

# THE UNRULY TONGUE: PHILITAS OF COS AS SCHOLAR AND POET

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PHILITAS OF COS stands as a gray eminence at the start of Alexandrian scholarship and literature.<sup>1</sup> Described as “simultaneously a poet and a critic” (Strabo 14.2.19. 657c), he was picked by Ptolemy I Soter to be tutor to his son Philadelphus (*Suda*, s.v. Philitas), and is said to have taught Zenodotus of Ephesus, first librarian of the Alexandrian Library (*Suda*, s.v. Zenodotus). His comments on epic vocabulary in his pioneering lexical study, Ἀτακτοὶ γλῶσσαι, caused Aristarchus, the great Homeric scholar and Alexandrian librarian who lived more than a century later, to write a work entitled *Against Philitas* (Schol. A ad *Il.* 1.524). As to his verse, its artistry was celebrated in programmatic poems by Callimachus (*Aet.* 1.9–10, with the Florentine Scholia) and Theocritus (7.39–41), eminent poets of the next generation working in Alexandria; Roman poets cite him as an authoritative model for elegy (Prop. 3.1.1–6, 3.51–52, 9.43–44; Ov. *Ars am.* 3.329–48, *Rem. am.* 759–60; Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.252).

As all this suggests, Philitas’ activity and impact loom large—in the work of others. Regrettably, he says very little to us in his own voice, since his oeuvre has mostly vanished, surviving only in brief citations and fragments. I want to turn to these, however, so as to explore in what sense Philitas may in his age have served as a model of a *poeta doctus*.

In one of his surviving poems (10 Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, p. 92 = 12 Sbardella = 25 Spanoudakis), a female speaker discriminates between ignorant rustics and those versed in song; the latter stand out by virtue of their laborious, hard-won knowledge: “No benighted rustic from the mountains / will take me . . . , toting his mattock, / but only an expert in song’s ordered

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1. I cite Philitas’ poetry according to the editions of Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, Sbardella 2000, and Spanoudakis 2002; his scholarly work, the Ἀτακτοὶ γλῶσσαι, according to the editions of Kuchenmüller 1928, Dettori 2000a, and Spanoudakis 2002. I am persuaded by Müller (1990, 27–37) that our earliest sources (including Propertius) speak mainly for the name having been spelled “Philitas,” and that “Philetas” is the result of later *etacism*; cf. also Sbardella 2000, 3–7, and Spanoudakis 2002, 19–23. To Müller’s evidence add now Posidippus’ epigram on the statue of Philitas in the new Milan papyrus, Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, Col. X 16–25 = 63 Austin and Bastianini 2002; cf. pp. 331–32 below.

verses, who through much toil / knows the way of every kind of tale.” Here poetry is considered the product of toil, of diligent skill and learning, as much as of inspiration.<sup>2</sup> This attitude to poetry was embraced by subsequent poets in Ptolemaic Alexandria.

Philitas’ erudition gave rise to an entirely new comic type: the spindle-thin professor so engrossed in study that he quite forgets to eat and drink, being *himself* rather consumed by his researches until he becomes a feeble shadow of a man.<sup>3</sup> This new comic type seems to have appeared specifically in response to the personality and interests of Philitas, whose particular obsession was with words. Already his younger contemporary, the elegist Hermesianax, describes how there was a statue of him set up by the people of Cos, in which he was portrayed as “frail with all the glosses, all the forms of speech” (περὶ πάντα Φιλίταν / ῥήματα καὶ πᾶσαν τρυόμενον λαλίην, frag. 7.77–78 Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, p. 100).<sup>4</sup> A similar picture emerges in one of the newly published epigrams of Posidippus, a near contemporary (Bastianini and Galazzi 2001, col. 10.16–25 = 63 Austin-Bastianini). The poem depicts another statue of Philitas, commissioned from the sculptor Hecataeus by none other than Ptolemy Philadelphus and perhaps intended for display in Alexandria—a devoted pupil’s tribute to his distinguished tutor:<sup>5</sup>

τόνδε Φιλίται χ[ά]λκον [ἴ]σσοι κατὰ πάν<θ>’ {α} Ἐκ[α]ταῖος  
 ἄκ[ρ]ιβῆς ἄκρους [ἐπ]λάσσει εἰς ὄνυχας  
 καὶ με[γέ]θει κα[τὰ] σα[ρκί] τὸν ἀνθρωπιστὶ διώξας  
 γνῶμο[ν]’, ἄφ’ ἡρώων δ’ οὐδὲν ἔμειξ’ {ε} ἰδέης,  
 ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀκρομέριμον ὀλ[η] κ[α]τεμάζατο τέχνηι 5  
 πρ[έ]σβυν, ἀληθείης ὄρθον [ἔ]χων) κάνονα  
 αὐδῆ[σ]οντι δ’ ἔοικεν, ὅσῳ πρ[ο]κίλλεται ἦθει,  
 ἔμψυχος, καίπερ χάλκεος ἔων ὁ γέρων·  
 ἐκ Πτολεμαίου δ’ ὤδε θεοῦ θ’ ἅμα καὶ βασιλ[ῆ]ος  
 ἄγκειται Μουσέ[ι]ων εὔνεκα Κῶτος ἀνὴρ. 10

Hecataeus made this bronze like Philitas in every way,  
 accurate down to the tips of his toes  
 in size and frame alike describing this investigator (?)  
 on a human scale. He included nothing from the physique of heroes.  
 No, with the straightedge of truth and all his skill he cast  
 the old man full of cares.  
 He seems about to speak—how fully his features are elaborated!—  
 alive, though of bronze, this old man:

2. For the varying interpretations of this fragment and its female voice, cf. Bing 1986; Dettori 1999; and the commentaries of Sbardella 2000 and Spanoudakis 2002.

3. As Yeats might have said, “a tattered coat upon a stick” (*Sailing to Byzantium*, line 10).

4. The latter term, λαλίη, later came to mean “dialect,” cf. Cairns 1979, 220.

5. The fact that the monarch is called “both god and king” (θεοῦ θ’ ἅμα καὶ βασιλ[ῆ]ος, line 9), demonstrates that Ptolemy Philadelphus is meant. For when the cult of the *Theoi adelphoi* was established in 272/1, he became the first of his line to receive divine honors while still alive. The founding of that cult thus constitutes the *terminus post quem* of our poem, and the dedication of the statue must be seen as Philadelphus’ tribute to his distinguished tutor Philitas. It is uncertain whether Philitas was still alive when this epigram was written—he is generally thought to have been born around 340. In any case he is represented as an old man (πρ[έ]σβυν, 5; ὁ γέρων, 8), so if he was dead it may be that the image of him in his last years was still vivid. For recent discussion of this epigram, cf. Angio 2002, 17–24; Bernsdorff 2002, 11–45 esp. 19–26; Hardie 2003, 27–36; Scodel 2003, 44, whose supplement in 10 I adopt.

I stand here dedicated by Ptolemy, god and king at once,  
for the sake of the Muses, the Coan man.

