

# Localization in the Hexameter

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Though a word shaped  $-\cup\cup-$  can theoretically occur 5 different places in a hexameter line, it turns out that over 85% of the time a word that shape will occur in one of two locations. This restriction of a word shape that might fit several places to only two or three is known as *localization*. It further turns out that localization habits are quite consistent across hexameter poets from Homer down to the Hellenistic period.

The first systematic account of word shape localization was by Eugene G. O'Neill, Jr. in *The Localization of Metrical Word-types in the Greek Hexameter*, Yale Classical Studies, 8:105-178. His work was followed up by several people in the same journal.

O'Neill's pages of tables include the statistics for seven different poets. For this article I will only include the statistics for the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and Hesiod, which in O'Neill's paper is 1000 hexameters taken from both the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony*.<sup>1</sup>

I first started looking into localization as a tool to help me with my own Greek verse composition. It is not the purpose of such work to produce works to rival Homer, of course, but to gain a deeper appreciation for the subtleties of the literature in our own reading. The next time some commentator says a word is emphatic in this or that position of a hexameter line, you should check the localization. It may be the word could go nowhere else.

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<sup>1</sup>Though Hellenistic poets are somewhat more restrictive in localization, it is not usually by much. They differ from earlier practice more in the rhythm of the full line. Since my own interest is in the archaic poets, I left out later poets.

**Notation.** First, it's necessary to talk about particular positions in the hexameter line. Here I will be using van Raalte's notation:

$$\frac{1}{1} \overset{a}{\smile} \overset{b}{\smile} \frac{2}{2} \quad \frac{1}{3} \overset{a}{\smile} \overset{b}{\smile} \frac{4}{4} \quad \frac{1}{5} \overset{a}{\smile} \overset{b}{\smile} \frac{6}{6} \quad \frac{1}{7} \overset{a}{\smile} \overset{b}{\smile} \frac{8}{8} \quad \frac{1}{9} \overset{a}{\smile} \overset{b}{\smile} \frac{10}{10} \quad \frac{1}{11} \smile \frac{12}{12}$$

In the work of O'Neill and Porter, position 2a is  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , 6a — a common caesura position — is  $5\frac{1}{2}$ , etc. An even position number without the 'a' or 'b' indicates contraction except for position 12, which is anceps and can only ever hold a single syllable.

In most of the localization literature the position of a word shape is identified by the position of the *last syllable*. I will follow that convention here. So, in the opening line of the Iliad —  $\mu\eta\nu\nu \acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon, \theta\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$  —  $\mu\eta\nu\nu$  is in position 2a,  $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  in 4a and  $\theta\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$  in 5.

O'Neill's method was to identify any syllable in position 12 as long. Since a word naturally  $\smile\smile$ , for example, will be identified as  $\smile--$  when it occurs in position 12, tables nine and ten should be taken together. All such shapes ending in  $\smile$  should be compared to those ending in  $--$ .

**Reading the tables.** In the tables I include the statistics for the most common localizations. In the final row I list in descending order of frequency those positions which occur less than 10% of the time in all of the three corpora. If a position is not in this list, then that word shape never occurs in that position.

The table numbering here is the same as in O'Neill's paper. I have omitted the tables from 28 on, which contain rare word shapes and other statistics not about localization itself.

Table One:  $\smile$

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
2a	15.1%	12.1%	13.0%
2b	15.1%	16.6%	13.9%
4a	11.3%	8.9%	8.7%
6a	14.3%	15.0%	17.6%
6b	12.9%	14.0%	11.3%
10a	11.1%	12.5%	12.5%
10b	8.4%	8.9%	10.1%

Others: 4b, 8b, 8a

Table Two: –

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
1	32.6%	30.5%	29.0%
3	19.4%	21.5%	27.2%
9	11.0%	10.2%	9.5%

Others: 2, 7, 4, 6, 8, 5, 12, 11

Table Three: ∪∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
2b	18.0%	17.1%	14.5%
4b	19.4%	21.3%	12.7%
6b	15.3%	13.2%	18.0%
8b	36.7%	31.9%	42.1%
10b	10.6%	16.5%	12.9%

Table Four: ∪–

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
3	31.2%	26.4%	21.9%
5	12.9%	10.1%	13.6%
7	52.5%	59.4%	61.7%

