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**HIPPONAX AND THE HOMERIC  
ODYSSEUS**

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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<sup>1</sup>. The portrait of Odysseus as the eternal underdog whose relatively undistinguished physical appearance concealed enormous intellectual and athletic prowess provided an ideal *persona* 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<sup>2</sup>. But there

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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, *Studi 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<sup>3</sup>:

Testim. 19 Dg.: Metrod. Sceps. 184 F 6 J. ap. Athen. XII 552cd: Μητρόδωρος δ' ὁ Σκήψιος ἐν δευτέρῳ Περί ἀλειπτικῆς Ἰππώνακτα τὸν ποιητὴν οὐ μόνον μικρὸν γενέσθαι τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ λεπτὸν, ἀκρότονον δ' οὕτως ὡς πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ κενὴν λήκυθον βάλλειν μέγιστόν τι διάστημα, τῶν ἐλαφρῶν σωμάτων διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν ἀέρα τέμνειν οὐκ ἐχόντων βιαίαν τὴν φορὰν.

Testim. 19a: Aelian. *Var. Hist.* X 6: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ Ἰππώνακτα τὸν ποιητὴν οὐ μόνον γενέσθαι μικρὸν τὸ σῶμα καὶ αἰσχροῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ λεπτόν.

Testim. 19b: Eust. *ad Hom.* Ψ 844 (1332, 54ff.): ἰστέον δὲ ὡς οἱ κατὰ τὸν Πολυποίτην ἀφιέντες ἐν τῷ δισκεύειν ἀκρότονοι ἐλέγοντο, καθά, φασι, δηλοῖ τὸ Ἰππῶναξ ὁ ποιητής, καίτοι μικρὸς ὦν τὸ σῶμα καὶ λεπτός, ὅμως ἀκρότονος οὕτως ἦν ὡς πρὸς ἄλλοις καὶ κενὴν λήκυθον βάλλειν μέγιστόν τι διάστημα, καὶ ταῦτα τῶν ἐλαφρῶν σωμάτων, ὅποια καὶ ἡ κενὴ λήκυθος, οὐκ ἐχόντων βιαίαν φορὰν διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι, φασί, τὸν ἀέρα τέμνειν.

Of the physical attributes assigned to Hipponax, only his 'ugliness' (cf. αἰσχροῦν, mentioned only by Aelian in 19a) fits the expected biographical stereotypes of an iambographer; we wonder in the end why 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<sup>4</sup>. 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

Bari 1984, 21-24. Mary Lefkowitz documents a wealth of examples in *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, Baltimore 1981.

<sup>3</sup> E. Degani, *Hipponax: Testimonia et fragmenta*, Leipzig 1983 [= Degani], 9.

<sup>4</sup> 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. fr. 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.

from Hipponax's poetry, and Degani, in his edition of the *testimonia* and fragments, is likewise disposed<sup>5</sup>. Ten Brink isolated as the model for Hipponax the Iliadic scene in which Polypoetes excels at discus-throwing at the funeral games for Patroclus (Ψ 844ff.)<sup>6</sup>. This suggestion is at first sight plausible enough: Polypoetes competed in the discus-throw; the Homeric passage reminded Eustathius that the adjective 'muscular' (ἀκρότονος) had been used of Hipponax<sup>7</sup>: Hipponax demonstrated his 'muscularity' by tossing an empty *lekythos*; therefore, the *lekythos* was an analogue of Polypoetes' 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 ἀκρότονος. Still, it is a curious coincidence that the Polypoetes 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 counterpoint 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<sup>8</sup>. 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 altercation 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

<sup>5</sup> B. ten Brink, *Epimetrum alterum*, «Philologus» VI (1851) 729; Degani 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ten Brink (above, n. 5) 729: «potuit se ἀκρότονον gloriari atque in disci iactu cum Polypoete [...] se componere».

<sup>7</sup> Metrodorus Scepsius (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.

<sup>8</sup> The expression πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις in Eustathius, as explained by ten Brink (above, n. 5), 728f.: «praeter alia 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 poem).

shall see, to connect several other Homeric passages with Hipponax's self-presentation as a poet of abuse.

