

## Hades' Famous Foals and the Prehistory of Homeric Horse Formulas

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The adjective κλυτόπωλος (of famous foals) appears five times in early Greek poetry, thrice in the *Iliad* as an epithet of Hades, once in the fragmentary Hesiodic *Catalogue* in reference to the hero Ion, and later in a very brief fragment from Pindar where it refers to Poseidon.<sup>1</sup> The *Iliadic* corpus, however, provides us the best forum for understanding the word's usage in oral poetry and opens a special window into the generation of Homeric horse formulas generally.<sup>2</sup> In what follows I will show that κλυτόπωλος and a wide array of Homeric expressions used to describe horses should be viewed as part of a unified network of historically and linguistically connected oral formulas. All of the formulas in this network will be shown to relate to ὠκέες ἵπποι (swift horses), one of the oldest and best attested formulas preserved in Greek from Indo-European poetry's ancient past. I will argue that the origin of κλυτόπωλος is linked to a wide range of formulas that all convey the idea of "good horses" and that recognizing the position of κλυτόπωλος within this formulaic network helps us to chart the diachronic evolution of this network as a whole. This analysis will, I hope, prove especially useful since existing scholarship does not approach the epithet from the perspective of oral verse mechanics or consider its relationship to other Homeric formulas, but instead focuses exclusively on the mythological and religious significance of the term's application to Hades, which is difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> There are also examples of the term from later literature, but I have omitted them from this discussion because their late date removes them from the world of oral poetry. Triphiodorus uses it to describe the Achaeans, Ἄλωσις Ἴλιου (*The Sack of Troy*) 92; Maximus Astrol. uses it to describe Selene, Περὶ Καταρχῶν (*On Inceptions*) 5.75, 6.151, 6.261. It also appears once in the *Papyri Magicae Graecae* 2.88 to describe Helios.

<sup>2</sup> Exactly what constitutes an oral formula in Homer is a complicated subject and a universally accepted definition of the term would be very hard to articulate since there are still debates about such issues as how frequently an expression must occur, how much such an expression may vary, and so forth. These debates are not new and an excellent overview of them can still be found in Hainsworth 1968 (espec. 33-45), whose work outlines a wide array of the techniques through which Homeric formulas are adapted. A more recent study in a similar vein is Bakker's treatment (2005, espec. 1-37) of peripheral and nuclear semantics in a range of related formulas dealing with spears. For the current discussion, however, the definition proposed by Milman Parry (1928:16) is still quite suitable: "Dans la diction des poèmes aédiques la formule peut être définie comme une expression qui est régulièrement employée, dans les mêmes conditions métriques, pour exprimer une certaine idée essentielle" ("Within the diction of oral poetry the formula may be defined as an expression which is regularly employed in the same metrical conditions to express a certain essential idea").

discern.<sup>3</sup> Since I will argue that the Hadean epithet is an extension of a broad formula network, I will ultimately need to address the concerns of such scholarship and explain why such an extension to Hades makes sense, but my first and primary task is to investigate this and related terms' function within the mechanics of oral verse.

An exposition and analysis of this network must begin with the most basic of Homer's equine formulas, the aforementioned ὠκέες ἵπποι (swift horses), the unique features of which provide a key to identifying related expressions. This formula itself is applied to horses quite frequently in the *Iliad*, but does not, of course, occur in only one shape, but rather in a range of grammatical forms. The following chart tallies the occurrences of the formula in its various forms in the *Iliad* (the phrase very rarely occurs outside of this text):

Formula	<i>Il.</i>
ὠκέες ἵπποι /	10
ὠκέες . . . ἵπποι /	1
ὠκέας ἵππους /	18
ἵππους / ὠκέας	2
ἵππων ὠκειάων /	2
ἵππων . . . ὠκειάων /	1

At first glance this formula is relatively ordinary. Its declensional distribution, for example, is the most common: the accusative is most prolific, followed by the nominative, and then the genitive.<sup>4</sup> In this case the dative and vocative are unknown.<sup>5</sup> It also happens to be of very common shape and position. The two most common inflections of ὠκέες ἵπποι happen to be of the shape – ∪ ∪ – – and occur always at verse end, a very common formulaic shape and position. This formula does not occur outside of the plural.

