

On Plato, *Cratylus* 398 d 5

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ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝΗΣ. Καὶ ἐγὼ μοι δοκῶ, ὦ Σώκρατες, τούτου πάνυ σοὶ σύμψηφος εἶναι. ὁ δὲ δὴ “ἥρωες” τί ἂν εἴη;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Τοῦτο δὲ οὐ πάνυ χαλεπὸν ἐννοῆσαι. μικρὸν γὰρ παρηκταὶ αὐτῶν τὸ ὄνομα, δηλοῦν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἔρωτος γένεσιν.

ΕΡΜ. Πῶς λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Οὐκ οἶσθα ὅτι ἡμίθεοι οἱ ἥρωες;

ΕΡΜ. Τί οὖν;

ΣΩ. Πάντες δήπου γεγόνασιν ἐρασθέντος ἢ θεοῦ θνητῆς ἢ θνητοῦ θεᾶς. εἰς οὖν σκοπῆς καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν Ἀττικὴν τὴν παλαιὰν φωνήν, μᾶλλον εἴση· δηλώσει γάρ σοι ὅτι παρὰ τὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος ὄνομα, ὅθεν γεγόνασιν οἱ ἥρωες, μικρὸν παρηγμένον ἐστὶν ὀνόματος χάριν.

— Plato, *Cra.* 398 c 5 ff.

d 5 ὀνόματος] στόματος Peipers αἰνίγματος K. F. Hermann: ὀνόματος χάριν secl. Wohlrab

The passage containing the derivation of ἥρωες from ἔρωες, which continued to be quoted many centuries later,¹⁾ is marred by a corruption in the first word of the phrase ὀνόματος χάριν. The MS reading is, indeed, indefensible. As K. F. Hermann observed,²⁾ Socrates can scarcely have said that in the change from ἔρωες to the old Attic ἔρωες³⁾ the form has been altered slightly ‘for the sake of a name’,⁴⁾ even if we interpret this phrase, with Heindorf, in the sense ‘ut iustum exiret ὄνομα’, since ἔρωες, no less than ἔρωες, is a ‘iustum ὄνομα’. Evidently, then, ὀνόματος is a corruption provoked by ὄνομα of the preceding line.

¹⁾ Cf., e.g., E. Gud. 248, 57 Sturz (~d 81^v) and E. Sorb. ap. Gaisford ad EM 437, 32, to mention only passages where Plato is cited by name: ἥρωες: Πλάτων ἔρωες διὰ τὸ ἐρᾶσθαι (Sorb. ἥρας θεὸν d) θνητῶν (Sorb. -ῆς d), ἐξ ὧν ἐγεννήθησαν οἱ ἥρωες. . . .

²⁾ Cf. Platonis *Dialogi secundum Thrasylli Tetralogias dispositi* post Carolum Fridericum Hermannum recogn. Martinus Wohlrab, 1 (Lipsiae, 1887), XXI–XXII, where Heindorf’s interpretation is likewise cited.

³⁾ Cf. n. 1 *supra*.

⁴⁾ On Plato’s use of ὄνομα cf. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 59f.

None of the conjectures hitherto proposed gives an acceptable sense. Peipers offers the palaeographically attractive conjecture *στόματος* and argues that *στόματος χάριν* is equivalent to *εὐστομίας ἐνεκα* (*Cra.* 412e 2, 414c 6; cf. the expression *στόμα πλάττειν*, *ibid.*, 414d 1).⁵⁾ However, in the case of the first such change referred to (*δίκαιον* for *διαϊόν* at *Cra.* 412e 1), the euphonic motive is obvious. Later, at *Cra.* 414c 4ff. Socrates adduces further examples of euphonic change: instead of *κάτοπτον* the form *κάτοπτρον*, and *Σφίγξ* for *Φίξ* (the Boeotian form; cf. Schol. ad Hes. *Th.* 326). It would be strange if in our passage Plato introduced the principle for the first time in this cryptic form (*στόματος χάριν*) and applied it to the word *ἔρω*, which poses no obvious euphonic difficulty.

At first glance K.F.Hermann's conjecture *αἰνίγματος*⁶⁾ appears more attractive. However, both of the passages which he adduces as parallel mention as agent a name-giver who acts for the motive of concealing the etymology: *καὶ ἀτεχνῶς ἔοικεν, ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις βουλόμενος τὰ λάντατον ὀνομάσαι ἀποκρυπτόμενος ὀνομάσειε καὶ εἴποι ἂν τ' ἐκείνου "Τάνταλον", . . .* (*Cra.* 395e 1); *ἴσως δὲ μετεωρολογῶν ὁ νομοθέτης τὸν ἀέρα "'Ἡραν" ὀνόμασεν ἐπικρυπτόμενος, θεὶς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ τελευτῇ. . .* (*Cra.* 404c 2). Our passage is different in that 1) the *νομοθέτης* is not mentioned, 2) the nature of the change is not such as to obscure the etymology, but, on the contrary, makes it easier to grasp (*Cra.* 398c 7: *Τοῦτο δὲ οὐ πᾶν χαλεπὸν ἐννοῆσαι. σμικρὸν γὰρ παρῆκται αὐτῶν τὸ ὄνομα . . .*).

