

Aristotle as Lyric Poet: The Hermias Poem

R. Renehan

HERMIAS, TYRANT OF ATARNEUS, companion of Platonists, father-in-law of Aristotle, must have been an exceptional figure.¹ In the last century Grote wrote thus of him: "Though partially disabled by accidental injury in childhood,² Hermeias was a man of singular energy and ability, and had conquered for himself [his] dominion. But what contributed most to his celebrity is, that he was the attached friend and admirer of Aristotle, who passed three years with him at Atarneus, after the death of Plato in 348–347 B.C., and who has commemorated his merits in a noble ode. By treachery and false promises, Mentor seduced Hermeias into an interview, seized his person, and employed his signet ring to send counterfeit orders whereby he became master of Atarneus and all the remaining places held by Hermeias. Thus, by successful perfidy, Mentor reduced the most vigorous of the independent chiefs of the Asiatic coast."³ The sequel to this 'successful perfidy' of Mentor is known: Hermias was taken to the Persian king at Susa, there interrogated under torture without breaking, and put to death. Some vivid details from these last days of Hermias, unknown to Grote, came to light with the publication of the Berlin papyrus containing substantial portions of Didymus' commentary on the *Philippics* of Demosthenes. Here one may read of Hermias' courage and steadfastness under interrogation, which so impressed the king that he was contemplating releasing him until Bagoas and Mentor, because of jealousy and fear, persuaded him to think better of it. Then, the most memorable detail

¹ The following will be referred to by author's name alone: C. M. BOWRA, "Aristotle's Hymn to Virtue," *CQ* 32 (1938) 182–89; INGMAR DÜRING, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stud.gr.lat.Gothoburg. 5 [1957]); WERNER JAEGER, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of His Development*² (Oxford 1948); ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Aristoteles und Athen*² II (Berlin 1893); D. E. WORMELL, "The Literary Tradition concerning Hermias of Atarneus," *YCS* 5 (1935) 57–92.

² This is a euphemism. Strabo 13.1.57 (610): ἦν δὲ Ἑρμείας εὐνοῦχος; other testimonia in Düring 280–82.

³ George Grote, *A History of Greece*² IX (London 1907) 427–28.

of all, Hermias, when about to die, made but one request, that a letter be sent to his “friends and companions” stating that “he had done nothing unworthy of philosophy or shameful.”⁴

The sentiment is noble indeed, the scene inspiring, and the *ipsisima verba* fully deserving of admission to any collection of famous last words. Scholars appear to have accepted the literal accuracy of this account at face value. Human nature being what it is, one wants it to be true. But there are difficulties. To begin with, the splendid final words of Hermias are lacunose in the papyrus; what we have is in part restoration—including the key word ‘unworthy’.⁵ Then again, whether in the world of *Realpolitik* the king of Persia was considerate enough of the victims of his torture to provide for the preservation of their last words (and in a foreign tongue) may be doubted. If we thus must exercise due caution in evaluating the particular details, nevertheless the fact remains that Aristotle received reports of Hermias’ death which so moved him that he composed a poem in commemoration of his dead friend. The potential importance of this document for what it may contribute to our understanding of Aristotle the man, and perhaps the philosopher, is self-evident. Despite the fact that Wilamowitz, Jaeger, Wormell, and Bowra have all published valuable interpretations of it, the poem remains imperfectly understood, and even mistranslated, in several key passages. The main issues addressed here are three: (1) the formal genre, if any, to which the poem is to be assigned, (2) the meaning of certain difficult phrases, and (3) the presence, or lack thereof, of formal philosophical doctrine in the poem.

The text has been preserved by Didymus, Athenaeus, and Diogenes Laertius:

Ἄρετὰ πολύμοχθε γένει βροτείῳ,
 θήραμα κάλλιστον βίῳ,
 σᾶς πέρι, παρθένε, μορφᾶς
 καὶ θανεῖν ζηλωτὸς ἐν Ἑλλάδι πότμος
 5 καὶ πόνους τλήναι μαλεροῦς ἀκάμαντας·
 τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις
 καρπὸν ἰσαθάνατον χρυσοῦ τε κρείσσω
 καὶ γονέων μαλακαυγήτοιο θ’ ὕπνου.
 σεῦ δ’ ἔνεκεν <καὶ> ὁ δῖος
 10 Ἡρακλῆς Λήδας τε κούροι

⁴ *BKU* I 5.64–6.18, quoting Callisthenes (*FGrHist* 124F2).

⁵ *BKU* I 6.15–18: τῶι πρὸς το[ύς φίλους τε καὶ ἐ]ταίρους [ἐπισ]τέλλειν ὡς οὐδ[έ]ν ἀ[νάξιον εἶ]η φιλοσοφία[ς οὐδ’ ἄ]σχημον διαπεπραγμένος.

πόλλ' ἀνέτλασαν ἐν ἔργοις
 σὰν †[.]έποντες δύναμιν†·
 σοῖς τε πόθοις Ἀχιλεὺς Αἴ-
 ας τ' Ἀίδαο δόμους ἦλθον·
 15 σᾶς δ' ἔνεκεν φιλίου μορφᾶς Ἀταρνέος
 ἔντροφος ἀελίου χήρωσεν αὐγᾶς.
 τοιγὰρ ἀοίδιμος ἔργους,
 ἀθάνατόν τέ μιν αὐξήσουσι Μοῦσαι,
 Μναμοσύνας θύγατρεις, Δι-
 20 ὅς ξενίου σέβας αὖξου-
 σαι φιλίας τε γέρας βεβαίον.

I have reproduced Page's text (*PMG* 842). The chief cruces will be discussed below. I note here the following. In 9 the reading is uncertain; Page prints his own conjecture (ἔνεκεν ὁ διὸς, ἔνεχ' ὁ διὸς, ἔνεκ' ἐκ διὸς *mss.*: ἔνεχ' οὐκ Διὸς Brunck: ἔνεχ' οἱ Διὸς Wil.). Interpretation of the poem is not affected. ἐν in 11 is an anonymous addition; the *mss.* do not have it and many editors do not print it.

I

Controversy over this poem had arisen already in Aristotle's life-time; the motive was political, not literary. Athenaeus (696A–97B) relates that it was sung daily at meals, presumably in the Lyceum to honor the memory of Hermias. As a consequence, a certain Demophilus brought a formal charge against Aristotle on the grounds that it was impious to sing a paean in honor of a man, since paeans were a class of poems reserved for deities.⁶ Athenaeus, or rather his source Hermippus, appealing to lines 15–16, countered that Hermias is regarded as dead, and argued that the poem is therefore a skolion, not a paean.

Whatever the specific genre, the charge is an obvious sham. The poem reveals no trace of impiety against traditional religious beliefs, for Hermias is clearly represented as dead. This is shown not so much by θανεῖν ζηλωτός in 4 or ἀελίου χήρωσεν αὐγᾶς in 16 (to which Athenaeus refers), but, curiously enough, by the very word ἀθάνατον, 'immortal', in 18. For the immortality which the Muses confer upon Hermias here is the traditional immortality regularly associated with

⁶ This legal action was one reason for Aristotle's departure from Athens in 323 B.C. See Düring 277, 343–44, and W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* VI (Cambridge 1981) 44–45.

them, that is, the immortality of the name, the continued survival of a person through the survival of his name alone. This is precisely what Tyrtaeus promises the warrior who falls bravely in battle:

οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ' ὄνομ' αὐτοῦ
ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γῆς περ ἐὼν γίγνεται ἀθάνατος.⁷

Similarly Theognis promises Kyrnos immortality through the Muses' song (245–46):

οὐδέ ποτ' οὐδὲ θανῶν ἀπολείς κλέος, ἀλλὰ μελήσεις
ἄφθιτον ἀνθρώποις αἰὲν ἔχων ὄνομα.

That such is Aristotle's meaning here cannot be doubted; *αοίδιμος ἔργοις* alone (17) would guarantee that. From this point of view Aristotle could hardly have composed a more traditional poem. One may dismiss as frivolous the accusation of *ἀσέβεια*. However, the problem of the poetic genre to which the composition belongs remains a real difficulty.