When Laodamas challenges Odysseus at θ 145ff. to compete in the Phaeacian games, Odysseus, perhaps disingenuously, takes mild offense (Λαοδάμα, τί με ταῦτα κελεύετε κερτομέοντες;) claiming to have other things on his mind. But Euryalus 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» (φυήν γε μὲν οὐ κακός ἐστι, 134). While it is true, he continues (137), that the sea has destroyed some of Odysseus' ἦβη, he still has impressive legs and hands (135) and a solid neck and large chest (136). Euryalus begins and ends his speech with a similar emphasis on Odysseus' appearance: οὐ γάρ σ' ... δαήμενοι φωτὶ εἰσκιω / ἄθλων (159f.), οὐδ' ἀθλητῆρι ἔοικας (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):

ἄλλος μὲν γὰρ εἶδος ἀκιδνότερος πέλει ἀνὴρ,  
ἀλλὰ θεὸς μορφήν ἔπεσι στέφει, οἱ δέ τ' ἐς αὐτὸν  
τερπόμενοι λεύσσουσιν· ὁ δ' ἀσφαλῆως ἀγορεύει  
αἰδοῖ μιλχίτη, μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν,  
ἐρχόμενον δ' ἀνὰ ἄστῳ θεὸν ὡς εἰσορόωσιν.  
ἄλλος δ' αὖ εἶδος μὲν ἀλίγκιος ἀθανάτοισιν,  
ἀλλ' οὐ οἱ χάρις ἀμφιπεριστέφεται ἐπέεσσιν·  
ὡς καὶ σοὶ εἶδος μὲν ἀριπρεπές, οὐδέ κεν ἄλλως  
οὐδὲ θεὸς τεύξειε, νόον δ' ἀποφώλιός ἐστι.

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 Euryalus 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 Euryalus (cf. 178f., 185, 205), grabs an enormous stone discus and hurls it farther than anyone (186-190):

ἦ ῥα καὶ αὐτῷ φάροι ἀναίξας λάβε δίσκον  
μείζονα καὶ πάχετον, στιβαρότερον οὐκ ὀλίγον περ  
ἦ οἴω Φαίηκες ἐδίσκειον ἀλλήλοισι.

τόν ῥα περιστρέψας ἦκε στιβαρῆς ἀπὸ χειρός·  
βόμβησεν δὲ λίθος.

By now it should be clear that the Hipponactean *lekkythos* anecdote shares many essential elements with this Homeric episode. Like Odysseus, Hipponax's outward appearance must have been solid (ἀκρότονος) yet unassuming (μικρός, λεπτός), and, as I argued above, he too must have been taunted for apparent weakness and challenged to a competition. Both figures, finally, prove their strength by throwing an object (a discus, an empty *lekkythos*) an extraordinary distance. Eustathius himself even makes it fairly clear that Hipponax's *lekkythos* functioned analogously to the Homeric discus: «they are called 'muscular' who, in discus-throwing, hurl <the discus> like Polypoetes, just as (they say) the following <anecdote about Hipponax> makes clear, as follows». With this sentence, Eustathius implies that since people refer to Hipponax as ἀκρότονος<sup>9</sup>, a word associated with discus-throwing, his *lekkythos* must have been a conspicuous substitute for the discus in some sort of formal athletic *agon*.

As the anecdote is related in the Hipponax *testimonia*, we cannot reconstruct the details of abuse and confrontation that lie behind it. But it is striking that the Euryalus passage follows a pattern of abuse (νεῖκος by Euryalus), counter-abuse (Odysseus' response) and eventual victory by the downtrodden (Odysseus' hurling of the discus) that has a distinct generic provenance with iambus. In fact, the principal Homeric passages in which Odysseus plays the iambographic role of abuser and abused, attacker and attacked, underdog and victor make it easy to see how Hipponax could have adopted him as an exemplary model in the fashioning of his own poetic *persona*.

## II. Odysseus and Irus

Perhaps the most famous passage in the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus is both attacked and then himself attacks occurs in the quarrel between Odysseus and the beggar Irus in Book XVIII. This scene offers an abundance of provocative details of narrative and characterization which, I shall argue, significantly informed both Hipponax's *lekkythos* scene as we have reconstructed it, and his abusive stance elsewhere in his poetry.

As in the Euryalus episode and Hipponax's *lekkythos* poem, one of the guiding themes of the Irus passage is the contrast (which ultimately assumes moral overtones) between physical appearance and reality. The opening lines of Book XVIII describe Irus as a beggar who, although lacking any real strength, looked enormous (οὐδέ οἱ ἦν ἴς / οὐδὲ βίη, εἶδος δὲ μάλα μέγας ἦν ὄρασθαι, 3-4)<sup>10</sup>. This description

<sup>9</sup> Probably the adjective appeared in the poem(s) in which the *lekkythos* story occurred.

