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PERIPHERAL AND NUCLEAR SEMANTICS IN
HOMERIC DICTION
THE CASE OF DATIVE EXPRESSIONS FOR 'SPEAR'

BY

EGBERT J. BAKKER

AND

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1. *Introduction*

In recent years a number of studies on Homeric versification have appeared¹⁾ which aim at showing a way out of the deadlock at which Homeric *oral poetry*-studies had ended in the '60's and '70's. The ways which Parry (1930: 117-147)²⁾ had shown for the application of the concept of formula to the whole of the Homeric poems, not just to the noun-epithet-expressions (which Parry had dealt with so convincingly in his 1928 dissertation) have ended up in an unwieldy concept of 'formula' as well as a highly implausible conception of how the production of Homeric verses came about in actual improvisation and performance. The need, implied by this conception, for an oral poet to 'know' a great many formulae to compose even a limited stretch of hexametric discourse is not only counterintuitive (how many formulae must a poet know before he can compose the entire *Iliad*?); it is also ruinous for a sound differentiation of oral versification from written versification, as was already stated in the objections to Parry's theory in the '60's, which need not be discussed here³⁾.

1) Jahn (1987), Bakker (1988: ch. 5) and Visser (1987, 1988).

2) Reprinted in Parry (1971: 301-324). Henceforth we shall cite from and refer to the collected works.

3) See Minton (1965), Hainsworth (1964), Hoekstra (1965: 7-30) among others. These studies strongly object to the policy of Parry and his followers to assign formulaic status to a given expression whenever it can be shown to have

The recent publications converge in one crucial respect. They abandon the conception of the formula as ‘ready-made phrase for anything the poet *wants to say*’ (italics will become clear later on) in favour of ‘ready-made phrase which accommodates what the poet wants to say to the metrical space available.’ This conception implies a universal distinction in the diction between what the poet *wants to say* on the one hand and the *adaptation* of this material to the metrical context on the other. The important point of this approach is that it makes the specific nature of oral poetry with respect to written hexameter poetry very clear: while oral, spontaneous versification does *not* differ from written, planned versification in the localization in the verse of the material that expresses what the poet wants to say (both oral and literate poets have to observe the same positive and negative metrical factors⁴), it does differ from written versification, and very considerably so, in the degree to which it makes *systematic* use of flexible, metrically adaptable material. In this article, we shall speak of material that is *peripheral to a nucleus*⁵).

Peripherality is an all-pervasive feature of the Homeric diction and it manifests itself in many ways. The epithet, to mention the most conspicuous example, may be described as peripheral to a nucleus (the noun or name)⁶). Jahn (1987) successfully describes

‘something’ in common with another expression (cf. the well-known statement in Parry 1971: 313: “Τεῦχε κόνεσσιν is like δῶκεν ἑταίρω”). The increasingly abstract ‘verse-patterns’ and ‘structural formulas’ became more and more confused with the metrical localization patterns which have to be recognized anyway in the Greek hexameter, whether oral or written. Consequently, the basis for a differentiation of Homeric verse from written hexameters became very weak indeed. However, the way out of the problem pointed out by the above studies is to question the degree of orality and formularity in the Homeric poems. In this article we argue that this is not necessary at all and even false.

4) O’Neill’s (1946) tables do not show significant differences between Homer and Alexandrian poets. The ‘inner metric’ of the hexameter is thus diachronically stable, being insensitive to the way the verse is ‘produced’.

5) A survey of the ‘nucleus-periphery’ way of thinking in Homeric diction is presented in Bakker (1990).

6) It is important to notice that in his first French thesis (1928), Parry wrote about the relation between epithets and their nouns/names precisely in this way (1971: 84); it means that, for instance, in the case of Ὀδυσσεύς we have one name, to which one out of a number of epithets may be added, depending on the metrical circumstances. Later (1930), however, Parry came to describe the epithet as being indissolubly linked with its name (see 1971: 73, 77); this means that there are as

the very frequent expressions for 'in his heart', for which the lexemes *θυμός*, *φρήν/φρένες*, *ἦτορ*, *κραδίη*, *πραπίδες*, *κῆρ* and *στῆθος* are used, as peripheral elements to a nucleus which consists of verbs of feeling or thinking⁷). Bakker (1988: ch. 5) discusses the peripheral extensions of the well-known concessive participial phrases with *περ* and shows that the distribution of the particles *καί*, *μάλα* and *ἔμπης* in participial phrases is entirely in service of the automatic adaptation of the participle to the metrical circumstances.

Finally, Visser (1987)⁸) argues that the distinction between nucleus and periphery may be applied as well to the verse as a whole. The main tenet of Visser's illuminating study is that the typical Homeric verse does not consist of the formulaic building-blocks which we have become so accustomed to in the Parryan way of thinking. Rather, he claims that a Homeric verse is a combination of 'determinant' material, whose metrical form is an active factor in the localization, and 'reacting' material, which is dependent in its metrical form and localization on the determinant material. Visser shows that in verses containing the statement 'A killed B' normally the names of the victor and the victim are the metrical determinants: as such they have 'priority' in the localization. The verb ('(he) killed'), on the other hand, is a flexible and 'reacting' element: its form and localization depends on the form and localization of the two other elements.

Together, the studies mentioned point to 'peripherality' as an essential and structural property of Greek epic diction. And this basic insight suggests an obvious line of research: to investigate

many 'formulae' for 'Odysseus' as there are noun-epithet-combinations. The difference may seem unimportant and superficial, but it has very serious consequences: if there are many formulae for 'Odysseus', there must be many formulae for any, even the simplest, concept, and the total number of formulae must be well-nigh infinite. And this is what makes Parry's final conception of the Homeric diction so implausible. For a good survey of Parry's thought in this respect see Visser (1987: 1-40).

