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Hipponax and the Homeric Odysseus

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Hipponax and the Homeric Odysseus

Abstract
Few will doubt that tracing Homer (and Homeric epos) on subsequent classical authors, in all its varied manifestations, has proved to be an enlightening critical enterprise. Indeed, it has become nearly impossible to consider the poetry of the so-called archaic lyric period without acknowledging at some level its relation to Homer and the epic tradition. It is a pity, therefore, that in this respect, as in so many others, Hipponax has been largely neglected except by those with specialized interests in the early Greek iambus, for Hipponax was clearly intrigued, as the fragments demonstrate, by the potential - particularly the comic potential - that Homeric style and narrative held for his own idiosyncratic poetry.

Comments
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HIPPONAX AND THE HOMERIC ODYSSEUS

Few will doubt that tracing the influence of Homer (and Homeric epos) on subsequent classical authors, in all its varied manifestations, has proved to be an enlightening critical enterprise. Indeed, it has become nearly impossible to consider the poetry of the so-called archaic lyric period without acknowledging at some level its relation to Homer and the epic tradition. It is a pity, therefore, that in this respect, as in so many others, Hipponax has been largely neglected except by those with specialized interests in the early Greek iambus, for Hipponax was clearly intrigued, as the fragments demonstrate, by the potential – particularly the comic potential – that Homeric style and narrative held for his own idiosyncratic poetry. Below I wish to argue for one example of this interaction with Homer, which, if correct, sheds some much needed light on the nature of the iambographic psogos. In particular, I hope to show that in creating his abusive, iambographic persona, especially in the narratives which dealt with his quarrel with Bupalus, Hipponax looked to the Homeric Odysseus as a model for his own self-presentation ¹. The portrait of Odysseus as the eternal underdog whose relatively undistinguished physical appearance concealed enormous intellectual and athletic self-presentation for Hipponax to assume, since the contrast between the exalted heroic status of Odysseus and the comically low status of the iambographer engaged in perpetual psogoi would have added irony and bathos to his poems.

I. Hipponax, Odysseus and the Diskobolia

The testimonia about Hipponax’s life and character contain much that biographical conventions would lead us to expect for an iambographer: he was, we are told, vituperative, irascible and ugly, in keeping with the nature of his poetry ². But there

¹ For an illuminating discussion of Archilochus’ use of Odysseus in the creation of his own persona cf. B. Seidensticker, Archilochus and Odysseus, «GRBS» XIX (1978) 5-22. While both Archilochus and Hipponax found the epic Odysseus appropriate to their personae, it will become clear below that Hipponax seems to have incorporated different aspects of Odysseus’ character from those adopted by Archilochus. This observation not only testifies to the striking malleability of an epic figure in the hands of non-epic poets, but even suggests the possibility that Odysseus figured prominently in an early iambic tradition. Although, largely for the sake of convenience, I speak in this paper in terms of Hipponax’s allusion to a Homeric text more or less as we have it, I recognize that the present state of our knowledge does not allow us to locate with precision the ‘original’ epic material which informs Hipponax.

² The literary-critical principle that a poet’s work reflected his moral character and even his physical appearance had a long history in Classical culture: cf. E. Degani, Stu di su Ipponatte,
always remain those frustrating details in the *testimonia* that cannot obviously be explained with reference to the poet's extant works or to the known processes of ancient biography. One anecdote about Hipponax full of such puzzling details describes the poet as small, ugly and thin, yet so muscular that he was able to hurl an empty *lekythos* at a great distance. Degani collects the three occurrences of the story in his edition as testim. 19, 19a and 19b: 3

Testim. 19 Dg.: Metrod. Sceps. 184 F 6 J. ap. Athen. XII 552cd: Μητρόδωρος ἀχρότονοι δ’ ἔκρησεν ἐν δευτέρῳ Περί ἀλεπτητίς ἱπποκάτα τὸν ποιητήν ὁ δέ μονός μικρόν γενέσας τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ λεπτόν, ἀχρότονον δ’ οὔτως ὡς πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ κενὴν λήκυθον βάλλειν μεγίστην τι διάστημα, τῶν ἐλαφρῶν σώματον διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν ἀέρα τέμνειν οὐκ ἔχοντας βιαίαν τὴν φορᾶν.