As in Hermesianax' image of the scholar "frail with all the glosses," Posidippus' statue portrays this "investigator" (γνώμον', 4) on a human scale as an emphatically old man (πρῆξθον, 6, γέρων, 8). He is, moreover, "extremely anxious," "full of cares" (ἀκρομέρινον, 5). The adjective is otherwise unattested, but aptly describes the absent-minded intellectual, engrossed in thought: according to the Hellenistic epigrammatist Dionysius (1.3 Gow-Page, *HE* = *Anth. Pal.* 7.78.3), another well-known personage, the scholar-poet Eratosthenes, died ἄκρα μεριμνήσας. In our poem, words in ἀκρο- describing the sculptor's painstaking realism—ἀκ[ρ]ιβῆς ἄκρους [ἔπλ]ασεν εἰς ὄνυχας (2)—suggest an affinity with the ἀκρομέρινον . . . πρῆξθον (5–6). Likewise the artist's deployment of all his skill (ὄλ[η] κ[α]τεμάξατο τέχνη, 5) in the accomplishment of his task seems appropriate to the creation of an image of the meticulous scholar-poet.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Philitas is not idealized in any way. On the contrary, he cuts a wholly unheroic figure—a point Posidippus drives home with the striking formulation in line 4 that the sculptor "blended in nothing from the form of heroes" (ἀφ' ἡρώων δ' οὐδὲν ἔμειξ' {ε} ἰδέης): a metaphor doubtless evoking the metallurgical act of making a compound.<sup>7</sup> There is in Philitas no alloy of heroism.<sup>8</sup>

This picture of Philitas is embellished in stories preserved for us in various sources. Aelian, for instance, relates the following (*VH* 9.14):

They say that Philitas grew extremely thin. Thus as the slightest thing could easily send him sprawling, he put lead weights in his soles, so as not to be blown over if there happened to be a stiff wind.

And in Athenaeus we learn of the tragicomic denouement when one of the characters humorously admonishes the host of the great banquet at which the work is set (9.401d–e):

Ulpian, you always refuse to take your share of food until you've learned whether the word for that dish is ancient. Like Philitas of Cos, therefore, . . . you risk withering away some day. For he became utterly emaciated through these studies and died, as the epigram in front of his memorial makes clear:

"Stranger, I am Philitas. The deceiving word caused my death,  
and the evening's thoughts extended deep into the night."

6. Signs in the poem point to Philitas' being seen here as both scholar and poet. For instance, with αὐδήσονται δ' ἔοικεν in 7 we might compare Asclepiades 43.3 Gow-Page, *HE* = *Anth. Plan.* (A) 120.3: αὐδάσονται δ' ἔοικεν, where, as in most instances, the verb is used of spoken utterance, not song, suggesting that Philitas' statue represents him less in his function as poet than as scholar. In the phrase Μουσέ(ι)ον εἵνεκα (10), on the other hand, the Muses may stand both for poetic and scholarly accomplishment ("esp. *liberal arts*," LSJ, s.v. Μοῦσα), while the final words of the poem, describing Philitas as Κῳϊος ἀνὴρ, implicitly recall Simonides' description of Homer as Χίος ἀνὴρ (frag. 8 dub. West, *IE*<sup>2</sup>), and suggest a comparison of poets.

7. The epigram is suffused with terms both metaphorical and literal that have strong artisanal resonance: [ἔπλ]ασεν (2), διώξας (3), κ[α]τεμάξατο (5), ὀρθον [ἔχων] κάνονα (6), ποικίλλεται (7).

8. Perhaps, as Calderón Dorda (1990, 125–29) first suggested in reference to the biographical tradition, the physical characterization hints at the poetic qualities that made Philitas' verse appeal to Callimachus and Theocritus, i.e., a "Callimachean slenderness." Building on this cf. Sens 2002, 5; 2004; and Bernsdorff 2002, 11–44, here 19–26.

As Alan Cameron has recently noted, “thin-jokes” were a staple of ancient comedy, the counterpart to our modern-day “fat-jokes.”<sup>9</sup> Yet the emaciated professor is something new. It is as yet unknown to Theophrastus’ *Characters*. Nor is it the brainchild of Attic comedy.<sup>10</sup> Rather, it seems to emerge in elegy and epigram—a genre for whose learned practitioners Philitas was an important model.<sup>11</sup>

Philitas was evidently famous already within his lifetime for his research on words. But what was the nature of these lexical researches, and in what way did they figure in his poetry, and in that of the scholar-poets who succeeded him? Much work on the erudite poets of Alexandria has focused on their reception and creative reuse of the epic tradition, in particular of Homer. That is not surprising given the wealth of Hellenistic hexameter and elegiac poetry, where we can trace how these poets mined early epic for the rare and atypical.<sup>12</sup> It is tempting to suppose that Philitas did the same, devoting his lexical interests mainly to Homer. After all, in a comic fragment of Strato (Kassel-Austin *PCG* VII, frag. 1), a contemporary of Philitas, a master of the house sputters in exasperation as he describes being driven to distraction because the cook he hired for a party possessed the peculiar and hilarious tic of speaking almost exclusively in Homerisms: “one would have had to use the books of Philitas and look up every word to check its meaning” (ἔδει / τὰ τοῦ Φιλιτᾶ λαμβάνοντα βιβλία / σκοπεῖν ἕκαστον τί δύναται τῶν ῥημάτων). The assumption here is that “the books of Philitas” dealt with Homeric vocabulary (but see the appendix below: “What does Strato’s *Phoinikides* tell us about Philitas?”). We recall as well that Aristarchus, the great Homeric scholar, wrote a work *Against Philitas*.

Yet the surviving fragments of Philitas’ researches, and some of his verse, point in another direction, toward a different area of intense learned and poetic interest, namely, exotic diction and local customs. This is where I believe he had his greatest impact on subsequent poetry. From what we can tell from citations of his famous lexical work, the Ἀτακτοὶ γλῶσσαι, Philitas often took Homer as his starting point. But let us have a look at some examples to see where he went from there.

9. Cameron 1995, pp. 490 and 493 with n. 25.

10. Contra Cameron 1995, appendix B, “Thin Gentlemen,” 488–91. Characteristically, Cameron seizes on precisely the genre in which Philitas is *not* depicted as emaciated, and asserts that it must be the source of that image. We have it in the elegy by Philitas’ younger contemporary, Hermesianax; it is implied in the new Posidippus epigram on the statue of Philitas; thereafter it is much elaborated in the stories of Aelian and Athenaeus (with its epigram, which might well—as Cameron suggests—be contemporary with Philitas). The one place it is absent is in Strato’s comic fragment, where Philitas is merely the scholar—there is nothing about his being thin; see appendix below. For a critique of Cameron’s general approach, cf. Bing 2000, 139–48.

11. The figure of the scholar here becomes the mundane counterpart to that more celebrated image of the singer, the Muses’ devotee, whose preoccupation is not scholarship but song; he too is so absorbed that he shrivels away and dies, ultimately becoming the cicada who needs no food and spends the livelong day in song—an image first elaborated in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (259b–d), then powerfully revived in Callimachus’ prologue to the *Aetia* (frag. 1.32–35).

12. The bibliography is enormous. I would cite the pioneering works of de Jan (1893); and Kuiper (1896–98); thereafter Herter (1929); and the collected essays of Giangrande (1980). More recently see especially Hunter 1996; the studies of Rengakos (1992, 1993, 1994a, 1994b); and Bonnano 1995.

Our first is the word ἄμαλλα, which probably refers to Homer's ἀμαλλοδετήρ at *Iliad* 18.553. That term is a Homeric hapax legomenon,<sup>13</sup> one of five treated by Philitas out of a total of twenty-five surviving glosses (i.e., 1/5). I am of course assuming that he chose to treat these words because they were Homeric hapaxes, though none of the citations makes explicit reference to Homer. Nevertheless it is a reasonable assumption, since Homeric language overall was privileged; such words in particular provoked perennial discussion and so, for all their rarity, were culturally marked.<sup>14</sup>

ἀμαλλοδετήρ occurs in that part of Achilles' shield on which there is a royal precinct with reapers harvesting the grain (*Il.* 18.552–57):

δράγματα δ' ἄλλα μετ' ὄγμον ἐπήτριμα πίπτον ἔραζε  
 ἄλλα δ' ἀμαλλοδετήρες ἐν ἔλλεδανοῖσιν δέοντο.  
 τρεῖς δ' ἄρ' ἀμαλλοδετήρες ἐφέστασαν· αὐτὰρ ὀπισθε  
 παῖδες δραγμαεύοντες, ἐν ἀγκαλίδεσσι φέροντες,  
 ἄσπερχές παρέχον· βασιλεὺς δ' ἐν τοῖσι σιωπῇ  
 σκῆπτρον ἔχων ἐστήκει ἐπ' ὄγμου γηθόσυνος κῆρ.

