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The Culture of the Ancient Epithet: Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Translation of Imagination

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Robert Frost's dictum – that 'poetry is what is lost in translation' – appears, at first sight, somewhat discouraging to the translator of poetry. Nevertheless, his implication, which is that nuance and its poetic byplay is specific not only to language but to context and perhaps to the full textual history of a work, can prompt us to renewed engagement with the causes of a poem's untranslatability and thus with its language, context, and history; as Benjamin remarked, 'the translatability of linguistic creations ought to be considered even if men should prove unable to translate them'.¹ Translation furthers philology, even if a translation, being in itself novel and therefore singular, cannot avoid simplifying the philological complexity of works which, in the case of archaic Greek poetry, are ancient and therefore multiplicitous.² Astute failure can be a mark of intellectual success. In the present essay, I consider one such untranslatable aspect of archaic Greek poetry, that of the compound epithet as we find it used in lyric poetry; by way of example, I will consider the epithets we find in a famous work of Greek poetry of the fifth century BC, an ode by Bacchylides colloquially known as 'Theseus' Dive' and formally designated Bacchylides 17. After sketching some basic methodological questions regarding the

¹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn (New York, 1968), pp. 69–82 (p. 70).

² I borrow the term 'multiplicity' in this sense from Christopher Witmore, 'The Realities of the Past: Archaeology, Object-Orientations, Pragmatology,' in *Modern Materials: The Proceedings of CHAT Oxford, 2009*, edited by Brent Fortenberry and Laura McAtackney (Oxford, 2012), pp. 25–36.

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translation of archaic lyric, I consider the semantic and phonological role of the compound epithet in Greek lyric and compare this role with the compound epithet's role in English poetry, in particular its use by the nineteenth-century philologist-poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. I suggest that the altogether different points of reference of the archaic Greek and English epithets – the one traditional, the other traditionally untraditional – require that translation of Bacchylides' epithets from Greek to English bypass the compound epithet itself. In conclusion, I offer a quick, expressly banal suggestion as to how traditionality might be rendered.

Before reviewing the character of the compound epithet in Bacchylides 17 and in Greek lyric generally, we must be clear as to what text the translator of Bacchylides 17 is translating. Fortunately, Bacchylides' poems are less multiplicitous – that is, they have historically fulfilled fewer contradictory roles – than are, for example, the Homeric poems:³ the limited testimonia for Bacchylides⁴ reduces the list of historical contexts we can claim for Bacchylides 17 essentially to that of the Alexandrian and post-Alexandrian reader and to an original performance by a Cean chorus during the festival of Apollo on Delos.⁵ The difference between a performance text (for Delos) and an anagnostic text (for Alexandria) poses the problem of medium; but the translator of lyric presumably is not a contemporary *chorodidaskalos* ('chorus-trainer') and intends his translation for choral presentation even less than does the translator of Athenian tragedy; to employ performance as the very medium of the translation itself might be ideal, but is not practical. Nevertheless, if we presume the will (if not the means) to render Bacchylides 17 in its original as opposed to written form, we suppose a desire to express whatever of the performance medium can be transferred to writing; that is, to create a written version of the poem which encodes a greater degree of performance context than the owner of the actual Bacchylides papyrus in the second century AD was probably aware of. The ideal (and necessarily unrealizable) written translation of Bacchylides 17 would be *performable* in the modern world, and create the same effect upon modern audiences as the original had done upon the Delian audience. Such an emphasis on the audience serves a useful hermeneutic purpose

³ See for instance the remarkable variety of uses of Homer described in the essays contained in *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes*, edited by R. Lamberton and J. J. Kearney (Princeton, NJ, 1992).

⁴ Collected on pp. 130–2 of *Bacchylides*, edited by Herwig Maehler (Stuttgart, 1992).

⁵ *Die Lieder des Bacchylides*, edited by Herwig Maehler, Vol. 2: *Die Dithyramben und Fragmente* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 168–70.

with respect to the poem's compound epithets: by shifting the focus from the composition of lyric to its reception, from the author to the process of communication between performers and audience, we contextualize the epithet, as an integral aspect of lyric, within archaic Greek verbal culture more broadly. Instead of focusing on the composer's intention, we focus also on the audience's expectation of epithets generally and response to any particular epithet. This must involve us, however, in the vexed question of traditionality.

To what extent is the compound epithet of lyric poetry 'traditional'? For an answer, we can only turn to the evidence of actual compound epithets in extant texts. Comparing three typologies of the epithet (for Bacchylides, Sappho and Alcaeus, and Pindar)⁶ we observe that scholars' definition of the 'traditional' has evolved in accordance with changing notions of authorship. In 1967, noting that epithets predominate among the *hapax legomena* of Bacchylides, N. G. Bouras straightforwardly equated singularity of transmission with originality of composition (Bouras, p. 122); but his discussion of morphology does not include the combination of elements, only the declension of the fully formed epithet as an integral lexical entity.⁷ By contrast, Anne Broger, writing in 1996, ascribes the uniqueness of some compound epithets in Sappho and Alcaeus in part to the exigency of adapting Homeric phraseology to Lesbian metre, often through the alteration of one constituent element in the compound; she describes the use and adaptation of these 'heroic' words as the appeal to the 'higher reality of myth' (Broger, p. 304). Here we find not only a consideration of lyric diction in light of the full verbal culture but also the implication that that context involves the audience; correspondingly, the singularity in any extant Lesbian epithet could be liable to reinterpretation if elements from those compounds were known from unavailable Cyclic material (Broger, pp. 304–5). Nevertheless, Broger relates the parallelism of Lesbian and epic epithets and epithet-formation not to the sharing of a common verbal culture by the two genres, but rather to the influence of epic upon Lesbian lyric (Broger, p. 309).