7) The important point here is that the numerous phrases for 'in his heart' (see Jahn 1987: 256) are *not* as many formulae from which the poet may choose when he wants to say 'in his heart'; what the poet wants to say is, e.g. 'he was grieved/happy', or 'he was thinking'; the function of the 'in his heart'-expressions is to adapt this phrase to the metrical context. For the semantic consequences of this see below, section 2.

8) Visser (1988) is a shorter and more accessible version of the 'theory'.

which further part of Homer's diction can be characterized as peripheral material with respect to which nucleus. In this article, we address the dative expressions for 'spear' in this light, seeing whether they can be described as peripheral, extending material with respect to verbs denoting killing or wounding. Also, we shall be concerned with the conditions under which a given element may be called 'peripheral' in Homer and the conditions under which it may not.

2. *Nucleus and periphery*

The following passage may serve as an introduction to the points we want to make:

- (1) Ἀστώαλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε μενεπτόλεμος Πολυποίτης·
 Πιδύτην δ' Ὀδυσσεύς Περκώσιον ἐξενάρειεν
 ἔγχει χαλκείῳ, Τεῦκρος δ' Ἀρετάονα δῖον.
 Ἀντίλοχος δ' ἄβληρον ἐνήρατο δουρὶ φαεινῷ
 Νεστορίδης, ἔλατον δὲ ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων·
 (.....) Φύλακον δ' ἔλε Λήϊτος ἦρωσ
 φεύγοντ'· Εὐρύπυλος δὲ Μελάνθιον ἐξενάρειεν. (Z 29-36)

This passage consists of seven factual statements of the type 'A killed B'. Verses in which this kind of simple assertion is made form the main subject of Visser's (1987) study of Homeric versification. In his discussion of line 32 (Ἀντίλοχος κτλ.), Visser (1987: 80-2) states that the verse-final expression *δουρὶ φαεινῷ* is the weakest element in the verse, being a mere verse-filler which bridges the open metrical space between the predicate and the end of the line⁹).

In this paper we will elaborate this point, analyzing *δουρὶ φαεινῷ* (and expressions for 'with the (his) spear' in general) from the point of view of their verse-technical function. We will argue that very often these expressions are *not* uttered by the poet to convey what they actually mean, viz. that someone is killed or wounded *by means of a spear*. Rather, we argue, they are uttered to adapt the verb of

9) In its turn, the predicate is in its localization and form dependent on the form and localization of the two proper names in the first half of the line. These two elements determine the structure of the verse.

killing or wounding to its metrical context, by giving it the appropriate length. The fact that the nucleus is a verb of killing or wounding implies that the peripheral function of ‘with the spear’ is confined to contexts that are concerned with ἀνδροκτασίαι. We will return to this point in 3.1 below.

There are two ways for dative expressions for ‘spear’ to have a verse-technical function. First, they may be a peripheral element to a nucleus, which is constituted by a verb denoting killing or wounding. This means that expressions for ‘with the spear’ are related to the verb in the same way as epithets to their name or noun, or as Jahn’s (1987) expressions for ‘in his heart’ to a verb of thinking or feeling. We claim that this is the appropriate characterization of δουρὶ φαεινῶ in Z 32, which is a peripheral element to ἐνήρατο, giving this verb the length needed by the poet to fill the verse. Second, ‘with the spear’ may have a versifying function without being immediately added to a nuclear verb. This typically happens when the verb is in another verse. This can be observed in Z 31 in the passage cited above, where ἔγχει χαλκείῳ fills the remaining first half of the verse in a situation where the second half is to be filled by the metrical determinants (the names of the victor and his victim).

The peripheral status of an expression in the Homeric diction entails two important properties (see also Jahn 1987: 249). Peripheral elements have to be (i) as neutral as possible with respect to their context, and (ii) metrically variable. These properties will be dealt with in 2.1 and 2.2. The third subsection (2.3) is concerned with the meaning of peripheral elements and of ornamental adjectives in particular.

2.1. *Neutrality with respect to context.* Peripheral elements are semantically neutral in that they may just be present or absent, there being no difference for the intended meaning of the combination nucleus-periphery. This is the logical consequence of the notion of peripherality: a peripheral element is peripheral precisely because it may be absent without more ado. And when it is present, it serves primarily a verse-technical, rather than a semantic role.

We have to emphasize the point that neutrality with respect to context does *not* mean that peripheral elements are meaningless. To deny that a peripheral element has any meaning of its own, as

Parry did in his later publications¹⁰), is to take a too strong position. Parry's treatment of the semantics of what we call peripheral elements has invoked, understandably, considerable reaction from scholars who claimed the contrary¹¹). Epithets and other peripheral elements do indeed have meaning; they have a sense that is very often very appropriately (poetically) in accordance with the meaning of the nucleus to which they are attached (see 2.3 below). But it is still a meaning that is subservient to the ultimate goal for which they are used by the poet, the metrical extension of their nucleus. This is why the meaning of any peripheral element is intrinsically 'innocuous': if its presence or absence would matter in any way, the element in question would cease to be a useful peripheral element.

Neutrality with respect to context can be observed in (1): ἔγχεῖ χαλκείῳ and δουρὶ φαεινῷ are used in the expressions reporting the killings of Pidytes by Odysseus and of Alerus by Antilochus, respectively. We maintain that they are *not* meant as descriptive details distinguishing these particular killings from the other killings in the list. When you get killed in the *Iliad*, you are killed nearly always by the thrust or the throw of a spear¹²). This means that spears may be present even when they are not mentioned, and that when they are mentioned they need not have 'heavy' descriptive content. Their occurrence in the description of a killing has the typical innocuous quality of peripheral elements.