Some sheaves fell to the earth in a row, one after another,  
 some the ἀμαλλοδετήρες bound with cords.

Three ἀμαλλοδετήρες attended to the job, and behind them  
 children gathered the sheaves, and carried them in their arms,  
 and quickly brought them over. And silent beside them the king  
 along the swath stood holding his scepter, rejoicing at heart.

Broken into its constituent parts ἀμαλλο-δετήρες means “those who bind the ἄμαλλα.” This substantivized “binding” is immediately repeated, and so explained, in the verb δέοντο and its object δράγματα: “Those who bind the ἄμαλλα” tie sheaves together. The resulting bundle, then, is the ἄμαλλα. Here we have a case of instant exegesis: a nice example of the interpretive maxim, often linked with Aristarchus, that “Homer is his own best interpreter,” or in Greek “Ὁμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν (literally, explaining Homer through Homer).<sup>15</sup> In the world of the shield—a synoptic, *pars pro toto* world, where homely scenes are crammed with universalizing meaning—no further explanation is required. We need know nothing more about the ἄμαλλα.

Yet Philitas commented on the word,<sup>16</sup> as we hear in the following citation in Hesychius (s.v. = 46 Kuchenmüller = 18 Dettori = 46 Spanoudakis):

ἄμαλλα· δράγματα, δέσμαι τῶν ἀσταχύων . . . ἀγάλη,  
 δράγματα ρ', ὥς φησι Ἴστρος, Φιλῆτας δὲ ἴστορεῖ ἐκ σ'.

ἄμαλλα. Sheaves, bundles of grain. . . a bunch; 100 sheaves, according to Istros, but Philitas says it consists of 200.

13. Strictly a *dis*-legomenon: it comes up twice in as many lines.

14. For Homeric hapax legomena, cf. Kumpf 1984. For their reuse in Hellenistic poetry, see Rengakos 1992, 1993, 1994a, 1994b; and Kyriakou 1995.

15. Pfeiffer 1968, 225–27, demonstrates that the attribution to Aristarchus is false (it comes from Porphyry), but that it is in keeping with his practice.

16. It was later taken up by Callimachus in the *Aetia* frag. 186.27 (Hyperboreans).

Now where would Philitas have come by such a fact? Not in Homer, that's for sure. Kuchenmüller's hunch was that he'd asked the farmers themselves, presumably on Cos ("haec ab ipsis rusticis quaesivit Philetas"). One may balk, of course, at picturing the scholar—especially the Philitas of biographical lore—exiting his study, blundering down the road to a local farm (flattened several times, no doubt, by nasty gusts; he'd left his weights at home) to ask the farmers (whom no one could have mistaken, for they looked beyond all like farmers) "Just how many sheaths make up an ἄμαλλα?"<sup>17</sup> But stripped of the biographical caricature, the basic supposition that he learned from a source with firsthand knowledge is not farfetched. Perhaps it was a farmer, perhaps a treatise on farming such as those mentioned in Plato's *Minos* (316e: "farm manuals," τὰ γεωργικὰ συγγράμματα). In any case, what the gloss of Philitas is clearly *not* is an attempt at "explaining Homer through Homer" ("Ὀμηρον ἐξ Ὀμήρου σαφηνίζειν").<sup>18</sup> It is not intended, I think, to explain Homer at all. Rather, here as elsewhere Philitas reveals an interest in rustic life for its own sake. The Homeric word is merely the cue. What appeals to him is the specialized knowledge, the figure 200, which tells us something about actual farming, not about the remote heroic world of epic.

Our next example likewise takes its cue from Homer but suggests, too, that Homer—far from being just a springboard—is a crucial foil against which the scholar sets his gloss. The word in question is πέλλα, another hapax legomenon, whose one appearance in Homer comes at *Iliad* 16.642. There it clearly means "milk pail," and is part of a rustic simile in which soldiers swarming over the dead Sarpedon are likened to flies "whirring through a sheepfold, about the pails (πέλλας) overflowing with milk (περιγλαγέας)." Here is how the word is glossed by Philitas (Ath. 9.495e = 33 Kuchenmüller = 5 Dettori = 33 Spanoudakis):

Κλείταρχος ἐν ταῖς Γλώσσαις πελλητήρα μὲν καλεῖν Θεσσαλοὺς καὶ Αἰολεῖς τὸν ἀμολγέα, πέλλαν δὲ τὸ ποτήριον· Φιλήτας δ' ἐν Ἀτάκτοις τὴν κύλικα Βοιωτοῦς.

Cleitarchus [of Aegina, first century B.C.E.] in his *Glosses* says the Thessalians and Aeolians call a milk pail πελλητήρ, but a drinking cup πέλλα. Philitas in his Ἀτακτοὶ says a wine cup (κύλιξ) is called πέλλα by the Boeotians.

Now milk and wine are virtual opposites in the Greek imagination. And the shallow, broadly flaring κύλιξ (a wine cup) could scarcely be more different from a milk pail. Yet πέλλα can be used to signify either. What strikes us are the widely (and wildly) divergent meanings of a single word: homonyms but in jarring antithesis. Add to that Philitas' concern with local usage (in this case, Boeotia's): On the one hand there is the culturally authoritative Homeric meaning, on the other the regional peculiarity. Significantly, Philitas

17. Intriguing but ultimately speculative links have been found between Philitas and the early history of bucolic on the basis of the character of the old cowherd Philetas in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (2.3), a singer and player of the syrinx. On this basis it has been suggested, moreover, that the figure of Lycidas in Theoc. *Id.* 7 is either Philitas or a character from one of his poems; cf. Reitzenstein 1893; Cairns 1979, 25–27; Hunter 1983, 76–83; Bowie 1985, 67–91; and Cameron 1995, 418–20.

18. As I argued above, Homer did that sufficiently himself in the very same verse.

appears to present the Boeotian meaning for its own sake, not to illustrate that of the Homeric hapax. Was he interested in the lack of uniformity, in semantic dissonance itself?<sup>19</sup>

I should emphasize that that would be quite contrary to the practice of the anonymous gloss writers, the *Glossographoi* in the Homeric scholia. While they too occasionally fix on a dialect usage, they do so in order to suggest that this is what Homer meant by a certain term in a given passage under discussion.<sup>20</sup> To be sure, the citations of Philitas provide us no context; we cannot tell what he intended by noting that a Homeric hapax was used in a certain way in a regional dialect. Yet nothing suggests it was meant to illustrate the sense in Homer (can one even argue that *πέλλα* can be glossed as “wine cup” in the Iliadic simile?).<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, what leaps out at the reader of the gloss when set against the Homeric use is its irreducible difference—an opposition so neat as to suggest a deliberate strategy and interest in semantic dissonance.