Testim. 19b: Eust. ad Hom. Ψ 844 (1332, 54ff.): ἵστεον δὲ ὡς οἱ κατὰ τῶν Πολυνοίτην ἀφιένεις ἐν τῷ δισκευέιν ἀχρότονοι ἐλέγοντο, καθα, φασὶ, δηλοὶ τ’ ἰππόκατα τὸ ποιητῆς, καὶ τοιὸς μικρός ὁν τὸ σῶμα καὶ λεπτός, διῶς ἀχρότονος οὔτως ὡς πρὸς ἄλλους καὶ κενήν λήκυθον βάλλειν μεγίστην τι διάστημα, καὶ ταῦτα τῶν ἐλαφρῶν σώματον, όποια καὶ ἢ κενὴ λήσιμος, οὐκ ἔχοντων βιαίαν φορὰν διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι, φασὶ, τὸν ἀέρα τέμνειν.

Of the physical attributes assigned to Hipponax, only his 'ugliness' (cf. οἰσχρόν, mentioned only by Aelian in 19a) fits the expected biographical stereotypes of an iambographer; we wonder in the end the commentators pointedly contrast the poet's unimpressive appearance with his surprising strength. It is easy enough to suggest, as others have done, that Hipponax drew this contrast himself somewhere in his poems. Indeed, these *testimonia* are so precise and so difficult to dismiss as obvious fabrication that I assume in this article that they do in fact derive from the actual *oeuvre* of Hipponax. 4 Situating such a passage in the extant fragments, however, and assessing its potential function in Hipponax's poetry, is another matter.

Ten Brink first suspected that the anecdote related above reflected a scene from Hipponax's poetry, and Degani, in his edition of the *testimonia* and fragments, is likewise disposed 4. Ten Brink isolated as the model for Hipponax the Iliadic scene in which Polyphemus excels at discus-throwing at the funeral games for Patroclus (Ψ 844ff.) 5. This suggestion is at first sight plausible enough: Polyphemus competed in the discus-throw; the Homeric passage reminded Eustathius that the adjective 'muscular' (ἀχρότονος) had been used of Hipponax: 6 Hipponax demonstrated his 'muscularity' by tossing an empty *lekythos*; therefore, the *lekythos* was an analogue of Polyphemus' discus.

While it is tempting to see such a connection between Homer and Hipponax, there is no indication in Eustathius that he has anything more in mind than documenting two cases of the adjective ἀχρότονος. Still, it is a curious coincidence that the Polyphemus incident mentioned by Eustathius involves a discus competition and the Hipponax story functions analogously to the same athletic contest. We may at least feel certain, then, that in the *lekythos* scene Hipponax was engaged in an athletic contest of some sort. Several other issues also seem clear. First, the point of the anecdote is that although Hipponax was ugly and weak in appearance, his extraordinary strength served as a counterpart to these liabilities. The poem in which the anecdote appeared, in other words, must have illustrated the unreliability of physical appearance as a judge of reality. Second, whether the poem actually depicted an athletic contest between Hipponax and his adversary, or simply referred to such a contest, perhaps as an *exemplum*, the setting must have been one in which the iambographer was pitted initially as an underdog against a self-assured ἐχθρός, yet proved victorious in the end, and thereby humiliated him. Hipponax's athletic victory, after all, is presented as a παρά προσδοκίαν, the last thing one would expect from such a slight figure, and implies that he felt called upon to prove himself in answer to taunts and ridicule.

By focusing on the two basic elements of the story—the figure of the underdog, inferior in appearance yet superior in the end; an athletic *agon* involving a discus as the proving ground for his strength—a much clearer Homeric model than the Iliadic one inferred from Eustathius leaps immediately to mind, namely the alteration between Odysseus and the Phaeacian Euryalus in *Odyssey* VIII. This scene has a striking number of direct parallels to the Hipponax *testimonia*, and serves, as we

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4 Absolute certainty on this issue is, of course, impossible. The nearly identical wording of the three *testimonia* makes it likely that they derive from one source, probably a commentary on Hipponax (for an example of which cf. Hippon. frr. 129-131 Dg.). Insofar as a commentator would at least be working with a text at hand, he would presumably have less temptation to engage in wholesale fabrication of details.

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1 B. ten Brink, *Epimatum alterum. «Philologus» VI (1851) 729; Degani 9.

2 Ten Brink (above, n. 5) 729: «potuit se ἄχροτονος gloriari atque in disci iactu cum Polypoeto [...] se componere».

3 Metrodorus Scopius (1st BC) included the example of Hipponax in his second book *On Training* (testim. 19 quoted above), implying that the story about the *lekythos* was embedded in an athletic context.

4 The expression πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους in Eustathius, as explained by ten Brink (above, n. 5), 728f.: «πρατερ αἱ brachiorum validorum documenta», implies that the hurling of the empty *lekythos* was the grand culmination of a series of athletic competitions (although they need not all have occurred in this particular scene).
shall see, to connect several other Homeric passages with Hipponax's self-presentation as a poet of abuse.

