SOME GREEK TERMS IN HOMER SUGGESTING NON-COMPETITIVE ATTITUDES

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The words I am intending to consider are *aganos*, friendly, kindly, *meilichos*, friendly, mild, *kēdos*, care or trouble, and *pistos*, faithful. These words imply the adoption of an essentially non-hostile or non-competitive attitude. Thus, in Homeric society, which is dominated by *areté*-standards, where the emphasis is on success and terms of real approval belong to success, these words stand out. They are among the antecedents of more socially-orientated values.

My intentions in the article are twofold: firstly, to examine *aganos* and *meilichos* in terms of the distinction between descriptive and analytic aspects in the use of language and, secondly, to analyse the basic meaning of all the selected words. *Aganos* is traced back to the root *gau*, *gaw*, into which a nasal may be inserted. *Aganos* is this root with the nasal-infix and *a*-prefix that intensifies. The Greek derivatives of the root (e.g. *ganumai, ganos, gētheo*) show, interestingly enough, two parallel semantic developments involving concepts of physical brightness and joy. It seems probable that joy was seen as something which 'lit up' the person who experienced it, so that he seemed 'brighter' to look at. The basic concept behind the word *aganos* seems to be that of 'bringing joy' or 'bringing pleasure'. The English translations 'gentle, friendly, kindly' may or may not be valid, but this is not the aspect which is emphasized. In the early stages of the development of a language the vocabulary is descriptive rather than analytic. It is focused on externals, on appearances rather than on internal motivations. It seems to me, therefore, important that when treating early literature in any language we should try to explain vocabulary in descriptive terms and should only presume the intrusion of an analytic term when all descriptive explanations have failed us. We should thus, in my view, presume that Homeric Greek, as Adkins says, does not analyse motives behind actions; it describes them in terms of their effect or result. A man, for example, who is *aganos* may well have been friendly: but what Homer speaks of is the way the others are affected by his *aganophrosúne*: he describes the visible effect of it.

*Aganos* does occur as an epithet of men, but more often it is used of things, most frequently of arrows or words.

One recurrent usage is that when men or women die in a peace-time context, they are said to be killed, by Apollo in the case of men (*Od. 3.280*) and by Artemis in the case of women (*Od. 5.124; 11.199*), with *aganois* darts. The death is a swift one as opposed to death by hunger or a long wasting disease. Odysseus asks his mother in the underworld:

"What fate of grievous death overthrew you? Was it a long-lasting disease or did Artemis, rejoicing in arrows, come upon you and slay you with her *aganois* darts?"

*Od. 11.171–3*
The swineherd describes to Odysseus the wonderful island of Syrië. There, he says,

"Hunger never comes upon the people, nor does any other hateful disease come upon wretched mortals. But whenever in the city the race of men grows old, Apollo of the silver bow arrives with Artemis and, coming upon them with their aganois darts, they slay them."

*Od. 15.407-11*

Death by hunger or disease is hateful, and the men who suffer it are wretched. By contrast, the men and women who grow to old age and then die swiftly by the aganois arrows of Apollo or Artemis must be happy. Old age with its sapping of youthful strength worried the Greeks and distressed them. But in Homer, a graceful old age, with retention of all faculties except that of youthful physical strength, is invested with a great dignity, as we can see in Homer’s handling of Nestor and Priam. A wasting disease would be felt as a great indignity, and this feeling would be intensified by the constant Homeric emphasis on the maintenance of aretē. In contrast, then, to a death on the battlefield or lingering disease, both of which, in a sense, reflected upon one’s aretē, a swift death with no preceding diminution of powers would be a pleasant one.

Words or speech are frequently referred to as aganos. Hera suggests to Athene in Book 2 of the *Iliad* that she should go down and persuade the Greeks not to run away from Troy. She says,

"But go now among the army of the Achaians with their brazen tunics; with your aganois words restrain each man and do not allow them to drag down the curved ships to the sea."

*I. 2.163-5*

These words are repeated when Athene deputes the task to Odysseus (lines 179-81).

In this case, Odysseus in fact carries out Athene’s instructions only when addressing the leaders of troops (line 189). By contrast,

"Of the ordinary people, whatever man he saw and found shouting, him he would strike with his staff and berate with words."

*I. 2.198-9*

The agathos need not worry about offending men of a lower rank who have not the power to avenge themselves. Equally, he is eager to retain the goodwill of his fellow agathoi whose support he needs. Odysseus, therefore, may act the blustering, loud-voiced bully with the rank and file, but to the leaders his words must be pleasant.

It seems fairly certain that in this context there is an intention to please, a deliberate choice of words that ‘bring pleasure’. But this does not prove beyond doubt that the word aganos itself is anything other than descriptive. Odysseus is urged to use words which are observed to ‘bring pleasure’ because of the joy or pleasure that lights up the face of the hearer. Thus, although aganos here implies intention to give pleasure, the word aganos itself remains purely descriptive.

