

MICHAEL PASCHALIS

Political Verse vs Homeric Hexameter in John Tzetzes' *Allegories of the Iliad***Abstract**

Modern readers are misled by the sneers Tzetzes heaps upon the 'unmetrical' political verse to believe that he considered it entirely unworthy of competing with the Homeric hexameter. These characterizations are, however, absent from the *Allegories of the Iliad*, the *Allegories of the Odyssey*, and the *Theogony*. In the *Allegories of the Iliad* it is the virtues of didactic discourse and consequently of political verse that dominate. These are: clarity, comprehensibility, conciseness, accuracy, and sharpness of detail. By exploiting these virtues Tzetzes offers remarkably concise, comprehensible, and accurate adaptations of Homeric scenes and passages, and he also successfully employs classical stylistic features, which ennoble the status of political verse. His aim is to show that political verse is not only a match for the Homeric hexameter, a worthy rival, but capable of surpassing it.

Keywords

political verse (virtues), hexameter, Homeric δεινότης, etymology, paronomasia, parechesis

University of Crete

Riassunto

I lettori moderni si fanno trarre in inganno dalle parole di scherno che Tzetzes rivolge contro il verso politico 'non metrico', tanto da credere che egli lo considerasse del tutto indegno di competere con l'esametro omerico. Tuttavia, questa caratterizzazione è assente dalle *Allegorie dell'Iliade*, dalle *Allegorie dell'Odissea* e dalla *Teogonia*. Nelle *Allegorie dell'Iliade* dominano le virtù del discorso didattico e, di conseguenza, del verso politico: chiarezza, intelligibilità, concisione, accuratezza e precisione dei dettagli. Sfruttando queste virtù, Tzetzes offre adattamenti straordinariamente concisi, comprensibili e accurati di scene e passi omerici, e fa ricorso con esiti felici anche alle caratteristiche stilistiche classiche che nobilitano lo status del verso politico. Il suo obiettivo è dimostrare che il verso politico non solo è un degno rivale dell'esametro omerico in grado di competere con esso, ma che è anche in grado di superarlo.

Parole chiave

verso politico (sue qualità), esametro, δεινότης omerica, paronomasia, parechisi

michael.paschalis@gmail.com

I. Tzetzes' claim of superior knowledge over Homer

A) *Allegories of the Iliad*: content

John Tzetzes wrote the *Allegories of the Iliad* (henceforth *AI*) in two phases between 1147 and 1160¹. The work was commissioned by Eirene, formerly Bertha von Sulzbach, the German wife of Manuel Komnenos (books I-XV) and, after her death, was sponsored by Konstantinos Kotertzes (books XVI-XXIV; see *AI* XVI I-VI). In the Prolegomena to *AI* the Byzantine polymath boasts of knowing the people and the events of the Trojan War better than all ancient poets that wrote about them beginning with Homer and better than a hundred books and whole libraries (480-487)²:

¹ On Tzetzes, his works and his time see briefly Pontani 2020, 452-459; on Homer in Byzantium and especially in the Komnenian era see Βασιλικοπούλου - Ιωαννίδου 1971, Cesaretti 1991, Cupane 2008, Cullhed 2014, Van den Berg 2022.

² In *Theog.* 20-33 Tzetzes claims greater knowledge of the genealogy of gods and heroes

οὕτως ὡς ἂν ἀνέγνωκας Ὅμηρους, Στησιχόρους,
Εὐριπίδας, Λυκόφρονας, Κολλούθους τε καὶ Λέσχας,
καὶ Δίκτυν συγγραψάμενον καλῶς τὴν Ἰλιάδα,
Τριφιοδώρους, Κόϊντον, κἄν ἑκατὸν βιβλία,
οὐκ ἂν λεπτομερέστερον οὕτως ἐξηκριβώσω·
καὶ τότε τμήματι βραχεῖ πάντα συγκεκλεισμένα,
ὅπως πᾶς ὁ βουλόμενος ἐν πόνῳ βραχυτάτῳ
ἀνεγνωκέναι τοῖς πολλοῖς δοκῆ βιβλιοθήκας.

Thus not even if you had read Homer and Stesichoros,
Euripides, Lykophron, Kollouthos and Lesches,
and Diktys' well-written Iliad,
Triphiodoros and Quintus, even a hundred books, not
even then would you have learned the story in greater detail,
since I have incorporated everything in abbreviated form,
so that anyone who wishes may seem to the masses
to have read whole libraries with minimum effort³.

Earlier in the Prolegomena Tzetzes had portrayed himself regarding the project of writing the *AI* as the new Moses (23-24, 28-34):

Χειροτονεῖς τὸν δούλον σου, τὸν τίνα, τὸν ὅποιον,
γενέσθαι τύπον ἀκραιφνῆ τοῦ πάλαι Μωϋσέως,
[...]
ἀλλὰ τὸν μέγα τὸν βαθὺν ὠκεανὸν Ὅμηρου,
τὸν πᾶσα περισφίγγοντα κύκλῳ τὴν οἰκουμένην,
βατὸν κελεύεις ἅπασι καὶ πορευτὸν ποιῆσαι, 30
ὡς Μωϋσῆς τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν Ἰσραηλίταις πάλαι·
ἤδη χωρῶ πρὸς τὸν εἰρμόν, καὶ γλώττης βακτηρία
πλήξας αὐτὸν τοῖς σύμπασι πορεύσιμον ποιῆσω,
καὶ βάθη τὰ ἀθέατα τούτου φανεῖται πᾶσιν.

You appoint your slave, this someone, this anyone,
to become a pure image of Moses of old,
[...]
but the great and deep Ocean of Homer
which tightly binds in a circle the whole world around;
you order it to be made accessible and passable to all

than a hundred ancient writers, headed by Homer, together with all the gods and heroes themselves if they had really existed.

³ The translation of the *Allegories of the Iliad* is by Goldwin - Kokkini 2015, who have adopted Boissonade's text (1851) with minor changes.

as Moses made the Red Sea to the Israelites long ago.
 I am already advancing sequentially, and with the staff of my tongue
 I strike it and will make it passable for everyone
 and its invisible depths will be revealed to all⁴.

The 'invisible depths' (βάθη τὰ ἀθέατα) of the *Iliad* consist in the allegorical meaning of the mythical narrative. This point is clarified in the Proem to the *Allegories of the Odyssey* (henceforth *AO*), where Tzetzes specifies that the battles of the Trojan war conceal underneath the 'yawning depths' (βάθος ἀχανές) of allegory (ἐν ταῖς ἀλληγορίαις)⁵.

Tzetzes criticizes the earlier, ancient and Byzantine, allegorical readings of Homer for being 'not relevant' to the Homeric poems and for offering partial or simply different allegorizing narratives⁶. Allegorizing Homer, that is saying what Homer has left unsaid, represents Tzetzes' plan to reveal the *true meaning* of his poetry and thus to demonstrate that he knows Homer better than everyone else. He furthermore declares himself superior to the critics and grammarians of the past as well as to the great Greek poets themselves, whom he does not hesitate to criticize and correct, as regards not only the allegorical meaning of Homer's mythical narrative but also the full and accurate knowledge of the mythical narrative itself⁷. In *AI XVI* 4-5 Tzetzes poses as a reincarnation of Homer by calling his new patron Konstantinos Kotertzes 'the noble Peisistratus' (ὁ εὐγενῆς Πεισιστρατος) for «facilitating the completion of *AI* with his money»⁸, but the truth of the matter is that he feels superior to the Greek poet. Thus, he criticises 'all-wise' (πάνσοφος) Homer for factual errors in several passages, as in *AI XVIII* 528-531:

⁴ On Homer as 'the sea of speech' see also *AI Proleg.* 51, *XVI* 123, *XX* 35 (καὶ θάλασσα καὶ πέλαγος ὠκεανὸς χαρίτων), *XXI* 107 (τὸ πέλαγος τῶν λόγων); on Homer as ocean see Williams 1978, 98-99. On the idea of 'depth' in Homeric poetry see also *AI XVIII* 648 καὶ τῷ κεκαλυμμένῳ δὲ τῶν νοημάτων βάθει; *XX* 270 Πλήν ἀλλὰ πρόσχευς ἀκριβῶς βαθὺς ἐστὶν ὁ γέρων; *XXI* 240 τί δρᾶς, ὦ βαθνοῦσταντε, τοὺς ἀπλουστέρουσ παίζων; *XXIV* 189 τὸ βάθος ἔνδον παρεικῶς καὶ τὰ κομψὰ τοῦ τύφου.

⁵ *AO* Proem 10-12 τὰς Ἰλιάδος μάχας τε καὶ πόλεμον Ἑλλήνων, / ἐχούσας βάθος ἀχανές ἐν ταῖς ἀλληγορίαις / οὐ κατὰ Γύνδην ποταμόν, Ὀκεανὸν δὲ μέγαν, [...]. The text of the *Allegories of the Odyssey* is by Hunger 1955-1956. Ravani 2022, 276 misses the allegorical significance of the Moses simile, because he skips *AI Proleg.* 34 and its relation to the *AO* passage.

⁶ See *AI IV* 47-52 against Psellos, esp. 50 Οὐδὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὸν Ὀμηρον ἄπερ φησὶν ἐκείνος; *Proleg.* 246-250 against John of Antioch for partial allegory; *XVI* 61-62 against Palaephatus for a different allegory; *XVIII* 655-658 against Heraclitus, Cornutus, and Palaephatus.

