

of the plot seems to require. Though allowed to wreak general havoc on the Greeks and to kill numbers of insignificant individuals, he is granted victories over only two significant heroes, Patroclus and Teucer, and both these victories are, as we have seen, deliberately tainted. Conversely, Homer uses Hector as a kind of whipping-boy for Ajax, Agamemnon, and Diomedes when the requirements of the plot risk compromising their reputations. Victories over Hector compensate for the loss of τιμή they are forced to incur.

Homer did not compose the *Iliad* with a disinterested, international, twentieth-century audience in mind. He composed and performed for a contemporary Greek audience, for whom the Greek heroes were vital figures of awe and veneration. It seems clear that this audience had certain expectations about how their great heroes would fare on the battlefield, and that these expectations did not include defeat by an enemy hero, no matter how distinguished.⁹ It would be foolish to criticize Homer for bending his plot a little in order to respect these expectations. It would be surprising if he did not share them himself.¹⁰

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9. Patroclus is, of course, a special case. It is perhaps significant, however, that he seems not to have a tradition independent of Homer. Some scholars believe that he is Homer's invention.

10. An earlier version of this paper was given at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in December 1989 in Boston. It has been improved by the informed discussion of the participants at the session and by the suggestions of Richard Janko and the Editor, to all of whom I express my thanks.

ARCHIMEDES *ANTHOLOGIA PALATINA* 7. 50

τὴν Εὐριπίδew μήτ' ἔρχew, μήτ' ἐπιβάλλου,
δύσβατον ἀνθρώποις οἶμον, ἀοιδoθέτα·
λείη μὲν γὰρ ἰδεῖν καὶ †ἐπίρροθος†, ἣν δέ τις αὐτῇν
εἰσβαίνει, χαλεποῦ τρηχυτέρη σκόλοπος.
ἦν δὲ τὰ Μηδεΐης Αἰήτιδος ἄκρα χαράξης,
ἀμνήμων κείσῃ νέρθεν· ἔα στεφάνουs.

This epigram is Archimedes 1 in D. L. Page, ed., *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 24–25. W. M. Calder, III (*CP* 84 [1989]: 234–35) has brought to light an unpublished emendation by Wilamowitz (contained in a postcard addressed to W. R. Paton in 1914) of the corrupt ἐπίρροθος in line 3. Wilamowitz was not impressed by Paton's conjecture ἐπίκροτος (which had already occurred independently to Dorville and Brunck), and himself very tentatively proposed ἐπίρροπος—but he may have taken a deliberate decision not to publish the idea.

I once thought of ἐπίδρομος, “suitable for traveling over” (as in, e.g., Antip. Thess. *Anth. Pal.* 9. 58. 1 ἐπίδρομον ἄρμασι τεῖχος); this was mentioned by

H. Lloyd-Jones in his review of *Further Greek Epigrams* (CR 32 [1982]: 140). But it seems that Gregory of Nazianzus was familiar with this epigram, and that he reveals the true reading as ἐπίτροχος. When describing the different paths of the virtuous and the wicked, Gregory writes (*Carm.* 1. 2. 1. 466–68, PG 37:557):¹

καὶ γὰρ τε τρίβους περώσιν ἀνίσους,
τοῖς μὲν γὰρ χθαμαλὴ καὶ ἐπίτροχός ἐστι κακοῖσιν,
οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ τέμνουσι προσάντα.

As Gregory realized, Archimedes' starting point is the Hesiodic path that is smooth and enticing but ultimately ruinous (*Op.* 288 λείη μὲν ὁδός κτλ.). So the path of Euripides to the eye seems smooth and easy to run over (ἰδεῖν covers both adjectives) but, when embarked upon, turns out to resemble the rough and difficult path of Virtue.² Archimedes has grafted onto this the image of the poetic road, traversed either on foot or in a chariot, familiar from the prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia* (frag. 1. 25–28 Pf.) and innumerable imitations.

The epithet λείη (3), as well as describing the path (as it appears to the eye), has a second reference, to the polished craftsmanship of Euripides' verses.³ Perhaps final proof of the correctness of ἐπίτροχος in Archimedes lies in the fact that it too has an appropriate second meaning. LSJ translates the metaphorical sense with "tripping"; the epithet is applied to μέλη (Heliodorus 4. 17) and ῥυθμοί (Aristid. Quint. 2. 15), and here perhaps suggests the quality of Euripides' lyrics. So ἐπίτροχος means both "easy to run over" and "running easily."⁴

I wish I could offer a solution to the problems of the last couplet. Page's interpretation of line 5 seems to me no better than those of earlier scholars that he decries. In view of the Hesiodic background, ἄκρα naturally suggests *Works and Days* 291 ἐπὶ δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται, and may also imply that the *Medea* was the summit of Euripides' art (as some older scholars thought). Could χαράξης refer to the indentations made by the poet's chariot-wheels? Part of the trouble might be that Archimedes is trying to be too clever with his multiple references. The last line defeats me.⁵

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1. Gregory uses the epithet again in a similar context (but without the detailed imagery of the path) in *Carm.* 1. 2. 2. 75 (PG 37:584) πᾶσιν γὰρ ἐπίτροχός ἐστιν ἁμαρτία.

2. With lines 2 and 4 of Archimedes compare particularly Quint. Smyrn. 5. 52–54 (the mountain of Virtue) ἄμφι δὲ πάντῃ / ἀτραπιτοὶ θαμέεσσι διεργόμεναι σκολόπεσσιν / ἀνθρώπων ἀπέρυκτον ἐὼν πᾶτον. This passage of Greg. Naz. is not mentioned either by A. Rzsch in his edition of Hesiod of 1902 (on *Op.* 288) or by F. Vian, *Quintus de Smyrne*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1966), pp. 203–5.

3. See R. F. Thomas, "Callimachus and Roman Poetry," *CQ* 33 (1983): 97–99 (with nn. 35 and 36) for the application of λειαίνω and similar words to a polished literary style.

4. Compare the Latin use (illustrated by OLD, s.vv.) of *currere* and *decurrere* to commend smoothly running verse.

5. One might almost expect the last couplet to praise the poet who succeeds in spite of all the difficulties (like the climber of Helicon in Honestus *Anth. Pal.* 9. 230. 3–4 οὕτως καὶ σοφίης πόνος ὁρθός· ἦν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἄκρον / τέρμα μόλης, ἀρύση Πιερίδων χάριτας). But that does not seem conceivable.