely, relegating the hurling of the bolt to a half-line, which works against the comic effect of the passage – a grandiose description makes it all the funnier when the Mice stubbornly refuse to flee. Since 286 and 288 are both good lines attested in all MSS, I am reluctant to delete them, and have fallen back on the unsatisfactory compromise of a lacuna: the text requires a line with a function very similar to that of 287, but of better quality. The only other option is to follow Ludwich, adopt λαβὼν at 285, and delete 286-7: ‘taking the bolt, Zeus whirled and threw it’ – but I am not convinced by Ludwich’s adjustment, and I would rather gain a lacuna than lose a blameless line.

Nearly all MSS have δ’ ἔβαλε; I read δὲ βάλε (cf. VIII.313, XV.577) since it prevents elision at the medial caesura. The *BM* poet does permit this elsewhere (Introduction, p. 65), but never with a case where it could be so painlessly avoided.

ψολόεντα κεραυνόν: more likely than the dative, given the lack of a specified target: cf. xxiii.330 νῆα θοὴν ἔβαλε ψολόεντι κεραυνῶ, but xxiv.539 (NB) Κρονίδης ἀφίει ψολόεντα κεραυνόν. Ζ's ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν (VIII.133) is only possible if one also reads βαλόν. Aristotle distinguishes between 'clear' and 'smoky' thunderbolts as two meteorologically discrete types (*Mete.* 371a; see also ps.-Arist. *Mu.* 395a).

286 μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον: *I.530, of Zeus' nod. Kelly 2007, pp. 216-17 notes that in early epic the expression 'Olympus was shaken' is thematically linked to the concept of *stasis* against Zeus' rule: 282-3 and the comparisons to Capaneus and Enceladus show that the Mice have almost taken on the status of *theomakhoi* by this point, and hence Zeus acts as if defending Olympus against a direct threat, even though the Mice are not challenging him personally. Cf. in particular Hes. *Th.* 842 μέγας πελεμίζετ' Ὀλυμπος, of Zeus moving to fight Typhoeus.

288 ἦκ' ἐπιδινήσας: *VII.269 = ix.538, of the great rocks thrown by Ajax and Polyphemus.

ἔπτατο χειρὸς: another clever allusion to the end of the *Odyssey*. The expression 'flew from the hand(s)' is not used of thrown missiles in Homer, but it does appear at xxiv.534, ἐκ χειρῶν ἔπτατο τεύχεα – the weapons of the terrified Ithacans fall from their hands at Athene's intervention. Its use here both suggests one of the major Homeric precedents for the thunderbolt episode, and paves the way for the failure of Zeus' attempt: a weapon 'flying from the hand' is a sign of helplessness, not of violence.

289 **πάντας μὲν ὃ' ἐφόβησε:** apparently modelled on *πάντας μὲν ὃ' ἔλπει (ii.91 = xiii.380), of Penelope manipulating the Suitors, although there is no obvious contextual echo. *ἐφόβησε appears 4x in Homer (XI.173, XIII.300, XV.91, XVI.583); there may be significance that in two of these cases animals are being frightened (XI.173, cattle spooked by a lion; XVI.583, smaller birds scattered by a hawk).

†ἐπὶ τοὺς δέ τε μύας†: found throughout the *vett.*, with very minor variations. A few later MSS offer βατράχους τε μύας τε, which looks like an attempt at correction. The conjectures of subsequent editors have been unconvincing (ἐπὶ τούσδε Κρονίων Brandt, ἐπιδούς δέ τε μύδρους Ludwich, etc.); Maittaire offered the hybrid reading πάντας μὲν ὃα μύας ἐφόβησε βαλὼν ἐπὶ τούσδε, but the sense of this is very weak. The precedent of *Od.* xxiv would suggest that only the Frogs should be frightened, as only the Ithacans are panicked by Athene's shout, but the poet could equally well have varied this model; the Greeks and Trojans alike are frightened by thunder at VII.476-81, a passage which has other connections with the end of the *BM* (see *ad* 302-3). With no good reading in the paradosis and no Homeric original to use as a template, and even the intended sense uncertain, my preference is to print the second half of the line in cruces.