Nestor says to Agamemnon that they should consider how to win over
Achilles from his anger:

“But even now let us consider how, giving satisfaction to him, we may persuade him with 
aganoisin gifts and meilichioisin, soft, words.”

Il. 9.111–3

It is clear that aganos works in a co-operative, non-competitive sphere. Therefore, as would be expected, it operates between men of more or less equal status or in interactions with superiors. Achilles is to be won over by persuasion, gifts such as bring him joy and meilichia words. These methods would be considered only in a context where a man was too powerful to be compelled to do what one wished or where his goodwill was important. In such a case, it is essential not to do or say anything which may rouse his opposition or set in operation his competitive instincts. It is in this sphere that aganos operates.

Helen, mourning the death of Hektor in Book 24 of the Iliad, says,

“But I never heard from you a kakon or hasty word; but if any other man within the palace reproached me . . . you, persuading him with words, restrained him, both by your aganophrosune and your aganois words.”

Il. 24.767–8; 771–2

In contrast with a kakon word, a word such as brings trouble, or the verbal reproaches uttered by others, Hektor’s conduct is directed to defending her from such rebukes. He is aganophron; his phrenes, his heart or emotional impulses, tend to produce what gives joy to others, and his words have the same effect. He tried to make Helen’s stay in Troy as tolerable as possible, though he, since the burden of the fighting fell on him, might logically have been expected to be the most bitter of the Trojans towards her.

When Tros faces Achilles’ charge, he goes to meet him and beg for mercy, hoping that Achilles would feel a friendly impulse towards one of his own age. Homer comments:

“The fool, nor did he realise that he was not likely to persuade him; for he was not at all a man who was glukuthumos or aganophron, but greatly in the grip of eager passion.”

Il. 20.466–8

Achilles is possessed by a raging battle fury. In such a state, a man is incapable of responding to co-operative urges. He is not open to persuasion. His thumos, the seat of passion, is, presumably, pikros, bitter; it is not experienced as something attractive and sweet, glukus. And his phrenes, emotional impulses, are not in a state to bring joy to others. He is unrelentingly hostile and threatening.

An instance does occur of aganos as an adjective describing a person, rather than one feature of a person. Athene reproaches Zeus and the other gods for their neglect of Odysseus. Why, she says, should anyone bother to rule well, when the gods do not reward him for so doing?

“Let no sceptre-bearing king any longer be keen to be aganos and gentle, nor knowing what is right and proper in his phrenes, but let him always be hard to bear and do unseemly things.”

Od. 5.7–10
Here the man who is *aganos* is contrasted with one who is harsh or hard to bear. *Aganos* implies that he ruled in a way that brought joy to those whom he ruled. In this instance *aganophrosynē* would be shown to an inferior. It is therefore interesting to note that Athene advises against it since it does not bring sufficient reward or sufficiently promote self-interest.

*Aganos* thus clearly operates in the sphere of co-operation. Amidst the tensions of competitive living, to have someone acting non-competitively was clearly experienced as something joyful and therefore a word such as *aganos*, which, as we have seen, has a root-connection with the sensation of joy, is used to describe such acts, or even, rarely, the person who performs them. As we have seen, an intention to please seems clearly implied in many of the cases cited. But nowhere can the transition from descriptive to analytic be shown to have taken place. Words, prayers, gifts are described as joy-bringing, bringing pleasure because this is the effect they have been seen to have and are therefore anticipated to have. The word says nothing of the feeling of the agent but describes the effect on the recipient.

It was seen at *Iliad* 9.111–3 that Achilles was to be won over to goodwill also with *meilichiois*in words.

The word *meilichos* or *meilichios* is rendered as “freundlich, liebreich; mitis, comis, lenis, mollis, placidus”.

The basic reference in *meilichos* is to a quality that could be described as ‘softness’. Like *aganos*, it is used frequently of words or speech. Achilles’ horses, mourning the death of Patroklos, refuse to budge an inch, though Automedon whips them

“and addressed them often with *meilichioisi*words, often with threatening language.”

*Meilichia* are contrasted with an essentially aggressive and competitive use of threats.

*Iliad* 12 has another contrast:

“They reproached one man with *meilichiois*, another with hard words.”

The contrast here brings out the softness of *meilichios* through the juxtaposition with ‘hard’. *Meilichie*, then, is in contrast with threatening abuse and with harshness, both of which are reactions of aggression.

In trying to deter someone from an act of harshness or one that will bring danger, men use *meilichia* words. By these means, for instance, Odysseus’ companions try to dissuade him from killing Eurylochos who opposes the suggested visit to Kirke’s palace (*Od.* 10.442) and from provoking Polyphemos while they are desperately rowing out of his reach (*Od.* 9.493). When begging for mercy in battle, men use *meilichia* words. Peisander and Hippolochos make such a plea to Agamemnon, and Homer says,

“Thus the two men, weeping, addressed the king with *meilichiois* words; but they heard an *ameilikton*, unsoftened, reply.”
As opposed to *agana* words, which bring joy in the non-hostile context, *meilichia* are used in a context where the speaker feels directly or indirectly threatened. They are intended to appease in order to avert the threat. They are ‘soft’ words. In this case, Agamemnon refuses to yield and thus he replies in an *ameilikton*, harsh or rough, speech. *Meilichia* words would be softly or quietly spoken, as opposed to the roughness or even the loudness of aggressive speech. Their intention is clearly appeasement; but *meilichia* offers a description of the words used, not an analysis of intent.