⁷ On Tzetzes' criticism of his predecessors see further Van den Berg 2020, 293-296; Kuttner-Homs 2020, 453-457; Savio 2020.

⁸ Cullhed 2014, 67.

Κᾶνπερ ὁ πάνσοφος ἀνὴρ, τῷ σπεύδειν λεληθέναι,
λέγει τὰ πρῶτα ὕστερον, τὰ δ' ὕστερα προτέρως
καὶ συστροβή τοὺς γράφοντας καὶ τριλογεῖν ποιῆ δέ,
ἡμῖν δὲ κατ' εὐκρίνειαν τὴν τάξιν τηρητέον⁹.

Even if that most wise man, being forgetful in his haste,
describes the first things last, and the last first, and
confuses writers, and causes them to explain him in three ways,
we should maintain order by making clear distinctions.

B) *Allegories of the Iliad: form*

Tzetzes repeatedly praises the Greek poet as the master of rhetorical δεινότης in the sense of saying one thing and meaning another, of providing a mythical narrative that should be interpreted according to one of the three categories of allegory outlined in the *Exegesis of the Iliad*, rhetorical, natural, or mathematical¹⁰. One such instance is *AI XV 37-42*:

Ὅς ἂν δὲ χρήζη μέθοδον δεινότητος μανθάνειν,
καὶ θέλη ρήτορα δεινόν, καὶ θέλη λογογράφον,
καὶ μεταφράσει χρῆσθαι δέ, τῇ καὶ **μεταποιήσει**,
καὶ, λέγων πάλιν τὰ αὐτά, δοκεῖν ὡς ἄλλα λέγειν,
τὸν Ὅμηρον ἐχέτω μοι παράδειγμα τῆς τέχνης.
Ποσάκις εἶπε τοῦτο γάρ, ἄλλα δοκῶν διδάσκειν;¹¹

Whoever needs to master a vigorous rhetorical style,
and wishes «to become» a skilled orator and a writer,
and to use paraphrase and adaptation and,
though repeating the same thing, to seem to say something else,
let him have Homer as a model for his craft.
For how often did he say one thing, while seemingly teaching
[another?

The only person privy to Homer's μέθοδος δεινότητος is Tzetzes himself. The following passage is typical of the way he proceeds (*AI I 177-178*):

⁹ In *AI Proleg.* 473-475 Tzetzes blames Homer for underestimating the number of the Trojan War leaders; see also *AI XVI 441* φεύγει, οὐχὶ τὸν Πάτροκλον, ὡς Ὅμηρος νῦν φέροι; *XVIII 645-649* etc.

¹⁰ See Παπαθωμόπουλος 2007, 43-44; and further Goldwyn 2017.

¹¹ See also *AI XVI 367-374*; *XX 42-47, 64-129, 427-420*; *XXI 182-188*; *XXII 109-110, 127-128*.

Ταῦτα μὲν εἶπον μυθικῶς ὡς κείνται τῷ κειμένῳ·
τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς νῦν μάθανε καὶ τὴν ἀλληγορίαν.

I have thus given the mythical account of the text;
learn here the truth and the allegory.

Tzetzes' praise of Homer's μέθοδος δεινότητος and recommendation of the Greek poet as a model to aspiring orators and writers who wish to say one thing but mean another does not tell the whole truth. In praising Homer, *he praises and recommends himself*. It is *he* who recognizes the existence of a second level of meaning in Homer's narrative and only *he* who knows what this other meaning is. The bottom line of his rivalry with Homer is the following: he understands Homer better than Homer himself; his *Allegories* represent a version of the *Iliad* superior to Homer's.

In the Proem to *AO* Tzetzes makes the following claim (39-41):

εἴτ' οὖν τοῖς πᾶσι ζηλωτῆς καθέστηκεν Ὀμήρου,
κἂν τοῖς σαφέσι καὶ ληπτοῖς καὶ παιγνιωδεστέροις
καὶ τοῖς ἀποκαθάρμασι τοῦ λόγου τῆς οἰκίας,

Well, then, he [sc. Tzetzes] has become the emulator of Homer
[in all things,
both in words clear and comprehensible and rather playful,
as well as in the offscourings of house talk.

Agapitos concluded that «these allusive lines suggest that Tzetzes in his allegorical exegesis has been able to emulate Homer in all aspects of the poet's various styles, thus implying that he himself is the poet's best interpreter»¹². Let me dig a little deeper into the meaning of Tzetzes' statement. No interpretation of his ζήλωσις Ὀμήρου can disregard the *medium* through which it is realized, that is *political verse*. These lines imply that *political verse has the potential of emulating dactylic hexameter* and, I would add, surpassing it, as was the goal of ζήλωσις. In *AI Proleg.* 480-487 quoted above Tzetzes boasts that his *brief* narrative offers a more *comprehensive* and *accurate* account of the Trojan war than Homer's. I would assume that his achievement became possible also thanks to *the virtues of political verse*. Before getting to this point, it is necessary to start with an overview of discussions concerning political verse.

¹² Agapitos 2017, 49.

C) *Political verse*

1. Overview

The *Allegories of the Iliad* are written in political verse. Political verse, which corresponds to the popular modern Greek 15-syllable verse (δεκαπεντασύλλαβος), was considered ‘unmetrical’ in Tzetzes’ time. This was because it is based not on the quantity of syllables, like ancient meters, but on the stress-accent of words. Hence Tzetzes does not discuss it in his treatise *Περὶ μέτρων*, which deals exclusively with ancient meters.

Theoretical discussions of the nature of political verse have focused on the thorny question of its origins¹³. As regards its status in Tzetzes’ practice, they have emphasized its didactic value, since his work composed in political verse serves primarily teaching purposes. Scholars have also overemphasized the negative characterizations of political verse coming from Tzetzes himself without due consideration for the fact that it is also Tzetzes himself who extols its virtues. As a matter of fact, in works like the *Allegories of the Iliad* the praise of the literary potential of political verse reaches its climax. Most importantly, studies of political verse have completely overlooked its literary qualities as displayed in paraphrasing, adapting, and condensing the Homeric hexameter narrative.

2. Is political verse a crypto-hexameter rhythm?

Stanislas Kuttner-Homs argued recently that¹⁴:

most of Tzetzes’ scholia are verses, and a closer look to its metrics and rhythm sounds to reveal an art dedicated to dethroning the Classics and establish Tzetzes as a classical authority and, if such a reversal is possible, as Homer’s teacher.

In order to prove his point, Kuttner-Homs compared Homeric hexameters embedded in the narrative of *AI* with the narrative medium itself, political verse, his aim being to establish affinities between them. He proceeded to scan political verses as dactylic and especially as dactylic pentameters. In my view this approach is misguided. What I mean is that it *reverses* the direction of the evolution of dactylic hexameter by turning political verse into *a forced and distorted equivalent of dactylic verse*.

¹³ See for instance Jeffreys 1974, Lavagnini 1983, E. & M. Jeffreys 1986, Lauxtermann 1999, Jeffreys 2019.

¹⁴ Kuttner-Homs 2020, abstract.

The distinction between long and short vowels had gradually begun to disappear in the Hellenistic period until at about 400 AD the process reduced them to an absolute equality in time value. Paul Maas stressed this point a long time ago¹⁵. One should distinguish the strict quantitative rules kept in *composing*, for instance, iambic trimeters (dodecasyllables) from the way in which *they were read or recited*. In Maas' view it is possible that at least from the fourth and fifth centuries AD onwards verse was no longer read (and sung) according to quantity, but according to the new stress accent falling on each word:

Trotzdem zweifelt niemand, daß diese [die sogenannten iambischen] Kanones [zum Beispiel, der Weihnachtskanon des Johannes Damaskenos] wie alle übrigen nur nach dem Wortaccent gelesen und gesungen wurden. So viel kann sich also unter der Verkleidung eines "jambischen Trimeters" verstecken¹⁶.

The evolution of hexameter verse since late antiquity had been gradually making room for word-accent at the expense of syllable (vowel) quantity. This is obvious especially in two areas. First, in the coincidence of word-accent with long-syllable stress in the last foot of a dactylic hexameter¹⁷. Second, in the coincidence of word-accent with long-syllable stress in the second half of a dactylic hexameter¹⁸. Modern metrical studies, like those of Wifstrand and Jeffreys¹⁹, while noticing that Nonnos avoids proparoxytone words at the end of the line, have overlooked broader changes in the second half of the Nonnian hexameter and their association with the growing role of word-accent. Furthermore, the significant increase of wholly dactylic verses (ὀλοδάκτυλοι, DDDDD) at the expense

¹⁵ Maas 1962, 13-14.

¹⁶ Maas 1973, 265. For a survey of discussions concerning the transition from hexameter to fifteen-syllable (political) verse see Jeffreys 2019.

¹⁷ In the first forty lines of Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 1 there are thirty-one coincidences (77,5%), which in George Pisides' *De vita humana* will increase to eighty-nine in a total of ninety lines (98,89%). By contrast, in the first forty lines of *Iliad* 1 there are only nine coincidences (22,5%) and in the first forty lines of Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus*, there are twenty-one (52,5%). On Pisides and Nonnus see e. g. Sternbach 1893, 43: «Praeterea Nonni praeceptis se conformavit poeta in hexametri fine summopere enixus, ut vocabuli accentus cum ictu versus congrueret»; Jeffreys 1974, 190-191; and the references in note 20.

¹⁸ From 15,56% in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 1 (fourteen instances in the first ninety lines) to nearly double as many in George Pisides (28,89% or twenty-six out of ninety hemistichs). What this means is that in nearly one-third of Pisides' second hemistichs syllable quantity is superseded by word-accent.