290 **ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγε:** see note on 219.

ἀλλ' ἔτι μᾶλλον: *IX.678, *XXI.305, in both cases of a character's fury increasing.

291 **ἔτο:** the sense 'to be eager to do x' for ἦμι is impeccably Homeric, rarely found in later Greek, and hence *lec. diff.* here. In the *Iliad* it tends to occur in contexts of a warrior striving to damage the enemy: most relevant is V.434-5, where Diomedes ἔτο δ'

αἰεὶ | Αἰνείαν κτεῖναι despite Apollo's opposition, until he is finally warned off. ἔπλετο would be a natural gloss, for which ἔπλετο can only be an error.

πορθήσιν: in Homer the verb is always used of places, to mean 'sack' (the fields of the Egyptians, xiv.264, xvii.433; cities and walls, IV.308), but its use of people (to mean 'ruin, kill') occurs from Aeschylus onwards (e.g. *A. Th.* 194).

βατράχων γένος αἰχμητάων: *I*'s version is unmetrical, since it requires γένος to scan as a spondee.

268 **καί νύ κεν ἐξετέλεσσεν:** *xi.317, of Otus and Ephialtes attempting to scale Olympus. Once again the poet activates the image of the Mice as *theomakhoi*-by-proxy: their attack on the Frogs is described as though, like the Giants, they were attacking Olympus directly (cf. *ad* 286). At xi.318 the Aloeidae are destroyed by Apollo, alerting the audience to the imminent defeat of the Mice.

στρατός can take the plural, e.g. *Pi. P.* 2.46, but after singulars at 290-1 we would expect another here, particularly if ἦεν is a remnant of the original reading.

ἐξετέλεσσαν would be a natural error due to the Homeric intertext (Ludwich *ad loc.*), or if, following the transposition (see *ad* 268-83), the verb was taken to follow from πάντες 267.

292 **ἐλέησε:** Zeus pities the plight of mortals 4x in the *Iliad*, always with ἐλέησε: XV.12 (Hector injured by Ajax), XVI.431 (Sarpedon), XVII.441 (the horses of Achilles), XIX.340 (the Achaeans mourning Patroclus). Cf. also XV.44. ὥκτειρε must have been influenced by the very similar second half of 270.

293 ὅς ῥα φθειρομένοισιν: not represented exactly in any MS, but necessary: ὅς ῥα τότε βατράχοισιν is unmetrical, while the τις in both ὅς τις τοῖς βατρ- and ὅς τις φθειρομένοισιν disrupts the syntax. βατράχοισιν is also unwelcome after βατράχους in the previous line.¹⁴⁵

294-8 The poem concludes with a spectacular last-minute divergence from Homeric style: a riddling five-line description of the crabs which Zeus sends to drive away the Mice. Glei pp. 206-7 draws attention to Thersites at II.217-19, who is given an unusually detailed physical description spanning three lines, but this piling up of adjectives in asyndeton is quite alien to Homer. The early 1st c. AD (?) epigrammatist Statilius Flaccus imitated it in his own very similar description of a crab: see Introduction, p. 12.

On Greek kennings see Wærn 1951, especially pp. 38-46 on denominative kennings and their use to describe animals (e.g. Hes. *WD* 571 φερέουκος, A. *Pers.* 612 ἀνθεμουργός): she concludes that ‘the original home of this type of kenning is the folk tale and the fable’ (p. 46), so the *BM*’s final spree of kennings could be interpreted as a last tribute to its fabular origins. Alternatively, the point may be a humorous one. Wærn draws attention to a fragment of Antiphanes (fr. 55) in which one character repeatedly criticises another for using florid descriptive language packed with kennings, and urges him to speak simply, which proves that kenning-rich language was perceived as a target for parody: Wærn even suggests (p. 103) that the passage may be a specific parody of