*Meilichia* occur, too, when hostility may be anticipated rather than actual. When Odysseus lands on Phaëtkía, he debates whether to approach Nausikaa with *meilikhos* words, keeping his distance, or actually to touch her knees as a suppliant. He has been cast away and has no resources to protect himself. He is, therefore, totally dependent on her for support. If she were frightened by his actually touching her, she would be likely to react with defensive aggression. Thus, in order to avert this threat to his security, Odysseus

“immediately made a *meilikion* and *kerdaleon*, crafty, speech: ‘touch your knees, lady...’”

*Od. 6. 148-9*

His words are soft or quiet, in order to turn away potential hostility and thus to bring advantage (*kerdos*) to himself (cf. also *Od. 9.363*). Clearly, then, the softness of *meilikía* can be directed to the disarming of hostility or suspicion in pursuit of one’s own advantage or gain. Penelope uses it in the same way to induce the suitors to offer gifts in order to win her favour, although she has no intention of marrying any of them. Odysseus is delighted,

“because she extorted gifts from them and charmed their *thumos*, heart, with *meilikhos* words...”

*Od. 18.282-3*

Homer has already described the effect of Penelope’s beauty in weakening the suitors’ critical faculties. Now she adds the effect of *meilikía* of speech, and by these means she exercises an irresistible charm over their *thumos*, the seat of emotional impulses, and draws gifts out of them. before entering upon hostilities, Diomedes realises from Glaukos’ words that their families are related by *xenia*, guest-friendship. He, therefore, sticks his spear in the ground and addresses Glaukos with *meilikhos* words (*II. 6.214*), the act and words designed to remove the hostile content from the situation.

In these cases then, and in four others, *meilichia* words are intended to disarm potential or actual hostility. We can clearly see the intentions of the person using the words, but *meilichia* itself remains purely descriptive.

*Meilichia* words may be used also between *philoi*, men on the same side, and, in these cases, the softness may, it seems, be intended to bring pleasure. Competitiveness can operate even between *philoi*, as Agamemnon shows in *Iliad* 1 in his attitude to Achilles. Addressing a *philos* in *meilikhos* words would imply adopting a non-competitive attitude, and by reassurance would cause a relaxed feeling in the relationship. As opposed to the tension of opposition, *meilikhos* involves the relaxation and pleasure of a non-competitive attitude,
and this lack of tension is explained as softness.

Agamemnon, reviewing the troops before battle, sees Idomeneus preparing for the fight and in delight he addressed him with *meilichioisin* (*Il.* 4.256), telling him he will give him great *timē*, honour, for this. When Diomedes and Odysseus get back from their spying expedition, the Greeks in joy greet them with *meilichioisi* words (*Il.* 10.541–2) and these words express wonder at the splendour of the booty they have taken. We note that joy, delight and *meilichia* quite frequently go together (cf. also *Od.* 10.173 and 181; *Od.* 8.171–2).

It has already been seen that the basic concept behind *meilichos* is one of softness. Yet the contrast between tension, which is inextricably bound up with the competitive attitude, and relaxation, which would be present in a non-competitive acceptance of people, could be felt as a contrast between hardness and softness. The very physical feel of the body of a man in each of these attitudes would lead to this distinction. And this relaxation must have been felt as something pleasant, as bringing joy.  

Hektor goes to Paris’ house to get him back into battle. Helen meets him at the door and announces that she wishes she had died at birth, rather than that she should bring this trouble on the Trojans. These words again are described as *meilichia* (*Il.* 6.343). They are not, by any means, ‘gentle’ or ‘friendly’ words, but are designed, through self-blame, to disarm the hostility which Hektor may be expected to feel towards herself and Paris for being the cause of the war and yet leaving the fighting to him. We note that the contrast between the dominant competitive attitude and the relaxation of non-competition is so primary as to override other possible contrasts. Helen’s non-competitiveness (*meilichie*) is the most important feature of her words in the Homeric context.

*Meilichos* is also used by Homer as an epithet of people. Hektor and Patroklos are the two who are thus characterised.

Briseis calls Patroklos “always *meilichos*”, after she has related how he comforted her on the death of her husband and brothers and her own enslavement (*Il.* 19.300), and Menelaus, summoning the Greeks to help him protect Patroklos’ body from the Trojans, describes him in these words:

“For he knew how to be *meilichos* to everyone, while he was alive.”

*Il.* 17.671–2

Menelaus gives no details of Patroklos’ *meilichie*, but Briseis’ reasons show that he has been pleasant to her, even though, since she is a prisoner of war, there is no necessity for him to be so.