The 'classification of Greek lyric poetry' is a notoriously complex subject, as A. E. Harvey well illustrates in his excellent paper of that name.⁸ Many of the terms used, such as *ῥυθμικός* and *ἐγκώμιον*, have both a popular meaning in ordinary use and a technical sense in the language of the grammarians. *ῥυθμικός* as an informal word can be applied to a very wide variety of poems; as a technical term it tended to be confined to poems in honor of gods. Moreover, the technical terms themselves did not remain fixed but acquired new meanings in the course of time; *σκόλιον* is a good example of a term whose technical sense shifted. In one sense the question of the poetic category to which to assign Aristotle's poem is little more than pedantic. One may be tempted to agree with Harvey (173) and leave it at that: "Athenaeus 15.696b ff. records the argument whether Aristotle's poem to Hermias was a paean or a skolion. If even in those days people could not always tell a paean when they saw one, we cannot expect to discover a reliable criterion ourselves." But in another sense this seemingly pedantic debate acquires a certain importance. For considerable confusion exists about the true nature of Aristotle's Hermias poem. Grote, as we have seen, described it as a 'noble ode', to whom he does not say. Smyth, whose brief paragraph on this, while not free from errors, is as sensible a summation as any, called it an 'ode to Areta'.⁹ Harvey, with a certain inconsistency (see *supra*)

⁷ 12.31–32 West. For a different view see C. Fuqua, *GRBS* 22 (1981) 215–26.

⁸ *CQ* N.S. 5 (1955) 156–75.

⁹ H. W. Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets* (London 1906) 468–69.

adjudged it a skolion; indeed, he does not hesitate to state positively that Aristotle is “the last author we hear of as composing a *σκόλιον*” (162). Bowra, who discusses in some detail the characteristics of skolia and paeans, decided that “Aristotle’s poem is too serious to be a skolion . . . The solution must be that Aristotle modeled his poem on the paean but added to it some characteristics of the *θρήνος*” (186).

Most scholars call the poem a ‘hymn’, but without any consistency among themselves. Diogenes Laertius refers to it both as a paean (5.4) and as a hymn to *Hermias* (τὸν ὕμνον ἐποίησεν εἰς τὸν . . . Ἑρμίαν, 5.5); Jaeger also calls it a hymn specifically to Hermias (108, 117). If they are using ‘hymn’ in the strict sense, that is, of a poem in honor of a god, then the poem would indeed run the risk of impiety. But, as we have seen, there are clear indications that an apotheosis of Hermias was hardly Aristotle’s intention. Indeed he does not even mention Hermias by name; the only explicit reference to him is oblique—Ἀταρνέος ἔντροφος in 15–16, scarcely an honorific description peculiarly appropriate to a god. In any event, it is obvious that those who talk of Aristotle’s *Hymn to Hermias* intend no such interpretation. They are speaking loosely; even so, the title ‘Hymn to Hermias’ will not do, for it fails to give any hint that the poem is formally addressed to a deity, Areta. Conversely, the title ‘Hymn to Virtue’, used, for example, by Wilamowitz, Wormell, Bowra, and Düring¹⁰ is misleading, for it does not indicate at all the real purpose of the poem, namely to venerate the memory of the man Hermias.

Here surely, in this very diversity of opinion, lies the solution. Scholars, in ancient times and modern, have failed to agree on the genre of the poem precisely because it cannot be put into any single category without Procrustean measures. It is untypical, even as is its immediate occasion. The poem is addressed to Areta, an abstraction certainly regarded as a deity; the contrast with *γένει βροτείῳ* in the very first verse places that beyond doubt. One readily understands why many have wished to classify the poem as a hymn or, alternately, as a paean. Indeed, Aristotle very probably has imitated Ariphton’s well-known *Paeon to Hygieia*, as Wilamowitz (406) and Bowra (182–85) in particular have stressed. But the poem, while in form a *laudatio* of Areta, is in intent rather a tribute to Hermias, no god but a mortal, and one whose name does not even occur in the poem. This is most unusual. One need only contrast the traditional memorial epigrams associated with Simonides, or the same poet’s lyric poem in praise of Leonidas and the

¹⁰ Wilamowitz (“der hymnus auf die Tugend”) 405 and elsewhere; Wormell 61, 63, 73, and elsewhere; Bowra, title of article; Düring 274, 277.

heroes of Thermopylae (fr.26 P.), to perceive how bold and original an approach Aristotle has taken. Furthermore, as far as *style* is concerned, the composition approximates most closely neither to hymn nor to paeon, neither to skolion nor to threnos, but to a different and distinct genre (see *infra*). Instead of attempting to place the poem in some rigid compartment, scholars would have done better to stress the experimental element in it.

II

In the Hermias poem Aristotle introduces certain characteristic features typical of the contemporary dithyrambic style. Such are unusual meanings of words, new and strange compounds, uncommon syntax, obscure images, allusive (and elusive) comparisons. Of course none of these features is unique to the dithyramb; it is rather in their accumulation that a definite style emerges. It is in good part because Aristotle has elected to affect such a style, in fashion at the time, that scholars have proposed such a number of fundamentally different interpretations, remarkable in so short a piece of seemingly straightforward content. The Greek is difficult.

The first two verses are a good illustration of the λέξις διθυραμβική:

Ἄρετὰ πολύμοχθε γένει βροτείῳ,
θήραμα κάλλιστον βίῳ.

πολύμοχθος normally is used of one who undertakes or endures many labors; its primary application, like that of *πολύπονος* and *πολύαθλος*, is to mortals. Here, by contrast, the epithet refers to a deity, with the connotation of ‘causing many labors’ to mortals, *πολλοὺς μόχθους παρέχουσα τῷ βροτείῳ γένει*, as Smyth glosses it. LSJ’s free paraphrase (*s.v.* *πολύμοχθος* II, “Pass., *won by much toil, toilsome*, ἀρετά Arist. Fr.675.1”) amounts to the same thing. (Strictly *πολύμοχθος* is neither active nor passive; all it means is ‘involving much toil’. Either the one who imposes or the one who endures the toil can legitimately be so described; in the nature of things the epithet usually refers to the latter.) In other words, one would have expected *πολύμοχθος* to agree with *γένει βροτείῳ*, not with *Ἄρετᾶ*. “Ganz correct, aber doch recht kühn” was Wilamowitz’s just verdict on its use here.

In the second verse *θήραμα* is in apposition to *Ἄρετᾶ* and, like it, is followed first by an epithet, then by a dependent dative. All this

gives a first impression of a close structural balance, which is formal only. *θήραμα* means 'prey', 'object of the hunt'; the relationship of *θηρατής* to *θήραμα* normally is that of superior to inferior, stronger to weaker. *θήραμα*, unlike English 'quest', is formed from a word meaning 'beast'—*θήρ*. There is a Greek proverb which Aristotle quotes (or coins): *ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. θήραμα*, so far from being a word ordinarily applied to deity, normally would suggest, if anything, a polar contrast to it. Moreover, *θήραμα* is not a personal agent noun, but a neuter action noun; it denotes not a doer but an object, and formally corresponds to such nouns as *πράγμα* and *χρήμα*: a strange term to occur in apposition with a deity. All this must be kept in mind in order to appreciate the boldness of calling the divine Ἄρετά a *θήραμα*.¹¹ The two epithets, *πολύμοχθε* and *κάλλιστον*, correspond in appearance only. As we have seen, *πολύμοχθε* is boldly joined with Ἄρετά and would more normally have modified *γένει βροτείω*. In contrast, *κάλλιστον* is unexceptionally attached to *θήραμα*. Finally, the two datives are quite distinct in function. This can be seen by explicating the compendious word *βίω*; it stands for *τῷ βίω τοῦ βροτείου γένους* or, in ordinary prose, *ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίω*. Wilamowitz pointed the difference concisely by paraphrasing *οἱ ἄνθρωποι θηρῶσι τὸ κάλλιστον τῷ βίω*.¹²

The lesson of these first two verses is clear: all is not what it first seems in the dithyrambic style. It will be well to bear this in mind in interpreting what are probably the most disputed lines in the poem, 6–8:

τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις
καρπὸν ἰσαθάνατον χρυσοῦ τε κρείσσω
καὶ γονέων μαλακαυγήτοιό θ' ὕπνου.

καρπὸν: ἔμερον Kaibel ("requiro ἔμερον sim, i.e. *amorem auri, parentum, somni amore fortiolem*"): *κάρπωμ'* Hartung: *ἄρπυν* Bergk: *κάρτος* Bywater (et Ross): *χαρτὸν ludere possis* (cf. Soph. *Trach.* 228)

ἰσαθάνατον BKU (coniec'erant Bergk, Wil.¹³): *τ' ἀθάνατον* Ath.: *εἰς ἀθάνατον* Diog.Laert.

¹¹ Eur. *IA* 568 *μέγα τι θηρέειν ἀρετάν* is less bold, because *ἀρετάν* there is not personified. (The passage has a sophistic background; see R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Meno* [Cambridge 1964] 1 n.8.)

¹² Readers of Wilamowitz will recognize that this last detail is by no means my only debt to him in the treatment of these two verses; see Wilamowitz 407.