¹⁹ Wifstrand 1933, 3-17; Jeffreys 1981, 313-319.

of spondees, as noted in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (38,07%) and the *Paraphrasis of the Gospel of John* (35,7%) and in Pisides' *De vita humana* (55,56%)²⁰, is probably not unrelated to the influence of word-accent. In political verse as well as in every other rhythm based on the stress-accent of words (e. g. Romanos' *kontakia*)²¹ it is not possible to have *two accented syllables* (the accentual equivalent of a spondee) *side by side*. It is worthy of note in this respect that modern Greek poems written in accentual hexameters and composed in the 19th and 20th century do not admit spondees - differently e.g. from German hexameters - but are *wholly dactylic*.

3. The virtues of political verse

Modern readers are misled by the sneers Tzetzes heaps upon political verse, such as «pedestrian», «common», «vagabond», «uneducated and vulgar muse», and «trite»²², to believe that he considered it entirely unworthy of competing with the Homeric hexameter. These characterizations, however, reflect the conventional attitude of Byzantine scholars towards the 'unmetrical' political verse and render in a vivid manner the abyss that presumably separates it from the venerable meters of ancient Greece. It is highly significant that these negative characterizations *are absent* from *AI*, *AO*, and the *Theogony*, all of which are written in political verse. On the contrary, in this group of works, and overwhelmingly so in *AI*, it is the *virtues* of didactic discourse and consequently of *political verse* that dominate. These virtues are the following: clarity (σαφής, εὐκρινής, διαυγής), comprehensibility (εὐληπτος), conciseness (σύντομος, βραχύς, ἐπίτομος), accuracy (ἀκριβής), and sharpness of detail (λεπτός)²³. There is a tendency to restrict such virtues to content and *disregard form*, the medium of political verse. M. Jeffreys has shown the proper way to understand the meaning of Tzetzes' statements²⁴:

²⁰ Agosti - Gonnelli 1995, 314-315; Gonnelli 1991, 131; D'Ambrosi 2003, 121.

²¹ Μητσάκης 1986, 316.

²² See further Jeffreys 1974, 160-161.

²³ I list the number of instances that occur in *AI*: σαφῶς (8 instances), σαφής (5), σαφέστερος (2), σαφέστατος (1), σαφεστάτως (1), σαφήνεια (1); εὐκρίνεια (1); διαυγῆ τῷ λόγῳ (1); εὐληπτότατος (1; cf. also *AO* 1.47-48 οὕτω τὴν Ἰλιάδα μέν, σύμπασαν Καλλιόπην, λόγοις ἠλληγορήσαμεν εὐλήπτοις, σαφεστάτοις); συντόμως (3), συντόμῳ λόγῳ (1); βραχύς (2), βραχύτατος (1); ἐπιτομώτερον (2); ἀκριβῶς (4), ἀκριβεστέρω (1), ἠκριβωμένως (3); λεπτῶς (7), κατὰ λεπτόν (4), λεπτομερῶς (1), λεπτομερέστερον (1), λεπτολογῶ (3). See further Jeffreys 1974, 156; and Van den Berg 2020, 291-293, who discusses accuracy, clarity, and brevity as the primary virtues of Tzetzes' didactic oeuvre but without reference to political verse.

²⁴ Jeffreys 1974, 156.

To judge by Tzetzes' own words, clarity and sharpness of detail are the chief virtues of his poems in the political line. They are full of words like σαφώς, λεπτώς, and ακριβώς, which are especially common at points where the poet is explaining the purpose and form of his work. It is not difficult to suggest a connection between political verse and clarity of expression. This was one of the few means of expression at Tzetzes' disposal where he had no classical models to follow and no classical comparisons to fear. He could make his own selection of vocabulary, style, and sentence structure, and use them much more flexibly than in any quantitative meter.

The second part of this study provides numerous examples of the merits of Tzetzes' political verse as manifested in the way he paraphrases, adapts, and condenses the Iliadic narrative.

4. Playful Homer and playful Tzetzes

In order to render vividly the vast distance that in his view separates the mythical narrative of the *Iliad* from 'the truth and allegory' hidden underneath it, Tzetzes frequently states that, in the former, Homer is 'playful' (παίζων), while in the latter, 'he is serious' (σπουδάζει)²⁵. In this respect he furthermore argues that

²⁵ *AI Proleg.* 330 Βλέπε πώς παίζων Ὅμηρος σπουδαία περιπλέκει; *Proleg.* 341 Τέως βλέπε τὸν Ὅμηρον πὼς παίζων καὶ σπουδάζει; *IV* 47-49 Μὴ Χερουβίμ, μὴ Σεραφίμ ὧδε θεοὺς μοι νόει, / ὥσπερ Ψελλὸς ἐδίδαξεν ὁ πάνσοφος ἐκεῖνος, / παίζων οὐκ οἶδα πὼς εἰπεῖν, ἢ καὶ σπουδάζων ἄρα; *XVI* 323-324 Ταῖς ἀλλοτρίαις τελευταῖς ὁ Ὅμηρος δὲ παίζων / δεικνύει λόγων δύναμιν ἐξαιρῶν τὰ τυχόντα; *XVI* 336-337 ὡς παίζοντος Ὅμηρου / καὶ προφανῶς δεικνύοντος τὸν ἥττονα γυμνάζειν; *XVI* 347-348 ὅπως λόγον τὸν ἥττονα ῥητορικῶς γυμνάζων / καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγει καὶ καπυρὸν γελᾷ δέ; *XVIII* 417 ὁ Ὅμηρος ὁ πάνσοφος παίζων συμπλάττει λόγους; *XVIII* 522-523 πλὴν ἐν ἀλληγορηματι πραγματικῶ ῥητόρων, / παίζων καὶ φυσικεῦται περὶ κοσμογενείας; *XVIII* 601 παίζων δέ, τὴν Ἀχιλῆιον ἀσπίδα καταλέγων; *XVIII* 703 Μετὰ μικρὸν ὁ γέρων δε, παίζων σωφρονεστάτως; *XVIII* 775 Ὅρα τὸν χρυσογέροντα, πὼς παίζει νῦν δι' ὄλου; *XX* 270-271 Πλὴν ἀλλὰ πρόσχερς ἀκριβῶς· βαθύς ἐστιν ὁ γέρων, / καὶ παίζων τοῖς μυθώδεσιν ἠπάτησε μυρίους; *XX* 404-405 Παίξε καὶ γέλα καπυρὸν· Τζέτζην γελᾶν μὴ δόκει· / χρῶ μὲν τῷ καθ' ὑπόθεσιν σχήματι παίζων οὕτω; *XXI* 34-35 Δεινός ἐστιν ὁ Ὅμηρος ἐντέχνως πάντα γράφειν, / κἄνπερ σπουδάζων γράφῃ τι, κἄν παίζων ὡς ἐνθάδε; *XXI* 240 τί δρᾶς, ὦ βαθυνοῦστατε, τοὺς ἀπλουστέρους παίζων; *XXI* 282 Πάλιν ὁ γέρων παίζει; *XXII* 103-104 Ὅμηρος κρύφα παίζων δὲ τὸν ἥλιόν σοι λέγει / λάμποντα κατὰ πρόσωπον εἶρξαι τὸν Ἀχιλλέα; *XXII* 108 Τοιαῦτα καὶ ὁ Ὅμηρος παίζων δοκεῖ μοι τῆδε; *XXIII* 73 Ὅρα καὶ τὸν χρυσογέρον οἶα καὶ πάλιν παίζει; *XXIV* 215-216 Οὐχ ὁ Ἑρμῆς μετήμειπεν· Ὅμηρος παίζων λέγει / ὡς θαυμαστόν τε καὶ γλυκὺν ποιήσῃ σοι τὸν λόγον. Cf. also *VII* 32 παίγνιον Ὅμηρου Ὀδυσσεά; *XXII* 95 Τοῦτο Ὅμηρου παίγνιον νόησον τοῦ πανσόφου; *XXII* 113 ἄ δὲ δι' ἥλιον νῦν φῆς παίγνια σοῦ τυγχάνει; *XXIII* 96 Ἐγνώκεις καὶ τὸ παίγνιον Ὅμηρου τοῦ πανσόφου. See further Cesaretti 1991, 184-196.

Homer has left us a ‘sweet’ mythical narrative intended to ‘please’ his readers²⁶ and thus deceive everyone (XX 271 καὶ παίζων τοῖς μυθώδεσιν ἠπάτησε μυρίουσ) except for himself (XX 404 Τζέτζην γελᾶν μὴ δόκει).

Playfulness does not characterize only Homer’s mythical narrative but is also a recurring feature of political verse mentioned both in Tzetzes and outside him.²⁷ It is so typical of it that Tzetzes applies it to his own allegorizing commentary on Hesiod’s *Theogony*, thus recounting ‘important matters’ (τὰ σπουδαῖα) in playful writing (ἐν παιγνιώδεσι γραφαῖς)²⁸. Such statements sound like or could be construed as versions of σπουδαιογέλοιο²⁹.

As a stylistic feature common to both Tzetzes and Homer, playfulness could form the basis for a broader *synkrisis* between political verse narrative and hexametric narrative. In this context Homer’s playfulness in ‘saying one thing but suggesting another’ (παίζων σπουδάξει) could also be tested in certain figures of speech: παρονομασία (paronomasia), the play upon words often in etymological sense (so understood in this study)³⁰; and the acoustic perception created by various types of παρήχησις (parechesis; cf. alliteration, assonance), the repetition of the same sound in words in close or immediate succession³¹. These and other figures of speech to be mentioned below, like the evocative parallelism of half-verses and narrative cola, abound in Homer’s ‘playful’ hexametric mythical narrative³².

