

## Oulos, “BANEFUL”

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Οὔλος has a variety of legitimately distinct semantic values. This paper will consider the particular οὔλος (and its derivative οὔλιος) that is usually loosely translated as “baneful.” Though neither lexeme appears in the *Odyssey*, they have, together, a frequency of 8x in the *Iliad*.

B 6. πέμψαι ἐπ’ Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι οὔλον ὄνειρον·

B 8. βάσκ’ ἴθι, οὔλε ὄνειρε, θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν·

E 461. Τρωὰς δὲ στίχας οὔλος Ἕρης ὄτρυνε μετελθών,

E 717. εἰ οὕτω μαίνεσθαι ἐάσομεν οὔλον Ἕρηα.

Λ 62. οἶος δ’ ἐκ νεφέων ἀναφαίνεται οὔλιος ἀστὴρ / παμφαίνων,

P 756. οὔλον κεκλήγοντες, ὅτε προΐδωσιν ἰόντα / κίρκον,

P 759. κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν / οὔλον κεκλήγοντες ἴσαν, λήθοντο δὲ  
χάρμης.

Φ 536. δειδία γὰρ μὴ οὔλον ἀνὴρ ἐς τεῖχος ἄλῃται.

The traditional translation of “baneful” has not always aroused full confidence; further, the etymological situation is unclear and the ancient scholiasts were not always sure of Homer’s use of οὔλος and οὔλιος.

B 6. Scholiast T (Erbse)<sup>1</sup> was in doubt concerning the value of οὔλος: ἢ τὸν ἐπ’ ὀλέθρῳ πεμπόμενον. ἢ τὸν ὀλόκληρον, ὡς τὸ “οὐλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαίρει.”

Λ 62. One scholiast (Dindorf)<sup>2</sup>, however, took pains to correct a presumed error: ὅτι τινὲς γράφουσιν αὔλιος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐσπέριος, πρὸς ὃν αὐλίζεται τὰ ζῶα. καὶ Καλλίμαχος “αὔλιος ὃς θυμὸν εἴσι μετ’ ἡελίου.” ἔστι δὲ ἀλύπιος καὶ εἰς ἀνάπαυσιν ἄγων τὰ ζῶα. γραπτ-

<sup>1</sup> H. Erbse, *Scholia graeca in Homeri Iliadem* (Berlin 1969-).

<sup>2</sup> W. Dindorf, *Scholia graeca in Homeri Iliadem* (Oxford 1875-88).

έον οὖν οὖλιον, ἵνα τὸν τοῦ κυνὸς σημαίνῃ, τὸν φθοροποιὸν καὶ λαμπρότατον, ᾧ καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέα ὁμοιοῖ “παμφαίνονθ’ ὥστ’ ἀστέρα ὅς ῥά τ’ ὀπώρης εἰσιν.”

Eustathius, who no doubt had access to a much different collection of commentaries from that which we do now, commented as follows: οὖλος ὄνειρος, Ἰλ. B 6. ὁ ὀλέθριος ἢ ὁ ὑγίης καὶ τέλειος ἢ ὁ στρεβλὸς καὶ σκολιὸς διὰ τὴν ἀσάφειαν, παρὰ τὸ εἰλῶ, ὃ δηλοῖ τὸ συστρέφω.

The best place to start in terms of modern criticism would be with Bechtel.<sup>3</sup> Bechtel contends that οὖλος seems to have four distinct meanings, and equally as many possible etymologies.

1. οὖλος, “ganz,” ω 402: οὐλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε. Here οὖλος is compared best with Lat. *salve*, both on an etymological and semantic level.

2. οὖλος, “kraus,” ζ 230: . . . . . καδ δὲ κάρητος/οὔλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας. Here οὖλος is best compared with Lat. *lāna* (< \**wlāna*).

3. οὖλος, “täuschend,” B 6: πέμψαι ἐπ’ Ἀτρείδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι οὖλον ὄνειρον. Bechtel offers no firm etymology, but does repeat the offering by Fick (*Ilias* 79) who relates this οὖλος with Lith. *ap-wilti* “to cheat.”