Another example reinforces that impression and adds a new dimension. It is a further Homeric hapax, the word *κρήιον*,<sup>22</sup> which occurs at *Iliad* 9.206 in the sense of “butcher block” or “tray for cutting meat.” There it is described as *κρεῖον μέγα*, a great butcher block, big enough to hold a sheep’s chine, and used by Patroclus and Achilles in preparing the meal for the embassy of Greeks. Here is what Philitas says about it (Ath. 14.645d, 37 Kuchenmüller = 9 Dettori = 37 Spanoudakis):

κρήιον πλακοῦς ἄρτος, ὃν Ἀργεῖοι παρὰ τῆς νύμφης πρὸς τὸν νυμφίον φέρουσιν. ὁπταῖται δ’ ἐν ἄνθραξιν, καὶ καλοῦνται ἐπ’ αὐτὸν οἱ φίλοι, παρατίθεται δὲ μετὰ μέλιτος. ὥς φησιν Φιλίτας ἐν Ἀτάκτοις.

*κρήιον* is a flat cake or loaf which the Argives bring from the bride to the groom. It is baked on charcoal, and the friends are invited to partake of it, served with honey. So says Philitas in the *Ἀτάκτοις*.

Again the meaning is strikingly anomalous and local in origin. But this time Philitas reveals not just his interest in regional words, but in customs.

19. A comparable interest in homonyms, though of a less jarring kind, occurs in Philitas’ gloss of another Homeric hapax: *ἱσθμῖον*. This word appears at *Od.* 18.300 as one of the gifts the suitors give to Penelope; it is usually taken to mean “necklace.” Though the text is corrupt, it appears that Philitas explains the way in which *ἱσθμῖον* means both “neck” and “necklace” by analogy with *στέφανος*, which can signify both “the top of the head” and “crown.” Ath. 15.677c (emended by Kuchenmüller 41 = 13 Dettori = 41 Spanoudakis): Φιλίτας δὲ φησὶ <ἱσθμῖον> στέφανος. ἤγουν ὁμωνυμία ἀμφοτέρωθι οἷον τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ <περὶ αὐτῇ κόσμου καὶ τοῦ τραχήλου καὶ τοῦ> περὶ αὐτῷ κόσμου. The word was also glossed by Simias of Rhodes, cf. Fränkel 1915, 113.

20. For their approach generally and deployment of dialectal evidence, cf. Dyck 1987, 119–60, esp. 123: “The basic flaw . . . is their habit of tailoring their definitions of Homeric words to . . . a handful of passages: they seldom undertook the laborious task of . . . attempting to do justice to the totality of evidence,” and 126: “. . . the Γλωσσογράφοι may have used . . . an awareness of dialectal variations as license to posit wild semantic shifts [in Homer].”

21. See Dettori 2000b, 183–98, esp. 186.

22. This is the Doric form of Homer’s *κρεῖον*. The latter is cited in the *Etymologicum Magnum* in the same sense that Philitas assigns it: *κρεῖον*: ὃ δὲ Πτολέμαρχος τὸν ἐκ στέατος πλακοῦντα. Athenaeus’ reading, *κρήιον*, would seem to be thrown into doubt by Hesychius’ *κρήιον*: τὸ τῶν μελισσῶν· καὶ εἶδος πλακοῦντος, but also has *κρήια*: τὰ ζῷδια, which LSJ define as “cakes in shape of animals.” For detailed discussion see Kuchenmüller 1928 ad loc.

Among other things, that custom may serve here to highlight the difference from the Homeric context. For while Homer describes the manly preparation of meat for the feast of heroic friends in a council of war,<sup>23</sup> Philitas recounts how the Argive bride bakes cakes for her groom and his friends, to be served with sweet honey. The single word thus carries connotations of both marriage and butchery, love and war.<sup>24</sup>

Our final instance, the word κύπελλον, again drives home the impression of deliberate dissonance—the more so as, far from being a hapax, this word is fairly frequent in Homer, appearing five times in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, invariably with the meaning “goblet,” and often coupled with the stately epithet “golden”—a cup fit for heroes, in other words.<sup>25</sup> The following, however, is what we find in the Ἀτακτοὶ γλῶσσαι (Ath. 11.483a, 38 Kuchenmüller = 10 Dettori = 38 Spanoudakis):

Φιλήτας δὲ Συρακοσίου κύπελλα καλεῖν τὰ τῆς μάξης καὶ τῶν ἄρτων ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης καταλείμματα.

Philitas says the Syracusans call the crumbs of barley cake and bread left on the table κύπελλα.

From goblets made of gold to humble breadcrumbs, the debris left over from a meal. The dissonance could not be more striking, verging almost on the paradoxical. It is as though Philitas had wanted to see how dissimilar a usage he could find, how far one could depart from the culturally authoritative norm; and here too his source is local, this time Syracusan. The effect resembles that of the Homeric simile: for like the simile that reveals a life apart, beyond the sphere of heroic action, the gloss throws open a door, exposing the epic term to a strange, incongruous local meaning, and so disclosing an unexpected world. But the gloss does something more radical, too, perhaps: unlike the simile, which subordinates its world to that of heroic narrative both formally and in the hierarchy of epic values, the gloss reconfigures that relationship by shifting the balance. It takes for its text not merely Homer but the totality of the language.<sup>26</sup> The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* thus appear within the larger textual/linguistic matrix, a touchstone still, no doubt,

23. N.B. the emphasis on friendship in Achilles' welcome (9.197–98): χαίρετον· ἡ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἰκέαντον· ἡ τι μάλα χρεώ, / οἱ μοι σκυζόμενῳ περ Ἀχαιῶν φιλατοὶ ἔστων.

24. Homer acknowledges and exploits the poignancy of this antithesis in critical moments, such as when Hector awaits Achilles in *Il.* 22.126–28 and says in resignation οὐ μὲν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης / τῷ ὀαριζέμεναι, ἅ τε παρθένος ἡθιῶς τε, / παρθένος ἡθιῶς τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοιν. Spanoudakis 2002, 362, interestingly observes that “Coans considered themselves as deriving their origin from the Argolid and it is an Argive custom that P. describes here.”

25. Thereafter it is a rarity, appearing only in poetry, and mostly much later. It does come up once each in Antimachus frag. 22.2; Ap. Rhod. 2.1271; and Lycoph. *Alex.* 1104, in the former two with its Homeric epithet “golden.”

26. In this we see how Philitas anticipates and influences Callimachus; cf. A. S. Hollis' description of that poet's catholic interest in language (1990, 11–14), as well as Selden 1998, 290–412, esp. 374: “Linguistic hybridization is the single most prominent characteristic of Callimachus' style. . . . His texts are essentially constructions, vocabular mosaics assembled out of disjoint verbal tesserae: anomalous and eccentric glosses, incompatible morphologic features, freak syntactical constructions which have been culled from every dialect and genre, from poetry as well as prose, from substandard speech and scientific treatises alike, from every stage of the language's historical development.”



but no longer the alpha and omega. Instead it is part, now, of a complex, often surprising web of discourse.<sup>27</sup>

I believe that this preoccupation with anomalous usage helps illuminate why Philitas called his glosses ἄτακτοι, something no other glossary is called.<sup>28</sup> The title is often translated as *Miscellaneous Glosses*, that is, the words are interpreted as being ἄτακτοι (without order) in relation to each other, and as a group. Hence, most influentially, Rudolf Pfeiffer supposed that the book was “not systematically arranged like the later collections made by grammarians; we may compare the name *Miscellanea* given by the poet Politian to his various learned writings put together without proper arrangement.”<sup>29</sup> But our examination suggests that one could also take it to refer to words that are “disorderly” in themselves individually. Put somewhat differently, that semantic deviation or dissonance of the single word, which Philitas evidently found appealing, might be characterized as a kind of unruliness, hence ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι might be translated as *Disorderly Words*, or—since γλῶσσα can also mean “tongue”—it might even be called *Unruly Tongues*.<sup>30</sup>

It is—I should stress—inherently plausible and likely that this student and lover of words, Philitas, would have been alive to such a playful potential connotation in the title of his work—even if on some level it referred to its organization as a miscellany.