When Laodamas challenges Odysseus at 9 145ff., to compete in the Phaeacian games, Odysseus, perhaps disingenuously, takes mild offense (Λαοδάμου, τί με ταύτα κελεύετε κερτομοῦντε;) claiming to have other things on his mind. But Eurypylus will not let the matter rest and proceeds to insult and taunt Odysseus (158ff.), likening him to a greedy sailing merchant rather than an athlete. Throughout the entire scene there is a distinct emphasis on physical appearance. Laodamas' first remarks at 133 focus on Odysseus' appearance: «he's not in bad shape» (φηνε γε μέν οὐ κακῶς ἐστι, 134). While it is true, he continues (137), that the sea has destroyed some of Odysseus' θηρί, he still has impressive legs and hands (135) and a solid neck and large chest (136). Eurypylus begins and ends his speech with a similar emphasis on Odysseus' appearance: ὁ γὰρ σοὶ ... διήμιον ψώτι ἐκ σκο / ἄθλων (159ff.), οὐδέ ἄθλητα ἔστω (164). In his angered response, Odysseus contrasts those whom Zeus endows with good physique and those he endows with eloquence, and implies that it is dangerous to rely on mere appearances in evaluating the whole person (169-177):


Superficially the speech delineates a contrast between intelligence and eloquence on the one hand, and mere physical strength on the other. Odysseus presents the dichotomy as if they are mutually exclusive, yet he characteristically breaks down the polarity as he excels in both realms. By accusing Eurypylus of being all brawn and no brain, Odysseus implies that he himself fits the first model, i.e., the man whose «form brims with words». But he then proceeds to demonstrate to the Phaeacians his great physical prowess as well, contrary to what they expect from his sea-worn appearance. At 186ff. Odysseus, enraged at the taunts of Eurypylus (cf. 178ff., 185, 205), grabs an enormous stone discus and hurls it farther than anyone (186-190):

10 Probably the adjective appeared in the poem(s) in which the lekythos story occurred.
11 On the likelihood that Irus' name comically and ironically means 'she who has force' cf. G. Nagy, The Best of the Achaean, Baltimore 1979, 229-230 §9 n. 4.
stands in direct contrast to that of Odysseus, who appears in his rags as not much more than an old man (21, 31, 52). Eventually, however, he reveals a solid physique, made all the more imposing by Athena’s intervention (66-70):

\[ \text{ἀς ἔφη, οἱ δ' ἀρά πάντες ἐπὶ σὲν, ἀντάρ Ὀδυσσέως \( \\ 
\text{κύοςτα μὲν ἄκρατας περὶ μήδεα, φοίνε ἐν \( \delta \) μπορούς καλως τε μεγάλους τε, φάνεν δὲ οἱ εὐφρέτης ὄμοι στιθεῖ τε στιθιμόρε τε βροχάννεις: ἀντάρ Ἀθηνᾶς \( \text{έχει παρισταμένη μέλες} \) ἕλλεον \( \text{ποιμένι λαδόν.} \) \]

In the actual fight between the two in lines 89-104, Irus is clearly no match for Odysseus, whose most important strategic decision is whether or not to kill his opponent. Just as we suggested for the Hipponax of the lekythos poem, the taunted figure 11 who appears weak at first turns the tables on his abuser in an agon and emerges superior. Scholars have noted that Hipponax frs. 121, 122 and 132 seem suspiciously reminiscent of the Irus episode, in particular lines 25-31, although no one has ventured to articulate a sustained program of allusion on Hipponax’s part. 12

\[ \text{λάβετε μεο ταλάματα, κόψω Βουπάλου τὸν ὀφθαλμόν} \] (fr. 121)

\[ \text{ἀμφίδεξες γὰρ εἶμι κοῦκ ἀμαρτάνο κόπτων} \] (fr. 122)

\[ \text{τοί δὲ μοῦ ὀδόντες ὑπο τὴς γνάθος πάντες κεκινέσατε!} \] (fr. 132)

13 τὸν δὲ χωλοσάμανον προσφέρετεν Ἰρος ἀλλήτης· ὁ πόσιοι, ὡς ὁ μολοβῶς ἔπροσπάθην αὐτῷ ἀγορέω, γορή καματο νύσσο: ὅπερ κακά μητισάμην κόπτων ἀμφότερην, χαμα δὲ κε πάντας ὀδόντας γναθῶν ἐξελάσσαμι σωθε ὡς ἠμποτέρης. ξυστά φον, ἢν πάντες εὐγενεσισ καὶ οἶδε μαρμαρέους. πᾶς θ' ἓν νεωτέρῳ ἁρδιε μάχοι: (Od. XVIII 25-31).