The only other instance of *meilichos* as an epithet describing a man comes when Andromache, after the death of Hektor, says to their son Astyanax,

“For your father was not *meilichos* in grievous battle.”

*Il.* 24.739

By contrast to his behaviour in the domestic situation where we have seen him to be loving and considerate, in battle Hektor is not *meilichos*. He is hard and hostile. This is only to be expected. It is the only way to fight battles. Aias says to the other Greeks,

“Therefore our safety lies in the (strength of) our hands, not in *meilichie* of war.”

*Il.* 15.741
To save themselves they must fight and not indulge in relaxing (meilichie) in the battle. In such a situation, the hardness of tension is essential, and meilichos with its connotations of softness and pleasure is out of place.

It is, therefore, quite obvious from the usage of meilichos in Homer that this word works in the co-operative sphere. It reflects the pleasure and relaxation that the agathos may experience when he can abandon for a while the competitive maintenance of his aretē.

The third word we are going to examine is kēdos. It is vital to remember that if the ancient Greeks used a single word to cover several English ‘meanings’, there must be a single underlying concept which is the real ‘meaning’ of the Greek word.

Kēdos is given as “Sorge, Trauer: Leichenbestattung; Familiengefühl”, “soin, sollicitude, souci, pl. funérailles; sentiment de famille”,13 Kēdos is related to Oscan cadeīs “inimicitiae, malevolentiae”, Middle Irish caiss, Welsh cas, Breton cas, Gothic gatis et cetera, all with the meaning “hatred” and several derivatives (e.g. Middle Breton cuez) meaning “grief”. In its derivatives we can see that kēdos is a very negative feeling. We are interested to see why in Greek kēdos should be used in such different senses as, on the one hand, “troubles”, “grievances” and “burials” and, on the other, “care”, “sollicitude” and “family feeling”. There must be some common element behind these divergent meanings that accounts for the use of one word for them all; it is this element we are seeking to identify.

Kēdos is experienced as a feeling of distress. Kēdea, troubles, are kakēs, not advantageous (II. 18.814), causing much grief (II. 1.445), grievous. (Od. 9.12), miserable (II. 5.15615), or dismal (Od. 15.399).

As would be expected, the distresses caused by war are prominent in the Iliad, and in the Odyssey the distresses of Odysseus’ toils and long separation from home.

Wounds cause kēdos and so do death and the stresses of war. When Hades is wounded, he feels kēdos in his heart (II. 5.400), and the same phrase is used when Odysseus is later injured in battle (II. 11.458). When Hera lends her support to the Greeks, “Kēdea, troubles, hang over the Trojans” (II. 2.15, 32 and 6916). The word kēdea is frequently used to describe Odysseus’ sufferings and struggles to get home in the Odyssey.17 Of course, each man has his own kēdea, his own troubles to endure.11 Kēdea are associated with pain, grief and weeping.19 Kēdos is an emotion, experienced in the seat of emotions, the thumos.20

When kēdea is followed by a genitive such as hetairōn, of his companions, this seems to be not a possessive genitive, but a genitive of cause or origin. These are the people from whom the kēdea derive. Agamemnon tells Nestor that he is wandering around unable to sleep or settle down,

“But the war and kēdea of (= from) the Achaians trouble me. For I am dreadfully afraid for the Danaans . . .” II. 10.92–3
His fear for his fellow Greeks is the source of his kēdea.21 Similarly, Odysseus agrees to tell his story to Alkinoos, including “kēdea of (=from) my companions who perished afterwards.”

Od. 11.382

These are not kēdea felt by the dead companions, but the kēdea which derive from the companions who have died. This is shown most clearly when Agelaos is urging the suitors to aim all their weapons at Odysseus:

“There will be no kēdos of (=from) the others, whenever this man has fallen.”

Od. 22.254

He would hardly say that Odysseus’ friends would experience no kēdos, trouble, if he fell; what he does say is that the suitors will experience no kēdos deriving from the others, if Odysseus is put out of the way.

How was kēdos felt? It seems that it was basically experienced as a sensation of failing, of deprivation and disaster, a sense that one’s resources, powers of strength are being drained from one.

The dying Sarpedon calls to Glaukos to assist him, but Glaukos cannot respond as he is wounded himself. He prays desperately to Apollo,

“You are able everywhere to listen to a man who is kēdomenos, as now kēdos has come upon men.”

Il. 16.515–6

He then goes on to explain his kēdos. He has a nasty wound and his hand is pierced with sharp pains; his blood will not stop flowing, and his shoulder feels weighted down. He cannot hold his sword nor fight against the enemy. A most noble man has died and he, Glaukos, cannot go to protect his body because of the wound. His aretē demands that he protect his friend’s body, but the strength to do so is sapped from him. He feels himself to be failing; he feels a sense of loss.

When Ajax has struck Hektor unconscious by hurling a stone at him, Apollo finds him when he has just recovered consciousness and says,

“Why are you sitting weakly apart from the others? Or has some kēdos come upon you?”