¹⁴⁵ Ludwig and Allen differ here: both agree that a certain group of MSS have φθειρομένοισιν, but Allen lists them as reading ῥα φθ-, Ludwig as reading τις φθ-. I have not confirmed this via autopsy, but I suspect Ludwig is correct: not only is his *app.* generally more detailed, but Allen totally ignores the τις reading. It is more likely that Allen would have accidentally elided a minority reading with a majority than that Ludwig would have inserted a reading which does not in fact exist in the MSS. One of the special pleasures of studying the *BM* is the occasional necessity of performing textual criticism on its textual criticism.

Timotheus. The sheer number and concentration of kennings in *BM* 294-8, concluding with the grandiose οἱ δὲ καλεῦνται | καρκίνοι, may be a final flourish of the poem's epicising technique: just as the frog king is λιμνόχαρος πολύφημος and Psicharpax introduces himself in the manner of a Homeric hero, the crabs are given a comically over-solemn introduction. (Wærn, oddly, never mentions the *BM*: she may have considered it too late a work to fall within the bounds of her study.)

Crabs themselves are relatively uncommon as actors in fable. Four fables listed in Perry 1965 have crabs in a major role: Babrius 39 (a crab is too insignificant to intervene in the disagreement between the dolphins and the whales); Babrius 109 (a young crab will learn to walk in a straight line only when his mother shows him how); Perry 116 (a crab is punished for leaving his native element, the water, when a fox eats him); and Perry 196 (a crab kills a snake for being treacherous). None of these are particularly significant for the passage at issue, although it is interesting that Babrius 39 involves a crab attempting to mediate a conflict between two rival tribes.

The only association between crabs and mice in ancient literature is Arat. 1132-41, where both animals are listed as weather-forecasters: mice are energetic in good weather (1132-3) but rest when rain is on the way (1140-1), and crabs emerge from the water when a storm is imminent (1138-9). Fittingly for a passage with some potential relevance to the *BM*, it is textually uncertain: 1137-41 have sometimes been deleted by editors as a later interpolation. Kidd 1997 outlines the problem *ad loc.*, and discusses the possibility of transposing 1140-1 to follow 1137, so that the lines relating to mice are grouped together: 'this would leave the crab couplet as a surprise conclusion' (p. 571). He concludes, however, that the evidence is in favour of leaving the line order intact. If the crab couplet did conclude the passage, there would be good grounds for suspecting a

deliberate reference by the *BM* poet, but no such order is ever found in the paradosis. Either way, the joke is obvious: Zeus sends a thunderbolt from heaven; although this in itself does not stop the Mice, it brings crabs out of the water in the expectation of an approaching storm! Such an interpretation does not require the poet to have read Aratus, merely to be aware of the folklore, but we would expect a scholarly 2nd-c. BC author familiar with Callimachus to know the *Phaenomena* as well.

It is worth noting that Aristophanes' *Wasps* concludes with the arrival of some dancing crabs, but the joke is a topical one, directed at the tragedian Carcinus and his three sons (Sommerstein 1983, p. 246). It is hard to see why the poet would have decided to allude to the ending of this particular comedy, with which the *BM* has no other connection except for the mention of the μῦς καὶ γαλῆ at 1182; a reference to the folk-wisdom about crabs and storms seems much more plausible. A final possibility, of course, is that the poet just wanted some suitably terrifying monsters on a mouse's scale: cf. Petersen 2007, in which warrior mice again confront monstrous crabs.