4. οὖλος, “verderblich,” E 461: οὖλος Ἄρης. Bechtel, following Fick,<sup>4</sup> connects this οὖλος with the root of ὄλλυμι (< \**ὄλνυμι*).<sup>5</sup>

Some scholarship has since followed on these themes. An opinion of principal importance was offered by McKenzie<sup>6</sup> who focused on *Iliad* 17.756, 759: οὖλον κεκλήγοντες. Having first pointed out that οὖλος often denotes an action which involves frequent repetition,<sup>7</sup> he contends successfully that οὖλος can have the same metaphorical value

<sup>3</sup> F. Bechtel, *Lexilogus zu Homer* (Halle 1914) 256–61.

<sup>4</sup> GGA (1881) 442.

<sup>5</sup> This etymology was formally offered by Brugmann in *IF* 11 (1900) 266–99, “Zur griechischen und lateinischen Etymologie und Stammbildungslehre,” especially pp. 266–71.

<sup>6</sup> “Etymologies,” *CQ* 19 (1925) 208–10.

<sup>7</sup> McKenzie lists three passages from Callimachus which tend to show οὖλος in an action which involves frequent repetition. *Hymn* 3.246–47: αἱ δὲ πόδεσσιν/οὔλα κατεκροτάλιζον, ἐπεψόφεον δὲ φαρέτραι. *Hymn* 1.52–53: οὔλα δὲ Κούρητες σε περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο / τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες. *Epigr.* 5.5: (κόγχος) . . . οὖλος ἐρέσσων . . .

as *πυκνός*, Lat. *crēber*. *οὔλος* is thus related to *εἶλω*, "pack tightly together," IE *\*we/ol-*.

Traditionally, *οὔλον κεκλήγοντες*, whether uttered by birds (*P* 756) or by men (*P* 759), has been translated something like "crying out in a deathly way." *οὔλος* here was supposed to parallel in semantic value the *οὔλος* of *οὔλος Ἀρης*. Yet McKenzie says, if we were to compare these two usages, we would see that they are opposites. One is the cry of birds or men about to die; the other is the epithet of a man about to kill. Scholiast *D* interprets the line to mean *ὁξὺ βοῶντες καὶ πυκνόν*, and McKenzie endorses this opinion. A further Classical collocation (non-Epic) of *οὔλος* with wood (Theophrastus *HP* 3.11.3: *ἔχει τὸ ξύλον ξανθὸν καὶ οὔλον*, "has yellow and closely grained wood") reinforces a parallel with *πυκνός*.<sup>8</sup> It seems best, then, following McKenzie, to remove *οὔλον κεκλήγοντες* from the area where *οὔλος* is translated as "baneful." *οὔλος* here appears to be best translated as "thick" or "frequent."

*Οὔλιος ἀσθήρ* (*A* 62) also is difficult. Traditionally, *οὔλιος*<sup>9</sup> is translated here again as "baneful." However, in Strabo we find quite a different meaning for *οὔλιος* (Str. 14.4.6):

*Οὔλιον δ' Ἀπόλλωνα καλοῦσι τινὰ καὶ Μιλήσιοι καὶ Δήλιοι, οἶον ὑγιαστικὸν καὶ παιωνικόν· τὸ γὰρ οὔλειν ὑγιαίνειν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τὸ οὐλή καὶ τὸ οὐλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε·*

Hesychius supports this value: *οὐλιᾶσθε· ὄνησιν τινὰ ἔχετε*.

A passage by Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.17.21) gives a number of instances of *οὔλιος*. This passage is particularly significant since *οὔλιος* must, without question, be translated as "wholesome:"

*eundem deum praestantem salubribus causis οὔλιον appellant id est sanitatis auctorem ut ait Homerus οὐλέ τε καὶ μάλα χαῖρε. Leandrius scribit Milesios Ἀπόλλωνι Οὐλίῳ pro salute sua immolare. Pherecydes refert Thesea cum in Cretam ad Minotaurum duceretur, vovisse pro salute atque reditu suo Ἀπόλλωνι Οὐλίῳ καὶ Ἀρτέμιδι Οὐλίᾳ.*

A few other occurrences of *οὔλιος* are known. In *SIG* 756.17 we

<sup>8</sup> Further support for this will follow later; cf. *Anth. Pal.* 7.543: *οὔλον ἀνθρώπων . . . γεράνων*.