Broger's willingness to consider, in the context of audience awareness of contemporary poetry, not only the results but also the process

⁶ For general studies see respectively N. G. Bouras, 'Τὸ ἐπίθετον παρὰ Βακχυλίδη', *Platon*, 37–8 (1967), pp. 118–30; Anne Broger, *Das Epitheton bei Sappho und Alkaios: eine sprachwissenschaftliche Untersuchung* (Innsbruck, 1996); and Pascale Hummel, *L'Épithète pindarique: Etude historique et philologique* (New York, 1999).

⁷ Bouras, pp. 124–7. On p. 128 there is a brief section on 'Ἐύνθεσις', providing statistics only on the use of prepositional adfixes and some of the most typical initial elements (ἀ-, εὐ-, πολυ- χρυσεο-, etc.).

of epithet formation has been expanded in great detail in an extraordinarily sensitive and thorough philological work of 1999, Patrice Hummel's *L'épithète pindarique*. The scope of Hummel's work is too vast for summary, but we may note her findings on the relationship between the Pindaric epithet and the epithet in epic and other lyric. After noting that 'ce qui est en jeu en l'occurrence [*sc.* de l'épithète], c'est l'articulation linguistique des réalités dénotées par les termes idiotisme et idiosyncrasie', she produces 36 pages of Pindaric epithets showing complete concordance with Homer, Hesiod, or lyric and elegy, and 7 pages of Pindaric epithets showing partial or approximate concordance with these other authors,⁸ with similar ratios for epithetical phrases.⁹ Hummel concludes that 'si la pratique syntaxique de Pindare dénote une originalité qui connaît peu d'équivalents, sa pratique épithétique, si l'on peut dire, doit autant à la tradition commune de toute la littérature poétique qu'à sa propre logique stylistique' (Hummel, p. 448). Challenging 'la notion d'hapax' which 'renvoie en même temps au nombre des occurrences attestées dans l'ensemble des textes grecs conservés et à l'idée de création lexicale' (Hummel, p. 452), Hummel instead locates Pindar's originality in the manipulation of language patterns in novel ways (Hummel, p. 488).

With these findings in mind, let us turn to the first few compound epithets of Bacchylides 17.¹⁰ They are as follows, presented with the nouns they modify (in **bold**):

κυανόπρωρα ναῦς	line 1	dark-prowed ship
μενέκτυπος Θησεύς	lines 1–2	steadfast-in-battle-din Theseus
τηλαυγής φάρος	line 5	far-shining sail
π[ε/ο]λέμαιγυς Ἀθάνη	line 7	with-warlike-aegis Athena
ἱμεράμπυξ θεά	line 9	with-desirable-diadem goddess
χαλκοθώραξ ἔκγονος	lines 15–16	bronze-breastplated offspring
μεγαλ[α/ο]χος βία	line 23	lordly (<i>or</i> great-necked) strength
ἔρατώνυμος κόρα	lines 31–32	lovely-named girl
ἰόπλοκοι Νηρηίδες	lines 37–38	violet-weaving Nereids

⁸ That is, not strictly lexical concordance of meaning or referent, showing variation in the formation of endings (eg. ἀγορεύς in Pindar, ἀγρευτής in Solon; Ἀγαμεμνόνιος in Pindar, Ἀγαμειμόνεος in Homer) or supplying a synonym in one element of the compound (ἀγακτίμενος in Pindar, εὐκτίμενος in Homer, Hesiod, and Bacchylides; γλυκύπικρος in Pindar, γλυκύοξος in Philoxenus).

⁹ Hummel, pp. 410–17 (total correspondence) and pp. 419–22 (partial correspondence).

¹⁰ For a survey and discussion of all the epithets in Bacchylides 17, see Gail W. Pieper, 'Conflict of Character in Bacchylides' Ode 17', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 103 (1972), 395–404.

For these, we find parallels in the following:

