

ἐν προτέροισι πόδεσσι κύνων ἔχε ποικίλον ἔλλόν
 ἀσπαίροντα λάων τὸ δὲ θανυμάζεσκον ἅπαντες
 ὡς οἱ χρούσει ἐόντες ὁ μὲν λάε νεβρὸν ἀπάγχων,
 αὐτὰρ ὁ ἐκφυγέειν μεμαῶς ἤσπαιρε πόδεσσι.

No less a critic-philosopher of art than E. H. Gombrich has referred to this description of Odysseus' gold brooch as an incomparable example of "interaction between narrative intent and pictorial realism." Yet he hazards no opinion on how this scene actually looked, arguing instead that "it matters more how it was seen."¹) Narrative and pictorial interaction is indeed a point one might consider; however, neither it nor any grasp of the actual appearance of the brooch itself may be conjectured until one considers carefully not "how it was seen" but "how sight functions therein." What is transpiring between hound and fawn? The problem lies with the verb *λάω*.

Learned inquiry into the meaning of *λάω* in *Odyssey Nineteen* has been extensive but inconclusive. Three definitions have been suggested: 1) 'gripping, devouring' 2) 'barking, crying' 3) 'gazing, seeing.'²) C. Mutzbauer, *Griechische Tempuslehre* (1893), I. 162-163; N. Wecklein, "Textkritische Studien zur Odyssee," *SBAW* 7 (1915), 20; K. Meister, *Die Homerische Kunstsprache* (1921), 74; W. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer* (1948), II. 326; *LfgE* (1955), s. v. ἄγχω; A. Wace & F. Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer* (1962), 500 support the first translation. C. Lobeck, *Ῥηματικόν* (1846), 6; L. Doederlein, *Homerisches Glossarium* (1858), III. 211; A. Fick *Wörterbuch* (1890), I. 119f.; F. Bechtel, *Lexilogus* (1914), 27; M. Leumann, *Homerische Wörter* (1950), 233 f.; F. Brein, *Der Hirsch in der griechischen Frühzeit* (1969), 184 support the second translation. L. Radermacher, "Der homerische Hermeshymnus," *SAWW* (1931), 139; A. Prévot, "Verbes grecs relatifs à la vision et noms de l'oeil," *RPh* 3. ix (1935), 251; P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* (1958), 355; indirectly through later usage, R. McCail, "ΛΑ Ω: Two Testimonia in Later Greek Poetry" *CQ N. S.* 20 (1970), 306-308 support the third.³)

1) E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (1960), 132-133. For other archeological and art historical considerations see W. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer* (1948), on τ 19. 225 f.

2) See R. McCail, *CQ N. S.* 20 (1970), 306.

3) See also Hsch. s. v. *λάων*, Sch. V B on τ 229.

É. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire* (1923), s. v. *λάω* makes no definitive judgement on the passage, noting instead that the ancients were divided between ‘gazing’ and ‘barking’ while the moderns tended to support ‘gripping.’ Frisk also refers to the important, although somewhat intricate, attempt of Leumann to explain the shifting of the verb’s definition in terms of a newly-formed present from the perfect *λέληκα*; he contends that it was the cry of a bird of prey that was transferred to another hunting animal, the hound (235–236).

Leumann’s conclusions, especially insofar as he must deny the etymological connection between *λάω* ‘to look’ and *ἀλαός* ‘blind’ (236), are unhappy. The obvious solution is to explain this passage in terms of sight and to make *λάω*, if not exactly, at least somewhat, parallel in meaning to the clearly attested “sight” of the eagle in *h. Herm.* 360 (*αἰετός δὲν λάων ἐσκέρατο*). Prévot’s argument is good as far as it goes: he notes the verb’s relationship to *skr. śasati* ‘to shine’ and ‘to desire’ (Gr. *λιλαίομαι* ‘to desire strongly’); he leans heavily on the verb’s adjunct meaning of ‘to gaze with an evil eye’ (*ἀλάστωρ, ἄλαστος*); he argues *vis à vis* τ 229 that *λάω* “*exprime dans ce passage le ‘regard lancé par l’ennemi vainqueur à son adversaire pour le subjurer’*”; he closes by denying any essential difference in usage between τ 229 and *h. Her.* 360 (249–250).