<sup>9</sup> The suffix *\*-yos* commonly produces adjectives in Indo-European. Note Skt. *brahmán*, but *brahmaṇya-* "having the qualities of a *brahmán*." In Greek we find *μάκαρ* and *μακάριος*, as well as *φίλος* and *φίλιος*.

read *ἱερεὺς... Ἀπόλλωνος Ὀλίου*. Here there is a long catalogue of the gods for whom there are priests present. In the whole list there appear to be none who are priests of gods whose rôle is not beneficial to man. It would seem artificial to assume that Apollo is here in his rôle of plague-giver rather than healer. We similarly read in *IG* 12 (I).834.3 and 845.10 (Lindos) of *Ἀπόλλωνος Ὀλίου*. Though the phrase *οὔλιος Ἀπόλλων* does not appear in Homer, Eustathius records: *οὔλιος Ἀπόλλων ὁ ὑγιαστικός, παρὰ τὸ οὔλειν*.

There seems to be solid evidence for a value of “wholesome” for *οὔλιος*, though this is not the value that is reflected in most Classical writings. The word *οὔλιος* appears once in tragedy (with one additional possible reading in Aeschylus<sup>10</sup>).

τοῖά μοι  
πάννυχα καὶ φαέθοντ'  
ἀνεστέναζες ὠμόφρων  
ἔχθοδόπ' Ἀτρείδαις  
οὔλιω σὺν πάθει. (Soph. *Ajax* 928–32)

This passage, and the suggestion by Mette, shows *οὔλιος* in a setting where it would be best translated as “destructive” (= *ὀλέθριος*).

Pindar also seems to have used the word *οὔλιος* in what appears to have been the standard Classical sense of *ὀλέθριος*.

O. 9.76: ἐξ οὗ Θέτιος γόνος οὔλιω νιν ἐν ᾿Αρει...

O. 13.23: ἐν δ' ᾿Αρης ἀνθεὶ νέων οὔλαις αἰχμαῖσιν ἀνδρῶν.

P. 12.6–8 τάν ποτε / Παλλὰς ἐφεῦρε θρασειᾶν Γοργόνων /  
οὔλιον θρῆνον διαπλέξαισ' Ἀθάνα.

Pseudo-Hesiod *Scutum*<sup>11</sup> lists two occurrences of *οὔλιος*. Neither supports the Epic concept of “wholesome,” and both would seem best translated as “destructive” (= *ὀλέθριος*).

ἐν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐναρσφόρος οὔλιος ᾿Αρης,  
αἰχμὴν ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων, . . . (192–93)  
τόσση δ' μὲν ἰαχῇ βρισάρματος οὔλιος ᾿Αρης  
κεκληγῶς ἐπόρουσεν. (441–42)

<sup>10</sup> The Aeschylean fragment (206 Nauck) usually stands as

ἐξευλαβοῦ δὲ μή σε προσβάλῃ στόμα  
πέμφιξ· πικρὰ γὰρ κοῦν διὰ ζόης ἀτμοί.

Mette, however, prints *πικρὰ γὰρ κοῦλία λαιμῶ* in the second verse (fr. 456).

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the dating of the *Shield*, cf. Cook, “The Dating of the Hesiodic *Shield*,” *CQ* 31 (1937) 204–14.

To return to Homer's οὐλιος ἀστήρ, we note that οὐλιος ἀστήρ<sup>12</sup> is compared to Hector's shield. As the dog star shines, so too will Hector shine among the foremost. Homer describes the dog star in *X* 26-30: παμφαίνονθ' ὥς τ' ἀστέρ' ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο, / ὅς ῥά τ' ὀπώρας εἰσιν, ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαὶ / φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ· / ὃν τε κύν' Ὠρίωνος ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσι. / λαμπρότατος μὲν ὃ γ' ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται.

Yet, even though we must agree that the οὐλιος ἀστήρ brings doom, we must nonetheless admit that the doom it brings is quite different from the violence which surrounds οὐλος Ἄρης, οὐλος ἀνὴρ and οὐλος ὄνειρος. It is likely that οὐλιος of οὐλιος ἀστήρ actually has the same meaning that οὐλιος has in conjunction with Ἀπόλλων. The most common epithet of Ἀπόλλων, φοῖβος, has a verbal derivative, φοιβάω, used in Theocritus 17.134 in the sense of "to purify" (χεῖρος φοιβήσασα μύροις). Hesychius reads: φοιβᾶσθαι· καθαίρει[ι]σθαι.

