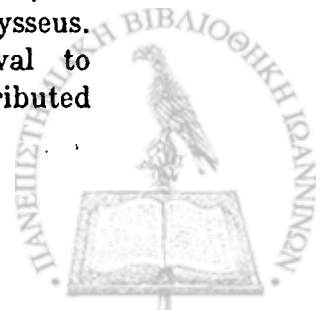


ΑΥΓΗ/ΑΥΓΑΙ: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE HOMERIC PERCEPTION OF LIGHT AND VISION

Homeric references to eyes and vision are mainly formulaic and seem to belong to the traditional language of the epic. Various terms are used for denoting 'eyes', as the organs of vision, both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. 'Οφθαλμοί, which occurs in a variety of formulaic expressions, is the most common of these terms (*Il.* 3.28: ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδῶν: cf. 5.212, 15.286; 5.659: τὸν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψε: cf. 5.696; 23.385: τοῖο δ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν γύτο δάκρυα χρομένοιο; *Od.* 2.155: ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν: cf. 6.160; 4.150: ὀφθαλμῶν τε βολαί; 11.426: χερσὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐλέειν; 24.296 etc.). Next come ὄσσε (e.g. *Il.* 1.104: ὄσσε δὲ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι εἴκτην; 1.200: δεινῶ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε φάανθεν; 3.427: ὄσσε πάλιν κλίνασα; 4.461: τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυπεν: cf. 11.356; 13.3; 15.607-8: τῶ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε / λαμπέσθην βλοσυροῖσιν ὑπ' ὀφρῶσιν: cf. 19.365; 17.167; 23.396-7: τῶ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε δακρυόφι πλησθεν; 24.637) and ὄμματα (*Il.* 1.225: κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων; 3.217: ὑπαὶ δὲ ἴδεσκε κατὰ χθονὸς ὄμματα πήξας; 10.91; 23.66: ὄμματα κάλ' εἰκνῖα; *Od.* 5.47: ὄμματα θέλγει; 16.179; 24.3), also attested in both epics. Another word for 'eyes' is φάεα, mentioned three times in the *Odyssey* and in all three cases it presents elements of a social ritual related to arrival scenes and welcome greetings.¹ Finally, the word ἀυγαί in the expression Διὸς ἀυγὰς (*Il.* 13.837), which is unique in the Homeric poems,

* I would like to thank Professor I. Anastasiou for very helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this article.

1. See *Od.* 16.15, 17.39, 19.417: gestures of affection functioning within a ritual context —like the kissing of the head, of both eyes and the hands— accompany the newcomer and are expressed in an obviously formulaic character (e.g. κύσσε δὲ μιν κεφαλὴν τε καὶ ἄμφω φάεα καλὰ / χεῖράς τ' ἀμφοτέρως ...: *Od.* 16.15 f.; κύσσε δὲ μιν κεφαλὴν τε καὶ ἄμφω φάεα καλὰ: 17.39; κύσσ' ἄρα μιν κεφαλὴν τε καὶ ἄμφω φάεα καλὰ: 19.417). The first two cases refer to Telemachos and the third to Odysseus. Both Odyssean heroes are greeted by members of their family, on his arrival to Ithakē the first, at his grandparents' house the second, and they are attributed emotions of affection and parental devotion.



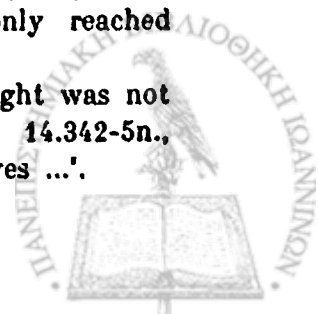
may indirectly refer to eyes and vision, particularly to Zeus' eyes or rather to the 'invisible rays coming from the eyes' of the supreme god; a theme that agrees with the very ancient idea of 'an all-seeing god', according to R. Janko,¹ who relates *Διὸς ἀυγὰς* and its possible meaning as 'Zeus' eyes' to line 3 of the same book of the *Iliad* (book 13) where the formula *τρέπεν ὄσσε φαεινῶ* is associated with Zeus again. Such an interpretation, however, is not compatible with the idea of hearing expressed in the same verse (*ἤχη δ' ἀμφοτέρων ἵκετ' αἰθέρα καὶ Διὸς ἀυγὰς*: 13.837), for it presupposes a receiver of sound that eyes are not possible to be unless a 'visual' apart from the acoustic reception of *ἤχη* is implied here. Therefore, I suggest that here *Διὸς ἀυγὰς* should be understood as referring to the bright kingdom rather than to the eyes of Zeus;² there, in the dominion of Zeus, a radiant whiteness was permanent (*Od.* 6.44-5).

