

REVISED EDITION

Gregory Nagy

THE BEST OF THE ACHAEANS



Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry



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Poetry
Revised Edition
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Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry

a machine readable edition

Gregory Nagy

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Foreword

The 1999 second edition

§1. *The Best of the Achaeans* is intended for both non-specialists and specialists in Homer and in other forms of archaic Greek poetry.[\[1\]](#) More generally, it is for non-Classicalists as well as Classicalists (that is, those who study Greek and Roman antiquity). All quotations from the ancient texts are translated, and all cited words are defined in context.

§2. This book is about how to read Homer--both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*--and various related forms of Greek poetry in the archaic period, most notably the Hesiodic *Theogony* and *Works and Days* and the Homeric *Hymns*, especially the *Apollo*, the *Demeter*, and the *Aphrodite*. Other related poetic forms include the praise poetry of Pindar and the blame poetry of Archilochus. The readings are infused with references to non-canonical traditions as well, especially women's laments and the earliest attested versions of Aesop's fables.

§3. The object of all the readings is to understand simultaneously the form as well as the content of a wide variety of traditional media conveying various basic concepts of the ancient Greek hero. The most basic of all these concepts is a single all-pervasive historical fact of the archaic period and beyond: the cult of heroes. Heroes were not only the subjects of narrative and dramatic media but also the objects of worship. This book integrates heroic song, poetry, and prose with the ancestral practices of a

wide variety of hero-cults ([Introduction, §16-19](#)). More generally, it explores the heroic tradition within the cultural context of Panhellenism, to be defined as an early form of Hellenism that eventually became the nucleus of Classicism ([Introduction, §13-15](#)).

§4. *The Best of the Achaeans* was completed in 1978 and first published in 1979. Now, twenty years later, I have a chance to revisit. The present foreword highlights the specifics of what has changed and what remains stable.

§5. I start with the main points of consistency. This 1998 edition is "archaeological," adding to the general argumentation only the essentials for supplementing what I knew twenty years ago. I have preserved the original text and page-numbering of the 1979 edition for the introduction and for all the chapters as well as the appendix. The [Bibliography](#) has been updated with additions. Here too, however, I have maintained an "archaeological" stance, concentrating on research that directly follows up on the arguments made in the 1979 edition. The addenda in the text proper of this second edition, which are mostly cross-references to new points raised in this [Foreword](#) or to new entries in the [Bibliography](#), have been inserted at the ends of the 1979 footnotes. The corrigenda in the text proper of this second edition, mostly minor, have been entered without further comment.

§6. There is not much in the book, I find, that needs to be corrected for factual mistakes, and there is practically nothing in the contents that I would wish to retract. There are, however, things that needed to be restated, and this [Foreword](#) addresses that need. [1] There is also a great deal that could be added. Much of that has been done in a 1990 book providing additional context, *Pindar's Homer*. [2] The argumentation has been developed further in two 1996 books, *Homeric Questions* and *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. [3]

§7. Homeric and Hesiodic poetry are the focus of chapters 1-10 and 20. That set of chapters can be read independently of the rest, yielding a more compressed book of 240 pages. For those who wish to concentrate on Homer alone, the book can be compressed further: chapters 1-8 and 20 are likewise self-contained--a total of 180 pages. I worry that some readers of

the first edition may have stopped at chapters 8 or 9 and never made their way to chapter 20, where I offer retrospectives and overviews essential to my argumentation about Homer. My hope, in any case, is that the reader will take on the whole book, which addresses a variety of topics that are essential for understanding archaic Greek poetry.[\[1\]](#)

§8. For my reading of Homer and other forms of archaic Greek poetry, I rely on the traditional methodology of Classicists, combined with other empirical methods drawn from research in anthropology, linguistics, and oral poetics. This combination of approaches occasionally makes my specific readings different, in varying degrees, from those of my immediate predecessors. Such differences help explain some problems of reception, especially in the earlier years that followed initial publication. Over the last two decades, however, the argumentation of *Best of the Achaeans* has held up. Citations of the book in ongoing research reflect its expanding influence,[\[1\]](#) and much of what seemed controversial then is no longer so now.[\[2\]](#)

§9. Debate persists, however, on various levels. Some of it goes back to negative reactions at the time of initial publication. The sheer animosity of a few of the criticisms directed at my work surprised me at first. After all, I consistently avoid personal polemics in *Best of the Achaeans*. Why, I asked myself, has this book made some critics so angry? One answer, shaped by years of retrospection, is that it all comes down to assumptions that I challenge in the book. As I look back at the subtitle of my introduction, "assumptions, methods, results," I now see in this wording a clue to a source of provocation.

§10. The methods of *Best of the Achaeans* not only achieve new results: they also call into question various assumptions essential to the Homeric interpretations of various critics. Ironically, much of the initial criticism leveled against the book was based on the same assumptions that my methods and results have challenged. There is a further irony: a few continue to assert these assumptions as if they were facts. Another reaction is to say, in effect, that no one has made such arguments before, and what right does anyone have to make them now? I resist using up this space with a bibliography of such polemics, since I hope to keep this second edition

free, like the first one, of the ephemeral.^[1] Rather, I concentrate on the actual assumptions that caused the problem in the first place. These assumptions have taken on many forms, but they all come down to a simple enough notion: that oral poetry is lacking in cohesion and artistry. Therefore, the thinking goes, Homeric poetry must be explained in terms that transcend oral poetry.

§11. Here I revisit the basic questions, starting with the basic fact that drives these questions: a major challenge to our reading of archaic Greek poetry, especially Homer, is its heritage as oral poetry. Oral traditions, including oral poetry, depend on performance. In oral poetry, unlike written poetry, performance is a necessity, not an option. Moreover, the ongoing empirical study of a wide variety of living oral traditions makes it clear that any given performance becomes an occasion for some degree of recomposition-in-performance (the actual degrees of recomposition will of course vary in different contexts or phases).^[1] How, then, do we read something that was meant to be performed, not read from a book? How do we read something that is subject to change in each performance? These are the questions that I seek to answer in *Best of the Achaeans*, focusing on two key Homeric passages as my starting point: the first song of Demodokos in *Odyssey viii* and the "embassy scene" in *Iliad IX*.

§12. Mention of the word "passages" raises an even more basic question, stemming from an obvious fact: Homeric poetry survives because it was written down. The question, then, is as obvious as the fact: how did archaic Greek poetry, especially Homer, get written down in the first place? As of now, no direct answer is available. Nor is there any consensus about why or how or even when Homeric poetry was written down. One thing and one thing only, it seems to me, is certain: no one has ever been able to prove that the technology of writing had been necessary for either the composition or the performance of Homeric poetry.^[1]

§13. So much for the negative side. On the positive, I argue that Homeric poetry (by which I mean the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined) is a system, and that this system can be explained consistently in terms of oral poetics. The application of linguistics is vital for the argument.^[1] The Homeric textual tradition is the primary evidence for this system, but it cannot be equated

with the system itself.[\[2\]](#) My linguistic approach to the poetic and textual traditions of Homer extends to the other forms of archaic Greek poetry as well. Here is how James Redfield describes my methodology:

His concern is not with particular works per se but with the underlying system of meanings common to the epic tradition and inherited by Greek poets down to Pindar. This is a system, not as geometry is a system, but as a culture is a system; there is a high degree of redundancy, of alternative ways of expressing the same or similar ideas, of making similar distinctions. Terms are not connected by relations of identity but of analogy; themes are displayed through their variations.[\[3\]](#)

§14. My reading of Homer, especially of the passages in *Odyssey* [viii](#) and *Iliad* [IX](#), has occasionally been disputed on the grounds that it gives the impression of literary rather than oral poetics. Such an impression, however, stems from unjustified negative assumptions about oral poetics. There is no evidence for assuming that oral poetry is by nature unsystematic. The results of my readings, which add up to show that Homeric poetry is indeed a system, cannot be used as ammunition for claiming that Homer is therefore not "oral."

§15. The results of my readings show also that the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are complementary, and that this complementarity is itself a system in its own right.[\[1\]](#) Here again, I resist the assumptions of critics who try to explain this system in terms that transcend oral poetry. The first song of Demodokos in *Odyssey* [viii](#) and the "embassy scene" of *Iliad* [IX](#) provide striking examples of the system at work. Throughout *Best of the Achaeans*, I explain the organic complementarity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* precisely in terms of oral poetics.[\[2\]](#)

§16. A central theme unites the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: just as Achilles emerges as the "best of the Achaeans" in the *Iliad*, so too Odysseus becomes "best of the Achaeans" in the *Odyssey* ([Ch.1§13](#)). Moreover, the **kleos** or epic glory of Achilles in the *Iliad* is both complemented and contested by the **kleos** of Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (Ch.2 §§10-18).[\[1\]](#) A key is the Odyssean theme of **nostos** in the sense of 'song about a homecoming', not just 'homecoming' ([Ch.6§6n2](#)). Ironically, as I argue, Odysseus achieves

the **kleos** or epic glory of the *Odyssey* not because he destroyed Troy (a feat heralded at the very start of his epic) but because he achieves a **nostos** in both senses of the word: he comes home and thereby becomes the premier hero of a song about homecoming ([Ch.2§11](#)).[\[2\]](#)

§17. There are further related ironies. Achilles has to choose between **kleos** and **nostos**, forfeiting **nostos** in order to achieve his **kleos** as the central hero of the *Iliad* ([Ch.2§11](#)), but Odysseus must have both in order to merit his heroic status in the *Odyssey* ([Ch.2 §§12-16](#)). The narrative of the **kleos** that Odysseus earns in the *Odyssey* cannot be the *Iliad*, which means "Troy Tale" (Ilion is the other name for Troy). The *Iliad* establishes Achilles as the central hero of the story of Troy, even though he failed to destroy the city. Because of the *Iliad* tradition, "the **kleos** of Odysseus at Troy was preempted by the **kleos** of Achilles" ([Ch.2§17](#)).[\[1\]](#)

§18. There is a final irony, developed in the narrative of the *Odyssey* ([xi 489-491](#)): Achilles in Hades seems tempted to trade epics with Odysseus ([Ch.2§11](#)).[\[1\]](#) This he will never do, of course, in his own epic. As Achilles himself predicts in the *Iliad* ([IX 413](#)), the **kleos** of his own song will be áphthiton 'unwilting' ([Ch.2§3](#)).

§19. My arguments about the patterns of complementarity between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be extended much further. There are also patterns of complementarity between Homeric and Hesiodic poetry, adding up to an even more generalized unity.[\[1\]](#) The compressed narrative about epic heroes in the Hesiodic *Works and Days*, for instance, complements the ultimately expanded narrative of the Homeric *Iliad* ([Ch.9§29](#)).[\[2\]](#) Herodotus, the "father of history," describes the unity of Homer and Hesiod in cultural terms that convey the sum total of Greek civilization ([2.53.1-3](#)).[\[3\]](#) In any case, this unity can be described as an overall cultural system, which needs to be "read" as an oral tradition mediated by a script tradition.[\[4\]](#) Here we see the foundations of Panhellenism ([Introduction §§14-16](#)).[\[5\]](#)

§20. Even more generally, it is possible to argue that all forms of archaic Greek poetry complement each other. Cases in point are the relationship of epic and praise poetry ([Ch.12](#)), of praise and blame poetry ([Ch.14](#)). The patterns of complementarity emerge from reading the *ipsissima verba*, the words of the tradition themselves. That is how Milman Parry and Albert

Lord, my teacher, have read Homer. At the very start of my book, I invoke their favorite words for form and content, "diction" and "theme" ([Introduction §1](#)), in arguing that the diction of archaic Greek poetry is a most accurate expression of its themes. The Introduction goes on to describe this fundamental stance ironically as "literal minded" ([§7](#)). The irony has been lost, I notice, on a few literal minded critics.

§21. What has given my book its staying power is that it strives to achieve a coherent picture of a coherent system of ancient Greek poetics, to the degree that each detail of my analysis is meant to stay true to each constituent detail of that system. The coherence of the book results not from the sequencing of contents page by page but from the coherence of the system that emerges cumulatively from an overall reading.

§22. For my reading of Homer, I do not invoke theories of intertextuality.[\[1\]](#) Instead, I have developed what I call an evolutionary model for the textualization of Homer, without presupposing that the actual composition of the "text" required the medium of writing .[\[2\]](#) According to this model, there were at least five distinct consecutive periods of Homeric oral | written transmission, "Five Ages of Homer," as it were, with each period showing progressively less fluidity and more rigidity. [\[3\]](#) I argue that our Homeric text results from a "transcript tradition" that recorded the final or near-final stages in an evolving process of oral poetic recomposition-in-performance.[\[4\]](#)

§23. Here I apply a distinction made by Ferdinand de Saussure: linguistic analysis requires both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.[\[1\]](#) For Saussure, synchrony and diachrony designate respectively a current state of a language and a phase in its evolution.[\[2\]](#) I draw attention to Saussure's linking of diachrony and evolution, a link that proves to be crucial for understanding Homeric poetry in particular and archaic Greek poetry in general. This link led to my evolutionary model for the oral traditions that shaped Homeric poetry. According to this model, the "making" of this poetry needs to be seen diachronically as well as synchronically, if we follow Saussure's sense of diachrony. My primary premise is that synchronic approaches to Homer cannot succeed without the integration of diachronic approaches, just as diachronic approaches cannot succeed

without the integration of the synchronic. My secondary premise is that the synchronic analysis of Homeric poetry can succeed only when that poetry is viewed as a *system* rather than a *text*. To repeat: I refer to the system in question simply as "Homeric poetry."

§24. Applying these premises, I argue against the assumption that the Homeric text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as reconstituted in various editions both ancient and modern, can be viewed synchronically as a cross-section that represents a single real composition or performance. In other words, the Homeric text (or texts) is not the same thing as Homeric poetry.

§25. In this connection, we need to confront the general phenomenon of meaning in the media of oral poetics. On the basis of my own cumulative work, I have become convinced that meaning by way of reference in oral poetics needs to be seen diachronically as well as synchronically: "each occurrence of a theme (on the level of content) or of a formula (on the level of form) in a given composition-in-performance refers not only to its immediate context but also to all other analogous contexts remembered by the performer or by any member of the audience."^[1] The corpus of Homeric poetry cannot be reduced to the single occasion of an utterance that is self-contained at any one time and place--or even of a recording of such an utterance.^[2] I must add that I use diachronic and synchronic not as synonyms for historical and current respectively. Diachrony refers to the potential for evolution in a structure. History is not restricted to phenomena that are structurally predictable.^[3]

§26. These perspectives are essential for understanding the most visible aspect of linguistic methods in this book: my extensive exploration of etymologies.^[1] The etymologies of words, and even of names, can help explain traditional poetic contexts; conversely, these same poetic contexts can help explain the etymologies. "The purpose of connecting the etymology of a Homeric word with its current usage in the Homeric poems is to establish a continuum of meaning within tradition. An etymology may be a 'key' to the diachronic explanation of some reality, as in the case of a cultural continuum, but it cannot be equated with some clever novelty in literary criticism."^[2]

§27. In this context, some have misunderstood my view of oral tradition as a regulator of meaning ([Introduction §§4-11](#)).^[1] My approach to continuities (and discontinuities) of meaning within tradition is anything but absolutist:

Whereas a given tradition may be perceived in absolute terms within a given society, it can be analyzed in relative terms by the outside observer using empirical criteria: what may seem ancient and immutable to members of a given society can in fact be contemporary and ever-changing from the standpoint of empiricist observation. Moreover, I recognize that tradition is not just an inherited system: as with language itself, tradition comes to life in the here-and-now of real people in real situations.

[2]

§28. The phenomenon of meaning by way of reference in oral poetics leads to more specific questions about Homeric "cross-references." Here again, I apply the diachronic perspective of my evolutionary model:

It is from a diachronic perspective that I find it useful to consider the phenomenon of Homeric cross-references, especially long-distance ones that happen to reach for hundreds or even thousands of lines: it is important to keep in mind that any such cross-reference that we admire in our two-dimensional text did not just happen one time in one performance--but presumably countless times in countless reperformances within the three-dimensional continuum of a specialized oral tradition. The resonances of Homeric cross-referencing must be appreciated within the larger context of a long history of repeated performances.

[1] To put it most succinctly: "the referent of a reference in oral poetics is not restricted to the immediate context but extends to analogous contexts heard in previous performances."^[2]

§29. The evolutionary model can be applied to justify, in terms of oral poetics, the artistic subtleties of cross-reference in the "embassy scene" of *Iliad IX*, and it helps further refine my proposed solution to the notorious

problem of dual-for-plural usages in that passage ([Ch.3§§9-20](#)). [1] The same model can also account for the poetic subtleties of the first song of Demodokos in [*Odyssey* viii 73-82](#) ([Ch.1§8](#)):

The Muse impelled the singer to sing the glories [**kleos** plural] of men, from a story-thread[2] which had at that time a glory [**kleos**] reaching the vast heavens:

the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles son of Peleus,
how they once upon a time [**pote**] fought at a sumptuous feast of the
gods. ...

... For then [**tote**] it was that the beginning of pain [**pêma**] started
rolling [**kulindeto**]
upon both Trojans and Danaans, on account of the plans of great Zeus.

§30. In this book, I read the adverb **tote** 'then' of verse 81 as a cross-reference to the adverb **pote** 'once upon a time' at verse 76. [1] By virtue of cross-referring to a specific point in epic time, the wording **tote gar** 'for then it was...' at verse 81 cross-refers also to a specific point in a notionally total and continuous narration extending into the current narrative.[2]

§31. To "return to the time-frame introduced by the earlier temporal adverb" is a matter of performance, not just composition. That is, the cross-reference represented in this story-within-a-story is performative as well as compositional. The blind singer is here being represented as cross-referring by way of performance.

§32. Contact is being made between the micro-narrative of [*Odyssey* viii 72-83](#) and the macro-narrative of the *Iliad*. A key is the word **pêma** 'pain' in [*Odyssey* viii 82](#). This "pain" signals an Iliadic theme, which can be summarized as follows: Achilles is a **pêma** for the Trojans when he is at war and a **pêma** for the Achaeans both when he withdraws from war and when he dies ([Ch.4§6](#)). In our *Iliad*, this "pain" is realized in the death of Patroklos, which foretells the death of Achilles himself ([*Iliad* XVII 685-690](#)):

Come, so that you may learn
of the ghastly news, which should never have happened.
I think that you already see, and that you realize,

that a god is letting roll [**kulindei**] a pain [**pêma**] upon the Danaans, and that victory belongs to the Trojans; the best of the Achaeans has been killed,

Patroklos, that is; and a great loss has been inflicted on the Danaans.

Like some colossal boulder that has just broken loose from the heights above, the pain is now rolling precipitously and inexorably downward, heading straight at the doomed Iliadic warriors down below. This powerful metaphor of epic doom, resonating through the fine-tuned words of Homeric song, evokes the grand images that link the first song of Demodokos with the ultimate song of Achilles, the *Iliad*.

§33. I can only repeat a conclusion reached twenty years ago ([Ch.4§8](#)), but this time with a pronounced shift in emphasis, highlighted by underlines:

An *Iliad* composed by Demodokos would have been a poem with a structure more simple and more broad, with an Achilles who is even perhaps more crude than the ultimately refined hero that we see emerging at the end of our *Iliad*. I have little doubt that such an *Iliad* was indeed in the process of evolving when it was heard in the *Odyssey* tradition which evolved into our *Odyssey*. Demodokos had heard the **kleos** and passed it on in song.

Notes

§1n1. By "archaic" I mean the historical period extending roughly from the second half of the eighth century B.C. through the second half of the fifth. As for "Homer", I invoke the name as a metonym for "Homeric poetry."

§6n1. My present Foreword is a substitute for the original 1979 foreword written by James M. Redfield, which I will treasure forever. I have exchanged here the old gold for new bronze, which I need as armor for restating my own case.

§6n2. Nagy 1990a (hereafter *PH*), as listed in the updated [Bibliography](#) of this second edition. Note too the electronic edition of *PH*, as also indicated

in the [Bibliography](#) below. Another book supplements the 1979 edition: Nagy 1990b (hereafter *GM*), especially Ch.2 ("Formula and Meter: The Oral Poetics of Homer"), Ch.3 ("Hesiod and the Poetics of Pan-Hellenism"), and Ch.5 ("The Death of Sarpedon and the Question of Homeric Uniqueness").

§6n3. Nagy 1996a and 1996b in the updated [Bibliography](#), hereafter *PP* and *HQ* respectively. Although *HQ* covers the earlier phases of the Homeric tradition and *PP* the later, *HQ* is marked 1996b in the bibliography because it was published several months after *PP*, which is marked 1996. *HQ* cross-references extensively to *PP*, while the first edition of *PP* has no direct cross-references to *HQ* as a book version.

§7n1. One such topic, which is vitally important for my overview of archaic Greek poetry, is the genre of "lives of poets," on which see below at [Ch.7§9n1](#), [Ch.13§13n](#), [Ch.16§§5-6](#), [Ch.17§§7-8](#), and all of [Ch.18](#) (especially [§4n4](#) and [§7](#)). My approach to the "vita" traditions of poets is meant as an alternative to the outlook represented by Lefkowitz 1981. See also PH 80, 322-326, 333, 363-365, 392, 395-397, 412, 419-423.

§8n1. The updated [Bibliography](#) below tracks some of the progress in reception: see for example Bakker 1997, Burgess 1996, Calame 1995, Detienne 1993, Dumézil 1982, Easterling 1989, Hainsworth 1991, Janko 1992, Koenen 1994, Loraux 1994, Lord 1991 and 1995, Martin 1983 and 1989, Morris 1986 and 1993, Muellner 1996, Palmer 1980, Pinney 1983, Pucci 1998, Seaford 1994, Segal 1994, Slatkin 1991, Snodgrass 1987, Svenbro 1993, Vernant 1985.

§8n2. Patterns of avoidance persist in the publications of a few Classicists. At times the avoidance takes the shape of shifting the point of reference from my initial observation to someone else's restatement.

§10n1. Separate bibliographies of various polemics, along with my counterarguments, is offered in *PP* 1-3 and *HQ* 129-145 (with pp. 19-27). For a different set of polemics, see also *GM* 294-301.

§11n1. For comparative perspectives drawn from a variety of non-Greek cultures, see *HQ* Ch.2.

§12n1. *HQ* 31.

§13n1. *HQ* 9-10; also *GM* 18-35.

§13n2. *PP* 107-152, with full argumentation.

§13n3. Redfield 1979.vii. The phenomenon of poetic variation is in fact the central topic of one of my books (*PP*).

§15n1. *GM* 7-17. Also part of the system are compositions like the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (see [Introduction §13-15](#)). On the cultural construct of Homer as author of this Hymn, see *PH* 375-377, *PP* 81-82.

§15n2. I find it absurd that some Homeric bibliographies classify my book as if it concerned only the *Iliad*, not the *Odyssey*.

§16n1. On **kleos** 'glory' as conferred by poetry, see [Ch.1§2n3](#). Some critics undervalue the traditional poetic implications of this word: for further argumentation and select bibliography, see *PH* 3n10 and 244-245n126. For a similar semantic pattern, where the overall concept of the medium subsumes individual contexts within it, see *PH* 218-219 on the usage of **apo-deik-numai** in the sense of 'perform'.

§16n2. A key to the epic success of Odysseus is his wife, Penelope. At [Ch.2§13n](#), I argue that the ultimate referent of **kleos** at [*Odyssey* xxiv 196](#) is the song of Odysseus, the *Odyssey*, even if the immediate referent is Penelope. The relationship between the **kleos** of Odysseus and the **kleos** of Penelope is metonymical and reciprocal. See also Raphals 1992.206.

§17n1. Iliadic themes are a threat to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*: see [Ch.20§4](#) on the nightmarish Iliadic implications of [*Odyssey* x 198-202](#). See also [Ch.15§7n4](#) on the Song of the Sirens in [*Odyssey* xii 189-191](#): when they tempt Odysseus by promising songs about the Tale of Troy, they speak the language of Muses. If Odysseus were to fall permanently under the spell of such Iliadic songs in his own *Odyssey*, he would forfeit his *nóstos* and thereby his only remaining access to *kléos*. For more on the Iliadic implications of the Sirens, see Pucci 1979 and 1998.

§18n1. The ironies of kléos in the *Odyssey* are developed explicitly in *Best of the Achaeans* (especially in [Ch.2§11](#)). There is a great deal of further elaboration by Segal 1983. See also [Ch.6§9](#) below on the simile of the lamenting captive woman in [*Odyssey* viii 523-531](#): this passage is crucial for my overall argumentation about Iliadic resonances in the *Odyssey*.

§19n1. Slatkin 1987 and Muellner 1996.45 (also all of his Ch.4). I offer a general introduction to Hesiodic poetry in *GM* Ch.3 ("Hesiod and the Poetics of Panhellenism"; see especially p. 53n54).

§19n2. See *GM* 126n17 on the interpretation of the pivotal word **men** in [*Works and Days* 166](#) as parallel to **men** at lines [122](#), [137](#), [141](#), [161](#), not to **men** at line [162](#) (pace West 1978.192; more on **men** in Bakker 1997.80-85, especially p. 81).

§19n3. See *PH* 215-215. For more on Homeric and Hesiodic complementarity, see also *PH* 73n106 and *GM* 15-16 on Hesiod fr. 204 (cf. Finkelberg 1988).

§19n4. *PP* Ch.5-7.

§19n5. *PH* Ch.2-3, *GM* Ch. 1 and 3. On models of Panhellenism extending to modern times, see Leontis 1995.

§22n1. I spell out my reasons in *PH* 53-54. For a model of intertextual approaches to Homer, see Pucci 1995 and 1998.

§22n2. *HQ* Ch.2 ("An Evolutionary Model for the Making of Homeric Poetry"); also Ch.3 ("Homer and the Evolution of a Homeric Text"). See below at [Ch.1§§6-7](#) ("evolved"/"evolving"). See also Seaford 1994, especially p. 144. My evolutionary model differs from various specific "dictation-theories," most notably those of Janko (1982.191), Jensen (1980.92), and West (1990.34). It is not at odds, however, with the more general dictation theory of Lord 1953 (reprinted 1991). For further bibliography on dictation theories, see Nagy 1997d.

§22n3. *HQ* 41-42, with details in *HQ* Ch.3; also *PP* 110, with details in *PP* Ch.5-7. The *HQ* and *PP* discussions emphasize respectively the earlier and

later phases of my evolutionary model. See also Sherratt 1990, especially pp. 817-821.

§22n4. See also *PP* Ch.5 ("Multiform epic and Aristarchus' quest for the real Homer"); Ch.6 ("Homer as script"); Ch.7 ("Homer as 'scripture'"). On hermeneutic models of "transcript," see *PP* 110-113 and Bakker 1997.208n3.

§23n1. Saussure 1916.117. See *GM* 20

§23n2. Saussure, ibid.: "De même synchronie et diachronie désigneront respectivement un état de langage et une phase d'évolution."

§25n1. *PP* 50.

§25n2. *HQ* 17, 20.

§25n3. *PH* 21n18, following Jacopin 1988.35-36, who adds: "Both synchrony and diachrony are abstractions extrapolated from a model of reality."

§26n1. In this book, a model for linguistic research in etymologies is Benveniste 1969. See below at [Ch.6§13](#). See also in general *GM* 1-2.

§26n2. *HQ* 9. See especially [Ch.5](#) below, "The Name of Achilles," including the supplement at pp. 83-93, "The Name of the Achaeans." See also the [Appendix](#), concerning the morphological parallelism **Akhaio-** / **krataio-**. I argue there that this parallelism, linking the name of the Achaeans with a word conveying the "zero-sum" mentality of heroic victory or defeat, is crucial for understanding the epic themes linking the hero Achilles with the host of warriors who claim him as one of their own. See now also Nagy 1994.5, with further elaboration on combining methods of etymological and formulaic analysis.

§27n1. *HQ* 15n8, with bibliography.

§27n2. *HQ* 15. Also *PH* 57-61, 70-72 (cf. also pp. 349, 411). At *HQ* 15n8, I add: "there can be different levels of rigidity or flexibility in different

traditions, even in different phases of the same given tradition."

§28n1. *HQ* 82.

§28n2. *HQ* 82n53.

§29n1. For the inner logic of reference and cross-reference in the "embassy scene," see in general *HQ* 138-145, especially p. 144n133 (pace Griffin 1995.52). In the French edition of *Best of the Achaeans* (Nagy 1994b.75), I added the following remarks at the end of [§11 in Ch.3](#), (where I mark the point of addition with an asterisk in the margin): Earlier, before Odysseus had taken the lead, the dual construction could still imply Ajax and Odysseus ([IX 182](#)): "And the two were going by the shore of the much-roaring sea." At this point, a dual reference to Ajax and Odysseus would pick up the reference to these two heroes at [IX 169](#), where the leadership of Phoinix is still presupposed ([IX 168](#)).

§29n2. On the metaphorical world of oímê, which I translate here as 'story-thread' see *PP* 63n19, n20.

§30n1. Pelliccia 1985 (185-186) collects evidence to show that **tote** 'then' in such contexts as [viii 81](#) serves "to return to the time-frame introduced by the earlier temporal adverb." In this case that temporal adverb is **pote** 'once upon a time' at verse 76.

§30n2. On the essential notion, inherent in oral poetic traditions, of a total and continuous narration, of which any given performance is but a part, see *HQ* 77-82. For comparative evidence on the notional totality of epic performances, see Flueckiger 1996.133-134. See already [Ch.1§6](#) below: "the traditions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* constitute a totality."

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Introduction

A Word on Assumptions, Methods, Results

§1. My approach to archaic Greek poetry is based on two major working assumptions. One, the mechanics and artistry of a given poem are traditional not only on the level of form--let us call it *diction*--but also on the level of content--let us call it *theme*. Two, the diction is a most accurate expression of the theme.

§2. The basis for my understanding of Greek poetic diction is the work of Milman Parry on Homeric phraseology, which can be summed up in his concise definition of the formula: "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea."^[1] The mechanical nature of the formula is reflected by what Parry called the principle of economy.^[2] Denys Page restates the principle: "Generally speaking, for a given idea within a given place in the line, there will be found in the vast treasury of phrases one formula and one only."^[3] Page goes on to offer an illustration by examining all the Homeric expressions for the concept of "sea":^[4]

For this one idea, "the sea," and for its expression in noun + epithet phrases only, he [the poet] relied upon his memory to provide him with a ready-made formula for almost every requirement; and the traditional vocabulary was now so highly developed, so refined and reduced, that for each requirement he found never, or hardly ever, more than one single formula. He has no freedom to select his adjectives: he must adopt whatever combination of words is supplied by tradition for a given part of the verse; and that traditional combination brings with it an adjective which may or may not be suitable to the context.

There is, however, something troublesome here about the insistence on the poet's lack of freedom to say accurately whatever he means. It seems as if the factor of metrics were in control of what can or cannot be said. In this particular case of adjectives describing the sea, for instance, we are being told that the poet had no choice but to accept the various epithets that

tradition had thrust upon him to fill out the various metrical positions of the Greek hexameter.

§3. In short, Parry's work on the mechanics of Homeric diction has caused a serious problem of esthetics for generations of Hellenists reared on the classical approaches to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: how can compositions that have always seemed so deliberate and integral in their artistry result from a system of diction that is so mechanical--one might almost say automatic? For various Homeric experts the solution lies in objecting to various aspects of Parry's findings: the genius of Homer must somehow be rescued from the workings of a formulaic system.^[1] For me, however, it is easier to accept Parry's work and to proceed from there by looking for a solution in the factor of tradition itself.

§4. Let us take another glance at the Homeric deployment of epithets. Granted, Parry's descriptive approach shows us that the choice of epithets is regulated by metrical factors. On the other hand, the historical approach of comparative reconstruction reveals much more.^[1] From my own previous studies using this approach, I have learned that certain fixed noun + epithet combinations in Homeric diction go back to a time that predates the very existence of the Greek hexameter; ^[2] further, that the choice of epithet is ultimately determined by themes that can be reconstructed all the way to a period when Greek was not yet differentiated from its sister languages in the Indo-European family.^[3] With the help of such findings, I have developed the theory that Greek meter itself is a long-range result of regularizations in the formal patterns of traditional poetic diction.^[4] Granted, diction is indeed regulated by meter from the descriptive point of view, but this regulation is from the historical point of view only the result of a more basic principle, namely, that diction is ultimately regulated by theme.^[5]

§5. My theory, then, has it that theme is the overarching principle in the creation of traditional poetry like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; also, that the formulaic heritage of these compositions is an accurate expression of their thematic heritage. Such a theory helps account for the problems raised by Parry's theory of the formula. Did the poet really *mean* this or that? Did he really *intend* such-and-such an artistic effect? My general answer would be

that the artistic intent is indeed present--but that this intent must be assigned not simply to one poet but also to countless generations of previous poets steeped in the same traditions. In other words, I think that the artistry of the Homeric poems is traditional both in diction and in theme. For me the key is not so much the genius of Homer but the genius of the overall poetic tradition that culminated in our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

§6. To my mind there is no question, then, about the poet's freedom to say accurately what he means. What he means, however, is strictly regulated by tradition. The poet has no intention of saying anything untraditional. In fact, the poet's inherited conceit is that he has it in his power to recover the exact words that tell what men did and said in the Heroic Age.[\[1\]](#)

§7. These theoretical underpinnings have fostered a general attitude of literal mindedness in my approach to the concept of the hero in archaic Greek poetry. In the pages that follow, I will as a policy assume that the application of an epithet--whether it be fixed or particularized--is thematically appropriate as well as traditional.[\[1\]](#) Moreover, my working assumption extends from the usage of epithets in particular to the usage of words in general: the entire formula, to repeat, is an accurate response to the requirements of traditional theme.[\[2\]](#) I stress this point now in order to prepare the reader for the oncoming plethora of transliterated Greek words that I will be continually citing in my discussion of central poetic themes. My reliance on key words in context cannot be dismissed as a reductive and oversimplified method of delving into the thematic complexities of archaic Greek poetry, if indeed the words themselves are functioning elements of an integral formulaic system inherited precisely for the purpose of actively expressing these complexities. The words should not be viewed merely as random vocabulary that passively reflects the themes sought by the poet. The semantic range of a key word in context can be expected to be as subtle and complex as the poetry in which it is encased.

§8. In the course of confronting the diverse problems entailed by my overall inquiry, I have found that the most striking confirmation of my literal readings has been the remarkable pattern of correspondences between the deployment of key words on the one hand and, on the other, the artistic unity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as compositions. I should emphasize that

the positing of a unitary *Iliad* and a unitary *Odyssey* has been for me not an end in itself, one that is continually threatened by contextual inconsistencies in this Homeric passage or that. Rather, it has been a means for solving the problems presented by these inconsistencies. Whatever Homeric passages seem at first to be inconsistent in the short range may in the long range be the key to various central themes of the overall *Iliad* or *Odyssey*--central messages that are hidden away from those of us, such as we are, who have not been raised by Hellenic society as the appreciative audience of Epos.

§9. Unlike most Homerists who perceive an artistic unity in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, however, I would still prefer to reconcile what I see with what Parry has discovered about formulaic composition, with all that his discoveries imply about the traditional predetermination of diction. In this respect I find myself in the congenial company of Michael Nagler,[\[1\]](#) although my work lays less emphasis on the poet's thought processes and more on the poet's tradition. From my point of view, the way to reconcile the factor of formulaic composition with the factor of artistic unity is to infer that both are a matter of tradition. The unity of a masterpiece like the *Iliad* may itself be the product of a lengthy evolution in the artistic streamlining of form and content.[\[2\]](#)

§10. If indeed tradition is a principal factor in the artistic integrity of an archaic Greek poem, it follows that we need not simply attempt to ascribe an *Iliad* or an *Odyssey* to the creativity of one genius, the poet Homer. I prefer to follow the same line of reasoning in the case of Hesiodic poetry. Whatever unity we may discover in the *Theogony* and in the *Works and Days* need not lead us to the certainty that we have just found the "author" called Hesiod. Nor can we with any certainty recover an "author" by the name of Homer (or by any other name) on the basis of the Homeric *Hymns*. Granted, the *Theogony* itself names Hesiod as its composer (verse 22);[\[1\]](#) or again, the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* actually presents itself as a poem composed by a blind poet from Chios whose songs are heard throughout the city-states of the Hellenes--surely the figure of Homer himself (verses 166-176).[\[2\]](#) Nevertheless, we will have a chance to see that the references made by an archaic poem to its composer, or "author," are not so much a personal attempt by the poet to identify himself but rather a formal reflection of the poetry upon its own importance: the archaic poem presents

itself retrospectively as something transmitted by the ultimate poet.[\[3\]](#) Even the poems of a historical figure like Pindar tend to present their composer as a mere function or instrument of the poetry itself. In short, an archaic poem establishes its authority primarily by asserting the traditions upon which it is built.

§11. My criteria, then, for determining the integrity of poetic composition do not directly involve questions of authorship. In the case of something like Hesiod *fragment 204MW*, for example, it does not matter for my purposes whether this piece of archaic poetry was or was not composed by a person who may be identified as Hesiod: all that matters to me is whether I have comparative evidence to show that the given poetry is traditional in theme and diction and that its traditions are cognate with the ones we find in the *Theogony* or *Works and Days*.[\[1\]](#)

§12. I should add that any single composition may well be built from multiple traditions. In fact, the Homeric poems are prodigiously versatile in integrating a plethora of various different traditions in epic narrative.[\[1\]](#) Moreover, they even adapt and then integrate a variety of traditions in poetic genres other than epic.[\[2\]](#) My point remains, however, simply that the unity achieved by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their integration of various different traditions is itself an overall tradition.

§13. In archaic Greek poetry, the principle of unity in composition may be the result of social as well as artistic factors. In the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, for example, the integrity of the poem results from the fusion of two traditions about Apollo, the Delian and the Pythian, but the artistic fusion of the two distinct traditions implies a corresponding social fusion of two distinct audiences. The worship of Delian Apollo is the founding principle uniting the city-states on the Aegean Islands and on the coast of Asia Minor--precisely those Hellenic areas that are not included in the vast affiliation of city-states united in the worship of Pythian Apollo at Delphi.[\[1\]](#) Since the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* is appropriate to the city-states under the sway of the Delian as well as the Pythian Apollo, its range of audience is truly Panhellenic in scope.

§14. Mention of the Panhellenic orientation that we find in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* brings us now to a vital contribution to our understanding

of Homeric composition--from the field of archaeology. A recent archaeological synthesis by Anthony Snodgrass has made it clear that the eighth century B.C., the very era in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* approached their ultimate form, was a watershed in the evolution of Hellenic civilization; alongside the emergence of the **polis** 'city-state' as a general institution with a strong trend of localized traditions (cult, law, etc.), there emerged a commensurately strong trend of intercommunication among the elite of the city-states--the trend of Panhellenism.^[1] Some specific manifestations of the latter trend are:

- establishment of the Olympic Games
- establishment of the Pythian Apollo's Sanctuary and Oracle at Delphi
- organized colonizations
- proliferation of the alphabet.

Such institutions as the Olympic Games and the Delphic Oracle, both stemming from the eighth century, are of course monumental feats of intersocial organization and also of intercultural synthesis.^[2] Significantly, the same can be said of Homeric Epos itself. From the internal evidence of its contents, we see that this poetic tradition synthesizes the diverse local traditions of each major city-state into a unified Panhellenic model that suits most city-states but corresponds exactly to none; the best example is the Homeric concept of the Olympian gods, which incorporates, yet goes beyond, the localized religious traditions of each city-state.^[3] We also know that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had proliferated throughout the city-states at the time that they reached their present form; it may be, then, that the Panhellenic nature of Homeric Epos is due not only to its composition but also to its proliferation.^[4]

§15. Moreover, composition and proliferation need not necessarily be related as an *event* followed by a *process*: the evolution of the fixed texts that we know as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* may be envisaged as a cumulative process, entailing countless instances of composition/performance in a tradition that is becoming streamlined into an increasingly rigid form as a result of ever-increasing proliferation.^[1] Again we come to the image of that blind singer from Chios, the poet in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (166-176).^[2] If indeed such a figure amounts to an idealized retrojection based

on the poetic tradition's sense of its own glory,[3] then we may also see the actual factor of proliferation reflected in the poet's boast that his songs are heard throughout the city-states of mankind:

hêmeis d' humeteron kleos oisomen hosson ep' aian
anthrōpōn strephomestha poleis eu naietaôsas

And we [the poet] will carry on your glory [kleos][4] wherever on earth we go,
throughout the well-inhabited city-states [polis plural] of men.

H.Apollo 174-175

In this connection, we cannot afford to ignore the actual existence of poetic organizations like the **Homēridai** of Chios and the **Kreôphuleîoi** of Samos--both of which had a heritage of strong Panhellenic affiliations.[5] The very concept of **Homēros** may be reflected by the inherited function of the **Homēridai**.[6] In sum, I think of Homeric poetry as a masterpiece of organization not only in an artistic but also in a social dimension.[7]

§16. The Panhellenic character of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is actually reflected--albeit indirectly--by the two Panhellenic institutions that we have considered, the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi and the Olympics. As we shall see later in detail, the death of Achilles is a theme officially celebrated in the **paiân** 'paean', a form of song performed in worship of Apollo at Delphi (Pindar *Paean* 6).[1] Also, Achilles was traditionally mourned by the women of Elis in a ceremony that inaugurated the holding of the Olympics every four years (Pausanias 6.23.3).[2] As we shall also see, these traditional practices concerning Achilles reflect a latent dimension of the prime figure of Panhellenic Epos: even in classical times and beyond, he was also a figure in cult.

§17. We will have ample opportunity to examine the religious dimension of the Hellenic hero in cult. For now I wish only to insist on the most fundamental aspect: that the hero must experience death. The hero's death is the theme that gives him his power--not only in cult but also in poetry. We as readers of Hellenic poetry can still sense it. When a hero enters combat in the Homeric Epos, we are fully aware of the intense seriousness of it all:

he will confront death. Not even the lofty Olympians can match that, since they cannot die; when the pro-Achaean gods enter combat with their pro-Trojan counterparts in *Iliad XXI*, the results cannot be fatal--and they cannot be serious either. For the Achilles of Homeric Epos, on the other hand, I will argue that the reality of death has a religious dimension that corresponds to the traditional ideology of hero cults.

§18. In this connection, it would be apt for me to quote a particularly intuitive observation linking the factor of hero cults with the factor of artistic unity in Homeric composition:[1]

It was only natural that the zeal of our specialists, be they philologists, historians, or archaeologists, should have led them far too frequently to proceed as if the Homeric poems were a *rudis indigestaque moles*. But in so doing they have tried, quite unconsciously and with the best intentions, to break the spiritual law which decrees that no human speech or communication, in prose or in verse, shall have any real meaning for those who fail to pay attention to the whole, or for those who are bored and inattentive whenever an author says something which is foreign to their personal and private interests. The poems respond to such students by promptly falling into fragments; they decay into masses of unrelated symbols. It is therefore the duty of the historian and of the archaeologist to expand their definitions of history to include the history of Greek religion and of Greek poetry; it will then become clear that Homer's transformation of history is founded upon hero worship, and that the Homeric poems deliberately and on the whole successfully suppress the post-Mycenaean aspect of Greece, and magnify the glory of the heroes in a most unhistorical but most poetical manner.

So much for intuition; what about evidence? Here again we get a vital contribution to our understanding of Homeric poetry from the field of archaeology. The Greek religious institution of hero cults, in much the same form that we see even in the classical era, can be traced back all the way to the eighth century B.C.--the same archaic era in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were attaining their ultimate form.[2]

§19. Accordingly, I have set as my main goal the answer to this vital question about the Achilles of our *Iliad*: does this Panhellenic figure possess the religious dimension of a cult hero even within Epos? There are other questions that are related: how is myth stylized in epic, and how does poetry in general express the connections between myth and ritual? In the course of my lengthy inquiry into the problem of heroes in cult, heroes in epic, I will be presenting a wealth of evidence in the form of passages from archaic Greek poetry in general and from Homeric Epos in particular.[\[1\]](#) From a careful reading of these passages, we will, I hope, enhance our overall understanding of the many-sided heroes who appear in them. In some cases, we will even discover a heroic dimension in the figures who are said to be the actual makers of Greek poetry--including Homer.[\[2\]](#) But the focus is not on Homer but on Achilles and Odysseus. My prime concern is that each of us may arrive at his own understanding of whoever is "best of the Achaeans."

Notes

§2n1. Parry 1971 [=1930] 272.

§2n2. Parry, pp. 276, 279.

§2n3. Page 1959.224.

§2n4. Page, pp. 225-226.

§3n1. There seem to be two favorite modes of objection. One is to scoff at the primary typological parallel adduced by Parry and his successor Albert Lord, to wit, the living epic traditions preserved by the South Slavic peoples (on which see Lord 1960). The second is to worry about whether Homer was literate or illiterate. I will not stun the reader at this point with massive doses of bibliography documenting these objections.

§4n1. In the field of linguistics, this approach is designated simply as the "comparative method": Meillet 1925.

[**§4n2.**](#) Nagy 1974.229-261.

[**§4n3.**](#) Ibid.

[**§4n4.**](#) Nagy, pp. 140-149. Even from a descriptive point of view, I will consistently argue that Homeric epithets are indeed appropriate to the themes associated with the words that they describe.

[**§4n5.**](#) Nagy 1976b. Rewritten in 1990b Ch. 2.

[**§6n1.**](#) More at [Ch.15 §§7-8](#), where the factor of regional variation also is taken into account. It stands to reason that different poets on different occasions will draw their material from different local traditions and that the poetic versions of what exactly happened in the past will differ from tradition to tradition. The important thing to keep in mind, however, is that variant traditions function as multiforms (cf. [Ch. 3 §2](#)). Regional variations are themselves an aspect of what we call traditional oral poetry (cf. Lord 1960 *passim*). What the poet tells is true or false, depending on where he tells it: the local traditions on which the poet's immediate audience has been reared constitute the ultimate criterion of "truth." Such an ideology is clearly documented in Radloff's study of Kirghiz poetry (1885) and is still visible in Homeric passages that allude to the poet's tailoring the contents of his song to the predilections of his audience; see Svenbro's illuminating discussion (1976.5-73). I should stress that such poetic tailoring need not be interpreted as untraditional: it could just as easily be a matter of adjusting to local traditions. In the case of Homeric Epos, however, the tendency is to avoid localized idiosyncrasies: see the suggestive remarks of Svenbro, pp. 42-43, who correlates this tendency with what he sees as an ongoing process of text fixation. Unlike Svenbro, however, I would emphasize the factor of the **polis** 'city-state' less than the factor of Panhellenism (see [§§14-15 below](#)); within the context of the **polis**, there seems to be ample opportunity for regional variations ([§14n4](#)).

[**§7n1.**](#) On the distinction between fixed and particularized epithets, see Parry 1971 [= 1930] 153-165. In a critique of Parry's formulation (Nagy 1976b.243-244), I made the strategic error of applying the term particularized also to fixed epithets that are restricted to describing one entity. see now Nagy 1990b.22-23.

§7n2. For examples of thematic accuracy in the deployment of epithets in particular and words in general, see [Ch.2](#) and [Ch.5](#) respectively. Consider also my comments on the epithet **korunêtês** 'club wielder' at [Ch.20§11n1](#).

§9n1. Nagler 1974; see also Austin 1975 and Frame 1978.

§9n2. Cf. Pagliaro 1970.39-40 on the theories of Giambattista Vico; also Nagy 1974.11. I have developed the theory more fully at [Ch.2§18](#) and [Ch.5§§18-19](#). In fact, I was tempted to have those paragraphs here, but I finally decided to place them in specific contexts where the point could perhaps be made more strongly.

§10n1. Cf. [Ch.17§9](#).

§10n2. Cf. [§15 below](#).

§10n3. [Ch.17§§8-9](#).

§11n1. More on Hesiod *fr.* 204MW at [Ch.11§§13-15](#).

§12n1. Cf. [Ch.3§§1-2](#), 19.

§12n2. Cf. [Ch.6](#) on lamentation, Ch.11-Ch.15 on praise- and blame-poetry. To go one step further: Homeric Epos even adapts and integrates the formal conventions of actual prayers. See Muellner 1976.

§13n1. See Giovannini 1969.67, who also points out that the areas not included in the world of the Pythian Apollo correspond to the areas not included in the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships* in [Iliad II](#).

§14n1. Snodgrass 1971.421, 435; cf. West 1973.182. See now Snodgrass 1987.

§14n2. Snodgrass, pp. 352, 376, 416-417, 421, 431; cf. West *ibid.*

§14n3. Cf. Rohde [I 125-127](#).

§14n4. In this connection, it is vital to point out that the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are radically different in scope and artistry from the epics of the

so-called Cycle-- namely, the *Cypria*, *Aithiopis*, *Little Iliad*, *Iliou Persis*, *Nostoi*, and *Telegonia* (the fragments of which will be cited consistently from Allen 1912). I rely on the definitive article by Griffin 1977, who demonstrates convincingly the uniqueness of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in relation to the Cyclic poems. Griffin implicitly ascribes this uniqueness to "Homer." Instead, I prefer to stress the factor of Panhellenism: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* seem to be the only epics that ultimately achieved a truly Panhellenic status. To put it another way: I suggest that the Cyclic epics are so different from the two Homeric epics not because they are either more recent or more primitive but rather because they are more local in orientation and diffusion. For example, consider the myth in *Vita Herodotea* 15 (Allen, pp. 202-203) that tells how Homer was commissioned to dictate not only the *Little Iliad* but also a composition called the *Phokais*--when he traveled to Phokaia! On the relationship of the Cycle with the local **ktisis** ('colonization') poetry of various city-states, see [Ch.7§§27-29](#) (esp. [§28n3](#); cf. also [Ch.8§12n2](#)). On the relationship of the Cycle with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, cf. [Ch.3§§1-2](#).

§15n1. It is significant that the proliferation of the alphabet and of the Homeric poems seems to be contemporaneous. As for the context of performance, I cite the international format of the institution known as the **panēguris** 'gathering, festival', on which see Wade-Gery 1952.2-6; one example is the Delian festival as reflected in lines 146-150 of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* and as discussed by [Thucydides 3.104](#). I agree with Wade-Gery's argument that there is also internal evidence for the existence of such institutions within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (*ibid.*), although I cannot agree with other aspects of his presentation.

§15n2. Cf. [§§13-14 above](#).

§15n3. Cf. [Ch.17§§8-9](#); cf. also [Ch.18§4](#).

§15n4. On **kleos** in the sense of "glory" *as conferred by poetry*, see [Ch.1§§2-4](#). The poet is referring to the **kleos** that he will make for the Deliades (named in [H.Apollo 157](#)); note that their **kleos** is destined never to perish (verse 156).

§15n5. On the subject of the **Homēridae/Kreōphuleῖoi** in particular and **rhapsōidoi** in general: Burkert 1972b. Further details at [Ch.9§25](#). On the expression used by **rhapsōidoi** to designate their inherited function, "to recite Homer," see [Ch.6§6n4](#). On the meaning of **rhapsōidos** 'rhapsode', see [Ch.17§10n5](#).

§15n6. More at [Ch.17§§9-13](#).

§15n7. Even the root *ar- in **Homēros** and **Homēridai** (on which see [Ch.17§9](#) and [n2](#)) is thematically appropriate for designating both social and artistic cohesion: [Ch.17§12](#), esp. [n5](#). Here as elsewhere, questions of etymology will enter the discussion. I should note at the outset that I intend to avoid building my arguments on the meanings of names; still, they frequently serve as convenient points of departure for any overall examination of traditional themes associated with the names of mythical figures (cf. [Ch.5§1](#), [Ch.8§9](#), etc.).

§16n1. [Ch.4](#) (esp. §§4-6); also [Ch.5§9](#), [Ch.7](#) (esp. §§4, 24-30).

§16n2. [Ch.6§§26](#) and 30.

§18n1. Hack 1940.481.

§18n2. Snodgrass 1971.191-193, 398-399. Further discussion at [Ch.6§28](#).

§19n1. The important testimony of Athenian drama has been as a rule left out of consideration in this phase of my research; I hope to undertake a separate treatment of this vast area in a future project.

§19n2. [Ch.17§§10-13](#).

Chapter 1

The First Song of Demodokos

§1. Homeric Epos has the power not only to define the hero but to articulate this very power. In my search for evidence in support of such a claim--and this search will extend throughout my presentation--I will of course have to struggle with the overwhelming dimensions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is especially difficult to find an appropriate place to begin. How to approach two such monumental compositions, representing as they do the culmination of perhaps over a thousand years of performer-audience interaction? Already at this point, I stress these important factors of performer and audience, in light of the discoveries made by Milman Parry and Albert Lord about the traditional nature of Homeric composition.^[1] We see at work here an inherited medium where the composition can be simultaneous with performance--or at least, where composition becomes a reality only in performance.^[2] In fact, I find this factor of performance an ultimately suitable point of departure. We are about to examine *Odyssey* viii 72-82, the description of a poet's performance as actually narrated by Homeric Epos. In this description we may discover a vantage point from which we are allowed an instant glimpse into the artistic unity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined.

§2. Unlike Indic epic, where narrative is enclosed within the overall framework of dialogue or dialogue-within-dialogue, oftentimes in accretions of seemingly never-ending inner circles,^[1] Greek epic delivers the narrative directly in the persona of the poet. The invoking of the Muses at the start of a Greek epic is the tag of the poet's own performance. The immediacy of performance, however, is counterbalanced by an attitude of remoteness from composition. The performer feels himself distant enough to intimate that the message of his composition comes not from him but from tradition. As the poet tells the Muses before he launches into the *Catalogue of Ships*:

humeis gar theai este, pareste te, iste te panta,
hêmeis de kleos oion akouomen oude ti idmen

You are goddesses; you are always present, and you know everything;
but we [poets] only hear the **kleos** and know nothing.

II 485-486[2]

Accordingly, the poet invokes the Muses to tell him how it all happened ([II 484](#)). He behaves as an instrument, as it were, in the hands of the Muse, whose message is equated with that of creative tradition. He passes on the **kleos**, let us call it the "glory," of heroes. And yet, the word **kleos** itself betrays the pride of the Hellenic poet through the ages. Etymologically, **kleos** should have meant simply "that which is heard" (from **kluō** 'hear'), and indeed the poet hears **kleos** recited to him by the Muses (again, [II 486](#)). But then it is actually he who recites it to his audience. Here the artist's inherited message about himself is implicit but unmistakable. In a word, the Hellenic poet is the master of **kleos**. "That which is heard," **kleos**, comes to mean "glory" because it is the poet himself who uses the word to designate what he hears from the Muses and what he tells the audience. Poetry confers glory.[\[3\]](#) The conceit of Homeric poetry is that even a Trojan warrior will fight and die in pursuit of **kleos** ... [Achaiôn](#) "the **kleos** of the Achaeans" ([XI 227](#)).[\[4\]](#) If you perform heroic deeds, you have a chance of getting into Achaean epic. The Achaean singer of tales is in control of the glory that may be yours.

§3. As Marcel Detienne has shown in detail,[\[1\]](#) the verb **mi-mnē-skô**, designating the function of the Muses at [II 492](#) (*mnēsaiat'*) and elsewhere, means not so much that the Muses "remind" the poet of what to tell but, rather, that they have the power to put his mind or consciousness in touch with places and times other than his own in order to witness the deeds of heroes (and the doings of gods).[\[2\]](#) He is independent of seeing the here and now; he need only *hear* the **kleos**. For him, a thing like blindness cannot help but serve as a proof, a veritable emblem, of his artistic independence.

§4. Enter Demodokos, the blind poet of the Phaeacians in [Odyssey viii](#). This figure **Dêmódokos** 'received by the **dêmos**'[\[1\]](#) is an appropriate idealization of an artist by the art form of epic. Through the persona of Demodokos, the

epic of the *Odyssey* can express many things about itself as a composition-- far beyond what the medium of performance could let the poet say in his own persona when he invoked his own Muse. As Samuel Bassett has remarked in another connection, "Homer has carefully groomed the Phaeacian bard for his part."^[2] After the Phaeacians have had their fill of food and drink, the time for an evening's entertainment is at hand. The Muse, or perhaps we should say "a Muse," impels the poet Demodokos to sing the "**kleos** [plural] of men" ([klea andrôn: viii 72-73](#)), from a story that had a **kleos** of great impact "at that time":

[oimês tês tot' ara kleos ouranon eurun hikane ...](#)

from a story-thread^[3] that had at that time a **kleos** reaching up to the vast heavens ...

[viii 74](#)

§5. I have not yet reached the point where I can examine what Demodokos then sang. Suffice it now to observe that he performs not just one but three separate compositions in [Odyssey viii](#), all of them pertinent to the themes of the overall *Odyssey*. What is more important for now, the performances of the idealized poet seem to be themselves idealized within the narrative. Outside the narrative, on the other hand, the composition of the *Odyssey* itself is idealized in such a way that it has become unperformable. Not only for the *Odyssey* but for the *Iliad* as well, an important aspect of idealization is amplitude and comprehensiveness. In size and in arrangement, they are truly monumental structures. Between the two of them, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* manage to incorporate and orchestrate something of practically everything that was once thought worth preserving from the Heroic Age. Their monumental scale, however, has far outgrown the earlier and ideal context of performance, namely, an evening's dinner-hour entertainment as described by Odysseus himself before he begins his own narration:

[ê toi men tote kalon akouemen estin aoidou
toioud' hoios hod' esti, theois enalinkios audên.
ou gar egô ge ti phêmi telos chariesteron einai
ê hot' eüphrosunê men echêi kata dêmon hapanta,
daitumones d' ana dômat' akouazôntai aoidou](#)

hēmenoī hexeiēs, para de plēthōsi trapezai
sitou kai kreîon, methu d' ek krētēros aphussôn
oinochoos phoreîisi kai encheiēi depaessi:
touto ti moi kalliston eni phresin eidetai einai.

It is indeed a good thing to listen to a poet
such as this one before us, who is like the gods in speech.
For I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasing[1]
than when mirth[2] holds sway among all the **dēmos**,[3]
and the feasters up and down the house are sitting in order and
listening to the singer,
and beside them the tables are loaded
with bread and meats, and from the mixing bowl the wine-steward
draws the wine and carries it about and fills the cups.
This seems to my own mind to be the best of occasions.

ix 3-11

The dinner-hour performer described here is none other than Demodokos himself. By contrast, the *Odyssey* acknowledges its own monumental scale with the narrative that Odysseus is about to perform, starting at Book ix. As the inner narrative of his own adventures by Odysseus begins to exceed--by way of its actual length--the span of an evening's entertainment, the outer narrative has Alkinoos urge the inner narrator to continue with the following words:

nux d' hêde mala makrē athesphatos: oude pô hôrē
heudein en megarôi: su de moi lege theskela erga.
kai ken es êô dian anaschoimên, hote moi su
tlaiês en megarôi ta sa kêdea muthêasthai.

This night is very long--immeasurably so. It is not yet time to sleep in the palace. But go on telling me about your wondrous deeds.

And I myself could hold out until the bright dawn, if only you could bear to tell me, here in the palace, of your sufferings.[4]

xi 373-376

What goes for the adventures of Odysseus in the inner narrative goes also for the entire composition: the *Odyssey* itself is here in effect justifying the evolution of its own dimensions. The idealized performances of Demodokos, on the other hand, have retained and thus in a sense compensated for this element of dinner-hour entertainment that had been lost in the idealized compositions of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. Of course, it cannot be emphasized enough that both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* must have evolved within the medium of composition during performance, performance during composition. The paradox is that the compositions were developed to the point where they came to defy the traditional format of their performance.[\[5\]](#)

§6. Earlier, I had referred to the "artistic unity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined." The wording was meant to convey what I consider the ultimate token of self-reflexiveness in Homeric poetry. The *Odyssey*, in the words of David Monro, "never repeats or refers to any incident related in the *Iliad*."
[\[1\]](#) Denys Page amplifies:[\[2\]](#)

It is as if the Odyssean poet were wholly ignorant of that particular story which is told in the *Iliad*. Nowhere is there any allusion to the wrath of Achilles or to the death of Hector, or indeed to any other incident, large or small, described in the *Iliad*. Yet the *Odyssey* often pauses to narrate some part of the Trojan story and refers freely to a variety of older and contemporary Epic poems--*always excluding the Iliad*. There is Helen's tale of Odysseus' entry into the city of Troy in disguise ([4.235ff.](#)); there is Menelaus' story of the wooden horse ([4.266ff.](#)); we hear of Odysseus' valour in battle over Achilles' corpse ([5.309ff.](#)), and of the rivalry between Odysseus and Ajax ([11.543ff.](#)); Nestor tells at some length of a quarrel between Agamemnon and Menelaus ([3.103ff.](#)); Demodocus sings of a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles ([8.74ff.](#)). Are we seriously asked to believe that a poet (or poets) who knew the *Iliad* might compose a poem of 12,000 lines concerning one of the *Iliad*'s greatest heroes without ever showing the slightest awareness of that poem?

Page argues that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are thus unconnected. And yet, it is precisely the size of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* that forces me to believe

the opposite.^[3] Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are so ambitiously comprehensive that their sheer size would make it seem inevitable for them to overlap in their treatment of at least some events related to Troy--unless there was a deliberate avoidance of such overlapping. If the avoidance was indeed deliberate, it would mean that the *Odyssey* displays an awareness of the *Iliad* by steering clear of it. Or rather, it may be a matter of evolution. Perhaps it was part of the Odyssean tradition to veer away from the Iliadic. Be that as it may, the traditions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* constitute a totality with the complementary distribution of their narratives and, to me, there seems to be something traditionally self-conscious about all this. It is as if there were a traditional suppression of anything overtly Iliadic in the *Odyssey*.

§7. What I have offered so far, of course, is just an intuition. Perhaps I can be more convincing if I find positive rather than negative evidence. What I need is a specific instance where the *Odyssey* unmistakably alludes to an Iliadic scene without duplicating it. Monro's Law would be violated only by duplication, not by allusion. For example, the passing reference in *Odyssey* xxiv 77 to mixing the ashes of Achilles and Patroklos is not a duplication of two other references to the same mixing in *Iliad* XXIII 91-92 and 243-244. Even if we were to accept the argument that Patroklos had been perhaps an exclusively Iliadic figure,^[1] the parallelism of references fails to overturn Monro's Law. Inside our *Iliad*, the references to the mixing of ashes are themselves allusions to future events that are projected as occurring outside the *Iliad*. One of the artistic triumphs of our *Iliad*, as Cedric Whitman has shown, is that it makes the painful death of Achilles ever present by allusion inside the *Iliad*, even though the actual death scene lies in the future, outside the *Iliad*.^[2] The future for the *Iliad* is a suitable past for the *Odyssey*.

§8. There is, however, someone who could bridge the gap between past and future. The poet has such powers, granted by the Muses. The poet of the *Theogony*, for example, says that they breathed into him a wondrous voice:

... hina kleioimi ta t' essomena pro t' eonta

... so that I may give kleos to the future and the past

It is at this point that I am at last ready to consider the first performance of Demodokos, poet of the Phaeacians. He is singing the [klea andrôn 'kleos](#) [plural] of men' ([viii 73](#)), and the **kleos** of his song reached all the way up to the heavens ([viii 74](#)). Perhaps this **kleos** also bridges the gap between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*:

[autar epei posios kai edêtuos ex eron hento,](#)
[Mous' ar' aoidon anêken aeidemenai klea andrôn,](#)
[oimês tês tot' ara kleos ouranon eurun hikane,](#)
[neikos Odussêos kai Pêleïdeô Achilêos,](#)
[hôs pote dêrisanto theôn en daiti thaleiêi](#)
[ekpaglois epeessin, anax d' andrôn Agamemnôn](#)
[chaire noîi, ho t' aristoi Achaiôn dêrioônto.](#)
[hôs gar hoi chreiôn muthêsato Phoibos Apollôn](#)
[Puthoi en êgathei, hoth' huperbê laïnon oudon](#)
[chrêsomenos: tote gar rha kulindeto pêmatos archê](#)
[Trôsi te kai Danaoisi Dios megalou dia boulas.](#)

But when they had their fill of drinking and eating,
the Muse impelled the singer to sing the [glories](#) [[kleos plural](#)] of men,
from a story-thread which had at that time a [glory](#) [[kleos](#)] reaching the
vast heavens:

the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles son of Peleus,
how they once fought at a sumptuous feast of the gods,
with terrible words, and the king of men, Agamemnon,
rejoiced in his mind that the best of the Achaeans were fighting.

Thus had oracular Phoebus Apollo prophesied to him,
at holy Delphi, when he had crossed the stone threshold
to ask the oracle. For then it was that the beginning of pain started
rolling

upon both Trojans and Danaans, on account of the plans of great Zeus.

§9. These verses have been a puzzle for ancient as well as modern exegetes.
The passage was already a landmark of literary controversy, a **zêtêma**, at

the time of Aristarchus.^[1] Nowhere else in attested Greek epic do we find a tradition reporting an overt **neīkos** 'quarrel' between Odysseus and Achilles, which is described here in words appropriate to the baneful **neīkos** between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad I*. The only direct trace of any altercation between Odysseus and Achilles appears in surviving fragments of the *Syndeipnoi* "Banqueters" by Sophocles (*frr.* 562-571 Pearson).^[2] The playwright, in the opinion of such analysts as Peter Von der Mühl and Wolfgang Kullmann, must have derived the theme of the altercation from a scene in the epic Cycle, somewhere in the middle of the *Cypria*.^[3] The theory goes further; the **neīkos** in *Odyssey viii* is supposed to have been based on the same purported scene in the *Cypria*. In the middle of the Proclus summary of the *Cypria* (p. 104.23-24 Allen), however, we find only that Achilles had a quarrel with Agamemnon over not being invited to a feast of the Achaeans at Tenedos. Accordingly, Von der Mühl and Kullmann adjust their theory; Odysseus must have been featured in the *Cypria* as taking the side of Agamemnon and goading a recalcitrant Achilles to rejoin the Achaean expedition (cf. Sophocles *fr.* 566).

§10. It would require separate argumentation to refute the notion that our *Odyssey* postdated the *Cypria* and even derived material from it.^[1] What is more important for now, the theory that the **neīkos** 'quarrel' scene of *Odyssey viii* was modeled on a **neīkos** scene in the *Cypria* fails to account for the precise manner in which the theme is treated by Demodokos. The form and content of *Odyssey viii 75-81* are noticeably tailored to suit the beginning of an epic poem.^[2] The unitarians Walter Marg and Klaus Rüter go even further, in pointing out that these verses in *Odyssey viii* are eerily reminiscent of the way in which the *Iliad* itself begins.^[3] There too we find a programmatic correlation of the following themes: Achilles, son of Peleus (*I 1 ~ viii 75*); Agamemnon, king of men (*I 7 ~ viii 77*); the beginning of grief for Trojans and Achaeans alike (*I 2-5 ~ viii 81-82*); the involvement of Apollo (*I 8-9 ~ viii 79-82*); the Will of Zeus (*I 5 ~ viii 82*). If indeed verses 75-82 of *Odyssey viii* are based on a scene in another epic, then an incident which is supposed to occur in the middle of the *Cypria* does not seem a likely traditional model. At best, we can rescue the relevance of the *Cypria* here by imagining some lost epic tradition that began with a dispute between Achilles and Odysseus and to which both *Cypria* and *Odyssey* had alluded.

§11. Marg and Rüter would argue that the **neīkos** 'quarrel' between Achilles and Odysseus in *Odyssey viii* is a pastiche actually based on the opening of our *Iliad*, where Achilles and Agamemnon have their unforgettable **neīkos**. [1] To support this interpretation, they adopt George M. Calhoun's theory of the misunderstood oracle. Agamemnon was happy, the reasoning goes, because Apollo had told him that Troy would be taken only after the "best of the Achaeans" had a quarrel; at the time, he supposedly did not realize that the oracle had meant Achilles and himself, rather than Achilles and Odysseus. [2] I agree that Agamemnon must have misunderstood Apollo's oracle, but I disagree with Calhoun's theory about the actual misunderstanding. I find this theory hard to reconcile with Rüter's own reconstruction of the traditional cause for such a quarrel. As Rüter argues, [3] the thematic conventions of Epos pitted the **aristeiā** 'prestige'[4] of Achilles against that of Odysseus in the form of a quarrel over whether Troy would be captured by might or artifice respectively. The scholia to [viii 75](#) and 77 suggest an epic tradition that has Achilles advocating might and Odysseus, artifice as the means that will prove successful in capturing Troy. [5] We can also infer from the scholia (A) to [Iliad IX 347](#) that Aristarchus apparently considered this Iliadic verse to be an allusion to just such a tradition. The context of [IX 347](#) is this: Achilles is rejecting the pleas of Odysseus that he rescue the hard-pressed Achaeans; Odysseus and the other Achaean leaders, Achilles tells him, should devise a way to keep the enemy's fire from reaching the Achaean ships. Achilles seems to be saying: "you come to me now that you need my might; well, just leave me alone and go see how far your artifice will get you!" [6] If might is more important than artifice, then Achilles is more important than Odysseus. The quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles would have centered on who is the "best of the Achaeans," just like the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles. [7]

§12. The disadvantages to Calhoun's theory of the misunderstood oracle become more apparent: (1) Agamemnon would be ignoring his own heroic worth if he understood Odysseus and Achilles to be the "best of the Achaeans," and (2) such a misunderstanding would result in slighting the heroic worth of Odysseus within the *Odyssey* itself. [1] It would then be an absurdity for Odysseus to praise the compositions of Demodokos, as he does at [viii 487-488](#) and 496-498.

§13. My suspicion is that the oracle was not misunderstood in its prophecy of a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus specifically. The reference to Achilles and Odysseus as the "best of the Achaeans" at [viii 78](#) may have served to reveal that the poetic repertory of Demodokos is in control of two distinct themes that permeate the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*--themes that define the central hero of each epic.

Notes

§1n1. See especially Lord 1960, *The Singer of Tales*. The papers of Milman Parry have been collected by Adam Parry, 1971.

§1n2. In her far-reaching survey of traditional "oral" poetry as attested among the various peoples of the world, Finnegan 1977.52-87 adduces instances where composition seems to precede performance and where composer and performer are distinct (cf. Old Provençal *trobador* 'composer' compared to *joglar* 'performer'). I must say that Finnegan's synthesis (1977), much as I admire it for its breadth, cannot replace Lord's synthesis (1960), which remains the definitive study of "oral" poetry in depth.

§2n1. Part I of Dumézil's *Mythe et épopée* I (1968) can serve as a convenient introduction to the nature of Indic epic.

§2n2. I will consistently refer to the books of the *Iliad/Odyssey* in upper-/lower-case roman numerals. My translations are based on those of Lattimore 1951/1965, with adjustments.

§2n3. For an extensive discussion of Greek **kleos** and its Indic cognate *srávas* as "glory" conferred by the "hearing" of poetry (Indo-European root *kleu- 'hear'), I cite my earlier work on the subject, hidden within a comparative study of Greek and Indic meter (Nagy 1974.231-255). See also Schmitt 1967.61-102. For a parallel semantic development in yet another Indo-European language group besides Greek and Indic, we may adduce the evidence of Slavic, where *slava* means "glory" while *slovo* means both "word" and "epic tale." As Puhvel (1976.263) observes, both *slava* and *slovo* are independently derived from the same root *kleu- 'hear' as in

Greek **kleos**. It does not follow, however, that *slava* came to mean "glory" without the intermediacy of poetic tradition: compare the discussion of Slavic names with second element *-slav* in Schmitt, p. 89. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that the Indo-European root *kleu- itself had been a traditional word not only for "hear" in general but also "hear poetry" in particular (cf. Schmitt, pp. 90-93, 202, etc.). See now [Foreword §16n16](#).

§2n4. I find it significant that this mention of **kleos** comes shortly after an invocation of the Muses ([XI 218](#)). The goddesses are being asked a question: who was the first hero on the Trojan side to be killed by Agamemnon at this point in the narrative ([XI 219-220](#))? The answer follows as the narrative resumes: it was Iphidamas ([XI 221-231](#)). And the hero's motive for fighting on the Trojan side is indicated with these words: meta kleos hiket' Achaiôn 'he came in pursuit of the **kleos** of the Achaeans' ([XI 227](#)).

§3n1. Detienne 1973.9-16, 20; also Vernant 1959.

§3n2. When Hektor says that there should be a **mnêmosunê** 'reminder, memory' of his setting fire to the ships of the Achaeans ([VIII 181](#)), he is in effect saying that this moment should be recorded by epic. This is precisely what happens at [XVI 112-113](#), where the Muses are specially invoked to tell "how it was that the fire first fell upon the ships of the Achaeans." On **Mnêmosunê** personified, who is mother of the Muses, see [Hesiod Th. 98-103](#) and the discussion at [Ch.6§5](#). The word **Moûsa** itself (from *mont-ia) may well stem from the same root *men- that we find in **mi-mnê-skô** and **mnê-mosunê**: Nagy 1974.249-250, 253n24.

§4n1. The meaning is made explicit at [xiii 27-28](#), where Demodokos is described as **lâoîsi tetîmenos** 'honored by the people'. On the function of the **dêmos** 'district' as the social setting for the poet's activity, see [xvii 381-387](#), as discussed at [Ch.12§13](#). The poet **Phêmios** also has an expressive name, derived from **phêmê** 'prophetic utterance' (as at [ii 35](#)). The meaning of **Phêmios** is likewise made explicit, at [xxii 376](#): he is described as **poluphêmos** 'having many prophetic utterances' (for the semantics, compare the discussion of **poluainos** at [Ch.12§19n1](#)). Note too his expressive patronymic **Terpiadês** ([xxii 330](#)), derived from **terpô** 'give pleasure'. This verb conventionally designates *in poetry* the effects *of poetry*

(as at [i 347](#), where Phemios is said to **terpein** 'give pleasure' to his audience). Compare also the patronymics **Polutherseidê̄s** ([Ch.14§11](#)) and **Harmonidê̄s** ([Ch.17§11](#)). For more on Demodokos and Phemios, see Rüter 1969.233-234.

§4n2. Bassett 1938.118.

§4n3. The prehistory of the word **oimê** 'story' reveals that it had conveyed the imagery of weaving (hence "story thread"): Durante 1976.176-179 (*pace* Chantraine [III 783-784](#)).

§5n1. On the implications of **chariesteron** 'more pleasing [having more **kharis**]', see [Ch.2§13n2](#); also [Ch.5§39](#).

§5n2. On the theme of **euphrosunê** 'mirth' in the community: [Ch.5§39](#).

§5n3. On the **dêmos** as the community/audience of **Dêmodokos**: [§4n1](#).

§5n4. For other passages where the audience stays awake far into the night for the sake of listening to tales, see [xv 390-401](#), [xvii 513-521](#), [xxiii 308-309](#). Cf. Maehler 1963.28-29.

§5n5. Kirk (1962.281) compares the size of the Homeric compositions with the "leap from the largeish pot to the perfectly colossal one" in the evolution of monumental amphoras/craters during the Geometric Period. What interests me in this comparison is that the colossal size of a utensil defies its own utility.

§6n1. Monro 1901.325.

§6n2. Page 1955.158.

§6n3. Cf. the arguments of Kirk 1962.299-300.

§7n1. Cf. Dihle 1970.159, with bibliography.

§7n2. Whitman 1958 chapter IX.

§9n1. See Lehrs 1882.174.

§9n2. For an introduction: Pearson 1917 [II 198-201](#) (cf. Radt 1977.425-430).

§9n3. Von der Mühll 1954.1-5, Kullmann 1960.100, 272, etc. Despite my disagreements, I should note my special admiration for Kullmann's important work.

§10n1. See further at [Ch.3§1](#).

§10n2. Cf. Notopoulos 1964.33.

§10n3. Marg 1956.16-29, Rüter 1969.247-254. For a guide to the recent controversies between unitarians and analysts, see Fenik 1964, esp. pp. 8-15, 30-35.

§11n1. Marg ibid., Rüter ibid.

§11n2. Calhoun 1937.11.

§11n3. Rüter 1969.249-251.

§11n4. For an introduction to the complex subject of **aristeiā**, the prestige that a hero gets from his grandest moments in epic narrative, see Schroeter 1950 and Müller 1966.

§11n5. See further at [Ch.3§§5-8](#). Of course, the *Iliad* itself acknowledges that Troy was to be captured by way of artifice, as inspired by Athena ([XV 70-71](#)).

§11n6. See Rüter, p. 250. I postpone a detailed look at the passages concerned until [Ch.3§§5, 7](#).

§11n7. See further at [Ch.3§8](#).

§12n1. I offer my own interpretation of Agamemnon's misunderstanding at [Ch.4§7](#).

Chapter 2

The Best of the Achaeans

§1. It is an overall Iliadic theme that Achilles is "best of the Achaeans," as I will now try to show.^[1] The title is hotly contested. The central grievance of Achilles in the *Iliad* is that Agamemnon has dishonored him, and in this context the hero of the *Iliad* is regularly called **aristos Akhaiôn** 'best of the Achaeans' ([I.244](#), 412; [XVI.271](#), 274).^[2] During his quarrel with Achilles, Agamemnon, too, is specifically described as one who lays claim to the title **aristos Akhaiôn**:

hos nun pollon aristos Achaiôn euchetai einai

who boasts that he is now by far the best of the Achaeans

[I.91](#)

hos meg' aristos Achaiôn euchetai einai

who boasts that he is by far the best of the Achaeans

[II.82](#)

The first of these verses is spoken by Achilles himself, whose very actions in [Iliad I](#) had challenged Agamemnon's claim.

§2. When the great *Catalogue* of [Iliad II](#), recounting the resources of each major Achaean hero, reaches Agamemnon, the men who followed him to Troy are described as polu pleistoi kai aristoi 'by far the most numerous and the best [aristos plural]' ([II.577](#)). Later, Agamemnon himself is said to excel:

hounek' aristos eên, polu de pleistous age laous

because he was the best [aristos], and he led the most numerous host

II 580

The tradition here grudgingly assigns him the title of "best" by virtue of his being the leader of the "best." But the *Catalogue* comes to a close with the words:

houtoi ar' hêgemones Danaôn

So now, these were the leaders of the Danaans.

II 760

The poet then follows up with a question:

tis t' ar tôn och' aristos eên, su moi ennepe Mousa

Who, then, was by far the best [aristos]? Tell me, Muse!

II 761

The simple question is then expanded into a compound question: who was the best among the Achaeans *and among their horses* (II 762)? The Muse's answer is an elaborate exercise in ring composition. First, let us look at the horses: those of Eumelos were best (II 763-767). Then the men: well, Ajax was best [**aristos**] (II 768)--that is, so long as Achilles persisted in his anger and refrained from fighting:

ophr' Achileus ménien: ho gar polu phertatos éen

so long as Achilles was angry; for he was by far the best [phertatos].
[1]

II 769

Which brings us back to the horses: those of Achilles were actually the best after all (II 770). But since Achilles was out of sight when the first superlative came around, his horses were out of mind. Achilles, however, is never out of mind in the *Iliad* when it comes to asking who is best of the Achaeans.[2] The great Ajax, then, is here being demoted from the best to

the second best of the Achaeans by what seems to be premeditated afterthought. He also gets the same sort of treatment from the epic tradition in *Iliad VII*, in a passage that deserves detailed attention.

§3. Hektor is about to challenge *Achaiôn hos tis aristos* 'whoever is best [aristos] of the Achaeans' to a duel ([VII 50](#)).^[1] He boasts that this unnamed Achaean will be killed and thus become part of an epic story glorifying the deeds of Hektor. The hapless unknown Achaean, by performing an *aristeiâ*,^[2] would become part of a *kleos*, but the *kleos* would belong to the winner, Hektor. Here is how Hektor says it:

*kai pote tis eipêisi kai opsigonô anthrôpôn,
nêi poluklêidi pleôn epi oinopa ponton:
"andros men tode sêma palai kataethnêîtos,
hon pot' aristeuonta katektane phaidimos Hektôr."
hôs pote tis ereei: to d' emon kleos ou pot' oleitai.*

And some day, someone from a future generation will say, as he is sailing on a many-benched ship over the wine-dark sea: "This is the tomb of a man who died a long time ago, who was performing his *aristeiâ* when illustrious Hektor killed him." That is what someone will say, and my *kleos* will never perish.

[VII 87-91](#)

The tomb of this unknown Achaean challenger would be at the Hellespont ([VII 86](#)), clearly visible to those who sail by. And it so happens that epic tradition assigns such a tomb to Achilles himself:

*aktêi epi prouchousêi, epi platei Hellêspontôi,
hôs ken têlephanês ek pontophin andrasin eiê
tois hoi nun gegaasi kai hoi metopisthen esontai.*

on a jutting headland, by the broad Hellespont, so that it may be bright from afar for men coming from the sea, those who are now and those who will be in the future.^[3]

It is Achilles who should have answered Hektor's challenge to the one who is best of the Achaeans. This is the hero whose father had taught him "to be best [**aristos**] always" ([aien aristuein: XI 784](#)). Achilles will die, yes, and his ashes will indeed be enshrined at the Hellespont. But, ironically, it is Hektor who will be killed by Achilles.[\[4\]](#) It is Hektor who will become part of an epic story glorifying the deeds of Achilles. By performing his fatal **aristeia**, Hektor will become part of a **kleos**, as he says it at [VII 91](#), but the **kleos** will belong to the winner, Achilles.[\[5\]](#) The *Iliad* belongs to Achilles. It is to Achilles that the Iliadic tradition assigns the **kleos** that will never perish. Achilles himself says it:

ôleto men moi nostos, atar kleos aphthiton estai

I have lost a safe return home [**nostos**], but I will have unfailing glory.
[**kleos**].[\[6\]](#)

[IX 413](#)

We may have lost countless other epic compositions, but the *Iliad* has survived and endured. The confidence of the *Iliad* in its eternal survival is the confidence of the master singer. For Achilles, the **kleos** of the *Iliad* tradition should be an eternal consolation for losing a safe return home, a **nostos**. There is also irony here for Achilles. Hektor's insulting boast hits the mark in that Achilles will be killed and will be buried where Hektor's words predict. But the greatest irony is reserved for Ajax, the second best of the Achaeans. Before we can get to him, however, other things have yet to happen in [Iliad VII](#).

§4. After Hektor issues his challenge, no one dares to respond but Menelaos. If no one takes up the challenge, he says in the form of a public reproach,[\[1\]](#) it will be a subject of future public reproach as well for the Achaeans ([VII 96-97](#)),[\[2\]](#) and that will be a "thing without **kleos**" ([aklees: VII 100](#)).[\[3\]](#) The Achaeans had better behave as heroes, for Epos is keeping them under observation. As Menelaos prepares to fight Hektor, the poet of the *Iliad* turns away from the audience of his performance and addresses directly the persona in his composition:

entha ke toi, Menelae, phanê biotoio teleutê
Hektoros en palamêisin, epeï polu pherteros êen

At that point, Menelaos, the end of your life would have appeared, in the clutches of Hektor, since he was better by far.

VII 104-105

What prevented the death of Menelaos from appearing here in the narrative was the intervention of his fellow Achaeans. In particular, his brother Agamemnon is holding Menelaos back, urging him not to fight "a better man" (ameinoni phôti: VII 111). Menelaos is told that even Achilles would not fight, "and he is far better than you" (ho per seo pollon ameinôn: VII 114).

§5. At this point, Nestor too reproaches the Achaeans (VII 123-161).[1] His words are in fact so compelling that all nine of the "pan-Achaean champions" (aristêes Panachaiôn: VII 159) volunteer straightway to face Hektor. They are Agamemnon, Diomedes, the Ajaxes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Eurypylos, Thoas, and finally, Odysseus (VII 162-168). Lots are drawn to narrow the list down to one. The Achaeans are meanwhile praying that the winner of the lottery should be Ajax or Diomedes or Agamemnon (VII 177-180). The effect of the prayer on the narrative is that our attention is narrowed down to three out of nine. Of these three, we have already seen Agamemnon claiming the title "best of the Achaeans." Diomedes, too, gets this title, but only in Book V of the *Iliad*. Book V is his finest hour, his **aristeiâ**, and this is where he is twice called **aristos Akhaiôn** 'best of the Achaeans.' Both times, however, the specific moment is sinister. In one passage, the archer Pandaros has just shot Diomedes with an arrow, and he is boasting that he has wounded the "best of the Achaeans" (aristos Akhaiôn: V 103).[2] For an audience brought up on the tradition that Achilles himself was killed by the arrow of another archer,[3] the superlative of this boast has an ominous ring in the *Iliad*. In the other passage, the goddess Dione is consoling her daughter Aphrodite, who has just been wounded by Diomedes (V 406-415). He should beware, she says, lest a man stronger than her daughter should fight him (V 411); then Diomedes would be killed and his wife would have to mourn him, the "best of the Achaeans" (ariston Akhaiôn: V 414). Elsewhere in his **aristeiâ**,

Diomedes is described only one other time as "best" ([ariston](#): [V 839](#)), but not specifically as the best of the Achaeans. So much for Diomedes, whose heroic momentum is finally thwarted by Zeus himself at [VIII 130-171](#).^[4] As for Agamemnon, he, too, gets the general epithet "best" one other time besides the instances already discussed. This time, the setting is Book XI, the setting for his own **aristeiâ**. And here, too, the specific moment is sinister. Hektor has just wounded Agamemnon, and he is exulting that his enemy, "the best man," has withdrawn from the fighting ([ristos](#): [XI 288](#)).^[5] So much, then, for Agamemnon.

§6. We can finally turn to Ajax, second best to Achilles among all the Achaeans. Here is a man destined by epic tradition to lose the most important contest of his heroic existence, a contest of **aristeiâ** with Odysseus.^[1] But the *Iliad* allows him to win a lottery this time. His winning changes nothing in the course of oncoming events, since Ajax and Hektor then proceed to fight to a draw. At the end of their inconclusive duel, Hektor even compliments Ajax by calling him "best of the Achaeans" ([Achaiôn phertatos](#): [VII 289](#)), on the grounds that he excels in both might and artifice ([VII 288-289](#)). Ajax himself had boasted of his excellence in these very qualities ([VII 197-198](#)).^[2] Since the audience has already been made aware that Ajax is second best, Hektor's words and the outcome of a draw have the effect of presaging the outcome of a fatal defeat for Hektor when he comes to confront Achilles himself. As for Ajax, he will fight on, even as the situation of the Achaeans keeps getting worse and worse in the face of Hektor's onslaught. But finally even Ajax is turned back by Zeus himself ([XI 544](#); [XVI 102](#), 119-121).^[3] The stage is now set for Hektor's confrontation with Achilles--or with whoever must stand in for Achilles.^[4]

§7. Besides Diomedes, Agamemnon, Ajax, and Achilles, no other Achaean in the *Iliad* gets the epithet "best of the Achaeans."^[1] Others also may be best, but only in categories that are restricted as subdivisions of the Achaeans. Thus Periphas may be "best of the Aetolians" ([V 843](#)), Kalkhas may be "best of the bird-watching seers" ([I 69](#)), and Teukros may be "best of the Achaeans in archery" ([XIII 313-314](#)). Similarly, in the Games of Book XXIII, different Achaeans turn out to be best in different athletic events. Thus Diomedes is best at driving the chariot ([XXIII 357](#)), Epeios is best at boxing ([XXIII 669](#)), and Agamemnon is best at spear throwing, as

Achilles himself acknowledges ([XXIII 891](#)). Such a restricted acknowledgment, however, is all that Agamemnon will ever get from Achilles in the *Iliad*.

§8. There are two isolated instances that at first seem like exceptions to the proposition that only four Achaean heroes vie for the epithet "best of the Achaeans" in the *Iliad*. In one passage, Menelaos is telling Antilokhos the ghastly news of Patroklos' death:

[êdê men se kai auton oīomai eisoroônta](#)
[gignôskein hoti pêma theos Danaoisi kulindei,](#)
[nikê de Trôôn: pephatai d' ôristos Achaiôn,](#)
[Patroklos, megalê de pothê Danaoisi tetuktai.](#)

I think that you already see, and that you realize,
that a god is letting roll a pain upon the Danaans,
and that victory belongs to the Trojans: the best [aristos] of the
Achaeans has been killed,
Patroklos, that is; and a great loss has been inflicted on the Danaans.

[XVII 687-690](#)

Patroklos, however, had not vied overtly with Achilles for the title "best of the Achaeans." Rather, he became the actual surrogate of Achilles, his alter ego.[\[1\]](#) The death of Patroklos is a function of his being the **therapôn** of Achilles: this word **therapôn** is a prehistoric Greek borrowing from the Anatolian languages (most likely sometime in the second millennium B.C.), where it had meant "ritual substitute."[\[2\]](#) In death, the role of Patroklos becomes identified with that of Achilles, as Cedric Whitman has eloquently reasoned.[\[3\]](#) The death of Patroklos inside the *Iliad* foreshadows the death of Achilles outside the *Iliad*.[\[4\]](#) At the very beginning of his fatal involvement, the Patroklos figure had immediately attracted an epithet otherwise appropriate to the prime antagonists of the *Iliad*. It is Achilles and Hektor who are appropriately isos Arêi 'equal to Ares' in the *Iliad*,[\[5\]](#) except for the one time when Patroklos leaves the tent of Achilles and comes out of seclusion:

[ekmolen isos Arêi, kakou d' ara hoi pelen archê](#)

He [Patroklos] came out, equal to Ares, and that was the beginning of his doom.[\[6\]](#)

[XI 604](#)

When Achilles recalls the prophecy that the "best [**aristos**] of the Myrmidons" will die while he is still alive ([XVIII 9-11](#)), he is under the spell of a premonition that Patroklos has just been killed. Within the *Iliad*, however, the "best of the Achaeans" is surely also the "best of the Myrmidons," in that the Myrmidons of Achilles are a subcategory in relation to the Achaeans. By dying, Patroklos gets the titles "best of the Myrmidons" and "best of the Achaeans" because he has taken upon himself not only the armor but also the heroic identity of Achilles.[\[7\]](#) The death of Achilles is postponed beyond the *Iliad* by the death of Patroklos.

§9. The other isolated instance that seems at first to be out of step with the rest of the *Iliad* occurs in Book X, the *Doloneia*. The Achaeans are deliberating about who should accompany Diomedes on a special expedition against the Trojans; both Ajaxes volunteer, as well as Meriones, Antilokhos, Menelaos, and, finally, Odysseus ([X 228-232](#)). Agamemnon at this point tells Diomedes to choose the "best" hero out of the group (ariston: [X 236](#)) and not to pick someone inferior for reasons of etiquette, not even if the inferior one should be "more kinglike" (basileuteros: [X 239](#)).

Agamemnon's motive is made clear by the narrative: "he feared for blond Menelaos" ([X 240](#)). For the second time now, we see Menelaos being spared from death. Without hesitation, Diomedes then names Odysseus, with whom he is sure to return in safety and who "excels at thinking" (perioide nōsai: [X 247](#)).[\[1\]](#) If that were all that there was to it, Odysseus might seem to be eligible for the title "best of the Achaeans." But at this point the words of Odysseus himself break in:

Tudeïdē, mêt' ar me mal' ainee mêtē ti neikei:
eidosi gar toi tauta met' Argeiois agoreueis

Son of Tydeus! Give me neither too much praise nor too much blame;
[\[2\]](#)
you are saying these things in the presence of Argives who know.

It is as if he were saying: "the Achaeans are aware of the tradition, so please do not exaggerate."^[3] With the words of Odysseus himself, the epic tradition of the *Iliad* has pointedly taken Odysseus out of contention.^[4] And the contention is here expressed by **neikeô** (*neikei*: [X 249](#)), a verb derived from the same noun **neîkos** that was used to designate the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus in the first song of Demodokos (*neikos*: [viii 75](#)).^[5]

§10. In contrast to the *Iliad*, it is an overall theme of the *Odyssey* that Odysseus is indeed **aristas Akhaiôn** 'best of the Achaeans'. In its elaboration of this theme, as I will try to show, the *Odyssey* deploys subtle references not only to a *Doloneia* tradition in particular^[1] but also to an Iliadic tradition in general.

§11. In the *First Nekuia* of [Odyssey xi](#), when Odysseus meets the shade of Achilles, he addresses Achilles as "best of the Achaeans" (*phertat' Achaiôn*: [xi 478](#)). But the *Odyssey* then has Achilles saying that he would rather be alive and the lowliest of serfs than to be dead and the kingliest of shades ([xi 489-491](#)). As Klaus Rüter sees it,^[1] Achilles seems ready to trade places with Odysseus, whose safe homecoming will be marked by a painful transitional phase at the very lowest levels of the social order. The words of Achilles in the *First Nekuia* are ironically conjuring up the glorious days of the *Iliad* when he had said:

[ôleto men moi nostos, atar kleos aphthiton estai](#)

I have lost a safe return home [**nostos**], but I will have unfailing glory [**kleos**].

The destiny of the *Odyssey* is that Odysseus shall have a **nostos** 'safe return home'.^[2] From the retrospective vantage point of the *Odyssey*, Achilles would trade his **kleos** for a **nostos**. It is as if he were now ready to trade an *Iliad* for an *Odyssey*. By contrast, at a moment when Odysseus is sure that he will perish in the stormy sea, he wishes that he had died at Troy ([v 308-311](#)):

... kai meu kleos êgon Achaioi

... and then the Achaeans would have carried on my kleos.

v 311

§12. If Achilles has no **nostos** in the *Iliad*, does it follow that Odysseus has no **kleos** in the *Odyssey*? How can someone have the **kleos** of the Achaeans if he calls someone else the "best of the Achaeans"? As in the *Doloneia*, Odysseus again seems to be taking himself out of contention--this time by giving the title to Achilles, at [xi 478](#). Also at [xi 550-551](#), he calls Ajax the most heroic Achaean "next to Achilles" ([met' amumona Pêleiôna: xi 551](#)). But Odysseus can afford to be generous in spirit to the two most heroic Achaeans of the *Iliad* tradition; the *Odyssey* will make him the most heroic Achaean in the *Odyssey*.

§13. In the *Second Nekuia* of [Odyssey xxiv](#) (15-202), the narrative again looks back to an *Iliad* tradition and beyond. We find here the shades of Achilles, Patroklos, Antilokhos, Ajax, and Agamemnon. Achilles himself concedes that Agamemnon too has left behind a **kleos** for the future ([xxiv 33](#)). Agamemnon in turn says that Achilles will have **kleos** for all time ([xxiv 93-94](#)); he adds that his own **nostos** was sinister, that it resulted in an unheroic death ([xxiv 95-97](#)). At this point, the retrospective preoccupation switches from *Iliad* to *Odyssey*. The shades of Amphimedon and the other suitors arrive in the underworld, and Amphimedon retells the Revenge of Odysseus ([xxiv 121-190](#)). The story covers the heroic deeds of Odysseus, what amounts to his **kleos**, in the second half of the *Odyssey*. When the retrospective tale is done, the Agamemnon figure speaks again, and his effusive words function as a song of praise not only for Odysseus, to whom they are addressed, but also for Penelope:[\[1\]](#)

olbie Laertao paï, polumêchan' Odusseu,
ê ara sun megalêi aretêi ektêso akoitin:
hôs agathai phrenes êsan amumoni Pênelopeiêi,
kourêi Ikariou: hôs eu memnêt' Odusêos,
andros kouridiou. tôi hoi kleos ou pot' oleitai
hês aretêis, teuxousi d' epichthonioisin aoidêi
athanatoi chariessan echephroni Pênelopeiêi,

ouch hôs Tundareou kourê kaka mêsato erga,
kouridion kteinasa posin, stugerê de t' aoidê
esset' ep' anthrôpous, chalepên de te phêmin opassei
thêluterêisi gunaixi, kai hê k' euergos eêisin.

O fortunate son of Laertes, Odysseus of many wiles!
It is truly with great merit [**aretê**] that you got a wife.
For the mind of blameless Penelope, daughter of Ikarios, was sound.
She kept her lawful husband, Odysseus, well in mind.
Thus the **kleos** of his **aretê** shall never perish,
and the immortals shall fashion for humans a song that is pleasing[2]
for sensible Penelope,
unlike the daughter of Tyndareos, who devised evil deeds,[3]
killing her lawful husband; and among humans,[4]
she will be a hateful song
She will make for women an evil reputation,
females that they are--even for the kind of woman who does noble
things.

xxiv 192-202[5]

As my translation shows, I find myself interpreting this passage to mean that Penelope is the key not only to the **nostos** but also to the **kleos** of Odysseus. I understand **kleos** at verse 196 as belonging primarily to Odysseus himself and that it is his **aretê** 'merit' to have won a Penelope (rather than a Clytemnestra).[6] If this interpretation is correct, then we see in the *Second Nekuia* triadic assignment of **kleos** to Agamemnon, Achilles, and Odysseus. Odysseus gets the best **kleos**, through his wife. Through Penelope, he has a genuine **nostos**, while Agamemnon gets a false one and Achilles, none at all.

§14. Such an interpretation is not ad hoc; rather, it takes into account the overall structure of the *Odyssey*. The Revenge of Odysseus is treated throughout the *Odyssey* as a genuinely heroic theme, worthy of **kleos**. And the prime stimulus for revenge is Penelope herself. Already in the *First Nekuia*, Odysseus is asking his mother in the underworld whatever happened to Penelope: is she steadfast ...

ê êdê min egêmen Achaiôn hos tis aristos

or has whoever is the best [aristos] of the Achaeans already married her?

xi 179

The *Odyssey* can afford to let Odysseus put the question in this form, if indeed the narrative is confident of his heroic destiny in the *Odyssey*. Since his prime heroic act in the *Odyssey* is the killing of Achaeans who are pursuing his wife, Penelope is truly the key to his **kleos**. Penelope defines the heroic identity of Odysseus. Significantly, the expression Achaiôn hos tis aristos 'whoever is best [aristos] of the Achaeans' is restricted in the *Odyssey* to the single question: "who will marry Penelope?" (xvi 76, xviii 289, xix 528; cf. xx 335). The Homeric audience is being conditioned for the **aristeiâ** of Odysseus.

§15. In particular, there are two passages that accentuate the inevitable outcome, the incontrovertible conclusion, that Odysseus is the "best of the Achaeans." At xv 521, Telemachus is telling the seer Theoklymenos that the suitor Eurymakhos, "by far the best man" (pollon aristos anér), wants to marry Penelope. At this point in the narrative, a hawk appears, with a dove in its talons. The seer is quick to interpret: the omen is good, for it shows that no family in Ithaca is "more kingly," basileuteron, than that of Odysseus (xv 525-534). The omen has corrected the misuse, the misapplication, of the epithet "by far the best man."^[1] There is an even more drastic correction in the case of the obnoxious Antinoos, another prominent suitor. The stage is set when Odysseus, in the guise of a beggar, is asking for alms from Antinoos:

dos, philos: ou men moi dokeis ho kakistos Achaiôn emmenai, all' ôristos, epeι basilēi eoikas

Give, friend! For you seem to be not the worst of the Achaeans, but the best [aristos], since you seem like a king.

xvii 415-416

Noblesse oblige, but Antinoos crudely refuses. Later on in the *Odyssey*, he is the very first suitor to be shot dead by the arrows of an angry Odysseus ([xxii 8-21](#)). At this point, the other suitors are not yet aware that the archer is Odysseus himself; thinking that the shooting was accidental, they rail at Odysseus, exclaiming that he has just killed "the very best" of the Ithacan fighting men ([hos meg' aristos / kourôn ein Ithakêi: xxii 29-30](#)). In view of the previous action, the characterization "best" seems ironically misapplied. Antinoos may have looked like a king, but he did not behave like one.[\[2\]](#)

§16. To sum up: unlike Achilles, who won **kleos** but lost **nostos** ([IX 413](#)), Odysseus is a double winner. He has won both **kleos** and **nostos**. Accordingly, in his quest for his own heroic identity, Telemachus is confronted with a double frame of reference in the figure of his father:

noston peusomenos patros philou, ên pou akousô

I am going to find out about the **nostos** of my father, if I should hear.