2.2 *Metrical diversity*. The function of a peripheral element not only hinges on its neutrality with respect to context, but also on its variable metrical form: if the verse-filling and extending function of a peripheral element is to be fully productive in the diction, the peripheral element has to be able to fill *any* incident metrical slot in an automatic way. Consequently, diversity of metrical form can be seen as an index of peripherality. The diversity can be achieved by a number of means, each of which is in its own right a highly

10) "The fixed epithet in Homer is purely ornamental. It has been used with its noun until it has become fused with it into what is no more than another metrical form of the name" (1971: 305).

11) See for instance Tsagarakis (1982), Vivante (1982). However, in its turn, this reaction has gone too far too. See 2.3 below.

12) See also Visser's (1987: 58-65) typology of killing scenes.

significant feature of the Homeric diction. We mention (i) morphological and/or dialectal diversity, (ii) the addition of optional ('peripheral') elements and (iii) synonymy.

The first of these is the basic ingredient of Witte's and Meister's notion of *Kunstsprache*, of which Parry discovered the functional motivation. Morphological and/or dialectal diversity (e.g. *νηυσί* beside *νήεσσι* and the artificial form *νέεσσι*) does not exist merely for its own sake; it is motivated by the poet's (or the diction's) desire for metrically diverse and semantically interchangeable forms.

The second means to effect metrical diversity implies that a peripheral element may consist of a nucleus and a periphery itself (as in the case of *δουρί φαεινῶ*, where *φαεινῶ* is the periphery to the nucleus *δουρί*). Peripherality is thus a recursive affair: it applies *within* expressions that are *as a whole* peripheral to something else.

The third factor, synonymy, means that the very frequent phenomenon in Homer of the existence of various lexemes with the same meaning is not just a matter of poetic style; synonymy in the Homeric diction is very clearly motivated by the poet's need of different metrical forms for one single semantic concept. A good example of metrically motivated synonymy in Homer is the large number of verbs meaning 'to kill' (Visser 1987: 67-79), which reflects the non-determinant (reacting) status of the verb in verses reporting a killing.

In the case of dative expressions for 'with the spear', synonymy and the concomitant metrical diversity, lies in the co-occurrence of the lexemes *δόρυ* (*δουρί*) and *ἔγχος* (*ἔγχει* or *ἔγχει*)¹³. Each of these can be combined with its own epithets. The functional synonymy of *δόρυ* and *ἔγχος* appears from the fact that both lexemes may be used 'co-referentially' (referring to one and the same object in a single description). One example out of many:

- (2) *Νεστορίδαι δ' ὁ μὲν οὔτασ' Ἀτύμνιον ὀξεί δουρί
'Αντιλοχος, λαπάρης δὲ διήλασε χάλκεον ἔγχος.* (Π 317-8).

13) See also Whallon (1966: 16-18), who argues that in contradistinction to the pair *σάκος* and *ἀσπίς*, which is consistently used to refer to two different types of shields, *δόρυ* and *ἔγχος* are used indiscriminately to refer to any (type of) spear. However, originally *δόρυ* and *ἔγχος* probably designated different weapons (see Trümper 1950: 53-4).

Together with their epithets, *δουρί* and *ἔγχεϊ/ἔγχει*¹⁴) yield the following list (see also Paraskevaides 1984: 26):

- (3)
- | | |
|--|---|
| | <i>ἔγχει</i> (V-υ) |
| | <i>δουρί</i> (C-υ) |
| | <i>ἔγχεϊ</i> (V-υυ) |
| | <i>ὄξεϊ δουρί</i> (V-υυ-υ) |
| | <i>ἔγχεϊ μακρῶ</i> (V-υυ--) |
| | <i>δουρί φαιινῶ</i> (C-υυ--) |
| | <i>ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ</i> (-υυ---) |
| | <i>ἔγχεϊ ὄξυόεντι</i> (-υυ-υυ-υ) |
| | <i>χαλκήρει δουρί</i> (C--υυ-υ) ¹⁵ . |

2.3 *The meaning of ornamental adjectives.* Metrical and/or prosodic diversity as discussed in 2.2 above is greatly augmented when more than one peripheral element may be added to the nucleus. Thus in the system of the peripheral element ‘with the spear’ listed in (3) above, we have *δουρί φαιινῶ* and *ὄξεϊ δουρί* beside *χαλκήρει δουρί*, and *ἔγχεϊ μακρῶ* beside *ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ* and *ἔγχεϊ ὄξυόεντι*. The co-existence of various epithets to one nucleus leads us again to the meaning of these elements. We already saw that peripheral elements are *neutral* with respect to their context (2.1); we may now say that they are *mutually interchangeable* as well. Like neutrality with respect to context, interchangeability is a crucial feature of peripheral elements: for *δουρί φαιινῶ* and *ὄξεϊ δουρί*, for example, to function as a metrically identical pair that allows for adaptation to

14) Note that there are more words for ‘spear’ (*ἐγγεῖη*, *ἄκων*, *αἰγανέη*), or words that by metonymical extension of their meaning (applying to parts of a spear (*αἰχμή*, *ἀκωκή*, *ξυστόν*) or to the material of which (a part of) the spear is made (*μελίη*, *χαλκός*)) may come to mean ‘spear’ in Homer. These words either do not occur in the dative or, if they do, do not have the function under study here (but *ξυστόν* occurs two times as what seems to be a peripheral element to a verb of wounding: Δ 469, Λ 260). The notable exception is *χαλκῶ*. This dative forms, just like *δουρί/ἔγχει*, epithet-combinations (*ὄξεϊ χαλκῶ*, *νηλεῖ χαλκῶ*, *ταναήκει χαλκῶ*) that would seem to compete with the *δουρί/ἔγχει*-expressions in battle-contexts. However, on closer inspection *χαλκῶ* and *δουρί/ἔγχει* appear to have an entirely different distribution. The semantic differences between them are discussed in Bakker & Van den Houten (to appear), a paper that reports the same research as the present one.