Ἀυγή, however, recurs in various forms in the Homeric poems. Its meaning relates to 'light' and 'vision' with particular association with the Sun: *αὐγῆς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο* (*Il.* 8.480); *ἡελίου ἴδεν ἀυγὰς* (*Il.* 16.188); *πέπτατο δ' αὐγῆ | ἡελίου ὄξεϊα* (*Il.* 17.371-2); *ὕπ' ἀυγὰς ἡελίοιο* (*Od.* 2.181; 11.498, 619); *εἶματα δ' ἡελίοιο μένον τερσήμεναι αὐγῆ* (*Od.* 6.98); *Ἡελίου τ' αὐγῆ Ὑπεριονίδαο ἄνακτος* (*Od.* 12. 176); *ἧ που ἔτι ζῶουσι ὕπ' ἀυγὰς ἡελίοιο* (*Od.* 15.349), etc. *Ἡελίοιο ἀυγαί* are thus the rays of sun, the sunshine itself.³ But it can also be a 'ray' from a fire as well as the rays of light coming from a metal as it will be shown below. It is equivalent to *φῶς* meaning both 'light and sight' which is also found in various contexts in both the *Iliad* and

1. *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. iv: books 13-16, Cambridge 1992, 148 (on *Il.* 13.837).

2. I presume that this is exactly meant by Kazantzakis-Kakridis' translation in modern Greek (N. Καζαντζάκη - Ι.Θ. Κακριδῆ, *Ὀμήρου Ἰλιάδα*, Ἀθήναι 1955), which is as follows: *καὶ ὁ ἀχὸς τῶν δυὸ στὰ αἰθέρια ἀσκώνονταν, στοῦ Δία τὰ λάμπη ἀπάνω*. Here *λάμπη* apparently refers to the lightened kingdom of Zeus, the realm of Olympos. The ancient scholia give emphasis on the speed of the sound created by the clashing of the two armies—as well as on its intensity—so that it can rapidly break through the barriers and cover the distance between earth and sky (which is the greatest distance that can be run) and reach the *αἰθήρ* (*ἵκετ' αἰθέρα*): see H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, I-VII (Berlin 1969-88). Cf. also Janko, *Commentary*, 148: 'But we are still in suspense: the din has only reached his eyes, not his ears!'

3. Cf. Janko, *Commentary*, 148: 'Since vision by reflected light was not understood, Helios was thought to see with his rays (cf. 339-44n., 14.342-5n., *Od.*, 11.16), and everyone else with invisible rays coming from the eyes ...'.



the *Odyssey*.¹ The following discussion will attempt to clarify the above word's meaning and function in the Homeric poems.

At *Iliad* 8.480 *ἀργαί* is obviously the sunlight which does not reach Tartaros, according to Zeus' utterance. Kronos and Iapetos are in imprisonment there, in Tartaros; and the same fate may have Hera too if she insists on changing the events of the war in favour of the Greeks and against the predetermined fate.² Even if she goes there out of anger, where there is neither sunlight nor breezes as those were the '«lowest» boundaries'³ of the earth (*οὐτ' ἀργῆς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο / τέρποντι οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι*), not even then would Zeus care and intervene for reversing what has been decided about the fate of the two armies (8.477-83). The same formulaic expression recurs with some variations at *Od.* 12.176: *Ἡελίου τ' ἀργῆ Ὑπεριονίδαο ἄνακτος*, where the patronymic *Ὑπεριονίδαο* is included, which is a 'metrical alternative to *Ὑπερίονος*'.⁴ In the latter case *Ἡελίου τ' ἀργῆ* has been rightly interpreted as 'the warmth of the sun'⁵ that helped the wax to melt in Odysseus' hands; the same wax that he used for sealing his men's ears in order to resist the Sirens' song, since they could not hear it, in the well-known episode of the *Odyssey* (12. 165-200).

Thus it seems that *ἀργή*'s original (or more significant) meaning is that of 'sunlight', in some cases closely associated with the notion of life, or in negative sense with that of death, as it will be shown in the following examples. Such is the meaning at *Il.* 16.188 where Eudoros, the son of Hermes and Polymela, is 'brought out to light by the goddess of childbirth, Eileithuia, and thus he saw (*Φίδεν*) *ἠελίου ἀργάς*' (187-8: *αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τὸν γε μογοστόκος Εἰλείθυια / ἐξάγαγε πρὸ φώωσδε καὶ ἠελίου ἴδεν ἀργάς*). Birth, as coming out (it is assumed from the darkness of womb: cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 665: *οὐδ' ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη*) and first seeing the 'light of Sun', is contrasted

1. See *Ibid.*, for *φάος* (*Il.* 1.605: *Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατέδυν λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο*), *φαινώ*, *φάσα*, *ἀργή* / *αἶ*, and *ἀργάζομαι*, 'see'.

2. *Il.* 8.477: *ὧς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι*; see G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. ii: books 5-8, Cambridge 1990, 334 (on 8.477): 'θέσφατον means «divinely decreed», but its usage is not clear enough (it only recurs once in *Il.*) to indicate weighing the fates of the two armies ... rather than his own general will and foreknowledge of future events'.