Οὐλιος, cognate with Lat. *salve*, is used formulaically. Indo-European, as well as Greek, has the poetic device of calling a dreaded thing by its opposite. The Euxine Sea is an example of this, as are the Eumenides.<sup>13</sup> In Indic, the demon Rudra is renamed Śiva, "propitiator." Here too the terrible star is given a beneficent epithet, the dreadful occurrence of the dog star is favored with a pleasing label. Hence οὐλιος quite consistently, though sometimes contradictorily, means "healthful, wholesome." The dreaded star which heralds the season of sickness is propitiated by being called οὐλιος.

Five uses of οὐλος remain in Homer. Bechtel has viewed them in two ways: as "täuschend" (*B* 6 οὐλον ὄνειρον, *B* 8 οὐλε ὄνειρε), and as "verderblich" (*E* 461 οὐλος Ἄρης, *E* 717 οὐλον Ἄρηα, *Φ* 536 οὐλος ἀνὴρ). This apparently creates a problem, for if we are to agree with Bechtel that we have two distinct usages, we must then agree that the οὐλος which modifies ὄνειρος (2x) is different from the οὐλος which modifies Ἄρης (2x) and ἀνὴρ (1x); we must thus posit two etymological origins. This is not altogether an appealing solution since the groupings are really so similar: οὐλος ἀνὴρ and οὐλος Ἄρης

<sup>12</sup> The "Dog Star" (Sirius), the brightest star in the heavens, appears in the constellation of Canis Major, and is one of the nearest stars to the earth.

<sup>13</sup> *Εὐξενος* was formerly *ἄξενος* (Ovid, *T.* 4.4.56: *dictus ab antiquis Axenus ille fuit*). *Εὐμενίδες* were formerly the *Ἐρινύες*.

are both warriors, plunderers of cities; οὔλος ὄνειρος is a dream begetting plundering.

We might rather view these five usages of Homeric οὔλος ("Ἀρης (2x), ἀνὴρ (1x), ὄνειρος (2x)) as a unit. It would seem that these three nouns are modified by an adjective that denotes "plundering:" plundering Ares, a plundering man, and a dream begetting plundering. The dream sequence in *B* 6 and *B* 8 describes Zeus directing οὔλος ὄνειρος to go to Agamemnon to have him make haste to take (ἔλοι) the widewayed city. Ares is of course the personification of war and plundering par excellence, and οὔλος ἀνὴρ refers to Achilles who will spring into the Trojan stronghold.

It seems most likely that the Indo-European root \*welO- is the basis of οὔλος. From IE \*welO-<sup>14</sup> is derived ἀλίσκομαι (*Φαλίσκομαι*), "capture, take," Arm. *goṭanam*, "to steal," and Lith. *pri-vilti*, "to cheat." The phonetic development of IE \*w!O- (the zero grade of IE \*welO-) to οὔλος is unusual. Yet there are an adequate number of parallels to permit us to posit this shift here again with confidence.

1. οὔλος "plundering," Arm. *goṭanam* "steal," Lith. *-vilti* "cheat," IE \*w!O-.
2. οὔλος "wooly," Arm. *gelmn* "wool," Lith. *vilna* "wool," IE \*w!-.
3. οὔλος "twisted," Gk. ἐῖλω "pack tightly together," Arm. *glem* "to roll," Lith. *véliti* "to roll," IE \*w!-.

The last two items are no doubt of the same origin. IE \*w!- developed along two lines: "wooly" (as well as "curly, twisted" and "thick"), and a verbal concept "to roll, pack together."

Thus it would seem that there are three separate roots involved (as opposed to Bechtel's four) which produce the multi-meaning οὔλος.

1. οὔλος "whole, healthy," Lat. *salvus*, IE \*solw- (οὔλιος ἀσθήρ).
2. οὔλος "thick, frequent," Lat. (ν) *lāna*, IE \*wel- (οὔλον κεκλήγοντες).
3. οὔλος "plundering," Gk. ἀλίσκομαι, IE \*welO- (οὔλος ἀνὴρ, "Ἀρης).