This is the most common and important equine formula in Homer, but there are several others that serve much the same semantic function even if they differ in precise diction. Through comparison of some of these formulas to ὠκέες ἵπποι we are able to identify a common underlying phonetic structure. Observe the following two formulas that are semantically related to the ὠκέες ἵπποι formula but that occur grammatically in the dual number rather than in the more common plural:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The works to which I refer are those of Thieme 1968 and Nilsson 1941, who are the only scholars, to my knowledge, who have attempted to explain the origin of this term. Both of their approaches will be explained and evaluated shortly.

<sup>4</sup> On the regularity of this distribution see Hainsworth (1968:48).

<sup>5</sup> The horses that are addressed in the epics are those that are called by name, such as those of Hector and of Achilles (*Il.*8.185; *Il.*19.400).

<sup>6</sup> Although generally only two horses were attached to each chariot, Homeric horse pairs are usually expressed grammatically with plural forms rather than dual. This is not surprising given the inconsistent usage of the dual throughout the Homeric corpus.

Formula	Π.
ταχέ' ἵππῳ	2
χαλκόποδ' ἵππῳ	2

The formula, ταχέ' ἵππῳ (fast horses), is essentially synonymous with ὠκέες ἵπποι, and χαλκόποδ' ἵππῳ (bronze-footed horses), although not technically synonymous, does describe the horses' feet.<sup>7</sup> Their feet are the instrument of their speed, so there is a semantic overlap at the metonymic level. The most interesting element of these substitutions for the current argument is their phonic similarity to each other as well as the ὠκέες ἵπποι formula. In their first word, all the expressions contain an unvoiced velar stop, either of the unaspirated kappa variety, of ὠκύς, or that of its aspirated counterpart, khi, as in ταχέ'. The word χαλκόποδε even exhibits two unvoiced velars, one in echo of the other. Although ὠκέες ἵπποι itself does not appear in the dual, these alternative dual formulas bear a resemblance to it on a phonological level, which, I believe, provides a clue to an even wider range of related formulas.

There are several further equine formulas that do not fully accord with ὠκέες ἵπποι semantically, but, like the dual formulas, nevertheless reflect it on a phonological level. These are μώνυχες ἵπποι (single-hoofed horses), καλλίτριχες ἵπποι (beautiful-haired horses), and χρυσάμπυκες ἵπποι (horses with golden frontlet):

Formula	Π.
μώνυχες ἵπποι /	8
μώνυχας ἵππους /	24
καλλίτριχες ἵπποι /	3
καλλίτριχας ἵππους /	8
καλλίτριχε . . . ἵππῳ /	1
χρυσάμπυκας ἵππους /	1
χρυσάμπυκας . . . ἵππους /	3

These formulas, combined with ὠκέες ἵπποι, ταχέ' ἵππῳ, and χαλκόποδ' ἵππῳ comprise a list of most of the common formulas involving horses in Homer, and every one of them displays an unvoiced velar, either of the kappa or khi variety, in the word preceding ἵπποι. Indeed, they often precede that velar with another at the beginning of the word, just as the dual formula χαλκόποδ' ἵππῳ does. Admittedly, the formula χαλκόποδ' ἵππῳ does not exhibit the final velar in the same position as the other formulas, but, given the weight of the other evidence, it does contribute to an overall sense of phonetic similarity among these expressions, at the level of a basic k...p consonantal sequence. The semantic similarity is even easier to spot, as these expressions

<sup>7</sup> This grouping of formulas must call to mind the Achillean formula, πόδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς, “swift-footed Achilles,” and although it exceeds the limits of the current article, there is, I think, good reason to believe that there is a relationship between certain equine formulas and those of Achilles, rooted in the commonality of the equating of martial and equine excellence in the epics.

function quasi-synonymously, each having the core semantic value of “good horses.”<sup>8</sup> Most describe the horses’ quality by focusing on their speed, either directly, such as ὠκέες ἵπποι and ταχέ’ ἵπποι, or through metonymy, such as χαλκόποδ’ ἵπποι and μώνυχες ἵπποι. καλλίτριχες ἵπποι and χρυσάμπυκες ἵπποι describe the horses’ quality through their beauty. Rarely are these differences particularly narratologically significant. Despite the particular honorific attributes highlighted by any one expression, they all fundamentally indicate “good horses.”