A measure of support for this “unruly” suggestion may come from the evidence that Simonides wrote a work entitled ἄτακτοι λόγοι (Page, *PMG* 653), “speeches or stories that are ἄτακτοι.” We hear of it in a remark by pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle. In his *Metaphysics* (N 3.1091a5), Aristotle says:

πάντα δὴ ταῦτα ἄλογα, καὶ μάχεται αὐτὰ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τοῖς εὐλόγοις, καὶ ἔοικεν ἐν αὐτοῖς εἶναι ὁ Σιμωνίδου μακρὸς λόγος. γίγνεται γὰρ ὁ μακρὸς λόγος ὥσπερ ὁ τῶν δούλων ὅταν μὴθὲν ὑγιὲς λέγωσιν.

All this is absurd, and conflicts both with itself and with what is probable, and it seems to be an instance of Simonides’ “long story” [μακρὸς λόγος], for the “long story” comes about, like those that slaves tell, when people have nothing sound to say.

Pseudo-Alexander comments on this as follows (*Comm. in Arist. Graeca* 1.818.4–8 Hayduck):

ὁ Σιμωνίδης ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, οὓς Ἀτάκτους ἐπιγράφει, μιμεῖται καὶ λέγει οὓς εἰκός ἐστι λόγους λέγειν δούλους ἐπταικότας πρὸς δεσπότης ἐξετάζοντας αὐτοὺς τίνας ἔνεκα ταῦτα

27. The repositioning of the Homeric text within the larger discourse may recall the concept of “intertextuality” as lucidly framed by Fowler 1997, 13–34, here 16. He sees “the inherently multiple nature of intertextual reference,” where “the notion of a hierarchy of reference itself becomes questionable.” I believe that Philitas retains the hierarchy in somewhat diluted form, even while questioning it.

28. As Kuchenmüller 1928, 114 states, “Nimirum ‘Glossae’ extabant permultae, ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι praeter Philetam nullae.” For an overview of the many attempts to interpret the title, cf. Dettori 2000a, pp. 21–22, n. 54, and p. 27: “Il significato di ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι rimane, a mio parere, alquanto misterioso”; see also Spanoudakis 2002, 384–86.

29. Pfeiffer 1968, 90.

30. Selden 1998, 377, draws attention to the somewhat later Stoic interest in linguistic phenomena that “exploit a single signifier to designate several different signifieds, an effect of semantic ambiguity which Chrysippus called *amphibolia*.”

ἐπταίκασιν· καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπολογουμένους λέγειν πάνυ μακρὰ καὶ πολλὰ, οὐδὲν δὲ ὑγιὲς ἢ πιθανόν, ἀλλὰ πᾶν τὸ ἐπιφερόμενον ἐναντίον τῷ προφρασθέντι· τοιοῦτον γὰρ ὡς εἰκὸς τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ παιδείας ἄμοιρον.

Simonides in the stories which he entitles Ἄτακτοι imitates and recounts the stories that slaves are apt to tell when they have bungled something and their masters are grilling them as to why: he has them make long prattling excuses that have nothing sound or convincing about them; rather all their conclusions contradict what they'd previously asserted. Such speech, as it seems, is typical of a barbarian and one without education.

David Campbell translates Ἄτακτοι λόγοι as “Miscellaneous Stories.”<sup>31</sup> But the descriptions in Aristotle and Alexander suggest rather that the title refers to the “disorderly” speech of the slave or barbarian, speech in “disarray” both with regard to its form and its content. Thus the λόγος is ἄτακτος not in relation to other λόγοι, and so “miscellaneous,” but in and of itself, that is, within its own constituent parts, and hence “disorderly.”

A still stronger piece of evidence for taking ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι as unruly or disorderly tongues comes from the second-century B.C.E. poet Nicander. In his *Theriaca* (756–58) Nicander tells us that ἄτακτα are the result of the bite of a venomous spider (φαλάγγιον):

τοῦ μὲν ὅμως ἔμμοχθον ἀεὶ περὶ δάχμα χέονται  
φλύκταιναι, κραδίη δὲ παραπλάζουσα μέμνηνε,  
γλῶσσα δ' ἄτακτα λέληκε, παρέστραπται δὲ καὶ ὄσσε.

But for all their size around the troublesome bite of one [the venomous spider φαλάγγιον] blisters always rise, and the mind wanders and is crazed; the tongue (γλῶσσα) shrieks disordered words (ἄτακτα) and the eyes squint. [translation from Gow and Scholfield 1953]

Inasmuch as the collocation of γλῶσσαι and ἄτακτα appears nowhere else in Greek literature, I feel certain that Nicander was playfully alluding here to the title of Philitas' Ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι. Mad departures from familiar speech: that might be an apt, if comically exaggerated way, of describing a central facet of Philitas' *Disorderly Words* or *Unruly Tongues*. Did the spider bite Philitas?

In proposing that the work's title meant *Unruly Tongues*, we may wish to revisit Kuchenmüller's controversial suggestion about the identity of Battis (or Bittis), the putative beloved of Philitas. This Battis is mentioned in the *Leontion*, an elegy in three books by Philitas' younger contemporary and acquaintance Hermesianax of Colophon.<sup>32</sup> Can she corroborate the name “Unruly Tongues”? Perhaps. The elegy recounted tales of famous loves, from the poetic tradition and elsewhere. In the long fragment that survives from Book 3 (frag. 7 Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, pp. 98–105) Hermesianax describes the loves of his poetic predecessors in chronological order and generic pairings from Orpheus to Philitas.

31. Campbell 1991, 507, on Simonides 653.

32. See the discussion of this poem in Bing 1993a, 619–31.

However one may judge this poem in other respects, it displays an appealing zaniness in its catalogue of poets' loves. Elsewhere I have argued that this was an ironizing response to the burgeoning interest in poets' lives amongst biographers,<sup>33</sup> and I think any interpretation that does not acknowledge the elegy's antic humor fails to do it justice. Here, for instance, we find Homer madly in love with Penelope, leaving his native land so as to be close to her in Ithaca (7.29–34); we find Anacreon vying with the far earlier Alcaeus for the love of Sappho (7.47–56)—“I think Hermesianax was joking about this love affair,” Athenaeus comments as he cites the verses (13.599d); most preposterously, we find Hesiod courting a girl named Ehoie, and obsessively invoking her name at the start of each section in his catalogue poetry—a droll conceit on the epic phrase ἦ οἷη with which each heroine in Hesiod's *Ehoiai* or *Catalogue of Women* was introduced.

It was against the backdrop of such comic flights of fancy that Kuchenmüller made his suggestion about Philitas' beloved Battis, who appears in the following verses of the poem (7.75–78):

Οἷσθα δὲ καὶ τὸν αἰοιδόν, δν Εὐρυπύλου πολιῆται  
 Κῶοι χάλκειον στήσαν ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ  
 Βιττίδα μολπάζοντα θοήν, περὶ πάντα Φιλίταν  
 ῥήματα καὶ πᾶσαν τρυόμενον λαλίην.

And you know that singer whom the Coan citizens  
 of Eurypylos raised in bronze beneath the plane tree,  
 Philitas, singing of nimble Bittis, when he was weak  
 with all the glosses, all the forms of speech.