¹³ "The conjecture *ἰσαθάνατον*, confirmed by Didymus, is falsely attributed to Wilamowitz by Diehl, together with all recent editors. It was first advanced by Bergk, *PLG*², 520 (cf. *PLG*³, 664), who did not, however, incorporate it in the printed text. In the fourth edition he abandoned the suggestion and read *ἄρπυν ἐς ἀθάνατον*." Wor-

Here again on the surface the Greek looks straightforward; the syntax is simple (if one accepts *ισαθάνατον*). Furthermore, there is an external aid to interpretation: for it is all but certain that Aristotle's poem has been influenced by the famous *Paeon to Health* of Ariphron.¹⁴ Wilamowitz (406) noted the similarity and Bowra discusses it in detail.¹⁵ Thus, for example, both poems have a certain metrical resemblance (basically dactylo-epitrite).¹⁶ But much the most interesting set of correspondences for the understanding of verses 6–8 is to be found in verses 3–7 of Ariphron:

εἰ γὰρ τις ἢ πλούτου χάρις ἢ τεκέων
ἢ τᾶς ἰσοδαίμονος ἀνθρώποις βασιληίδος ἀρχᾶς ἢ πόθων
οὗς κρυφίοις Ἀφροδίτας ἔρκεσιν θηρεύομεν,
ἢ εἴ τις ἄλλα θεόθεν ἀνθρώποισι τέρψις ἢ πόνων
ἀμπνοὰ πέφανται . . .

All three genitives in Aristotle's comparison appear to have an analogue in Ariphron. *πλούτου* answers to *χρυσού*, *τεκέων* and *γονέων* both are illustrations from the sphere of the family, and *μαλα-*

mell 62 n.10. Wilamowitz (408–09) seems to have proposed the conjecture independently. In such cases the *ius primae noctis* of course belongs to the first claimant and we must not deny him his pleasure. But talk of false attributions can become excessive and imply dishonesty where none was intended. (Housman was inclined to be a bit *cerritus et furiosus* on the subject, and he has made others so.) If more than one prominent scholar independently arrives at the same conclusion, textual or other, we ought to know it. This is a question of cumulative, and legitimate, *auctoritas* which should always be taken into account.

¹⁴ *PMG* 813. The poem survives both in Athenaeus and on inscriptions; Sextus Empiricus, Plutarch, and Maximus of Tyre refer to it. Lucian calls it *τὸ γνωριμώτατον ἐκέينو καὶ πᾶσι διὰ στόματος*. See Page's *testimonia* for details. Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*³ II 221 n.2, conjectures "der Hymnus des Ariphron, der in Athen unter die Kultlieder aufgenommen ist, wohl gleich für diesen Kult [*sc.* of Asklepios at Athens] gedichtet."

¹⁵ 182–85. In view of n.13 *supra* I mention with hesitation that it was my independent observation of this similarity that first aroused my interest in Aristotle's poem.

¹⁶ See Bowra 184 for details. He stresses the beginnings of the poems: "Both openings may fairly be called Anapaestic . . . The connection of Anapaests with 'Dactylo-epitrites' is not common." Wilamowitz explains the opening of Aristotle's poem as Aeolic; the disagreement is due to the variants *βροτέω/βροτείω*. Bowra accepts the former, Wilamowitz, rightly in my view, the latter. The very fact that both poems are in dactylo-epitrite meter, apart from any uncommon metrical combinations, is itself probably significant (when one takes into account other similarities between the poems to be mentioned). If (a) two 'professional' poets were involved or (b) a 'simple' meter had been used (*e.g.* iambic trimeters, dactylic hexameters, elegiac couplets, etc.), this argument would be worthless. But it is a question of an amateur (Aristotle) and a moderately complex metrical scheme, and this may suggest dependence and direct imitation. That Aristotle was capable of producing a poem in a lyric meter is of interest. Recall Harvey's comment (*supra*) that Aristotle was "the last author we hear of as composing a *σκόλιον*."

καυγήτοιο ὕπνου, whether or not the reference is sexual (see *infra*), may be compared with Ariphron's πόθων κτλ. The verbal echo of θηρεύομεν in θήραμα is perhaps coincidence, but ἰσοδαίμονος and ἰσαθάνατον, both uncommon synonyms of ἰσόθεος, are not likely to be such. All in all, the evidence for imitation is impressive and accordingly the meaning of Aristotle's verses may appear unproblematic. The reality is otherwise.

I list the main difficulties. First, the soundness of καρπόν has often been called into question; the *apparatus criticus* above lists but a selection of the conjectures put forward. Page was concise and emphatic; "vix credibile," he observed. Second, ἰσαθάνατον, even after the discovery that such was the reading of the Didymus papyrus, has not been universally accepted; it wants further explication. Third, γονέων has been taken by some as referring to parents in particular, by others to ancestors in general. Fourth, μαλακαυγήτοιο, it has been suggested, does not describe the eyes, but the cheeks. Those who refer it to the cheeks are not in agreement as to whether the reference is amatory or not. Fifth, some say ὕπνου is here a symbol of repose, others of sex. Clearly, first impressions notwithstanding, the interpretation of this Greek is not easy.

Wilamowitz (408) believed that καρπὸς ἰσαθάνατος was identical with the symbolic 'apples of immortality' of Greek saga. That is fanciful, but he is correct to defend καρπόν. No convincing substitute has been proposed. What is wanted is not a word for 'desire' but for 'fruition', and that we have in καρπόν. Bywater's κάρτος . . . κρέσσον, 'mightier might', is, to my ear at least, a most inelegant *figura etymologica*, and κάρτος, with all its connotations of violence and bodily strength, is utterly inappropriate to this context. κάρτος τε βίη τε is the epic phrase (*Od.* 4.415, 6.197); Κράτος and Βία are known to all from Hesiod and *Prometheus*. Whatever is the objection to καρπός? The word is collocated with φρήν, as here, by Pindar: ὁ δὲ Ῥαδάμανθυς εὖ πέπραγεν, ὅτι φρενῶν ἔλαχε καρπὸν ἀμώμητον, οὐδ' ἀπάταισι θυμὸν τέρπεται ἔνδοθεν.¹⁷ I would bring into connection with Aristotle's verses some iambic trimeters of the sixth-century poet Ananius (fr.2 D., 3 W.):

εἴ τις καθείρξαι χρυσὸν ἐν δόμοις πολὺν
καὶ σῦκα βαιὰ καὶ δὴ ἢ τρεῖς ἀνθρώπους,
γνοίη χ' ὄσῳ τὰ σῦκα τοῦ χρυσοῦ κρέσσῳ.

Here we find the same phrase as in Aristotle, χρυσοῦ κρέσσῳ. Figs, says Ananius, are more precious than gold. Figs are a literal fruit; in

¹⁷ *Pyth.* 2.73–74; cf. *Ol.* 7.7–8, Μοισᾶν δόσιν . . . γλυκὺν καρπὸν φρενός.

Aristotle *καρπός* obviously is metaphorical fruit, but the passages are, in their way, similar. Whether or not Aristotle knew the verses of Ananius—and I believe that he did¹⁸—they are a piece of evidence in support of the soundness of *καρπόν*.

There is also little doubt, despite some dissenters, that *ισαθάνατον* is correct. It is important for the meaning of the poem to recognize this (see *infra*). Bergk may have been the first to think of the word, but it was Wilamowitz who first strongly advocated it. Hiller-Crusius remark, in apparent disapproval, “v. Wilamowitz *ισαθάνατον* proposuit, vocem novam atque singularem.” This is nothing but a Latin rendering of Wilamowitz’s own comment on the epithet—“neu und seltsam.” They neglect to mention that, in defense of such a formation, he has just appealed, and rightly so, to “das *διθνραμβῶδες* des stiles” (409). As we have seen, Wilamowitz’s conjecture was later confirmed by the Didymus papyrus; it is unreasonable to question it any longer. Ariphron’s *ισοδαίμων*, given the probable relationship between the two poems, should have decided the matter, papyrus or no. For the unusual compound compare also *ισοθάνατος*, which Sophocles used,¹⁹ and *ισάμμορος*, preserved by Hesychius.²⁰ The former is a parallel for the root *θανατ-* compounded with *ισ-*, the latter for an *alpha-*privative word so compounded.