[ii 360](#)

patros emou kleos euru meterchomai, ên pou akousô

I am going after the widespread **kleos** of my father, if I should hear.

[iii 83](#)

§17. Curiously, in all these instances where Odysseus is the "best of the Achaeans," he earns the title not for doing what he did at Troy but for doing what he did within the *Odyssey* itself. This restriction is all the more remarkable in view of the tradition, displayed prominently within the *Odyssey* itself, that Odysseus, not Achilles, can take credit for the destruction of Troy; Demodokos himself tells how it all happened in his third performance, a composition about the Trojan Horse ([viii 499-520](#)).[\[1\]](#) We too have already heard of it in verse 2 of Book i. Moreover, in the first song of Demodokos, "the **kleos** of which at that time reached the vast heavens" ([viii 74](#)), Odysseus was characterized along with Achilles as "best of the Achaeans" because one of these two heroes was destined to be the destroyer of Troy. In the epic composition of Demodokos, Odysseus is

implicitly "best of the Achaeans" because tradition upholds his claim to have destroyed Troy. The poet Demodokos lives up to the challenge of Odysseus that he recite the story of the Trojan Horse [kata moiran](#) 'according to destiny' ([viii 496](#)). Within the conventions of epic composition, an incident that is untraditional would be [huper moiran](#) 'beyond destiny'. For example, it would violate tradition to let Achilles kill Aeneas in [Iliad XX](#), although the immediate situation in the narrative seems to make it inevitable; accordingly, Poseidon intervenes and saves Aeneas, telling him that his death at this point would be "beyond destiny" ([huper moiran: XX 336](#)).^[2] Demodokos, then, is hewing to tradition in giving Odysseus the credit that is his due for having destroyed Troy. The triumph of the *Iliad*, however, is that Achilles becomes explicitly the "best of the Achaeans" without having destroyed Troy. Because of the *Iliad* tradition, it seems that the **kleos** of Odysseus at Troy was preempted by the **kleos** of Achilles. Such a triumph, however, could have been achieved only through sustained artistic reaction to the predilections of audiences who listened generation after generation to the **kleos** of the Achaeans.

§18. In this connection, it seems appropriate to reaffirm my general opinion about the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: the structural unity of such epics results, I think, not so much from the creative genius of whoever achieved a fixed composition but from the lengthy evolution of myriad previous compositions, era to era, into a final composition.^[1] In other words, I think that the **kleos** of Achilles and the **kleos** of Odysseus, through generations of both shifting and abiding preferences in performer-audience interaction, have culminated in our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These epics are Panhellenic in the dimension of time as well as space. If, then, our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are parallel products of parallel evolution, it becomes easier to imagine how the extraordinarily renowned **kleos** of Achilles could preempt the **kleos** of Odysseus at Troy. The audience will have to hear about the destruction of Troy by Odysseus not in the *Iliad* but in the *Odyssey*. This feat of Odysseus at Troy, which entitles him to be ranked with Achilles as "best of the Achaeans" in the first song of Demodokos, has been sidetracked in the *Iliad*--but not entirely.

Notes

§1n1. In my discussion of the epithets designating the "best," the reader will notice that I proceed without assuming that the placement of epithets is conditioned simply by metrical factors. Such an assumption would have failed to account for the fact that Homeric diction is traditional not only in form but also in content. For the theoretical underpinnings of my procedure, I cite Nagy 1974.140-149 and 229-261. See also [Intro.§7](#).

§1n2. Cf. also [IX 110](#), where Agamemnon is said to have dishonored [andra pheriston](#) 'the best [pheristos] man'.

§2n1. The word for "best" here is **phertatos**, synonymous with **aristos** at lines 761 and 768. Although the first form has a separate heritage of social connotations (cf. Palmer 1955.11-12), it is clearly a synonym of the second form in the diction of Homeric poetry. Achilles (and he only) is twice in the *Iliad* addressed as [phertat' Achaiôn](#) 'best [phertatos] of the Achaeans' ([XVI 21](#), [XIX 216](#)).

§2n2. My general thinking on the **aristeiâ** of Achilles has been much stimulated by the perceptive observations of Segal 1971b.

§3n1. Hektor's challenge was formulated for him by the seer Helenos ([VII 47-53](#)), who himself thinks that Diomedes is [kartiston Achaiôn](#) 'best [kartistos] of the Achaeans' ([VI 98](#)).

§3n2. At [Ch.1§11n4](#), I approximated this complex word with the notion of "grand heroic moments."

§3n3. For further discussion of this passage: [Ch.20§22](#).

§3n4. For other instances of Homeric irony where a hero's speech is partially validated but also partially invalidated by the events of the traditional narrative, see [XVI 241-248](#) as discussed at [Ch.17§4](#) (the valid and nonvalid aspects are made explicit at [XVI 249-252](#)). See also [XX 179-183](#), as discussed at [Ch.15§3](#).

§3n5. When the moment of his death at the hands of Achilles approaches, Hektor expresses his wish to die [eükleiôs](#) 'with good kleos' ([XXII 110](#)) and not [akleiôs](#) 'with no kleos' ([XXII 304](#)). Cf. [Ch.10§13n2](#).

§3n6. On the semantics of **aphthito-** 'unfailing' as a mark of immortality, see [Ch.10§§3,5-19](#).

§4n1. As Menelaos begins to speak, he [neikei oneidizôn](#) 'made **neîkos**, making **oneidos**' ([VII 95](#)). Both **neîkos** and **oneidos** mean 'blame, reproach' and indicate the language of blame poetry; the whole subject will be discussed at length in [Ch.12](#).

§4n2. The potential reproach that is in store for the Achaeans is called **lôbê** by Menelaos ([VII 97](#)). Again, **lôbê** means 'blame, reproach' and indicates the language of blame poetry: [Ch.14§§5](#)(n1),6.

§4n3. On the antithesis between the **kleos** of epic poetry and the shame of blame poetry: [Ch.14§10](#).

§5n1. [VII 161](#): [hôs neikess'](#) 'thus he made **neîkos** [reproach]'.

§5n2. It is precisely this kind of boasting that a hero seeks to avoid hearing from his opponent, in order to protect his epic prestige. Thus when Glaukos is wounded by the arrow of Teukros, an archer on the Achaean side ([XII 387-389](#)), the Trojan ally tries to hide "lest one of the Achaeans see him wounded and boast [verb **eukhetaomai**] with words [**epos** plural]" ([XII 390-391](#)). The use of **epos** [plural] is of special interest here: this word can refer not only to the words of a figure in epic but also to the poetic form of the given words (see [Ch.15§7](#) and n1).

§5n3. On the killing of Achilles by Paris: [Ch.4§4](#).

§5n4. Diomedes himself admits defeat at [XI 317-319](#) (on which see [Ch.5§25](#)). See also Whitman 1958.134.

§5n5. Even the diction of Homeric poetry affirms that the wounding of a hero thwarts his **aristeiâ**. For example, when Paris wounded Makhaon, he [pausen aristeuonta](#) 'stopped him from performing his **aristeiâ**' ([XI 506](#)).

§6n1. Cf. *Little Iliad*/Proclus p. 106.20-23 Allen. For a review of the details, see Kullmann 1960.79-85.

§6n2. The excellence of Ajax in both might and artifice is thus implicitly bested by the excellence of Achilles in might. It will also be bested by the excellence of Odysseus in artifice (n1).

§6n3. The words of Ajax himself set the significance of his eventual withdrawal. Those who flee, he says, get no **kleos** ([XV 564](#)). All the same, the heroic status of Ajax as second best after Achilles is reaffirmed at [XVII 279-280](#).

§6n4. It is said more than once in Book XI that by now all the heroes who are **aristoi** 'best' have been incapacitated: lines 658-659, 825-826 (cf. also [XVI 23-24](#)). Achilles himself observes in particular that Diomedes and Agamemnon have been put out of commission ([XVI 74-77](#)). His words contrast the inability of Diomedes with the ability of Patroklos "to ward off the devastation" at the Battle of the Ships ([loigon amunai/amunô̄n](#) at [XVI 75/80](#)). See [Ch.5§12](#) and n1.

§7n1. I do not count the sporadic instances of **aristos** in the plural, as at [V 541](#) (Krethon and Orsilokhos are called [Danaôn andras aristous](#) 'men who are best [**aristoi**] among the Danaans').

§8n1. See [Ch.17§4](#).

§8n2. See Van Brock 1959; cf. Householder/Nagy 1972.774-776 and Lowenstam 1975.

§8n3. Whitman 1958.136-137, 200-202. Note that Achilles is acknowledged as **aristos** 'best' by Glaukos at [XVII 164-165](#) on the basis of the feats performed by Patroklos, who is called the **therapôn** of Achilles in this very context.

§8n4. See Pestalozzi 1945.

§8n5. For a listing of attestations: [Ch.17§5](#).

§8n6. Cf. Nagy 1974.230-231; further discussion at [Ch.17§5](#). Other than Hektor and Achilles/Patroklos, the only other Iliadic figure who is called **îsos Arêi** 'equal to Ares' is the hero Leonteus ([XII 130](#)). The evidence of

Homeric diction indicates that the epic traditions about Leonteus were parallel to those about Patroklos, in that both figures are connected with the theme that the hero in death is a **therapôn** of Ares: [Ch.17§5n8](#).

§8n7. For more on the wearing of Achilles' armor by Patroklos: [Ch.9§33n2](#).

§9n1. On the semantics of noun **noos** 'thinking' and verb **noeô** 'think' in Homeric poetry: Frame 1978. On the use of **noeô** to express the notion of taking the initiative: [Ch.3§13n](#).

§9n2. The verbs **aineô** 'praise' and **neikeô** 'blame' indicate the poetry of praise and blame: [Ch.12§3](#).

§9n3. It is an established theme of praise and blame poetry that the audience is well aware of the traditions with which it is presented: [Ch.12§§18-19](#).

§9n4. The figure of Diomedes himself is here directly pertinent to the epic reputation of Odysseus, since there are numerous epic traditions featuring these two heroes on joint expeditions (for a list: Fenik 1964.12-13). Significantly, different epic traditions give more or less credit to one or the other figure. In the *Little Iliad*, for example, it is Diomedes and not Odysseus who brings back Philoktetes (Proclus p.106.24-25 Allen); see Fenik, p. 13n2 and Severyns 1938.365-369.

§9n5. Besides meaning 'quarrel, fight, contention', the word **neîkos** also designates the poetry of blame: [Ch.12§3](#).

§10n1. Cf. Muellner 1976.96n43.

§11n1. Rüter 1969.252-253.

§11n2. On the semantics of **nostos** in Homeric poetry: Frame 1978. On **nostos** as not only 'homecoming' but also 'song about a homecoming': [Ch.6§6n2](#).

§13n1. In [Ch.14§5n1](#) and n3, I propose that this passage reflects a formal tradition of praise poetry centering on the theme of Penelope, as

distinguished by the contrasting blame poetry about Clytemnestra.

§13n2. The adjective [chariessan](#) that describes **aoidê** 'song' here at line 198 is derived from **kharis**, a noun that conveys simultaneously the social aspect of *reciprocity* as well as the personal aspect of *pleasure*. Cf [chariessan amoibê](#) 'compensation that has **kharis**' at [iii 58](#); on the reciprocity between poet and patron, see [Ch.12§21n3](#). In the Homeric *Hymn to Hestia* ([Hymn 24](#)), the poet prays that his **aoidê** 'song' have **kharis** (line 5); by implication, the pleasure that it gives is linked with the reward he will receive. See further at [Ch.5§39](#).

§13n3. These themes correspond to the actual name **Klutaimêstrê**, a form indicating that the wife of Agamemnon is "famed" (**Klutai-**, from the same root *kleu- as in **kleos**) on account of what she "devised" (-**mêstrê**, from verb **mêdomai**). The element -**mêstrê**, from **mêdomai** 'devise', corresponds to the theme of [kaka mêsato erga](#) 'she devised [**mêdomai**] evil deeds' at line 199. As for the element **Klutai-** 'famed', it corresponds to the theme of [stugerê ... aoidê](#) 'hateful song' at line 200. This hateful song will be not simply about the wife of Agamemnon. Rather, the song is being presented as the very essence of **Klutaimêstrê**. (On the formal variant **Klutai-mnêstrêas** in the latinized *Clytemnestra*, see Nagy 1974.260; for more on the semantics of **mêdomai**, see Nagy, pp. 258-261.)

§13n4. To my knowledge, instances of **epi** + accusative in the sense of "among" are restricted in Homeric diction to **anthrôpous** 'humans' as the object of the preposition. This syntactical idiosyncrasy can be correlated with an interesting thematic association: the expression **ep' anthrôpous** 'among humans' is conventionally linked with **kleos** ([X 213](#), [i 299](#), [xix 334](#), [xxiv 94](#)) and its derivatives ([XXIV 202](#), [xiv 403](#)). It is also linked with **aoidê** 'song' at [xxiv 201](#). Because of this parallelism between **kleos** and **aoidê**, and because **kleos** designates the glory conferred by poetry ([Ch.1§2](#)), I infer that **ep' anthrôpous** 'among humans' in these contexts indicates an audience in general listening to poetry in general. Calvert Watkins suggests to me that the original force of **epi** in this collocation may indeed be directional.

§13n5. To continue with the inference that the collocation of **aoidê** 'song' at line 200 with **ep' anthrôpous** 'among humans' at line 201 implies a sort of

universal *audience* listening to the song about Clytemnestra: what men will *hear* about **Klutai-mêstrê** is of course not the positive **kleos** of praise poetry (on which see [Ch.12§3](#)). Rather, it is blame poetry (see [Ch.14§5n1](#)).

Ironically, when he had set out for Troy, Agamemnon had left behind an **aoidos** 'singer, poet' to guard Clytemnestra ([iii 267-268](#)). When Aigisthos persuaded her to betray Agamemnon by way of adultery, he took the **aoidos** to a deserted island ([iii 270-271](#)). In this way, the **aoidos** could not have *seen* the adultery, but the shameful behavior is nevertheless *heard* by the audience, which listens to the hateful **aidê** 'song' about Clytemnestra. We see here a striking Homeric attestation of two traditional themes concerning the generic poet. One, he does not need to be an eyewitness and thus actually to *see* deeds in order to tell about them, since he can *hear* about them from the Muses ([Ch.1§3](#)). Two, he can regulate social behavior with his power to blame evil deeds (cf. [Ch.14§12n4](#), [Ch.15§8n8](#), [Ch.16§10n6](#)). On [iii 267-268](#), see also Svenbro 1976.31 and n88.

§13n6. Compare the maxim told by Penelope to the disguised Odysseus at [xix 329-334](#) (on which see further at [Ch.14§6](#)), where the good host gets the **kleos** of praise while the bad host gets the ridicule of blame. In being hospitable to the would-be beggar, Penelope is striving to match the former hospitality of Odysseus himself, who is described as the ultimate good host ([xix 309-316](#)). By implication, the **kleos** of being a good host belongs primarily to Odysseus. But Penelope herself is part of this **kleos**: at [xix 325-328](#), she says that her own excellence will be recognized only if she is a good host to the would-be beggar. So also at [xxiv 197-198](#): the **aidê** 'song' about her is part of the overall **kleos** of Odysseus. A similar interpretation is possible at [xix 107-114](#). See now [Foreword §16n17](#).

§15n1. Cf. Whitman 1958.341n13 on the traditional device of misstating for the purpose of soliciting an omen to correct the misstatement.

§15n2. There is more irony when the **psûkhai** of the suitors reach Hades. Agamemnon wonders whether they had all been "chosen" as the **aristoi** 'best men' in a community ([xxiv 107-108](#)).

§17n1. More on this composition at [Ch.6§9](#).

§17n2. For a stimulating discussion, see Pestalozzi 1945.40. On destiny and epic plot, see Kullmann 1956; cf. also Fränkel 1962.62-64. For a recent synthesis, I cite Mathews 1976. My translation of **moîra** as 'destiny' in the contexts of [XX 336](#) and [viii 496](#) does not reveal the full semantic range of the word, which will be discussed further at [Ch.7§21](#). The context of [viii 496](#) is pertinent to that discussion, in that Odysseus rewards Demodokos for his songs by giving him a choice cut of meat ([viii 474-483](#)). The poet receives this award at a feast, where the portions of food are actually designated as **moîrai** ([viii 470](#)). To repeat, Odysseus challenges Demodokos to recite the story of the Trojan Horse [kata moiran](#) 'according to **moîra**' ([viii 496](#)).

§18n1. Cf. Intro.§9.

Chapter 3

A Conflict between Odysseus and Achilles in the *Iliad*

§1. As we have already seen, some experts argue that the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus in *Odyssey* viii is a pastiche actually based on the opening of our *Iliad*, where Achilles and Agamemnon have their memorable quarrel.

[1] But in this line of reasoning there is a flaw that we have yet to single out: it presupposes that one text (the *Odyssey*) is here referring to another text (the *Iliad*). The same sort of flaw afflicts the argument of other experts who seek to show that the Odyssean passage in question refers to some lost passage in the Homeric Cycle (specifically, the *Cypria*).[2] Even if we were to accept for the moment the dubious notion that parts of the Homeric Cycle are drawn from some text that predates our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the fundamental objection remains the same: when we are dealing with the traditional poetry of the Homeric (and Hesiodic) compositions, it is not justifiable to claim that a passage in any text can refer to another passage in another text. Such a restriction of approaches in Homeric (and Hesiodic) criticism is one of the most important lessons to be learned from the findings of Milman Parry and Albert Lord on the nature of traditional "oral" poetry.[3]

§2. I will confine myself, then, to examining whether a poem that is composed in a given *tradition* may refer to other *traditions* of composition. Thus, for example, our *Odyssey* may theoretically refer to traditional themes that are central to the stories of the *Cypria*--or even to the stories of the *Iliad*, for that matter. But even in that case, such traditional themes would have varied from composition to composition. There may theoretically be as many variations on a theme as there are compositions. Any theme is but a multiform, and not one of the multiforms may be considered a functional "Ur-form." Only by hindsight can we consider the themes of our *Iliad* to be the best of possible themes.

§3. In the specific case of [*Odyssey* viii 72-82](#), we do indeed see what amounts to an Iliadic overture in the thematic combination of Achilles, Agamemnon, grief for Trojans and Achaeans, involvement of Apollo, and the Will of Zeus. Nevertheless, we may not infer that these themes were based specifically on the opening of our *Iliad*.^[1] There are traditional elements in the epic opening reported by [*Odyssey* viii 72-82](#) that go beyond the scope of the opening in *Iliad* I. These elements may still be considered "Iliadic" only in the sense that clear traces of them are indeed to be found in our *Iliad*. But they are not within the actual opening of [*Iliad* I](#); instead, they surface here and there in the rest of the composition.

§4. For a striking illustration, I begin with the reference in [*Odyssey* viii 78](#) to the quarreling Achilles and Odysseus as "the best of the Achaeans" (**aristoi Akhaiôn**), where the context of their quarrel is a **dais** 'feast' ([viii 76](#)). Let us compare a scene in [*Iliad* VIII](#), where Agamemnon seeks to revive the fighting spirit of the demoralized Achaeans. He stands on the ship of Odysseus ([VIII 222](#)), which is exactly halfway between the ships of Ajax on one extreme and Achilles on the other ([VIII 223-226](#)),^[1] and begins his speech with these words:

[aidôs](#), [Argeioi](#), [kak'](#) [elenchea](#), [eidos agêtoi](#):
[pêi](#) [eban](#) [euchôlai](#), [hote dê](#) [phamen](#) [einai aristoi](#),
[has](#) [hopot'](#) [en](#) [Lêmnoî](#) [keneauchees êgoraasthe](#),
[esthontes](#) [krea](#) [polla](#) [boôn](#) [orthokrairaôn](#),
[pinontes](#) [krêtêras](#) [epistepheas](#) [oinoio](#),
[Trôôn](#) [anth'](#) [hekaton](#) [te](#) [diêkosiôn](#) [te](#) [hekastos](#)
[stêssth'](#) [en](#) [polemôi](#): [nun d'](#) [oud'](#) [henos](#) [axioi](#) [eimen](#)
[Hektoros](#), [hos](#) [tacha](#) [nêas](#) [eniprêsei](#) [puri](#) [kêleôi](#).

Shame, Argives! Though splendid in appearance, you are base objects of blame.^[2]

Where have the boasts gone, when we said that we are the best [**aristoi**]?^[3]

These boasts you uttered, saying empty words, at Lemnos, when you were eating the abundant meat of straight-horned oxen and drinking from great bowls filled to the brim with wine, how any one of you could each stand up against a hundred or even two

hundred Trojans
in battle. But now we cannot even match one of them,
Hektor, who is about to set fire to our ships with burning fire.

[VIII 228-235](#)

In verses 231-232, we note that the setting for this scene of boasting is equivalent to a **dais**, which in [viii 76](#) had served as the setting for the scene of quarreling between Odysseus and Achilles. In the present passage, the key words for understanding its affinity with [viii 72-82](#) are at [VIII 229](#): **aristoi** 'best', in collocation with the plural noun **eukhôlai** 'boasts', derived from the verb **eukhomai** 'boast'. Agamemnon's own claim to be "best of the Achaeans" is in fact formulated with this same verb:

hos nun pollon aristos Achaiôn euchetai einai
who now boasts to be by far the best of the Achaeans

[I 91](#)

hos meg' aristos Achaiôn euchetai einai
who boasts to be by far the best of the Achaeans

[II 82](#)

From the intensive studies of Leonard Muellner on the behavior of **eukhomai** 'boast' and its substitute **phêmi** 'say' in Homeric diction, we know that these words are used by or of a hero to express his superiority in a given area of heroic endeavor.^[4] Take, for example, [V 171-173](#), where we hear that no one in Lycia can boast (**eukhetai**: 173) to be better than Pandaros in archery (171), and that the hero thus gets **kleos** in this area of endeavor (172).^[5] We may compare **kleos** at [Odyssey viii 74](#), correlated with **neîkos** 'quarrel' between the **aristoi Akhaiôn** 'best of the Achaeans', Odysseus and Achilles himself ([viii 78](#)). Granted, the scene of **eukhôlai** 'boasts' at Lemnos is presented at [VIII 228-235](#) not as a quarrel among various Achaeans with various areas of heroic superiority but rather as a collective affirmation of the Achaeans' superiority over the Trojans. Such a

perspective of collectivity stays in effect, however, only so long as the narrative remains general by not quoting any individual hero. Once the Homeric narrative quotes a hero as he actually **eukhetai** 'boasts', the factor of comparison and even rivalry with other heroes becomes overt.^[6] Ironically, the boasts of all the other Achaeans during their onetime feast at Lemnos now sound empty because the hero who is "best" *when all heroic endeavors are taken into account* is not at hand to stop the overwhelming might of Hektor.

§5. Among the areas of heroic endeavor that serve as conventional points of comparison when a hero boasts, we actually find **biē** 'might' (e.g., [XV 165](#)) and the equivalent of **mêtis** 'artifice, stratagem' (e.g., [XVII 171](#)).^[1] In this connection, we may note again that the reference in *Odyssey* [viii 78](#) to the quarreling Achilles and Odysseus as the "best of the Achaeans" seems to be based on an epic tradition that contrasted the heroic worth of Odysseus with that of Achilles in terms of a contrast between **mêtis** and **biē**. The contrast apparently took the form of a quarrel between the two heroes over whether Troy would be taken by might or by artifice. The scholia to *Odyssey* [viii 75](#) and 77 point to such an epic tradition, where Achilles is advocating might and Odysseus, artifice, as the means that will prove successful in destroying Troy.^[2] We have also considered the testimony of the scholia (A) to *Iliad* [IX 347](#), from which we learn that Aristarchus apparently thought this particular Iliadic passage ([IX 346-352](#)) to be an allusion to precisely the same tradition that we are now considering, namely, the rivalry of Achilles and Odysseus as indicated in *Odyssey* [viii 72-82](#).^[3] In *Iliad* [IX 346-352](#), we find Achilles in the act of rejecting the request of Odysseus that he rescue the hard-pressed Achaeans:

all', [Oduseu](#), [sun soi te kai alloisin basileusi](#)
[phrazesthô nêessin alexemenai dêion pur](#).
[ê men dê mala polla ponêsato nosphin emeio](#),
[kai dê teichos edeime](#), [kai êlase taphron ep' autôi](#)
[eureian megalên](#), [en de skolopas katepêxen](#):
[all' oud' hôs dunatai sthenos Hektoros androphonoio](#)
[ischein](#)

Let him [Agamemnon], Odysseus, along with you
and the other kings
devise a way^[4] to ward off the destructive fire from the ships.
He has indeed labored greatly in my absence,
and he has even built a wall and driven a ditch around it
--wide and big it is--and he has fastened stakes inside.
Even so he cannot hold back the strength of Hektor the man-killer.

IX 346-352

In effect, the words of Achilles defiantly and ironically challenge Odysseus, Agamemnon, "and the other kings" (IX 346) to rely on *artifice* at the very moment when they are desperately in need of his *might*.

§6. There are still further allusions to the theme of a dispute over might against artifice. Our *Iliad* preserves, in evocative contexts, the very words which must have signaled the rival means to a common end. The word **biē** 'might', on the one hand, is a conventional Iliadic measure of Achilles' superiority, as in the following juxtaposition:

presbuteros de su essi: biēi d' ho ge pollon ameinōn

You [Patroklos] are older; but he [Achilles] is much better in **biē**

XI 787

The word **mêtis** 'artifice, stratagem', on the other hand, characterizes Odysseus in particular: in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, only he is described with the epithets **polumêtis** 'of many artifices' and **poikilo-mêtis** 'of manifold artifices'. He is frequently called **Dii mêtin atalantos** 'equal to Zeus in artifice'. The polarity of **biē** 'might' and **mêtis** 'artifice' is clearly visible in old Nestor's advice to his son about the art of chariot racing:

all' age dê su, philos, mêtin emballeo thumôi
pantoién, hina mê se parekprophugêisin aethla.
mêtî toi drutomos meg' ameinôn êe biêphi:
mêtî d' aute kubernêtês eni oinopi pontôi

nēa thoēn ithunei erechthomenēn anemoisi:
mēti d' hēniochos perigignetai hēniochoio.

Come, my **philos**, put in your **thūmos** every sort of **mētis**, so that prizes may not elude you.

It is with **mētis** rather than **biē** that a woodcutter is better.

It is with **mētis** that a helmsman over the wine-dark sea steers his swift ship buffeted by winds.

It is with **mētis** that charioteer is better than charioteer.

XXIII 313-318

In such a traditional celebration of **mētis** 'artifice' at the expense of **biē** 'might', we see that superiority is actually being determined in terms of an opposition between these qualities.

§7. With these passages serving as background, we now move back to the evidence of IX 346-352,[1] where Achilles is defiantly challenging Odysseus and the other Achaean chieftains to survive the Trojan onslaught without the benefit of his own might. As his speech draws to a close, the final words of Achilles to Odysseus can be understood as conveying an underlying awareness and even bitterness. Let the Achaeans, Achilles tells Odysseus, devise "a better **mētis**" to ward off the fire of the Trojans and thus save the Greek ships:

ophr' allēn phrazōntai eni phresi mētin ameinō,
hē ke sphin nēas te saōi kai laon Achaiōn
nēusin epi glaphurēis, epeι ou sphisin hēde g'. hetoimē,
hēn nun ephrassanto emeu apomēnisantos.

that they should devise[2] in their thoughts another **mētis** that is better and that will rescue their ships and the host of the Achaeans who are at the hollow ships. For this one [this **mētis**], which they now devised[3] during the time of my anger, does not suffice.

IX 423-426

The reference is to Nestor's original stratagem to build the Achaean Wall, and this stratagem actually is designated in that context as **mêtis** ([VII 324](#)). Ironically, Nestor's later stratagem, to send the Embassy to Achilles, is also designated in the narrative as **mêtis** ([IX 93](#)). Ironically too, Odysseus is the one who is pleading for what the Achaeans most sorely need at this point, the might of Achilles. For the moment, the **mêtis** 'artifice' of Odysseus (and Nestor) is at a loss, and the **biê** 'might' of Achilles is implicitly vindicated.

§8. Of course, the primary and central grievance of Achilles in our *Iliad* is against Agamemnon; any grievance of his against Odysseus that may have surfaced in Book IX must be secondary and marginal, as we can see clearly in [IX 346-352](#).^[1] Furthermore, even when we accept as traditional the theme of a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, we must keep in mind that the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad I* is in all likelihood an equally traditional theme.^[2] It would be useless to argue that one theme or the other was older. All we can say is that the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus is an alternative traditional theme that would have been suitable for testing the heroic worth of Achilles in a different dimension. Whereas the conflict of Achilles and Agamemnon contrasts martial with social superiority,^[3] the conflict between Achilles and Odysseus is on a different axis of opposition: **biê** 'might' against **mêtis** 'artifice'. I submit that the epic theme of such a conflict is maintained as an undertone in *Iliad IX*, by means of including Odysseus in the Embassy to Achilles.

§9. In fact, this theme may help account for a notorious problem involving the Embassy Scene of *Iliad IX*. The problem is, simply put, that this passage features some dual constructions in places where we might have expected the plural.^[1] Instead of plunging into the vast bibliography on the subject,^[2] I propose simply to examine the passage anew, attempting to correlate how the dual constructions are deployed in the story with how the story itself applies to the tradition of a conflict between Odysseus and Achilles. I should note at the outset, however, that the evidence for this conflict has already been established in the preceding discussion and stands by itself. It does not depend on the discussion that follows. As for what I am about to argue, there is considerable room for disagreement. But I hope to show, at the very least, that the Embassy Scene as we have it is not a

clumsy patchwork of mutually irreconcilable texts but rather an artistic orchestration of variant narrative traditions.

§10. We take up the story at a point where King Agamemnon and the Achaeans finally despair of resisting the onslaught of Hektor and the Trojans without the aid of Achilles, who has withdrawn from the fighting. At a meeting of the elders, Nestor suggests that an embassy be sent to Achilles, bringing to him an offer of settlement from Agamemnon ([IX 93-113](#)). Agamemnon agrees and makes a lavish offer ([IX 114-161](#)), whereupon Nestor suggests that there be three emissaries: Phoinix, Ajax, and Odysseus ([IX 162-172](#)). Nestor's original plan calls for Phoinix to go first, followed by Ajax and Odysseus, followed by the heralds Odios and Eurybates:

ei d' age, tous an egô epiopsomai, hoi de pithesthôn.
Phoinix men prôtista Diü philos hêgêsasthô,
autar epeit' Aias te megas kai dios Odusseus:
kêrukôn d' Odios te kai Eurubatês ham' hepesthôn.

But come, let those upon whom I am looking take on the task.
First of all, let Phoinix, dear to Zeus, take the lead;
and after him the great Ajax and brilliant Odysseus,
and of the heralds let Odios and Eurybates accompany them.

[IX 167-170](#)

The crucial expression is Phoinix ... hêgêsasthô at verse 168: "let Phoinix ... take the lead." As the emissaries proceed on their way to Achilles, the one who actually takes the lead is not Phoinix but Odysseus:

tô de batên proterô, hêgeito de dios Odusseus.

And the two were moving along, and brilliant Odysseus led the way.

[IX 192](#)

The word hêgeito here at [IX 192](#) is in direct contrast with the corresponding hêgêsasthô of [IX 168](#) ("he led the way" compared to "let him lead the way"

respectively). In contradiction of the original plan, Odysseus is now leading the way instead of Phoinix.

§11. As we consider the dual construction tô de batên proterô 'and the two were moving along' here in the second passage ([IX 192](#)), let us not immediately assume that we are dealing with the emergence of an earlier version involving two emissaries as opposed to the first passage ([IX 167-170](#)), which is supposed to present a later version involving three emissaries. Instead, at least for the moment, let us take the thematic progression from the first passage to the second passage as a given of the narrative at hand. In that case, the dual in the second passage must refer to Ajax and Phoinix, not to Ajax and Odysseus. The plan of the first passage had called for Ajax and Odysseus to be led by Phoinix. Instead, we now see Ajax and Phoinix being led by Odysseus. See now [Foreword §29n40](#).

§12. Rather than assume that Phoinix, in Denys Page's words, "mislaid himself"[\[1\]](#) in the forgetful mind of the composer, let us suppose that Odysseus simply asserted himself in the actual narrative of the composition. Old Nestor, as the originator of the plan to send an embassy, had after all made a point of stressing the role of Odysseus when the emissaries were sent off:

toisi de poll' epetelle Gerêniοs hippota Nestôr,
dendillôn es hekaston, Odussêi de malista,
peiran hôs pepithoien amumona Pêleiôna.

And the Gerenian horseman Nestor gave them many instructions, making signs with his eyes at each, especially at Odysseus, that they try to persuade the blameless son of Peleus.

[IX 179-181](#)

§13. The self-assertion of Odysseus goes beyond taking the lead in the procession to the tent of Achilles. When the emissaries are about to deliver their message to Achilles, Ajax gives Phoinix the signal to begin, but it is Odysseus who takes the initiative:

neus' Aias Phoiniki: noêse de dios Odusseus

Ajax nodded to Phoinix; and brilliant Odysseus took note ... [1]

IX 223

Instead of Phoinix, it is Odysseus who now gives the first speech ([IX 225-306](#)); only then does Phoinix speak ([IX 434-605](#)), then Ajax ([IX 624-642](#)). In the end, Phoinix stays behind with Achilles, and it is Odysseus who leads the Embassy back to the tent of Agamemnon:

... hoi de hekastos helôn depas amphikupellon speisantes para nêas isan palin: êrche d' Odusseus.

... and they each took a double-handled cup
and made a libation; then they went back to the ships, and Odysseus led the way.

IX 656-657

As the leader of the Embassy, it is he who reports to Agamemnon the reply of Achilles ([IX 673 ff.](#)).

§14. This pattern of self-assertion on the part of Odysseus reflects in particular on one of his many traditional roles, that of the trickster. By taking the lead among the emissaries, he puts himself in the position of being the one who actually delivers the terms of compensation proposed by Agamemnon for settlement with Achilles ([IX 260-299](#), reporting [IX 120-158](#)). In doing so, Odysseus makes a significant adjustment to Agamemnon's original message by failing to repeat Agamemnon's reaffirmation of social superiority over Achilles ([IX 160-161](#)). As Cedric Whitman argues, the acceptance of such compromised terms by Achilles would thus have aborted his heroic stature in the *Iliad*.^[1] The success of Odysseus in the Embassy would have entailed the failure of Achilles in his own epic. Accordingly, the suspicion of Achilles upon hearing the speech of Odysseus seems justified:

echthros gar moi keinos homôs Aïdao pulêisin
hos ch' heteron men keuthêi eni phresin, allo de eipêi

For he is as hateful [**ekhthros**] to me as the gates of Hades,
whoever hides one thing in his thoughts and says another.

[IX 312-313](#)

§15. These strong words are framed by Achilles' outright rejection of the speech by Odysseus ([IX 308-311](#), 314-429). Moreover, even before he heard the offer that he rejects so forcefully, Achilles may have already considered Odysseus to be the sort of **ekhthros** 'hateful one, enemy' that is described in [IX 312-313](#). We come back to the moment when Achilles sees the Embassy approaching:

stan de prosth' autoio: taphôn d' anorousen Achilleus
autēi sun phormingi, lipôn hedos entha thaassen.
hôs d' autôs Patroklos, epeι ide phôtas, anestê.
tô kai deiknumenos prosephê podas ôkus Achilleus:
"chaireton: ê philoi andres ikaneton: ê ti mala chreô.
hoi moi skuzomenôi per Achaiôn philtatoi eston."

And they stood in front of him, and Achilles jumped up, amazed,
still holding the lyre, leaving the place where he was sitting.
Likewise Patroklos, when he saw the men, stood up.
Greeting the two of them, swift-footed Achilles said:
"Hail to the two of you: you have come as friends. I need you very
much--
you two who are the dearest to me among the Achaeans, even now
when I am angry."

[IX 193-198](#)

The last three verses of this passage all contain dual constructions, as if there were only two emissaries rather than three. Furthermore, the two are addressed by Achilles as "most dear [**philos**]" to him among all the Achaeans, [Achaiôn philtatoi \(IX 198\)](#).^[1] If indeed Achilles later implies that Odysseus may be an "enemy" (**ekhthros**) to him, is Odysseus being excluded from his greeting? Certainly the definition that we find for **ekhthros** 'enemy' in [IX 312-313](#)^[2] --a definition framed by the words of Achilles himself--applies to the epic behavior of Odysseus. As we see most

clearly in his own epic, the *Odyssey*, he continually says one thing and means another.^[3]

§16. Let us pursue the hypothesis that the duals in [IX 196-198](#)^[1] refer to Ajax and Phoinix, and that Odysseus is being excluded by Achilles in his reference to the Achaeans who are "most dear [**philos**]" to him ([philtatoi](#): [IX 198](#)). On the level of form, we can say that the dual pronoun [tô](#) of [IX 196](#) recapitulates the [tô](#) of [IX 192](#),^[2] which immediately precedes in the narrative. In [IX 192](#), the dual [tô](#) sets off Ajax and Phoinix from Odysseus; as I have already argued, it is here that Odysseus first seizes the initiative and takes the lead in the Embassy, with his fellow emissaries being relegated to the dual [tô](#).^[3] Now the dual [tô](#) in [IX 196](#) takes up where the last dual left off in [IX 192](#), and we may continue with the understanding that it refers to Ajax and Phoinix.

§17. On the level on content, this interpretation is viable if an "Embassy of Ajax and Phoinix to Achilles" had been a stock theme of Greek epic tradition and if the story of an enmity between Odysseus and Achilles had likewise been traditional. If we find evidence to support these two propositions, then we could also claim that the Embassy episode of [Iliad IX](#) has, from the standpoint of, say, an audience in the eighth century B.C., much higher artistic merit than what we can see in a text without attested precedents. Then we could confidently reject any superficial impression of ours that the Embassy is an imperfect story, marred by a clumsy deployment of misplaced duals.

§18. If the stock theme of an "Embassy of Ajax and Odysseus to Achilles" had been original to the Iliadic tradition for this particular period in the course of the Trojan War narrative--as Page and other analysts infer--then the final Iliadic treatment that we see attested in Book IX, with the "Embassy of Ajax, Odysseus, and Phoinix to Achilles," should have required the conversion of all duals into plurals, especially at the moment when Achilles greets the emissaries ([IX 193-198](#)). Instead, Achilles greets them in the dual! The purported grafting of Phoinix into this scene is thus only partially successful, in that the role of Phoinix fails to get its proper due. As Page exclaims, "Unhappy Phoenix, Achilles' oldest friend, not a

single word of you!"^[1] We are left with the impression that the story has faults beyond remedy.

§19. If, on the other hand, the stock theme of an "Embassy of Ajax and Phoinix to Achilles" had been traditional, then we see in *Iliad IX* the insertion of Odysseus on the level of form and the self-assertion of Odysseus on the level of content. Of course, we may in the meantime reject the assumption of some analysts that any such insertion is a *textual* phenomenon: all we need say is that the composition integrates another traditional element. If, in turn, the insertion of Odysseus into the Embassy story carries with it the traditional theme of an enmity between him and Achilles, then the narrative of *Iliad IX* may allow the retention of duals referring to the pair of Ajax and Phoinix when the time comes for Achilles to greet the Embassy. For an audience familiar with another version of the story where Achilles had only two emissaries to greet, the retention of the dual greeting when Odysseus is included in the Embassy surely amounts to an artistic masterstroke in the narrative. The exclusion of Odysseus in the dual greeting would serve to remind the audience of the enmity between him and Achilles.

§20. We should consider whether there are any formal traces of material for a traditional story where only Ajax and Phoinix are emissaries to Achilles. For this purpose, let us contrast the way in which the narrative in Book IX handles the pair of Ajax and Phoinix with the way in which it handles the pair of Ajax and Odysseus. When Odysseus is set off from Ajax and Phoinix, the latter pair is designated in the dual. This is what I propose to be the case in IX 192[1] and 196-198.^[2] Conversely, when the narrative overtly sets off Phoinix from Ajax and Odysseus, it designates this pair consistently in the plural. Besides IX 656-657,[3] I can also cite the following:

all' humeis men iontes aristêessin Achaiôn
angeliên apophasthe--to
gar geras esti gerontôn--

But you must go back to the chieftains of the Achaeans
and give them this message--for that is the privilege of the Elders--^[4]

IX 421-422

The humeis men ... here is immediately contrasted with Phoinix d(e) ... , which follows at IX 427. Achilles is asking Phoinix to stay with him, while the other emissaries are to go back carrying the message of his refusal. Elsewhere too, Achilles distinguishes Phoinix from the others, to whom he refers not in the dual but in the plural:

houtoi d' angeleousi, su d' autothi lexeo mimnôn
eunêi eni malakêi

These men will take the message; but you must stay here and lie down on the soft bed.

IX 617-618

In sum, dual constructions fail to appear in every triadic situation where Ajax and Odysseus are *explicitly* set off from Phoinix. This evidence, then, goes against the possible counterclaim that the dual constructions of IX 192 and 196-198[5] might refer *implicitly* to Ajax and Odysseus. It therefore remains tenable to claim that they refer instead to Ajax and Phoinix. Furthermore, these references may be *explicit* in the narrative of Book IX, if indeed there existed a traditional epic story that told of Achilles being angry at Odysseus. Then the dual constructions of IX 196-198 express a pointed exclusion of Odysseus from those who are "most dear [**philos**]" to Achilles (philtatoi: IX 198).[6]

§21. This much said, I leave the problem of the dual constructions in Iliad IX and return to the broader problem of establishing the relationship between the expanded passage of the Embassy Scene and the compressed passage of Odyssey viii 72-82. So far we have been dealing with only one specific theme that seems to be shared by these two passages, namely, a conflict between Achilles and Odysseus. Besides this theme, however, there are a number of accessory themes that also seem to be shared by these two passages. Let us examine these comparable themes by using as our frame of reference the compressed narrative of Odyssey viii 72-82.

1. The dispute of Achilles and Odysseus took place at a sacrificial feast or **dais** ([theôn en daiti thaleiêi: viii 76](#)). Compare this setting of a **dais** 'feast, portion' with the first words of Odysseus to Achilles in the Embassy Scene:

[chair', Achileu: daitos men eisê斯 ouk epideueis](#)
[êmen eni klisiêi Agamemnonos Atreïdao](#)
[êde kai enthade nun: para gar menoikea polla](#)
[dainusth': all' ou daitos epératou erga memêlen,](#)
[alla lién mega pêma, diotrephe, eisoroôntes](#)
[deidimen](#)

Hail, Achilles! You will not be without a fair **dais** either in the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus or here and now. There is at hand much that would suit you, for you to have as dais. But the concern is not about a pleasant **dais**.

Rather, we are facing a great **pêma** [pain], O **diotrephe**s, and we are in doubt.

[IX 225-230](#)

The sacrificial nature of the **dais** 'feast' in the tent of Achilles is implicit ([IX 219-220](#)),[\[1\]](#) and the triple reference to the procedure of a **dais** within the first four verses of the speech by Odysseus to Achilles may suggest an echo of a well-established theme.[\[2\]](#)

2. The dispute of Achilles and Odysseus was an omen that Troy would be destroyed--but not before enormous grief, **pêma**, afflicted not only the Trojans but also the Achaeans ([pêmatos archê: viii 81](#)). Compare the **pêma** that afflicts the Achaeans at [IX 229](#).[\[3\]](#)
3. The omen that Troy would be destroyed was predicted for Agamemnon by Phoebus Apollo "at holy Delphi, when he [Agamemnon] had crossed the stone threshold to ask the oracle" ([viii 79-81](#)). Compare the incidental reference of Achilles to Delphi in his answer to Odysseus:

oud' hosa laïnos oudos aphêtoros entos eergei,
Phoibou Apollônos, Puthoi eni petrêessêi

nor all the things contained within the stone threshold of the Archer, Phoebus Apollo, in rocky Delphi.

IX 404-405

This passage contains the only reference to Delphi in our *Iliad* (except for the purely geographical reference in the Great Catalogue, [II 519](#)).

4. The quarreling Achilles and Odysseus are called "best of the Achaeans" ([aristoi Achaiôn: viii 78](#)). Compare the speech of Phoinix, where he calls the emissaries the "best" ([aristous: IX 520](#)) as well as the "most dear [**philos**]" to Achilles among all the Argives ([philtatoi Argeiôn: IX 522](#)). These two superlatives, however, both seem to be only partially applicable to the three emissaries. The title "best" may suit Ajax and Odysseus but not necessarily Phoinix.^[4] The title "most dear," on the other hand, may well apply to Ajax and Phoinix only, with the exclusion of Odysseus. On this basis alone, the ethical stance of the Embassy may well be undermined--from the heroic perspective of Achilles.

§22. Taken separately, any one of these four convergences in detail between the compressed narrative of [Odyssey viii 72-82](#) and the expanded narrative of the Embassy Scene in *Iliad* IX is not enough to make a case for the existence of a common epic heritage. Taken together, however, all four of them serve to corroborate the argument that both the compressed and the expanded narratives draw from a stock epic theme--details and all--about an enmity between Achilles and Odysseus. Even without these four convergences, we have strong evidence for this theme in a fifth convergence. As we have already observed in the Embassy Scene, Achilles replies to Odysseus with an ad hoc definition of **ekhthros** 'enemy' that actually fits the epic role of Odysseus, the consummate dissembler ([IX 312-313](#)).^[1] The words of Achilles and the corresponding epic actions of Odysseus combine to make the message of [Iliad IX](#) explicit. As in [Odyssey viii 72-82](#), the first song of Demodokos, a traditional enmity exists between these two preeminent heroes of Greek epic.

Notes

§1n1. See [Ch.1 §§10-11](#).

§1n2. [Ch.1 §10](#).

§1n3. The lesson has not yet been learned, I fear, by what still seems to be a majority of Homerists. To list some prominent examples would be unproductive. Instead, I send the reader to the collection of Parry's writings (1971) and to Lord's synthesis (1960), which remain indispensable. For a useful formulation rejecting the methodology of positing *exemplum* and *imitatio* on a textual level, see Edwards 1971.189: "Given two poems A and B, now in a written text, however well a word or phrase fits its context in A, it is impossible to prove that it was invented for that place *at the moment when the text of A became fixed*. We can never rule out the existence of an older place X, which provided a common source for both A and B at the lines in question, so making their chronological relationship impossible to determine. This remains true even if X was only an older version of A." Instead of the wording "older place," however, I would prefer to substitute a phrase that does not connote the existence of an older *text*. See now [Foreword §§22-24](#).

§3n1. Marg 1956 takes the position that the **neîkos** 'quarrel' of [viii 72-82](#) must be an "invention" based on the opening of the *Iliad*, since such a **neîkos** between Achilles and Odysseus is not directly attested anywhere else. This position is challenged by Maehler 1963.27n1, who points out that this argument from silence fails to take into account the traditional nature of such quarrel scenes between prominent Achaeans. On the topic of traditional quarrel scenes in epic, I find the discussion by Girard 1902.249 particularly suggestive. I would add that narratives about quarrels allow the genre of epic to accommodate the diction of other genres that are otherwise unsuitable to it, such as the diction of blame poetry--a genre that functions as the converse of praise poetry. Discussion at [Ch.12 §6](#).

§4n1. I feel tempted to compare this arrangement with the relative ranking of Achaean heroes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* traditions: Achilles and

Ajax are best and second-best in the former, while Odysseus is best in the latter. See again [Ch.2](#), esp. [§6n2](#).

[§4n2](#). Cf. [Ch.14§14](#), esp. [n3](#).

[§4n3](#). On the use here of **phêmi** 'say' ([phamen](#)) as a substitute for **eukhomai** 'boast': Muellner 1976.83.

[§4n4](#). Muellner, pp. 81-83.

[§4n5](#). Discussion by Muellner, p. 82.

[§4n6](#). See again Muellner, pp. 79-83.

[§5n1](#). See Muellner, p. 83; for **phrenes** 'thinking' as an attribute of **mêtis**, consider the epithet **epiphrôn** 'having **phrenes**' as applied to **mêtis** at [xix 326](#).

[§5n2](#). See [Ch.1§11](#). Cf. Rüter 1969.249-251, Marg 1956.22, Girard 1902.253. These discussions do not raise the possibility, as I do here, that there was indeed an epic tradition--independent of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*--about a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus. Marg in fact explicitly rejects the possibility (p. 20). As I am about to argue, however, the internal evidence of [Iliad IX](#) contains clear traces of such an independent epic tradition. The information of the scholia, on the other hand, is admittedly garbled except for the clear delineation of "might" compared to "artifice": [andreia/sunesis](#), [biazesthai/dolôi metelthein](#) (scholia ad [viii 75](#)), [sômatika/psuchika](#), [andreia/mêchanê kai phronêsis](#) (scholia ad [viii 77](#)).

[§5n3](#). See [Ch.1§11](#). Cf. Lehrs 1882.174.

Scholia (A) ad IX 347:

[pros to en Odusseiai zêtoumenon "neikos Odussêos kai Pêleideô Achilêos," hoti emphainei kai nun anairôn têñ epicheirêsin tôn peri Odussea, legontôn boulêi kai logôi hairethêsthai têñ polin: nun gar hoion episarkazôn legei.](#)

§5n4. On **phrazomai** as a verb that denotes the activity of **mêtis**: Detienne/Vernant 1974.25n32 (in connection with [Hesiod W&D 85-86](#)). Cf. [§7n2 below](#).

[§7n1.](#) [§5.](#)

§7n2. Compare the use of **phrazomai** 'devise' here at [IX 423](#) and 426 with its use at [IX 347](#). At [§5n4](#), we have noted that this word functions as a verb of **mêtis**.

[§7n3.](#)

[§8n1.](#) [§5.](#)

§8n2. For a discussion of epic precedents: Davidson 1975.26-28 on the role of **atê** in [Iliad XIX 95-133](#), parallel to [I 410-412](#).

§8n3. On the traditional nature of this contrast, see again Davidson, pp. 26-28 on the Indo-European epic theme of an opposition between *dux* and *rêx*; cf. also Muellner 1976.83n27.

§9n1. Besides the various interpretations of Book IX based on the premise that the dual constructions designate an actual pair, we also come upon the argument that these dual *forms* may have a plural *function*. There is, however, no grammatical justification for such a claim, and the sporadic instances in Homeric poetry where duals may seem to function as plurals cannot be cited as parallels to the situation in Book IX. In each instance, there is an ad hoc explanation available, so that the theory of dual-for-plural remains unproved. See Page 1959.324-325 for discussion and bibliography.

§9n2. For a conscientious survey, I cite Lesky 1967.103-105. Segal's (1968) comparison of the compressed Embassy Scene of [Iliad I](#) (320-348) with the expanded scene of [Iliad IX](#) helps us understand better the traditional narrative themes that are deployed (see especially his p. 104), but his discussion leaves room for disagreement on the question of the dual constructions in IX.

[§12n1.](#) Page 1959.298.

§13n1. For the use of **noeô** 'take note, think' in contexts of "taking the initiative," see especially [X 224-226](#), 247; [V 669](#) (with reference to Odysseus); also [IX 104-108](#) (with reference to Nestor). For the traditional combination of **neuô** 'nod' and **noeô**'take note' in situations where signals are sent and received respectively, see [Odyssey xvi 164-165](#) (Athena nods to Odysseus, who gets the message and then takes the initiative); also [xvi 283](#). Cf. Köhnken 1975.32. For an important study of Homeric **noos** and related words, I cite again Frame 1978.

§14n1. Whitman 1958.191-192; cf. Rosner 1976.320.

§15n1. For the function of the untranslatable word **philos** 'dear, friend' and its derivatives in Homeric narrative, see [Ch.6§13](#); see also Sinos 1975.65-81 on the ethical principle of **philotês** that informs our *Iliad*.

§15n2. [§14](#).

§15n3. See again [§14](#); this trait of Odysseus corresponds to his epithet **poluainos** ([Ch.12§19n1](#)).

§16n1. [§15](#).

§16n2. [§10](#).

§16n3. Granted, the subject + verb construction of [Odusseus](#) + [hêgeito](#) 'Odysseus led the way' at [IX 192](#) does not by itself rule out the possibility that Odysseus is *included in* rather than *excluded from* the dual construction that immediately precedes. Köhnken (1975.35) argues for inclusion, citing [XXIV 95-96](#): there Iris is the leader ([hêgeito](#)) of two, Thetis *and herself*. But I must point out that this situation is not directly analogous, since the actions of the other member of the pair, Thetis, are designated in the singular, not the dual. Thus I am still bound to understand the dual constructions of [IX 192](#) as referring to Ajax and Phoinix. On the other hand, Köhnken's citing of [hêgeit\(o\)](#) 'led the way' at [XXIV 96](#) is useful for our understanding of [IX 657](#), where Odysseus leads ([êrche](#)) the Embassy back to the tent of Agamemnon. Besides himself and the heralds, only Ajax is left.

§18n1. Page 1959.300.

§20n1. §10.

§20n2. §15.

§20n3. §13.

§20n4. We may note with interest the collocation of **gerôn** 'elder' with **geras** 'privilege, honorific portion' at [IX 422](#).

§20n5. §§10 and 15 respectively. see now [Foreword §29n40](#).

§20n6. There is an ad hoc explanation for the duals in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (verses 456, 487, 501) that may be pertinent to the problem of the duals in [Iliad IX](#). These dual constructions in the *Hymn to Apollo* occur in the quoted words spoken by the god to the Cretans. The narrative is presenting a dialogue between Apollo and the "leader of the Cretans" ([Krêtôn agos](#): 463), who is speaking on behalf of the other Cretans.

Accordingly, Apollo's random dual references to them may be elliptic: the leader (A) plus the others (B). Elliptic duals (A+B instead of A+A) and elliptic plurals (A+B+C ... instead of A+A+A ...) are an Indo-European heritage in the Greek language; see Schwyzer/Debrunner 1950.50-52.

Conceivably, Achilles may be "grammatically correct" when he gives a dual greeting to the leader of the Embassy (A) plus the others (B) at [IX 196-198](#). Cf. Thornton 1978. But the ambiguities remain: maybe someone is still being excluded. Cf. also Köhnken 1978, replying to Thornton's article.

§21n1. See further at [Ch.7§19](#).

§21n2. Again, [Ch.7§19](#).

§21n3. Quoted at item (1) above.

§21n4. One of the main points made by Köhnken (1975) is that the reference by Phoinix to the "best" ([aristous](#): [IX 520](#)) applies more to Ajax and Odysseus than to himself. But we also have to reckon with the reference, again made by Phoinix, to the "most dear" ([philtatoi](#): [IX 522](#)),

which in turn seems to apply more to Ajax and himself than to Odysseus. Thus the problem of the dual greeting by Achilles remains ([IX 197-198](#)), since the emissaries are called "most dear of the Achaeans" here ([*Achaiôn philtatoi*](#): [IX 198](#)). Even if the greeting by Achilles were casual, it would be hard to justify the exclusion of his beloved mentor. Besides, Köhnken's own catalogue of other Iliadic passages where Phoinix is mentioned (p. 28) shortens the gap between the heroic stature of Ajax and Odysseus on the one hand and that of Phoinix on the other.

[**§22n1.**](#) [**§14.**](#)

Chapter 4

The Death of Achilles and a Festival at Delphi

§1. The quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus in the first song of Demodokos, [viii 72-82](#), dramatizes the antithesis of two inherited central themes built into the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, namely, the qualifications of Achilles and Odysseus respectively for the title "best of the Achaeans." Their epic actions are striving to attain what is perhaps the most distinctive heroic epithet that the **kleos** of the Achaeans can confer upon a mortal. In the first song of Demodokos, the poet--or let us say Demodokos--comments not only on the *Odyssey* but also on the *Iliad* itself. Or better, I should say, "an Iliadic tradition" instead of "the *Iliad*." Moreover, Monro's Law is not overturned, in that this quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles in [Odyssey viii](#) is no playback of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in [Iliad I](#). There are basic differences in roles as well as in characters.

§2. As we have seen, there are elements of diction and theme in the first song of Demodokos that must stem from an independent and idiosyncratic tradition and simply cannot be based on the opening of [Iliad I](#). One of the most divergent and interesting aspects of the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus is that it took place "at a sumptuous feast of the gods" ([theôn en daiti thaleiîi: viii 76](#)). Besides the intrinsic meaning here, the other Homeric contexts where feasts of the gods are mentioned make it clear that this expression denotes a sacrifice.[\[1\]](#)

§3. By good fortune, we have indirect evidence about the nature of such a sacrifice, especially from Pindar's *Paean 6*. This piece was composed for performance at a Delphic festival called the **theoxenia**. Within the framework of this ancient festival, the gods were treated as actual participants at the sacral banquet of their worshippers.[\[1\]](#) The institution of **theoxenia** 'having a host-and-guest relationship with the gods' survives elsewhere too in the Hellenic world of the classical period,[\[2\]](#) and there is reason to suppose that its ritual traditions--if not the ritual itself in its attested form--were already attested at the time that our *Odyssey* took on its

present shape.^[3] Since the first song of Demodokos in *Odyssey* viii makes a thematic connection between Apollo's Delphi and a 'feast of the gods' attended by Achaean heroes, the preeminence of Apollo at the Delphic **theoxenia**^[4] leads me to suspect that we are witnessing a Homeric reflex of the ritual traditions surrounding this festival.^[5] Furthermore, there are ominous implications for Achilles in the lore connected with the **theoxenia**. It seems as if the death of Achilles were a traditional theme that is appropriate for a paean performed at the **theoxenia**.

§4. Pindar's fragmentary *Paean* 6 was evidently composed for an **agôn** 'contest' at the Panhellenic festival of the Delphic **theoxenia**; the poet describes himself as:

agôna Loxia katabant' eurun
en theôn xeniae

entering the broad contest place of Loxias [Apollo]
at the **theoxenia**

Pindar *Paean* 6.60-61SM

By the very fact that it is a paean, the poem is a glorification of Apollo.^[1] In particular, it commemorates a tradition concerning a quarrel of the gods:

kai pothen athan[atôn eris a]r?xato.^[2] tauta theoisi [m]en
pithein sophou?[s] dunaton,
brotoisin d' amachano[n] heu]remen:

and from what causes the quarrel of the immortals began,
these things the skilled can ascertain from the gods,
but otherwise it is impossible for mortals to discover

Pindar *Paean* 6.50-53

Then the Muses are invoked to inspire a retelling (54-58). Mention of a sacrifice (62-64) is followed by a considerable lacuna, and when the text resumes we hear that Apollo in the guise of Paris has killed Achilles on the

battlefield (78-80).^[3] An elaboration follows concerning the consequences of Apollo's action:

Iliou de thēken apha
opsiteran halōsin

and he straightway caused
the capture of Troy to happen later

Pindar *Paean* 6.81-82

There is further elaboration at 87-89, where we learn specifically that Apollo "had a quarrel" (*erixe*: 87) with Hera and Athena.^[4] Since this elaboration is bracketed, before and after, by a description of how and why Achilles died, the inference is that the death of Achilles had something to do with the quarrel between Apollo on one side, Hera and Athena on the other. Since the gods' quarrel involves the capture of Troy, is it parallel with the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus over whether Troy would be captured by **biē** 'might' or by **mêtis** 'artifice'? Since the battles of heroes are matched by the battles of their divine patrons in the Homeric theme of **theomakhiâ**, we may expect a thematic match between heroic and divine quarrels as well. There is also a formal match that may be cited in this regard: the Muses are asked to explain the cause of the **eris** 'quarrel' between Achilles and Agamemnon at [*Iliad I 8*](#) in much the same way that they are asked to explain the **eris** among the gods at *Paean* 6.50-61.

§5. The evidence may seem meager at this point, but there must have been something about Achilles that was particularly offensive to Apollo. Conversely, we know that Paris, the antagonist and future killer of Achilles, offended the same gods whom we now see quarreling with Apollo in *Paean* 6, namely, Hera and Athena. The offense of Paris was the outgrowth of a quarrel that took place at a banquet given by the gods to celebrate the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the parents of Achilles himself. This quarrel of the gods served as the epic theme for the opening of the *Cypria*(Proclus summary p. 102.14-16 Allen), and there are clear references to the same epic tradition in [*Iliad XXIV 25-30*](#). Moreover, the *Cypria* presents this quarrel as a fitting epic theme for the opening of the entire Trojan War! The grievance of Hera and Athena against Paris was that he made a choice

favoring Aphrodite instead of them (*Cypria*/Proclus p. 102.16-19). The Iliadic allusion to this tradition, however, also alludes to a grievance of Apollo against Achilles. It seems as if the polarization of Hera and Athena on one side and Apollo on the other corresponds not only to the hostility of the first two divinities against Paris but also to the hostility of the third against Achilles.^[1] The three divinities are continuing their quarrel in *Iliad XXIV 25-63*. In the course of their quarrel, Apollo describes Achilles as a brute who is like a ravenous lion, without any control over his **biē** 'might' (XXIV 42).^[2] In Pindar's *Paean* 6, at the very moment that Apollo destroys Achilles, the hero is described as biatan 'endowed with **biâ** [epic **biē**]' (line 84). One of the reasons, then, for Apollo's enmity may well have been the championing of **biē** by Achilles. A more general reason, however, is yet to emerge from our ongoing scrutiny of the characteristics common to the god and the hero. It is too early at this point to attempt a precise formulation, and I offer here only the essentials: *the hostility of Apollo and Achilles has a religious dimension, in which god and hero function as ritual antagonists.*^[3]

§6. Even though the actual concept of ritual antagonism between Apollo and Achilles remains to be articulated, we can already see the stark consequences of this antagonism in the dimension of myth. In Pindar's words:

pro ponô
de ke megalôn Dardanian
eprathen, ei mêt phulassen Apo[l]l[ô]n:

before the great suffering,
he [Achilles] would have destroyed Troy,
if Apollo had not been protecting it

Pindar *Paean* 6.89-91SM

By killing Achilles, the god Apollo postponed the destruction of Troy and thus brought about a great deal of suffering that otherwise would not have happened. In the *Iliad* too, there is allusion to the tradition that great suffering was caused by the death of Achilles. The death of Patroklos in the

Iliad, which duplicates the death of Achilles beyond the *Iliad*, is announced with the following words:

ophra puthéai
lugrês angeliês, hê mē ôphelle genesthai.
êdê men se kai auton oïomai eisoroônta
gignôskein hoti pêma theos Danaoisi kulindei,
nikê de Trôôn: pephatai d ôristos Achaiôn,
Patroklos, megalê de pothê Danaoisi tetuktai.

that you may learn
of the ghastly news, which should never have happened.
I think that you already see, and that you realize,
that a god is letting roll a pain [pêma] upon the Danaans,
and that victory belongs to the Trojans; the best of the Achaeans has
been killed,
Patroklos, that is; and a great loss has been inflicted on the Danaans.

XVII 685-690

Only here in the *Iliad* does Patroklos get the epithet that elsewhere distinguishes Achilles, "best of the Achaeans"; the death of Patroklos is being presented as a prefiguration of the death of Achilles.^[1] By dying, the "best of the Achaeans" is the source of great **pêma** 'pain' for the Achaeans. For the Trojans too, Achilles is the greatest **pêma**--in the words of Hektor and Priam themselves ([XXII 288](#) and 421 respectively). That is, Achilles is a **pêma** for the Trojans *so long as he is fighting against them*. When he withdraws from the fighting, however, there is **pêma** for the Achaeans and **kûdos** 'glory of victory' for the Trojans ([VIII 176](#)),^[2] a situation that is recognized as the Will of Zeus by Hektor ([VIII 175](#), [XII 235-236](#)) and by the narrative itself ([XII 255](#), [XV 592-599](#)).^[3] In short, Achilles is a **pêma** for the Trojans when he is at war and a **pêma** for the Achaeans both when he withdraws from war and when he dies.

§7. With the background of these patterns in traditional diction, the words of Demodokos assume an ominous tone:

tote gar rha kulindeto pêmatos archê
Trôsi te kai Danaoisi Dios megalou dia boulas

for then it was that the beginning of pain [**pêma**] started rolling upon both Trojans and Danaans, on account of the plans of great Zeus[1]

viii 81-82

When Agamemnon rejoiced at the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, who were "the best of the Achaeans" (viii 78), he rejoiced at a sign that presaged the destruction of Troy. In his joy he was unaware of the intervening pain yet to be inflicted on the Achaeans by the withdrawal and then by the death of Achilles. His joy was justified in the distant future but unjustified in the events at hand. In Pindar's words, the destruction was not to happen pro ponô 'before suffering' (*Paean* 6.89). Our *Iliad* presents a highly sophisticated variation on this theme, in the episode of Agamemnon's False Dream. As in the first song of Demodokos, the impetus is the **boulê** 'plan, will' of Zeus (II 5). As in the song of Demodokos, the promise is that Troy will be destroyed (II 12-15, 29-32). As in the song of Demodokos, Agamemnon arrives at a premature conclusion:[2]

ta phroneont' ana thumon ha rh' ou teleesthai emallon:
phê gar ho g' hairêsein Priamou polin êmati keinôi,
nêpios, oude ta êidê ha rha Zeus mêteto erga:
thêsein gar et' emellen ep' algea te stonachas te
Trôsi te kai Danaoisi dia krateras husminas

thinking in his **thûmos** about things that were not to be: for he thought that he would capture Priam's city on that very day, the fool; he did not know what things Zeus was planning to do. For he [Zeus] was yet to inflict pains [**algea**] and groaning on both Trojans and Danaans in battles of **kratos**.[3]

II 36-40

From the standpoint of our *Iliad*, the story to be told concerns some of those "pains" [**algea**] that are yet to intervene before the capture of Troy. In fact,

the same word **algea** is deployed at the very beginning of our *Iliad* to designate the countless "pains" of the Achaeans ([I.2](#)), caused by the **mēnis** 'anger' of Achilles ([I.1](#)) and motivated by the Will of Zeus ([Dios d' eteleieto boulê: I.5](#)).

§8. Demodokos, then, is alluding to an *Iliad*, but not to our *Iliad*. Like our *Iliad*, the *Iliad* that Demodokos could have sung would feature the **mēnis** 'anger' of Achilles and Apollo. Unlike our *Iliad*, however, this Iliadic tradition would feature Odysseus, not Agamemnon, as the prime offender of Achilles. Unlike our *Iliad*, this *Iliad* would have the chief resentment of Achilles center on the slighting of his **biē** 'might'. An *Iliad* composed by Demodokos would have been a poem with a structure more simple and more broad, with an Achilles who is even perhaps more crude than the ultimately refined hero that we see emerging at the end of our *Iliad*. I have little doubt that such an *Iliad* was indeed in the process of evolving when it was heard in the *Odyssey* tradition which evolved into our *Odyssey*. Demodokos had heard the **kleos** and passed it on in song.

Notes

§2n1. See especially [iii 336](#) and 420; also [xiv 251](#). Cf. [Ch.3§21](#).

§3n1. For a suggestive discussion, adducing the comparative evidence of other festivals parallel to the **theoxenia**: Gernet 1968 [=1928] 32-33.

§3n2. For a survey: Nilsson 1906.160-162.

§3n3. This supposition is developed further at [Ch.7§§8-13](#), 17-20, 25-30.

§3n4. Apollo is preeminent at the Delphic **theoxenia** not necessarily because of any special affinity with the practice of **theoxenia** but rather simply because of his preeminence at Delphi itself.

§3n5. The citations at n3 apply here as well.

§4n1. On this function of the paean, cf. also [Ch.5§9](#). On the Panhellenic nature of the Delphic **theoxenia**, consider the lines that immediately follow

those just quoted, at *Paean* 6.62-63: [thuetai gar](#) aglaas [huper](#) Panel[lados] 'sacrifice is being made on behalf of splendid All-Hellas' (cf. Radt 1958.131-134). The poem goes on to say that the festival had been instituted as a result of a promise contained in a prayer offered by the community at a time long ago when it had been afflicted by a famine (lines 63 ff.); the food of the **theoxenia**, then, is a factor of compensation.

§4n2. For the editors' restoration of [eris](#) here at line 50, cf. [erixe](#) at line 87, referring to the same quarrel.

§4n3. The *Iliad* itself refers to the interaction of Apollo and Paris in the killing of Achilles: see [XIX 416-417](#), [XXII 358-360](#).

§4n4. Cf. n2.

§5n1. For more on god-hero antagonism as a factor in determining the alignments of various gods in the Trojan War, see [Ch.8§12](#).

§5n2. Further discussion at [Ch.7§22](#).

§5n3. See [Ch.7](#) (esp. [§4](#)) and [Ch.8](#) (esp. [§§1-5](#)).

§6n1. See [Ch.2§8](#). In this connection, the wording [pêma theos Danaoisi](#) [kulindei](#) 'a god is letting roll a **pêma**' upon the Danaans' here at [XVII 688](#) is directly comparable to [tacha hoi mega pêmakulisthê](#) 'surely a great **pêma** rolls down upon him' at [XVII 99](#)--words applied by Menelaos to any mortal who dares to fight Hektor *and thus undertake a confrontation with Apollo himself* ([XVII 98-99](#)). Patroklos had done so, but Menelaos dares not do likewise ([XVII 100-101](#)). The stance of Patroklos in his confrontation with Apollo is described as [pros daimona](#) 'facing the **daimôn** [divinity]' ([XVII 98](#)), which conveys the theme of ritual antagonism between god and hero (see [Ch.8§§3-4](#) and [Ch.17§5](#)). On the collocation of **pêma** 'pain' and **kulindô** 'roll' [as a rock], note also the parallel at [viii 81-82](#) as quoted in [§7 below](#).

§6n2. On the function of **kûdos** 'glory of victory' in Homeric narrative: Benveniste 1969 [II 57-69](#).

[**§6n3**](#). Further discussion of **pêma/kûdos** and the Will of Zeus at [Ch.20 §§15-17](#).

[**§7n1**](#). The double-edged **pêmatos archê** 'the beginning of the **pêma** [pain]' is a thematic germ of the Achilles figure: even his name may be explained as taking its form from the concept "grief for the people": *Akhí-lâuos. See [Ch.5](#). Cf. also the expression **neikeos archê** 'the beginning of the strife' ([XXII 116](#)), as discussed at Ch. 11[§12](#) and n.

[**§7n2**](#). Cf. [Ch.7 §25n1](#).

[**§7n3**](#). On the word **kratos**: [Ch.5 §25](#).

Chapter 5

The Name of Achilles

§1. The theme of **pêma** 'pain, grief' as we find it in the first song of Demodokos ([viii 81](#)) seems to be recapitulated in the very name of Achilles. As we consult Pierre Chantraine's etymological dictionary of Greek under the entry **Akhilleus**, we find listed a number of different explanations that have been offered over the years to account for the name of Greek epic's preeminent hero.^[1] My discussion will center on one of these, namely, Leonard Palmer's suggestion that **Akhil(I)eus** is a shortened form of *Akhí-lâuos,^[2] meaning "whose **lâos** [host of fighting men] has **akhos** [grief]."^[3] By examining this reconstruction in detail, I hope to add further evidence to my thesis that the thematic germ of the Achilles figure entails **pêma** for the Trojans when the hero is at war and a **pêma** for the Achaeans both when he withdraws from war and when he dies. I should emphasize, of course, that this thesis is already supported by the textual evidence presented in the last chapter--and that it does not depend on the etymology of the name **Akhil(I)eus**. Whether or not we are to accept Palmer's proposed etymology, however, we stand to gain additional perspectives on Achilles in the course of examining the constituent themes associated with his name. Two key words will be involved: **akhos** and **penthos**, both meaning "grief."

§2. We begin by taking note of the numerous morphological details in support of the proposition that **Akhil(I)eus** is derived from *Akhí-lâuos 'whose **lâos** has **akhos**'.^[1] Plausible as it is, however, this reconstruction will not carry conviction unless we can be satisfied that the posited meaning 'whose **lâos** has **akhos**' is intrinsic to the function of Achilles in myth and epic.^[2] We will have to examine how the notion of an Achilles figure relates to the notions of **akhos** 'grief' and **lâos** 'host of fighting men'.

§3. Such an examination can be valid, of course, only if the Achilles figure itself is intrinsic to the traditions of Greek myth and epic.^[1] Further, we must be ready to assume that the mythopoeic theme of **Akhil(I)eus** inspired the naming of historical figures called **Akhil(I)eus**--if there be any--rather

than the other way around.^[2] Lastly, we must be sure that the traditions of Greek myth and epic are old enough to be dated back, at the very least, to a time when a formation like *Akhí-lâuos could have existed.

§4. For the moment, let us consider only the traditions of epic. In both form and content, the heritage of Homeric diction can be traced back all the way to Indo-European prototypes.^[1] Even the internal evidence points to centuries of development. From Milman Parry's detailed studies on the formulaic nature of Homeric diction,^[2] we can absorb a sense for appreciating the immense stretches of time that must have been required for an evolving poetic medium to refine its diction to such degrees of economy and artistic effectiveness.^[3] What applies to the Homeric compositions must apply commensurately to the Hesiodic, as we learn from the studies of Edwards and others.^[4]

§5. Not only for Homeric tradition in particular but also for myth in general, we have the warranty of deep archaism wherever we find mythical themes encased in such preservative media as the poetic traditions inherited by Pindar.^[1] Combining internal analysis with the comparative method, we can establish not only that the traditional poetic forms of Pindar and other masters of lyric sometimes predate even Homeric counterparts,^[2] but also that their traditional poetic themes can sometimes be traced back all the way to Indo-European prototypes.^[3]

§6. In short, the testimony of the early Greek poetic traditions about **Akhil(l)eus**, by virtue of their formal and thematic archaism, can justifiably be applied as a test for Palmer's reconstruction *Akhí-lâuos. We must therefore examine whether the notion framed by *Akhí-lâuos (and *Penthí-lâuos, for that matter) corresponds to the functions of **akhos (penthos)** and **lâos** in the poetic traditions. In addition, we must examine whether such a correspondence extends to the Achilles figure itself. Since the primary poetic tradition about Achilles is the *Iliad*, a brief examination of its central themes, and of the diction expressing these themes, will have to be the first task.

§7. The artistic unity of our *Iliad*, and the controlling function of the Achilles figure therein, can perhaps best be seen in the deployment of its central themes. Complex as it is in its ramifications, the plot is simple in its

essence. The **tîmê** 'honor' of Achilles has been slighted ([I 505-510](#), 559, etc.). He becomes angry and withdraws from the war, leaving our narrative with an opportunity to test the worth of the other prominent Achaean warriors of epic against the onslaught of Hektor and his Trojans. The Achaeans fall short and are forced to make appeals for the help of Achilles. Although Achilles refuses to come to the rescue, his comrade Patroklos becomes his surrogate.[\[1\]](#) Patroklos rescues the Achaeans but is killed by Hektor through the intervention of the god Apollo.[\[2\]](#) Achilles now enters the war to kill Hektor, thereby finally establishing his own place in epic by the positive action of fighting in battle. His negative action of withdrawing from battle had set the stage for showing that only he could have rescued the Achaeans. By functioning as his surrogate, however, Patroklos anticipates the epic destiny of Achilles, which is to rescue the Achaeans and to be killed in the process through the intervention of Apollo. It is Patroklos who rescues the Achaeans in our *Iliad*; for the moment, at least, the Trojans have been repelled by the time Achilles enters the battle and establishes his own place in the epic, by killing Hektor.

§8. The *Iliad* does more than simply orchestrate these central themes into an artistic unity: it also names them. Either the narrative or the characters within the narrative can actually refer to the central themes inside the *Iliad*, with special designations. For example, the invocation at the beginning of the *Iliad* announces the content of the narrative simply by naming the **mênis** 'anger' of Achilles:[\[1\]](#)

mênin aeide thea Pêlêia deô Achilêos

Sing, goddess, the **mênis** of Achilles son of Peleus.

I 1

Through the preeminent placement of the word **mênis**, the theme of Achilles' anger is singled out by the composition as the most central and hence most pervasive in the Iliadic tradition. Furthermore, the subsequent application of **mênis** is restricted by the composition specifically to the anger that Achilles felt over the slighting of his **tîmê** at the very beginning of the action. The anger that Achilles felt later over the killing of Patroklos is nowhere denoted by **mênis**. In fact, the only instance where **mênis**

applies to heroes rather than gods in the *Iliad* is the mutual anger between Achilles and Agamemnon.^[2] We see in these restrictions on the application of **mēnis** a distinctive Iliadic association of this word with all the epic events that resulted from Achilles' anger against Agamemnon, the most central of which is the devastation suffered by the Achaeans. Again, the wording at the very beginning of the *Iliad* announces the theme of devastation by referring to the countless **algea** 'pains' of the Achaeans caused by the **mēnis** of Achilles:

hê muri' Achaiois alge' ethêken

which [the **mēnis**] made countless **algea** for the Achaeans.

I 2

§9. Like the word **mēnis**, **algea** 'pains' too serves as a key to the plot of the *Iliad*.^[1] Just as Apollo chronologically has **mēnis** over the abduction of Chryseis (I 75) before Achilles has **mēnis** over the abduction of Briseis, so also the Achaeans have **algea** from Apollo before they get **algea** from Achilles:

tounek' ar' alge' edôken hekêbolos êd' eti dôsei
oud' ho ge prin Danaoisin aeikea loigon apôsei
prin ...

For that reason the far-shooter gave--and will give--**algea**,
and he will not remove the disgraceful devastation [**loigos**] from the
Danaans until ...

I 96-98 (cf. also 110)

And the remedial action, as we see from I 97 here, is denoted by loigon apôsei 'will remove the devastation [**loigos**]'. When this **loigos** 'devastation' is removed with the appeasement of Apollo's anger, the Achaeans sing a **paiêôn** 'paean' to him (I 473), where the name of the song is also the epithet denoting the healing powers of the god.^[2] Since the **algea** that Apollo had visited upon the Achaeans was a **loimos** 'plague' (I 61, 97), the use of **paiêôn** at I 473 is all the more apt.^[3]

§10. To repeat, **algea** in the diction of the *Iliad* may denote two kinds of grief for the Achaeans: (1) the plague resulting from the **mēnis** of Apollo and (2) the dire military situation resulting from the **mēnis** of Achilles. In the case of the plague, the remedial action was denoted by loigon apôsei 'will remove the devastation [**loigos**]'[\(I 97\)](#); in fact, the narrative quotes directly the actual prayer to Apollo by Apollo's priest:[\[1\]](#)

êdê nun Danaoisin aeikea loigon amunon

Ward off now from the Danaans the disgraceful devastation [**loigos**]!

I 456

Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, as we examine the word **loigos** beyond [I 97](#) and 456, we find that its accusative loigon occurs exclusively in combination with the same verb amun- 'ward off' that we find here in [I 456](#). And from the contexts of these combinations, the fact emerges that the dire military situation resulting from the **mēnis** of Achilles calls for the same remedial action, from the standpoint of the diction, as did the plague resulting from the **mēnis** of Apollo:

... <u>loigon amunêis</u>	<u>XVI 32</u>
... <u>loigon amunai</u>	<u>I 341, XVI 75, XVIII 450</u>
... <u>loigon amunôn</u>	<u>XVI 80</u>

§11. In fact, the diction of the *Iliad* can designate the plight of the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships as simply loigon Achaiôn 'the devastation [**loigos**] of the Achaeans' at [XXI 134](#), where the Achaeans are then immediately described, in Achilles' own words, with the following narrative gloss:

hous epi nêusi thoêisin epephnete nosphin emeio

whom you killed at the swift ships in my absence.

XXI 135

The **loigos** of the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships happened because they were "apart from Achilles," who had **mēnis**. Already in Book I, the words of Achilles had alluded to their future predicament:

hoppôs hoi para nêusi sooi macheointo Achaioi

that the Achaeans be safe as they fight at the ships

I 344

It was in this future context, in what amounts to the title of a future episode in the narrative ("Battle of the Ships"), that the words of Achilles first raised the possibility that he would be needed then for the role of warding off the **loigos** of the Achaeans:

... ei pote dê aute
chreiô emeio genêtai aeikea loigon amunai

... if ever there will be
a need for me to ward off the disgraceful devastation [loigos]

I 340-341

§12. As the narrative approaches this epic destiny of Achilles with the ever-worsening plight of the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships, the hypothetical subject of loigon amunein 'ward off the devastation' remains Achilles only up to a certain point:

ai ke mê Argeioisin aeikea loigon amunêis

if you do not ward off the disgraceful devastation [loigos] from the Argives

XVI 32

Already here the speaker is Patroklos, who becomes soon hereafter the actual subject of the expression on the level of form and the surrogate of the action on the level of content. And it is Achilles who sends him off to battle with these words:

alla kai hôs Patrokle neôn apo loigon amunôν
empes' epikrateôs

Even so, Patroklos, ward off the devastation [loigos][1] from the ships and attack with **kratos**.[2]

XVI 80-81

The outcome will bring more grief.

§13. As we hear from the retrospective narrative of XVIII 444-456, where Thetis retells briefly the entire *Iliad* up to the moment at hand, Achilles "had refused to ward off the devastation [loigos]" (ênaineto loigon amunai: XVIII 450) and Patroklos had taken his place--only to be killed by Hektor through the intervention of Apollo (XVIII 451-456). The god had thus given the emblem of victory, the **kûdos**, to Hektor (XVIII 456).[1] When Achilles finally wins back the **kûdos** by killing Hektor, he calls on the Achaeans to sing a **paiêôn** (XXII 391), and the song is to begin as follows:

êrametha mega kudos: epephnomen Hektora dion

We won a big **kûdos**; we killed brilliant Hektor!

XXII 393

The **paiêôn** here is to be contrasted with the only other one in the *Iliad*, at I 473, where it had celebrated the remedy for the **algea** 'pains' of the Achaeans. True, the killing of Hektor has reversed the situation for the opposing sides: now it is the Achaeans who have the **kûdos** (XXII 393) and the Trojans who have **algea** (XXII 422) because of Achilles, who is a **pêma** 'pain' for the Trojans (XXII 421-422). In fact, he is for them the **pêma megiston** 'greatest pain' (XXII 288), in Hektor's own words. Previously, it had been Hektor who was called a **pêma** by the Achaeans (XI 347, cf. VIII 176), and in fact their plight during the onslaught of Hektor was also a **pêma** (IX 229).[2]

§14. It remains to ask whether the Achaeans will be rid of grief after Hektor is killed. Clearly they will not, since the death of Achilles will itself be an

ultimate **pêma** for them--as is presaged by the words announcing the death of Patroklos ([XVII 688-689](#)).[\[1\]](#)

§15. Moreover, the death of Patroklos is visualized as a **pêma** not only for the Achaeans but for himself as well. Contemplating how the hero died, Agamemnon offers this generalization: any mortal who dares to fight Hektor *and thereby undertake a confrontation with Apollo* will get a **pêma** ([XVII 98-99](#)).[\[1\]](#) This generalization surely applies also to Achilles: the death of the hero will be a **pêma** both for the Achaeans and for himself.[\[2\]](#)

§16. In short, the figure of Achilles is pervasively associated with the theme of grief. The program of the *Iliad*, which is equated with the Will of Zeus ([I 5/II 38](#)), decrees countless **algea** 'pains' for Trojans and Achaeans alike ([I 2/II 39](#))--all because Achilles became angry in a quarrel.[\[1\]](#) Beyond the *Iliad*, in the first song of Demodokos, we find Achilles again in a quarrel, and grief is again decreed (**pêma** 'pain': [viii 81](#)) by the Will of Zeus ([viii 82](#)).[\[2\]](#) Moreover, the Iliadic identification of a depersonalized force called **pêma megiston** 'greatest pain' with the epic persona of Achilles, as at [XXII 288](#), makes the hero seem like the very essence of grief.

§17. So far, we have been examining the relationship of the Achilles figure with the central theme of grief in the *Iliad* without actually considering the word **akhos** and its deployment within the composition. The evidence that we have already seen, however, leads us to expect that any Iliadic diction involving **akhos** should also directly involve the Achilles figure, if indeed the name **Akhil(I)eus** had once designated the epic function of the hero in its being derived from *Akhí-lâuos 'whose lâos has **akhos**' = 'he who has the host of fighting men grieving'.[\[1\]](#)

§18. Before we proceed, however, a few precautions may be taken about the nature of our evidence. We may by now have satisfied ourselves, on the basis of the Iliadic diction, that there is a thematic association between the Achilles figure and the notion of grief. The diction seems orchestrated to fit the main themes, or better, to express these themes by way of the placement of certain key words. For example, the deployment of the expression **loigon amun-** 'ward off devastation [**loigos**]' had indirectly told its own story about how Achilles' **ménis** caused grief for the Achaeans. The associations of key words keep retelling the main themes of the *Iliad* on a formal level, beyond

the more fundamental level of the actual narrative. But it is essential to keep in mind that such orchestration of the forms in such a way as to fit the main themes is a *result*, not a *cause*. In Greek epic, as also elsewhere in traditional poetry, inherited themes are expressed by inherited forms which are highly regulated by the formulaic system of the genre.

§19. To put it another way: from the intensive studies of Parry and Lord on the nature of formulaic language, we expect to see in Homeric poetry the automatic distribution of set phraseology appropriate to set themes.

Conversely, our knowledge of formulaic behavior tells us that we cannot expect any given composition within the tradition to require any alterations or modifications in the inherited phraseology of its hexameters for the purpose of accommodating the composition's sense of its own unity. If we do indeed discern the reality of an artistically unified *Iliad*, then we must also be ready to say that the unity of our *Iliad* is itself traditional. This is not to detract from a work of genius. Nor is it the same thing as claiming that the *Iliad* is the work of some committee of composers. Rather, I would say simply that the genius behind our *Iliad*'s artistic unity is in large part the Greek epic tradition itself. In order to accept this proposition, we may have to force ourselves to imagine the immensely creative process of this tradition, with all the many centuries of what must have been the most refined sort of elite performer/ audience interaction that went into the evolution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as we know them.[\[1\]](#)

§20. With these thoughts in mind, I return to the evidence of Iliadic diction, on **akhos** and **Akhil(I)eus**. If we are now about to discover a pervasive nexus between these two elements in the *Iliad*, I would then infer that such a nexus is integrated in the inherited formulaic system and hence deeply rooted in the epic tradition. Accordingly, the internal evidence of epic may well corroborate the proposed derivation of **Akhil(I)eus** from **akhos**.

§21. As we turn now to the deployment of **akhos** in the *Iliad*, we immediately come upon an overt equation of this word with the expression **pathon algea** 'suffered pains', involving the same word **algea** that we have already seen in the context of designating the grief that the Achaeans suffered from the **mēnis** of Achilles (**algea**: [L2](#)) and from the **mēnis** of

Apollo (**algea**: I 96, 110). This equation of **akhos** with **pathon algea** is to be found in the words of Achilles himself:

ainon achos to moi estin, epei pathon algea thumōi

the terrible **akhos** that I have, since I suffered pains [**algea**] in my **thûmos**

XVI 55

In the present case, however, **algea** designates the grief of Achilles over his loss of **tîmê** 'honor' (XVI 59), not the grief of the Achaeans. For Achilles to suffer his own **algea** qualifies here as **akhos** (XVI 55), yet we find only thirty-three hexameters earlier that the grief of the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships also qualifies as **akhos**:

mê nemesa: toion gar achos bebiêken Achaious

Do not be angry: for such an **akhos** has beset the Achaeans.

XVI 22

The word **akhos** signals *le transfert du mal*: the **akhos** of Achilles leads to the **mênis** of Achilles leads to the **akhos** of the Achaeans.

§22. Such a transfer has a religious dimension, as we can see from the traditions of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The **akhos** of Demeter is instantaneous with the abduction of the Kore (H.Dem. 40, 90-91). Her resulting **mênis** (H.Dem. 350) causes devastation in the form of cosmic infertility (351 ff.). The **tîmai** 'honors' of the Olympians are thus threatened (353-354), and it is only with the restoration of Kore that Demeter's **mênis** ceases (410), as her **akhos** abates (acheôn: 436). Demeter thereupon gets her appropriate **tîmai** (461), and her anger (468) is replaced with fertility (469, 471 ff.).

§23. Besides all the obvious convergences here, we must also note an important divergence from the pattern of Achilles: once Demeter's **mênis** ceases, so too does her **akhos**. This theme is also found directly in the cult

traditions, as we see, for example, in the report about the Demeter of Arcadian Phigalia: the **Moîrai** 'Fates' persuaded her both "to lay aside her anger and to cease in her grief" ([apothesthai men tēn orgēn, hupheinai de kai tēs lupēs: Pausanias 8.42.3](#)).^[1] The pattern is different with the grief of Achilles. The abduction of Briseis brings instantaneous **akhos** for Achilles ([I 188](#)), but this grief is not removed by the restoration of the girl, the vindication of his **tīmē**, and the cessation of his terrible **mēnis**. Before these three events take place, the **akhos** of Achilles is made permanent by the death of his surrogate Patroklos. When Achilles hears the news that Patroklos has been killed, his **akhos** is instantaneous in the narrative ([XVIII 22](#)), and for this **akhos** there is to be no remedy, as the earlier words of Odysseus had already predicted for Achilles:

[autōi toi metopisth' achos essetai, oude ti mēchos rhechthentos kakou est' akos heurein](#)

You yourself will have an **akhos** in the future,
and there will be no way to find a remedy for the bad thing once it is done.

[IX 249-250](#)

As Thetis predicts, Achilles will have grief for the rest of his life ([achnutai: XVIII 442-443](#)). Earlier, he was grieving for Briseis ([acheôn: XVIII 446](#)); now he can grieve for Patroklos ([acheuôn: XVIII 461](#)), and after this **akhos** there can be no other:

[... epei ou m' eti deuteron hôde hixet' achos kradién, ophra zôoisi meteiô](#)

... for never again will an **akhos** like this enter my heart while I am among the living

[XXIII 46-47](#)

§24. Whereas Achilles is the man of constant sorrow, the Achaeans have **akhos** intermittently. And each time that they get a remission of **akhos** in the *Iliad*, Achilles figures as the key factor. Initially, Apollo's **mēnis** had

given them grief because of the abduction of Chryseis; their grief was relieved when Chryseis was restored, whereas the consequent abduction of Briseis gave grief to Achilles. Later, Achilles' own **mēnis** gave the Achaeans grief, which was then relieved when Patroklos beat back the onslaught of the Trojans at the Battle of the Ships. The consequent death of Patroklos then left Achilles without respite from grief.

§25. During the intermittent period of **akhos** for the Achaeans, the Trojans are described as having **kratos** 'superior power', and the complementary distribution of these two Homeric themes of **akhos/ kratos** is controlled by the Will of Zeus, the self-proclaimed "plot" of our *Iliad*. The key passage is [I 509-510](#), where we find an overt correlation of the grief that is about to beset the Achaeans with the temporary awarding of **kratos** to the Trojans, and the correlation is under the control of Zeus. It is up to Zeus both to give **kratos**, as here ([I 509](#)), as well as to take it away, and the Achaeans in their plight fully realize the absence of **kratos**.[\[1\]](#) Diomedes speaks for them all when he says:

... epeι nephelēgereta Zeus
Trōsin dê boletai dounai kratos êe per hēmin

... since Zeus the cloud-gatherer
wills to give the kratos to the Trojans instead of us.[\[2\]](#)

[XI 318-319](#)

That is, Diomedes speaks for all except for Achilles, who stands outside the common good of the Achaean host. For Achilles, the transfer of **kratos** from the Achaeans to the Trojans leads to his own **tîmê** ([I 505-510](#)), and the restoration of his **tîmê** is equivalent to the Will of Zeus (cf. also [II 3-5](#)), which in turn comes to pass with the grief of the Achaeans at the Battle of the Ships ([I 2-5](#), 559; [IX 608-609](#)). When he is praying to Zeus, Achilles says it himself:

timêas men eme, mega d' ipsao laon Achaiôn

You have given **tîmê** to me and great harm to the **lâos** of the Achaeans

With exactly these same words, the priest Chryses had prayed to Apollo ([I 454](#)); there too the **lāos** of the Achaeans was having grief, but that time it was still the **mēnis** of Apollo that was causing it, not the **mēnis** of Achilles.

§26. Who, then, is this warrior, whose **tīmē** is instrumental in taking **kratos** from the **lāos** of the Achaeans and bringing them **akhos** instead? Surely it is *Akhí-lāuos, the one who has grief for and of the **lāos**. The individual **akhos** of the Achilles figure leads to the collective **akhos** of the Achaean host during the Battle of the Ships, but it was their own earlier **akhos** during the plague that had led to Achilles' **akhos**. If there had been no abduction of Chryseis, leading to the **akhos** of the Achaeans, there would have been no abduction of Briseis, leading to the **akhos** of Achilles. Achilles was as instrumental in ridding the Achaeans of their first **akhos** as he was in bringing upon them the second; in fact, he had even prayed to Zeus for the grief that would come upon them ([XVIII 74-77](#); cf. [I 408-412](#)).

§27. The Homeric theme of **akhos** reflects not only on the individual nature of the Achilles figure but also on the collective nature of the Achaean **lāos**. As for the word **lāos**, its traditional use in Homeric diction also reinforces the proposed reconstruction *Akhí-lāuos, inasmuch as **lāos** serves to designate the Achaeans specifically in a *social* sense: the Homeric **lāos** is a warrior society, a *Männerbund*.[\[1\]](#) As such, the function of the **lāos** corresponds ideologically to the Indo-European "second function," in terms of Georges Dumézil's formulation.[\[2\]](#) This warrior society of the **lāos**, as my former student Dale Sinos has shown in detail, sets the ethical standards of our *Iliad* in terms of the bonds that unite the **philoī** 'friends', who are the members of the **lāos**.[\[3\]](#) The epic stance of the individual Achilles toward the collective **lāos** thus presents an ethical problem that we will have to examine presently; for the moment, however, the pertinence of **akhos** is the major issue. Here too, we will see that the theme of **akhos** is central. When Achilles has his first **akhos**, over Briseis, it separates him from the **lāos**. When he has his second **akhos**, over Patroklos, it reintegrates him with the **lāos**.

§28. Supplement: The Name of the Achaeans
When the first **akhos** of Achilles separated him from the **lāos**, the **lāos** then got **akhos** too. This

theme of transference from the individual to the collective introduces yet another factor relevant to the etymology of **Akhil(I)eus**, namely the etymology of the word "Achaeans," **Akhaioi**. In Homeric diction, this name **Akhaioi** functions as the synonym of **Danaoi** and **Argeîoi**, but its association with other words is idiosyncratic. In particular, I draw attention to the extremely common Homeric collocation of **lâos/lâon** with **Akhaiôn** (and **Akhaikon**). Since **lâos** is a *social* designation, we are encouraged to see here a parallel semantic function in the name that serves as its defining genitive, **Akhaiôn** (construction of the type *urbs Romae*).^[1] Accordingly, we have an answer to the possible objection that **Akhaioi** cannot be derived from **akhos**--on the grounds that the name may refer to a genuine people as well as an epic collective. The answer is this: the process of ethnic naming may itself be a social function, and the designation of a people may involve a mythopoeic or even ritualistic level. Surely such levels are present in the Homeric synonyms of **Akhaioi**, namely, **Danaoi** and **Argeîoi**.^[2]

§29. In fact, such mythopoeic and ritualistic levels are also present in the cult designation of Demeter as **Akhaiâ** precisely in the context of her **akhos** over the abduction of Kore. In Plutarch's *De Iside* 378d, we read reports of mourning rites ([penthimois thusiais](#)) practiced by various peoples during the period of sowing (October/November) to lament the abduction of the Kore. After citing the Thesmophoria of the Athenians, where he describes the second day of the festival (12 Pyanopsion) as a period of lamentation, Plutarch's survey turns to a corresponding ritual period in Boeotia:

[kai Boiôtoi ta tês Achaias megara kinousin, epachthê tên heortên ekeinên onomazontes hôs dia tên tês Korês kathodon enachei tês Dêmêtros ousês.](#)

And the Boeotians activate the chambers [**megara**] of the **Akhaiâ**, giving their festival a name of grief because of Demeter's **akhos** over the Descent [**kathodos**] of the Kore.

Plutarch *De Iside* 378e

There is an overt correlation here between Demeter's cult title **Akhaiâ** and her **akhos** 'grief' over the Descent of the Kore;^[1] furthermore, her individual grief is correlated with the collective grief of the community that

worships her. These correlations of the name **Akhaiâ** are presented as a fact of cult; they are independent of the surface resemblance of the forms **akhos** and **Akhaiâ**. I propose that we are dealing here with something more than a mere lexicographical association, as we might have thought if we had access only to such information as the following gloss:

Achaia [six]: epitheton Dêmêtros. apo tou peri tēn Korēn achous,
hoper epoieito anazêtousa autên

Akhaia: epithet of Demeter. From the **akhos** that she had over the Kore when she was looking for her.

Hesychius s.v.

As we have already seen, the word **akhos** is the *traditional* designation of Demeter's grief over the abduction of the Kore (H.Dem. 40, 90, 436), just as **Akhaiâ** serves as a *traditional* epithet of the grieving Demeter during a ritual period of lamentation. Even if we were to assume that the association of **akhos** with **Akhaiâ** results from a contrived etymology, we would still have to concede on the basis of Plutarch's report that the contrivance itself must be traditional and deeply archaic, not some random figment of a lexicographer's imagination.[\[2\]](#)

§30. Besides the traditional association of **akhos** with **Akhaiâ** in cult, we have also seen the association of **akhos** with **Akhaioi** in the central themes of the *Iliad*. This convergence of evidence leads us to suspect a lexical relationship between **akhos** and **Akhaio/â-**, and there are interesting morphological parallels that may serve as corroboration. Let us first compare the es-stem **akhos** and adjectival **Akhaio-** with the es-stem **kratos** (*/kartos*) and adjectival **krataio-**.[\[1\]](#) This match is interesting from the thematic as well as formal point of view, since we have already seen that the word **kratos** (*/kartos*) is used in Homeric diction to designate the converse of **akhos**, where the back-and-forth struggle of the Achaeans and Trojans is being described.[\[2\]](#) When the Achaeans are hard pressed with **akhos** 'grief', it is the Trojans who have the **kratos** 'superior power' (I 509-510, etc.); conversely, when the Trojans are hard pressed, it is the Achaeans who have the **kratos** (VI 386-387, etc.).[\[3\]](#) It also seems pertinent to the back-and-forth theme of the Achaean/Trojan struggle that a noun for which

the adjective **krataio-** serves as fixed epithet is the word for "fate": verse-final **Moîra krataiê**, as at [V 83](#), [XVI 334](#), etc.[\[4\]](#)

§31. The adjective **krataio-** seems to be formed from the element **kratai-/kartai-**, as attested in compound adjectives like **kratai-pedon** 'whose ground is firm [has **kratos**]'[\(xxiii 46\)](#): applying to **oûdas** 'floor').[\[1\]](#) In parallel onomastic formations, we find **krati-** as well as **kratai-**: thus **Krati-dêmos** 'whose **dêmos** has **kratos**' as well as **Kratai-menê̄s** 'whose **menos** [might] has **kratos**'.[\[2\]](#) On the basis, then, of its compounding patterns as well as its variant **krati-**, we may consider the element **kratai-** as part of a so-called Caland System.[\[3\]](#) Such a system would include the abstract noun with stem in **-es-** (**kratos/kartos**; Aeolic **kretos** even shows the expected e-grade of the root) and the adjectives with stems in **-u-** (**kratu-**) and **-ro-** (**kratero-**) compared to **-i-** in the first part of compounds (**kratai-**).[\[4\]](#) The vowels immediately before **-ro-** and **-i-** in **kratero-** and **kratai-** respectively are problematical,[\[5\]](#) but the overall system of **kratos** is clear enough to allow comparison with what seems to be the system of **akhos**:

kratos **kratu-** **krati-** **kratai-** **krataio-**
akhos **akhu-** ***akhi-** ***akhai-** **Akhaiο-**

§32. The **u**-stem **akhu-** is visible in the **n**-infix verb **akh-n-u-tai** ([achnutai](#), as at [XVIII 443](#)) corresponding to the noun **akhos**, and also in **akheuô̄n** ([acheuô̄n](#), as at [XVIII 461](#)), verse-final variant of verse-medial **akheô̄n** ([acheô̄n](#), as at [XVIII 446](#)); we have in fact already examined all three of these forms in the specific context of Achilles' grief.[\[1\]](#) The type **akheô̄n** must in turn be compared with **krateô̄n** ([krateô̄n](#), as at [XVI 172](#)).