This reduction of Bechtel's inventory is made possible, at first, by the removal of οὔλον κεκλήγοντες from the definition "baneful

<sup>14</sup> The *o*-coloring laryngeal, from the series \*E, \*A, \*O, is also written as *H*<sub>3</sub>, from the series *H*<sub>1</sub>, *H*<sub>2</sub>, *H*<sub>3</sub>.

(crying)." It thus becomes reasonable to merge οὔλον ὄνειρον with οὔλος ἀνὴρ and οὔλος Ἄρης. We can now see that Homer used these three homonyms accurately and consistently.

What then for the Classical period? It appears that by then the meanings of οὔλος and οὔλιος were in doubt. The scholiasts usually commented on each occurrence, confident that their readers would welcome an explanation. Apollonius Sophista provided glosses as did Eustathius later. A correspondence was usually made with δλέθριος largely because of the ancient idea of an etymological relationship with ὄλλυμι. In this case the scholiasts and lexicographers frequently appear to have been wrong. Their glosses and opinions reflect well the confusion that centered around these two words at this time. It seems apparent that by the fifth century the original value of οὔλος "plundering" had pretty much been lost; everywhere οὔλος had become synonymous with δλέθριος. I have been able to locate seven occurrences of οὔλος (= δλέθριος) outside of Homer.

Nicander of Colophon used οὔλος twice (*Ther.* 233, 671). The phrase οὔλα γὰρ στομίῳ ἐμφύεται (233) is usually translated as "with a destructive mouth." But Gow<sup>15</sup> has contested this conventional viewpoint, preferring to translate the phrase as "with the whole mouth." Indeed, scholiast *bm* also saw this as a possibility and suggested: ὅλω, ὡς κατὰ μετάθεσιν. However, G is in doubt and states: ὅλω ἢ δλεθρίῳ καὶ ὀλοῶ. But in any event a definition of "plundering" is not practical. Similarly in *Ther.* 671 (κνυζηθμὸν κυνὸς οὔλον) οὔλος cannot possibly mean "plundering."

Bion 2.14-15 Gow likewise sees οὔλος as δλέθριος.

οὔλον χεῖμα φέρει νιφετόν, κρυμῶς δὲ φοβεύμαι.  
εἶαρ ἐμοὶ τριπόθητον ὅλω λυκάβαντι παρείη.

An earlier usage by Apollonius of Rhodes shows the same value of δλέθριος.

- 3.296-97. τοῖος ὑπὸ κραδίῃ εἰλυμένος αἶθετο λάθρη / οὔλος  
ἔρως...  
3.1077-78. ὦς φάτο· τὸν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ὑπήϊε δάκρυσι κούρης /  
οὔλος ἔρως...

<sup>15</sup> A. S. F. Gow and A. F. Scholfield, *Nicander* (Cambridge 1953).

Two instances from the *Anthologia Palatina* are listed in *LSJ* where οὔλος is putatively to be translated as “baneful.” The first (7.27), by Antipater Sidonius, reads: ὕγρα δὲ δερκομένοισιν ἐν ὄμμασιν οὔλον αἰδοῖς. This clearly supports a value of “baneful.” The second, 7.543 (anonymous), is probably incorrectly listed, since it would appear that οὔλος here better means “thick:” οὔλον ἀνηρίθμον κείνο νέφος γεράνων.

That οὔλος and οὔλιος are from the same root is without doubt. It is significant, however, that it is fairly difficult to insist that either be consistently translated as “baneful” or “wholesome” or “plundering.” The οὔλος to be translated as “wholesome” is from a different stem from the οὔλος which produces “plundering” and “baneful.” There is a clear chronological dividing line. In the Epic period, οὔλος was not “baneful;” in Classical times, a translation of “plundering” is difficult. However, that the Classical usages of οὔλος (at best by only five authors) differ from that of Homer need not be viewed with surprise. First, it is quite evident that even in Epic times both οὔλος and οὔλιος were uncommon words. After Homer, they were used quite infrequently in the whole of Greek literature. In some cases, they were used self-consciously by authors who were given to considering themselves “Homeric” (Nicander, Apollonius). But we know how occasionally an uncommon word can have a reversal in meaning. English “sanguine” is a pertinent example of this semantic confusion. Its most early occurrences in English usually had the meaning of “bloody, red” (Chaucer, *Knight's Tale* 1310: “his colour was sangwyn”). But the late medieval physiologists were using the word to describe temperaments: “sanguyn, melancolyk, phlegmatyk and coleryke.” It was this latter usage that begot our current English value of “cheerful,” quite different from the original “bloody.”

