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THE EXPRESSION *LONGUS HELLESPONTUS*
IN OVID*

Ovid uses the expression *longus Hellespontus* several times. It occurs once in *Metamorphoses*, as the poet describes the opening of the strait: *longus in angustum qua clauditur Hellespontus* “where the long Hellespontus closes into a narrow strait” (*Met.* 13. 407).¹ It should be noted that this passage may well have been the original context for which the expression was coined, as the epithet *longus* is neatly balanced by *in angustum*. Two more times the expression is used in the *Fasti*: *perque urbes Asiae longum petit Hellespontum* “and across the cities of Asia, [Ceres] seeks the long Hellespontus” (*Fast.* 4. 567); and later in the poem, it appears in the designation of Priapus as *longi deus Hellesponti* “the god of the long Hellespont” (possibly with a *double entendre*, see below n. 3) as he advances on the sleeping Vesta (*Fast.* 6. 341). Ovid also plays with the expression in the periphrasis *longaque Phrixiae stagna sororis* “the long stagnant waters of Phrixus’ sister (*scil.* the Hellespont)”

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¹ Verses 404–407 that anticipate the further narration (cf. the more detailed mention of Priam in verse 409) have given rise to a long discussion whether they should be considered an interpolation, and are even bracketed in some editions (for a summary of the discussion with references to earlier scholarship, see Bömer 1982, 299). I follow Bömer who, emphasizing that the passage indicates what will later be told in detail and also plays the role of *cardo* in the transition of Ovid’s narrative from Ajax to the fall of Troy, considers the passage authentic and placed where it was intended by Ovid.

(*Fast.* 4. 278), and later in the *Tristia* (1. 10. 15–18), when describing his route to Tomi:

Quae simul Aeoliae mare me deduxit in Helles
 et longum tenui limite fecit iter,
 fleximus in laeuom cursus, et ab Hectoris urbe
 uenimus ad portus, Imbria terra, tuos,

[the ship] that brought me to the sea of the Aeolian Helle, and made its long path in the narrow channel;² we turned to the left, and from the city of Hector, we arrived at your port, o land of Imbros.

At first glance, there is nothing remarkable about the epithet *longus* for the Hellespont, given the oblong and narrow form of the strait: probably this is the reason why the expression *longus Hellespontus* in itself has not attracted much attention of commentators and scholars.³ However, it was not a fixed expression (it does not occur in other poets), and the fact that Ovid, despite his love of *variatio*, repeats such a trivial characteristic several times, retaining *longus* even in cases where the toponym itself is replaced by a learned periphrasis (*mare... Helles* or *Phrixiae stagna sororis*) is peculiar.⁴ Repetition of

² G. Luck suggested that the expression *tenui limite* might refer to the thin trail left by the passing of the ship: “meint Ovid die schmale Furche, die das Schiff in seinem Kielwasser zurückläßt?” (Luck 1977, II, 83). But it seems more natural to understand *limes* as “channel”, denoting the form of the strait.

³ Bömer 1982, 300 *ad Met.* 13. 407 who notes: “*longus* ist ein für Ovid typisches Epitheton für den Hellespont”; Fantham focuses on the spondaic line-ending produced by the toponym *Hellespontus* (Fantham 1998, 199 *ad Fast.* 4. 567). Littlewood 2006, 111 *ad Fast.* 6. 341 discusses the stylistic and rhythmical effects used by Ovid in his witty depiction of Priapus (including the possible double entendre behind *longus*), but does not comment on the use of *longus* to characterize the Hellespont: “It is clear from the word-order that *longus* here is suggestive, and the poet prolongs the anticipation by putting the noun right at the end of the hexameter and slowing the tempo with the spondaic *Hellesponti*”.

⁴ This is not to say that trivial epithets are never repeated in Ovid (for example, the expression *formosa puella* occurs numerous times). But, as far as Ovid’s qualification of toponyms and names is concerned, a greater variation of epithets is expected. A good example of Ovid’s usual technique is his qualification of Mount Ida (where he not only could choose his own epithets,

expressions in the Ovidian corpus is often due to a pun, wordplay or allusion that the poet considered a success: in this case, the repetition of *longus* seems to suggest that the adjective when applied to the Hellespont might have carried for Ovid more weight than is warranted by its literal sense, and that we might be dealing with an allusion or wordplay that Ovid was proud of and could have expected at least some of his readers to recognize.

Two more traits about Ovid's use of the expression *longus Hellespontus* are worth noting: (a) the adjective is always separated from the word it qualifies, suggesting that the poet highlighted the epithet by means of hyperbaton; and what is even more important, (b) in three cases (*Met.* 13. 407; *Fast.* 4. 567 and 6. 341) the word *Hellespontus* occupies the fifth and sixth foot of the hexameter, creating a σπονδειαίζων.⁵ While *Hellespontus* is not the easiest word to adapt to dactylic poetry, and is not used frequently by Roman poets, it should nevertheless be noted that the last two feet of the hexameter was not the only possible position for the toponym and its derivative adjectives.⁶ The placement of the Greek toponym at the verse end,

but also incorporate references to Homer's *πιθήεσσα, πολυπίδαξ, πολύπτυχος*: in Ovidian corpus only *nemorosa* appears twice (*Her.* 16. 53; *Ars am.* 1. 289), whereas all other characteristics are single occurrences: *clivosa* (*Am.* 1. 14. 11); *longa* (*Her.* 16. 110); *alta* (*Her.* 17. 115); *creberrima fontibus* (*Met.* 2. 218); *umbrosa* (*Met.* 11. 762); *amoena fontibus* (*Fast.* 4. 249); *aquosa* (*Fast.* 6. 15); *opaca* (*Fast.* 6. 327); *umida* (*Met.* 10. 71). On *Ida* in Ovid, see McKeown (1989, 369 *ad Am.* 1. 14. 11).