The consistency of the semantic, phonetic, as well as metrical quality exhibited by these expressions is striking and should not be dismissed as sheer coincidence. I suggest, in fact, that these formulas constitute an especially rich example of a formulaic network composed of genetically related expressions, similar to those studied by Nagler (1974:1-26).<sup>9</sup> In such a network new formulas can be generated as something like varied allomorphic realizations of a stable underlying nexus of metrical, semantic, and phonetic characteristics. That is to say in the process of oral performance, phonetically similar expressions may cluster around a unique theme, especially in common metrical positions. In this case I mean that as a poet reached line end, the position where each of these formulas is most common, if the poet planned to express the idea of “good horses,” then a variety of different formulas may have been employed, either by generation or recollection, with the aid of a persistent underlying phonetic structure.

The word κλυτόπωλος differs from these expressions because it is not an adjective-noun sequence but instead a singular *bahuvrīhi* type compound adjective, that is, it identifies a possessor of good horses rather than the horses themselves. It still exists in the same basic semantic sphere as an expression that conveys the semantic notion of “good horses.”<sup>10</sup> It also resembles these formulas at the phonetic level. In this case πῶλος (foals) appears rather than ἵππος, and κλυτός (famous) appears rather than one of the various adjectives already described, but a similar structure, anchored by corresponding k...p sounds is still evident. Finally, in hexametric verse this word occurs only at line end, the most frequent position for the other “good horses” expressions. κλυτόπωλος then resembles the “good horses” formulas at the semantic level, at the phonetic level, and at the metrical level, so it should satisfy the criteria for inclusion in this network. If, in the course of a performance, a poet reached line end and wished to express the core semantic idea of “good horses” in a way that describes an individual who has good horses rather than describing the good horses themselves, he could have generated or employed

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<sup>8</sup> On the commonality of speed as a basic approbative value of horses in Indo-European cultures see Matasovic (1996:73-74).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that Nagler referred to these groups as “families” of formulas while I have opted simply to call them networks.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Apion’s definition: “ἵππους ἀγαθοὺς <ἔχων>” (having good horses) from his Γλῶσσαι Ὀμήρικαι (*Homeric Glosses*) fr.51.1 (Neitzel 1977).

such a formula by drawing on the same phonetic structure on which his stock of “good horses” formulas generally was built.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that the word’s appearance in the fragmentary Hesiodic *Catalogue* perfectly reflects its treatment in Homer, occurring in the same position as in the Homeric text (frag. 10a23-4; Merkelbach and West 1983:115b):

ἦ οἱ Ἀ]χαιὸν ἐγ[είνατ’ Ἰάονά τε κλυ]τόπῳλ[ο]ν  
 μυχθ]εῖσ’ ἐν [φιλότητι καὶ εὐε]ἰδέα Διομήδην

who bore to him Akhaios, and Ion **of famous foals**,  
 and glorious Diomedes, having mingled in love

The only other early usage occurs in a fragment from Pindar, and that is the only one that deviates from this pattern (frag. 243; Maehler 1989:156):

Ζηνὸς υἱοὶ καὶ κλυτοπόλου Ποσειδάωνος

the sons of Zeus and Poseidon **of famous foals**

This is, however, a metrical outlier, occurring in non-hexametric verse, and Pindaric poetry was presumably composed with the aid of writing, so this particular example does not need to have an origin in oral verse mechanics. It is not uncommon, however, for Pindar’s compositions to employ ancient phraseologies or to display vestiges of older technique.<sup>12</sup> In any case the Pindaric usage does nothing to obscure the character of this term or related terms in earlier verse.<sup>13</sup>