<sup>10</sup> On the likelihood that Irus' name comically and ironically means «he who has force» cf. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, 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):

ὡς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπήνεον, αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
ζώσατο μὲν βράκεσιν περὶ μῆδεα, φαίνε δὲ μηροὺς  
καλοὺς τε μεγάλους τε, φάνεν δὲ οἱ εὐρέες ὦμοι  
στῆθεά τε στιβαροὶ τε βραχίονες· αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη  
ἄγχι παρισταμένη μέλε' ἤλδανε ποιμένι λαῶν.

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 *lekylthos* poem, the taunted figure<sup>11</sup> who appears weak at first turns the tables on his abuser in an *agon* and emerges superior. Scholars have noted that Hipponax fr. 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<sup>12</sup>:

λάβετε μεο ταϊμάτια, κόψω Βουπάλου τὸν ὀφθαλμόν (fr. 121)  
ἀμφιδέξιω γάρ εἰμι κούκ ἀμαρτάνω κόπτων (fr. 122)  
τοῖ δέ μεο ὀδόντες ἐν τοῖσι γνάθοισι πάντες κεκινέονται<sup>13</sup> (fr. 132)

τὸν δὲ χολωσάμενος προσεφώνεεν Ἴρος ἀλήτης·  
'ὦ πόποι, ὡς ὁ μολοβρός ἐπιτροχάδην ἀγορεύει,  
γρηῖ καμνοὶ ἴσος· ὃν ἂν κακὰ μητισταίμη  
κόπτων ἀμφοτέρησι, χαμαὶ δέ κε πάντας ὀδόντας  
γναθμῶν ἐξελάσαιμι συὸς ὡς ληϊβοτείρης.  
ζῶσαι νῦν, ἵνα πάντες ἐπιγνώσι καὶ οἶδε  
μαρναμένους. πῶς δ' ἂν σὺ νεωτέρῳ ἀνδρὶ μάχοιο;' (*Od.* XVIII 25-31).

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

<sup>11</sup> Note that at the beginning of the book Irus begins the *agon* by addressing Odysseus with hostile intention ὅς ῥ' ἔλθων Ὀδυσσῆα διώκετο οἷο δόμοιο, / καὶ μιν νεικεῖων ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα, 8-9. On Irus' νεῖκος cf. Nagy (above, n. 10) 228.

<sup>12</sup> W. de S. Medeiros, however, comes close in his edition *ad l.* (his fr. 129; *Hipónax de Éfeso*, I, Coimbra 1961: «estes versos, na realidade, deviam pertencer à μάχη Βουπάλειος [...] inspirada, conforme dissemos, na luta entre Odisseu e Iro».

<sup>13</sup> The obelisks 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, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*, I, Oxonii 1989<sup>2</sup>, 130). Whatever its precise configuration, it remains likely, nevertheless, that this fragment does refer to the result of a blow to the jaw.

κόπτων, the apparent conflation of Homeric words in ἀμφιδέξιω<sup>14</sup>, the parallel threats of Hipponax (ἀμφιδέξιω γάρ εἰμι κούκ ἀμαρτάνω κόπτων) and Irus (κόπτων ἀμφοτέρησι, 28), the occurrence in both poets of πάντες 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 ταϊμάτια, 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 up» (ζῶσαι νῦν). When Odysseus does tie up his rags around his loins in line 67 (ζώσατο μὲν βράκεσιν περὶ μῆδεα), the result is the same as when Hipponax removes his *himation*, for in each case the body is uncovered<sup>15</sup>. 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 'downtrodden' 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<sup>16</sup>.

### 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

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Degani *ad l.* (p. 125) for discussions (ancient and modern) of this adjective.

<sup>15</sup> M. Poliakoff in *Combat Sports in the Ancient World*, New Haven 1987, 68-70 characterizes the Odysseus-Irus fight as a streetfight, since the contestants 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!».