κυανόπρωρα	<i>Iliad</i> 15.653; 23.826, 859; x10 in <i>Odyssey</i>
μενέκτυπος	Pindar O.10.81, N.4.87; βαρύ-κτυπος ('loud-of-battle-din'); <i>Iliad</i> x9
μενε-πτόλεμος	countless times in <i>Iliad</i> (e.g. epithet of Diomedes)
τηλαυγής	Aristophanes <i>Birds</i> 1088, 1706; Sophocles <i>Tr.</i> 517
π[ε/ο]λέμαιγυς	Ibycus <i>Fr.</i> S166.21 χρῦσ-αιγυς ('with-golden-aegis'); Pindar O.13.70 κυάν-αιγυς ('with-dark-aegis')
ἱμεράμπυξ	Pindar O.7.64, O.13.65, <i>Fr.</i> 30.6; Bacchylides 5.13; <i>Iliad</i> 5.358, 363, etc.; <i>Theogony</i> 916 χρῦσ-άμφυξ ('with-golden-diadem'); Pindar <i>Fr.</i> 75.19, 52c ἔλικ-άμφυξ ('with-twisted-diadem'); Pindar <i>Fr.</i> 29.3 κυαν-άμφυξ ('with-dark-diadem'); Pindar N.7.15 λιπαρ-άμφυξ ('with-bright-diadem'); Sappho 136.1; Simonides <i>Fr.</i> 78(1).1 ἱμερό-φωνος ('with-desirable-voice'); Bacchylides 13.104 ἱμερό-γυιος ('with-desirable-limbs')
χαλκοθώραξ	Pindar <i>Fr.</i> 169a.12, <i>Fr.</i> 52b.1; Bacchylides 11.123
μεγαλ[α/ο]χος	no parallels for μεγαλοῦχος ('lordly'); for μεγάλαυχος : Pindar P.8.15, Aeschylus <i>Pers.</i> 533
ἔρατώνυμος	Limenius, <i>Paeon Delphicus</i> (2C BC) ἔρατο-γ[λύφαρος] ('lovely-eyelidded'); <i>De Arboribus</i> (2C AD?) ἔρατό-στομ[ος] ('lovely-mouthed'); Sappho <i>Fr.</i> S107.4, <i>Fr.</i> S476.8, <i>Iliad</i> 6.255, 12.116, <i>Odyssey</i> 19.571 δυσ-ώνυμος ('evil-named'); Philodamus (2C BC) μεγαλ-ώνυμος ('great-named')
ἰόπλοκοι	Pindar I.7.23, O.6.30, Bacchylides 9.72, 3.71

All these epithets, then, with the exception of the doubtful μεγαλοῦχος, can be paralleled either via total correspondence or with respect to their constituent elements. I have included parallels from Athenian drama because Bacchylides was active in the fifth century BC. Nevertheless, it may well be objected that parallels even with Pindar are insufficient to prove traditionality. The situation becomes clearer, however, if we compare the high degree of correspondence described by Broger and Hummel and suggested above for Bacchylides 17 with the compound epithets of a genuine innovator like Timotheus, who flourished about 400 BC. The epithets from his long surviving poem (*The Persians*, 791 PMG) are reproduced in my Appendix 1; their novel character could easily be demonstrated, even if such compounds as μαρμαροπ[τύχ]ο[ι]ς ('with-marble-fold') at line 38, μακραυχενόπλους

(possibly 'long-neck-sailing')¹¹ at lines 89–90, ναυσιφθόροι ('ship-destroying') at line 132, or παλίμφορον ('back-ferrying') at line 162 do not raise eyebrows sufficiently high on their own. Timotheus is, of course, the innovator *par excellence*, famously declaring:

οὐκ αἶδω τὰ παλαιά,
καινὰ γὰρ ἀμὰ κρείσσω.
νέος ὁ Ζεὺς βασιλεύει,
τὸ πάλαι δ' ἦν Κρόνος ἄρχων.
ἀπίτω Μοῦσα παλαιά.¹²

(I do not sing of old things,
for my new things are better:
a new Zeus reigns as king,
though earlier Kronos was ruler;
let the old Muse depart.)¹³

The Persians itself closes with a programmatic statement featuring appropriately neologistic epithets.¹⁴ The evident contrast of Timotheus' novel compound epithets with the compounds of lyric and epic marks the latter as a largely coherent system, and it is the existence of that system which is crucial for a comparison of traditionality and atraditionality. We can suppose that full recovery of the Alexandrian lyric canon would result in the attestation of any compound epithet in more than one place, or we can follow Hummel in locating the tradition of the compound epithet in poetic practice rather than on the level of strict lexical correspondence; from the point of view of audience response to a poem like Bacchylides 17, the key point is that innovation within the old system took place within very narrow bounds.

Here we may return obliquely to the question of translation by considering the role of the compound epithet in English poetry. In this, we have an excellent guide in Kenneth Haynes, who remarks that 'the facility of Greek for forming compound epithets was emphasised in Western Europe at least from the early sixteenth century', envied

¹¹ This is one of Timotheus' weirdest. For a survey of suggested translations, see María Teresa Amado Rodríguez, 'Las distintas interpretaciones de μακραχενόπλους (Tímoteo, "Persas" 89–90)', in *Actas del VII Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos*, 3 vols (Madrid, 1989), I, 95–100.

¹² *Poetae Melici Graeci*, edited by Denys Page (Oxford, 1962; elsewhere 'PMG'), 796.

¹³ Translations of Greek texts are my own except where stated.

¹⁴ E.g. PMG 791.202–20, compound epithets in bold: 'ἀλλ' ὦ χρυσεοκίθαριν ἀέ- | ξων μοῦσαν νεοτευχῆ, | ἐμοῖς ἔλθ' ἐπίκουρος ὕμ- | νοις ἴηε Παιάν. | ὁ γὰρ μ' εὐγενέτας μακροαί- | ων Σπάρτας μέγας ἀγεμῶν | βρύων ἀνθεσιν ἴβας | δονεῖ λαὸς ἐπιφλέγων | ἐλᾶ τ' αἰθοπι μῶμω | ὅτι παλαιότεραν νέοις | ὕμνοις μοῦσαν ἀτιμῶ- | ἐγὼ δ' οὔτε νέον τιν' οὐ- | τε γεραὸν οὔτ' ἰσῆβαν | εἶργω τῶνδ' ἐκάς ὕμνων. | τοὺς δὲ μουσοπαλαιολύ- | μας, τούτους δ' ἀπερύκω, | λωβητῆρας ἀοιδᾶν, | κηρύκων λιγυμακροφῶ- | νων τείνοντας ἰυγᾶς.'

by Erasmus and imitated by the Pléiade poets of France; it was 'under French influence [that] English writers and translators in their turn began to reflect on the capacity of their language to form compounds'.¹⁵ The response was to follow poets in other languages in both praising their own language as peculiarly suited to compound epithets and in coining them apace; the epithets of

Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare [who] created an enduring poetic diction... [and] were a prime source of compound epithets... [feature] impassioned rhetoric, characterised by *energeia*... [or] a complementary rhetorical principle, *enargeia*, implying vividness, phanopoeia, or decorative beauty. Sidney's *flamie-glistring lights* and *rose-enameld skies* are examples; along with Spenser's *sea-shouldring Whales*.