The agonistic setting of the Hipponax fragments, the repetition of the participle

\[ \text{κόπτων, the apparent conflation of Homeric words in ἀμφίδεξιος} \] (fr. 121), the parallel threats of Hipponax (ἀμφίδεξιος γάρ εἶμι κοῦκ ἀμαρτάνο κόπτων) and Irus (κόπτων ἀμφότερης, 28), the occurrence in both poems of ὀδόντες ὀδόντες, all conspire to suggest that Hipponax drew on the Odysseus-Irus episode at some point in his attacks on Bupalus. The opening phrase of fr. 121, λάβετε μεο ταλάματα, in particular, followed by the threat to strike Bupalus in the eye, clearly describes preparation for a formal boxing match. Likewise, Irus urges Odysseus in line 30 to «gird himself with» (ζῶσαι νῦν). When Odysseus does tie up his rags around his loins in line 67 (ζῶσαι μὲν ὀδέκες περὶ μήδεα), the result is the same as when Hipponax removes his himation, for in each case the body is uncovered. 11 The moment of uncovering for Odysseus is especially dramatic since, as we noted above, his impressive physique is thereby revealed to a stunned Irus. In similar fashion, it is likely that in Hipponax’s fr. 121 the removal of the himation served to transform the ‘downrodden’ poet into an unexpectedly threatening opponent. If, as I have argued, the three Hipponax fragments allude to the Irus episode, we have further testimony that Hipponax adopted as one of his roles the superficially unassuming, but physically powerful Odysseus 14.

III. Odysseus the Poet of Abuse

Homer continually emphasizes in both epics Odysseus’ knack for appearing in one guise, only to reveal its opposite. Although this aspect of his personality is for obvious reasons more prominent in the Odyssey, Homer acknowledges it most explicitly in Iliad III, during the so-called ‘teichoscopia’, where Helen identifies for Priam the various Achaeans visible to them from the ramparts. This essentially


12 W. de S. Medeiros, however, comes close in his edition ad l. (his fr. 129; Hipónax de Éfeso, 1, Coimbra 1961: ‘westes versos, na realidade, deviam pertencer à máquina Bouología [...] inspirada, conforme dissemos, na luta entre Odissi e Irôw.’

13 The obeisials reflect Degani’s judgment that the entire fragment is corrupt. Others are less extreme, such as O. Masson and M.L. West, who print it as lines 4-5 of their fr. 73 (Masson, Les fragments du poète Hipponax, Paris 1962; West, Lambi et Elegi Græci, 1, Oxonii 1989, 130). Whatever its precise configuration, it remains likely, nevertheless, that this fragment does refer to the result of a blow to the jaw.

14 Cf. Degani ad l. (p. 125) for discussions (ancient and modern) of this adjective.

15 M. Poliaikoff in Comedies and Wars in the Ancient World, New Haven 1987, 68-70 characterizes the Odysseus-Irus fight as a streetfight, since the contestans use no boxing gloves or padding. Hipponax (fr. 121 Dg.) certainly implies an impulsive fistfight as well: «take my cloak, I will strike Bupalus in the eye!».

16 I should note here, of course, that the three Hipponax fragments need not come from the lekythos poem, nor need they necessarily come from the same poem. I wish to stress simply that Hipponax consciously drew on exemplary agonistic models in Homer.