As we can see, the Greek text transmits the name Bittis. Ovid, however, twice refers to her in company with Philitas as Battis (*Tr.* 1.6.1–3, *Pont.* 3.1.57–58), the only further references to her in all of ancient literature. With this as his cue, and noting the equivalence of βαττολογία and πολυλογία, Kuchenmüller argued that names in the βαττ-stem signified loquaciousness and that Battis consequently meant “chatterbox,” like Horace's Lalage.<sup>34</sup> But more, he cleverly proposed that seen thus, Battis was nothing other than the humorous personification of Philitas' scholarly passion, the gloss:<sup>35</sup> “Battis—sic enim corrigendum ex Ovidio—nihil aliud significat quam γλῶσσα, quae quantum cordi fuerit Coe, nemo nescit.”<sup>36</sup>

While Kuchenmüller's proposal initially met with acclaim, in recent years the tide has turned against it.<sup>37</sup> Peter Knox, for instance, dismisses it disdainfully: “Kuchenmüller supposed that Hermesianax was making a joke and that there was no poem about Bittis. His highly implausible hypothesis to explain these lines has won few supporters, but deserves none.”<sup>38</sup> Of

33. Bing 1993a, 619–31.

34. Kuchenmüller 1928, p. 27, n. 5.

35. Cf. Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, II 1, where Benedik refers to Beatrice as “my lady Tongue”!

36. Kuchenmüller 1928, 27.

37. For the state of the question, cf. Sbardella 2000, 53–60; and Spanoudakis 2002, 29–34.

38. Knox 1993, 61–83, here p. 66, n. 25.

course, this is nothing but assertion. Knox is wedded to the notion that Ovid, whose elegy is addressed to his wife, cites Philitas' love of Battis, as he does that of Antimachus for Lyde the line before, because she was his wife.<sup>39</sup> On this view, Ovid is "referring to earlier works in that genre," namely, elegies addressed to wives.<sup>40</sup> It is unthinkable for Knox, therefore, that Battis should be merely a figure for Philitas' scholarly obsession.

Another scholar, Joachim Latacz, attacks Kuchenmüller's proposal in a more sustained analysis.<sup>41</sup> Without going into the details, his conclusion is that the *Leontion* celebrates Love's ineluctable power, and that the catalogue of poets' loves serves to "justify, exalt, and even consecrate" ("ein Katalog . . . der . . . rechtfertigen, erhöhen, ja konsekrieren soll") the author's own existence as love poet. No doubt he had to invent loves for those who had none by tradition—and Latacz acknowledges that he did so lightheartedly for Hesiod and Homer—, but for Philitas, the author's contemporary and acquaintance, that would have been "neither necessary nor appropriate [my emphasis]" ("weder nötig noch angebracht").<sup>42</sup> Make no mistake, Latacz is referring to what would have been socially, not poetically, appropriate. But propriety itself is surely an inappropriate criterion, since it is just too solemn for a poet like Hermesianax, whose work abounds in cockeyed humor. The critiques of Knox and Latacz are suspect *a limine* and ultimately do not carry conviction since they do not do justice to the poem's essential wit.

Kuchenmüller, I suspect, was right. But perhaps we can improve on him. It appears he thought that Battis' name played only on the concept γλῶσσα, without its qualifier ἄτακτος; consequently he looked to its linguistic root solely for the notion of chattiness. But the name Battis is better explained like its masculine counterpart Battos from the stem meaning "stutter" (as in βατταρίζω and βάταλος).<sup>43</sup> That sense accords far better with the "disorderly words" of Philitas' title. A stammer, after all, is the ἄτακτος γλῶσσα, the "unruly tongue" par excellence. If, as Knox suggests, the adjective θοήν, with which Hermesianax describes Battis, means "volatile" (i.e., fickle), that too would fit the linguistic instability that we have seen appealed to Philitas.<sup>44</sup>

Anomalous meanings, words from the margins, and exotic customs stand at the heart of Philitas' glosses.<sup>45</sup> We have examined these—one-sidedly

39. He even claims (66) that Leontion is Hermesianax' wife, though with no more evidence than there was for Battis.

40. Knox 1993, 66–67.

41. Latacz 1985, 77–95.

42. Quotations from Latacz 1985, 90 and 91 respectively.

43. Cf. Masson 1976, 84–98.

44. Knox 1993, 66. LSJ does not go this far. But cf. Knox' commonsense remarks about the meaning of θοήν (e-mail message to author, January 28, 2000): "Speed in a woman is not an attribute otherwise admired by poets, speed suggests running in general and running away in particular, and in love poetry a woman who runs away is typically represented as fickle . . . hence 'volatile.'" Sbardella (2000, 56–59) summarizes attempts to explain this term, and endorses Alfonsi's proposal (1943, 160–68, esp. 163) that θοήν should be taken adverbially with μολπάζοντα, "singing quickly," i.e., "briefly," on the model of its adverbial use at *Od.* 8.38. The reference is to the deliberate brevity of Philitas' poems.

45. In Kuchenmüller 1928, the index lists words from eight dialects (Aeolic, Argive, Boeotian, Cyrenaean, Lesbian, Megarian, Sicyonian, Syracusan), as well as several rustic words.

perhaps—against the normative language of Homer. But I should stress that Philitas' aim was not simply to blaze new trails for poetry. There was something more at stake. At a time when there was growing pressure toward linguistic conformity through the spread of Koine Greek as the language of political administration<sup>46</sup>—a pressure to which people were the more susceptible as they were pulled away from previously insular linguistic communities by the centrifugal forces of the age—a sense arose that dialect was a precious marker of identity that might be lost, should be studied, needed preservation.<sup>47</sup> Against a trend to uniformity, “unruly tongues” might prove a potent antidote. One gets an inkling of their power when, in the very different context of his “Acontius and Cydippe,” Callimachus says that “erudition is bad in one who can't keep his tongue—his *gloss*?!—in line. Truly, he's like a child with a knife” (ἡ πολυιδρεΐη χαλεπὸν κακὸν, ὅστις ἀκαρτεῖ / γλώσσης· ὥς ἐτεὸν παῖς ὅδε μαῦλιν ἔχει, frag. 75.8–9 Pf.).<sup>48</sup>

I want to close with a glance at the poetry of Philitas. Unfortunately, none of the twenty-five surviving words from the ῥακτοὶ γλῶσσαι appears in the paltry remains of Philitas' poetry, itself not more than fifty verses, some of them partial. Yet I believe we can get a taste of how his scholarly interests found expression in his poetry from the following example (Philitas frag. 16 Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, p. 93 = 18 Sbardella = 20 Spanoudakis):

γῆρύσαιτο δὲ νεβρὸς ἀπὸ ζῶην ὀλέσασα  
ὀξεῖς κάκτου τύμμα φυλαξαμένη

The deer can sing when it has lost its life  
if it avoids the prick of the sharp “cactus.”

This enigmatic couplet is cited and explained by the late-third-century B.C.E. paradoxographer Antigonos of Carystus with reference to the wondrous properties of the κάκτος, a thistle- or artichoke-like plant, which Theophrastus (*Hist. pl.* 6.4.10; cf. Ath. 2.83) had said grew only in Sicily (Antig. Car. *Mirabilia* 8 = 34.40 Giannini 1966):

οὐχ ἦττον δὲ τούτου θαυμαστόν, καθωμιλημένον δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ περὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ Σικελίᾳ  
ἄκανθαν τὴν καλουμένην κάκτον· εἰς ἣν ὅταν ἔλαφος ἐμβῇ καὶ τραυματισθῇ, τὰ ὀστᾶ  
ἄφωνα καὶ ἄχρηστα πρὸς αὐλοὺς ἴσχει. ὅθεν καὶ ὁ Φιλήτας ἐξηγήσατο περὶ αὐτῆς εἴπας·

No less marvelous than this, indeed proverbial, is the thorny plant from Sicily called the κάκτος. When a deer steps on it and is pricked, its bones remain soundless and unusable for flutes. For that reason Philitas spoke of it.