3. Kirk, *Commentary*, 334 (on 8.477-83).

4. A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. ii: books ix-xvi, Oxford 1989, 127 (on 12. 175-6).

5. See as previous note.



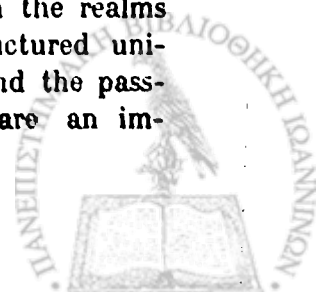
to death or to the loosing of senses when *σκότος*, 'darkness', covers the eyes (*τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυψε(ν)*): *Il.* 4.461, 526; 6.11; *ἀμφὶ δὲ ὄσσε κελαινὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψε(ν)*: *Il.* 5.310; 11.356; *cf.* 23.50-1: *ὔλην τ' ἀξέμεναι παρὰ τε σχεῖν ὄσσ' ἐπιεικὲς | νεκρὸν ἔχοντα νέεσθαι ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα*,¹ where *ζόφον ἠερόεντα* means the darkness, the gloom of the nether world.

The same concept of life as 'being able to see the light of Sun' and deprived of that if someone is dead, is expressed in a tragic way through Achilles' speech to Odysseus during the latter's visit to the Underworld (*Od.* 11. 488 ff.).² Achilles is not confronted by Odysseus' praise of him as having been the *φέρτατος* 'the most brave, the most powerful, the best' of all Achaeans and the *μακάρτατος*, the 'most fortunate' of all men, of those *προπάρουθε* and those *ὀπίσσω*, those already born and those that were to be born. For he had been honoured like a god in his lifetime and now he was pre-eminent among the dead (*'μέγα κρατέεις νεκύεσσιν'*: 11.485); therefore, he should not grieve for his death (*Od.* 11. 478-86). But Achilles is well aware of how definite, how strict and clear are the boundaries between life and death,³ no matter if Odysseus had approached this borderline by his descent into Hades. The contrast between life and death, which is paralleled to that between light and darkness, is explicitly (and in a way passion-

1. According to Janko, *Commentary*, 344 (on *Il.* 16.188) *ἠέλλου (F)ίδεν ἀνγός* is a 'pre-Homeric formular innovation beside *ὄπ' α. ἠέλλοιο* (4χ *Od.*): *cf.* / *α. τ' ἠέλλου HyDem* 35.'

2. For an excellent, full discussion on the various interpretations of this very complex episode of the *Odyssey* see A. Heubeck (books ix-xii), in A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 75 ff.

3. Evidence dated from Mycenaean times shows the belief to a transitional period during which the dead (or rather his spirit) lived in a marginal condition, between the two Worlds, until he/she could enter the other World; this period was marked by the performing of transitional rites: see R. Garland, *The Greek way of death*, London 1985, 38-41. For Homeric beliefs about death and after-life see Chr. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'To Die and Enter the House of Hades: Homer, Before and After' in J. Whaley, (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality. Studies in the Social History of Death*, London 1981, 15-39, esp. 20-1: 'The definite division between the two worlds and controlled communication between them is also expressed through the image of the gates which are firmly attached to the Land of the Dead and to Hades its ruler god ... This definite, naturally articulated division between the realms of the living and of the dead is a manifestation of an ordered and structured universe in which there are proper boundaries between life and death and the passage from one to the other is governed by fixed and strict rules which are an important part of the cosmic order.'



ately) expressed in Achilles' wish to come up on earth and life again, back to his homeland and his palace and as a supporter of his aged father; 'to live again under the light of Sun' (ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο: *Od.* 11.498) 'exactly such as he had been in the Trojan plain, spreading death around, fighting for the Argives' (499-500). For Achilles there is no reconciliation to death: he would rather be in the world of living and light (ἐπάρουρος, ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο), in the occasional service of another person who owns no land (θητευέμεν ἄλλω / ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρω) —which socially means being on a very low rank— rather than being the king of dead (ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν) (*Od.* 11. 489-91).¹

The phrase ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο recurs in a similar context at *Od.* 15.349, but with the addition of ζώουσιν. The verse runs as follows: ἢ που ἔτι ζώουσιν ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο, ἢ ἤδη τεθνᾶσι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι: 'do they live and see the sunlight or they have died and entered the House of Hades?' (349-50). It refers to Odysseus' parents, and to whether they are alive or not, in a context where life presupposes the idea of vision.² The question is addressed to Eumaeus, the swineherd, by Odysseus, who, however, already knows the answer since he had met his mother's ghost in the Underworld;³ but the hero either wants to be more convincing as a stranger who knows nothing about Odysseus' (i.e. his own) family in Ithakē or his question is part of courtesy, gentleness and formality towards his host; shortly an interest in the fate of that family which offered him hospitality through one of its servants, Eumaeus.

Elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, in his speech to Odysseus in Hades, Herakles refers to his mortal life as living 'ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο' (11.617-

1. See *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. ii, 106 (on 11.488-503): 'Achilles' violently angry response, «Do not try to reconcile me to death!» is all the more surprising since the expression of an unconditional preference for life appears not to be in keeping with the attitude expressed by Achilles when alive (*Il.* xviii 88-93; αὐτίκα τεθναίην 98; κῆρα ... δέξομαι 115). It is, however, quite in character, for in Hades the perspective has dreadfully changed. Now that Achilles is dead, his spirit yearns for life with the same vehemence with which it had once embraced death. ... Achilles' words (like those of Odysseus, 484-6) are entirely centred on a contrast of life with death: «Better θητευέμεν on earth than ἀνάσσειν in Hades». Cf. J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, Oxford 1980, 100-1; see also S.L. Shein, *The Mortal Hero. An Introduction to Homer's Iliad*, Berkeley, California 1984.

2. See *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 254 (on 15.349): 'ζώουσιν ὕπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο: a «conjugation» of the formulaic ζῶει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο ...'.

3. *Ibid.*



9: Διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ, | ἄ δειλ' ἢ τινὰ καὶ σὺ κακὸν μόνον ἠγγιάζεις, | ὄν περ ἐγὼν ὀχέεσκον ὑπ' αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο).¹ Herakles' previous life was that of a mortal but now his εἶδωλον is in the Underworld while himself is on Olympus as a heroic divinity.² Herakles' words, however, do not imply a contrast of life to death but a comparison of Odysseus' fate (κακὸν μόνον) with his own endurance 'beneath the rays of the sun'. Nevertheless, the contrast that can be assumed here (though it is not stated) is between Herakles' unhappy life and Achilles' felicity on earth.

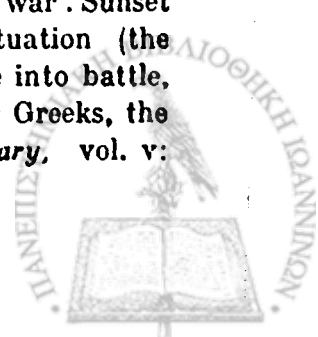
According to the above, then, the boundaries of Sun's kingdom are strictly set: sunlight cannot reach the realm of Hades and scatter its darkness.³ And sunset is typically defined as κατέδυ λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο (as at *Il.* 1.605). The image of the sun sinking into the Ocean whence he drags 'black night' over the land, at *Il.* 8. 485-6, is a marvellous description of sunset and one of the best examples showing Homer's artistry in his perception of light and vision—a poet whom tradition persistently wanted to be blind—as well as his manifestation as a master of structuring, creating visual imagery.⁴

1. See *Commentary*, 115 (on *Od.* 11.618-9): 'Heracles means that Odysseus surely has to bear a burden of fate not unlike the one he endured in his mortal life'.

2. For the compromise by Homer of the two beliefs which want Herakles at the same time present among the gods (deification) but his εἶδωλον among those who had undergone a physical death, as well as for the supposition that the poet's idea of Odysseus' visiting the Underworld originated from Herakles' *catabasis* to Hades, see *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. ii, 114 (on 11.601-27) where a very interesting discussion. M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, Oxford 1985, 134, assigns this conception of Herakles' phantom in the *Odyssey*, to an interpolator which is the view of some ancient scholars too.

3. Cf. J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, 162: 'The gods are at home in the radiant brightness of Olympus, the dead in eternal darkness; men live between them in a world in which light and dark succeed each other'; cf. Chr. Sourvinou-Inwood, *art. cit.*, 21.

4. See *Il.* 8.485-6: ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' Ὀκεανῷ λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο, | ἔλκον νύκτα μέλαιναν ἐπὶ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν. Cf. Kirk, *Commentary*, vol. ii, 335 (on 8. 485-6): 'Sunset eases the transition from Olympos back to affairs on earth.' Sunset can also be hastened or delayed, according to the divine will, as it happens at *Il.* 18.239-42: Hera intervenes and sends Helios to set (to the Ocean), despite his will as it is not yet time to leave; therefore, the Achaeans παύσαντο πολέμοιο, 'ceased war'. Sunset seems here to function as a medium for defining the very complex situation (the passionate atmosphere) created by Achilles' threatening reappearance into battle, the rescuing of Patroklos' body, the grief of Achilles and the other Greeks, the dismay of the Trojans: see M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. v: books 17-20, Cambridge 1991, 174 f. (on 18.239-42).