Further complicating the question of whether the Mice are the poem's Greeks or its Trojans, the coming of the crabs can, like the *aristeia* of Meridarpax, be seen as Achillean: the Frogs are driven back to a body of water, but at the last minute a devastating force clad in impenetrable armour emerges and puts the attackers to flight. Alternatively one could see the crabs as equivalent to the Scamander, an overpowering (and aquatic) divine presence immune to conventional military valour; the poet seems to be playing with the *Iliad*'s various reversals and routs, denying his readers any fully secure identification between model and adaptation. Much as he refuses to co-opt entire lines or phrases from Homer (Introduction, pp. 54-5), he avoids the temptation to reproduce any motif from the plot in its entirety. Another parallel, as 301 proves, is

Achilles' account of the failed revolution on Olympus at I.400-6. In the *Iliad*, a hundred-handed monster suppresses a revolt against Zeus' authority; in the *BM*, a race of eight-legged monsters successfully terrifies and routs an army that has so far defied even Zeus' thunderbolt.

294 ἦλθον δ' ἐξαίφνης: almost comically abrupt ('suddenly crabs appeared').

Presumably the crabs, like the Frogs, emerged from the pond. Freshwater crabs are characteristic of tropical and subtropical regions (Yeo *et al.* 2008), but members of the family Potamidae are found around the Mediterranean, and *Potamon fluviatile* especially is common in mainland Greece (Maurakis *et al.* 2004).

νωτάκμονες: 'anvil-backed', *hapax*, referring to the broad, hard upper shell of a crab.

ἀγκυλοχήλαι: at XVI.428 and xxii.302 vultures are described as γαμψώνυχες ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι, 'with hooked claws and curved beaks'. At Ar. *Eq.* 197 a mock-epic oracle refers to the βυρσαίετος ἀγκυλοχήλης, the 'leather-eagle with curved claws'. In both cases the MSS are divided between -χειλ- and -χηλ-, but the original texts are clear: Homer requires -χειλ- to prevent tautology, and in *Eq.* Demosthenes goes on to explain that the eagle is ἀγκυλοχήλης because ἀγκύλαις ταῖς χερσὶν ἀρπάζων φέρει (205). Here, the sense clearly requires the minority reading ἀγκυλοχήλαι: crabs are not notable for curved mouthparts of any kind. The confusion over the two words, however, means it is quite plausible that even the *BM* poet used the wrong form.

295 λοξοβάται: 'skewed-walking', found only elsewhere at *Sibylline Oracles* 13.169

λοξοβάτην τε τράγον. However, Gregory Nazianzenus' description of a crab, ἥ καὶ

λοξοβάμοισι καὶ ὀκταπόδεσσι παγούροις (576.11), is certainly indebted to this line and to 298. Cf. also Babrius 109.1 μὴ λοξὰ βαίνειν.

στρεβλοί: 'crooked'. It is not clear exactly which quality of the crabs is being described here: their sideways gait was covered by λοξοβάται. The reference may be to their segmented legs, to the 'wrinkled' appearance of the shell in some species, or to something else entirely.

ψαλιδόστομοι: 'scissor-mouthed', *hapax*, from ψαλὶς 'clippers, scissors' (first at S. fr. 407a). Crab mouthparts are not noticeably scissor-like, and are in fact largely invisible. The poet may have been thinking of lobsters, which have more prominent mandibles that do resemble scissors.

ὄστρακόδερμοι: 'shell-skinned', very common in scientific writers as a term for crustaceans; rare elsewhere.

296 Absent in *I*.

ὄστοφυεῖς: 'bony'. Technically inaccurate, since crabs are invertebrates, but the Greeks do not seem to have distinguished between bone and chitin.

πλατύνωτοι: 'wide-backed', used in Arcestratus fr. 46 to describe a fish called the λειόβατος (apparently a kind of ray). The word goes on to have a surprising future in epithet-lists of this sort: Gregory Nazianzenus' use of it in the first line of an epigram (*Anth. Gr.* 8.172) was probably inspired by the *BM*, but it also appears catalogued as a desirable quality in various types of animal (Armenian horse, *Hippiatr.* 1.2; heifer, *Gp.* 17.2.1.6; ram, *Gp.* 18.1.3.4).

ἀποστίλβοντες: 'gleaming', one of the only Homeric words in the passage (iii.408).

297 βλαιοί: ‘splay-footed, bandy-legged’, first at X. Eq. 1.3.8.