The next problem of interpretation concerns the meaning of *γονέων* in verse 8. ‘More precious than parents’ would seem to be the obvious sense. *Odyssey* 9.34–35 has been compared, *ὥς οὐδὲν γλύκιον ἤς πατρίδος οὐδὲ τοκῆων γίγνεται*,²¹ as well as Pindar *Isthmian* 1.5, *τί*

¹⁸ The motif seems to have been familiar; see the tragic poet Achaëus *TrGF* 20F25: *πεινώτη δ’ ἀνδρὶ μάζα τιμωτέρα χρυσοῦ τε καλέφαντος, τιμωτέρα* suggests that *κρείσσω* in Aristotle and Ananius connotes ‘better’, ‘more precious’, rather than ‘stronger’; see LSJ s.v. *κρείττων* I.2 and IV. Compare also Heraclitus DK 22F9 (37 Marcovich), preserved by Aristotle (*Eth.Nic.* 1176a6ff): *καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτός φησιν ὄνους σύρματ’ ἂν ἐλεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ χρυσόν ἤδιον γὰρ χρυσοῦ τροφή ὄνους*.

¹⁹ Fr.359 Radt. Pollux, who preserves *ισοθάνατος* (6.174), considered it *οὐ πάνν ἀνεκτόν*.

²⁰ *ισάμμορος*: *δύσμορος*. Bergk cited this word. Schmidt in his edition of Hesychius thought *ισάμμορος* corrupt and conjectured *κάμμορος* (assuming a confusion of uncial K and IC); see also LSJ s.v. *ισάμμορος*. But *ισαθάνατος* and *ισάμμορος* provide mutual confirmation for the soundness of each other. (In the case of *ισάμμορος*, its alphabetical position under the letter *iota*, between *ἴσαμι* and *ἴσαν*, cannot be lightly dismissed.) *ισαθάνατος* stands in the same relation to *ισοθάνατος* as *ισάμμορος* to *ισόμορος* and *ισόμοιρος*. Compare also Eur. *Or.* 200 *ισόνεκος* ‘like one of the dead’ (so E. Fraenkel against LSJ: *Aeschylus Agamemnon* III [Oxford 1950] 695 n.2). For *iso-*compounds in general see Fraenkel’s copious material 680–83 and 695–98 on *Ag.* 1442f and 1470f; he does not cite *ισάθανατος* or *ισάμμορος*.

²¹ The comparison (made by Smyth *ad loc.* and Bowra 183) is a bit misleading, for the Greek continues *εἶ περ καὶ τις ἀπόπροθι πῖονα οἶκον γαίη ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ ναιεὶ ἀπάνευθε τοκῆων*. The statement is particular, not general.

φίλτερον κεδνῶν τοκέων ἀγαθοῖς; Valentin Rose, however, took the word as a poetic equivalent of εὐγένεια, 'noble ancestry', and this interpretation has been widely accepted. Wilamowitz,²² Smyth,²³ Jaeger,²⁴ Wormell,²⁵ Diehl-Beutler²⁶ all approve of it. Not so Page, who once again comments simply "vix credibile," apparently considering γονέων, in any sense, inappropriate here. LSJ s.v. γονεύς recognize, in addition to the usual meaning of the word ('begetter', 'parent'), a more general meaning, 'progenitor, ancestor'. Inspection of the three passages there adduced reveals special contextual circumstances in each instance. Herodotus 1.91.1: Κροῖσος δὲ πέμπτον γονέος ἀμαρτάδα ἐξέπλησε. Here πέμπτον makes all the difference and leaves no doubt of the meaning. Aristotle *Gen.An.* 722a8: ἔτι τοῖς ἄνωθεν γονεῦσιν εἰκόασιν . . . ἀποδιδῶσι γὰρ διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν αἱ ὁμοιότητες. Here again the addition of ἄνωθεν and of διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν prevents ambiguity. Isaeus 8.32: κελεύει γὰρ [sc. ὁ νόμος] τρέφειν τοὺς γονέας· γονεῖς δ' εἰσὶ μῆτηρ καὶ πατήρ καὶ πάππος καὶ τήθη καὶ τούτων μῆτηρ καὶ πατήρ, εἰάν ἔτι ζῶσιν· ἐκείνοι γὰρ ἀρχὴ τοῦ γένους ἐστὶ κτλ. The speaker is clearly distorting language for his own purposes (an inheritance is in question), and is forced to be very explicit in order to be understood. Wyse correctly refers to "the strained use of γονεύς," and states, "In Attic prose γονεῖς never means anything but 'parents'."²⁷ This may be true of 'Attic prose'; it is not true of Aristotle.

In fact, the most striking instances of γονεῖς='ancestors'²⁸ are to be found in Aristotle, and it is curious that both Bonitz in his *Index Aristotelicus* and LSJ have missed them. *Eth.Nic.* 1097b12, ἐπεκτείνοντι γὰρ ἐπὶ τοὺς γονεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀπογόνους; 1100a26f, τοῖς ἀποστήμασι πρὸς τοὺς γονεῖς παντοδαπῶς ἔχειν αὐτοὺς ἐνδέχεται; 1100a29f, ἄτοπον δὲ καὶ τὸ μηδὲν μηδ' ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον συνικνεῖσθαι τὰ τῶν ἐγγόνων τοῖς γονεῦσιν. Nevertheless, if γονεῖς can on occasion be used of ancestors, it cannot mean *noble* ancestors, which the interpretation

²² 408, "vorfahren (εὐγένεια, wie Rose richtig gesehen hat)."

²³ *ad loc.* (*supra* n.9), with hesitation: "γονέων=εὐγένεια, or perhaps *amor parentum.*"

²⁴ 118, "ancestors" (in the translation of the poem).

²⁵ 62, "noble birth" (in his translation).

²⁶ *ad loc.*: "γονέων intellegas maiores nobiles (Theog. 131s)." The citation of Theognis in this connection is remarkable, for the Greek is οὐδὲν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι πατρός καὶ μητρός ἄμεινον ἔπλετο!

²⁷ W. Wyse, *The Speeches of Isaeus* (Cambridge 1904) 611. He does not intend to suggest by his restriction "in Attic prose" that the word may be so used in poetry. He has just cited Hdt. 1.91.1 and is contrasting Attic prose with that one passage *dicis causa.*

²⁸ Compare LSJ s.v. πατήρ VII.1 for πατέρες 'forefathers'.

εὐγένεια demands. That is too great a semantic leap and hardly to be gotten out of this passage. Surely *γονεῖς* with its ordinary force, ‘parents’, makes the best sense in the context of this poem. Parents are the source of physical life for their offspring. Plato *Laws* 869b7–c2, ᾧ γὰρ μόνῳ οὐδ’ ἀμυνομένῳ θάνατον, μέλλοντι ὑπὸ τῶν γονέων τελευτήσεσθαι, παρέξει νόμος οὐδεὶς κτείνει τὸν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα, τοὺς εἰς φῶς τὴν ἐκείνου φύσιν ἀγαγόντας. So also Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 94, τοὺς γονέας . . . παρ’ ὧν . . . τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ ζῆν εἰλήφαμεν. The tragic poet Dicaeogenes wrote in a trimeter θεὸς μέγιστος τοῖς φρονούσιν οἱ γονῆς (*TrGF* 52F5; compare *Men. Mon.* 526, νόμιζεσαν τῶ τοὺς γονεῖς εἶναι θεούς). Aristotle himself gives ample evidence of sharing this attitude. He often collocates *θεοί* and *γονεῖς* when discussing *τιμὴ* and *φιλία* (*Eth.Nic.* 1162a4–5, 1163b15ff, 1164b5, 1165a24), and he several times states that parents are the cause of existence for their children, αἴτιος [*sc.* ὁ πατήρ] γὰρ τοῦ εἶναι, δοκοῦντος μεγίστου (1161a16f; compare 1162a6–7 and 1165a23, in both of which passages *γονεῖς* are explicitly mentioned as αἴτιοι τοῦ εἶναι). Precious though parents be because of their gift of physical life, more precious still is the moral gift of Virtue, for whom good men eagerly forfeit these same lives: σᾶς πέρι, παρθένε, μορφᾶς καὶ θανεῖν ζηλωτὸς ἐν Ἑλλάδι πότμος. In these verses lies a clue for the interpretation of *γονέων*.