I suspect that in this passage we should read *ἀνομοιότητος χάριν* 'for the sake of distinction', i.e. *ἔρω* 'love' gives rise to *ἔρω* 'hero' with a slight change (in the breathing and in the inflected forms) so that the two words will not be homonymous⁷⁾. In ancient grammatical literature alteration (or non-alteration) in the form of a word is not seldom attributed to the tendency to avoid ambiguity. A classic case of this type of explanation is found in ancient exegesis of the word *βίος*, best preserved in Scholion h on A 49:

βιοῖο: τῆς τοῦ τόξου νευρᾶς. Ἀριστάρχειος ὁ τόνος τῆς βιός ὀξύτονος, διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν βίον ἀντιδιαστολήν· ἔοικε γὰρ ὑπὸ (Epim. ἀπὸ h) τῶν ἀρχαίων ὁμωνύμως λέγεσθαι βιός τὸ τόξον καὶ ἡ ζωή· Ἡράκλειτος

⁵⁾ Cf. D. Peipers, 'Zu Plato's *Kratylus*', *Philol.* 29 (1870), 178.

⁶⁾ Cf. n. 2 *supra*.

⁷⁾ On the development of the concept of homonymy in general cf. Ernst Heitsch, *Die Entdeckung der Homonymie*, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Jg. 1972, Nr. 11.

οὐν ὁ σκοτεινὸς “τῷ οὐν τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος” (fr. 22B Diels-Kranz) . . .⁸⁾

As in our passage a change in breathing (and inflectional stem), so here a change in accent is explained by the avoidance of homonymy. The same principle was invoked elsewhere, e.g. by Herodian to account for the third person singular of the verb εἰμί⁹⁾. Not only is the thought restored by the conjecture ἀνομοιότητος appropriate to this passage and paralleled elsewhere in grammatical literature, but the word itself is a *vox Platonica*¹⁰⁾ and could easily be corrupted to ὀνόματος, especially since ὄνομα occurs in the preceding line.

⁸⁾ *Anecdota Graeca e MSS Bibliothecis Vaticana, Angelica, Barberiniana, Vallicelliana, Medicea, Vindobonensi deprompta* ed. P. Matrangola, Pars Secunda (Romae, 1850), 391, 26–392, 3 and *Anecdota Graeca e codd. MSS Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis*, ed. J. A. Cramer, 3 (Oxonii, 1841), 122, 11–15 (for present purposes I have restored an eclectic text without noting variants within the h tradition); cf. *Epimerismoι on Iliad A 1–129*, ed. with an introduction by A. R. Dyck, diss. (Chicago, 1975), 110, 22–26 (= AP 3, 320, 22–26; briefer version: *Anecdota Graeca e codd. MSS Bibliothecarum Oxoniensium* descripsit J. A. Cramer, 1 [Oxonii, 1835], 92, 18–20); from Epim. EM 198, 23; Eust. 41, 1; no doubt Herodianic material underlies these treatments: cf. Hdn. 1, 111, 17 Lentz; Arcad. 41, 1 Schmidt; Ioh. Philop., *Collectio vocum, quae pro diversa significatione accentum diversum accipiunt* 9, 11 Egenolff.

⁹⁾ Cf. Hdn. 2, 832, 12–15 Lentz (= Choer. Th. 2, 331, 3–7 Hilgard; I quote the text as given by Hilgard): ἀπὸ τοῦ εἰμί οὐν τοῦ σημαίνοντος τὸ ὑπάρχων τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἐνικῶν ὥφειλε γενέσθαι εἰσίν· ἵνα δὲ μὴ συνεμπέσῃ τῷ τρίτῳ τῶν πληθυντικῶν, λέγω δὴ τῷ εἰσίν ἐκεῖνοι, καὶ κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸν τόνον, τούτου χάριν ἐπιλέλοιπεν . . .; sim. Epim. Hom. on A 176 (AP 3, 338, 28–339, 7); cf. the similar explanation of the diphthongal spelling of the vocalism of the penultimate syllable of ἐρήρειστο (πρὸς ἀντιδιαστολὴν τοῦ ἐρήρειστο) at Hdn. 2, 510, 22 (= EM 372, 50); cf. Epim. Hom. on A 6C (p. 66, 6 Dyck = AP 3, 306, 25–26); Choer. Th. 2, 93, 16; Zon. (K) 873 s.v. ἐρήρειστο; for avoidance of homonymy as an explanation of non-alteration of forms (i.e., homonymy would result if an expected change occurred), cf. Apoll. Dysc. 3, 102, 33.

¹⁰⁾ Cf. the register of occurrences in Leonard Brandwood, *A Word Index to Plato* (Leeds, 1976), p. 79 s.v. ἀνομοιότης.