To understand the full significance of this term’s relationship to other horse formulas, a look at other uses of the word πῶλος (foal) in the epics is instructive. The word is used relatively seldom, at least in comparison to ἵπποι (horses), and it usually occurs in compounds. The very few examples of πῶλος occurring in uncompounded form occur in the immediate vicinity of the

<sup>11</sup> Finkelberg (2004:238-41) offers a warning about analysis of Homeric formulas through Nagler’s generative model. She warns that, although such readings are useful, they can lead to a privileging of phonetic over semantic character in the construction of theories of Homeric verse-making technique. I hope that I have avoided this pitfall, since I do not suggest that the phonetic relationship between these formulas outweighs their semantic relationship but instead that metrical and phonetic patterns helped the poet in the generation and memorization of these semantically related expressions.

<sup>12</sup> Pindar may, in fact, showcase other members of this network not attested in Homer. λεύκιπποι, and λευκόπωλοι, the bright horses, for example, are both absent from Homer but display the same underlying phonetic structure as the Homeric “good horses” formulas.

<sup>13</sup> One more term, πλῆξιππος (lasher of horses), may also be added to the list of related expressions in Homer, since it features the same phonetic structure and in three of its four appearance in the *Iliad* it appears at verse end (2.104, 4.327, 11.93). Admittedly, it does not agree with the others semantically in quite as neat a fashion, but it does indicate one’s status as horseman and so could function in the same broad nexus of expressions. Moreover, the word is slightly unusual because compounds that feature ἵππος as their final element are fairly rare. Indeed, the fact that this compound positions its verbal element before its nominal makes it a so-called “pickpocket” compound, named after a prominent English example thereof, and the entire class is rare. The network proposed here may provide some justification for this unusual form.

word ἵππος and may be employed there to avoid repetition. In its more common compound forms it usually occurs at verse end, often in the formula Δαναῶν ταχυπόλων (of the Danaans of swift foals). This appears ten times in the epics and it too exhibits the same phonetic character as the broader network under discussion. πῶλος also appears twice in the name Ἐχέπωλος (the possessor of foals), which is applied to two different figures in the epic. One, the son of Thalusios, is a minor character killed in the fourth book, and the other, a son of Ankhises, did not actually come to Troy at all but is mentioned as the original owner of the horses that Agamemnon drives in the funeral games for Patroklos in the twenty-third book of the *Iliad*. In each case the word occurs at line end and also demonstrates the same phonetic character seen elsewhere in these expressions.

Πρῶτος δ' Ἀντίλοχος Τρώων ἔλεν ἄνδρα κορυστὴν  
ἔσθλόν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι Θαλυσιάδην Ἐχέπωλον·

Antilokhos first slew one of the helmeted Trojans  
among the forefighters, noble **Ekhepolos**, son of Thalusios.

(*Il.* 4.457-58)

τὴν Ἀγαμέμνονι δῶκε Ἀγκισιάδης Ἐχέπωλος

[the horse] that Ekhepolos, son of Ankhises, gave to Agamemnon.

(*Il.* 23.297-98)

Ἴλιον εἰς εὐπόλων (toward Ilium of the good foals), is, in fact, the only common usage not accounted for by these phonetic and metrical conditions.

The recognition of πῶλος within this network is especially exciting because it helps us to chart the development of the network with unusual precision by allowing us to identify an early and a late phase. This is partially true because ὠκέες ἵπποι has good claims to be an especially ancient expression and thus allows us to determine the earliest characteristics of this network. Some of the reasons for believing ὠκέες ἵπποι to be unusually ancient have been known since Rudiger Schmitt (1967:238) demonstrated that it has cognates in Vedic and Gathic Avestan poetry. Greek ὠκέες ἵπποι, Sanskrit *āśānas āśvās*, and Avestan *āsauiō aspāhō* all translate as “swift horses” and all are perfect cognates descending directly from the reconstructable phrase, *\*h<sub>1</sub>ōkēu-es h<sub>1</sub>ékū-ōs*.<sup>14</sup> This phrase must then have occurred in the poetry of the speakers of Proto-Indo-European, the parent language of Greek, Sanskrit, and Avestan, as well as of many others. Further poetic features of the phrase, originally unnoted by Schmitt, further strengthen the belief that these three cognate phrases testify to a piece of genuine Proto-Indo-European (PIE) poetic vocabulary (and not just a coincidence). Research into the poetic devices favored by the PIE poets suggests that alliteration was prominent in their repertoire and this phrase demonstrates alliteration of all four of its consonantal components, that is, the initial first