Il. 15.244–5

Hektor is still looking shaky: he has little strength. Yet, presumably, there is no visible wound. Apollo pretends not to know what has happened, and asks him if some “feeling of being drained of his strength” (kēdos) has come upon him.

It can be seen22 that the agathos felt that he possessed, as his own personal resources against a hostile world, not only his own body but also everything that was philos (dear, belonging) to him, including his family, possessions and friends. Any draining away of these, therefore, would equally be felt as a sapping of his own strength and powers, and thus personal wounds, personal sufferings and the deaths of his friends are all felt in the same way—as a reduction in that part of the world upon which he can rely and which he can use to maintain himself.

Kēdein is to cause such a feeling of deprivation or diminution of resources in someone else. Achilles says to Priam, about his father, Peleus,

“Nor now do I provide for him in his old age, since I sit very far away
from my country in Troy, κῆδον, bringing κῆδος, for you and your children.”

Instead of staying at home caring for, contributing to the resources of, his own father, he is far away from home doing exactly the opposite for another old man. He is draining away his resources, causing him to feel κῆδος, a sense of helplessness and loss. Perhaps this is why he spares Priam—because the thought of what he is doing to Priam causes him to fear that a similar situation may arise for Peleus.

When the Kyklops calls out to his friends in the pain of his blinded eye, “standing about the cave, they asked what κῆδοι, what was causing him κῆδος.”

They do not know that he is wounded; they know only that he called out for help, and they ask him what it is that is causing him to feel he needs help, what is taking away his own resources.33

In the Odyssey, Eurykleia tells Penelope the news of Odysseus’ return and reports, “He has killed the haughty suitors, who kept causing κῆδος to his house and who consumed his possessions and brought force to bear on his son.”

They had sapped away the resources of his household, by living on his possessions. They would also have caused him κῆδος by bullying his son. It is his duty to protect his son, and, just as Glaukos felt κῆδος at being unable to assist Sarpedon, so would Odysseus at the thought of his failure to protect his son. It reflects upon his aretē and therefore is felt as a draining away of a part of that aretē. The feeling of helplessness, where he ought to be self-sufficient, is enfeebling, draining him of self-respect. However, this is far too analytic an explanation for the time. Κῆδος merely describes his sensation without analysing its cause.

When Phoinix begs Achilles to accept Agamemnon’s offerings and to be reconciled, Achilles angrily replies, “Do not by grieving and mourning disturb my θυμος, heart, while bringing χαριν, pleasure, to the hero, the son of Atreus (Agamemnon). It is not at all necessary for you to ϕιλειν, treat him in a friendly manner, so that you may not be hateful to me ϕιλειντι, who am your friend. It is a good thing for you, together with me, to cause κῆδος to any man who causes κῆδος to me.

Agamemnon has drained away Achilles’ resources, both by taking Briseis, a part of his physical possessions, and by threatening his τιμη, honour, and thus making him feel weak in relation to society. Achilles, in return, brings κῆδος to Agamemnon by refusing to fight and thus causing him to fail at war. It is the duty of ϕιλοι, friends, to κεδειν, to cause κῆδος to, the same people, otherwise they would be acting against each other’s interests.34 It is certainly not in the interests of an αγαθος to drain the resources of a man who is ϕιλος, on his side, for upon him he depends to some extent for his own security. Κεδειν is in this respect the
direct opposite of *philein*.

The passive *kēdesthai* is to feel *kēdos*, to feel weakened or drained of one's powers. It is to be caused to feel *kēdos*. The wounded Glaukos described himself as *kēdomenos*, feeling *kēdos* (II. 16.516). Dione urges the wounded Aphrodite to endure, though *kēdomēnē*, feeling *kēdos*—presumably from her wound which is draining her of strength (II. 5.382). Again, the threat that causes the *kēdos* may be to a man's *aretē*, rather than purely physical. When Menelaus wishes to accept Hektor's challenge to a single combat, Agamemnon tells him it would be folly to accept and urges him to endure, though feeling *kēdos* (II. 7.110). Menelaus feels that his *aretē* is challenged and therefore feels *kēdos*. Similarly, Polydamas urges the Trojans to retreat before Achilles, though feeling *kēdos* (II. 18.273).

Divine beings may experience this, as well. Hera, though *kēdomēnē*, must accept the authority of Zeus and endure, says Hephaistos (II. 1.586).

It is interesting that the very same word that expresses the distress of failing can be used in a clearly co-operative sense. In this context, *kēdesthai* is frequently combined with *philein*, and sometimes also with *eleairein*, to pity. The combination with *philein* occurs with reference to the gods: they *philousi*, treat in a friendly manner, and *kedontai*, feel *kēdos* for, men. It is equivalent, then, to feeling a friendly impulse in favour of someone in misfortune (*eleairein*), and to acting in a co-operative manner towards someone (*philein*).