⁵ The term σπονδειαίζων for the rare form of hexameter with a spondee on the fifth foot was used by Cicero: *ita belle nobis 'flavit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites' (hunc σπονδειαίζοντα si cui voles τῶν νεωτέρων pro tuo vendito)...* "so nicely did for us 'the softest Onchesmites blew from Epirus' (feel free to sell this spondaic verse to one of the νεώτεροι as your own)" (*Att.* 7. 2. 1). For Roman readers this type of line-ending was associated with Greek poetry: Winbolt 1903, 129; Dainotti 2015, 196–198 (with references to earlier scholarship); specifically on Ovid's use of spondaic line-ends in *Fasti*, see Bömer 1958, II, 85–86 *ad Fast.* 2. 43; Fantham 1998, 199 *ad Fast.* 4. 567.

⁶ Thus, the toponym *Hellespontus* is placed in the first part of the hexameter (before the penthemimeral caesura) in *Enn.* fr. 369 Skutsch and in *Culex* 33; before Ovid, *Hellespontus* was placed at the end of the hexameter by Catullus (64. 357–358, where the expression *rapidi... Hellesponti* probably reproduces Homer's verse end *παρ' ἀγάρροον Ἑλλήσποντον* at *Il.* 12. 30, as noted by Ellis 1876, 279, cf. Trimble 2025, 636); roughly contemporary with Ovid is *Hellespontus* at the verse end in *Ciris* 413 (the high number of σπονδειαίζοντες

coupled with the rarity of dispondaic endings in Roman hexametric poetry, inevitably produces an association with Greek poetry. And indeed, the Hellespont does occupy the last two feet of hexameter in four passages in Homer.⁷ In one of these (*Il.* 12. 30) the name of the strait stands alone, but in the remaining three it is accompanied by the epithet *πλατύς* (because of the ambiguity, I leave the adjective untranslated):

Il. 7, 85–86:

... ὄφρα ἐ ταρχύσωσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί,
σῆμά τέ οἱ χεύωσιν ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ

... so that Achaeans crowned with long hair may bury him, and make him a mound by the *πλατύς* Hellespont

Il. 17, 432–433:

τὼ δ' οὔτ' ἄψ ἐπὶ νῆας ἐπὶ πλατὺν Ἑλλήσποντον
ἠθέλετην ἰέναι οὔτ' ἐς πόλεμον μετ' Ἀχαιούς...

but the two did not want to go back to the ships by the *πλατύς* Hellespont, nor into the battle with other Achaeans...

Od. 24, 80–84:

ἄμφ' αὐτοῖσι δ' ἔπειτα μέγαν καὶ ἀμύμονα τύμβον
χεύαμεν Ἀργείων ἱερὸς στρατὸς αἰχμητάων
ἄκτῆ ἔπι προῦχούσῃ, ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ
ὥς κεν τηλεφανῆς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἶη
τοῖσ', οἳ νῦν γεγάασι καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσσονται...

in this poem is noted by Lyne 1978, 16). Two derivative adjectives are attested: *Hellespontia* (hapax in poetry), placed at the beginning of the hexameter in *Cat.* fr. 1. 4; and *Hellespontiacus*, regularly placed at the beginning of hexameter (*Verg. Georg.* 4. 111; probably reprised in Petronius, 139. 2) or occupying the first half of the pentameter, especially in Ovid (*Her.* 18. 108 and 19. 32; *Fast.* 1. 440).

⁷ This was not the only possible position for the toponym Ἑλλήσποντος in the Homeric hexameter: in other cases, it is located on the second and third foot (*Il.* 2. 845; 9. 360), or on the fourth and fifth foot (*Il.* 15. 233; 18. 150; 23. 2; 24. 346; 24. 545).

and over them we heaped a mound, big and flawless, we the holy host of Argive spearmen, on a projecting shore by the πλατύς Hellespont, so that it would be visible from afar in the sea to men living now and to those to come...

In all these cases the narrator's focus is primarily not on the Hellespont as such, but on its coastline. The adjective πλατύς in Greek could be used in two senses. It usually means "broad, i.e. wide and flat", and translations and commentaries on Homer's poems invariably accept this translation for πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος.⁸ However, in a number of contexts (especially in prose) πλατύς is used to define sea water as opposed to potable water, i.e. carries the sense "salty, brackish". The earliest attestation of πλατύς in this sense appears in Herodotus (2. 108):

[...] σπανίζοντες ὑδάτων πλατυτέροισι ἐχρέωντο τοῖσι πόμασι, ἐκ φρεάτων ἀρύομενοι.

feeling the lack of water, they used saltier <water> for drink, drawing it from wells.

In Aristotle's *Meteorologica* (258 a) the adjective denotes saltiness of rain water, and is used as a synonym of ἀλμυρός:

ὅθεν μὲν οὖν ἡ γένεσις ἔνεστιν τοῦ ἀλμυροῦ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, εἴρηται. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὰ τε νότια ὕδατα πλατύτερα καὶ τὰ πρῶτα τῶν μετοπωρινῶν.

wherein lie the origins of the saltiness in <sea>water, has been explained. And for the same reason, the rainwater brought from the south as well as the first rains of autumn are saltier.

⁸ *LSJ* 1996, 1414 s.v. πλατύς III: "but πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος *Il.* 7. 86, 17. 432, is not *the salt*, but *the broad*, Hellespont"; Kirk 1990, 245 *ad Il.* 7. 86: "over the flat Hellespont". For Edwards, the formula was probably created for the specific context of burial mounds on the sea-shore: "The mound can be seen from afar over the 'level' sea, and the association of the phrase with tombs suits the context and looks forward to the grave-stone simile two lines later" (Edwards 1991, 105–106).