Such occurrences of drastic semantic change are documented from ancient times as well. Consider M. Leumann's discussion<sup>16</sup> of ἀταλός, which originally had a meaning of something like “childlike, tender.” However, with the compound ἀταλάφρων “tender-minded (of a child),” the initial α- was viewed as an alpha privative, and ταλάφρων “tough-minded” developed. Thus ἀταλός, originally “childlike,”

<sup>16</sup> M. Leumann, *Homerische Wörter* (Basel 1950) 139–41.



came to have a meaning of "soft," the opposite of the falsely generated \*ταλός "tough."

Likewise, *Ἀρτεμις*, by folk etymology, came to be occasionally spelled *Ἀρταμις* by popular assimilation with *ἄρταμος* "slaughterer."

We must view Homeric οὔλος in the same light. The confusion was brought about by the homonymous existence of οὔλος "wooly, thick," οὔλος "plundering," and οὔλος "all" (as well as "healthy, whole"). οὔλος "whole" did not occur outside Homer and a few inscriptions; the standard Attic form was ὅλος. Further, the Epic metaphorical use of οὔλος "thick," for "wooly, curly," escaped most later readers who thus tried to blend it in with the value of οὔλος \*"baneful." ὀλέθριος was used as a synonymous concept which seemed to satisfy somewhat all readings.

In modern times, doubts arose over why οὔλος ὄνειρος could be derived from ὄλλυμι. Linguists tried to clear a path that would resolve the difficulties. οὔλον κεκλήγοντες presented a formidable difficulty until it was finally cleared away by McKenzie.

Other than the convenience of positing ἀλίσκομαι as a cognate for οὔλος, rather than ὄλλυμι, no truly significant linguistic reasons really exist. Both ὄλλυμι and ἀλίσκομαι satisfy the phonetic requirements to produce οὔλος or οὔλιος. ὄλλυμι has an IE shape of \*OelE-. The \*-E- is reflected as -e- in ὀλέθριος.<sup>17</sup> That it does not appear in οὔλος has been explained by E. D. Francis<sup>18</sup> on a parallel with κενFός; κενFός: κενεός—οὔλος: ὀλοός. This explanation is quite feasible. However, it is just as reasonable to assume a root \*welO- which begets not only οὔλος but ἀλίσκομαι. The \*-O- is reflected in the aorist infinitive ἀλῶναι as well as derivatives such as ἄλῶσις, ἄλώσιμος and ἄλωμα. The initial digamma is clearly marked in Thess. *Φαλίσσκειται* and Arc. *Φαλόντοις*. Frisk (GEW I.74) lists a variety of cognates, and other than Arm. *gołanam* "to steal" and Lith. *-vilti*<sup>19</sup> "cheat" listed above, Goth. *wilwan* "to steal" is also likely.

<sup>17</sup> R. S. P. Beekes, *The Development of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeal in Greek* (The Hague 1969), deals with the laryngeal aspects of ὄλλυμι. Pages 42 and 236 are particularly pertinent.

<sup>18</sup> Yale dissertation, 1970, pp. 305-06.

<sup>19</sup> E. Fraenkel, *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1955), deals with Lith. *vilti*, but his etymological comment, "Gehören zur Wz. \*wel- 'wollen'," is hardly illuminating.

It would seem that there is no hard evidence of a phonetic sort that would champion a derivation of οὖλος from ὄλλυμι (\*OIE-) rather than from ἀλίσκομαι (\*welO-). Both seem to provide the needed phonemic shape. It is only when we begin to consider semantic requirements that ὄλλυμι fails. A value of "plundering" will cover all Epic instances of οὖλος not covered by "whole" (<\*solw-) or "closely packed" (<\*wl-), while a derivation from ὄλλυμι "destroy" is, in the long run, insufficient.