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## Φλεγυῶν AND THE PHLEGYANS, WITH A NOTE ON μόρφνος φλεγύας (HES. SC. 134)

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The Phlegyans (Φλεγύαι or Φλέγυες), a mythical and notoriously reckless Lapith people living in northern Thessaly, later in Boeotia, and eventually settling in Phocian Daulis,<sup>1</sup> are first attested in Hom. *Il.* 13,302, where they are called "great-hearted" (Φλεγύας μεγαλήτορας). Some interesting information about the Phlegyan people is provided by the ancient scholia (*Schol. Hom. Il.* 13,302 Erbse):

302 a. Φλεγύας μεγαλήτορας: οἱ μὲν Γυρτωνίους, b(BCE<sup>3</sup>) Τ οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας τὴν Δαυλίδα τῆς Φωκίδος, οὓς μεγαλήτορας τοῖον ἰδεῖν ὀρέκτας† φησὶ διὰ τὸ πεπορθηκέναι τὸν ἐν Πυθοῖ ναόν. καὶ Φερεκύδης (FGrHist 3, 41 d) δὲ ἱστορεῖ περὶ τῶν Φλεγυῶν· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὰς τὰς Θήβας ὑπ' Ἀμφίονος καὶ Ζήθου διὰ τοῦτο τετειχίσθαι, διὰ τὸ δέος τῶν Φλεγυῶν. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τὰς Θήβας ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰρεθῆναι Εὐρυμάχου βασιλεύοντος, καὶ ἔρημον γενέσθαι τὴν πόλιν μέχρι τῆς Κάδμου ἀφίξεως. ἐπὶ πλεῖον δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν διείλεκται Ἔφορος ἀποδεικνύς ὅτι τὴν Δαυλίδα καὶ οὐ τὴν Γυρτῶνα ᾤκησαν· ὅθεν καὶ παρὰ Φωκεῦσι τὸ ὑβρίζειν φλεγυῶν λέγεσθαι. ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ἐν τῇ τριακοστῇ τῇ Δημοφίλου (FGrHist 70, 93). πάλαι δὲ διεφέροντο Φωκεῖς πρὸς Θεσσαλούς· διὸ καὶ τὰς Θερμοπύλας ᾤκησαν Φωκεῖς· εἴσοδον γὰρ ἔχουσιν ἀπὸ Θεσσαλίας. Τ  
b. ἄλλως· Φλεγύαι ἔθνος βίαιον περὶ τὴν Γυρτῶνα, οἱ Θηβαίοις ἐπιχειρήσαντες ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος κατεταρταρώθησαν. Τ  
{ἢ ἐ μετα} Φλεγύας μεγαλήτορας: Φλεγύαι Γόρτυναν κατοικοῦντες — διεφθάρησαν. ἰ οὔτοι δὲ ἐνέπρησαν καὶ τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς ναὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. ἰ ἡ ἱστορία παρὰ Φερεκύδει (FGrHist 3, 41 e). Α

<sup>1</sup> S. Eitrem, *RE* XX (1941), coll. 266–9 s.v. Phlegyas; J. Fontenrose, *Python. A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins*, Berkeley 1959, 25–7, 35–6, 41–2.

As may be gathered from the underlined passage, in Book 30 of his *History* (actually added by his son Demophilus), Ephorus of Cyme, writing in the fourth century BC, had affirmed that the Phocians used the verb φλεγυᾶν for ὑβρίζειν, evidently because of the insolent and outrageous behaviour of the Phlegyan people (Jacoby, *FGH* 70 F 93).<sup>2</sup>

Similar evidence is given by Eustathius of Thessalonica in his commentaries on the *Iliad* (vol. III, p. 474):