§33. An **i**-stem ***akhi-** has already been posited as the first member in the reconstructed compound ***Akhí-lâuos** 'whose **lâos** has **akhos**'. As for the hypothetical variant ***akhai-** (cf. **kratai-** and **krati-**), it may well be visible in the name **Akhai-menê̄s**, the Greek formal reinterpretation of Old Persian *Haxâ-manîj*. The morphological integrity of **Akhai-menê̄s** (compared to **akhos**) as a Greek formation is validated by such parallel formations as attested in the names **Kratai-menê̄s** (compared to **kratos**) and **Althai-**

menēs (compared to **althos**).^[1] Note also the form **akhai-menis**, the name of a plant (pseudo-Dioscorides 3.110).

§34. The **es**-stem noun corresponding to the name **Althai-menēs** 'whose **menos** [might] has **althos**' requires special attention.^[1] In Hesychius, the entry **althos** is glossed as **pharmakon** 'cure, drug'; the derivative **an-althēs** 'incurable' is actually attested in the epic tradition (*Iliou Persis fr. 5.6* Allen). This noun **althos** corresponds to **althaiâ**, the name of a plant that cures wounds (Theophrastus *Historia Plantarum* 9.15.5), and to **Althaiê**, the name of Meleager's mother ([IX 555](#));^[2] we must also compare **krataiâ**, likewise the name of a plant (pseudo-Dioscorides 2.180).^[3] The semantics of these forms suggest the possibility, however remote, that **althos** (/Althaiê) may have been a thematic converse of **akhos** (/Akhaiâ). Compare the function of **akos** 'cure' as the converse of **akhos** 'grief':

autōi toi metopisth' achos essetai, oude ti mēchos
rhechthentos kakou est' akos heurein

You yourself [Achilles] will have an **akhos** in the future, and there will be no way
to find an **akos** for the bad thing once it is done.^[4]

[IX 249-250](#)

§35. In view of such formal correspondences as

kratos Kratai-menēs krataio-
althos Althai-menēs althaiâ-

it would be tempting to consider

akhos Akhai-menēs Akhaio-

as a set of related forms. One formal problem that stands in the way is the Latin borrowing *Achîuî*, on the basis of which **Akhaio-** is conventionally reconstructed as *Akhaiuó-.^[1] Also, the form *a-ka-wi-ja-de* in the Linear B texts (KN C 914) has been tentatively interpreted as *Akhaiuiân-de 'to Achaea'.^[2] Yet I can find no morphological precedent for reconstructing a

suffix *-uó- as in *kratai-uó- or *Akhai-uó-. On the other hand, it may be possible to reconstruct **krataio-** and **Akhaio-** as original compounds containing the root *ui- 'force' as second element. The key is the verse-final form **krataiis/Krataiin** in the *Odyssey* ([xi 597](#)/[xii 124](#)).

§36. At [xi 597](#), **krataiis** (nominative) designates the supernatural force that sends the rock of Sisyphus rolling back again and again to its starting point. At [xii 124](#), **Krataiin** (accusative) designates the mother of the man-eating immortal monster Scylla; according to the instructions of Circe, Odysseus and his men must call on **Krataiis** to restrain Scylla from attacking them again ([xii 124-126](#)). Among other interpretations of the name **Krataiis**, the scholia (*ad* [xii 597](#)) offer **krataiâ ìs** 'force that has **kratos**', with the immediate context cited as justification. In the appendix, I argue on morphological grounds that **krataiis** is in fact the personification of an adjective originally shaped *kratai-ui- 'whose **ìs** [force] has **kratos**'.^[1] For a semantic parallel, I adduce the compound **Kratai-menê̄s**, which can be translated "whose **menos** [might] has **kratos**." Also, I adduce the expression **kraterê ... [[currency]]s Odusêos** ([XXIII 720](#)), which amounts to a periphrasis of an epithet + name combination such as *kratai-ménê̄s Oduseús.^[2] In arguing for the parallelism of **menos** and **ìs** in **Kratai-menê̄s** and *kratai-uis, I can cite such epic combinations as **hieron menos** + genitive ([vii 167](#), [viii 2](#), etc.) and **hierê ìs** + genitive ([ii 409](#), [xviii 405](#), etc.).^[3]

§37. In the appendix, I also present arguments in favor of interpreting the adjectives **krataio-/Akhaio-** as derived from compounds shaped *kratai-ui-/*akhai-ui- 'whose **ìs** has **kratos/akhos**'.^[1] In the case of *kratai-ui-, we have just considered the semantic parallel of **Kratai-menê̄s** 'whose **menos** [might] has **kratos**', where the element **menos** has the inherited function of being a synonym of **ìs**. There is also another semantic parallel, one that is even closer to the posited compound **krataio-** on a formal level. Since the word **biê** 'might' also functions as a synonym of **ìs** (e.g., **ìs** at [XI 668](#) is equated with **biê** at [XI 670](#)), we may now in addition cite the adjective/name **kratai-bios/Kratai-bios**'whose **biê** has **kratos**'.^[2] So much for the reconstruction *kratai-ui-. As for *akhai-ui-, I should note simply that its posited meaning "whose **ìs** had **akhos**" corresponds to the primary martial function of the **Akhaioi** 'Achaeans' in epic action: their prowess

entails **akhos** for the enemy and, simultaneously, **kratos** for themselves.^[3] Moreover, the Iliadic tradition features an interesting variation on this theme: because Achilles withdraws from battle, the Achaeans temporarily lose **kratos** to the Trojans and they themselves are overwhelmed by **akhos**. Epic diction actually conveys this reversed position of the Achaeans in terms of **akhos** and **biē**, synonym of **îs**:

toion gar achos bebiēken Achaious

For such an akhos has brought biē upon the Achaeans.^[4]

XVI 22

These words are spoken by Patroklos to Achilles, and they introduce a concrete description of the Achaeans' plight now that all the major heroes save Achilles have been knocked out of action by Hektor's onslaught (XVI 23-29). The perfect formation **bebiēken** 'has brought biē upon' at XVI 22 reverses the martial function of the Achaeans from active to passive: they "whose **îs** has **akhos**" are no longer inflicting **îs** but are themselves afflicted by it, so that they, rather than the enemy, get the resulting **akhos**.^[5] To sum up, the warrior needs **biē** to win in battle, but **biē** is not enough. One can have **biē** and still lose without the **kratos** that only Zeus can grant.^[6] Even the cosmic régime of the Olympians is actually maintained by the combination of **Kratos** and **Biē** personified (Hesiod Th. 385-401). Thus he who is **kratai-bios** 'whose **biē** has **kratos**' is one who not only has **biē** but also wins because he has been granted **kratos** by the gods. The same goes for the **kraterê ... îs** of Odysseus at XXIII 720. But winning is an ambiguous prospect for the **Akhaioi**: their **îs** may fail to have **kratos** from the gods, and so the **akhos** may be destined for them rather than the enemy.

§38. So much, then, for the argument that **Akhaiâ/Akhaioi** is treated by epic diction as a derivative of **akhos** 'grief'. When we add the evidence of the strong thematic links between these words, we gain an important perspective on the *social* function of **akhos**. On the level of cult, the title **Akhaiâ** shows that the community becomes involved in the **akhos** of Demeter by performing rites of lamentation. On the level of epic, the title **Akhaioi** shows that **akhos** can afflict an entire aggregate of warriors. We had started our discussion of **Akhaiâ/Akhaioi** by stressing the social

implications in the component **lâos** of the reconstructed *Akhí-lâuos.[\[1\]](#) Now we see that the social implications extend to the component **akhos** as well.

§39. In this light, we may compare *Akhí-lâuos 'whose **lâos** has grief' with the name **Kharilâos** (from *Kharí-lâuos) 'whose **lâos** has mirth', as used in Archilochus *fr. 168W*. The poem addresses Kharilaos and then promises to give him pleasure by making him laugh:

Erasmonidê Charilae,
chrêma toi geloion
ereô, polu philtath' hetairôn,
terpseai d' akouôn

Kharilâos, son of **Erasmôn**!

I will tell you something to be laughed at,
you most **philos** [dear] of **hetaîroi** [companions]!
and you will get pleasure hearing it.

Archilochus *fr. 168W*

There are implications not only in the name **Kharilâos** but also in the patronymic **Erasmonidês** 'son of **Erasmôn**', which is related to **erasmios** 'lovely'; this adjective elsewhere describes the bloom of youth that inspires poetry (Anacreon *fr. 375P*).[\[1\]](#) Moreover, the verb **terpô/terpomai** 'give/get pleasure' conventionally designates the effect of poetry (e.g., [i 347](#)).[\[2\]](#) We may also note the combination of **erasmios** 'lovely' and **terpnos** 'pleasurable' in Semonides 7.52W and compare the collocation of **Erasmonidês** (Erasmonidê) and **terpomai** 'get pleasure' (terpseai) in this poem of Archilochus. My point is that the pleasure and laughter promised by the poem are actually embodied in the element **khari-** of **Khari-lâos**.[\[3\]](#) This element, as found in the noun **kharis**,[\[4\]](#) conveys the notion of "pleasure, mirth" in conventional descriptions of poetry and its effects;[\[5\]](#) moreover, the context of such pleasure is *social*.[\[6\]](#) As the narrating Odysseus says in [ix 3-11](#), there is no accomplishment "having more **kharis**" (chariesteron: line 5) than the **euphrosunê** 'mirth' that everyone in the **dêmos** 'district' experiences from the dinner hour performance of a poet.[\[7\]](#) So too with **Khari-lâos**: he will get pleasure and laugh as "the most **philos**

[dear] of the **hetaîroi** [companions]" (philtath' hetairôn: line 3). In other words, the audience of the poem is a *community* (comprised of **philoī** 'friends').^[8] And the notion of community is also embodied in the element **lâos** of **Khari-lâos**.^[9]

§40. If indeed the semantics of **Khari-lâ(u)os** and *Akhí-lâuos are comparable, we may note with interest the reaction of the **lâos** when Achilles suspends his **mênis** 'anger':

hôs ephath', hoi d' echarêsan eüknêmides Achaioi
mênin apeipontos megathumou Pèleïônos

Thus he [Achilles] spoke. And the fair-greaved Achaeans were happy that the great-hearted son of Peleus unsaid his **mênis**.

XIX 74-75

Since the **mênis** 'anger' of Achilles had caused **akhos** 'grief' for the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships,^[1] it is significant that the suspension of this same **mênis** now causes them "mirth"--as conveyed by the root **khar-** in echarêsan 'were happy' at XIX 74. This same root constitutes the first element of the compound **Khari-lâos** 'whose **lâos** has mirth.'

§41. As we have seen, another traditional word for the dire military situation of the Achaeans during the Battle of the Ships is **loigos** 'devastation'.^[1] Since the grief caused by the **mênis** of Achilles is thus a devastation as well, we may suppose that a name like **Kharilâos** could convey the notion that the **lâos** has mirth *because some devastation is suspended*. In view of this possibility, let us consider the social function of the name **Kharila** in Delphic myth and ritual. From the report of Plutarch *Quaestiones Graecae* 293e, we learn that **Kharila** designates not only a Delphic festival but also the figure commemorated in that festival. The corresponding myth tells that **Kharila** was a starving girl who begged for a share of food that was being distributed in the community by the king; when the king knocked her away with his shoe, she hanged herself. During the enneateeric festival of **Kharila**, a ritual dummy that is also called **Kharila** is knocked away by the king of the festival, whereupon it is

hanged by its neck and then buried. As is generally agreed, the theme of the festival is fertility by way of banishing hunger.^[2] Both the myth and the ritual of **Kharila** reveal an archaic social foundation in general and an archaic judicial system in particular.^[3] On the basis of the social function inherited by the name **Kharila**, I suggest that the form may be a truncated variant of *Kharílāuos. We have in fact already seen other such variants: **Kharillos** and **Kharillēs**.^[4]

Notes

§1n1. Chantraine [I 150](#).

§1n2. Palmer 1963.79. Here in [Ch.5](#) and in [Ch.6](#), I am offering a revised version of an article that I wrote for Palmer's Festschrift (Nagy 1974c). See now Palmer 1979 and Nagy 1994.

§1n3. Technically, this posited *bahuvrīhi* compound should be translated "he who has the **lāos** grieving" or "he whose **lāos** has **akhos**." (The Sanskrit grammatical term *bahuvrīhi* literally means "he who has much rice.") For the interpretation of **lāos** as "host of fighting men" in the context of epic, see Jeanmaire 1939.11-111 and Vian 1968.59. For the connection of Greek **lāos** with Hittite *la[[dotaccent]][[dotaccent]]a-* 'military campaign' and *la[[dotaccent]][[dotaccent]]iyala-* 'warrior', see Heubeck 1969 and Watkins 1976b.122.

§2n1. Palmer (1963.79) compares what appears to be another shortened form, **Penthī-los**, to be derived from *Penthí-lāuos 'whose **lāos** has **penthos** [grief]', where the first component **penthī-** follows the inherited Caland pattern: **penthī-** compared to **penthos** 'grief', parallel to **akhi-** compared to **akhos** 'grief'. (On such patterns see the original formulation by Caland 1893.592; see also Nussbaum 1976.) Palmer (*ibid.*) adduces such other examples as **Kûdi-aneira** 'whose men have glory [**kûdos**]', and **Oidi-podēs** 'whose feet have swelling [**oîdos**]', etc. As a parallel to the hypothetical truncation of *-lāuos in **Akhil(l)eus** (from *Akhí-lāuos), we may cite the coexistence of the forms **Sthenelos** ([V 111](#), etc.) and **Sthenelāos** ([XVI 586](#)). To explain the optional doubling of the **-I-** in the epic forms of **Akhil(l)eus**,

Palmer (ibid.) points out that expressive gemination seems to be a characteristic of shortened forms, adducing **Kharillos/Kharillēs** compared to **Khari-lāos** (from *-lāuos); for the forms, see Bechtel 1917.285. (On **Kharila**, see further at [§39 below](#); also compare the formal pair **Kharila** and **Khari-lāos** with **Iolē** and **Io-lāos** respectively.) We may add **Perillos**, apparently a by-form of **Peri-lāos** (see Jeffery 1976.139); cf. also **Philleus** and **Phileus**, as discussed by Perpillou 1973.172 and 241n8. There remains the problem of the suffix **-eus** in **Akhi-l(I)eus**: here too Palmer can point to formal parallelisms, showing from the evidence of both Linear B and later Greek that this suffix is especially characteristic of shortened names (Palmer, p. 78; cf. also Perpillou, pp. 167-299). As another possible instance where compounded *-lāuos is ultimately truncated to **-leus**, Palmer (p. 80) adduces epic **Nēleus** and Attic **Neileōs** (from *Neelēos from *Nehé-lāuos, apparently attested as the name *ne-e-ra-wo* in a Linear B tablet from Pylos, Fn 79.5); see Ruijgh 1967.369-370. In addition, I cite the by-form of **Iolē**, namely **Ioleia** (Hesiod *fr.* 26.31MW), and the masculine **Io-lāos**; the feminine type **Ioleia** implies a corresponding *Ioleús. Finally, we may compare the formal types **Iolāos** and **Ioleia** with **Prôtesilāos** and **Penthesileia**.

§2n2. As precedent, I cite Frame 1978.82-83, 86, 96-99, 112 on the mythology underlying the form *Nehé-lāuos (n1), which means something like "bringing the **lāos** back home to safety"; Frame connects the root *nes- of *Nehé-lāuos not only with **Nēleus** and **Neileōs** but also with **Nes-tôr**, the name of the son of Neleus. Compare the root *ag- in **Ageleōs** ([xxii 131](#), 247), from *Agé-lāuos 'bringing/leading the **lāos**', and also in **Ak-tôr** ([II 513](#), etc.). The contraction of *Nehe- to **Nê-** in **Nēleus** implies that the replacement of *Nehé-lāuos by *Nehe-leús had already taken place during a pre-Ionic phase in the development of Homeric diction (see Wackernagel 1953 [= 1914] 1156-1157 and n2).

§3n1. The single most convincing piece of writing on the subject of Achilles' inherited central role in the Iliadic tradition remains that of Whitman 1958 (Ch.IX). His book and Lord's (1960, esp. Ch.IX on the *Iliad*) have been invaluable for my present efforts.

§3n2. I raise this issue to allow for the possibility that the name spelled *a-ki-re-u* in Linear B (Knossos tablet Vc 106; cf. Pylos tablet Fn 79) stands for *Akhil(l)eús. For an articulate comparison of the historical Pylos and a possibly historical Nestor with the mythopoeic Pylos and the mythopoeic Nestor, I cite Frame 1978. For a useful general discussion of the relationship between the mythopoeic requirements of epic and the realia of history: Lord 1970.29-30.

§4n1. I cite primarily my own monograph on the subject (Nagy 1974), certainly not because I think of it as authoritative but because it reflects a stage of work that has led to my present interests. Instead of listing here the parallel work of my associates in Indo-European poetics (such as Muellner 1976, Watkins 1977, Frame 1978), I prefer to pay them tribute with citations wherever they are in order. For a general introduction to the language of Indo-European poetry: Schmitt 1967 and Durante 1971/1976.

§4n2. I cite again his collected papers, Parry 1971; cf. also Lord 1960/1968.

§4n3. Cf. Nagy 1974.49-102; also Fenik 1968.229 and Lord 1974.193-199.

§4n4. Edwards 1971, with further bibliography.

§5n1. This observation about Pindar (which applies also to Bacchylides) will be developed as my argument proceeds, especially in Chs.7, 12, 14, 20. We have already had occasion to observe the archaism of Pindaric traditions in the case of *Paean* 6, as discussed at [Ch.4](#).

§5n2. Cf. Gentili 1972, esp. p. 73; also Pavese 1967, 1972.

§5n3. For a particularly striking example from Pindaric poetry, see Benveniste 1945 on *Pythian* 3.45-53.

§7n1. [Ch.2](#)§8.

§7n2. [Ch.4](#)§6.

§8n1. It is traditional for an archaic poem to begin with a word that names the main subject of the narrative in the manner of a title (in this case, **mēnis**

at [I.1](#)), followed by an epithet and a relative clause setting forth the relationship of the title word to the main subject (in this case, how the **mēnis** of Achilles was baneful and caused devastation for the Achaeans, at [I.2-5](#)). Consider also the openings of the *Odyssey*, *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, *Little Iliad*, and nearly all the Homeric *Hymns*.

§8n2. The only exception is the **mēnis** of Aeneas against King Priam ([epemēnie](#): [XIII.460](#)), which must have been the central theme of another epic tradition--this one featuring Aeneas as its prime hero. See [Ch.15§2](#). On the restriction of **mēnis** to Achilles among the heroes of the *Iliad*, compare also the use of **memonen** 'he is in a rage' at [XXI.315](#) ([Ch.20§5n4](#)). For the significance of this restriction from the religious standpoint of god-hero antagonism, see [Ch.8§3](#). On the semantics of **mēnis**: Considine 1966 and Watkins 1977. Adducing the evidence of Homeric diction, Watkins argues that **mēnis** must have resulted from a deformation of *mnâ-nis, containing the root *mnâ- (*mne[schwa]j2-) as in **me-mnē-mai** 'to have in mind'. This enlarged root *mnâ- is built from *men- as in Greek **menos**, an abstract noun indicating a "state of mind" as manifested in such phenomena as "power" (on the semantics: Nagy 1974.266-269) or, as it turns out, "anger." Watkins has found three Iliadic passages ([I.207](#), 282; [XXI.340](#)) where **menos** is used not only in the sense of "anger" *but also as a functional equivalent of mēnis*. I would add the evidence of **meneainō** 'be angry, furious, in a rage', a verb formally derived from this noun **menos** (cf. Chantraine [III.685](#)). In view of Watkins' convincing argument that **mēnis** is a *reciprocal* notion, I cite [Iliad XIX.58](#), where Agamemnon tells Achilles: **eridi meneēnamen** 'we were angry [at each other] in **eris**'. The word **eris** 'strife' here refers to their quarrel at the beginning of the *Iliad* (see further at [Ch.7§17](#) and [Ch.12§6](#)). Note that Achilles himself predicts at [XIX.63-64](#) that the Achaeans "will long remember," **mnēsesthai**, the mutual **eris** between him and Agamemnon (see [Ch.19§3](#)). Accordingly, I see no reason to dismiss as adventitious the designation of Agamemnon's anger against Achilles as **mēnis** at [I.247](#): [Atreïdēs d' heterôthen emēnie](#) 'the son of Atreus, on the other side, had **mēnis**'. The expression [heterôthen](#) 'on the other side' even underscores the reciprocity of the **mēnis** between the heroes. Achilles, however, as the prime hero of the *Iliad* and as the determinant of its action, is also the determinant of this anger that serves as the epic's central theme. See now Muellner 1996; also Palmer 1979 and Nagy 1994.

§9n1. Since the word **algea** 'pains' is announced by the relative clause that expands on the "title" **mēnis** ([§8n1](#)), it is a formal as well as functional key.

§9n2. Cf. Nagy 1974.135-137; also Burkert 1977.228.

§9n3. On the relationship of the **paiēôn/paiâ̄n** 'paean' to the death of Achilles himself, see Intro.§16; also [Ch.4](#) (esp. §§4-6), and [Ch.7](#) (esp. §§4, 24-30).

§10n1. On the strictly regulated subgenre of prayers as quoted within Homeric narrative: Muellner 1976.17-67.

§12n1. By contrast, even Diomedes cannot "ward off the devastation [**loigos**]" from the ships ([loigon amunai](#)), as Achilles observes with satisfaction at [XVI 74-75](#).

§12n2. On **kratos**, see [§25](#).

§13n1. On **kûdos**, see the reference at [Ch.4§6n2](#).

§13n2. See [Ch.4§6](#).

§14n1. See [Ch.4§6](#).

§15n1. See [Ch.4§6n1](#).

§15n2. Cf. [Ch.17§5](#).

§16n1. [Ch.4§7](#).

§16n2. Ibid.

§17n1. [§2n1](#).

§19n1. Cf. Intro.§9.

§23n1. For the function of the **Moîrai** here, compare the etymology of Modern Greek *moirologi/mirology* 'lamentation', as discussed by Alexiou 1974.110-128. For her argument that the word is derived from **moîra**, we

may add the evidence from the latter-day Greek dialects in Southern Italy, where the form *ta moroloya* 'funeral lamentations' seems to be derived from the equivalent of classical **moros**, synonym of **moîra**. See Rohlfs 1964.334.

§25n1. See Benveniste 1969 II 76-77.

§25n2. Ajax too comes to realize this: [XVI 119-121](#). Moreover, Homeric diction itself confirms that the presence or absence of **kratos** on the one or the other military side depends on the Will of Zeus. When the Achaeans briefly and unexpectedly regain the upper hand and *almost* capture Troy at [XVII 319-322](#), they almost do so [karteî kai stheneî spheterôi](#) 'with their own **kratos** and strength' ([XVII 322](#)). But this would-be event is designated as [huper Dios aisan](#) 'beyond the **aîsa** [allotment, fate] of Zeus' ([XVII 321](#)). In other words, it is *untraditional*, since whatever runs counter to the traditional plot of the narrative is conventionally designated as "beyond destiny": [Ch.2§17](#), [Ch.7§21n2](#), [Ch.15§3n9](#). On the [Dios boulê](#) 'Will of Zeus' as the traditional plot, see also [Ch.7§17](#) and the comments on [viii 577-580](#) at [Ch.6§8](#); cf. [Ch.6§24n3](#) and [Ch.10§17](#). In the present episode, the would-be event of Troy's capture is not only untraditional; it is also *almost* accomplished by an untraditional application of **kratos**, in that the word is here described as being at the disposal of the Achaeans rather than Zeus. For more on the correlation of destiny and **kratos**, see the discussion of the expression **Moîra krataîē** at [§30](#).

§27n1. For a detailed exposition: Jeanmaire 1939.11-111; see also Vian 1968.59 and Palmer 1955. These references are also important for appreciating the function the *ra-wa-ke-ta*= *lâuâgétâs in the Linear B tablets. For detailed studies on Indo-European Männerbund: Wikander 1938 (after Höfler 1934) and Przyluski 1940. On Pindaric **lâgetâs**, see Suárez de la Torre 1977 (and cf. [Ch.6§26n1](#) below).

§27n2. See Yoshida 1964.6 and Vian 1968 passim; cf. Lejeune 1960.139 and 1968.31-32; also Palmer 1955 passim. From the prodigious work of Georges Dumézil on the Indo-European three functions, I cite the one bibliographical entry that is by far the most important collection of comparative source material for students of Greek epic: Dumézil's *Mythe et épopée* I (1968). It bears stressing, however, that the value of the evidence presented in this work is strictly comparative in nature. Almost all the

evidence is taken from non-Greek epic traditions, and the significance of this comparative material for the study of Greek epic is always implicit and hardly ever made explicit.

§27n3. Sinos 1975.65-81. On the function of the word **philos** and its derivatives in Homeric narrative: Benveniste 1969 [I 338-353](#).

§28n1. See Jeanmaire 1939.26-43, esp. p. 27.

§28n2. On **Danaos/Danaai**, see especially Hesiod *fr.* 128MW, in conjunction with my discussion (Nagy 1973.161) of the element **dan-** in **Êri-danos**. On **Argeîoi/Argeiê**, see Clader 1976 Ch.III sec.3, following Frame 1971.

§29n1. See Festugière 1959 for a discussion of the expression [megara kinousin](#) and of the calendar dating of the **kathodos**. Cf. also Quinn 1971.146.

§29n2. See again Festugière 1959.

§30n1. I postpone until appendix §8 the problem of the Latin Achîuî borrowing Achîuî, on the basis of which **Akhaio-** is conventionally reconstructed as *Akhaiuó-.

§30n2. [§§25-26](#).

§30n3. Cf. [§§25-26 above](#). Note too the frequent application of the adjective **kratero-** to nouns designating "battle," notably **husmînê** and **phûlopis**. Conversely, **polemos** 'war' is conventionally designated in Homeric diction as **dusêkhês** 'having bad **akhos**' (on which see Chantraine [I 302](#)). At [XVIII 242](#), **phûlopis** is designated as **kraterê** and its synonym **polemos** as **homoiios**. Whatever the etymology of **homoiios** (see Chantraine [III 799](#)), it seems to convey the theme that the evil of war afflicts all (cf. [XVIII 309](#)).

§30n4. On the correlation of fate and **kratos**: [§25n2](#).

§31n1. Cf. **kratai-gualoi** 'whose plates are firm = have **kratos**' ([XIX 361](#)), applying to **thôrêkes** 'breastplates', and **kartai-poda** 'whose feet are firm = have **kratos**' (Gortynian Code [IV 36](#)), applying to larger cattle rather than **probata** = sheep and goats; cf. [Pindar O.13.81](#), where **kartai-pod'** designates a bull. The translation "firm" for **kratai-** in **kratai-pod-** and **kratai-pedo-** is perhaps overly specific. More simply, the notion of **kratos** mediates between the foot and its footing. In the case of **kratai-pedo-** even a floor has **kratos** by way of giving a firm footing. As for **kratai-pod-**, compare **khalko-pod-** 'whose hooves are of bronze' ([VIII 41](#)), applying to horses. Here too, the emphasis seems to be on firmness as a mark of superiority; cf. **krater-ônukh-** 'whose hooves/ claws have **kratos**', applying to horses ([V 329](#), etc.), asses ([vi 253](#)), and wolves ([x 218](#)).

§31n2. See Bechtel 1917.256.

§31n3. For the term, see Nussbaum 1976.

§31n4. On the basis of the Greek evidence, I see no need to posit, as does Benveniste (1969 [II 77-83](#)), the conflation of two separate roots in this system. The notion of "firm, hard" (cf. n1) is not necessarily at odds with **kratos** in the sense of "superiority in a trial of strength" (Benveniste's working definition: 1969 [II 77](#) = 1973.362). Even **kratunô**, which Benveniste translates as "harden," can be interpreted further as "prepare for superiority = **kratos**"; hence such direct objects as **phalangas** 'phalanxes' in the *Iliad* ([XI 215](#)).

§31n5. Schmitt (1967.112n685) has noticed an interesting detail: as an epithet, **kratero-** is a variant of **hiero-** in combinations with the noun **îs** + genitive of the hero's name (as periphrasis for the plain name). Thus we find **kraterê ... [[currency]]s Odusêos** at [XXIII 720](#) besides **hierê [[currency]]s Têlemakhoio** at [ii 409](#), [xviii 405](#), etc. Note also **krateron menos** + genitive of the hero's name at [XVI 189](#) and [XXIII 837](#) besides **hieron menos** + genitive of the hero's name at [vii 167](#), [viii 2](#), etc. (At [H.Apollo 371](#) **hieron menos** combines with the genitive of **Êelios** 'Sun'.) In the case of **hiero-**, we may confidently reconstruct ***is-ro-**, so that the vowel **e** seems to be a reflex of * (see Schmitt, pp. 111-114). The construction of **hiero-** + noun meaning "power" + genitive of name is not only a periphrasis of the simple name but also an obviation of a Caland System compound

formation with *is-i- as the first member; see Schmitt, p.111n678. Schmitt accordingly posits (*ibid.*) a *bahuvrīhi* epithet *isi-ménes- as the basis for the periphrasis **hieron menos** (+ genitive of the name described by this epithet). In view of the parallelism **hieron/krateron + menos** in Homeric diction, we may perhaps also posit *k[[perthousand]]ti-ménes-. The attested name **Kratai-menēs** would be only an indirect reflex, however; *k[[perthousand]]ti- should yield **krati-**. The compound element **kratai-/kartai-** seems to be a conflation of *k[[perthousand]]ti- (from *k[[perthousand]]ti-) and *k[[perthousand]]ta- (from *k[[perthousand]]t-, without -i-), and the latter seems to be attested as the adverb **karta** 'very'. As Alan Nussbaum points out to me, it is possible for elements of the Caland System, when they appear as the first member of compounds, to bear the suffix *-- in place of the more usual *-i-: consider **alka-** as in **Alkâ-thoos** (Homeric: [XII 93](#), etc.) and **Alka-menēs** (Bechtel 1917.35) besides **alki-** as in **alkî-phrôn**, **Alki-menēs**, etc. For an example of a compound without either connecting vowels *-i- or *--, consider Homeric **aîth-ops** as compared to **Aithi-ops**.

[**§32n1**](#). See [§23](#).

[**§33n1**](#). The name **Akhai-menēs** may be attested in Linear B as *a-ka-me-ne* (Knossos tablet [X 82](#) + 8136), although other readings of this spelling are also possible. See Chadwick/Baumbach 1963.178. Compare also **krataios** and **kratai-** with **araios** and **arai-**. The latter is attested in the Homeric place name **Arai-thureê** ([II 571](#)), the meaning of which is something like "whose entrance is narrow"; cf. **araiê ... eisodos** 'narrow entrance' at [x 90](#). For **thurai** in the sense of "entrance," see [ix 243](#), etc.

[**§34n1**](#). On the cult of the hero **Althai-menēs** at Rhodes: Rohde [I 116](#) and n1.

[**§34n2**](#). For a discussion of these forms: Chantraine 1968.60.

[**§34n3**](#). Cf. Strömberg 1940.82.

[**§34n4**](#). The **kakon** 'bad thing' here at [IX 250](#) turns out to be the death of Patroklos, which is again predicted as a **kakon** at [XI 604](#).

§35n1. For more on *Achîui*, see appendix §8. As for the Hittite form *A[[dotaccent]][[dotaccent]]iaua-*, there is no convincing evidence to prove any connection with the Greek word for "Achaean": Steiner 1964.

§35n2. Chadwick/Baumbach 1963.178.

§36n1. Appendix §§1-2.

§36n2. See [§31n5](#).

§36n3. Ibid.

§37n1. Appendix §§3-7.

§37n2. For the adjective, see *Anecdota Graeca* (ed. J. A. Cramer) 318.5 and Eustathius 1938.1; for the name, see Bechtel 1917.256.

§37n3. [§§25-26](#), 30.

§37n4. See also [X 145](#), likewise referring to the plight of the Achaeans (cf. [X 172](#)).

§37n5. For the notion that a victim can be afflicted by the **biē** of the enemy, cf. [XI 467](#): Menelaos fears that the Trojans are overcoming Odysseus with **biē** (**biōiato**), since he is alone. Consider also expressions like **ê thanatōi biētheis ê nousōi** 'overcome by the **biē** of either death or disease' ([Herodotus 7.83](#)).

§37n6. So also with athletics: in order to win, the athlete needs both **biē** and **kratos** ([Hesiod Th. 437](#)); cf. [Pindar I. 8.5](#).

§38n1. Above, [§28](#).

§39n1. The poem itself is a *response* to **hēbē** 'bloom of youth'. Its words say that whoever turns his thoughts to **hēbē**, which is **erasmiē** 'lovely', will dance to the sound of the flute. For a parallel correlation of song and dance, cf. [Odyssey i 421-423](#).

§39n2. [Ch.1§4n1](#). Again, cf. also [Odyssey i 421-423](#).

§39n3. There are also other instances in Archilochean poetry where the function of a character seems to be conveyed by his name: see especially [Ch.12§21](#) on Lukambêš. Cf. also the poetic function of the patronymic Terpiadêš: [Ch.1§4n1](#).

§39n4. For an introduction to the relationship of noun **kharis** and verb **khairô** 'be well, be glad, be happy', see Latacz 1966.125-127.

§39n5. [Ch.1§5\(n1\)](#), [Ch.2§13\(n2\)](#).

§39n6. Ibid. On the notion of reciprocity conveyed by **kharis**, see Benveniste 1969 [I 199-202](#).

§39n7. For the text, see [Ch.1§5](#). On the theme of **euphrosunê** 'mirth' in the community, see also [Ch.12§15n5](#). On the **dêmos** as the community/audience of **Dêmôdokos**, see [Ch.1§4n1](#).

§39n8. See further at [Ch.13§2](#).

§39n9. On **lâos**: [§27 above](#).

§40n1. [§21](#).

§41n1. [§§9-11](#).

§41n2. Nilsson 1906.466-467, with further references; also Usener 1912/1913 [= 1875] 116-119 on the parallel Italic ritual of *saecula condere*.

§41n3. Glotz 1904.ix,64; Gernet 1968 [= 1928] 58, [1948-1949] 231-232.

§41n4. [§2n1](#). I leave the accent of **Kharila** unmarked because I cannot verify the quantity of the last syllable. We are impeded here by the fact that this name is attested only in the text of Plutarch.

Chapter 6

Lamentation and the Hero

§1. The social dimensions of the actual word **akhos** 'grief' have so far been explored mainly in terms of its thematic relationship with the concept of **lāos** 'host of fighting men' in epic diction. The time has now come to explore the meaning of **akhos** on its own terms.

§2. In Homeric diction, **akhos** 'grief' functions as a formulaic variant of another **es**-stem, **penthos**. Both words designate the grief of Achilles over his loss of **tîmê** (*achos*: I 188, XVI 52, 55; *penthos*: I 362); also, both words designate the grief of Achilles over his loss of Patroklos (*achos*: XVIII 22, XXIII 47; *penthos*: XVIII 73). Finally, not only **akhos**, as at XVI 22, but also **penthos** designates the collective grief of the Achaeans, as at IX 3; in this passage, there is special emphasis on the grief of their king Agamemnon, which is called **akhos** as well, at IX 9. Outside the poetic diction, we find expressions like *penthos poiēsasthai* 'have public mourning [**penthos**]' (Herodotus 2.1.1; cf. 2.46.3, 6.21.1).[1] Even inside the poetic diction, the collective aspect of **penthos** is apparent in its application to the public mourning for Hektor (XXIV 708).[2]

§3. This collective aspect is also apparent in the opposition of **penthos** to **kleos**. When the healer Makhaon is summoned to heal the wound of Menelaos, the Trojan who had wounded him is said to have **kleos** as opposed to the collective **penthos** of the Achaeans:

... *tôi men kleos, ammi de penthos*

... for him **kleos**, for us **penthos**

IV 197-207

Whereas the word **kleos** is used in traditional poetic diction to designate the public prestige of Epos or praise-poetry,[1] the word **penthos** can indicate

the public ritual of mourning, formally enacted with songs of lamentation (as at [XXIV 708-781](#), especially 720-722).

§4. The traditional relationship of **penthos** with **kleos** is reflected by its fixed epithet **alaston** 'unforgettable', which is morphologically parallel to **aphthiton** 'unfailing', the fixed epithet of **kleos** ([IX 413](#)).^[1] There is also an important thematic connection with **kleos** in the application of **alaston** to both **penthos** ([XXIV 105](#), [xxiv 423](#)) and **akhos** ([iv 108](#)), since the meaning of **alaston** is coordinate with the inherited theme of **mnêmosunê** 'memory'. The conceit of Homeric poetry is that the sacred mnemonic power of the Muses is the key to the **kleos** of epic. The **aoidos** 'singer' sings what he sings because the **Moûsai** put his mind in touch with the realities of the past (mnêsaiai' [II 492](#), [kleos II 486](#), [Mousai II 484](#)).^[2]

§5. This is not the place for a detailed survey of the word **kleos** in its function of expressing the very notion of epic poetry within epic poetry--a task that I have attempted elsewhere.^[1] I confine myself here to the differences between the traditional genres of poetry, as expressed by the contrast of **kleos** with **penthos/akhos**. Not only does the epithet **alaston** 'unforgettable' of **penthos/akhos** conjure up the traditional theme of **mnêmosunê** 'memory', which is inherent in the poetic concept of **kleos**, but also the word **penthos** itself is used by the poetry of the Homeric and Hesiodic traditions as a foil for **kleos**.^[2] For a striking example, consider this Hesiodic passage:

*ei gar tis kai penthos echôn neokêdei thumôi
azêtai kradiên akachêménos, autar aoidos
Mousaôn therapôn kleea proterôn anthrôpôn
humnêsêi makaras te theous, hoi Olumpon echousin,
aips' ho ge dusphrosuneôn epilêthetai oude ti kêdeôn
memnêtai*

And if someone has **penthos** and is distressed having akhos in a **thûmos** beset with new cares, yet, when a singer, **therapôn** of the Muses,^[3] sings the **kleos** [plural] of men of old and also the blessed gods that inhabit Olympus, at once he forgets his sorrows, and his cares he no longer remembers.

Hesiod Th. 98-103

When the singer sings "the **kleos** [plural] of men of old," the song is in the tradition of an *Iliad* or an *Odyssey*; when he sings "the blessed gods," the song is in the general tradition of a *Theogony*.^[4] (I avoid saying "*the Iliad*" or "*the Theogony*" in order to suggest that the diction refers simply to established poetic traditions rather than fixed texts.) The conceptual association of Theogonic poetry with the word **kleos** is made overt a few hexameters earlier in the Hesiodic *Theogony*, where the Muses are designated as the ones who make into kleos (kleiousin) the **genos** 'genesis' of the gods:^[5]

theôn genos aidoion prôton kleiousin aoidêi

With song they first make into kleos the genesis of the gods, thing of reverence that it is.

Hesiod Th. 44

A few hexameters later, after the contrast of **kleos** with **penthos** (Th. 98-103), the Muses are finally invoked to sing the contents of our *Theogony*, with the following words:^[6]

chairete tekna Dios, dote d' himeroessan aoidêi:
kleiete d' athanatôn hieron genos aien eontôn

Hail, children of Zeus! Grant an entrancing song.

Make into kleos the sacred **genos**[genesis] of the immortals,^[7] who always are.

Hesiod Th. 104-105

The inherited function of our *Theogony*, then, is to give **kleosto** the genesis of the gods. The hearing of such **kleos** is a remedy for **penthos**, as we learn from the passage that inaugurated this discussion, the artistic manifesto of *Th. 98-103*. In Theogonic language, **Mnêmosunê** 'mnemonic power' gave birth to the **Moûsai** 'Muses', who were to be the **lêsmosunê** 'forgetting' of ills:^[8]

tas en Pierîei Kronidêi teke patri migeisa
Mnêmosunê, gounoisin Eleuthêros medeousa,
lêsmosunê te kakôn ampauma te mermêraôn

They were born in Pieria to the one who mated with the son of Kronos, to Mnêmosunê, who rules over the ridges of Eleuther--born to be a lêsmosunê of ills and a cessation of anxieties.[\[9\]](#)

Hesiod Th. 53-55

§6. Let us now turn from the **kleos** of the Theogonic tradition to "the **kleos** [plural] of previous men," as our *Theogony* calls it (kleea proterôن anthrôpôن: verse 100). To repeat, **kleos** is used in epic diction to designate the epic tradition itself.[\[1\]](#) Presently, however, we are concerned only with the specific use of this word as an antithesis of **penthos/akhos**. We begin with the song of Phemios in *Odyssey* i; his subject is the **nostos** 'homecoming' of the Achaeans (i 326-327),[\[2\]](#) and his song brings grief rather than entertainment to one of his listeners, who happens to be the wife of Odysseus. Penelope asks the singer to stop his song, because it brings her **penthos alaston** 'unforgettable grief' (i 342). Just before, her words had described the **aoidoi** 'singers' generically as those who give **kleos** to the deeds of heroes and gods:

erg' andrôn te theôн te, ta te kleiousin aoidoi

the deeds of men and gods, which the singers make into kleos

i 338

Just after, she says that *she always has her husband on her mind* (memnêmenê aiei: i 343), and then we hear the following description of Odysseus:

tou kleos euru kath' Hellada kai meson Argos

who has **kleos** far and wide throughout Hellas and midmost Argos

i 344

From the standpoint of an audience listening to the medium of epic, the word **kleos** can apply to the epic of Odysseus, to the narrative tradition of the *Odyssey*. From the standpoint of Penelope as a character within the epic, however, the **kleos** of Odysseus, with all its hardships, entails personal involvement: it brings to mind a grief that cannot be swept away from the mind (cf. memnêmenê aiei 'remembering always': i 343). Telemachus does not yet realize the extent of his own involvement in the unfolding action when he rebukes his mother and urges the singer to continue his song, on the grounds that it is fitting entertainment for an audience (i 346-347). The story of the poet's song is the Will of Zeus, he says (i 347-350),[3] and the song is popular with its audience:

tên gar aoidê̄ mallon epikleious' anthrōpoi
hē tis akouontessi neôtatē amphipelētai

For men would rather continue to make into kleos[4] the song that is the newest to make its rounds with the listeners.

i 351-352

On one level, the song is neôtatē 'newest' for an audience of epic, in that it tells of actions that will lead to the **nostos** 'homecoming' of Odysseus, the last Achaean to come home from Troy. On another level, the song is "newest" specifically for Telemachus, in that he is about to become involved in the actions of this **nostos**.[5]

§7. The factor of personal involvement or noninvolvement decides whether an epic situation calls for **penthos** or **kleos**. The figure of Menelaos sets the tone for the involvement of Telemachus. As a warrior who had shared in the hardships of the Achaeans at Troy, Menelaos tells Telemachus that Odysseus is the warrior whose absence he misses and mourns the most of all (iv 100-105; see especially acheuôn 'having **akhos**' at 100). There is a reason for this:

... epei ou tis Achaiôn toss' emogêsen
hoss' Oduseus emogêse kai êrato. tōi d' ar' emellen
autōi kêde' esesthai, emoi d' achos aien alaston

... since none of the Achaeans struggled so much
as Odysseus struggled and achieved. For him there would be
cares in the future, whereas I would have an **akhos**
alaston[unforgettable grief] always.

[iv 106-108](#)

This unforgettable **akhos** now finally involves Telemachus, as he hears from Menelaos how Odysseus is probably being mourned, at this very minute, by his father, wife, and son ([iv 110-112](#)). Telemachus indeed begins to weep ([iv 113-116](#)), and from here on we find communal weeping at the table of Menelaos when the story of Odysseus comes up (see especially [iv 183-185](#)), since he is presently the only Achaean left who is still without a **nostos**:

... keinon dustēnon anostimon oion ...

... that wretched one, the only one who has not come home ...

[iv 182](#)

Later on, Helen tells Menelaos and his guests--Telemachus included--a story of Troy as an entertainment during dinner:

ê toi nun dainusthe kathêmенои en megaroisi
kai muthois terpesthe: eoikota gar katalexô

Sit now and dine in the palace, and be entertained
by the stories that I will say in proper order are
appropriate.

[iv 238-239](#)

Her entertaining story, however, begins on a note of grief:

panta men ouk an egô muthêsomai oud' onomênô,
hossoi Odussêos talasiphronos eisin aethloi:
all' hoion tod' erexe kai etlê karteros anêr
dêmôi eni Trôôn, hothi paschete pêmat' Achaioi

I could not possibly tell of or name
all the struggles that are the share of the enduring Odysseus.
but I will tell of this one thing that he did and endured--
--that man of **kratos**--in the district of Troy, where you Achaeans
suffered pains [pêma plural].

[iv 240-243](#)

All the characters listening to the story are personally involved, and we would expect its words to arouse instant grief on their part, were it not for what Helen did before telling her tale. She put a **pharmakon** 'drug' in their wine ([iv 220](#)), described as:

népenthes t' acholon te, kakôn epilêthon hapantôn

without penthos, without anger, making one forget all ills

[iv 221](#)

One who drinks it would not even mourn the death of his mother, father, brother, or son ([iv 222-226](#)). What would otherwise be a **penthos** for Helen's audience can thus remain a **kleos**, since there is no personal involvement.

§8. Such a distinction between **kleos** and **penthos** is even more vivid when Odysseus himself becomes personally involved. He is an unidentified member of the audience as the poet Demodokos starts singing the klea andrôn '**kleos** [plural] of men':

Mous' ar' aoidon anêken aeidemenai klea andrôn
oimês tês tot' ara kleos ouranon eurun hikane

The Muse impelled the singer to sing the **kleos** [plural] of men from a story thread that had at that time a **kleos** reaching up to the vast heavens.

[viii 73-74](#)

The story of the singer concerns "the beginning of pain [**pêma**]" (**pêmatos archê**: viii 81) that befell Achaeans and Trojans alike, "on account of the plans of great Zeus" (**Dios megalou dia boulas**: viii 82). Odysseus immediately begins to weep, though he hides his grief (viii 83-95). Later on, the still-unidentified Odysseus compliments the Trojan story of the poet as "correct":

liên gar kata kosmon Achaiôn oiton aeideis,
hoss' erxan t' epathon te kai hoss' emogêsan Achaioi

You sing in very correct fashion the fate of the Achaeans,
all the things that they did and suffered and struggled for.

viii 489-490

He then asks Demodokos to shift ahead in subject matter (**metabêthi**: viii 492) and sing about the Trojan Horse (viii 492-495). The poet obliges, beginning within a traditional framework (**enthen helôn hôs** ... 'taking it from the place in the story where ...': viii 500), and the cumulative effect of his Trojan story is that Odysseus again bursts into tears (viii 521-534). This time the host Alkinoos draws attention to the still-unidentified guest's grief (**akhos**: viii 541), and he calls on Odysseus to explain what amounts to an internalized lamentation:

eipe d' ho ti klaieis kai odureai endothi thumôi
Argeiôn Danaôn ide Iliou oiton akouôn.
ton de theoi men teuxan, epeklôsanto d' olethon
anthrôpois, hina êisi kai essomenoisin aoidê

Tell why you weep and lament within your thûmos
upon hearing the fate of the Argive Danaans and of Ilion.
The gods fashioned it, and they were the ones who ordained
destruction for men, so that it might be a song for men yet to be.

viii 577-580

What is an **akhos** for Odysseus is for future audiences simply a "song" like the *Iliad*, with its plot enacted by the Will of Zeus and his gods.

§9. The plot in this third song of Demodokos is strikingly parallel to the plot of the Cyclic *Iliou Persis* as we find it in the Proclus summary (pp. 107-108 Allen). But there is an interesting variation. On the one hand, the narrative in the *Iliou Persis* draws to a close with the destruction of Troy and such specific scenes as the killing of Astyanax by Odysseus and the enslavement of Andromache by Pyrrhos (p. 108.8-9).^[1] On the other hand, the narrative of Demodokos is interrupted, before it draws to a close, by the weeping of Odysseus. The action stops just when various Achaean heroes are performing their various grisly feats during the destruction of Troy, such as the killing of Deiphobos ([viii 516-520](#)). At this point, the weeping of Odysseus is compared *by way of a simile* to the weeping of a widow who is taken as captive by a ruthless enemy after the destruction of her city and the killing of her husband ([viii 523-531](#)). The husband is described as a hero who fell in front of his city, where he was defending both the community and his children ([viii 524-525](#)). The resemblance with Hektor is unmistakable. The generic situation in the simile is thus strikingly parallel to the specific situation of Andromache at the end of the *Iliou Persis*. In this sense, the simile that pictures the weeping of Odysseus completes the narrative that his weeping had interrupted. And the captive widow also has **akhos** ([viii 530](#)), so that the **akhos** of Odysseus is universalized: he now feels the grief of his own victims in war, and his involvement is thus complete.

§10. In sum, we see from the evidence of epic itself that the **kleos** heard by its audiences may be **akhos/penthos** for those involved in the actions that it describes. Alkinoos perceives the **akhos** of Odysseus when he sees his guest's reaction to the **kleos** sung about the Trojan War. As a considerate host, he even asks Odysseus whether he had a male relative or **hetaîros** 'comrade' who died at Troy ([viii 581-586](#)). This theme brings us back to the *Iliad*, where Achilles has **akhos/penthos** ([XVIII 22/73](#)) over the death of Patroklos, his **hetaîros** ([XVIII 80](#), etc.). It is this grief that impels him to go forth finally and fight, and here is how Achilles says it:

... nun de kleos esthlon aroimên

... but now let me win worthy **kleos**

After the death of Patroklos, the Achilles figure uses the expression nun de 'but now' (as also here) no fewer than fifteen times in our *Iliad*.^[1] With his **akhos/penthos** over Patroklos, "Achilles enters the realm of **kleos**."^[2]

§11. By entering his war, Achilles knowingly approaches certain death (XVIII 95-99), which in turn will bring **penthos** to his mother (XVIII 88).
[1] The choice for him had been clear all along: either a **nostos** without **kleos** (IX 414-415) or **kleos** without **nostos** (IX 412-413). If he gives up a safe homecoming--that is, if he chooses not to be the hero of a story about homecoming--Achilles will die at Troy but will have a **kleos** that is **aphthiton** 'unfailing' (IX 413). In other words, he will be the central figure of an epic tradition that will never die out.^[2] And the key to the **kleos** of Achilles' epic is the **akhos/penthos** over Patroklos.

§12. We are now ready to consider the semantics of the name **Patroklos** (cf. I 345, etc.)/**Patrokleês** (cf. I 337, etc.),^[1] a compound formation referring to the **kleos** 'glory' of the **pateres** 'ancestors' (on the latter meaning of the word **pateres**, see VI 209, etc.). These two notions of "glory" and "ancestors" within the compound **Patro-kleês**(/**Patro-klos**) should be compared with the two notions in the combination kleea = **kleos** [plural] and proterôn anthrōpōn = "previous men" in Hesiod Th. 100 (where **kleos** [plural] is antithetical to **penthos** at verse 98). The semantics of kleea proterôn anthrōpōn 'the **kleos** [plural] of previous men', an expression that had provided the starting point for this discussion of **akhos/penthos** and **kleos**, has a parallel in epic, where the specific application is to Achilles himself. Here is the Iliadic parallel to the combination in Hesiod Th. 100:

houtô kai tôn prosthēn epeuthometha klea andrôn
hérōôn ...

We learn this also from the kleos [plural] of men of the past,
who were the heroes ...^[2]

IX 524-525

These words introduce the story that Phoinix tells Achilles, taken from the epic tradition of Meleager. As Dale Sinos has shown in detail, this story is intended to illustrate the ethical principle of **philotēs** 'being a **philos**' in

warrior society.^[3] It is an epic *exemplum*, or klea andrôn 'kleos [plural] of men', set before Achilles so that he may be persuaded to lay aside his anger and to rejoin his **hetaîroi** 'comrades-in-arms', who are his **philoī**.^[4]

§13. As we proceed to consider the story of Meleager, we must keep in mind the *institutional* and *sentimental* connotations of this word **philos/philoī**, conventionally translated as "friend" when it is a noun and as "dear" or "one's own" when it is an adjective. For a suggestive discussion, I refer to Benveniste's acute reading of **philos** in its Homeric contexts.^[1] For now, however, I merely cite what he sees as the results of his findings.^[2]

It would take many chapters to list and analyze with the necessary care all the examples of *philos* where it is said to be "possessive." We believe, however, that we have interpreted the most important. This re-examination was necessary to expose a long-standing error, which is probably as old as Homeric exegesis, and has been handed down from generation to generation of scholars. The whole problem of *philos* deserves a full examination. We must start from uses and contexts which reveal in this term *a complex network of associations, some with the institutions of hospitality, others with usages of the home, still others with emotional behavior*[italics mine]; we must do this in order to understand plainly the metaphorical applications to which the term lent itself. All this wealth of concepts was smothered and lost to view once *philos* was reduced to a vague notion of friendship or wrongly interpreted as a possessive adjective. It is high time we learned again how to read Homer.

§14. The story of Meleager, like the story of Achilles, tells of the hero's withdrawal from battle. Like Achilles, Meleager is angry:

... cholon thumalgea pessôn

... mulling his anger, which caused pain for his **thûmos**

The same words apply to the anger of Achilles:

... cholon thumalgea pessei

IV 513

Compare also these words addressed to Achilles:

pauē', ea de cholon thumalgea

Stop! Abandon your anger, which causes pain for your **thûmos**.^[1]

IX 260

The parallels are even deeper: while the anger of Achilles was preceded by the anger of Apollo, the anger of Meleager (IX 525, 553) was preceded by the anger of Apollo's sister, Artemis (IX 533-535).^[2] Just as Achilles is destined by tradition to die at the hands of Apollo himself (XXI 275-278; cf. Pindar *Paean* 6.78-80), so also Meleager (Hesiod *fr.* 25.9-13MW).^[3]

§15. I save the most important point of comparison for last: the comrades of Meleager, his **hetaîroi**, rate as next-to-highest in the narrative sequence that catalogues those who have ties to the hero and who are now entreating him to rejoin his comrades-in-arms. The ranking of the hero's social affinities at IX 574-591 implicitly presents Meleager as one who loves the *elders* not so much as the *priests* not so much as his *father* not so much as his *sisters* not so much as his *mother* not so much as his **hetairoi** not so much as his *wife*. As the studies of J. T. Kakridis have shown, variations in the listing of a hero's affinities represent a relative ranking of these affinities in Homeric narrative and constitute a poetic convention in itself.^[1] In comparison with other attested occurrences of this convention, which Kakridis calls "the ascending scale of affection," the position of the **hetaîroi** in the Meleager story is noticeably high.^[2] This preeminence can be seen not only on the level of theme but also on the level of form. Here is how the **hetaîroi** of Meleager, his comrades-in-arms, are described:

... hetairoi,
hoi hoi kednotatoi kai philtatoi êsan hapantôn

... the **hetaîroi**,
who were for him the most cherished and **most philoi** of all

IX 585-586

On the level of theme, the one relation in the listing that outranks even the **hetaîroi** is the wife of Meleager, Kleopatre. This name **Kleo-patrê** ([IX 556](#)) combines the same notions **kleos** 'glory' and **pateres** 'ancestors' as that of **Patroklos ~ Patro-kleês**. By their very etymologies, these compound names **Kleo-patrê** and **Patroklos** convey with their mutually inverted members a parallel epic theme.[\[3\]](#) For Achilles, then, the story of Meleager has a distinct message: in his own ascending scale of affection as dramatized by the entire composition of the *Iliad*, the highest place must belong to Patroklos, whose name has the same meaning as the name of Kleopatre. In fact, Patroklos is for Achilles the **polu philtatos ... hetairos**--the '**hetaîros** who is the most **philos** by far' ([XVII 411](#), 655). The words of Achilles himself put it this way, as we find him in a later scene grieving for his fallen comrade:

alla ti moi tôn êdos, epeï philos ôleth' hetairos,
Patroklos, ton egô peri pantôn tion hetairôn

But what pleasure is there for me in these things? For my **philos**
hetaîros has perished,
Patroklos, to whom I gave more **tîmê** than to all the other **hetaîroi**.

XVIII 80-81

§16. For Phoinix, however, the code of the Meleager story, as he introduces it, has a different message.[\[1\]](#) In his words, the Achaeans who are "most **phili**" to Achilles (**philtatoi**: [IX 522](#)) are now entreating him to rejoin them in their desperate battle. As Achilles refuses to relent, another of the three delegates describes the hero with these words of reproach:

... oude metatrepetai philotêtos hetairôn

... and he is not swayed by **being. philos** of his **hetaîroi**

The speaker here is Ajax, and he is speaking for all his fellow delegates as he affirms that they all want to be, among all the Achaeans, "the most **phili**" to Achilles ([philtatoi](#): IX 642). Achilles himself, who had been brought up by his father to choose "being **philos**" over strife ([philophrosunê](#): IX 256), actually addresses the delegates as "the most **phili** of the Achaeans" ([Achaiôn philtatoi](#): IX 198; cf. 204). Nevertheless, the delegates fail in their attempt to persuade Achilles to rejoin the **phili**. The [klea andrôn](#) = 'kleos [plural] of men', the story about Meleager as told by Phoinix "in the midst of all the **phili**" ([en ... pantessi philoisi](#): IX 528), points Achilles first towards the individual **philos**, Patroklos, and only the death of this comrade will finally lead the central hero of the *Iliad* back to the collective **phili**. As Sinos has argued in detail, Patroklos is the link of Achilles to the **phili**.^[2] When Patroklos enters the war as the surrogate of Achilles, the Trojans are terrified, thinking that Achilles has cast aside his **mênis** so that he may rescue his **phili**:

[ménithmon men aporripsai, philotêta d' helesthai](#)

that he has cast aside his state of **mênis** and has chosen being **philos** instead.

But it is really Patroklos who restores the **philotês** 'state of being **phili**' between Achilles and the Achaeans. As Sinos points out, Patroklos will have to sacrifice himself and die so that Achilles may recognize his social obligation to his **phili**:^[3]

[oude ti Patroklôi genomên phaos oud' hetaroisi
tois allois, hoi dê polees damen Hektori diôi](#)

I did not become the Light^[4] for Patroklos or for the other **hetaîroi** who fell in great numbers at the hands of brilliant Hektor.

§17. The delegates to Achilles fail where the death of Patroklos succeeds. Despite their claim to be the most **phili** to Achilles, he rejects their offer of compensation to him because--from the standpoint of the *Iliad*--Patroklos is even more **philos** than they. This ultimate motivation, however, is not yet manifest in Book IX, as Ajax is expressing his outrage at the rejection:

autar Achilleus

agrion en stêthessi theto megalêtora thumon,
schetlios, oude metatrepai philôtêtos hetairôn
tês hîi min para nêusin etiomen exochon allôn,
nêlês: kai men tis te kasignêtoio phonêos
poinên ê hou paidos edexato tethnêôtos.
kai rh' ho men en dêmôi menei autou poll' apoteisas,
tou de t' erêtuetai kradiê kai thumos agênor
poinên dexamenôi: soi d' allêkton te kakon te
thumon eni stêthessi theoi thesan heineka kourê
oiês.

But Achilles

has made savage the great-hearted **thûmos** within his breast,
the wretch. And he has no care for being.**philos** with his **hetaîroi**,
the way we honored him by the ships far beyond the others,
the pitiless one. And yet it can happen that a man takes compensation
from the murderer of his own brother or of his own son who is killed.
And the offending party pays much and stays there in the district,
while the injured party's heart is curbed, and so too his proud **thûmos**,
once he accepts the compensation. But the gods have placed in you
a **thûmos** that is unyielding and bad,
all on account of one girl.

IX 628-638

Achilles may be the most **philos** to his comrades-in-arms, but they are not the most **phili** to him. Ajax thinks that the girl taken away from Achilles by Agamemnon, with the passive acquiescence of the Achaeans, is even more **philê** than they. This theme again conjures up Kleopatre, who was indeed by implication the most **philê** to Meleager--especially in view of what Achilles himself had said of the girl Briseis, who was taken from him:

epeι hos tis anēr agathos kai echephrōn
tēn autou phileei kai kêdetai, hōs kai egô tēn
ek thumou phileon, douriktêtēn per eousan

Since whatever man is good and sensible
loves his own wife [has a wife who is **philē** to him] and cares for her.
So also I loved her [she was **philē** to me]
with all my **thūmos**, even though she was only a prisoner.

IX 341-343

There is another connection in what Achilles says just before this profession that Briseis is **philē** to him:

ê mounoi phileous' alochous meropōn anthrōpōn
Atreïdai;

Or is it that the Atreidai are the only men
who love their wives [whose wives are **philai** to them]?

IX 340-341

The wife in question here is distinctly not **philē**: she is Helen, cause of the entire Trojan War.

§18. To continue: Ajax thinks that Briseis ranks highest in the ascending scale of affection that determines the behavior of Achilles. In the passage already quoted, the protest of Ajax is founded on the surface inequity: whereas another man would accept compensation from the killer of his own brother or son, Achilles persists in refusing compensation from Agamemnon and the Achaeans--who had merely taken away from him a girl-prisoner (IX 628-638). And yet, as we have seen, the theme of Briseis as **philē** to Achilles conjures up the theme of Kleopatre as **philē** to Meleager. The words of Ajax are a code with one message for Ajax himself but with quite another message for the audience of our *Iliad*. Meshing with the theme of Kleopatre, the words of Ajax indirectly point toward Patroklos as the ultimate **philos**. But now we will also see that the theme serving as a foil for that of the girl, namely the readiness of a man to accept

compensation from the killer of his own brother or son, also points to Patroklos.

§19. From the retrospective vantage point of Book XXIV, Apollo is telling why the hero Achilles is so repellent to him:

mellei men pou tis kai philteron allon olessai,
êe kasignêton homogastrion êe kai huion

For a man could easily lose someone else who is more philos, either a brother from the same womb or even a son.

XXIV 46-47

More **philos** than whom? Patroklos, of course! Here the issue is no longer whether or not Achilles is to accept compensation from Agamemnon and the Achaeans for the taking of a girl, but rather, whether or not he is to accept compensation first from Hektor and later from his family and the Trojans in general for the killing of Patroklos. Apollo is repelled by the refusal of Achilles to show pity and cease taking vengeance on Hektor's corpse. The theme of a brother's or son's death is already at work in the words of Ajax at IX 628-638, but there it serves as a foil for the taking of a girl, not yet directly for the actual killing of Patroklos. In both passages, IX 628-638 and XXIV 46-47, the constant is the pitiless temperament that refuses compensation.

§20. The same temperament we find frozen in the artistic microcosm of the Shield of Achilles, Iliad XVIII. This panorama of universal situations applying to the central themes of the *Iliad* features as one of its main scenes the image of a litigation between two parties:

ho men eucheto pant' apodounai
dêmôi piphauskôn, ho d' anaineto mêtén helesthai

One man, in his declaration to the **dêmos**, was saying that he paid [the compensation for murder] in full,
while the other [the man with ties to the victim] was refusing to take anything.

XVIII 499-500

For the translation and exegesis, I am guided by the brilliant work of Leonard Muellner,[1] who has also shown that the archetypal quarrel pictured here concerned whether the man with affinities to the victim is or is not bound to accept the compensation offered him--the word for which is **poinê** ([XVIII 498](#)), precisely the same term that was applied to the compensation offered for the hypothetical death of one's brother or son in the speech of Ajax ([IX 633](#), 636). In addition, Muellner points out that the syntax of mêden at [XVIII 500](#) must mean that the little man in the picture on the shield will absolutely never accept any compensation.[2] This utter inflexibility of an aggrieved party who is permanently frozen into the picture reflects the same temperament that is so repellent to Apollo in the heroic figure of Achilles. Apollo says of him:

hôi out' ar phrenes eisin enaisimoi oute noêma
gnamptōn eni stêthessi, leôn d' hôs agria oiden

His thinking is not right and his sense of noos
is not flexible within his breast, but like a lion he knows savage ways.

XXIV 40-41

Old Phoinix had already entreated him with these words:

all', Achileu, pore kai su Dios kourêisin hepesthai
timên, hē t' allôn per epignamptei noon esthlôn

So, Achilles, you too must grant that the Daughters of Zeus [**Litai** 'Prayers', personified] be given their honor,
which makes flexible the noos of others, good as they are.

IX 513-514

What Ajax had said against Achilles still applies when Apollo says it again:

agrion en stêthessi theto megalêtora thumon

He made savage the great-hearted **thûmos** within his breast.

IX 629--Ajax

... agria oiden

... he knows savage ways

XXIV 41--Apollo

nélēs...

< part="I">pitiless one ...

IX 632--Ajax

... eleon men apôlesen

... he lost pity

XXIV 44--Apollo

§21. The savage and inflexible temperament of Achilles is a constant extending all the way to Iliad XXIV, which marks the point where pity begins to set in and the ultimate heroic refinement of the Iliadic hero is about to be achieved.^[1] The remarkable thing is that the ethical dilemma of the *Iliad* is already set in the Embassy Scene of Book IX, where the words of the Achaean delegates--without their being aware of it--are a code that carries the message of Patroklos for Achilles.

§22. Just as Patroklos led Achilles to rejoin his comrades-in-arms, it was Kleopatre who had impelled Meleager to reenter his war. The words of Kleopatre had conjured up the grief that happens when a city is destroyed:

... kai hoi katelexen hapanta
kêde' hos' anthrôpoisi pelei tôn astu halôîi:
andras men kteinousi, polin de te pur amathunei,
tekna de t' alloi agousi bathuzônous te gunaikas

... and she told him in their proper order
all the cares that befall men whose city is captured:

they kill the men, fire reduces the city to ashes,
and strangers lead away the children and deep-girdled wives

[IX 591-594](#)

Within this highly compressed presentation, we see the same themes as in the formal lamentation of Andromache ([XXIV 725-745](#)) during the public **penthos** for Hektor. In Andromache's lament, the thematic setting for her personal grief is the portended collective grief surrounding the portended destruction of the city.[\[1\]](#) In fact, Kleopatre herself has the stance of lamentation (oduromenê 'mourning', [IX 591](#)), just as those who "mourn" Hektor (odurontai: [XXIV 740](#)). Furthermore, Kleopatre even has a by-name that connotes the very essence of **penthos**:

tên de tot' en megaroisi patêr kai potnia mêtêr
Alkuonêن kaleeskon epônumon, hounek' ar' autês
mêtêr alkuonos polupentheos oiton echousa
klaien ho min hekaergos anêrpase Phoibos Apollôn

And her father and mother in the palace called her Alkuonê,
because her mother had the fate of an alkuôn, a bird of much **penthos**,
and wept because far-reaching Apollo snatched her away.[\[2\]](#)

[IX 561-564](#)

In sum, it was the grief conjured up by Kleo-patrê that impelled Meleager to enter the war and thus undertake the epic deeds that resulted in "the **kleos** [plural] of men who lived before, heroes" (tôn prosthen ... klea andrôn hérôôn: [IX 524-525](#)). Similarly, the grief caused by the actual death of **Patro-kleês** leads to the "unfailing **kleos**" of Achilles in the epic tradition of the *Iliad* (kleos aphthiton: [IX 413](#)).[\[3\]](#)

§23. Because of **Patro-kleês**, Achilles gets **kleos**. Conversely, because of *Akhi-lâuos, Patroklos gets **akhos/penthos** from the Achaeans. In general, the **akhos** that Patroklos gets from Achilles at [XXIII 47](#) is formalized in a public dimension as the Funeral Games throughout *Iliad XXIII*.[\[1\]](#) In particular, this **akhos** is formalized when Achilles leads the Achaeans in lamentation for Patroklos:

... hoi d' mōxan aollees, êrche d' Achilleus

... and they all wailed together, and Achilles led them

XXIII 12

toisi de Pêleïdês hadinou exérche gooio

The son of Peleus led them in frequent **goos** [lamentation].

XXIII 17

Similarly, in the public **penthos** over Hektor ([XXIV 708](#)), Andromache leads the Trojan women in songs of lamentation for her husband:

para d' heisan aoidous

thrénôn exarchous, hoi te stonoessan aoidên

hoi men ar' ethrêneon, epi de stenachonto gunaikes.

têisin d' Andromachê leukôlenos êrche gooio

And they seated next to him [Hektor's corpse] **aoidoi** [singers, poets] who were to lead in the thrênoi[lamentations].

They sang a wailing song, singing thrênoi. And the women wailed in response,

and white-armed Andromache led them in the goos [lamentation].

XXIV 720-723

The dimension of singing lamentations, which is only implicit in the epic use of the words **akhos/penthos** by way of contrast with **kleos**, is here made explicit. As Margaret Alexiou has shown in detail, the traditional genre of lamentation is an integral element in funerary ritual, requiring an interplay of two subgenres: the kin sing **gooi** while poets sing **thrênoi**, as described in the Iliadic passage we have just considered.[\[2\]](#) The genre of epic, however, imposes numerous restrictions on its own thematic treatment of lamentations. Nowhere, for instance, can we see epic overtly telling the contents of the **thrênoi**, even though they are suitable for singing by **aoidoi**

'singers, poets', as at 720-721 above; only **gooi** are "quoted," as at [XXIV 725-745](#) (*Andromache*), 748-759 (*Hekabe*), and 762-775 (*Helen*).[\[3\]](#)

§24. There is an even more important restriction evident in epic: the *Iliad* itself does not treat the tradition of lamentations for Achilles within the actual context of a real funerary ritual. True, Thetis and her sister Nereids have a stylized wake for Achilles as if he were a corpse being laid out for the **prothesis** 'wake' (cf. especially [XVIII 71](#)),[\[1\]](#) and the stylized mourning for Achilles commences immediately after he gets his permanent **akhos**, from hearing the news that Patroklos is dead ([XVIII 22-73](#)). But the Iliadic tradition requires Achilles to prefigure his dead self by staying alive, and the real ritual of a real funeral is reserved by the narrative for his surrogate Patroklos. Only outside our *Iliad*, in the retrospective format of the *Odyssey*, can we witness the actual wake of Achilles, with the Muses and his own kin, the Nereids, singing lamentations over his corpse ([xxiv 58-61](#)).[\[2\]](#) As we have already seen from its other retrospective glimpses of the Trojan War story, our *Odyssey* treats Iliadic traditions as if it were referring to other poetic traditions, such as that of lamentation itself.[\[3\]](#)

§25. The point remains, then, that the epic tradition of the *Iliad* assigns the overtly ritual dimension of **akhos/penthos** to Patroklos. Conversely, the **kleos** that Achilles gets from the *Iliad* is distinctly nonritual on the level of epic. As we have seen from the internal evidence of epic itself, the [klea andrôn 'kleos](#) [plural] of men' are intended as an elevated form of *entertainment*, and they bring **akhos/penthos** only to those who are involved in the **akhos/penthos** that the **kleos** may happen to describe. For the uninvolved audience of epic, the death of Patroklos is a subject for **kleos**. For the involved Achilles, it is **akhos/penthos**. It follows, then, that the death of Achilles himself would be **akhos/penthos** for those involved and thus unsuitable for the **kleos** of epic. From the fact that our *Iliad* substitutes the death of **Patro-kleēs**, we may infer that the death of Achilles may have been unsuitable for the **kleos** of the Iliadic tradition partly because the audience itself was involved in his death. There is a religious dimension here. Communal involvement in **akhos/penthos** requires the rituals of cult, as we have already seen from the evidence on the cult of Demeter **Akhaiā**. By performing ritual lamentations, the community involves itself with the **akhos** of Demeter over the **kathodos** of Kore.

§26. The death of Achilles would be an **akhos** not only to the **lāos**, in epic, but also to the community at large, in cult.^[1] There are clear traces that we can cite from the hero cults of Achilles in the classical and even postclassical periods. For just one example, let us consider a custom in Elis that Pausanias mentions in connection with various local athletic traditions--among them the restricted use of a site with the epichoric name of **hieros dromos** 'sacred run' ([6.23.2](#)). On an appointed day at the beginning of the Olympic Games, as the sun is sinking in the west, the women of Elis perform various rituals to worship Achilles ([tou Achilleôs drôsin es timên](#)), and the ritual that is singled out specifically is that of mourning ([koptesthai](#): [Pausanias 6.23.3](#)).^[2] Whereas Achilles gets **kleos** from epic, he gets **akhos/penthos** from cult.^[3]

§27. This is not the place, of course, to attempt a detailed exposition of how the cult of heroes in Greek religion is decidedly not some relatively late phenomenon, motivated somehow by the stories of heroes in Greek epic.^[1] The monumental work of Erwin Rohde remains one of the most eloquent sources for our understanding the **hêrōs** 'hero' as a very old and distinct concept of traditional Greek religion, requiring cult practices that were also distinct from those of the gods. The cult of heroes was a highly evolved transformation of the worship of ancestors, within the social context of the city-state or **polis**.^[2] As a parallel, I would propose that the [klea andrôn /hêrōôn](#) 'kleos [plural] of men who were heroes' of [Iliad IX 524-525](#) represents the evolution of Greek epic from earlier "stories about the ancestors," as still represented by the names **Kleo-patrê/Patro-kleês**, and, vestigially, by the function of the traditional figures assigned to these names.

§28. In order to understand the Homeric perspective on **hêrōes**, the emergence of Homeric Epos must be seen in its social context, dated to the eighth century B.C. This same era is marked by the emergence of (1) the **polis** and (2) intensive intercommunication among the elite of the various **poleis**, a phenomenon which we have defined as Panhellenism.^[1] I will leave the details and documentation to Anthony Snodgrass and others,^[2] confining myself here to the problem of contrasting the cult of heroes, which is restricted to the local level of the **polis**, with the Homeric **kleos** of heroes, which is Panhellenic and thus free from such restrictions. The point

is, essentially, that the eighth century B.C. is the setting not only for the emergence of Homeric Epos but also for the upsurge of hero cults,[3] an institution that reflects not the beginnings but rather the strong revival of a continuous heritage.[4] Following Rohde, we may properly refer to such a heritage in terms of ancestor worship, which later became hero cult.[5] It is in the context of the **polis** that the worship of ancestors evolved into the cult of heroes.[6] Moreover, the epic tradition was also evolving within the same context. The internal evidence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reflects the ideology of the **polis** in general[7] --but without being restricted to the ideology of any one **polis** in particular.[8] Here, then, is the central issue: the Panhellenic Epos is the product of the same era that produced an upsurge in local hero cults.

§29. The hero of cult must be local because it is a fundamental principle in Greek religion that his power is local.[1] On the other hand, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are Panhellenic. What results is that the central heroes of this epic tradition cannot have an overtly religious dimension in the narrative. Such a restriction on the self-expression of epic led Rohde to misunderstand the Homeric evidence on heroes. In general, his thesis was that the overall Homeric silence on the subject of hero cults implies an absence of even the ideological background.[2] In specifics, however, Rohde himself noticed sporadic instances in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* where some sort of reference is indeed being made to hero cults, but he did not integrate this evidence, which went against his thesis. Each of these instances would require a detailed exposition, but I restrict the discussion here to just one instance that reflects on the status of Patroklos/Achilles in the *Iliad*.

§30. As Rohde himself had noticed, the Funeral of Patroklos at *Iliad XXIII* has several features that connote the rituals of hero cults.[1] For example, the wine libation ([XXIII 218-221](#)) and the offering of honey with oil ([XXIII 170](#); cf. [xxiv 67-68](#)) "can hardly be regarded as anything but sacrificial."^[2] Such marginal details of cult, as also the integral element of singing lamentations at [XXIII 12](#) and 17, give ritual *form* to the **akhos** of Achilles for Patroklos at [XXIII 47](#).^[3] Even the central epic action of Book XXIII, the Funeral Games of Patroklos, has ritual form.^[4] In Homeric narrative, the funeral of a hero is the primary occasion for athletic contests ([XXIII 630-631](#): Amarynkeus; [xxiv 85-86](#): Achilles himself).^[5] In classical times,

local athletic contests were still motivated as funeral games for the epichoric hero (cf., e.g., [Pausanias 8.4.5](#)). As a general principle, the **agôn** was connected with the cult of heroes, and even the Great Panhellenic Games were originally conceived as funeral games for heroes.^[6] The custom of mourning for Achilles at the beginning of the Olympics ([Pausanias 6.23.3](#)) is a striking instance of this heritage.^[7] As a parallel, epic offers a corresponding single event in the mourning for Patroklos that inaugurates the Funeral Games in Book XXIII. Even though there are hints within the *Iliad* that the Funeral of Patroklos is presented as a grand beginning of cult ([XXIV 592-595](#)),^[8] the overt singularity of the event forced Rohde to rule it out as a parallel to the cult of heroes, which is recurrent.^[9] And yet, the *Iliad* itself is a singularity. What is recurrent in ritual is timeless in the epic tradition, just like the **kleos aphthiton** of Achilles.

Notes

§2n1. Cf. also the parallel use of **penthos** in inscriptions (e.g., Sokolowski 1955 no. 16.11-13).

§2n2. Cf. also [XVI 548-553](#): it is **penthos** that makes the Trojans want to recover the body of Sarpedon.

§3n1. [Ch.1§2](#), [Ch.12§3](#); cf. Nagy 1974.229-261.

§4n1. Nagy 1974.256.

§4n2. [Ch.1§3](#).

§5n1. Nagy 1974.244-255; see also Koller 1972.

§5n2. Nagy, pp. 255-261.

§5n3. On the notion "therapôn of the Muses": [Ch.17§§3-9](#), [Ch.18§§1-6](#).

§5n4. Cf. Kullmann 1956, esp. pp. 11, 20.

§5n5. Cf. also line 33: [humnein](#) ... [genos](#).

§5n6. Cf. West 1966.189.

§5n7. The connection of **genos** here with the notion of "theogony" is made even more explicit at *Th.* 114-115. On the traditional nature of theogonic poetry: Duban 1975.

§5n8. On the etymology of **Moûsai**: [Ch.1§3n2](#).

§5n9. Cf. also *Th.* 61.

§6n1. Nagy 1974.244-255.

§6n2. Even this narrative of a narrative obeys the convention of beginning with a word that serves as title (in this case, **nostos** at [i 326](#)), followed by an epithet and then a relative clause that sets forth the relationship of the title word to the main subject (in this case, how Athena caused the **nostos** of the Achaeans from Troy to be a baneful one indeed: [i 327](#)). See [Ch.5§8n1](#). Thus the word **nostos** here designates not only the homecoming of the Achaeans but also the epic tradition that told about their homecoming.

§6n3. On the Will of Zeus as the plot of the narrative, see the comments on [viii 577-580](#) at [§8](#); also [Ch.5§25n2](#) and [Ch.7§17](#).

§6n4. For the semantics of **kleiô/epikleiô**, compare **aineô/epaineô**, the technical and programmatic words for "praise" in praise poetry (e.g., [Pindar O.4.14/P.2.67](#); see Detienne 1973.18-22). Cf. also the technical word used by **rhapsôidoi** for the notion of "recite Homer": **Homêron epaineîn** (*Plato Ion* 536d, 541e).

§6n5. See also n2 above. For further discussion of the two-level application of **kleos** to characters within the narrative and to the audience outside the narrative: Nagy 1974.11-13. More on [i 351-352](#) in Nagy 1990.69.

§9n1. See Friis Johansen 1967.28 on the corresponding theme in archaic iconography: warriors killing children in the presence of women. In fact,

the iconographical evidence indicates "a coherent *Iliou Persis* narrative as source" (Friis Johansen, p. 36).

§10n1. Bassett 1933.58.

§10n2. Sinos 1975.104.

§11n1. At [XXIV 105](#), her **penthos** is described as **alaston** 'unforgettable'.

§11n2. [Ch.2§11](#); cf. also Nagy 1974.250-255.

§12n1. Cf. **Eteoklos** in Hesiod *fr. 70.34MW*, a by-form of **Eteokleês**; also **Dioklos** ([H.Dem. 153](#)), a by-form of **Diokleês/Dioklês** ([H.Dem. 474](#), 477).

§12n2. To justify my interpretation of this passage, I cite Schmitt 1967.93-95.

§12n3. Sinos 1975.67-70. For further observations about the intent of this story: Rosner 1976.

§12n4. Sinos 1975.70-79.

§13n1. Benveniste 1969 [I 338-353](#).

§13n2. Benveniste 1969 [I 352-353](#) = 1973.288.

§14n1. For additional parallelisms on the level of diction between the stories of Meleager and Achilles, see Rosner 1976.323.

§14n2. Cf. Lord 1967.243.

§14n3. At [XXI 275-278](#), Apollo alone is pictured as killing Achilles; at [XIX 416-417](#) and [XXII 358-360](#), on the other hand, Achilles is killed by Apollo *and* Paris.

§15n1. Kakridis 1949.21-24.

§15n2. Kakridis, p. 21.

§15n3. Cf. Howald 1946.132.

§16n1. On the terms *code* and *message* (as used by Jakobson 1960), see further at [Ch.12 §§18-19](#).

§16n2. Sinos 1975.

§16n3. Sinos 1975.74.

§16n4. The same notion of "becoming the Light" for men by virtue of being their savior is more fully expressed by way of simile: see [Ch.20 §20](#).

§20n1. Muellner 1976.105-106.

§20n2. Ibid.

§21n1. See Rosner 1976.321-322, supplementing Whitman 1958.203-207 and Segal 1971.18 ff.

§22n1. For the tradition of lamentation over the destruction of cities: Alexiou 1974.83-101. Compare the **akhos** of the captive woman in [viii 530](#), corresponding to the **akhos** experienced by Odysseus when he is about to hear Demodokos narrate the destruction of Troy. Discussion at [§9](#).

§22n2. Cf. *Anthologia Palatina* 9.151.8, where only the Nereids remain after the destruction of Corinth: [sôn acheôn mimnomen](#) halkunes. For the traditional connection of **(h)alkunes** and Nereids, see Theocritus 7.59-60. See also Alexiou 1974.97: "Like the folk songs for the fall of Constantinople, many of these ballads open with the theme of weeping birds--nightingales, swallows and cuckoos--which, as sole survivors of the disaster, bring the news to others and are called upon to join in the general lamentation."

§22n3. For a possible allusion to this theme in the *Odyssey*: [§10](#). Note the last words of Andromache's first lament for Hektor: [kleos einai](#) 'that there be kleos' ([XXII 514](#)).

§23n1. More details at [§30](#).

§23n2. Alexiou 1974.10-14. I should note that the semantic distinction between **gooi** and **thrênoi** is generally not maintained in the diction of Athenian tragedy.

§23n3. See Alexiou, p. 13, with more details about the social prestige of the **thrênos**.

§24n1. See Kakridis 1949.67-68.

§24n2. Cf. Alexiou 1974.10-14. Here too (as at [XXIV 721](#)), **thrênoi** are being sung ([xxiv 61](#)); however, now the singers are not **aoidoi** (as at [XXIV 720](#)) but the Muses themselves ([xxiv 60](#)). Cf. also Pindar *P.3.100-103*: the death of Achilles causes **goos** for the Danaans.

§24n3. For example, the narrative convention of the **Dios boulê'Will of Zeus'** as at [Iliad 15](#) is treated as a foil by [Odyssey i.7](#) (see Maehler 1963.23) as well as by [viii 577-580](#).

§26n1. For the traditional use of the word **lâos** outside the context of epic to designate the community at large, see Benveniste 1969 [II 91-95](#), esp. on **lîiton, leitourgiâ**. Note that **lîiton** is described in [Herodotus 7.197](#) as a word proper to the **Akhaioi**.

§26n2. For this and other examples of cult practices in honor of Achilles, see Nilsson 1906.457. In the case of [Pausanias 6.23.2](#), I am unsure about any direct connection between the **hieros dromos** 'sacred run' and the lore surrounding Achilles, but it may be worth pointing out this hero's specific affinity with the theme of running; see esp. [Ch.20§9](#) (cf. also [XVIII 56](#) as discussed at [Ch.10§11](#) and n4).

§26n3. Cf. [Herodotus 5.67.5](#), where the earliest known stages of the local cult of Adrastos at Sikyon are being described: ta te dê alla hoi Sikuônioi etimôn ton Adrêston kai dê pros ta pathea autou tragikoisi choroisi egerairon 'the people of Sikyon gave **tîmê** to Adrastos in various ways; in particular, they honored him [gave him **geras**] with tragic songs/dances corresponding to the things that he suffered [pathos plural]'. On **pathos** 'thing suffered' as related to **penthos** 'grief', see Nagy 1974.258-260. Both nouns are derived from the root *k

§27n1. See especially Rohde [I 146-199](#). For a strong critique of the opposing view as represented by L. R. Farnell, see Brelich 1958.99n81, who comments also on the irony that Farnell is a noted commentator on the poetry of Pindar. See also the criticism of Farnell by Pötscher 1961.336n91.

§27n2. Cf. Rohde [I 108-110](#); also Brelich 1958.144n202, Nilsson [I 186](#), Schnaufer 1970.34, Alexiou 1974.19.

§28n1. See Intro. §14.

§28n2. See Intro. §14nn1-2.

§28n3. On which see Snodgrass 1971.191-193. Cf. Intro. §18.

§28n4. Snodgrass, pp. 398-399. I cannot agree with the argument of Coldstream 1976 that the upsurge of hero cults in the eighth century is a mere *result* of Homeric poetry. Snodgrass himself has offered a refutation of this view in a paper presented at the Convegno internazionale sulla ideologia funeraria nel mondo antico, Naples/Ischia 6-10 December 1977 (sponsored by the Istituto Universitario Orientale [Naples] and the Centre de Recherches Comparées sur les sociétés anciennes [Paris]). The title of the paper read by A. Snodgrass was: "The Origins of the Greek Hero-Cults"; other papers include: J.-P. Vernant's "L'idéologie de la mort héroïque," A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon's "Les funérailles de Patrocle," and N. Loraux's "Mort civique et idéologie de la cité." In developing my present argument, I draw considerable encouragement from the views of Vernant and his colleagues. See now Snodgrass 1982.

§28n5. Rohde [I 108-110](#), 228-245, esp. 235n1.

§28n6. Cf. Rohde [I 167-171](#). This evolution can be correlated with the obsolescence of the **thrênos** as a genre, and with the history of vigorous legislation against it; see Alexiou 1974, esp. pp. 13, 18-19, 104, 108.

§28n7. Snodgrass 1971.435; see also Luce 1978.

§28n8. Cf. Intro. §14.

§29n1. Rohde [I 184-189](#): once a hero ceases to be epichoric, he may become a god. Cf. also Rohde's discussion on pp. (I) 59-65, 141-145, 159-166, etc.

§29n2. For a sensible critique: Hack 1929; also Sinos 1975.91-94.

§30n1. Rohde [I 14-22](#).

§30n2. Rohde [I 16n1](#) = 1925.45n13.

§30n3. Besides the element of song, we also find that of dance. In Aristotle *fr. 519* Rose (on which see the correction made by Meuli 1968 [= 1926] 70n3; also West 1978.372n1), there is a report of a tradition that Achilles danced the **purrhikhê** at the pyre of Patroklos. From the same source (*ibid.*, *ap. scholia to XXIII 130*), we hear of a funerary custom in Cyprus: **tôn basileôn kêdeuomenôn proêgeito purrichizôn ho stratos** 'at the funerals of kings, the procession was led by the army, who danced the **purrhikhê**'. Compare the proceedings at the Funeral of Patroklos, [XXIII 131-137](#) (and the commentary of Rohde [I 165-166n1](#)).

§30n4. See Sinos 1975.83-88 on the significance of the **sêma** at [XXIII 331](#).

§30n5. Rohde [I 14-22](#). Kirk (1968.115) refers to the chariot contest at the Funeral Games of Amarynkeus as "an apparent predecessor of the Olympic Games."

§30n6. Rohde [I 151-152](#) and Nilsson 1951 [=1911] 99-100.

§30n7. It should be noted, however, that the primary hero of the Olympics is Pelops ([Pausanias 5.13.1](#)); see Burkert 1972.108-119.

§30n8. Rohde [I 55-59](#), esp. p. 59n1; Sinos 1975.92-94.

§30n9. Rohde [I 148-152](#).

Chapter 7

The Death of Pyrrhos

§1. As we contemplate the ritual aspects of the Iliadic hero, we are faced with a conflict between a trend and a constant: while Achilles is becoming Panhellenic by way of Epos, the powers of the hero in hero cult remain strictly local.^[1] By evolving into the hero of the epic tradition that culminated in our *Iliad*, the Achilles figure stands to lose his overtly ritual aspects. For illustration, let us consider the inherited poetic diction describing the prestige of a typically local hero in cult, and compare the words that our *Iliad* chooses to describe the destiny of its own prime hero. By losing his chance to be exempt from mortality and by being awarded as compensation a hero cult at Eleusis that will last for all time to come, the youthful Demophon is described in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* as getting a **tîmê** that is **aphthitos** 'unfailing' (*H.Dem.* 261, 263).^[2] The epithet here is crucial, because heroes are generically distinguished from gods by virtue of *not* having a **bios** 'lifespan' that is **aphthitos** (Simonides 523.3P).^[3] Achilles, on the other hand, names as compensation for his impending death not **tîmê** but a **kleos** that is **aphthiton** 'unfailing' (*IX* 413). Whereas **tîmê** 'honor' is conferred by cult,^[4] the prestige that **kleos** brings is the undying glory of Epos.^[5] Within the timelessness of epic, the Funeral of Patroklos will have to serve as indirect compensation to Achilles for the absence of the ritual **tîmê** that is his due. Outside of epic, however, there evolved another form of indirect compensation that befits the Panhellenic hero in the dimension of cult.

§2. The historical setting is unique: it is Delphi, the Panhellenic Sanctuary for the Oracle of Apollo, where the presiding Hero is none other than the son of Achilles, Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos.^[1] In Pindar's words, the Hero of Delphi is destined to be one of the Aeacids (Aiakos [[arrowright]] Peleus [[arrowright]] Achilles [[arrowright]] Pyrrhos [[arrowright]] ...), and the Aeacid to be chosen is the son of Achilles:

... echrêne de
tin' endon alsei palaitatôi
Aiakidan kreontôn to loipon emmenai
theou par' euteichea domon, héroïais de pompais
themiskopon oikein eonta poluthutois

... but it had to be that

one of the royal Aeacids be inside the most ancient grove
for all time to come, by the well-built abode of the god,
and that he should have his home as the one which presides
over the Heroes' Processions, which are distinguished by
many sacrifices[2]

Pindar N.7.44-47

By Pindar's time, the institutions of Delphi reflect no longer simply a **polis** that happens to have a sanctuary of Panhellenic importance, but rather, the reverse: the entire community of Delphi now functions as a sacral extension of the Sanctuary.[3] Accordingly, the status of Pyrrhos at Delphi transcends that of the typical hero: whereas the hero of a **polis** is by nature local, the son of Achilles is more of a Panhellenic figure by virtue of being Hero of Delphi.

§3. There would be no gain in our trying to retroject the figure of Pyrrhos as the Hero of Delphi all the way to, say, the eighth century B.C.[1] It is enough to say that the inherited epic themes associated with this figure are so close to the inherited ritual themes of the Hero at Delphi that an identification was in effect by the time the Sanctuary evolved into the form known to Pindar. In the poet's own words (N.7.44-47), other Aeacids would have been equally appropriate as Hero of Delphi--Achilles included. But the bones of Achilles--and bones are the basis for establishing the locale of hero cults--anchor him in the *Iliad* as the Hero of the Hellespont.[2] The Panhellenic stature of the *Iliad* has thus precluded Achilles as Hero of Delphi, and the Delphic sanctuary of Apollo has in turn developed a Panhellenic ideology that complements the *Iliad*. In short, the identification of Pyrrhos with the Hero enshrined at Delphi is another in a series of interrelated Panhellenic phenomena that go far beyond the local constraints of Hellenic religion.[3]

§4. The reality of the cult, however, is based on localization: Pyrrhos was Hero of Delphi because of the local belief that he was buried there ([Pindar N.7.34](#)-35). In fact, his grave and the cult that goes with it were officially recognized to be part of the precinct of Apollo himself, as we learn not only from the words of Pindar (above, [N.7.44-47](#))^[1] and the detailed reports of Pausanias ([10.24.6](#); cf. [1.4.4](#)) but also from the archaeological evidence.^[2] This institutional symbiosis of the Hero's cult with that of Panhellenic Apollo must be correlated with the numerous myths which, although they vary in detail, converge on the theme that Apollo killed Pyrrhos, just as he had killed the father Achilles.^[3] A sampling of the documentation can wait until we finish confronting a vital detail: the death of the father and the death of the son are both celebrated as parallel events in Pindar's *Paean* 6 to Apollo (lines 78-80: Achilles; lines 117-120: Pyrrhos). Even the traditional exultation *iē iē* of the paean bursts forth immediately following the words retelling the death of Pyrrhos (*Paean* 6.121-122). Since *Paean* 6 was composed specifically for a Delphic setting and in honor of Apollo, we should be especially mindful of the central role of its hero as the ritual antagonist of the god. For we see here a striking illustration of a fundamental principle in Hellenic religion: antagonism between hero and god in myth corresponds to the ritual requirements of symbiosis between hero and god in cult.^[4]

§5. Now we are ready to examine some of the variant myths about how Pyrrhos actually met his death, and we begin with those that have a bearing on the Achilles figure as well. One version has Pyrrhos attempting to plunder the riches of Delphi; Apollo thwarts him and brings about his death. ^[1] There is an important parallel in the figure of the impious **Phleguās** and/or the band of plundering warriors called **Phleguai**,^[2] who similarly attacked or even burned down the Delphic shrine and were, in some versions of the myth, destroyed by Apollo.^[3] Even the name **Phleguās** 'fiery' (from **phlegō** 'burn') is semantically comparable to **Purrhos** 'fiery red'.^[4]

§6. The theme of plundering Delphi, common to Pyrrhos and Phlegyas, also applies to Achilles himself in the *Iliad*--albeit indirectly. In the only Iliadic mention of Delphi (aside from the reference in the Great Catalogue, [II 519](#)),^[1] Achilles is renouncing the prospect of plundering the riches of Apollo's

sanctuary there, which have just been juxtaposed with the riches contained in the citadel of Troy (at [IX 401-403](#)):

oud' hos a laïnos oudos aphêtoros entos eergei,
Phoibou Apollônos, Puthoi eni petrêessêi.
lêistoi men gar te boes kai iphia mêla,
ktêtoi de tripodes te kai hippôn xantha karêna.

nor all the things contained within the stone threshold of the Archer,
Phoebus Apollo, in rocky Delphi.
For cattle and fat sheep can be plundered
and tripods can be won, as well as tawny heads of horses.

[IX 404-407](#)

It is remarkable that a theme so appropriate to the Hero of Delphi on the level of cult should apply in particular to the Achilles figure in the single instance where the *Iliad* conjures up directly the traditions of Delphi.

§7. This Homeric focusing of theme is all the more remarkable when we consider the additional evidence of the *Odyssey*, which likewise has only two overt references to Delphi. One of them is out of focus for our immediate purposes ([xi 581](#)), but the other brings us back to the first song of Demodokos ([viii 72-82](#)), which in turn will lead us back to the death of Pyrrhos. Demodokos is singing about the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and how it has revealed to Agamemnon a prophecy that applies in a particular setting, to wit, at a **dais** 'feast' of the gods ([theôn en daiti thaleiêi](#): [viii 76](#)), where Achilles and Odysseus are having a quarrel. This quarrel is described as the "beginning of grief [pêma]" ([pêmatos archê](#): [viii 82](#)) for Achaeans and Trojans alike, and we have seen that the death of Achilles is a major theme implied by the notion of pêma as it applies to the Achaeans.^[1] Such a thematic correlation of the death of Achilles with Delphi/sacrifice/quarrel presents us with a mythological ensemble that is parallel, however indirectly, to another variant myth about the death of Pyrrhos.

§8. The myth that we are about to consider is the same one that is celebrated by Pindar in his *Paean* 6 to Apollo, composed for the occasion of the **theoxenia** at Delphi.^[1] From the words of this composition, we see

that Pyrrhos met his death at Delphi as the direct result of a quarrel over slices of meat that were being distributed at a sacrifice:

amphipolois de
k]ur[ian][2] peri timan
dêri]azomenon ktanen[3]
en teme]neï philôi gas par' omphalon eurun

When he [Pyrrhos] quarreled with the attendants
over his rightful **tîmai**,
he [Apollo] killed him
in his own precinct, right by the broad center of the Earth.

Pindar *Paean* 6.117-120

In another variation on this myth, the killer is not Apollo himself but one of his temple attendants:[4]

'cheto de pros theon
kteat' agôn Troiathen akrothiniôn:
hina kreôn nin huper machas
elasen antituchont' anêr machairai.
barunthen de perissa Delphoi xenagetai

And he went to the god
bringing the riches of first-fruit offerings from Troy.
And there a man with a **makhaira** smote him
as he got into a quarrel over slices of meat.
And the Delphians, conductors of xenoi, were greatly vexed.

Pindar N.7.40-43

The thematic ingredients of (1) the attendant with the **makhaira** 'sacrificial knife' and (2) the Delphians as **xenâgetai** 'conductors of **xenoi**' have interesting variants in still other versions of the myth, where the killer is named as (1) **Makhaireus**, son of **Daitâs**,[5] or (2) **Philoxenidê**s.[6]

§9. Taken on the level of myth, these themes are all pertinent to the ritual of the Delphic **theoxenia**, which actually involved the awarding of slices of meat from the sacrificial table.^[1] Consider the following testimonium, which seems to have survived for us only because of a quaint detail in the ritual proceedings:

diatetaktai para Delphois tēi thusiai tōn Theoxeniôn, hos an komisēi
gēthullida megistēn tēi Lētoi, lambanein moiran apo tēs trapezēs.

There is an arrangement among the Delphians, at their festival of the **Theoxenia**, that whoever brings the biggest **gēthullis** [a vegetable] to Leto is to get a slice of meat from the sacrificial table.

Polemon *ap. Athenaeus* 372a

We should note in particular the sacrificial motif of exchanging a vegetal offering for a slice of the sacrificial victim's meat--called a **moîra**. In Pindar's *Nemean 7*, we have seen Pyrrhos himself being featured as one who acts in the ritual manner of the Delphic **theoxenia**, in that he is making a grand offering from the rich spoils of Troy in return for a slice of meat from the sacrificial table (above, line 42). In fact, even his offerings are called **akrothinia** 'first fruits [of war]' (line 41)--a word with vegetal connotations in that it is primarily appropriate for designating "first fruits [of Earth]" (e.g., Aeschylus Eumenides 834; etc.).^[2] Pyrrhos gets involved in a quarrel over not receiving his due **moîra** of meat, and *Paean 6* describes the issue in dispute as **kûriân** [or **moiriân!**] **peri tîmân** 'concerning his rightful **tîmai**' (line 118).^[3] Moreover, the theme of being deprived of one's **moîra** of meat at the sacrificial table is actually attested in the ritual lore of Delphi.