15) Notice that we have omitted dative *plurals*. Expressions for ‘with the(ir) spears’ are not so easily used as peripheral elements.

the prosodic circumstances, and so to adequately perform their function as peripheral elements, there must be no semantic (lexical) barriers between the two epithets which would restrict the poet in his choice for either of them.

But again, we have to emphasize that interchangeability does not imply loss of meaning in any sense: the fact that *δουρὶ φαεινῶ* is interchangeable with *ὄξει δουρί* does not mean that both epithets do not mean anything or are identical to each other. Indeed it is safe and justified to assert that there is a clear difference between the two which is observed by the poet *as long as is reasonably possible*. This might seem to appear from the following: with one exception (Δ 490), the peripheral element to *ἀκόντισε* placed after the trochaic caesura is *δουρὶ φαεινῶ* (*Ἄκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ* | |, see 3.1 below) and not *ὄξει δουρί*, although *Ἄκόντισεν ὄξει δουρί* would have been equally possible. The reason for this consistent preference can be found in the depicted reality: a javelin in its quality of being hurled or brandished (i.e. not yet touching a body) is typically ‘shining’ and not ‘sharp’. The poet did not miss the opportunity to bring out this picturesque detail. We have to keep in mind, however, that the ‘poetic’ qualities of *φαεινῶ* can be easily overruled. In Z 32 (= ex. (1) above), for example, *δουρὶ φαεινῶ* is used simply because the nuclear verb *ἐνήρατο* ends on a vowel.

This is why we think that Tsagarakis (1982: 32-4) goes too far in the application of the—in itself justified—semantic distinction between the two ornamental adjectives *χαλκείω* and *ὄξυόεντι* to *ἔγχεϊ*. By its very meaning, | | *ἔγχεϊ ὄξυόεντι*^T seems to be more suited to be applied to a killing than the more neutral *ἔγχεϊ χαλκείω*¹⁶). Accordingly, Tsagarakis claims that the only time that *ἔγχεϊ ὄξυόεντι* is used in the first half of the verse (Π 309) it is sensitive to the context, which is explicitly concerned with killing, thereby criticizing Edwards (1966: 149) who states that *ὄξυόεντι* is preferred here to *χαλκείω* because of its extra syllable. However, the sensitivity of *ὄξυόεντι* to contexts that are concerned with killing can be simply

16) Notice, incidentally, that the meaning of *ὄξυόεις* is strictly speaking controversial. Homer may have used it as a kind of synonym to *ὄξυς*, but on account of the suffix *-εις* it must have meant originally something like ‘with sharp parts’. If, on the other hand, the alternative meaning ‘beechen’ is valid, then Tsagarakis’ point obviously loses all its force.

overruled, too. Just consider Z 30-1 (= ex. (1)), where *χαλκείω* is used simply because the poet needed a P-caesura, in spite of the fact that the context, on Tsagarakis' account, favours *ἄξυόεντι*. In sum, the semantics of epithets and ornamental adjectives in Homeric diction is more complex than either Parry's treatment in terms of meaninglessness or Tsagarakis' (and others') opposed account of unconditioned full significance.

3. *From peripheral to significant*

We now will have a closer look at the meaning of *δοῦρί* and *ἔργει* in their context, in particular with respect to their predicate. As will appear, whether or not a spear-expression can be seen as peripheral with respect to a nucleus heavily depends on the context in which the predicate occurs and on the function which the predicate has in that context. We suggest the following tri-partition in the material: (i) the spear-expression is truly peripheral; this occurs when the nuclear predicate is a verb of killing or wounding in an ongoing narrative that is concerned with *ἀνδροκτασίαι*; (ii) the spear expression occurs in the context meant under (i), but it loses (some of) its peripheral status on account of some contextual feature; (iii) the spear-expression occurs outside ongoing battle-narrative and has to be assigned a 'significant' status: it is used for whatever the poet wanted to say. The three subdivisions will be dealt with in three subsections.

3.1 *Spears in battle narrative.* What is omnipresent in someone's consciousness may be taken for granted to such a degree that it need not even be mentioned: its presence is understood anyway. And when it is mentioned, there is either a specific reason for doing so, or the mentioning is simply redundant. This is, we claim, precisely the situation with spears in Homeric battle-narrative. The idea 'spear' appears to be so prominent in the poet's mind when battle is described that it is subsumed in the semantics of verbs of 'spear-handling' (killing, wounding, aiming etc.): the modifier 'with the spear' may be omitted with any of these verbs in contexts that make it perfectly clear that spears are understood. The consequence of this is that when the poet does explicitly mention a spear, he does so for the sake of versification, to extend a spear-handling

verb backwards or forwards to the nearest metrical boundary (verse-beginning/-end, caesura). In other words the dative modifier becomes a peripheral element that is suited to this particular context and this particular nucleus.

Before we present the examples, a specification of the notion of 'battle narrative' is in order. By 'battle narrative' as the appropriate context for the peripheral status of datives for 'spear' we mean passages in which an actual killing is reported, or a direct attempt thereto (by aiming and throwing a spear, which results in hitting or wounding). Consequently, passages in which actions of warriors on the battle-field other than direct combat are described are excluded, just as passages of direct speech and, by definition, passages that are not concerned with fighting at all.

Let us start again from instances like Z 32 (ex. (1) above). Here a spear-expression of the form $\text{---}\cup\cup\text{---}\cup$ extends a verb of the form $\cup\text{---}\cup\cup$ (falling between the trochaic caesura and the bucolic diaeresis) to the end of the line. Δουρὶ φαεινῶ as extension of ἐνήρατο occurs only once, but as extension of ἀχόντισε , a verb of the same metrical form, it is very frequent (14 times in the *Iliad*), for example:

- (4) Ἔκτωρ δ' αὐτ' Αἴαντος ἀχόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ (P 304).
 Ἔκτωρ δ' Αὐτομέδοντος ἀχόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ (P 525).