Ὅμοίως δὲ καὶ οἱ Φλεγυαί, ὄμοροι τοῖς Ἐφύροις ὄντες ἢ κάτοικοι τῆς ἐν Φωκίδι Γυρτώνης ἢ περὶ τὴν Δαυλίδα τῆς Φωκίδος, ἀσεβεῖς ἄνδρες καὶ ληστρικοί, οἱ καὶ τὸν ἐν Πυθοῖ ναὸν ἐπόρθησαν. καὶ τὰς Θήβας δὲ διὰ τὸ ἐξ αὐτῶν δέος τετειχίσθαι ὑπ' Ἀμφίονος καὶ Ζήθου φασίν. ὧν θανόντων ἀλῶναί τε πάλιν τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ Φλεγυῶν Εὐρυμάχου βασιλεύοντος καὶ ἔρημον μεῖναι αὐτὴν μέχρι Κάδμου. οὕτω δὲ ἦσαν βίαιοι καὶ ὑβρισταί, ὥστε καὶ τὸ ὑβρίζειν, φασί, δι' αὐτοὺς παρὰ Φωκεῦσι φλεγυᾶν λέγεσθαι. μῦθος δὲ ἐστὶ ταρταρωθῆναι αὐτοὺς ὑπ' Ἀπόλλωνος Θηβαίοις ἐπιχειροῦντας.

Not only does the Byzantine scholar refer to the Phlegyans as ἀσεβεῖς ἄνδρες καὶ ληστρικοί, but he also states that they were regarded as so violent and wanton (βίαιοι καὶ ὑβρισταί) that among the Phocians their name gave birth to the verb φλεγυᾶν = ὑβρίζειν, this latter information obviously going back (cf. φασί) to Ephorus/Demophilus (if not earlier). In these and various other versions concerning the recklessness of the Phlegyans, the same basic elements reoccur: they mercilessly ravaged and fought other peoples and gods alike. The most horrific crime that they committed was the attack and plundering of Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi (we also learn from writers that they burned the temple, though this is probably a play on their name deriving from the verb φλέγειν "burn"). According to some sources, it was rather Phlegyas, son of Ares and the eponymous ancestor of the Phlegyans, who was responsible for this sacrilegious act (note that his name may suggest a fire demon). However, other versions of the myth tell that Apollo succeeded in rescuing his temple, and it was believed that the god avenged the attacking Phlegyans and destroyed them (alternatively, though, it was said that the punishment took place in the aftermath of their attack on Thebes).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As for the corrupt phrase †οἶον ἰδεῖν ὀρέκτας† in ll. 2–3 of the scholia, Bekker attractively emended it to οἶονεῖ δεινονρέκτας (accepted by Jacoby, *FGH* 3 F 41 d; 70 F 93). Erbse, app. cr.: "possis οἶονεῖ δεινῶν ῥέκτας".

<sup>3</sup> For the sources (Antipater of Magnesia and others) representing the Phlegyans as offenders

Regarding the verb φλεγυῶν, it is naturally related to the name of the Phlegyan tribe, both deriving from φλεγ-υ-, i.e., the verbal stem φλεγ- (tr.) "burn, ignite", (intr.) "burn, flame, shine", followed by the suffix -υ. However, the verb is hardly denominative, as some ancient writers and many Phocians may have believed.<sup>4</sup> A denominative from the name of Phlegyas and of his people would most probably have been either \*φλεγυάζω or \*φλεγυίζω, both endings (-άζω and -ίζω) being very well documented in similar contexts.<sup>5</sup> One could even consider \*φλεγυεύομαι (or \*φλεγυεύω) from Φλεγυεύς (Steph. Byz. *ethn. s.v.* Φλεγύα, πόλις Βοιωτίας, ἀπὸ Φλεγύου τοῦ Ἄρεος καὶ Χρυσῆς παιδός. ὁ πολίτης Φλεγύας καὶ Φλεγυεύς; cf. αἰξωνεύομαι "to be slanderous like the people of [the Attic deme] Aexone" [< Αἰξωνεύς]; χαλκιδεύομαι "to be parsimonious like the inhabitants of Chalcis" [< Χαλκιδεύς]). The only verb in -άω in the list combined by Amado Rodríguez (n. 5) is the desiderative ἀθηνιάω "long to be in Athens", introduced by Lucian in a list of obsolete and odd words used by a mistaken *pseudologistes*,<sup>6</sup> and the only denominative in -όω derived from a place name seems to be the factitive αἰγυπτιώω "to make (swarthy) like an Egyptian".<sup>7</sup>