²⁶ AI XVIII 255, XX 41, XX 432, XXI 87, XXII 22, XXIV 47, XXIV181, XXIV 216.

²⁷ Jeffreys 1974, 175.

²⁸ *Theog.* 725; see also *Theog.* 502 καὶ μᾶλλον παιγνιώδεσι τοῖς στίχοις γεγραφόσι (of those who write in political verse).

²⁹ On playfulness in the works of eleventh and twelfth century teachers see further Agapitos 2017, 50-51.

³⁰ Cf. Lausberg 1998, 285, 637: «The *annominatio* ‘paronomasia’ is a (pseudo-)etymological play on the slightness of the phonetic change on the one hand and the interesting range of meaning which is created by means of the change on the other. The range of meaning can in such cases be raised to the level of paradox. The author expects the audience to see the etymology (cf. § 466) thus created between the two words to be their own work». Most ancient definitions restrict the application of the figures to nouns, but Quintilian’s includes verbs as well: IX 3,73 *non exigo, ut immoriaris legationi: immorare!* The present study takes this broader view of paronomasia.

³¹ Smyth 1956, 680-681, 3037. Lausberg 1998, 285, 637 does not distinguish between paronomasia and parechesis. Under paronomasia he lists the definition by [Hermogenes], *Περὶ εὐρέσεως* 4.7 Παρήχησις ἐστὶ κάλλος ὁμοίων ὀνομάτων ἐν διαφόρῳ γνώσει ταῦτὸν ἠχοῦντων. γίνεται δὲ ὅταν δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας λέξεις ἢ ὀνόματα εἴπη τις ὅμοια μὲν ἠχοῦντα, διάφορον δὲ τὴν δήλωσιν ἔχοντα, [...], which includes two examples of etymological play: πείθει τὸν Πειθίαν and ἀλλ’ Εὐπείθει πείθοντο.

³² See e. g. Rank 1951, Von Kamptz 1982, Tsitsibakou - Vasalos 2007.

It will be shown below that Tzetzes employed 'playful' political verse to compete successfully with Homer on his own ground, to match and challenge his stylistic features in paraphrasing, adapting, and condensing the epic narrative.

Tzetzes' paraphrase, adaptation, and condensation of the Homeric narrative provide practical and substantial evidence of the literary potential of political verse and amply document his ζήλωσις Ὀμήρου in this area as well. He either improves on and enriches existing figures of speech or introduces new ones and displays the potential of political verse by condensing longer passages into one or two memorable lines. In *AI* XV 37-42 quoted above Tzetzes recommends Homer as the master of the craft of saying one thing while meaning another (μέθοδον δεινότητος), but the specific reference to 'paraphrase and adaptation' (καὶ μεταφράσει χρῆσθαι δέ, τῇ καὶ μεταποιήσει) subtly points to the author of *AI* as the true master of this craft.

II. *Uses of political verse in the emulation of the Homeric hexameter*

In the Introduction to the *Exegesis of the Iliad* Tzetzes reviews the history of the exegesis of the Homeric epic and lists five types of it. Relevant to my topic are the last two, etymology (έτυμολογία) and allegory (άλληγορία)³³:

ἄλλοι δὲ τῆς έτυμολογίας έπεμελήθησαν, καθάπερ καὶ ἡ Σαπφῶ· έτεροι δὲ τῆς άλληγορίας τῶν θεϊκῶν όνομάτων, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ Κορνοὔτος, κᾶνπερ άλληγορῆ ἄσυμβίβαστα.

Allegory represents the very definition of saying one thing and meaning another. As far as etymology is concerned, in *AI* we encounter three main kinds, which, for reasons dependent on the requirements of this study, I would label (a) allegorical etymologies, (b) exegetical etymologies, and (c) implicit literary etymologies, commonly known as puns or word-plays³⁴. It is especially in (c) where Homer or Tzetzes or both say one thing and mean another, whether it involves the meaning (paronomasia) or the acoustic impression of words (parechesis). In (c) the hidden meaning is merely suggested, and the reader is expected to grasp it. In (a) and (b) it is Tzetzes himself who provides the reader with the 'true' meaning or meanings of a word or phrase of the *Iliad*. Exegetical etymologies are occasionally embedded in the Homeric text itself³⁵.

³³ Παπαθωμόπουλος 2007, 3-4.

³⁴ A detailed list of types of Greek etymologies found in scholia and lexica is provided by Le Feuvre 2020; see also Zucker - Le Feuvre 2021, *passim*.

³⁵ *E.g. Il. IX 562-564* Ἄλκυνόνην καλέεσκον έπώνυμον, οὔνεκ' ἄρ' αὐτῆς / μήτηρ ἄλκυνός πολυπενθέος οἶτον ἔχουσα / κλαῖεν ὃ μιν ἑκάεργος ἀνήρπασε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων. The text of the *Iliad* is by West 1998-2000.

Condensing the Homeric narrative was inevitable because Tzetzes needed space for expounding his allegorizing interpretation of the text and his commentary. Beyond these obvious reasons, reducing the size of the Homeric text was to become ideal ground for Tzetzes to unfold his stylistic emulation of Homer. In practising it he created terse, epigrammatic lines frequently displaying clusters of semantic and/or alliterative associations, all of which constitute substantial evidence of the potential of political verse. The examples quoted below testify to Tzetzes' remarkable use of conciseness (συντομία), one of the cardinal virtues of political verse. Conciseness in combination with clarity (σαφήνεια) and accuracy (ἀκρίβεια) enable Tzetzes to convey the core of a Homeric scene or passage and thus render its content easier to commit to memory.

I will next examine selected instances of the three kinds of etymology found in Tzetzes' adaptation of the Homeric narrative, focusing on the third one, implicit literary etymologies, and on his condensing techniques. Section II.A contains examples of allegorical and exegetical etymologies introduced by Tzetzes. Section II.B examines instances of paronomasia and parechesis, in which Tzetzes improves on figures of speech existing in the Homeric text. In section II.C Tzetzes enriches the adaptation of the Homeric text with semantic and sound figures that are entirely his own.

A) *Allegorical and exegetical etymologies*

Below I give two examples of allegorical and one of exegetical etymology as well as one of a mixed type:

1. Etymologies of Ἡρακλῆς and Εὐρυσθεύς (AI VIII 158-162)³⁶:

Ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ὁ ἥλιός ἐστιν ἐν τοῖς ἐνθάδε
 ὡς κλέος Ἡρας καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὃν Εὐρυσθεύς ἐκπέμπει,
 ἢ σφαῖρα ἢ οὐράνιος ἦτις εὐρέως θέει,
 ἄθλους τελέσαι δώδεκα, τὸν χρόνον ἐκπληρῶσαι,
 δώδεκα περιτρέχοντα τμήματα τῶν ζωδίων.

The sun here, being the glory of Hera and of the earth,
 the celestial globe which moves in a wide arc,
 is Herakles, whom Eurystheus sent forth
 to fulfil twelve labors, that is, to complete the year,
 running around the twelve divisions of the zodiac.

³⁶ The translation of the *Iliad* is by Green 2015.

In the passage quoted above Tzetzes provides etymologies of Ἡρακλῆς and Εὐρυσθεύς (the glosses are given in bold). The etymology of Ἡρακλῆς from Ἡρα + κλέος is conventional³⁷ and is here given an allegorical function. The etymology of Εὐρυσθεύς from εὐρύς + θέω (τρέχω) also exploited in allegorical fashion is not found in surviving etymological works³⁸.

2. Etymologies of κόρυς (AI XVII 37-42):

Κόρυθες δ', ὡς τιθέμεναι τάχα περὶ τὴν **κάραν**
ἀπὸ τοῦ **κάρυς κόρυς** τε εἰλήχασιν τὴν κλῆσιν,
ἢ ὅτι **Κόρυθος** αὐτὰς πρῶτος ὁ Ἰβηρ εὗρεν,
ὡς **Σάκας** **σάκος**, **Φάλαξ** δὲ εὗρε πολέμων στάσιν.

The helmets, supposedly because they are placed on one's head,
received the name helmet from karys,
or because Korythos the Iberian invented them first,
just as Sakas invented the shield and, and Phalax the battle formation

Tzetzes provides alternative etymologies of κόρυς: (a) from the form κάρυς, a derivative of κάρα (head)³⁹, (b) from Κόρυθος, its supposed inventor⁴⁰.

3. Kleoboulos suffers a πορφύρεος θάνατος (Il. XVI 330-334; AI XVI 73-75):

There is a less common type of etymology that stands between the exegetical and the literary type: though it is a gloss on a Homeric word, the adaptation omits the latter and introduces the former as an entirely new feature. Here is the Homeric passage:

Αἴας δὲ Κλεόβουλον Ὀϊλιάδης ἐπορούσας
ζῶν ἔλε, βλαφθέντα κατὰ κλόνον· ἀλλὰ οἱ αὖθι
λύσε μένος **πλήξας** ξίφει αὐχένα κωπήεντι.
πᾶν δ' ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος **αἷματι**· τὸν δὲ κατ' ὄσσε
ἔλλαβε **πορφύρεος θάνατος** καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή.

³⁷ *Et.M.* 435,4; *Diod.Sic.* I 24.4, IV10.1; *Et.Gud.* coll. 247-248 Sturz.