χειροτένοντες: χειλοτένοντες IZ. Either word would be a *hapax*, but the sense of *a*’s is much better: crabs visibly reach out with their arms, but not with their mouths.

ἀπὸ στέρων ὀρόωντες: found only in S, of the early MSS, but I follow West in reading it. (I has the unmetrical ὀρῶντες.) ἐσορῶντες *vel sim.* *aZ* is unexpected, since even when it lacks a direct object εἰσοράω usually means ‘look at, behold, watch (something)’ rather than simply ‘look’: e.g. IV.9, XI.73. Homer always uses the uncontracted form of the participle: εἰσορόωντες 9x, *8x, simplex ὀρόωντες 5x, *2x.

298 ὀκτάποδες: again, technically inaccurate: crabs are classed as decapods.

However, to a Greek who saw the claws as the crab’s ‘hands’ (see above on 297), there would appear to be four pairs of ‘legs’.

δικάκηνοι: crabs are not two-headed, but it is possible that, as Maittaire and Ludwich both argue *ad loc.*, the poet had in mind the two eye-stalks which are visible on many species of crab. Since a crab’s body lacks any obviously separate ‘head’, it is very likely that a Greek might have assumed the two small mobile stalks to be its ‘heads’. Clarke’s emendation to δικέραιοι, followed by West, is unnecessary.

ἄτειρές: ἀχειρές *codd.* is ‘formal und inhaltlich bedenklich’ (Glei p. 209): the -έες ending is peculiar, and the crabs were χειροτένοντες in the previous line. Nauck proposed ἄτειρές, to which Glei objects on the grounds that it would be the only epithet not to refer to the crabs’ physical appearance; but in Homer ἄτειρής is used of concrete objects (V.292, XIV.25, etc.), and if we take the word to mean ‘impenetrable’ rather than ‘untiring’ it is a logical conclusion to the list (since it proves that the Mice will be powerless against such heavily-armoured foes). The presence of ἄτειρές twice in

Gregory Nazianzenus (440.6, 1239.2) and once in Quintus Smyrnaeus (3.717) – always in this *sedes* – provides additional support for the reading.

οἱ δὲ καλεῦνται | καρκίνοι: as commonly with kennings (Wærn 1951 pp. 49-51), the list of epithets concludes with a ‘solution’. The phrasing here is grand, and reminiscent of I.403-4 (see *ad* 294-303 and 301), where Achilles specifies that the Hundred-Hander has different names among gods and mortals: ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες | Αἰγαίων’. There may be a suggestion that crabs, too, are called something different on Olympus.

299 In keeping with the bathos of the poem’s ending – an army which stood up to a thunderbolt is driven off by crabs – we drop instantly out of Homeric battle-narrative into something much more straightforwardly comic. The crabs do not kill or seriously injure the Mice: we are not given gory Iliadic descriptions of mouse warriors impaled on claws or torn limb from limb. Instead, they nip at the tails and paws of the Mice and scare them into flight. The image of the advancing mouse horde with its spears and shields is replaced with one of a gaggle of very ordinary mice scampering away back to their holes, a *dénouement* that would not appear out of place in a picture-book for modern children.

300 **πόδας καὶ χειρας:** there may be a joke here, given that Carcinus, the mythological crab who was transformed into the constellation Cancer, was sent by Hera to distract Heracles during his battle with the Lernaean Hydra: it bit the hero on his foot, but was immediately kicked away or crushed. The story was an old one: the crab is already present in the version of the Hydra battle shown on a Boeotian bronze fibula

from c. 700 BC (London, BM 3205; *LIMC* Herakles 2019). [Eratosth.] *Cat.* 11 records that Panyassis included it in his *Heracleia* (Davies *EGF* p. 116). See also Hyg. *Astr.* 2.23.1, Hellan. *FGrH* 4 F 103, Sen. *Herc. Oet.* 67.