There is, however, no reason to doubt the existence of the verb φλεγυάω. Though evidently a very rare word, this is a quite plausible formation whose use may not have been limited to the Phocians. Ephorus/Demophilus seem to report a more or less local belief according to which the verb was derived from the name of the Phlegyans, and this may, in fact, have increased its popularity and use among the Phocians. However, the verb, derived from φλέγω "burn", may well have been known elsewhere too, being probably used metaphorically for ardent

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against Delphi, see N. Robertson, "The Myth of the First Sacred War", *CQ* 28 (1978) 52–3.

<sup>4</sup> But cf. also P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Paris 1980, 1209: "dénommatif" (no comments on this point in *DELG Suppl.*). H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1970, 1022 and R. Beekes, *Greek Etymological Dictionary*, Leiden 2010, 1576 just report the equation φλεγυῶν = ὑβρίζειν in Ephorus as well as the violent reputation of the Phlegyan people.

<sup>5</sup> For the evidence, see M. T. Amado Rodríguez, "Verbos denominativos derivados de gentilicios y topónimos", *Myrtia* 10 (1995) 67–103 (φλεγυῶν is not discussed); M. Kajava, "Cities and Courtesans", *Arctos* 41 (2007) 22–23, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Luc. *Pseudol.* 24, with the following comment: "κακὸν κακῶς σε ὁ λόγιος Ἑρμῆς ἐπιτρέψειεν αὐτοῖς λόγοις. ποῦ γὰρ ταῦτα βιβλίων εὕρισκεις;" Cf. ἀθηναίζω "to be wise as Athena" (< Ἀθηνᾶ) or "to behave like an Athenian" (< Ἀθηναῖος).

<sup>7</sup> *TGF* adesp. fr. 161 (the fragment, χρόαν δὲ τὴν σὴν ἥλιος λάμπων φλογὶ αἰγυπτιώσει, might possibly be from a comedy, see Kock, *CAF* III, p. 399). The standard verb was αἰγυπτιάζω "to be like an Egyptian", "speak Egyptian", "to be like Egypt" (i.e., under water).

anger, burning violence and similar moods compared to fire and burning (just as φλέγω and φλόξ are found in fighting scenes as well as in descriptions of ardent passion<sup>8</sup>). Such types of behaviour could easily be conceived of as including the ideas of insolence and outrageousness.

In particular, one may associate φλεγυάω with the rare adjective φλεγυρός "burning", "ardent", "vehement" (perhaps dissimilated from -υ-λόζ), as both are construed with the suffix -υ- and because the latter is attested in clearly metaphorical contexts. In a fragment of Cratinus' *Drapetides*, Lampon, a common target of Athenian political satire in the latter half of the fifth century BC, is ridiculed as follows (Cratin. fr. 62 K-A):

Λάμπωνα, τὸν οὐ βροτῶν  
 ψῆφος δύναται φλεγυρὰ δείπνου φίλων ἀπείργειν.  
 νῦν δ' αὖθις ἐρυγγάνει·  
 βρύχει γὰρ ἅπαν τὸ παρόν, τρίγλη δὲ κἄν μάχοιτο.<sup>9</sup>

In a technical sense, βροτῶν ψῆφος may well refer to a public vote (which could have deprived Lampon of the right to dine in the Prytaneum), but the use of φλεγυρά as an attribute of ψῆφος may rather suggest that not even heated and vehement public opinion was enough to keep the gluttonous man away from dinner parties.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the Cratinus fragment may be commented on by the first gloss in the Hesychian entry φλεγυρά· ὑβριστική· λαμπρά (from Diogenianus).<sup>11</sup> If this is so, the explanation may not be quite apt, but it all depends on the interpretation of the nature of the public *psephos*, whether it was just

<sup>8</sup> For φλόξ in Homer, and its comparative free use in the *Iliad*, see J. B. Hainsworth, "No Flames in the Odyssey", *JHS* 78 (1958) 49–56.