The final phrase of the comparison, *μαλακαυγήτιο ὕπνου*, remains to be considered. Note that in form it is an expanded third member of a tricolon.²⁹ Wilamowitz (408) denied that *μαλακαύγητος* (“with languid eye,” LSJ) referred to the eyes at all; he saw rather a reference to the glow on the *cheeks* of a sleeping person: “jede mutter, die nachts sich über das bettchen ihres kleinsten beugt, wird den Aristoteles trotz seiner kühnheit verstehn.” This can hardly be correct. Ibycus 7.3 (*PMG* 288), ἀγανοβλέφαρος Πειθῶ; Pindar fr.123. 3–4, τὰς . . . ἀκτῖνας πρὸς ὄσσων μαρμαρυζοίσας; Licymnius 4 (*PMG* 771), Ὑπνος δὲ χαίρων ὀμμάτων ἀνγαῖς; *Carth.conn.* 34.c.1 (*PMG* 917), ᾧ Μοῦσ’ ἀγανόμματε μάτερ (if correctly restored); *PMG* 929.g, μαλακόμματος ὕπνος [γ]υῖα περι πάντα βαλῶν, ὡσεὶ μάτηρ παιδ’ ἀγαπα[τ]ὸν χρόνιον ἰδοῦσα φίλω [κ]όλπῳ πτέρυγας ἀμφέβαλεν.³⁰ Bowra (183) acquiesced in Wilamowitz’s view that *μαλακαύγητος* described softly glowing cheeks. Unlike Wilamowitz, however, Bowra

²⁹ See Fraenkel (*supra* n.20) 574 on Aesch. *Ag.* 1243.

³⁰ This last passage does not support Wilamowitz’s ‘mother/child’ interpretation, as a careful reading of it will show (*μαλακόμματος ὕπνος*). The papyrus that preserves this fragment was first published in 1932 and was not known to Wilamowitz when he put forward his views on *μαλακαύγητος*.

thought the reference to be erotic and compared two well-known passages, Phrynichus Tragicus fr.13 and Sophocles *Antigone* 783–84, both of which explicitly mention cheeks (*παρειαί*) and accordingly prove nothing. *μαλακαύγητος ὕπνος* means ‘soft-eyed sleep’; in and of itself the phrase could occur in both amatory and non-amatory contexts. It is not impossible that Aristotle had in mind specifically τὰ ἀφροδίσια, but the whole tenor of the poem inclines me to think that he intended a more general reference (not necessarily excluding sex). Just as the third and fourth verses are suggestive of the force of *γονέων* in this comparison, so too verse 5, καὶ πόρους τλήναι μαλερούς ἀκάμαντας, points the way to a correct understanding of *μαλακαυγήτοιο θ’ ὕπνου*. The contrast is explicit: action *versus* repose (*πόρους/ὕπνου*), endurance *versus* softness (*τλήναι/μαλακ-*). For Aristotle’s view of the relative merits of rest and activity see *Eth.Nic.* 1176b34ff: ἀναπαύσει . . . ἔοικεν ἢ παιδιά, ἀδυνατοῦντες δὲ συνεχῶς πονεῖν ἀναπαύσεως δέονται. οὐ δὴ τέλος ἢ ἀνάπανσις γίνεται γὰρ ἔνεκα τῆς ἐνεργείας. δοκεῖ δ’ ὁ εὐδαίμων βίος κατ’ ἀρετὴν εἶναι· οὗτος δὲ μετὰ σπουδῆς, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐν παιδιᾷ.

If the quite reasonable assumption that Ariphron’s *Paeon to Health* was the immediate model for this passage be accepted, then it becomes possible to say something about Aristotle’s method of poetic composition. Bowra (183) states that in all three points of comparison Aristotle “follows on the lines marked by Ariphron.” This does not go far enough. The ancients considered the conscious reworking of borrowed material in a novel manner to be a touchstone of true originality.³¹ Aristotle does not mechanically imitate Ariphron’s verses, but inventively uses them to achieve a quite different effect.

Ariphron in a straightforward manner states that every grace and delight flourishes along with Health. He mentions first *πλούτου χάρις*; the connotations of *πλοῦτος* are clear and simple—material wealth and riches, originally of produce and livestock, later often monetary. For this word Aristotle substitutes *χρυσός*. There is a world of difference in the connotation. To quote Martin West: “Gold is the metal of the gods, not only rare and precious but spotless and incorruptible . . . In Greek we find it standing for moral sincerity: Thgn. 449 ff. *εὐρήσεις δέ με πᾶσιν ἐπ’ ἔργμασιν ὥσπερ ἀπεφθον χρυσόν . . . τοῦ χροίης καθύπερθε μέλας οὐχ ἄπτεται ἰός οὐδ’ εὐρώς . . .*”³² For the connotative distinction between *πλοῦτος* and *χρυσός* the famous opening of

³¹ See on this *CP* 71 (1976) 97–105.

³² *Hesiod Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 178. (Of course *χρυσός* can also have a pejorative sense in certain contexts. See especially Eur. fr.324 N.², interesting for the contrast with parents and children.)

Pindar's *First Olympian* is instructive: ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ ἄτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μέγανος ἔξοχα πλούτου. Next Ariphron mentions the χάρις τεκέων, the meaning of which is self-evident. Aristotle takes his cue from this, but by substituting γονέων for τεκέων, parents for children, and stating, in seeming contradiction to traditional Greek moral and legal standards, that something else is more precious than parents (gods excepted), he becomes so allusive—so dithyrambic—that he has baffled critics. Some were troubled enough by this that they attempted to explain γονέων as a reference to noble birth; Page resigned himself to pronouncing the word incredible. I have attempted above to explain the real force of γονέων in the context of this poem. It cannot be said that Aristotle's meaning is immediately evident. Once again, the contrast with his model is obvious. Ariphron goes on to mention sexual desire—πόθων οὓς κρυφίους Ἀφροδίτας ἔρκεσιν θηρεύομεν. It is not apparent that Aristotle's μαλακαυγήτοιό θ' ὕπνου must have precisely the same reference; gentle sleep as a symbol of pleasant inactivity in general would seem more relevant here. The poem is intended to memorialize the painful and heroic death of Hermias, αἰδιδμος ἔργοις (17).

Aristotle has condensed Ariphron's full and unambiguous language and at the same time broadened the content. There may be some obscurity, but the effect is pleasing. μαλακαυγήτος, doubtless Aristotle's own coinage, is a fine example of a compound epithet in the dithyrambic style. So too is ἰσαθάνατος, which surely is an adaptation of Ariphron's ἰσοδαίμων. Aristotle's original use of his material is particularly clear here. ἰσοδαίμων is not new with Ariphron; examples of it survive in both Aeschylus and Pindar. In all three instances the word is associated with kings: Aesch. *Pers.* 634 ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεύς; Pind. *Nem.* 4.84 βασιλεύσιν ἰσοδαίμονα . . . φῶτα; Ariphron (4) τᾶς ἰσοδαίμονος ἀνθρώποις βασιληίδος ἀρχᾶς. This is adequate to suggest that Ariphron has used a traditional epithet in a traditional sense. In formation ἰσοδαίμων is quite regular and presumably modeled directly on ἰσόθεος. By contrast, Aristotle's ἰσαθάνατος, almost certainly his own creation, is a bold and rare composition on an *alpha-*privative stem. He transfers the epithet from the material sphere of worldly advantages, in particular kingship, to the spiritual happiness that Virtue confers. Is it extravagant to recall that it was a king that did Hermias to death? The use of a compound in -αθάνατος, echoed below in verse 18 by ἀθάνατον, makes Aristotle's meaning quite plain. Over the life of the virtuous man death shall have no dominion.

Several other expressions in the poem call for comment. 15–16:

σᾶς δ' ἔνεκεν φιλίου μορφᾶς Ἄταρνέος
 ἔντροφος ἀελίου χήρωσεν ἀγᾶς.

ἀγᾶς· ἀγᾶς, ἀγᾶς (sic) vv.11.

Ἄταρνέος ἔντροφος, ‘nursling of Atarneus’, is of course Hermias; nowhere in the poem is he mentioned by name. I quote Werner Jaeger: “While the nationalist party at Athens, led by Demosthenes, was blackening the character of the deceased, while public opinion was dubious about him in Hellas and feeling ran very high throughout the land against Philip and his partisans, Aristotle sent out into the world this poem, in which he declared himself passionately on the side of the dead man” (117). This is a fine appreciation, but somewhat exaggerated. The probable chronology is as follows. Aristotle left Athens in 347 and Hermias was executed in 341. After an absence of approximately thirteen years Aristotle returned to Athens in 335; then only did he found his school at the Lyceum. Thus at the time of Hermias’ death Aristotle was far from Athens and its ‘nationalist party’, and, while doubtless a man of a certain prominence, hardly the famous figure he was to become. Whether he was yet in a sufficiently influential position to contemplate realistically ‘sending out into the world’ an open political statement is uncertain. Perhaps he was in such a position; the two words Ἄταρνέος ἔντροφος suggest that such was not the primary purpose of this poem. Is it conceivable that Aristotle, a practical man of real political experience, would have completely omitted the name of Hermias from the poem if his immediate audience was intended to be the general public of Hellas and not rather a select group? Hermias was an important politician, but hardly so important that ‘nursling of Atarneus’ alone would be an allusion intelligible to all. There is no other hint in the poem of the identity of the honoree. More importantly, if Aristotle had in mind the composition of an open poetic epistle, would he have chosen in the first place the obscure and allusive style of the dithyramb? Jaeger is correct to this extent; the poem is a passionate declaration, but the personal one of friend grieving for friend. Aristotle wrote this poem first and foremost for himself and for a small circle of mutual friends and philosophers.