ἀνεγνάμπτοντο: more correct than the majority reading ἀνεγνάπτ-. Spears are bent back (ἀνεγνάμφθη) three times in the *Iliad*: III.348, VII.259, XVII.44. In each case the wielder goes on to lose the fight.

301 Modelled on I.406 τὸν καὶ ὑπέδεισαν μάκαρες θεοὶ οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔδησαν (see above).

The most extreme development of the running joke in the *BM* whereby the Mice are compared to great or powerful entities: here the Mice are the gods themselves (δειλοὶ μύες filling the same position in the line as μάκαρες θεοὶ), but the gods quelled by Zeus' final statement of authority.

302-3 Nightfall was used several times by the Alexandrian editors of Homer as a convenient place for a book-division: in particular, I, VII, and i end at or around a reference to the sun setting, although only in iii is sunset the last line of the book.

Argonautica 3 also ends with a sunset, and the *BM* poet may have had it in mind: the final event it describes is of course the battle with the γηγενεῖς, the Earthborn Men. The Spartoi on Colchis are not the same as the γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν referred to at *BM* 7, the Giants, but Apollonius calls them γηγενέων ἀνδρῶν 3x (3.1048, 1338, 1347). Jason's massacre of the Spartoi is compared to a farmer who panics when war breaks out between two neighbouring tribes (the plot of the *BM*), fearing μή οἱ προτάμονται ἀρούρας – devastation of crops being associated with mice, see Introduction p. 47 – and sets about his harvest with a curved sickle, ἄρπην εὐκαμπῇ, suggestive of the curved

claws of the ἀγκυλοχῆλαι crabs. The parallel is a loose one, but the presence of an army of ‘earth-born’, a threat to crops, and a curved blade or blades in the same passage is highly suggestive, especially given that both sequences end with a sunset. ἐξετελέσθη in BM 303 could then echo τετελεσμένος in 3.1407.

πολέμου τελετή μονοήμερος in 303, lit. ‘the one-day festival of war’, is a striking expression unparalleled in Greek: we never hear elsewhere of war as a τελετή, or indeed of a τελετή as μονοήμερος. The reference could be once again to Apollonius, who calls Jason’s struggle for the Fleece an ἄεθλος (3.1407); but this is perfectly apt, since the challenges of Aeetes are an arranged test rather than a genuine battle. Calling a war of vengeance a τελετή, the word normally used of mystery rites and by extension of festivals involving such rites, is much harder to justify. Glei suggests *ad loc.* that τελετή might have been a mistaken formation from τέλος – one manuscript has the unmetrical τελευτή – and some scholia agree with him: Σ MB gloss τελετή as καὶ τέλος, Σ bΠ^a as ἡ τελείωσις (contrast the other scholia which gloss ἡγουν ἡ ἐορτή or πανήγυρις, or simply ἡ ἐνέργεια ‘activity’). Even aside from the tautology, this would hardly agree with μονοήμερος: ‘the one-day conclusion to the war was concluded’. More likely is Glei’s other proposal, that τελετή is intentionally comic: he compares XVII.228 πολέμου ὀαριστύς, ‘the conversation of battle’, a similarly startling juxtaposition.

μονοήμερος, meanwhile, is a rare word, never found before this in Greek. It appears in the Septuagint (Wi. 5:14) referring to a guest (καταλύτης) who stays for a single day, and then largely in medical and alchemical texts: in Galen it describes a type of eye-salve (e.g. p. 712 l. 18), in Zosimus it seems to specify a method of distillation (p. 140 l. 13). In Eustathius’ commentary on the *Iliad*, however, we find it referring to the

construction of the Achaean wall in *Il.* VII: ἔνθα ὄρα καὶ ὥς μονοήμερῳ ἔργῳ οἰκεῖον
τὸ ‘δύσετό τ’ ἥλιος, τετέλεστο δὲ ἔργον’ (VII.465).