There is, as it happens, a cluster of Hipponaxian fragments (42, 43, 44, 47, 48 Dg.) where the poet complains of poverty; one (fr. 44) even mentions the poet’s name: ἐμοὶ δὲ Πλαῦτος – ἐμῖ νὰ λάθην μονάδος – ἢ τὰκτ' ἐλθὼν συνάτμε' εἴπεν. Ἰππανάζε, δίδωμι τοί μένσα ἀρτόγονο τρικόνων καὶ πολλ' ἐκ' ἄλλα·: δελάλος γὰρ τὰς πρένας. Possibly these fragments derive from a context in which Hipponax aligned himself with the beggar Odysseus. They portray, in any event, a poet who feels oppressed and unjustly put upon (although the self-pity is surely ironic and humorous; cf. Degani ad fr. 42, pp. 59-60).
'metapoetic' passage focuses on the four principal players of the poem \(^{17}\), but Homer lavishes a full 33 lines on Odysseus alone. At 203-224 Antenor embellishes Helen's brief identification of Odysseus with an anecdote about the time when he entertained Menelaus and Odysseus, who had come on an embassy to rescue Helen. Here Antenor stresses the startling discontinuity between the physical appearance of Odysseus and his intellectual-verbal faculties \(^{18}\). Antenor's description of Odysseus at the Trojan assembly corroborates Priam's assessment of Odysseus as he spotted him on the battlefield: Odysseus was not an unusually impressive physical specimen, although, perhaps, he was distinct enough \(^{19}\). In Antenor's account Odysseus pales beside Menelaus when they stand up, although sitting down his bearing is more stately: στάντων μὲν Μενέλαος ὑπερεξεν ἐνεργός ὑμώος, / ἀμφό θ' ἐξωμένω γεραντόσεροι ἐπὶ 'Οδυσσέως \(^{20}\). Unlike the other passages we have examined which focus on Odysseus' superficially unheroic physique, we do not end up here with a demonstration of latent and unexpected physical force. Rather, in a subtle variation of the appearance-reality contrast, Antenor focuses on how on that occasion Odysseus' physical appearance belied his extraordinary rhetorical skills. In contrast to Menelaus' terse but clear and fluid style in speaking (213-215), Antenor describes how Odysseus fidgeted nervously, awkwardly wielded the speaker's scepter, and ultimately looked like an utter fool (217-224):

> στάντων, ὥσπερ δὲ ἔσεσθ' κατὰ χθονὸς δύματα πιέοι, σκητήρον δ' οὔτ' ὀπίσθ' οὕτω προσπρεγής ἐνώμω, ἀλλ' ἀστείος ἔσεσθ', ἀδέρετο φοτ' ἐοίκος: φαίνεις κ' ἅκοτον τ' ἀν' ἔμμεναι ἄνφορα τ' αὐτός. ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὅπα τε μεγάλην ἐν στήθος ἐν' ὁι καὶ ἐπέκ αἰνέας ἕκτοιτα, ἐκείρης, οὐκ ἂν ἔκειτ' 'Οδυσσήθ' γ' ἔρισε σε διτος ἀλλ' ὅτε γ' ὅσθ' ὁδυσσασομέθ' εἴδος ἔσθεντες.

When Odysseus actually spoke, the beauty and power of his 'snow-like' words \(^{21}\) mitigated his physical appearance. Line 224, although some have quibbled over it \(^{22}\), clearly means that in the light of Odysseus' oratory, his performance demeanor in particular and overall appearance in general (ἦδος) seemed not to be so strange anymore (οὐ τοῦτο γ' δὲ... ἔνωμεν ἐνωμέθ'). Antenor's point is consistent with the usual Homeric characterization of Odysseus: although certainly capable of holding his own on the battlefield with the best of the heroes, Odysseus' real distinction lay in his mental acuity and his ability to manipulate speech so as to prove superior even to those obviously stronger than himself.

We may readily understand, therefore, how such qualities could have been assimilated by Hippoxon in creating his ambioric persona, since a poet's success, like that of Odysseus, relies on the power of ἐνεργος. Moreover, the fact that Odysseus' appearance initially makes him a potential object of scorn and abuse (219-220) ought to remind us that Hippoxon's most famous quarrel began apparently with an abusive depiction of the poet by the sculptor Bupalus \(^{23}\). Hippoxon's allegedly deformed appearance occasioned ridicule from Bupalus and his brother Athenis, but Hippoxon retaliated with poetry so violent that his targets supposedly committed suicide \(^{24}\). The essential components of the ἐνεργος between Hippoxon and Bupalus parallel neatly those of Antenor's description of Odysseus in public performance: both passages isolate an initial physical abnormality in their principal figures, but in turn each figure compensates for any physical deficiencies by means of verbal skill.

In the teichoscopia, of course, Odysseus is not behaving explicitly as a poet (or orator) of abuse as Hippoxon does in his abuse of Bupalus. But only one book earlier in the Idiad Odysseus adopts precisely this stance in his attack on Thersites, a passage which adds an explicitly ambioric dimension to his character. Nagy has carefully analyzed the quarrel between Thersites and Odysseus and calls it 'the one epic passage with by far the most overt representation of blame poetry' (p. 265). While this is largely true, Nagy's analysis of the actual mechanics of 'blame' \(^{25}\) in this passage requires, I believe, some adjustment.

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\(^{19}\) Priam mentions that Odysseus was shorter than Agamemnon by a head, though broader in the shoulders (193).

\(^{20}\) Cf. Kirk (above, n. 18) 295: 'Odysseus is not especially tall but is powerfully built. His broad shoulders make him look especially impressive when he is seated (and his lack of commanding height does not show).'