<sup>14</sup> Work by A. Kloekhorst (2008:237-39) and by Michiel de Vaan (2009) suggests, however, that the Proto-Indo-European antecedent of Greek ἵππος may, in fact, have been a u-stem noun rather than an o/e stem as has generally been speculated and is assumed here.

laryngeal consonant ( $h_1$ ), the palatal-velar  $k̑$ , the semi-vowel  $ɥ$ , and the final consonant. The last of these would have altered depending on the expression's grammatical form but should generally have remained identical in both words and thus preserved this correspondance. This evidence, taken together with the phrase's appearance in our three later Indo-European (IE) poetic sources, supports the hypothesis that the later IE formulas descend from a genuinely PIE poetic phrasing.

There is also another, less obvious, poetic figure represented here, which makes this conclusion even more compelling. The two words involved in *\*h<sub>1</sub>ōkēu-es h<sub>1</sub>ékū-ōs* derive from the PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>ékū-* (horse) and *\*h<sub>1</sub>ōkū-* (swift), the similarities of which are immediately striking. They seem to be a noun and adjective pair deriving from a common root *\*√h<sub>1</sub>ék̑*, and sharing the same base meaning, "swift." These words would, therefore, form a *figura etymologica*, something akin to the well know cluster of Greek, ἔπος εἰπεῖν, Vedic *āvocāma vācaḥ*, and Avestan *uxdā vacā*, all descending from the PIE *\*uēkuos uēku*, meaning "to speak a speech."<sup>15</sup> Unlike those *figurae etymologicae* the "swift horses" formula does not maintain its transparently etymological quality in the later traditions, but in the PIE phase of the language the phrase would have exhibited this pronouncedly enough to have been readily recognized by its hearers. The exhibition of this highly specialized poetic feature along with the demonstrated artfulness of phonetic arrangement makes it highly likely that this phrase is the ancestor of Homeric ὠκέες ἵπποι.

The significance of all of this for the current discussion is that this formula, to put it very simply, is remarkably ancient. It surely proliferated in Greek verbal art in a period before our texts document and, most importantly, before several important phonetic developments spread through the Greek language. The most important of these, for this issue, is the conversion of Greek labiovelars, the "k̑" sounds, to "p" in many contexts, including when they were followed by an "o" as happened here.<sup>16</sup> In the period just before that which our texts document, this formula was certainly in use, but did not sound like ὠκέες ἵπποι, but instead like ὠκέρες ἴκφοι, with two unvoiced velar sounds. The organizing phonetic structure then was not, in fact, the k...p sequence that the Homeric formula network documents. The original underlying phonetic structure seems instead to have been an alliterative k...k.

This presents a problem, however, for the two halves of this formula network, the expressions anchored to a final ἵππος unit, and those anchored to a final πῶλος unit, like κλυτόπωλος. The etymology of πῶλος is the subject of speculation, but it must descend from something like *\*pōlH-*. Thieme (1968:143-48) has suggested that this comes from the verbal root *√kuel*, meaning "to roam," but its cognition with such words as German *Fohlen* and Gothic *fula* makes that impossible. The unvoiced labiovelar "k̑" sound could indeed become a labial "p" in Greek but would not have become a fricative "f" in the Germanic languages. A "p," as in *\*pōlH-*,

<sup>15</sup> This is also pointed out by Katz (2010:361). On *figurae etymologicae* in Greek and Indo-Iranian poetics see Schmitt (1967:264-5).

