

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. XIV

HELSINKI 1980 HELSINGFORS

I N D E X

Paavo Castrén	I Cornelii Mamullae: Storia di una famiglia.....	5
Siegfried Jäkel	Φόβος, σέβας und αἰδώς in den Dramen des Euripides.....	15
Saara Lilja	The Ape in Ancient Comedy.....	31
Bengt Löfstedt	Zum dänischen Mittellatein.....	39
Martti Nyman	A Pre-marine Vestige of θάλασσα: An Etymological Proposal.....	51
Tuomo Pekkanen	Exegetical Notes on the Latin Sources of Northern Europe.....	79
Heikki Solin	Analecta epigraphica LXI - LXVI.....	91
Holger Thesleff	Notes on <i>unio mystica</i> in Plotinus.....	101
Rolf Westman	Zur Apotheose des Daphnis bei Vergil..	115
Toivo Viljamaa	'Nominal' Difference: Plato, Cratylus 398 d	127
De novis libris iudicia		131

' N O M I N A L ' D I F F E R E N C E :
P L A T O , C R A T Y L U S 3 9 8 d

T o i v o V i l j a m a a

Ἐὰν οὖν σκοπῆς καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν Ἀττικὴν τὴν παλαιὰν φωνήν, μᾶλλον εἴσει· δηλώσει γὰρ σοι ὅτι παρὰ τὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος ὄνομα, ὅθεν γεγόνασιν οἱ ἥρωες, σμικρὸν παρηγμένον ἐστὶν ὀνόματος χάριν (Plato, Crat. 398 d).

"Think of the word in the old Attic, and you will see better that the name *heros* is only a slight nominal alteration of *Eros*, from whom the heroes sprang."

The above quoted passage of Plato's Cratylus contains a problem which still continues to trouble students of Plato's works: is the surviving text-form corrupted or is the phrase ὀνόματος χάριν authentic? To be sure, many editors of Plato accept the preserved text paying no special attention to it. Others, however, think that the phrase does not make any sense here (Burnet, for instance, with the *crux critica*) and therefore the MS reading cannot be correct. The following conjectures among others have been proposed: στόματος χάριν (Peipers), ἀνίγματος χάριν (K.F. Hermann); or some think that the phrase must be secluded as an interpolation (Wohlrab).

Lastly A.R. Dyck, Glotta 56 (1978) 70-72, discusses the problem. He briefly presents different earlier proposals and then makes his own conjecture: instead of ὀνόματος χάριν we should read ἀνομοιότητος χάριν (meaning 'for the sake of distinction'). The proposal is interesting and the suggested text-form is palaeographically possible. In addition, the words like ὁμοιότης and ἀνομοιότης, as shown by Dyck, belong to the Platonic lexicon.

In my opinion, however, these conjectures and particularly the one made by Dyck create certain suspicion, because they impose too great demands on the exactness of the Platonic diction. It is reasonable to ask whether Plato is so exact in his diction as modern scholars often are inclined to suppose. We must remember that Plato, in fact, makes fun of Sophistic etymologies.¹

There are two possibilities to make definitions of words: (1) to handle them on the level of expression comparing, for instance, words with one another, or (2) to handle them on the level of the content comparing words with the reality which they reflect. I think that the second possibility is true of Plato's exposition.² He is more interested in the truth and reality than in superficial variations of words. Therefore we ought not to take too seriously occasional phrases in his text and to search for exact meaning distinctions in individual words.

In the opinion of Dyck Plato's purpose is to say that a slight change ("in breathing and in inflection") serves for avoidance of ambiguity so that the words ἦρωϛ and ἔρωϛ will not be homonymous. Although this practice belongs to ancient grammatical tradition, there is no evidence of that Plato wants to treat homonymy in Cratylus. And secondly, many etymologies in this dialogue show that he does not pay any attention to inflection of words.

Because Plato makes Socrates refer to the old Attic writing system, the difference between the two words must be ΗΕΡΟΣ versus ΕΡΟΣ. Thus the name of the heroes (ἦρωϛ) is derived from the name of the love (ἔρωϛ) by addition of one letter. The change is slight and insignificant in Plato's opinion. If we assume that in Cratylus Plato is not very exact in his use of terms (for instance, in his use of the word ὄνομα), we can conclude that he holds the difference between ἦρωϛ and ἔρωϛ to be only 'nominal' (ὀνόματος χάριν), i.e. the

1 On the mixture of serious and joke in the etymologies of Cratylus, K. Gaiser, *Name und Sache in Platons 'Kratylos'*, Heidelberg 1974, 45-53.

2 Cf. M. Lezy, *Platon als Sprachphilosoph*, Paderborn 1919, 27-53.

difference belongs to the world of words or to the level of expression and therefore it is only a formal and no real difference. Of course, this conclusion which sustains the MS reading presupposes a study of the use of the word ὄνομα in the whole dialogue and on the other hand it assumes that the χάριν-construction can have such a weakened meaning.

My interpretation of the passage is based on the assumption that in Cratylus Plato's main concern is to make a distinction between the 'nominal' and 'real' world. He is not interested in grammatical things like inflection, and he is not interested in superficial ambiguity or homonymy. He is not deriving words from words but he derives names of things from the characteristics of the things which the words denote. This fact can be seen, for instance, in 397 c, where the name of the gods (θεοί) is derived from the nature of running (ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ θεῖν), or in 398 b, in which the name of the daemons (δαίμονες) is derived from their character of being prudent or wise (δαήμονες).

A χάριν-phrase can be (1) final, (2) causal, or (3) modal.³ The meanings (1) and (2) often are complementary and whichever can be selected according to the emphasis or the thematic perspective intended by the speaker. Because the phrase ἁνομοιότητος χάριν proposed by Dyck implies the thematic perspective 'aiming at unambiguity', the conjecture seems to be unappropriate since it contains a theme which is not typical in Cratylus. Therefore it might be easier to understand in this passage the perspective (2) and to propose a conjecture like ὁμοιότητος χάριν because Socrates, in fact, answers the question why the words differ slightly from each other. But also the causal perspective is insignificant for Plato. In all, 'cause' or 'purpose' are not essential themes in Plato's dialogue. When comparing words with one another, i.e. when making distinctions on the level of expression, he rather wants to say what kind of changes have taken place and in what way the derivation of a word is carried

³ See E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik*, München 1950, II 551-552 and J. Humbert, *Syntaxe Grecque*, Paris 1960, 264.

out: Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τὸ τοιόνδε δεῖ ἐννοῆσαι περὶ ὀνομάτων, ὅτι πολλάκις ἐπεμβάλλομεν γράμματα, τὰ δ' ἐξαιροῦμεν, παρ' ὃ βουλόμεθα ὀνομάζοντες, καὶ τὰς ὀξύτητας μεταβάλλομεν (Crat. 399 a).

Plato actually belittle the significance of the outside form of words (cf. Plato, leg. 644 a 'Ἡμεῖς δὴ μηδὲν ὀνόματι διαφερώμεθ' αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' ὃ νυνδὴ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁμολογηθεὶς μενέτω "But we, instead of disputing about a word, let us keep the definition of which we just were in agreement".).⁴ Therefore it is natural that the phrase ὀνόματος χάριν in Cratylus 398 d cannot be emphatic but it is only an adverbial adjunct which slightly modifies the meaning of the preceding verb παρηγμένον 'altered', 'changed'.

⁴ Compare Hesiod. erga 709 γλώσσης χάριν.