(Haynes, pp. 108–9)

Nevertheless, the two most typical uses of the epithet in English verse are exemplified by the practice of Milton and Keats respectively. Milton saw in epithets 'a possibility to force a confrontation between pagan and Christian'; in *Comus*, Milton 'uses them to contrast the characters. For example, compounds in ill- and well-, analogues to the many Greek compounds in *δυσ-* and *εὖ-*, are almost never spoken by *Comus*' (Haynes, pp. 110–11). Milton's epithets are both thematic and allusive. In the eighteenth century, classical compound epithets inspired a fondness for two-word periphrases, often 'casual' in meaning,¹⁶ but complex epithets and *enargeia* returned with a vengeance in Romantic poetry:

Keats' greatest epitaphs... elicit the response, 'How strange, how delightful, how true.' Madeleine's 'azure-lidded sleep' evokes the delicate blue veining of the relaxed, closed eyelid; in seeing it in memory or imagination, we participate in the erotic experience Keats describes. The 'far-foamed sands' has a strange power in context, mingling visual, auditory, and tactile imagery.

(Haynes, p. 117)

Unlike Milton, Keats, who did not read Greek, did not employ compound epithets for their allusive or thematic power, but rather as a means of endowing his poems with picture. The effect depends above all on surprising the reader with vividness; even the novelty of Milton's translated epithets would be out of place here, where Keats' poetic effect depends largely on innovation.

¹⁵ Kenneth Haynes, *English Literature and Ancient Languages* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 105–7.

¹⁶ John Arthos, *The Language of Natural Description in Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (London, 1966), p. 68 n. 1.

Arguably, however, the English poet who has made the greatest use of compound epithets, and employed them equally to fulfil Miltonic (thematic/allusive) and Keatsean (enargetic) functions, is Gerard Manley Hopkins. Like Milton, Hopkins was fully conversant with Greek lyric, including the complexities of Greek metre; unlike Milton, he was a child of modern philology (taking root at Oxford through the pervasive influence of Max Müller),¹⁷ a student of Anglo-Saxon and Welsh poetry, and profoundly interested in the expressive possibilities of the individual word.¹⁸ Hopkins' epithets are comparable to Timotheus' for their innovativeness; unlike Timotheus, however, Hopkins was innovating in a tradition of atraditionality, in which vividness and specificity are meant to provoke reactions on the part of the reader comparable to those of Haynes to Keats' 'azure-lidded sleep'. His first important production, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, abounds in extraordinary epithets; I have collected them in Appendix 2. Here we find both enargetic epithets to rival Keats ('the sea flint-flake, black-backed', 13.5; 'black-about air', 24.5; 'blue-beating and hoary-glow height', 25.6), epithets which concentrate the poem's Christian view of shipwreck ('three-numberèd form', 9.2; 'widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps', 13.8; 'double-naturèd name' 34.2), and epithets which evoke or embellish Greek lyric models ('dappled-with-damson west', 5.5; 'sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart', 27.4; 'crimson-crested east', 35.5). Most striking, however, are those compound epithets, in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* as in Hopkins' other work, which require a good deal of puzzling out to be understood – whose attraditionality is virtually total – and which, together with a fondness for archaism and difficult syntax, have given Hopkins his reputation as a poet's poet. In *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, for example, we find 'my heart... carrier-witted' (3.7), 'lovely-asunder starlight' (5.2–3), 'down-dugged ground-hugged grey' (26.2), or 'moth-soft Milky Way' (26.6).

However obscure these epithets may sometimes seem, it is clear that, like the Cubists, Hopkins never aimed for abstraction: though placing the greatest demands on his reader's intellect and imagination, he nevertheless always had an object in view, even if this were only perceptible to an ideal reader. In her article on Hopkins' ideal audience, Janet Denford lists the expectations Hopkins' verse implies of his readership: not only 'a comprehensive knowledge of language' but acquaintance

¹⁷ On Hopkins' philological training as a background for his poetical activity, see Cary H. Plotkin, *The Tenth Muse: Victorian Philology and the Genesis of the Poetic Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Carbondale, IL, 1989).

¹⁸ Plotkin, pp. 109–23.

with classical mythology, the Bible, ecclesiastical history, and musical notation, as well as an ability to correctly interpret Hopkins' 'sprung rhythm', with or without the aid of the stress-markers Hopkins often supplied or the *tempo* subscriptions sent to friends.¹⁹ To this list we should add an ability to interpret difficult compound epithets.