These verses are as to their internal structure similar to Z 32: the names of the agent and his victim/target, being semantically the most important, have 'priority' in the production of the verse; together they lay down the verse-structure, the object occupying the important position just before the trochaic caesura and the remaining metrical space (the second half of the verse) being filled by the predicate and its extension.

That δουρὶ φαεινῶ is indeed no more than an optional extension of the verb appears from the fact that it can be easily dropped when the names of the aggressor and his intended victim cannot, for some reason, be placed in the first half of the line. Consider:

- (5) τοῦ δ' ἰθὺς μεμαῶτος ἀχόντισε Τυδέος υἱός (Θ 118).

The name of Diomedes (Διομήδης , $\cup\cup\text{---}$) can only be placed at the end of the line (O'Neill 1946: 145); only in the form of Τυδέος υἱός

can it be placed before the trochaic caesura. Consequently, if Homer had wanted to say ‘And to him the son of Tydeus aimed his shining spear’, he could have produced the following verse:

(6) *τοῦ δ’ ἄρα Τυδέος υἱὸς ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῷ¹⁷).

However, the poet chose not to do this, partly because he wanted to add a descriptive detail (ἰθὺς μεμαῶτος) about the warrior aimed at (Hector). But there is also a more important reason. Τυδέος υἱός before the trochaic caesura would be too prominent from an informational point of view. As it stands, (6) would be appropriate in a context in which the one who aimed at Hector would still have to be identified, so that his name would convey *new information* in the context. But in the context of (5) Diomedes is already present, and the mentioning of his name merely serves to disambiguate the subject of ἀκόντισε. This is why Τυδέος υἱός is placed at the end of the line, *behind* the verb, where it can be interpreted as a clarifying apposition to ἀκόντισε (‘and to him (...) he aimed his spear, the son of Tydeus’)¹⁸). The dislocation of Τυδέος υἱός goes at the cost of δουρὶ φαεινῷ, but this merely proves that this expression is a truly peripheral element, which can be dropped whenever the context induces the poet to do so.

Consider also:

(7) Αἴαντος δὲ πρῶτος ἀκόντισε φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ (Ξ 402).

This verse is as to its propositional content identical to P 304 in (4) above: both state the fact that Hector aimed his spear at Aias, and one could ask why the two verses are different. Again, the dif-

17) Notice that δ’ ἄρ’, δ’ ἄρα and δ’ ἄρ’ ἔπειτα may be analyzed as the extended forms of δέ (see Visser 1987: 91-2, Bakker 1990). In other words, the principle of nucleus and periphery equally applies to the connective particle. This means that for the description of ἄρα in Homer there is a big difference whether the particle is preceded by δέ or not.

18) The functioning of a noun phrase as a non-subject term behind a verb is sometimes called in linguistics ‘right-dislocation’. In Greek, right- (or left-) dislocation is an interpretation possibility that is not often duly recognized, but ἀκόντισε Τυδέος υἱός is principally ambiguous between ‘The son of Tydeus aimed’ and ‘he aimed, the son of Tydeus’. To recognize the presence of right- and left-dislocation in Homeric discourse has very important consequences for the study of *enjambement*, see Bakker (to appear).

ference seems to be clearly motivated by contextual considerations, which take precedence over the question as to whether or not to use *δουρὶ φαεινῶ*. The crucial difference between P 304 and Ξ 402, is that the latter is not a neutral statement of the type ‘A (Hector) aimed at B (Aias)’: the point in Ξ 402 is that when the Greeks and Trojans are facing each other in battle order during Zeus’ absence, Hector is *the first* to open the attack and to throw a spear, which is aimed at Aias. This is why *πρῶτος* supplants *Αἴαντος* at the important pre-caesural position and why *Αἴαντος* in its turn replaces the subject in verse-initial position, pushing it to the end of the line, where it ousts *δουρὶ φαεινῶ*. The name of Hector is extended by the epithet *φαίδιμος*, so that it occupies the same metrical space.

The following example shows that apart from *πρῶτος* there may be more factors at work:

(8) *Αἰνείας δὲ πρῶτος ἀκόντισεν Ἴδομενῆος* (N 502).

Here it is the metrical form of *Ἴδομενῆος* that causes the divergence from the basic pattern of (4): if this form (–υυ–υ) is placed at the normal object-position before the caesura, there is no more room left for the subject *Αἰνείας*, and as this form cannot be placed after the bucolic diaeresis, the object has to move to the end of the line.

The examples in (5), (7) and (8) show that Greek epic diction, at least as it is used by Homer, was capable of expressing subtle contextual nuances even in such stereotyped narrative situations in which the one warrior aims at the other. It is very important to realize that this flexibility with regard to contextual factors is achieved in highly conventional language and versification. And this is precisely where *δουρὶ φαεινῶ* enters the picture: it functions as the standard extension of *ἀκόντισε*, but whenever for some narrative or verse-technical reason its space is to be occupied by other, contextually more significant material, it can be readily dropped. For the meaning there is no difference, because the idea ‘spear’ is inherent in *ἀκόντισε* anyway¹⁹).

Another example of the peripherality of spear-expressions is constituted by cases where *δουρὶ* or *ἔγχεϊ* is used in a context where the spear was mentioned just before:

19) See also Visser (1987: 82).

- (9) Ἐκτωρ δ' ὀρμηθέντος ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ.
 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο χάλκεον ἔγχος
 τυτθόν· ὁ δ' Ἀμφίμαχον, Κτεάτου υἱ' Ἀκτορίωνος,
 νισόμενον πόλεμόνδε κατὰ στήθος βάλε δουρὶ (N 183-186).
- (10) τοῦ δὲ βάδην ἀπιόντος ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ
 Δηϊφοβος· δὴ γάρ οἱ ἔχεν κότον ἐμμενὲς αἰεὶ.
 ἀλλ' ὅ γε καὶ τόθ' ἄμαρτεν, ὁ δ' Ἀσκάλαφον βάλε δουρὶ,
 υἴὸν Ἐνυαλίοιο· δι' ὤμου δ' ὄβριμον ἔγχος || ἔσχεν (N 516-519).