These two words can tell us more. ἔντροφος used as a substantive survives in one other classical passage, Euripides *IA* 289, Αἴας . . . ὁ Σαλαμῖνος ἔντροφος. In the immediately preceding sentence of the poem (13–14) Aristotle adduces Ajax as an exemplum; he then uses

ἔντροφος of Hermias. Whether he borrowed this uncommon usage of ἔντροφος from Euripides I cannot say. That may well be mere coincidence. But consider the meaning of ἔντροφος as a substantive; it means ‘native’, ‘native son’. That is how Euripides used it of Ajax, ‘native of Salamis’, and that is how the word is used later by Antiphilus in an epigram (*Anth.Pal.* 9.242.2), *Θασίων ἔντροφος αἰγιαλῶν*, “native of Thasos’ shores,” as Gow and Page render it. The significance of this appears to have been overlooked. Hermias, like other prominent politicians, had been the object of much slander, in particular concerning his origins (see Wormell 66ff). ‘Slave’, ‘barbarian’, ‘Bithynian’—such were the accusations. ἐν Ἑλλάδι in 4 and Ἄταρνεός ἔντροφος supplement each other; whatever the facts, Aristotle clearly represents Hermias as a free Greek, a native son of Atarneus and no slave from abroad.

ἄελίου χήρωσεν ἀγᾶς has caused trouble. Rose, Smyth, and others, bothered by the sense, prefer to print the genitive singular ἀγᾶς. Here are Smyth’s comments: “*χήρωσεν*: ‘bereft himself’ = *ἐχηρώσατο* . . . The alternative reading *χήρωσεν ἀγᾶς* preserves the grammar at the expense of dithyrambic extravagance—*sic declaratur desiderium, quod Sol sentiat, quum Hermias non amplius in conspectum eius veniat* (Ilgen), ‘left desolate the light of the Sun’.” It should be apparent by now that ‘dithyrambic extravagance’ is more likely to be a recommendation than an objection in this poem. The usual motif is that the dead leave the light of the sun. *τίπτ’ αὐτ’, ὦ δύστηνε*, says Teiresias to Odysseus in the underworld, *λιπὼν φάος ἡελίοιο ἤλυθες, ὄφρα ἴδῃ νέκρας καὶ ἀτερπέα χῶρον;* (*Od.* 11.93–94). For *χηρώω* so used see *Anth.Pal.* 7.172.5–7 (Antipater of Sidon): *καὶ μέ τις . . . ἔχιδνα . . . ἡελίου χήρωσεν*. But to introduce that thought here is to substitute the commonplace for the exquisite, contrary to the whole style of the poem.³³

³³ The type of conceit which Aristotle affects may be illustrated by some verses of Housman’s (*More Poems*, XXVI):

Good creatures, do you love your lives
And have you ears for sense?
Here is a knife like other knives,
That cost me eighteen pence.
I need but stick it in my heart
And down will come the sky,
And earth’s foundations will depart
And all you folk will die.

The second stanza shows the same inversion of the relationship between individual and the external world as in Aristotle’s phrase.

Verses 18–21 contain one final crux, minor in itself, but of interest as an illustration of Aristotle’s use of poetic diction:

ἀθάνατόν τέ μιν αὐξήσουσι Μοῦσαι,
 Μναμοσύνας θυγάτρεις, Δι-
 ὄς ξενίου σέβας αὔξου-
 σαι φιλίας τε γέρας βεβαίον.

The repetition αὐξήσουσι . . . αὔξουσαι has seemed offensive to many. Some consider the participle corrupt, others the indicative. Bergk’s ἀσκούσαι for αὔξουσαι is perhaps the best representative of the former approach, Wilamowitz’s αὐδήσουσι for αὐξήσουσι of the latter. Wilamowitz himself pronounced his own conjecture “simpel und sicher,” and it has been accepted by Kern, Bidez, Wormell, and Düring. Wormell is emphatic (62 n.10): “The repetition αὐξήσουσι, αὔξουσαι is intolerable in a poem in which significant verbal echoes play so great a part, and αὐξήσουσι may well be a scribal error caused by the following αὔξουσαι.” I consider the transmitted text sound. (1) Aristotle does not avoid repetition in this poem; indeed, he appears to affect it: σᾶς (3, 15), σεῦ (9), σοῖς (13); μορφᾶς (3, 15); ἔργοις (11, 17); Διός (9?, 19); φιλίον (15), φιλίας (21); τλήναι (5), ἀνέτλασαν (11). (2) αὐξήσουσι/αὔξουσαι is a ‘significant verbal echo’, and serves to link Hermias with Zeus, patron of friends, and with the reverential honor attached to steadfast friendship (19–21). These themes are central to the poem; recall its occasion. (3) The syntax is different. αὐξήσουσι governs direct object and predicate adjective, αὔξουσαι direct object only. Both constructions, in precisely the (honorific) sense desiderated here, are well attested; see LSJ s.v. αὐξάνω I.2, 3. Thus Aristotle, while using the same word, achieves variety. (4) The specific ‘repetition of verb and participle of same stem in same sentence’ is affected elsewhere in Greek poetry. To James Diggle’s examples³⁴ (all from tragedy) add the following: *Od.* 11.222 ἀποπταμένη πεπότῃται; Simon. fr. 121.3 D. (9.3 P.) οὐδέ τεθνάσι θανόντες; Aesch. *Cho.* 504 οὐτῶ γὰρ οὐ τέθνηκας οὐδέ περ θανῶν; *PV* 790–92 ὅταν περάσης ρείθρον ἠπείρου ὄρον . . . πόντου περῶσα φλοῖσβον κτλ.; [Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 1.1 ταῦθ’ ἐλόμενοι εἶλοντο τοὺς πονηροὺς ἄμεινον πράττειν ἢ τοὺς χρηστούς; Antiphon 6.1 καὶ εὐχόμενος ἂν τις ταῦτα εὐξαιτο; Ag. *Eq.* 286–87 καταβοήσομαι βοῶν σε. κατακεκράξομαί σε κράζων; Eur. *Bacch.* 332 φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς; *El.* 1310 καὶ σ’ ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος; Pl. *Phd.* 60D

³⁴ *Studies on the Text of Euripides* (Oxford 1981) 66–67.

ἐποίησας ἀντά, πρότερον οὐδὲν πάποτε ποιήσας; *Soph.* 263D ἔοικεν ἢ τοιαύτη σύνθεσις ἔκ τε ῥημάτων γιγνομένη καὶ ὀνομάτων ὄντως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς γίνεσθαι λόγος ψευδής; Plotinus 6.7.22 καὶ ἕως τί ἐστὶν ἀνωτέρω τοῦ παρόντος, αἴρεται φύσει ἄνω αἰρομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ δόντος τὸν ἔρωτα. *Hdt.* 5.95.1 φεύγων ἐκφεύγει is representative of a number of expressions involving the participle of φεύγειν and compounds of the same verb.³⁵ LXX *Gen.* 22.17 ἢ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου is a Hebraism, but the other examples adduced above, most of them more striking than Aristotle's collocation, should suffice to show that the usage is no solecism.

III

It remains to consider whether the poem can be shown to reflect formal philosophical doctrine. In theory there is nothing extravagant about such an assumption. Aristotle and Hermias shared common philosophical interests, and the well-known elegiac fragment of Aristotle's in praise of Plato contains several phrases which may derive from philosophy.³⁶ Both Wilamowitz and Jaeger have in fact seen philosophical elements in the poem. Neither scholar should be dismissed without a hearing. Wilamowitz (410–12) identified the *μορφά* of Areta with the Platonic Form (*ιδέα, εἶδος*) of the highest good, and concluded that the poem was consequently "in its entire conception contradictory." An individual, says Wilamowitz, possesses a Form by participation in it, by *μέθεξις*; it is not external to him, but internal. One does not pursue what one already has. Such logic has, in my view, no place in a poem, but, if any feel the force of the supposed contradiction, let them rather resolve it by concluding that *μορφά* is not a Platonic Form here (on which more below). Wilamowitz considers next verse 12, where he reads *ἔργοις σὰν ἀγρεύοντες δύναμιν*. This expression he interprets in the context of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The pursuit of the *δύναμις* of virtue is "quite Aristotelian," since

³⁵ For some examples see D. Tarrant, *The Hippias Maior* (Cambridge 1928) 58 on 292A *ἂν μὴ ἐκφύγω φεύγων αὐτόν*, and for discussion of the sense K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes Clouds* (Oxford 1968) 116.