Hopkins' explanation of his verse – his education of an ideal reader – is most profound in his development of a personal doctrine of 'inscape', an aesthetic psychology which is particularly appropriate to his coinage of epithets. As he put it to his correspondent Robert Bridges in 1879:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness... But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling *inscape* is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped.²⁰

Earlier, hiking in the Alps in 1870, he had noted in his diary:

Now in the upper Grindelwald glacier between the bed or highest stage was a descending limb which was like the rude and knotty bossings of a strombus shell-; third the foot, a broad limb opening out and reaching the plain, shaped like the fan-fin of a dolphin or a great bivalve shell turned on its face, the flutings in either case being suggested by the crevasses and the ribs by the risings between them, these being swerved and inscaped strictly to the motion of the mass.²¹

His diaries are full of such detailed description – and also of compound epithets. In his theological work, Hopkins came close to equating *inscape* with Duns Scotus' *haecitas*; as W. H. Gardner writes, 'for Hopkins... inscape was something more than a delightful sensory impression: it was an insight, by Divine grace, into the ultimate reality... seeing the "pattern, air, melody in things from, as it were, God's side"'.²² Thus the will to transfix secular motion by means of an eternal gloss accounts for the multi-layered complexity of his compounds: whereas the inscape of direct experience is the mystical perception of eternity on the part of an observer, inscape as it applies to poetry is the transmission of such perception from the direct observer,

¹⁹ Janet Denford, 'A "Passion for Explanation": Issues of "Audience" in the Poetry and Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 24.1–2 (1999), 3–25.

²⁰ Quoted in *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by W. H. Gardner (New York, 1953), p. xxii.

²¹ *Poems and Prose*, ed. Gardner, p. 116.

²² W. H. Gardner, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition*, 2 vols (London, 1944–9), I, 125–7.

the poet, to the reader. Hopkins' ideal reader is inducted into poetic *haecitas* by means of the compound epithet's recreation of inscape; the reader's task is to unpack the meaning folded into the compound epithet by Hopkins.

Given this embrace of extreme singularity in epithets, it is fascinating to observe how Hopkins understood what we now recognize to be *non-singular* epithets, namely the epithets contained in Homeric formulae. Fortunately we possess some notes of Hopkins' dating from his later residence in Dublin, made as he proceeded through Books 4–6 of the *Iliad* at various points between 1884 and 1886.²³ Hopkins was no *naif* in the study of classical literature: besides his rigorous training at Oxford in the 1860s, he was, at the time the notes on the *Iliad* were made, employed as a lecturer in Classics at University College. Nevertheless, we are somewhat taken aback to discover the depth of his Homeric scholarship: preliminary jottings include references to the traditionality and performance contexts of epic, a note on the collegial character of rhapsody, the range of possible audiences, and relay composition.²⁴ In other words, Hopkins approached Homeric poetry as a traditional art form.

Let us observe the master of inscape in the act of reading Diomedes' *aristeia* in *Iliad* 5. Given his apprehension of traditionality, it is curious to observe that he nonetheless tends to endow formulaic epithets with as much specificity as possible. He comments on the epithet *δαίφρων* ('battle-minded') in lines 5.180–5:

Αἰνεία, Τρώων βουληφόρε χαλκοχιτώνων,
Τυδείδη μιν ἔγωγε δαίφρωνι πάντα εἴσκω,
ἀσπίδι γιγνώσκων ἀλώπιδι τε τρυφαλείη,
ἵππους τ' εἰσορόων· σάφα δ' οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ θεός ἐστιν.
εἰ δ' ὁ γ' ἀνὴρ ὅν φημι, δαίφρων Τυδέος υἱός,
οὐχ ὁ γ' ἀνευθε θεοῦ τάδε μαίνεται

(*Iliad* 5.180–5)

(Aeneas, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Trojans,
For my part I reckon him to be the **battle-minded** offspring of
Tydeus,
as I recognize him by his shield and visor and crested helmet,
and as I look at his horses; but I do not know clearly if he is a god.
But if he is the man whom I say, the **battle-minded** son of Tydeus,
then indeed he does not rage thus without a god)

²³ Warren D. Anderson, editor, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Dublin Notes on Homer', *Hopkins Quarterly*, 19 (1992), i–xiii, 1–126.

²⁴ Anderson, pp. 1–2, 8–9.

Hopkins remarks, 'Seemingly master of the art of war' (Anderson, p. 20). This is not altogether inappropriate, since the battle-minded son of Tydeus *is* a master of the art of war; nevertheless, it imposes a context-specific meaning on Pandarus' words.

A little further on, he comments on 5.439–44:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμων Ἴσος,
δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας προσέφη ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων·
'φράζεο, Τυδείδη, καὶ χάζεο, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν
ἴσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποτε φύλον ὁμοῖον,
ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων.'
Ὡς φάτο, Τυδείδης δ' ἀνεχάζετο τυτθὸν ὀπίσσω,
μῆνιν ἀλευάμενος ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος

(*Iliad* 5.439–44)

(But when indeed for the fourth time he rushed ahead, stand-in for a god,
then **far-working** Apollo addressed him, calling terribly:
'Take thought, son of Tydeus, and give way, and do not aspire
to be equal with the gods, since in no way are the two races similar,
that of the immortal gods and that of human beings who walk upon the
ground.'