The narrative situations underlying these examples are very similar. In both cases, a warrior aims his spear at a particular enemy, but misses; instead, he hits, by accident, another man who is present on the scene. Both times it is stated that this accidental hit was done 'with a spear', a highly redundant detail, since the same throw is described just before as ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ. The conclusion seems inescapable, then, that in (9)-(10) βάλε δουρὶ is simply an extended form of βάλε and that δουρὶ does not belong to the poet's communicative intention²⁰.

Δουρὶ in N 186 (= ex. (9)) is a peripheral element, but it is hard this time to maintain the same for δουρὶ φαεινῶ three verses before, it would seem, as the spear is referred to again in l. 184 by χάλκεον ἔγχος. Second mention of the spear equally occurs in the following examples (compare also (2) above):

- (11) ἐκ δ' ἔθορε προμάχων, καὶ ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ
 ἀμφὶ ἔ παπτήνας· ὑπὸ δὲ Τρῶες κεκάδοντο
 ἀνδρὸς ἀκοντίσαντος· ὁ δ' οὐχ ἄλιον βέλος ἦχεν....
 (O 573-5).
- (12) ἔνθ' αὖ Πειριθόου υἴός, κρατερὸς Πολυποίτης,
 δουρὶ βάλεν Δάμασον κυνέης διὰ χαλκοπαρήθου·
 οὐδ' ἄρα χαλκείη κόρυς ἔσχεθεν, ἀλλὰ διαπρὸ

20) Sometimes the βάλε δουρὶ-expression belongs to the C-part of Beye's (1964) ABC-scheme for battle descriptions, in which, after a little biographical or anecdotic digression (the B-part) about the victim who was stated in the A-part, the poet refers back to the victim by means of an anaphoric pronoun (see also Visser's (1987: 44-57) typology of battle scenes). An example is Δ 494-504: τοῦ δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς μάλα θυμὸν ἀποκταμένοιο χολώθη (495) (...) ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῶ (497) (...) τὸν β' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐτάροιο χολωσάμενος βάλε δουρὶ (501).

αίχμη χαλκείη ῥῆξ' ὄστέον, ἐγκέφαλος δὲ
ἔνδον ἄπας πεπάλακτο. (M 182-186)²¹).

On account of the second mention, by a full noun phrase, it might seem that δουρί (φαεινῶ) in (9) and (11)-(12) is fully integrated in the structure of the discourse, contrary to what we might expect on the basis of other examples. However, it is preferable to keep analyzing δουρί (φαεινῶ) in (9) and (11)-(12) as a peripheral element, in view of instances where a spear is referred to that is *not mentioned* earlier:

- (13) ὧς εἰπὼν οὔτησε κατ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' εἶσθην.
διὰ μὲν ἀσπίδος ἦλθε φαεινῆς ὄβριμον ἔγχος. (Λ 434-35).
- (14) τὸν μὲν Μηριόνης, ὅτε δὴ κατέμαρπτε διώκων,
βεβλήκει γλουτὸν κατὰ δεξιὸν· ἡ δὲ διαπρὸ
ἀντικρὺ κατὰ κύστιν ὑπ' ὄστέον ἦλυθ' ἀκωκή (E 65-67).
- (15) Ἔκτορα δ' Ἴδομενεὺς μετὰ Λήϊτον ὀρμηθέντα
βεβλήκει θώρηκα κατὰ στῆθος παρὰ μαζόν·
ἐν καυλῶ δ' ἔαγγη δολιχὸν δόρυ (P 605-607).
- (16) ὁ δ' ἐπ' αὐτῶ Δημολέοντα,
ἔσθλὸν ἀλεξητῆρα μάχης, Ἀντήνορος υἷον,
νύξε κατὰ κρόταφον, κυνέης διὰ χαλκοπαρήου.
οὐδ' ἄρα χαλκείη κόρυς ἔσχεθεν, ἀλλὰ δι' αὐτῆς
αἰχμὴ ἰεμένη ῥῆξ' ὄστέον, ἐγκέφαλος δὲ
ἔνδον ἄπας πεπάλακτο. (Y 395-400).

Notice the extensive similarity in wording in (12) and (16). What seems at first sight in (12) to be a genuine, referential mentioning of a spear (δουρί βάλεν Δάμασον) that makes possible the use of αἰχμὴ χαλκείη two verses later, appears in the light of (16) to be no more than the optional backward extension of βάλεν to the beginning of the line. For in (16) αἰχμὴ is used without any overt preparation. Of course, the use of νύσσειν, like ἀκοντίζειν almost implies the use of a spear (you cannot perform those acts without a spear), but (13)-(15) show that the principle equally applies to much more neutral verbs like βάλλειν and οὐτάζειν, which proves that the omnipresence of spears in the depicted battle may correlate with absence of spears

21) Similar cases are E 72-4, where χαλκός in 74 refers back to δουρί in 72; E 660-661, where αἰχμὴ in 661 refers back to ἔγχει μακρῶ in 660, and N 560-562, where αἰχμὴ in 562 refers back to ὀξεί χαλκῶ in 560.

in the text. And the fact that this absence does not make the text illogical or incoherent is the basis for the use of *δουρί/ἔγχει* as a context-neutral peripheral element.