³⁶ Fr.673 Rose. See on these verses Jaeger 106–10 and also *CQ* 21 (1927) 13–17. For philosophical language note especially 5 *μεθόδοισι λόγων* and 7 *οὐ νῦν δ' ἔστι λαβεῖν*. With the former expression compare Pl. *Polit.* 226D *τῇ τοιαύτῃ μεθόδῳ τῶν λόγων*, *Epist.* 2.314D *τῇ μεθόδῳ τῶν λόγων*, *Resp.* 435D *μεθόδων, οἷαις νῦν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις χρώμεθα* (*μέθοδος* is of course frequent in Aristotle: Bonitz *Index s.v.*); for the latter expression cf. Jaeger's remarks 109 n.2.

Aristotle states in the *Ethics* τὰς . . . ἀρετὰς λαμβάνομεν ἐνεργήσαντες πρότερον, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν (1103a31–32). So far so good, observes Wilamowitz. But, he proceeds, virtue is not a δύναμις but a ἔξις according to Aristotle. Virtue so conceived is no proper object of a poem; here also, concludes the great scholar, the poem admits of no fully satisfying interpretation.

This flat pronouncement of Wilamowitz's has the merit of focusing the question and forcing us to make a choice. Either (i) Aristotle could not use correctly his own technical term δύναμις or (ii) Wilamowitz has misunderstood a correct technical use or (iii) the word is not technical here. In reality, δύναμις in Aristotle's philosophy is an extremely complex term with several meanings. (Bonitz devotes four columns to it in his *Index Aristotelicus*.) The pitfalls of introducing a philosophical δύναμις to this poem can be easily illustrated. Bowra (188) paraphrases and expands upon Wilamowitz's interpretation, albeit to reject it. He begins by adducing what he calls "the most obvious parallel, which Wilamowitz does not actually cite"—in fact it is the sentence immediately preceding the sentence which Wilamowitz does cite—a 'parallel' in which Aristotle states that we acquire δυνάμεις first (πρότερον) and then (ὑστερον) ἐνέργειαι. Since Aristotle is speaking here of τὰ φύσει ὄντα, which he has just explicitly contrasted with ethical virtues, none of which, he states, are φύσει, I do not see the relevance of the parallel. But Bowra proceeds; "If the poem uses δύναμις in this special sense, it means that in noble actions men pursue the potentiality of acting even more nobly, or as Wilamowitz says 'die Tugend ist in der Energie eher vorhanden als in der Dynamis'." That is to say, Bowra applies to virtuous deeds a parallel from Aristotle in which δύναμις is not used of virtue and which makes δύναμις prior to ἐνέργεια, and then quotes Wilamowitz who states the opposite, as if Wilamowitz were saying the same thing.³⁷ Neither scholar takes into account the different senses in which Aristotle uses 'prior' (πρότερον), which could further complicate the issue. I shall refrain from so doing, for the original suggestion that δύναμις is technical here seems to me unfortunate and to lead nowhere.

The text itself is doubtful and Page was prudent to dagger it.³⁸ Without knowing the verb which governs δύναμιν, it is precarious to argue for any philosophical doctrine. If ἀγρεύοντες is sound, it prob-

³⁷ Bowra's "acting even more nobly" (emphasis mine), not to be got out of the poem, is perhaps an attempt at reconciliation.

³⁸ σὰν ἀγρεύοντες Ath.: ἀναγορεύοντες D.L.:]εποντε[BKU: σὰν ἀγορεύοντες Ross: σὰν ἀνειπόντες Bowra.

ably is a continuation of the metaphor in verse 2 *θήραμα*. Moreover, the possessive *σάν* (12) clearly shows that the *δύναμις* belongs to Areta and not to men.³⁹ This alone should have excluded any attempt to introduce a formal Aristotelian theory of human ethics into the poem. In reality non-technical *δύναμις* is perfectly at home in Greek poetry. Theognis 373–74, *Ζεῦ φίλε . . . ἀνάσσεις τιμὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μεγάλην δύναμιν*; 718, *ὡς πλοῦτος πλείστην πᾶσιν ἔχει δύναμιν*; *TrGF Adesp.* 129, *ὦ χρυσέ . . . κρείσσον' ἔχων δύναμιν*; Aesch. *Ag.* 779, *δύναμιν οὐ σέβουσα πλούτου*. If Areta has, say, a *δύναμις χρυσοῦ κρείστων*, what need of involving philosophy?

Jaeger, unlike Wilamowitz, makes no attempt to detect technical Aristotelian language in the poem. On the other hand, he agrees with Wilamowitz in regarding Areta as a Platonic Form, and not merely a personified abstraction (108–09). The significance of this for Jaeger is enormous and must be given in his own words (118): “The unique value of this poem for our knowledge of Aristotle’s philosophical development has never been exploited. For the most part it has been regarded merely as a human document, but it shows that when Aristotle had completed his destructive criticism of Plato’s Idea, exact thinking and religious feeling went separate paths in him. To the scientific part of himself there was no longer any such thing as an Idea when he wrote these lines, but in his heart it lived on as a religious symbol, as an ideal.” Wormell (63) accepts Jaeger’s conclusions fully, although Bowra (188–89) did not, nor, most recently, does Guthrie.⁴⁰ Jaeger has quite correctly perceived that the key to the understanding of the entire poem is its very first word—*Ἀρετά*. Is she Form or not, that is the question. In support of his view that she is, Jaeger pointed out that *μορφά* occurs twice (3 and 13).

Bowra replied that *μορφά* is a reference to the beauty of *Ἀρετά* “probably due in the first place to Prodicus, and in the second place to the natural poetic habit of ascribing beauty to supernatural powers however abstract.” He further argues that *μορφή* is the wrong word if the reference is to a Platonic Form or Idea, that *μορφή* in fact is used of manifold appearance in contrast to Forms. He compares for this

³⁹ Note the recurrent polyptoton of the possessive adjective: *σᾶς* (3), *σάν* (12), *σοῦς* (13), *σᾶς* (15); also the pronoun *σεῦ* (9).

⁴⁰ *Supra* n.6: 33–34. Guthrie’s conclusions, which I read after forming my own, seem on the whole sensible to me. But he states, rather than argues, his position and the reader will, I trust, find little duplication in his treatment and mine. From Guthrie (32 n.1) I have also learned of J. Crosssett’s paper “Aristotle as a Poet: The Hymn to Hermes,” *PhQ* 66 (1967) 145–55. This paper seems to me to lack philological rigor and to propose an interpretation of the poem, based on Aristotle’s formal philosophical works, which is fanciful.

'pluralistic' use of *μορφή* Philolaus DK 44F5 and Plato *Resp.* 380D. That *μορφή* can refer to physical form (beautiful if the context so require) is certainly true. Sophocles *El.* 1158–59: ὅς σ' ὤδέ μοι προῦπεμψεν ἀντὶ φιλάτης μορφῆς σποδόν τε καὶ σκιὰν ἀνωφελῆ. The usage is normal and need not be documented in detail. To this extent Bowra is correct. His attempt to demonstrate, against Jaeger, that *μορφή* could not refer to a Platonic Form fails completely.⁴¹ Yes, *μορφή* is used, both in philosophical and other contexts, of multiform reality; compare *πολύμορφος*. Why should it not? The word, in and of itself, means 'form' without further qualification. What induced Bowra to confine it to that sense I leave to others to conjecture. Aeschylus in *Prometheus* describes Themis/Gaea as *πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφή μία* (210). So too Euripides fr.484.2, ὡς οὐρανός τε γαῖά τ' ἦν μορφή μία (before their separation); Apollonius Rhodius 1.497, τὸ πρὶν ἔτ' ἀλλήλοισι μῆ συναρηρότα μορφῆ; *Erinomis* 981A, ὅταν μία συνελθούσα σύστασις ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀποτέκη μίαν μορφήν. That Plato always contrasted *εἶδος* and *μορφή* is simply false. *Resp.* 381C (of the gods): κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος ὢν εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν μένει ἀεὶ ἀπλῶς ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ μορφῇ. *Phd.* 104D: ἐπὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον . . . ἢ ἐναντία ἰδέα ἐκείνη τῇ μορφῇ ἢ ἂν τοῦτο ἀπεργάζεται οὐδέ ποτ' ἂν ἔλθοι.⁴² Bowra has also forgotten that Aristotle uses *μορφή* for his formal cause, his *εἶδος*. "principium formale, quod peculiari nomine *εἶδος* Ar appellat . . . etiam *μορφῆς* nomine significat," observes Bonitz.⁴³ Jaeger was perfectly justified in appealing to *μορφά* in defense of his thesis. It does not follow that his thesis is correct.