It can be added that the same authors use *πλατύς* as both “broad” and “salty”.⁹ Aristophanes even seems to use a pun that plays with the two usages of *πλατύς* in the stichomythic exchange between Lamachus and Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 1124–1127):

- ΛΑ. Φέρε δεῦρο γοργόνωτον ἀσπίδος κύκλον.
 ΔΙ. Κάμοι πλάκοῦντος τυρόνωτον δὸς κύκλον.
 ΛΑ. Ταῦτ’ οὐ κατάγελῶς ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις πλατύς;
 ΔΙ. Ταῦτ’ οὐ πλακοῦς δῆτ’ ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις γλυκύς;

Lamachus. Carry here the round of shield, decorated with the Gorgon!

Dicaeopolis. And give me too the round of cake, covered with cheese!

Lamachus. Is not this a *πλατύς* derision for people?

Dicaeopolis. Is not this cake sweet for people?

Whereas dictionaries and most commentaries on the *Acharnians* understand *κατάγελως πλατύς* as “downright mockery”,¹⁰ the pun behind Lamachus’ use of *πλατύς* has been aptly explained by Ch. de Lamberterie, building on F. A. Paley’s remark,¹¹ as a pun on “broad” (laugh openly) and “brackish” (bad taste), which brings out the contrast with *γλυκύς* at the end of Dicaearchus’ reply; de

⁹ For *πλατύς* “broad” in Aristotle, e.g. *Met.* 992 a where *πλατύ* and *στενόν* are opposed; for Herodotus, cf. *Hdt.* 2. 156. 2; 3. 113. 2; 4. 39. 2 and 41; and (what is relevant for the question of Hellespont), *πλατέα* was suspected behind the transmitted reading *ἀκτὴ παχέα* for the coastline by the Hellespont: “Statt *παχέα* ist wohl *πλατέα* zu lesen. Es ist ein hügeliger bewaldeter Küstenvorsprung von einer Meile Ausdehnung, an beiden Enden durch die Einbuchtungen von Sestos (heute Zemenik) und Koila (heute Kilia) von der übrigen Küste abgekerbt” (Stein 1889, 44 *ad Hdt.* 7. 33; see also Wilson 2015, 130 who approves of this emendation).

¹⁰ *LSJ* 1996, 1413, s.v. *πλατύς* I.5: “metaph. [...] flat (i.e. downright) mockery, *Ar. Ach.* 1126”; cf. in the same category, “but *πλατὴν γελάσαι, καταγελάειν, laugh loud and rudely*”; cf. Olson in his commentary while maintaining that *πλατύς* is the right reading (ms. also give *πολύς*), explains the use of *πλατύς* based on the meaning “broad” only: “**πλατύς**: Lit. ‘broad’, i.e. ‘patent, open’; cf. *Pax* 815 with Olson *ad loc.*” (Olson 2002, 343 *ad Ach.* 1126–1127).

¹¹ Paley 1876, 109: “*πλατύς* flat in the sense of downright. It may also resemble our phrase *broad grins*. But the contrast with *γλυκύς* suggests the meaning ‘bitter’ or ‘brackish,’ Herod. II, 108”.

Lamberterie proposed the following translation for v. 1126: “N’a-t-il pas le mauvais goût de se moquer ouvertement du monde ?”¹²

Neither “broad” nor “brackish” is a fortunate characteristic for the Hellespont. “Broad” is obviously a strange epithet to qualify a notoriously narrow strait. As for “brackish”, it may be argued that this qualification is supported by a Herodotean parallel in Xerxes’ scornful address to the Hellespont: Σοὶ δὲ κατὰ δίκην ἄρα οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων θύει, ὡς ἐόντι καὶ θολερῷ καὶ ἀλμυρῷ ποταμῷ, “and justly no one honours you with offerings, as you are a turbid and brackish river” (Hdt. 7, 35), but, as regards the Homeric formula, “brackish” is unexpected and unpoetic. Nairn pithily summarized the problem with the two interpretations of πλατὺς Ἑλλήσποντος: “the meaning ‘broad’ is as destructive of the truth, as ‘brackish’ is of poetry”.¹³ Another line of explanation was to accept that πλατὺς in πλατὺς Ἑλλήσποντος means “broad”, and to focus instead on the application of the term *Hellespont*. There is one Homeric parallel that justifies this approach – Achilles calls the Hellespont “limitless” as he pities Priam’s loss in *Iliad* 24. 544–546:

ὄσσον Λέσβος ἄνω Μάκαρος ἔδος ἐντὸς ἐέργει
καὶ Φρυγίη καθύπερθε καὶ Ἑλλήσποντος ἀπείρων,
τῶν σε γέρον πλούτῳ τε καὶ υἰάσι φασὶ κεκάσθαι.

People say, old sir, that you excelled in wealth and through your sons as far as the confines of Lesbos, the seat of Makar, out in the sea, and of Phrygia inland,¹⁴ and of the boundless Hellespont.

Obviously, the expression Ἑλλήσποντος ἀπείρων is suited to emphasize the vastness of the territories in which Priam had no pier; but it is an isolated expression, most likely created on the basis of the preexisting formula πλατὺς Ἑλλήσποντος, and the idea of the

¹² De Lamberterie 1990, 457.

¹³ Nairn 1899, 436.

¹⁴ I am grateful to D. V. Keyer for correcting my initial translation and drawing my attention to the fact that ἄνω and καθύπερθε cannot be used as equivalent to “down below, i.e. to the south” and “above, i.e. to the north”, and that these adverbs must refer to the position of Lesbos out in the sea, and of Phrygia on the land.

vastness of the Hellespont is fully present here. As early as W. Leaf's commentary on the *Iliad*, it has been suggested that the term in *Il.* 24. 545 (but in other cases as well) refers not only to the Bosphorus strait, but to the Northern part of the Aegean Sea: thus, when Homer is characterizing it as *πλατύς* or *ἀπείρων*, he was thinking of the broader sea off Troy and Thrace.¹⁵ Alternatively, it has been linked to the fact that the form of Hellespont resembles a river – and that, if so ranked, the Hellespont is broad in comparison to other rivers.¹⁶