<sup>16</sup> I must make clear here that the word ἵππος may never have contained an actual labio-velar, but instead a velar followed by a labial; that is to say that a syllabic break occurred between the two sounds, that is ἵκ-φος rather than ἵκ-φος. I am assuming here that the conversion of this consonantal group occurred at roughly the same time as that of the labiovelars. This should be a safe assumption since the two developments proceeded in much the same way.

gives us precisely what we see in the Greek and the Germanic cognates.<sup>17</sup> This means that πῶλος always began with a “p” sound and that the underlying phonetic structure for the πῶλος formulas was always k...p, rather than the k...k of the ἵππος formulas. The best explanation for the relationship of these two groups must lie in a diachronic evolution of the stable phonetic schema of which all these formulas are a realization. This is an evolution that would have occurred in tandem with the changing phonetic character of the Greek language. The ἵππος formulas, or more historically, the ἵκρος formulas, must represent an earlier phase in the generation of “good horses” expressions. In early oral composition “good horses” expressions must have employed an alliterative k...k pattern, perhaps rooted in the *figura etymologica* of the “swift swifties” phenomenon. As the phonetic evolution of the Greek language altered the ἵκρος formulas to ἵππος formulas, the schema upon which all of these expressions were founded altered as well, developing from a k...k structure to a k...p one. After phonetic change resulted in this k...p sequence this new scheme became generative itself and thenceforth formulas could be added to the network with a base in ἵππος or πῶλος. This does not mean, of course, that each unique ἵππος formula must antedate each unique πῶλος formula, but instead that the general practice of generating and employing ἵππος formulas must have a start date anterior to the start date of the incorporation of πῶλος formulas.

The Iliadic treatment of κλυτόπωλος, then, provides an excellent vantage point from which to observe and recognize the development and deployment of horse formulas generally in Greek oral poetry, not just of the one involving Hades in the *Iliad*. But what of this term’s application to Hades? Although few scholars have looked into this word very closely, those who have focused entirely on explaining why Hades was known as a possessor of famous foals in the first place. Horses do not after all feature very frequently in his mythology. Although my own argument has not yet dealt with this issue, it has been implicit throughout my reasoning that there was indeed some special significance in the application of the term to Hades. My argument assumes, in fact, that the Greek oral poets deployed this term for one who possesses good horses on the model of other “good horses” formulas precisely because there was an immediate utility to such a term in their performances, and my argument must not conclude, I think, without attempting to identify what that was.

The first step in this process should be an examination of the three occurrences of the term themselves, each of which occurs in different battle scene and depicts one man threatening another:

Sarpedon speaking to Tlepolemus:

σοὶ δ’ ἐγὼ ἐνθάδε φημὶ φόνον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν  
 ἐξ ἐμέθεν τεύξεσθαι, ἐμῶ δ’ ὑπὸ δουρὶ δαμέντα  
 εὖχος ἐμοὶ δώσειν, ψυχὴν δ’ Ἄϊδι κλυτοπόλω.

I declare that slaughter and dark death will be fashioned for you, by my hands and that you, conquered by my spear, will give glory to me and your soul to **Hades of famous foals**

(*Il.* 5.652-54)

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<sup>17</sup> There are other cognates that support this as well. See Beekes 2010:1266 and Frisk 1960:634.



Odysseus speaking to Socus:

σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ ἐνθάδε φημὶ φόνον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν  
ἦματι τῷδ' ἔσσεσθαι, ἐμῷ δ' ὑπὸ δουρὶ δαμέντα  
εὖχος ἐμοὶ δώσειν, ψυχὴν δ' Ἄϊδι κλυτοπόλῳ

I declare that there will be slaughter and dark death for you today, and that you, conquered by my spear, will give glory to me and your soul to **Hades of famous foals**.

(*Il.*11.443-45)

Meriones speaking to Aineas:

εἰ καὶ ἐγὼ σε βάλωμι τυχῶν μέσον ὀξείῃ χαλκῷ,  
αἰψά κε καὶ κρατερός περ ἐὼν καὶ χερσὶ πεποιθώς  
εὖχος ἐμοὶ δοίης, ψυχὴν δ' Ἄϊδι κλυτοπόλῳ.