Αύγη ἡελίου can also be scorching for the fighting Trojans and the Achaeans as it happens at *Iliad* 17.370-2: *οἱ δ' ἄλλοι Τρῶες καὶ εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοὶ | εὐκνήλοι πολέμιζον ὑπ' αἰθέρι, πέπτατο δ' αὐγῇ | ἡελίου ὄξεϊα ...*, where *ὄξεϊα* means strong; the phrase refers to the strong sunlight, the heat of the sun.¹ Or it can simply dry the clothes that Nausikaa and the other women have washed at *Odyssey* 6.97-8, while they are dining and playing on the banks of the river. Here, *ἡέλιου ... αὐγῇ* is the warmth of the sun:

δεῖπνον ἔπειθ' εἶλοντο παρ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο,
εἶματα δ' ἡέλιου μένον τερσήμεναι αὐγῇ.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σίτου τάρφθεν δμωαί τε καὶ αὐτή,
σφαίρη ταί γ' ἄρα παῖζον, ἀπὸ κρήδεμνα βαλοῦσαι
τῆσι δὲ Ναυσικάα λευκώλενος ἄρχετο μολπῆς.

(*Od.* 6.97-101)²

Our final example referring to *αὐγὰς ἡέλιου* is *Od.* 2.181. It refers to the swarms of birds that come and go (i.e. fly) under the light of sun but they are not all *ἐναίσιμοι*, 'fateful'.

1. See Edwards, *Commentary*, 98 (on 17.370-7): 'αὐγῇ is not elsewhere given an epithet; ὄξεϊα (372) is not otherwise used of light and must be given the bright metaphorical sense 'piercing', in sharp contrast to the mist ...'.

2. Nausikaa's excursion to the river and her encounter with Odysseus is one of the most beautiful scenes of the epic, composed with extraordinary skill and subtlety, a hymn to maidenly modesty and decorum, but also to the female beauty perfectly combined here with discretion and nobility of character. Moreover, it is an admirable presentation of the beauty and the significance (this mainly applies to lines 97-101) that any everyday activity could acquire, the elevation of ordinary everyday activities to a level of distinctive elegance, of intellectual and moral uplift. See A. Heubeck, Stephanie West, J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford 1988, 298 ff. See also Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, 57 ff., who encounters this scene among those that pose questions of characterization in the Homeric poems and 'are not simple records of events', but they help us to read psychological approaches by the poet along with the course of the events. See also D.N. Maronitis, *Παιρωδία ζ: «Ὀδυσσέως καὶ Ναυσικᾶς ὁμιλία»: Μετάφραση - επιλεγόμενα*, Αθήνα 1991, 39-44, for an evaluation of the story of the sixth book of the *Odyssey* and its central figures, Odysseus and Nausikaa; their meeting scene is compared to that of Hektor and Andromache in the *Iliad* for similarities and differences; see esp. 44: 'The poet enjoys presenting his art in narrative; the audience relishes and admires him. And all these happen within a poetry whose conventions forbid the epic poet to reveal even his name' (my transl.).



But when the sun sets and darkness covers the earth, then ἡ-ελλοιο ἀγῶαι are substituted by the light of torches which raises up as high as to be visible by the neighbours for coming and rescuing the people that are besieged by enemies in the castle of their island (at *Il.* 18.210 ff.); such a light comes from the fire that Athena lit on the golden cloud with which she had crowned the head of Achilles, as he was rushing for rescuing Patroklos' body and preventing its sacrilege by the Trojans (*Il.* 18. 203-14). This is a beautiful simile and a very powerful scene as we imagine Achilles advancing and a firelight raising up his head. In the whole passage there is a profound emphasis on terms related to light and glare, an atmosphere of flash fire and light in general, which is created by the golden cloud and the fire flames (ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ κεφαλῇ νέφος ἔστεφε διὰ θεῶων / χρύσειον, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ δαΐε φλόγα παμφανόωσαν: 18.205-6), the lighting torches (πυρσοὶ τε φλεγέθουσιν ἐπήτριμοι, ὑπόσε δ' αὐγὴ γίγνεται ... : 211-2) and the mention of σέλας in line 214 (ὦς ἀπ' Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρο' ἵκανε). As M.W. Edwards¹ has pointed out the comparison in this simile is 'between the fire flaming from Akhilleus' head and that from the walls of the besieged city'. Athena's rôle is pre-eminent in the above scene as she is the goddess who reinforces the fire on Achilles' head so as to appear more terrible and indispensable (lines 225-7: ..., ἐπειδ ἴδον ἀκάματον πῦρ / δεινὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς μεγαθύμου Πηλεΐωνος / δαιόμενον· τὸ δὲ δαΐε θεὰ γλανκῶπις Ἀθήνη). Thus the great Homeric hero appears terrifying and ferocious like the glare of the fire that springs up (lines 221-9). And Athena honours him by crowning him with a golden flaming cloud —as a halo! This is a divine scene!²

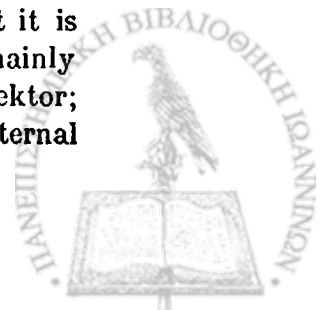
1. *Commentary*, 170 (on 18.207-14). See on this simile C. Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric poems, Hypomnemata* 49, Göttingen 1977, 106-8. For Achilles as a heroic model/example see G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, Baltimore 1979, (*passim*), esp. viii-ix (Forward), 347; K.C. King, *Achilles. Paradigms of the War Hero from Homer to the Middle Ages*, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1987.