<sup>9</sup> J. M. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy* I, Leiden 1957, 41 (fr. 57–8), translates (and understands) as follows: "Lampon, whom no thunder-vote Of mortal men / Can stay, poor sinner, From a friend's dinner. // But now repletion sounds its note. He 's full agen, / All 's grist to his gullet — Yet he 'd fight for a mullet." Cf. E. Bakola, *Cratinus and the Art of Comedy*, Oxford 2010, 147.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Eupolis fr. 175 K-A [Κόλακες], of the flatterers of Callias, whom not even weapons could keep from flocking to dinner: οὐ πῦρ οὐδὲ σίδηρος / οὐδὲ χαλκὸς ἀπείργει / μὴ φοιτᾶν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον. The chorus of flatterers, using military terms analogously to Cratinus' ψῆφος φλεγυρά, may here describe their own abilities, see I. C. Storey, *Eupolis. Poet of Old Comedy*, Oxford 2003, 191.

<sup>11</sup> Cratinus is suggested by Hansen and Cunningham in vol. IV, p. 166 of the new Hesychius edition (Berlin 2009). The Hsch. entry is recorded at Cratin. fr. 62 K-A (*PCG* IV, p. 153), as it already was in the collections of Meineke and Kock, respectively.

"vehement" or both "ardent" and "outrageous".<sup>12</sup> In any case, Hesychius (and his source) is obviously right to state that φλεγυρός also means "insolent" or "outrageous", and in saying this, he may well have had the villainous Phlegyans in mind (cf. the adjacent entries in Hsch.: Φλεγύαι· ἔθνος ὑβριστικὸν καὶ ἀσεβές; φλέγουσι· βλάπτουσι; φλεγυροῦ· βλαβεροῦ). The lexicographer clearly draws on a long tradition attested not only in Ephorus/Demophilus (and their sources<sup>13</sup>) but also in archaic poetry. Indeed, the Phlegyans are styled as *hybristai* as early as the sixth-century Homeric Hymn to Apollo (*Hymn. Hom. Apoll.* 277–80):

ἔνθεν δὲ προτέρω ἔκιες ἑκατηβόλ' Ἄπολλον,  
ἶξες δ' ἔς Φλεγύων ἀνδρῶν πόλιν ὑβριστάων,  
οἱ Διὸς οὐκ ἀλέγοντες ἐπὶ χθονὶ ναιετάασκον  
ἐν καλῇ βήσση Κηφισίδος ἐγγύθι λίμνης.<sup>14</sup>

What about, then, the Homeric epithet *μεγαλήτωρ*, characterizing the Phlegyans in *Hom. Il.* 13,302 (Φλεγύας *μεγαλήτορας*)? In his *RE* article (cit. n. 1, col. 267), Samson Eitrem argued that the tradition of violent and reckless Phlegyans must be post-Homeric, because otherwise they could not be called "great-hearted" in Homer. It is true that this generic attribute does not depict the Phlegyans as godless and violent, but neither does it contradict that tradition (cf. *Pind. Pyth.* 3,8, where Phlegyas himself is *εὖιππος* "with fine horses". This surely does not exclude brutal manners).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Meineke fr. 43,1–2: "itaque ne ludibriis quidem et contumeliis Lamponem a conviviis prohiberi dicit"; Kock fr. 57–8: "ego neque quid ψῆφος φλεγυρά (pro φῆμις φλεγυρά) neque quid τρίγλη δὲ κἄν μάχοιτο significant intellego".

<sup>13</sup> F. Pownall, *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth-Century Prose*, Ann Arbor 2004, Ch. 4.

<sup>14</sup> "From there you went on, far-shooting Apollo, and reached the community of the Phlegyes, ruffians who lived there disregarding Zeus, in a pretty valley near the Cephisus Marshes" (transl. M. L. West, Loeb 2003). These lines belong to the Pythian part of the poem, perhaps recited at Delphi in 586 BC.