¹⁵ Leaf 1902, 576 *ad Il.* 24. 545: “Ἐλλήσποντος must evidently be taken to include the sea on the [West] coast of the Troad as well as the narrow channel on the [North], to which we now confine the name. This could hardly be called *ἀπείρων*”; cf. Büchner 1912, 182: “An den meisten Stellen der großen Homerischen Gedichte bezeichnet der Name nicht bloß die Straße der Dardanellen, sondern auch noch das westlich angrenzende Gebiet des Melasbusens bis an den Thermäischen Golf und das thessalische und makedonische Gebiet des nördlichen Ägäischen Meeres [...], dessen Name vor dem 5. Jhdt. v. Chr. nicht nachgewiesen werden kann”. Richardson 1993, 333 *ad Il.* 24. 543–546 admits this solution, recognizing, at the same time, the alternative possibility of the expression being influenced by the expression *πόντος ἀπείρων* which is known from Hesiod (*Th.* 678) and attested as Aristarch's reading in two Homeric passages: “The epithet *ἀπείρων* in 545, applied only here to the Hellespont, is at first sight puzzling, and has been explained as referring to the whole sea off Troy and Thrace, not just the modern channel. It is called ‘broad’ at 7.86, 17.432”; see also the *Basler Kommentar* (Bierl–Latacz 2009, 195 *ad Il.* 24. 545): “nicht nur die Dardanellen selbst, sondern in einem weiteren Sinn auch ein Teil der nordöstlichen Ägäis”. From the point of view of geographical descriptions, Jachmann 1955, 94–95 and 108–109 has argued in favor of the idea that the term Hellespont could denote a larger area than the Bosphorus.

¹⁶ Luce 1998, 41–42: “Ancient sailors regarded the Hellespont as a river rather than a strait, and this conception is embodied in the stock epithet, ‘broad’, that Homer three times applies to it (*Il.* 7, 86; 17, 432, *Od.* 24, 82). ‘Broad’ would be rather pointless as a description of an arm of the sea but is very much in order for a riverlike mass of water that flows constantly in the same direction and is between two and three miles wide at its point of entry to the Aegean”. In ancient sources there is the direct qualification of the Hellespont as a *ποταμός* in Xerxes' scoffing words (ὡς εἶναι καὶ θολερῶ καὶ ἄλμυρῶ ποταμῶ, Hdt. 7. 35), and a reference to an idea of this kind may be implicitly present in Ausonius' *Mosella* as he compares the Mosel to the Hellespont (*Mos.* 287–291; however, Ausonius' choice of words qualifies the Hellespont as a maritime strait, cf. *Sestiacum pelagus* v. 287, *freta Abydeni ephēbi* v. 288, *pontus* v. 289, *euripus* v. 290).

The question of whether πλατύς “broad” and πλατύς “salty, brackish” are homonyms or whether the latter is semantically derived from the former remains a disputed one. The purposes of this article do not require me to propose a solution to this question, but a summary of the discussion seems to be in order. The idea of the existence of two very similar PIE u-stem adjectives is an old one: those who adhere to this interpretation would reconstruct, on the one hand, *plh₂tú- “wide” for Gk. πλατύς “wide, flatly spread out”, Skt. pṛtú- “wide” and Lith. plātus “wide”, and, on the other hand, *płtú- “sharp” for Gk. πλατύς “salty, brackish” (i.e. “with a sharp taste”) and Skt. paṭú “sharp”. This interpretation for πλατύς “salty” already found in Debrunner (1954, II.2, 465); in Boisacq (1916, 792) who mentions among 19th century linguists for the discussion of πλατύς “brackish” together with Skt. paṭú “sharp” Fröhde, Fortunatov and Persson; in Pokorny (1959–1969, III 985 s.v. (s)p(h)el-), who admits the possibility of linking πλατύς “brackish” to a verbal root with the meaning “to split”; the idea is mentioned by LSJ (1996: 1414, s.v. πλατύς III; the remark seems to have been based on the lemma in Boisacq’s dictionary), and it was endorsed by Ch. de Lamberterie (1990, 457–459). There is, however, a formal problem with the reconstruction of the root for sharp, pungent taste, *płtú-, as it is formally difficult to reduce Gk. πλατύς “brackish” and Skt. paṭú- “sharp” to a single form: however, Ch. de Lamberterie explained Skt. paṭú- as a prakritism, comparing it with a similar adjective *kṛt(h₂)ú (cf. Gk. κρατύς and Skt. kaṭú-) and viewing the adjective *płtú “sharp” as a whole as a Greek and Indo-Iranian isogloss¹⁷ (an early derivative of the verb *(s)płt / *(s)pólt (“to split”) in these two languages).

However, another authoritative line of interpretation has been to posit πλατύς “brackish” as derived from πλατύς “wide and flat”. The common denominator for these two characteristics is, obviously, the sea, but such a transition is untypical and difficult to explain

¹⁷ “Limité à deux langues, il ne permet évidemment pas de restituer en indo-européen un adjectif *płtú-. Mais comme d’autre part πλατύς, immotivé et isolé en synchronie, se dénonce par ce fait même comme un archaïsme et ne saurait pas être une création du grec, on est en droit de considérer *płtú- comme une forme dialectale de l’indo-européen ; c’est une de ces isoglosses entre le grec et l’indo-iranien comme il en existe tant dans la dérivation nominale” (de Lamberterie 1990, 460).