Others: 11, 9

Table Five: –∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
2a	28.7%	27.9%	32.1%
5a	27.8%	30.1%	23.3%
10a	35.9%	34.3%	36.8%

Others: 4a, 8a

Table Six: ––

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
2	21.2%	20.2%	21.1%
5	14.0%	12.5%	16.2%
7	6.4%	8.0%	10.5%
12	41.3%	41.7%	39.0%

Others: 3, 9, 8, 4, 11

Table Seven: ∪∪–

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
3	13.9%	13.5%	13.6%
5	41.0%	34.0%	32.9%
7	33.8%	39.8%	38.9%
9	9.4%	10.7%	13.4%

Others: 11

Table Eight: –∪∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
2b	25.7%	33.8%	32.3%
8b	29.4%	27.6%	28.0%
10b	35.3%	31.5%	36.2%

Others: 4b

Table Nine: ∪–∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
4a	11.6%	8.2%	12.5%
6a	75.8%	82.4%	66.3%
10a	3.1%	3.5%	15.0%

Others: 8a

Table Ten: ∪––

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
12	92.1%	92.9%	95.7%

Others: 8, 4

Table Eleven: ∪–∪∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
8b	95.3%	95.6%	88.2%
10b	3.2%	1.5%	10.0%

Others: 4

Table Twelve: ––∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
6a	59.7%	54.4%	54.9%
10a	31.9%	39.2%	42.4%

Others: 4a, 8a

Table Thirteen: ∪∪-∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
6a	56.9%	62.5%	55.2%
10a	39.5%	33.1%	38.4%
Others: 4a, 8a			

Table Fourteen: ---

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
3	49.4%	50.3%	46.0%
5	34.7%	31.8%	34.7%
12	7.1%	11.3%	8.0%
Others: 9, 11, 7, 8			

Table Fifteen: -∪∪-

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
3	42.2%	37.3%	37.9%
5	37.6%	48.6%	48.6%
9	10.4%	9.0%	7.0%
Others: 11, 7			

Table Sixteen: ∪∪--

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
12	96.2%	100%	96.5%
Others: 8, 4			

Table Seventeen: --∪∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
8b	63.8%	68.4%	64.8%
10b	36.2%	31.6%	35.2%

Table Eighteen: ∪∪-∪∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
8b	70.1%	63.2%	54.7%
10b	29.9%	35.5%	42.2%
Others: 4b			

Table Nineteen: ∪---

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
5	41.7%	45.6%	63.5%
9	51.7%	54.4%	34.9%
Others: 7			

Table Twenty: ∪---∪-

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
5	28.3%	23.5%	39.3%
9	67.9%	76.5%	55.4%
Others: 7			

Table Twenty-one: ---∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
4a	17.8%	12.5%	6.4%
6a	66.7%	70.0%	68.1%
10a	15.6%	17.5%	25.5%

Table Twenty-two: -∪∪-∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
4a	10.0%	3.6%	4.3%
6a	62.5%	42.8%	78.3%
10a	27.5%	53.6%	17.4%

Table Twenty-three: ----

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
12	96.5%	96.3%	90.2%
Others: 9, 5, 4			

Table Twenty-four: -∪∪---

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
12	100%	100%	100%

Table Twenty-five: ∪∪-∪∪-

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
5	44.4%	83.3%	16.7%
7	22.2%	0%	0%
9	0%	0%	66.7%
11	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%

Table Twenty-six: ∪----∪

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
6a	16.2%	19.4%	27.3%
10a	83.8%	80.6%	72.7%

Table Twenty-seven:  $\cup\text{---}\cup\text{---}\cup$

Positions	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	Hesiod
6a	0%	8.3%	50.0%
10a	100%	91.7%	50.0%

## Syntactic Localization

Not only are individual word shapes localized, but some syntactic patterns are prone to localization, too.<sup>2</sup> For example, at the end of a line one often finds a noun shaped  $\text{---}\cup$  and a verb shaped  $\cup\text{---}\cup$ , such as ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν in *Il.1.2*. I'll represent that pattern so:

$\text{---}\overset{\mathbf{N}}{\cup}$  |  $\cup\overset{\mathbf{V}}{\text{---}}\cup$  12, 6a

Again using the convention that the shape is localized by the last position, this pattern can occur in positions 12 or 6a. In the schemata **V** is a verb, **N** a noun, **p** a pronoun, **a** an adjective, **av** an adverb and **pcp** a participle. A single bar is a word boundary, the double bar the caesura.