³⁸ Chantraine 1968, 388 associates the second component with σθένος ('strength', 'might'; Eurystheus was the son of Σθένελος) and considers the name an abbreviated form of Εὐρυ-σθένης that parallels the adjective εὐρυ-σθενής, 'of far-extended might'.

³⁹ *Orion Etym.* col. 86,32-33 Sturz: κόρυς· παρὰ τὸ κάρη ἢ τὸ κάρηνον ἀποκοπή τοῦ <ον> κάρυς τίς ἐστι καὶ κόρυς, τροπή τοῦ α εἰς ο; *Et.Gen.* AB s.v. κόρυς (unde *Et.M.* 531,35); *Philoxenos fr.* 305 Theodoridis.

⁴⁰ See Phot. *Bibl.* 147b 35.

Ajax the son of Oileus now went for Kleoboulos
and took him alive, a man who'd tripped in the crush;
then unleashed his strength, struck with his hilted sword
at the man's neck: the whole blade was warmed by his blood,
scarlet death and all-mastering fate overpowered his eyes.

Ὁ δὲ Λοκρὸς Κλεόβουλον ἀπέκτεινε τῷ ξίφει,
ὡς τὰς πορφύρας ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ πορφυραγρέται,
ἢ πορφυρέω ἐρυθρῷ αἵματηρῷ θανάτῳ.

And the Locrian killed Kleoboulos with his sword,
just as gatherers of purple dye «kill» the murexes with a single stroke
or with a purple, red, bloodstained death.

Tzetzes' adaptation glosses the Homeric epithet πορφύρεος, applied to death, but without mentioning it, and offers two alternative etymologies of it. The first one is clearly original: Ajax strikes (πλήξας) Kleoboulos at the neck with his sword and the sword is made warm by blood (αἷματι) gushing out of the wound, just as gatherers of purple dye 'kill' the murexes (τὰς πορφύρας) with a single stroke (ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ) causing the molluscs to yield their purple dye. The alternative etymology builds on this association by applying πορφυρέω not to death but to the red colour of blood (ἐρυθρῷ) and equating it with purple dye⁴¹.

B) *Improving on Homeric paronomasia and parechesis*

1. Μενέλαος the lion (*Il.* III 449-450; *AI* III 172):

Ἄτρείδης δ' ἄν' ὄμιλον ἐφοίτα **θηρὶ** ἐοικῶς
εἶ που ἐσαθρήσειεν Ἀλέξανδρον **θεοειδέα**.

But Atreus' son like a wild beast raged through the ranks,
hoping to catch a glimpse of Alexandros the godlike;

Ὁ δὲ Μενέλαος αὐτὸν ὡς **λέων** ἀνηρεύνα.

But Menelaos was searching for him like a lion.

⁴¹ The meaning of πορφύρεος (θάνατος) found in scholia and lexica is 'dark', with figurative explanations: cf. *schol. Hom. Il* E 83 a.¹ Erbse λέγει δὲ πορφύρεον τὸν μέλανα, ἐξ οὗ δηλοῖ τὸν χαλεπὸν; Hsch. π 3084 Hansen ὁ μέλας, καὶ βαθύς, καὶ παραχώδης.

Tzetzes transforms the sound-play $\theta\eta$ -, $\theta\epsilon\omicron$ - of the Homeric text into an etymological association. He achieves this by replacing the patronymic Ἀτρεΐδης with Μενέλαος and the generic $\theta\eta\rho\iota$ ἐοικῶς with ὡς λέων. He thus plays on Μενέλαος / λέων by alluding to Μενέλεως, the Attic form of the proper name. Tzetzes transfers here the comparison of Menelaos to a lion at the beginning of his encounter with Paris earlier in the same book (III 21-29):

Now when war-minded Menelaos (Μενέλαος) first caught sight
[of him
emerging out of the crowd with his lengthy strides,
then, as a lion (ὡς τε λέων) rejoices at finding, when ravenous,
some hefty carcass - an antlered stag or a wild goat -
and eat it he must, despite being set upon by swift
hunting dogs and tough youngsters, so Menelaos (Μενέλαος)
delighted at seeing Alexandros, divinely handsome,
with his own eyes, and, hot for revenge on the wrongdoer,
promptly sprang, fully armed, from his chariot to the ground.

2. Aphrodite's flesh wound (*Il.* V 336-340; *AI* V 67-71):

ἄκρην οὐτάσε χεῖρα μετάλμενος ὀξείῃ δουρί
ἀβληχρήν· εἶθαρ δὲ δόρυ χροῶς ἀντετόρησεν
ἀμβροσίου διὰ πέπλου, ὃν οἱ Χάριτες κάμουν αὐταί,
πρυμνὸν ὑπὲρ θέναρος· ῥέε δ' ἄμβροτον αἶμα θεοῖο,
ἰχώρ, οἷός περ τε ῥέει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν·

and sliced into the flesh of her hand with his keen-edged bronze -
that delicate hand! The spear drove straight into her flesh -
clean through the fragrant robe toiled on by the Graces themselves -
at the base of her palm: out flowed the goddess' blood, immortal
ichor, such as flows in the veins of the blessed gods,

ὅθε τὴν χεῖρα λέγουσι τρῶσαι τὴν Ἀφροδίτης·
τὴν πρακτικὴν γὰρ ἔσβεσεν ἐπιθυμίαν τούτου,
καὶ τὴν χροιάν μετήλλαξε τῆς θεάς, τοῦ προσώπου,
ὅθεν οὐδ' αἶμα γέγραφε τοῦ τραύματος ῥυῆναι,
οἷον ἰχώρα δὲ τινα, τὸν ὄχρον οὕτω λέγων.

whence they say that he wounded the hand of Aphrodite;
for it quenched his desire for action,
and it changed the complexion of the goddess' face,
whence he wrote that it was not blood that flowed from her wound,
but a kind of ichor, thus describing her pallor.

In adapting the Homeric passage where Diomedes wounds Aphrodite, Tzetzes replaces *χρῶς* (skin) with *χροιά* (complexion) and adds *ῶχρος* (pallor), in close proximity to *ιχώρ*, the liquid that flows in the veins of the gods. The flow of *ιχώρ* causes the *χροιά* of Aphrodite's skin to turn pale. Contrary to existing ancient or Byzantine etymologies⁴², Tzetzes is apparently etymologizing *ιχώρ* from *ῶχρος*, which was considered a cognate of *χροιά* (*χρόα*)⁴³. Thus his reworking of the wounding of Aphrodite by Diomedes is organized around a triple etymological association whereas the original text contains none.

3. The shifting balance of battle (*Il.* VI 2-3; *AI* VI 8):

At the beginning of *Iliad* VI the gods on both sides have withdrawn from the battlefield and the battle rages on:

πολλὰ δ' ἄρ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθ' ἴθυσε μάχη πεδίοιο
ἀλλήλων ἰθυνομένων χαλκήρεα δοῦρα

now this way, now that, the battle kept shifting across the plain,
as each side aimed at the other their bronze-tipped spears.

Ἐξήπλωτο δ' ὁ πόλεμος, ἐξήνθησεν ἡ μάχη

The war spread, the battle bloomed

The two-line Homeric description is organized around the repetition of *ιθύω* in the active (*ἴθυσε*) and the middle voice (*ιθυνομένων*). Tzetzes reduces it to a single line, composed of two isocola and homoiokataktika, starting with the alliteration *ἐξη-*. The parallelism is completed with the two lines ending respectively in *πόλεμος* and *μάχη*.

4. Agamemnon arms himself for battle (*Il.* XI 15-17; *AI* XI 10-12):

Ἀτρείδης δ' ἐβόησεν ἰδὲ ζώνυσθαι ἄνωγεν
Ἄργείους· ἐν δ' αὐτὸς ἐδύσετο νόρῳπα χαλκόν.
κνημίδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκεν

⁴² *Et.M.* 480,52 *ιχώρ*: τὸ σεσηπὸς αἶμα. ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσχω, τὸ λεπτύνω, ἰσχώρ, τὸ λεπτύνον τὸ σῶμα ἐν τῷ καταστάζειν.

⁴³ *Et.M.* 826,3 *ῶχρος*: ἐκ τοῦ *χρόα*, ὃ σημαίνει τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ σώματος· διὰ γὰρ τῆς ἐπιφανείας γίνεται ἡ ὠχρίασις. λοιπὸν ἐκ τοῦ *χρόα* γίνεται ἄχρους· καὶ ὑπερβίβασμῳ ἄχρους καὶ κατὰ συναίρεσιν ὠχρος, *χροιά*; 679,37 ἰδοὺ γὰρ τὸ *χροιά*, γινόμενον παρ' αὐτοῖς [*sc.* τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις] κατὰ ἀποβολὴν τοῦ *ι* *χρόα*, βαρύνεται. [...] ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ *χροῦς* *χροδός* γέγονεν ἡ *χρόα* Ἀττικῶς.

Atreus' son roared his command to the Argives to gird themselves,
and himself amongst them now donned the gleaming bronze.
His greaves first he fastened on about his shins -

Ὁ βασιλεὺς δ' ἐβόησεν ὀπλίεσθαι τοὺς πάντας
ὠπλίσθη τότε καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν πᾶσαν πανοπλίαν,
πρῶτον ὑποδησάμενος ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ κνημίδας,

The king shouted for everyone to arm himself;
then he armed himself fully,
first fastening his greaves on his legs,

Tzetzes replaces the paronomasia κνημίδας / κνήμησιν⁴⁴ with the assonant words ὑποδησάμενος ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ⁴⁵. He achieves this by replacing ἔθηκεν with ὑποδέομαι⁴⁶ and περὶ κνήμησιν (around the shins) with ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ (on his legs). ὑποδέομαι literally means 'bind under one's feet', 'put on shoes', hence it is not the appropriate verb for putting on greaves. Tzetzes probably chose both the compound verb and its form in order to create the parechysis in question.