§10. In a fragment from the *Life of Aesop* tradition, we see the following ritual scenario about a particular sacrificial custom at Delphi:^[1]

... epan [eise]lthēi t[is] tōi theōi thusias[ôn o]hi Delph[o]i
per[i]estêkasi ton bôm[o]n huph' heautois machairas k[o]mizontes.
sphagiasamenou de tou hiereiou [*emended to hierêôs*] kai deirantos to
hiereion kai ta splanchna periexelomenou hoi periestôtes hekastos hên

[an ischusēi moiran apotemnomenos apeisin, hôs pollakis ton](#)
[thusiasanta auton amoir\[o\]n api\[e\]nai.](#) ...

When someone goes in for the purpose of initiating sacrifice to the god, the Delphians stand around the altar carrying concealed **makhairai**. And after the priest has slaughtered and flayed the sacrificial victim and after he has apportioned the innards, those who have been standing around cut off whatever **moîra** of meat each of them is able to cut off and then depart, with the result that the one who initiated the sacrifice oftentimes departs without having a moîra himself.

Pap.Oxy.1800 fr. 2 ii 32-46 = Aesop Testimonia 25 Perry

The internal motivation for this interesting description has to do with a story about Aesop and how he ridiculed this ritual at Delphi.[\[2\]](#) Elsewhere too, we find what seem to be mostly jesting allusions to the same ritual practice, as in the following proverb:[\[3\]](#)

[Delphoisi thusas autos ou phagêi kreas](#)

If you sacrifice at Delphi, you will not eat any meat yourself.

Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum I 393 (Appendix Proverbiorum I 95)

§11. Such allusions, if we did not have an actual description of the ritual, would have impressed us as nothing more than anticlerical jokes at the expense of the Sanctuary and its proverbially greedy attendants. But the description in the *Life of Aesop* fragment presents the scenario of a free-for-all over slices of meat *as a genuine ritual practice*--and not simply as a matter of greedy behavior on the part of the attendants.[\[1\]](#) As we will have a chance to observe later, the *jest* may present the ritual practice as if it really were greedy behavior, but even the jesting itself may have had a formalized ritual basis.[\[2\]](#) The point remains that there is indeed a ritual basis to the customary free-for-all over the slices of sacrificial meat, as we can also see from such parallels as the festival of ritualized greed at Lykosoura in Arcadia ([Pausanias 8.37.8](#)).[\[3\]](#) There is apparently even an

element of ritualized stealth in the Delphic proceedings: consider the expression [k\[ru\]pha](#) 'stealthily', applied again to the attendants in another fragment describing how Aesop ridiculed the Delphians' ritual custom.[\[4\]](#)

§12. Even more important for now, the program of the ritual as described in the *Life of Aesop* tradition converges closely with the program of the myth about the death of Pyrrhos as described in Pindar's *Paean* 6 and *Nemean* 7. Both myth and ritual feature the themes of (1) a wrangle over slices of meat that takes place between the sacrificer and the attendants who perform the sacrifice and (2) the sacrificer's being deprived of his share. In fact, the convergence of themes is so close that we may see in the death of Pyrrhos the official Delphic myth that integrates the ideology of the ritual. However, the myth has the sacrificer himself, Pyrrhos, becoming the ultimate victim of the sacrifice--butchered at the table of the god by the very knives that sliced the meat to be shared in the ritual.[\[1\]](#)

§13. We come back to the first song of Demodokos in the *Odyssey* ([viii 72-82](#)), where the implicit theme of a future death for Achilles is correlated with the three other themes of Delphi/sacrifice/quarrel. We have now witnessed a myth about the death of Pyrrhos that--on an altogether different level--has a parallel correlation of these three other themes. The parallelism can be observed in the dimension of form as well: the verb describing the quarrel of Pyrrhos in the Pindaric narrative, **[dēri]azomenon** (*Paean* 6.119), corresponds to the one that twice describes the quarrel of Achilles in the Homeric, **dērisanto/dērioōnt** ([viii 76](#)/[78](#)). Some aspects of the parallelism, however, are still problematical. Whereas Pyrrhos is killed during a quarrel at a sacrifice in Delphi, the death of Achilles is merely presaged in Delphi--and indirectly at that: Agamemnon apparently thinks that the quarrel of Achilles at a sacrifice is only a sign that Troy will be taken, not realizing that it is also a sign of future **pēma** for the Achaeans when Achilles withdraws and again later when he dies. The relationship of Achilles to the themes of Delphi/sacrifice/quarrel obviously requires still further scrutiny. Let us begin by going beyond the **dais** 'feast' of the gods at [viii 76](#), in an attempt to understand the overall testimony of hexameter diction about the hero's relationship to sacrifices in particular and to feasts in general.

§14. Not just for Achilles but for any Homeric character, the eating of meat at feasts is by nature a sacrificial occasion: in the words of George M. Calhoun, "every meal was a sacrifice and an act of worship, and every sacrifice a meal."^[1] By treating the Homeric hero simply as an idealized man taken out of the second millennium B.C., this statement may be overly one-dimensional in its view of epic action,^[2] but it remains a valid observation about the contents of Homeric narrative: feasts where meat is consumed are indeed regularly occasioned by sacrifice. The Homeric word for such occasions is **dais/daitē** (e.g., [iii 33/44](#), etc.),^[3] and both nouns are etymologically derived from the verb **daiomai** 'divide, apportion, allot'. Consider the following Homeric collocation of verb and noun:

moiras dassamenoi dainunt' erikudea daita

Apportioning moîrai [portions], they feasted a very glorious dais [feast].

[iii 66](#)

We will have more to observe about **moîrai** later. For now it will suffice to add that the notion of "division" latent in **dais** becomes overt in expressions involving daitos eisê̄s 'of an equal **dais**' (as at [I 468](#), 602; [II 431](#); [VII 320](#); [XXIII 56](#))--denoting situations where everyone has his proper share at the sacrificial feast.^[4]

§15. Is there, then, a special relationship of Achilles to the **dais**? Certainly this seems to be so not only in the case of Achilles but also in the case of all his heroic lineage, according to the Hesiodic passage that describes the Aeacids as follows:

... polemô̄i kecharêotas ëüte daiti

... delighting in war as well as in the **dais**

Hesiod *fr.* 206MW

The key, I submit, to such a close relationship of the Aeacids to the **dais** is the etymological connection of the word with the notion inherent in

daiomai 'divide, apportion, allot'. This notion constitutes a mythological theme that runs through the whole line of Aeacids, starting with the prime ancestor himself. The hero Aiakos, in the words of Pindar, was so fair and just as to be worthy of settling matters pertaining to the gods themselves:

Aiakon ... kedno-
taton epichthoniôn. ho kai
daimonessi dikas epeiraine

Aiakos ... the most cherished of mortals,
who rendered dikai [judgments, justice] even for the gods[1]

Pindar I.8.22-24

The correlation here of the word **dikê** with the concept of making fair allotments reminds us of the wording used to describe how the honor of Achilles himself is to be tested one more time in the *Iliad*. As the actual setting for Agamemnon's final offer of compensation to Achilles in return for having at the outset deprived him of his fair share, Odysseus proposes the holding of a special **dais**:

autar epeita se daiti eni klisiêis aresasthô
pieirêi, hina mê ti dikês epideues echêistha

But let him [Agamemnon] make amends to you [Achilles] with a rich **dais** in the tents,
so that you may have no lack in **dikê**.

XIX 179-180

It is at this **dais**, when Achilles is to be tested one more time with the compensation offered by Agamemnon (XIX 268-281), that he even bids his fellow Achaeans to go and feast (XIX 275)--though without his participation.[2]

§16. As we now follow the line of Aiakos down to his son Peleus, the association of the Aeacids with the themes of the **dais** becomes more

involved. In the words of Pindar, the hero Peleus actually feasted with the gods:

kai theoi daisanto par' amphoteris
kai Kronou paidas basilêas idon chru-
seais en hedrais, hedna te
dexanto

And the gods had a dais with each of them [Peleus and Kadmos], and they [Peleus and Kadmos] saw the royal children of Kronos sitting on their golden seats, and they received wedding-gifts from them.

Pindar P.3.93-95

The singular occasion for the **dais** of Peleus, where the Olympian gods themselves attended, was the feast of his wedding with Thetis--a traditional theme celebrated by the *Cypria* as an appropriate setting for the onset of the entire Trojan Cycle (Proclus p. 102.14-15 Allen). There is an evocative reference to the theme of this **dais** even in the *Iliad*, where Hera reminds Apollo that he too had attended:

pantes d' antiaasthe, theoi, gamou: en de su toisi
dainu' echôn phorminga

And all you gods attended the wedding.^[1] And you too were feasting among them, and you had your lyre with you.

XXIV 62-63

At this **dais** celebrating a marriage that led to the conception of Achilles himself, Zeus willed that **Eris** 'Strife' would bring about a **neîkos** 'quarrel' among the gods; these specific themes of **eris/neîkos** at a **dais** constitute the opening scene of the *Cypriain* particular and of the Trojan Cycle in general (Proclus p. 102.13-19: **Eris/neîkos** at 14/15).^[2] Short range, these themes are appropriate to the motivation of the Trojan War; long range, the very same themes also provide a setting for the evolution of Achilles as a heroic figure.^[3]

§17. We come back again to the first song of Demodokos in the *Odyssey* ([viii 72-82](#)), where the theme of a future death for Achilles is implicitly signaled by a quarrel at a sacrifice. The sacrifice is described as a **dais** of the gods ([viii 76](#)), and the quarrel is a **neîkos** ([viii 75](#)). The **neîkos** and all else that happened thereupon are described as the Will of Zeus ([viii 82](#)), which is the same traditional device that motivates the **neîkos** at the beginning of the *Cypria* (Proclus p. 102.13-14; *Cypria* fr. 1 Allen).[\[1\]](#) Likewise at the beginning of our *Iliad*, the Will of Zeus ([I 5](#)) leads to **eris** 'strife' between Achilles and Agamemnon ([erisante: I 6](#); [eridi: I 8](#)),[\[2\]](#) and this strife takes the form of a **neîkos** 'quarrel' ([eridas kai neikea: II 376](#)).[\[3\]](#) In the words of Agamemnon, **eris** 'strife' is a theme that defines the very character of Achilles:

[aiei gar toi eris te philê polemoi te machai te](#)

eris is always dear to you, as well as wars and battles[\[4\]](#)

[I 177](#)

§18. In the beginning of the *Iliad*, we can now see a marked divergence in theme. The setting for the strife and quarreling between Achilles and Agamemnon is *not* a feast--let alone a sacrifice.[\[1\]](#) In fact, it is just the opposite. During the time that Achilles and Agamemnon were having their quarrel, Zeus and all the Olympians were away at a **dais** ([kata daita: I 424](#)) in the far-off land of the Aithiopes ([I 423-424](#)), situated at the extremities of the universe.[\[2\]](#) Whenever the gods are away at such a **dais** with the remote Aithiopes, the efficacy of a sacrifice by the heroes in the here-and-now of the epic narrative is in question.[\[3\]](#) Yet the notion of "divide, apportion, allot" inherent in the institution of the **dais** is very much present in the Strife Scene that begins the *Iliad*, even if the **dais** itself is notably absent as a setting. The word **daiomai** 'divide, apportion, allot' is actually used in *Iliad I* to describe the grievance of Achilles over his being deprived of his fair allotment in the spoils of war ([dassanto: I 368](#), to be read in the overall context of [I 365-392](#), especially 392).

§19. In the beginning of the *Iliad*, the more pervasive mode of describing the loss by Achilles of his fair share is by way of the noun **tîmê** 'honor' and the verbs formally related to it (see especially [I 505-510](#), 558-559; [II 3-4](#)).

[1] The word **tîmê**, as we have seen, is also appropriate for designating what it was that Pyrrhos had pursued by quarreling over slices of meat: the hero's wrangle was "on account of his rightful **tîmai**" (**kûriân** [or **moiriân!**] **peri tîmân**: Pindar *Paean* 6.118). [2] As for Achilles, he loses his **tîmê** 'honor' specifically because Agamemnon has taken away his **geras** 'honorific portion': [3]

... atar min nun ge anax andrôn Agamemnôn
êtimêsen: helôn gar echei geras, autos apouras

But Agamemnon, king of men, has taken away his tîmê; for he got and keeps his **geras**, having himself taken it away.

I 506-507

In this particular case, of course, the **geras** is a captive girl. Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, however, the same word refers to a choice cut of meat, *le morceau du héros*, awarded to the foremost warrior of the moment:

autar epei pausanto ponou tetukonto te daita,
dainunt', oude ti thumos edeueto daitos eïsêš:
nôtoisin d' Aianta diènekeessi gerairen
hérôs Atreïdês, euru kreiôn Agamemnôn

But when they finished with their efforts and prepared the **dais** [feast], they had the **dais** [feasted], and there was no **thûmos** lacking in a fair **dais** [allotment].

And wide-ruling Agamemnon the hero, son of Atreus, gave as **geras** to Ajax the whole back [of beef]. [4]

VII 319-322

Let us contrast again the concern over the **tîmê** of Achilles in *Iliad I*: The situation is unlike that of Ajax in *Iliad VII*, in that *Iliad I* lacks the setting of a **dais**. Even later on in the *Iliad*, there seems to be a set of insistent allusions to this initial Iliadic divergence from the theme of the **dais**, as when Odysseus says to Achilles:

chair', Achileu: daitos men eisê s ouk epideueis
êmen eni klisiêi Agamemnonos Atreïda
êde kai enthade nun: para gar menoikea polla
dainusth': all' ou daitos epératou erga memêlen ...

Hail, Achilles! You are not without a fair **dais**
either in the tent of Agamemnon son of Atreus
or here and now. There is at hand much that would suit your **menos**,
for you to have as dais. But the concern is not
about a pleasant **dais** ...

IX 225-228

The detailed side-stepping here of the theme of a **dais** draws all the more attention to it. The wording of this passage, so strikingly parallel in detail to the one we have considered immediately before ([VII 319-322](#)), again conjures up for us the theme of awarding, in the context of a **dais**, the choice cut of meat--this time to the foremost warrior of the *Iliad* in its entirety. And the speaker is Odysseus, who had quarreled in another traditional scene with Achilles himself at a **dais** where the preeminence of the epic heroes was somehow at stake ([viii 72-82](#)). Later on in the *Iliad*, again it will be Odysseus who proposes a **dais** as the setting for Agamemnon's making amends to Achilles ([XIX 179-180](#)), and it will be at this **dais** that Achilles finally witnesses the undoing of his loss of **tîmê** ([XIX 268-281](#)).[5]

§20. The time has come to underscore an interesting contrast that has been emerging between the figures of Achilles and Pyrrhos. For the Achilles of our *Iliad*, the restoration of **tîmê** happens at a **dais**--but the same does not hold for the Strife Scene where he had originally lost that **tîmê**. Pyrrhos, on the other hand, has his Strife Scene on account of his **tîmai** at an overt sacrifice; furthermore, his actions mirror closely on the level of myth the proceedings of the sacrifice on the level of ritual. To put it another way, our story of Pyrrhos is much closer to a ritual quarrel over cuts of sacrificial meat than our story of Achilles, where the narrative elements have been considerably stylized--especially in [*Iliad I*](#).

§21. The epic stylization that affects the theme of a choice cut of meat for Achilles, *le morceau du héros*, actually runs very deep. In certain instances of Homeric diction, even the comparative approach secures the notion of "allotment, portion" for words that designate the epic destiny of Achilles. Such is the case with **aîsa**, designating the Iliadic destiny of Achilles in contexts stressing his excessively brief lifespan (e.g., [I 416](#), 418); when we turn to the comparative method, we find such related forms as Oscan *aiteis*, functionally equivalent to Latin *partis* (genitive of *pars* 'share, allotment'). [1] More overtly, the word **moîra** not only functions as a synonym of **aîsa** in some Homeric contexts where it carries the sense of "fate". [2] It also designates specifically "cut of meat" in other contexts (e.g., [iii 66](#)). [3] Finally, for yet another example of stylized imagery that is traditionally connected with the theme of a champion's portion for Achilles, I cite the complex word **kêr**. [4] In the plural, **kêres** at [IX 411](#) specifically designates the two possible courses of epic action between which Achilles must choose [5] --a **nostos** 'safe homecoming' with a long life on the one hand or, on the other, a brief life with a **kleos** 'glory' that is everlasting ([IX 410-416](#)). [6]

§22. Such highly elaborated formal imagery surrounding the Achilles figure in the *Iliad* distances him considerably from Pyrrhos, that stark figure of a savage warrior who is lunging after a choice cut of meat to which he lays claim. And yet, the same *Iliad* that stylizes the actions of Achilles to their ultimate epic refinement can also bridge the vast distance of heroic evolution and suddenly picture Achilles on the most fundamental level of savage behavior. The god Apollo, who brought about the death of both father and son, says these words to mark the hero of the *Iliad*, Achilles himself:

leôn d' hôs agria oiden
hos t' epeï ar megaléi te biéi kai agénori thumôi
eixas eis' epi mêla brotôn, hina daita labêisin

But, like a lion, he [Achilles] knows savage ways
--a lion that yields to its great **biê** and overweening **thûmos**,
and goes after the sheep of men, in order to get a **dais**. [1]

The use of the word **dais** in this image of stark savagery is particularly striking as it applies to the Achilles figure. Actually, this characterization of the Iliadic hero is quite in tune with a latent dimension that keeps surfacing at moments of intense heroic anguish, as when Achilles is grieving over his dead **hetaîros**:

oude ti thumôi
terpeto, prin polemou stoma dumenai haimatoentos

nor was he gladdened in his **thûmos**
until he entered the jaws of bloody war

XIX 312-313

The verb **terpomai** 'be gladdened' can conventionally designate gratification by way of eating (e.g., [XI 780](#)), and it is precisely this theme of eating that functions as the immediate context for the passage under consideration. The elders of the Achaeans are imploring Achilles to eat ([XIX 303-304](#)), but he refuses and insists on keeping a fast ([XIX 304-308](#), 319-321); while he is fasting, he actually reminisces about the meals that Patroklos used to serve up to him ([XIX 314-318](#), especially 316). This grim juxtaposition of two images, the bloody jaws of war and the hero who goes without meals while Patroklos lies unavenged, is only part of a ghastly Iliadic theme that finally comes to a head at the moment when a victorious Achilles is standing triumphant over the sprawled figure of a dying Hektor and says:

ai gar pôs auton me menos kai thumos aneiê
m' apotamnomenon krea edmenai, hoia eorgas

I wish that somehow my **menos** and **thûmos** impelled me
to slice you up and eat your meat raw, for the things you did.

XXII 346-347

We recall the simile, uttered by Apollo himself, comparing Achilles to a carnivorous lion whose **thûmos** impels it to its **dais** 'feast' of sheep ([XXIV 41-43](#)).^[2] So also here, the **menos** and **thûmos** of Achilles are bringing our

hero to the verge of a bestial deed. In another simile comparing Achilles with a raging lion ([XX 164-175](#)), the beast is described as impelling itself to fight:

... hee d' auton epotrunei machesasthai

... and it is impelling itself to fight

[XX 171](#)

The stance of the beast is then directly compared to the manner in which the **menos** and **thûmos** of Achilles impel him to fight:

hôs Achilê' otrune menos kai thumos agênôr

so also the **menos** and overweening **thûmos** of Achilles impelled him onwards[3]

[XX 174](#)

In effect, then, the simile is saying that Achilles has the **thûmos** of a lion, in that the beast's intrinsic behavior is set in the same way as Achilles is driven by his **thûmos**. Little wonder, then, that Achilles qualifies as **thûmoleôn** 'he who has the **thûmos** of a lion' (as at [VII 228](#)).[4] Little wonder, moreover, that the mother of Hektor reviles Achilles as **ômestês** 'eater of raw meat' ([XXIV 207](#)).[5]

§23. By the end of the *Iliad*, however, these hideous dimensions of the heroic temperament are a thing of the past, as compassion finally takes hold of Achilles and he restores the body of Hektor to the grieving father. What is more, the setting for this ultimate scene of heroic compassion and refinement is again a feast--this time initiated by Achilles himself ([XXIV 599-601](#)). No sooner said than done, the feast is held, and we get our last Iliadic glimpse of Achilles as he presides over the affair--and actually apportions the sacrificial meat:

... atar krea neimen Achilleus

... and Achilles distributed the meat

§24. To sum up our survey: the Aeacids, we now see, have a special affinity to the theme of the **dais**, but for Achilles the Homeric tradition expresses this affinity in a manner that downplays the ritual aspects of the **dais**. For the Achilles figure, the most overt--or the least downplayed--Homeric manifestation of the ritual element is the first song of Demodokos at [viii 72-82](#), where the hero's future death is implicitly linked with the themes of Delphi/sacrifice/quarrel--and these are the same themes that frame the death of Pyrrhos as it is presented in Pindar's *Paean* 6 and *Nemean* 7.

§25. The narrative of [viii 72-82](#), however, is so compressed that we are still left with a number of mysteries surrounding the **neîkos** 'quarrel' of Achilles and Odysseus. Perhaps the most intriguing question is this: we know that the **neîkos** happened at a **dais** of the gods ([viii 76](#)), but why is this **dais** connected with a prophecy that emanates specifically from Delphi ([viii 79-81](#))? From what we have seen of the close parallelism between the story of how Pyrrhos died at Delphi and the themes of [viii 72-82](#), we are led to speculate whether the **dais** where Achilles and Odysseus quarreled is a theme that actually incorporates Delphic lore. If this were the case, then the epic scene that opens the first song of Demodokos would be even more ritual in orientation than we had imagined, what with the sacral ideology of Delphi as an informing principle. The contrast with the opening of the *Iliad*, where the **neîkos** of Achilles and Agamemnon lacks even the setting of a feast--let alone a sacrifice--would then be all the more remarkable.^[1] We may add that the opening of the first song of Demodokos is in any case a treatment with more ritual undertones than even the opening of the *Cypria*, where the **dais** that serves as the setting for the **neîkos** of the gods is presented from a narrative vantage that stresses not so much a sacrifice by heroes to gods but rather a feast attended by heroes and gods together.^[2]

§26. What kind of epic composition can we imagine that commences not only with an overt sacrifice as the opening scene but also with links to the sacral lore of Delphi? To confront the first part of the question, let us look at the evidence of allusions in actual Homeric diction and theme. The most suggestive passage for our purposes is the lengthy Cretan narrative in [Odyssey](#) xiv (192-359), told by Odysseus in the guise of a Cretan

princeling. The main adventure, an expedition led by our Cretan adventurer to plunder the wealth of Egypt ([xiv 245-286](#)), is twice directly correlated in the narrative with the great Achaean expedition to Troy ([xiv 229-231](#), 235-242). In fact, the hero of the narrative claims that he not only fought in the Trojan War but also was actually the leader of the Cretan contingent, along with the mighty Iliadic hero, Idomeneus himself ([xiv 237-238](#)). Since the narrative endeavors to enhance the scale of the Egyptian expedition so as to match the epic proportions of the Trojan expedition, it is important to observe precisely how the launching of the enterprise is described.

Significantly, the Cretan leader of the expedition to Egypt holds an overtly sacrificial **dais** lasting for six days ([xiv 249-251](#)), and only thereafter can his ships sail off. From this passage, then, we infer that a **dais** might be an appropriate setting to open a narrative about a Trojan expedition.

§27. We come now to the second part of our question: why should Delphi be connected with the theme of the **dais** at which Achilles and Odysseus quarreled? Here the historical evidence about Delphi itself may be pertinent. From the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. onward, by virtue of its becoming a centralized Panhellenic repository of myriad local religious traditions, the Delphic Oracle was evolving into the ideological and political center that coordinated the launching of expeditions for the purpose of founding new cities and for other such monumental enterprises. [1] From the standpoint of a local epic that relates the founding of one city or the destruction and plundering of another, the setting of a **dais**--especially in the context of Delphi--could provide for an appropriate opening scene. [2]

§28. The *Iliad* as we have it, on the other hand, is of course a composition that goes far beyond the dimensions and interests of any local epic tradition. Our *Iliad* is clearly Panhellenic in scope, and an opening like the one in the first song of Demodokos may have fallen far too short of the thematic range that Homeric Epos requires. But whether or not the specific themes in the first song of Demodokos are worthy of Iliadic standards, it is more important for us now to stress two facts about our *Iliad* that pertain directly. First, the isolated Iliadic reference to Delphi actually concerns Achilles: aside from the *Catalogue* reference ([II 519](#)), [1] all that remains is the one mention of Delphi which, as we have seen, apparently confronts Achilles

with the remote thematic alternative of plundering Delphi instead of Troy ([IX 404-405](#)).^[2] Second, we are about to see that there are Iliadic references to local epic traditions concerning Achilles, although they are as a rule merely marginal. In the *Iliad*, such references could not be allowed to interfere with the Panhellenic central theme of the expedition to Troy--an expedition that goes far beyond local epic interests.^[3]

§29. The Trojan expedition, as it is presented in its ultimate form by our *Iliad*, is a grand theme which, by converging on the one main goal of Troy, unites on the level of content the heroic and material resources of the various cultural centers that may each once have had their own epic traditions about conquering various territories.^[1] Aside from its centralized thematic concern about the expedition to Troy, however, the *Iliad* also manages some marginal references to epic traditions about various other expeditions to other places, notably Lesbos ([IX 129](#), 271, 664), Skyros ([IX 668](#)), Tenedos ([XI 625](#)), and Lyrnessos and Pedasos ([XIX 60](#); [XX 90-92](#), 188-194; cf. [XI 104-112](#)).^[2] These expeditions all involve territories that would have been Aeolic at the time that our *Iliad* took its present shape,^[3] and the Iliadic references to them consistently stress the heroic preeminence of Achilles.^[4] This emphasis on Achilles is particularly striking in the case of Lesbos: the *Iliad* says that Achilles himself captured *all* Lesbos ([IX 129](#), 271), and the significance of such a heroic deed seems to have less to do with the epic fate of nearby Troy and far more with the here-and-now of a Homeric audience in the eighth or seventh century B.C.^[5] The *Iliad* is here verifying something that applies from the standpoint of this era: that the affinity of the Achilles figure with this particular Aeolic island is a matter of acknowledged tradition, incorporated even by Panhellenic Epos.^[6]

§30. From the standpoint of such localized epic traditions, the first song of Demodokos would have been appropriate as the opening of an epic composition about an expedition undertaken by Achilles. Such a composition would have acknowledged the Oracle of Delphi as the authority that inspired the epic expedition, and the setting of a sacrifice would provide an appropriate opening Strife Scene for motivating the eventual death of the main hero who undertook the enterprise. This much I can now say with somewhat more confidence, having found a distant

parallel in the form of a Strife Scene at a Delphic sacrifice, leading to the death of Pyrrhos, son of Achilles.

Notes

§1n1. For a brief survey of cult practices in honor of Achilles, see Nilsson 1906.457; cf. also [Ch.6§§26/30 above](#) and [Ch. 20§24n3 below](#).

§1n2. The word **tîmê** can specify the "honor" that a god or hero receives in cult. (The article s.v. [timê](#) in Liddell and Scott does not allow for such a distinct semantic category.) The diction of Herodotus about matters of ritual provides adequate illustration for this particular usage of **tîmê**, as at 1.118.2 (cult of a god) and 1.168 (cult of a hero). As for the verb **tîmaô** in the sense of "worship," see [Herodotus 1.90.2, 2.50.3, 2.75.4, 5.67.5](#) (in the last passage, the cult of the god Dionysos is designated in the same terms as the cult of the hero Adrastos, on whom see also the verb **tîmaô** at [Herodotus 5.67.4](#)). For a clear discussion of **tîmê** as "cult," see Rudhardt 1970.6-7; also Rohde [I 99n1](#). Besides, see Richardson 1974.260-261 on the [Homeric Hymn to Demeter 311-312](#), where the theme of the gods' getting **tîmai** is explicitly correlated with the observance of their respective cults by mortals (see also [H.Dem. 353](#), 366-369). Note that the cult figure gets **tîmê** from two directions: the "honor" is performed by mortals but determined by immortals. On the status of Demophon as a **daimôn** of cult: [Ch.10§10](#).

§1n3. On the semantics of **aphthito-**: [Ch.10§§3-19](#). The word for "heroes" in this passage from Simonides is **hêmitheoi**, which is appropriate in the dimension of cult. See [Ch.9](#) in general and [§§15-17](#), 31 in particular.

§1n4. See n2. For the interpretation of **tîmâ** at [Pindar N.7.31](#) as applying to Pyrrhos, see Köhnken 1971.46. For the possibility that "the **tîmâ** of the Hero" in the Amphictionic law *SIG* 145.32 (380 B.C.) refers to Pyrrhos: Burkert 1966b.437. In this case, the word **tîmâ** specifies the sacrifice of a bull to the Hero.

§1n5. Ch.1§2. We must also contrast Achilles and Demophon in this regard with Anchises in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*: in compensation for his

mortality, Anchises wins immortality neither for his **kleos** nor for his **tîmê**, but rather for the continuation of his progeny, the Aeneadae ([H.Aphr. 196-197](#), 239-end).

§2n1. For the tradition of the double name, see *Cypria fr. 14* Allen. The names **Purrhos/Neoptolemos** are more appropriate to cult/epic respectively; see especially Usener 1912/1913 [= 1904] 460-461. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to the hero as Pyrrhos. Consider also the interesting variant verse for [Iliad XIX 327](#), where we find **Purêṣ** instead of **Neoptolemos** (for a discussion: Delcourt 1965.31-32).

§2n2. On the validity of this Pindaric testimony about the cult of Pyrrhos, see Fontenrose 1960.191-198, with polemics and bibliography. On *Nemean 7* itself, see especially Köhnken 1971.37-86 and Lloyd-Jones 1973.

§2n3. For a key factor in this transformation, the First Sacred War of ca. 590 B.C., see Wiechers 1961, esp. p. 24.

§3n1. I refer to the discussion of the problem by Fontenrose 1960.198-205.

§3n2. On the burial of Achilles at the Hellespont: [Ch.20 §§22-24](#). On the function of bones in hero cults, see Rohde [I 159-166](#); cf. also Ch6 [§29](#).

§3n3. The Homeric tradition itself, I submit, is informed by many such interrelated Panhellenic phenomena. Following the reasoning of Pfister 1948.151, I would even suggest that the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships* in [Iliad II](#) amounts to a Panhellenic survey of the Homeric heroes from the diverse local standpoints of their primary cults, the locations of which are represented as their respective homelands. On the possibility that the systematization of the *Catalogue* is derived from Delphic traditions, I cite Giovannini 1969.51-71.

§4n1. See also Pherecydes *FGrH* 3.63, 64a-b; Asclepiades *FGrH* 12.15. Note the interesting additional detail that Pyrrhos was first buried under the threshold of Apollo's temple, only to be transferred later into the area of the god's **temenos** 'precinct' (for discussion, see Delcourt 1965.44; cf. also Rohde [I 197](#)).

§4n2. See Burkert 1972.136n12 for the basic bibliography; also Fontenrose 1960.191- 198 and Burkert 1966b.440n2.

§4n3. For a collection of references to the testimonia: Fontenrose, p. 212.

§4n4. See Burkert 1972.17n41, 68; also Burkert 1966.102-104 and 1975.19. Cf. Delcourt 1965.38.

§5n1. [Pausanias 10.7.1](#) (cf. also 2.5.5); scholia to [Pindar N.7.58](#), 150a; Strabo 421. For parallelisms with the traditional lore about King Pyrrhos of Epeiros, see Delcourt 1965.42-43. I should note, however, my disagreement with the notion that the lore about the historical figure is the source for the theme of plundering associated with the mythical figure (cf. also Burkert 1966b.437).

§5n2. The parallelism with Pyrrhos is pointed out by Burkert 1966b.437. On **Phleguâs** as the eponym of the **Phleguai**: Strabo 442c.

§5n3. [Pausanias 10.7.1](#); Ephorus *FGrH* 70.93; [Servius ad Virgil Aeneid 6.618](#); scholia *ad Statius Thebaid* 1.713; Eustathius *ad XIII 301*; etc. For an extensive discussion of the myths associated with the name **Phleguâs/Phleguai**: Vian 1960.219-222. We may note in particular the claim, in the scholia (T) to [Iliad XIII 302](#), that the verb **phleguân** in the dialect of Phokis means **hubrizein** 'commit **hubris**'. For the connotations of **hubris**, see [Ch.9§§9-10](#).

§5n4. See Vian 1960.221. For the mythological connection of the Pyrrhos and Achilles figures with the themes of fire, see, in general, Delcourt 1965. One of the most interesting points of formal convergence is the epithet **Purrhaiê** of Thetis (Hesychius s.v.), who dips the infant Achilles into fire much as Demeter had done to Demophon; see Delcourt, pp. 36-37, Detienne/Vernant 1974.136, and Richardson 1974.237-238.

§6n1. On the theory that the *Catalogue* is organized on the basis of Delphic traditions: Giovannini 1969.51-71.

§7n1. [Ch.4§6](#).

§8n1. For the relationship of Pindar's *Paean* 6 to *Nemean* 7, see especially Köhnken 1971.71-72, with bibliography. For a pioneering study: Finley 1951.

§8n2. On the basis of [murian](#) in the scholia to *Nemean* 7.94, Boeckh had suggested moirian instead of kurian. For the morphology, I would compare **moirios/moiridios** with **kourios/kouridios**. (For **kourios**, see [Iliad XIII 433c.](#))

§8n3. For the argument in favor of this reading, see Lloyd-Jones 1973.131, *pace* Fontenrose 1960.223n14.

§8n4. In Greek ritual, the priest or attendant may preside as a stand-in for the god himself: cf., e.g., [Pausanias 6.20.9](#). See now Nagy 1996 Ch.3-4.

§8n5. Asclepiades *FGrH* 12.15; Callimachus *fr.* 229.7 Pfeiffer; Strabo 421. From these sources, we also learn of the tradition that one of the descendants of Makhaireus was Brankhos, founder of Apollo's Oracle at Didyma near Miletos.

§8n6. Scholia to [Euripides *Andromache* 53](#). On the semantics of the word **xenos**: [Ch.12§§12-16](#).

§9n1. On the reciprocity of the **theoxenia**, in that the roles of host and guest are interchangeable for gods and men, see Gernet 1968 [= 1928] 32-33. The figure of Pindar himself, by virtue of his poetry on the subject, becomes incorporated into the myths surrounding the Delphic **theoxenia**--and eventually even into the ritual itself; for a collection of testimonia, see Deneken 1881.9-10. Here again, the most pervasive theme is that a choice cut of meat from the sacrificial table is to be awarded to Pindar, to Pindar's ghost, or to his descendants. There is a particularly interesting ritual detail in *Life of Pindar* p. 92.50-53 Westermann [1845] (see also Drachmann I, p. 216): every day, as the **neôkoros** 'temple attendant' is about to close the entrance to Apollo's temple, he calls out to Pindar that the poet should have his meal with the god. Note too the tradition that **Theoxenos** (praised in Pindar *fr.* 123SM) was the poet's lover (*Life of Pindar* p. 102.11 Westermann). On the connection between the myths in the traditional *Lives* of poets and the rituals surrounding the hero cults of poets, see [Ch.18](#).

§9n2. For a particularly interesting Delphic attestation, see the regulations of the Labyadai, *DGE* 323 D.47; the semantics of **akro-thin-** 'top of the heap' are of course readily transferable from agricultural to military contexts (cf. [Pindar *O.2.4*](#) and *O.10.57* besides *N.7.41*).

§9n3. For **moiriān**, see again [§8n2](#).

§10n1. The pertinence of this text was noticed by Burkert 1966b.439.

§10n2. For the rest of the text, also connected with this particular story, see [Ch.16§7](#); also Wiechers 1961.15-16.

§10n3. For further allusions, in comedy and elsewhere, see Wiechers 1961.16-18; cf. Delcourt 1965.39.

§11n1. Cf. also the scholia to [Pindar *N.7.62*](#), describing the attendants' behavior towards Pyrrhos in these words: [*hōs ethos autois*](#) 'as was their custom'.

§11n2. See [Ch.16§10](#), esp. n7.

§11n3. For this and other parallels, see Burkert 1966b.440n1. Cf. [*H.Apollo 535-536*](#); cf. also the expression [*krea diarpazontas*](#) 'snatching away the cuts of meat' describing the Delphians in Pherecydes *FGrH* 3.64a.

§11n4. Scholia Florentina (=*Pap.Soc.Ital.* 1094), line 23, to Callimachus *fr. 191* Pfeiffer; see also Burkert 1966b.439n2.

§12n1. On the connection of the Aeacids, especially Achilles and Pyrrhos, with the mythology of rituals featuring the **pharmakoi** 'scapegoats' of Apollo, see Wiechers 1961.43-49, with bibliography; cf. also Toepffer 1888.144. For the basic text on **pharmakos**, see Harpocration s.v., based on Istros *FGrH* 344.50 (on which there is more at [Ch.16§2](#)). For a **pharmakos**, our attested material indicates stoning or being thrown off a cliff as the primary modes of death; in the case of stoning, we see a specific application of this theme to Pyrrhos in [Euripides *Andromache* 1085-1165](#).

§14n1. Calhoun 1962.446; cf. Motto and Clark 1969.124n21.

§14n2. For an alternative view, where we see the Homeric hero's actions not as something modeled on how we ordinary mortals behave but as the epic dimension of heroes who also have a ritual dimension, see [Ch.9](#).

§14n3. At [iii 420](#), there is a more specific reference to the very same occasion: [theou es daita thaleian](#) 'to the sumptuous **dais** of the god [Poseidon]'.

§14n4. Cf. Motto and Clark 1969.118-119. Of course, everyone gets an *equal* share not in the sense of the *same* amount but in the sense of varying amounts equal to the varying worth of each hero. For example, Ajax at [VII 321-322](#) gets a choice cut of meat in a distribution (**dais**) that is described as *eîsê* 'equal' at [VII 320](#).

§15n1. The use here of **daimones** to designate "gods" makes the reverse theme of a mortal's deciding allotments for the gods even more striking, since the word **daimôn** is derived from the same root as found in **daiomai** 'divide, apportion, allot'. For the etymology, see Chantraine [I 246-247](#). For the Homeric theme of **daimôn** as "he who apportions," see Kullmann 1956.51-56 (cf. also Boreckyô' 1965.75 on [Pindar P.3.81](#)-82); also Richardson 1974.257 on the expression **daimonos aisêi** (further discussion at [§21n1](#)).

§15n2. After Odysseus proposes the **dais**, Agamemnon approves the proposal and calls it **en moirêi** '[said] in proper measure [**moîra**]' ([XIX 186](#)). Achilles, however, wishes not to eat while his comrade lies unburied and unavenged ([XIX 199-214](#)), but Odysseus argues for the necessity of having a feast before fighting ([XIX 216-237](#)). In this context, Zeus is called the **tamiês polemoio** 'apportioner of war' ([XIX 224](#)); in nonmetaphorical contexts, the **tamiês/tamiê** is a male/female functionary who allots food (e.g., [XIX 44](#)).

§16n1. The verb **antiaô/antiaomai** 'come forth [to get]' used at [XXIV 62](#) is appropriate for describing the coming of a god in order to receive the sacrifice that is being offered to him (cf., e.g., [I 67](#), [i 25](#), etc.).

§16n2. The **eris/neîkos** then extends to the figure of Paris, who has to choose from among Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite (*Cypria*/Proclus p.

102.14-19 Allen; also *Iliad XXIV 25-30*). In the Judgment of Paris, he brings about **neîkos** for Hera and Athena (*neikesse*: [XXIV 29](#)) but **aînos** for Aphrodite (*êinê's*: [XXIV 30](#)). For the social and poetic significance of **aînos/neîkos** in the sense of praise/blame, see [Ch.11§16](#) and the following [Ch.12](#).

§16n3. The *Thebais* tradition (*fr. 3* Allen) also concerns a quarrel, specifically over portions of meat. Oedipus curses his sons because they once gave him the wrong **moîra** of meat (the **iskhion** 'haunch, ham' rather than the **ômos** 'shoulder'). The theme of the fatal strife that ensues between the brothers **Eteo-kleê̄s** and **Polu-neikê̄s** is even reflected in their names; for the implication of poetic genre in the contrast of **kleos**/praise and **neîkos**/blame, see [Ch.14§12n3](#) (cf. also [Ch.12§7n3](#)). The theme of the **moîrai** of Oedipus is probably reflected in the expression *mêlôn henek' Oidipodao* 'on account of the sheep of Oedipus' ([Hesiod W&D 163](#)). For the correlation of **mêla** 'sheep' and the theme of **moîrai**, see [§22n1 below](#).

§17n1. Zeus wants to alleviate the Earth by depopulating the many heroes who weigh upon it (*Cypria fr. 1* Allen). For more on the Will of Zeus, see n3 and [Ch.5§25n2](#).

§17n2. See also [I 177](#), 210, 277, 319.

§17n3. At [XIX 270-274](#), Achilles says that his quarrel with Agamemnon was the Will of Zeus, so that many Achaeans may die; at the very next verse, [XIX 275](#), he bids the Achaeans to go and eat at Agamemnon's feast.

§17n4. Compare this characterization ("strife and war") with Hesiod *fr. 206MW* about the Aeacids in general ("feasts and war"), as discussed at [§15](#). Note too that the same words that characterize Achilles at [I 177](#) recur at [V 891](#) to characterize none other than the god of war himself, Ares! The symmetry is more extensive: whereas Achilles is reproached by the socially superior Agamemnon, Ares is reproached by Zeus himself!

§18n1. In the attested evidence, the closest thing to a quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the context of a **dais** is the incident at Tenedos as told in the *Cypria* (Proclus p. 104.21-24 Allen). Here the **mênis** 'anger' of Achilles seems to center on his not being invited in time to a banquet, on

account of which he loses **tîmê** (see the brief summary in [Aristotle *Rhetic* 1401b1g](#); note too the wording: **mênis** and **atîmazomenos**).

§18n2. For the geographical symbolism of the Aithiopes and their realm, see [Ch.10 §§25-45](#). As for the chronology of [*Iliad I*](#), there are of course many details that remain unclear. This much is for sure, however: at the time Thetis is speaking to Achilles, his quarrel with Agamemnon has just happened, and it is here that she tells how Zeus and the other Olympians had left for the Aithiopes *on the day before* ([I 423-425](#)).

§18n3. See Lowenstam 1975.132-133, (=1981.53) esp. on [XXIII 205-209](#).

§19n1. On the use of **tîmê** to specify "cult", see [§1n2 above](#). Motto and Clark (1969.119) draw a parallel between the loss of **tîmê** by Achilles and the incident in the story of Meleager ([IX 533-537](#)) where Artemis is deprived of her share in a sacrifice--which, we may note, qualifies as a **dais** ([dainunth': IX 535](#)).

§19n2. See [§8](#). Consider also the periodic sacrifice of a bull as "the **tîmâ** of the Hero" in a Delphic inscription ([§1n4](#)), where the unnamed hero may be Pyrrhos.

§19n3. For more on **geras** in the sense of "honorific portion" (and **tîmê** 'honor'), see Benveniste 1969 [II 43-50](#). Beyond the material discussed by Benveniste, I cite the evidence of inscriptions dealing with sacral regulations, where the same word **geras** (especially in the plural: **gerê**) specifies a cut of sacrificial meat that is destined for the god who presides over the sacrifice or, less directly, for the priest who performs the sacrifice. For documentation, see Stengel 1910.169-171, Puttkammer 1912.2, and Gill 1974.127-128. Note that the vocabulary of sacral regulations frequently fails to distinguish the god's portion from the priest's (Puttkammer, pp. 16-18 and Gill, pp. 128-131). In poetry too, we find the use of **geras** and **tîmê** in contexts that overtly specify cult--e.g., [Hesiod *Th.* 392-396](#). On [H. *Hermes* 112-141](#), see Kahn 1978.41-73.

§19n4. The translation "whole" for **diênekeessi** at [VII 321](#) is based on the evidence of the inscriptions: in the language of sacral regulations, **diânekês** marks a portion of meat that is not subdivided, like a whole leg or a whole

back (see Puttkammer, p. 11). Ajax gets the choice cut of meat for having fought with Hektor, who had challenged whoever is the "best of the Achaeans" to fight him ([VII 50-51](#), 73-75); see [Ch.2§3](#). The theme of "the champion's portion," *le morceau du héros*, has important Celtic parallels, discussed by Arbois de Jubainville 1899.45-47, 52, 62-63; cf. also Girard 1902.262, 268-271. In Old Irish saga, the two most relevant narratives are the *Tale of MacDathó's Pig* and *Bricriu's Feast*; translations are conveniently available in Cross and Slover 1936.199-207/254-280.

[§19n5.](#) [§15.](#)

§21n1. For a discussion of the etymology and semantics of **aîsa**: Chantraine [I 38-39](#). For the interesting collocation **daimonos aisēi** at [H.Dem. 300](#), see Richardson 1974.257. We may add that there are in fact sporadic attestations, in the corpus of surviving sacral regulations, of **aîsa** designating "portion of meat" (see Puttkammer 1912.40n8).

§21n2. See Lee 1961.196-197. Consider especially the use of **aîsa/moîra** in expressions for "according to destiny" ~ "contrary to destiny": **kat' aîsan** ([XVII 716](#), etc.) and **kata moîran** ([I 286](#), etc.) ~ **huper aîsan** ([III 59](#), etc.) and **huper moîran** ([XX 336](#)). For more on the convention itself: [Ch.2§17](#), [Ch.5§25n2](#), [Ch.15§3n9](#).

§21n3. For **moîra** as "cut of meat" in sacral inscriptions, cf. Gill 1974.124n6. The epic convention of correlating the plot at hand with the Will of Zeus (on which see again [Ch.5§25n2](#)) seems to be the basis for the imagery inherent in **tamiēs polemoio** 'apportioner of war' as epithet of Zeus ([XIX 224](#), etc.); see [§15n2](#).

§21n4. Note the correlation of **Moîrai** and **Kêres** in [Hesiod Th. 217](#) (see West 1966.229). For the difficulties of the etymology and semantics, see Chantraine [II 526](#). For an attempt at deriving the word **kêr** from the same root *ker- 'cut' as in Latin *carō, carnis* 'meat, flesh', see Lee 1961; his most important contribution, in any case, is at pp. 196-197, where he lists the parallel combinations of **kêr** and **moîra** in Homeric diction.

§21n5. For an interesting local-oriented variation on this theme, see [XIII 663-672](#); for parallel applications of **kêr** and its themes to

Achilles/Herakles, see [XVIII 115](#)/117.

§21n6. The **kleos** is **aphthiton** 'unfailing' in that it is a glory conferred by poetry; for the poetic connotations of **kleos**, see Nagy 1974.244-255. On the contrast in genre between **kleos** and **nostos**: Nagy, pp. 11-13; also [Ch.2 §§3](#) and 11, to be read in conjunction with [Ch.6 §§6nn2](#) and 5.

§22n1. Note that the **dais** of the lion is the meat of sheep, the prime sacrificial animals at Apollo's Delphi, and that the god's attendants are conventionally described as slaughtering them eagerly with **makhairai** 'knives' ([H.Apollo 535-537](#)).

§22n2. The expression "yielding to the **thûmos**" at [XXIV 42-43](#) (**thumôi /eixas**) is a reflexive equivalent of the active expression "[the **menos** and] the **thûmos** impel," as at [XXII 346](#) (**menos kai thumos aneiê**). See n3.

§22n3. Note that the active construction here ("the **menos** and the **thûmos** impelled") is drawn into a parallel, by way of the simile, with a reflexive construction at [XX 171](#) ("the lion is impelling itself"). For the relationship of **menos** and **thûmos**, see [XXII 312-313](#), where Achilles fills his **thûmos** with savage **menos** ([meneos d' emplêsatō thumon / agriou](#)); this passage is in the immediate vicinity of the threat to eat Hektor raw ([XXII 346-347](#)). On the savagery of Achilles, see esp. Redfield 1975.

§22n4. In the *Iliad*, Herakles is the only other hero who also qualifies ([V 639](#)).

§22n5. Achilles is the only Homeric hero to be described with this epithet, otherwise restricted to beasts (e.g., dogs at [XXII 67](#)). See also Robertson 1940.177-180 on [Pindar N.3.48](#): the phrasing here concerns animals not yet dead, whose marrow will be sucked by the savage young hunter Achilles (see also [Apollodorus 3.13.6](#)).

§25n1. The *Iliad* not only veers away from the themes of Delphi: it also presents the word **ossa** 'voice' in a negative light, which may be significant in view of this word's association with the oracular voice of Apollo (see [Pindar O.6.61-62](#)). In the *Iliad*, the False Dream that almost aborts the Trojan Expedition (and by extension the *Iliad* itself) is equated with **Dios**

angelos 'messenger of Zeus' ([II 26](#), 63, 94), which in turn is equated with **os̄sa** personified ([II 93](#)). Compare Agamemnon's false expectations upon hearing the False Dream ([II 36-40](#)) with his false expectations upon hearing the Oracle of Apollo ([viii 77-82](#)).

§25n2. Even though the **dais** at the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis is presented more as a banquet than as a sacrifice, the diction at [XXIV 62-63](#) describes the attendance of Apollo and the other gods in a manner appropriate to gods who come to receive sacrifice. See [§16n1](#).

§27n1. See Vian 1963.83 and Parke/Wormell [I 78-79](#); cf. also Snodgrass 1971.416- 417. For a useful bibliography on the Panhellenic importance of Delphi: Giovannini 1969.66n2.

§27n2. For a survey of attested epic traditions about colonizations and the prominent role played in such poetry by the Delphic Oracle of Apollo, see Schmid 1947.148-153.

§28n1. On the Delphic orientation of the *Catalogue*: Giovannini 1969.51-71.

§28n2. See [§6](#).

§28n3. For an interesting introduction to the traditional genre of **ktisis** ('colonization') poetry, see in general Schmid 1947. One of the most important lessons to be learned from Schmid's book is that **ktisis** poetry is fundamentally local rather than Panhellenic in orientation, and that its contents are therefore continually subject to shifts each time the colony itself undergoes shifts in population or politics. Another is that the hero in a **ktisis** poem may be presented overtly as a cult figure (see esp. Schmid, p. 138).

§29n1. See Schmid 1947, esp. pp. 4-8, 83-87, 141-148; also Norden 1922.16 on [Iliad II 653-670](#), the earliest attested passage that refers overtly to the genre of **ktisis** poetry. In this particular instance, the **ktisis** of Rhodes, we already see the conventional themes of (1) a formal **arkhaiologiâ** and (2) a description of tribal divisions (Norden, *ibid.*). As I have done with other Iliadic passages, I reject any assumption that [II 653-670](#) involves the

interpolation of a distinct *text* that is later in date than the main body of the *Iliad*. Instead, I would again argue that we see in this passage the incorporation of a distinct poetic *tradition*.

§29n2. There are further references in the *Cypria* (Proclus p. 101.4-11; p. 102.10-12 Allen). See Bethe 1927 [III 66-75](#) for an interesting discussion; I disagree, however, with the relative chronologies offered, as well as with the ad hoc theories of textual interpolation (notably in regard to the passages in [Odyssey xxiv](#) about the funeral mound of Achilles).

§29n3. On the archaeological evidence for the Aeolic settlement of the Troad by the end of the eighth century B.C.: Cook 1973.360-363.

§29n4. For a discussion of these expeditions in terms of **ktisis** poetry, see Schmid 1947.83-87, esp. p. 86.

§29n5. Similarly with the Hellespont, its navigational importance as the passage to the Black Sea concerns not the second millennium B.C. but rather the period of politically organized colonizations--that is, from the eighth and seventh centuries onwards. See [Ch.20§24](#). For the importance of the thematic affinity between the Achilles figure and the Hellespont, see [Ch.20](#) in general.

§29n6. If we try to reconstruct the situation backward as well as forward in time, we observe that there are stories connecting Achilles with the conquest of Lesbos that are attested in the classical period as well. A particularly interesting example is the story of Achilles and Peisidike (Parthenius *Erotica* 21), which tells how the hero captured the Lesbian city of Methymna. A variant of this story is localized at Pedasos and seems to be attested already in the Hesiodic tradition (*fr. 214MW*). See again Schmid, pp. 83-87, 141-148.

Chapter 8

The Death of Hektor

§1. By comparing the death of Achilles with the death of Pyrrhos, we have come to see more clearly the factor of ritual antagonism between god and hero. If, of course, we had only the *Iliad* as evidence, this factor would be much more difficult to discern in the case of Achilles, whose own antagonism with the god Apollo is so poetically stylized and elaborated as to suit the artistic framework of Panhellenic Epos. Even within such a monumental structure, however, the basic outlines emerge clearly enough. Although the death of Achilles himself at the hands of Apollo is deferred beyond the *Iliad*, the death of his surrogate Patroklos is presented in a manner that makes the experience apply directly to the hero of the *Iliad*.^[1]

§2. Aside from this basic observation on the level of theme, we can also adduce detailed evidence on the level of diction. We have seen that the *Iliad* applies **mēnis** 'anger' as a word appropriate specifically to Achilles among heroes, and that his **mēnis** over his loss of **tîmê** 'honor' results from the earlier anger of Apollo, likewise specified as **mēnis**, over his respective loss of **tîmê**. The first **mēnis**, of Apollo, had caused what is called a **loigos** 'devastation' for the Achaeans in the form of a plague; the second **mēnis**, of Achilles, then causes them devastation in the form of a dire military situation inflicted by Hektor at the Battle of the Ships. This second devastation is also specifically called a **loigos**. Moreover, both the first and the second **loigos** are described as bringing **algea** 'pains' to the Achaeans. The first **loigos** is removed when the plague is lifted, whereupon the Achaeans sing a **paiêôn** 'paean' to Apollo; the second is removed when Hektor is killed, and this time Achilles bids them to sing, again, a **paiêôn**.
^[1] We could go on multiplying examples of thematic and formal convergences between Apollo and Achilles. For instance, Walter Burkert is so struck by the physical resemblance in the traditional representations of the god and the hero--especially by the common feature of their both being unshorn in the manner of a **koûros**^[2] --that he is moved to describe Achilles as a *Doppelgänger* of Apollo.^[3] For now, however, let us simply

adhere to this main point: that god and hero mirror each other, both formally and thematically, in the dimension of ritual.

§3. In order to observe how the formal and thematic matchings between Apollo and Achilles are actually enacted in an epic scene of ritual antagonism, let us contrast the Iliadic stance of Achilles with that of the intrepid Diomedes, who in his own right actually dares to wound the Olympian gods Aphrodite and Ares in *Iliad* V. After three consecutive attempts, even Diomedes shrinks from a fourth and final confrontation with Apollo ([V 432-444](#)), and in doing so he is specifically described as avoiding the god's **mēnis** (**mēnin aleuamenos**: [V 444](#)). At the moment that he is making this fourth attempt, Diomedes qualifies as **daimoni īsos** 'equal to a **daimōn**' ([V 438](#), which is then reported at [V 459](#)), and the deployment of this epithet coincides with the climax of ritual antagonism between the god and the hero.[\[1\]](#)

§4. When Patroklos, the surrogate of Achilles, confronts Apollo four consecutive times in two separate but closely related scenes, he too qualifies during his fourth attempt in both scenes as **daimoni īsos** 'equal to a **daimōn**' ([XVI 705](#), 786). In the first scene, Patroklos shrinks from a fourth and final confrontation with the god--and he lives ([XVI 705-711](#)). In the second scene that follows shortly thereafter, Patroklos fails to avoid the fourth and final confrontation--and he is killed ([XVI 786-789](#)). In the first scene, Patroklos, like Diomedes, is specifically described as avoiding the god's **mēnis** (**mēnin aleuamenos**: [XVI 711](#)); in the second scene, he has intrinsically incurred it.[\[1\]](#) So also with Achilles himself: when the time comes for his own final confrontation with Apollo, the hero of the *Iliad* will die by failing to avoid the god's **mēnis**, and the diction of the *Iliad* itself predicts this. Consider the "rehearsal" at [XX 447-454](#), where the action would have proceeded as it had in the second confrontation scene of Patroklos at [XVI 786-789](#), if only Apollo had not made the action void ([XX 441-446](#)).[\[2\]](#) But even if the epic action of Achilles is here ineffectual, his stance of antagonism towards Apollo is ominously clear: as he is making his fourth attempt, he too is **daimoni īsos** 'equal to a **daimōn**' ([XX 447](#)).

§5. With the perspective of ritual at our disposal, and with the evidence of the traditionals epic diction that keeps formally matching the figures of

Achilles and Apollo, we may now even ask whether the antipathy of the god toward the Achaeans in the *Iliad* has less to do--at least in origin--with his sympathy toward the Trojans and more with the theme of his antagonism toward the hero of the *Iliad*. In order to assure ourselves that the factor of ritual antagonism between god and hero can actually determine the antipathies of various gods in the epic tradition of the Trojan War, let us now turn to the figure of Hektor, the prime enemy of Achilles in the *Iliad*.

§6. The question is, which Olympian god would qualify as Hektor's ritual antagonist? Let us suppose that the heroic pattern of Hektor is inverse to that of his prime epic opponent. In that case, the Olympian who should bring about his death is Athena. And indeed, just as Paris and Apollo are named by the *Iliad* as the killers of Achilles ([XIX 416-417](#), [XXII 359-360](#)), so also the death of Hektor is described as being actually caused by Athena, albeit with Achilles and his spear serving as her instrument ([XXII 270-271](#), 445-446). Athena not only intervenes overtly in the final duel of Hektor and Achilles (see especially [XXII 222-223](#), 275-277, 298-299); she even says that Achilles and she are to be the ones who vanquish Hektor ([XXII 216-218](#)).

§7. The mutual function of Athena and Apollo as the ritual antagonists of the two prime heroes who will fight each other in the *Iliad*, Hektor and Achilles respectively, becomes overt in [Iliad VII 17-61](#). There the two Olympians, championing the Achaeans and Trojans respectively, decide to call a halt to the general battle between the two warring sides and to bring about instead a one-to-one conflict that pits Hektor against "whoever is best of the Achaeans" ([VII 50](#)).^[1] At [VII 58-61](#), as the preparations take place for a duel that should have matched Hektor against Achilles himself,^[2] we get a singularly uncanny picture of the two main Olympian antagonists of Hektor and Achilles, Athena and Apollo, in the shape of two birds perched on the Tree of Zeus, observing the events that unfold--and all along "delighting in the heroes" ([andrasi terpomenoi](#): [VII 61](#)).

§8. If indeed we may call Athena the ritual antagonist of Hektor, what is there in the hero that mirrors the goddess? To put it another way, how do the figures of Hektor and this divinity converge in theme and form? Let us first consider Hektor's heroic attributes and then his aspirations. Among his

attributes, we note that Hektor is the only Trojan in the *Iliad* who is described as "equal to Zeus in **mêtis**" ([Dii mêtin atalante: VII 47, XI 200](#)). [1] In the words of Agamemnon himself ([X 47-52](#)), no other Trojan had performed more deeds of **mêtis** ([mêtisasthai: X 48](#)) against the Achaeans than Hektor. [2] In this respect, then, the function of the hero has a close affinity to Athena, the goddess of **mêtis** incarnate. [3] Here is a divine figure who not only boasts that her **mêtis** confers upon her the **kleos** that is hers from poetry ([mêtî ... kleomai: xiii 299](#)): the poetic tradition actually establishes her as daughter of Zeus and **Mêtis** personified ([Hesiod Th. 886-900](#)).

§9. Another of Hektor's traditional attributes is his reputation for protecting the city and its people. At [VI 402-403](#) and [XXIV 729-730](#), this basic function of the hero is heralded in what can almost be described as programmatic fashion. In fact, **Astuanax**, his son's name, comes directly from the father's function of protecting the **astu** 'city': [1]

[ton rh' Hektôr kaleeske Skamandrion, autar hoi alloi
Astuanakt': oios gar erueto Ilion Hektôr](#)

Hektor used to call him [his son] Skamandrios, but the others called him **Astuanax**; for Hektor alone protected Ilion. [2]

[VI 402-403](#)

What is more, the name of **Hektôr** himself is an agent noun derived from the verb **ekhô** in the sense of "protect," as is attested precisely in the context of Hektor's protecting the city of Troy and its inhabitants:

[hos te min autên
rhuskeu, eches d' alochous kednas kai nêpia tekna](#)

... you [Hektor] who guarded it [the city], [3]
and you protected the cherished wives and helpless children [4]

[XXIV 729-730](#)

phê̄s pou ater laōn polin hexemen êd' epikourôn oios:

Perhaps you [Hektor] think that you will protect the city [**polis**] all alone, without the fighting men and the allies.[\[5\]](#)

V 473-474

In this respect, too, the function of the hero has a close affinity to Athena, who is worshiped by the Trojans as the official guardian of their city. She is the goddess whose idol is enshrined in their citadel, and it is to her that they as a community pray in their hour of need (see especially [VI 286-311](#)). In fact, when they specifically pray to Athena that she ward off the onslaught of Diomedes, the verb that designates the action is a derivative of **ekhô** (aposchêi: [VI 277](#)). What is more, she is invoked in their prayers as **(e)rusiptolis** 'protector of the city' (rhusiptoli: [VI 305](#)), which is a generic cult epithet of Athena that we find applied exclusively to her in both of the two attested Homeric *Hymn(s) to Athena* ([11.1](#), [28.3](#)).[\[6\]](#)

§10. Both of these attributes showing an overlap between the figures of Hektor and Athena--as paragon of **mêtis** and as guardian of the city--are significantly involved in the actual death of the hero. The scene of Hektor's demise (at [Iliad XXII](#)) is motivated by an earlier scene of deliberation in the Council of the Trojans ([XVIII 243-314](#)), where Hektor goes against the pattern of action that is marked out even by his name. He advocates an *offensive* strategy in response to the impending onslaught of Achilles, whereas his counterpart Poulydamas is advocating a *defensive* strategy. The immediate stance of Poulydamas as a counterpart of and alternative to Hektor is highlighted in the narrative by the manner in which this hero is described: he was born on the same night as Hektor ([XVIII 251](#)), and he had the reputation of excelling with words whereas Hektor excelled "with the spear" ([XVIII 252](#)).[\[1\]](#) Significantly, the scene of deliberation ends with the stratagem that wins approval, that of Hektor, being described as bad in contrast with that of Poulydamas ([XVIII 310-313](#)); moreover, the narrative specifies that Athena had here taken away Hektor's senses ([XVIII 311](#)), and that the hero's **mêtis** had gone bad (kaka mêtioônti: [XVIII 312](#)). For good measure, when the time comes for Hektor's final confrontation with

Achilles, Athena again takes away Hektor's senses--this time by actively deluding him ([XXII 222-247](#), 296-299).

§11. We come now to the question of Hektor's aspirations in the *Iliad*. The hero himself says that he wishes he were immortal and "honored"--specifically like Athena and Apollo:

ei gar egôn hôs
eiên athanatos kai agérôs êmata panta,
tioimên d' hôs tiet' Athênaiê kai Apollôn,
hôs nun hêmerê hêde kakon pherei Argeioisin

If only I were
immortal and unaging for all days to come,[\[1\]](#)
and if only I got **tîmê** [were honored] just as Athena and Apollo get
tîmê [are honored]
--as surely as this day brings misfortune to the Argives.

[VIII 538-541](#)

What is more, he is accused by Poseidon (in the form of Kalkhas) of boasting that he is the child of Zeus:

Hektôr, hos Dios euchet' eristheneos païs einai

Hektor, who boasts to be the child of mighty Zeus.[\[2\]](#)

[XIII 54](#)

In fact, Hektor himself wishes that he were the child of Zeus:

ei gar egôn houtô ge Dios païs aigiochoio
eiên êmata panta, tekoi de me potnia Hêrê,
tioimên d' hôs tiet' Athênaiê kai Apollôn,
hôs nun hêmerê hêde kakon pherei Argeioisi

If only I were the child of aegis-bearing Zeus
for all days to come, and the Lady Hera were my mother,

and if only I got **tîmê** just as Athena and Apollo get **tîmê**
--as surely as this day brings misfortune to the Argives.

XIII 825-828

For the second time, we see an overt comparison of the hero with the gods Athena and Apollo. And the epithet **Dios pais** 'child of Zeus' is equally unmistakable: when they had met at the Tree of Zeus in the context of planning the duel that pits Hektor against whoever is the best of the Achaeans, both Apollo and Athena were specifically designated as son/daughter of Zeus ([VII 23/24](#)).[\[3\]](#) After Hektor is dead, his own father says of him:

Hektora th', hos theos eske met' andrasin, oude eôikei
andros ge thnêtou païs emmenai, alla theoio

Hektor, who was a god among men; and he seemed to be the child not of a mortal but of a god.[\[4\]](#)

XXIV 258-259

The wording here conveys a striking variation on the conventional theme of a hero's getting **tîmê** from the community:

... theos d' hôs tieto dêmôi

... and he got tîmê from the dêmos, like a god

V 78 X 33 XI 58 XIII 218 XVI 605[5]

On the level of epic, of course, the hero gets **tîmê** by virtue of his reputation as a warrior; on the level of ritual, on the other hand, the hero gets **tîmê** in the form of cult--which is what the word **tîmê** itself can actually designate. [\[6\]](#) In the specific case of Hektor, the **tîmê** to which he aspires is that of Apollo and Athena themselves, and it is hard to imagine a more direct way for epic to convey the ritual aspect of a hero.

§12. The epic tradition of the *Iliad* has neither the vocabulary nor really the thematic need to distinguish the cult of heroes from the cult of gods. The

hero's ritual antagonism with a divinity can find its epic expression in his aspiration to get the same **tîmê** as his divine counterpart, and the narrative leaves it at that. More directly, the plot of epic represents the ritual antagonism in a format where the god actually contrives the hero's death. What epic will not represent, however, is the symbiosis of god and hero in cult. On the level of epic, the Trojans cannot worship Hektor as the main protector of their city, in a manner that complements their worship of Athena.^[1] For the *Iliad*, even the worship of Athena by the Trojans is a difficult theme to elaborate, because of the fundamental antagonism that exists between her and Hektor, the prime hero who protects the Trojans. For the *Iliad*, the narrative focus on the antipathy that Athena has for Hektor blurs whatever sympathy she would have had for the Trojans. The scene where the Trojans pray to her is but a vestige of her relation to them.^[2] And aside from this one scene with its strong ritual orientation, the *Iliad*, with its overall epic orientation, highlights instead the sympathy of Athena toward Achaean champions like Achilles, parallel with the sympathy of Apollo toward Hektor.

Notes

§1n1. See again [Ch.2§8](#) on the function of Patroklos as **therapôn** of Achilles and [Ch.6§§23-26](#) on the mourning over Patroklos as a substitute for the mourning over Achilles.

§2n1. For citations and further discussion of how all these words function in the *Iliad*, see [Ch.5§§8-16](#).

§2n2. Compare Apollo's epithet **akersekomês** 'unshorn' (as at [XX 39](#)) with the hair-shearing scene of Achilles at [XXIII 140-153](#). Burkert (1975.19) stresses the association of this theme with vestigial aspects of what anthropologists would call initiation. Cf. also Brelich 1958.361.

§2n3. Burkert 1975.19. Cf. Chirassi Colombo 1977. In this connection, we may note that Achilles even swears by Apollo ([I 86](#)), and that the significance of this theme emerges from a careful study of the word **apeileô**'predict, threaten' and its deployment in the *Iliad*. I refer to a

forthcoming work by Leonard Muellner, who also explores the thematic and formal links between **apeileô** and **Apellôn/Apollôn**.

§3n1. For more on the word **daimôn**: [Ch.9 §§5-6](#) (cf. Lowenstam 1975). Cf. also Muellner 1976.82-83 on [XX 102](#).

§4n1. More on this crucial scene at [Ch.17 §5](#).

§4n2. Cf. also [XXII 7-20](#).

§7n1. The essence of the gods' will is understood by Helenos, who imparts it to Hektor ([VII 44-53](#)). See [Ch.2 §3](#).

§7n2. See again [Ch.2 §3](#).

§8n1. On **mêtis**, see [Ch.3 §§5-8](#).

§8n2. The Achaeans' loss, which is in proportion to Hektor's gains in **mêtis** ([X 43-52](#)), is also equated with lack of **boulê kerdaleê** 'crafty planning' ([boulês](#) ... / [kerdaleês](#): [X 43-44](#)). Compare this use of **boulê** 'plan, planning' in the context of **mêtis** with the uncanny image of Hektor as he "plans his plans," **boulas bouleuei** ([X 415](#)), at the **sêma** 'tomb' of Illos, local hero of Troy. For the semantics of **sêma**, cognate of Indic *dhyama* 'thought', see Sinos 1975.83-90.

§8n3. See Detienne/Vernant 1974, esp. pp. 167-175, 176-200.

§9n1. For a correlation of the word **astu** itself with the theme of a protecting Hektor, see [XXIV 499](#).

§9n2. This passage is the clearest example of a traditional convention in the naming of heroes: the son is named after one of the father's primary heroic characteristics. See Clader 1976.30-31 on **Megapenthês** 'he who has great **penthos**', the son of Menelaos ([iv 11](#)); the father's **akhos/penthos** 'grief' is a traditional epic theme (e.g., [iv 108-110](#)). Cf. also the son of Nestor, **Peisi-stratos** 'he who persuades the army'. As for the son of Odysseus himself, **Têle-makhos**, his name may mean either "he who fights far away [at Troy]" or perhaps "he who fights from far away [with arrows]"; both

characterizations are appropriate to the father. Finally, see van der Valk 1958.147n164 on the names of two of Herakles' three children by Megara: **Thêrimakhos** 'he who fights beasts' and **Dêikoôn** 'vigilant in battle' (*vel sim.*; cf. Chantraine [II 551](#)). These names correspond respectively to five of the hero's labors involving beasts and to five involving treacherous enemies. (The themes of Hades/death and Hesperides/life round out the number of labors to twelve.)

§9n3. The pronoun is referring to the **polis** 'city' of Troy, at [XXIV 728](#).

§9n4. On the semantics of **nêpios** 'helpless': Edmunds 1976.

§9n5. Chantraine ([II 330](#)) considers the derivation of **Hektôr** from **ekhô** without discussing the semantics of the verb. The article by Meier 1976 helps fill the gap, although I think that his definition of the semantic sphere of **ekhô** is overrestrictive. The notion of "domination" need not always imply "domination by conquest." Consider the semantics of **ktizô**, etc.

§9n6. For more on the generic cult function of Athena as protector of the city: Nilsson [I 346-349](#). For another distinctive epithet that apparently emphasizes the protective and defensive aspects of Athena, consider **alalkomenêis** as at [IV 8](#) and [V 908](#). On the derivation from **alalkeîn** 'ward off', see Chantraine [I 57](#). For a survey of traditional themes featuring Athena on the defensive and offensive, see Vian 1968.58.

§10n1. On the spear as an emblem of **biê** (as opposed to **mêtis**), see the use of **biê** at [Hesiod W&D 148](#), in the context of [W&D 143-155](#) as discussed at [Ch.9§9](#); see also [§12](#). Compare the image of Achilles as a boy, armed with nothing but a spear ([Ch.20§8](#)).

§11n1. On the function of this wording in the process of immortalization:

[Ch.10 §30n2](#). More on [VIII 538-541](#) and related passages in Nagy 1990b.294.132-133.

§11n2. Having studied the inherited phraseology of **eukhetai/eukheto** 'boast', Muellner observes (1976.78): "This, the ultimate genealogy, is being put forward not as pretentious or boastful but true." For amplification, see the important discussion by Muellner at pp. 50-52, 80(n23).

§11n3. The specific wording **Dios pais** 'child of Zeus', as applied to Hektor ([XIII 54](#)), is also appropriate for female divinities (e.g., [viii 488](#)).

§11n4. Note too Muellner 1976.50 on [VII 298](#), where the women of Troy are described as **eukhomenai** 'praying' to Hektor (dative): "This is the only place in all the Homeric corpus (including **eukhomai** in secular contexts) where a dative noun after **eukhomai** is *not* a god or a collection of gods."

§11n5. In the *Iliad*, this expression is applied respectively to Dolopion, priest of Skamandros; Agamemnon; Aeneas; Thoas; and Onetor, priest of Zeus Idaios. Its significance can best be appreciated by considering more closely what is represented by the **dēmos**, described here as the source of **tîmê** for the hero. See n6.

§11n6. On **tîmê** in the sense of "cult": [Ch.7§1n2](#). Moreover, we have observed *en passant* in [Ch.6§29](#) that cult practices were a strictly localized phenomenon in archaic Greek religion. Accordingly, the Homeric association of **tîmê** with **dēmos** (n5) is of utmost significance, in view of the connotations this word inherits. Derived from the root *dâ- 'divide, allot, apportion' (Charntraine [I 274](#)), **dēmos** had originally meant something like "district," and this intrinsic local connotation is still overt in numerous Homeric contexts (e.g., [V 710](#); [XVI 437](#), 514; etc.); see especially Detienne 1968.131 on **dēmos** in [Odyssey ii 32](#), 44 and [Herodotus 1.62](#). It is even possible that the element **dēmo-** in compound names like **Dêmophoôn** ([H.Dem.234](#): "shining for the **dēmos**") and **Dêmodokos** ([viii 44](#), etc.: "approved by the **dēmos**") emphasized the localized functions of such figures. For more on the name **Dêmophoôn**: [Ch.10§10n4](#); also Nagy 1990b.132-133.

§12n1. For a latent reference to the worship of Hektor: [§11n4](#).

§12n2. Thus I disagree with the notion (cf. Bethe 1927 [III 19-20](#)) that the scene in [Iliad VI](#) where the Trojans worship Athena necessarily represents a "new" tradition--let alone that the passage itself is an interpolation. As for the observation that Athena's being guardian of Troy seems to be a more central theme in the *Iliou Persis* (Proclus pp. 107-108 Allen), it does not necessarily follow that such a divergent thematic treatment is less archaic than that of the *Iliad*. Newer compositions like the *Iliou Persis* may in fact

use older themes than what we find in the *Iliad*. The theme of Athena's being guardian of Troy may well suit the political realities of the eighth or seventh centuries B.C. in the Troad, but the theme itself may be much more archaic.

Chapter 9

Poetic Categories for the Hero

§1. In the *Iliad*, Hektor's aspiration to get the same **tîmê** that is accorded to Athena (and Apollo) not only formalizes the antagonism between hero and god; it also implies a slighting of the superior god's **tîmê** by the inferior hero. On the level of Homeric discourse, the dimension of cult that is conveyed by the word **tîmê** is latent in such situations, so that the hero's stance amounts to what seems to be--on the surface of the narrative--simply a slighting of the god's honor. On the level of Hesiodic discourse, by contrast, the **tîmê** of the gods in an analogous situation is overtly expressed in terms of cult.[\[1\]](#)

§2. The passage in question comes from the Myth of the Five Generations, in the *Works and Days*. Let us join the narrative midstream, at the description of the Second, or "Silver," Generation of Mankind, and how it came to grief after having enjoyed only the briefest span of adolescence ([W&D 132-134](#)). We are now about to be told the reason for this sudden demise:

hubrin gar atasthalon ouk edunanto
allélôn apechein, oud' athanatous therapeuein
êthelon oud' erdein makarôn hierois epi bômois,
hê themis anthrôpoisi kat' êthea. tous men epeita
Zeus Kronidês ekrupse choloumenos, houneka timas
ouk edidon makaressi theois hoi Olumpon echousin

For they could not keep wanton **hubris** from each other,
and they were unwilling either to be ministers to the immortals
or to sacrifice on the sacred altars of the blessed ones,
which is the socially right thing for men, in accordance with their local
customs.

And Zeus the son of Kronos was angry and made them disappear,
because they did not give tîmai to the blessed gods who control
Olympus.

Hesiod W&D 134-139

§3. In this passage, remarkable as it is for both its explicitness and its precision, we see the institutional observance of cult being overtly expressed in terms of giving the gods **tîmai**.^[1] This point is essential as we read further in the *Works and Days*. For, despite the fact that the men of the Silver Generation did not give **tîmai** to the gods, *they still receive what they had failed to give*:

deuteroi, all' empê timê kai toisin opêdei

They are second in rank, but nevertheless they too get **tîmê**.

Hesiod W&D 142

The Silver Generation is "second," of course, to the First, or "Golden," Generation (W&D 109-126); by implication, it is to the Golden rather than Silver Generation that **tîmê** is primarily due-- next to the gods themselves.^[2] Also by implication, the **tîmê** received by the Golden and Silver Generations comes from sacrifice, as performed by the mankind of the here-and-now.

§4. It is not immediately clear from these Hesiodic verses, however, if the Silver Generation actually represents a classification of heroes, in their ritual dimension as antagonists of gods. The specifically heroic nature of the Silver Generation becomes explicit only when we see how it complements the nature of the Golden Generation, with which it is formally and thematically coordinated. This coordination was observed in the irreplaceable *Psyche* of Erwin Rohde, and it is his reading that I will attempt to reformulate here.^[1] The narrative of the *Works and Days* makes it clear that the lifespan of the Silver Generation would have been but a copy of the Golden, had it not been for the former's committing **hubris** 'outrage' (W&D 134-135).^[2] The **hubris** of the Silver Generation is a consequence of its nature, which is to be contrasted with that of the Golden (W&D 129). In the case of the Golden Generation, the Hesiodic description of its nature is explicitly appropriate to heroes *as they are worshiped in cult*:

toi men daimones eisi Dios megalou dia boulas
esthloi, epichthonioi, phulakes thnêtôn anthrôpôn
hoi rha phulassousin te dikas kai schetlia erga,
êera hessamenoi pantîi phoitôntes ep' aian,
ploutodotai: kai touto geras basilêion eschon

And they are the **daimones**, by the Will of Zeus.
They are the good, [3] the **epikhthonioi**, the guardians of mortal men.
They guard the **dikai** and against bad deeds.
Invisible, they roam all over the Earth, [4]
givers of wealth. And they had this too as a **geras**, befitting kings. [5]

Hesiod W&D 122-126

Whereas the Silver Generation commits **hubris**, the Golden is here described as upholding **dikai** (W&D 124). We will have more to say presently about this contrast in **hubris/dikê**, as also about the explicitly heroic characteristics of the Golden Generation; for now, the most important thing to observe is the description of this class of mankind as **epikhthonioi** (W&D 123). [6]

§5. As Rohde points out, [1] the epithet **epi-khthonioi** marks the earthbound condition of mankind (besides W&D 123, see Th. 416, Iliad IV 45, etc.; **khthôn** = 'earth'), as compared to the celestial existence of the Olympian gods, who are **ep-ouranioi** (see Iliad VI 129, etc.; **ouranos** = 'sky'). We must keep in mind that the function of **epi-** 'on, at' in these two formations is simply to associate figures with places. That much said, we now come to the description of the Silver Generation as the **hupo-khthonioi** 'those who abide under the earth':

toi men hypochthonioi makares thnêtoi kaleontai

And they are called the **hypokhthonioi**, blessed mortals.

Hesiod W&D 141

Let us juxtapose the corresponding description of the Golden Generation: [2]

esthloī, epichthonioī, phulakes thnētōn anthrōpōn

They are the good, the **epikhthonioī**, the guardians of mortal men.

Hesiod W&D 123

True, the Silver Generation abides beneath the earth by virtue of being **hupo-khthonioī**, but this formation does not imply that the Golden Generation abides above the earth by virtue of being **epi-khthonioī**. As Rohde surveys the association of institutional hero cults with figures like Amphiaraos, Trophonios, Althaimenes, Teiresias, Erekhtheus, Phaethon, and others, he finds that the characteristics of these heroes match closely those of the Golden Generation, *and yet their abodes in cult are all under the earth*.^[3] Even the diction of Hesiodic poetry bears out this feature. A figure like Phaethon is specifically called a **daimōn** in his function as **nēopolos mukhios** 'underground temple-attendant' of the goddess Aphrodite (Th. 991).^[4] As we have already seen, those in the Golden Generation are also specifically called **daimones** (W&D 122).

§6. The essence, then, of the Golden and Silver Generations is that together they form a complete picture of the hero in cult. The evidence of Hesiodic diction even corroborates that both generations--not just the Golden--qualify as **daimones**.^[1] In this respect, they are both like the Olympian gods, who also qualify as **daimones** (e.g., Iliad I 222, etc.).^[2]

§7. If indeed the First and Second Generations of Mankind are designed as complementary categories, it remains to ask why a distinction was made in the first place. The answer is available in a study by Jean-Pierre Vernant, who has observed that the entire Myth of the Five Generations is permeated with the central theme of contrasting **dikē** with **hubris**.^[1] The composition of the *Works and Days* elaborates this theme even further in the lengthy moral (W&D 213-285) that follows the Myth of the Five Generations (W&D 106-201).^[2] We have, in fact, already seen that the concept of **dikē** characterizes the First Generation, as compared to the **hubris** of the Second. We must now add that the Third Generation is again characterized by **hubris** (hubries: W&D 146);^[3] furthermore, it is then set off from the Fourth Generation for the specific reason that the Fourth has **dikē**, as compared to the Third (dikaioteron: W&D 158).^[4] By virtue of **dikē**, the

Fourth is also superior to the Third ([dikaioteron kai areion: W&D 158](#)), whereas the Second had been inferior to the First ([polu cheiroteron: W&D 127](#)). In other words, Generation I, which is marked by **dikê**, serves as a positive foil for Generation II, marked by **hubris**; correspondingly, Generation III, which is marked by **hubris**, serves as a negative foil for Generation IV, again marked by **dikê**. As for Generation V, which describes the realities of the Hesiodic world, the good is to be mixed in with the bad ([W&D 179](#)). In this world of the here-and-now, **hubris** is engaged in an ongoing struggle with **dikê** ([W&D 213-218](#) and beyond). I could put it another way: Generation V is the quintessence of the four opposing types of human condition, Generations I versus II, and III versus IV. The here-and-now incorporates all the oppositions of the past and the hereafter.

§8. It remains to ask what kind of human condition is represented by Generations III and IV. My answer will be based on the proposition that Generations I and II together form an integral picture of the hero in cult. Correspondingly, I propose that Generations III and IV together form a complete picture of the hero in epic. Furthermore, just as Generation I had represented the positive side of Generation II, so also Generation III represents the negative side of Generation IV.

§9. As in our discussion of the first two generations, let us approach the next two by beginning with the negative side of the picture. The Third or "Bronze" Generation is depicted as bent on nothing but **hubris** and war:

[Zeus de patêr triton allo genos meropôn anthrôpôn
chalkeion poiês', ouk argureîi ouden homoion,
ek melian, deinon te kai obrimon: hoisin Arêos
erg' emele stonoenta kai hubries](#)

And Zeus made another Generation of **meropes** men, the Third.
And he made it Bronze, not at all like the Silver.
A Generation born from ash trees, violent and terrible.
Their minds were set on the woeful deeds of Ares and acts of hubris.
[1]

Their very birth and essence, ash trees and bronze respectively, add up to a prime emblem of war: the generic spear of epic diction has a staff made of ash wood and a tip made of bronze, so that a Homeric word for "spear" like **enkhos** can bear either the epithet **meilinon**'of ash' (e.g., [V 655](#)) or **khalkeon** 'of bronze' (e.g., [V 620](#)).^[2] The description of the Bronze Generation continues, with more details about their savage ways:

oude ti siton

êsthion, all' adamantos echon kraterophrona thumon,

aplastoi: megalê de biê kai cheires aaptoi

ex ômôn epephukon epi stibarosi melessin.

tôn d' ên chalkea men teuchea, chalkeoi de te oikoi,

chalkôi d' eirgazonto: melas d' ouk eske sidêros.

kai toi men cheiressin hupo spheterêisi damentes

bêsan es eurôenta domon kruerou Aido,

nônumnoi: thanatos de kai ekpaglous per eontas

heile melas, lampron d' elipon phaos êelioio.

And they did not eat grain,

but their hard-dispositioned **thûmos** was made of hard rock.

They were forbidding: they had great **biê** and overpowering hands growing out of their shoulders, with firm foundations for limbs.^[3]

Their implements were bronze, their houses were bronze, and they did their work with bronze. There was no iron.

And they were wiped out when they killed each other,

and went nameless to the dank house of chill Hades.^[4]

Terrible as they were, black Death still took them, and they left the bright light of the Sun.

Hesiod W&D 146-155

§10. As the comparative studies of Francis Vian have shown,^[1] this blood-crazed behavior of the Bronze Men is like that of a runaway *Männerbund* on the fringes of civilized society.^[2] The Bronze Men are in the same mold as various other bands of impious warriors in Greek myth--most notably the Spartoi and the Phlegyai.^[3] We may note in particular that the Phlegyai are also characterized by **hubris** (Phleguôn ... hubristaôn: *Ê.Apollo* 278),^[4]

while the Spartoi are traditionally depicted as bearing the sign of the spear as a birthmark ([Aristotle Poetics 1454b22](#)).[\[5\]](#)

§11. Besides such remote figures as these Spartoi and Phlegyai, we can find a much more immediate manifestation of the heroic type represented by the Bronze Men. As we have seen in Chapter 7, Achilles himself is associated--however remotely--with the theme of plundering Delphi, as if he were of the same mold as the wanton Phlegyai.[\[1\]](#) Then too, Achilles himself has his epic moments of wanton slaughter, where the diction of even the *Iliad* presents its prime hero on the very fringes of savagery. More than that, we have seen in Chapters 3 and 4 that Achilles himself is the champion of **biē** in the Homeric tradition.[\[2\]](#) Now as we begin to see in the *Works and Days* that **biē** is also the mark of the Bronze Generation ([W&D 148](#)), we may be ready to infer that this Hesiodic classification of mankind suits the dark and latent side of the Homeric hero.[\[3\]](#) What may carry conviction is yet another striking convergence in detail between the figures of Achilles and the Bronze Men.

§12. We have already seen that bronze and ash wood are emblematic of the Third Generation ([W&D 143-151](#)) and that the spear of Homeric diction consists of the same elements: a tip of bronze and a shaft of ash wood. We must now observe further that the bronze-tipped ash spear of Achilles in particular is the only piece of the hero's armor that was not made by the divine smith Hephaistos (see [XVII 194-197](#), [XVIII 82-85](#)). Rather, the spear of Achilles was inherited from his father, to whom it had been given by Cheiron the Centaur:

Pēliada meliēn tēn patri philōi pore Cheirōn
Pēliou ek koruphēs, phonon emmenai hērōessin

the Pelian ash-spear, which Cheiron had given to his **philos** father,
from the heights of Mount Pelion, to be death for heroes

[XVI 143-144](#)

In fact, Achilles is described as the only hero who could wield this magnificent spear ([XVI 140-142](#)), which is also the only piece of the hero's armor that Patroklos did not take with him when he fatally replaced

Achilles ([XVI 139-141](#)) and which is therefore the only piece not to be despoiled and then actually worn by the killer of Patroklos, Hektor. As Richard Shannon points out, the spear of Achilles is a theme that reaffirms the hero's connection with his mortal father, just as the rest of his armor connects him with his immortal mother.^[1] What is more, as Shannon's whole monograph shows convincingly, the **meliē** 'ash spear' of Achilles is a word that is "restricted in the *Iliad* to describing the individual weapon of a specific character in particular contexts."^[2] In sum, the diction of the entire *Iliad* makes the bronze-tipped ash spear an emblem of Achilles just as surely as the birthmark of a spear characterizes the wanton Spartoi, or as bronze and ash wood characterize the equally wanton Bronze Men.^[3]

§13. Having seen how the Third Generation corresponds to the recessive dark side of the Homeric hero, we are ready to examine whether the Fourth Generation corresponds to the dominant illustrious side, worthy of glorification by epic poetry.^[1] In the process, we will also have to examine the more basic question: to what extent may we look at Generation IV as the positive side of Generation III?

§14. The Hesiodic description of those in the Fourth Generation overtly names them as the heroes who fought at Thebes and at Troy ([W&D 159-165](#)). Even the diction corresponds to that of Homeric Epos: the expression **andrôn hêrōôn theion genos** 'the divine generation of **hêrōes**' ([W&D 159](#)) features the conventional Homeric word for "hero": **hêrōs/hêrōes** ([Iliad I 4](#), etc.). In the entire *Works and Days*, the word **hêrōs/hêrōes** is in fact restricted to the Fourth Generation ([W&D 159, 172](#)).

§15. Conversely, the next epithet applied to the Fourth Generation, **hêmitheoi** 'half-gods' ([W&D 160](#)), is restricted in the entire *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to one attestation, [XII 23](#). The immediate context is one of those rare moments when the narrative of the *Iliad* distances itself from the epic action of the moment long enough to take in the wider view of the entire *Iliad*--and then the even wider view of the entire Trojan War. As the time frame expands, the perspective shifts from the heroic past to the here-and-now of the Homeric audience. The whole shift is occasioned by the topic of the wall that the Achaeans had built.^[1] After a description of how the wall had functioned up to this point in the narrative ([XII 3-9](#)), we hear that it will

no longer exist after a while ([XII 9](#)). Then comes a recounting of all the epic action that is yet to happen before the wall is destroyed: at this point in the narrative, Hektor is still alive ([XII 10](#)), Achilles still has his **mēnis** ([XII 10](#)), and the Troy of Priam is not yet destroyed ([XII 11](#)). With the mention of the last theme, we are transported beyond the time frame of the *Iliad* into a brief account of Troy's destruction ([XII 12-16](#))--after which Apollo and Poseidon let loose the rivers of the Troad in order to sweep away all traces of the Achaean Wall ([XII 17-33](#), especially 26-32).[\[2\]](#)

§16. It is almost as if all the "props" that mark an Achaean expedition against Troy are to be obliterated once the expedition is over and the attention of epic switches to other places, other stories.[\[1\]](#) Among these "props" destined for obliteration, we get the following description of the remains lying on the riverbanks:

hōthi polla boagria kai truphaleiai
kappeson en koniēisi kai hēmitheōn genos andrōn

where many cowhide-shields and helmets
fell in the dust--as also a generation of **hēmitheoi**[\[2\]](#)

[XII 22-23](#)

I have taken all this time in elaborating on the single Homeric attestation of **hēmitheoi** in order to show how closely the diction of archaic hexameter poetry responds to variant traditional perspectives on heroes. Whereas **hērōes** is the appropriate word in epic, **hēmitheoi** is more appropriate to a style of expression that looks beyond epic.[\[3\]](#)

§17. In sum, I propose that the diction of the *Works and Days* represents the Fourth Generation of Mankind in a manner that is both appropriate to the heroes of epic tradition (consider **hērōes** at [W&D 159](#)) and at the same time removed from the epic perspectives of the heroic age (consider **hēmitheoi** at [W&D 160](#)). It follows that we are now faced with an important question about the theme reflected by the diction. In specifically identifying the men of the Fourth Generation as those heroes who had fought at Thebes and at Troy, the *Works and Days* is doubtless making reference to actual epic traditions, and we have yet to ask what these may be.

§18. Let us look first at the Theban War. Actually, we may have to choose between two separate epic traditions about two separate Theban Wars: the *Seven against Thebes*, otherwise known as the *Thebais*, and the *Epigoni*. Through the medium of Athenian tragedy--specifically through the *Seven against Thebes* by Aeschylus--we at least know indirectly the main themes inherited by the first of these two epic traditions, although there is very little that survives directly from either (see *Thebais/Epigoni* at pp. 112-114/115-116 Allen). Even aside from the Aeschylean play, however, the *Iliad* itself gives us valuable glimpses of themes from the traditions of both the *Thebais* and the *Epigoni*.^[1] In fact, the references in *Iliad IV-V* reveal an interesting contrast between heroic types as represented by two distinct epic traditions.

§19. As we join the action in *Iliad IV*, we find Agamemnon goading Diomedes into battle with taunting words of **neîkos** 'blame' ([neikessen: IV 368](#)).^[1] The king's taunt takes the form of an episodic narrative about the heroic exploits of Tydeus in one of his skirmishes with the Thebans ([IV 370-400](#)).^[2] Since Tydeus was of course not only the father of Diomedes but also one of the Seven against Thebes, the narrative has a special application as a taunt for Diomedes, since he in turn was one of the Epigoni. Even more important, the conclusion of Agamemnon's taunt is that Diomedes is inferior, **khereia** (accusative), to his father in battle ([IV 400](#)), and we note that we have seen a variant of the same word used in contrasting the Generations of Mankind (**kheiroteron** 'inferior': [W&D 127](#)).

§20. Diomedes responds to the taunt of Agamemnon by showing an eagerness to prove himself in battle ([IV 401-402](#), 412-418), but his comrade Sthenelos cannot resist a rejoinder to Agamemnon. As we examine his words, we must keep in mind that Sthenelos was also one of the Epigoni, while his father Kapaneus was also one of the Seven against Thebes:

Atreïdê, mē pseude' epistamenos sapha eipein:
hêmeis toi paterôn meg' ameinones euchometh' einai:
hêmeis kai Thêbês hedos heilomen heptapuloio,
pauroteron laon agagonth' hupo teichos areion,
peithomenoi teraessi theôn kai Zênos arôgêi:

keinoi de spheterêisin atasthaliêisin olonto.
tô mê moi pateras poth' homoiêi entheo timêi

Son of Atreus! Don't warp your talk when you know how to speak clearly!

We boast to be much better than our fathers.

We even captured the foundations of seven-gated Thebes,
having mustered a smaller army against a stronger fortress,
and having heeded the signs of the gods and the help of Zeus.

But *they* perished, by their own wantonness.

So do not bestow on our fathers a **timê** that is like ours.

IV 404-410

Although Diomedes is socially compelled to answer Agamemnon's taunt with action rather than words,[1] the very theme of the taunt leads to his vindication. If indeed action weighs more heavily than words--which is after all the ideological basis for the taunt itself-- then surely the Epigonoi are better than the Seven against Thebes, since the sons captured Thebes and thus succeeded where their fathers had failed.[2] Thus the whole interchange that began with the taunt of Agamemnon amounts in the end to an affirmation that the Epigonoi were indeed superior to the Seven against Thebes.[3]

§21. Again, we are reminded of the Hesiodic Myth of the Five Generations. Since Generation IV is not only "more just" but also "better" (**areion**: [W&D 158](#)) than Generation III, we may ask whether there is a traditional parallel in the theme that makes the Epigonoi superior to the Seven against Thebes. Here too, after all, we see a contrast of actual generations. Moreover, the fathers of the Epigonoi are said to have died because of their "wantonness," **atasthaliêisin** ([IV 409](#)), and we must recognize that the word **atasthalo-** 'wanton' and its derivatives are conventionally associated in Homeric diction with acts denoted by the word **hubris** and its derivatives ([XI 695](#), [XIII 633-634](#), [iii 207](#), [xvii 588](#), etc.); the adjective **atasthalo-** even serves as an epithet of the noun **hubris** ([xvi 86](#), [xxiv 352](#)). So too in Hesiodic diction: in fact, it is the same epithet **atasthalo-** 'wanton' that marks the **hubris** of Generation II ([W&D 134](#)), which is parallel to the **hubris** of Generation III ([W&D 146](#)).

§22. As we look about for an instance illustrating the "wanton" (**atasthalo-**) nature of the Seven against Thebes, we come upon a particularly grisly and negative theme--one that also happens to contrast sharply with a positive theme that reflects on the nature of the Epigonoi. We begin by considering the positive theme. There is a poetic tradition, as we learn from *Skolion* 894P, that both Diomedes and Achilles were immortalized on the Isles of the Blessed.^[1] In the case of Diomedes, we see from the Pindaric allusion at *Nemean* 10.7 that it was Athena who brought about his immortalization. The scholia to this passage reveal the corresponding negative theme.^[2] Athena was about to confer immortality upon Tydeus, father of Diomedes, as he lay dying from wounds inflicted in his duel with the Theban hero Melanippos, who had also been mortally wounded. What stopped the goddess from fulfilling her initial design was her sheer disgust at what she saw: Tydeus was eating the brains of Melanippos.^[3] Here, then, is the grisly deed that deprived Tydeus of an immortality that could have been his--but was passed on to his son Diomedes. Again we may compare the Hesiodic Myth of Generations, and how the men of Generation III are assigned to Hades ([W&D 153](#)) while those of Generation IV are eligible for the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 164-173](#)).^[4] For all these reasons, I conclude that the war against Thebes at *W&D* 162-163 is the war of the Epigonoi.^[5]

§23. Having first looked at the Theban War, let us now turn to the Trojan War. The compressed Hesiodic retelling of the fate in store for the Achaean heroes who fought at Troy ([W&D 167-173](#)) resembles the plot of the *Aithiopis* more than that of the *Iliad*, in that the heroes who fell are said to be transported after death into a state of immortality on the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 171](#)).^[1] In the *Aithiopis*, both the main hero and the main heroic opponent--Achilles and Memnon respectively--are similarly transported after death into a state of immortality by their respective divine patronesses, Thetis and Eos (Proclus p. 106.14-15 and 6-7 Allen). By contrast, the plot of the *Iliad* ends on the theme of death for both the main hero and the main heroic opponent; the death of Hektor, which is the theme that ultimately closes the composition, explicitly requires the ensuing death of Achilles ([XXII 359-360](#)), and there is no overt prediction of impending immortality for either Achilles or Hektor anywhere in the *Iliad* (or in the *Odyssey*).^[2]

§24. This dichotomy in how the Achilles story ends has led to the commonplace inference that the *Iliad*, being apparently an older composition than the *Aithiopis*, somehow represents an older set of beliefs according to which the Achilles figure fails to achieve immortality after death.^[1] The two underlying assumptions are (1) that the Achilles *figure* ends at the same point where a given Achilles *story* ends and (2) that Hades had always represented an *eschatological* rather than a *transitional* state. Neither assumption carries conviction.

§25. Let us begin to look beyond these assumptions by quickly examining a parallel to the Iliadic finale of Achilles, in an epic composition known as the *Oikhalias Halosis* ('Capture of Oikhalia'),^[1] transmitted by a rhapsodic organization at Samos known as the Kreophyleioi.^[2] Thanks to Walter Burkert's meticulous survey of the attested documentation about this lost epic,^[3] we know that there were several features in the plot structure of the *Oikhalias Halosis* that paralleled the specific conventions of the *Iliad*. (The parallelisms between this epic composed in the tradition of the Kreophyleioi of Samos and those composed in the tradition of the Homeridai of Chios^[4] had even led to a myth that has the founding father Kreophylos being "given" the *Oikhalias Halosis* by Homer himself, who had left Chios to visit him in Samos and had then wanted to reward the host's cordial treatment of his guest.)^[5] We find perhaps the most striking parallel between the *Iliad* and this particular Herakles epic in the emphasis on the theme of mortality. As we see from the retelling in [Apollodorus 2.7.7](#), Herakles at the end of the *Oikhalias Halosis* arranges for the funeral of those who fought on his side,^[6] much as Achilles makes possible the funeral of Hektor at the end of the *Iliad*. Thus the *Oikhalias Halosis* ends on a note of death and lamentation, and Burkert infers that such an ending foreshadows the impending death of Herakles himself.^[7] In fact we know from the Hesiodic tradition that the inherited story of Herakles and Iole, the central theme of the *Oikhalias Halosis*, presupposes his subsequent suffering and death on Mount Oeta (Hesiod *fr. 25.20-25* and *fr. 229MW*)^[8] --a traditional theme that is pictured again for us many years later by Sophocles in his *Women of Trachis*.^[9] And yet we also know that the inherited theme of the hero's death and descent to Hades (Hesiod *fr. 25.20-25MW*) in turn presupposes his subsequent accession to Olympus and

immortality (Hesiod *fr. 25.26-33MW*).[\[10\]](#) Note the transition from death and Hades to Olympus and immortalization:

kai] thane kai rh' Aïd[ao polustonon hike]to dôma.
nun d' êdê theos esti, kakôn d' exêluthé pantôn,
zôei d' entha per alloi Olumpia dômat' echontes
athanatos kai agêros, echôn kall[is]phuron Hêbên

And he died and went to the mournful house of Hades.
But now he is already a god, and he has emerged from all the evils,
and he lives where the others who have their abodes on Olympus live
also;
he is immortal and unaging, having as wife Hebe with the beautiful
ankles.[\[11\]](#)

Hesiod *fr. 25.25-28MW*

As Burkert points out, the theme of immortality in store for the hero is simply left outside the framework of the *Oikhalias Halosis*, by virtue of its epic ending.[\[12\]](#) In this respect, then, the composition bears a Homeric mark.[\[13\]](#)

§26. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find an adherence to the same sort of Homeric touch in the genuinely Homeric *Odyssey*, where we indeed see Achilles languishing in Hades ([xi 467-540](#), [xxiv 15-18](#)).[\[1\]](#) If the *Odyssey* is to complement the *Iliad*, Achilles must not yet be seen on the Isles of the Blessed.