2. In this sublime scene of the glorification of Achilles (18.203 ff.) there are the typical elements of the 'arming' of a warrior (ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθήνη / ὤμοις ἰφθίμοισι βάλ' αλγίδα θυσσανόεσσαν, / ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ κεφαλῇ νέφος ἔστεφε διὰ θεῶων / χρύσειον, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ δαΐε φλόγα παμφανόωσαν: 203-6) which, however, are elaborated into a supernatural scene equal to divine epiphanies. Thus a type-scene of the 'arming of a warrior' is masterly adapted, or rather incorporated into the following simile and both are unfolded in the course of narrative suggesting with specific details (like the fire-imagery, Achilles' war-cry, the besieged city) future events and particularly the foreshadowing end of Troy: see Edwards, *Commentary* on the above passage and Introduction, 11 ff., for type-scenes and relevant bibliography.

In the previous passage it is obvious that the image of Achilles is a divine invention and creation, the result of divine intervention. Elsewhere in the *Iliad* (22.134 f.) Achilles' appearance like Ares (*Ἴσος Ἐνναλίω, κορυθαίκι πτολεμιστῆ*: line 132), wearing his armour, gives the impression of blazing fire or raising sun: thus bronze armour which covered him was shining (*ἀμφὶ δὲ χαλκὸς ἐλάμπετο εἴκελος αὐγῆ / ἢ πυρὸς αἰθομένου ἢ ἡελίου ἀνιόντος*: 22.134-5)¹ and terrified Hektor as he caught sight of him (136-7). This scene concerns Achilles' great manifestation, the prelude to his most heroic act, to the most important phase of his *aristeia*: the killing of Hektor and the achievement of *κλέος ἄφθιτον* (cf. *Il.* 9.412-6) since his own death was henceforth prescribed: *«τέθναθι κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι, ὅπποτε κεν δῆ / Ζεὺς ἐθέλη τελέσαι ἧδ' ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλου»* (*Il.* 22.365-6).² Bronze shining like fire, and moreover in association with the

1. This is obviously a formulaic expression with a bit of unreality as the firelight cannot be similar to the light of sunrise; the latter is milder, subdued. *Αὐγή* referring to real firelight is found at *Il.* 9.206, in the expression *ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῆ*, where Patroklos is engaged with the lighting of a fire and the roasting of the meat for a sacrificial meal. In another passage in the *Odyssey* (6.305) Arete is sitting in the *megaron*, the main room of the Homeric house, 'by the fireplace and by the firelight, spinning wool, a marvel to see' (*ἢ δ' ἴσται ἐπ' ἐσχάρῃ ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῆ, / ἠλάκατα στρωφῶσ' ἀλιπρόφρυγα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι*). Similarly, at *Od.* 23.89 Penelope sits opposite Odysseus, by the firelight (*ἔξετ' ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆος ἐναντίη, ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῆ / τοίχου τοῦ ἐτέρου*); here, however, *ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῆ* means rather in the glow of the fire since Penelope's place is by the other wall according to line 90 (*τοίχου τοῦ ἐτέρου*). For the Homeric house with its generic and its specific 'architectural' sense, its Semantics and its poetic function in the epic, see *Ο Ομηρικός οἶκος. Από τα Πρακτικά του Ε' Συνεδρίου για την Οδύσεια (11-14 Σεπτ. 1987), Ithakē 1990 (Κέντρο Οδυσσειακῶν Σπουδῶν)*.

2. Achilles is one of the Homeric characters that foreshadowing death is especially confined to, from the beginning of the *Iliad* right to the end, through his own words but also through the words of others: 1.417-8, 505-6; 19.412-6; 22.358-60 etc. An increasing intensity in the foreshadowing of his death is found in book 18, as the death of Patroklos brings an end to Achilles' withdrawal from war and marks his determination to take vengeance despite the fact that such an act would mean his end too; his approaching fate of death is often reminded from now on and reaches its climax at Hektor's death when the count-down has already begun (*Il.* 22.358-66); see Edwards, *Commentary*, 139-40, 157-63 (on 18.89-126) and esp. Introduction, 8: 'Akhilleus' death does not take place in the *Il.*, but throughout the poem, with increasing intensity, we share his knowledge that it is imminent, and we admire his resolution in facing it.' On Achilles' fate chainly bound to that of Patroklos and Hektor (since Patroklos is dead so must be Hektor; therefore, Achilles must die too) as well as for his alternative (long life or eternal



same hero, Achilles, recurs earlier at *Il.* 18.610 (τεῦξ' ἄρα οἱ θώρηκα φαεινότερον πυρὸς ἀγῆς) and refers to the making of the hero's armour by Hephaestos. Thus, the glaring appearance of Achilles created by the flash of bronze armour in the first passage may also allude to the divine origin of its craftsmanship, to the work of Hephaestos himself. Edwards¹ has pointed out the symbolic meaning that this bronze armour acquires —both in its making and the depicting of scenes as well as in its use— in view of Achilles' forthcoming death.