\(^{21}\) On the ambiguity of the metaphor, cf. Kirk (above, n. 18) 296.

\(^{22}\) The problem lies with the meaning of ἔνωμεν: 'admire' or 'be surprised at'; cf. Kirk (above, n. 18) 297.

\(^{23}\) Degani collects the relevant passages in his testim. 7 (Suda), 8 (Pliny; see next note), 9a-c (scholia to Horace, Epodes 6, 14). The alleged incident may or may not have actually occurred, although there is little doubt that Hippoxon's target Bupalus was the same person as the historical sculptor Bupalus; cf. R. Rosen, Hippoxon, Bupalus and the Conventions of the Psogos, «TAPA» CXVIII (1988) 31 n. 10.

\(^{24}\) The locus classicus is Pliny, Nat. Hist. XXXVI 12: Hippoxon acti notabilis foeditasculus erat; quamobrem imaginem eius lascivia locosanm hi propoerare ridentium circulus, quod Hippoxon indignatus destinavi amaturudinem carminam in tantum ut credatur aliquis at laesium eos compulsisse (= testim. 8 Dg.).

\(^{25}\) Nagy's important discussion of 'blame poetry' in the Best of the Achaean (above, n. 10) has made the term fashionable in Classical studies. Although I recognize its utility as a critical construct, I have never found it an adequately descriptive term (preferring myself 'poetry of abuse' or the like; if we require a technical term, perhaps we should consider...
Nagy emphasizes, for example, Thersites’ function as a blame poet 26, but never quite specifies Odysseus’ role in the ἐν τοῖς. While Nagy does acknowledge that Odysseus responds to Thersites’ ‘blame poetry’ with his own ‘blame poetry’ 27, for him Thersites, whose «base appearance [...] serves to mirror in form the content of his blame poetry» (p. 263), embodies paradigmatically the poet of abuse. It is peculiar, however, that the representative per excellence of such poetry should end up utterly defeated, humiliated and physically injured by Odysseus – a laughing-stock (B 270) for the Achaeans, and a negative social force, rather than the positive one we would expect. Nagy himself senses the problem: «[h]ere again, we see a theme of reversal, since the function of Thersites himself was ‘to make eris against kings’ (ἐρήμηντοι βασιλέας: 2.214) – in accordance not with the established order of things but rather with whatever he thought would make the Achaeans laugh (2.214-15)» (Nagy’s italics) 28. Nagy infers from this situation that «Homeric Epos can indeed reflect the comic aspect of blame poetry, but that it does so at the expense of the blame poet. In the Thersites episode of the Iliad, it is Epos that gets the last laugh on the blame poet, rather than the other way around» (p. 262) 29.

This conclusion, while it explains ingeniously how a ‘blame poet’ can become the ultimate object of ridicule himself, seems to me to misidentify the roles played by Thersites and Odysseus in their quarrel. If we can judge from the quarrel between Hipponax and Bupalus, or that between Archilochus and Lycambes, the iambographer (qua ‘blame poet’) adopts a defensive stance which is by definition reactionary and self-righteous: he feels attacked himself, and so must attack in

'psogic). ‘Blame’ can be levelled at someone in a polite, diplomatic and inoffensive manner, whereas the distinct element of ‘blame poetry’ is its emotional, explicitly abusive approach. Hesiod presents his Works and Days, for example, as a ἐν τοῖς, although few would regard it as unabashed abuse from the same mold as the iambus. Moreover, it is not always the case that a ‘blame poetry’ actually engages in ‘blame’. ‘Blame’ usually does describe the initial motivation for an attack, but just as often the content of such poetry is mere verbal abuse, with the original cause of blame receding quickly from view. By the time we get to Old Comedy we are often hard pressed to account for many abusive passages in terms of ‘blame’. Nagy (above, n. 10) 259-264 passim, and 262 §12 n. 3.

26 On the ‘blame poet’s dual role as a ‘blamer’ and an object of ‘blame’ (abuse necessarily engendering counter-abuse), cf. Nagy (above, n. 10) 261; also A. Suter, Paris and Dionysus: iambos in the Iliad (forthcoming), Thersites and Odysseus (as surrogate for Agamemnon) certainly play these reciprocal roles in Ilid II, and Nagy does mention that ‘Thersites gets blame for having given blame’ (p. 261).

27 Nagy 262, and cf. his footnote §12 n. 4: «the expression kátai kósmos ‘according to the established order of things’ (II. 214) implies that blame poetry, when justified, has a positive social function». In other words, Nagy implies, Thersites’ blame was not justified.