§27. Beyond the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Achilles is regularly featured as having won immortality after death through the intervention of his divine mother Thetis; in this glorious state, he abides on the mythical island of Leuke (*Aithiopis*/Proclus p. 106.12-15 Allen),[\[1\]](#) which is an individualized variation on his other traditional abodes in the afterlife--either the Isles of the Blessed (*Skolion* 894P, [Pindar O.2.68](#)-80) or Elysium itself (Ibycus 291P, Simonides 558P).[\[2\]](#)

§28. The formal description of these diverse mythical places in the diction of archaic poetry presents a remarkably unified vision. We begin our survey

of the relevant passages with the Homeric account of the Plain of Elysium (**Êlusion pedion**: [iv 563](#)), situated at the Edges of Earth (**peirata gaiês**: [iv 563](#)),^[1] where Menelaos will be "sent" by the gods because he is consort of Helen ([iv 564-569](#)). Life here is described as "most easy" for humans (**rheistê**: [iv 565](#)), and there is no bad weather ([iv 566](#)), but instead the earth-encircling River Okeanos makes the Wind Zephyros blow so as to reanimate mortals ([iv 567-568](#)).^[2] Let us straightway juxtapose this picture with the Hesiodic description of the Isles of the Blessed, the abode of such heroes as those who fell at Troy and were then given immortal life by divine agency ([W&D 167-168](#)). These Isles of the Blessed are also situated at the Edges of Earth (**peirata gaiês**: [W&D 168](#)), where the earth-encircling Okeanos flows ([W&D 171](#)); here too life is easy ([W&D 170](#)) and the weather is so good that the Earth bears crops three times yearly ([W&D 172-173](#)).

§29. As we now look even more closely at this Hesiodic passage describing the heroes who inhabit the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 167-173](#)), we discover a remarkable mirroring of both theme and diction between these representatives of Generation IV and those of Generation I: I:

hôste theoi d' ezôon akêdea thumon echontes

They lived like gods, having a thûmos without cares.

[W&D 112](#)

IV:

kai toi men naiousin akêdea thumon echontes

And they live having a thûmos without cares.

[W&D 170](#)

I:

karpon d' ephere zeidôros aroura
automatê pollon te kai aphthonon

And the grain-giving Earth bore crops
by itself--a great and generous supply.

W&D 117-118

IV:

toisin meliêdea karpon
tris eteos thallonta pherei zeidôros aroura

And for them the grain-giving Earth bears delicious crops
that come into bloom three times a year.

W&D 172-173

I:

hoi men epi Kronou êsan, hot' ouranôi embasileuen

And they were in the time of Kronos, when he was king in the sky.

W&D 111

IV:

toisin Kronos embasileuei

And Kronos is king for them.

W&D 169[1]

§30. The form of this ring composition is the reflex of a theme: that the progression of mankind has come full circle from Generation IV back to the Golden Age of Generation I. From these convergences in diction and theme, I infer that the ring-composed Hesiodic Myth of the Five Generations of Mankind operates in a *cycle* from Generation I to II to III to IV back to I, by way of the quintessential V of the here-and-now.[\[1\]](#) In line with this reasoning, I am ready to reinterpret the following verses:

mêket' epeit' ôphellon egô pemptoisi meteinai andrasin, all' ê prosthe thanein ê epeita genesthai

If only I no longer lived in the Fifth Generation,
but had either died before it or been born after it!

Hesiod W&D 174-175

The poet's wish to have died before the Fifth Generation would place him in the Fourth, while his alternative wish to be born after the Fifth would place him ahead into the First. Either way, he would reach the Golden Age. His longing is for the Golden Age *as a permanent state*: he is seeking release from the *cycle* of human existence, which is diachronically represented in the sequence of I to II to III to IV back to I and synchronically represented in the quintessential V.[\[2\]](#)

§31. The theme of a cycle that leads to the permanency of a Golden Age is attested in the traditional poetic diction of Pindar. Significantly, one attestation comes from a specific type of lamentation, a **thrênos**:[\[1\]](#)

hoisi de Phersephona poinan palaiou pentheos
dexetai, es ton huperthen halion keinôn enatôi eteî
andidoi psuchas palin, ek tan basilées agauoi
kai sthenei kraipnoi sophiai te megistoi
andres auxont': es de ton loipon chronon héroes ha-
gnoi pros anthrôpôn kaleontai

On whose behalf Persephone will receive compensation for a **penthos** of long standing,
the **psûkhai** of these she sends back up, on the ninth year, to the sunlight above,
and from these [**psûkhai**] will grow illustrious kings,
vigorous in strength and very great in wisdom.
And for the rest of time they shall be called holy heroes.

Pindar *fr.* 133SM[\[2\]](#)

The title **hêroes hagnoi** 'holy heroes' at line 5 recalls the words **olbioi** **hêrôes** 'blessed heroes' ([W&D 172](#)), describing the immortalized Fourth Generation. Moreover, the title **basilêes** 'kings' at line 3 recalls the honor appropriate to the Golden Generation, which is called the **geras basilêion** 'honorific portion of kings' (W&D 126).[\[3\]](#) In Pindar's *Olympian* 2, a composition that adopts the thematic apparatus of the **thrênos** apparently because of this genre's ad hoc appropriateness to the special circumstances of the performance and audience,[\[4\]](#) we see further elaboration on the traditional vision of the Golden Age:*O.2.70-71*: The place is the Isles of the Blessed, with the Tower of Kronos as landmark. Compare the reign of Kronos in the Golden Age, *W&D* 111, and on the Isles of the Blessed, *W&D* 169.*O.2.70-72*: The winds blow from the Okeanos. Compare the gusts of Zephyros blowing from the Okeanos bordering Elysium, [iv 567-568](#); compare too the Okeanos bordering the Isles of the Blessed, *W&D* 171.*O.2.72-74*: The plant life is golden.[\[5\]](#) Compare the golden essence of the First Generation, *W&D* 109-110.*O.2.75-77*: Rhadamanthys is there, rendering justice. Compare his presence in Elysium, [iv 564](#).*O.2.78-80*: Achilles is among those heroes who abide on the Isles of the Blessed. Compare the transportation of heroes who fell at Troy to the Isles of the Blessed, *W&D* 167-173.

§32. The envisioning of Achilles on the Isles of the Blessed formalizes the promise of an afterlife--a consolatory theme that is apparently intrinsic to the genre of the **thrênos**. In the *Aithiopis*, moreover, the **thrênoi** sung by the Muses over the dead Achilles himself lead immediately to his being transported into the actual state of immortality by his divine mother (Proclus p. 106.13-15 Allen).[\[1\]](#) Thus the epic narrative here fulfills on the level of content the promise that the genre of the **thrênos** offers on the level of form. In the *Odyssey*, by contrast, no such self-fulfillment can come from the mention of the **thrênoi** sung by the Muses over the dead Achilles (**thrêneon**: [xxiv 61](#)). It is Agamemnon who is telling of these **thrênoi**, and he is speaking to Achilles--who along with Agamemnon is at this very moment languishing in Hades!

§33. As we come back to the Hesiodic passage describing the Fourth Generation of Mankind ([W&D 156-173](#)), we can reaffirm that the heroes of the Trojan War in this representation belong to a narrative type that fits

Achilles as he appears in the *Aithiopis*, not the Achilles of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But we can also expand the comparison by considering the end in store for the Third Generation of Mankind. After these bloodthirsty warriors die, they are relegated specifically to Hades ([W&D 152-155](#)), which is in direct contrast with the Isles of the Blessed, the ultimate destination of the Fourth Generation. In this particular respect, then, the blood-thirsty warriors of the Third Generation resemble the Achilles of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, who is likewise destined for Hades. In other respects as well, we have seen resemblances: the wanton behavior of the Third Generation corresponds to the dark and recessive dimension of the prime Homeric hero, just as their very emblems of bronze and ash wood correspond to the spear of Achilles. As we have seen, that spear is the only mortal aspect of this hero's otherwise immortal apparatus.^[1] I must add that our calling the armor of Achilles "immortal" is not a case of forcing an interpretation. The epithet **ambrota'immortal'** is actually applied to the **teukhea** 'armor' of Achilles, as at [XVII 194](#), 202.^[2]

§34. Of course, the *Iliad* is hardly primitive on account of its delving into the mortal aspect of Achilles. If anything, the Iliadic emphasis on mortality is a mark of sophistication, which we can appreciate only after we take another look at traditional representations of immortality.

Notes

§1n1. For **tîmê** as "cult," see [Ch.7§1n2](#).

§3n1. Cf. Rohde [I 99](#)n1.

§3n2. Rohde [I 99](#).

§4n1. See Rohde [I 91-110](#).

§4n2. For the significance of the opposition between **hubris** and **dikê** in the *Works and Days*, I will rely on the study of Vernant 1966 [= 1960].

§4n3. On the connotations of **esthlos** 'worthy, good': [Ch.10§1n2](#), [§3n2](#).

§4n4. For the interpretation of [êera hessamenoi](#) 'wrapped in mist' at [W&D 125](#) as "invisible," see Rohde [I 96n3](#).

§4n5. On **geras** 'honorific portion', see [Ch.7§19n3](#); on the connotations of **basilēion** 'befitting **basilēes** [kings]', see [§31](#).

§4n6. For cogent arguments against the bracketing of [W&D 124-125](#), see Rohde [I 96n1](#); also Vernant 1966 [= 1960] 29. Albert Henrichs calls my attention to a remarkable parallelism between [W&D 122-126](#) and the parabasis of Aristophanes *Heroes* =fr. 58 Austin. See Merkelbach 1967 and Gelzer 1969 (esp. pp. 123 ff.).

§5n1. Rohde [I 97n1](#); so also the Proclus commentary. Cf. also Goldschmidt 1950.37, Vernant 1966 [= 1960] 25 and 1966b.274, and West 1978.182.

§5n2. For the textual problems at [W&D 122-123](#), see West, pp. 181-182.

§5n3. Rohde [I 111-145](#).

§5n4. See Rohde [I 135n1](#), as well as [Ch.10 §§22-36](#) below; also Sinos 1975.17-37.

§6n1. The etymology of **daimôn** as 'he who apportions' (see [Ch.7§15n1](#)) is paralleled by the epithet **ploutodotai** 'givers of wealth' at [W&D 126](#), correlated with **daimones** at [W&D 122](#). For a warning against equating the **daimones** of Hesiodic diction with the **daimones** of Plato's usage, see Rohde [I 96n2](#). Cf. also Detienne 1963, esp. the preface by J.-P. Vernant. Finally, consider the comment on the word by Nock 1972 [= 1944] 580n21: "It is a word of reflection and analysis."

§6n2. The Olympian gods in turn have some cult functions that properly belong beneath the Earth, in which contexts they qualify as **khthonioi** (e.g., [W&D 465](#), [Th. 767](#)) or **mukhioi** (see Rohde [I 135n1](#) for a survey of attestations in cult; cf. also [Hesiod Th. 119](#)).

§7n1. Vernant 1966 [= 1960] 20, 24-26.

§7n2. Within this passage ([W&D 213-285](#)), the words **dikē/hubris** occur no fewer than 27/4 times (derivatives included). On the intervening **aînos** of the hawk and the nightingale ([W&D 202-212](#)), see Puelma 1972; also [Ch.12§18](#) below.

§7n3. Whether we read the textual variant [hubries](#) or [hubrios](#), the present argument remains unaffected.

§7n4. The inherited meaning of a comparative like **dikaioteros** is not "X has more **dikē** [than Y]" but "X has **dikē** [as compared to Y, who does not]." Similarly, Homeric **skaioteros** [compared to **dexios**] is not "X is more left [than Y]" but "X is left [as compared to Y, which is right]"; also, **dexiteros** [compared to **skaios**] is not "X is more right [than Y]" but "X is right [as compared to Y, which is left]"; see Benveniste 1948.115-125.

§9n1. We may take special note here of the close association between the Bronze Generation and Ares, on which see Vian 1968.64-66. With regard to Ares as the god who is the essence of bronze, see Muellner 1976.82 on [Iliad XX 102](#).

§9n2. Moreover, the **meliê** functions as the word for both "ash tree" (e.g., [XVI 767](#)) and "ash spear" (e.g., [XVI 143](#)). For a thorough discussion of the Homeric evidence, see Shannon 1975, esp. pp. 46-48 for his comments on [W&D 143-155](#).

§9n3. Verses 148-149 are bracketed in Solmsen's edition on the grounds that their phraseology recurs in the Hesiodic description of the Hundred-Handers at *Th.* 147-153, 649, 670-673. But the textual repetitions are well motivated by the thematic parallelisms. See also Vian 1968.61-63 on the close thematic parallelisms between the Bronze Generation and the general category of earth-born Giants.

§9n4. The Bronze Men are **nônumnoi** 'nameless' in that their deeds cannot be glorified by poetry; so also the Achaeans would be **nônumnoi** if they were to be destroyed at Troy without having succeeded in capturing the city ([XII 70](#), [XIII 227](#), [XIV 70](#)). This is not to say that the deeds of the Bronze Men are not a fitting subject for poetry--only that the treatment of their deeds in poetry will not win them any glory (cf. [§20 below](#)). For the

inherited poetic theme that the hero's name depends on being glorified by poetry, see Schmitt 1967.90-93.

§10n1. See especially Vian 1968 (with further bibliography), following Vernant 1966 [= 1960].

§10n2. In this respect, their association with Ares is significant. As Nilsson ([I 517-519](#)) points out, by classical times this god has many myths but noticeably few cults. Without cult, the figure of Ares is liable to be an outsider from the standpoint of the **polis**. Cf. also Vian 1968.55.

§10n3. On whom see Vian, pp. 59-61.

§10n4. See also [Ch.7§5n3](#) on **phleguân = hubrizein**.

§10n5. Cf. Vernant 1966 [= 1960] 34.

§11n1. [Ch.7§6](#).

§11n2. [Ch.3§§5-8](#), [Ch.4§5](#), [Ch.7§22](#).

§11n3. See also [Ch.7§17](#) and n4 for a correlation of [Iliad I 177/V 891](#), where Achilles/Ares is reproached by Agamemnon/Zeus for being a lover of strife and war--precisely the characteristics of the Bronze Men!

§12n1. Shannon 1975.31. In fact, Hephaistos made not only the armor that Thetis gives to Achilles in [Iliad XVIII](#) but also the armor that has to be replaced when Hektor strips Patroklos; this earlier set of arms was inherited by Achilles from his father, who had received it from the gods in honor of his marrying Thetis (see again [XVII 194-197](#), [XVIII 82-85](#); cf. also *Cypria fr. 3* Allen).

§12n2. Shannon, p. 93.

§12n3. Compare the picture of Achilles as a boy, armed with nothing but a spear, in [Pindar N.3.43-47](#) as discussed at [Ch.20§8](#).

§13n1. Contrast [§9n4](#).

§15n1. Aside from what I intend to say here, see West 1969 for an interesting discussion of the Achaean Wall and the relation of this theme to the *Iliad* as a whole.

§15n2. Even the diction that frames the naming of these rivers ([XII 19-23](#)) is parallel in style to the Hesiodic catalogue of rivers ([Th. 337-345](#)), those of the Troad included ([Th. 340-345](#)); cf. West 1966.259-260.

§16n1. Note in particular that the area by the Hellespont is explicitly smoothed over by the flooding rivers ([XII 30-32](#)). I suspect that this volunteered detail is consciously offered as a variant of the tradition that tells how the Achaeans had made a funeral mound for the dead Achilles by the Hellespont ([xxiv 80-84](#)). There is then an ironic fulfillment of the dire threat made by the river Xanthos/Skamandros to bury Achilles under a mound of silt ([XXI 316-323](#)), as if the funeral mound of Achilles were to be in the end simply a natural formation adorning the landscape of the Troad. I draw attention to the irony that the River calls this mound the **sêma** 'tomb' of Achilles ([XXI 322](#)), from which the Achaeans will not even be able to recover the hero's bones ([XXI 320-321](#)).

§16n2. This passage marks the only Homeric attestation of not just **hêmitheoi** but also **boagria** 'cowhide shields'. (Note too the use of the word **genos** with **hêmitheoi**!) Besides [W&D 160](#), the word **hêmitheoi** occurs also at Hesiod fr. 204.100MW; the context (lines 95-103) is that Zeus plans the Trojan War in order that mortals may die and thus be separated from the immortal gods. Note the word **eris** 'strife' at line 96 and compare the opening of the *Cypria* as discussed at [Ch.7§16](#).

§16n3. Note the context of the collocation [genos andrôn hêmitheô̄n](#) 'generation of men who were **hêmitheoi**' at [Homeric Hymn 31.18-19](#) (cf. also [Homeric Hymn 32.18-19](#)). On the basis of the diction, I would infer that such compositions as Homeric *Hymn* 31 (and 32) are not preludes to an epic composition like the *Iliad*. Cf. Koller 1956, esp. p. 180. In [Plato Hippias Maior 285d](#), stories about the "generations of heroes" ([peri tôn genôn ... tôn te hêrōôn kai tôn anthrōpôn](#)) are treated as a genre parallel to stories about colonizations (... [kai tôn katoikiseôn, hôs to archaion ektisthêsan hai poleis](#)); see Schmid 1947.xiii. On the local orientation of **ktisis** ('colonization') poetry and its suitability for the subject of hero cults,

see [Ch.7§28n3](#). Note also the context of **hēmitheoi** at Alcaeus *fr.* 42.13LP (aimitheôn) and at Simonides *fr.* 523.3P; "the best of the **hēmitheoi**" in the first passage is Achilles himself, while the second passage is from a **thrênos**, on which see further at [§§31-32](#), [Ch.10§§1-5](#). Finally, note the application of **hēmitheoi** at [Bacchylides 9.10](#) and [13.155](#) respectively to the Seven against Thebes and the Achaeans who fought Hektor at Troy.

§18n1. We have to speak in terms of *traditions* rather than *compositions*. See Wehrli 1972 [= 1957] 65-66n27 for speculations over whether there was more than one extant composition known as the *Thebais* in the classical period.

§19n1. For the social context of **neîkos**, see [Ch.12](#).

§19n2. Cf. also [V 793-813](#). As yet another instance of narrated heroic exploits that serve as taunts in the format of **neîkos**, we will examine in Chapter 15 the duel of Achilles and Aeneas, at [Iliad XX](#). For an interesting parallel in Old Irish narrative, consider the *Tale of MacDathó's Pig*; a translation is conveniently available in Cross and Slover 1936.199-207.

§20n1. Note that Agamemnon's taunt accuses Diomedes of being worse in deeds *but better in words* than his father ([IV 400](#)). The situation is altogether different, however, when it comes to Athena's taunt at [V 793-813](#): her challenge is both mental and physical. Appropriately, the immediate response of Diomedes is not action but clever words ([V 815-824](#)), which in turn are justified by his later heroic action.

§20n2. Even the *Catalogue* of the *Iliad* takes into account the destruction of Thebes by the Epigonoi ([II 505](#)). The failure of the original Seven to destroy Thebes qualifies them as **nônumnoi** 'nameless'. The point is not that we do not know their names (we do) but that epic cannot give them a good name, as it were: see [§9n4](#).

§20n3. There is also the clear implication that the host assembled by the Epigonoi against Thebes was superior to the host of Agamemnon at Troy, in that the Epigonoi had fewer men arrayed against a stronger defense, as Sthenelos says ([IV 407](#)). The immediate foils here are the Seven against Thebes, but the negative contrast extends to the host assembled by

Agamemnon, a king who is traditionally described as having far more men than what the Trojan defense could muster (cf. [II 119-130](#), [XIII 737-739](#), [XV 405-407](#)).

§22n1. See further at [Ch.10§1](#).

§22n2. See Pindar scholia, vol. 3, pp. 167-168 Drachmann; see also the scholia (ABT) to [Iliad V 126](#) (Pherecydes *FGrH* 3.97).

§22n3. For the thematic associations of this act with the ideologies of cult, see Delcourt 1966; cf. also Vian 1963.204 and 1968.65. In *W&D* 146-147, the Bronze Generation is described as not eating grain (see [§9](#)), and the scholia *ad loc.* interpret this detail as an allusion to cannibalism.

§22n4. As I read *W&D* 158-168, my understanding is that the heroes of the Theban as well as the Trojan War are eligible. On the problem of line 166, see West 1978.192; as my discussion will show, however, I do not agree with his reasoning ("Epic is constantly telling us that they went to Hades"). See [Foreword §19n21](#).

§22n5. The object of the war, "the sheep of Oedipus" ([W&D 163](#)), is a theme that applies not only to Eteokles and Polyneikes but also to their descendants. For sheep as an emblem of kingship, see the interesting, though diffuse, article of Orgogozo 1949. See also [Ch.7§16n3](#).

§23n1. Whether all or only some of the heroes are meant depends on the authenticity of *W&D* 166 (cf. [§22n4](#)).

§23n2. For an instance of a latent prediction, see [Ch.10§50](#).

§24n1. For perhaps the most forceful presentation of this notion, see Rohde [I 84-90](#).

§25n1. *Oikhalias Halosis* pp. 144-147 Allen.

§25n2. Cf. Neanthes *FGrH* 84.29, Aristotle *fr.* 611.10 Rose, and the other sources assembled by Burkert 1972b.76-80, esp. p. 77n15.

§25n3. Burkert 1972b, esp. pp. 82-85.

§25n4. On whom see the scholia to [Pindar N.2.1](#) (Hippostratus *FGrH* 568.5) and Harpocration s.v. **Homēridai** (Acusilaus *FGrH* 2.2, Hellanicus *FGrH* 4.20). Cf. Dihle 1970.115 and Burkert 1972b.79.

§25n5. See especially Callimachus *Epigram* 6 Pfeiffer, and Burkert's commentary (1972b.76-77). See also [Plato *Republic* 600b](#), as well as the truncated accounts in *Certamen* p. 237.322-323 Allen and Proclus p. 100.11-13 Allen.

§25n6. Burkert 1972b.84.

§25n7. Burkert ibid.

§25n8. Burkert ibid. For the cult of Herakles on Mount Oeta, see Nilsson 1951 [= 1922].

§25n9. For the indebtedness of the dramatist to the *Oikhalias Halosis* in particular and to non-Homeric Epos in general, see the bibliography assembled by Burkert 1972b.80n27.

§25n10. See also Hesiod *fr.* 229MW and *Th.* 950-955.

§25n11. The sequence of events in Hesiod *fr.* 25.20-33MW (first Hades at 20-25 and then Olympus at 26-33) was confusing to scholars of the Hellenistic period and thereafter; witness the obelizing of lines 26-33 in *Pap.Oxy.* 2075. And yet consider [Odyssey xi 601-627](#) and the discussion at [§26n](#). Cf. also Roloff 1970.93.

§25n12. Burkert 1972b.83-84.

§25n13. Ibid.

§26n1. Similarly, the *Odyssey* presents a stop-motion picture of Herakles in Hades ([xi 601-627](#)). But the vision is hardly eschatological: Herakles is at that very moment on Olympus with the immortal gods ([xi 602-604](#)). What we see in the narrative is truly a "vision" (*eidolon*: [xi 602](#)), appropriate for other phases in other tellings of the story. See further at [Ch.10§48](#).

§27n1. The island is envisioned well beyond the Hellespont, in the Black Sea (see Alcaeus *fr. 354LP* and [Pindar N.4.49](#)); this orientation can be correlated with the penetration of Hellenic enterprises into that area (especially on the part of Miletos) and with the establishment of cult centers honoring Achilles in actual locales physically suitable for the description of **Leukê** 'White Rock'. For a survey of the places bearing that name in the Black Sea region, see Rohde [II 371-373](#)n2; for the thematic associations of the name **Leukê**, see Rohde *ibid.* and Diehl 1953; also Nagy 1973.137-148. For an illuminating article on the Iliadic evidence for the Hellenic penetration of the Black Sea, see Drews 1976, esp. pp. 20-22. See now Nagy 1990.71.

§27n2. See also [Plato Symposium 179e, 180b](#); Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.811-816; [Apollodorus Epitome 5.5](#). For an eloquent discussion of the thematic convergences that link Leuke, the Isles of the Blessed, and Elysium, see Rohde [II 365-378](#), esp. pp. 369-370n2. He calls Leuke the "Sonderelysion" of Achilles (Rohde [II 371](#)).

§28n1. For the themes associated with the **peirata gaiês** 'extremities of Earth', see in general Bergren 1975; for a correlation with the earth-encircling cosmic river Okeanos, see Nagy 1973.148-154.

§28n2. The verb **anapsûkhein** 'reanimate' ([iv 568](#)) implies, I propose, that death had somehow preceded the ultimate state of immortality. See further at [Ch.10§28](#). After all, the prophecy at [iv 561-562](#) says to Menelaos not that he will not die but that he will not die in Argos. In general, the experience of death seems to be a latent element in myths telling of abductions into a state of immortality: see [Ch.10§§26-28](#). In its other attestations, **anapsûkhein** overtly means not "bring back to life" but simply "bring back to vigor" (see [V 795](#), [XIII 84](#), [Hesiod W&D 608](#)); this semantic restriction, however, is due to specialization of contexts. Compare the behavior of **psûkhê** in epic fiction. Both swooning and dying can be conveyed by the theme of *losing one's psûkhê*, as at [V 696](#) and [XVI 856](#) respectively; in the case of a swoon as at [V 696](#), revival is conveyed by the theme of *regaining one's breath*: note [ampnunthê](#) at [V 697](#) (here it is the wind Boreas that restores the hero's breath: [V 697-698](#)). The actual word **psûkhê**, however, is not even used in contexts of reviving from a swoon--let alone reviving from

death. Yet the **psûkhê** that is lost in the process of swooning is surely the same **psûkhê** that is regained in the process of reviving from the swoon. For the reading [ampnunthê](#) at [V 697](#) and [XIV 436](#) (instead of [empnunthê](#)), see Schnafer 1970.199n540. My interpretation, however, differs from his. Finally, consider the collocation of **psûkhai** (subject) and **psûkhontai** (verb) in the gold leaf of Hippionion (Zuntz 1976.133, line 4); note too the mention of **psûkhron hudôr** (*ibid.*, line 7), flowing from the spring of **Mnâmosunâ** (*ibid.*, lines 6 and 12). I propose to examine more closely the contexts of these words in another project. (See now Nagy 1990b.90-91.)

§29n1. *W&D* 169 has been renumbered as 173a and bracketed along with 173b-e in West's edition (1978.194-195). Even if 173b-e are indeed interpolated, it does not follow that the same goes for 169=173a. The instability of this line in the textual tradition may actually be due to a misunderstanding of the Kronos theme, which I interpret to be cyclic.

§30n1. In Celtic and Indic lore, the number 5 following the sequence 1-2-3-4 is a symbol of integration and centrality (see Rees and Rees 1961.118-204). I suspect that this symbolism is cognate with the traditions underlying the Hesiodic Myth of the Five Generations.

§30n2. The theme of being released after death from the cycle of man's existence is directly attested in the Thurian gold leaf A1 (Zuntz 1971.301 line 5), where the persona of the dead man declares:

[kuklou d'](#) exeptan barupentheos [argaleoio](#).

I rushed out of the woeful **kuklos** of heavy **penthos** [grief].

Whether we translate **kuklos** abstractly as "circle" or concretely as "wheel," it clearly applies here to the human condition (Zuntz, pp. 320-322). Note that the Pythagorean word for "reincarnation" is **anakuklôsis** (p. 99.30DK; cf. Zuntz, p. 336). For another instance where **kuklos** designates the cyclic nature of man's existence, cf. [Herodotus 1.207.2](#): if Cyrus recognizes that he is a mortal rather than an immortal, says Croesus, then he should accept the teaching "that there is a **kuklos** of human affairs" ([ekeino prôton mathe hôs kuklos tôn anthrôpêiôn esti prêgmatô](#)). On a synchronic level, the immediate sense here is "wheel of fortune," but the ultimate context is still

the predicament of mortality. Note that the persona of the dead man in the Thurian gold leaf A1 declares that he has become, after death, part of the **olbion genos** 'blessed breed' of immortals (Zuntz, p. 301, line 3; cf. also gold leaves A2 and A3) and that he will henceforth be addressed as **olbie kai makariste** 'holy and blessed' (line 8). Cf. **olbioi hêrôes** 'blessed heroes' ([W&D 172](#)), describing the immortalized fourth **genos** ('generation, breed') of mankind, who abide en makarôn nêsoisi 'on the Isles of the Blessed [makares]' ([W&D 171](#)). For more on the Thurian gold leaves, see [Ch.10§20n5](#).

§31n1. For the inherited connections of the **thrênos** as a genre with the obsolescent institution of ancestor worship even in the classical period, see [Ch.6§28](#): the cult of heroes in the **polis** evolved at least partly from the worship of ancestors in the **genos** 'clan'. Note that Simonides *fr. 523P*, which tells how the **hêmitheoi** (line 2) are destined not to have a **bios** 'lifespan' that is **aphthitos** 'unfailing' (line 3), is an excerpt from a **thrênos** (Stobaeus 4.34.14). From the standpoint of the comparative method, the themes of the **thrênos** include elements archaic enough to be of Indo-European pedigree (see Vian 1963.118).

§31n2. The passage is quoted by [Plato Meno 81b](#) to illustrate a traditional ideology preserved in social circles that he describes as well-versed in sacral lore. For a correlation of the ideology in this **thrênos** with the ideology of the Thurian gold leaves, cf. Zuntz 1971.313. I draw special attention to the words **poinâ** 'compensation' and **penthos** 'grief' in the Pindaric fragment. The function of the latter word as a formal mark of lamentation has already been examined in detail ([Ch.6](#)); we have also seen it characterize the **kuklos** of life in the Thurian gold leaf A1: barupentheos 'of heavy **penthos**' (see [§30n2](#)). As for the former word, it figures prominently in the Thurian gold leaves A2 and A3 (Zuntz, pp. 303 and 305, line 4):

poinan d' antapeteis' ergôn henek' outi dikaiôn

and I paid compensation for unjust deeds [deeds without **dikê**]

We recall the absence and presence of **dikê** in Generations II/III and I/IV respectively (see [§7](#)).

§31n3. Cf. [§4n5](#). In the Pharsalian gold leaf B1 (Zuntz, p. 359, line 11), the dead man is given the following promise for the afterlife:[kai tot' epeit'](#) [a\[lloisi meth'\] hérôessin anaxe\[i\]](#) [sand then you will be king along with the other hérôes]

§31n4. See Finley 1955.59: "nominally an *epinikion*, it [Olympian 2] is in fact a consolatory poem and a meditation on death." See also Bollack 1963 and Sinos 1975.136. Note that the **thrênos** itself as a genre is not restricted to the actual occasion of a funeral (Proclus *Chrestomathy* p. 247.16 ff. Westphal); see also Nilsson 1951 [= 1911] 98.

§31n5. The same theme recurs in a genuine **thrênos** by Pindar, *fr. 129.5SM*, where the description again concerns the Isles of the Blessed; cf. Sinos 1975.134-138.

§32n1. In the Proclus summary of the *Aithiopis*, the distinction between the **thrênoi** of the Muses and the **gooi** of Thetis and the Nereids is blurred (Thetis, with the Muses, [thrênei ton paida](#) 'mourns his son': Proclus p. 106.13-14 Allen). We may infer, however, that the actual narrative of the *Aithiopis* did maintain this distinction: cf. [Odyssey xxiv 58-61](#) and the comments at [Ch.6 §§23-24](#).

§33n1. [§12 above](#).

§33n2. For the limited time that Hektor is to be immune from death (see [XVII 198-208](#)), Zeus seals him in the armor of Achilles ([XVII 209-212](#)). Hektor had been able to kill Patroklos and despoil the armor of Achilles specifically because Apollo had first stripped away this armor in his attack on Patroklos ([XVI 787-804](#)). By the time that Hektor delivers the mortal blow, Patroklos has been denuded of the armor ([XVI 815](#)). See Thieme 1968 [= 1952] 120-121. When Hektor in turn wears this armor, he will be immune to everything except the ash spear of Achilles, with which he is mortally wounded (see [XXII 319-330](#)). Ironically, the immortal apparatus of Achilles can thus be penetrated only by an emblem of mortality (see further at [§12 above](#)).

Chapter 10

Poetic Visions of Immortality for the Hero

§1. Upon having their lifespan cut short by death, heroes receive as consolation the promise of immortality, but this state of immortality after death is located at the extremes of our universe, far removed from the realities of the here-and-now. We in this life have to keep reminding ourselves that the hero who died is still capable of pleasure, that he can still enjoy such real things as convivial feasts in the pleasant company of other youths like him. It is in this sort of spirit that the *Banquet Song for Harmodios* is composed, honoring the young man who had achieved the status of being worshiped as a hero by the Athenians for having died a tyrant killer:[1]

philtath' Harmodi', ou ti pou tethnêkas,
nêsois d' en makarôn se phasin einai,
hina per podôkês Achileus
Tudeidên te phasi ton esthlon Diomêdea

Harmodios, most **philos!** Surely you are not at all dead, but they say that you are on the Isles of the Blessed, the same place where swift-footed Achilles is, and they say that the worthy Diomedes,[2] son of Tydeus, is there too.

Skolion 894P

The perfect tense of the verb ou ... tethnêkas 'you are not dead' leaves room for the reality of the hero's death: it is not that he did not die, but that he is not dead now. The fact of death, even for the hero, is painfully real and preoccupying. Consider this excerpt from a **thrênos** by Simonides:[3]

oude gar hoi proteron pot' epelonto
theôn d' ex anaktôn egenonth' huies hêmitheoi,
aponon oud' aphthiton oud' akindunon bion
es gêras exikonto telesantes

Not even those who were before, once upon a time,
and who were born **hēmitheoi** as sons of the lord-gods,
not even they reached old age by bringing to a close a lifespan that is
without toil, that is **aphthitos** [unfailing], that is without danger.

Simonides *fr. 523P*

Not even heroes, then, have a **bios** 'lifespan' that is **aphthitos** 'unfailing';
they too have to die before the immortality that is promised by the **thrēnoi**
comes true.[\[4\]](#)

§2. Even in the *Aithiopis*, the immortality reached by Achilles is not an immediate but a remote state: after death, the hero is permanently removed from the here-and-now of the Achaeans who mourn him. For them, the immediacy of Achilles after death has to take the form of a funeral (*Aithiopis*/Proclus p. 106.12-16 Allen), which includes not only such things as the singing of **thrēnoi** over his body (*ibid.* 12-13) but also--even after Achilles has already been transported to his immortal state--the actual building of a funeral mound and the holding of funeral games in his honor (*ibid.* 15-16). I conclude, then, that even in the *Aithiopis* the immortality of Achilles is predicated on his death, which is the occasion for the **thrēnoisung** by the Muses as a consolation for his death. In the *Iliad*, the theme of immortality is similarly predicated on the death of Achilles, but here the focus of consolation is not on the hero's afterlife, but rather, on the eternal survival of the epic that glorifies him.

§3. As we now proceed to examine the diction in which this theme is expressed, we must keep in mind the words in the **thrēnos** of Simonides (523P): even the heroes themselves fail to have a **bios** 'lifespan' that is **aphthitos** 'unfailing'. In the *Iliad*, Achilles himself says that he will have no **kleos** if he leaves Troy and goes home to live on into old age ([IX 414-416](#))--but that he will indeed have a **kleos** that is **aphthiton** 'unfailing' ([IX 413](#)) if he stays to fight at Troy and dies young.[\[1\]](#) The same theme of the eternity achieved by the hero *within epic* recurs in Pindar's *Isthmian 8*, and again it is expressed with the same root **phthi-** as in **aphthito-**; he will have a **kleos** that is everlasting (cf. [xxiv 93-94](#)):

ton men oude thanont' aoidai ti lipon
alla hoi para te puran taphon th' Helikônai parthenoi
stan, epi thrênon te poluphamon echean.
edox' ara kai athanatois,
esthlon ge phôta kai phthimenon humnois thean didomen

But when he [Achilles] died, the songs did not leave him,
but the Heliconian Maidens [Muses] stood by his funeral pyre and his
funeral mound,
and they poured forth a **thrênos** that is very renowned.
And so the gods decided
to hand over the worthy man, dead as he was [**phthimenes**], to the
songs of the goddesses [Muses].^[2]

Pindar I.8.62-66

The key word of the moment, **phthi-menos**, which I translate here in the conventional mode as "dead," is formed from a root that also carries with it the inherited metaphorical force of vegetal imagery: **phthi-** inherits the meaning "wilt," as in **karpoûphthisin** 'wilting of the crops' (Pindar *Paean* 9.14).^[3] Through the comparative method, we can recover kindred vegetal imagery in another derivative of the root, the epithet **a-phthi-ton** as it applies to the **kleos** of Achilles at [IX 413](#).^[4]

§4. As in the *Iliad*, the contrast in this Pindaric passage concerns the mortality of Achilles and the immortality conferred by the songs of the Muses. More specifically, Pindar's words are also implying that the epic of Achilles amounts to an eternal outflow of the **thrênos** performed for Achilles by the Muses themselves. In this light, let us now consider again the Homeric evidence. In the *Odyssey*, the description of the funeral that the Achaeans hold for Achilles includes such details as the **thrênos** of the Muses ([xxiv 60-61](#)) and ends with the retrospective thought that "in this way" (hôs: [xxiv 93](#)) the hero kept his fame even after death and that he will have a **kleos** that is everlasting ([xxiv 93-94](#)). We get more evidence from the *Iliad* in the form of a correlation between theme and form. The forms are the actual names of **Akhil(l)eus** (from *Akhi-lâuos 'having a grieving lâos') and **Patrokleês** ('having the **kleos** of the ancestors'). As I have argued,^[1] the figure of **Patro-kleês** is in the *Iliad* the thematic key to the

kleos aphthiton of Achilles, while **Akhi-l(I)eus** is commensurately the key to the collective **akhos** 'grief' that the Achaeans have for Patroklos on the occasion of his funeral. Since this **akhos** takes the social form of lamentations even within the epic of the *Iliad*,^[2] we can say that the theme we found in Pindar's *Isthmian* 8 is already active in the Homeric tradition; here too, lamentation extends into epic.

§5. Up to now, I have been stressing the remoteness inherent in the concept of immortality after death, as we find it pictured in the formal discourse of the **thrênos** and then transposed into the narrative traditions of epic. In contrast to the remoteness of this immortality stands the stark immediacy of death, conveyed forcefully within the same medium of the **thrênos** and beyond. We are again reminded of the excerpt from the **thrênos** of Simonides, which says that even the **bios** 'lifespan' of the heroes themselves fails to be **aphthitos** (523P). The latent vegetal imagery in this theme--that the life of man "wilts" like a plant--brings us now to yet another important contrast in the poetic representations of immortality and death. Traditional Hellenic poetry makes the opposition immortality/ death not only remote/immediate but also artificial/natural. To put it another way: death and immortality are presented in terms of nature and culture respectively.^[1]

§6. In *Iliad VI*, Diomedes is about to attack Glaukos, but first he asks his opponent whether he is a god, not wishing at this time to fight an immortal (*VI 119-143*; see the words for "mortal"/"immortal" at 123, 142/128, 140 respectively). In response, Glaukos begins by saying:

Tudeïdê megathume, tiê geneên ereeineis;
hoiê per phullôn geneê, toiê de kai andrôn.
phulla ta men t' anemos chamadis cheei, alla de th' hulê
têlethoôsa phuei, earos d' epigignetai hôrê.
hôs andrôn geneê hê men phuei hê d' apolêgei

Son of Tydeus, you with the great **thûmos**! Why do you ask about my **geneê** [lineage, line of birth]?^[1]

The **geneê** of men is like the **geneê** of leaves.
Some leaves are shed on the earth by the wind,
while others are grown by the greening forest

--and the season of spring is at hand.
So also the **geneē** of men: one grows, another wilts.[\[2\]](#)

[VI 145-149](#)

Here the life and death of mortals are being overtly compared to a natural process, the growing and wilting of leaves on trees.[\[3\]](#) In another such Homeric display of vegetal imagery, in this case spoken by the god Apollo himself as he talks about the human condition, this *natural* aspect of death is expressed specifically with the root **phthi-**:

[ei dê soi ge brotôn heneka ptolemixô](#)
[deilôn, hoi phulloisin eoikotes allote men te](#)
[zaphlegees telethousin, arourês karpon edontes,](#)
[allote de phthinuthousin akêrioi](#)

... if I should fight you on account of mortals,
the wretches, who are like leaves. At given times,
they come to their fullness, bursting forth in radiance,[\[4\]](#) eating the
crops of the Earth,
while at other times they wilt [phthi-nuthousin], victims of fate.

[XXI 463-466](#)

§7. Let us straightway contrast the immortalized heroes on the Isles of the Blessed, whose abode flourishes with *golden* plant life ([Pindar O.2.72](#)-74; *Thrênos fr. 129.5SM*). Also, let us contrast the First Generation of Mankind, whose very essence is gold ([W&D 109](#)). The immortality of the Golden Age is specifically correlated with the *suspension of a vegetal cycle*: in the Golden Age ([W&D 117-118](#)) as on the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 172-173](#)), the earth bears crops *without interruption*. The description of Elysium supplements this picture: in the state of immortality, there is simply *no winter*, nor any bad weather at all ([iv 566-568](#)).

§8. In these images, we see gold as a general symbol for the artificial continuum of immortality, in opposition to the natural cycle of life and death as symbolized by the flourishing and wilting of leaves on trees, where the theme of wilting is conventionally denoted with derivatives of the root

phthi-. As we now set about to look for specific words that express this cultural negation of the vegetal cycle, we come back again to the negative epithet **aphthito-**. Let us begin with the **skēptron**'scepter' of Agamemnon ([I 245-246](#)), by which Achilles takes his mighty oath ([I 234-244](#)), and which is specifically described as "gold-studded" ([chruseiois hēloisi peparmenon](#): [I 246](#)) and "golden" ([chruseou](#): [II 268](#)). This **skēptron**, by which Agamemnon holds sway in Argos ([II 108](#)) and which an Achaean chieftain is bound by custom to hold in moments of solemn interchange ([I 237-239](#), [II 185-187](#)), also qualifies specifically as **aphthiton aiei'imperishable forever'** ([II 46](#), 186). It was made by the ultimate craftsman, Hephaistos ([II 101](#)), whose divine handicraft may be conventionally designated as both golden and **aphthito-** (e.g., [XIV 238-239](#)).^[1] Significantly, this everlasting artifact of a **skēptron** provides the basis for the Oath of Achilles in form as well as in function:

[all' ek toi ereô kai epi megan horkon omoumai:](#)
[nai ma tote skêptron, to men ou pote phulla kai ozous](#)
[phusei, epeï dê prôta tomén en oressi leloipen,](#)
[oud' anathêlêsei: peri gar rha he chalkos elepse](#)
[phulla te kai phloion. nun aute min huies Achaiôn](#)
[en palamêis phoreousi dikapoloi](#)

But I will say to you and swear a great oath:
I swear by this **skēptron**, which will no longer ever grow leaves and shoots,
ever since it has left its place where it was cut down on the mountaintops--
and it will never bloom again, for Bronze has trimmed its leaves and bark.
But now the sons of the Achaeans hold it in their hands as they carry out **dikai**.

[I 233-237](#)

Achilles is here swearing not only by the **skēptron** but also in terms of what the **skēptron** is--a thing of nature that has been transformed into a thing of culture.^[2] The Oath of Achilles is meant to be just as permanent and irreversible as the process of turning a shaft of living wood into a social

artifact.^[3] And just as the **skêptron** is imperishable '**aphthiton'**, so also the Oath of Achilles is eternally valid, in that Agamemnon and the Achaeans will permanently regret not having given the hero of the *Iliad* his due **tîmê** ([I 240-244](#)).

§9. For another Homeric instance featuring **aphthito-** as an epithet suitable for situations where the natural cycle of flourishing and wilting is negated, let us consider the Island of the Cyclopes. In [Odyssey ix 116-141](#), this island and the mainland facing it are described in a manner that would suit the ideal Hellenic colony and its ideal **peraiâ** respectively,^[1] if it were not for two special circumstances: the mainland is inhabited by Cyclopes, who are devoid of civilization ([ix 106-115](#)), while the island itself is populated by no one at all--neither by humans nor even by Cyclopes, since they cannot navigate ([ix 123-125](#)). At the very mention of navigation, there now follows a "what-if" narrative about the idealized place that the Island would become *if it were colonized* ([ix 126-129](#)).^[2] If only there were ships ([ix 126-127](#)), and these ships reached the Island, there would be commerce ([ix 127-129](#)), and then there would also be agriculture, yielding limitless crops ([ix 130-135](#)). What is more, the grapevines produced by this ideal never-never land would be **aphthitoi** 'unfailing' ([ix 133](#)). Thus if culture rather than nature prevailed on the Island of the Cyclopes, then its local wine would bear the mark of immortality. Again we see the epithet **aphthito-** denoting permanence in terms of *culture* imposed on *nature*.

§10. In fact, the epithet **aphthito-** functions as a mark of not only culture but even cult itself. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the infant Demophon is destined by the goddess to have a **tîmê**'cult' that is **aphthitos** ([H.Dem. 261](#), 263), and this boon is contrasted directly with the certainty that he is *not* to avoid death ([H.Dem. 262](#)).^[1] As Demophon's substitute mother, Demeter had actually been preparing him for a life that is never to be interrupted by death ([H.Dem. 242](#), 261-262), but the inadvertence of the infant's real mother had brought that plan to naught ([H.Dem. 243-258](#)). Still, Demophon is destined by the goddess to achieve immortality on the level of cult, so that her preparation of the infant was not in vain. We in fact catch a glimpse of the child's destiny as a hero of cult in the following description of how the goddess had been preparing him to be immortal:

etrephen en megarois: ho d' aexeto daimoni isos
out' oun siton edôn, ou thêsamenos

...
chriesk' ambrosiêi hôs ei theou ekgegaôta,
hêdu katapneiousa kai en kolpoisin echousa:[2]
nuktas de krupteske puros menei êute dalon
lathra philôn goneôn: tois de mega thaum' etetukto
hôs prothalês teletheske, theoisi de anta eôikei

She nurtured him in the palace, and he grew up like a daimôn,
not eating food, not sucking from the breast

...
She used to anoint him with ambrosia, as if he had been born of the
goddess,[3]
and she would breathe down her sweet breath on him as she held him
at her bosom.
At nights she would conceal him within the **menos** of fire,[4] as if he
were a smoldering log,[5]
and his parents were kept unaware. But they marveled
at how full in bloom he came to be, and to look at him was like
looking at the gods.

H.Dem. 235-236, 237-241

The underscored phrase at verse 235, meaning "and he grew up like a **daimôn**," contains a word that we have in fact already seen in the specific function of designating heroes on the level of cult (Hesiod W&D 122, Th. 991).[6]

§11. This same underscored phrase, as Sinos points out,[1] has an important formal parallel in the *Iliad*:[2]

ô moi egô deilê, ô moi dusaristotokeia,
hê t' epei ar tekon huion amumona te krateron te,
exochon hérôôn: ho d' anedramen erneï isos
ton men egô threpsasa, phuton hôs gounôi alôês,
nêusin epiproeêka korônisin Ilion eisô

Trôsi machêsomenon: ton d' ouch hypodexomai autis
oikade nostêSanta domon Pélêion eisô.

Ah me, the wretch! Ah me, the mother--so sad it is--of the very best.
I gave birth to a faultless and strong son,
the very best of heroes.^[3] And he shot up like a seedling.^[4]
I nurtured him^[5] like a shoot in the choicest spot of the orchard,^[6]
only to send him off on curved ships to fight at Troy. And I will never
be welcoming him back home as returning warrior, back to the House
of Peleus.

XVIII 54-60

The context of these words is an actual lamentation (**goos**: [XVIII 51](#)), sung by the mother of Achilles himself over the death of her son^[7] --a death that is presupposed by the narrative from the very moment that the death of the hero's surrogate Patroklos is announced to him.^[8]

§12. It appears, then, that the mortality of a cult figure like Demophon is a theme that calls for the same sort of vegetal imagery as is appropriate to the mortality of Achilles. The examples can be multiplied: like the hero of the *Iliad*, who is likened to a young shoot with words like **phuton** ([XVIII 57](#), 438) and **ernos** ([XVIII 56](#), 437),^[1] the hero of the *Hymn to Demeter* is directly called a **neon thalos** 'young sprout' ([H.Dem. 66](#), 187).^[2] Moreover, we have seen that this theme of mortality common to Demophon and Achilles is replete with the same sort of imagery that we find specifically in the genre of lamentation (consider again the **goos** of Thetis, [XVIII 54-60](#)).
^[3]

§13. In this light, let us reconsider the epithet **aphthito-**. We have already seen that it conveys the *cultural* negation of a *natural* process, the growing and the wilting of plants, and also, by extension, the life and the death of mortals. Now we must examine how this epithet conveys the theme of immortality in its application to Demophon and Achilles as heroes of cult and epic respectively. As compensation for the death that he cannot escape, Demophon gets a **tîmê** that is **aphthitos** ([H.Dem. 261](#), 263); likewise, Achilles gets a **kleos** that is **aphthiton** ([IX 413](#)). Thus both heroes are destined for immortality in the form of a *cultural* institution that is

predicated on the *natural* process of death. For Demophon, this predication is direct but implicit: by getting **tîmê** he is incorporated into hero cult, a general institution that is implicitly built around the basic principle that the hero must die.^[1] For the Achilles of our *Iliad*, this same predication is explicit but indirect: by getting **kleos** he is incorporated into epic, which is presented *by epic itself* as an eternal extension of the lamentation sung by the Muses over the hero's death ([xxiv 60-61](#), 93-94).^[2] Thus the specific institution of lamentation, which is an aspect of hero-cult and which is implicit in the very name of Achilles, leads to the **kleos** of epic. For both heroes, the key to immortality is the permanence of the cultural institutions into which they are incorporated--cult for Demophon, epic for the Achilles of our *Iliad*. Both manifestations of both institutions qualify as **aphthito-**.

§14. For the Achilles of our *Iliad*, the **kleos aphthiton** of epic ([IX 413](#)) offers not only an apparatus of heroic immortality but also a paradox about the human condition of the hero. Achilles himself says that the way for him to achieve this **kleos aphthiton** is to die at Troy ([IX 412-413](#)), and that the way to lose **kleos** is to live life as a mortal, at home in **Phthîê** ([IX 413-416](#)). The overt Iliadic contrast of **kleos aphthiton** with the negation of **kleos** in the context of **Phthîê** is remarkable in view of the element **phthi-** contained by the place name. From the wording of [Iliad IX 412-416](#), we are led to suspect that this element **phthi-** is either a genuine formant of **Phthîêor** is at least perceived as such in the process of Homeric composition. We see the actual correlation of the intransitive verb **phthi-** (middle endings) 'perish' with **Phthîê** at [XIX 328-330](#), where Achilles is wishing that he alone had died at Troy and that his surrogate Patroklos had lived to come home. Again, coming home to **Phthîê** ([XIX 330](#)) is overtly contrasted with dying '**phthîsesthai**' at Troy ([XIX 329](#)).^[1] If indeed the name for the homeland of Achilles is motivated by the theme of vegetal death as conveyed by the root **phthi-**, then the traditional epithet reserved for the place is all the more remarkable: **Phthîê** is **bôtianeira** 'nourisher of men' ([I 155](#)). The combination seems to produce a *coincidentia oppositorum*,^[2] in that the place name conveys the death of plants while its epithet conveys the life of plants--as it sustains the life of mortals. The element **bôti-** in this compound **bôti-aneira** stems from the verb system of **boskô** 'nourish', a word that specifically denotes the sustenance, *by vegetation*, of grazing animals, as at [xiv 102](#), and of men, as at [xi 365](#). In the latter instance, the object of the

verb **boskei** 'nourishes' is **anthrōpous** 'men', and the subject is actually **gaīa** 'Earth'. [3] Thus the life and death of mortal men is based on the life and death of the plants that are grown for their nourishment: this is the message of the epithet **bōtianeira** in its application to the homeland of Achilles. **Phthiē** is the hero's local Earth, offering him the natural cycle of life and death as an alternative to his permanent existence within the cultural medium of epic.

§15. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the foil for the permanence of cult as a cultural institution is also expressed by way of vegetal imagery: this time the image that we are considering is not the prolonged life but the prolonged death of plants, as denoted by the root **phthi-**. In contrast with the application of **aphthito-** to the **tîmê** of Demophon, let us consider the wording of the myth that tells how the permanence of all cult was endangered when the goddess Demeter prolonged indefinitely the failure of plant life:

epei mega mēdetai ergon
phthisai phul amenêna chamaigeneôn anthrōpô
sperm' hupo gês kruptousa, kataphthinuthousa de timas athanatô

For she [Demeter] is performing [1] a mighty deed,
to destroy [**phthi-sai**] the tribes of earth-born men, causing them to be
witout menos,
by hiding the Seed underground--and she is destroying [**kata-phthi-**
nuthousa] the **tîmai** of the immortal gods.

H.Dem. 351-354

First, we are shown what the prolonged death of vegetation does to mortals, and we start with the adjective **amenêna** 'without **menos**' at verse 352, derived from the noun **menos** 'power'. [2] This epithet is proleptic, in that it anticipates what Demeter does to mortals by virtue of taking away the sustenance of vegetation: she thereby takes away their **menos**, and this action is here equated with the action of **phthîsai** at verse 352, meaning "destroy" or, from the metaphorical standpoint of human life as plant life, "cause [plants] to fail." [3] In Homeric diction, the intransitive uses of the same verb **phthi-** can designate the failing of wine supplies (ix 163) and of

food supplies ([xii 329](#)); when the food supplies fail, **katephthito**, the **menea** of men who eat them fail also ([iv 363](#)). Second, we are shown what the prolonged death of vegetation does to the immortal gods: again, the action of Demeter is designated with the verb **phthi-** (**kataphthinuthousa**, verse 353), but here the image of plant failure applies not to the gods directly but to their **tîmai** 'cults' instead. The impact of prolonged plant failure on cult is explicit:

[kai nu ke pampan olesse genos meropôn anthrôpôn](#)
[limou hup' argaleês, geraôn t' erikudea timên](#)
[kai thusiôn êmersen Olumpia dômat' echontas](#)

She [Demeter] would have completely destroyed the **genos** of **meropes** men
with the painful famine, and she would have taken away from the gods
who live in their Olympian abode
the **tîmê** of honorific portions and sacrifices.[\[4\]](#)

[H.Dem. 310-312](#)

We see, then, that the indefinite perpetuation of vegetal death as expressed by **phthi-** is a natural image of cosmic disorder; it functions as a foil for the cultural image of cosmic order, as represented by the indefinite perpetuation of vegetal life and as expressed by **aphthito-**. We also see now more clearly the suitability of this epithet **aphthito-** for the function of defining not only cult in particular but also the eternal cosmic apparatus of the immortal gods in general.[\[5\]](#)

§16. The cosmic order of the Olympians is of course not only *permanent* but also *sacred*, and in fact both these qualities are conveyed by the same epithet **aphthito-**.[\[1\]](#) As we see from the Hesiodic tradition, nothing is more sacred or binding for the Olympians than taking an oath in the name of the Styx ([Th. 793-805](#)), and the river's waters in this particular context are specifically called **aphthito-** ([Stugos aphthiton hudôr](#): [Th. 805](#)). If a god breaks such an oath, he has to endure the worst of punishments ([Th. 793-805](#)), which include the temporary withdrawal of divine sustenance, nectar and ambrosia ([Th. 796-797](#)).[\[2\]](#) The children of the Styx, **Kratos** and **Biê** ([Th. 385](#)), uphold the cosmic régime of Zeus ([Th. 385-403](#)), and in this

context the river herself is called **aphthito-** ([Stux aphthitos](#): [Th. 389, 397](#)). In the Homeric tradition as well (the *Hymns* included), to swear by the Styx is for any god the most sacrosanct of actions ([XV 37-38](#), v 185-186, [H.Apollo 85-86](#)). When the goddess Demeter thus takes her oath in the name of the Styx ([H.Dem. 259](#)), what she swears is that the infant Demophon would have had a life uninterrupted by death ([H.Dem. 260-261](#)) and a **tîmê** that is **aphthitos** ([H.Dem. 261](#)). Demeter then says that the inadvertence of the infant's real mother has negated the first part of the Oath ([H.Dem. 262](#)), but the second part remains valid: Demophon will still have a **tîmê** that is **aphthitos** ([H.Dem. 263](#)). We now see that the epithet **aphthito-** in this context conveys not only the permanence of Demophon's cult, but also its intrinsic sacredness, as conferred by the essence of Demeter's Oath.[\[3\]](#)

§17. So also Achilles swears by the **skêptron** of King Agamemnon ([I 234-239](#)), affirming both that the Achaeans will one day yearn for him and that Agamemnon will then regret not having given "the best of the Achaeans" his due **tîmê** ([I 240-244](#)). Here we must keep in mind that the **skêptron** itself is **aphthiton** ([II 46](#), 186). Accordingly, the Oath of Achilles is not only permanent in its validity but also sacred. Moreover, the wish that the mother of Achilles conveys from the hero to Zeus is phrased from the standpoint of the Oath: let the Achaeans be hard pressed without the might of Achilles, and let their king regret not having given the hero his due **tîmê** ([I 409-412](#)). It is this wish that Thetis presents to Zeus ([I 503-510](#)), with special emphasis on the **tîmê** of Achilles ([I 505](#), 507, 508, 510bis), and it is this wish that Zeus ratifies irrevocably ([I 524-530](#)). In this way, the Oath of Achilles is translated into the Will of Zeus, which, as we have seen, is the self-proclaimed plot of our *Iliad*.[\[1\]](#) The oath is sacred because it is founded on the **skêptron**, which is **aphthiton**; now we see that the epic validating the **tîmê** of Achilles is also sacred, for the very reason that it is founded on this Oath. Accordingly, the epithet **aphthito-** as it applies to the **kleos** of Achilles ([IX 413](#)) conveys not only the permanence of the hero's epic but also its intrinsic sacredness as conferred by the essence of the hero's Oath.

§18. The traditional application of **aphthito-** to both the cult of Demophon and the epic of Achilles serves as a key to what is for us a missing theme in the archaic story of Achilles. In the case of Demophon, we have seen how

the hero gets a **tîmê** that is **aphthitos** because the goddess swears by the Styx, which is itself **aphthitos**. We have yet to follow through, however, on what such a combination of **Stux** and **aphthitos** implies: *that the waters of the Styx are an elixir of life.*^[1] The lore about the cosmic stream Styx applies commensurately to the actual stream Styx in Arcadia,^[2] and in fact the belief prevails to this day that whoever drinks of that stream's waters *under the right conditions* may gain immortality.^[3] The point is that there survives for us a story telling how Thetis had immersed the infant Achilles into the waters of the Styx, in an unsuccessful attempt to exempt him from death (Statius *Achilleid* 1.269; *Servius ad Virgil Aeneid 6.57*; etc.). This failure of Thetis must be compared with the failure of Demeter in her attempt to make Demophon immortal. It would indeed be conventional for scholars to consider the story of Achilles in the Styx as a parallel to that of Demophon in the fire, if it were not for the fact that there is no attestation of such an Achilles story in archaic poetry.^[4] This obstacle may now perhaps be overcome with the indirect testimony of the epithet **aphthito-**: for both Demophon and Achilles, this word marks a compensatory form of immortality, and the Stygian authority of this deathlessness is overt in the case of Demophon. In the case of Achilles, we may say that the authority of the **skêptron** is a worthy variation on the authority of the **Stux**, in that both **skêptron** and **Stux** are intrinsically **aphthito-**. From the standpoint of diction, either could ratify the **kleos** of Achilles as **aphthiton**.

§19. As our lengthy survey of the word **aphthito-** in Homeric and Hesiodic diction comes to an end, we conclude that this epithet can denote the permanent and sacred order of the Olympians,^[1] into which the hero is incorporated after death through such cultural media as epic in particular and cult in general.

§20. It remains to ask a more important question: whether the theme of the hero immortalized in cult is compatible with the poetic visions of the hero immortalized by being transported to Elysium, to the Isles of the Blessed, or even to Olympus itself. Rohde, for one, thought that the concept of heroes being transported into a remote state of immortality is purely poetic and thus alien to the religious concept of heroes being venerated in cult.^[1] From the actual evidence of cult, however, we see that the two concepts are not at all treated as if they were at odds with each other.^[2] In fact, the

forms **Êlusion** 'Elysium' and **Makarôn nêsoi**'Isles of the Blessed' are appropriate as names for actual cult sites. The proper noun **Êlusion** coincides with the common noun **en-êlusion**, meaning 'place made sacred by virtue of being struck by the thunderbolt' (Polemon *fr.* 5 Tresp); correspondingly, the adjective **en-êlusios** means 'made sacred by virtue of being struck by the thunderbolt' (Aeschylus *fr.* 17N = *fr.* 263M).^[3] The form **Êlusion** itself is glossed in the Alexandrian lexicographical tradition (Hesychius) as *kekeraunômenon chôrion ê pedion* 'a place or field that has been struck by the thunderbolt', with this added remark: *kaleitai de kai enêlusia* 'and it is also called **enêlusia**'. As for **Makarôn nêbos**, there is a tradition that the name was actually applied to the old acropolis of Thebes, the Kadmeion; specifically, the name designated the sacred precinct where Semele, the mother of Dionysos, had been struck dead by the thunderbolt of Zeus (Parmenides *ap.* Suda and *ap.* Photius, s.v. **Makarôn nêbos**; Tzetzes *ad* Lycophron 1194, 1204).^[4] We are immediately reminded of the poetic tradition that tells how Semele became immortalized as a direct result of dying from the thunderbolt of Zeus (see [Pindar O.2.25](#), in conjunction with [Hesiod Th. 942](#)).^[5]

§21. We are in fact now ready to examine the general evidence of poetic traditions, in order to test whether the medium of poetry distinguishes this concept of heroes (or heroines) being transported into a state of immortality from the concept of their being venerated in cult. As with the evidence of cult itself, we will find that poetic diction reveals no contradiction between these two concepts.

§22. Actually, there are poetic themes that tell of a hero's actual veneration in cult, and these themes are even combined with those that tell of his translation into immortality. Such combinations in fact form an integral picture of the heroic afterlife, as in the Hesiodic version of the Phaethon myth:^[1]

[autar toi Kephalôi phitusato phaidimon huion,](#)
[iphthimon Phaethonta, theois epieikelon andra.](#)
[ton rha neon teren anthos echont' erikudeos hêbês](#)
[paid' atala phroneonta philommeidês Aphroditê](#)

ôrt' anereipsamenê, kai min zatheois eni néois
néopolon muchion poiêsato, daimona dion

And she [Eos] sprouted for Kephalos an illustrious son,
sturdy Phaethon, a man who looked like the gods.
When he was young and still had the tender bloom of glorious
adolescence,
Aphrodite **philommeidê**[2] rushed up and snatched him away as he
was thinking playful thoughts.
And she made him an underground temple attendant, a **dîos daimôn**,
in her holy temple.

Hesiod Th. 986-991

Phaethon in the afterlife is overtly presented as a **daimôn** of cult ([Th. 991](#)) who functions within an undisturbed corner plot, **mukhos**, of Aphrodite's precinct (hence **mukhios** at [Th. 991](#))[3] as the goddess's **nêopolos** 'temple attendant' (again [Th. 991](#)). The designation of Phaethon as **daimôn** also conveys the immortal aspect of the hero in his afterlife, since it puts him in the same category as the Golden Generation, who are themselves explicitly **daimones** ([W&D 122](#)).[4] As for the mortal aspect of Phaethon, we may observe the vegetal imagery surrounding his birth and adolescence. When he is about to be snatched away forever, he bears the **anthos** 'bloom' of adolescence ([Th. 988](#)). Earlier, the verb that denotes his very birth from Eos is **phîtûsato** ([Th. 986](#)): the Dawn Goddess "sprouted" him as if he were some plant. We see here in the *Theogony* the only application of **phîtûein** 'sprout' to the act of reproduction, which is elsewhere conventionally denoted by **tiktein** and **geinasthai**.[5] The most immediate parallel is the birth of the Athenian hero Erekhtheus, who was directly sprouted by Earth herself:

hon pot' Athênê
threpse Dios thugatêr, teke de zeidôros aroura,
kad d' en Athêneis heisen, heôi en pioni néoi.
entha de min tauroisi kai arneiois hilaontai
kouroi Athênaion peritellomenôn eniautôn

Athena the daughter of Zeus once upon a time
nurtured him, but grain-giving earth gave him birth,[\[6\]](#)
and she [Athena] established him in Athens, in her own rich temple,
and there it is that the **koûroi** of the Athenians supplicate him,
every year when the time comes, with bulls and lambs.

II 547-551

As with Phaethon, the immortal aspect of the hero Erekhtheus is conveyed by his permanent installation within the sacred precinct of a goddess.[\[7\]](#)

§23. We have yet to examine the actual process of Phaethon's translation into heroic immortality.[\[1\]](#) The key word is the participle **anereipsamenê** ([Th. 990](#)), describing Aphrodite at the moment that she snatches Phaethon away to be with her forever. The word recurs in the finite form **anêreipsanto** ([XX 234](#)), describing the gods as they abduct Ganymedes to be the cup bearer of Zeus for all time to come. In the next verse, we hear the motive for the divine action:

kalleos heineka hoio, hin' athanatoisi meteiê

on account of his beauty, so that he might be among the Immortals.

XX 235

The Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* elaborates on the same myth: it was Zeus himself who abducted Ganymedes ([H.Aphr. 202-203](#)). Here too, the motive is presented as the same:

hon dia kallos, hin' athanatoisi meteiê

on account of his beauty, so that he might be among the Immortals.

[H.Aphr. 203](#)

In this retelling as well as in all the others, Ganymedes becomes the cup bearer of Zeus; *and as such he abides in the gods' royal palace at Olympus* ([H.Aphr. 204-206](#)). By virtue of gaining Olympian status, he is in fact described as an Immortal himself:

athanatos kai agérôs isa theoisin

immortal and unaging, just as the gods are.[\[2\]](#)

H.Aphr. 214

As cup bearer and boy-love of Zeus, Ganymedes also qualifies as a **daimôn**:

paidophilein de ti terpnon, epei pote kai Ganumêdous
êrato kai Kronidês athanatôn basileus,
harpaxas d' es Olumpon anégage kai min ethêken
daimona, paideiês anthos echont' eraton

Loving a boy is a pleasant thing. For even the Son of Kronos, king of the Immortals, loved Ganymedes.

He abducted him, took him up to Olympus,[\[3\]](#) and made him a **daimôn**, having the lovely bloom of boyhood.

Theognis 1345-1348

The parallelisms between this Theognidean passage about Ganymedes and the Hesiodic passage about Phaethon ([Th. 986-991](#)) are remarkable not just because of the convergences in detail (both heroes are described as **daimôn**, both have the **anthos** 'bloom' of youth, etc.). An even more remarkable fact about these parallelisms is that the processes of *preservation on Olympus* and *preservation in cult* function as equivalent poetic themes.

§24. The parallelisms between the myth of Ganymedes and that of Phaethon lead to our discovery of further details about the process of heroic preservation. When the gods abducted '**anêreipsanto**' the young Ganymedes ([XX 234](#)), the specific instrument of the divine action was a gust of wind, an **aella**:

... hoppêi hoi philon huion anêrpase thespis aella

... to whatever place the wondrous **aella** abducted him

H.Aphr. 208

Actually, in every other Homeric attestation of **anêreipsanto** besides [XX 234](#), the notion "gusts of wind" serves as subject of the verb.[\[1\]](#) When Penelope mourns the unknown fate of her absent son Telemachus, she says:

nun au paid' agapêton anêreipsanto thuellai

But now the thuellai have abducted my beloved son.

[iv 727](#)

When Telemachus mourns the unknown fate of his absent father Odysseus, he says:[\[2\]](#)

nun de min akleiôs harpuiai anêreipsanto

But now the harpuiai have abducted him, without **kleos**.

[i 241](#)

§25. The meaning of **thuella** 'gust of wind' is certain (see the collocation of **thuella** with **anemoio** 'of wind' at [VI 346](#), etc.). As for **harpuria**, a word that is also personified as "Harpy" ([Th. 267](#)),[\[1\]](#) the same meaning "gust of wind" is apparent from the only remaining Homeric attestation of the verb **anêreipsanto** 'abducted'. After Penelope wishes that Artemis smite her dead and take her **thûmos** immediately, we hear her make an alternative wish:

ê epeita m' anarpaxasa thuella
oichoito propherousa kat' êeroenta keleutha,
en prochoêis de baloi apsorroou Ôkeanoio

or later, may a thuella abduct me;
may it go off and take me away along misty ways,
and plunge me into the streams of Okeanos, which flows in a circle.

[xx 63-65](#)

As precedent for being abducted by a gust of wind and cast down into the Okeanos, her words evoke the story about the daughters of Pandareos:

hôs d' hote Pandareou kouras anelonto thuellai

as when the **thuellai** took away the daughters of Pandareos

xx 66

This mention of abduction is followed by a description of how the Pandareids were preserved by the Olympian goddesses (xx 67-72). The preservation of the girls is then interrupted by death, at the very moment that Aphrodite is arranging for them to be married (xx 73-74). Death comes in the form of abduction:

tophra de tas kouras harpuiai anêreipsanto

then the **harpuiai** abducted the girls[2]

xx 77

§26. Our survey has by now covered all the Homeric/Hesiodic attestations of **anêreipsanto/anereipsamenê**, and we can reach several conclusions. Most important of all, we see that the divine abduction of mortals by gusts of wind (**thuellai** or **harpuiai**) entails not only preservation but also sex and death.[1] Of these last two experiences, we will leave the first in abeyance until we confront the second.

§27. In the imagery of passages featuring the forms **anêreipsanto/ anereipsamenê**, you experience death when the abducting winds plunge you into the earth-encircling river Okeanos. So we have seen from Penelope's death wish (xx 63-65). As we see further from Homeric diction, especially at xxiv 1-14, the Okeanos is one of the prime mythical boundaries that serve to delimit light from darkness, life from death, wakefulness from sleep, consciousness from unconsciousness.[1] The River Okeanos marks the cosmic extremities beyond Earth and Seas (cf. XIV 301-302). The Sun himself, Helios, plunges into it every sunset (VIII 485) and emerges from it every sunrise (VII 421-423, xix 433-434). As the Sun thus rises at Dawn from the Okeanos, he stirs the **arourai** 'fertile lands' (VII 421, xix 433),[2] and we are reminded by this action that the noun **aroura** itself traditionally attracts such epithets of fertility as **zeidôros**'grain-giving'

([II 548](#), [VIII 486](#), etc.).[\[3\]](#) Since plunging into the Okeanos overtly conveys death ([xx 63-65](#)), it follows that the notion of emerging from it conveys regeneration. For the Sun, we infer that regeneration through Okeanos is cosmic, bringing with it the fertility of Earth itself; in fact, Okeanos qualifies not only as **theōn genesin** 'genesis of gods' ([XIV 201](#), 302) but even as **genesis pantessi** 'genesis for all things' ([XIV 246](#)).

§28. In this light, it becomes significant that the Okeanos is also a traditional landmark both for the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 171](#)) and for Elysium itself ([iv 567-568](#)). What is more, the Okeanos in the context of Elysium has the specific function of reanimating mortals:[\[1\]](#)

[all' aiei Zephuroio ligu pneiontos aētas](#)
[Ôkeanos aniēsin anapsuchein anthrōpous](#)

but the Okeanos sends up the gusts of shrill-blowing Zephyros at all times, so as to reanimate men[\[2\]](#)

[iv 567-568](#)

On the basis, then, of incidental references to the Sun and its movements in epic diction, we can detect a solar model of death and regeneration--both through the Okeanos. Moreover, we see that this solar model applies to the general theme of the hero's return from death. As we now look for specific instances of this theme, we turn to the myths about the personification of sunrise, Eos. In doing so we also confront a third theme in the myths of abduction: having already noted death and preservation, we are ready to reckon with a theme of sex.

§29. There is an archaic tradition that features the Dawn Goddess Eos herself abducting young male mortals, and her motive is in part sexual.[\[1\]](#) In the *Odyssey*, the immortal nymph Kalypso cites the abduction of Orion by Eos as a precedent for her mating with Odysseus ([v 121-124](#)). Similarly, Aphrodite herself cites both the abduction of Ganymedes by Zeus and the abduction of Tithonus by Eos as precedents for her mating with Anchises ([H.Aphr. 202-238](#)). As for the abduction of Phaethon, again by Aphrodite, the precedent is built into the young hero's genealogy: his father Kephalos had been abducted by his mother Eos ([Th. 986](#); [Euripides Hippolytus 455](#)).

§30. As with the myth of Aphrodite and Phaethon, the myths of Eos too are marked by the design of making the hero immortal. Thus when Eos abducts Kleitos, her motive is described in these words:

kalleos heineka hoio, hin' athanatoisi meteī

on account of his beauty, so that he might be among the Immortals

xv 251

The very same words, as we have seen, mark the immortalization of Ganymedes after his abduction by Zeus ([XX 235](#); cf. [H.Aphr. 203](#)).^[1] The divine motive for abduction by Eos is thus both preservative and sexual.^[2]

§31. In order to see at a closer range the operation of a solar model in the myths of divine abduction, let us return to the Hesiodic myth of Phaethon ([Th. 986-991](#)).^[1] The form of his name in Homeric diction serves as an actual epithet of **Hēlios** the Sun (as at [XI 735](#)). What is more, his mother is **Êōs** the Dawn ([Th. 986](#)), while the goddess who abducted him embodies regeneration itself, Aphrodite ([Th. 988-991](#)).

§32. On the level of celestial dynamics, these associations imply the theme of a setting sun mating with the goddess of regeneration so that the rising sun may be reborn. Let us pursue this scheme--so far hypothetical only--one step further: if the setting sun is the same as the rising sun, then the goddess of regeneration may be viewed as both mate and mother. Such an ambivalent relationship actually survives in the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, where the goddess of solar regeneration, *Us.as-* 'Dawn', is the wife or bride of the sun god *Sūrya-* (*RV* 1.115.2, 7.75.5, etc.) as well as his mother (*RV* 7.63.3, 7.78.3). In the latter instance, the incestuous implications are attenuated by putting *Us.as-* into the plural, representing a succession of dawns. Similarly, *Us.as-* in the plural can designate the wives of *Sūrya-* (4.5.13). Yet even if each succeeding dawn is wife of the preceding dawn's son, the husband and son are always one and the same *Sūrya-* and the basic theme of incest remains.

§33. There is more than one reason for comparing these Indic traditions about *Sūrya-* 'Sun' and *Us.as-* 'Dawn' to such Greek traditions as we see in

the myth of Phaethon. First and most obvious, the actual forms *Sûrya-* and *Us.as-* are cognate with **Hêlios** 'Sun' and **Êôs** 'Dawn'.^[1] Second, there are instances in Homeric diction where the relationship of the forms **Êôs** and **Phaethôn** is directly parallel to the relationship of Rig-Vedic *Us.as-* and *Sûrya-*. Besides being an epithet of **Hêlios** ([XI 735](#), etc.), the form **Phaethôn** also functions as a name for one of the two horses of **Êôs**:

Lampon kai Phaethonth' hoi t' Êô pôloí agousi

Lampos and **Phaethôn**, who are the horses that pull **Êôs**

[xxiii 246](#)

We may note that **Lampos**, the name of her other horse, is also associated with the notion of brightness. The Rig-Vedic parallel here is that *Sûrya-* the sun god is called the "bright horse," *svetám ... ásvam*, of the Dawn Goddess *Us.as-* (*RV* 7.77.3; cf. 7.78.4). There is also, within Homeric diction itself, an internal analogue to the combination of **Phaethôn** and **Lampos** at [xxiii 246](#). The names for the daughters of **Hêlios** the sun god are **Phaethousa** and **Lampetiê** ([xii 132](#)), which are feminine equivalents of **Phaethôn** and **Lampos**.^[2] The Rig-Vedic parallel here is that the name for the daughter of *Sûrya-* the sun god is *Sûryâ* (*RV* 1.116.17), a feminine equivalent of the masculine name. The comparative evidence of this contextual nexus suggests that the Horses of the Dawn at [xxiii 246](#) had once been metaphorical aspects of the Sun. As in the *Rig-Veda*, the Sun could have been called the bright horse of the Dawn--by such names as **Phae-thôn** or **Lampos**. Once the metaphor is suspended, then the notion "Horse of the Dawn" becomes reorganized: if the Dawn has a horse, she will actually have not one but two for a chariot team, and the two kindred solar aspects **Phaethôn** 'bright' and **Lampos** 'bright' will do nicely as names for two distinct horses. Yet the surviving function of **Phaethousa** and **Lampetiê** as daughters of Helios serves as testimony for the eroded personal connotations of the names **Phaethôn** and **Lampos**. By contrast, the metaphor is maintained in the *Rig-Veda*, where *Sûrya-* the sun god is both bridegroom and horse of the dawn goddess *Us.as-*. There is even a special word that conveys both functions of *Sûrya-* namely *márya-* (*RV* 1.115.2, 7.76.3). In fact, the metaphorical equation of horse and bridegroom is built

into various rituals of Indic society, such as that of initiation, and a key to this equation is the same word *márya-* and its Iranian cognate.[\[3\]](#)

§34. Significantly, there is a corresponding Greek attestation of such a metaphorical equation, in the context of a wedding song:

Humêñ Humêñ:

tan Dios ouranian aeidomen,
tan erôtôn potnian, tan parthenois
gamêlion Aphroditan.
potnia, soi tad' egô numphhei' aeidô,
Kupri theôn kallista,
tôi te neozugi sôi
pôlôi ton en aitheri krupteis,
sôn gamôñ gennan

Hymen, Hymen!

We sing the celestial daughter of Zeus,
the Mistress of Love, the one who gets maidens united in matrimony,
Aphrodite.

My Lady, I sing this wedding song to you,
O Kypris, most beautiful of gods!
--and also to your newly yoked
pôlos [horse], the one you hide in the aether,
the offspring of your wedding.

Euripides *Phaethon* 227-235D

The **pôlos** 'horse' of Aphrodite is Hymen himself,[\[1\]](#) and we note that the same word at [xxiii 246](#) designates the horses of Eos, Phaethon and Lampos. We also note that Hymen's epithet *neozugi* 'newly yoked' (line 233) marks him as Aphrodite's bridegroom (compare the diction in [Aeschylus Persians 541-542](#); [Euripides Medea 804-805](#); also *fr. 821N*). As for the appositive sôn gamôñ gennan 'offspring of your wedding' (line 235), it conveys that Hymen is also Aphrodite's son. We must at the same time appreciate that this entire wedding song to Aphrodite and Hymen is being sung in honor of **Phaethôn**, and that his bride-to-be is in all probability a daughter of the Sun.[\[2\]](#) Finally, we note that Aphrodite here functions as tan Dios ouranian

'the celestial daughter of Zeus' (line 228). This characterization now brings us to a third important reason for comparing the Indic traditions about *Sûrya*-'Sun' and *Us.as-* 'Dawn' with the Greek traditions about **Phaethôn** and **Êôs**.

§35. The epithets of *Us.as-* 'Dawn' in the *Rig-Veda* prominently include *divá(s) duhitár-* and *duhitár- divás* 'Daughter of Sky'--exact formal cognates of the Homeric epithets **Dios thugatêr** and **thugatêr Dios** 'Daughter of Zeus'.^[1] In the surviving traditions of Greek poetry, however, this epithet is assigned not to Eos herself but to Aphrodite and other goddesses.^[2] When these goddesses qualify as **Dios thugatêr/thugatêr Dios**, they fulfill the inherited functions of Eos herself,^[3] and nowhere is this more apparent than in the story of Aphrodite and Anchises. We have already seen that when Aphrodite seduces the young hero, she herself cites the abduction of Tithonus by Eos as precedent ([H.Aphr. 218-238](#)). Now we may add that throughout this seduction episode, Aphrodite is actually called **Dios thugatêr** ([H.Aphr. 81](#), 107, 191).

§36. The replacement of Eos as **Dios thugatêr/thugatêr Dios** by Aphrodite and other goddesses leads to a fragmentation of her original functions. From the comparative evidence of the *Rig-Veda*, we might have expected Eos to be both the mother and the consort of a solar figure like Phaethon. Instead, the Hesiodic tradition assigns Aphrodite as consort of Phaethon, while Eos is only his mother ([Th. 986-991](#)). We may infer that the originally fused functions of mating with the consort and being reborn from the mother were split and divided between Aphrodite and Eos respectively. However, such a split leaves Phaethon as son of Eos simply by birth rather than by rebirth.

§37. For another instance of fragmentation in the functions of Eos, let us consider what happens to the originally fused functions of abduction, death, and preservation in the myth of Orion at [v 121-124](#): here Eos abducts and preserves the young hero Orion, but then he is killed by Artemis. I infer that the function of causing the death of Orion has been reassigned from Eos to Artemis.^[1] In this same function of causing death, Artemis actually qualifies as **thugater Dios** (vocative) in Penelope's death wish ([xx 61](#)).^[2] Eos, on the other hand, retains the function of abducting and preserving

Orion. Accordingly, the Orion myth is marked by the sequence *abduction/preservation followed by death*; this pattern is the inverse of *abduction/death followed by preservation*--the sequence that marks the myth of Phaethon.[\[3\]](#)

§38. In contrast to the solar myth of Phaethon, the inverse sequence that marks the myth of Orion results in a scheme that is astral. We may note that the figure of Orion is in fact already an astral image in Homeric diction ([v 274](#), [XVIII 488](#)), and that the relation of Orion's celestial movements to the Dawn is the inverse of the Sun's movements. Like the Sun, the constellation Orion rises from the Okeanos and sets in it ([v 275](#), [XVIII 489](#)). Unlike the Sun, it rises and sets at night, not in daytime. In the summer, at threshing time, Orion starts rising before Dawn ([W&D 598-599](#)). In the winter, at ploughing time, Orion starts setting before Dawn ([W&D 615-616](#)). In summer days, the light of Dawn catches up with the rising Orion, and he can be her consort in the daytime.[\[1\]](#) In winter days, the light of Dawn arrives too late to keep Orion from setting into the Okeanos.

§39. One related star which does not set, however, is the **Arktos** 'Bear':

[οιὲ δ' ἀμμορος ἐστὶ λοετρὸν Οἰκανοῖο](#)

She alone has no share in the baths of Okeanos.

[v 275 = XVIII 489](#)

Since the theme of plunging into the Okeanos conveys the process of death (see again [xx 63-65](#)), it follows that the exemption of Arktos from ever having to set into the Okeanos conveys her immortality. The Arktos "stalks Orion," **Oô-rîōna dokeuei** ([v 274](#) = [XVIII 488](#)), and the verb **dokeuei** 'stalks' implies doom. In Homeric diction, it applies when marksmen or beasts take aim at their victims ([XIII 545](#), [XVI 313](#), [VIII 340](#)).[\[1\]](#) In the lore reported by Pausanias (8.35.6-7), the name **Arktos** applies also to Kallisto as mother of Arkas and hence progenitrix of the Arkades 'Arcadians'; she is represented as being turned into a bear and being killed by Artemis. The heroine **Kallistô** herself is the ritual antagonist of Artemis **Kallistê**, whose sanctuary is located on the "Mound of Kallisto" ([Pausanias 8.35.8](#)).[\[2\]](#) On the basis of such traditions, featuring an intimate nexus between Artemis

and the concept of **Arktos**, we are encouraged to infer an actual identification in the astral scheme: an immortal Arktos stalks a mortal Orion at [v 273-275](#) and [XVIII 487-489](#), and the image implicitly retells the myth of Artemis killing Orion, explicit at [v 121-124](#). As Odysseus is floating along on his nocturnal sea voyage, he contemplates this image of Arktos stalking Orion in the sky above ([v 271-275](#)), which Kalypso had marked out for him to fix the direction in which his raft is to sail ([v 276-277](#)). Since Kalypso herself had compared her seduction of Odysseus with the abduction of Orion by Eos ([v 121](#)), the connected theme of Orion's death from the shafts of Artemis ([v 122-124](#)) makes the image of Arktos stalking Orion at [v 271-275](#) an ominous sign indeed for Odysseus. He is being guided away from the Island of Kalypso by a celestial sign that points to the fate awaiting him if he had stayed behind as bedmate of the immortal goddess.

§40. Such is the power of a myth that results ultimately from the fragmentation of the functions once encompassed by one figure, the pre-Olympian goddess Eos. It is through this figure that we can better appreciate the traditional nature not only of myths concerned with the immortalization of the hero but also of sundry other myths concerned with how this process can go wrong.

§41. Of course, it scarcely needs saying that we have so far managed to cover merely one type of myth concerning the immortalization of the hero. Besides this type, which centers on the theme of abduction by winds, there are doubtless other major types with other themes, other details. Here is my tentative list, surely incomplete, of alternative ways for the hero to achieve immortality:

- being struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus[\[1\]](#)
- plunging from a white rock into the deep waters below[\[2\]](#)
- being suddenly engulfed by the Earth.[\[3\]](#)

Ideally, we could embark on a detailed survey of these additional types, but it will suffice for us now to draw inferences from the model featuring abduction by Eos or by the divine figures that replaced her functions. Even in the case of this model, however, I dare make no claim that we have seen the whole picture. Every additional attestation would serve to enhance and

even alter our perception of Eos and how she confers immortality on the hero.[\[4\]](#)

§42. This much, in any case, can be said with some confidence: the functions of Eos that prevail in the Greek myths have been by and large restricted to beneficent ones, in that we find her consistently promoting the immortality of the hero. The functions associated with her inherited epithet, on the other hand, remain ambivalent. We have already noted that this epithet, **Dios thugatēr/thugatēr Dios**,[\[1\]](#) along with its thematic associations, has been reassigned to other goddesses, who are thereby endowed with maleficent as well as beneficent functions. The clearest example of the maleficent aspect in Homeric diction is the passage where Penelope prays to Artemis for death, invoking her in this context as **thugater Dios** ([xx 61](#)). As for the beneficent aspect, there are many examples available, and most of them are suited--no surprise--to the particular requirements of epic narrative. For instance, Athena qualifies as **Dios thugatēr** ([IV 128](#)) when she rescues Menelaos from certain death on the battlefield ([IV 127-130](#)); in this context, she is specifically compared to a mother fostering her child ([IV 130-131](#)). This function of the **Dios thugatēr** as a motherly goddess who preserves the hero from mortal harm is typical on the level of epic narrative.[\[2\]](#) On a more fundamental level, however, this function of the **Dios thugatēr** entails not only the temporary preservation of the hero in epic action but also his permanent preservation in the afterlife. There is actually an important attestation of this basic function in epic action. Even more important, the goddess in question is not some derivative **Dios thugatēr** but Eos herself. The only surviving attestation of her taking a direct part in epic action is the *Aithiopis*, where she translates her dead son Memnon into a state of immortality (Proclus p. 106.6-7 Allen).[\[3\]](#)

§43. The heroic figure Memnon, even within epic action, is ideally suited for this theme of immortalization, since tradition makes him not only son of Eos but also king of the Aithiopes ([Hesiod Th. 985](#)). The kingdom of the Aithiopes is situated on the banks of the Okeanos, and the Olympian gods themselves habitually go all the way to the Okeanos in order to receive sacrifice from them ([I 423-424](#), [XXIII 205-207](#), [i 22-26](#)).[\[1\]](#) And just as the

world-encircling Okeanos flows in the extreme East and the extreme West, so also the kingdom of the Aithiopes is situated in the two extremities:

Aithiopas, toi dichtha dedaiatai, eschatoi andrôn
hoi men dusomenou Huperionos, hoi d' aniontos

the Aithiopes, who are divided in two, the most remote of men:
some where Hyperion [Helios] sets, others where he rises

i 23-24

§44. This instance of *coincidentia oppositorum*,^[1] where identity consists of two opposites, has an interesting parallel involving Okeanos and Eos directly. Again we are about to see how two opposite places can add up to the same place. To begin, from the overall plot of the Odyssey, we know that Odysseus is wandering in the realms of the extreme West when he comes upon the island of Aiaia (x 135). It is from Aiaia, island of Circe, that Odysseus is sent on his way to the underworld by traveling beyond the sea until he and his men reach the cosmic river Okeanos (xi 21-22).^[2] Later, on the way back from the underworld, the ship of Odysseus has to leave the Okeanos before returning to Aiaia, which is now described as situated not in the extreme West but in the extreme East.^[3] In fact, Aiaia now turns out to be the abode of Eos and sunrise:

autar epei potamoio lipen rhoon Ôkeanoio
nêus, apo d' hiketo kuma thalassês euruporoio
nêson t' Aiaiên, hothi t' Éous êrigeneiês
oikia kai choroi eisi kai antolai Èelioio ...

But when the ship left the stream of the river Okeanos,
and reached the waves of the sea with its wide-flung paths,
and then the Island Aiaia--and there are the abode and the dancing
places
of early-born Eos, and the sunrises of Helios ...

xii 1-4

In short, the Okeanos in the extreme East is a key to the emergence of Odysseus from his sojourn in the world of the dead--a sojourn that began when he reached the Okeanos in the extreme West.

§45. By being king of the realms along the banks of the Okeanos in the extreme East and West, the figure of Memnon is implicitly associated with a whole set of themes that center on the immortalization of the hero. We are reminded that Elysium itself is situated on the banks of the Okeanos, from which the wind Zephyros blows to reanimate mortals ([iv 567-568](#)). So too are the Isles of the Blessed ([W&D 171](#)), where heroes who fought and died in the Trojan War were translated through the ultimate agency of Zeus ([W&D 168](#)). We see the same agency at work in the *Aithiopis*, when Eos herself asks the permission of Zeus that she may give immortality to her fallen son Memnon (Proclus p. 106.6-7 Allen).^[1] The *Aithiopis* also has an important parallel to the action of Eos: the immortal Thetis translates her own son Achilles from a state of death into a state of immortality on the Island of Leuke (Proclus p. 106.14-15). To my mind, it is useless to argue, on the basis of such parallels, that the immortalization of Achilles was modeled on the immortalization of Memnon.^[2] All that matters is that both are traditional themes that fit the essence of the hero in cult, and that both also fit the general pattern of the afterlife in store for the Fourth Generation of Mankind ([W&D 167-173](#)).

§46. Having returned to the Hesiodic Myth of the Five Generations of Mankind, we may conclude this chapter with the same theme that inaugurated the previous one. By now we see that the process of immortalization that comes after Generation IV is an essential link with the idyllic state of Generation I. Thus the picture of the hero in epic, as seen in Generations III/IV, can revert to the picture of the hero in cult, as seen in Generations I/II.^[1] Even the most stylized hero of epic may get his due in cult, and in that spirit I close with two examples.

§47. For the first example, I choose a bit of lore from the Hellespont. As Pausanias surveys the paintings of Polygnotus in the Knidian Lesche at Delphi, his attention is suddenly riveted on a detail as he describes the picture of Memnon. On the hero's cloak are images of birds:

Memnonides tais ornisin estin onoma, kata de etos hoi Hellêspontioi phasin autas en eirêmenais hèmerais ienai te epi tou Memnonos ton taphon, kai hoposon tou mnêmatos dendrôn estin ê poas psilon, touto kai sairousin hai ornithes kai hugrois tois pterois tou Aisêpou tōi hudati rhainousi.

And **Memnonides** is the name of the birds. The people of the Hellespont say that every year on certain days these birds go to Memnon's grave, and where the grave is bare of trees or grass the birds sweep through it and sprinkle it with their wings, which are wet with the water of the Aisepos.[\[1\]](#)

Pausanias 10.31.6

From this information, however fragmentary it may be, we discover that even a hero who has been translated into a remote state of immortality is traditionally eligible to have not only a cult but even a grave or funeral mound.[\[2\]](#)

§48. Of course, myths about the immortalization of a hero imply that his *body* has been regenerated, as we see from the application of the word **autos** 'himself' to the immortalized Herakles who abides on Olympus ([xi 602](#)). In Homeric diction, **autos** designates the hero's *body* after death (as at [I 4](#)), in comparison to his **psûkhê**, which travels to Hades (as at [I 3](#)).[\[1\]](#) Accordingly, the hero's remains cannot be pictured as being in his grave *once he is immortalized*, and there seems at first glance to be a conflict here with the requirements of cult, the original basis for which is the belief that the hero's bones are buried in his grave.[\[2\]](#) Unlike others, however, I see no conflict *so long as the promise of immortalization aims not at the here-and-now but rather at a fulfillment in the hero's future*. If this condition holds, then the ultimate aspect of the afterlife, from the standpoint of both cult and myth, turns out to be not Hades but rather Elysium, the Isles of the Blessed, and all the other variations on the theme of immortalization. Hades, on the other hand, would be the transitional aspect of the afterlife, when the **psûkhê** is separated from the body. Then, in a place like Elysium, body and **psûkhê** can be reintegrated when the Zephyros blows from the Okeanos to *reanimate* men--the word for which is **anapsûkhein** ([iv 568](#)).[\[3\]](#)

§49. In fact, the traditional emphasis on the hero's bones in cult represents a formal commitment to the promise of immortalization. The discipline of anthropology can help us here, with its vast reservoir of experience about parallel social institutions, taken from actual field work. On the basis of innumerable typological parallels as surveyed by Karl Meuli and his followers,[1] we now know that the function of bones in Hellenic cult and myth is to symbolize the ultimate regeneration not only of sacrificial animals but also of mortal men themselves. One of the prime models for this process of regeneration by way of dismembered bones is the god Dionysos himself (Diodorus Siculus 3.62.6;[2] Philodemus *De pietate*, pp. 34-38 Henrichs).[3] It is beyond my scope to offer even the briefest survey here of the themes and the sources,[4] but I must still mention an important application of the Dionysiac model to the immortalization of Achilles himself.[5] This particular application can bring us to my second example showing how an immortalized hero, no matter how stylized he may have become in the medium of epic, may still be envisioned in a context that pertains to the medium of cult.

§50. From Stesichorus *fr. 234P*, we know of a tradition that Dionysos had given a golden amphora, made by Hephaistos, to the goddess Thetis, in compensation for her having preserved him after he fled from Lykourgos by plunging into the sea (cf. [VI 130-140](#)). It is into this same golden amphora that the bones of Achilles were placed, together with those of his surrogate Patroklos, on the occasion of his funeral ([xxiv 72-76](#); cf. [XXIII 91-92](#)).[1] From what we know about the symbolic function of bones in general and about regeneration in particular, we may see in this formal token the promise of an ultimate immortality in store for the hero of the *Iliad*.[2]

Notes

§1n1. On the incorporation of Harmodios into the institutions of Athenian cult and myth, see Taylor 1975, esp. pp. 20-25, 47-70.

§1n2. 1039), see Quinn 1971.153. In Harpocration s.v. **Kourotophos**, we read that the custom of sacrificing to Kourotophos was "founded" by the Athenian hero Erekhtheus: he was the first to sacrifice to her, in gratitude to Gaia 'Earth' for having given him birth. In the Athenian myth of Erekhtheus, there eventually prevailed a distinction between one goddess (Athena) who nurtures the hero and another goddess (Earth) who gives him birth; see [*Iliad II 547-551*](#). The relationship of Kourotophos to Erekhtheus hints at a stage where Athena is not yet distinct from Mother Earth. For more on the subject of Kourotophos, see Hadzisteliou Price 1978.

§1n3. Previous references to this **thrēnos**: [Ch.9§16n3](#), [§31n1](#). Kegel 1962.47 argues that **aphthiton** at line 3 makes no sense and should therefore be considered corrupt; I offer the following discussion ([§§1-18](#)) as a counterargument.

§1n4. In the case of Ino, she apparently dies and then gets a **biotos**'lifespan' that is **aphthitos**: see [Pindar O.2.29](#), as discussed at [§41n2](#). On the affinities of Pindar's *Olympian* 2 with the poetic form of the **thrēnos**, see again [Ch.9§31](#).

§3n1. [Ch.2§3](#).

§3n2. For the epithet **esthlos** 'worthy, good' describing Achilles here, cf. [§1n2](#); also [Ch.9§4n3](#). The collocation of **esthlos** and **phthimenos** as epithets of Achilles should be compared with the collocation of **esthlon** and **aphthiton** as epithets of the **kleos** of Achilles, at [*Iliad IX 415*](#) and 413 respectively. Compare also the repeated use of **esthlos** at [*Odyssey viii 582*](#) and 585, describing the hypothetical relative or comrade who perished at Troy (the word for "perished" at [viii 581](#) is actually **apephthito!**). The context for these occurrences is suggestive: Alkinoos is asking Odysseus why he wept over the epic song of Demodokos ([viii 577-578](#)), and his

weeping is called an **akhos** at [viii 541](#). For the contrast of lamentation and Epos in this passage, see [Ch.6§§8-9](#).

§3n3. Cf. also **phthinokarpos** 'having fruits that wilt' at [Pindar P.4.265](#).

§3n4. See [§§5-15](#) and Nagy 1974.231-255; also Schmitt 1967.61-69. Note that **aphthito-** in Homeric diction regularly refers to things made by Hephaistos (scholia V to [XIV 238](#)), and that the armor of Achilles is all made by Hephaistos--except for the hero's spear (see [Ch.9§12](#)).

§4n1. [Ch.6§§22-23](#); see also Sinos 1975.99-125.

§4n2. [Ch.6§23](#).

§5n1. For the validity of the distinction *nature/culture* from the vantage point of anthropology, see Redfield 1975.

§6n1. For the distinction made in Homeric diction between **geneî** 'long-range lineage, complete ancestry' and **genos** 'immediate ancestry', see Muellner 1976.77.

§6n2. The response continues until the conclusion at [VI 211](#): "It is from this **geneî** and bloodline that I boast to be." Note the intervening use of **genos** at [VI 209](#), in collocation with **pateres** in the sense of "ancestors" (**paterôn**: on which see [Ch.6§12](#)).

§6n3. The same theme recurs in Mimnermus *fr.* 2W; also in Hesiod *fr.* 204.124 ff. MW, where the correlation seems to apply specifically to the life and death of heroes who died in the Trojan War (discussion at [Ch.11§14](#)).

§6n4. The form **za-phlege-es** 'very radiant' ([XXI 465](#)) is interesting. Consider its relation to **Phlegu-âs**, as discussed at [Ch.7§5](#). Cf. Vian 1960.219.

§8n1. Otherwise, the handicraft of Hephaistos is brazen and **aphthito-**, as at [XVIII 369-371](#). The scholia (V) to [XIV 238](#) claim that anything made by Hephaistos qualifies as **aphthito-** in Homeric diction. Compare the

application of **ambroto-** 'immortal' to the **teukhea** 'armor' of Achilles at [XVII 194](#), 202, as discussed at [Ch.9§33](#) and n2.

§8n2. Cf. Watkins 1975.22-23.

§8n3. On the cult of Agamemnon's **skēptron** at Khaironeia, where its local name is the **doru** 'wood, shaft', see [Pausanias 9.40.11](#)-12. Discussion by Nagy 1974.242-243n16; see now also Watkins 1975.22-23.

§9n1. For the interrelation of island (**nêbos**) and mainland (**peraiâ**) in archaic patterns of colonization, see Jeffery 1976.50-59 in general and pp. 50-51 in particular.