No doubt the κάκτος pricked Philitas' interest in *recherché* words. It was not just that the plant was exotic and exclusively Sicilian, as Theophrastus had pointed out; the word itself confirms its regional pedigree in its earliest appearances. They occur in the poet Epicharmus, a Sicilian (frags. 159, 160,

46. Cf. the useful discussion by Horrocks (1997).

47. Cf. Hunter 1996, 31–45, esp. 32: “In the face of the advance of the *koine*, third-century inscriptions reveal an impressive survival of both weak and strong Doric forms across wide geographic areas; linguistic difference was a living issue for Theocritus' ancient readers.”

48. Note that the word for knife, μαῦλις, is glossed by Eustathius as an Aeolic term (cf. Pfeiffer's note ad loc.).

161), thereafter also in his countryman Theocritus (10.4). We recall from the earlier example of κύπελλα that Philitas was curious about Sicilian vocabulary. Beyond this we note that while the tradition of the κάκτος prick apparently belongs to Sicilian lore, the flute made from deer bone was (according to Athenaeus 4.80) a Theban invention. Do we glimpse here Philitas' interest not just in obscure traditions, but in the changes wrought on them as they shift from one locality to another, that is, in the different meanings that accrue to them in different places—just as with the unruly words examined before?

Philitas' scholarly and poetic interests doubtless shaped the tastes of his pupil Ptolemy II Philadelphus. We now know that he honored his tutor's memory with a bronze statue. But this king left a far greater monument to his mentor by championing the rapid growth of the great library of Alexandria. It was a scholarly tool such as his learned teacher could only have dreamt of. But for the scholar-poets of the next generation, who admired Philitas and followed his example, it was the means to build on his model: Callimachus with his fascination for exotic lore and *recherché* words, Theocritus in his foregrounding of rural customs and language, Apollonius whose epic teems with learned details from periegetic and ethnographic sources. It was also the instrument that facilitated the emergence of a privileged circle of learned readers—a tiny elite, to be sure, within a broader audience of diverse educational background, yet one best able to appreciate the polish, erudition, and indeed unruliness of the new poetry.<sup>49</sup>

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#### APPENDIX: WHAT DOES STRATO'S *PHOINIKIDES* TELL US ABOUT PHILITAS?

As noted above, we are fortunate to have a contemporary reference to Philitas' ἄτακτος γλῶσσαι in New Comedy. It comes in a scene from the *Phoinikides* by Strato (c. 300 B.C.E.), known to us from Athenaeus (9.382c–383b) as well as from a late-third-century B.C.E. papyrus from the Fayum (Austin, *CGFP* 219 = Page, *GLP* 57 pp. 260–69). In it a master of the house describes his confrontation with a cook who speaks almost exclusively in Homerisms. Since the nature of the cook's epic vocabulary directly affects how we interpret the reference to Philitas, I print the entire passage:<sup>50</sup>

49. See Morgan 1998 on the great range of literate attainment, esp. 94–95: "One's impression on reading Quintilian, and even more on reading other elite writers, is that they recommend virtually the whole of Greek and Latin literature. . . . We know of some *litterati* whose learning was as wide as these accounts suggest, but it beggars belief that most pupils learnt anything like as much as this. When we look at the papyri we shall see that below the elite, the evidence is that most people did not read a fraction of it." Cf. also Morgan's concept of "elite *litterati*," 109–10: "literate education in provincial Egypt is quite different from its counterpart among elite *litterati* at Rome or Alexandria or Athens, despite the fact that it looks superficially similar. Some *litterati* knew, or claimed to know whole works, and even whole authors, by heart, and they had learnt the critical appreciation of literature along with the texts themselves. In the papyri there is no direct evidence of the reading of whole books, except very occasionally in summary." Hellenistic poets were aware of this range of audiences, and figured them in their poetry; cf. Bing 1993b and 1994.

50. The text reproduced here is that of Kassel-Austin, *PCG* 7, frag. 1. I am indebted to Page's translation for many particulars.

σφίγγ' ἄρρεν', οὐ μάγειρον, εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἴληφ'· ἀπλῶς γὰρ οὐδὲ ἔν, μὰ τοὺς θεούς, ὦν ἂν λέγῃ συνήμι· καινὰ ῥήματα πεπορισμένος πάρεστιν· ὥς εἰσῆλθε γάρ, εὐθύς μ' ἐπηρώτησε προσβλέψας μέγα·	5
“πόσους κέκληκας μέροπα ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; λέγε.” “ἐγὼ κέκληκα Μέροπα ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; χολαῖς. τοὺς δὲ Μέροπα τούτους με γινώσκειν δοκεῖς;”	8
“οὐδ' ἄρα παρέσται δαιτυμῶν οὐθεὶς ὅλως;”	11
“ἦξει Φιλῖνος, Μοσχίων, Νικήρατος, ὁ δεῖν', ὁ δεῖνα·” κατ' ὄνομ' ἐπεπορευόμην·	13
οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ εἷς μοι δαιτυμῶν.	15
ὁ δ' ἠγανάκτησ' ὥσπερ ἡδικημένος ὅτι οὐ κέκληκα δαιτυμόνα· καινὸν σφόδρα. “οὐδ' ἄρα θύεις ῥηξίχθον;” “οὐκ,” ἔφην, “ἐγώ.”	17
“βοῦν εὐρυμέτωπον;” “οὐ θύω βοῦν, ἄθλιε.” “μῆλα θυσιάζεις ἄρα;” “μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ·”	21
“τὰ μῆλα πρόβατα·” “μῆλα πρόβατ'· οὐκ οἶδ',” ἔφην, “μάγειρε, τούτων οὐθέν, οὐδὲ βούλομαι· ἀγροικότερός εἰμ', ὥσθ' ἀπλῶς μοι διαλέγου.”	23
“τὰς οὐλοχύτας φέρε δεῦρο.” “τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τί;”	25
“κριθαί.” “τί οὖν, ἀπόπληκτε, περιπλοκάς λέγεις;”	34
“πηγὸς πάρεστι;” “πηγός; οὐχὶ λαϊκάσει, ἐρεῖς σαφέστερόν θ' ὃ βούλει μοι λέγειν;” “ἀτάσθαλός γ' εἶ, πρέσβυ,” φησὶν. “ἅλα φέρε· τοῦτ' ἔσθ' ὁ πηγός, τοῦτο δεῖξον.” χέρνιβον παρῆν· ἔθυνεν, ἔλεγεν ἕτερα μυρία	40
τοιαῦθ' ἅ μὰ τὴν Γῆν οὐδὲ εἷς συνῆκεν ἄν, μίστυλλα, μοίρας, διπτυχ', ὀβελοῦς· ὥστ' ἔδει τὰ τοῦ Φιλιτᾶ λαμβάνοντα βυβλία σκοπεῖν ἕκαστον τί δύναται τῶν ῥημάτων. ἀλλ' ἰκέτευον αὐτὸν ἤδη μεταβαλὼν	45
ἀνθρωπίνως λαλεῖν τι. τὸν δ' οὐκ ἂν ποτε ἔπεισεν ἢ Πειθῶ παραστᾶς· αὐτόθι. καί μοι δοκεῖ ῥαψωιδοποιούτου τινὸς δοῦλος γεγονὼς ἐκ παιδὸς ἀλιτήριος εἶτ' ἀναπεπλήσθαι τῶν Ὀμήρου ῥημάτων.	50