<sup>16</sup> I should note here, of course, that the three Hipponax fragments need not come from the *lekylthos* 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 Hipponactean fragments (42, 43, 44, 47, 48 Dg.) where the poet complains of poverty; one (fr. 44) even mentions the poet's name:

ἐμοὶ δὲ Πλουτοῦς – ἔστι γὰρ λίην τυφλός –  
ἐς τῶκί' ἔλθων οὐδάμ' εἶπεν· Ἴππῶναξ,  
δίδομί τοι μνέας ἀργύρου τριήκοντα  
καὶ πόλλ' ἔτ' ἄλλα· δεῖλαιος γὰρ τὰς φρένας.

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<sup>17</sup>, 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<sup>18</sup>, 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<sup>19</sup>. In Antenor's account Odysseus pales beside Menelaus when they stand up, although sitting down his bearing is more stately: *στάντων μὲν Μενέλαος ὑπέιρεχεν εὐρέας ὤμους, / ἄμφω δ' ἐζομένω γεραρότερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς*<sup>20</sup>. 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):

στάσκειν, ὕπαι δὲ ἶδεσκε κατὰ χθονὸς ὄμματα πήξας,  
 σκῆπτρον δ' οὐτ' ὀπίσω οὔτε προπηγνές ἐνώμα,  
 ἀλλ' ἀστεμφές ἔχεσκεν, αἰδρεῖ φῶτὶ ἐοικώς·  
 φαίης κε ζάκοτόν τε τιν' ἔμμεναι ἄφρονά τ' αὐτῶς.  
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὅσα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἴη  
 καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίησιν,  
 οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσσῆϊ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος·  
 οὐ τότε γ' ᾧδ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀγασσάμεθ' εἶδος ἰδόντες.

When Odysseus actually spoke, the beauty and power of his 'snow-like' words<sup>21</sup> mitigated his physical appearance. Line 224, although some have quibbled over

<sup>17</sup> The very form of the *teichoscopia* subtly conveys information about the characters that is otherwise unrelated to the narrative. On the rhetorical strategies of the *teichoscopia*, cf. A. Bergren, *Helen's Web: Time and Tableau in the Iliad*, «*Helios*» VII (1979) 19-34; G. Kennedy, *Helen's Web Unraveled*, «*Arethusa*» XIX (1986) 5-14; and R.P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes*, Ithaca 1989, 95.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. C. Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric Poems*, Göttingen 1977, 93; and G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: a Commentary*, I, Cambridge 1985, 297.

<sup>19</sup> Priam mentions that Odysseus was «shorter than Agamemnon by a head, though broader in the shoulders» (193).

<sup>20</sup> 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)».

<sup>21</sup> On the ambiguity of the metaphor, cf. Kirk (above, n. 18) 296.

it<sup>22</sup>, clearly means that in the light of Odysseus' oratory, his performance demeanor in particular and overall appearance in general (εἶδος) seemed not to be so strange anymore (οὐ τότε γ' ᾧδ' ... ἀγασσάμεθ'). 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 Hipponax in creating his iambographic *personae*, since a poet's success, like that of Odysseus, relies on the power of ἔπεα. Moreover, the fact that Odysseus' appearance initially makes him a potential object of scorn and abuse (219-220) ought to remind us that Hipponax's most famous quarrel began apparently with an abusive depiction of the poet by the sculptor Bupalus<sup>23</sup>. Hipponax's allegedly deformed appearance occasioned ridicule from Bupalus and his brother Athenis, but Hipponax retaliated with *poetry* so violent that his targets supposedly committed suicide<sup>24</sup>. The essential components of the *veikos* between Hipponax 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 Hipponax does in his abuse of Bupalus. But only one book earlier in the *Iliad* Odysseus adopts precisely this stance in his attack on Thersites, a passage which adds an explicitly iambographic 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'<sup>25</sup> in this passage requires, I believe, some adjustment.

<sup>22</sup> The problem lies with the meaning of ἀγασσάμεθ': 'admire' or 'be surprised at'; cf. Kirk (above, n. 18) 297.

<sup>23</sup> Degani collects the relevant passages in his *testimm.* 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 Hipponax's target Bupalus was the same person as the historical sculptor Bupalus; cf. R. Rosen, *Hipponax, Bupalos and the Conventions of the Psogos*, «*TAPhA*» CXVIII (1988) 31 n. 10.

<sup>24</sup> The *locus classicus* is Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XXXVI 12: *Hipponacti notabilis foeditas vultus erat; quamobrem imaginem eius lascivia iocosam hi proposuere ridentium circulis, quod Hipponax indignatus destrinxit amaritudinem carminum in tantum ut credatur aliquis ad laqueum eos compulisse (= testim. 8 Dg.)*.