So he spoke, and the son of Tydeus gave way a little bit backwards,
avoiding the wrath of **far-shooting** Apollo)

Hopkins explains the epithets of Apollo *ἑκάεργος* ('far-working') and *ἑκατηβόλος* ('far-shooting'): 'that could do him harm there or anywhere, then or afterwards. In the first there is also a suggestion of better kept at a distance from, the farther off the better' (Anderson, pp. 25–6). Hopkins could not have been unaware that these are entirely standard epithets for Apollo, used liberally elsewhere with little or no distinction between them but for metrical context; but here he does not so much gloss their essential meaning as differentiate their value in a particular context.

A third example demonstrates this imaginative approach still more clearly. Regarding the difficult epithets *μόνουχοι* ('single-footed') and *κρατερώνυχοι* ('mighty-footed'), found three times altogether (always of course with *ἵπποι*, 'horses') in 5.236–329:

αὐτῷ τε κτεῖνη καὶ ἐλάσση **μόνουχος** ἵππους
(*Iliad* 5.236)

(that he should both kill the two men and drive off the
single-footed horses)

ἀλλ' ὁ γὰρ τοὺς μὲν εὖος ἠρύκακε **μόνουχος** ἵππους
νόσφιν ἀπὸ φλοίσβου, ἐξ ἀντυγὸς ἠνία τείνας.

Αινείαο δ' ἐπαΐξας καλλίτριχας ἵππους
 ἐξέλασε Τρώων μετ' ἔϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς.
 δῶκε δὲ Δηϊπύλω, ἐτάρω φίλω, ὄν περι πάσης
 τίεν ὀμηλικίης, ὅτι οἱ φρεσὶν ἄρτια ἦδη,
 νηυσὶν ἐπι γλαφυρῆσιν ἐλαυνόμεν· αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἦρωσ
 ὦν ἵππων ἐπιβάς ἔλαβ' ἠνία σιγαλόδοντα,
 αἴψα δὲ Τυδεΐδην μέθεπε **κρατερώνυχας** ἵππους
 (*Iliad* 5.321–9)

(But he indeed curbed his **single-footed** horses
 far off from the roar of battle, binding the reins from the rim;
 and springing upon the fair-maned horses of Aeneas
 he drove them away from the Trojans in among the well-greaved
 Achaeans.

And he gave them to Deipylus, his comrade, whom above all
 he valued of his age-mates, since he was of like mind with himself,
 to drive off to the hollow ships; but the hero himself
 got into his chariot and took up the shining reins,
 and straightaway he drove off the **mighty-footed** horses after the son
 of Tydeus)

Hopkins writes of the first *μόνυχας* ('single-footed'): 'there is a thought like "the poor dumb beasts" after their master's death and no doubt a suggestion in *μων-υχας* of *μόνους*' (Anderson, pp. 20–1). On the second *μόνυχας* he comments: 'perhaps putting the dumb beasts where they would be out of harm's way. There may be a suggestion here too of a lonely spot. There is also the contrast with *καλλίτριχας* ("beautiful-maned") below, the more precious horses of Aeneas, more precious as head than foot' (Anderson, p. 23). Regarding *κρατερώνυχας* ('mighty-footed'), he adds: 'remarque [sic] the change: the dumb beasts cd. do good service in war' (Anderson, p. 23).

What, essentially, is Hopkins doing in reading so much into neutral compound epithets? To say that he is 'misreading' the formulaic system would of course be anachronistic, since Parry had yet to describe it; yet even so I suggest that to regard the archaic Greek compound epithet as unspecific in meaning, even in its least singular form – even at the heart of the Homeric formulaic system – is to react against the modern view of authorship in a manner that privileges the act of composition at the expense of the act of performance. As we observed above, it is the process of communication that underlies the relationship between performer and audience; yet as Hopkins himself shows, communication *from* composer *to* audience is liable to dissolve into a *communion* of performer and listener, whereby the act

of creation is essentially reciprocal. Given that Hopkins understood and indeed emphasized the importance of social participation in the epic tradition, it is possible that he consciously felt that his projection of meaning onto and into formulae – his *inscaping* of Homeric compound epithets – was his own attempt to involve himself in Homer in the manner of an ancient audience. Carried away by the momentum of Book 5, he could only participate, consciously or unconsciously.

This brings us back to the nature of the archaic Greek compound epithet and its role in Greek verbal culture. I suggest that it is precisely in the *lack of definition* inherent in the traditional compound epithet – whether lexically traditional, traditional in its constituent elements, traditional in its variable composition, or all three – that audience participation in the act of performance is invited, if not required. Returning at last to the compound epithets of Bacchylides 17, we can agree with Charles Segal, who remarked that 'Bacchylides... manipulates his epithets to control tempo and mood in a way similar to the oral poet's expansion or contraction of themes... By thinning out his epithets the poet can manipulate our responses, attain subtle shifts of emphasis, throw certain details into sharp relief, or modulate between different moods in contrasting sections of the ode'.²⁵ Or we can applaud the attempt of Gail Pieper, for instance, to see in the epithets which describe Theseus and Minos a subtle form of characterization.²⁶ We may find any such reading more or less convincing, but fundamentally, in a traditional art form, such responses are not strictly dictated by the poet: rather, shifts of emphasis, modulations of mood, and characterizations are listener- or reader-dependent. Standing outside the living ancient Greek verbal culture, we are apt to endow that culture with what amounts to the singular intentionality formerly ascribed to Greek lyric poets, and thus to theorize the vanished existence of a definitive significance for any given epithet, even if we cannot recover it

²⁵ Charles Segal, 'Bacchylides Reconsidered', in *Aglaia: The Poetry of Alcman, Sappho, Pindar, Bacchylides, and Corinna* (New York, 1998), p. 257. In A. E. Harvey, 'Homeric Epithets in Greek Lyric Poetry', *Classical Quarterly*, 7 (1957), 206–23, it is suggested (p. 208) that narrative passages in Bacchylides are intentionally more Homeric in their epithets (that is, feature more epithets attested in Homer) than non-narrative passages. Since we lack a complete edition of Bacchylides, however, and since we must presume that the Greek oral poetic tradition was vast, it is methodologically difficult for us to distinguish confidently between epic and lyric vocabularies.