§9n2. Cf. Kirk 1970.165 *en passant*.

§10n1. On [H.Dem. 263](#), I prefer the direct sort of interpretation as offered by Richardson 1974.245, which does *not* presuppose any textual conflation involving verses 260-263.

§10n2. On the internal rhyme here, possibly connoting the magic of incantation, see Richardson, p. 239.

§10n3. I interpret **theou** here as 'of the goddess' rather than 'of a god'. For a parallel treatment of the infant god Apollo, see [H.Apollo 123-125](#).

§10n4. Consider the infant's name, **Dêmophoôn** 'shining for the **dêmos**', also attested as DEMOPHAON = **Dêmophoôn** (Kretschmer 1894.142 no. 126) and even as DÊMOPHAFÔN = **Dêmophauôn** (Priscian *Institutiones Grammaticae* 1.22, 6.69). For the parallel forms **Phaôn** and **Phaethô**, see Nagy 1973.148. On the semantics of **dêmos**, see [Ch.8§11n6](#).

§10n5. On the thematic associations inherent in **dâlos** 'smoldering log', see Detienne 1973b [= 1970] 298-299, who adduces the relevant myths about Meleager and the **dâlos**; cf. also [Odyssey v 488](#).

§10n6. This same phrase **ho d' aexeto daimoni isos** 'and he grew up like a **daimôn**' at [H.Dem. 235](#) has a formal parallel at [H.Dem. 300](#), describing the temple of the goddess herself: **ho d' aexeto daimonos aisêi** 'and it [the

temple] grew up by the **aîsa** [dispensation] of the **daimôn**'. The **daimôn** here is surely Demeter. For the application of the word **daimôn** to god and hero alike, see [Ch.9§6](#); also [Ch.7§15n1](#), [§21n1](#).

§11n1. Sinos 1975.28-36.

§11n2. Verses 56-60 are also at [XVIII 437-441](#).

§11n3. The phrasing **hê t' ... exochon hêrôôn** at 55-56 serves to elaborate on the compound epithet **dusaristotokeia** at 54, with the culminating theme conveyed by the epithet **exokhos hêrôôn** 'the very best of heroes'. (The element **dus-** 'bad, sad' of the compound **dus-aristo-tokeia** is metalinguistic, in that it motivates the application of the epithet **-aristo-tokeia** 'mother of the very best' in the context of **ô moi ... ô moi**, the language of lamentation.) Compare too the epithet **exokhos hêrôôn** 'the very best of heroes' with the phraseology at Alcaeus 42.13LP.

§11n4. For an instance where **anatrekhô** 'shoot up' applies directly to the growth of a plant, see [Herodotus 8.55](#), where the perfect participle of this verb ([anadedramêkota](#)) describes the new shoot that grew from the stump of Athena's olive tree after the burning of Athens by the invading Persians; significantly, the tree was in the precinct of the local hero Erekhtheus. See Sinos 1975.28-29.

§11n5. Note that the underscored phrases at [XVIII 56](#) and [H.Dem. 235](#), describing the growth of Achilles and Demophon respectively, are both directly connected with the theme of *nurturing goddesses*. On the relationship of the nurturing goddess, **Kourotrophos**, with the **koûros** on the level of cult and with the **ephêbos** on the level of society in general, see Sinos 1975.29-30 and Clader 1976.75-77; also Vidal-Naquet 1968.947-949 and Detienne 1973b.302, esp. n7. The word **koûros** 'male youth' is the Ionic reflex of *kóruos, which in Attic yields **koros** 'shoot [of a plant]'; see Merkelbach 1971. For **Kourotrophos** as a distinct cult figure in Attica, to whom the **ephêboi** made sacrifice (*IG II*

§11n6. Besides the application of **phuton hôs** 'like a shoot' to Achilles at [XVIII 57](#) (and 438), this simile is applied to no one else in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

§11n7. See Reiner 1938.12-13, who also adduces an interesting parallel from *Euripides Suppliants* 918-924.

§11n8. See [Ch.6§24](#).

§12n1. Note too the comparison of the dead Euphorbos to an **ernos** 'sprout' cut off from an olive tree, at [XVII 52-58](#).

§12n2. Compare [XXII 87](#): here the mother of Hektor addresses him as **philon thalos** in the context of conjuring up a future scene where Hektor will be laid out on the funeral couch and his mother will be mourning him.

§12n3. We should also note the ritual laments for Adonis in the Athenian festival known as the **Adônia**. From Plutarch's account ([Alcibiades 18.5](#)), we see that lamentation was but one aspect of an overall "funeral" for Adonis (see Alexiou 1974.217n2, who surveys the references to the **Adônia** in comedy). For the significance of the vegetal imagery surrounding the Adonis figure, especially the theme of *premature growth and death*, see Detienne 1972; cf. also Sinos 1975.9-37.

§13n1. Cf. [Ch.6§27](#).

§13n2. See [§§2-4](#). Of course, the inherited semantic range of the word **kleos** itself covers not just Epos in particular but praise poetry in general. Praise is in fact an integral element of lamentation; see Reiner 1938.23n1 and p. 63n3 on [XXII 303-305](#). In the latter passage, Hektor recognizes that he will die but hopes that he will thereby get **kleos** if indeed he has acted heroically (line 304); then "those in the future" will also hear about him (line 305).

§14n1. Note also the ring composition in the placement of **phthi-** at [XIX 322](#) (**apophthimenoio puthoimên /**) and [XIX 337](#) (**apophthimenoio puthêtai /**), denoting respectively the hypothetical deaths of father and son, Peleus and Achilles.

§14n2. For the term, see Eliade 1963.419-429; see also [§§43-44](#).

§14n3. Note the application of the same epithet **bôtianeira** 'nourisher of men' to **khthôn** 'Earth' at [H.Apollo 363](#) and [H.Aphr. 265](#).

§15n1. On the mental and supernatural aspects of the verb **mêdomai**: Nagy 1974.265-278.

§15n2. On the cosmic aspects of **menos** and its Vedic cognate *máñas*-: Nagy 1974.268-269.

§15n3. Cf. [§3](#).

§15n4. On the word **geras** 'honorific portion': [Ch.7§19n3](#).

§15n5. The Indic cognate of Greek **aphthito-** is *áksô.ita-* 'unfailing', and the semantic range of this epithet reveals interesting parallels with that of its Greek counterpart. In the *Rig-Veda*, the epithet *áksô.ita-* applies to the unfailing flow of the cosmic powers inherent in water, fire, light, milk, semen, urine, and *soma*-sap; for a survey of the nouns that correspond to these elements and attract the epithet *áksô.ita-*, see Nagy 1974.231-240.

§16n1. In the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, by virtue of its being a sacrosanct medium, the elements described as *áksô.ita-* are uniformly sacred; see again Nagy 1974.231-240.

§16n2. One consequence of being deprived of nectar and ambrosia is that the punished god *loses his breath*: he lies "breathless" (**anapneustos**: [Th. 797](#)), enveloped in a "bad sleep" (**kakon ... kôma**: [Th. 798](#)). On the supernatural connotations of **kôma** 'sleep', see West 1966.375.

§16n3. Cf. also the application of **aphthito-** to **sebas** 'object of reverence' at *Iliou Persis fr. 1.1* Allen, referring to the Palladium of Troy, which its founder Dardanos is instructed by the Oracle to "revere" (**sebein**: *fr. 1.2* Allen) by guarding it and by instituting sacrifices and songs/dances for its cult (*ibid.*).

§17n1. [Ch.5§25n2](#).

§18n1. See Richardson 1974.245.

§18n2. In [Herodotus 6.74](#), we see that swearing by the Styx is a most sacred act for the Arcadians; see Frazer 1898 [IV 253-254](#) *ad Pausanias 8.18.4*.

§18n3. For documentation, see West 1966.377-378.

§18n4. On the stories of Achilles in the fire, see Richardson 1974.237-238.

§19n1. See again [§15](#).

§20n1. Rohde [I 68-110](#). His assumption has generally been followed; cf. Dihle 1970.18-20.

§20n2. As Walter Burkert points out to me (*per litteras* 6/16/1977), there is a clear archaic example where the cult of a hero at his tomb coexists with the myth of his immortalization, in the report on Hyakinthos by [Pausanias 3.19.4](#).

§20n3. See Burkert 1961.209; in the Aeschylus fragment, the form **enēlusios** applies to Kapaneus, who was struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus. For the semantic relationship of **enēlusios/enēlusion**, compare **hieros/hieron** 'sacred'/'sacred place'. Note that the body of the thunderstruck Kapaneus is described as **hiero-** in [Euripides *Suppliants* 935](#).

§20n4. See Burkert 1961.212n2; cf. Vian 1963.123.

§20n5. See also Diodorus Siculus 5.52, Charax *FGrH* 103.14, etc. In the Pindaric account ([O.2.25](#)), her abode of immortality is Olympus itself. Cf. the immortalization of Herakles on Olympus, as discussed at [§41n1](#). Cf. also the testimony of the Thurian gold leaves at A1.4, A2.5, A3.5 (Zuntz 1971.301-305), where the *persona* of the dead man declares in each instance that his immortalization was preceded by death from the thunderbolt.

§22n1. For the parallelism between the names **Phaethôn/Phaôn** and **Dêmophâôn**, see [§10n4](#).

§22n2. For more on this epithet, see Boedeker 1974.20, 23-26, 32-35.

§22n3. On the nature of the **mukhos**, see Rohde [I.135](#)n1 (cf. also Nagy 1973.171). I disagree, however, with Rohde's specific assumption that Phaethon's abduction does not involve death. See also n4.

§22n4. We may note that even those in the Golden Generation are subject to death, although this death is more like sleep ([Hesiod W&D 116](#)). The point is that death does not disqualify them from becoming **daimones** in cult. As such, they are immortalized and merit the title of **athanatoi** 'immortals' ([W&D 250, 253](#)). For a cogent set of arguments that the wording of [W&D 249-255](#) applies to the same **daimones** as at *W&D* 122-126, see Vernant 1966 [= 1960] 29.

§22n5. West 1966.427.

§22n6. For the division of motherly functions, giving birth and nurturing, between Earth and Athena, see [§11n5](#). On the eventual distinction between **Erekhtheus** and **Erikhthonios** in Athenian mythology, see Burkert 1972.176, 211.

§22n7. Cf. Nock 1972 [= 1930] 237 for other examples of goddess/hero symbiosis within a sacred precinct.

§23n1. In the discussion that follows, I have incorporated and revised parts of my earlier work on the subject of Phaethon (Nagy 1973.148-172).

§23n2. These words are the "correct" formula for immortalization; when the words are "incorrect," as in the myth of Eos and Tithonus, then the immortalization is ruined by the failure of preservation. See [§30 below](#).

§23n3. For the mystical meaning of **anagô** as 'bring back to the light from the dead', see Nagy 1973.175.

§24n1. For what follows, see also Nagy 1973.156-161.

§24n2. The identical verse recurs when Eumaios mourns the unknown fate of his absent master Odysseus ([xiv 371](#)).

§25n1. Note that one of the **Harpuiai** 'Harpies' is **Aellô** ([Hesiod Th. 267](#)), a name derived from **aella**.

§25n2. I regret my earlier view (Nagy 1973.158-159, 167-168) that [xx 66](#) and [xx 77](#) represent two stages of action. If instead they represent the same action, then we can understand [xx 61-81](#) as operating on the principle of ring composition. Penelope wishes an immediate death caused by the shafts of Artemis ([xx 61-63](#)) or a delayed death caused by the abducting winds ([xx 63-65](#)); [xx 66](#) introduces as precedent the abduction of the Pandareids; an elaboration of the story follows at [xx 67-76](#), climaxed by [xx 77](#), which recaps [xx 66](#). Then [xx 79](#) returns to Penelope's wish for a delayed death, and [xx 80](#) recaps her alternative wish for an immediate death. The force of **é epeita** 'or later' in expressing a delayed death at [xx 63](#) is that the winds would snatch Penelope away later, *just before her marriage to one of the suitors*. There is in that case a neat parallelism with the story of the Pandareids, who were abducted just before their own arranged marriage (see [xx 73-74](#)). I would therefore stand by my view (Nagy 1973.159n64) that the context of **é epeita** 'or later' at [xx 63](#) helps explain the epithet **metakhroniai** 'delayed' as applied to the **Harpuiai** at [Hesiod Th. 269](#).

§26n1. Of course, this death may be more like sleep, of the sort that overcomes the Golden Generation ([W&D 116](#)); see [§22n4](#).

§27n1. For a defense of this formulation, see Nagy 1973.149-153. The root *nes-, which Frame (1978) defines as 'return to life and light', denotes the act of crossing these boundaries: from darkness to light, from death to life, from sleep to wakefulness.

§27n2. The verb is **proseballen**; cf. the use of **eballen** at [Odyssey v 479](#); for the notion of fertilization implied by such verbs of "striking," consider the comparative evidence of Rig-Vedic diction, as discussed by Watkins 1971.347.

§27n3. Besides giving life directly to crops (cf. also the epithet **pûrophoroio** 'wheat-bearing', as at [XII 314](#)), the **aroura** gives life indirectly to men, who eat the crops (as at [VI 142](#) and [XXI 465](#); cf. [§6](#)). At [II 548](#), the **Aroura** gives life directly to man, by giving birth to Erekhtheus (cf. [§22](#)).

§28n1. See [Ch.9§28n2](#).

§28n2. On the corresponding negative function of Zephyros: [§41n4](#).

§29n1. For an illuminating internal and comparative reconstruction of this theme, see Boedeker 1974.

§30n1. See [§23](#).

§30n2. We may note an interesting elaboration in the myth of Eos and Tithonos, which makes a distinction between preservation and immortalization ([H.Aphr. 218-238](#)). Tithonos is immortalized and lives by the banks of Okeanos ([H.Aphr. 225-227](#)), but his **hēbē** 'adolescence' is not made permanent ([H.Aphr. 220-227](#)); consequently, his preservation is corroded by old age ([H.Aphr. 228-238](#)). This failure is formalized by a lapse in the wording of the request made by Eos to Zeus for the preservation of Tithonos, at [H.Aphr. 221](#) (also 240). We see the "correct" wording for the concept of preservation at [H.Aphr. 214](#) (cf. [v 136](#), [vii 257](#), etc.), while the "incorrectness" of the wording by Eos is motivated at [H.Aphr. 223-224](#). Since **hēbē** 'adolescence' ([H.Aphr. 224](#)) is the key to the "correct" formulation of the request for immortalization, it is significant that the immortalization of Herakles is formalized by his being married to **Hēbē** incarnate: see Hesiod *fr. 25.28MW*, as discussed at [Ch.9§25](#).

§31n1. See [§22](#).

§33n1. See Schmitt 1967.169-175.

§33n2. On the morphology of **Lampetiē**, see Nagy 1973.164n72; also Frame 1978.135-137 on Indic *Nasatyā*.

§33n3. On the meaning and contexts of *márya-*: Wikander 1938.22-30, 81-85, esp. 84.

§34n1. See Diggle 1970.148-160.

§34n2. See Diggle, pp. 158-160. For an interpretation of the Phaethon myth as preserved in the drama of Euripides, which is distinct from the Phaethon

myth as preserved in the Hesiodic tradition, see Nagy 1973.147-156.

§35n1. Schmitt 1967.169-175.

§35n2. Besides Aphrodite ([III 374](#), etc.), we find Artemis ([xx 61](#)), Athena ([IV 128](#), etc.), Persephone ([xi 217](#)), Helen ([iv 227](#)), etc.

§35n3. See Boedeker 1974 for a discussion from the comparative viewpoint.

§37n1. I disagree with Delcourt 1966.148, who suggests that the verses about the death of Orion are interpolated.

§37n2. Even Persephone, goddess of the dead, qualifies as **Dios thugatēr** ([xi 217](#)).

§37n3. For still another variation on a theme, consider the myth of the Pandareids ([xx 66-78](#)): here the sequence is *preservation followed by abduction/death*. Note that the Olympian goddesses who preserve the girls all qualify as **Dios thugatēr/thugatēr Dios**: Aphrodite, Artemis, and Athena. The only exception is Hera, wife of Zeus. The word **harpuiai** denoting the winds that abduct the girls ([xx 77](#)) is apparently suitable for such a negative situation, where abduction/death follows a period of preservation. Such a situation seems connected with the epithet **metakhroniai** 'delayed', describing the **Harpuiai** 'Harpies' at [Hesiod Th. 269](#). See [§25n2](#).

§38n1. Formally, **Oô-riôn** (**Oô-ariôn**) seems to be connected with **oar** 'wife', **oaros** 'companionship, keeping company', etc.

§39n1. [XIII 545](#): Antilokhos catches Thoön off guard and deals him a mortal blow. [XVI 313](#): similarly, Phyleides kills Amphiklos. [VIII 340](#): Hektor is compared to a hunting dog stalking a boar or lion. Cf. also Detienne/Vernant 1974.21n15.

§39n2. See Sale 1965 for a conscientious discussion of the sources and for a critical survey of previous studies on Artemis/Kallisto. I especially agree with Sale's distinguishing between goddess and heroine, although I find his

treatment of the separate figures overly restrictive, partly because he offers no systematic coordination of the attested mythological variants.

§41n1. This type has been at least partially treated in the preceding discussion, since the concept of **Êlusion** seems to be directly connected with it (cf. §20). From the standpoint of poetic diction, one of the clearest examples is the fate of Semele in [Pindar O.2.25](#) (to be read in conjunction with [Hesiod Th. 942](#)). From the standpoint of poetic theme, the foremost example of immortalization by the thunderbolt is the fate of Herakles: as the hero is smitten by Zeus, he is elevated to Olympus as an immortal god; unfortunately, our best source for this theme is prosaic (Diodorus Siculus 4.38.4-4.39.1); see also Rohde [I 320-322](#). Another important example on the level of theme is the myth of Phaethon as preserved in Euripides *Phaethon*(fragments edited by Diggle). In the traditions of this myth, Phaethon is struck dead by the thunderbolt of Zeus (for an extended discussion, see Nagy 1973.148-156; for the implication of Phaethon's rebirth through the river **Êridanos**, see *ibid.*, p. 161). Finally, note that there is a myth that tells of Erektheus as another hero who was struck dead by the thunderbolt of Zeus (Hyginus 46).

§41n2. See Nagy 1973.141-148, 172-173, esp. p. 145n31 on Ino Leukothea. Myth has it that Ino plunged into the deep from atop the white rock formations known as the **Skirônides Petrai** ([Pausanias 1.44.7](#)-8). On her transformation from mortal to immortal, see [Odyssey v 333-335](#). As an immortal, she is said to have a **biotos** 'life' that is **aphthito-** 'unfailing' in [Pindar O.2.29](#); note the parallelism at *O.2.25-26*, telling of Semele's immortalization after death from the thunderbolt of Zeus. For an interesting anecdote about the custom of singing **thrênoi** for Leukothea, see Xenophanes *fr. 13DK* (*ap.* [Aristotle Rhetoric 1400b5](#)).

§41n3. The discussion by Rohde [I 111-145](#) is irreplaceable. We may wish to modify, however, his conclusion that there is no death involved in the process of being engulfed by the Earth. If, for example, we examine the attestations for the engulfment of Amphiaraos (Rohde [I 114n1](#)), we find that the emphasis on his being alive has to do more with his status in the here-and-now of cult than with his status at the moment of his engulfment. If we can agree that death is part of the process of engulfment, then Rohde's

difficulties ([I 114-115n2](#)) with [*Odyssey xv 247*](#) and 253 are eliminated: in these passages Amphiaraos is overtly said to have died. As for Rohde's idea that a cult name like **Zeus Amphiarâos** implies that Amphiaraos is a "faded god" ([I 125n2](#)), there are other explanations available. Such combinations may imply that the name Amphiaraos is motivated primarily by the theme of ritual antagonism between god and hero. Cf. Chapter 8.

§41n4. In the storm that finally destroys all the remaining comrades of Odysseus ([xii 403-426](#)), the **thuella** of Zephyros ([xii 409](#); cf. also **thuôn** at 408, 426) is directly coordinated with Zeus and the thunderbolt that he hurls at the hapless ship ([xii 415-417](#)). The storm itself was initiated by Zeus ([xii 405](#)), and it brings about a loss of **nostos** 'safe homecoming' for the comrades ([xii 419](#)). The coordination of the **thuella** of Zephyros with the thunderbolt of Zeus in this narrative about the antithesis of immortalization serves to remind us of a local cult in Arcadia ([Pausanias 8.29.1](#)), where the following triad is worshipped: **Astrapai**, **Thuellai**, and **Brontai**. Note that the first and third are the personifications of lightning and thunder respectively. These traditional combinations suggest that the theme of death/immortalization by the thunderbolt of Zeus may not always have been distinct from the theme of death/immortalization by **thuellai** of wind. (There is also an interesting collocation of **thuellai** with **pûros** ... **oloôîo** 'of baneful fire' at [xii 68](#).)

§42n1. For the sake of convenience, I will henceforth arbitrarily refer to the nominative of this epithet by using only one word order: **Dios thugatêr**.

§42n2. Other examples: Athena/Odysseus ([xiii 359](#)), Aphrodite/Paris ([III 374](#)), Aphrodite/Aeneas ([V 312](#)).

§42n3. The deeply traditional nature of the Memnon/Eos myth can be verified not only from the comparative standpoint of its Indo-European heritage. The internal evidence of iconographical representations confirms that the Memnon/Eos myth is a basic and pervasive tradition among the Hellenes: see Lung 1912, Clark and Coulsen 1978. It is in fact so much more pervasive than the parallel Sarpedon/Apollo myth of *Iliad XVI* that Clark and Coulsen consider the Iliadic story of Sarpedon's death to be modeled on that of Memnon's death. I would maintain, however, that the two stories are simply multiforms. To prove that there are artistic

inadequacies in the Sarpedon/Apollo multiform that do not exist in the Memnon/Eos multiform is not to prove that one was modeled on the other.

§43n1. The gods' participation in the sacrifices of the Aithiopes is conventionally pictured as a communal feast: [Ch.11§9](#).

§44n1. See also [§14](#).

§44n2. See also Frame 1978.48-50, whose discussion takes into account the thematic intrusion of a northerly direction into the narrative.

§44n3. Cf. Rohde [I 75n2](#).

§45n1. In Quintus of Smyrna [II 550](#) ff., the agents of Eos are the winds Zephyros and Boreas, who snatch Memnon's body away (*anêreipsanto*: QS [II 563](#)). Memnon is even designated as their brother (QS [II 555](#)). The tradition that Zephyros and Boreas are the sons of Eos is also attested in [Hesiod Th. 378-379](#). See Kakridis 1949.81-82.

§45n2. *Pace* Dihle 1970.18-20.

§46n1. See [Ch.9§§2-6](#).

§47n1. The translation is essentially that of Frazer 1898 [I 546](#); see also his commentary [V 387](#). Besides this passage from Pausanias, see also Dionysius *Ixeuticon* 1.8 and the comments of Vian 1959.28-29.

§47n2. See also [§20n2](#).

§48n1. See Büchner 1937.116. I cannot agree with Schnaufer 1970.103-107, who argues that [xi 602](#) is an interpolation. See also [Ch.9§26n](#).

§48n2. See Rohde [I 159-166](#).

§48n3. See [Ch.9§28n2](#).

§49n1. See especially Meuli 1946, Uhsadel-Gülke 1972, Burkert 1972.

§49n2. = *Orphicorum Fragmenta* 301 Kern.

§49n3. For a brief survey of attestations: Uhsadel-Gülke 1972.40-41. Besides the 1975 article of Henrichs, I call attention to his forthcoming edition of Philodemus *De pietate*.

§49n4. For an illuminating synthesis: Detienne 1977.

§49n5. See Uhsadel-Gülke 1972.41-42.

§50n1. See Uhsadel-Gülke ibid.

§50n2. In this connection, it may be well to recall the traditions that picture an immortalized hero in the form of a solar horse, as discussed at §§33-34. Such traditions may underlie the figure of **Xanthos**, the immortal horse of Achilles ([XVI 149-154](#)). It is this Xanthos who pointedly tells Achilles that the hero's death cannot be prevented--any more than the death of Patroklos ([XIX 408-417](#)). And this affirmation of the hero's mortality is immediately preceded in the narrative by a simile comparing Achilles to Helios the Sun ([XIX 398](#))! After the immortal horse has finished telling the mortal hero of his future death, the **Erīnūes** prevent him from speaking further ([XIX 418](#)). Perhaps the *Iliad* has here taken one segment from the cycle of heroic immortalization and stylized it with an ending imposed to suit the dimensions of the Epos. Perhaps also the figure of Xanthos conjured up a vision of Achilles beyond the narrative that ends with his death. Born on the banks of the Okeanos from the union of the Wind **Zephuros** with an abducting gust described as a **Harpua** ([XVI 150](#)), Xanthos seems a model of solar regeneration into immortality (on which see again §§23-36). We may note that heroes who have been immortalized attract the epithet **xanthos** 'blond': e.g., Rhadamanthys in Elysium ([iv 564](#)) and Ganymedes in Olympus ([H.Aphr. 202](#)). Menelaos is the hero who attracts this epithet by far the most frequently in the *Iliad* ([III 284](#), [IV 183](#), etc.) and the *Odyssey* ([iii 257](#), 326, etc.)--and he is the only Homeric hero who is overtly said to have been immortalized ([iv 561-569](#)). Significantly, Achilles himself has hair that is **xantho-** ([I 197](#), [XXIII 141](#)). (In Homeric diction, Demeter is the only deity who is **xanthē** [[V 500](#)], and as **Dêmêtēr Erīnūs** in Arcadian cult she is actually said to have the form of a horse [[Pausanias 8.25.4 ff.](#)]. The thematic association of **Erīnūs/horse** may be relevant to [XIX 418](#), where the **Erīnūes** prevent Xanthos from speaking to Achilles of anything beyond the mention of his death.)

Chapter 11

On Strife and the Human Condition

§1. We have by now seen that Memnon's realm, the land of the Aithiopes, has landmarks that are parallel to those of the Golden Age and the Isles of the Blessed. By virtue of this parallelism, the land of the Aithiopes in fact affords an ideal setting for the immortality in store for Memnon after he dies the hero's death.^[1] In the overall myth of the Aithiopes, however, Memnon's final immortalization is not the only theme that serves as a contrast with the here-and-now of the human condition. The land of the Aithiopes is also the setting for another such contrasting theme: the communion of gods and men. This theme in turn will be a key to our understanding the social functions of praise and blame.

§2. The Olympian gods have a custom of traveling all the way to the ends of the Earth, to the banks of the Okeanos, for the purpose of feasting with the native Aithiopes ([I 423-424](#), [XXIII 205-207](#), [i 22-26](#)). In the *spatial* perspective, these Aithiopes are the **eskhatoi andrôn** ([i 23](#)), the most remote humans in the universe.^[1] Moreover, the gods had once also feasted with the earliest humans--those most remote in the *temporal* perspective of mythopoeic thinking. The following story, designed as an ideal that contrasts with the human condition, emerges from two separate types of Hesiodic narrative.

§3. We begin with Hesiod *fr. 1MW*, the first part of a catalogue that accounts for heroes born of female mortals and male immortals. As such, it complements [Hesiod Th. 965-1020](#), a catalogue that accounts for heroes born of female immortals and male mortals.^[1] In both catalogues, the heroes born from the mating of mortals and immortals qualify as "children who look like the gods" ([Th. 1020](#) and *fr. 1.5* Merkelbach 1968.128§129).^[2] Moreover, the catalogue of Hesiod *fr. 1* presents its mortal mothers as parallel to such mortal fathers as we see in the catalogue of [Th. 965-1020](#). The mortal males and females are formally correlated as [aneres éde gunaikeis](#) 'men and women' at *fr. 1.9*, corresponding to the [andrasin](#) 'men' of

Th. 967 and the gunaikôn 'women' of *Th.* 1021 = *fr.* 1.1 respectively.^[3] These men and women are distinguished from mortals in the here-and-now not only by virtue of having mated with the gods but also by virtue of having feasted with them:

xunai gar tote daites esan, xunoi de thoôkoi
athanatois te theoisi katathnêtois t' anthrôpois

For at that time they had feasts [dais plural] together and they sat together,
the immortal gods and the mortal men.

Hesiod *fr.* 1.6-7MW

The adverb tote 'at that time' (verse 6) makes explicit the temporal remoteness of this state of affairs.

§4. There are further details about these primeval mortals: some lived for a long time (hoi men dêron ... : *fr.* 1.11), while others died suddenly (tous d' eith[ar] ... : *fr.* 1.12).^[1] This description is parallel to that of the Golden and Silver Generations in the *Works and Days*.^[2] There members of the Silver Generation are set off from the Golden in that they died soon after reaching adolescence (W&D 132-133).^[3] Whereas the Golden Generation "lived like gods" (hôste theoi d' ezôon: *W&D* 112), the men of the Silver Generation lost their heritage of a godlike existence. The reason given is that they refused to perform the proper sacrifices to the gods (W&D 136-137). As we have already seen,^[4] their refusal is also defined in the same narrative tradition as their failure to give the proper **tîma** to the gods (W&D 138-139). Unfortunately for us, the parallel narrative of Hesiod *fr.* 1 (and beyond) is not complete enough to reveal explicitly how its mortals of yore came to lose their heritage of a godlike existence. There is an important clue, however, in a detail that we have already noted: these mortals used to have 'feasts' = **dais** [plural] with the gods (Hesiod *fr.* 1.6-7). Furthermore, this detail meshes with the story of Prometheus as it is told in the *Theogony*.

§5. Prometheus provokes Zeus in particular and the gods in general by tricking them into accepting as their portion the bones of a slaughtered ox and by reserving the edible meat for humanity (Hesiod Th. 536-557).^[1] All

this is presented as happening "at a time when the gods and mortal men were having a definitive settlement":[2]

... hot' ekrinonto theoi thnētoi t' anthrōpoi

Hesiod Th. 535

The preceding passage implies a combination that is explicit in the following parallel:[3]

autar epei rha ponon makares theoi exetelessan
Titēnessi de timaôn krinanto biêphi ...

But when the blessed gods completed their effort
and had a definitive settlement of tîmai, by way of **biê** [might], with
the Titans ...

Hesiod Th. 881-882

The key word here is **tîmai**, the 'honors' of cult that the Olympian gods obtain by defeating the Titans, who are rival gods (**theoi**, as at *Th.* 630, 648, etc.).[4] The primary result of their definitive settlement is *a permanent separation*, with the Olympians remaining in the sky (*Th. 820*) while the Titans are cast down and imprisoned forever underneath the earth (see especially *Th.* 729-733). Similarly, there is a definitive settlement of **tîmai** between the gods and men when Prometheus apportions the inedibles and edibles between them. Again, the primary result is *a permanent separation*, in that mankind is relegated to the human condition--a theme central to the entire Prometheus story (*Th. 521-616*).[5]

§6. We can now see an overall parallelism with the story of the Silver Generation (W&D 127-142). There the setting is a sacrifice (W&D 136-137), and the mortals fail to give **tîmai** to the gods (W&D 138-139). What results is the negation of their godlike existence (W&D 132-133). As for the story of Prometheus, the setting here is a feast (see especially *Th.* 537, 544), [1] which becomes from that time onward the basis of all sacrifice to the gods (Th. 556-557). Prometheus as the agent of mortals cheats the gods out of the edible portions (Th. 538-541), and this settlement (implicitly, of

tîmai: [Th. 535](#)) leads indirectly to the evils of the human condition ([Th. 570-616](#)).[\[2\]](#)

§7. The Aithiopes, then, exist in a condition that serves as a foil for the condition of ordinary mortals. For the Aithiopes, having feasts with the gods is not just a privilege: it is a sign that they are not subject to being separated permanently from the gods. Again, we recall that the landmarks of their abode are parallel to those of the Golden Age and the Isles of the Blessed.[\[1\]](#) By contrast, the mortals of the here-and-now have sacrifices to the gods, not feasts with them. Moreover, we have seen that the story of Prometheus in the *Theogony* derives this continuous institution of making sacrifice from the single event of a feast shared by gods and men. Of course, this feast is not the same thing as a first sacrifice. Granted, it constitutes the definitive settlement whereby the mortals and immortals get the edible meat and the inedible bones respectively. Nevertheless, this feast is only the basis of sacrifice, whereas the act of sacrifice itself entails more. Men are to have at their disposal the distribution of edible portions not only for themselves *but also for the gods*. Every city-state has its own traditions for determining what portions of the edible meat--*in addition to the bones and fat*--are assigned to the gods.[\[2\]](#) In return, the gods have at their disposal the function of alleviating in their manifold ways the manifold evils of the human condition. Of course, the gods may even grant the ultimate alleviation, immortality after death; the inedible bones that are at their disposal are in fact the very emblem of life after death.[\[3\]](#)

§8. There is, then, a fundamental difference between feasting with the gods and sacrificing to them. The Hesiodic story about the Silver Generation actually anticipates the human condition of these figures by describing them as men who owe sacrifice to the gods ([W&D135-137](#)). Nevertheless, the nature of their offense against the gods is parallel to the offense of Prometheus. In both instances, the afflictions of the human condition are brought about by the withholding of **tîmai** from the gods. In the context of a single event, a feast, Prometheus as the agent of humanity withholds **tîmai** from the gods;[\[1\]](#) in the context of a continuous institution, sacrifice, men keep restoring **tîmai** to them. When the Silver Generation refuses to sacrifice, the offense is the same as the primordial offense of Prometheus: the withholding of **tîmai** from the gods.[\[2\]](#)

§9. In this connection, we must reexamine the evidence of diction: the vocabulary of archaic hexameter poetry does not distinguish between the feasting of men and gods together on the one hand and the sacrificing of men to gods on the other. Both the feasting and the sacrificing qualify as a **dais**. For example, Zeus calls the portions sacrificed to him on the altar his **dais** ([IV 48](#), [XXIV 69](#)). The very event of a sacrifice may in fact be called simply **dais** ([iii 33](#)), without such qualifiers as **theoû** 'of the god' (as at [iii 420](#), where **dais** refers to the same event as at [iii 33](#)).^[1] Conversely, when the gods come to feast with the Aithiopes, their mutual **dais** (as at [I 424](#), [i 26](#)) has the trappings of a sacrifice: **hekatombai** 'hecatombs' ([XXIII 206](#); cf. [i 25](#)) and **hîra** 'sacred rites' ([XXIII 207](#)).^[2] This ambivalence in the meaning of **dais** is of course due directly to the derivation of the noun from the verb **daiomai** 'divide, apportion, allot'.^[3] A **dais**, then, is a 'division' not only of meat portions (a feast) but also of the **tîmai** that go with them (a sacrifice).

§10. We are now ready to consider the wording that designates the primordial offense of Prometheus. In the process of cheating the gods out of **tîmai** that correspond to meat portions, Prometheus caused **eris** 'strife' and made Zeus angry. This theme of **eris** introduces the entire story about the deceit of Prometheus--a story that begins with the following explanation for the anger of Zeus:

[hounek' erizeto boulas hupermenei Kroniôni](#)

because he [Prometheus] had a conflict of wills with the mighty son of Kronos.^[1]

[Hesiod Th. 534](#)

§11. Here at *Th. 534*, both the verb [erizeto](#) 'had **eris** [strife, conflict]' and the noun [boulas](#) [**boulê** = 'will, design, plan'] designate essential themes in the story. For a better understanding, we must compare the beginning of the *Cypria*, where the Trojan War is motivated by the **boulê** 'Will' of Zeus (*fr. 1.7* Allen), who wants to depopulate Earth (*fr. 1.1-7*); significantly, the entire war is in fact designated as **eris** 'strife' (*fr. 1.5*).

§12. Moreover, the beginning of the *Cypria* tells how the war actually began with the appearance of **Eris** 'Strife' personified (Proclus summary p. 102.14 Allen). She came to a feast shared by gods and men, the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis (*Cypria*/Proclus p. 102.14-15), and there she caused a **neîkos** 'quarrel, fight' (p.102.15) involving the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite (p. 102.15-16). The **eris** 'strife' and **neîkos** 'quarrel' then extend to the human dimension, as Paris is asked to judge which of the three goddesses is supreme (p. 102.16-17). Paris of course chooses Aphrodite and wins Helen, whose abduction causes the Trojan War; it too is directly called **eris** in the *Cypria* (fr. 1.5 Allen). The reference by Menelaos to Helen's abduction in the *Iliad* motivates the Trojan War in this way: heinek' emês eridos 'on account of my **eris'** ([III 100](#)). So also when the doomed Hektor is about to be killed by Achilles, he calls the abduction of Helen neikeos archê 'the beginning of the **neîkos'** ([XXII 116](#)).[\[1\]](#)

§13. So far, we have merely noted a parallelism in theme and diction between the entire story of the Trojan War on the one hand and, on the other, a single-verse introduction to the story of Prometheus ([Hesiod Th. 534](#)). In the latter instance, the **eris** 'strife' between Zeus and Prometheus concerns their respective **boulai** 'wills, designs' affecting humanity. In the former instance, we have seen that the **boulê** 'Will' of Zeus is that men should have **eris** 'strife' and **neîkos** 'quarreling', which is to result in the depopulation of Earth in the form of the Trojan War. Now we are ready to observe Hesiod *fr. 204.95-123MW*, a text that presents an actual convergence between the main themes in the overall story of the Trojan War and those in the story of Prometheus.

§14. At line 95 of Hesiod *fr. 204MW*, there is a compressed mention of a traditional theme that we find developed throughout the *Iliad*: the division of the Olympian gods into pro-Achaean and pro-Trojan factions during the Trojan War.[\[1\]](#) At line 96, we are told the ultimate source of this division: ex eridos 'ever since the **eris'**. The reference here is to the strife in the traditional story about the Judgment of Paris; then at lines 96-123, there follows a fragmentary passage that tells about the Will of Zeus and how it had caused the Trojan War.[\[2\]](#) This theme is more comprehensive here than at *Cypria fr. 1* Allen, where the Will of Zeus entails the deaths of heroes in the Trojan War.[\[3\]](#) The gaps in the text leave many important questions

without answers, but one additional detail is clear: besides entailing the death of heroes in the Trojan War (see especially lines 118-119),[\[4\]](#) the Will of Zeus also entails *the permanent separation of gods and men*. The crucial lines read as follows:

all?' o?hi m[e]n mak?a]r?es? k?[.]n? hô?s? t?o? paros per
chôr?is ap' an[th]r?ôpôn? [bioton ka]j? êthe' echôsin

but so that the blessed gods ... , as before,
may have their way of life and their accustomed places apart from men

Hesiod *fr.* 204.102-103MW

This detail shows that the **eris** willed by Zeus causes not only the Trojan War in particular but the human condition in general.[\[5\]](#)

§15. Returning to the expression erizeto boulas 'had a conflict [**eris**] of wills [**boulai**]' at Hesiod Th. 534, we now see that the story of Prometheus here is a mythological variant of the story of Troy as told in Hesiod *fr.* 204MW, in that both stories are designed to explain the human condition in terms of **eris** 'strife, conflict'. In the story of the Trojan War, the **boulê** 'will' of Zeus causes **eris** for the gods and then for men, who had feasted with the gods. In the story of Prometheus, there is a primordial **eris** between the **boulê** of Zeus and the **boulê** of the deceitful Titan acting on behalf of men, men who had feasted with the gods. In both stories, **eris** disrupts the communication of men with gods, bringing about the human condition.

§16. Having observed the fundamental nature of **eris** 'strife' in these mythological visions of mankind's essence, we are ready to consider the social implications of the word itself. Our starting point will be another key word, **neîkos** 'quarrel, fight'. In the story about the Judgment of Paris, we have seen that the personified figure **Eris** had brought about a **neîkos** involving the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, and that Paris is then asked to judge which of the three is supreme (*Cypria*/Proclus p. 102.14-19).[\[1\]](#) From the Iliadic allusion to the story, we now see that Paris in effect rejected Hera and Athena by virtue of choosing Aphrodite and further that this rejection is presented as a **neîkos** against these two goddesses:

hos neikesse theas, hote hoi messaulon hikonto,
tēn d' ēinēs' hē hoi pore machlosunēn alegeinēn

[Paris] who blamed [made neīkos against] the goddesses [Hera and Athena], when they came to his courtyard, but he praised her [Aphrodite] who gave him the baneful pleasure of sex.

XXIV 29-30

My task now is to show that the verb **neikeō** (which I translate as 'blame', from the noun **neīkos**)^[2] and the verb **aineō** ('praise', from the noun **aīnos**)^[3] reflect two antithetical social functions expressed in two formal modes of discourse.

Notes

§1n1. Memnon's immortalization is actually unique, to the extent that the realm in which he lived before his death as a hero is also appropriate as the setting for his afterlife. For Memnon, the afterlife is by implication a homecoming. In the diction of archaic Greek poetry, the appropriate words for this theme are those containing the root *nes-; see Frame 1978.

§2n1. See [Ch.10§43](#).

§3n1. In fact, the text of our *Theogony* ends with the same two verses ([Th. 1021-1022](#)) that begin Hesiod *fr. 1* (1-2). For a helpful discussion of the complementary relationship between *fr. 1* and the *Theogony* as we have it, see Merkelbach 1968.

§3n2. Among these heroes are Memnon ([Th. 984](#)) and Achilles ([Th. 1007](#)).

§3n3. This correlation *within* the text of *fr. 1* leads me to disagree with Merkelbach's suggestion (1968.132-133) that [Hesiod Th. 965-1020](#) is a passage that had been inserted between *Th. 964* and *Th. 1021* (= *fr. 1.1MW*) after the verses of *fr. 1MW* had already been composed. The aneres of aneres êde gunaikeis at *fr. 1.9* presupposes the contents of *Th. 965-1020*.

§4n1. The text is fragmentary beyond the words quoted, but the sense seems clear; see Merkelbach's collection of restorations (1968). I should add that the antithesis hoi men dêron ... tous d' eith[ar] 'some for a long time ... others suddenly ...' (Hesiod *fr.* 1.11-12) is set up with the phrase oud' ara isaiônes ... 'they [were] not with equal spans of life ...' (Hesiod *fr.* 1.8).

§4n2. Cf. Merkelbach 1968.126, who notes a parallelism with the Golden Age. There is no mention, however, of the antithesis discussed at n1 above.

§4n3. On the prodigiously long lifespan of the Golden Generation, cf. Hesiod *fr.* 356MW.

§4n4. [Ch.9 §§2-3.](#)

§5n1. The wording that denotes the division of meat by Prometheus is **dassamenos** ([Th. 537](#)) and **diedassao moirâs** ([Th. 544](#)). The verb here is **daiomai** 'divide, apportion, allot', the derivative of which is **dais** 'feast'; see [Ch.7§14](#).

§5n2. For the translation, cf. West 1966.317.

§5n3. The significance of this parallel was pointed out by Rudhardt 1970.6.

§5n4. For the notion of **tîmê** as the 'honor' conferred by cult, see [Ch.7§1n2](#), [§19nn1 and 3](#); [Ch.9§3](#).

§5n5. For an illuminating commentary: Vernant 1974.177-194 (cf. also Vernant 1977).

§6n1. For the key words in these verses, see [§5n1](#).

§6n2. For the parallelism of *Th.* 570-616 with the myth of Pandora ([W&D 53-105](#)), see Vernant 1974.192-194.

§7n1. See [§1](#).

§7n2. See Puttkammer 1912.35. This fact has been generally overlooked until the appearance of an important article by Gill (1974), who documents

the practice of depositing choice portions of meat on a given god's **trapeza**, 'table', which coexists with the practice of burning the other portions (notably the bones and fat) on the god's altar. In view of the general absence in Homeric poetry of references to setting aside choice cuts of meat for the god who receives sacrifice, Gill and others infer that the practice of depositing meat on a **trapeza** was originally distinct from the practice of burning meat on an altar. I would argue, however, that the Homeric silence on this aspect of sacrifice is for different reasons: Homeric Epos is Panhellenic, and as such it will tend to avoid any references to localized aspects of any Hellenic institution (cf. Intro. §14). To repeat: the choice of meat portions deposited on the god's **trapeza** actually varied from **polis** to **polis** (Gill, p. 125; cf. also [Ch.7§19n3](#) above). Such localized variation would make this aspect of sacrifice unsuitable for Homeric presentation. One exception to the Homeric silence on the deposition of meat seems to be [*Odyssey* xiv 418-438](#) (Gill, p. 134); even here, the description is so stylized that it is difficult to imagine what, if any, regional characteristics may be revealed. On the **trapeza** of the Sun in the land of the Aithiopes ([Herodotus 3.17](#)-26), see Vernant 1972.

[§7n3](#). See [Ch.10§49](#).

[§8n1](#). See [§§5-6](#).

[§8n2](#). See [§4](#).

[§9n1](#). See [Ch.7§14](#).

[§9n2](#). Cf. also [Ch.7§16n1](#).

[§9n3](#). See again [Ch.7§14](#).

[§10n1](#). On the omission of Prometheus' name at the start of this narrative: West 1966.317.

[§12n1](#). Note the epithet of Helen in the anonymous lyric fragment 1014 Page: **poluneikēs**. Note too the usage of archē: whereas the theme of Helen is neikeos archē 'the beginning of the **neîkos**', the theme of Achilles is

pêmatos archê 'the beginning of the pêma [pain]' (viii 81; cf. [Ch.4§6](#) and [§7n1](#)).

§14n1. Cf. Stiewe 1963.5.

§14n2. Cf. Stiewe, pp. 4-6. I should add that there is no need to assume that the text of Hesiod *fr.* 204MW is based on one or several other *texts*; it is enough to say that the text is based on various *traditions* that occur also in the *Cypria* and in the *Iliad*.

§14n3. The Will of Zeus at the beginning of the *Cypria* is in turn more comprehensive than at the beginning of the *Iliad* ([I 1-7](#)), where it entails the deaths of heroes only in that portion of the Trojan War which begins with the **mênis** 'anger' of Achilles. See [Ch.5§25](#) (esp. n2), [Ch.7§17](#), [Ch.10§17](#).

§14n4. Note the close parallelism in diction between [Iliad I 3-4](#) and these lines 118-119 of Hesiod *fr.* 204MW.

§14n5. Note the extended metaphor at Hesiod *fr.* 204.123 ff.MW, which immediately follows the passage about the Will of Zeus: men die much as leaves fall from trees. On this theme of mortality, see [Ch.10§6](#).

§16n1. See [§12](#).

§16n2. The translation "blame," like all other translations, is only partially adequate. In his suggestive discussion of the verb **neikeô/neikeiô**, Adkins (1960.59n17) weighs such translations as "upbraid" and "chide," finally deciding on "abuse" in order to emphasize that "in a society which does not distinguish between moral error and mistake, it is impossible to distinguish mockery, abuse, and rebuke. There is only one situation: unpleasant words directed at a man who has *in fact* fallen short of the expectations of society."

§16n3. I postpone any definition of **aînos** until later.

Chapter 12

Poetry of Praise, Poetry of Blame

§1. As we see from Georges Dumézil's comparative study *Servius et la Fortune*, Indo-European society operated on the principle of counterbalancing praise and blame, primarily through the medium of poetry.^[1] This state of affairs is most overtly preserved in the evidence of Indic and Old Irish,^[2] but we must now also include Greek. Thanks to the brilliant synthesis of Marcel Detienne, we are in a position to see the opposition of praise and blame as a fundamental principle in the archaic Greek community.^[3]

§2. It is convenient to start by looking at such conservative Dorian societies as that of Sparta. The clearest evidence comes from Plutarch's *Lycurgus*: in Sparta, the law was based on two fundamental principles, namely **epainos** 'praise' and **psogos** 'blame'.^[1] The social function of this antithesis can be seen from the objects of praise and blame respectively: **kalôn epainos** 'praise of the noble' compared to **aiskhrôn psogos** 'blame of the base' ([Plutarch *Lycurgus* 8.2, 21.1, 25.2](#); also [14.3](#), [26.3](#)). Furthermore, the prime medium of praise and blame was poetry ([14.5](#), [26.6](#)).^[2]

§3. In the traditional Dorian praise poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides, we find the most striking and most appealing sort of confirmation about the poetic function of praise and blame. Not only is praise poetry programmatically called **epainos** or **aînos** (verb **epaineô** or **aineô**) by the praise poetry itself but its opposite is specified as **psogos** (verb **psegô**),^[1] as in the following words of Pindar:

xeinos eimi: skoteinon apechôn psogon,
hudatos hôte rhoas philon es andr' agôn
kleos etêtumon ainesô

I am a guest-stranger. Keeping away dark blame [psogos]
and bringing genuine kleos, like streams of water, to a man who is

philos,
I will praise [verb **aineô**] him.

[Pindar N.7.61-63](#)

In other words, the actual antithesis between **aînos/epainos** and **psogos** is in itself a poetic tradition. Besides the programmatic words **aînos/epainos** and **aineô/epaineô**, there are other elements in the diction of praise poetry that serve to designate its own function, the most important of which is **kleos** (as in the passage quoted, [Pindar N.7.62](#)).^[2] The traditional diction of the praise poetry composed by Pindar and Bacchylides also has inherited, besides **psogos**, several other words that serve to mark blame as a foil for praise:^[3]

eris 'strife'	<u>erida</u>	Pi.N.4.93
vs. aineô 'praise'	<u>aineôn</u>	"
neîkos 'quarrel, fight'	<u>neikei</u>	Pi.N.8.25
~ erizô 'have eris'	<u>erizei</u>	.22
~ phthoneroi 'those who have phthonos '	<u>phthoneroisin</u>	.21
~ oneidos 'blame, reproach' ^[4]	<u>oneidos</u>	.33
oneidos	"	"
vs. aineô 'praise'	<u>aineôn ainêta</u>	.39
vs. kleos 'glory'	<u>kleos</u>	.36
mômos 'blame, reproach'	<u>mômos</u>	Ba.13.202
vs. aineô 'praise' ^[5]	<u>aineitô</u>	.201
phthonos 'envy, greed'	<u>phthonos</u>	Ba.13.200
~ mômos	<u>mômos</u>	.202
vs. aineô	<u>aineitô</u>	.201
phthonos	<u>phthonos</u>	Pi.P.1.85
~ mômos	<u>mômos</u>	.82
phthonos	<u>phthonon</u>	Ba.5.188
vs. aineô ^[6]	<u>ainein</u>	"

I draw special attention to the first two entries in the list, **eris** and **neîkos**. In Homeric and Hesiodic poetry, we have seen that these words are appropriate for motivating the Trojan War in particular and the human condition in general. Now we see in the diction of praise poetry that **eris** and **neîkos** also can have a far more specific function: designating the opposite of praise poetry.

§4. Of course, blame is inimical to praise in praise poetry only if it is the blame of the noble, since the conceit of praise poetry is that it praises the noble only, not the base. For an illustration, let us isolate the word **phthonos** 'envy, greed' and examine its use as a foil for praise poetry within such poetry. In [Bacchylides 5.188](#) and [13.199-201](#), we have just seen **phthonos** being directly contrasted with **aineô** 'praise' ([ainein](#) and [aineitô](#) respectively). [1] He who *praises* ([eu legein](#) 'speak well'): [Ba.3.67](#)) is described as [hostis mê phthonôi piainetai](#) 'one who does not fatten himself on phthonos' ([Ba.3.67-68](#)). [2] I draw attention to this combination in view of the following expression in Pindaric praise poetry:

[psogerón Archilochon barulogois echthesin
piaínomēnōn ...](#)

Archilochus, having psogos, fattening himself on heavy-worded
hatreds ...

[Pindar P.2.55-56.](#)

We see here a programmatic description of blame poetry (witness the epithet **psogeros** 'having **psogos**') as the opposite of praise poetry, in the specific context of rejecting blame within a poem of praise:

[eme de chreôn
pheugein dakos adinon kakagorian ...](#)

but I must avoid
the relentless bite of speaking ill ...

[Pindar P.2.52-53](#)

§5. Where the language of blame is unjustified, it is specifically correlated with imagery that dwells on the devouring of meat. As we have just observed, blaming is made parallel to biting; also, the blamer is said to fatten himself on **phthonos** or on the hatreds of **psogos**. As we look for further development of this imagery, we come upon the following passage:

[1]

opson de logoi phthoneroisin,
haptetai d' eslôn aei, cheironessi d' ouk erizei.
keinos kai Telamônos dapsen huion,
phasganôi amphikulisais.
ê tin' aglôsson men, êtor d' alkimon, latha katechei
en lugrôi neikei: megiston d' aiolôi pseu-
dei geras antetatai

Words are a morsel for those who have **phthonos** [2]

He [one who has **phthonos**] [3] grabs at the noble rather than have eris with the inferior.

That one [Odysseus] [4] even devoured the son of Telamon [Ajax], skewering him on the sword. [5]

One who is unversed in speech but stout at heart is held down by Neglect [6] on the occasion of a baneful **neîkos**.

And the biggest honorific portion is handed over to intricate Deceit.

Pindar N.8.21-25

At line 21, we see that **phthonos** is the food of the blamer only in a figurative sense: the language of **phthonos** is his means for getting a meal, not the meal itself. [7] But then, we also see at lines 22-23 of Pindar's praise poem a ghastly extension of the same theme: not only does the man of **phthonos** get a meal, but the meal may actually turn out to be his victim! The verb **haptomai** at line 22 (haptetai) connotes not only 'grab at food', as at Odyssey iv 60 and x 379, but even 'grab at a victim with the teeth', as at Iliad VIII 339, where the subject of the verb is **kuôn** 'dog'. Similarly with dapsen 'devoured' at line 23 of Pindar's poem: in Homeric diction, the same verb **daptô** can be applied in contexts where corpses are 'devoured' by dogs rather than by the fire of cremation (XXIII 183; cf. XXII 339). So also with **piainô** 'fatten' in the expression **phthonôi piainetai** 'fattens himself on

phthonos' at [Bacchylides 3.68](#) and [barulogois echthesin / piaínomenon](#) 'fattening himself on heavy-worded hatreds' at [Pindar P.2.55](#)-56: in Homeric diction, dogs devour specifically the fat of uncremated corpses ([VIII 379-380](#), [XI 818](#), [XIII 831-832](#)).^[8] In effect, then, the language of praise poetry presents the language of unjustified blame as parallel to the eating of heroes' corpses by dogs.

§6. Significantly, the language of epic itself quotes the language of blame within the framework of narrating quarrels,^[1] and a prominent word of insult within such direct quotations is **kuôn** 'dog' and its derivatives.^[2] For example, Achilles insults Agamemnon by calling him **kunôpa** 'having the looks of a dog' ([I 159](#)) and **kunos ommat'** **ekhôn** 'having the eyes of a dog' ([I 225](#))[3] in the context of their quarrel, which is designated by **eris** and its derivative **erizô** ([I 6](#), 8, 177, 210, 277, 319; [II 376](#)), as well as by **neîkos** ([II 376](#)).^[4] The actual words of blame spoken by Achilles to Agamemnon are designated as **oneidos** 'blame, reproach' by the victim himself ([oneidea: I 291](#); cf. [I 211](#)).^[5] Similarly, in Pindar's praise poem, the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus qualifies as an **eris** ([erizei: N.8.22](#)) and as a **neîkos** ([neikei: N.8.25](#)). In addition, the unjustified blame of Ajax by Odysseus qualifies as **oneidos** ([oneidos: N.8.33](#)). But here the praise poem itself insults Odysseus--not by calling him **kuôn** 'dog' but rather by describing his actions as those of a dog feeding on human flesh. Whereas the righteous indignation of Achilles is formalized in his words of justified blame against Agamemnon,^[6] the corresponding indignation of Ajax is taken up by the praise poem itself. But the words of justified blame in Pindar's *Nemean 8* are intended not so much against Odysseus but against the unjustified blame in the quarrel that led to the besting of the heroic Ajax by his deceitful adversary.

§7. After concluding its retrospective on the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus, Pindar's praise poem has this to say about the language of blame:

[echthra d' ara parphasis ên kai palai,](#)
[haimulôn muthôn homophoi-](#)
[tos, dolophradêς, kakopoion oneidos](#)

Hateful misrepresentation has existed [for a long time](#),
companion of wily words, deviser of deceit,

maleficent **oneidos**.

Pindar N.8.32-33

These words serve as a foil for the words that later conclude Pindar's *Nemean 8*, where praise poetry itself gets the ultimate praise:[1]

ên ge man epikômios humnos
dê palai kai prin genesthai
tan Adrastou tan te Kadmeiôn erin

The encomium[2] has existed for a long time--even before the eris between Adrastos and the Thebans ever happened.[3]

Pindar N.8.50-51

Thus praise poetry recognizes its own deeply traditional nature by describing itself as a primordial institution. The ideal opposite of **oneidos** ([N.8.34](#)) is presented as **kleos** ([N.8.36](#)), which the righteous man wishes to leave behind for his children when he dies ([N.8. 36-37](#)). In the same connection, the praise poem presents the function of the righteous man as the function of the praise poet himself:

aineôn ainêta, momphan d' epispeirôn alitrois

praising what is to be praised, sowing blame upon what is unrighteous[4]

Pindar N.8.39

§8. We may round out our survey of the word **phthonos** 'envy, greed' as a foil for praise poetry by considering a particularly suggestive occurrence at the beginning of [*Odyssey xviii*](#). Here we see the beggar Iros making **neîkos** against Odysseus ([neikeiôn: xviii 9](#)), who is himself disguised as a beggar; in his quoted **neîkos** ([xviii 10-13](#)), Iros commands Odysseus to get out of his way, threatening that the present **eris** between the two of them ([eris: xviii 13](#)) may escalate from verbal to physical violence (cf. [xviii 38-39](#)).[1]

The disguised master of the household refuses to budge from the doorway, answering Iros with these words:

daimoni', oute ti se rhezô kakon out' agoreuô,
oute tina phthoneô domenai kai poll' anelonta.
oudos d' amphoteros hode cheisetai, oude ti se chrê
allotriôn phthoneein: dokeois de moi einai alêtês
hôs per egôn, olbon de theoi mellousin opazein

You **daimonios!**[2] I am harming you by neither deed nor word.
And I do not begrudge [I have no phthonos] that someone should be a
giver, after having been a taker in great quantities.
But this threshold will accommodate both of us, and you should not
have phthonos about the property of others. You seem to be a beggar
like me,
and it is the gods who are likely to grant **olbos**[prosperity].

xviii 15-19

The collocation of **olbos** and **phthonos** here is striking in view of a traditional theme found time and again in the actual words of praise poetry: that **olbos** comes from the gods to the righteous and that it attracts the **phthonos** of the unrighteous (see especially [Pindar N.11.29](#)). Ironically, the **olbos** of Odysseus himself is now being threatened by the suitors, whose "messenger" Iros has so much **phthonos** as to hinder our hero from even entering his own household.[3] Without having to identify himself as the owner, however, Odysseus warns Iros not "to have **phthonos** about the property of others" (allotriôn phthoneein: xviii 18).

§9. Such excessive **phthonos** on the part of Iros is directly comparable to **phthonos** in its function as a traditional negative foil of praise poetry within praise poetry. As we have seen, gluttony is a prime characteristic of **phthonos** in the diction of praise poetry;[1] hence the saying "words are a morsel for those who have **phthonos**" ([Pindar N.8.21](#)).[2] In fact, we now see from the Homeric description of Iros that his **phthonos** is manifested in precisely this sort of gluttony; the key word is **margos** 'gluttonous, wanton':

êlthe d' epi ptôchos pandêmios, hos kata astu
ptôcheuesk' Ithakês, meta d' eprepe gasteri margêi
azêches phagemen kai piemen: oude hoi ên is
oude biê, eidos de mala megas ên horaasthai

And there came a beggar,[3] belonging to all the district [**dêmos**], who used to go begging throughout the town of Ithaca; he was renowned for his endless eating and drinking with his **margê** belly. And he had no **îs** [force], nor **biê** [might], but in appearance he was big to look at.[4]

xviii 1-4

In the language of praise poetry, the same word **margos** characterizes those whose words are inimical to the institution of praise:

epi toi
Akraganti tanusais
audasomai enorkion logon alathei noôi
tekein mê tin' hekaton ge eteôn polin
philois andra mallon
euergetan prapisin aphthonesteron te chera
Thêrônos. all' ainon epeba koros
ou dikai sunantomenos alla margôn hup' andrôn,
to lalagêsai thelon
kruphon tithemen eslôn kalois
ergois.

Aiming my arrow at Akragas,
I will proclaim under oath, with unerring intent,
that no city in these last hundred years has produced
a man more beneficent in disposition to **philois**
and more ungrudging.[from **a-phthonos** = having no phthonos] in
hand
than Theron. But satiety[5] attacks praise [**aînos**].
It [satiety] is accompanied not by justice but by **margoi** men.
It is idle talk, which wishes to put concealment upon the fine deeds of
the worthy.

In short, a man who is **margos** is a man who has the mouth of **Eris** personified:

Eridos pote margin echôn stoma

... having the **margin** mouth of **Eris**

Ibycus fr. 311 a P

§10. From the evidence of such traditional wording, I propose that the story of Iros in effect ridicules the stereotype of an unrighteous blame poet. Like the unrighteous blamers who are righteously blamed by praise poetry, Iros has **eris** 'strife' with a good man ([xviii 13](#), 38-39) and makes **neîkos** 'quarreling' against him ([xviii 9](#)). Like the blamers, he is **margos** 'gluttonous' (cf. [xviii 2](#)) and has **phthonos** 'greed' for the **olbos** 'prosperity' that the good man gets from the gods (cf. [xviii 17-19](#)).^[1] Moreover, we have seen that the good man who is praised by a praise poem must be a paragon of generosity (hence **a-phthonos** 'without **phthonos**', as in [Pindar O.2.94](#)). Now we also see that Odysseus himself is generous even with the provocative Iros ([ou ... phthoneô](#) 'I have no **phthonos**' : [xviii 16](#)). In fact, this theme of generosity turns out to be crucial for our understanding of the Iros story, as we are about to see from the comparative evidence of ancient Irish tales. One of the most interesting Irish parallels comes from the *Second Battle of Mag Tured*: it is a story about the Dagdae, a prodigiously generous heroic figure, and Cridenbél, a prodigiously greedy blame poet.^[2] Cridenbél was so gluttonous that his mouth grew out from his chest, not from his face. This poet made it his habit to demand from the Dagdae, under the threat of blame, the three best portions of each of the hero's meals. *Noblesse oblige*, and the Dagdae's generosity would never allow him to refuse the blame poet's demands. As a result, he became ill from malnutrition. At this point, the Dagdae resorts to deceit: he conceals three gold pieces in the three portions demanded by Cridenbél, and the blame poet unwittingly gluts himself to death on gold--ironically an emblem of ultimate prosperity.

§11. Like the story of Iros in the *Odyssey*, this story from ancient Irish tradition ridicules the function of the blame poet in society. Such ridicule is of course intensified in the *Odyssey* by way of presenting Iros as a beggar. But the actual function of the beggar in society is in fact vitally serious in the overall narrative of the *Odyssey*, as we see from the figure that serves as a positive foil for the beggar Iros, namely Odysseus himself in beggar's disguise. Odysseus plans specifically to beg for his meals--and the word for "meal" here is **dais** ([xvii 11](#), 19); moreover, he plans to beg from the suitors! A stranger in his own house, the disguised Odysseus is received properly by Telemachus, who gives him food and encourages him to beg from the suitors ([xvii 336-352](#)); Odysseus responds by praying that Zeus grant **olbos** 'prosperity' to Telemachus ([olbion einai](#): [xvii 354](#)). Odysseus proceeds to beg from the suitors, but the chief suitor Antinoos raises objections to the beggar's presence ([xvii 360-395](#)). Telemachus rebukes Antinoos: "you want to eat much, instead of giving to the other man" ([xvii 404](#)). "I myself," says Telemachus, "have no **phthonos**" ([ou toi phthoneô](#): [xvii 400](#)). The climactic moment comes when Odysseus begs from the suitor Antinoos. He addresses him as **philos** ([xvii 415](#)), says that the young man seems like the "best of the Achaeans" ([xvii 415-416](#)), and promises to make **kleos** for him in return for generosity ([xvii 418](#)). *Noblesse oblige*, but Antinoos refuses.^[1] In fact, his refusal not only disqualifies Antinoos himself but also undermines the position of all the other suitors. There is no generosity, says Antinoos, in giving away things that are not one's own ([xvii 449-452](#)). By contrast, Odysseus shows the ultimate generosity when he tells the "messenger" of the suitors: 1. that he [Odysseus] feels no **phthonos** if one gives away things that are not one's own ([xviii 16](#)) 2. that he [Iros] is entitled to feel no **phthonos** about things that are not his own ([xviii 17-18](#)).^[2] The suitors merit their death--and Iros, his beating--not for eating the food of Odysseus but for actually denying it to him. Odysseus himself formally blames Antinoos for withholding abundant food that belongs to someone else ([xvii 454-457](#)), and his words of blame are called **oneidos** by Antinoos ([oneidea](#): [xvii 461](#)).

§12. To make matters worse, Antinoos is so angered by these words of **oneidos** 'blame' that his violence is escalated from the verbal to the physical: he throws a footstool at Odysseus and injures him ([xvii 462-463](#)). Penelope decries this act as a moral outrage ([xvii 499-504](#)), in that she

considers the beggar to be a **xenos**'guest-stranger' in the house of Odysseus (Homeric **xeînos**: [xvii 501](#)). As we examine the implications of this word **xenos**, it is appropriate to cite here the formulation devised by Émile Benveniste:[\[1\]](#)

We must envisage the situation of a *xénos*, of a "guest," who is visiting a country where, as a stranger, he is deprived of all rights, of all protection, of all means of existence. He finds no welcome, no lodging and no guarantee except in the house of the man with whom he is connected by *philótēs*. ... The pact concluded in the name of *philótēs* makes the contracting parties *phíloi*: they are henceforth committed to a reciprocity of services which constitute "hospitality."

Anyone, then, who would consider even a mere beggar as his or her **xenos** displays the maximum of generosity, since a beggar stands to offer the minimum in reciprocal services. Thus Telemachus in effect reveals the nobility of his royal family by receiving Odysseus in beggar's disguise as a **xenos** ([xvii 342-355](#); hence [xeinôi/xeine](#) at 345/350). Antinoos, by contrast, proves himself ignoble by his failure to act likewise, and his bad behavior is compounded when he addresses the injured Odysseus sarcastically as a **xenos** ([xeine](#): [xvii 478](#)). Ironically, the father of Antinoos had been treated as a **xenos** by Odysseus himself ([xvi 424-432](#)); it is thus appropriate that Odysseus should address Antinoos as **philos** at the very moment that he tests him by begging for food ([xvii 415](#)).

§13. Different **xenoi** have different capacities to reciprocate the generosity of their host, and the swineherd Eumaios perceives that the disguised Odysseus is much more than a mere beggar. In other words, the stranger's capacity to reciprocate is much higher than that of a mere beggar. Thus when Antinoos reproaches Eumaios for inviting "another beggar" to the house of Odysseus ([xvii 375-379](#)), the swineherd replies as follows:

[Antino', ou men kala kai esthlos eôn agoreueis:](#)
[tis gar dê xeionon kalei allothen autos epelthôn](#)
[allon g', ei mê tôn hoi dêmioergoi easi,](#)
[mantin ê iêtéra kakôn ê tektona dourôn,](#)
[ê kai thespin aoidon, ho ken terpêisin aeidôn;](#)

houtoi gar klētoi ge brotôn ep' apeirona gaian:
ptôchon d' ouk an tis kaleoi truxonta he auton

Antinoos! Though you are noble, you do not speak properly.
What man who is from somewhere else himself[1]
will invite yet another **xenos** [guest-stranger], unless he [the **xenos**] is
one of those who are workers of the **dêmos**,[2]
such as a seer, or a healer of illnesses, or a carpenter who works on
wood,
or even an inspired singer who can give delight with his singing?[3]
For such men are apt to be invited anywhere in the world.
But one would not invite a beggar; such a man would feed on his host.

xvii 381-387

For Antinoos, these words are meant to convey that Eumaios, being a stranger himself, would not invite a low-ranking stranger, such as a beggar; if the stranger is a beggar, then he did not invite him. For Odysseus, these same words mean that Eumaios considers him a high-ranking stranger, such as a seer, physician, carpenter, or poet; if the stranger is one of these, then he did invite him. The sequence of enumerating the four occupations is arranged in a crescendo of detail, starting with a single word to designate the seer (mantin: xvii 384) and ending with a whole verse to designate the poet (xvii 385). Thus the formal presentation of alternatives implies that the stranger is most likely to be a poet.

§14. Later on, Eumaios tells Penelope explicitly that the stranger indeed has the powers of a poet:

hoi' ho ge mutheitai, thelgoito ke toi philon êtor.

...

hôs d' hot' aoidon anêr potiderketai, hos te theôn ex
aeidêi dedaôs epe' himeroenta brotoisi,
tou d' amoton memaasin akouemen, hoppot' aeidêi:
hôs eme keinos ethelge parêmenos en megaroisi

The kind of things he tells about--it would put your heart in a trance....
As when a man is looking at[1] a singer who has learned his words

from the gods--and the words give pleasure to mortals,
who yearn to hear him without pause when he sings--
so also that one was putting a trance on me as he sat in my house.

[xvii 514, 518-521](#)

The disguised Odysseus merits such a compliment from Eumaios not only when he tells the first-person odyssey of the Cretan adventurer, at [xiv 192-359](#),^[2] but also later when he employs a particular form of discourse in asking for an overnight cloak, at [xiv 462-506](#). In these verses, the disguised Odysseus is narrating to Eumaios and his friends a story about the Trojan War: it happened on a cold night, during an ambush, that a man was tricked out of his cloak by Odysseus himself, who gave it to his own friend and equal, the narrator!^[3] As Leonard Muellner points out, the telling of this story to Eumaios has a parallel purpose: to get a cloak for the disguised Odysseus.^[4] "The story is--in more ways than one--proud talk that raises its speaker's prestige (and almost gives away his identity),^[5] but in the *Odyssey* it receives a moral interpretation ... by which Odysseus obtains proper treatment as a guest in the form of ... a symbolic mantle."^[6] Significantly, these words of Odysseus constitute a form of discourse that Eumaios himself compliments as an **aînos** ([ainos](#): [xiv 508](#)). And it is this same word **aînos** that designates praise poetry within the traditional diction of epinician praise poetry!

§15. From the evidence of Homeric diction alone, the meaning of **aînos** may be analyzed further:^[1]

In particular, *aînos* designates a discourse that aims at praising and honoring someone or something or at being ingratiating toward a person. Accidental or not, in Homer the word always defines a polite, edifying speech that is in direct or indirect connection with a gift or a prize. In [Il. 23.795](#) *aînos* means "praise," as is made evident by the verb *kûdainô* ("to give honor") of line 793. Achilles repays this *aînos* with a gift. In the same book, Nestor's speech--in which he recalls his past deeds and thanks Achilles for his generous gift--is termed an *aînos* ([Il. 23.652](#)). In both poems we find *polúainos* as an epithet for Odysseus: in at least one passage the word is connected with Odysseus's cunning ([Il. 11.430](#)), and in [Od. 14.508-9](#) Odysseus's

speech--termed *aînos*--is explicitly defined as a discourse that will not "miss a reward." In [Od. 21.110](#) Telemachos turns to the suitors, who are ready to compete for Penelope's hand, and says rhetorically that she does not need any praise (*aînos*). Yet Telemachos has in fact praised Penelope and enhanced her unique qualities (106-9): he therefore increases the suitors' willingness to compete for the prize, i.e., for Penelope.

The **aînos** told by Odysseus to Eumaios is parallel to the epinician praise poetry of the classical period both in name and in details of convention. Consider, for example, the elaborate excuse that introduces the story of the cloak as told by Odysseus:

kekłuthi nun, Eumaie kai alloi pantes hetairoi,
euxamenos ti epos ereô: oinos gar anôgei
êleos, hos t' epheêke poluphrona per mal' aeisai
kai th' hapalon gelasai, kai t' orchêsasthai anêke,
kai ti epos proeiken hoper t' arrêton ameinon.
all' epei oun to prôton anekragon, ouk epikeusô

Listen to me now, Eumaios and all you other **hetaîroi** [companions]!
Speaking proudly,^[2] I will tell you an **epos** [poetic utterance].^[3]
The wine, which sets me loose, is telling me to do so.
Wine impels even the thinking man to sing
and to laugh softly. And it urges him on to dance.
It even prompts an **epos** that may be better left unsaid.
But now that I have shouted out loud, I will not suppress it.

[xiv 462-467](#)

In the epinician praise poetry of the classical period, we find similar formalistic excuses:

ea me: nikônti ge charin, ei ti peran aertheis
anekragon, ou trachus eimi katathemen

Your indulgence, please! If I--to reciprocate the victor--shouted something out loud as I soared too far up, I am not

unversed in bringing it back down.[\[4\]](#)

Pindar N.7.75-76

Moreover, the festive mood that calls for "singing, laughter, and dancing" ([xiv 464-465](#)) is reminiscent of the formal setting for the epinician praise poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides: a song-and-dance composition performed in an atmosphere of **euphrosunâ** 'mirth' (e.g, [Pindar N.4.1](#)).[\[5\]](#)

§16. In the **aînos** told by Odysseus, the actual disposition of the audience constitutes a theme that rounds out the composition; the story of the cloak is concluded with an appeal to the host's sense of **philotês** 'being a **philos**' ([philotêti: xiv 505](#)). In other words, Eumaios the host should be **philos** to Odysseus the **xenos** 'guest-stranger'. So also in the praise poetry of Pindar, the poet may conventionally present himself as the **xenos** of the patron, who is his **philos**:

[xeinos eimi: skoteinon apechôn psogon,](#)
[hudatos hôte rhoas philon es andr' agôn](#)
[kleos etêtumon ainesô](#)

I am a **xenos** [guest-stranger]. Keeping away dark **blame** [**psogos**] and bringing genuine **kleos**, like streams of water, to a man who is **philos**,
I will praise [**aineô**] him.

Pindar N.7.61-63

In light of these patterns in traditional diction, we may now see another dimension in the words employed by the disguised Odysseus in his attempt to beg from Antinoos. Speaking as a **xenos**, however lowly, the beggar addresses the suitor as **philos** ([xvii 415](#)) and promises him **kleos** in return for any largesse ([xvii 418](#)). Antinoos refuses to give anything, and in return he gets **oneidos** 'blame' from Odysseus ([oneidea: xvii 461](#)).[\[1\]](#) Generosity and its opposite deserve praise and blame respectively from this poetlike figure.

§17. We have seen, then, from the evidence of Homeric diction that the word **aînos** designates a mode of poetic discourse appropriate for purposes that go far beyond simply praising a patron. Although **aînos** becomes the primary word for designating praise poetry even within such poetry, it is also appropriate for designating, more broadly, "an allusive tale containing an ulterior purpose."^[1] In the case of the **aînos** at [xiv 508](#),^[2] we see how a tale about a cloak--with the Trojan War as the setting--has won a temporary cloak for the teller as a pledge of the host's disposition as **philos** to his guest. As we compare the epinician praise poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides, which is also traditionally designated by the word **aînos**, we find that the poetic occasion is of course far more grandiose; nevertheless, the poetic form is essentially parallel. Here too, the central element is the deployment of tales taken from Myth--and the Trojan War serves frequently as the setting;^[3] these tales, moreover, are arranged to convey an ad hoc message of praise and edification to the victor and his family, who are accordingly obligated as **phili** to the poet. A derivative of **aînos** even conveys the moralizing tone so characteristic of epinician poetry: the compound **par-aineô** 'advise, instruct' applies to the edifying instructions given by the Centaur, Cheiron, to the youthful Achilles and also by the poet himself to his young patron ([Pindar P.6.23](#)).^[4] This derivative word **paraineô** also applies to the didactic function of the Hesiodic tradition in general, and the application is actually attested in the diction of epinician praise poetry:

Lampôn de meletan
ergois opazôn Hêsiō-
dou mala timai tout' epos,
huioisi te phrazôn parainei,
xunon astei kosmon heîi prosagôn:
kai xenôn euergesiais agapatai

And Lampon [the patron, father of the victorious athlete],
who adds preparedness to action, honors this **epos** [poetic utterance] of
Hesiod.

He instructs [**par-aineô**] his sons by telling it to them,
thus bringing communal embellishment to his city.

And he is loved for treating well his **xenoi**.

Pindar I.6.66-70

Such a poetic utterance or **epos** ('Add preparedness to action!'), which serves as an instructive legacy for the sons of Lampon, is actually attested in the Hesiodic tradition:

meletê de toi ergon ophellei

Preparedness aids action.

Hesiod W&D 412

§18. In the sense of 'an allusive tale containing an ulterior purpose',[1] the word **aînos** applies not only to the specific genre of praise poetry but also to the general narrative device of animal fables. In the poetry of Archilochus, for example, we find **aînos** designating the fable about the fox and the eagle (*fr. 174.1W*), as well as the fable about the ape and the fox (*fr. 185.1W*). The word is likewise appropriate for designating the animal fables belonging to the tradition of Aesop.[2] In order to understand the formal connection between fable and praise poetry, we may now turn to the **aînos** about the hawk and the nightingale in Hesiod W&D 203-212.[3] I call special attention to the fable's introductory description of the intended audience:

nun d' ainon basileusin ereô phroneousi kai autois

Now I will tell an **aînos** for kings, aware as they are.

Hesiod W&D 202

Using the language of Prague School linguistics,[4] we may say that the *code* of this **aînos** has a *message* for kings--but only if they are "aware" (**phroneontes**, at verse 202). Such a built-in ideology of exclusiveness also pervades the form of **aînos** that we know as epinician praise poetry. Consider the following programmatic declarations about this genre of poetry by the poetry itself:

phroneonti suneta garuô

I proclaim things that can be understood to the man who is aware
[**phroneôn**].

[Bacchylides 3.85](#)

... phônaenta [sunetoisin](#) ...

... having a sound for those who can understand ...

[Pindar O.2.85](#)

... [epaineonti sunetoi](#)

... those who can understand give praise

[Pindar P.5.107](#)

Praise poetry is "understandable" (**suneta**) only for the man who is "aware" (**phroneôn**). Only "those who can understand" (the **sunetoi**) can deliver or hear the message of praise.[\[5\]](#) Epic also recognizes this ideology of praise poetry, but it finds expression only in terms of quotations presented before an audience of Achaeans. Consider these words addressed by Odysseus to Diomedes:

[Tudeïdê, mêt' ar me mal' ainee mêtē ti neikei:
eidosi gar toi tauta met' Argeiois agoreueis](#)

Son of Tydeus! Do not give me too much praise [aineô, from ânos]
nor too much blame [neikeô, from neîkos].

You are saying these things in the presence of Argives who know.[\[6\]](#)

[X 249-250](#)

§19. The **ânos**, then, is a code bearing one message to its intended audience; aside from those exclusive listeners "who can understand," it is apt to be misunderstood, garbled.[\[1\]](#) With this ideology in mind, we will find it easier to understand the semantics of other attested words derived from **ânos**. I cite in particular a by-form of **aineô** 'praise', **ainizomai/ainissomai**: this verb means either 'praise' (as in [viii 487](#)) or

'utter an oracular response' (as in [Pindar P.8.40](#)). It can even mean 'speak riddles' (as in [Herodotus 5.56](#))-- hence the derivative noun **ainigma** 'riddle' (as in [Sophocles Oedipus Rex 393, 1525](#)). We may also find it easier now to understand the semantics of the verb from which the noun **ânos** is derived: the negative form is **an-ainomai** 'say no', and the unattested positive counterpart *ainomai must have meant something like 'say [in a special way]'.[\[2\]](#)

§20. What, then, is the bond of communication that determines who can and who cannot understand the exclusive message of praise poetry? It is, I submit, the same principle that we find in the Homeric ideology of **philotês**--the ties that bind the **philioi hetaîroi** together.[\[1\]](#) In the Homeric tradition, as Dale Sinos has demonstrated in detail, the dimensions of **philotês** are determined by the social base of the Achaean **lâos**.[\[2\]](#) In the epinician praise poetry of the classical period, on the other hand, the social base for the community of **philioi** is the **kômos** 'revel, celebration, celebrating group of singers/dancers'.[\[3\]](#) The **kômos** is not only the context for celebrating the victor with praise (cf. [Pindar N.3.5, I.8.4, etc.](#)).[\[4\]](#) It is also, in a larger sense, a formal affirmation of the **philotês** that flourishes among **hetaîroi** 'comrades' in society. This social function of the **kômos** is evident even in the diction of epinician praise poetry, as the following examples show:

philophrosunais ... kômon ...

with the disposition of a **philos** ... **kômos** ...

[Pindar O.6.98](#)

kômazonti philois ... sun hetairois ...

having a **kômos** with the **philioi hetaîroi** ...

[Pindar O.9.4](#)

par' andri philôi ... kômazonti ...

in the presence of a man who is **philos** ... having a **kômos** ...

§21. The recipient of praise is of course **philos** both to his **hetaîroi** in the **kômos** and to the poet himself (as in [Pindar N.7.61-63](#)).^[1] Moreover, the poet's function is reciprocal negatively as well as positively. Pindar's own words reveal that the traditional function of the poet is to be not only **philos** to the **philos** but also **ekhthros**'hateful, hostile' to the **ekhthros**:

[philon eiê philein:](#)

[poti d' echthron hat' echthros eôn lukoio](#)
[dikan hypotheusomai,](#)
[all' allotē pateôn hodois skoliais](#)

Let it happen that I be **philos** to [philein] the **philos**.

But I will be like an **ekhthros** to the **ekhthros**,^[2] heading him off in the manner of a wolf,
making different steps at different times, in twisting directions.

We have here a complete picture of reciprocity between the poet on the one hand and the man who gets the poet's praise or blame on the other.^[3] It is also important to observe that the foil for being **philos**, being **ekhthros**, is described in words that amount to a periphrasis of the notion inherent in the name **Luk-ambê̄s**, which has been traditionally interpreted as 'having the steps of a wolf'.^[4] Pindar's words apparently connote the stylized movements of a dance that represents the steps of a wolf. So too with the name **Luk-ambê̄s**: the second half of this compound, like that of **i-ambos**, seems to indicate an actual dance step.^[5]

Notes

§1n1. Dumézil 1943; updated in Dumézil 1969.

§1n2. For a convenient collection and correlation of facts, with bibliography, see Caerwyn Williams 1972 and Ward 1973. Cf. also Watkins

1976.

§1n3. Detienne 1973.18-27.

§2n1. For details, see Detienne 1973.19.

§2n2. See also Detienne, pp. 18-20.

§3n1. For a survey of passages, see Detienne 1973.21. For the programmatic character of **aînos/epainos** and **aineô/epaineô** as designating the poetic medium of praise, I cite in particular [Pindar O.6.12](#) and [Bacchylides 5.16](#); see also the discussion of praise poetry by Bundy 1962.35.

§3n2. See Maehler 1963.85. As we have seen, the word **kleos** within the genre of *epic* denotes the glory conferred upon the hero *by epic*; see [Ch.1§2](#). Note too the word **etêtumon** 'true, genuine' applied to **kleos** here in [Pindar N.7.63](#); the significance of this epithet will be discussed at [Ch.14§12n3](#).

§3n3. The list I give here is of course incomplete. Moreover, the traditional diction of epic poetry has inherited its corresponding set of words indicating blame, as the discussion that follows will reveal (see esp. [Ch.14§14](#)). Of course, I do not mean to suggest that all the words in this list *intrinsically* indicate the concept of blame. In the case of a word like **phthonos**, for example, I will argue only that it indicates blame *when it is being contrasted explicitly or implicitly with praise*.

§3n4. On the Pindaric passage in which all these words occur, see Köhnken 1971.24-34.

§3n5. Cf. a parallel contrast of **mômoms** and **(ep)aneô** 'praise' in Theognis 169 (**mômeumenos** and [ainei](#)), 875-876 (**mômêsaito** and [eainêsaï](#)), and 1079-1080 ([mômêsomai](#) and [ainêso](#)); also in Alcman 1.43-44P (**mômêsthai** and **epainê**).

§3n6. Cf. [aphthonêtos ainos](#) 'praise [**aînos**] without **phthonos**' at [Pindar O.11.7](#).

§4n1. The concept of **mômos** 'blame, reproach' is associated with the **phthonoentes** 'those who have **phthonos**' in [Pindar O.6.74](#).

§4n2. Cf. also Köhnken 1971.34-36.

§5n1. Cf. Köhnken 1971.30-32.

§5n2. I.e., the language of **phthonos** is like eating.

§5n3. My translation veers from the generally accepted interpretation, according to which the subject of [haptetai](#) and [erizei](#) at line 22 is to be supplied as [phthonos](#), implied by [phthoneroisin](#) at line 21 (for bibliography, see Köhnken 1971.30n38 and 33n57). The reasons for my interpretation will emerge from the discussion that follows. I should point out, however, that the main thesis of this discussion, that **phthonos** entails the "devouring" of a good hero, will not depend on whether or not my interpretation here is accepted. See further in Nagy 1996b.143n130.

§5n4. I posit that the thematic development is from the general to the specific: from "one who has **phthonos**" to "Odysseus." See again Nagy 1996b.143n130.

§5n5. I.e., Odysseus caused Ajax to kill himself with his own sword. Cf. [Pindar I.4.37](#), where the subject of [tamôn](#) 'cutting' is Ajax himself.

§5n6. Nonremembrance is the opposite of being remembered *by poetry*; on this traditional theme, see Detienne 1973.21-27. Cf. also [Ch.1§3](#) above.

§5n7. We see a clear instance of this theme in [Odyssey xviii 1-19](#), on which see further at [§9](#).

§5n8. At [Pindar N.9.23](#), the verb **piaínô** is applied in a context where the corpses of the Seven against Thebes "fatten" the smoke of cremation; at line 24, the funeral pyres "feasted on" (**daisanto**) the heroes. (Only Amphiaraos is exempt: lines 24-26.)

§6n1. Cf. [Ch.3§3](#)n.

§6n2. See Faust 1970; also Faust 1969.109-125.

§6n3. Cf. [IX 373](#).

§6n4. Cf. [Ch.7§17](#).

§6n5. From the standpoint of Agamemnon, the blame is of course unjustified.

§6n6. Significantly, Achilles himself is not called a **kuôn** 'dog' (or any of its variants) by any of his adversaries in the *Iliad* (see the survey by Faust 1970.10-19, column D). When Achilles is blamed for his savagery, the *primary* image is that of a lion (see [Ch.7§22](#)), not a dog; this observation may serve as a supplement to the interesting discussion by Faust 1970.24. I concede that the verb **helkô**, which denotes the dragging of Hektor's body by Achilles ([XXII 401](#), [XXIV 52](#); cf. [XXIV 21](#)), also denotes the dragging of corpses by dogs (see especially [XXII 335-336](#)). Nevertheless, the verb that denotes the dragging of victims by lions is also **helkô** ([XI 239](#), [XVIII 581](#)).

§7n1. Cf. Köhnken 1971.34-35; also Carey 1976.37.

§7n2. For the function of the praise poem as a "song [**humnos**] of the **kômos**" (adjective **epikômios**; or **enkômios**, as at [Pindar N.1.7](#), *O.2.47*, etc.), see [§20](#).

§7n3. On the function of the Nemean Games as a ritual extension of "the **eris** between Adrastos and the Thebans," cf. Köhnken 1971.35. On the theme of the strife between Eteokles and Polyneikes, see [Ch.14§12n3](#). The strife is caused by the curse of Oedipus, to whom his sons had given the wrong **moîra** of meat (see [Ch.7§16n3](#)); by doing so, Eteokles and Polyneikes were in effect making **oneidos** against their father (**oneideiontes**: *Thebais fr. 3.2* Allen).

§7n4. For **momphâ** as 'blame' cf. also the corresponding verb **memphomai** as at [Pindar N.1.24](#) ([memphomenois](#)).

§8n1. Note that the verbal **eris/neîkos** at the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis escalates into the physical **eris/neîkos** of the Trojan War; see [Ch.11§12](#). To

put it another way: the words **eris/neīkos** apply not only to the language of blame but also to the action of physical combat.

§8n2. On the use of this vocative: Brunius-Nilsson 1955.

§8n3. Iros is said to get his name for being messenger of the suitors ([xviii 6-7](#)); thus the function of **Îros** is presented as parallel to that of **Îris**, messenger of the Olympian gods in the *Iliad*. I see no internal evidence that would justify our dismissing this theme as a haphazard contrivance based on the formal parallelism of **Îros** and **Îris**. Indeed, Iros may well have functioned as the figure who quotes actual messages of the suitors in more expanded versions of the story.

§9n1. [§§4-5](#).

§9n2. See [§5](#).

§9n3. As Calvert Watkins points out to me, the syntax in the beginning of this narrative is strikingly parallel to the syntax in what is thought to be the beginning of the comic poem known as the *Margites* (fr. 1W). Note that the subject of the introductory sentence in [xviii 1](#) is **ptôkhos** 'beggar', whereas the corresponding subject in the *Margites* (fr. 1.1W) is **aoidos** 'singer, poet'.

§9n4. xviii~f1 Appearances are deceiving, however. The action of the narrative will reveal that Iros indeed has no **îs** or **biê** (on the use of **biê** as synonym of **îs**: [Ch.5§37](#)), since he is bested by his "rival" Odysseus when their **eris** 'strife' escalates from verbal to physical combat (on which see [§8n1](#)). Accordingly, those who witness the combat call him **A-îros** ([xviii 73](#)), which may be reconstructed as *[[circumflex]]-uîros and glossed etymologically as "he who has no force = *uîs." This form serves as a comic correction for what now emerges as the ironically misapplied meaning of **Îros** as *uîros "he who has force = *uîs." Thus the form **Îros** seems to be a play on an unattested Greek word *uîros, cognate with Latin [uir](#) 'man', etc. My reasoning here is based on the article of Bader 1976. I must add, however, that Bader's presentation does not account for the primary connection of **Îros** with **Îris** in the narrative (on which see [§8n3](#)). The apparent connection of **Îros** with *uîros 'he who has *uîs' has to be considered secondary from the standpoint of the narrative (see again [xviii 6-](#)

7). Still, the name **Iris** itself may well be derived from the same root *uî- as in **îs**: see [Ch.20§9n6](#).

§9n5. For **koros** 'satiety', cf. also [Pindar O.1.55](#)-57: the sin of Tantalos is called his **koros** in that he could not "digest" (**katapepsai**) his vast **olbos** 'prosperity'.

§10n1. Cf. Theognis 581-582.

§10n2. See Stokes 1891.64-67 for text and translation. The translation is also conveniently available in Cross and Slover 1936.31-32.

§11n1. See [Ch.2§15](#).

§11n2. See [§8](#). When Telemachus urges Antinoos to give food to the disguised Odysseus, the expression **dos hoi helôn** 'take and give to him' at xvii 400 corresponds to **domenai kai poll' anelonta** 'take much and give' at xviii 16. In both verses, these expressions are in collocation with **ou** ... **phthonedô** 'I do not have **phthonos**', applying to Telemachus and Odysseus respectively.

§12n1. Benveniste 1969 [I 341](#) = 1973.278.

§13n1. E.g., the speaker himself! For the story, see [xv 403-484](#).

§13n2. On the formation of **dêmiourgos**, see Bader 1965.133-141. The prime concept inherent in the word seems to be social mobility: a **dêmiourgos** is affiliated with the whole **dêmos** 'district', not with any one household. Note that Ithaca counts as one **dêmos** (see, e.g., [i 103](#), [xiv 126](#), etc.). For more on the semantics of **dêmos**, see [Ch.19§3n5](#).

§13n3. On the parallelism of artisans and poets, which is presented here as a social reality within the context of the **dêmos**, see also [Ch.17§§10-13](#).

§14n1. For the visual implications of the verb **thelgô** 'put into a trance' (used here at lines 514 and 521), see Householder/Nagy 1972.769-770.

§14n2. On which see [Ch.7§26](#). Note that dinner time is the context for the performance of this entertaining narrative ([xiv 192-198](#)).

§14n3. See Muellner 1976.96.

§14n4. Muellner, p. 97.

§14n5. The key word is **eukhomai** ([euxamenos](#)) 'saying proudly': [xiv 463](#)), on which see Muellner, pp. 96-97. Note also the use of **eukhomai** 'I say proudly' ([xiv 199](#)) at the beginning of the first-person narrative about the Cretan adventurer.

§14n6. Muellner, p. 97.

§15n1. Pucci 1977.76. Cf. also Meuli 1975 [= 1954] 739-742 and 751-753.

§15n2. See [§14n5](#).

§15n3. On the use of **epos** to mean not just 'utterance, word(s)' but also 'poetic utterance' *as quoted by the poetry itself*, see Koller 1972, esp. p. 17 on Tyrtaeus *fr. 4.2W*. Cf. also [Ch.15§7](#) on [XX 203-205](#) and [Ch.17§12](#) on Theognis 15-18.

§15n4. My translation emphasizes the up/down motion conveyed by [aertheis](#)/ [katathesthai](#). I should add, however, that the combination of [katathesthai](#) with [charin](#) conveys yet another theme, that of fulfilled reciprocity.

§15n5. On the programmatic connotations of **euphrosunâ** as 'victory revel' in epinician poetry, see Bundy 1962.2. In [H.Hermes 481-482](#), the lyre is said to be a means of **euphrosunê** 'mirth' at the **kômos**; on the **kômos**, see [§20](#).

§16n1. See again [§11](#).

§17n1. For the wording of this definition, see Verdenius 1962.389, who actually cites [xiv 508](#).

§17n2. Verdenius (ibid.) also cites an interesting parallel use of the word **âinos** in [Sophocles Philoktetes 1380](#).

§17n3. For a sound discussion of the mythological paradigm and its function in Pindaric poetry, I cite Kohnken 1971.

§17n4. Surely the words that Phoinix intends for Achilles in *Iliad IX*, spoken in the presence of an audience of **philioi** ([IX 528](#)), qualify for designation by the word **parainesis** (abstract noun derived from verb **paraineô**). See Maehler 1963.47.

§18n1. See again [§17](#).

§18n2. In [Aristophanes Birds 651-653](#), the fable known as "The Fox and the Eagle" is actually attributed not to Archilochus (cf. *fr. 174W*) but to Aesop (cf. *Fable 1* Perry). For more on the Aesopic **aînos** and its applications in Attic comedy, see Fraenkel 1920. On the classification of the Aesopic fable as **aînos**, see Quintilian 5.11.19-21 (Aesop *Testimonium* 98 Perry) and Aelius Theon *Progymnasmata 3 (Rhetores Graeci II 72 ff. Spengel; Aesop Testimonium 103 Perry)*. Aelius Theon (*ibid.*) also observes that the designation **aînos** is appropriate because the fables of Aesop have the function of **parainesis** (on this word see [§17](#), esp. n4). It seems significant in this connection that the adopted son of Aesop is called **Aînos** in the *Life of Aesop* tradition (*Vita W 103-110 Perry*), and that Aesop aims at him what may surely be classified as a **parainesis** (*Vita W 109-110*). The story of Aesop and Ainos is apparently built on themes derived from the traditional story of Achiqar and Nadan (on which see Perry 1952.5-10), but its arrangement of these themes seems to suit the meaning of the word **aînos** in particular and the social function of the figure Aesop in general. After the adopted son's treachery against his father has been foiled, Aesop gives a "parainesis" to **Aînos**, whereas Achiqar gives both a scourging and a speech of blame to Nadan (see Perry 1952.9). In both versions, the son dies, but his death in the version of the *Life of Aesop* tradition is idiosyncratic: Ainos is so "scourged" ([mastigôtheis](#)) by the words of Aesop that he kills himself by jumping off a cliff (*Vita W 110*). In *Vita G 142*, Aesop himself dies by jumping off a cliff--instead of being pushed off by the Delphians as in *Vita W 142*. Finally, we may note that the king of Babylon in the story of Aesop and Ainos is called **Lukoûrgos** (both *Vitae G* and *W*). For more on the name **Lukoûrgos** (from **Luko-orgos**), see [Ch.13§7](#).

§18n3. On which see Puelma 1972 and Pucci 1977.61-62, 76.

§18n4. For the terms *code* and *message*, see Jakobson 1960.

§18n5. For the parallel use of **sophos** 'well-verses' to express this ideology of exclusiveness in praise poetry, cf. Maehler 1963.93-95; cf. also Nisetich 1975. For a variation on this theme, where being **sophos** is described as not an adequate criterion for distinguishing the **agathos** 'good' listener from the **kakos** 'bad', see Theognis 681-682. Even here, though, the *intended* audience is the **agathoi** 'good'.

§18n6. For more on the context: [Ch.2§9](#).

§19n1. As for the words of instruction spoken by Phoinix to Achilles in *Iliad IX* (see [§17n4](#)), the code seems to bear one message from the speaker and another message to the listener; see [Ch.6§16](#). Note too the argument of Meuli (1975 [= 1954] 742-743n2) that the epithet **poluainos** of Odysseus (e.g., [xii 184](#)) means 'having many **aînoi** = fables'. I would rephrase: Odysseus is **poluainos** in that he can speak about many things *in code* (witness his "Cretan lies"). Compare the discussion of **poluphêmos** at [Ch.1§4n1](#).

§19n2. See Chantraine [I 35-36](#).

§20n1. See [Ch.6§§12-19](#).

§20n2. Sinos 1975.65-79.

§20n3. See also [§15n5](#).

§20n4. Cf. also the verb **kômazô**, as at [Pindar N.9.1](#), *P.9.89*, etc., and the adjective **enkômios**, as at [Pindar N.1.7](#), *O.2.47*, etc. (cf. [§7n2](#)).

§21n1. See again [§16](#).

§21n2. Note the striking parallelism of lines 83-84 with Archilochus *fr. 23.14-15W*. We now see that being **ekhthros** equals 'to blame' just as being **philos** equals 'to praise'. The adjective **ekhthros** belongs to the same family as the noun **ekhthos**, which we have observed in the following Pindaric

characterization: [psogerón Archilochon barulogois echthesin / piaínomenon](#) 'Archilochus, having **psogos**, fattening himself on heavy-worded hatreds [**ekhthos** plural]' ([Pythian 2.55-56](#)). Discussion at §4. Note too the Pindaric characterization of blame poetry as, by its very origin, [echthra ... parphasis](#) 'misrepresentation that is hateful [has **ekhthos**]' ([Nemean 8.32](#)). Discussion at §7.

§21n3. Compare the reciprocity of **kleos** in Ibucus *fr.* 282P: at line 48 the word applies to the poet and at line 47 it applies to the patron. See Nagy 1974.250-251 and Watkins 1975.17; cf. also Watkins 1976. For a supplemented text of Ibucus *fr.* 282P, see now Page 1974 S 151-165.

§21n4. Pickard-Cambridge 1927.15: "wolf's gait." On the Indo-European motif of the wolf as a figure who is outside of society: Gernet 1936. I owe this reference to O. M. Davidson.

§21n5. On the formal connections between **Luk-ambēs** and **i-ambos**: West 1974. 26-27.

Chapter 13

Iambos

§1. With the mention of **Lukambēs**, we may now turn to the **iamboi** of Archilochus.^[1] Of course, we are dealing here not so much with a metrical category but rather with a genre of composition:^[2] "iambic metre got its name from being particularly characteristic of **iamboi**, not vice versa."^[3] The word **i-ambos**, as K. J. Dover observes, seems to have referred originally to the type of occasion for which this genre was appropriate;^[4] so also with the word **dithur-ambos**.^[5] The point is, **Luk-ambēs** figures as a prime **ekhthros** 'hateful one, enemy' of Archilochus.