28 Nagy 230-231 makes a similar argument for Irus and Odysseus: «the story of Iros in effect ridicules the stereotype of an unrighteous blame poet. I am uncomfortable with the concept of an ‘unrighteous blame poet’, for reasons that become clear in the next paragraph, although my discomfort may simply reflect our lack of a precise morphology of ‘blame poetry’.

29 Or, on a less personal level, as we see for example in the wóys of Aristophanes, the poet may claim to feel compelled to retaliate for the public good against those whom he regards as acting unjustly. On the didactic pretense of Old Comedy cf. R.M. Rosen, Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition, Atlanta 1988, 18-19 and 27-28.

30 For the testimonia about the alleged betrothal of Lycambes’ daughter Neboile to Archilochus, and the subsequent cancellation of the engagement, cf. West (above, n. 13) 63-64; cf. also Lefkowitz (above, n. 2) 6-27.

31 Homer is not so associated to me per litteras that he regards Thersites, like Irus (cf. above, n. 29), as an ‘unrighteous blame poet’, in contrast to Odysseus who plays the role of the ‘righteous blame poet’. Faced with a contrast such as this, it is clear which ‘blame poet’ Hipponax would choose to model himself on.

32 On the subtleties of this judgment within the text, see now W.G. Thalmann, Thersites: Comedy, Scapegoats, and Heroic Ideology in the Iliad, «TAPhA» CXVIII (1988) 1-28, esp. p. 27. Martin’s fine analysis of Thersites’ discourse (above, n. 17), 109-112, incidentally supports my contention that he is a poor representative of the blame poet. It is true, of course, that neither Odysseus nor Thersites are strictly speaking ‘poets’, nor does Homer explicitly recognize them as such. However, as Nagy has well shown (above, n. 10), 253-264, the Thersites episode overtly employs the vocabulary of ‘blame poetry’ and the entire scene functions as an opposite analogue to the poetry of praise. Moreover, it is natural for the models of discourse available to a poet to derive from both poetic genres, even though epos does not allow for a seamless integration of ‘blame poetry’ into itself. One of Martin’s central theses about the Iliad is that «all speakers in the poem are ‘performers’ in traditional genres of discourse» (above, n. 17), 170; cf. esp. pp. 43-145.
IV. Odysseus and Hipponax among the Phaeacians

How explicit Hipponax would have been in adopting traits of the Homeric Odysseus in his poems is difficult to judge. His fondness for manipulating Homeric conventions, of course, is apparent at every turn in the fragments, and his allusive methods include overt parody, mixing of 'high' (i.e. Homeric) and 'low' diction to create bathos, and the use of Homeric diction as formal, ornamental devices \(^35\). His interest in Homer, however, does not end with matters of style, but seems to take on genuine programmatic dimensions. In fact, the fragments suggest that Hipponax was particularly intrigued by the 'Phaeacian' books of the *Odyssey* – the very section in which Odysseus quarrels with Euryalus. Scholars fastened initially on the name of Hipponax's lover (or would-be lover?), 'Αριδηνή, who bears the same name as Alcinoos' wife, Arete the queen of Phaeacia, and have argued convincingly that the similarity is more than coincidental \(^36\). Hipponax's Arete, it seems, functioned as a cipher with specific Homeric associations through which the poet could shape his attacks on Bupalus. As such, the very name of Arete in Hipponax functioned as a hermeneutic device capable of expanding of its own accord the allusive possibilities of the poem. That is, if Arete is able to conjure up a Homeric context, it stands to reason that other characters who appear with her might easily be made to interact with her in a manner appropriate to such a context. Unfortunately, the sorry state of the fragments does not allow us to specify much further the details of such multi-dimensional interactions, although if scholars are correct to associate the hints of incest in Homer's genealogy of the Phaeacian royalty (τις 54-59) with the explicit charges of incest against Bupalus in Hipponax (fr. 20.2; 69, 7 Dg.), we may form some idea of this allusive mechanism \(^7\).

The most compelling evidence that Hipponax incorporated Homeric material from the Phaeacian books directly into his narratives, and that the Hipponaean Arete, therefore, bore some relation to the Homeric one, can be found in frs. 74-77. E. Lobel, who edited the papyrus from which these fragments derive (P. Oxy. 2174), noted that they include «the title and some details of a 'Return of Odysseus':»

\[
\text{ΟΔΥΣΣΕ} \\
\omega{} \\
\text{τις} \\
\text{(fr. 74 Dg.)}
\]


\(^{36}\) The argument for associating Hipponax's Arete with the Homeric Arete is intricate and at times tendentious in its details, but ultimately leaves little doubt that Arete was a 'significant' name. Cf. Rosen, *Hipponax and his Enemies in Ovid's Ibis*, «CQ» XXXVIII (1988) 293 n. 13, with bibliography noted there; and in particular Degani, *Studi* (above, n. 2) 197-198.