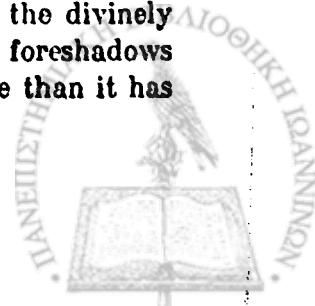
Αὐγή may also be assigned to starlight. In a very beautiful simile in the beginning of book 22 (lines 25 ff.), Achilles is compared to Ὠρίων whose shining distinguishes it among many stars (... ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ ἀγῆαι / φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ) but is a bad omen for the mortals when it appears; thus the hero's armour was shining as he was running in the Trojan plain, a bad sign for Priam who saw him first and started lament for his son Hektor (*Il.* 22.25-35):

Τὸν δ' ὁ γέρον Πρίαμος πρῶτος ἶδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
 παμφαίνονθ' ὥς τ' ἀστέρ' ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο,
 ὅς ῥά τ' ὀπώρης εἰσιν, ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ ἀγῆαι
 φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ·
 ὅν τε κύν' Ὠρίωνος ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσι.
 λαμπρότατος μὲν δ' γ' ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,
 καὶ τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν·
 ὡς τοῦ χαλκὸς ἔλαμπε περὶ στήθεσσι θεόντος.
 ὤμωξεν δ' ὁ γέρον, κεφαλὴν δ' ὁ γε κόψατο χερσὶν
 ὑψόσ' ἀνασχόμενος, μέγα δ' οἰμώξας ἐγεγώνει
 λισσόμενος φίλον υἷόν· ...

In a similar context at *Il.* 13.244 the glare of Idomeneus' bronze armour, as he is running, is paralleled to that of lightning (cf. 11.83:

glory?)—but also predetermined—choice, see J.M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector*, Chicago 1975, 18 ff., 28-9, 34, 93, 134; cf. R. Garland, *The Greek way of death*, *op. cit.*, 19-20, for the Homeric belief to men's pre-ordained fate though not to an unaltered consistency on the time of its fulfilment, as divine and human action could precipitate or delay it.

1. *Commentary*, 8: 'Akhilleus' doom is foreshadowed almost exclusively in his own words and those of others ... In a similarly allusive way, the divinely made armour worn by Patroklos, Hektor, and Akhilleus himself also foreshadows his death, as we realize that its power will not protect him any more than it has the others ...'.



χαλκοῦ τε στεροπήν). And in a very vivid simile in the second book of the *Iliad*, the bronze armour of the Achaean warriors proceeding to combat glare like the fire which raises from a burning wood (2.455 ff.):

Ἦύτε πῦρ αἰδηλον ἐπιφλέγει ἄσπετον ὕλην
 οὔρεος ἐν κορυφῆς, ἔκαθεν δέ τε φαίνεται αὐγή,
 ὡς τῶν ἐρχομένων ἀπὸ χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο
 αἶγλη παμφανόωσα δι' αἰθέρος οὐρανὸν ἴκε.

The gleaming of bronze armour may, however, also have a blinding effect on spectators as it happens at *Iliad* 13.339-42, where it strikes the eyes blind (... ὅσσε δ' ἄμερδεν / αὐγή χαλκείη κορύθων ἄπο λαμπομενάων / θωρήκων τε νεοσμήκτων σακέων τε φαεινῶν).¹ A quite different effect has bronze at *Il.* 19.362-3 (αἶγλη δ' οὐρανὸν ἴκε, γέλασσε δὲ πᾶσα περὶ χθῶν / χαλκοῦ ὑπὸ στεροπῆς). Here, the shining metal makes the earth laugh, probably taking pleasure from the spectacle of the flashing armour (i.e. helmets, shields, cuirasses, spears, marching out of the ships in a metaphorical presentation of the warriors: 19.359-61; cf. *Il.* 2.458); a similar pleasure that the earth may take looking at the fast falling snow mentioned in the beginning of the above simile in line 357 f.: ὡς δ' ὅτε ταρφειαὶ νιφάδες Διὸς ἐκποτέονται / ... ὡς τότε ταρφειαὶ κόρυθες λαμπρὸν γανόωσαι / νηῶν ἐκφορέοντο καὶ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσαι (357, 359-60). In this simile, however, the comparison is mainly focused on the fast falling, the thickness of the snowflakes compared to the movements of the warriors, and to a secondary degree on the glare of snow and bronze. This is furthermore confirmed by the repetition of the epithet *ταρφειαί* which gives emphasis on what is mainly intended by this comparison. As a whole this passage is full of terms associated with an idea of brightness.²

In epic thought then, bronze seems to possess a vital power through its vision and sound, but mainly through the first. Such an attribute is more obvious in the *Iliad*, where the defensive and attacking power of the warriors is strengthened by the influence (both

1. See R. Janko, *Commentary*, 90 (on 13.339-44): '... Here, in a bold image, the bronze's eye glares so brightly, that it blinds the onlooker, as the sun's eye can.' Note here especially the clashing between the rays of light coming from bronze and those coming from eyes, namely of light and vision.