He furthermore constructed a triple etymological play out of derivatives of ὄπλον (weapon) by replacing ζώννυσθαι with ὀπλίεσθαι and adding ὠπλίσθη and the compound παν-οπλίαν. The etymology of παν-οπλίαν (full suit of armour) is suggested through the accompanying epithet πᾶσαν⁴⁷. The triple etymological play involves in addition a triple polyptoton of πᾶς: τοὺς πάντας, τὴν πᾶσαν, παν-.

5. Polypoetes overpowers Δάμασος (*Il.* XII 183-186; *AI* XII 85):

δουρὶ βάλεν Δάμασον κυνέης διὰ χαλκοπαρήου
οὐδ' ἄρα χαλκείη κόρυς ἔσχεθεν, ἀλλὰ διάπρω
αἰχμὴ χαλκείη ῥήξ' ὀστέον, ἐγκέφαλος δὲ
ἔνδον ἅπας πεπάλακτο· δάμασσε δέ μιν μεμαῶτα.

spearhead Damaskos through his helmet's cheekpiece of bronze:
the bronze helmet failed to deflect the spear point: it drove
clean through metal and bone, mashing up as it went
all the brains inside. It stopped his charge stone-dead.

⁴⁴ κνημῖς, 'greave' < κνήμη, 'shin'.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Th.* III 22,2 τὸν ἀριστερὸν μόνον πόδα ὑποδεδεμένοι.

⁴⁶ Cf. *AO* XXIV 227-228 περὶ δὲ κνήμησι βοείας / κνημίδας ῥαπτὰς δέδετο.

⁴⁷ Cf. *AI* III 151 ἔκοψε τὴν ἀσπίδα τε καὶ πᾶσαν πανοπλίαν; *X* 66 χρυσὴν αὐτοῦ τὴν σύμπασαν ἔχοντα πανοπλίαν; *XIII* 135 ἀπέδυσσε καὶ τούτου δὲ πᾶσαν τὴν πανοπλίαν (and stripped him of all his armour).

δορι βαλὼν τὸν Δάμασον ἐδάμασεν αὐτίκα,

at once [Polypoetes] overpowered Damasos

Tzetzēs reduces the four lines of the Homeric text to a single line, which preserves the basic content of the battle scene. He furthermore conspicuously improves on the sound effect of the Homeric text (δάμασσε δέ μιν μεμαῶτα) by constructing a *figura etymologica*: he replaces μιν (him) with the name of the victim (Δάμασον) as the cognate object of the verb that indicates his death (ἐδάμασεν).

6. Zeus abandons the Trojans 'to suffer the toil of battle' (*Il.* XIII 1-3; *AI* XIII 1-3):

Ζεὺς δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν Τρῳάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορα νηυσὶ πέλασσαν,
τοὺς μὲν ἕα παρὰ τῆσι πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ οἰζύν
νωλεμέως,

Zeus, when he'd brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships,
abandoned them there, to endure toil and suffering
without respite,

Ὁ Ζεὺς, ἡ Εἰμαρμένη δέ, σὺν Ἑκτορι τοὺς Τρῳάς
ἄφ' οὐ πρὸς ναῦς εἰσήγαγεν, ἐκεῖσε καταλείπει
ἀδιαλείπτως πολεμεῖν καὶ πόνους υπομένειν.

After Zeus, that is Destiny, led Hector and the Trojans
to the ships, he abandoned them there
to fight incessantly and endure their toils.

Lines XIII 2-3 of the Homeric passage display a structure based on the combination of ν and μ sounds. With πολεμεῖν καὶ πόνους υπομένειν Tzetzēs enhances the acoustic effect of the Homeric text through the triple repetition of πο- (-πο) and the double repetition -με-. Most importantly, his adaptation is enriched with a semantic cluster: by replacing ἕα and νωλεμέως with the (near-) synonyms καταλείπει and ἀδιαλείπτως he creates an etymological association between Zeus' decision and its effect on the Trojans, which is based on the repetition of the λειπ- root of the verb λείπω.

7. The fear of Δηΐφοβος (*Il.* XIII 162-164; *AI* XIII 56):

Δηΐφοβος δέ
ἀσπίδα ταυρείην σχέθ' ἀπὸ ἔο, δεῖσε δὲ θυμῶι
ἔγχος Μηριόναο δαΐφρονος.

and Deiphobos
held his oxhide shield away from him, inwardly scared
by the spear of Meriones, the skilled warrior.

Δηΐφοβον ἐφόβησε δορι βαλὼν ἀσπίδα,

Meriones then scared Deiphobos [...]
by striking his shield with his spear.

In Tzetzes' adaptation the semantic association between Δηΐφοβος and δεῖσε, which suggests the ancient etymology of the name based on the notion of 'fear'⁴⁸, becomes direct and hence clear. He achieves this by changing the verb δεῖσε with ἐφόβησε and the syntax, from 'feeling fear' (of Deiphobos) to 'inducing fear' (of Meriones). Thus, Tzetzes creates a *figura etymologica* where the name Deiphobos becomes the cognate object of ἐφόβησε.

8. The shield of Idomeneos and the death of Ἴππασίδης (*Il.* XIII 404-405, 411-412; *AI* XIII 101-102):

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο χάλκεον ἔγχος
Ἴδομενεύς· κρύφθη γὰρ ὑπ' ἀσπίδι πάντος' ἔϊση,
[...]

ἀλλ' ἔβαλ' Ἴππασίδην Ὑψήνορα ποιμένα λαῶν
ἦπαρ ὑπὸ πραπίδων, εἶθαρ δ' ὑπὸ γούνατ' ἔλυσεν.

but Idomeneos, on the lookout, ducked the bronze-pointed shaft,
took cover behind the well-balanced shield he bore,
[...]

Hippasos' son Hypsenor, shepherd of men, it struck
in the liver below his midriff, and at once unstrung his knees;

Ἴδομενέως κύψαντος, κρυβέντος τῇ ἀσπίδι,
βαλὼν πρὸς τὸ διάφραγμα, κτείνει τὸν Ἴππασίδην.

Idomeneos ducked, hiding behind his shield,
and he killed Hippasides, hitting him in the diaphragm.

Tzetzes reduces the nine-line Homeric battle scene to a two-line description. The adaptation renders the essential idea of what happened: Idomeneos 'ducks' and 'hides behind his shield', and as a result Deiphobos' spear 'hits and kills Hip-

⁴⁸ Paschalis 1997, 232.

pasides'. While Homer seems to play on sound effects associated with marginal aspects of the battle scene (given in bold letters), Tzetzes displays his superior rhetorical skill by focusing on the substance of the encounter: (a) he retains the verb κρύφθη and replaces ἠλεύατο with a form of κύπτω (duck), thus creating the parechesis κύψαντος, κρυβέντος, and (b) he places τῆ ἀσπίδι and τὸν Ἰππασίδην at the end of two successive lines; he thus forms a double parechesis involving the two articles and the two nouns, the former of which is a phonetic anagram (ιπασιδ) of the latter.

9. Asios is given a guide to Hades (*Il.* XIII 414-416; *AI* XIII 104):

«οὐ μὰν αὐτ' ἄτιτος κεῖτ' Ἄσιος, ἀλλὰ ἔφημι
εἰς Ἄϊδος περ ἰόντα πυλάρταο κρατεροῖο
γηθήσειν κατὰ θυμόν, ἐπεὶ ρά οἱ ὄπασα πομπόν».

«Not unavenged does Asios lie now: no, I declare,
though he's going to the house of Hades, mighty gate-guardian,
he'll rejoice at heart, since I've furnished him with an escort».

«Ἔχει πρὸς Ἄϊδην ὄδηγόν Ἄσιος ὃν παρέσχον».

«Asios has a guide to Hades, whom I gave to him».

In condensing the Homeric passage Tzetzes retains, as usual, its basic content. The memorable single line adaptation of Deiphobos' words improves on the acoustic effect ὄπασα πομπόν, which links the killer with the victim that he furnishes as an escort to Asios. Tzetzes constructs a more pertinent parechesis by replacing πομπόν with ὄδηγόν: the new sequence Ἔχει πρὸς Ἄϊδην ὄδηγόν places the focus on Asios himself, Hades (his destination), and the guide that will point him the way.

10. The chest wound of a motionless hero (*Il.* XIII 437-438; *AI* XIII 108):

ἀλλ' ὡς τε **στήλην** ἢ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον
ἀτρέμας **ἔσταότα στήθος** μέσον **οὔτασε** δουρὶ

but stood, like a pillar or some high leafy tree,
motionless, while he was run through in mid-chest

βαλὼν πρὸς **στήθος** τῷ **δορὶ δίκην ἔστῶτα στήλης**·

spearing him in the chest as he stood like a stele;

In the scene where Idomeneos kills Alkathoos Tzetzes reduces the two-line description to one, consisting of two cola and displaying a remarkable structure. The two cola correspond to the two hemistichs of the line, the first of which records the killing and the second the stele simile. They are connected in chiasmatic order (ABBA): the end of the first hemistich is linked to the beginning of the second through parechesis; the beginning of the first is linked to the end of the second by means of paronomasia⁴⁹. The chiasmatic structure of the line: (A) βαλὼν πρὸς στήθος (B) τῷ δορί (B) δίκην (A) ἐστῶτα στήλης patently upgrades the Homeric text by rearranging the members of the triple etymological association (στήλην, ἐστῶτα, στήθος) and replacing ὥς τε with δίκην in order to form an alliterating pair with δορί.