### Before the caesura:

$\text{---}\underline{\underline{\cup}}\text{---}$	5, 3	pcp, av, a, V (3)
$\cup\overset{\mathbf{V}}{\text{---}}\cup$	6a, 12	
$\overset{\mathbf{V}}{\text{---}}\cup$	6a, 2a	
$\underline{\underline{\cup}}\overset{\mathbf{V}}{\text{---}}\cup$	6a	
$\underline{\underline{\cup}}\overset{\mathbf{V}}{\text{---}}$	5	
$\text{---}\overset{\mathbf{N}}{\cup}$   $\overset{\mathbf{a}}{\cup}\text{---}$	3, 5	ἄνδρῖ φίλῳ, χειρᾶς ἐμάς
$\text{---}\underline{\underline{\cup}}\text{---}$   $\text{---}\overset{\mathbf{a}}{\cup}\text{---}$	5	Ἴλίου αἰπεινῆς, ἔγχει χαλκείῳ

<sup>2</sup>This section is based on Joseph A. Russo's *The Structural Formula in Homeric Verse*, Yale Classical Studies, 20:219-40. I'm not prepared to accept the concept of a structural *formula*, but the appendix contains useful and interesting localization information.

Note that in this group the noun and adjective agree:

$\underline{N} \cup$   $\underline{P} -$   $\underline{a} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	νηυσὶν ἔπι γλαφυρῆσι
$\underline{N} \cup$   $\underline{P}$   $-\underline{a} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίην
$\underline{N} \underline{a}$   $\underline{P}$   $\underline{a} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	οὐρανὸν ἐς πολύχαλκον
$\underline{a} \underline{a}$   $\underline{P}$   $\underline{N} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	ποικίλου ἐκ δίφροιο
$-\underline{a} -$   $\underline{P}$   $\underline{N} -$	5	ἡμετέρῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
$-\underline{a} -$   $\underline{N} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	σκηπτούχοι βασιλῆες
$\underline{N} \cup$   $\cup - \underline{pcp} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	ἴστων ἐποιχομένην
$\underline{av} \vdots \cup \vdots \cup - \underline{pcp} -$ ( )	5 (6a)	ἔνθα καθεζόμενοι, ἃψ ἀπονοστήσειν

#### After the caesura:

$\underline{N} \cup$   $\cup \underline{V} \underline{a}$	12, 6a	ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν, μῦθον ἔειπε
$\underline{P}$   $\underline{N} \cup$   $\cup \underline{V} \underline{a}$	12	μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἔηκε, ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλεν
$-\underline{N} \underline{a}$   $\underline{V} \underline{a}$	12	ἄλγεα τεύχει, νείκεα βάλλει
$-\underline{pcp} - \underline{a}$	12	αἰθομένοιο, χωομένοιο, ἐρχομενάων
( ) $\underline{N}$   $-\underline{a, pcp} - \underline{a}$	12	οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος
$-\underline{N} \underline{a}$   $\underline{a} \underline{a}$	12, 10a, 6a	ὄρκια πιστά, ἤματα πάντα
$-\underline{V} \underline{a}$   $\underline{N} \underline{a}$	12	ᾤλεσα λαόν, ἵκετο θυμόν
$-\underline{a} \underline{a}$   $\underline{N} \underline{a}$	12, 10a	οἴνοπα πόντον, νήπια τέκνα

#### Crossing the caesura:

( )  $\underline{P}$  |  $\underline{a} \underline{N} \underline{a}$  ||  $\underline{pcp, V}$  7 ἐν κονίησι πεσών, ἐνὶ στήθεσσι βαλόν

With noun and adjective agreeing:

$\underline{N} \underline{a}$  |  $\cup - \vdots \underline{a} \vdots \underline{V} \underline{a}$  ||  $\underline{a} -$  7 παῖδα δ' ἐμοὶ λύσαιτε φίλην  
νοῦσον ἀνὰ στράτον ᾧρσε κακῆν