It is a very strange coincidence that the one instance of μονοήμερος in a context relevant to Homer should be describing a line which is so similar to *BM* 302-3. But Eustathius was writing in the 12th c. AD. There are two possibilities:

1. Eustathius was drawing on extant discussions of the Achaean wall, which already used the word μονοήμερος. The *BM* poet knew a version of this commentary, current already in the 2nd c. BC, and therefore associated μονοήμερος with VII.465. *BM* 303 would then be, appropriately for the poem’s final line, a final allusion to issues of Homeric scholarship and interpretation.
2. 303 is not original. This would leave 302 ἐδύετο δ’ ἥλιος ἤδη as the end of the poem: abrupt, but possible (for ἤδη at sentence-end cf. xii.393, xx.53, 90).

Of these I favour the first option. μονοήμερος amusingly emphasises the brevity of the whole conflict, compared to the ten years of the Trojan War. τελετή is strange, but it is not impossible that the poet should have coined the expression ‘festival of battle’ to refer to a poem which combines Iliadic gore and violence with a fundamentally playful premise; and the line is found in all our MSS. If our poet knew a scholarly discussion of *Il.* VII which remarked (for example) on the phenomenal speed with which the Achaeans build a wall big enough to annoy Poseidon, and called it a μονοήμερον ἔργον *vel sim.*, he might have decided to allude to this by referring to his comic war of mice and frogs – a conflict mighty enough to alarm the gods, yet over by sunset – as a τελετή μονοήμερος.

Word count: 99,663

(NB: the word count has been calculated from the Introduction and Commentary sections only, with all their quotations and footnotes. It does not include the text and apparatus, the translation, or the bibliography.)

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APPENDIX A: IMAGES

[This image has been removed from the digital archive version of the thesis for copyright reasons; Reuters Pictures would not grant permission for its free use. You can see it by following the hyperlink below.]

IMAGE 1: A mouse riding on a frog's back to escape floodwater in Lucknow, India, July 2006. Source: Reuters (Pawan Kumar), taken from <http://news.nationalgeographic.co.uk/news/2006/07/060705-mouse-frog.html>



IMAGE 2: A specimen of the Balkan Water Frog, *Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*, photographed in the Peloponnese in June 2011. The pale underbelly, slightly visible here, is described at BM 81. Source: Benny Trapp, taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan_frog



IMAGE 3: One of Beatrix Potter's illustrations for *The Tale of Two Bad Mice* (London, 1904). Reproduced here to demonstrate that a mouse on hind paws lacks any clearly defined 'shins', meaning that mouse greaves would indeed be attached to the 'thighs' (BM 124). Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tale_of_Two_Bad_Mice

APPENDIX B: LINES OMITTED AND RETAINED IN THE PRINCIPAL MSS

	<i>a</i>	<i>l</i>	S	Z
22-23	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
26	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
42-52	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
61	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
72	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
76	hab.	hab.	hab.	hab.
77	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
97a	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
100a	hab.	car.	car.	hab.
101	hab.	hab.	hab.	car.
121	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
122	hab.	hab.	hab.	hab.
123	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
170a	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
170b	car.	hab.	car.	car.
171	hab.	hab.	car.	hab.
184a	hab.	car.	hab.	car.
194	hab.	hab.	hab.	car.
194a	car.	hab.	hab.	hab.
198a	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
205	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
209a	car.	car.	car.	hab.
210-12	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
214	hab.	car.	hab.	car.
214a	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
213	hab.	hab.	hab.	hab.
215	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
216-17	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
219	hab.	hab.	hab.	hab.
222	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
226	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
227	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
252	hab.	hab.	hab.	hab.
252a	car.	hab.	car.	hab.
252b	car.	car.	car.	hab.
253-59	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
261a	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
261b	car.	hab.	car.	car.
262	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
262a	car.	hab.	hab.	hab.
263	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
264	car.	car.	car.	hab.
265-68	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
280a	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
280b	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
281	car.	hab.	hab.	car.
282	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
287	car.	car.	hab.	car.
268	hab.	car.	hab.	hab.
296	hab.	car.	car.	hab.