11. Envisaging the capture of Troy (*Il.* XIII 815-816; *AI* XIII 198):

ἦ κε πολὺ **φθαίη** εὖ ναιομένη **πόλις** ὑμῆ
χερσὶν ὕφ' ἡμετέρησιν **ἀλοῦσά τε περθομένη τε**

Before that day, indeed, this populous city of yours
may well be taken, laid waste beneath our hands -

Ἕμεῖς, ἴσθι, **πορθήσομεν πρότερον** σὴν **πατρίδα**.

Know well, before that we will ravage your homeland.

Out of φθαίη [...] πόλις [...] ἀλοῦσά τε περθομένη τε, Ajax's threatening challenge to Hector, Tzetzes creates a single, dense line, in which he links together and highlights by means of parechesis the capture of the city, the envisaged time of the event, and the character of the city as the homeland of the Trojans.

12. The day that will bring disaster (*Il.* XIII 828-829; *AI* XIII 203):

ὡς νῦν **ἡμέρη** ἦδε κακὸν **φέρει Ἀργείοισιν**
πᾶσι μάλ',

as surely as this day is bringing disaster to the Argives,
every last one,

⁴⁹ See Orion *Etym.* col. 145,23 Sturz, s.v. στήθος. ὅτι ἔστηκεν ἀσάλευτον· ὡς δὲ ἄλλοι, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἔστηκεν [...]. Also, *Et.Gud.* col. 511.19 Sturz, s.v. στήθος. ἐκ τοῦ σῶ στήσω, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γίνεται στήθος, τὸ ἰστάμενον ἀσάλευτον καὶ μὴ κλινόμενον, ἐπεὶ δὴ ὅλα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος κλίνεται, τὸ δὲ στήθος οὐ κλίνεται· ἢ παρὰ τὴν στερέροτητα· ἢ παρὰ τὸ στερεὸν εἶναι στέρνον.

ἡ νῦν ἡμέρα συμφορὰν Ἑλλησι πᾶσι φέρει

this day will bring calamity to all the Greeks

In Tzetzes' adaptation of Hector's warning to Ajax the cognates συμφορὰν and φέρει bracket the assonance Ἑλλησι πᾶσι in the familiar chiastic order (ABBA)⁵⁰.

13. Ajax hits Hector with a rock and spins him like a top (*Il.* XIV 413; *AI* XIV 36):

στρόμβον δ' ὡς ἔσσευε βαλὼν, περὶ δ' ἔδραμε πάντη.

the blow spun him round like a whipped top.

ὡς στρόμβον περιέτρεψε περιδραμόντα πάντη.

and spun him around like a whirling top.

Tzetzes improves on the Homeric line by replacing ἔσσευε with περιέτρεψε. The resulting word sequence enhances the sense of 'whirling motion' and probably suggests the etymology of στρόμβος⁵¹.

14. Thetis prophesies that Achilles is destined to die when he kills Hector (*Il.* XVIII 95-96; *AI* XVIII 154-155):

«ὠκύμορος δὴ μοι, τέκος, ἔσσειαι, οἷ' ἀγορεύεις·
αὐτίκα γὰρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἑκτορα πότμος ἐτοιμός».

«Oh, my child, what you say now means that you're doomed to
[an early death,
since your own fate awaits you very soon after Hector's».

«Ὠκύμορος, ὦ τέκνον μοι, λοιπὸν οἷς λέγεις ἔση
μετὰ θανὴν γὰρ Ἑκτορος θνήσκεις καὶ σὺ εὐθέως».

«So, my son, your words mean that you will die early;
After Hector's death, you yourself will die immediately».

In adapting the Homeric passage Tzetzes links directly by means of the cognates θανὴν and θνήσκεις Hector's with Achilles' death and re-enforces the sound effect of the semantic pair by adding εὐθέως. His aim is to convey the substance

⁵⁰ Cf. II.B.10 above.

⁵¹ Cf. Phot. *Lex.* σ 630 Theodoridis στρόμβος· ῥόμβος· ἀπὸ τοῦ περιστρέφεσθαι.

of Thetis' warning as clearly and emphatically as possible. The substitution of the alliteration λοιπὸν οἷς λέγεις for οἷ' ἀγορεύεις serves as an appropriate introduction to Thetis' message.

C) *Enriching the Homeric text with paronomasia and parechsis*

In many instances Tzetzes does not just improve on what is already there but offers adaptations of the Homeric text that introduce entirely new features of semantic and sound associations. Here are a few examples:

1. Achilles reviles Agamemnon (*Il. I 225-244; AI I 90*):

«οἰνοβαρές, κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων, κραδίην δ' ἐλάφοιο,
[...]

σὺ δ' ἔνδοθι θυμὸν ἀμύξεις
χωόμενος, ὃ τ' ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισας».

«You wine-sodden wretch, dog-faced, deer-hearted,
[...]

you'll eat out the heart within you,
incensed that you failed to honour the best of the Achaeans».

λόγοις λοιδόροις δὲ πολλοῖς πλύνει τὸν βασιλέα

he nevertheless showered the king with abusive words

Achilles' 19-line fierce attack on Agamemnon is condensed into a single line description marked by various patterns of parechsis which sum up the substance of the Homeric text. The aim was to convey succinctly the tone of Achilles' speech.

2. Achilles appeals to Θέτις, the Νηρηΐς (*Il. I 350-351; AI I 120-121*):

ὀρώων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον·
πολλὰ δὲ μητρὶ φίλῃ ἠρήσατο χεῖρας ὀρεγνύς·

[with] eyes fixed on the boundless deep,
[Achilles] appealed to his dear mother, arms outstretched:

βλέπων ὦ πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος, καὶ τῇ μητρὶ προσλέγων,
τῇ τοῦ Νηρέως, Θέτιδι δῆθε τῇ Νηρηϊδί·

Looking across the water, he addressed his mother,
the daughter of Nereus, Thetis the Nereid:

Tzetzes' adaptation of the Homeric passage represents yet another rhetorical tour de force. He adds a line containing the name of Achilles' mother, which he had mentioned earlier⁵², and her genealogy. The composition of the line is remarkable. It consists of two tautologies arranged in chiasmic order (ABBA): (A) τῆ τοῦ Νηρέως (to the daughter of Nereus) = (A) Νηρηΐδι (to the Nereid); (B) Θέτιδι (to Thetis) = (B) δῆθε τῆ (pronounced δίθε τι, a phonetic anagram of Θέτιδι)⁵³.

3. Nestor's instructions to the Argives (*Il.* VI 67-70; *AI* VI 34):

«ὦ φίλοι, ἦρωες Δαναοί, θεράποντες Ἄρηος,
μή τις νῦν ἐνάρων ἐπιβαλλόμενος μετόπισθεν
μιμνέτω, ὡς κεν πλεῖστα φέρων ἐπὶ νῆας ἴκηται,
ἀλλ' ἄνδρας κτείνωμεν' [...].»

«My friends, you Danaan warriors, henchmen of Ares,
let no man now in his thirst for plunder hang back
far in the rear, to let him bring most back to the ships:
no, let us rather kill foemen».

«Τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἄνδρες, κτείνωμεν πρῶτον, ὡς ἔστι πρέπον'
[...].»

«My men, let us first kill the men, as is fitting;
[...].»

Tzetzes skillfully condenses the four lines into one, retaining, as usual, the basic idea of Nestor's words. He achieves this effect by (a) linking the prospective victims (Τοὺς ἄνδρας) with the addressees of Nestor's command (ἄνδρες) in a sort of polyptoton⁵⁴ and anadiplosis (*reduplicatio* / παλλιλογία),⁵⁵ (b) expressing the priority of the suggested course of action (πρῶτον), and (c) providing the appropriateness of the suggested course of action (ὡς ἔστι πρέπον). Steps (b) and (c) are linked by means of alliteration.

⁵² Proleg. 445 τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως τῆ μητρὶ τῆ Θέτιδι προεῖπε.

⁵³ For the chiasmic arrangement cf. II.B.10 and II.B.12 above.

⁵⁴ Lausberg 1998, 287-288, 638 3αβ'.

⁵⁵ Lausberg 1998, 277-278, 619.

4. Iobates gives Bellerophon his daughter Φιλονόη in marriage (*Il.* VI 192; *AI* VI 59-61):

δίδου δ' ὅ γε θυγατέρα ἦν,

offered him his own daughter,

([...] καὶ θυγατέρα δι' αὐτὸ λαβὼν τὴν Ἰοβάτου
τὴν κλήσιν τοῦ ὀνόματος ἔχουσαν **Φιλονόην**),
φίλος ὑπῆρχε τῷ **Οἰνεῖ** τῷ πάππῳ Διομήδους.

([...] and because of this he took as his wife Iobates' daughter,
whose name was Philonoe)
he, then, was a friend of Diomedes' grandfather, Oineus.