<sup>15</sup> Φλ. *μεγαλήτορες*: R. Janko, *The Iliad. A Commentary, vol. IV: Books 13–16*, Cambridge 1992, 85. Regarding the Pindaric passage, one may wonder whether Phlegyas' name, suggesting burning and fire, had any significance to Pindar in his Third *Pythian*, describing the funeral pyre of Koronis, Phlegyas' daughter, as well as the snatching of the infant Asclepius from Koronis' burning body by Apollo. Pindar not only describes the rescue of Asclepius for future divinity, but also his death by Zeus' lightning leading to his apotheosis. The ode's central theme, immortalization by fire, is interestingly discussed by B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, Oxford 2005, Ch. 14 (esp. 360–3).



Regarding the second gloss (λαμπρά) in the abovementioned Hesychian entry φλεγυρά· ὑβριστική. λαμπρά, it might explain the epithet of a Muse in a lyric song in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, as it does in *Schol. Ar. Acharn.*: φλεγυρά· λαμπρά, φέγγουσα, λάμπουσα, ἢ θερμὴ διὰ τοὺς ἄνθρακας. ἀντὶ τοῦ ἰσχυρά.<sup>16</sup> The chorus composed of charcoal burners invoke the Acharnian Muse to offer them inspiration for their song (*Ar. Acharn.* 665–6):

δεῦρο, Μοῦσ', ἐλθὲ φλεγυρὰ πυρὸς ἔ-  
χουσα μένος ἔντονος Ἀχαρνική.

The image of poetry as fire is known from Pindar and elsewhere, but a "fiery" Muse is particularly appropriate in the present scene, as she is to "fire" the song comparable to the sparks bursting from the charcoal cooking fire (667–75):

οἶον ἐξ ἀνθράκων πρηνίνων  
φέψαλος ἀνήλατ' ἐρε-  
θίζόμενος οὐρία ῥιπίδι,  
670 ἤνικ' ἄν ἐπανθρακίδες ὧσι παρακείμεναι,  
οἱ δὲ Θασίαν ἀνακυκῶσι λιπαράμπυκα,  
οἱ δὲ μάττωσιν, οὐ-  
τω σοβαρὸν ἐλθὲ μέλος  
ἔντονον ἀγροικότονον  
675 ὡς ἐμὲ λαβοῦσα τὸν δημότην.<sup>17</sup>

But if the adjective λαμπρά in Hesychius was really meant to explain Aristophanes' φλεγυρά, it remains a somewhat faded term to do so, and the same concerns the scholiast's observations except, perhaps, for the closing remark ἀντὶ τοῦ ἰσχυρά (omitted in some mss.). In fact, unless simply explaining ἔντονος in line 666, the adj. ἰσχυρά appropriately serves to interpret the metaphorical use of φλεγυρά. One expects a rather strong expression to define the Muse's attribute, which, in Aristophanes, is first glossed with πυρὸς ἔχουσα μένος "with the power

<sup>16</sup> Some mss. read φλέγουσα instead of φέγγουσα (thus also *Suda s.v.*, depending on the sch.). Note, further, the variant φλεγυρα· ενθερμος in *P.Oxy.* VI 856,78, republished in *Schol. Ar. Acharn.* p. ix (Wilson).

<sup>17</sup> "Even as from the oaken coals / the spark files up when roused / by a fair wind from the fan, / what time the sprats / are lying by, / while some do stir / the Thasian pickle with its gleaming circlet, / and others knead the dough: / even so come thou, with a lusty song, a rigorous song, a country song, / to me thy fellow-demesman." (transl. A. H. Sommerstein, *The Comedies of Aristophanes*, vol. I, Warminster 1980). For the passage, see S. Douglas Olson, *Aristophanes: Acharnians*, Oxford 2002, 243–5.

of fire", then with ἔντονος "intense, vehement" (also 674, a plausible emendation for εὔτονον), and finally with the lively image of the cooking fire (667–9). If taken to mean "ardent" and "vehement" (and not just λαμπρά "bright", "brilliant", etc.), the adjective φλεγυρά also aptly fits the tone of the chorus' anxious complaint about the ruinous civic and political situation in Athens as well as the uncertain destiny of veteran citizens.