from the point of view of semantics (cf. Chantraine *DELG*, 913 s.v. πλατύς 2: “on s’étonne pourtant de cette déviation du sens chez [Hérodote] et [Aristote]”). The idea that the meaning “brackish” is due to a reinterpretation of πλατύς “broad” is already found in Passow: “wahrscheinlich weil man ursprünglich unter πλατὺ ὕδωρ überhaupt das Meer verstand, wovon nachher der besondere Begriff des Salzigen allein festgehalten wurde” (Passow 1852, II, 942 s.v. πλατύς).¹⁸ This idea was taken up by Pape and, among Herodotean scholars, in Sayce’s commentary and Powell in his *Lexicon to Herodotus*.¹⁹ An interesting twist on the idea of semantic derivation of πλατύς from “broad” to “brackish” was offered by C. B. Gulick, in a note on Athen. 2. 41 b: “Perhaps because salt was extracted from the broad ocean” (Gulick 1927, 178–179). A new reconstruction for this semantic transition was proposed by A. Heubeck who took the Homeric formula πλατύς Ἐλλήσποντος as the original context where this reinterpretation occurred: for him, the Hellespont was regarded in archaic times as a river (he specifically evokes Herodotus’ Xerxes chastising the Hellespont ὡς ἐόντι καὶ θολερῶ καὶ ἀλμυρῶ ποταμῶ, Hdt. 7. 35) and, in comparison to other rivers, it could be characterized as πλατύς “broad”, which was then reinterpreted to “salty” (another feature that is not typical of a river).²⁰ Similarly, Hj. Frisk (1954–1972, 554–555 s.v. πλατύς 2, building on Heubeck’s article): “Ohne Zweifel aus πλατύς Ἐλλήσποντος (Hom.; vgl. A. Pers. 985) durch Mißverständnis entstanden, indem der ‘breite [Hellespont]’ als der

¹⁸ Cf. “Weil man unter πλατὺ ὕδωρ überhaupt das Meer verstand, bekam das Wort auch die Bedeutung des Salzigen” (Pape 1880, II, 627).

¹⁹ Sayce 1883, 182, *ad* Hdt. 2. 108 (explaining πλατυτέροισι): “‘Brackish’, perhaps because πλατύς was used of the ‘broad’ sea”; E. Powell qualifies the meaning “brackish” as metaphorical (which must mean that he derives it from “broad”): “metaph. compar. πόματα *brackish*: 2, 108⁴” (Powell 1996, 306 s.v. πλατύς).

²⁰ Heubeck 1958, 260: “Wir nehmen also an, daß in einer Zeit, als der Hellespont kühnerweise als ‘salziger Fluß’ bezeichnet werden konnte und die Erinnerung an die auffällige und darum besonders einprägsame Formulierung πλατύς Ἐλλήσποντος lebendig war, πλατύς als ἀλμυρός mißverstanden bzw. umgedeutet werden konnte”. Heubeck (1958, 258–259) credited Meyrhofer with the idea for the study, and Heubeck’s conclusions were, several years later, incorporated by Meyrhofer into his dictionary of Sanskrit (cf. Meyrhofer 1963, II, 191 s.v. पातुह).

‘salzige [Hellespont]’ aufgefaßt wurde. Das schmückende Epithet ‘breit’ erschien wohl für eine Meerenge wenig angemessen” (cf. Beekes 2010, 1205 s.v. πλατύς 2 whose treatment of the question is extremely close to Frisk’s). The possibility of this semantic transition was, however, vigorously contested by de Lamberterie (1990, 459) who pointed out that the epithet is only applied to water as substance, never to stretches of water (the sea or straits).²¹

Returning to the question of πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος in Homer, it is very probable that the poet inherited this noun-epithet formula from earlier epic tradition; and the way he reworks πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος into Ἑλλήσποντος ἀπείρων in *Il.* 24. 545 gives reason to believe that for him πλατύς (whatever its relationship with πλατύς “brackish”) in this expression meant “broad”. However, ancient readers and critics did see the contradiction in calling the notoriously narrow strait πλατύς, and while the triple repetition (*Il.* 7. 86; 17. 432; *Od.* 24. 82) did not leave room to doubt Homer’s text, tried to explain the poet’s choice of epithet. Some of the explanations that exist in modern editions were offered already by ancient readers and Homeric scholarship.

I. Usage of πλατύς as “salty”. Remarkably, even the explanation of πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος as “brackish Hellespont” is attested in Athenaeus (2. 41 a), as he lists different types of water mentioned in Homeric poems:

διαστέλλει δὲ καὶ γλυκὴ ὕδωρ ἀπὸ πλατέος, τὸν μὲν Ἑλλήσποντον εἶναι λέγων πλατύν, ὑπὲρ δὲ θατέρου φράζων ‘στήσαμεν νῆας ἀγχοῦ ὕδατος γλυκεροῖο’.

²¹ “Il s’agit toujours de l’eau comme élément chimique, et non d’une étendue d’eau. Un syntagme *πλατύς πόντος ‘mer saumâtre’ n’est ni attesté ni même, semble-t-il, concevable : le grec dit couramment ἄλμυρον ὕδωρ, mais pas *ἄλμυρὸς πόντος. On ne voit donc rien qui puisse justifier cette ‘Umdeutung’ : le point de départ comme le point d’arrivée sont mal posés” (de Lamberterie 1990, I, 459). This is certainly a strong argument. However, it should be noted that while for the expression πλατὺ (or ἄλμυρον) ὕδωρ de Lamberterie’s reasoning is correct, the possibility for a double understanding (both “broad” and “salty”) opens up, once the same expression is placed in the plural, πλατέα ὕδατα (and indeed this or similar expression may stand behind the periphrasis of Helle in *Heroid* 18. 104: *sola dedit vastis femina nomen aquis*).

[Homer] distinguishes fresh water from *salty*, by describing the Hellespont as πλατύς, and saying of the other [type]: ‘we moored [our] ships near to fresh water’.²²

Indeed, this may have been one of the earliest interpretations. In a fragment of Choerilus from the list of nations that crossed the Hellespont as part of Xerxes’ army, quoted by Joseph in *Contra Apionem*, there is a people who lived by Mount Solyma, by the lake characterized as πλατή (Choeril. fr. 320. 1–3 SH = fr. 4. 1–3 Radici Colace):

τῶν δ’ ὄπιθεν διέβαινε γένος θαυμαστὸν ιδέσθαι,
γλῶσσαν μὲν Φοίνισσαν ἀπὸ στομάτων ἀφιέντες,
ᾧκευ δ’ ἐν Σολύμοις ὄρεσι πλατή παρὰ λίμνη...

behind them was crossing a tribe wondrous to behold, who let out from their mouths Phoenician speech and lived in the mountains of Solyma by the broad (salty?) lake.