2. See Edwards, *Commentary*, 276-7 (on 19.356-64). On similes see also *ibid.*, Introduction, 24-41, where also a selected bibliography, and esp. 25-6 for the variety of the forms that the similes of 'the common idea «like a flame» can appear', as well as the 'succession of short comparisons of different form' for illustrating 'the glare of Akhilleus' armour'.



psychological and physical) that the radiance ('the flashing bronze': *νώροπα χαλκόν*: *Il.* 2.578) has on enemies as the examples above have shown.¹ This power of bronze is manifested by visual and auditory imagery in Homer (*Il.* 2. 457-8; 12.338-40) and is in some cases reinforced by the participation of nature in a metaphorical sense: for example shining bronze can make the earth rejoice or gives the impression of lightning (*στεροπαί*), while the sound of bronze can be similar to that of thunder² (apart from the examples already mentioned *cf.* also: *Il.* 13.800-1: *ὡς Τρωῆες ... χαλκῷ μαρμαίροντες ἄμ' ἠγεμόνεσσιν ἔποντο*; 14.11: *[σάκος] χαλκῷ παμφαῖνον*; *Od.* 4.72: *χαλκοῦ τε στεροπήν καὶ δώματα ἠχήμεντα*). And according to the previous discussion *αὐγή χαλκείη*, the gleaming of bronze, is compared to the light of fire, to the flashing of lightning, and probably to the 'white glare of snow', etc.

Consequently, in the world of terms that build up Homer's visual perceptions, *αὐγή* is mainly used to denote the concept of light (in some cases in relation or rather in contrast to darkness). Elsewhere in the epic the word is found in another semantic development, in the contrasting schema of life conceived within light and death within darkness. The word was probably originally applied to the sunlight (*αὐγὰς ἠελίοιο*) conceived as 'rays' with which the Helios could see,³ and then also assigned to the light of stars, lightning, fire and metals, especially to bronze. It expresses a twin function: first it is understood as the effusion of light that is received by the onlooker (as in most cases) and secondly as the light radiated by a shining, glittering object, e.g. a metal. In general the idea of brightness predominates in the context where this word is found—sometimes within a simile—and imposes on the audience's imagination images full of light, equal to a profound and creative poet.

1. J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and thought among the Greeks*, London 1983, 13; see also S. Constantinidou, 'The importance of bronze in early Greek religion', *Δωδώνη* 21.2 (1992), 159 f.

2. Edwards, *Commentary*, 277 (on 19.362-3): 'As the Greeks go to battle with Akhilleus leading them, their armour flashes like lightning; the earth thunders beneath their marching feet. The same combination of light and sound, lightning and thunder is worked out more fully in two juxtaposed similes when the troops advance at the end of the Greek catalogue (2.780-5).' On the metaphorical uses of bronze (as *χάλλεος ὕπνος* 'death-sleep' of a warrior, *χάλλεος Ἄρης* 'brazen Ares', *χάλλεον ἦτορ* 'bronze heart' (of the warriors), *χάλλεος οὐρανός* 'brazen sky' etc.) see *ibid.*, 104, 172, 260.

3. See Janko, *Commentary*, 148.



However, *αὔραι* are above all the 'rays', the 'eyes', of Sun whence all light comes: 'The Sun, the greatest eye in the cosmos, sees all ...'.¹ But to be able to see its light one has to belong to the World of the Living.²

1. *Ibid.*, 206 (with Janko's reference to N.J. Richardson's (*The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford 1974) commentary on *HyDem* 24-6. Cf. *Il.* 3.276 ff.: «Zeῦ πάτερ, Ἴδηθεν μεδέων, κῦδιστε μέγιστε, Ἡέλιός θ', ὅς πάντ' ἐφορῆς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις, ...»): Here, Helios is among those who shall guarantee the keeping of the oath sworn by the Achaeans and the Trojans before the duel between Paris and Menelaos.

2. *Od.* 11.498 (οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐπαρωγὸς ὑπ' ἀγῶς ἡελίοιο); 15.349 f. (ἧ που ἔτι ζώουσιν ὑπ' ἀγῶς ἡελίοιο, ἧ ἤδη τεθνήσκει καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι).