Summing up, the rare verb φλεγυῶν seems to have been used of "fiery" behaviour manifesting itself in a wide range of verbal or physical actions, and its semantic field may be compared to that of φλεγυρός. In some cases, the verb had clearly negative connotations, as is suggested by its equation to ὑβρίζειν. Because of the ancient tradition of casting the Phlegyans as stock villains, this use was held to be a Phocian feature, or indeed a local peculiarity. However, it would hardly have been surprising to encounter godless, brutal and insolent φλεγυῶντες in other parts of the Greek world as well.

#### **Appendix: μόρφνος φλεγύας (Hes. Sc. 134)**

Following the above considerations, it may be useful to offer a brief note on a passage in the early sixth-century pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield*, describing in detail the wondrous armour of Heracles. According to the poet, the hero's arrows (οἰστοί) had been manufactured as follows (Hes. Sc. 132–4):

πρόσθεν μὲν θάνατόν τ' εἶχον καὶ δάκρυσι μῦρον,  
μέσσοι δὲ ξεστοὶ περιμήκεες, αὐτὰρ ὄπισθε  
μόρφνοιο φλεγύαο καλυπτόμενοι πτερύγεσσιν.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the back of the arrows was furnished with feathers of a bird styled as μόρφνος φλεγύας. The identity and appearance of this bird has caused perplexity since ancient times. What seems clear is that μόρφνος refers to an eagle, as in Hom. *Il.* 24,315–6: αὐτίκα δ' αἰετὸν ἦκε, τελειότατον πετεηνῶν, / μόρφνον θηρητῆρ', ὃν καὶ περκνὸν καλέουσι (of the messenger eagle sent down by Zeus to King Priam). Here the bird is further called περκνός "dusky, dark-coloured, spotted", a term interpreted as a noun (πέρκνος) by Aristarchus

<sup>18</sup> "For in front they held death and trickled with tears, in the middle they were smooth, very long, and in back they were covered with the feathers of a fiery red eagle" (transl. G. W. Most, Loeb 2007). Date and authorship (a Theban or pro-Theban poet?): R. Janko, "The *Shield of Heracles* and the Legend of Cycnus", *CQ* 36 (1986) 38–47.

and Herodian, just as they regarded *μόρφνος* as a substantive.<sup>19</sup> This latter word, originally an adjective, probably also suggests a "dark" colour (Suda *s.v.* μορφνόν·σκοτεινόν;<sup>20</sup> cf. Hom. *Il.* 21,252: αἰετοῦ ... μέλανος), though one may note that the eagle of the Priam episode, which, according to Aristotle, is called not only *πλάγγος* but also "duck-killer" and *μορφνός* (*sic*), is distinguished by him from the one called (by its colouring) *μελανάετος* and "hare-killer".<sup>21</sup> It is hard not to associate *μόρφνος* / *μορφνός* with the rhyming *ὀρφνός* "dark, dusky, murk", and thus the interesting possibility exists that we are dealing with the amalgamation of *μόρυχος* "dark, obscure" and *ὀρφνός*.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, if the original sense of *περκνός* was "dappled", "spotted" or "with dark patches", this term being frequently used of animals (birds, fishes, etc.),<sup>23</sup> it may be relevant to observe that *ὀρφνός* (and *ὀρφν-*) probably does not only mean "plain dark", but can also indicate a mix of dark colour tones, as observable, e.g., in twilight and nighttime conditions (*ὀρφναῖος* and *ὄρφη* were used especially of the dusk of evening and of the darkness of night). "Dappled darkness" might perhaps be further suggested by the derivative *ὀρφνινόν* (*χρῶμα*) in Pl. *Tim.* 68 c, meaning some sort of dark violet colour, a mix of black, red and white.<sup>24</sup> Whatever the etymology of *μόρφνος* may be, it is generally agreed that the word suggests "dark" and that