It's a male sphinx, not a cook, that I've taken into my house; by the gods, I simply cannot grasp a thing he says. He's come laden with newfangled words; for as soon as he came in he looked at me and loudly asked, "How great a multitude of articulates have you asked to supper, say?"—"Me?! ask Articulates to supper? You're crazy! Do you think I know these Articulates?"—"Then shall there be no rationer at all?"—"Philonos is coming, Moschion, Nikeratos, this guy and that," I ran through the names: there was not a single Rationer that I could see. He got annoyed, as if he'd been insulted that I hadn't asked a Rationer. Very strange, believe me. "Then are you sacrificing no earth breaker?"—"Not me," I said.—"A broad-browed ox?"—"I'm not sacrificing oxen, ass!"—"Ewes shall be sacrificed, then?"—"Me?! By Zeus, no way!"—"Ewes are sheep."—"Ewes sheep? Cook," said I, "I don't know, and I don't want to know, anything about it. I'm just too countrified, so talk to me in plain language."—"Bring hither the sacrificial groats."—"And what are they?"—"The barley."—"Then why say it so complicatedly,

you cripple?”—“Is brine on hand?”—“Brine? Why don’t you suck my cock,<sup>51</sup> and say what you want to say more plainly?”—“You are rash in word, agèd sir,” he replied. “Bring me the salt—that is brine; show me where it lies.” The lustral basin was ready. He sacrificed, spoke another thousand words such as no one, by Earth, could understand: dicings, lots, double-folds, spits—till one would have had to use the books of Philitas and look up every word to check its meaning. Changing my tone, I begged him to say something like a human being. But Persuasion herself, if she had been right there, could not have persuaded him. I think the rogue had been the slave of some rhapsode type from childhood, and so was stuffed with Homer’s words.

To be sure, this cook is “stuffed with Homer’s words” and performs his culinary rites as though he had stepped off the scroll of an heroic epic.<sup>52</sup> But in reality one needs little more than a rudimentary knowledge of Homer to appreciate the scene, for the epicisms of this cook are mostly far from rare.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, even schoolchildren were expected to know these words: the third-century B.C.E. papyrus that preserves our fragment was a schoolmaster’s book with texts for use in schools.<sup>54</sup>

We may confirm this by looking a bit closer at the cook’s vocabulary: μέροπες (“articulate people,” 6), though not appearing as a substantive in early epic (cf. first Aesch. *Cho.* 1018) is common in both Homer and Hesiod as an epithet of “men” (e.g., *Il.* 1.250, 2.285, *Od.* 20.49; Hes. *Op.* 109, etc.). Likewise, δαιτῦμων, “rationer,” “banqueter” (11), is well attested in the *Odyssey* as well as Classical prose (e.g., *Od.* 4.621, 22.12; Hdt. 1.73; Pl. *Resp.* 345c, etc.). The “earth-breaker” (ῥηξίχθων, 19) is absent from earlier poetry; yet the meaning of the compound is sufficiently clear that we know that some large farm animal is intended. “Broad-browed oxen” (20) and “sheep” (21) are familiar figures from epic (cf., e.g., respectively, *Il.* 20.495, *Od.* 11.289, Hes. *Theog.* 291, etc., and *Il.* 18.524, *Od.* 9.45, etc.). And anyone acquainted with Homeric descriptions of sacrifice will recall the “barley groats,” οὐλοχῦται (34; cf. *Il.* 1.449, etc.). The one truly obscure word is πηγός, “brine,” that is, salt derived from the sea (36). Hereafter, however, we are back on familiar ground with the cook’s description of the master as “rash” (ἀτάσθαλος, 38; cf. *Od.* 4.693, etc.), as well as with the description of the sacrifice with its “dicings,” μίστυλλα (“plural of μίστυλλον, as if that were a neuter noun: in fact the cook had used μίστυλλον as 1st

51. For the translation of this verb cf. Jocelyn 1980.

52. The idea of a “Homeric” cook is actually a thoroughgoing anachronism. There is no professional specialist for cooking in the epics of Homer; the heroes do it themselves. The one instance that may point in the direction of professional specialization is the reference to heralds cooking in the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.558–59). According to the fourth-century Attidographer Kleidemos, this had long been the herald’s role (*FGrH* 323 F 5a); cf. generally Berthiaume 1982, 6–7.

53. With unwitting perception, the master speculates that his cook grew up as the slave of some rhapsode type (48–49), i.e., in the service not of a creative, but merely reproductive, bard. This is someone who serves up the familiar, not the uncommon.

54. In their editio princeps, Guérard and Jouguet (1938) argued that the scroll was a manual for schoolchildren. More recently, however, it has been seen as a schoolmaster’s text, from which he could draw for classroom use, cf. Criboire 1996, 269, #379, with pp. 121–28. Besides our fragment the papyrus contains a syllabary illustrating vowel usage with various consonants; lists of numbers, gods, rivers; brief excerpts from tragedy, epic (*Odyssey*), epigram; three scenes from New Comedy, all involving a cook; and finally a mathematical section. Parsons 1977, 5, speculates that a papyrus containing a text of a very different quality, Callimachus’ *Victoria Berenices*, was “the private preparation of a Fayumic schoolmaster,” but if he is suggesting that that poem was used in schools it must have been for another level and quality of student altogether.



pers. sing. imperf. of the verb μιστύλλω”; thus Page ad loc.), its “lots” (μοίρας, *Il.* 8.470, etc.), “double-folds” (δίπτυχα, *Il.* 1.461, etc.), and “spits” (ὀβελούς, *Il.* 1.465, etc.).

Thus the schoolchildren to whom this excerpt might have been assigned would not have been overly taxed. On the contrary, they were probably meant to chuckle at the doltish master revealing, in blissful naiveté, to the better-instructed audience his own ignorance of epic idiom which, ironically, he describes as “newfangled” (καινόν, 3). Κοινόν (“common”) would describe it better (though its use by a cook is novel indeed—and amusing).

The quality of audience appreciation assumed by the poet is very telling. How different from that on which Aristophanes could count in his plays, where the humor required a high level of literary awareness (think only of the extended parodies of contemporary and earlier authors)! In our scene, by contrast, there are no irksome allusions to be dealt with; a schoolboy’s grasp of epic is to generate the happy smile of superior knowledge. The reference to the glossary of Philitas should not mislead us. When Strato’s distressed employer is nearly driven to consult this learned work, we cannot imagine that many spectators would have laughed because they had used it themselves. The overwhelming majority would probably only have heard of it, finding it exotic and, in this context, funny, an extravagant remedy for something so commonplace: for the thought of consulting it comes just when the cook’s preliminary arrangements culminate—not in an action puzzling to a minimally cultured Greek, but in a conventional Homeric sacrifice (40–42) such as virtually anyone would know from numerous instances in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, a “typical scene,” as Homerists would call it (cf., e.g., *Il.* 1.458–68, 2.421–31, *Od.* 3.454–63, etc.).

Thus, while Strato’s fragment does indeed testify to the notoriety of Philitas’ Ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι, it is hardly grounds for imagining that it was “eine Art lexikalischer Bestseller,” as J. Latacz proposed.<sup>55</sup> Certainly it suggests that Homeric words comprised some part of the Ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι, that the public may even have pigeon-holed the book on the basis of this particular aspect. But it mainly suggests that Homeric diction had the patina of difference from everyday usage that allowed it to stand, corporately, for language that needed to be explained. Thus to the question with which this appendix began—“What does Strato’s *Phoinikides* tell us about Philitas?”—we must sadly answer: not a great deal.

55. Latacz 1985, 78. To be fair, he included the qualification “wenn wir der Komödie trauen dürfen.”

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