§2. By virtue of being singled out, even within epinician praise poetry, as "a man of **psogos**" ([psogerōn Archilochon](#): [Pindar P.2.55](#)), the figure of Archilochus surely qualifies as a master of blame poetry.^[1] Thus the **iamboi** composed against Lykambes qualify the poet as an **ekhthros** to his victim.^[2] Yet even an **ekhthros** may have to deliver his poetry in the context of a receptive audience--who would have to be, by contrast, **philoī** to him. In fact, Aristotle specifically identifies the audience of Archilochus as his **philoī**:

[pros gar tous sunētheis kai philous ho thumos airetai mallon ê pros tous agnôtas, oligôreisthai nomisas. dio kai Archilochos prosêkontôs tois philois enkalôn dialegetai pros ton thumon:](#)

[su gar dê para philôn apancheai](#)

For the **thûmos**, when it feels neglected, is stirred more towards acquaintances and **philoī** than towards those who are unknown. Accordingly, it is appropriate that Archilochus should address the following words to his **thûmos**, as he is reproaching his **philoī**:

For you [the **thûmos**] are being choked off from the **philoī**.

[Aristotle *Politics* 1328a quoting Archilochus \(fr.129W\)](#)

The audience of **phili**oi is also apparent in the Archilochean epode that begins as follows:

Erasmonidê Charilae,
chrêma toi geloion
ereô, polu philtath' hetairôn,
terpseai d' akouôn

Kharilaos, son of Erasmon!
I will tell you something laughable,
you most philos of hetaîroi!
And you will get pleasure hearing it.

Archilochus *fr.* 168W

In this particular instance, the target of reproach may have been the **Khari-lâos** figure himself, whose very name suggests the notion of "mirth for the *lâos*."^[3] Nevertheless, Kharilaos remains the "most **philos** of **hetaîroi**," presumably in the company of other **phili**oi **hetaîroi**.

§3. Even if one of the **phili**oi **hetaîroi** were to be singled out for attack, the poetry of blame would not have to go far enough to rupture the **philotês**. In the fragment concerning Kharilaos, we may infer as much from the promise terpseai d' akouôn 'you will have pleasure hearing it' (Archilochus *fr.* 168.4W).^[1] Furthermore, in another fragment from the same composition, we actually see a reaffirmation of **philotês**:

philein stugnon per eonta ...

to be **philos** to him even when he is hostile ...

Archilochus *fr.* 171.1W

In societies where blame poetry was an inherited institution, there must have been clearly defined traditional limits for degrees of insult. Consider

the following description of the Spartan **sussitia** 'communal meals':[\[2\]](#)

autoi te paizein eithizonto kai skôptein aneu bômolochias, kai skôptomenoi mêt duscherainein: sphodra gar edokei kai touto Lakônikon einai, skômmatos anechesthai: mêt pheronta d' exên paraiteisthai, kai ho skôptôn epepauto.

They had the custom of engaging in playful mockery, without **bômolokhiâ**.[\[3\]](#) And when they were mocked themselves, they would not take offense, because putting up with mockery was the Laconian way to behave. And whenever someone could not bear it [the mockery], it was possible for him to be excused, and the one who was mocking him would stop then and there.[\[4\]](#)

Plutarch *Lycurgus* 12.6

We may also compare the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* ([55-58](#)), where playful ridicule at banquets is associated with the theme of "**philotês**befitting **hetaîroi**" (hetaireiêi philotêti: verse 58).[\[5\]](#) At *fr. 295d* in his edition of archaic **iamboi**, Martin West gives a catalogue of fragments where various specific "amici" [**philoi**] may have been targets of reproach by Archilochus; perhaps it is significant that there is only one "inimicus" [**ekhthros**] attested, **Lukambê**s himself!

§4. As we look further at the figure of **Lukambê**s, we must also consider more closely the poetic conventions of the **iambos**. Clearly, the primary function of the Archilochean Iambos was blame poetry, and the primary target of this poetry was Lykambes and his daughters. On this point, the testimony of the ancient world is unambiguous, and I need cite only the most familiar reference, Horace *Epist. 1.19.23-25*.[\[1\]](#) With the appearance of the Cologne Epode (*Pap. Colon. 7511*),[\[2\]](#) we now have, for the first time, an extensive text about this family, made so infamous by the invectives of Archilochus.[\[3\]](#) The rest of the direct textual evidence about Lykambes and the Lykambides is so deficient that we have the greatest difficulties in reconstructing the overall structure of any other Archilochean composition from any of the attested fragments and excerpts. Even so, the bits and pieces at our disposal have led us to certain expectations, and the Cologne Epode now leaves us perhaps surprised at the nature of its blame

poetry. Instead of railing at the family of Lykambes directly, the poem places them inside a narrative. The immediate victim of the narrative is a daughter of Lykambes,[4] who herself is not addressed directly but in quotations within the narrative. Within the overall structure of this composition, direct address happens only in quotations from the daughter and from the narrator. These in turn are not only opened but also closed with expressions inherited for precisely the function of framing dialogue:

- tosaut' ephônei ... line 6, after the quote
... tên d' egô antamei[bomên] line 6, before the quote
[tos]aut' ephôneon ... line 28, before the quote

In this connection, I refer to Führer's monograph about the mechanics of direct quotation in "lyric" (in the sense of "non-epic"), with its ample documentation on the traditional nature of such framing expressions and on their strict interrelation with the quotations.[5]

§5. Moreover, the inherited mechanics of direct quotation in epic are structurally parallel to those of lyric, the Iambos included.[1] They are in fact stricter, in that overt quote frames for dialogues (type prosephê, prosephônee, etc.) and for speeches (type metephê, metephônee, etc.) are *de rigueur* in Epos.[2] Conversely, the quote frames in a genre like the Iambos are only optional--a point to which we will have to return presently. But the point now is simply that the quote frames are indeed present in the Cologne Epode, so that the dialogue between the *persona* of the seducer and that of Lykambes' daughter--as we see it in this particular example of the Iambos--meets the strictest formal requirements of epic quotation. The essential difference between Epos and Iambos here can be seen from the standpoint of narration: whereas the epic narrative that frames dialogues is in the third person, the framing narrative of the Cologne Epode is in the first person--which coincides with the *persona* of the seducer.

§6. Shall we say, then, that this *persona* is Archilochus, whose actions determined the narrative of this iambic composition? Or rather, shall we say that the function of the composition determined the narrative, which in turn determined the *persona* that acts and speaks within?[1] If we choose the second alternative, then the function of blame poetry is a cause; if we

choose the first, then it is merely an effect. There are also other consequences that accompany our choice. The first alternative leads us to approach Archilochean poems as biographical documents, and we then find ourselves taking the same attitude as most of the ancient commentaries that have survived. The second alternative leads us to ask whether the details and essentials about the *persona* of the composer are to be derived from his role as composer of blame poetry. For example, those ancient commentators who took a biographical approach to Archilochean poetry were upset to read in the poet's own words that his mother was a slave-woman, called **Enîpô** (*Critias fr.* 88 B 44DK, *Aelian VH* 10.13; see *Archilochus fr.* 295W). And yet, this very detail reflects on the function of Archilochean poetry, in that **Enîpô** is derived from a word used in Epos to designate 'blame', **enîpê** (as at [xx 266](#)).^[2]

§7. In this connection, I return to the argument that even the prime target of Archilochean blame poetry, **Lukambê**s himself, is a stock character whose name is connected with the very notion of **iambos**.^[1] Moreover, if indeed one of the original contexts of the **i-ambos** was Dionysiac in nature,^[2] we may compare West's collection of thematic evidence about **Luk-ambê**s with the tradition that Dionysus was persecuted by **Luko-orgos**, wielder of the **bouplêx** 'cattle prod' ([VI 130-140](#)).^[3] Be that as it may, the traditional form of iambic blame poetry--as we can see from the fragments of Hipponax and Semonides beside those of Archilochus--is replete with a great variety of stock situations and stock characters.^[4]

§8. Further, K. J. Dover raises the possibility that the poet can even assume the *persona* of a stock figure like Charon the carpenter (*Archilochus fr.* 19W) or the father reproaching his daughter (*Archilochus fr.* 122W).^[1] In these two cases, however, we may not have to go that far. Although lyric in general allows the occasional assumption by the composer of a *persona* that is overtly distinct from his own self (e.g., *Alcaeus fr.* 10LP),^[2] the specific genre of Iambos may perhaps be more strict. At least, the Archilochean poems about Charon and about the father-to-daughter reproach are inconclusive, since their endings have not survived. They may both have ended with a quote frame even though they began without one. The effect may have been an amusing surprise.^[3] The suppression of the quoting

mechanism till the very end of the composition is a comic device well known to us from Horace *Epoche* 2.[\[4\]](#)

§9. The point remains, then, that Archilochean blame poetry against Lykambes and his daughters is a stylized poetic form, with strict formal regulation of narrative and of dialogue quoted within the narrative; also, that the personification of the composer and that of his targets is similarly stylized within the narrative and dialogue. As Aristotle says in the *Rhetoric* ([1418b23-31](#)), such personifications as in Archilochus *frr.* 19 and 122W (both of which he actually cites)[\[1\]](#) are an example of how the poet composed blame poetry: kai hôs Archilochos psegei 'and as Archilochus reproaches [makes **psogos**]'. The evidence of the Cologne Epoche serves as an invaluable confirmation for what we can also infer from the other fragments: the Archilochean **iamboi** against **Lukambê**s and family, with their stylized themes and characters, are as universal in content as they are ad hoc.

§10. We are left with the more fundamental problem of examining the traditional function of this Hellenic form of blame poetry, the Iambos. Looking forward in time, beyond Archilochus, we see a medium kindred to Archilochean **iamboi** in the complex poetic form of the Athenian **kômôidiâ** 'comedy', which in turn must be compared with its less sophisticated counterparts in other city-states. I leave the details of exposition to Martin West and others,[\[1\]](#) confining myself here to stressing what Pickard-Cambridge had proved long ago--that the traditional notion of **kômôidiâ** was derived from **kômós** 'revel, celebration, celebrating group of singers/dancers'.[\[2\]](#) In the **kômós** we see the social origins of comedy, a medium of blame poetry that has the capacity of being applied on the universal or ad hoc level.[\[3\]](#) In other words, the blame poetry that we may find in **kômôidiâ** is by origin an extension of a social function that is associated with the **kômós**. This connection helps explain an aetiological story about sixth-century Naxos, as reported in Aristotle's *Constitution of the Naxians* (*fr.* 558 Rose, as directly quoted by Athenaeus 348b-c). On that island, which is hours away from Paros, the traditional home of Archilochus, a group of young men made a **kômós** to the house of an eminent citizen after a drinking party; they insulted him and his two marriageable daughters, and the ensuing riot led to the emergence of the

tyrant Lygdamis.[\[4\]](#) We have here a theme where the **kômos** actually affects the social order, in a context that connotes blame poetry.

§11. Looking backwards in time beyond Archilochus, we see from the comparative evidence of other Indo-European civilizations that the blame poetry of the Archilochean Iambos has an inherited converse in the institution of praise poetry.[\[1\]](#) From the standpoint of their heritage, the **psogoi** 'reproaches' of an Archilochus are thematically the converse of the **epainoi** 'praises' of a Pindar. Actually, in Pindar's own words, praise and blame are two sides of the same thing:

... ho gar ex oikou poti mômon epainos kirnatai

... for praise [epainos] is by nature mixed with blame [mômos][\[2\]](#)

Pindar *fr.* 181SM

Even on the level of form, we may observe in general that the dactylo-epitrites of epinician praise poetry are comprised of metrical elements that are cognate with those used to build the epodes of Archilochean **iamboi**.[\[3\]](#) Most important of all, both blame and praise poetry have a common social context in the institution of the **kômos**. This convergence can be instantly and most dramatically illustrated by simply citing the formation of two words: **kômôidiâ** 'comedy'[\[4\]](#) and **enkômion** 'encomium'.[\[5\]](#)

§12. In the very language of epinician praise poetry, it is the "Dorian" **kômos** (as it is called in [Pindar P.8.20](#)) that serves as the context for celebrating the victor with **aînos** 'praise'.[\[1\]](#) Conversely, in the blame poetry of Archilochus, the same word **aînos** designates the use of animal fables (*frr.* 174.1, 185.1W),[\[2\]](#) the basic themes of which would have been appropriate for performance by a **khōros** 'song/ dance group' comprised of "animals" in some formal analogue of **kômôidiâ**.[\[3\]](#)

§13. In short, the **iamboi** of Archilochus against **Lukambê̄s** and his daughters are a special case of blame poetry. The insults are against an **ekhthros**, not a **philos**. Nevertheless, they are in all likelihood framed for a general audience of receptive **philoī**, whose social outlook may well have resembled that of the famous Naxian **kômos** mentioned by Aristotle. At

least, the transmission of Archilochean poetry at Paros suggests that his blame poetry was not against the social outlook of the local state that helped preserve this poetry.^[1] Whether we view the audience of Archilochus as the immediate **phili** or, teleologically, as the social order that helped preserve and propagate Archilochean **iamboi**, the point remains that such poetry is an affirmation of **philotes** in the community. If indeed these **iamboi** are intended for the **phili** as audience, then a direct approach to Lykambes is poetically unnecessary. If the insults aimed at Lykambes are for the entertainment of the **phili**, then the device of a first-person narrative *about* Lykambes and his daughters is appropriate and effective.

§14. As a discourse that has the capacity of *telling about* its subjects without necessarily *speaking to* them, the blame poetry of Archilochus is farther from the praise poetry of Pindar and closer to the epic poetry of Homer. As a correlate to this distinction, we may note that the subjects of Archilochean blame seem to be stock characters,^[1] whereas the immediate subjects of Pindaric praise are of course historical figures. Moreover, we have seen that there is a narrative frame for the direct speeches of blame in the poetry of Archilochus, which in this respect too is farther away from a Pindaric and closer to a Homeric model. In the poetry of Pindar, there is no narrative frame for the poet's direct speech of praise. On the other hand, the Cologne Papyrus has revealed that the direct speeches of Archilochean poetry can be framed within a first-person narrative. In this respect, Archilochus is farther away from epic and closer to comedy. In terms of comedy, the equivalent of the first-person narrator would be a character interacting with other characters; most appropriately, this character would be assumed by the first actor, who was originally the poet himself.^[2]

Notes

§1n1. This chapter is a reworking of an earlier article (Nagy 1976).

§1n2. The word **iamboi** is an appropriate designation for the following meters of Archilochus: iambic trimeters (18-87W) and tetrameters (88-167W); also epodes (168-204W), including the Cologne Epode (see §4).

§1n3. West 1974.22; see [Aristotle *Poetics* 1448b31](#). Of course, the generalization of a meter for one genre does not preclude the use of the same meter for other genres.

§1n4. Dover 1964.189; cf. West 1974.23 and Richardson 1974.213-217.

§1n5. See West 1974.23-25.

§2n1. See [Ch.12§4](#).

§2n2. Again, [Ch.12§4](#) and [§21](#).

§2n3. See [Ch.5§39](#).

§3n1. Again, [Ch.5§39](#).

§3n2. See also West 1974.16-17 on the playful insults and retorts in the poetry of Theognis (577-578, 1115, 1123, 1211).

§3n3. The word **bômolokhos** 'he who ambushes at the altar' and its derivatives refer to a particularly offensive sort of discourse; cf. [Aristophanes *Frogs* 358](#), [Knights 902](#), [Peace 748](#), etc. The verb **bômo-lokheô** can mean "beg" (Pollux 3.111). In Pherecrates *fr. 141* Kock, we see that a **bômolokhos** is one who literally 'ambushes' the sacrificer at the altar by asking for meat under the threat of verbal abuse. For the theme of verbal strife at a sacrifice, compare the myth of Prometheus ([Ch.11§§10](#), 15, etc.). For the semantics of **bômo-lokhos**, compare perhaps **Arkhi-lokhos**.

§3n4. The word for 'mock, ridicule' here is **skôptô**, on which see further at [Ch.16§10](#) and n7; also [Ch.18§3](#) and n4.

§3n5. There are textual difficulties at the beginning of verse 58. I prefer the readings **hôs** over **hon** andêrizeskô over **ôrizeskon**. My interpretation: Zeus and Maia had **eris** in a spirit of **philotês**. (From the standpoint of, say, an Alexandrian exegete, this concept would have seemed contradictory.) When young men at the banquet table engage in playful ridicule (**kertomeousin**: verse 56), they sing of the **eris** that once took place between Zeus and Maia (verses 57-58). According to this interpretation, the young men are in effect

reenacting this primal **eris**. For more on the verb **kertomeô** in the sense of 'reproach, ridicule' as in verse 56, see [Ch.14§§11](#) (n6), 14.

§4n1. For details, see West 1974.22, 25-28.

§4n2. For a convenient introduction and the text itself, see Van Sickle 1975(b).

§4n3. The figure of Neoboule, daughter of Lykambes, is mentioned at line 16. Throughout the poem, she is treated as a negative point of contrast--a veritable foil--to the other girl, who in turn gets seduced in the narrative. The poem has this other girl unwittingly introduce the subject of Neoboule for verbal abuse, when she volunteers her as a fitting substitute for the desires of the seducer (lines 3 ff.). Since the girl refers to Neoboule as "a maiden in our house who ..." (lines 3-4), we may reasonably infer that she too, like Neoboule, is a daughter of Lykambes. Compare also *fr. 38* and *fr. 54W* and the discussions by West 1974b.482 and Koenen 1974.499. I find myself in sympathy with the proposal that Dioscorides *Epigr. 17* (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.351), a poem about the daughters of Lykambes, was at least partly "inspired" by the poem of *Pap. Colon.* 7511; see Koenen 1974.499, West 1974b.482 and 1975.218.

§4n4. See again n3.

§4n5. Führer 1967. Cf. Gentili 1965.382 and 1972.69n82.

§5n1. Führer 1967.1-4, 66-67. See now also Stoessl 1976.

§5n2. Cf. Nagy 1974.84-94.

§6n1. As Pietro Pucci points out (*per litteras* 1/10/1976), the term *persona* must be understood as "the role which is traditional for a poet to assume in a specific genre."

§6n2. On **Enîpô**, see Treu 1959.157 (following earlier proposals that the name is a personification misunderstood by Critias); see also Van Sickle 1975b.151, whose discussion supplements that of West 1974.28.

§7n1. Cf. [Ch.12§21](#). See also West 1974.25-28. For a discussion of **Kharilâos** as a stock figure, see [§2](#) and [Ch.5§39](#). As for Lykambes' daughter **Neoboulê**, I cite Van Sickle's observation that the name "suits the kind of girl who changes her marriage plans" (1975b.152).

§7n2. See West 1974.23-25. Another context, as Albert Henrichs points out to me, would have been the cult of Demeter. Consider the function of **Iambê** in [H.Dem. 192-205](#). For further discussion, see West, *ibid.* and Richardson 1974.213-217.

§7n3. Note that **Lukoorgos** "had **eris**" against Dionysos ([erizen](#): [VI 131](#)); on **eris** see [Ch.11§§10-16](#), Ch. 12[§3](#). The **eris** of the god's persecutor is in this story punished by blindness ([VI 139](#))--a theme that I propose to examine in detail elsewhere.

§7n4. See Dover 1964.205-212 and West 1974.28-33.

§8n1. Dover 1964.206-208.

§8n2. For a survey, see Führer 1967.5-7.

§8n3. See Führer 1967; cf. also the comments of M. Treu following the presentation of Dover, 1964.218-219.

§8n4. See Fraenkel 1957.60.

§9n1. See [§8](#).

§10n1. West 1974.33-39, with bibliography.

§10n2. Pickard-Cambridge 1927.225-253.

§10n3. Of course, comedy is more than blame poetry: it is a combination of artistic forms, including several types of poetry/song and dance.

§10n4. See West 1974.27-28.

§11n1. See [Ch.12§§1-3](#).

§11n2. On **mômos** 'blame, reproach', cf. [Ch.12§3](#).

§11n3. Cf. Nagy 1974.167-168, 173-174, 297-302.

§11n4. See [§10](#).

§11n5. See [Ch.12§7n2](#).

§12n1. See [Ch.12§20](#).

§12n2. See [Ch.12§18](#). Moreover, Archilochus *fr.* 174W is from a poem against Lykambes and family (172-181W).

§12n3. Cf. the theme of "wolf steps," as discussed at [Ch.12§21](#). On the purely technical (as compared to theoretical) notion of **mimêsis** as 'performance' of song/dance (in reenactment of myth), see Koller 1954.11. For parallels to the **aînoi** of Archilochus, cf. Stesichorus *fr.* 281P.

§13n1. An essential factor, I submit, is the archaic cult of Archilochus at Paros (see [Ch.18§1](#), esp. n1); this factor also accounts for the *Life of Archilochus* tradition, which I view as a development parallel to the transmission of the poetry itself (see [Ch.18§4](#)). In other words, I reject the notion that the *Life of Archilochus* tradition is merely the result of otiose exercises in fabricating stories on the basis of the attested poetic text. Cf. Brelich 1958.321-322 on the *Life of Hesiod* tradition, which follows traditional narrative patterns associated with cult heroes. In this connection, I will also adduce the *Life of Aesop* tradition ([Ch.12§18n2](#) and [Ch.16](#)). See now my further comments in [Foreword §7n5](#).

§14n1. See [§§6-7](#); also [Ch.12§21](#).

§14n2. The word **exarkhô**, used by Aristotle to designate the function of first actor (participle **exarkhôn**: [Poetics 1449a11](#)) is also found in Archilochus *fr.* 120 and *fr.* 121W designating the poet's leading off a choral performance (dithyramb and paean respectively). See Pickard-Cambridge 1927.123 and Lucas 1968.80-83.

Chapter 14

Epos, the Language of Blame, and the Worst of the Achaeans

§1. The resemblances in poetic form between the Archilochean Iambos and the Homeric Epos suggest that blame poetry may have evolved away from an old (and unattested) form corresponding to that of praise poetry (as still attested in Pindar and Bacchylides) into its newer form resembling comedy. The key here to formulating the evolution of blame poetry is the evolution of epic poetry itself into a superbly versatile medium equally capable of dialogue and narrative. In fact, Aristotle singles out Homeric Epos as an ideal medium of dialogue (*Poetics* 1448a20-24, 1460a7), with as much dramatic potential as he finds in Aristophanic comedy or Sophoclean tragedy (*Poetics* 1448a25-28).^[1]

§2. Aristotle actually reconstructs a primordial form of blame poetry, which he designates as **psogoi**, and a coexisting proto-form of praise poetry, which he designates as **enkômia** or **humnoi** (*Poetics* 1448b27). He traces the blame and praise poetry forward in time to the attested forms of Iambos and Epos respectively (**iamboi** vs. **hêroika**: *Poetics* 1448b32-34), adding that comedy and tragedy respectively are the ultimate successors if not descendants of these poetic forms (1449a2-6). This formulation provides us with an attractive set of parallelisms. We see the direct address of blame and praise poetry becoming framed within the narratives of Iambos and Epos. We can also imagine that interchanges of direct address within the narrative can evolve into dialogue, which in turn corresponds to the dialogue of comedy and tragedy. Despite its advantages, however, Aristotle's formulation seems too restrictive, especially in its treatment of Epos as a direct descendant of praise poetry. We may expect, granted, that Epos can quote direct speeches of praise^[1] just as Iambos can quote direct speeches of blame. But Epos is in fact more inclusive: we have already seen, for instance, that it also can quote direct speeches of blame--as in the context of narrating a quarrel.^[2]

§3. Another difficulty with Aristotle's scheme is that his definition of primordial praise and blame poetry is itself overly restrictive. These poetic forms are said to have their beginnings when the **spoudaîoi** 'noble' praised the noble and the **phaûloï** 'base' blamed the base ([Poetics 1448b24-27](#) in conjunction with [1448a1-2](#)).^[1] For Aristotle, **spoudaîoi** and **phaûloï** "indicate the two ends of the ordinary, aristocratically based, Greek scale of values".^[2] In fact, he uses these same words at [Nicomachean Ethics 1145b9](#) as synonyms for "praiseworthy" (**spoudâios kai epainetos**) and "blameworthy" (**phaûlos kai psektos**).^[3] From our own examination of what traditional praise poetry actually says about itself, however, we have already seen that *blaming the noble* and *praising the base* are also presented as poetic functions--which are of course themselves blamed as base by praise poetry, with its avowed functions of both *praising the noble* and *blaming the base*.^[4] Moreover, the program of praise poetry entails not only that *the noble praise the noble* but also that *the noble blame the base*--a function omitted in Aristotle's formulation. In fact, we hear nothing from Aristotle about the **enkômia** of Pindar and Bacchylides--the evolution of which should surely be traced from the proto-**enkômiathat** he himself has posited (see again [Poetics 1448b27](#)).

§4. It may well be by way of retrojecting his scheme of current poetic forms that Aristotle conceives of proto-**psogoi** as blame of the base *by the base only* and proto-**enkômia** as praise of the noble *by the noble only*. This restrictive formulation actually fits the Aristotelian view of attested comedy and tragedy respectively. There is an important adjustment, however: for these attested poetic forms, the actual elements of blame and praise are left out of the formulation. Comedy is seen simply as a base medium representing the actions of the base and tragedy as a noble medium representing the actions of the noble (cf. especially [Poetics 1449a32-39](#)). By analogy, then, Aristotle sees proto-**psogoi** as a base medium representing the actions of the base *by way of blame*, and likewise proto-**enkômia** as a noble medium representing the actions of the noble *by way of praise*(see again [Poetics 1448b24-27](#)). There is a clear recognition here that blame and praise had been functional elements "at first" (**prôton**: [1448b27](#)), in the poetic forms of **psogoi** and **enkômia**. There also is a clear implication that they are no longer directly functional in comedy and tragedy. In fact, Aristotle explicitly says so in the case of comedy. He specifies that this

poetic form has the dramatic function not of **psogos** 'blame' but simply of **to geloîon** 'laughter' (*Poetics* 1448b37-38).

§5. Since laughter is recognized as the obvious function of comedy also in English usage, we may henceforth approximate Aristotle's **to geloîon** with 'the comic element' as well as 'laughter' while we proceed to examine further the relationship of blame poetry with Iambos and comedy. Aristotle remarks that comedy represents the actions of the base because **to geloîon** 'the comic element' is an aspect of **to aiskhron** 'baseness' (*Poetics* 1449a32-34) and further, that the laughter of comedy--**to geloîon**--is intrinsic to **aîskhos** 'baseness', so long as it is not too painful or destructive (1449a34-37). If indeed the comic element is intrinsic to what is **aîskhro-** 'base' and **aîskhos** 'baseness', it is significant that the diction of Homeric Epos itself associates these same words with the overall concept of blame poetry. For example, **aîskhos** is used as a synonym of **oneidos** 'blame, reproach' at III 242.^[1] Moreover, we see that Melantho **enenîpe** 'reproached' the disguised Odysseus **aiskhrôs** 'in a base manner', at xviii 321. Five verses later, the same action is restated: at xviii 326, she **enenîpe**'reproached' Odysseus **oneideiois epeessi** 'with words of **oneidos**'. Finally, Hektor **neikessen** 'reproached [made **neîkos** against]' Paris **aiskhroîs epeessi** 'with base words', at both III 38 and VI 325. The last example is particularly instructive: Hektor's words of blame against Paris are **aiskhra** 'base' not because Hektor himself is base but because Paris is so. In other words, the subject of blame is base, and so too are the words that describe him, but the blamer himself can remain noble. Such a situation cannot be accommodated by Aristotle's scheme of blame poetry, where the blamer too would have to be base.^[2] Moreover, Hektor's words of blame are hardly comic, any more than the words of Achilles when he blamed Agamemnon.^[3] Here it is useful to consider again Aristotle's observation that laughter is intrinsic to **aîskhos** 'baseness' (*Poetics* 1449a32-37). We may now wish to restate: baseness has merely a *potential* for the comic element. Having noted that epic diction itself equates **aîskhos** 'baseness' with the substance of blame, we can now appreciate Aristotle's observation that **to geloîon** 'laughter' rather than **psogos** 'blame' is the function of comedy (*Poetics* 1448b37-38). Again we may restate: blame poetry has a *potential* for the comic element, and comedy formalizes this element of blame poetry. But blame poetry

itself is more inclusive and thus cannot be equated with comedy. Blame poetry can be serious as well as comic; it can condemn as well as ridicule.

§6. Still, the nonserious side of blame poetry is also formally indicated in Homeric diction, and the key word is **hepsiaomai**'play, get amusement'.^[1] The only Homeric attestation of the simplex verb occurs in a particularly suggestive context:

... hepsiaasthai
molpēi kai phormingi: ta gar t' anathêmata daitos

... to get amusement

with singing and the lyre: for these are the things that go on at a feast
[dais]^[2]

xxi 429-430

Whereas we see the simplex verb **hepsiaomai** reflecting the element of *poetry*, the compound **kath-epsiaomai** reflects a complementary element, that of *blame by way of ridicule*. We begin at xix 372, where the disloyal handmaidens **kathepsioôntai** 'ridicule' the disguised Odysseus. This action of the women is then designated in the next verse as a **lôbê** 'outrage, disgrace' and as **aiskhea** 'acts of baseness [**aîskhos**]'^[3] (xix 373). In other words, *the ridicule committed by the women is an act of blame* [3] As the blamers of Odysseus, the women are themselves counterblamed by being called **kunes** 'dogs' at xix 372.^[4] The equivalent of **kathepsioôntai** 'ridicule' at xix 372 is in turn **ephepsioonto** 'ridiculed' at xix 370, likewise designating the action of the disrespectful handmaidens. This other compound **eph-epsiaomai** now leads us to another attestation, in one of the most revealing Homeric passages on blame as a foil for praise:

hos men apênês autos eîi kai apênea eidêi,
tôi de katarôntai pantes brotoi alge' opissô
zôoi, atar tethneôti g' ephepsioôntai hapantes.
hos d' an amumôn autos eîi kai amumona eidêi,
tou men te kleos euru dia xeinoi phoreousi
pantas ep' anthrôpous, polloi te min esthlon eeipon

If a man is harsh himself and thinks harsh thoughts,
all men pray that pains should befall him hereafter
while he is alive. And when he is dead, all men
ephēpsioôntai[ridicule] him.

But if a man is blameless^[5] himself and thinks blameless thoughts,
the guest-strangers he has entertained carry his kleos far and wide
to all mankind, and many are they who call him esthlos [worthy].^[6]

[xix 329-334](#)

§7. Of course, the nonserious aspect of blame poetry depends on personal noninvolvement. Blame may be a **kharma** 'thing of mirth' to others while at the same time being an **elenkheiê** 'disgrace' to the one who is to experience it (as at [XXIII 342](#)).^[1] As a particularly striking instance, let us consider these words warning about the ridicule of blame that every husband is meant to fear:

hêtis de toi malista sôphronein dokei,
hautê megista tunchanei lôbômenê:
kechênotos gar andros, hoi de geitones
chairous' horôntes kai ton, hôs hamartanei.
tên hên d' hekastos ainesei memnêménos
gunaika, tên de touterou mômêsetai.
isên d' echontes moiran ou gignôskomen

And she [the wife] who seems to have the most even disposition happens to be the very one who commits the greatest disgrace.^[2] Her husband has his mouth agape, and the neighbors make merry at seeing how he too has gone wrong.^[3] Every man will keep it in mind to praise his own wife and will blame the wife of the other man. And we do not recognize that we all have the same lot.

Semonides 7.108-114W

In such a situation, the ridicule of blame formalizes the disgrace of the involved and the laughter of the uninvolved.^[4]

§8. Since Homeric Epos is of course serious in content (cf. [Aristotle Poetics 1448b34-35](#)), it is hardly suited to reflect the comic aspect of blame poetry. By contrast, the Iambos is ideal for this purpose; in fact, the poem of Archilochus that is addressed to **Khari-lâos** 'whose lâos has mirth' specifically promises **khrêma ... geloîon** 'a thing of laughter' (*fr.* 168.2W). [1] We may speculate that there might have been a quality of timelessness in such laughter if indeed the subjects of blame in the Iambos were stock characters. [2] Be that as it may, however, we may surmise from the attested evidence that Iambos was more concerned with laughter than with blame for the sake of blame. In this connection, we come back to Aristotle's useful formulation about comedy: its function is laughter, not blame ([Poetics 1448b37-38](#)).

§9. Although Homeric Epos is not intrinsically suited for the comic element, Aristotle does find an attested poetic form, *within the Homeric tradition*, [1] that has a function parallel to that of comedy. The form in question is represented by the Homeric *Margites*, which shares with comedy the prime function of **to geloîon** ([Poetics 1448b28-38](#)). [2] From both Aristotle's brief account (*ibid.*) and the few fragments that have survived (most notably *fr.* 1W), we know that the *Margites* even combines the meters of both Epos and Iambos. It consists of dactylic hexameters interspersed with iambic trimeters. From the fragments and the overall testimonia (pp. 69-76 West 1972), [3] we also know that the contents of the *Margites* resemble those of the Iambos: both the story and its characters are base and ridiculous. Finally, we may note that the very name **Margîtēsis** built from the adjective **margos** 'gluttonous, wanton'--a word that serves to designate a base exponent of blame poetry. [4]

§10. In fact, the name **Margîtēs** has a strikingly close formal parallel in **Thersîtēs**, the name of a figure described in the *Iliad* itself as the most base of all the Achaeans who came to Troy. The actual word here for 'most base' is **aiskhistos** ([II 216](#)), belonging to the family of the same noun **aîskhos** that conventionally designates the baseness of blame poetry. This man who is *the worst of the Achaeans* (cf. also [II 248-249](#)) is also described as **ekhthistos** 'most hateful' to Achilles and Odysseus specifically ([II 220](#)), who happen to be *the best of the Achaeans* in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* respectively--and thereby the two preeminent figures of Panhellenic Epos. [1] In this

respect also, the word **ekhthistos** is significant. It belongs to the family of the same noun **ekhthos** 'hatred' that conventionally designates the nature of blame poetry compared to that of praise poetry: "being **ekhthros**" as against "being **philos**."^[2] Moreover, Thersites is said to be **ekhthistos** 'most hateful' in particular to Achilles and Odysseus ([II 220](#)) for the following reason:

... tô gar neikeieske

... because he made neîkos against these two

[II 221](#)

Thersites is the most inimical figure to the two prime characters of Homeric Epos *precisely because it is his function to blame them*. Epos is here actually presenting itself as parallel to praise poetry by being an institutional opposite of blame poetry. This passage, then, even supports Aristotle's formulation of Epos as a descendant of **enkômia** 'praise poetry' ([Poetics 1448b24-38](#)).^[3] We should add the qualification, however, that Epos is more likely a partial and maybe even an indirect descendant.^[4] Nevertheless, it implicitly recognizes its own affinity to praise poetry.

§11. The name of **Thersîtēs** connotes blame poetry not only by way of its parallelism with the formation **Margîtēs**.^[1] The boldness conveyed by the element **thersi-** is not the same as a warrior's **thersos/tharsos** 'boldness'.^[2] Rather, it is akin to the **thersos/tharsos** 'boldness' of the blame poet. Consider the expression **thersi-epê phthonos** 'bold-worded envy' at [Bacchylides 13.199](#), which serves as a foil for **aineitô** 'let him praise' at line 201.^[3] Or again, we may note that Antinoos calls Odysseus **tharsaleos** 'bold' ([xvii 449](#)) after hearing a speech directed at him by the would-be beggar, who is asking him for food ([xvii 415-444](#)). When the base suitor refuses, he is reproached by Odysseus ([xvii 454-457](#)), whose words are actually acknowledged as **oneidos** [plural] 'blame' by Antinoos.^[4] Finally, consider the collocation **Polutherseiđe philokertome** at [xxii 287](#), applied in derision to Ktesippos, another of the base suitors, at the moment of his death by the man who killed him, the loyal Philoitiros. The **lôbê** 'outrage' of Ktesippos against the disguised Odysseus ([xx 285](#))^[5] had been verbal as well as physical: while sarcastically advocating that the apparent beggar be

treated as a **xenos** ([xx 292-298](#)), Ktesippos had thrown a foot of beef at him ([xx 299-300](#)). Having now avenged this insult, Philoitos ridicules the slain Ktesippos by calling him **Polu-therseidēs** and **philo-kertomos** ([xxii 287](#)) in the context of reproaching him specifically for improper speech at the time of his physical attack on Odysseus ([xxii 287-289](#)). The mock patronymic **Polu-therseidēs** 'son of Bold-in-many-ways' reinforces the epithet **philo-kertomos** 'lover of reproaches'.^[6] In sum, a man who had reproached Odysseus is now getting a taste of his own medicine.

§12. Similarly, Thersites in the *Iliad* gets blame for having given blame. He dares to reproach Agamemnon ([II 225-242](#)), and the narrative introduces his words with **neikee** 'made **neîkos**' ([II 224](#)), then concludes them with **phato neikeiōn** 'spoke making **neîkos**' ([II 243](#)). Thersites is in turn reproached by Odysseus himself ([II 246-264](#)), whose own words of blame are introduced with **êñpape** 'reproached' ([II 245](#))[1] and concluded with his actually beating Thersites ([II 265-268](#)). Significantly, this combined physical and verbal abuse of Thersites results in pain and tears for the victim ([II 269](#)) but laughter for the rest of the Achaeans ([II 270](#)).^[2] Here again, we see a theme of reversal, since the function of Thersites himself was "to make **eris** against kings" (*erizemenai basileusin*: [II 214](#))[3] -- in accordance not with the established order of things^[4] but rather with *whatever he thought would make the Achaeans laugh*([II 214-215](#)).

§13. We may note that the word here for 'laughable' is actually **geloion** ([II 215](#)), corresponding to Aristotle's term for the function of comedy, **to geloion** (*Poetics* 1448b37, [1449a32-37](#)). We may note also that Aristotle's concept of **aîskhos** 'baseness', to which the concept of **to geloion** 'laughter' is intrinsic (*Poetics* 1449a32-37), corresponds to the characterization of Thersites as the **aiskhistos** 'most base' of all the Achaeans who came to Troy ([II 216](#)). I infer, then, that Homeric Epos can indeed reflect the comic aspect of blame poetry, but that it does so at the expense of the blame poet. In the Thersites episode of the *Iliad*, it is Epos that gets the last laugh on the blame poet, rather than the other way around. Not only the maltreatment of Thersites by Odysseus but even his physical description by the narrative makes him an object of ridicule. Epos dwells on his deformities in repulsive detail ([II 217-219](#)), thus compounding the laughter elicited by his baseness. He is **aiskhistos** 'most base' not only for what he says and does (or for what

is said and done to him by Odysseus!) but also for his very ugliness. And surely the base appearance of Thersites serves to mirror in form the content of his blame poetry. The content, in fact, is a striking illustration of what is called in Pindaric praise poetry **ekhthrâ ... parphasis** 'hateful misrepresentation' ([N.8.32](#))--the negative essence of blame poetry.[\[1\]](#) In the words that Thersites is quoted as saying, we actually find such a misrepresentation: the anger of Achilles, he says, is nonexistent, since such a superior hero would surely have killed Agamemnon if he had really been angry ([II 241-242](#)). Since the **mênis** 'anger' of Achilles is the self-proclaimed subject of the *Iliad* (I 1), these words of Thersites amount to an actual misrepresentation of epic traditions about Achilles.[\[2\]](#) As a blamer of the *Iliad*, Thersites is deservedly described at [II 220](#) as **ekhthistos** 'most hateful' to the prime hero of our epic.

§14. From what we have seen up to now, the story of Thersites in the *Iliad* surely stands out as the one epic passage with by far the most overt representation of blame poetry. And we have yet to add the cumulative evidence from the overall diction in this passage, with its striking concentration of words indicating blame as a foil for Epos:[\[1\]](#)

eris 'strife'

Thersites makes **eris** against kings ([erizemenai basileusin](#): [II 214](#), 247).
neîkos 'quarrel, fight'

Thersites makes **neîkos** against kings in general ([neikeiein](#): [II 277](#)) and Agamemnon in particular ([neikee](#): [II 224](#), 243); also against Achilles and Odysseus ([neikeieske](#): [II 221](#)), who are also kings (cf. [I 331](#) and [IX 346](#) respectively).

oneidos 'blame, reproach'

Thersites speaks "with words of **oneidos**" ([oneideiois epeessin](#): [II 277](#)), equated with "making **neîkos**" against kings ([neikeiein](#): same verse), on which see the previous entry in our list. The plural of **oneidos** designates his words against kings in general and Agamemnon in particular ([oneidea](#) at [II 251](#) and 222 respectively). He is "making **oneidos**" against Agamemnon ([oneidizôn](#): [II 255](#)).

kertomeô 'reproach [verb]'[\[2\]](#)

The participle ([kertomeôn](#): [II 256](#)) is equated with the participle of **oneidizô** 'make **oneidos**' ([oneidizôn](#): [II 255](#)). The subject is Thersites.

For the ridiculing aspect in the semantics of **kertomeô**, see §11n6.
elenkhos 'reproach, disgrace'

Thersites reproaches all the Achaeans by addressing them with the plural of this neuter noun, described as **kaka** 'base' (**kak' elenchea**: II 235).^[3] For more on **elenkhos**, see §7, especially n1; also §11n4.

lôbêtêr 'man of **lôbê** [outrage]'^[4]

This epithet is applied to Thersites by Odysseus (II 275). For more on **lôbê**, see §§5(n1), 6, 11.

aiskhistos 'most base'

See again §§10, 13.

ekhthistos 'most hateful'

See again §10

Finally, we may append a set of negative epithets applied to Thersites that serve to reproach not only the poetic form of his discourse but also its very style:

a-metro-epês

'whose words [**epos** plural] have no moderation' (II 212)

a-krito-mûthos

'whose words [**mûthos** plural] cannot be sorted out' (II 246)

epes-bolos

'who throws his words [**epos** plural]' (II 275).^[5]

Notes

§1n1. Cf. [Plato *Republic* 392d-394d](#). From [Plato *Ion* 535c](#), we see that a rhapsode of epic uses its dialogues to show off his full powers of dramatic performance (**mimêsis**); cf. also [Ion 536a](#). Else (1965.69) summarizes: "The rhapsodes did not merely recite Homer, they acted him, and from this quasi-impersonation of Homeric characters it was only a step to full impersonation, from the rhapsode who momentarily spoke in the person of Achilles or Odysseus to the 'actor' who presented himself as Achilles or Odysseus."

§2n1. A worthy example is the praise of Odysseus by Agamemnon at [xxiv 192-202](#) (discussion at [Ch.2§13](#)). Compare also Semonides 7.30-31W, where the praise of a woman by a **xenos** 'guest-stranger' is quoted directly. The quotation itself is introduced with the word **epainesei** 'will praise' (7.29).

§2n2. Above, [Ch.12§6](#).

§3n1. See Lucas 1968.75 on 1448b25-26; also p. 63 on 1448a2.

§3n2. Lucas, p. 63.

§3n3. For a discussion of the words **epaineô** 'praise' and **psegô** 'blame', see again [Ch.12§§2-3](#).

§3n4. See esp. [Ch.12§4](#).

§5n1. On the word **oneidos**, see [Ch.12§§3](#), 7 (usage in praise poetry) and [Ch.12§§6](#), 11 (usage in Epos). Also, **aîskhos** is used as a synonym of **lôbê** 'outrage, disgrace' at [XIII 622](#), [xviii 225](#), [xix 373](#). Finally, note that Clytemnestra is said at [xi 433](#) to have made **aîskhos** not only for herself but also for all womankind in the future by way of betraying Agamemnon. At [xxiv 200](#), this same betrayal turns the very concept of Clytemnestra into a **stugerê ... aoidê** 'hateful song' that will survive into the future ([xxiv 201](#)) and will bring a bad name to all womankind ([xxiv 201-202](#)). We have here one of the clearest instances of blame as blame *poetry*. For more on [xxiv 192-202](#), see [Ch.2§13](#).

§5n2. See again [§3](#).

§5n3. See [Ch.12§6](#). Consider also the **aoidê** 'song' of blame directed at Clytemnestra in particular and women in general ([xxiv 199-202](#)), as discussed at n1. This **aoidê** blaming Clytemnestra serves as a serious foil for the **aoidê** praising Penelope ([xxiv 196-198](#)). For the typology of praising/blaming the wives of others and one's own, cf. Semonides 7.112-113W, on which there is more at [§7](#).

§6n1. For the semantics, see Chantraine [II 394](#).

§6n2. Whereas the conventional 'amusement' denoted by this word is nonserious, the actual 'amusement' intended by Odysseus for the suitors is of course dead serious.

§6n3. On **lôbê** and **aîskhos** as indicators of blame, see [§5n1](#).

§6n4. On the traditional use of **kuôn** 'dog' and its derivatives in the language of blame: [Ch.12§6](#).

§6n5. On the etymology of **amûmôn** 'blameless', see Chantraine [I 79](#). The word is probably related to **mômos** 'blame, reproach' (on which see [Ch.12§3](#)). In Hesychius, the related noun **mûmar** is glossed as **aîskhos** and **psogos**; also, the verb **mûmarizei** is glossed as **geloiazei** 'jest'.

§6n6. Whereas the harsh man gets the ridicule of blame poetry, the blameless man gets the **kleos** of praise poetry. As such, the blameless man qualifies as **esthlos** 'worthy'. The collocation of **kleos** with this epithet **esthlos** is suggestive: see [Ch.10§3n2](#).

§7n1. The words **elenkhos/elenkheiê** designate the shame and disgrace that result from blame (cf. [XI 314](#)). The derivative adjective **elenkhês** 'worthy of reproach' is specifically applied to the person who is being blamed (as at [IV 242](#), where the quoted words of blame are introduced by **neikeieske** 'made **neîkos**' at verse 241). Note too the use of **elenkhos** in [Pindar N.8.21](#), introducing the theme of blame poetry at lines 21-25 (on which see [Ch.12§5](#)).

§7n2. For more on **lôbê** 'outrage, disgrace': [§5n1](#).

§7n3. Cf. [Hesiod W&D 701](#), warning men not to choose a bad wife--the source of **kharmata** 'merriment' for the neighbors. Cf. also Theognis 1107-1108 = 1318a-b W, where one man's misfortunes are described as a **katakharma** 'thing of merriment' to one's **ekhthroi** 'enemies' and a **ponos** 'pain' to one's **phîloi** 'friends'. For more on the semantics of root *khar- as in **khairô** and **kharis**, see [Ch.5§39](#).

§7n4. At [XXI 389-390](#), Zeus "laughed" (**egelasse**) in his heart with "mirth" (**gêthosunêi**) when he saw the other Olympians confronting each other in

eris ([eridi](#)). Compare the epithet **kakokhartos** 'made happy by evil/misfortune' as applied to **Eris** personified in [Hesiod W&D 28](#); compare also the image of **Eris** as she "made merry" (**khaîre**) over the fighting of the Achaeans and Trojans, at [XI 73](#). For more on the theme of blame as grief for the one who is blamed and laughter for the ones who hear the blame, see [§11n6 below](#).

§8n1. Cf. [Ch.5§39](#).

§8n2. Cf. [Ch.12§21](#), [Ch.13§§2](#), 6, 7.

§9n1. I note again--as I have done throughout--that in matters of archaic Greek poetry our concern should be more with questions of poetic tradition than with questions of poetic authorship.

§9n2. Aristotle specifically attributes the *Margites* to "Homer" (*ibid.*). My own formulation is that the poem is within the Homeric tradition (n1). Aristotle's attribution is nevertheless valuable because it implies an affinity of the *Margites* with Homeric composition that cannot be matched by the Cycle, which Aristotle does not even attribute to "Homer" ([Poetics 1459b1](#)). For more on the *Margites* as archaic poetry in the Homeric tradition, see Forderer 1960.

§9n3. For an interesting supplement: West 1974.190.

§9n4. See [Ch.12§9](#).

§10n1. See [Ch.2](#); cf. also Puelma 1972.105n74.

§10n2. See [Ch.12§21n2](#).

§10n3. In this connection, we may note again the interesting expression used by the **rhapsidoi** 'rhapsodes' to designate "recite Homer": **Homēron epaineîn** (discussion at [Ch.6§6n4](#)). Moreover, the word **kleos** designates both praise poetry ([Ch.12§3](#)) and Epos ([Ch.1§2](#)).

§10n4. Cf. [§2](#).

§11n1. On the forms, see Chantraine 1963.21.

§11n2. See Chantraine, p. 20, for attestations of historical figures in Thessaly named **Thersîtâs**, where indeed the naming must have been inspired by the concept of a warrior's **thersos** (Aeolic for **tharsos**).

§11n3. On this instance of **phthonos**, see also [Ch.12§4](#).

§11n4. See [Ch.12§11](#). Compare also [xviii 390](#), where the suitor Eurymakhos tells the disguised Odysseus that he has spoken **tharsaleôs** 'boldly'. The would-be beggar has just spoken words of counter-reproach to the suitor ([xviii 366-386](#)), who had reproached Odysseus for being a glutton ([xviii 357-364](#)). Note that Eurymakhos specifically reproaches Odysseus for having an insatiable **gastêr** 'belly' ([xviii 364](#)), and that Odysseus refers to this in his counter-reproach when he speaks to Eurymakhos as one who is "reproaching my belly," **tên gaster' oneidizôn** ([xviii 380](#)). In this connection, we should observe the insulting of the poet by the Muses in [Hesiod Th. 26](#): shepherds are **gasteres oîon** 'mere bellies'. For the appositive **kak' elenkhea** 'base objects of reproach' (again, *Th. 26*), see the brief discussion of **elenkhos** at [§7n1](#); cf. [§14](#). For a brilliant exercise in correlating *Th. 26* with [Odyssey xiv 124-125](#), see Svenbro 1976.50-59: the **gastêr** is an emblem of the poet's readiness to adjust his themes in accordance with what his immediate audience wants to hear.

§11n5. For the implications of **lôbê**: [§5n1](#).

§11n6. The word **kertomiai** 'reproaches' at [xx 263](#) is equated with **thûmos enîpê** 'spirit of blame' at [xx 266](#). (For more on the noun **enîpê** 'blame, reproach' and the corresponding verb **enenîpe** 'blamed, reproached [aorist]', see [§5](#) and [Ch.13§6](#).) Note too the use of the verb **kertomeô** 'reproach' at [xviii 350](#): the suitor Eurymakhos is **kertomeôn** 'reproaching' Odysseus, and his words of blame are said to cause **akhos** 'grief' for Odysseus ([xviii 348](#)) and **gelôs** 'laughter' for the other suitors ([xviii 350](#)).

§12n1. On the family of **enîpê** 'blame, reproach' (with expressively reduplicated aorists **enenîpe** and **ênipape**), see Chantraine [II 349](#). Cf. [§§5](#), 11(n6); also [Ch.13§6](#).

§12n2. Cf. [§§7](#) and 11(n6).

§12n3. Since the function of Thersites as blame poet is described as the making of **eris** against kings and since the **kleos** of praise poetry is traditionally described as **etētumon** 'true, genuine' (see [Ch.12§3n2](#)), we may compare the epic antithesis of **Eteo-kleês** ('whose **kleos** is genuine') as king and **Polu-neikê̄s** ('whose reproaches are many') as potential usurper. Cf. Reinhardt 1951.339 *en passant*; also Burkert 1972b.83. For more on the strife between Eteokles and Polyneikes, see [Ch.7§16n3](#) and [Ch.12§7n3](#). For more on **neîkos** 'quarrel, fight' as a word marking blame as a foil for praise, see above at [Ch.12§3](#). Finally, compare the semantics of **Thersîtēs** with the name given to the son of **Polu-neikê̄s**, **Thers-andros** ([Pindar O.2.43](#)). On the convention of naming heroes after the father's prime characteristic, see further at [Ch.8§9n2](#).

§12n4. The expression **kata kosmon** 'according to the established order of things' ([II 214](#)) implies that blame poetry, when justified, has a positive social function. Cf. [Ch.2§13n5](#).

§13n1. See [Ch.12§7](#).

§13n2. Note too that Thersites here fails to use the word **mēnis** for 'anger', resorting instead to the unmarked **kholos** ([II 241](#)). Cf. [Ch.5§8n2](#).

§14n1. Compare this list with the original list at [Ch.12§3](#), comprised of words indicating blame as a foil for praise poetry.

§14n2. Cf. also **kertomeîn** at Archilochus *fr.* 134W.

§14n3. Cf. also the reproach of the poet by the Muses in [Hesiod Th. 26](#): shepherds are **kak' elenkhea** 'base objects of reproach'; see [§11n4](#). We may note that the Judgment of Paris took place in his **messaulos** 'courtyard [for animals]' ([XXIV 29](#)), where he *blamed* Hera and Athena but *praised* Aphrodite (see [Ch.11§16](#)). On the pastoral background of the Paris figure: scholia (A) to [Iliad III 325](#).

§14n4. Cf. also **lôbêt**[...] at Archilochus *fr.* 54.9W (the same fragment also contains the name of Lykambes!).

§14n5. For the formation of this word, cf. the interesting collocation **epesin** ... **êde bolēisin** at [xxiv 161](#), referring to the way in which the suitors had *reproached* Odysseus (**enissomen**, same verse).

Chapter 15

The Best of the Achaeans Confronts an Aeneid Tradition

§1. Having finished with the diction surrounding the Thersites figure, we may now turn to another Iliadic passage, [XX 246-256](#), which rivals the passage about Thersites in its wealth of information relating to the poetry of blame. For a proper understanding, however, we must begin with an Iliadic passage found earlier on in the action.

§2. In the heat of battle, the Trojan hero Deiphobos suddenly finds that he needs help from his ally Aeneas, and he goes to look for him:

... ton d' hustaton heuren homilou
hestaot': aiei gar Priamōi epemēnie diōi,
hounek' ar' esthlon eonta met' andrasin ou ti tiesken

And he found him standing hindmost in the battle,
for he had mēnis [anger] always against brilliant Priam,
because he [Priam] did not honor him [Aeneas], worthy that he was
among heroes.

[XIII 459-461](#)

There is a striking thematic parallelism here between Aeneas and Achilles, who likewise had withdrawn from battle because he had **mēnis** against Agamemnon ([I.1](#), etc.). The king had not given the hero **tīmē** 'honor'--even though Achilles is not just "worthy among heroes" but actually the "best of the Achaeans" ([I.244](#), etc.).[\[1\]](#) These themes of **mēnis**/withdrawal/**tīmē**/excellence are not only present in the *Iliad*; they are in fact central to it, permeating the composition in its monumental dimensions.[\[2\]](#) It is the expansion of these central themes in the *Iliad* that makes us so aware of their compression in the mention of Aeneas at [XIII 459-461](#). Moreover, this Iliadic mention contains a unique attribution of

mēnis to Aeneas. With the exception of [XIII 460](#), the word **mēnis** (and its derivatives) always applies to the reciprocal anger of Achilles as the individual warrior against Agamemnon as king of the collective Achaeans. This anger is the prime theme of the *Iliad*, and no other anger on the part of any other hero ever qualifies as **mēnis** in the entire epic[3] --with the exception of [XIII 460](#). Thus the microcosm of [XIII 459-461](#) shares a distinctive pattern with the macrocosm of the *Iliad*. In short, the nature of the themes attributed to Aeneas in this passage suggests that they are central to another epic tradition--this one featuring Aeneas rather than Achilles as its prime hero.

§3. Let us reconsider the words describing the withdrawal of Aeneas:

ton d' hustaton heuren homilou
hestaot':

And he found him standing hindmost in the battle

[XIII 459-460](#)

This stance of the hero is in sharp contrast with his later involvement in the fighting:

Aineia, ti su tosson homilou pollon epelthôn
estês;

Aeneas! Why are you standing so far up front in the battle?[1]

[XX 178-179](#)

The speaker here is none other than Achilles himself, who has just been confronted in battle by this hero whose epic tradition is parallel in its themes to his own.[2] After this question alluding to the specific theme of a withdrawal by Aeneas, Achilles continues with another taunting question:

ê se ge thumos emoji machesasthai anôgei
elpomenon Trôessin anaxein hippodamoisi
timês tês Priamou; atar ei ken em' exenarixéis,

ou toi touneka ge Priamos geras en cheri thêsei:
eisin gar hoi paides, ho d' empedos oud' aesiphrôn

Does your **thûmos** urge you to fight against me
because you hope to be king of the horse-taming Trojans,
which is the **tîmê** of Priam?^[3] But even if you kill me,
Priam will not place the **geras** [honorific portion] in your hand on that
account.^[4]
He has children,^[5] and he is sound and not unstable.^[6]

XX 179-183

There is a conflict going on here between Achilles and Aeneas as warriors
in battle and also between the epic traditions about each of the two heroes.
Moreover, the *Iliad* here is actually allowing part of the Aeneas tradition to
assert itself at the expense of the Achilles tradition. We have just seen
Achilles taunt Aeneas by predicting that he will never replace Priam as king
of Troy. And yet, the god Poseidon himself then prophesies the exact
opposite:

êdê gar Priamou geneên êchthêre Kroniôn:
nun de dê Aineiao biê Trôessin anaxei
kai paidôn paides, toi ken metopisthe genôntai

For the son of Kronos has already abominated the line of Priam.
And presently the might of Aeneas will be king of the Trojans
and his children's children, who are to be born hereafter.

XX 306-308

This destiny prophesied by Poseidon is part of a poetic tradition glorifying
the Aeneadae, as we see from the independent evidence of the Homeric
Hymn to Aphrodite.^[7] There we find Aphrodite making a parallel prophecy
to the father of Aeneas:

soi d' estai philos huios hos en Trôessin anaxei
kai paides paidessi diampères ekgegaontai

You will have a **philos** son who will be king of the Trojans, and children will be born to his children, and so on forever.[\[8\]](#)

H.Aphr. 196-197

Moreover, Poseidon rescues Aeneas in the middle of his battle with Achilles precisely because, as the god himself says, "it is destined" ([morimon: XX 302](#)) that Aeneas must not die at this point. In this way, the line of Aeneas will not die out, and he will have descendants ([XX 302-305](#))--as compared to the doomed line of Priam ([XX 306](#)). At [XX 336](#), Poseidon personally tells Aeneas that his death at this point in the narrative would have been **huper moîran** 'beyond destiny'. In effect, then, it would be untraditional for the narrative to let Achilles kill Aeneas in [Iliad XX](#), since there is a poetic tradition that tells how Aeneas later became king of Troy; accordingly, Poseidon intervenes in the narrative and keeps Aeneas alive for further narratives about his future.[\[9\]](#)

§4. One of the most obvious traces of a variant epic tradition about Aeneas in [Iliad XX](#) is this surprising rescue of a pro-Trojan hero by a decidedly pro-Achaean god, Poseidon himself. This is not to say, however, that the narrative about the rescue is out of joint with the overall composition of the *Iliad*. True, we may have expected Apollo rather than Poseidon to rescue Aeneas. And yet, if this pro-Trojan god had attempted such a rescue, then the timing of the other gods' respective interventions would have been thrown off, *as the narrative itself says* ([XX 138-141](#)). In other words, the *Theomachia* would have begun prematurely.[\[1\]](#) Whereas a rescue by Apollo would have been simply a pro-Trojan act, the rescue by Poseidon puts the act *above* taking sides; the figure of Aeneas thus transcends the war of the Trojans and Achaeans.[\[2\]](#) In this sense, Aeneas is beyond the scope of the Trojan War tradition in general, reflecting other themes and perhaps even other concerns of other times. The favorable relationship of Poseidon with Aeneas may in fact reveal a special cult affinity between the god and a dynasty of Aeneadae;[\[3\]](#) during the times that the *Iliad* and the *Hymn to Aphrodite* traditions were separately evolving into their ultimate forms, the current importance of such a dynasty could be retrojected into the Heroic Age by such poetic devices as the prophecy to Aeneas that his descendants, not Priam's, will be the ones who are to hold sway in the Troad ([Iliad XX](#)

[302-308](#), [H.Aphr. 196-197](#)) [4] I avoid saying, however, that the *Hymn to Aphrodite*--let alone the *Iliad*--was expressly composed for an audience of Aeneadae.[\[5\]](#) Even when we take into account the observation by Reinhardt that Aeneas is the only attested Iliadic hero who is mentioned as having descendants *in the present*,[\[6\]](#) it does not necessarily follow that such descendants are the key figures in the poet's audience, nor that the "poet of the *Iliad*" had made an ad hoc reference to the presence of this audience by virtue of narrating a self-fulfilling prophecy.[\[7\]](#) Rather, we see from the evidence of [Iliad XX](#) and the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* that the perpetuity of the line of Aeneadae was itself a traditional poetic theme.[\[8\]](#) The *Iliad* does not invent something, even if it is historically true, just to please a given group. Of course, it can still please those in any given group by repeating something traditional about them.[\[9\]](#)

§5. Our *Iliad*, then, invalidates not only the prediction made by Achilles when he taunts Aeneas but also the actual combat between the two heroes. The divine intervention of Poseidon is a clear sign even to Achilles that Aeneas had not "boasted in vain" about his heroic identity ([maps autôs euchetaasthai: XX 348](#)).[\[1\]](#) Such an assertion of the Aeneas tradition at the expense of the Achilles tradition can only go so far, however. The heroic momentum of Achilles in the *Iliad* may be temporarily stalled but never deflected. Within the *Iliad*, the tempo of events after the death of Patroklos preordains that Achilles will win in any duel with any challenger. Within a composition from some other tradition, however, the outcome of a duel involving Achilles may not be inevitable.

§6. Ironically, Achilles himself conjures up the presence of other traditions when he tries to intimidate Aeneas by *reminding him*[\[1\]](#) of an incident that happened when Achilles was capturing the cities of Lyrnessos and Pedasos ([XX 187-198](#)). As Achilles tells it, Aeneas was handily routed by him (*ibid.*).[\[2\]](#) Moreover, Aeneas himself had earlier told Apollo that he was indeed intimidated at the prospect of facing Achilles in combat; the reason for his fear, he says, is that he remembers how Achilles had routed him when the Achaeans captured Lyrnessos and Pedasos ([XX 89-98](#)). But now a curious thing happens: as he is being reminded of the same incident by Achilles, Aeneas is suddenly no longer intimidated. He replies to Achilles:

Pêleïdê, mē dê epeessi me nêpution hôs
elpeo deidixesthai, epei sapha oida kai autos
êmen kertomias êd' aisula muthêsasthai

Son of Peleus! Do not hope to intimidate me with words [epos plural] as if I were some child.

For I myself know clearly how to tell
reproaches [kertomiai] and unseemly things.[3]

XX 200-202

Aeneas is saying that he too can narrate **kertomiai** and **aisula**-- words that indicate the poetry of blame.^[4] By implication, the words [epos plural] that Achilles had just narrated about the Capture of Lyrnessos and Pedasos-- words that make Aeneas the object of blame--are not the only possible narration. It seems that Aeneas now has in mind other words [epos plural], words that Aeneas could in turn relate about Achilles--words that make Achilles the object of blame.

§7. The very word **epos** [plural] at XX 200 (also recapped at XX 256) indicates not just "words" in general but "poetic words" in particular,^[1] as we can see from the lines that immediately follow XX 200-202:

idmen d' allélôn geneên, idmen de tokêas
proklut' akouontes epea thnêtôn anthrôpôn:
opsei d' out' ar pô su emous ides out' ar' egô sous

We know each other's lineage, we know each other's parentage,
hearing the famed[2] words [epos plural] of mortal men.
But by sight you have never yet seen my parents, nor I yours.

XX 203-205

The words of Aeneas to Achilles here reveal the traditional conceit of the **aoidos** 'singer, poet', who *knows* nothing but *hears* the **kleos** 'fame' = 'that which is heard' from the Muses, who in turn *know* everything.^[3] As the poet declares at the beginning of the *Catalogue*:

humeis gar theai este, pareste te, iste te panta,
hêmeis de kleos oion akouomen oude ti idmen

For you [the Muses] are goddesses; you are always present, and you
know everything;
but we [poets] only hear the **kleos** and know nothing.[\[4\]](#)

II 485-486

When a poet starts his performance by asking his Muse to *tell* him the subject (cf. [I.1, i.1](#)), the composition is in fact being presented to his audience as something that he *hears* from the very custodians of all stages of reality. The poet's inherited conceit, then, is that he has access to both the content and the actual form of what his eyewitnesses, the Muses, speak as they describe the realities of remote generations. I should emphasize that this conceit is linked with the poet's inherited role as an individual performer, and that "only in performance can the formula exist and have clear definition."[\[5\]](#) The formulas are the selfsame words spoken by the Muses themselves: they are recordings of the Muses who were always present when anything happened. In fact, the frame in which these formulas are contained, the dactylic hexameter, was traditionally called **epos** by the poetry itself.[\[6\]](#) Since the dactylic hexameter, as well as all verses, has an inherited tendency to be syntactically self-contained,[\[7\]](#) the **epos** is truly an epic utterance, an epic sentence, from the standpoint of the Muses or of any character quoted by the Muses. The word introducing Homeric quotations is in fact regularly **epos**. There are even some subtle grammatical distinctions, in traditions of phraseology, between the **epos** the Muses quote and the **epos** they simply narrate.[\[8\]](#) In a medium that carries with it such inherited conceits about accuracy and even reality, we can easily imagine generations after generations of audiences conditioned to expect from the performer the most extreme degrees of fixity in content, fixity in form. In sum, the words of Aeneas to Achilles imply that they both have complete poetic access to each other's heroic lineage and, by extension, to each other's heroic essence.[\[9\]](#)

§8. It remains to be seen what sort of **epos** [plural] Aeneas had threatened to relate about Achilles at [XX 200-202](#). The key is the **epos** [plural] related by Achilles about Aeneas--words that made the Trojan ally an object of blame.

As we have already observed, these words [**epos** plural] of Achilles concerned the Capture of Lyrnessos and Pedasos. Significantly, this story comes from an epic tradition that is different from that of the *Iliad*. Whereas the Homeric *Iliad* is Panhellenic in scope, the *Capture of Lyrnessos and Pedasos* tradition is decidedly local. Its orientation is that of **ktisis** poetry, which is distinguished by its adaptability to the ever-shifting character of whatever local community it happens to glorify.^[1] From place to place, the heroic themes of **ktisis** poetry can be expected to shift in accordance with local lore and ideology.^[2] It may even be that different local traditions could present the same incident to the disadvantage of different heroes--so that different heroes would become the object of blame. In fact, the words of Aeneas himself allude to precisely this factor of local variation in theme:

esti gar amphoterisin oneidea muthēsasthai
polla mal', oud' an nēus hekatozugos achthos aroito.
streptē de glōss' esti brotōn, polees d' eni muthoi
pantoioi, epeōn de polus nomos entha kai entha.
hoppoion k' eipēistha epos, toion k' epakousais.
alla tiē eridas kai neikea nōin anankē
neikein allēloisin enantion, hôs te gunaikas,
hai te cholōsamenaī eridos peri thumoboroio
neikeus' allélēisi mesēn es aguian iousai,
poll' etea te kai ouki: cholos de te kai ta keleuei.
alkēs d' ou m' epeessin apotrepseis memaôta ...

It is possible for the two of us to tell each other very many reproaches [**oneidos** plural],^[3]

and not even a hundred-benched ship could bear their burden.

But the tongue of men is twisted, bearing many stories of all kinds. And there is a manifold range of **epos**[plural] from place to place.^[4]

The sort of **epos** you say is just the thing that you will hear told about yourself.^[5]

But why must there be **eris** and **neîkos** [plural]^[6] for the two of us to make neîkos against each other, like women^[7]

who are angry in a **thûmos**-devouring **eris**
and who make neîkos against each other in the middle of the assembly,

saying many true things and many false.^[8] Anger urges them on.
But I am eager for battle and you will not deflect me from my strength
with epos [plural] ...

XX 246-256

At verse 250, Aeneas is in effect saying that he could recount epos[plural] about Achilles as an object of blame, and that his narration would be the exact opposite of the epos [plural] Achilles had recounted about him. Instead of any further talk, however, the Trojan ally is now determined to start fighting (XX 244-245, 256 ff.). The ensuing narrative of the duel between Aeneas and Achilles may even reveal some details from a variant local tradition in which the hero of our *Iliad* was actually injured by his opponent. At XX 291, the action of the duel is interrupted by Poseidon at the very moment when Aeneas has the initiative: he is about to throw a huge rock at Achilles (XX 285-287). On the basis of parallels in other narratives about duels where one hero throws a rock at another, we should expect Aeneas to win the encounter.^[9] But then the thematic requirements of the *Iliad* take over: *even if* Aeneas had succeeded in hitting Achilles with the rock (XX 288), the hero's shield or helmet would surely have withstood the blow (XX 289), and then Achilles would surely have killed Aeneas (XX 290)!

§9. To sum up: the war of words between Aeneas and Achilles reveals the presence of an independent *Aeneid* tradition within the *Iliad*. Moreover, it reveals Aeneas himself as a master of poetic skills in the language of praise and blame. On the one hand, he has the power to tell stories about Achilles that make him the object of blame. On the other, he actually tells the full story of his own genealogy--an exercise in heroic self-affirmation that amounts to the ultimate praise of the hero by the hero.^[1] In view of these characteristics of Aeneas, we may consider the etymology of his name. As Karl Meister has argued,^[2] Homeric **Aineiâs** is the Ionic reflex of *Ainaâs (by way of *Aineâs), derivative of a noun that survives as **ainê**. As a formal parallel, Meister cites Homeric **Augeiâs** (XI 701), the Ionic reflex of *Augâs (by way of *Augeâs), derivative of a noun that survives as **augê**. Now this word **ainê** (as in Herodotus 3.74, 8.112) is a by-form of **aînos**, the

semantic range of which has revealed a bivalence of praise and blame.[\[3\]](#)
There is a parallel bivalence in the figure of Aeneas.

Notes

[**§2n1.**](#) [Ch.2 §§1-7.](#)

[**§2n2.**](#) [Ch.5 §§7-8.](#)

[**§2n3.**](#) [Ch.5 §8n2.](#)

[**§3n1.**](#) Cf. also [XVII 342.](#)

[**§3n2.**](#) As the two heroes confront each other in combat, they are described as **duo ... ἄνερες ἐξοχή' aristoi** 'two men who were by far the best' ([XX 158](#)).

[**§3n3.**](#) Compare the conflict between Aeneas and Priam over **τίμē** with the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, as discussed at [Ch.5 §§7-8.](#)
{sy,be} Cf. Reinhardt 1961.453 and Fenik 1968.121-122.

[**§3n4.**](#) Compare the **geras** deprived from Achilles: discussion at [Ch.7 §19.](#)

[**§3n5.**](#) An ironic understatement!

[**§3n6.**](#) The taunts of Achilles continue at [XX 184-186](#): if Aeneas kills him, does he expect that the Trojans will assign him a **temenos** 'precinct' of fertile land? Perhaps this description is appropriate to the grove of a cult hero: see [Ch.16 §8n1](#) (cf. the notion of **τίμē** for Aeneas from the **dēmos**, at [XI 58](#); discussion at [Ch.8 §11n5](#)).

[**§3n7.**](#) The valuable work of Heitsch 1965 on the *Hymn* and its relationship with the Aeneas stories in the *Iliad* is for me marred by his persistent assumption that he is dealing with interrelationships of texts rather than traditions. I also value the interesting work of Dihle (1970.65 ff.) on the idiosyncratic diction of the Iliadic passages about Aeneas. But for me his evidence shows not that the passages about Aeneas are "non-oral" but that

they reflect an Aeneas tradition that is significantly different from the Achilles tradition of our *Iliad*. I have similar problems with the admirable work of Lenz 1975, who offers a conscientious reassessment of the interpretations found in Heitsch and Dihle.

§3n8. The everlasting continuity predicted for the line of the Aeneadae is in compensation for the mortality of their ancestor Anchises, father of Aeneas; see [Ch.7§1n5](#).

§3n9. For more on **huper moîran** as 'contrary to destiny' and **kata moîran** as 'according to destiny' (as at [viii 496](#)), where **moîra** is the 'destiny' inherited by the traditional poetic narrative, see [Ch.2§17](#) and [Ch.5§25n2](#); cf. also Pestalozzi 1945.40. Note too the traditional function of **Dios boulê** 'the Will of Zeus' as the given plot of a given epic narrative. Discussion at [Ch.5§25n2](#) (with further references).

§4n1. See Scheibner 1939.6-7.

§4n2. Cf. Scheibner *ibid.*

§4n3. Note [XL 58](#), where it is said of Aeneas himself that "he got **tîmê** from the **dêmos**, like a god"; this characterization of the ancestor of the Aeneadae is appropriate to a cult hero ([Ch.8§11nn5, 6](#)).

§4n4. Cf. Jacoby 1961 [=1933] [I 39-48](#), 51-53; also Donini 1967.

§4n5. So Scheibner 1939.133 on the *Hymn to Aphrodite*. I also distance myself from any of the theories featuring the "poet of the *Iliad*" at the court of the Aeneadae (cf. Jacoby, *ibid.*).

§4n6. Reinhardt 1961.451. I would note, however, that there are other Homeric passages that refer to the present: see [Ch.9§§15-16](#).

§4n7. *Pace* Reinhardt *ibid.*

§4n8. Cf. Kullmann 1960.283n1.

§4n9. Besides [Iliad XX 306-308](#) and [H.Aphr. 196-197](#), there are attestations of still other prophecies addressed to the Aeneadae: see

Acusilaus *FGrH* 2.39 and the commentary by Jacoby [I.383](#).

§5n1. The infinitive **eukhetaasthai** refers to the boast of Aeneas to Achilles at [XX 206-209](#), as expressed by **eukhomai** 'I boast' at [XX 209](#) (recapped at [XX 241](#)). As Muellner points out (1976.93), "When a hero **eukhetai** [boasts], he says the most significant facts he can about himself." From the diction of [XX 206-209](#), Muellner (pp. 76-77) can also show that Aeneas is using words that formally assign Achilles to a heroic stature lower than his own. On the etiquette-rules of such **eukhomai** speeches, see Muellner, pp. 74-75n9.

§6n1. Note the expression **ê ou memnêi** 'do you not remember' at [XX 188](#); for the poetic implications of **mimnêskô** 'remind' and **memnêmai** 'have in mind', see [Ch.1§3n2](#) and [Ch.6§§5-9](#).

§6n2. On the poetic traditions that told of the Capture of Lyrnessos and Pedasos: [Ch.7§29](#).

§6n3. Note that **kertomiâs êd' aisula mûthêsasthai** at [XX 202](#) is equated with **oneidea mûthêsasthai** 'tell reproaches [**oneidos** plural]' at [XX 246](#), on which see further at [§8](#).

§6n4. See n3. On **kertomiai**, see [Ch.14§§11](#)(n6) and 14. On **aisula** see [Ch.19§6n6](#).

§7n1. See [Ch.12§15n3](#). Compare also the use of **epos** in Theognis 16 and 18 as discussed at [Ch.17§12](#).

§7n2. The epithet **pro-kluto-** 'famed', applied to **epos** [plural], is from the same root as **kleos** 'fame' = 'that which is *heard*' (on which see [Ch.1§2](#)).

§7n3. Again, [Ch.1§2](#). As for the theme of *hearing* instead of *seeing*, compare the theme of the blind poet ([Ch.1§§3-4](#)) and the story of the poet who was taken beyond the field of vision ([Ch.2§13n5](#)).

§7n4. Compare the **iste ... idmen** in [II 485-486](#) and the **idmen ... idmen** in [XX 203](#) (recapped by **isâsi** at [XX 214](#)) with the **idmen ... idmen** of the

Muses in [Hesiod Th. 27-28](#) and the **idmen** ... **idmen** of the Sirens in [Odyssey xii 189-191](#).

[§7n5](#). Lord 1960.33.

[§7n6](#). See Koller 1972; cf. also [Ch.17§12\(n4\)](#).

[§7n7](#). Cf. Nagy 1974.143-145.

[§7n8](#). Cf. Kelly 1974 on the different patterns of correption in quoted speeches compared to plain narrative.

[§7n9](#). For lineage as essence in the etiquette of **eukhomai**, see again Muellner 1976.74-77.

[§8n1](#). See [Ch.7§§29-30](#).

[§8n2](#). Ibid.

[§8n3](#). On the word **oneidos** as an indicator of blame poetry, see [Ch.12§§3](#) and 7 (usage in praise poetry) and [§§6](#) and 11 (usage in Epos).

[§8n4](#). On **nomos** in the metaphorical sense of a pastoral "range": Pohlenz 1965 [= 1948] 337.

[§8n5](#). On the semantics of **epi-** in **epakousais**, cf. [Ch.6§6n4](#).

[§8n6](#). On the words **eris** and **neîkos** as indicators of blame poetry, see [Ch.12§§3](#), 6, etc.

[§8n7](#). Richardson (1974.215) provides a list of festivals and cults where **aiskhrologiâ** was restricted to women. On **aiskhrologiâ** as 'ritual jesting', see Richardson, pp. 213-217. On **to aiskhron** 'baseness' as a formal mark of blame poetry, see [Ch.14§§4-5](#).

[§8n8](#). From the standpoint of praise poetry, the words of the blame poet are conventionally false (cf. [Pindar N.8.21](#)-25 and 32-33); discussion at [Ch.12§§5-7](#).

By contrast, the **kleos** conferred by the praise poet is *true* (cf. [Pindar N.7.63](#)); discussion at [Ch.12§3\(n2\)](#), [Ch.14§12\(n3\)](#). The theme that

blame can actually be *true* reflects an earlier time when the concept of a blame poet was not yet distinct from that of a praise poet: see [Ch.16§10n6](#).

§8n9. See Merkelbach 1948.307-308; also Heitsch 1965.66-71, esp. p. 67. I do not agree, however, with their inferences about textual interpolation.

§9n1. Cf. again Muellner 1976.74-77.

§9n2. Meister 1921.156-157; cf. Perpillou 1973.186.

§9n3. [Ch.12§§18-19](#), [Ch.13§12](#).

Chapter 16

The Death of a Poet

§1. In the story of Thersites, we have seen that the details told about him consistently reflect his function as poet of blame.^[1] As it happens, even the story of his death reflects this function. From the epic tradition of the *Aithiopis*, we learn that Thersites was killed by Achilles himself; the reason given for the killing is that the hero had been "reproached and blamed" by Thersites (*loidorêtheis* ... *kai* *oneidistheis*: Proclus summary p. 105.25-26 Allen). Specifically, Thersites had alleged that Achilles loved Penthesileia (*Aithiopis*/Proclus p.105.26-27). The killing is followed by dissension among the Achaeans, and Achilles has to atone for his deed: he sails off to Lesbos, sacrifices to Apollo and his divine family, and is ritually purified by Odysseus (*Aithiopis*/Proclus pp. 105.27-106.1).

§2. In these details from the *Aithiopis*, the figure of Thersites is parallel to that of a **pharmakos** 'scapegoat'.^[1] We turn to an **aition** 'cause'^[2] motivating a ritual that entails the expulsion of **pharmakoi** at the Thargelia, an Ionian festival in honor of Apollo. According to Istros (*FGrH* 344.50, *ap.* Harpocration, s.v.), this ritual is a set of reenactments or **apomîmêmata**.^[3] In particular, the ritual reenacts the killing of one **Pharmakos**, personified, by Achilles and his men; he was stoned to death on the grounds that he stole sacred **phialai** 'bowls' belonging to Apollo (Istros, *ibid.*). Whereas this ritual of **pharmakoi** has the function of purifying the community (Istros, *ibid.*),^[4] the myth of the primordial **pharmakos** has the opposite function, in that his death had been the original cause of impurity and pestilence. We see this theme in another attested **aition** that likewise motivates the ritual. According to Helladios (*ap.* Photius *Bibliotheca* 279, p. 534a3-4 Bekker), a ritual of **pharmakoi** was instituted at Athens for the purpose of purifying the city, which had been afflicted by a pestilence resulting from the unjustified death of Androgeos the Cretan. In effect, then, the primordial death of the primordial **pharmakos** on the level of myth causes a potentially permanent impurity, which in turn calls for permanent purification by way of year-to-year reenactment on the level of ritual.^[5]

There is too little evidence for us to know for sure whether such reenactments could once have taken the form of real executions or whether the ritual deaths of **pharmakoi** were normally stylized in song and dance, as the word **apomîmêmata** indicates (Istros, ibid.). For now, it is more important to observe two modes of killing the **pharmakos** on the idealized level of myth: death either by stoning (Istros, ibid.) or by being thrown off a cliff (Ammonius 142 Valckenaer).^[6] Returning to the story from the *Aithiopis* (in the abbreviated form that survives in the Proclus summary), we may speculate as to whether Thersites too had been stoned to death by Achilles and his men, as was **Pharmakos**. In this case, however, the medium of epic collapses the distinction between the perspectives of myth and ritual: the same figure who caused the impurity--Achilles himself--is also given the chance to be purified for his action.^[7]

§3. Such details about the death of a **pharmakos** are strikingly parallel to the details about the death of Aesop at Delphi, as we find them in the *Life of Aesop* tradition (*Vitae* G+W Perry; also papyrus fragments of *Vitae: Pap.Oxy.* 1800 and *Pap.Soc.Ital.* 1094).^[1] Aesop too is killed on the grounds that he stole a sacred **phialê**'bowl' of Apollo (*Vitae* G+W 127). The Delphians had deliberately hidden the bowl amidst Aesop's belongings as he was about to leave Delphi, so that they might accuse him of stealing it (ibid.). Like some primordial **pharmakos**, Aesop is unjustly accused and executed by the Delphians, who either stone him to death (*Pap.Soc.Ital.* 1094, p. 165 Callimachus I ed. Pfeiffer) or throw him off a cliff (ibid. and *Vita* W 142).^[2] As in an **aition** about **pharmakoi**, the Delphians are then afflicted by a pestilence resulting from the unjustified death of Aesop (*Vitae* G+W 142).

§4. I omit here several other details that can be adduced about the death of Aesop as parallel to the death of a **pharmakos**.^[1] I also postpone our considering how it was that the Delphians purified themselves of the pestilence resulting from Aesop's death.^[2] Our immediate concern is the similarity of Aesop not just with **pharmakoi** in general but also with Thersites in particular. We must now consider how it was that Aesop provoked the people of Delphi to kill him. Just as Thersites had incurred death by blaming Achilles, so also Aesop incurs his own death by blaming the Delphians (cf. Aristotle *Constitution of the Delphians* fr. 487 Rose).

And the medium of his blame is the Aesopic fable, the formal word for which is **aînos**.^[3]

§5. Since the **aînos** is by nature an ambiguous mode of discourse, its effect will be praise *or* blame on the basis of ad hoc application--whether explicit or even implicit.^[1] A story like "The Travelers and the Driftwood," one of the fables that Aesop initially tells the Delphians in our attested *Life of Aesop* tradition (*Vitae G+W* 125),^[2] contains an *implicit* message of blame by virtue of the context set by the narrative. Aesop's explicit likening of the Delphians to driftwood, which looks from afar like a seaworthy ship as it floats towards travelers waiting on the shore (but turns out to be a piece of nothing as it comes closer into view) is actually redundant from the hindsight of all the other fables he is yet to tell--fables bearing similar implicit messages of blame against the Delphians. The blame is fulfilled through the development of the narrative, and the deployment of interlocking fables is intensified as the time of Aesop's execution draws near. Among the fables that he tells just before he dies are "The Frog and the Mouse" (*Vitae G+W* 133) and "The Dung Beetle and the Eagle" (*G+W* 134-139).^[3] With each telling of each **aînos**, the narrative reinforces the ad hoc application of Aesop's words to the Delphians as objects of blame. Without its framing narrative, of course, the ad hoc moral of any given **aînos** could be lost.^[4] It is highly significant, therefore, that the actual framing of an **aînos** like "The Dung Beetle and the Eagle" within a narrative about the death of Aesop *is itself traditional*. In the comedy of fifth-century Athens, there is an overt reference to this fable *as one that was told by Aesop when the Delphians accused him of stealing Apollo's bowl* ([Aristophanes *Wasps* 1446-1448](#); cf. also [Peace 129-132](#)).^[5] We have here the most compelling sort of evidence for drawing two conclusions:

1. In particular, the *Life of Aesop*--as it survives in *VitaeG* and *W*--preserves a traditional context for the telling of the Aesopic **aînos**.^[6]
2. In general, the **aînos** takes on its distinct message of praise or blame only within the context of the narrative that frames it, and the *Vitae* are a survival of such a narrative tradition.

We may also observe again that the Archilochean Iambos is itself a medium where the words of blame can be framed within narrative.^[7] Further, an

aînos like "The Fox and the Eagle" (Archilochus *fr.* 174W)[\[8\]](#) is actually framed within a poem of blame against Lykambes himself (Archilochus *frr.* 172-181W).[\[9\]](#)

§6. In the *Life of Aesop* tradition, the various fables that Aesop tells the Delphians serve to blame them for various things. As an example, I will single out again "The Travelers and the Driftwood," for the main purpose of emphasizing that the *Life of Aesop* is deeply archaic in content if not in diction.[\[1\]](#) When Aesop narrates this fable, he concludes from it that the Delphians are inferior to other Hellenes and that their behavior is worthy of their ancestors (*Vitae G+W* 125). When the Delphians challenge him to say outright what he means, Aesop answers: since the ancient custom is to make one-tenth of a captured city--population and all--sacred to Apollo, and since the Delphians are by ancestry sacred to Apollo, they are therefore slaves of all the Hellenes (*Vitae G+W* 126). As Anton Wiechers has argued in detail, these words of reproach actually reflect the political situation of Delphi in the era of the First Sacred War (ca. 590 B.C.).[\[2\]](#) However, the sequence of events in the *Life of Aesop* tradition reverses the sequence in history:[\[3\]](#) Aesop's reproach-- causing his death--is based on the situation immediately *after* the First Sacred War, but his death--effected by his reproach--sets the stage for the events immediately *before* it, namely, the undertaking of a joint expedition against Delphi (*Vitae G+W* 142).[\[4\]](#) To put it another way, the *Life of Aesop* tradition actually presents the death of Aesop as a *cause* of the First Sacred War, but the institutional reality that Aesop reproaches--namely, that the people of Delphi are sacred to Apollo--is a lasting *effect* of the First Sacred War.[\[5\]](#) From the standpoint of the myth, the death of Aesop is the *effect* of his reproaching the institutions of Delphi; from the standpoint of these institutions, on the other hand, his death is their indirect *cause*. It is this sort of "cause" that qualifies as an **aition**.[\[6\]](#) Only here, the **aition** of Aesop's death motivates not simply one institution, such as a ritual, but an entire conglomeration of institutions sacred to Apollo-- the very essence of Delphi after the First Sacred War.

§7. We also have, in a fragment from the *Life of Aesop* tradition, an example of a specific description concerning one single Delphic institution, which happens to be a ritual. As before, we see this institution being reproached by Aesop. Here too, we see him killed by the people of Delphi

as a result of his reproach. And again we may say that the death of Aesop is an **aition**, implicitly motivating the particular ritual that he reproaches. The fragment first describes the ritual in question, then tells of Aesop's death. I present the text in its entirety:

est]in d' aitia toia[utê]eir[ê]menê:[1] epan [eise]lthêi t[is] tôi theôi
thusias[ôn o]hi Delph[o]i per[i]estêkasi ton bôm[o]n huph' heautois
machairas k[o]mizontes, sphagiasamenou de tou hiereôs[2] kai
deirantos to hiereion kai ta splanchna periexelomenou, hoi periestôtes
hekastos hên an ischusêi moiran apotemnomenos apeisin, hôs pollakis
ton thusiasanta auton amoir[o]n api[e]nai. touto oun Ai[s]ôp[o]s
Delphous onid[i]zôn epeskôpsen, eph' hois diorgisthentes hoi polloi
lithois auton ballontes kata krêmnou eôsan. met' ou polu de loimikon
pathos epeskêpse têi polei, chrêstêriazomenois d' autois ho theos
aneilen[3] ou proteron [lêx]ein têi nos[on me]chris [an A]isôpon
exi[laskônt]ai. hoi de peritei[chis]antes ton topon [en hoi k]atepesen
bômo[n th' hi]d[rusa]menoi lutêr[i]o[n][4] tês nosou, hôs hêrôi
th[usias] pro[s]ênenkan.

The cause is said to be this:[5] When someone goes in for the purpose of initiating sacrifice to the god, the Delphians stand around the altar carrying concealed daggers [**makhairai**]. And after the priest has slaughtered and flayed the sacrificial victim and after he has apportioned the innards, those who have been standing around cut off whatever **moîra** [portion] of meat each of them is able to cut off and then depart, with the result that the one who initiated the sacrifice oftentimes departs without having a **moîra** himself. Now Aesop reproached and ridiculed the Delphians for this, which made the people angry. They stoned him and pushed him off a cliff. Not much later, a pestilence fell upon the city, and when they consulted the Oracle, the god revealed that the disease would not cease until they propitiated Aesop. So they built a wall around the place where he fell, set up an altar as an antidote to the disease, and sacrificed to him as a hero.

§8. Explicitly, the death of Aesop is motivating a specific institution, the hero cult of Aesop at Delphi. There is a striking parallel in *Vitae G+W* 142. As in *Pap.Oxy.* 1800, we see that a pestilence falls upon Delphi after Aesop's death (G+W), that the Oracle tells the Delphians to propitiate the dead Aesop (G+W), that the Delphians accordingly build a shrine and set up a **stêlê** for Aesop (W).^[1] But the same passage in *Vitae G+W* 142 presents a complex **aition**. Aesop's death motivates not only his cult as hero but also, as we have already seen, the undertaking of a joint expedition against Delphi. The death of Aesop is thus motivating the First Sacred War and the institutional reality resulting from it, namely, that all Delphi is sacred to Apollo.^[2] As we have also seen,^[3] the death of Aesop in *Vitae G+W* 142 is thereby an **aition** or 'cause' that implicitly motivates the very institutions that he reproaches--from the standpoint of these institutions. From the standpoint of the myth, however, Aesop's death is the explicit *effect* of his reproaching these institutions. So also with *Pap.Oxy.* 1800: from the standpoint of its myth, Aesop's death is the explicit *effect* of his reproaching the ritual described. From the combined standpoints of myth and ritual, however, we may conclude by way of the comparative evidence in *Vitae G+W* 142 that the myth of Aesop's death is an **aition** or 'cause' that implicitly motivates this very ritual.

§9. Actually, we have already seen a parallelism between this ritual concerning the distribution of meat, exactly as we find it described in *Pap.Oxy.* 1800, and the myth concerning the death of Pyrrhos as we find it described in Pindar's *Paean* 6 and *Nemean* 7.^[1] In fact, the parallelism in theme between ritual and myth is so close here that we also have considered the possibility that the death of Pyrrhos is an **aition** that had once explicitly motivated the ritual described in *Pap.Oxy.* 1800.^[2]

§10. Following through on this hypothesis, we may tentatively formulate a twofold pattern wherein the deaths of Pyrrhos/Aesop are the explicit/implicit motivations for the Delphic ritual that dramatizes strife over cuts of sacrificial meat. The pattern can be extended much further. Whereas Pyrrhos is killed because he reacts to strife over meat by resorting to *physical* violence (Pindar *Paean* 6.117-120 and *N.7.40-43*),^[1] Aesop is killed because he reacts to the institution of this strife with *verbal* violence: he makes **oneidos** against the Delphians (*Pap.Oxy.* 1800: *onidizôn*).^[2]

While the hero cult of Pyrrhos is based on his death as a *warrior*, the hero cult of Aesop is based on *his* death as a *poet*. I say "poet" rather than "blame poet" because the word **aînos**, applicable to Aesop's fables of blame for the Delphians, also designates praise poetry itself.^[3] In fact, Aesop's blaming the Delphic procedure of meat cutting fits the self-avowed function of the praise poet, who blames what is base while praising what is noble.

Significantly, one of the main traditional targets for the praise poet to blame is **phthonos** 'greed'.^[4] Moreover, we have seen that the **phthonos** blamed by praise poetry is primarily manifested in the imagery of greedily devouring meat.^[5] Accordingly, Aesop's blaming the ritualized strife and greed inherent in the Delphic distribution of meat represents an archetypal function of praise poetry.^[6] On the other hand, Aesop's blame takes the specific form of *ridicule* (*Pap.Oxy.* 1800: epeskôpsen), which in turn is a characteristic of blame poetry.^[7] I conclude, then, that the themes surrounding the Aesop figure go back to a time when the concept of a blame poet was not yet distinct from that of a praise poet--that is, to a time when the poet blamed or praised in accordance with what he saw was bad or good. The semantic range of the very word **aînos** reveals a parallel bivalence of blame and praise.^[8]

Notes

§1n1. Cf. Ch.14 §§10-14.

§2n1. Cf. Usener 1912/1913 [= 1897] 244; also Wiechers 1961.44n2.

§2n2. To be more precise: I use **aition** in the sense of "a myth that *traditionally* motivates an institution, such as a ritual." I stress "traditionally" because the myth may be a tradition *parallel to* the ritual, not *derivative from* it. Unless we have evidence otherwise, we cannot assume in any particular instance that an aetiological myth was an *untraditional* fabrication intended simply to explain a given ritual. The factor of *motivating*--as distinct from *explaining*--is itself a traditional function in religion, parallel to the traditional function of ritual. It is only when the traditions of religion become obsolescent that rituals may become so obscure as to invite explanations of a purely literary nature. For a

particularly illuminating discussion of a specific **aition** as a traditional complement to a specific ritual, I cite Brelich 1969.229-311.

§2n3. On **mimêsis** as 'reenactment', in song and dance, of themes in myth, see [Ch.13§12n3](#).

§2n4. For further testimonia on purification by way of **pharmakoi**, see Wiechers 1961.34n9.

§2n5. For more on this sort of logic in the linking of myth and ritual, cf. the discussion of the Bouphonia by Wiechers 1961.37-42.

§2n6. For further references, see Wiechers 1961.34nn7, 8.

§2n7. For a similar collapsing of myth/ritual distinctions, see Sinos 1975.131-143 on the funeral of Patroklos as instituted by Achilles.

§3n1. For the fragments, see in general Aesop *Testimonia* 20-32 Perry. As for the *Life of Aesop* as attested in *Vitae G+W*, Perry says (1936.1): "It is almost without parallel among the ancient Greek texts that have come down to us. For, although many popular traditions have survived concerning the doings and sayings of Homer, Hesiod, and the Seven Wise Men of Greece, yet these are either scattered and fragmentary or else, when embodied in continuous accounts such as the *Contest between Homer and Hesiod*, the *Lives of Homer*, or Plutarch's *Banquet of the Seven Sages*, have taken on something of the formal and learned character of the environment in which they were composed or through which, at any rate, they have been transmitted to us whatever their original character may have been."

§3n2. In *Pap.Oxy.* 1800, Aesop is stoned and *then* thrown off a cliff.

§4n1. For an exhaustive listing: Wiechers 1961.35-36.

§4n2. See [§8](#) and n1.

§4n3. See [Ch.12§18](#) and n2.

§5n1. [Ch.12§§18-19](#), [Ch.13§12](#), [Ch.15§9](#).

§5n2. The story is also attested in the canonical corpus of Aesopic fables: *Fable* 177 Perry.

§5n3. The second story is also attested as Aesop *Fable* 3 Perry.

§5n4. When an **aînos** like "The Dung Beetle and the Eagle" is taken out of its narrative context, it can function simply as a nature story that explains why eagles and beetles breed in different seasons; there is a trace of this function at line 12 of Aesop *Fable* 3 Perry, side-by-side with the moral at lines 13-14. The moral, of course, functions as the message of the **aînos** in the context of the narrative, as made explicit in *Vitae* G+W 139. The moral attached to each **aînos** in the canonical collection of Aesopic fables serves as a compensation for the context that a framing narrative would supply.

§5n5. Again, the word for 'bowl' is **phialê** ([Aristophanes *Wasps* 1447](#)): so also in the story of **Pharmakos** ([§2](#)) and in the *Life of Aesop* ([§3](#)).

§5n6. Cf. Wiechers 1961.11-13. It follows that the canonical collections of Aesopic fables, *presented without framing narratives*, entail the truncation (sometimes even distortion) of the **aînos** as a traditional genre. Granted, some of the themes found in **aînoi** may have an independent existence in other genres such as the nature story (cf. n4 and Wiechers, p.12n13). But the point still remains that the *Fables* as we find them in Perry's edition do not represent the **aînos** in its archaic traditional form.

§5n7. See [Ch.13§§4](#), 9, 13.

§5n8. The story is also attested as Aesop *Fable* 1 Perry; see [Ch.12§18n2](#).

§5n9. See [Ch.12§§18-19](#), [Ch.13§12](#).

§6n1. Even in matters of language, however, we can detect archaic traces of Ionic underneath the Koine that pervades the narrative. See Wiechers 1961.9n5 on the fable about the girl without **noos** 'sense', who is tricked into having sex with a man whom she sees having sex with an **onos** 'ass' (*Vitae* G+W 131). The point of the whole story depends on a misunderstanding by way of metathesis: **onos** instead of **noos**, the Ionic equivalent of **noûs**. The form **noûs**, which is what we read in the Koine of

our attested *Vitae*, conceals the play on words and in effect renders the story unintelligible.

§6n2. His argument has to be read in its entirety: see Wiechers, pp. 7-30.

§6n3. Cf. Wiechers, p. 27n45.

§6n4. The First Sacred War was actually directed against Cirrha/Crisa, which controlled and in that sense defined the sacred center of Delphi. Before Delphi was reconstituted as distinct from the defeated Cirrha/Crisa, however, the First Sacred War could be envisaged as an expedition against Delphi. See Wiechers, p. 27. On Cirrha/Crisa: Giovannini 1969.19-20.

§6n5. Before the First Sacred War, Delphi was a sacred center controlled by the **polis** Cirrha/Crisa; after it, the defeated Cirrha/Crisa ceases to exist as a **polis**. Its fertile territory and its population are now sacred to Apollo, since Delphi now controls Cirrha/Crisa. In that sense, the **polis** is now controlled by the sacred center. See Wiechers, p. 24, for testimonia indicating that the territory of Cirrha/Crisa became **hiero-** 'sacred' to Apollo; his discussion should be supplemented, however, with Benveniste's observations on the semantics of **hiero-** (1969 [II 192-196](#)).

§6n6. On our use of the word **aition**, see again [§2n2](#).

§7n1. The lines that precede this sentence unfortunately are lost.

§7n2. Hunt corrects from [hiereiou](#): Perry 1952.221.

§7n3. Maas corrects from [apeipen](#), as noted by Wiechers 1961.23 but not by Perry (*ibid.*).

§7n4. Reading by Perry (*ibid.*).

§7n5. See n1. The sense of the missing sentence that precedes would have been something to the effect that Aesop had a hero cult at Delphi. As Albert Henrichs points out to me, **aitiâ** 'cause' is a word used by mythographers and scholiasts as an equivalent of **aition** 'cause' (as defined at [§2n2](#) and as applied at [§6](#)); cf. the scholia to the Aitia of Callimachus!

§8n1. Instituting a hero cult for Aesop as purification for his death is parallel to instituting a ritual of **pharmakoi**. For the parallelisms between the death of Aesop and the death of a proto-**pharmakos**, see §3. There are also traces in *Vitae G+W* of a variant tradition, of Samian origin, concerning the hero cult of Aesop. The people of Samos voted **tîmai** for Aesop (G+W 100); one version says that they assigned a **temenos** 'precinct' to him (W 100), while the other adds that this precinct came to be called the **Aisôpeion** (G 100). At this point, while he is being honored by the Samians, Aesop himself neglects to honor Apollo (G 100); for the significance of this neglect, see [Ch.17§1](#). (Note too the parallelism with [Hesiod W&D 138-139](#) compared to 142: the Silver Generation get **tîmai** from us mortals although they themselves failed to give **tîmai** to the gods. Discussion at [Ch.9§§1-3](#).) From another detail in the narrative about Aesop in Samos, we can even infer that the Samians may have believed that Aesop was actually buried on their island. When Aesop tells the Samians the story of "The Wolves and the Sheep" (= *Fable* 153 Perry), he gives this as the reason: "so that you may engrave it on my **mnêma** [memorial] after my death" (*Vita* G 96). This narrative device of a self-fulfilling prophecy implies that the *Life of Aesop* tradition had once been suitable for an inscription in a precinct of Aesop as cult hero. (Compare the *Life of Archilochus* tradition on the Mnesiepes Inscription in the precinct of Archilochus, the **Arkhilokheion**, at Paros; discussion at [Ch.18§§3-5](#).) For traces of Samian traditions about Aesop, see also Aristotle *Constitution of the Samians* fr. 573 Rose.