Joseph clearly interpreted this passage as referring to the Jews, and the πλατή λίμνη to the Dead Sea, with its saltiness being its chief characteristic.²³ While most modern scholars interpreted this passage as a reference to the Aethiopes of Asia, to be identified with the Solymi mentioned by Homer who live by the Phaselis lake (πλατή λίμνη would then mean “broad lake”), P. Radici Colace in her edition of Choerilus (and in an earlier article on this fragment) proposed to

²² Homeric formula πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος is counterbalanced by the quotation from the *Odyssey* (abridged and slightly modified, as Homer mentioned only one ship): στήσαμεν ἐν λιμένι γλαφυρῷ εὐεργέα νῆα / ἄγχ’ ὕδατος γλυκεροῦ... (*Od.* 12. 305–306). Both C. B. Gulick (1927, 179; see above) and S. D. Olson (2006, 235) translate πλατύς as “broad”; the latter gives no explanation of his translation.

²³ Cf. Joseph’s explanation: δῆλον οὖν ἐστίν, ὡς οἶμαι, πᾶσιν ἡμῶν αὐτὸν μεμνησθαι τῷ και τὰ Σόλυμα ὄρη ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ εἶναι χώρα, ἃ κατοικοῦμεν, και τὴν Ἀσφαλιτίν λεγομένην λίμνην· αὕτη γὰρ πασῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ [λίμνη] πλατυτέρα και μειζων καθέστηκεν (*Ios. Flav. Contra Apion.* 1. 175). It is worth noting that in the expression πασῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ πλατυτέρα και μειζων καθέστηκεν Joseph seems to be playing with the two meanings of πλατύς (“broad” and “salty”).

return to Joseph's interpretation, which would then mean that πλατύς would then mean "salty" (as the most salient characteristic of the Dead Sea).²⁴ This interpretation is accepted, as a possibility, by R. Führer who translates πλατέη παρὰ λίμνη as "an dem großen (Saltz?) See".²⁵ It may be added that a number of contexts in Hellenistic epigrams shows a similar jeu de mots on the two meanings of πλατύς, however, in these examples the adjective characterizes the sea (or even other seas), not specifically the Hellespont.²⁶

II. Geographical explanation ("the broader part of the Hellespont"). The second line of interpretation of πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος by ancient readers, well attested in the scholia, has much in common with modern geographical interpretations, i.e. the argument is that Homer used the term Ἑλλήσποντος broadly, denoting not only the Bosphorus, but the wider area near the Troad, before the strait. Therefore, πλατύς characterizes the whole area that can be called Ἑλλήσποντος, not only the narrow strait which is a part of it. Thus, the scholia A to *Il.* 7. 86 (which probably remount to Aristarchus through Aristonicus) explain:

πλατεῖ δὲ καθ' ὃ μέρος ἐ<σ>τι πλατύς, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ παρὰ πλατεῖ.

πλατεῖ in that part where [the Hellespont] is broad, and [ἐπὶ πλατεῖ] is used instead of παρὰ πλατεῖ.

A similar explanation is found in the exegetical scholia, ex. schol. bT in *Il.* 7. 86:

ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ: καθ' ὃ μέρος ἐστὶ †πλατύτερος† ἑαυτοῦ περὶ τὰς ἐκροὰς τοῦ Σκαμάνδρου.

in that part where [the Hellespont] is broader than itself, by the outflow of the Scamander [into the sea].

²⁴ See Radici Colace 1979, 42–44; cf. Radici Colace 1976, 17–20.

²⁵ See Führer 1993.

²⁶ E.g., Ἴονίου γὰρ ἐπὶ πλατὺ κῶμα περήσω (*Anth. Pal.* 5. 17. 3), where πλατύς, applied to the wave, may mean both "broad" and "salty"; similarly, διὰ πλατὺ κῶμα φηγόντα (*Anth. Pal.* 6. 349. 5); κατ' Αἰγαίῳ ῥόου πλατὺ λαῖτμα (*Anth. Pal.* 7. 614. 7).

Cf. scholia bT in *Il.* 17, 432:

οὐ τὸν καθόλου πλατύν, ἀλλὰ καθ' ὃ μέρος ἑαυτοῦ πλατύτερός ἐστιν.

not “broad” as a whole, but in that part where it is wider than itself.

And the A scholia on *Iliad* 17. 432 state that it is specifically used to denote the wider parts of the Hellespont, not the strait as a whole:

πλατύν εἶρηκε τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον οὐχ ὅτι τοιοῦτος, ἀλλ' ὅτι σύγκρισίς ἐστι τῶν κατὰ τὸν ναύσταθμον μερῶν πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα μέρη τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου· τὰ γὰρ κατὰ τὸν ναύσταθμον πλατύτερα ἐστι τῶν ἄλλων διαστημάτων τῶν ἀπεστενωμένων. λέγει οὖν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ τὰ πλατύτερα μέρη τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου.

[Homer] called the Hellespont “broad” not because it is such, but because there is an element of comparison of the place where the ships are stationed with other parts of the Hellespont. For the parts where the ships are stationed are wider than the dimensions of the straitened parts. Homer thus uses this expression instead of saying “by the wider parts of the Hellespont”.