It amounts to taking upon oneself a *kēdos*, a feeling of being drained, in relation to a person or thing—"taking trouble over" someone, as we say. What is *philon* to an *agathos* is under his protection, he is responsible for it, absolutely in the case of his own person, his household and possessions, and relatively also in the case of his friends and associates. Thus, even in this relationship there is some strain involved, and therefore one's relatives are *kedeioi*, those who cause one to experience *kēdos* (cf. II. 19.294).

Relatives by marriage are also involved. One's brother-in-law or father-in-law becomes by marriage a close part of one's family, and therefore they are *kēdistoi* after those who are one's relations by blood, i.e. they, after one's family, cause one the greatest *kēdos* (Od. 8.581–3).

So Deiphobos appeals to Aineias to go to the aid of Alkathoos:

"Now it is indeed necessary for you to protect your brother-in-law if any *kēdos* comes upon you." II. 13.463–4

If Aineias accepts any *kēdos* for his brother-in-law, he will accept the strain implied in undertaking his defence in battle. The same phrase, we must remind ourselves, is used of a drain on Hektor's strength caused by a wound (II. 15.245), and so once again there is no personal emotive element in *kēdos* here; it is purely descriptive.

As one would expect, the possessions of an *agathos*, people and things, also may be the object of his *kēdos* (Od. 19.28; 22–3). Achilll says indignantly, in Book 9 of the *Iliad*,

"Or are the sons of Atreus the only ones among human beings who *phileousi*, care for, their wives? For any *agathos* and sensible man *phileei
and *kêdetai*, accepts *kêdos* for, his own woman, just as I *ek thumou*, eagerly, *phileon*, cared for, this woman, though she was a prisoner of war."

II. 9.340–3

Though she was captured in war, he had taken her as his own and given her the care this implied.

Similarly, Eumaios says of Odysseus,

“For he carefully looked after me and accepted *kêdos* for me in his *thumos.*”

*Od. 14.146*

The *agathos*, then, looks after his dependants by providing the necessities of life (*philein*) and taking on himself the strain of protecting them (*kêdesthai*). The dependant will then accept this strain also on behalf of his master. Eumaios accepts *kêdos* for the livelihood of Odysseus (*Od. 14.3–4*), and the maid, Eurynome, is described as *kêdomene*, accepting *kêdos* for her mistress, Penelope (*Od. 18.178*).

In irony, at one point, Telemachos says to Antinoos,

“Antinoos, you accept *kêdos* for me wonderfully, as if you were my father.”

*Od. 17.397*

Though uttered in irony, the words show that a father also *kêdetai*, accepts *kêdos* for, his son. Mothers also are *kêdomenei* on behalf of their children (*Od. 24.104*). The gods also accept *kêdos* on behalf of their protégés (II. 1.55–6).

The variety of situations in which *kêdos* applies, shows that there is, obviously, very little, if any, of the emotional content of personal relationship and involvement in *kêdos*. I do not say that a father, for example, *kêdetai* did not also love his children. It is simply that this is not included in the sense of *kêdos*.

*Philein* is used of a host looking after the needs of a guest, and *kêdesthai*, to accept *kêdos* for, is used in this sense also (cf. *Od. 14.460–1*). Friends may also cause this *kêdos*, draining of one’s resources. Aias, in the embassy to Achilles, says,

“We desire to be your *kêdestoi* and *philiatoi*, dearest friends, more than all the other Achaians.”

II. 9.641–2

They wish to be accepted as the people who cause him the most *kêdos*—his closest friends. They want him, in fact, to accept the *kêdos* of friendship and therefore to enter the battle again for them (cf. also II. 11.664–5).

Of course, one *kêdetai* only on behalf of a *philos*, someone favourably disposed. Adrestos begs Menelaus to spare his life, and hold him for ransom. Menelaus is about to agree, when Agamemnon remonstrates,

“Why do you thus accept *kêdos* for men? Or were you excellently treated by the Trojans in your home?”

II. 6.55–7

Paris, while Menelaus’ guest, had carried off his wife. Since Menelaus has not received any benefit from the Trojans, he should not accept *kêdos* for this Trojan, but should simply dispose of him without any further ado.

When the gods accept this strain on behalf of a man, they take steps to help him. *Kêdomenei*, accepting *kêdos*, the gods close up the ugly wounds on Hektor’s
body, making it better to look at (II. 24.420–3; 750). Because Zeus kēdeiμί for Agamemnon, he sends him a dream to give him advice (II. 2.27). If a god kēdetai a man, he may give him power and kudos (II. 7.205). Because of her kēdos for both Achilles and Agamemnon, Hera sends Athene to stop Achilles from killing Agamemnon (II. 1.194–6; 208–9), and it was kēdomene that Athene looked after Odysseus (Od. 3.218–24).