\(^{7}\) See previous note.

The only legible portion of fr. 74 Dg. is indeed the first line, set off by a horizontal line above and below it indicating a title: *ΟΔΥΣΣΕ*. In the subsequent three fragments Lobel isolated the crucial elements that indicate the remnants of an Odyssean narrative: «seaweed [fr. 75.2], after a snack \(^9\) questions about family [fr. 75.4-5], Phaeacians [fr. 77.2], the lotus [fr. 76.7]» \(^{40}\). Lobel's interest in these

\(^{39}\) The supplement, suggested by Lobel (The *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XVIII, 1941, 70), has been adopted by virtually all subsequent editors of Hipponax.

\(^{40}\) Lobel 67. It is unclear precisely what is going on in the actual narrative. Lobel sees behind fr. 75 the scene in *Od*. VII where the recently shipwrecked Odysseus arrives at the palace of Alcinoos and Arete. He eats (175-176), then Arete asks him who he is (233-239). Fr. 77 is more problematic, even though the reading Φαίηκας seems assured. Lobel proposed
remarkable fragments, however, was marginal ("it cannot be said that even these [frs.] greatly enrich our knowledge either of this writer’s subjects or his treatment of them"). p. 67 and he did not attempt even to pose the most obvious questions about them. Even though the fragments do not allow us to restore a coherent narrative, the indisputable amalgamation of Odyssean elements that they reveal is itself reason for pause. Was this part of an attack on someone? Did Odysseus appear in the first or third person? We cannot supply certain answers to these questions, but it seems highly probable that Hipponax’s target Bupalus was interpolated into this Odyssean scene at 77.4: ἴσως ὁ δέσπορος Βοῦ. As I have noted elsewhere, Hipponax shows a predilection for placing Bupalus’ name in the cretic that forms the last three syllables of the second metron in the trimeter line, precisely the position it would fall in here if we accept the supplement ἴσως ὁ δέσπορος Βοῦ ἵον παλος. Line 4, therefore, seems to compare someone (or something) to Bupalus, perhaps the individual said to be ‘crazed’ (φηνολής) in the next line. We can now begin to weave the strands together: the poem bears a title referring to the Odyssey; Phaeacia is named in fr. 77, and fr. 75 confirms that the actual setting is Phaeacia; in the Odyssean scene to which fr. 75 apparently alludes, Arete addresses Odysseus first after his meal (η 233-239); Arete is also the name of Hipponax’s lover, over whom he competes with Bupalus; Bupalus is (probably) mentioned in 77.4. These factors point to a narrative involving a Homeric setting, but with transparent connections to contemporary characters. Insofar as Bupalus consistently played the role of Hipponax’s target, we may feel confident that his appearance in this explicitly Odyssean context fulfilled a similar function. We have in frs. 74-77, therefore, a situation in which Odysseus, doubtless a loosely veiled stand-in for the figure of the poet, is presented at his most abject and vulnerable: nearly destroyed in his shipwreck, in a strange and quietly hostile land, at the mercy of its king and queen. Once again, the portrait of the poet that emerges from his identification with such an Odysseus is that of the oppressed underdog. We cannot say, of course, whether Hipponax actually included the lekythos story in the poem represented by frs. 74-77. As an analogue to the altercation between Odysseus and the Phaeacian Euryalus, it is certainly not difficult to imagine it in a Phaeacian setting. In any case, if we are right to assume, as many have done, that Hipponax attacked Bupalus in some fashion in frs. 74-77, we may comfortably speculate that the narrative followed the poet from apparent inferiority in the face of his enemy (-ies) to eventual supremacy and glory. As we have seen, Hipponax consistently fashioned his poetic persona and the personae of his targets in accordance with just such a pattern.

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43 Hipponax may have used Odysseus as an exemplum here in a third person narrative, rather than adopting his role in the first person. In either case, however, the poet manages to identify himself with Odysseus. A. Bartalucci’s suggestion in Hipponaxiae interpretationes, «Maia» n.s. XVI (1964) 253 n. 41, that Bupalus lies behind the Odysseus figure of these fragments, seems highly unlikely in view of our discussion above. While he is correct to point out that post-homeric portraits of Odysseus are not always positive (especially in didactic and philosophical writers), there is simply no real evidence in Hipponax that would lead us to suspect a connection with Bupalus. I hope to have shown at least that the case for a connection between Odysseus and Hipponax himself is considerably stronger.