<sup>25</sup> Nagy's important discussion of 'blame poetry' in the *Best of the Achaeans* (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<sup>26</sup>, but never quite specifies Odysseus' role in the *νεῖκος*. While Nagy does acknowledge that Odysseus responds to Thersites' 'blame poetry' with his own 'blame poetry'<sup>27</sup>, 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 *par 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' (ἐριζέμενοι βασιλευδῶν: 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)<sup>28</sup>. 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)<sup>29</sup>.

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 *νεῖκος*, although few would regard it as unabashed abuse from the same mold as the iambus. Moreover, it is not always the case that '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'.

<sup>26</sup> Nagy (above, n. 10) 259-264 *passim*, and 262 §12 n. 3.

<sup>27</sup> 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 *Iliad* II, and Nagy does mention that «Thersites gets blame for having given blame» (p. 261).

<sup>28</sup> Nagy 262, and cf. his footnote §12 n. 4: «the expression *κατὰ κόσμον* '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.

<sup>29</sup> Nagy 230-231 makes a similar argument for Iros 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'.

turn<sup>30</sup>. Hipponax was driven to poetry, as the story goes, by the mocking sculptures of Bupalus; Archilochus by Lycambes' breach of trust<sup>31</sup>. It is somewhat misleading, therefore, to speak of Thersites as a prime representative of 'blame poetry', since, although he does engage in blame<sup>32</sup>, his blame is categorically judged in the poem to be unjust, unwarranted, and politically illegitimate<sup>33</sup>. Rather, it is Odysseus who performs the true role of the 'blame poet'<sup>34</sup>. As a representative of the Achaean leadership which has come under attack by Thersites, Odysseus – with 'right' on his side (cf. the army's response to Odysseus' harsh treatment of Thersites, 272-277) – quells with blame a potentially dangerous rabble-rouser. Viewed in this light, Thersites functions analogously to Bupalus, and Odysseus to Hipponax: both Thersites and Bupalus initiate the *νεῖκος*, and both suffer the consequences with 'legitimate' blame from Odysseus and Hipponax respectively.

It would, of course, be tempting to speculate that somewhere in his poetry Hipponax cast Bupalus explicitly in the role of Thersites. Even though the evidence does not allow us to indulge such a temptation, it should be clear from the preceding discussion that Odysseus' role as a self-righteous 'blamer' in the Thersites episode was functionally that of the iambographic poet. This observation helps to affirm the other connections we have already noted between Hipponax and Odysseus; there can be little doubt, in any case, that Hipponax would have found the resonance of an Odysseus 'Iambopoios' appropriate to his own *iamboi*.

<sup>30</sup> Or, on a less personal level, as we see for example in the *ψόγοι* 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.

<sup>31</sup> For the *testimonia* about the alleged betrothal of Lycambes' daughter Neobule to Archilochus, and the subsequent cancellation of the engagement, cf. West (above, n. 13) 63-64; cf. also Lefkowitz (above, n. 2) 26-27.

<sup>32</sup> Professor Nagy has indicated to me *per litteras* that he regards Thersites, like Iros (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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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 other 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<sup>35</sup>. 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 onto the name of Hipponax's lover (or would-be lover!), 'Αρήτη, who bears the same name as Alcinoos' wife, Arete the queen of Phaeacia, and have argued convincingly that the similarity is more than coincidental<sup>36</sup>. 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 (η 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<sup>37</sup>.

The most compelling evidence that Hipponax incorporated Homeric material from the Phaeacian books directly into his narratives, and that the Hipponactean Arete, therefore, bore some relation to the Homeric one, can be found in fr. 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'»:

ΟΔΥ[ΣΣΕ

. [

φ[

. [

(fr. 74 Dg.)

<sup>35</sup> On parody, especially Homeric, in Hipponax cf. E. Degani, *Ipponatte parodico*, «MCr» VIII/IX (1973/1974) 141-167 (= Degani, *Studi* [above, n. 2] 187-205).

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> See previous note.

χ\_υ ]ωλῆν.[  
 χ\_υ ]ζων φυκι[  
 χ\_ ]αν αὐτόν ὄστις ε[  
 χ\_ ]έπει τὸν ψωμό[ν  
 ]ερεῦσι τὴν γενή[ν (fr. 75 Dg.)