Kēdos, as has been mentioned, is connected with death, as the response roused in survivors by the death of friends or family. When Diomedes kills Xanthos and Thoon,

“he left groaning and bitter kēdos for their father.” II. 5.156–7

So too, Hektor, bringing home to Trojan women bad news of the way their men-folk had fared in the war,

“brought upon many women kēdea.” II. 6.241

But kēdos for the dead is not only the draining of one’s strength involved in mourning and the acceptance of the disappearance of one’s philoi and the resultant reduction in what is secure and dependable for one, but also the acceptance of responsibility for burying the body and the expenditure of one’s resources on this task. Bodies left unburied are akēdea, without kēdos. uncared for (Od. 24.187), and the people who deny them this kēdos are likewise called akēdees, without kēdos (Od. 17.319). Those who do accept the task of burying the corpse are called kēdemones, those who accept kēdos (II. 23.163; cf. also 23.159–60).

Kēdos, then, is a draining away of one’s resources. It may operate in the cooperative sphere in that a man may be thus drained in the interests of someone else. However, the word kēdos is not essentially co-operative. It simply describes the effect upon the body or possessions of an agathos who is involved in certain situations. It is noticeable that nowhere does an agathos actually claim, in the first person, to kēdesthai, to accept kēdos, on someone’s behalf. It is simply that others describe him as being kēdomenos. Kēdesthai clearly describes the situation, the manner in which the demands of other people or circumstances drain away a man’s resources. The agathos never actively claims to use his resources for someone else, which would make kēdesthai positively co-operative.

Pistos is rendered as “fidelis, certus.”

From the same root come Latin fidus, fides, and Old Slavonic beda = necessity, and bezde, bedit = force.

The idea, then, is of something binding and fixed. The chief uses of pistos in Homer are as epithets of oaths, or one’s companion. An oath which is pistos is felt to be fixed, one which cannot be contravened. (Yet despite the recurrent formulaic use of this epithet to refer to the treaty between the Greeks and the Trojans, this treaty is hardly established before it is broken by Pandaros!) A companion who is pistos is one who can be relied upon to remain fixed among one’s philoi, friends.

The idea of remaining fixed and steady can be seen also in Homer’s
description of Automedon, the charioteer. Patroklos, in Book 16 of the *Iliad*, chooses him to drive his horses in battle:

"Him he honoured most after Achilles, who breaks through the ranks of warriors, and he was *pistotates*, most faithful, in facing up to the war cry in battle."

*Il. 16.146-7*

He is the one who can most be relied on to remain fixed at his post despite the uproar of battle.

The ghost of Agamemnon, rendered suspicious of all women by his treatment at the hands of Klytemnestra, advises Odysseus not to sail home openly,

"since no longer are things *pista*, fixed, for women."

*Od. 11.456*

There is no trustworthiness in women; he can no longer rely on them to remain constant.

A man who is *apistos*, not *pistos*, cannot be trusted as a party to a treaty. Thus, Menelaus sends for Priam to form the treaty with the Greeks because his sons are "arrogant and unreliable" (*Il. 3.106*).

Hekabe, trying to persuade Priam not to go to Achilles, says,

"For if he seizes you and sees you with his eyes, he who is a savage man and *apistos*, unreliable, he will not pity you nor respect you."

*Il. 24.206-8*

A man who is *apistos* is one who is not fixed or constant and who cannot therefore be relied on. A man who is or ever has been savage is also *apistos*. His savagery places him in the grip of unpredictable or ungovernable impulses. Fixity and constancy belong to men who are civilised and therefore predictable. *Pistos* does not analyse the character of a person but describes him in terms of how he is perceived by others.

Those who do not believe that Odysseus will come home safely, are said to have a *thumos*, heart, that is *apistos*. A person or thing that is *apistos* is uncertain or wavering. So Odysseus and Eurykleia accuse Eumaios and Penelope respectively of having a *thumos apistos* in that they are wavering in their attitude to Odysseus' return instead of maintaining a fixed conviction.

Though to do so would make *apistos* more readily comprehensible to a modern mind, it seems probable that we should not introduce analytic ideas such as faith and trust into *pistos*. The Homeric Greek dealt with things that were real and tangible. He had no need for and therefore no concept of "faith" in what is unseen. Even his gods are something real and tangible. They are not "accepted by faith"; they are simply there. Doubt is as impossible as faith. To doubt the gods would be equivalent to doubting the existence of himself or his possessions. The gods are as fixed and certain as physical reality—in fact, a distinction between gods and physical reality would also not occur to the Homeric Greek. Thus, a thing or an idea is either solidly there or it is not. What is solidly certain is *piston*. A person or thing that is not solidly certain is *apiston*. This is not to imply that *apiston* is unreal; it is merely that what is *apiston* does not inspire a sense of solid reliability.

Later, when men became more self-conscious, the aspect of trust and
reliability which could be involved in that which is piston could be analysed and comprehended. As yet, however, it is the external aspect of fixity which would be dominant.

Yet, pistos is reserved for fixity in relationships between people and therefore it certainly comes within the co-operative sphere. A solid and certain bond between people is naturally of fundamental importance in relationships, and this pistos provides.