The same explanation that πλατὺς Ἑλλήσποντος refers to a part of the area that could be denoted as Ἑλλήσποντος, not to the Bosphorus strait only, was taken over from the scholia by Eustathius of Thessalonike,²⁷ and even integrated into ancient lexicographical works (Apoll. Soph. *Lex. Hom.* p. 132):

²⁷ Eustath. in *Il.* 7. 86 = vol. II, 408 van der Valk: Πλατύν δὲ Ἑλλήσποντον λέγει οὐ τὸν ἀπλῶς διόλου τοιοῦτον – ἔχει γὰρ στενὰ πολλὰ καὶ τι λίαν στενότατον καὶ οὐ πλέον ἐπτασταδίου πλατυνόμενον –, ἀλλὰ τὸ διεκπίπτον αὐτοῦ ἔξω πρὸς τῷ Αἰγαίῳ ἕως καὶ εἰς τὸ ναύσταθμον καὶ εἰς τὸ Ῥοίτειον καὶ εἰς τὸ Σίγειον, τὰ ἀνωτέρω ῥηθέντα, ἐκεῖνο πλατύν Ἑλλήσποντον λέγει. ἐκεῖ γὰρ εἰς πλάτος ὁ τῆς Ἑλλης πόντος ἀνοίγεται. Οἰοεὶ γοῦν φησὶν ὁ ποιητής, ὅτι σῆμα χεῦωσι περὶ τὸ πλατὺ μέρος τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου, ὥσπερ καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ ἀπαλὸν ἀύχένα φησὶν οὐ τὸν ἀπλῶς ἀπαλόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοιοῦτον μέρος αὐτοῦ.

πλατὴν Ἑλλησπόντον· οὐ καθολικῶς λέγει πλατύν, ἀλλὰ τὸ κατὰ τὴν Τροίαν μέρος τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου, ἀπὸ τοῦ μέρους τὸ ὅλον τροπικῶς λέγων· κατὰ γὰρ Σηστὸν καὶ Ἄβυδον πλατὺς ἐστὶν Ἑλλησποντος.

Homer does not say of the Hellespont that it is “broad” as a whole, but the part of Hellespont by Troia, characterizing, tropewise, the whole from its part: for the Hellespont is broad around Sestos and Abydos.

Cf. the abridged explanation in Hesychius (π 2492): πλατὴν Ἑλλησπόντον· τὸ κατὰ τὴν Τροίαν μέρος τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου· ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅλου τὸ μέρος τ<ρ>οπικῶς λέγων.

III. Antiphrasis. An explanation of πλατὺς Ἑλλησποντος through stylistic effect is found in the D scholia (*schol. in Il.* 7. 86 van Thiel):

H 86/Ys. πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ. ἦτοι κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν, στενὸς γὰρ ὁ Ἑλλησποντος· ἢ κατ’ ἐκεῖνο τὸ μέρος τὸ πεπλατυμμένον.

“on the broad Hellespont”. Homer says so either as an antiphrasis (i.e. expression of a notion through its opposite – *M. K.*), for the Hellespont is narrow; or because of its broadening in that part of the strait.

The explanation κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν is here coupled with the geographical explanation (see above, under II). However, it is a valuable testimony of an interpretation via stylistic figure (of the type πόντος Εὐξεινος instead of Ἄξεινος).²⁸ In view of the integration of early stages of Homeric scholarship into the D scholia, this interpretation may well remount even to pre-Hellenistic times.

²⁸ On the stylistic term ἀντίφρασις in ancient scholarship, see Lausberg 1990, 450 § 940, who classes it as a subtype of εἰρωνεία. It was regularly used by Greek and, even more often, by Roman grammarians to explain a difficult word etymology: cf. *lucus a non lucendo* (Serv. *in Aen.* 1. 22; cf. Diom. I. 462 Keil; Mart. Cap. IV. 360 Keil etc.); *antiphrasis... ut Parcae ab eo quod non parcant* (Sacerd. VI. 462. 12; cf. Serv. *in Aen.* 1. 22; etc.).

I would like to suggest that literary sources (Ovid, but other poets as well) point to an existence of one other explanation, which is not attested directly in remnants of ancient scholarship, but would be in keeping with ancient stylistic theories. Homer's use of the epithet *πλατύς* for the Hellespont could be viewed as a *κατάχρησις* (the use of proximate terms instead of the exact term, a stylistic quality that was specifically noted for poetry), and that it could be substituted, by later emulators of Homer, by an epithet that they considered more apt. Thus, in poetry we find traces of replacement of *πλατύς* by *μέγας* (Dion. Per. 820–821):

τὴν δὲ μετ' Αἰόλιδος παραπέπταται ἦθεα γαίης
Αἰγαίου παρὰ χεῖλος, ὑπὲρ μέγαν Ἑλλήσποντον

after that are spread the abodes of the Aeolian land by the rim of
the Aegean, over the great Hellespont.

J. Lightfoot does not remark on Dionysius Periegetes' choice of *μέγας* for the Hellespont (and even omits the epithet altogether in her translation),²⁹ and indeed, at first glance, the epithet is so neuter that it is easy to miss Dionysius' point. However, since just a few lines before he had described the broadening of the coastline by the river Sangarius, the use of *μέγας* seems to be a pointed correction of Homer: the Hellespont cannot be properly called “broad”, but it can be admired as “great”. In Roman poetry, a replacement among the same lines is attested in Valerius Flaccus (*Arg.* 1. 50):

et magni numen maris excitat Helle

and Helle, the deity of the great sea, keeps [me] awake.

Another poet who sought to correct Homer's *πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος* was Ovid: retaining the recognizable Homeric position of the toponym at the end of the hexameter, Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* modified the epithet *πλατύς* to *longus*, displacing the focus of perception from the width of the strait to the extension of its coastline. In the first passage where the expression appears, this replacement is

²⁹ Lightfoot 2014, 241.

especially pointed, as Ovid both stresses the narrowness of the strait *and* replaces the Homeric epithet with *longus*: *longus in angustum qua clauditur Hellespontus* (*Met.* 13. 407; cf. similar care in choice of words in *longum tenui limite fecit iter*, *Trist.* 1. 10. 16). This passage bears all the typical traits of that type of allusion that R. F. Thomas called “correction” in his seminal article on types of allusion in Roman poetry.³⁰ It is also worth noting that Ovid seems to have tried out a different approach to rendering Homer’s πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος, through the adjective *vastus*: on the one hand, *vastus* is closer to Homer’s πλατύς, but it seems that Ovid did not feel that it could be applied to the toponym Hellespont itself. There are two passages of this kind in his corpus. Ovid seems to have invented this variant in the letter of *Leander to Hero* (*Her.* 18. 104): *sola dedit uastis femina nomen aquis* “a single woman gave <her> name to vast waters”, and he later takes it up again in the *Tristia*, in the same elegy in which he described his journey, in a way juxtaposing in one poem the two adjectives he had considered as a variant for Homeric πλατύς (*Trist.* 1. 10. 32): *hic locus est gemini ianua uasta maris* “this place is the wide door between the two seas”.