Two passages in Homer concerning the ways of fawns must be brought as additional evidence to support the translation of ‘gazing, seeing’ in τ 229 and to suggest what kind of gaze or sight transpires between hound and fawn. Both stand in the context of warriors dazed by battle or slaughter: Δ 243 (*τίφθ’ οὕτως ἔστητε τεθηπότες ἤντε νεβροί* – “Why do you stand thus struck in wonder like fawns?”) and Φ 29 (*τοὺς ἐξῆγε θύραζε τεθηπότας ἤντε νεβρούς* – “He [Achilles] led them forth struck in wonder like fawns”). Homer evidently was aware of a deer’s capacity for being struck into a kind of inactivity that does not preclude physical movement. (Those so inclined would speak, no doubt, of a kind of hypnotism in such a context.) Δ 243 refers to unheroic inactivity at the sight of war; Φ 29, to unheroic inactivity at the sight of the vengeful Achilles. So in the brooch of Odysseus does the hound strike the fawn into a certain inactivity through the agency of his gaze. The fawn may move, nay even struggle, but he is, nevertheless, caught. So too, just as in the two Iliadic passages the fawns “stand struck with wonder,” are those who gaze at the brooch “continually awonder” (*θανάμα-*

ζεσκον). Homer has extrapolated an internal condition between hound and fawn to an external one between viewer and broach.⁴⁾ Gombrich in his visual approach to this ornament is, hence, slightly off the mark.

I should suggest the following translation for the passage:
In his front paws the hound held a dappled fawn,
Gazing hard at it as it struggled to get away. All were continually amazed

How, both being gold, while [the hound] continually gazed [imperfect] at the fawn and seized it tightly [in its paws],⁵⁾

The [fawn] on the other hand struggled convulsively with its feet and strove to flee.⁶⁾

Stanford

Raymond A. Prier

4) A similar type of "experiential ecphrasis" could be argued from *Il.* 3. 121-131 and *Od.* 11. 601-614. In the former Iris fetches Helen who is weaving a great tapestry of the war between the Trojans and Achaeans. Iris tells her to come look upon the wonderous works of the war itself: *ἵνα θέσκελα ἔργα ἴδῃαι* (*Il.* 3. 130). The external, wonderous works are extrapolated from the art object. In *Od.* 11, Heracles among the shades goes about with his bare bow and strung arrow, "shooting forth terrible glances" (*γυμνὸν τόξον ἔχων καὶ ἐπὶ νευρήφιν ὄσπρον, | δεινὸν παπταίνων* - *Od.* 11. 607-608). But to what is this glance directed? Nothing in the world of shades but most certainly at an extrapolation from that work of art, that "awful sword-belt about his chest" (*σμερδαλέος δέ οἱ ἀμφὶ περιστήθεσσαν ἀοστῆρ* - *Od.* 11. 609). Therein are "wonderous things fashioned" (*ἵνα θέσκελα ἔργα τέτυκτο* - *Od.* 11. 610); these are a variety of beasts and men at whom he aimed when in another world. So perhaps one might approach the greatest ecphrasis in Homer - the Shield of Achilles. See W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* (Stuttgart 1951), 357f.; W. Marg, "Homer über die Dichtung," *Orbis Antiquus* 11 (1957), 20f.; K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter* (Göttingen 1961), 401f.; J. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (Lund 1971), 108-137.

5) Ἀπόγγω in this instance does not mean 'to strangle, throttle with the jaws' or necessarily 'at the throat', although ἀγγω does mean 'to squeeze' and appears in Homer as a hapax in context with the throat, ἀγγε μιν ἱμάς ὑπὸ δειρήν *Γ* 371 (*L & S*, s. v. ἀγγω). Ἄγγω has, one must note however, an exact equivalent in *L. angō* 'to narrow, confine,' see also *aind. ambu-* 'narrow,' got. *agwun*, arm. *anjū-k* (Frisk, *Wörterbuch*, s. v. ἀγγω, Boisacq, *Dictionnaire*, s. v. ἀγγω). The hound is narrowing the fawn's movements by holding firm to it not with his jaws but with the πόδεσσι (228). The scene is admittedly somewhat stylized. The question whether the paws are about the neck or some other closely related part of the fawn's body is moot.

6) I should like to thank W. Beck of the *LfgreE* for helpful consultation with certain questions arising in this note. Also thanks are due to the von Humboldt Stiftung for supplying the needed time for research.