Kedos shows us vividly the threatened and drained feeling that co-operation, however essential for survival, could impose on the agathos, faced with the constant strain of succeeding by his own efforts in a basically competitive or even hostile world. Pistos gives us a sense of the emotive value in such a world of what is fixed and reliable.

The first two words examined bear tribute to the pleasure experienced by the Homeric Greek in abandoning a competitive attitude to life and his fellows. The responsibilities and tensions of the demands of maintaining his arete threw into high relief the moments when the agathos could relax in non-competitive surroundings and need no longer feel himself constantly threatened. The words selected for examination here bear witness to the strong emotive content of such a non-competitive situation, and thereby provide a useful insight into the emotional life of the Homeric hero, as far as this can be inferred from descriptions given.

NOTES

3. Cf. especially Minnermus: Bergk, Fragments of the Greek Lyric poets (Teubner 1897), nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
4. In Rieu’s translation, Hera’s words are rendered ‘use all your eloquence to’, but when Athene uses the same words, they are rendered ‘with courteous words’. Obviously, he feels it unnatural that a god should show courtesy to a man, though Snell shows that this feeling would not be real to Homer: cf. The Discovery of the Mind (Oxford 1953) 32–4.
5. Since writing this, I have found that Prof. Adkins, in his article ‘Truth, Kosmos and Arete in the Homeric Poems’, CQ 65 (1972) 13 ff., has come, via different paths, to the same emphasis on the pleasant in speech.
6. E.g. Odysseus invites the nymphs to rejoice in his aganoisi prayers, prayers such as bring joy (Od. 13.357–8).
8. Odysseus’ mother tells him that what killed her was her longing for him and her loss of his counsels and his aganophrosuné (Od. 11.202–3).
10. See above. Cf. also Il. 21.338–9.
11. When Odysseus meets Aias in Hades, he speaks to him with meilichiois words (Od. 11.552) in an attempt to win him over from the hostility conceived while both were still in the land of the living. Probably Odysseus felt, superstitiously, that this hostility might, through malevolence, harm him.

Similarly, the swineherd greets Odysseus with meilichioisin words (Od. 20.165) and hopes that he has not been insulted by the suitors. If he had been, it would have reflected upon the
ability of Eumaios, his original host, to look after him, and Eumaios might find himself the object of hostility caused by their act.

Odysseus, biding his time before the final attack on the suitors, instructs Telemachos not to react angrily if the suitors insult the disguised beggar, but simply bid them cease from their folly, addressing them with mei/ichos words. (Od. 16.279). Cf. also ll. 6.343—see below.

12. The swineherd describes to Odysseus the state of affairs in Ithaka at the time of his return. Of Penelope, he says; "From the mistress one cannot hear a mei/ichon word or deed, since evil has fallen on her house, (in the shape of) lawless men." Od. 15.374-6. This quotation clearly shows that mei/ichos does not describe an attitude of mind. Penelope’s unhappiness is not likely to have led her to harsh words and actions towards her own people or this would be clearer elsewhere. It is the effect of hearing her words or seeing her actions that is not ‘softening’ or pleasurable because her news and her unhappiness are not pleasant. She must still report to her followers that the master is not yet back and her house is still occupied by the suitors.

13. Cf. Boisacq, Dict. Etymol. de la Langue Grecque (Heidelberg 1916);
14. And Od. 1.244; 15.344.
15. And ll. 18.438; Od. 11.369; Homeric Hymns 2.249.
17. Od. 5.207; 7.242; 9.12; 11.369; 14.197 etc.
18. Od. 1.244; 14.47; 17.555; ll. 19.302.
20. ll. 5.408; 11.458; 18.853; Od. 14.197; 8.149.
21. Cf. also ll. 22.271–2.
23. Cf. also ll. 21.369 and ll. 17.550, where Homer tells us cold weather causes kedos to the sheep.
24. It is this aspect of arete which lies at the basis of later Greek military alliances, agreements to philin or to kedein the same people. It lies also at the basis of the popular definition of dikatosune, justice, as “to help one’s friends and harm one’s enemies.” Plato Rep. I.332C.
29. Cf. also Homeric Hymns 5.138. In each case, however, kedomene has reference to a single immediate situation of distress, rather than to a general evidence of kedos, possibly because, in general, it is the father who accepts kedos for the family.
30. Cf. also Od. 1.215 where the host Alkinoos is kedomenes for Odysseus, and Od. 20.130 where a neglected guest is called akedes.
32. Cf. also ll. 24.239–40.
33. And ll. 24.554.
34. For other active uses of akédês, cf. ll. 21.123; 24.526.
35. ll. 2.124; 3.94; 4.157; Od. 24.483.
36. E.g. ll. 15.331; 17.500; Od. 15.539.
37. Ten times: ll. 2.124; 3.73, 94, 245, 252, 256, 269, 280, 323; 4.157. Clearly pistos is a stock epithet for a treaty.
40. Sneü, The Discovery of the Mind 24-5.
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