²⁶ Pieper (n. 10). The epithets which support this reading are only three, however, together with a contest (as she argues) between the heroes as to whose divine parent is more Cronidean.

today. But 'the tradition' is merely a label that we apply from afar to an exceedingly complex, unstable, and dynamic process of continuous reinterpretation, a process which ultimately takes place in the imagination of the individual audience-member. In the case of Bacchylides 17, for example, an Athenian audience-member will have responded to, say, Theseus' epithet χαλκοθώραξ ('bronze-breastplated') differently from an Ionian, owing to their different personal histories (naturally unrecoverable to us) as audience members in their regional sub-cultures; indeed, the Athenian and his own brother will have responded differently, depending on which of them had seen a magnificent performance of Pindar *Fr.* 169a.12, or any of the presumably countless other poetic deployments of that word. Inside a tradition, the resonance is all, and highly individualized.

Let us take, for instance, the first few compound epithets of Bacchylides 17. We established earlier their involvement in contemporary verbal culture, but that very involvement makes them semantically unstable and dynamic: what specificity of definition is there in the description of the ναῦς ('ship') as κτανόπρωρα ('dark-prowed') in lines 1–2, of Minos' mother as an ἐρατώνυμος κόρα ('lovely-named girl') in lines 31–2, or of Theseus as the χαλκοθώραξ Πανδίου ἔκγονος ('bronze-breastplated offspring of Pandion') in lines 15–16? All epic ships are κτανόπρωραι ('dark-prowed'); Minos' mother in fact goes unnamed; and the youthful Theseus is not wearing a bronze breastplate onboard ship. But if we instead regard the lack of specific definition or appropriateness – the traditionality and generality – of such epithets as a device inviting imaginative projection on the part of each individual audience-member, if we regard them as semantic vessels which must necessarily be filled by idiosyncratic memory, then they prove, at the point of their activation in performance, neither inappropriate nor void of meaning. Κτανόπρωρα ('dark-prowed'), the first word of the poem, immediately recalls, for each listener, his or her personal history of experience with epic. Ἐρατώνυμος ('lovely-named') does indeed name Minos' mother, but in the listener's memory and imagination only. Χαλκοθώραξ ('bronze-breastplated') evokes at a single stroke whatever degree of the full Theseus myth the listener is familiar with, without recapitulating what would be (for the expert) superfluous detail, or including what would be (for the less expert) a confusing amount of new narrative. In short, Bacchylides' epithets here are not only inclusive of the audience as a whole, but inclusive of every audience member individually.

Let us then articulate the real problem of translating these compound epithets. If the archaic Greek epithet is endowed with phonological weight but not with semantic specificity, its function as a mediator between performer and listener depends on its traditionality; that is, on the audience's previous familiarity with specific epithets or their constituent elements, as also with the established poetic practice of combining those elements. In English, not only do we lack a repertoire of pre-combined or combinable epithet elements, but our Greek-derived tradition of compounding epithets is in fact marked by its ataditionality. Where the Greek audience was able to perceive the *inscape* of mythical objects through the intuitive projection of meaning onto and into their epithets, readers of English compound epithets are the receivers of inscape, required to unpack a poet's highly bundled meaning. If the epithets of Greek lyric are rendered literally, then, we place modern readers at a double disadvantage, requiring them on the one hand to confront foreign combinations of strange figures and on the other to disassociate themselves from Keatsian and Hopkinsesque *enargeia*. We simply do not have a vocabulary of attractive words in English whose reference is to an unfolding, open-ended tradition rather than to a specific poem and place.

This poses a dilemma for the translator still greater than that posed by Robert Frost in the dictum with which I began this essay: in the translation of epithets, we lose insofar as we gain. My suggestion is that faithful translation of Bacchylides 17, as of Greek lyric generally, should be *cultural*, and thus attempt to render the under-defined character of his compound epithets. To do so would be consciously to embrace the trite – or at least what our authorship-oriented conception of poetry would call trite. But could one really translate the beautiful word χαλκοθώραξ ('bronze-breastplated') as 'strong' or the delicate ἡμεράμυξ ('with-desirable-diadem') as 'sexy'? Such an approach would short-change the richness of the Greek poetic system, but it would at least leave the semantic content of such epithets under- as opposed to over-defined, as I have argued they were in the original context. It would instigate a collaborative as opposed to top-down model of poet-audience (or translator-reader) interaction. In short, it would transfer the task of replicating Bacchylides' beauty and delicacy from the translator's ragged thesaurus onto the modern reader's imagination.