<sup>19</sup> *Schol. Hom. Il.* 24,316a1 (*GG* III,1, p. 173). Cf. N. Richardson, *The Iliad. A Commentary*, vol. VI: Books 21–24, Cambridge 1993, 305–6, and especially A. Rengakos, "Lykophron als Homererklärer", *ZPE* 102 (1994) 126, who points out (n. 72) that *περκνός* was possibly treated as a noun also in Lyc. *Alex.* 260. Accentuation of *μόρφνος*: P. Probert, *Ancient Greek Accentuation. Synchronic Patterns, Frequency Effects, and Prehistory*, Oxford 2006, 356, 362–3.

<sup>20</sup> In Hsch. *s.v.* μοριφόν·σκοτεινόν·μέλαν, the entry perhaps has to be emended to μορφνόν.

<sup>21</sup> Arist. *HA* 618 b 23–7. Suda *s.v.* explains *μορφνός* (*sic*) as a scavenger bird, apparently a vulture, feeding solely on carcasses: μόνοι γὰρ οὗτοι τῶν ἀετῶν οὐ κυνηγοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ νεκροῖς σώμασι τρέφονται.

<sup>22</sup> *Pace* Chantraine (n. 4), 714: "Le fait que le mot rime avec *ὀρφνός* "sombre" n'explique rien", but cf. A. J. Van Windekens, *Dictionnaire étymologique complémentaire de la langue grecque*, Leuven 1986, 158, referring to *μόρυχος* (an epithet of Dionysus in Sicily as well as a personal name) and the comparative *μορυχώτερον* "more obscurely" (*v.l.* in Arist. *Metaph.* 987 a 10).

<sup>23</sup> Evidence in Beekes (n. 4), 1178. Cf. also Hsch. *περκνόν* [with a different full grade]·ποικιλόχροον ἔλαφον.

<sup>24</sup> "Dunkelpurpur", according to H. Dürbeck, *Zur Charakteristik der griechischen Farbenbezeichnungen*, Bonn 1977, 54 (p. 131: "dunkelviolet, fast schwarz"). *LSJ*: "brownish grey". Darkish clothes are sometimes defined as *ὀρφνινά* (e.g., *ἱμάτια*).

it was used especially in reference to the eagle, being also found, it seems, as an independent noun.

If the eagle of the ps.-Hesiodic passage is "darkish" in some respect (with dark spotted plumage?),<sup>25</sup> how, then, should the term φλεγύας be explained? This seems to be an adjective, though there is no unanimity on this issue either.<sup>26</sup> However, as the word is derived from φλέγω, there is a strong consensus that it refers to the bird's colouring ("fiery red, red-brown", "brun-rouge", "rot-braun", "rosso-fuoco", etc.), and this is how it has been explained since antiquity (Hsch. s.v. φλεγύας· ἀετὸς ξανθός, ὀξύς; Etym. Magn. s.v. φλεγύας: Ἔστιν ἀετὸς, ἀπὸ τοῦ φλέγειν καὶ λαμπρὸς εἶναι; similarly *Schol. Hes. Sc.* [Ioh. Ped.]). The compatibility of the eagle's darkness with its fiery red and dazzling (cf. ὀξύς in Hsch.) brightness suggested by φλεγύας may not be a problem, since perhaps μόρφονος generically indicates the darkish appearance of the bird without reference to any specific colour (cf. also n. 25), and on the other hand, if φλεγύας means "red-brown", it does not denote a particularly bright colour, being closer to "tawny".

However, even if the word φλεγύας might describe the eagle's colour, my impression is that it may have another (or additional?) meaning in Hes. *Sc.* 134. When eagles, hawks and similar birds appear in high poetry (similes or elsewhere), as they often do from Homer onwards, their colouring is usually a neutral issue not described in detail. The poets were much more interested in their lofty and wheeling flight and fast plunges, sometimes in their sharp sight or hooked beak. Homer once calls the eagle αἴθων "burning, fiery" (*Il.* 15,690), but even if this epithet usually means "tawny" in reference to animals (bulls, lions, oxen, horses etc.), here the eagle is not "fiery red", but simply, by way of simile, "fiery":

<sup>25</sup> Unless the "darkness" means that a wheeling eagle appears as dark or even black (Hom. *Il.* 21,252: μέλας) to those who look at it against the bright sky, cf. E. Handschur, *Die Farb- und Glanzwörter bei Homer und Hesiod, in den homerischen Hymnen und in den Fragmenten des epischen Kyklos*, Wien 1970, 199; Dürbeck (n. 24), 151.