Tzetzes expands the Homeric half-line to three lines. In the first place he adds the names of father (Ἰοβάτης)⁵⁶ and daughter (Φιλονόη), thus displaying his superior knowledge vis-à-vis Homer. The daughter was known by different names⁵⁷ and Tzetzes' choice of Φιλονόη was deliberate. He strategically places Φιλονόη at the end of l. 60 and divides it into its constituent parts: φίλο- plays on φίλος at the beginning of the next line (paronomasia); and -νόη pairs with the name Οἰνεῖ (parechesis). Thus line 61 functions as a sort of gloss on the name of Iobates' daughter, reflecting the older bond between Bellerophon and Oineus and now between Glaukos and Diomedes. Bellerophon, Glaukos grandfather, had been a friend of Oineus (Οἰνεύς), Diomedes' grandfather, and had been entertained by the latter (presumably in Calydon).

5. Ajax's tower-like shield (*Il.* VII 219; *AI* VII 49):

Αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε, φέρων σάκος ἥντε πύργον,

So Ajax drew near, hefting his tower-like shield of bronze,

Αἴας δὲ φέρων θυρεὸν στήθει **στερρὸν** ὡς πύργον.

Ajax protected his chest with a shield sturdy as a tower.

⁵⁶ The correct form is Ἰοβάτης (Iobates) and not Ἰόβατος (Iobatos) as mentioned in Goldwyn - Kokkini 2015.

⁵⁷ Ἀντίκλεια, Ἀλκιμένη, Ἀλκιμέδουσα, Πασάνδρα: *RE* IX.2 (1916) 1837-1838; scholia *Il.* VI 192 Erbse.

In adapting the Homeric line Tzetzes creates an intricate structure: he places *στήθει* in the middle and brackets it with two alliterating pairs, *φέρων θυρεὸν* and *στερρόν ὡς πύργον*, which link the middle *with both sides* through the *appropriate* sound: *στήθει* with *θυρεὸν*, *στήθει* with *στερρόν*. Finally, he employs the paronomasia *στήθει στερρόν*⁵⁸ in order to reinforce the concept of protecting the ‘chest’ with a ‘sturdy’ shield.

6. Hector’s bleeding wound and his reluctance to retreat (*Il.* VII 262-263; *AI* VII 65):

μέλαν δ’ ἀνεκήκιν αἷμα.
ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὡς ἀπέληγε μάχης κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ,

and the black blood spurted up.
Yet not even so did bright-helmeted Hector yield,

κρουνοὶ δ’ ἐχώρουν αἵματος. Ἔκτωρ δ’ οὐχ ὑπεχώρει,

and streams of blood poured out. But Hector did not retreat,

Tzetzes reconfigures the Homeric text by linking through etymological play the blood oozing from Hector’s wound (*ἐχώρουν*) with his unyielding determination to continue the fight (*οὐχ ὑπεχώρει*).

7. Reapers at work confronting one another (*Il.* XI 67-69; *AI* XI 55-56):

Οἳ δ’, ὡς τ’ ἀμητῆρες ἐναντίοι ἀλλήλοισιν
ὄγμον ἐλαύνωσιν ἀνδρὸς μάκαρος κατ’ ἄρουραν
πυρῶν ἢ κριθέων,

So they, like rows of reapers confronting one another
who drive their line ahead through a wealthy man’s field
of wheat or barley,

Ὅσπερ δ’ ἐν θέρει θερισταὶ στάντες ἐξ ἐναντίας
ἐρίζουσι θερίζοντες στάχους κριθῶν ἢ σίτων,

Just as reapers in summer, standing opposite each other,
strive to reap ears of barley or wheat,

⁵⁸ See II.B.10 above.

Tzetzes offers a masterful paraphrase of the Homeric simile consisting of three alliterating pairs of words. In addition, the first and the third pair are linked through paronomasia: *θεριστής*, 'reaper' is a derivative of *θερίζω*, 'reap', which in turn is derived from *θέρος*, 'summer'. This is a superb display of Tzetzes' rhetorical skill and of the literary potential of political verse.

8. Antilochos kills Asios' charioteer (*Il.* XIII 394-397; *AI* XIII 97-98):

ἐκ δέ οἱ **ἠνίοχος** πλήγη φρένας, ἄς πάρος εἶχεν,
οὐδ' ὄ γ' ἐτόλμησεν δηίων ὑπὸ χεῖρας ἀλύξας
ἄψ ἵππους στρέψαι· τὸν δ' **Ἀντίλοχος** μενεχάρμης
δοῦρι μέσον περόνησε τυχών·

while his charioteer, scared out of the wits that he had before,
dared not wheel his team round, and so escape
the hands of the enemy. Steadfast Antilochos took
aim, hit him squarely.

Τούτου δὲ τὸν **ἠνίοχον** **Ἀντίλοχος** **ανείλεν**
ἐστῶτα δίφρω, τῷ **δορι** πρὸς **στήθος** περονήσας.

Antilochos killed his charioteer
as he stood on his chariot, piercing his chest with his spear.

Tzetzes reduces the four lines to two rendering, as usual, the basic idea of the passage. In addition, he enriches the Homeric text by means of parechesis and paronomasia. In the first line he links the victim, the killer, and the act of killing through parechesis of *ν* and *λ*. In the second line he arranges in chiasmic order the etymological pair *ἐστῶτα* / *στήθος*⁵⁹ and the alliterating pair *δίφρω* / *δορι*: (A) *ἐστῶτα* (B) *δίφρω* (B) *τῷ δορι* (A) *πρὸς στήθος*⁶⁰.

9. Πάτροκλος kills Kebriones with a rock (*Il.* XVI 734-743; *AI* XVI 298-299):

ἐτέρηφι δὲ λάζετο **πέτρον**
μάρμαρον ὀκρίοντα, τὸν οἱ περὶ χεῖρ ἐκάλυψεν,
ἦκε δ' ἐρεισάμενος· οὐδὲ †δὴν ἄζετο† φωτός,
οὐδ' ἀλίωσε βέλος, βάλε δ' Ἔκτορος ἠνιοχῆα
Κεβριόνην, νόθον υἷὸν ἀγακλῆος Πριάμοιο,

⁵⁹ Cf. II.B.10 and II.C.5 above.

⁶⁰ For the chiasmic arrangement cf. II.B.10, II.B.12, II.C.2 above.

ἵππων ἤνι' ἔχοντα, μετώπιον ὀξεί λαῖ.
ἀμφοτέρας δ' ὀφρῦς σύνελεν λίθος, οὐδέ οἱ ἔσχεν
ὀστέον, ὀφθαλμοὶ δὲ χαμαὶ πέσον ἐν κονίησιν
αὐτοῦ πρόσθε ποδῶν· ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἀρνευτῆρι εἰκῶς
κάππεσ' ἀπ' εὐεργέος δίφρου, λίπε δ' ὀστέα θυμός.

while the other grasped a rock,
jagged and glinting: his hand enclosed it. With all his weight
behind it he threw. The missile did not fall short;
he did not throw in vain, but hit Hector's charioteer,
Kebriones - a bastard of glorious Priam's, now holding
the reins - in his forehead with the sharp rock: it crushed
both eyebrows together, the bone did not hold firm,
both eyeballs bolted out, dropped to the ground in the dust
right in front of his feet, and he, like a diver, fell
from the well-built chariot. The breath of life left his bones.

Καὶ πρῶτα πέτρῳ Πάτροκλος κτείνει τὸν Κεβριόνην,
ἠνίοχον τοῦ Ἑκτορος καὶ ἀδελφὸν δὲ νόθον,

And first Patroklos killed with a rock Kebriones,
Hector's charioteer and half-brother,

Homer uses three different terms (πέτρος, λάας, λίθος) for the 'piece of rock' with which Patroklos kills Kebriones. In his two-line adaptation Tzetzes chooses the one that is acoustically appropriate (πέτρῳ) to the name of the hero who hurls it (Πάτροκλος) and he furthermore creates a triple parechesis by adding πρῶτα. Through this adverb he marks the killing of Kebriones as a prelude to the fierce battle that follows (XVI 300-322).

III. Conclusion

The evidence presented above runs counter to the prevailing doctrine that political verse as used by Tzetzes in the *Allegories of the Iliad* and similar works served only didactic purposes and was devoid of aesthetic value. It disproves in practice the contempt for political verse expressed by the learned elite of Tzetzes' age for being 'unmetrical' and the negative epithets applied to it by Tzetzes himself. By exploiting the virtues of political verse Tzetzes offers remarkably concise, comprehensible, and accurate adaptations of Homeric scenes and passages, and successfully employs classical stylistic features, which ennoble the status of po-

litical verse and raise it to the rank of the Homeric hexameter. He manages to show that political verse is not only a match for the Homeric hexameter, a worthy rival, but capable of surpassing it. His aim is to bypass in practice the difference between a meter based on word-accent and a meter based on the quantity of syllables. Overall, I have suggested that in the *Allegories of the Iliad* Tzetzes took it upon himself to demonstrate the potential of political verse in areas where there is common ground with the Homeric hexameter. The *synkrisis* is based on the 'playful' character of Homer's mythical narrative, which says one thing but means another, and political verse. It is noticeable especially in allusive word meaning (paronomasia) and the creation of a sound impression (parechesis) which abound in the Homeric epics and are either enriched in Tzetzes' adaptation or are introduced for the first time. Besides constituting a conspicuous display of Tzetzes' superior rhetorical skills and scholarly self-confidence, and substantial evidence of his Homeric emulation, these and other stylistic features produce a memorable effect which would have helped Manuel Komnenos' German wife and his later sponsor and pupil Konstantinos Kotertzes commit the lines to memory.

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