APPENDIX 1: COMPOUND EPITHETS FROM TIMOTHEUS' *PERSIANS*
(279 PMG)

<i>compound epithet</i>	<i>line number</i>	<i>approximate meaning</i>
[πο]λυκροτο[.]	12	much-rattling
λι[νο]ζώστους	15	linen-girdled
?ἀγκυλέδετος	22	?belt-tied
τανυπτέροισι	29–30	with-extended-wing
χαλκόκρασι	30	bronze-headed
σμαραγδοχαίτας	31	hair-smashing
μαρμαροπ[τύχ]ο[ι]ς	38	with-marble-folds
ἄμεροδρόμοιο	41–2	day-running
ἰσόρροπα	48	equal-weighted
αμ]βλυδα[χ]ρον	55	(<i>uncertain</i>)
ἄβακχίωτος	62	without-Bacchus
ὄξυπαραυδήτω	66	with-piercing-voice (?)
λινοδέτω	74	bound-with-flax
οἴστρομανές	79	frenzy-maddened
κλυσιδρομάδος	81	soaked-by-running
μακραυχενόπλους	89–90	long-neck-sailing (?)
μαρμαροφεγγεῖς	92–3	marble-lustrous
λινοπνόης	95	flaxen-blowing
γυμνοπαγεῖς	99	naked-frosted (?)
δακρυσταγεῖ	100–1	tear-flooded
στερνοκτύπη	102	breast-smiting
δενδροέθειραι	106	tree-haired
δυσέκφευκ[τ]ον	119	difficult-to-escape
μελαμπεταλοχίτωνα	123–4	with-dark-flat-tunic
εὐωλένους	126	fair-armed
χρυσοπλόκαμε	127	golden-tressed
δυσέκφευκτον	129	difficult-to-escape
λαιμοτόμω	130	throat-cutting
κατακυμοτακεῖς	132	wave-mellowing (?)
ναυσιφθόροι	132	ship-destroying
νυκτιπαγεῖ	133	night-frosting (?)
ὠμοβρῶσι	138	raw-devouring
πολυβότων	141	much-nourishing
σιδαρόκωπος	143	iron-handled
παλίμπορον	162	back-ferrying
ἀμφιστόμους	164	double-mouthed
πολυστόνω (daggered)	170	much-groaning ²⁷
παλινπόρευτον	173	back-journeying

<i>compound epithet</i>	<i>line number</i>	<i>approximate meaning</i>
γουνπετής	176	falling-to-his-knees
ὕψικρότοις	201	lofty-rattling
χρυσεοκίθαριν	202	golden-kitharis'd
νεοτευχῆ	203	new-tooled
μουσοπαλαιολύμας	216	corrupting-the-old-Muse
λιγυμακροφώνων	219	sweet-loud-sounding
ποικιλόμουσος	221	with-a-variegated-Muse
ένδεκακρουμάτοις	230	eleven-chorded
πολύμνον	232	many-hymned
δυωδεκατειχέος	235	twelve-walled

APPENDIX 2: COMPOUND EPITHETS IN G. M. HOPKINS' *WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND* (1876)

<i>epithet object</i>	<i>stanza.line</i>
dovewinged heart	3.6
carrier-witted heart	3.7
lovely-asunder starlight	5.2
dappled-with-damson west	5.5
warm-laid grave	7.3
lush-kept sloe	8.3
plush-capped sloe	8.3
three-numbered form	9.2
lingering-out skill	10.6
American-outward-bound (the ship)	12.2
flint-flake sea	13.5
black-backed sea	13.5
white-fiery snow	13.7
whirlwind-swivelled snow	13.7
widow-making deeps	13.8
never-eldering revel	18.7
scroll-leaved flowers	21.8
time-taken (Christ)	22.6
five-lived favour	23.6
fall-gold mercies	23.8
black-about air	24.5
wild-worst Best	24.8
else-minded (they)	25.5
down-dugged grey	26.2
ground-hugged grey	26.2
blue-beating height	26.5

hoary-glow height	25.6
moth-soft Milky Way	26.6
sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart	27.4
double-natured name	34.2
heaven-flung Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame	34.3
heart-fleshed (as above)	34.3
maiden-furled (as above)	34.3
dooms-day dazzle	34.8
hard-hurled lightning	34.8
crimson-cresseted east	35.5
rare-dear Britain	35.6

Suffering and Scholarship: The Contexts of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's Ecclesiastes

Andrew Taylor

Grammar and Grace, *Writing under Tyranny*, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, *Burning to Read*: the titles of these recent critical works convey a sense of how writing in the early Reformation is seen as having become signally more troublesome and challenging as the relationship between sacred and temporal authority was fundamentally challenged and reconfigured.¹ The writing courtier's proximity to magisterial power encouraged the production of cautious and carefully calibrated voices of complaint, or claims of disengagement. Encounters with the texts on which the evangelical 'new learning' centred – the Psalms in particular – have been read as another kind of response: the impotent, plaintive vulnerability of the sinner in the face of the righteous, judging God begins to resemble the disgraced courtier suing for a king's forgiveness – subjectivity born from subjugation.² Moreover, such exploration of the soteriological impotence at the heart of evangelical theology has encouraged the scrutiny of biblical paraphrases for signs betraying their makers' religious commitments. Although this preoccupation with religious identity has tended to dominate the critical reception of the psalm paraphrases, in particular,

¹ Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford, 2002), Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford, 2005), James Simpson, *The Oxford English Literary History*, Vol. 2: 1350–1547: *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford, 2002), and *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

² See Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), esp. pp. 115–56.

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