<sup>26</sup> D'Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, London – Oxford 1936, 304: "a name or epithet of μόρφονος", referring to the possibility of the "lightning bird", perhaps in turn suggesting the *incendiaria avis* of Plin. *nat.* 10,36. However, Thompson rightly adds that "the whole matter is highly dubious and obscure." C. F. Russo, *Hesiodi Scutum*, Firenze 1950, 105 held φλ. as the name of an eagle species ("dal colore rosso fuoco"), similarly Handschur (n. 25), 198 (and cf. Suda s.v. φλεγύας. ὁ ἀετὸς; Ps.Zonar. *lex.* s.v. φλεγίας [sic]. ὄνομα ἀετοῦ). Regarding φλέξις, an isolated bird name in Ar. *Av.* 883 (-ιδι), all we can say is that it is derived from φλεγ-, cf. N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes. Birds*, Oxford 1995, 515: "It may or may not be connected with a bird-name φλεγύας (~ φλέγω, blaze, hence fiery-coloured?), glossed as ἀετὸς in ancient lexica."

Hector is about to bring fire to the Greek ships, just as the fiery eagle brings death to fowl.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, it seems that φλεγύας primarily associates with the eagle's ardent and fiery temper, its swiftness, and its superiority in strength. Such features would be well matched by the deadly arrows of Heracles. Covered in back with the feathers of a fiery μόρφνος, they project from the hero's bow, striking the enemy like an eagle swooping towards its prey. The colour of the feathers would probably have been an issue of minor significance.

Even though, according to the *Shield*, Heracles eventually did not use his bow to kill his opponent Cynus, but with a long spear struck him in the neck beneath the chin, the "eagle's arrows" were surely a tremendous weapon. Their fatal, or even tragic, power interestingly appears in one of Aesop's *Fables*, telling about an eagle lethally shot by a shaft covered with his own feathers (τὸ βέλος ἰδὼν ἐπτερωμένον τοῖς οἰκείοις πτεροῖς):

An archer aimed at an eagle and let loose an arrow. The eagle was struck and as he turned and looked at the shaft which was tipped with his own feathers, he said, "Many are betrayed by the very things that they themselves have wrought."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Hom. *Il.* 15,690–4: ἀλλ' ὡς τ' ὀρνίθων πετεηνῶν αἰετὸς αἶθων / ἔθνος ἐφορμᾶται ποταμὸν πάρα βοσκομενάων / χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἢ κύκνων δουλιχοδείρων, / ὡς Ἴκτωρ ἴθυσε νεὸς κυανοπρόροιο / ἀντίος ἀΐξας, cf. Janko (n. 15), 303–4.

<sup>28</sup> Transl. L. Gibbs, *Aesop's Fables*, Oxford 2002, n. 43 (according to Aphthon. 32 = ed. Perry 276). The same motif, defined as a "Libyan tale", occurs in Achilles' speech in Aesch. *Myrm.* fr. 139 (*TGF*): ὦδ' ἐστὶ μύθων τῶν Λιβυστικῶν κλέος, / πληγέντ' ἀπράκτω τοξικῶ τὸν αἰετὸν / εἰπεῖν ἰδόντα μηχανὴν πτερώματος. / "Τάδ' οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς / ἀλισκόμεσθα": by having lent Patroclus his armour and sending him out to his fatal fight against Hector, Achilles is like an eagle which, noticing that it has been struck by a shaft fitted with its own feathers, has caused its own disaster. The eagle's words (without the verb) were quoted by Ar. *Av.* 808.