If I should hurl (my spear) at you, and strike your middle with my sharp bronze, although you are strong and trust your hands, you would quickly give glory to me and your soul to **Hades of famous foals**.

(*Il.*16.623-25)

The first thing that one notices is that Ἄϊδι κλυτοπόλῳ is not the only common element among them, but that these lines echo each other generally, as if a traditional threat has been adapted three times. This looks then like an element of a type-scene, a narratological unit, larger than any single formula, in which elements tend to cluster in a given type of scene. We must still ask, however, why it is κλυτόπῳλος that we find embedded in these important lines rather one of Hades' other, more common epithets.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the fact that that κλυτόπῳλος was not replaced in any of these adaptations suggests that it made at least some sense to the poets and their audiences. Since it is not this epithet alone that repeats but the threat's language generally, the question that we must ask is not just why would Hades have famous foals but why would his possession of them be significant in this particular type of scene, in which this language was apparently resonant enough to become traditional. The answer here must be related to the passages' striking similarity of context, that is, the fact that each occurrence is part of a threat that sudden death will soon befall the target of the speaker's aggression. What, then, does the epithet κλυτόπῳλος have to do with such sudden death? It is with this question in mind that we should turn our attention to the two principal scholars who have studied this word before, Paul Thieme,

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<sup>18</sup> There are five other epithets used of Hades in the Homeric poems: ἴφθιμος (mighty), ἀδάμαντος (unconquerable), πελώριος (monstrous or huge), ἀμείλιχος (implacable), and πύλαρτης (gate fastener).

mentioned earlier, and Martin P. Nilsson.<sup>19</sup> Although neither approached the word in quite this light, each offers very useful suggestions about the application of κλυτόπωλος to Hades.

Thieme's explanation has roots in the Indo-European underworld and the etymology of the word Hades itself, which is difficult. He suggests that the word is comprised of the prefix *sm* (with) and the verbal root  $\sqrt{\text{uid}}$  (to see). Thieme's etymology would roughly mean "seeing together," and would have a perfect cognate in the particularly loaded Sanskrit term, *samvedanam*, the act of reuniting with one's forefathers in the afterlife.<sup>20</sup> He suggests that the limited information that we have about the early IE afterlife suggests that it may have been imagined, at least in part, as a meadowland, and therefore may have contained horses.<sup>21</sup> If Thieme is correct then these lines and the word κλυτόπωλος within them serve to call to mind the place to which the threatened man may soon be going. This works very well in our passages since the epithet would not be incidental but specially suited to this narratological circumstance, making sense of its unique occurrence in minatory exchange. This could, in fact, be sufficient explanation for the expression but it does require that the term be a fossilization since the belief that there were horses in the underworld is absent in archaic Greece. This expression then would need to have been preserved by poetic habit after its original significance had been forgotten. Although this is quite possible, I think it is useful to explore the possibility that this phrase had synchronic significance as well, to ask if it meant something special to the archaic poet and audience, admitting that such a meaning does not need to be the meaning of its origin. This is, I think, an especially important line of inquiry considering the lack of scholarly consensus regarding Thieme's etymology.<sup>22</sup>

For this I turn to Nilsson (1941:i, 424), whose explanation is followed by most scholars. He suggests that the term adheres because of Hades' use of horses in the abduction of Persephone. This theory holds that Hades did not always await the arrival of new souls to the underworld, but instead that, on occasion, he came to the realm of the living to collect them. This particular element of Hades' behavior would be typified in the abduction of Persephone. Hades' horses then would feature in this epithet because they are the means by which he hunts down his victims, so they function metonymically, like the Grim Reaper's sickle. Contrary to Nilsson's

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<sup>19</sup> I omit here the argument of Verrall (1898) that the term had nothing to do with horses at all but rather with "ranging" and "haunting," as if connected to *πωλέομαι*. Pindar's application of the word to Poseidon, the horse god, makes his idea difficult to accept.