3.2 *Significant mention in battle narrative.* One of the fascinating things about epic (Homeric?) diction is that statements of the type ‘X is a peripheral element’ cannot and should not acquire categorial status. In other words, a given expression can never belong to the *category* of peripheral expressions, viz. be peripheral by its very nature. The peripheral status of an expression, however self-evident that status might seem to be in some cases, always depends in the last resort on the *use* that is made of it by the poet as a peripheral element. The neutral and hence ‘innocuous’ meaning of certain elements in certain contexts is *exploited* by the poet for the sake of easy and smooth versification. But nothing prevents the element from being used with its proper meaning which expresses what the poet *wants to say*. In the case of epithets, this yields cases where an epithet is used not merely for the sake of versification but as an element that is highly appropriate and effective in its context²²).

Now spear-expressions, too, may be used as a significant, context-sensitive element in the same contexts and in the same metrical positions as the examples discussed in the previous subsection. We give two examples of this phenomenon; they do not have a special poetic effect, but they show that the peripheral status of an element can always be overruled whenever the context motivates this. Consider first:

- (17) E 850 οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες,
 πρόσθεν Ἴαρος ὠρέξαθ' ὑπὲρ ζυγὸν ἦνία θ' ἴππων
 ἔγχει χαλκείῳ, μεμαῶς ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἐλέσθαι·
 καὶ τό γε χεῖρι λαβοῦσα θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
 ὤσεν ὑπὲκ δίφροιο ἐτώσιον ἀΐχθηται.

22) Again and again (recently in Shive 1987) observations of this kind have been used to undermine the conception of an oral Homer, apparently because context-sensitivity of any kind is considered incompatible with the use of a highly conventional and traditional diction. We think that such a position is misguided, and, paradoxically, even an insult to the poetic qualities of the poet whose very genius one wants to emphasize.

855 δεύτερος αὐθ' ὠρμᾶτο βοήν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης
 ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ· ἐπέρεισε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
 νείατον ἐς κενεῶνα, ὅθι ζωννύσκετο μίτρη.

As to their form and metrical position, both instances of ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ in this passage, are identical to ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ in Z 31 (see ex. (1)). This time, however, the phrase is not used merely because the poet had to fill the P₁-part of the verse. But then the passage cited is by no means the standard listing of a killing. The confrontation of Diomedes and Ares, and the repeated intervention of Athena in this fight constitute a highly specific narrative situation, and this is immediately reflected in the function of ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ. The spears with which Ares and Diomedes charge at each other are referred to very consciously by the poet and the dative expressions, accordingly, are fully integrated in the discourse structure. Each time the subsequent discourse, in which the intervention of Athena is described, is concerned with the spear, as Athena's intervention consists in operations upon the weapon. In other words, ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ functions two times as the first mention of a *topic* which 'persists' into the following clause. The syntactic reflex of this persistence in l. 853 is the anaphoric pronoun τό; in 856 there is what may be called (e.g. Givón 1983: 17-8) *zero anaphora*: the topic is so continuous that it can be omitted as the syntactic object of the following verb²³).

The integration of the two instances of ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ in the discourse appears from the fact that each time the deletion of ἔγχρῃ χαλκείῳ would disrupt the coherence of the discourse: τό γε would be left hanging in the air, and there would be uncertainty as to the object of ἐπέρεισε. Notice the difference with exx. (11) and (12) in 3.1 above. There the second reference to the spear is not pronominal or zero, but by a full noun phrase. This alone makes the preceding dative redundant: it can easily be missed, as is shown by (13)-(16). Furthermore, and more importantly, δουρὶ (φαεινῶ) in

23) Zero anaphora is in Greek the normal realization of persistent object topics that refer to things (μιν being reserved to persons). An extreme example is B 102-108, where the σκῆπτρον (introduced in l. 101) is the persistent (continuous) topic; it is referred to 6 times but never expressed.

(11)-(12) cannot be called the first mention of a persistent topic: the subsequent discourse in those examples is not concerned with what happened to the spear, but with what happened next, or what happened to the victim.

In the following example the dative expression is significant for another reason:

- (18) Ἔνθ' ἔλεν Ἀστύνοον καὶ Ὑπείρονα, ποιμένα λαῶν,
τὸν μὲν ὑπὲρ μαζοῖο βαλὼν χαλκῆρεϊ δουρί,
τὸν δ' ἕτερον ξίφει μεγάλῳ κληῖδα παρ' ὤμων
πλῆξ'. (E 144-147).

Here we have two contrastive sentences: two different warriors (who function as contrastive topics: τὸν μὲν...τὸν δ' ἕτερον) are hit by two different weapons at two different parts of their body. Consequently, the dative χαλκῆρεϊ δουρί is a means to differentiate two different killings from one another and cannot be a peripheral element.

3.3 *Mention outside battle-narrative.* The notion of peripherality is entirely tied up with the appropriateness with respect to a given nucleus. Peripheral elements have to be semantically innocuous and neutral with respect to the context in which their nucleus typically occurs. This means that *outside* those contexts everything changes and that the elements in question have the meaning which has to be attributed to them anyway. It makes a huge difference, for example, whether or not the particle καί is followed by the combination 'participle + περ': before the participle, καί is a peripheral element whose function it is to adapt the participle, by backwards extension, to the metrical circumstances (see Bakker 1988: 171 ff.). It can have that function because it has a meaning that is neutral with respect to the concessive context constituted by the participle (cf. *though* and *even though* in English). But without the participle, καί is used for its own sake. In other words: its meaning is not *exploited*, but *used* (see also note 17 above). The present section is meant to show that the same applies to δουρί/ἔγχεϊ.

Outside battle narrative in the sense delimited above, spears may be referred to together with other weapons. The dative for 'spear' is then co-ordinated with other expressions:

- (19) αὐτὰρ ὁ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπεπωλεῖτο στίχας ἀνδρῶν
 ἔγχεϊ τ' ἄορι τε μεγάλοισι τε χερμαδίοισι
 ὄφρα οἱ αἴμ' ἔτι θερμὸν ἀνήνοθεν ἐξ ὤτειλῆς. (Λ 264-6).