. [  
 επε[  
 ... [  
 κρω[  
 κίν. [  
 αυτ[  
 . ]ζ.[ (fr. 76 Dg.)

χ\_υ\_ ]υψον . [  
 χ\_υ( ) ]Φαίηκας[  
 χ\_υ ]επλωσεν[  
 χ ]ασιος ὄσπερ βοῦ[  
 ]υτο φρενώλης τ[  
 χ ]θεν διδάξων . [  
 χ\_ ]ο κορσιπ[  
 χ\_υ ]λγκρον κ[  
 χ\_υ ] . . τησ[  
 χ\_ ]νειδα[  
 χ\_υ ]αλλα: τ[ (fr. 77 Dg.)

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: ΟΔΥ[ΣΣΕ<sup>38</sup>. 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<sup>39</sup> questions about family [fr. 75,4-5], Phaeacians [fr. 77,2], the lotus [fr. 76,7]»<sup>40</sup>. Lobel's interest in these

<sup>38</sup> The supplement, suggested by Lobel (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XVIII, 1941, 70), has been adopted by virtually all subsequent editors of Hipponax.

<sup>39</sup> Lobel presumably thinks this refers to Odysseus having a bite to eat to refresh himself; others associate it with the Cyclops, e.g. M. Fernández-Galiano, in *La lrica griega a la luz de los descubrimientos papirologicos*, «Actas del I Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos», Madrid 1958, 84. The word ψωμός occurs in Homer (in the plural) only at ι 374, where it is used of the morsels of human flesh vomited by the Cyclops. Hipponax, of course, may very well be playing on this association in an unrelated context.

<sup>40</sup> 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 [frr.] 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<sup>41</sup>? 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: ]ασιος ὄσπερ 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 ]ασιος ὄσπερ Βοῦ[ παλος<sup>42</sup>. Line 4, therefore, seems to compare someone (or something) to Bupalus, perhaps the individual said to be 'crazed' (φρενώλης) 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 frr. 74-77, therefore, a situation in which Odysseus, doubtless a loosely

Κρ]υψοῦ[ν for ]υψου[; E. Diehl suggested Κ]υσοῦ in his *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*<sup>3</sup>, III, Lipsiae 1952, 104. Either supplement would yield a comical by-form of Καλυψώ (cf. fr. 127 Dg. πῶς παρὰ Κυψοῦν ἦλθε, which Lobel was tempted to place in the lacunose fr. 77,1). The reason for reading Calypso here, of course, is that line 3, which in spite of its uncertainty as a verb or a noun (cf. Degani *ad l.*, p. 90, with *addendum ad l.*, p. 222) must refer to sailing, and as such probably has to do with sailing from Calypso's island to the Phaeacians, where he is shipwrecked (cf. fr. 74). Possibly in the ensuing lines, the Odysseus figure here begins to relate his wandering up to this point, as he begins to do in *Od.* IX. Fr. 77,5-7 are a mystery, although one could imagine that φρενώλης refers to the Cyclops, and διδάξων to Odysseus' voyage to Hades in search of knowledge (or even to the knowledge Odysseus hopes to acquire from his trip to the Cyclopes' island). The problem with this reconstruction is that it would seem out of sequence with line 7, where κορσιπι[ (cf. Hesychius *s.v.*) assures a reference to the Lotus eaters, which episode occurs prior to the Cyclops adventure.

<sup>41</sup> There is no firm indication in the fragments either way. The αὐτόν of 75,3 is suspicious, and may refer to an Odysseus figure, although this is hardly certain.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Rosen (above n. 23) 34 n. 19. Diehl (above, n. 40) first proposed the supplement, which has found favor with Adrados (*Liricos Griegos. Elegiacos y Yambógrafos arcaicos*, II, Barcelona 1959, 45) and Masson (above, n. 13) 71, in their editions; Degani, however, remains diffident. The metrical argument perhaps gives the supplement greater plausibility.

veiled stand-in for the figure of the poet<sup>43</sup>, is presented at his most abject and vulnerable: nearly destroyed in his shipwreck, in a strange and quietly hostile land<sup>44</sup>, 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 *lekkythos* story in the poem represented by frr. 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 frr. 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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<sup>43</sup> 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 *Hipponactae interpretatiunculae*, «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.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. G.P. Rose, *The Unfriendly Phaeacians*, «TAPhA» C (1969) 387-406.