Ovid displays interest in Homeric scholarship and an awareness of many of the questions raised by Homer’s text:³¹ it has been noticed that on several occasions Ovid in his references to Homer seems to be reacting to Aristarchus’ atheteses,³² or to scholars’ doubts on the authenticity of a passage (as preserved in the scholia).³³ While there is still much work to be done on Ovid’s reworking of Homeric expressions

³⁰ Thomas (1986, 185–189) who builds on Giangrande’s earlier remarks on *oppositio in imitando* in Hellenistic and Roman poetry (Giangrande 1967).

³¹ This has been noted already by M. von Albrecht for *Heroid* 3 (1980; for the analysis of Homeric scholarship in *Heroid* 3, see also Jolivet 1999).

³² E.g. Papaioannou (2007, 41) noticed that in *Met.* 12. 22–23 Ovid seems to have specifically rearranged the story of the portent at Aulis so as to place the petrification of the snake (the verse that had been athetized by Aristarchus, *Il.* 2. 319) as the culmination of the story, thus taking “an affirmative stance on the question of authenticity tied to the particular verse” (*ibid.*).

³³ E.g. it has been suggested that Ovid’s references to the *Doloneia* episode in *Her.* 1. 39–44, *Ars am.* 2. 135–138 and *Met.* 13. 98–100, 243–254 (that was suspected by Alexandrian scholars to be an Pisistratean insertion, cf. Eustath. in *Il.* 10. 1–10 = vol. III, 2 van der Valk) are a pointed defense of the episode (see Jolivet 2004; Weiden Boyd 2017, 38–40).

that were considered problematic by Homeric scholars, there is a good number of expressions where we are certain of the double reference to Homer and to the scholarly interpretation of the passage.³⁴ I think that the expression *longus Hellespontus* in *Met.* 13. 407, *Fast.* 4. 567 and 6. 341 deserves to be included among allusions of this kind.

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³⁴ A good example of Ovid reworking a Homeric expression so as to “answer” a scholarly interpretation of Homer are Briseis’ words to Achilles *sed non opus est tibi coniuge* (*Her.* 3. 37) as a reference to Achilles’ qualification of Briseis in Homer as ἄλοχον θυμαρέα (*Il.* 9. 338), but also echoes the scholarly interpretation (as reflected in the bT scholia: ἠϋξῆσε τὴν ὕβριν ἄλοχον αὐτῆν εἰπὼν καὶ θυμαρέα, schol. bT in *Il.* 9. 336 b); see Weiden Boyd (2017, 100–101).

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The article reconstructs the origins of Ovid’s expression *longus Hellespontus* (*Met.* 13. 407; *Fast.* 4. 567; 6. 341 where the toponym invariably stands at the end of the hexameter, while the epithet is placed separately in a hyperbaton; cf. *Fast.* 4. 278 and *Trist.* 1. 10. 15–18). The epithet *longus* is accurate in that it corresponds to the long and narrow form of the strait; however, it does seem somewhat trivial to be repeated many times, and moreover, Ovid is the only Roman poet to use it. It is suggested that the expression *longus Hellespontus* was originally inspired by the scholarly discussion of the Homeric formula πλατύς Ἐλλήσποντος (*Il.* 7. 86; 17. 432; *Od.* 24. 81 placed invariably at the end of the hexameter in the accusative or dative) where the epithet πλατύς, if taken to mean “broad, i.e. wide and flat”, is a strange description of

a notoriously narrow strait. After an overview of solutions proffered by ancient scholars, it is shown that Ovid had probably devised the expression *longus Hellespontus* as another solution to the problematic formula in Homer: Ovid modified the epithet *πλατύς* to *longus*, displacing the focus of perception from the width of the strait to the extension of its coastline.

В статье восстанавливаются истоки выражения *longus Hellespontus* “длинный Геллеспонт” у Овидия (*Met.* XIII, 407; *Fast.* IV, 567; VI, 341, где топоним неизменно стоит в конце гекзаметра, а эпитет вынесен вперед в гипербате; ср. также *Fast.* IV, 278 и *Trist.* I, 10, 15–18, где характеристика *longus* появляется при перифрастическом обозначении Геллеспонта). Эпитет *longus* соответствует удлиненной и узкой форме пролива, однако кажется слишком банальным, чтобы использовать его несколько раз (в том числе в рамках эрудированных перифраз). Кроме того, Овидий единственный из римских поэтов использует это выражение. В статье высказывается предположение, что *longus Hellespontus* у Овидия является ответом на обсуждение гомеровской формулы *πλατύς Ἑλλήσποντος* (*Il.* VII, 86; XVII, 432; *Od.* XXIV, 81, в форме асс. или dat., неизменно в конце гекзаметра), в которой эпитет *πλατύς*, если понимать его в стандартном значении “широкий и плоский” противоречит форме пролива, известного своей узкостью. После обзора предлагавшихся античными филологами интерпретаций, показывается, что Овидий, скорее всего, избрал выражение *longus Hellespontus* как собственное решение проблемного выражения у Гомера: он сменил эпитет *πλατύς* на *longus*, перенеся тем самым фокус восприятия с ширины пролива на протяженность линии берега.

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