'With his spear' as a co-ordinated phrase yields the recurrent clausular phrase *δοῦρι τε μακρῶ*, which cannot function as a peripheral element, because in containing the connective particle *τε* it can hardly be called context-neutral (the context has to be concerned with co-ordination):

- (20) Αἰνείας δ' ἀπόρουσε σὺν ἀσπίδι *δοῦρι τε μακρῶ* (E 297)
 οὐνεκ' ἄρ' οὐ τόξοισι *μαχέσκετο δοῦρι τε μακρῶ* (H 140)

The datives *ἔγχεϊ* or *δοῦρι* cannot be a peripheral element when they refer to a spear that is not used as a weapon, for instance when the wounded Diomedes and Odysseus come to the Assembly, 'leaning on their spear':

- (21) τῶ δὲ δύο σκάζοντε βάτην ἼΑρεος θεράποντε,
 Τυδείδης τε μενεπτόλεμος καὶ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς
 ἔγχεϊ ἐρειδομένω· ἔτι γὰρ ἔχον ἔλκεα λυγρά. (Γ 47-9).

Furthermore, 'spear' can be used metonymically, so that 'spear' stands for 'warfare'²⁴). In this use *ἔγχεϊ* is the complement of predicates denoting excellence:

- (22) Ἔκτορι δ' ἦεν ἑταῖρος, ἰῆ δ' ἐν νυκτὶ γένοντο,
 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἄρ' μύθοισιν, ὁ δ' ἔγχεϊ πολλὸν ἐνίκα. (Σ 251-252).
 (23) τῆς δὲ τρίτης Πείσανδρος ἀρήϊος ἡγεμόνευε
 Μαιμαλίδης, ὃς πᾶσι μετέπρεπε Μυρμιδόνεσσιν
 ἔγχεϊ μάρνασθαι μετὰ Πηλεΐωνος ἑταῖρον. (Π 193-5).
 (24) ἔγχεϊ δ' αὐτός || Τρωσὶ φιλοπτολέμοισι *μεταπρέπω* (Π 834-5)

The last example is from direct speech. This is an environment where, from a linguistic point of view, everything is different from narrative anyway. When a spear is mentioned to refer to "my spear" it is obviously absurd to speak of peripherality:

24) Compare the compound *δοῦριάλωτος*. Note that this fact itself is indicative of the omnipresence of spears in Iliadic warfare, which in its turn provides the cognitive basis for the use of *δοῦρι/ἔγχεϊ* as a peripheral element.

- (25) αἰψά τοι αἶμα κελαινὸν ἐρωήσει περὶ δουρί (A 303).
 (26) κούρην ἦν ἄρα μοι γέρας ἔξελον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν,
 δουρὶ δ' ἐμῶ κτεάτισσα (Π 56-57).
 (27) οὐ τοι ἔτ' ἔσθ' ὑπάλυξίς, ἄφαρ δέ σε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
 ἔγχει ἐμῶ δαμάα (X 270-71).

The listing of these examples ((19)-(27)) does by no means pretend to be a representative sample of the entire range of uses of *δουρί/ἔγχει* in the *Iliad*. What the examples show is that the use of a given expression as a peripheral element is always strictly confined to one particular type of context. This may be a linguistic context in the case of the peripheral use of particles (e.g. the presence of a participle in the case of *καί* or the presence of the connective *δέ* in the case of *ἄρα*). But in the case of expressions with referential potential, it may also be an extra-linguistic *situation*. This is of course the case with *δουρί/ἔγχει*: their function is entirely dependent upon the situation described. When the narrative is concerned with actions that cannot be performed but with a spear, the dative is exploited for the sake of versification; any instance outside these contexts is used for its own sake, as it belongs to what the poet actually *wanted* to express.

4. Conclusion

The above argument has shown that predicates like 'meaningful' and 'significant' in Homeric discourse have to be used with circumspection. Nothing in Homer is *meaningless*, but much is not intentionally *meaningful* either. To be keen on a poetically effective use of a given expression is quite understandable as a reaction to what some Parryists have done to Homer the creative poet, and it is justified by the poetic effects that emerge at the most unexpected moments. But one can simply go too far, as much of the quality of the Homeric poems lies in the fact that creative use has been made of what we call 'peripheral elements', whose very function it is to facilitate the complex process of versification. Those elements are, in this function, context-neutral and *not* overtly meaningful. To really appreciate Homer's genius is first to recognize the peculiar semantic status of this material and only then to decide whether creative use has been made of it.

The discussion of peripheral elements shows a second thing. Not only can a peripheral element be creatively used; also when it is *not* creatively used does it show that Homeric poetry is much more than the automatic use of formulaic building-blocks. Any peripheral element is peripheral to a particular nucleus²⁵) and this nucleus definitely conveys significant information: it is used because the poet *wanted* to use it. The nucleus-periphery way of thinking has the considerable advantage that it makes much of the old (and in the end rather fruitless) discussion about the traditionality or originality of Homeric poetry unnecessary. The 'formulae' in Homer are not 'positive', ready-made building-blocks that heavily constrain the poet in his expressive possibilities, but 'negative' reactions, conventionalized adaptations of meaningful expressions to the metrical circumstances. Consequently, this approach explicitly leaves room for 'free will' without denying the existence of a style and a method of versification which significantly differ from other, unequivocally literate poetry.

Our discussion of dative expressions for 'spear' has shown that the peripheral function of a given expression is confined to certain contexts. Much more research is needed to get a clearer understanding of the interaction between context-type and the use of linguistic elements, both in the language and in the verse.

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25) Which may be a peripheral element itself to yet another nucleus. To recognize the hierarchical, recursive organization of Homeric diction is necessary to make progress in the study of epic diction.

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