μορφά cannot be faulted, but there are other, and, in my opinion, decisive objections to the notion that Areta represents the Platonic Form of human virtue. One thing is certain. Whatever one call Areta in this poem—abstraction, personification, allegory, *Augenblicksgott*, clearly she is represented as a personal and divine being. In the first verse she is contrasted with the human race, and she confers upon

⁴¹ The suggestion that Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* was a direct influence on Aristotle's conception of *Ἀρετά* (by no means confined to Bowra), while not impossible, is undemonstrable and superfluous. The allegorization of *ἀρετά* occurs already in the famous verses of Hes. *Op.* 289–92. So also Simon. fr.74 P., ἐστὶ τις λόγος τὰν Ἀρετὰν ναίειν δυσαμβάτοις ἐπὶ πέτραις κτλ.; Bacchyl. 13(12).175f, οὐ γὰρ ἀλαμπεί νυκτὸς πασιφανῆς Ἀρετὰ κρυφθεῖσ' ἀμανροῦνται. One tends to forget, despite constant reiteration, that we possess precious little classical Greek. This question of possible borrowing from Prodicus is of secondary importance, as it does not affect the fundamental meaning of the poem.

⁴² John Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford 1911) 118 on 103E5: "τὴν ἐκείνου μορφήν: i.e. τὴν ἐκείνου ἰδέαν, τὸ ἐκείνου εἶδος. The three words are synonyms."

⁴³ *Index Aristotelicus* 474a28–30. Note especially *Metaph.* 1033b5–6: τὸ εἶδος, ἢ ὁτιδήποτε χρὴ καλεῖν τὴν ἐν τῷ αἰσθητῷ μορφήν.

mortals something in kind “like unto the immortals,” that is, the gods. The whole tenor of the poem is religious and the common description of it as a hymn is, if not strictly accurate, reasonable. So much is generally conceded. Consider now the following. (1) In Plato gods and Forms are regularly kept distinct. Gods are souls, they are dynamic, they are, in a sense, personal. The Forms are impassive and unmoved paradigms; they are impersonal.⁴⁴ The conclusion of the poem shows that Areta is to be taken on a plane with the Muses, Mnemosyne, and Zeus—and surely subordinate to the last, were one to raise the question. She is, in short, a god, not a Form. (2) In his speculations on what Jaeger—and we—would call the ‘divine Form of virtue’, Plato introduced a technical vocabulary; he regularly uses τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό, ἡ ἰδέα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, τὸ κάλλος αὐτό, and similar expressions. Plato discusses the several Forms of particular ἀρεταί—Justice, Temperance, and so forth—but when it comes to the highest Virtue, his language tends to change.⁴⁵ In short, it is questionable whether the word Ἄρετά would necessarily suggest to a Platonist the highest Form. (3) It is most doubtful, terminology apart, whether Aristotle is thinking primarily either of universal Virtue or the Form thereof in his poem. The composition celebrates the unflinching death of Hermias. Manly endurance (πολύμοχθε, τλήναι, ἀνέτλασαν) and acceptance of death with honor (θανεῖν ζηλωτός, Ἄϊδαο δόμους ἦλθον) are the particular qualities glorified herein, and all the exempla—Heracles, the Dioscuri, Achilles, Ajax—illustrate this. It is a question of ἀνδρεία, and ἀρετή is often used specifically of that one virtue. εὐπόλεμος Ἄρετή appears in an Athenian epigram *ca* 400 B.C. (Kaibel 34, *IG* II² 6859). No one thinks of Heracles and Achilles and Ajax as representative types of σωφροσύνη or σοφία.⁴⁶ To assert that Aristotle regarded such warriors as symbols of the ultimate Platonic Form of moral and intellectual Virtue seems a hard saying.⁴⁷ (4) The conclusion of the

⁴⁴ The question of the relation between Soul, God, Form in Plato is most complex and nowhere fully resolved by him, and specialists will see at once that I am oversimplifying. I trust that they will grant that, for present purposes, the oversimplification is neither unfair nor unjustified.

⁴⁵ For Plato’s recognition of the problem of the unity and plurality of ἀρετή/ἀρεταί see *Leg.* 963c ff.

⁴⁶ The Stoic idealisation of Heracles is later and, of course, irrelevant.

⁴⁷ Jaeger appears to have felt this to some extent, but his comments (118–19) do not satisfactorily explain away the difficulty. For Aristotle’s attitude towards Achilles and Ajax a passage in *An.Post.* (97b16ff) is perhaps significant. There, discussing the correct method of definition, he takes as an illustration μεγαλοψυχία. As instances of this quality he cites together Achilles, Ajax, and—Alcibiades: οἶον εἰ Ἄλκιβιάδης μεγαλόψυχος ἢ ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς καὶ ὁ Αἴας, τί ἐν ἅπαντες; τὸ μὴ ἀνέχεσθαι ὑβριζόμενοι· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐπολέμησεν, ὁ δ’ ἐμήνισεν, ὁ δ’ ἀπέκτεινεν ἑαυτόν.

poem proclaims that Hermias shall be immortalized in song. That is a traditional motif and represents no true immortality in the ontological sense.⁴⁸ The contrast with Plato is self-evident. For him Soul is literally immortal, the Forms eternal.

The notion that Ἄρετά is a Platonic Form thus breaks down under closer analysis. Either Aristotle was incapable of incorporating the theory of Forms into a self-consistent poem or he has chosen to use traditional, and not philosophical, material. Surely the latter is correct. Had this poem come down anonymously, no one would have thought of interpreting it otherwise. Compare the well-known epigram of Asclepiades, composed not long after Aristotle's death:

Ἄδ' ἐγὼ ἂ τλάμων Ἄρετὰ παρὰ τῷδε κάθημαι
 Αἴαντος τύμβῳ κειραμένα πλοκάμους,
 θυμὸν ἄχει μεγάλῳ βεβολημένα εἰ παρ' Ἀχαιοῖς
 ἂ δολόφρων Ἄπάτα κρέσσον ἐμεῦ δύναται.⁴⁹

“On the tomb of Aias surmounted by a figure of Arete,” remark Gow and Page. Aristotle's Ἄρετά has closer affinities with this τλάμων Ἄρετά than with the world of Forms. We may regret the fact that the Hermias poem can tell us nothing about Aristotle's development as a philosopher, but we must acknowledge that such is the case.⁵⁰

The poem remains a precious human document; it is genuinely moving. Moreover, and this has not, I think, been remarked, the poem does throw some light on Aristotle as a professional intellectual—not the philosopher of the *Metaphysics* or the *Ethics*, but the critic of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* who has so much to say about poetic theory and diction. In my analysis of certain difficult verses from the Hermias poem I have tried to illustrate Aristotle's command of the contemporary dithyrambic style. One may assume that any educated Greek was capable of composing elegiac couplets or iambic trimeters of sorts; the present performance is on quite a different level. The poem reveals a polished combination of traditional material and mod-

⁴⁸ Recall that in 13–14 Achilles and Ajax were explicitly said to have gone to the house of Hades.

⁴⁹ *Anth.Pal.* 7.145; Gow and Page, *Hellenistic Epigrams* (Oxford 1968) Asclepiades 29. The poem was imitated by Antipater (*Anth.Pal.* 7.146; *Hellenistic Epigrams* Antipater 7) and Mnasalces *apud* Ath. 163A (*Hellenistic Epigrams* Mnasalces 17), which clearly suggests that it was a familiar piece.

⁵⁰ Note a small detail. In 17 when Aristotle introduces an inferential particle, a term for ‘therefore’, he chooses *τοιγάρ*. This word occurs nowhere else in Aristotle or, for that matter, in extant Attic prose. Other words for ‘therefore’ (*ἄρα*, *τοίνυν*, etc.) are of course common in his works. So great is the distance between Aristotle the formal logician and Aristotle the poet.

ern technique. That Aristotle was in possession of the necessary equipment for such an elaborate and stylized poetic composition is of considerable interest, both historical and literary.⁵¹

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA BARBARA
July, 1982

⁵¹ A version of this paper was delivered as a lecture at Boston College, under the auspices of the Department of Classical Studies, on February 22, 1982.