<sup>20</sup> Puhvel also points out that the Vedic Yama is the *saṃgāmanam jānānām* "ingatherer of the people" (1987:109). The more traditional etymology traces the word to  $\sqrt{\text{uid}}$ - (unseen), which not only corresponds with the basic notion that death is unforeseeable, but is particularly apt given Hades' possession of a cap that imbued its wearer with invisibility. See Apollodorus, *Bib.* 1.2.2; *Aspis* 226-7; Pherekydes 3F11. See Frisk 1960:1.33.

<sup>21</sup> Although beyond the scope of this article, there are some other pieces of Indic evidence that could be added to bolster the connection between horses and the ruler of the dead. The name of the Indo-Iranian underworld god, Yama (Skt.)/Yima (Av.) does appear to have something to do with reining, and the Sanskrit noun *yama* when it does not appear as a name, can, in fact, indicate a rein. Yama is also said to have had particularly good horses, but that is true of the subjects of too many Vedic hymns to be useful: for example, *hiraṇyakaṣyānsudhurān hiraṇākṣānayaśśaphān āsvānanaśyato*, ("horses with golden girdles, good under the yoke, golden eyed, and iron hoofed, immortal") (*TA.* 6.5.2.5-6). For other similarities between the Greek and Indic afterworld see Puhvel (1987:139, n.4). On the Yama analogues in Greek mythology more generally see Ehni (1890:196-209).

<sup>22</sup> On objections to Thieme's etymology see Beekes (2010:34).

suggestion, however, I do not believe that there is good evidence to show that Hades was often imagined carrying souls to the underworld via his chariot, but instead Persephone seems to be the only figure to whom this is said to have happened.<sup>23</sup> I suggest, however, that this is, in fact, the best starting point for this analysis. Although horses are not a frequent feature of Hades' mythology, his abduction of Persephone by chariot was an exceedingly important and prolific story, despite its singularity. Reference to Hades' horses then would not remind the archaic audience of the underworld generally but of the sudden and violent abduction of Persephone specifically. The import of this minatory usage may, in fact, be that the victim is about to go to the underworld suddenly, just as Persephone did. The epithet, then, need be neither incidental nor vestigial here but may have worked specifically to enhance the resonance of the language of this threat. Such a reading is, of course, difficult to verify conclusively but seems to me to provide the most promising hypothesis since it allows room for diachronic evolution of the phrase while still pointing the way to a synchronic utility that aided in the epithet's survival.

Although the epithet κλυτόπωλος appears only three times in the *Iliad* it allows us insights into the prehistory of Homeric horse formulas generally. Not only does its metrical deployment and phonetic structure reflect common metrical and phonetic characteristics among the formulas but the linguistic history of the epithet's final element πῶλος allows us a special glimpse into diachronic evolution within Homeric formulas. This is so because its "p" sound has always been a "p" sound, while the "p" sound of formulas anchored by ἵππος was originally a "k" sound. This allows us to identify two groups within this network of formulas, those that were always built on a k...p structure, like κλυτόπωλος, and those whose historic k...p structure reflects a prehistoric k...k structure, like ὠκέες ἵπποι (earlier ὠκέρες ἴκφοι). Given the ancient poetic qualities of the k...k formulas and the extreme age of their most prominent representative, ὠκέες ἵπποι, it must be the case that the production of ἵππος formulas predates the production of πῶλος formulas. κλυτόπωλος then provides a precious view into the deep history of these oral formulas as well as the practices of the poets who employed them. Although linguistic changes in a language must sometimes render poetic formulas obsolete, κλυτόπωλος provides a beautiful example of how oral formulas sometimes survive such changes, how traditional poetic expressions sometimes persist and even multiply, yielding new forms and new meanings over the millennia.

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<sup>23</sup> To my knowledge, the only evidence that could support the belief that Hades carried away other souls comes from epitaphs that occasionally describe Hades snatching (ἀρπάζω) the dead: for example, IG II<sup>2</sup> 12629, SEG 25.298. Even then, however, this seems usually to indicate the death of a young woman and may then still be a reference to the Persephone myth.

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