§8n2. See [§6](#) and n5.

§8n3. Above, [§6](#).

§9n1. [Ch.7§§10-12](#).

§9n2. This is a modified restatement of the hypothesis offered at [Ch.7§12](#).

§10n1. Note the use of **dêriazomai** 'fight', derivative of the noun **dêris** 'fight', in Pindar *Paean* 6.119. Another derivative, **dêriomai**, applies twice to the fight between Achilles and Odysseus "at a **dais** of the gods" ([viii 76](#), 78), as we have observed in [Ch.7§13](#). Significantly, this fight between Achilles and Odysseus is called a **neîkos** ([viii 75](#)), on which see [Ch.7§17](#) as

also the discussion of **eris/neîkos** at [Ch.11§16](#) and [Ch.12§§3](#), 6, etc. See also [Hesiod W&D 27-41](#), a particularly explicit passage about **Eris** (line 28) and **neîkos** (the word occurs in this passage four times!); at line 33, **dêris** is equated with **neîkos** [plural]. Note too that the Strife Scene of Pyrrhos concerns his **tîmai** (Pindar *Paean* 6.118), which are formalized as portions of meat; compare the primal **eris** between Prometheus and Zeus, again concerning **tîmai** formalized as cuts of meat (above, [Ch.11§§5-10](#)).

§10n2. While the words **eris/neîkos** apply not only to the language of blame but also to the action of physical combat ([Ch.12§8n1](#)), the semantic range of the word **oneidos** and its derivatives seems to be restricted to the verbal dimension (cf. the discussion of **oneidos** as the opposite of **kleos**, at [Ch.12§7](#); cf. also [Ch.12§§6](#), 11). Note that Aesop's blame was provoked when the Delphians specifically "gave no **tîmê** to him" ([ouden ... etimêsan](#): *Vita* W 124).

§10n3. See [§5](#); also [Ch.12§§18-19](#), [Ch.13§12](#).

§10n4. See [Ch.12§§4-6](#).

§10n5. See especially [Ch.12§5](#).

§10n6. The blaming of anything *by* praise poetry is programmatically justified as a positive social function. See esp. [Ch.12§4](#), [Ch.14§3](#). So also on the two occasions that Hektor justifiably blames Paris (on which see [Ch.14§5](#)): both times the words of blame are introduced by [neikessen](#) 'made **neîkos**' ([III 38](#), [VI 325](#)), and both times Paris acknowledges the justness of the blame by saying [epeι me kat' aisan eneikesas oud' huper aisan](#) 'since you made **neîkos** against me according to **aîsa**, not beyond **aîsa**' ([III 59](#), [VI 333](#)). Note that the word **aîsa** can designate not only the ordained way that things are to be--that is, 'fate'--but also 'cut of meat' (see [Ch.7§21n1](#)). Proper and improper blame are presented in imagery that connotes the proper and improper apportioning of meat. For another allusion to blame as a positive social function, see [Ch.14§12n4](#).

§10n7. See esp. [Ch.14§§7](#) and 13. On the word **skôptô** 'ridicule' (*epeskôpsen*), see [Ch.13§3](#) and n4; also [Ch.18§3](#) and n4. Since the greed blamed by Aesop is ritualized ([Ch.7§11](#)), it may well be that Aesop's act of

blaming is itself an **aition** that motivates ritualized blaming in the form of ridicule. Note too the ridiculing of the Delphians' greed in comedy--e.g., Aristophanes *fr.* 684 Kock, Anon. *fr.* 460 Kock.

§10n8. See again §5; also [Ch.12 §§18-19](#), [Ch.13 §12](#).

Chapter 17

On the Antagonism of God and Hero

§1. Aside from the direct testimony of *Pap.Oxy.* 1800 and Aesop *Vitae* G+W 142 about a hero cult of Aesop, there is important indirect evidence for his actual function as cult hero. Again we turn to the parallelism between the deaths of Aesop and Pyrrhos. In the myth of Pyrrhos, the theme of his antagonism with Apollo is fundamental to his essence as cult hero of Delphi.^[1] Now we see a parallel pattern of antagonism in the *Life of Aesop* tradition. At the moment that the Delphians plot the death of Aesop, Apollo is described as having **mēnis** 'anger' against him (*mēniontos*: *Vita G* 127).^[2] There is a crucial supplementary detail in the Goleniščev Papyrus, where the god is described as actively helping the Delphians bring about Aesop's death (*Pap.Gol.*: sunergountos).^[3] Apollo's anger is motivated by an incident in Samos: Aesop had sacrificed to the Muses and set up a shrine for them, neglecting to place Apollo in the center (*VitaG* 100, 127; *Pap.Gol.*).^[4] The pattern of antipathy between Aesop and Apollo is in fact complemented by a pattern of sympathy between him and the Muses. In the course of *Vita G*, there is mention of the Muses no fewer than twenty-five times, often in the context of Aesop's swearing by them.^[5] It was the Muses who had originally given Aesop his power of verbal skills (*Vita G* 7).^[6] Before he dies, it is at a sanctuary of the Muses that Aesop takes refuge (*Vita G* 134), imploring the Delphians in the name of Zeus **Xenios** not to despise the smallness of the sanctuary (*Vita G* 139)--as the eagle had once despised the smallness of the dung beetle (*Vita G* 135).^[7] The implicit but obvious foil here for the smallness of the Muses' sanctuary is the overwhelming greatness of Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi. In this connection, we may observe that Aesop never mentions Apollo by name in *Vita G*: instead, he refers to the god either as the **prostatēs** 'leader' of the Muses (G 33, 142) or simply as 'he who is greater than the Muses' (G 33). The latter designation meshes neatly with the implicit theme that the Muses' sanctuary is small in comparison to Apollo's.

§2. Significantly, the two contexts of these references by Aesop to Apollo are by no means marginal to the central themes of Aesop's death. In the first instance, Aesop is telling a humorous fable about Apollo's powers of prophecy, and the humor is at the god's expense (*Vita G* 33);[1] in effect, Aesop is here implicitly provoking Apollo's anger. In the second instance, Aesop is by now at the actual moment of his death and is calling upon Apollo to be a witness of his unjust execution by the Delphians (*Vita G* 142). It seems a matter of ostentatious indirectness that Aesop is presented as referring to Apollo at these very moments by way of tabu periphrasis. Moreover, the timing as well as the meaning of Aesop's reference to Apollo as "leader of the Muses" and as "he who is greater than the Muses" amount to a clear acknowledgment by the narrative *that Aesop's essence as poet is defined not only by the Muses but also by their leader, Apollo himself.*[2]

§3. In fact, the traditional diction of archaic Greek poetry makes it explicit that the essence of the poet is defined by the Muses *and* Apollo:

ek gar toi Mouseôn kai hekēbolou Apollônos
andres aoidoi easin epi chthona kai kitharistai

For it is from the Muses and from far-shooting Apollo
that there are poets on earth, and lyre players too.[1]

Hesiod Th. 94-95[2]

Moreover, Apollo is traditionally the leader of the Muses from the standpoint of ritual poetry, as we see from the following spondaic fragment concerning libations:

spendômen tais Mnamas paisin Mousais
kai tōi Mousarchōi Latous huiei[3]

Let us pour libations to the Muses, children of **Mnâmâ** [Memory]
and to the **Mousarkhos** [Leader of the Muses], the son of Leto.

fr.adesp. 941 Page

Besides the title **Mousarkhos**, Apollo also qualifies as **Mouseῖος** (*IG* 7.1.36: Megara) and **Mousagetês** 'Leader of the Muses' (*IG* 12.5.893: Tenos).^[4] Still, in view of this evidence, an important question arises: why is it, then, that the archaic poet as a rule invokes the Muses *without* Apollo at the beginning of his composition (*Iliad* I 1, *Odyssey* i 1, *W&D* 1, etc.)? We will arrive at an answer, I submit, by looking further at the context of the same Hesiodic passage that explicitly derives the essence of the poet from the Muses *and* Apollo (*Th.* 94-95): the **aoidos** 'poet' is now specifically called **Mousaôn therapôν** 'the **therapôن** of the Muses' (*Th.* 100). Before we can interpret this expression, however, an excursus on the word **therapôن** is in order.

§4. As Nadia Van Brock can show,^[1] **therapôن** had actually meant something like 'ritual substitute' at the time it was borrowed into Greek from Anatolia, probably in the second millennium B.C. Compare Hittite *tarpaββa-/tarpan(alli)-* 'ritual substitute', corresponding formally to Greek **theraps/therapôن**. To paraphrase Van Brock, the Hittite word designates an entity's *alter ego* ("un autre soi-même"), a projection upon whom the impurities of this entity may be transferred.^[2] She goes on to cite a Greek reflex of these semantics in the Iliadic application of **therapôن** to Patroklos, ^[3] the one Achaean who is by far the most **philos** to Achilles^[4] --and who is killed wearing the very armor of Achilles.^[5] Without any such comparative evidence, without even having to consider the word **therapôن**, Cedric Whitman has independently reached a parallel conclusion: that Patroklos functions as the epic surrogate of Achilles.^[6] Granted, the prevailing applications of the word **therapôن** in ancient Greek poetry are semantically secondary: 'warrior's companion' (as typically at [IV 227](#), [VIII 104](#), [XIII 246](#), etc.) or simply 'attendant' ([XI 843](#), [XIX 143](#), [xviii 424](#), etc.). But we can see from the contexts where Patroklos is **therapôن** of Achilles ([XVI 165](#), 244, 653; [XVII 164](#), 271, 388) that the force of the word goes far beyond the dimensions of 'warrior's companion'. As Dale Sinos has convincingly argued,^[7] Patroklos qualifies as **therapôن** of Achilles *only so long as he stays within his limits as the recessive equivalent of the dominant hero*.^[8] In the words of Achilles himself, Patroklos and he are equivalent warriors, *so long as Patroklos stays by his side*; once he is on his own, however, the identity of Patroklos as warrior is in question:

tôi kudos hama proes, euruopa Zeu,
tharsunon de hoi êtor eni phresin, ophra kai Hektôr
eisetai ê rha kai oios epistêtai polemizein
hêmeteros therapôn, ê hoi tote cheires aaptoi
mainonth', hoppot' egô per iô meta mîlon Arêos

Far-seeing Zeus! Let the glory of victory go forth with him.
Make him breathe courage from inside, so that Hektor too
will find out whether our **therapôn** knows how to fight in battle alone,
or whether his hands rage invincible only those times
when I myself enter the struggle of Ares.[9]

XVI 241-245

By its very outcome, the fatal impersonation of Achilles by Patroklos reveals that the **therapôn** is no longer the equivalent of Achilles *once he leaves his side* and goes beyond the limits Achilles had set for him (XVI 87-96).[10] Since even the epithet assigned to the **therapontes** of Achilles is **ankhemakhoi** 'those who fight nearby' (XVI 272, XVII 165),[11] we may infer that Patroklos has ceased to be **therapôn** of Achilles at the moment of his death. As we shall now see, he has become the **therapôn** of someone else.

§5. When Patroklos has his fatal confrontation with Apollo, he is described as **daimoni ïsos** 'equal to a **daimôn**' (XVI 786), and we have observed that this epithet is traditionally appropriate for marking the climactic moment of god-hero antagonism in epic narrative.[1] In the Death Scene of Patroklos, this climactic moment is also the context of a more specific epithet: he is described as **thoôi atalantos Arêi** 'equal to swift Ares' (XVI 784). There was one other time when Patroklos was equated with Ares: back in *Iliad XI*, when he first became involved in his fatal impersonation of Achilles. There we find Patroklos leaving the tent of Achilles and coming out of seclusion; he is described at that very moment as **ïsos Arêi** 'equal to Ares' (XI 604). In the very same verse, the narrative itself takes note that the application of this epithet marks Patroklos for death:

ekmolen isos Arêi, kakou d' ara hoi pelen archê

He came out, equal to Ares, and that was the beginning of his doom.
[2]

[XI 604](#)

We recall that the designation 'equal to Ares' is particularly appropriate in the *Iliad* to the two other heroes who wear the armor of Achilles--the two main antagonists who are thereby cast in the same mold of warrior:[3]

Achilles	<u>isos Arēi</u>	<u>XX 46</u>
	<u>isos Enualiōi</u> [4]	<u>XXII 132</u>
Hektor	<u>isos Arēi</u>	<u>XI 295</u> , <u>XIII 802</u>
	<u>atalantos Arēi</u>	<u>VIII 215</u> , <u>XVII 72</u> .

In fact, when Hektor puts on the armor of Achilles which he had despoiled from the body of Patroklos,[5] he is sealed in this armor by Zeus (XVII 209-210) and then, quite literally, "Ares entered him" (du de min Arēs: XVII 210). Here we see Ares not so much as an Olympian ally of the Trojans but as the divine embodiment of murderous war. The same notion is inherent in such Homeric adjectives as **Arēiphatos** (XIX 31, etc.) and **Arēiktamenos** (XXII 72), both meaning 'killed by Ares' = 'killed in war'. No matter who the immediate killer may be in any given narrative of mortal combat, the ultimate killer is Ares as god of war. For example, the Achaeans Idomeneus kills the Trojan Alkathoos[6] in mortal combat (XIII 424-444), *with the direct help of the god Poseidon* (XIII 434-435); nevertheless, Ares is designated as the god who actually takes the hero's life (XIII 444).[7] So also with the death of Patroklos: although it is Hektor who kills him, *with the direct help of the god Apollo*, Patroklos is the ultimate victim of the war god, Ares. In his fatal moment of god-hero antagonism, the **therapōn** of Achilles is overtly equated with Ares, who is the ultimate motivation for his dying as a warrior of epic. Accordingly, *Patroklos is identified no longer with Achilles but rather with Ares himself*. In that sense, he is now the **therapōn** of Ares! And the most important evidence for this assertion has yet to be adduced: as an aggregate of warriors, the Achaeans [Danaans] are specifically addressed as therapontes Arēos '**therapontes** of Ares' (II 110, VI 67, XV 733, XIX 78). As a generic warrior, the hero of epic qualifies as a **therapōn** of Ares.[8]

§6. This formulation needs further refinement, for besides the dimension of myth as stylized in epic, we must also consider the dimension of ritual. As a generic warrior, the hero of epic is a **therapōn** of Ares *precisely because he must experience death*. The requirement of the hero's death, however, is dictated not so much by the narrative traditions of epic but by the ritual traditions of cult. Death is fundamental to the essence of the hero in cult, as we have already had occasion to observe.^[1] This much said, we may finally return to the designation of the poet as Mousaōn therapōn 'therapōn of the Muses' in Hesiod Th. 100, and, in this same context, to the explicit derivation of the poet's essence from the Muses *and Apollo* (Th. 94-95).^[2] We see from this testimony the emergence of a parallel pattern: whereas the generic warrior is the '**therapōn** of Ares', the generic poet is the '**therapōn** of the Muses'. Furthermore, the parallelism in itself indicates that the poet, as '**therapōn** of the Muses', is thereby worthy of being a cult hero.

§7. We find supporting evidence in the *Life of Hesiod* tradition (see especially Aristotle *Constitution of the Orchomenians* fr. 565 Rose). Its themes, especially the theme of Hesiod's death, correspond to the typical mythology surrounding the cult of a typical epichoric hero. For a convincing exposition, I simply refer to the discussion of Hesiod as cult hero by Angelo Brelich--a discussion framed by countless other examples of typical mythology surrounding local heroes.^[1] I will content myself here by citing his conclusion: the figure of Hesiod in the *Life of Hesiod* tradition fits perfectly the characteristic morphology of the cult hero.^[2]

§8. Significantly, even the figure of Hesiod as presented by Hesiodic poetry itself fits this same pattern of the cult hero; Brelich cites in particular such details as the poetic contest entered by Hesiod at the Funeral Games of Amphidamas (W&D 654-659).^[1] It follows, then, *that the Hesiodic compositions determine the identity of their composer*. This inference may strike us at first as an absurdity--until we reconsider the implications of the simple fact that Hesiodic poetry is not idiosyncratic but deeply traditional in both form and content.^[2] The ambition of a poem like the *Theogony* is to present the traditions that reveal the very essence of the universe, and to do so with a Panhellenic "audience" in mind.^[3] To enact such a vast program, the composer must surely be presented as the ultimate poet and sage who has all of tradition under his control.

§9. This ambition even motivates the generic function of the poet's name at *Th.* 22: **Hêsiodos** 'he who emits the Voice'.^[1] Compare also the generic function of the name **Homêros** 'he who fits [the Song] together',^[2] to be interpreted in conjunction with the patterns characteristic of a cult hero as we find them in the *Life of Homer* tradition.^[3] In fact, the themes inherent in both names **Hêsi-odos** and **Hom-êros** recur in the actual diction of the proem to the Hesiodic *Theogony* itself, and the context for these themes is the actual description of the Muses and their poetic function:

<u>perikalleia ossan hieisai</u>	'emitting a beautiful voice'	<u>Th. 10</u>
<u>ambroton ossan hieisai</u>	'emitting an immortal voice'	<u>Th. 43</u>
<u>eratên ... ossan hieisai</u>	'emitting a lovely voice'	<u>Th. 65</u>
<u>epératon ossan hieisai</u>	'emitting a lovely voice'	<u>Th. 67[4]</u>
So also <u>Hêsi-odos</u>	'he who emits the voice' ^[5]	
<u>artiepeiai</u>	'having words [epos plural] fitted together'	<u>Th. 29</u>
<u>phônêi homêreusai</u>	'fitting [the song] together with their voice'	<u>Th. 39[6]</u>
So also <u>Hom-êros</u>	'he who fits [the song] together'	

In short, the names **Hêsiodos** and **Homêros** identify the poet's function with that of the Muses themselves.^[7] Thus the poet's very name indicates that he is '**therapôn** of the Muses' (*Th. 100*), in that the word **therapôn** identifies god with hero through death. And by being a **therapôn**, the generic poet assumes the ritual dimensions of a cult hero.

§10. Supplement: The Name of Homer
More needs to be said about the name of Homer, since its meaning seems to reveal a particularly archaic view of the poet and his function. For the interpretation of **Hom-êros** as 'he who fits [the song] together', built from the verb root *ar- as in **ar-ar-iskô** 'fit, join', we may compare the following use of the same verb, as an intransitive perfect:

houtô sphin kalê sunarêren aoidê

So beautifully is their song fitted together.^[1]

H.Apollo 164

Moreover, I adduce the semantics of the Indo-European root *tek(s)-, which like *ar- means 'fit, join'. From the comparative evidence assembled by Rüdiger Schmitt,^[2] we see that *tek(s)- was traditionally used to indicate the activity of a carpenter in general (compare the semantics of *joiner*, an older English word for "carpenter") and of a chariot-carpenter in particular. In addition, Schmitt adduces comparative evidence to show that *tek(s)- was also used to indicate, by metaphor, the activity of a poet: much as a chariot-carpenter fits together his chariot, so also the poet fits together his poem/song.^[3] This comparison is actually attested as an overt simile in the most archaic body of Indic poetry:

imam te vacam vasûyânta âyávo
rátham ná dhirah svápâ ataksisuh

The sons of Âyu, wishing for good things, have fitted together [root *taks-*, from *tek(s)-] this utterance,^[4]
just as the skilled artisan (fits together) a chariot.

Rig-Veda 1.130.6ab

It is, then, an Indo-European poetic tradition that the poet may compare his activity with that of artisans like carpenters.^[5] Moreover, we see from Odyssey xvii 381-387 that poets are in fact the social equals of artisans--carpenters included.^[6]

§11. In this light, we may now turn to the internal Greek evidence of *ar-, which parallels the comparative evidence on *tek(s)-. In the Linear B texts (e.g., Knossos tablets Sg 1811, So 0437, etc.), the word for "chariot-wheel" is *a-mo* = **harmo**, by etymology an abstract noun ("fitting") derived from the verb root *ar- as in **ar-ar-iskô** 'fit, join'.^[1] Note too the Homeric name at V 59-60: **Harmonidês** 'son of **Harmôn**' (root *ar-), the patronymic of one **Tektôn** 'Carpenter' (root *tek[s]-).^[2]

§12. The technical sense of **Harmonidēs** is parallel to that of **harmoniē** 'joint [in woodwork]' (e.g., v 248),^[1] but the latter form also has the social sense of "accord" (e.g., XXII 255)--as well as a musical sense roughly corresponding to our notion of "harmony" (e.g., Sophocles *fr.* 244 Pearson).^[2] Both the musical and the social aspects of the word are incorporated in the figure **Harmoniē**, bride of Kadmos (*Hesiod Th.* 937, 975),^[3] at whose wedding the Muses themselves sang a song inaugurating the social order of Thebes--a song quoted by Theognis (verses 17-18W) in the context of his invoking the Muses and thus inaugurating his own poem (verses 15-16W):

Mousai kai Charites, kourai Dios, hai pote Kadmou
es gamon elthousai kalon aeisat' epos:
"hotti kalon philon esti, to d' ou kalon ou philon esti":
tout' epos athanatōn êlthe dia stomatōn

Muses and Kharites, daughters of Zeus! You were the ones who once came to the wedding of Kadmos, and you sang this beautiful **epos**:^[4]

"What is beautiful is **philon**, what is not beautiful is not **philon**."^[5] This is the **epos**^[6] that came through their immortal mouths.

Theognis 15-18W

§13. I conclude, then, that the root *ar- in **Homēros** traditionally denotes the activity of a poet as well as that of a carpenter, and this semantic bivalence corresponds neatly with the Indo-European tradition of comparing music/poetry with carpentry, by way of the root *tek(s)-.^[1] This tradition is proudly recaptured in the words of Pindar extolling the themes of Homer:^[2]

Nestora kai Lukion Sarpêdon', anthrôpôn phati s,
ex epeôn keladennôn, tektones hoia sophoi
harmosan, ginôskomen

We know of Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon--subjects for men to talk about--

from famed words [**epos** plural]
such as skilled carpenters fitted together.^[3]

Notes

§1n1. See [Ch.7](#) in general and [Ch.7§4](#) in particular.

§1n2. Here as well as throughout the *Life of Aesop*, the involvement of Apollo as Aesop's antagonist has been eliminated in the "W" branch of the story's transmission. For evidence that this adjustment is secondary and amounts to a distortion, see Wiechers 1961.11n9.

§1n3. For the pertinent passage in this fragment, see Perry 1952.11. For the entire text of the Golenișçev Papyrus, see Perry 1936.58-67.

§1n4. Instead, the central place is assigned to Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses (*Vita* G 100). This incident in the *Life of Aesop* tradition is linked by the narrative itself with Aesop's ultimate position as cult hero: see [Ch.16§8](#) and n1.

§1n5. Conversely, there is not a single mention of the Muses in *Vita W*; see n2 and cf. Perry 1952.11.

§1n6. The role of Isis as leader of the Muses (*Vita* G 6) is an innovation made possible by (1) an Egyptian phase in the transmission of the Aesop story and (2) the Egyptian religious trend of associating the cult of Isis with the cult of the Muses (on which see the evidence adduced by Perry, p.2n8, esp. Plutarch *De Iside* 352b).

§1n7. The message of "The Dung-Beetle and the Eagle," as built into the narrative of *Vita* G 135 and as formally enunciated in the moral that concludes Aesop *Fable* 3 Perry, is that one should not despise the small, since no one is so negligible as to be incapable of revenge. For more on this fable, see [Ch.16§5](#). Note that Aesop appeals to the ultimate protector of guest-strangers, Zeus **Xenios**, in acknowledging the smallness of the Muses' sanctuary; compare the appeal made by Odysseus, in his disguise as a lowly

beggar, to the same moral code of the **xenos** 'guest-stranger' ([Ch.12§16](#)). See in general [Ch.12§§12-16](#) on the ideology of the poet as **xenos**.

§2n1. See Perry 1962.299-300 on the probability that this fable was in the collection of Demetrius of Phaleron.

§2n2. I disagree here with Wiechers 1961.14n21, who thinks that Aesop's periphrastic references to Apollo in *Vita G* 142 are an innovation, not an archaism. Also, I think that the story of Aesop's encounter with Isis and the Muses at *Vita G* 6-7 is the reflex of an older version in which Apollo functioned as the leader of the Muses. The replacement of Apollo by the polymorphous Egyptian goddess Isis would have been facilitated if the references to Apollo had been periphrastic even in this older version. From the Egyptian standpoint, Isis could then be substituted easily as "leader of the Muses" or as "she who is greater than the Muses" (cf. [§1n6](#)). Still, the question remains: if indeed the older version presents Apollo and the Muses as givers of speech and speech skills respectively to Aesop, why is Apollo in this case beneficent, rather than maleficent? See [Ch.18§2](#).

§3n1. Whereas {bw,10} **aoidoi** 'poets' ('singers') are traditionally pictured as accompanying themselves on the lyre (as at [Odyssey viii 67-69](#)), they are here mentioned *along with* "lyre players" (**kitharistai**). This doublet of singers and lyre players reflects not the fragmentation of the poet's traditional function but rather the ensemble of song as embodied by the Muses and Apollo combined: the former sing while the latter plays the lyre, as at [Iliad I 603-604](#). In this passage, the ensemble of the Muses and Apollo is described in a manner more appropriate to a specific *picture* than to a general *event*; cf. [H.Apollo 186-206](#). By "picture" I mean a traditional mode of iconographic representation. {bw,12}

§3n2. The same verses recur in [Homeric Hymn 25.2-3](#). On the integrity of this hymn as a piece of traditional poetry, see Koller 1956.178-179 (*pace* West 1966.186: "a senseless bit of patchwork").

§3n3. Page (1962) supplies **tōi** in front of [Latous](#).

§3n4. Cf. [Plato Laws 653d](#); [Strabo 468](#); [Pausanias 5.18.4, 8.32.2, 10.19.4](#). Cf. also [Iliad I 603-604](#) and [H.Hermes 450-452](#).

§4n1. Van Brock 1959.

§4n2. Van Brock, p. 119; cf. also Lowenstam 1975.

§4n3. Van Brock, pp. 125-126.

§4n4. [Ch.6§§12-21](#).

§4n5. Cf. Householder/Nagy 1972.774-776.

§4n6. Whitman 1958.199-203.

§4n7. Sinos 1975.46-52.

§4n8. Cf. [Ch.2§8](#) (and [Ch.6](#)).

§4n9. Whitman (1958.200) quotes the same passage, adding: "When Achilles prays to Zeus for Patroclus' safety, he seems to ask, indirectly, whether his friend can play his role adequately or not."

§4n10. Note especially what Achilles tells him at [XVI 89](#): do not be eager to fight [aneuthen emeio](#) 'apart from me'. Dan Petegorsky draws my attention to a parallel: [Pindar O. 9.76](#)-79.

§4n11. See Sinos, pp. 46, 61(n6).

§5n1. [Ch.8§§3-4](#).

§5n2. See Nagy 1974.230-231. Cf. Whitman 1958.200: "Then he is 'like Ares'; but here the poet is looking forward consciously to the *Patrocleia*, as is shown by the remark, 'this was the beginning of his woe' [[XI 604](#)]." Cf. also Whitman, pp. 114, 194.

§5n3. Cf. [Ch.2§8](#). When Hektor sets out to fight in the armor of Achilles, he is specifically described as looking just like him ([XVII 213-214](#)).

§5n4. On the equivalence of Ares and Enyalios, see Nagy 1974.136.

§5n5. The manner in which Patroklos is denuded of Achilles' armor is highly significant: see [Ch.9§33n2](#).

§5n6. The semantics of **-thoos** in **Alkâ-thoos** seems relevant to the passage: [Ch.20§10](#). On **alka-**, see [Ch.5§31n5](#). On the parallelisms between the death of Patroklos and the death of Alkathoos, see Fenik 1968.132-133.

§5n7. For another striking example, consider the description of the tapestry woven by Helen depicting the **aethloi**'struggles' endured by Trojans and Achaeans alike *at the hands of Ares* ([III 125-128](#)). For the connotations of poetic theme ("The Ordeals of the Trojans and Achaeans") in the image of weaving here, see Clader 1976.6-9.

§5n8. Note also the epithet **ozos Arêos** (ten times in *Iliad*), where **ozos** is not the same word as the one meaning 'branch' but rather a reflex of a compound: **o-** 'together' + ***-sd-os** 'seated'; see Chantraine [III 777](#). The hero Leonteus, described as **îsos Arêi** ([XII 130](#)), also qualifies as **ozos Arêos** ([II 745](#), [XII 188](#), [XXIII 841](#)). In the Alexandrian lexicographical tradition, **ozos** and **therapô**were apparently considered synonyms (cf. Hesychius s.v. *ozeia*: [therapeia](#)). The semantics of **ozos** are suggestive of the relationship between god and hero in cult. Compare the description of Erikthonios as a hero who gets a share of the sacrifices offered to Athena in her temple: *Epigrammata* 1046.89-90 Kaibel (on which see Nock 1972 [= 1930] 237). For more on Erikthonios/Erekhtheus, see Nagy 1973.170-171. On the convergences and divergences of the Erikthonios and Erekhtheus figures, see Burkert 1972.176, 211.

§6n1. [Ch.10](#).

§6n2. Above, [§3](#).

§7n1. Brelich{bw,10} 1958.321-322. The most convincing aspect of Brelich's book is the sheer accumulation of evidence for parallel patterns; it is well worth reading in its entirety.{bw,12}

§7n2. Brelich, p. 322: "Così il poeta rientra perfettamente nella morfologia caratteristica dell' eroe."

§8n1. Brelich, p. 321. Note that Hesiod's divine patronage is local: the Muses of Helicon ([W&D 658-659](#)) as distinct from the Muses of Olympus/Pieria as invoked in the proem ([W&D 1](#)). In the *Theogony* too, we see that Hesiod's essence as poet is defined by the Muses of Helicon ([Th. 22-34](#)).

§8n2. Cf. [Ch.5§§4](#), 18-19.

§8n3. Note the transformation of the Muses from Heliconian ([Th. 1](#)) to Olympian ([Th. 25](#), [52](#), etc.), once they have defined Hesiod's essence as poet at Helicon ([Th. 22-34](#)). For the correlation of Olympus and Panhellenic ideology, see Intro. §14.

§9n1. The root *uod- of *Hēsí-uodos recurs as *ud- in **audē** 'voice' and **audāō** 'speak': Chantraine [I 137-138](#), [II 417](#). At *Th.* 31, **audē** designates the poetry with which the Muses themselves inspire **Hēsiodos**. See now Nagy 1990b.47n32.

§9n2. I agree with Durante 1976.194-197 (cf. Welcker 1835.128) that **Hom-ēros** is a compound built from the Indo-European elements *som- 'together' and *{an,2,10}r- 'fit, join' (as in Greek **ar-ar-iskō** 'fit, join'). My interpretation of the semantics, however, is different (see [§§10-13](#)); so too is my reconstruction of the earliest Greek form: *homo-ar-os, becoming *hom-âros.

§9n3. On these patterns, see the brief remarks of Brelich 1958.320-321.

§9n4. For a defense of this line, see West 1966.178-179 (I fail to agree, however, with his objections to the line on esthetic grounds).

§9n5. In [Pindar O.6.61](#)-62, the oracular response of Apollo is called **artiepēs / patriâ ossa** 'the ancestral voice having words [epos plural] fitted together'; for more on **ossa**, see [Ch.7§25n1](#).

§9n6. West (1966.170) translates "with voices in tune," helpfully adducing [H.Apollo 164](#) for comparison.

§9n7. And, latently, with that of Apollo. Cf. n5.

§10n1. Cf. West 1966.170.

§10n2. Schmitt 1967.296-298.

§10n3. Ibid.

§10n4. The *vak* 'utterance' here is the sacral hymn itself; see Muellner 1976.128.

§10n5. On the comparative evidence for the likening with weavers, see Schmitt, pp. 298-301. For an attestation of this comparison in the semantics of the word **rhapsidos** 'he who stitches the song together', see Durante 1976.177-179.

§10n6. For the text of this passage from the *Odyssey*, with discussion, see Ch.12§13.

§11n1. See Chantraine I 110-111.

§11n2. The noun **tektōn** occasionally designates 'artisan' in general, not necessarily 'carpenter', but the context of V 60-63 clearly indicates carpentry. For more on **tektōn**, see §12n1.

§12n1. The woodwork here is described as the kind done by one well-versed in **tektosunai** 'carpentry' (v 250).

§12n2. On which see Nagy 1974.45.

§12n3. Note that **Harmoniē** is daughter of Ares (*Th. 937*). For the theory that the name **Arēs** itself is derived from *ar- 'fit, join', see Sinos 1975.52-54 and 71-72, who argues that Ares is the obsolete embodiment of the principles joining together the members of society in general and of warrior-society in particular.

§12n4. On the use of **epos** to mean not just 'utterance' but also 'poetic utterance' *as quoted by the poetry itself*: Ch.12§15n3 and Ch.15§7.

§12n5. Neuter **philon** indicates the institutional and sentimental bonds that join society together (cf. Ch.6§13). Since beauty is **philon**, the social

cohesion of Thebes is implicitly embodied in the esthetics of the Muses' song, which in turn sets the cohesion of the poetry composed by Theognis. The concept of **Harmoniê** is appropriate to both the social and the artistic cohesion.

§12n6. Note that the quoted utterance of the Muses is called an **epos** both before and after the quotation. This framing effect may itself suggest **Harmoniê**.

§13n1. The Latin and Greek words *ars* and **tekhnê** are formed from verb roots that are no longer attested in the respective languages: Latin no longer has the verb *ar- from which the noun *ars* (*ar-ti-) is derived, while Greek no longer has the verb *tek(s)- from which the noun **tekhnê** (*téks-nâ) is derived. But Latin does have the verb *texô* ('build, join' in the older Latin, 'weave' in the later), and Greek does have the verb **ar-ar-iskô** ('fit, join'). Note that Homeric diction actually combines the verb **ar-ar-iskô** with **tektôn** 'artisan' as subject: **êrare tektôn** ([IV 110](#), [XXIII 712](#); in the latter passage, the artisan is actually a carpenter). This word **tektôn** is by origin an agent noun derived from the verb *tek(s)- 'fit, join'.

§13n2. For further discussion, see Schmitt 1967.297.

§13n3. The verb **harmozô** 'fit together' is derived from the noun *hármo, by origin an abstract noun ("fitting") which came to have a concrete designation ("chariot wheel") and which is in turn derived from the verb *ar- as in **ar-ar-iskô** ('join, fit'); see [§11](#). The phonology of **harmozô** (from *hármo as distinct from standard classical **harma**, meaning 'chariot') suggests that the word was inherited from the élite social strata of the second millennium B.C. See Risch 1966, esp. p. 157. On the name of Homer and its relevance to the concept of rhapsode, see now Nagy 1996.74-78.

Chapter 18

On the Stories of a Poet's Life

§1. In the preceding chapters, I have argued that the generic warrior/poet, as **therapôn** of Ares/Muses, is implicitly worthy of becoming a cult hero after death. This in fact is the explicit message, I now submit, of the famous poetic declaration made by the one attested figure who boasts of being both warrior and poet:

eimi d' egô therapôn men Enualioio anaktos
kai Mouseôn eraton dôron epistamenos

I am a **therapôn** of Lord Enyalios [Ares],
and of the Muses, well-versed in their lovely gift.

Archilochus *fr. 1W*

The poet's own words imply that Archilochus deserves a hero cult as both warrior and poet. And a hero cult is what he actually has on his native island of Paros, from archaic times onward, as we know both from the literary testimonia and from the evidence of archaeology.^[1] Moreover, the *Life of Archilochus* tradition motivates the death of the poet as also being the death of a warrior.^[2] He is killed in combat by a figure whose eponym is **Korax** 'Raven'.^[3] Apollo is angry at Korax, who approaches his sanctuary at Delphi,^[4] and he orders him to depart:

Mousaôn theraponta katektanes: exithi néou

You killed the **therapôn** of the Muses. Get out of the Sanctuary!

Oracle 4 Parke/Wormell^[5]

Korax protests that Archilochus had been killed *as a warrior*, not as a poet,^[6] but Apollo again declares that Korax has killed the **therapôn** of the Muses.^[7] After further entreaties, Korax is finally granted an oracular

directive: he must go "to the House of the **Tettîx** [Cicada],"^[8] where he must propitiate the **psûkhê** of Archilochus.^[9] We may detect a deeper significance in the names and themes of this story by considering the traditions of the Aesopic **aînos**. In the fables of Aesop, the **korax** 'raven' is conventionally presented as the bird of Apollo (*Fable* 323 Perry), endowed with powers of prophecy (*Fables* 125, 236); he is also a harbinger of death (*Fable* 162).^[10] The **tettîges** 'cicadas', on the other hand, are creatures of the Muses (*Fable* 470).^[11] As we turn back to the *Life of Archilochus* tradition, we may infer that the figures of **Korax** and **Tettîx** are parallel to Apollo and the Muses respectively. More specifically, the parallelism of Apollo and **Korax** implies that Apollo is maleficent as well as beneficent towards the poet.

§2. Similarly in the *Life of Aesop* tradition, Apollo is in fact both maleficent and beneficent to Aesop. We have already examined the maleficent aspect: Apollo is angry at Aesop for his neglect of the god at a sacrifice, and he actively helps the Delphians to bring about Aesop's death.^[1] Now we see that there is also a beneficent aspect of Apollo's involvement in the killing of Aesop. Surely the pestilence that descends upon the Delphians after Aesop's death is ordained by Apollo himself, and it is his Oracle that commands the Delphians to propitiate Aesop by worshiping him as a cult hero (*Pap.Oxy.* 1800, *Vitae G+W* 142; cf. Aristotle *Constitution of the Delphians* fr. 487). This beneficent aspect of Apollo helps account for the final gesture of Aesop, when he calls upon Apollo as "leader of the Muses" to be witness of his unjust execution by the Delphians (*Vita G* 142). I propose, then, that the traditional themes of antagonism between god and hero do not preclude a beneficent aspect on the god's part. There is in fact solid evidence that the ambivalence of a god in being both maleficent and beneficent towards a hero is so archaic as to have a heritage in the Indo-European traditions of epic narrative: it comes from the comparative studies of Georges Dumézil in linking the Old Norse hero *Starka[[radical]]r* and the Indic hero *Sô'isupâla* with the Greek hero **Hêrakleês**'.^[2] Aided by Dumézil's findings, we now know that the suckling of **Hêrakleês** 'by **Hêrâ**' after his birth (Diodorus Siculus 4.9.6) and the adoption of Herakles by Hera after his death (Diodorus 4.39.2-3) are themes of beneficence that complement the prevalent themes of her maleficence towards this **hêrôs** 'hero',^[3] and that together these themes of beneficence/maleficence

constitute the traditional epic theme embodied in the very name of Hêrakleês 'he who has the **kleos** of Hêrâ'.[\[4\]](#)

§3. Whereas Apollo's relationship to Archilochus and to Aesop in the *Lives* is ambivalent, that of the Muses is not; rather, it appears to be one-sidedly beneficent. Having already seen the evidence in the *Life of Aesop* tradition, [\[1\]](#) we turn to another story from the *Life of Archilochus*--this time as preserved in section E1 col.II of the Parian Mnesiepes Inscription.[\[2\]](#) According to this story,[\[3\]](#) Archilochus received his verbal powers of poetry from the Muses, who appeared to him in disguise as he was on his way to sell a cow (E1 col.[II 23-29](#)). Archilochus thinks that they are rustic women leaving the fields and heading for the city; he draws near and "ridicules" them (lines 29-30: *skôptein*),[\[4\]](#) but the Muses respond with playful laughter (lines 30-31). They then induce Archilochus to trade them his cow for a lyre; once the transaction is made, they disappear (lines 32-35). He falls into a swoon, and when he awakens he is aware that the Muses have just given him the gift of poetry (lines 36-38).

§4. The rest of this story about Archilochus is beyond our immediate interest, except for what it says about the future. An oracle from Apollo himself at Delphi prophesies to the father of Archilochus that his son will have immortality and fame:

a]thanatos soi pais kai aoidimos, ô Telesikleis,
estai en anthrôpoisin

Your son, O Telesikles, will be immortal among men,
a subject of song ... [\[1\]](#)

E1 col.II 50-51[\[2\]](#)

We see here an important dovetailing of the story with the self-avowed function of the entire Mnesiepes Inscription, which is to motivate the hero cult of Archilochus at Paros. First, the inscription formally restates an oracular command by Apollo to **Mnesiepê̄s**, with specific directives about the cult of Archilochus and other attendant ritual practices (E1 col.[II 1-15](#)). Then it briefly tells how the Parians complied with the Oracle's directives, instituting the cult in a sacred precinct called the **Arkhilokheion** (EE1

col.[II 16-19](#)). Finally, it tells the Life of Archilochus (EE1 col.[II 20](#) ff.), in which context we find the story of the poet and the Muses (EE1 col.[II 23](#) ff.). In other words, the Mnesiepes Inscription is itself the clearest evidence for arguing that the *Life of Archilochus* tradition is deeply rooted in the realia of cult. Moreover, the poetry of Archilochus *and its transmission* also are rooted in cult, as we have seen from the poet's traditional concept of himself as "**therapôn** of the Muses" (Archilochus *fr. 1W*).[\[3\]](#) I conclude, then, that the *Life of Archilochus* tradition is not only derived from the poetic tradition of Archilochus but also parallel to it.[\[4\]](#)

§5. This conclusion can be dismissed only if the Mnesiepes Inscription can be discredited as untraditional in its contents. For this to be so, one would have to argue that the commissioning of the inscription, dated as it is to the third century B.C., is coeval with the information that it contains about the oracular directives, about the cult itself, and about the *Life of Archilochus*. But we have in fact already seen direct evidence that the commissioning of the Mnesiepes Inscription is predicated by reports about the cult of Archilochus (cf. Alcidamas *ap.* [Aristotle Rhetoric 1398b11](#)),[\[1\]](#) as also by the story about Archilochus and the Muses.[\[2\]](#) We may now add an interesting piece of indirect evidence from the ideology of the oracular directive about cult procedures in the sacred precinct (EE1 col.[II 1-15](#)): the cult of the main gods in the **Arkhilokheion** is the first element to be formulated (lines 3-6, 10-12), whereas the cult of the hero himself is the last (lines 14-15). Significantly, the listing of the main gods is headed by the Muses and Apollo **Mousagetês** 'Leader of the Muses' (lines 3-4). Such a grouping of Apollo and the Muses is clearly archaic.[\[3\]](#) Also, this grouping presents a relationship between Archilochus and Apollo/Muses on the level of cult that corresponds on the level of myth to the identity of Archilochus as poet:**therapôn** of the Muses.

§6. In fact, I am now in a position to offer an overall interpretation of the epithet **Mousaôn therapôn** 'therapôn of the Muses' ([Hesiod Th. 100](#), Archilochus *fr. 1W*). I propose that the designation "Muses" here *includes Apollo as leader of the Muses*. Whereas the Muses are one-sidedly beneficent toward the poet, Apollo is ambivalently beneficent and maleficent.[\[1\]](#) It is Apollo who causes the impurity of a poet's death, thereby also causing eternal purification through the hero cult of this poet.

If indeed Apollo is latent in the designation "**therapôn** of the Muses," his maleficent stance toward the poet is thereby also latent. In this line of reasoning, I can also offer an explanation for why the archaic poet invokes the Muses without mentioning Apollo:[2] in this manner, he invokes the one-sidedly beneficent aspect of his divine patronage.

§7. Throughout our discussion of the poet as antagonist of his patron deities, we have had numerous occasions to see information taken from the *Lives* of the poets and used as evidence. I have tried to defend the validity of such information on a detailed case-to-case basis, but the ultimate defense rests on the cumulative evidence of the patterns that have by now emerged from our collection of the details. Admittedly, the *Lives* are extremely difficult source material, requiring the greatest caution. It is unfortunate that they are generally attested in versions that are late or fragmentary--or both. Worse still, we seldom have historical controls. Worst of all, the *Lives* have no strict literary form, and they are in the course of their transmission most vulnerable to distortion at the hands of transmitting scholars of the ancient world who supplement and modify, sometimes on the basis of the poet's attested poetry.[1] To use the *Lives*, one must be selective and critical, since the ultimate evidence is not so much in the *text* but in the *tradition* underneath. This much said, I now offer a brief reassessment of my conclusions about the *Lives*.

§8. We begin with the findings of Brelich about the *Life of Hesiod* tradition: the themes here fit the mythology surrounding a typical cult hero.[1] From such findings, I infer that the purpose of this and other *Life* traditions is to motivate not so much the poet's poetry but the poet's hero cult. This purpose is actually overt in the *Life of Archilochus* tradition as presented in the Mnesiepes Inscription, which serves explicitly to motivate the poet's hero cult.[2] The inscription also specifies that the primary gods worshiped within the frame of this hero cult are the Muses--and Apollo as their leader.[3] This symbiotic connection of Muses/Apollo with Archilochus in cult is matched by an antagonistic connection in myth: the *Life of Archilochus* tradition implies that Apollo is ambivalently beneficent/maleficent towards the poet, whereas the Muses are one-sidedly beneficent.[4] Such an antagonistic relationship in myth is overtly attested in the *Life of Aesop* tradition: Apollo abets the poet's death and then makes

him a cult hero.^[5] Aesop's very essence as poet is defined both by the beneficent Muses and by the beneficent/maleficent Apollo as their leader.^[6] These relationships of god and poet correspond to the relationships of god and hero: antagonism in myth, symbiosis in cult.^[7]

§9. We continue our reassessment by summarizing the evidence of epic diction, which amplifies our understanding of the antagonistic relationship between god and hero. At the moment of his death, the hero of epic in effect loses his identity to the god who takes his life; as such, the hero qualifies as the god's **therapôn**.^[1] A "therapôn of Ares," then, is a hero who forfeits his identification with his **philos** or **philoī** and becomes "equal to Ares" at the moment of his death.^[2] On the surface, of course, the hero's death is motivated by the inherited conventions of epic narrative; underneath the surface, however, it is motivated by the requirements of ritual ideology. As the semantic prehistory of the word indicates, the **therapôn** has a distinctly religious function. By losing his identification with a person or group and by identifying himself with a god who takes his life in the process, the hero effects a purification *by transferring impurity*.^[3]

§10. Keeping in mind this religious dimension of purification inherent in the word **therapôn**, we turn from the hero as warrior to the hero as poet. From the evidence of ancient poetic diction, we know that the generic poet is "therapôn of the Muses" just as the generic warrior is "therapôn of Ares."^[1] From the evidence of the *Lives*, on the other hand, we know that the poet becomes a hero because he forfeits his life and identity to Apollo, the leader of the Muses. The evidence is perhaps clearest in the *Life of Aesop* tradition, where Apollo ordains first the death and then the hero cult of Aesop.^[2] In such a hero cult, god and hero are to be institutionalized as the respectively dominant and recessive members of an eternal symbiotic relationship. The clearest evidence for this sort of institutionalization is to be found in the actual cult of Apollo/Muses and Archilochus at Paros, as actually documented by the Mnesiepes Inscription.^[3] Finally, we see from the *Life of Aesop* tradition that the poet's death results in purification. The immediate result from the death itself is impurity, but the ultimate result is eternal purification by way of propitiating the hero in cult--as ordained by Apollo himself.^[4] Moreover, the mode of Aesop's death is itself a purification, in that he dies like a **pharmakos** 'scapegoat'.^[5] His very

appearance indicates a transfer of impurities upon himself: Aesop is notoriously ugly and misshapen (*Vitae* G+W 1), much like that other image of a **pharmakos**, Thersites ([II 217-219](#)).[\[6\]](#)

Notes

§1n1. See Kontoleon 1964, esp. p. 46, and Treu 1959.250; see now also Kontoleon 1965, esp. pp. 413-418, on the discovery at Paros of an archaic iconographical representation of Archilochus as cult hero. See now Nagy 1990b.47-51.

§1n2. The references that follow are conveniently assembled by Treu, pp. 122-124.

§1n3. Plutarch *De sera numinis vindicta* 560e. See also the references at nn5, 6.

§1n4. I infer that Korax does so for the purpose of purification, on account of a pestilence or the like.

§1n5. From Galen *Protreptikos* 23, to be read in conjunction with Dio Chrysostomus 33.12.

§1n6. Heraclides Ponticus *Perì politeiōn* 8 (cf. Aristotle *fr.* 611.25 Rose).

§1n7. Dio Chrysostomus (n5) *ibid.*

§1n8. Plutarch (n3) *ibid.*: [epi tēn tou tettingos oikēsin](#).

§1n9. Plutarch (n3) *ibid.*; the author also supplies an interpretation of the oracular response, suggesting why the "House of the **Tettix**" should be Tainaros.

§1n10. In this fable, the **korax** of death turns out to be the cover of the **larnax** in which the overprotective mother is sheltering her child.

§1n11. This fable is transmitted by [Plato *Phaedrus* 259b-c](#). From Archilochus *fr.* 223W, we know that the poet called himself a **tettīx** in the context of composing blame poetry against those who harmed him.

§2n1. Above, [Ch.17§1](#).

§2n2. Dumézil 1971.13-132; to be fully appreciated, the argument must be read in its entirety.

§2n3. For the semantic relationship of **Hêrâ** and **hêrôs**, see the important article of Pötscher 1961; cf. also Householder/Nagy 1972.770-771.

§2n4. See Dumézil, p. 120, to be supplemented by Pötscher 1961 and 1971; cf. also Davidson 1975.

§3n1. Above, [Ch.17§1](#).

§3n2. Conveniently available in Treu 1959.40-45. Although the inscription is of a relatively late date (ca. third century B.C.), its contents are archaic in theme: see Maehler 1963.49n2, with bibliography and brief polemics.

§3n3. There is an archaic iconographical attestation of the same story (or of a close parallel) on a Boston pyxis from Eretria, dated ca. 460 B.C. (no. 37 tab. 15 Caskey/Beazley); see Kontoleon 1964.47-50.

§3n4. On the verb **skôptô** 'ridicule', see [Ch.13§3](#) and n4; also [Ch.16§10](#) and n7.

§4n1. For more on **aoidimos** 'subject of song', cf. [VI 358](#) and [H. Apollo 299](#); note the orientation of both passages toward the audiences of the future.

§4n2. The rest of the oracle (lines 51-52) links up with the continuation of the story (E1 col. [II 53](#) ff.).

§4n3. As an indication that the transmission of Archilochean poetry was rooted in the cult of Archilochus, I cite not only the function of the Mnesiepes Inscription but also the meaning of the name **Mnêsiēpēs** 'he who remembers the words [epos plural]'. As the figure to whom Apollo ordains the cult of Archilochus in the **Arkhilokheion**, Mnesiepes bears a name that

seems to correspond to his own function. The semantics of his name integrate Mnesiepes into the mythology surrounding the foundation of the **Arkhilokheion**. Compare also the mythology surrounding the **Aisôpeion** at Samos, as discussed in [Ch.16§8n1](#).

§4n4. Cf. [Ch.17§§7-8](#) on the *Life of Hesiod* tradition. In the case of a typical local hero who is not a poet, his life story is simply a function of his cult. In the case of the poet-hero, on the other hand, his life story is a function of his cult *and of the poetry ascribed to him*. I would reconstruct, then, an archaic poet's life story as a *Vita* tradition originally controlled both by the ideologies of his cult and by the contents of his poems. With the passing of the archaic period, however, the factor of cult recedes, and the genre of the poet's *Vita* becomes totally dependent on the poems themselves. Without the control of the religious ideologies conveyed by the cult, the narrative patterns of the *Vita* become subject to arbitrary interpretations based on the contents of the poetry. On the other hand, if indeed the traditional narrative patterns of the *Vita* are historically rooted in the institution of hero cults, the characters in the *Vita* traditions will assume the roles of heroes even when they are historical figures. Consider the *Life of Pindar* tradition as discussed at [Ch.7§9n1](#).

§5n1. See Treu 1959.250.

§5n2. See [§3n3](#).

§5n3. See [Ch.17§3](#).

§6n1. I must allow, however, that the Muses may not always be one-sided in every variant.

§6n2. See [Ch.17§3](#).

§7n1. Cf. Slater 1971, esp. p. 150, and Lefkowitz 1976. But see [Foreword](#) [§7n5](#) above.

§8n1. [Ch.17§7](#).

§8n2. §4.

§8n3. §5.

§8n4. §§1, 3.

§8n5. §2; also [Ch.16§8n1](#), [Ch.17§1](#).

§8n6. Ibid.

§8n7. See again [Ch.7](#).

§9n1. [Ch.17§5](#).

§9n2. Ibid.

§9n3. [Ch.17§4](#).

§10n1. [Ch.17§6](#).

§10n2. §2.

§10n3. §§4, 5.

§10n4. [Ch.16§8](#). This formulation helps account for the semantics of **agos** 'pollution'/'expiation' and **enagizein**'perform sacrifice in the cult of a hero' as distinct from **thuein** 'perform sacrifice in the cult of a god'. For a discussion of the formal and semantic connection between **agos** and **enagizein**, see Chantraine/Masson 1954. Nock (1944) has reservations about the god/hero distinction in **thuein/enagizein**, on the grounds that **thuein** is also attested in the context of sacrificing to heroes. Even so, I maintain that the god/hero distinction remains valid so long as **enagizein** is not attested in the context of sacrificing to the celestial gods. Thus, **thuein/enagizein**would be the *unmarked/marked* members of the opposition. For the terms *unmarked/marked*, see Jakobson 1971.136: "The general meaning of a marked category states the presence of a certain (whether positive or negative) property A; the general meaning of the corresponding unmarked category states nothing about the presence of A, and is used chiefly, *but not exclusively*, to indicate the absence of A" (italics mine). In the case of **thuein/enagizein**, "property A" is the factor of a hero

(or of a chthonic god--where I intend "chthonic" in the sense of "noncelestial").

[§10n5. Ch.16§3.](#)

§10n6. Note the use of **katharma** 'purification, refuse of purification' in the sense of 'outcast' when it is applied to Aesop as a term of insult by the other characters in the *Life* tradition (e.g., *Vitae* G+W 31); cf. Wiechers 1961.35.

Chapter 19

More on Strife and the Human Condition

§1. The deaths of Aesop and Thersites result directly from their engaging in blame,^[1] and the result of their deaths is purification.^[2] It follows, then, that their engaging in blame is itself an ultimately purifying act. Thus even in the ideology of myth, blame and the ridicule that it can bring have a potentially positive social function.^[3] Moreover, among the things that Aesop actually blamed was the negative social function of blame itself, formalized *in ritual* as strife over cuts of sacrificial meat (*Pap. Oxy.* 1800).^[4] The same negative social function is formalized in classical praise poetry as **eris** 'strife, conflict' ([Pindar N.4.93](#)), a negative foil of praise poetry itself.^[5] A parallel negative foil is **phthonos** 'envy, greed', conventionally visualized by praise poetry as a bestially gluttonous appetite for meat ([Bacchylides 3.67-68](#), [Pindar N.8.21-25](#)).^[6] The negative social function of blame is also formalized *in myth* as the primal **eris** between Prometheus and Zeus ([Hesiod Th. 534](#))--a conflict over cuts of meat that is the very cause of the human condition ([Th. 535-616](#)).^[7] Alternatively, it is formalized as the personified **Eris** at the Judgment of Paris, the cause of the Trojan War in particular (*Cypria*/Proclus p. 102.14-19 Allen) and of the human condition in general (Hesiod *fr. 204MW*).^[8] At the Judgment of Paris, **Eris** overtly takes the form of blame: as our *Iliad* tells it, Paris had engaged in blaming Hera and Athena, while praising Aphrodite ([XXIV 29-30](#)).^[9]

§2. If there is a *positive* social function assigned by myth to the institution of blame, there might also be a parallel assignment to the Hellenic concept of **eris** 'strife, conflict', a word we have seen so far as formalizing only the *negative* social function of blame. The social ambivalence of **Eris** is in fact a prime theme of the *Works and Days*:

[ouk ara mounon eên Eridôn genos, all' epi gaian](#)
[eisi duô: têñ men ken epainêseie noêas,](#)
[hê d' epimômêtê: dia d' andicha thumon echousin.](#)

hē men gar polemon te kakon kai dērin ophellei,
schetliē: ou tis tēn ge philei brotos, all' hup' anankēs
athanatōn boulēisin Erin timōsi bareian.

tēn d' heterēn proterēn men egeinato Nux erebennē,
thēke de min Kronidēs hupsizugos, aitheri naiôn,
gaiēs t' en rhizēisi kai andrasi pollon ameinô:
hē te kai apalamon per homôs epi ergon egeiren.
eis heteron gar tis te idôn ergoio chatizōn
plousion, hos speudei men arômenai êde phuteuein
oikon t' eu thesthai: zêloī de te geitona geitôn
eis aphenos speudont': agathê d' Eris hêde brotoisin.
kai kerameus keramei koteei kai tektoni tektôn,
kai ptôchos ptôchōi phthonnee kai aoidos aoidôi

There was not just one **Eris** born, but there are two on earth. When a man recognizes one, he should praise it. The other one is worthy of blame. The two have split dispositions. One brings about the evil of war and fighting.^[1] It is wretched. No man loves it, but, by necessity, in accord with the Will of the Immortals, men give **timê** to this burdensome **Eris**.^[2] The other one was the elder-born from dark Night. The son of Kronos, who sits on high and abides in the aether, placed it in the very roots of Earth. And this one is far better for men. This one incites even the resourceless man to work-- as one man who is out of work looks at another who is rich and busy with ploughing, planting, and maintaining his household properly. Neighbor envies neighbor, striving for wealth. This **Eris** is good for men. And the potter is angry with the potter, and the artisan with the artisan.^[3] And the beggar has **phthonos** [envy] for the beggar, and the poet for the poet.^[4]

We see here the "good" **Eris** in her positive social function as the principle of competition, that fundamental aspect of most Hellenic institutions--including poetry itself.^[5] In this connection, it is important to keep in mind that even the performance of such sublime poetic compositions as Pindar's *Paean* 6 took place in the framework of a competition. This song that tells about the **eris** of the gods (*Paean* 6.50, 87) in the awesome setting of Delphi's Panhellenic **theoxenia** is actually being performed, in the song's own words, at an **agôn** 'place of contest' ([agôna](#): *Paean* 6.60).^[6] In sum, one can praise and blame the good and the evil **Eris**, as the *Works and Days* tells us, but these very activities of praising and blaming are subsumed in the principle of competition itself--that elder and hence more primordial kind of **Eris**.

§3. Evil or good, **eris** functions as a prime definition of the human condition. It comes as no surprise, then, that **eris** is the overt catalyst for many of the major poems of Hellenic civilization. We have already seen that **eris** or **neîkos** precipitates not only the *Cypria* in particular but also in general the entire mass of epic material framed by the Trojan War.^[1] Moreover, the *Iliad* itself begins with the **eris/neîkos** between Achilles and Agamemnon.^[2] When Achilles tells Agamemnon that the Achaeans will long remember their mutual **eris** ([XIX 63-64](#)), his words apply--far beyond the Achaeans of their time--to the future generations of Hellenic listeners who will ask to hear the story of the *Iliad*.^[3] The grand Strife Scene between Agamemnon and Achilles is even recapitulated on the Shield of Achilles, in that microcosmic stop-motion picture of litigation between a defendant who offers compensation and a plaintiff who refuses it ([XVIII 497-508](#)).^[4] Like its major counterpart, this minor Strife Scene is also a **neîkos** ([neikos/eneikeon](#): [XVIII 497/498](#)). But here the quarrel is a formal litigation, with claims and counterclaims expressed in correct legal language.^[5] And the objective of the whole procedure is **dikê** 'justice' ([dikazon/dikên](#): [XVIII 506/508](#)). This quarrel is in fact strikingly similar to the one between Perses and Hesiod himself, where the objective is again **dikê** ([dikêis/dikên](#) ... **dikassai**: [W&D 36/39](#)) and where the quarrel itself is a **neîkos** ([neikos](#) at *W&D* 35; cf. also [neike'/neikeôn/neikea](#) at *W&D* 29/30/33).^[6]

§4. The **neîkos** of Perses and Hesiod is in fact a formal context for engaging in blame as a positive social function, as we see from the corresponding quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles. Here the words spoken by the aggrieved warrior against the king of his **philoi** are taken from the language of blame-poetry.^[1] Achilles insults Agamemnon by calling him such names as **kunôpa** 'having the looks of a dog' ([I 159](#)) and **kunos ommat'** **ekhôn** 'having the eyes of a dog' ([I 225](#))--epithets that typify a bestial degree of gluttony.^[2] When blame is justified, the application of **kuôn** 'dog' and its derivatives is a quintessentially appropriate insult.^[3] With other insults as well, Achilles attacks Agamemnon by picturing him as the ultimate glutton: most notably, he calls him **dêmoboros basileus** 'a king who is the devourer of the **dêmos**' ([I 231](#)).^[4] Agamemnon is here branded as a king so greedy that he consumes his own community.^[5] This insult is immediately pertinent to the **neîkos** of Perses and Hesiod, where the adjudicating **basilêes** 'kings' are themselves called **dôrrophagoi** 'devourers of gifts' on account of their lack of **dikê** 'justice' ([W&D 38-39](#) and [263-264](#); cf. [220-221](#)). The figure of Hesiod is engaged in making justified blame, expressed in language appropriate to blame-poetry, just as Achilles had done in his quarrel with Agamemnon. Here too we see blame-poetry in its positive social function. Moreover, this blaming of unjust kings whose injustice promotes the **neîkos** of Perses and Hesiod is in sharp contrast with the praising of the just kings in [Hesiod Th. 80-93](#). A king who makes settlements with **dikê** ([Th. 85-86](#)) is described as one who can stop "even a great **neîkos**" ([kai mega neikos: Th. 87](#)). Such just kings are **ekhephrones** 'aware' ([Th. 88](#)) precisely because they heed what the Muses say ([Th. 80 ff.](#))--through the intermediacy of the poets.^[6] Thus only those kings who are **phroneontes** 'aware' can understand the message of Hesiod the poet, as he tells them the **aînos** of the hawk and the nightingale:

nun d' ainon basileusin ereô phroneousi kai autois

Now I will tell an **aînos** for kings, aware [phroneontes] as they are.^[7]

Hesiod W&D 202

In sum, the **neîkos** of Perses and Hesiod is a context for blaming the unjust king; it is a **neîkos** that can be stopped only by the just king. The blaming itself is justified so long as the injustice remains--which is **hubris** as

opposed to **dikē** ([W&D 213-285](#)).[\[8\]](#) In this sense, the **neīkos** of Perses and Hesiod has the positive social function of precipitating the *Works and Days*. Moreover, this very **neīkos** motivates the major theme that has served as our point of departure--the Hesiodic portrait of **Eris** as a prime determinant of the human condition ([W&D 11-26](#)).[\[9\]](#)

§5. The human condition is not only defined by **eris**; it is even caused by it. On the level of myth, this **eris** is formalized as one primordial Strife Scene that takes place at one primordial **dais** 'feast' shared by gods and men.[\[1\]](#) There are various multiforms of this feast, such as the one attended by Prometheus ([Hesiod Th. 535 ff.](#)) or the one celebrating the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis (Hesiod *fr. 204.95 ff.*; *Cypria*/Proclus p. 102.13 ff. Allen; Pindar *Paeon 6.50 ff.*). But, aside from such variables, there is also an essential constant: by disrupting the **dais**, the **eris** of the Strife Scene disrupts the communion of gods and men, thereby bringing to an end the golden existence of mankind.[\[2\]](#) Since **eris** is inevitable and since it also can be formalized as blame,[\[3\]](#) the institution of blame in general and blame poetry in particular is itself conceived as one of life's necessary evils.

§6. Ironically, the **aīnos** as a traditional form of blame is not only an institution of **eris** but also an eternal reminder of what had been disrupted by **eris** at a primal Strife Scene, namely, the golden existence of mankind. The standard setting for the narrative of the **aīnos** is the Golden Age itself. In the proem to the versified fables of Babrius, where the poet cites the prosaic retellings of the Aesopic tradition as his immediate source (lines 14-16),[\[1\]](#) we read that the Golden Age was a time when:

1. animals had the same **phōnē** 'power of speech' as men (lines 5-12)
2. men and gods were one community (**hetaireiē**: line 13).

In other words, there had been in the Golden Age a communion of animals and men and of men and gods. In the fables of Aesop, we find animals actually communicating with men as well as one another through the power of speech,[\[2\]](#) and there are instances where the fable is actually introduced with an explicit statement to that effect:[\[3\]](#)

[kath' hon kairon ên homophôna ta zôia tois anthrôpois ...](#)

At the time when animals had the same **phônê** as men have ...

Life of Aesop G 99, introducing "The Poor Man Catching Insects" = *Fable*
387 Perry

kath' hon kairon ên homophôna ta zôia ...

At the time when animals had the same **phônê** ...

Life of Aesop W 97,[4] introducing "The Wolves and the Sheep" = *Fable*
153 Perry

Ironically too, Aesop himself had no **phônê**'power of speech' before he received the gift of verbal skills from the Muses (*Life of Aesop* G 7).^[5] In the beginning, he had been like an animal, doubly removed from the Golden Age. By having no **phônê**, he had been excluded from the community of both gods and men. We see as a permanent reminder of his primal state the simple fact that Aesop actually remains a theriomorphic figure throughout his *Life*.^[6] In the end, however, after having died for blaming a ritualized Strife Scene (*Pap.Oxy.* 1800), Aesop wins immortality (*Plato Comicus fr.* 68 Kock).^[7] It was in fact immortality that the animals had demanded from Zeus in their own Strife Scene, which had plummeted them from their own golden existence (*Callimachus Iambus 2 =fr.* 192 Pfeiffer).^[8] In the end, Aesop transcends the condition of both animals and men. The gaps that are bridged in his **aînoi** between animals and men and gods are bridged in the course of his *Life*.

Notes

§1n1. [Ch.16§4](#).

§1n2. [Ch.16§§1-2](#), [Ch.18§10](#).

§1n3. On the acknowledgment of this social function in the ideology of epic, cf. [Ch.14§12](#) and n4.

§1n4. For the text, see again [Ch.16§7](#).

[**§1n5.**](#) [**Ch.12§3.**](#)

[**§1n6.**](#) [**Ch.12§§4-5**](#) and [**§§6-11.**](#)

[**§1n7.**](#) [**Ch.11§15.**](#)

[**§1n8.**](#) [**Ch.11§14.**](#)

[**§1n9.**](#) [**Ch.11§16.**](#)

[**§2n1.**](#) For more on **dêris** 'fighting', see [**Ch.16§10n1.**](#)

[**§2n2.**](#) For the correlation of **Eris** and the **Dios boulê** 'Will of Zeus', see [**Ch.11§§10-15.**](#)

[**§2n3.**](#) The "anger" of potter against potter and artisan against artisan is equivalent to **phthonos**, as we see from the parallelisms in the next verse. On the inherited parallelism of the **tektôn** 'carpenter' as artisan *par excellence* with the **aoidos** 'poet', see [**Ch.17§§10-13.**](#) On the poet as **dêmiourgos**, see [**xvii 381-387**](#) as discussed at [**Ch.12§13**](#) and nn2, 3.

[**§2n4.**](#) On the convention of presenting the **xenos** 'guest-stranger' on a social scale that ranges from *beggar* all the way to *poet*, see [**Ch.12§§13-16.**](#)

[**§2n5.**](#) Cf. Pucci 1977.31-32, 130-135.

[**§2n6.**](#) The **agôn** is also the traditional context of such archaic poetic forms as the Homeric Hymns--and we can see this from the use of the word **agônat** [**HH 6.19-20.**](#) See also the Hesiodic and Homeric references to poetic contests at *W&D* 654-659 and [**II 594-600**](#), and the commentary by Maehler 1963.16. In fact, the name of the competitive poet **Thamuris** at [**II 595**](#) seems to be the embodiment of the social context for poetic competition. In the Alexandrian lexicographical tradition and elsewhere, we see that **thamuris** means 'assembly'; see Durante 1976.202 for documentation and commentary. Moreover, the word **agôn** itself denotes 'assembly' (from **agô**; cf. Chantraine [**I 17**](#)); the semantic extension 'place of contest' reveals that the holding of contests was a basic social function of such an 'assembly'. Compare the semantics of *samaryá-* 'poetic contest' in the *Rig-Veda*, as

discussed by Durante, pp. 198-201. I disagree, however, with Durante's equating the meaning of *samaryá-* with that of **Homēros**: see [Ch.17§9n2](#).

§3n1. [Ch.11§12](#); also [Ch.7§16](#).

§3n2. Above, [Ch.7§17](#).

§3n3. For the poetic self-references associated with the theme of *remembering* and *not forgetting* a story of grief, see [Ch.6§§4](#) ff.

§3n4. [Ch.6§20](#).

§3n5. See Muellner 1976.100-106 on the legal use of **eukheto** 'claimed' at [XVIII 499](#), for which he finds a striking parallel in the use of *e-u-ke-to* = **eukhetoι** 'claims' in the Linear B texts (Pylos tablets Ep 704 and Eb 297). Muellner (p. 104) also notes the collocation of *e-u-ke-to* with *da-mo* = **dâmos** (Ep 704), corresponding to the collocation of **eukheto** with **dêmos** in the Homeric passage at hand (XVIII lines 499 and 500 respectively). For Linear B **dâmos** as 'an administrative entity endowed with a juridical function', see Lejeune 1965.12.

§3n6. Cf. Vernant 1977. Note especially the expression **diakrînômetha neîkos** 'let us settle our quarrel' at *W&D* 35. The compound verb **diakrînomai** here must be compared to the simple **krînomai** 'have a definitive settlement' as used in [Hesiod Th. 535](#) and 882, where the settlements lead to the permanent separation of gods/men and gods/Titans respectively. Discussion at [Ch.11§5](#). Cf. also the semantics of the passive formation **krithen** 'they separated from each other' in [Pindar P.4.168](#).

§4n1. [Ch.12§6](#).

§4n2. [Ch.12§5](#).

§4n3. Consider again [Ch.12§§5-6](#).

§4n4. For the semantics of **dêmos** in this context of **neîkos**, see [§3n5](#). Since there is a traditional interplay in Homeric diction between **dêmos** 'district, community' and **dêmos** 'fat' (Nagler 1974.5-9), we may note that

dêmoboros can also be understood as 'devourer of fat'. On the traditional theme that tells of dogs devouring the **dêmos** 'fat' of corpses ([VIII 379-380](#), [XI 818](#), [XIII 831-832](#)), see [Ch.12§5](#). If this interpretation is valid, then Agamemnon is being described by Achilles with an epithet that befits a corpse-devouring dog.

§4n5. Note that Thersites himself blames Agamemnon for his greed ([II 225-238](#)). At [II 236-237](#), he even says that the Achaeans should forsake Agamemnon, leaving him behind "to digest his **geras** [plural; = honorific portions]" all to himself ([gera pessemen](#): [II 237](#)). For **geras** 'honorific portion' in the sense of 'cut of meat', see [Ch.7§19](#). On the greed of Agamemnon, consider also **philokteanôtate** 'preeminent lover of possessions' ([I 122](#)), an epithet applied to him again by Achilles.

§4n6. Cf. Puelma 1972.97-98.

§4n7. See [Ch.12§18](#).

§4n8. For more on **dikê** and **hubris**: [Ch.9§7](#) and n2.

§4n9. See again [§2](#).

§5n1. [Ch.11§15](#).

§5n2. [Ch.11§§1-14](#).

§5n3. §1; also [Ch.11§16](#).

§6n1. This is not to say, of course, that the original Aesopic tradition of **âînoi** was not poetry.

§6n2. For an example of verbal communication between animals and men, see Aesop *Fable* 465 Perry.

§6n3. Cf. also Callimachus *Iambus* 2 = *fr.* 192 Pfeiffer.

§6n4. Also at G 97, where the introductory phrasing is exactly as at G 99.

§6n5. In the attested version (G 7), Isis gives Aesop the power of speech itself (**phônê**) while the Muses give him the power of speech skills. I believe that earlier versions had Apollo in place of Isis: see [Ch.17§1n6](#), [§2n2](#); [Ch.18§2](#). Note too that the epiphany of the Muses to Aesop is in the setting of an elaborately lush garden, where the **tettîx** 'cicada' sings (G 6). For more on the **tettîx**, see [Ch.18§1](#).

§6n6. There is a collection of epithets applied to Aesop, many of them having to do with the various grotesque forms of various animals, at the very beginning of the *Life* narrative (*Vitae* G+W 1), on which see Wiechers 1961.31-32. Throughout the narrative, in fact, the other characters keep insulting Aesop by way of appellations like **kunokephalon** 'dog-head' (G 11, 30; W 31). The association of Aesop with the figure of a dog is especially interesting in view of the traditional use of **kuôn** 'dog' and its derivatives in the language of blame; see in particular [Ch.12§6](#) on [Iliad I](#) 159 and 225, where Achilles insults Agamemnon by calling him **kunôpa** 'having the looks of a dog' and **kunos ommat'** **ekhôn** 'having the eyes of a dog'. In fact, the name of Aesop himself may be a semantic parallel: **Ais-ôpos** may mean 'having the looks of baseness', if the element **ais-** can be connected with **ais-kh-** as in the word **aîskhos** 'baseness' and its family (on the semantics of which see [Ch.14§13](#)). The element **ais-** also may be connected with the adjective **ais-ulō-** 'unseemly'. Note that the speaking of **aisula** 'unseemly things' is equated with **kertomiai** 'reproaches' at [Iliad XX](#) 202 and 433. On the semantics of **kertomeô** 'reproach' and its family, see [Ch.14 §§11\(n6\)](#) and 14. Questions of etymology aside, however, the strong association of Aesop with the figure of a dog seems to be connected with the function of the Aesopic **aînos** as blame poetry. We observe the message of Aesop's fable about "The Wolves and the Sheep" (*Fable* 97 Perry), as conveyed by the context of its retelling in *Vitae* G+W 97: just as the dogs' barking protects the sheep from the wolves, so also the fable of Aesop protects the Samians from Croesus. In connection with the Samian phase of Aesop's *Life* (on which see also [Ch.16§8n1](#)), I should note in passing a curious passage in *Vita* G 87, featuring a barrage of insulting appellations as spoken by the Samians against Aesop (the last one of which is "a dog in a wicker basket"!). The categories of these appellations are well worth careful study, since they may match some stock characters in the Aesopic fables

(though their language is certainly far more picturesque than that of the rhetorical retellings in the Aesopic corpus that has come down to us).

§6n7. For a collection of other testimonia on the immortalization of Aesop, see Perry 1952.226; cf. Wiechers 1961.41.

§6n8. The contents of this Callimachean fragment can be supplemented by two paraphrases of its substance: (1) a papyrus from Tebtynis [see Maas 1934] and (2) Philo of Alexandria *De confusione linguarum* 6-8. See Perry 1962.312-313. Significantly, this same Callimachean passage telling of the animals' loss of immortality also alludes to Aesop's death at Delphi (*fr. 192.15-17 Pfeiffer*).

Chapter 20

Achilles beyond the Iliad

§1. Having just seen how the **neîkos** 'quarrel' between Hesiod and Perses ([W&D 35](#)) serves as the context for a grand definition of **dikê** by way of its opposition to **hubris**,^[1] we return one last time to the **neîkos** between Odysseus and Achilles ([Odyssey viii 75](#)) in the first song of Demodokos ([viii 72-82](#)). This quarrel too serves as a context for defining one theme, the **mêtis** 'artifice' of Odysseus, by opposing it to another theme, the **biê** 'might' of Achilles.^[2] But here it is not simply a matter of choosing between negative and positive, as with **hubris** and **dikê**. True, the **mêtis** of Odysseus is vindicated as the heroic resource that will lead to the ultimate capture of Troy. But the **biê** of Achilles is also vindicated by the events of traditional epic narrative, in that the Achaeans survived to capture Troy *only because they had been rescued earlier by Patroklos/Achilles from the onslaught of Hektor*.^[3] The **kleos** of Achilles as the best of the Achaeans in the *Iliad* is achieved because the Achaeans are doomed without his **biê**. For his own **kleos** as best of the Achaeans in the *Odyssey*,^[4] even Odysseus will need to have **biê** against the suitors. When they fail in their attempts to string the bow of Odysseus, the suitors themselves must recognize the hero's superiority in **biê**:

[pollon de biê̄s epideuees êsan](#)

and they were by far inferior in **biê**

[xxi 185](#)

[all' ei dê tosonde biê̄s epideuees eimen
antitheou Odusêos](#)

but if indeed we are so inferior in **biê**
to godlike Odysseus

[xxi 253-254](#)

In Penelope's own conditional words, the disguised Odysseus would have to use his **biê** in order to string the bow ([xxi 314-315](#)) *and thereby win her as wife* ([xxi 316](#)). Odysseus is of course not only about to string the bow, thus fulfilling the condition set down by Penelope. He will also kill the suitors with it.

§2. We may proceed, then, with the understanding that **biê** is a key to the **kleos** of Achilles/Odysseus in the *Iliad/Odyssey*. Now we are about to see that it is also a key element in epic traditions about other prominent heroes. In the case of Herakles, for example, the theme of **biê** is actually embodied in the hero's identity, since he is conventionally named not only as **Hêra-kleês** but also as **biê** + adjective of **Hêrakleês**:[\[1\]](#)

nominative	biê Hêraklêeiê	XI 690 ; Hes.Th. 289, 982 , fr. 35.1(MW)
genitive	biês Hêraklêeiês	II 666 ; Hes.Th. 332 ; fr. 33(a)25, 30
dative	biêi Hêraklêeiêi	II 658 , XV 640 ; Hes.Th. 315 , fr. 25.18, 165.9
accusative	biên Hêraklêeiên	V 638 , XIX 98 , xi 601; Hes.Th. 943 , fr. 33(a)23

The fact that a full declension of this periphrastic naming construct **biê** + adjective of **Hêrakleês** is attested in the diction of archaic hexameter poetry is itself striking evidence, on the level of form, that the Herakles figure and **biê** are traditionally linked on the level of theme.[\[2\]](#) Since the very name **Hêra-kleês** 'he who has the **kleos** of Hera' embodies the theme of glory *through epic*,[\[3\]](#) the traditional combination of **biê** with **kleos** in the periphrastic naming construct **biê** + adjective of **Hêra-kleês** is a formal indication that **biê** is a traditional epic theme. In fact, other heroic names built with **kleos** are also found in the same naming construct:

biê + adjective of Eteo-kleês (-klos) [4]	= Eteoklêeiê	IV 386
biê + adjective of Iphi-kleês (-klos) [5]	= Iphiklêeiê	xi 290, 296
Cf.		
biê + genitive of Patro-kleês (-klos) [6]	= Patrokloio XVII 187 , XXII 323	

§3. The heroic resource of **biê**, then, has a distinctly positive aspect as a key to the hero's **kleos**. Nevertheless, it has a disquieting negative aspect as

well. For our first example, let us turn again to the *Odyssey*. Whereas Odysseus uses **biē** to kill the suitors, the overall behavior of the suitors themselves in the course of the *Odyssey* is also characterized as **biē** (e.g., [xxiii 31](#)). Moreover, the **biē** of the suitors in the House of Odysseus is equated with **hubris** ([xv 329](#), [xvii 565](#)). This noun **hubris** characterizes not only the outrageous behavior of the suitors ([xvi 86](#), [xxiv 352](#)) but also that of the blood-crazed warriors belonging to Generation III of mankind ([Hesiod W&D 146](#)).^[1] In fact, the **hubris** of Generation III is correlated with their **biē** ([W&D 148](#)).^[2] Furthermore, the **hubris** that characterizes the blood-crazed warriors of Generation III is in direct opposition to the **dikē** of the noble Generation IV warriors ([W&D 158](#)).^[3] We come back, then, to our point of departure, the negative/positive opposition of **hubris/dikē** as dramatized by the **neīkos** of Perses and Hesiod ([W&D 35](#)). We now see that **biē** itself has a negative aspect, an element of **hubris**. In this way, **biē** can even be contrasted directly with **dikē**:

[kai nu dikēs epakoue, biēs d' epilētheo pampan](#)

Listen to **dikē**! Forget **biē** entirely!

[W&D 275](#)

§4. The ambivalence of **biē** is also reflected by the *Iliad*. Only here it is not a matter of assigning good and bad **biē** to good and bad characters respectively. Rather, the good/bad ambivalence of **biē** is built into one character, Achilles himself. The good aspect has already been mentioned: without the **biē** of Achilles, no **mêtis** can rescue the Achaeans from Hektor's onslaught.^[1] As for the bad aspect, it is manifested throughout the rampage of Achilles as he finally enters his war in the *Iliad*. He does more, much more, than simply kill Hektor. A veritable slaughter is to precede Hektor's death, only to be followed by mutilation and human sacrifice.^[2] Apollo says it all when he compares Achilles to a ravenous lion who lunges for his **dais** 'portion', yielding to his own savage **biē** ([XXIV 41-43](#)).^[3] The words of Apollo describing the hero's disposition correspond to the words used by Achilles himself as he expresses his own brutal urge to devour the vanquished Hektor ([XXII 346-347](#)).^[4] Such ghastly aspects of **biē** lead us to wonder what words the man of **mêtis** may possibly have used against the man of **biē** during their **neīkos** 'quarrel', which actually took place at a **dais**

'feast' ([viii 76](#)). One thing is certain: when Odysseus for a single moment despairs of his **mêtis**, the reaction of his men is to be overwhelmed by thoughts about **biê**. Let us observe first the hero's words of despair:

ô philoi, ou gar idmen hopêi zophos oud' hopêi êôs,
oud' hopêi êelios phaesimbrotos eis' hupo gaian
oud' hopêi anneitai: alla phrazômetha thasson
ei tis et' estai mêtis: egô d' ouk oiomai einai.

Dear friends! I speak because we know neither where the western darkness is nor the dawn,
neither where the sun that shines upon mortals sets below the earth
nor where it rises,[\[5\]](#) but let us hasten to think[\[6\]](#)
whether there is any **mêtis** any longer. I myself think there is none.

[x 190-193](#)

Then the reaction of his men:

hôs ephamên, toisin de kateklasthê philon êtor
mnêsamenois ergôn Laistrugonos Antiphatao
Kuklôpos te biês megalêtoros, androphagoio.
klaion de ligeôs, thaleron kata dakru cheontes:
all' ou gar tis prêxis egigneto muromenoisin.

So I spoke. And their heart was broken
as they remembered the deeds of Antiphates the Laestrygonian
and the **biê** of the great-hearted Cyclops, the man eater.[\[7\]](#)
And they wept loud and shrill, letting many a tear fall.
But crying did not get them anywhere.

[x 198-202](#)

In the absence of **mêtis**, disorienting thoughts of **biê** are stirred up in the mind. And the nightmarish vision of the man-eating Cyclops in the *Odyssey* is marked by the same **biê** that marks the epic vision of a rampaging Achilles in the *Iliad*. Significantly, it is only here in the *Odyssey* that the

Cyclops is ever called "great-hearted" ([megalêtoros: x 200](#))--an epithet generically applied to the warriors of the Trojan War.[\[8\]](#)

§5. The theme of **biē** is not only ambivalent in its positive and negative aspects, it is also elemental. Most prominently, the power of the winds is designated by **biē** ([bias anemôn](#): [XVI 213](#), [XXIII 713](#)) or by its synonym **îs** ([is anemou/anemoio](#): [XV 383/XVII 739](#), etc.).[\[1\]](#) Also, the power of fire is called the "**biē** of Hephaistos" ([Hêphaistoio biēphi](#): [XXI 367](#)),[\[2\]](#) and this appellation applies at the very moment when the power of fire is defeating the power of water. The latter is manifested in the river god Xanthos, who in turn is called the "**îs** of the river" ([is potamoio](#): [XXI 356](#)).[\[3\]](#) Before Hephaistos, Achilles himself had confronted the river god, but Xanthos says that the hero's **biē** will not suffice against a god ([ou ... biên chraismêsemen](#): [XXI 316](#)). What strikes us in particular here is that the narrative is presenting the **biē** of Achilles as parallel to the **biē** of fire itself. The god of water even says it about Achilles:

[memonen d' ho ge isa theoisi](#)

He is in a rage, equal to the rage of the gods.[\[4\]](#)

[XXI 315](#)

§6. The ultimate cosmic **biē** is that of Zeus himself as he readies himself for battle with the Titans:

[oud' ar' eti Zeus ischen heon menos, alla nu tou ge
eithar men meneos plênto phrenes, ek de te pasan
phaine biên](#)

Zeus did not any longer restrain his **menos** [might], but straightway his breathing was filled with **menos**[\[1\]](#) and he showed forth all his **biē**.[\[2\]](#)

[Hesiod Th. 687-689](#)

What follows these verses is an elaborate description of an ultimate thunderstorm ([Th. 689-712](#)) marked by thunder and lightning ([Th. 689-692](#),

[699](#), [707-708](#)) that brings *fire* ([Th. 692-700](#)) and is conducted by *winds* ([Th. 706-709](#)).^[3] The Cyclopes themselves, who had actually made thunder and lightning for Zeus ([Th. 139-141](#)), are characterized by their **biē** ([Th. 146](#)). And here we see at least one interesting point of convergence between the Cyclopes of the *Theogony* and those of the *Odyssey*, who in turn are described as "better in **biē**" than the Phaeacians ([biēphi ... pherteroi: vi 6](#)). We should also recall the **biē** of the man-eating Cyclops Polyphemus ([x 200](#)).^[4] The main point remains, however, that the cosmic aspect of **biē** as manifested in the thunderstorm of Zeus is parallel in epic diction to the heroic aspect of **biē** as manifested in the martial rage of Achilles. The slaughter of the Trojans by Achilles is directly compared to the burning of a city ([XXI 520-525](#)) as effected by the **mēnis** 'anger' of the gods ([XXI 523](#)). The anger of the gods in general and of Zeus in particular is of course manifested directly in the fire and wind of a thunderstorm inflicted by Zeus, as we have already seen in [Hesiod Th. 687-712](#).^[5] Moreover, cosmic fire marks the reentry of Achilles in battle: Athena brings about a **phlox** 'flame' that burns over the hero's head ([XVIII 206](#)), and the Trojans are terrified at the sight of this **akamaton pûr** 'inexhaustible fire' ([XVIII 225](#)). We may compare the **phlox** of Zeus during his thunderstorm against the Titans ([Hesiod Th. 692](#), 697), and in addition, the **phlox** and the **akamaton pûr** of Hephaistos as the fire god stands in for Achilles by combating the element of water itself ([XXI 333/349 and 341](#) respectively). Again I note that the **phlegma** 'conflagration' of Hephaistos is conducted by the **thuella** 'gust' of the West and South Winds ([XXI 334-337](#)),^[6] just as the thunderbolt of Zeus is conducted by **anemoi** 'winds' (*Th.* 706-709).

§7. The cosmic and heroic aspects of **biē** combined bring us now to a striking parallel in Indo-Iranian religion and epic. The parallelism is to be found in the Indo-Iranian storm god *Vâyu*: his very name means "Wind," and he had once functioned as a god of the Männerbund or warrior society.
[1] The parallelism is also to be found in the Indic hero *Bhîma*, one of the main figures in the epic *Mahâbhârata*. Begotten of a mortal woman Kuntî by the war god Vâyu himself, Bhîma is the very embodiment of *balam* 'physical might', who is destined to be "the best among the strong" (*MBh.* 1.114.8-10).^[2] He is, for that matter, not only strong but fast as well, running "with the speed of wind" (e.g., *MBh.* 1.136.19). He is also decidedly brutal--a quality that occasionally earns the solemn blame of his

older brother Yudhis.tô.hira (*MBh.* 9.58.15 ff.). In one episode (*MBh.* 3.153), he goes on a rampage of violence (again blamed by Yudhis.tô.hira) that is actually inaugurated by a violent windstorm. Bhîma has a younger brother Arjuna, begotten of Kuntî by the war god Indra. This hero is the embodiment not only of *balam* 'physical might' as applied to enemies but also of beneficence as applied to friends (*MBh.* 1.114.23). In this connection, we must note the important discussions of Stig Wikander and Georges Dumézil, who have convincingly shown that the relationship of the five brothers Yudhis.tô.hira, Bhîma û Arjuna, Nakula û Sahadeva, collectively known as the Pânô.dô.ava-s, reflects an ideology so archaic that it is Indo-European in origin.^[3] What is of more immediate concern, however, is the specific relationship of the heroes Bhîma and Arjuna, which reflects an ideology that is no longer apparent in the relationship of the gods who fathered them, Vâyu and Indra respectively. By the time that the *Mahâbhârata* was taking on its present shape, Vâyu had long been obsolescent, while Indra had long ago evolved from a god of war into a far more complex and versatile figure.^[4] The contrast between Bhîma and Arjuna in epic, however, remains unaffected--or at least less affected--by the trends of Indic religion. For my own purposes, I note in particular the following details of contrast from among a more extensive list of details assembled by Dumézil:^[5]

- Bhîma is defiant of military institutions; Arjuna is respectful
- Bhîma is a solitary combatant; Arjuna fights in the army
- Bhîma tends to fight without armor; Arjuna is equipped with a spectacular array of weaponry.

§8. Each of these thematic contrasts between the two Indic figures evokes a striking parallel within the single figure of Achilles. There is on one hand the Hellenic hero's defiance of military institutions, taking the specific form of his challenge to Agamemnon in *Iliad I* as well as his rejection of the Embassy in *Iliad IX*. On the other hand, his treatment of Priam in *Iliad XXIV* reflects a stance of ultimate military etiquette. Or again, there is his solitary disposition as manifested in his refusal to aid the **phîloi** despite the entreaties of the Embassy. Only after the death of Patroklos, who is to him more **phîlos** than anyone else, is Achilles finally reintegrated with the rest of his **phîloi**.^[1] Before his reintegration into the Männerbund of his **phîloi**,

[2] Achilles is pictured spending his time together with Patroklos in their mutual isolation, as we hear from the retrospective words spoken by the apparition of Patroklos himself:

ou men gar zōoi ge philôn apaneuthen hetairôn
boulas hezomenoi bouleusomen

No longer shall you and I, alive, be planning our plans
as we sit far away from the philoi companions [hetairoi].[3]

XXIII 77-78

Achilles had even expressed the wish that he and Patroklos should be the only Achaeans to survive for the grand event of capturing Troy:

ai gar, Zeu te pater kai Athêniâe kai Apollon,
mête tis oun Trôôn thanaton phugoi, hossoi easi,
mête tis Argeiôn, nôin d' ekdumen olethron,
ophr' oioi Troiês hiera krêdemna luômen

Father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo! If only
not one of all the Trojans could escape destruction,
nor a single one of the Argives, while you and I emerge from the
slaughter,
so that we two alone may break Troy's sacred coronal.

XVI 97-100

Finally, we come to the third contrast. Achilles, like Arjuna, has the most splendid armor, and the lengthy description of his shield in Iliad XVIII (468-608) even entails a distinct narrative form. The tradition that tells of his armor is in fact so strong that the *Iliad* itself reckons with not one but two occasions when Achilles was given a set of armor made by Hephaistos himself (the later occasion at XVIII 468-613, the earlier at XVII 194-197 and XVIII 82-85).[4] As for the image of an Achilles without armor, I find an interesting attestation in Pindar N.3.43-66, a rare survival from the poetic traditions that had told about the boyhood deeds of Achilles.[5] Here we see the young hero killing lions and boars while armed with nothing but a spear

(lines 46-47);[6] in motion he is *as fast as the winds* ([isa t' anemois](#): [line 45](#)), and his speed is such that he even outruns deer, hunting them down without the aid of hunting dogs or traps ([lines 51-52](#)).[7]

§9. Mention of Achilles' wondrous speed brings us back to the theme of **biē** as manifested by wind. The hero's speed is reflected even by the epithet system that adorns him in epic diction. Achilles is in fact the only hero in the *Iliad* who is called **podarkēs** 'relying on his feet' (over 20x),[\[1\]](#) **podas ôkus** 'swift with his feet' (over 30x), and **podôkēs** 'swift-footed' (over 20x).[\[2\]](#) Moreover, his windlike speed is a direct function of his **biē**, as we see from the words directed at Hektor by Athena in disguise:

[êthei'](#), [ê mala dê se biazetai ôkus Achilleus](#),
[astu peri Priamoio posin tacheessi diôkôn](#)

Dear brother, indeed swift Achilles uses biē against you,
as he chases you with swift feet[3] around the city of Priam.

[XXII 229-230](#)

In other heroic traditions as well, **biē** is manifested in the speed of wind. An ideal example is **Iphiklos**, who is also called **biē** + adjective of **Iphi-kleēs** (as at [xi 290](#), 296: [biē Iphiklēiē](#)).[\[4\]](#) This hero's identity, which is the very embodiment of **biē** and its synonym **îs**,[\[5\]](#) is determined predominantly by his windlike speed. He is pictured in Hesiod *fr.* 62MW (quoted by Eustathius 323.42) as racing through a field of grain with such speed that his feet barely touch the tips of the grain stalks. His epithet is **podôkēs** 'swift footed', and he is said to have races with the winds themselves (scholia *ad xi 326* and *Pap.Soc.Ital.* 1173.78-81). He even has a son called **Podarkēs** 'relying on his feet' (Hesiod *fr.* 199.5MW).[\[6\]](#)

§10. The verb **theō** 'run, speed', as we see it applied to the speeding **Iphiklos** ([theen](#): Hesiod *fr.* 62.1MW), also applies to speeding ships ([I 483](#), [ii 429](#), etc.) and to speeding horses ([X 437](#), [XIX 415](#), [XX 227](#), 229).[\[1\]](#) In the case of horses, we may be more specific: their speed is by convention compared directly to the speed of wind, by way of the verb **theō**. At [X 437](#), the horses of Rhesos are "like the winds in speed [[theiein](#)]." At [XIX 415](#), Xanthos, the wondrous horse of Achilles, says that they, the hero's horse

team, could run [[theoimen](#)] as fast as the gust of Zephyros the West Wind, described as the fastest of all. Despite their speed, however, Achilles is fated to die "by **îs** [[iphi](#)], at the hands of a god and a man" ([XIX 417](#)). Finally, at [XX 227](#), the wondrous horses fathered by Boreas the North Wind are described as so swift that their feet barely touch the tips of the grain stalks as they race [[theon](#)] across fields of grain. Also, at [XX 229](#), their feet barely touch the tips of the waves as they race [[theskon](#)] across the surface of the sea. Needless to say, the parallel with the speeding Iphiklos (Hesiod *fr. 62MW*) is striking. I lay such emphasis on the associations of the verb **theô** in Homeric diction because I see an interesting semantic complement in the associations of the adjective derived from **theô**, **thoos** 'swift'. As an epithet, **thoos** applies to Ares the war god himself ([V 430](#), [VIII 215](#), etc.) as well as to occasional warriors ([V 571](#), [XV 585](#), etc.). Moreover, the epithet **Arêithoos** 'swift with Ares' applies in the plural to **aizêoi**, an obscure noun designating *warriors* at [VIII 298/XV 315](#) and *hunters* at [XX 167](#). We are reminded of the Indo-Iranian war god *Vâyu*, whose very name means "Wind"; also of the warrior *Bhîma*, son of *Vâyu*, who runs with the speed of wind.^[2] In the associations of Greek **theô** and **thoos**, we find close parallels to these Indo-Iranian themes: the semantic range of the two words combined conveys a fusion of the elemental and martial functions.^[3]

§11. The form **Arêithoos** recurs as the name of an Arcadian hero in a particularly interesting narrative tradition preserved by the *Iliad*. The context is set as Nestor is reproaching the Achaeans ([neikess](#)"made **neîkos**": [VII 161](#)) because not one of them has yet taken up Hektor's challenge issued to whoever is "best of the Achaeans" ([VII 50](#)). The old man wishes that he were young again ([VII 132-133](#)), as he was at the time of his youthful exploits during a war between the Pylians and the Arcadians ([VII 133-156](#)). The tale of his exploits is concluded with a reiteration by Nestor of his wish that he were as young as he had been at that time:

[eith' hôs hêbôimi, biê de moi empedos eiê](#)

If only I were that young! If only my **biê** had remained as it was!

The narrative framed by Nestor's wish, which took place in those former days when he still had his full **biê**, concerns a duel between Nestor and a gigantic Arcadian hero--a duel that the old man is now contrasting with the present prospect of a duel between Hektor and whoever is "best of the Achaeans." The Arcadian hero was **Ereutha- liôn**, wearing the armor of **Arêithoos**:

toisi d' Ereuthaliôn promos histato, isotheos phôs,
teuche' echôn ômoisin Arêithooio anaktos,
diou Arêithoou, ton epiklêsin korunêtên
andres kiklêskon kallizônoi te gunaikes,
[140] hounek' ar' ou toxoisi machesketo douri te makrôi,
alla sidêreiî korunêi rhêgnuske phalangas.
ton Lukoorgos epephne dolôi, ou ti krateï ge,
steinôpôi en hodôi, hoth' ar' ou korunê hoi olethron
chraisme sidêreiê: prin gar Lukoorgos hypophthas
[145] douri meson peronêsen, ho d' huptios oudei ereisthê:
teuchea d' exenarixe, ta hoi pore chalkeos Arês.
kai ta men autos epeita phorei meta môlon Arêos:
autar epei Lukoorgos eni megaroisin egêra,
dôke d' Ereuthaliôni philôi theraponti phorênai:
[150] tou ho ge teuche' echôn prokalizeto pantas aristous.
hoi de mal' etromeon kai edeidisian, oude tis etlê:
all' eme thumos anêke polutlêmôn polemizein
tharsei hoi: geneîi de neôtatos eskon hapantôn:
kai machomên hoi egô, dôken de moi euchos Athênê.
[155] ton dê mêkiston kai kartiston ktanon andra:
pollos gar tis ekeito parêoros entha kai entha.

Their champion stood forth, **Ereuthaliôn**, a man godlike, wearing upon his shoulders the armor of King **Arêithoos**, **Arêithoos** the brilliant, named the Club Bearer[1] by the men and fair-girdled women of that time, [140] because he fought not with bow and arrows, nor with a long spear, but with a club coated with iron he smashed the army ranks. **Lukoorgos** killed him--with a stratagem, not with kratos--[2]

in a narrow pass, where the iron club could not ward off his destruction, since **Lukoorgos** anticipated him [145] by pinning him through the middle with his spear, and he fell down backwards to the ground.

And he stripped off the armor that brazen Ares had given him.

And from then on he wore the armor himself whenever he went to the mōlos [struggle] of Ares.

But when **Lukoorgos** was growing old in his halls, he gave it to **Ereuthaliōn** to wear, his **philos therapōn**.

[150] So, wearing his armor [of Areithoos], he [Ereuthalion] was challenging all the best to fight him.

But they were all afraid and trembling: no one undertook to do it.

I was the only one, driven to fight by my **thūmos** which was ready to undertake much,

with all its boldness, even though I was the youngest of them all.

I fought him, and Athena gave me fame.[\[3\]](#)

[155] For I killed the biggest and the best man:[\[4\]](#)
he sprawled in his great bulk from here to here.[\[5\]](#)

VII 136-156

Within the limits of my present inquiry, I cannot do justice to the many details of this fascinating narrative, and I content myself by citing only those points that are immediately pertinent. Surely the key point is that **Arēithoos** is an ideal exponent of **biē**, by virtue of both his name and his primary attribute, the club. The themes of war and swiftness inherent in the name **Arēithoos** remind us of the warrior Bhîma, who runs "with the speed of wind" (e.g., *Mahâbhârata* 1.136.19). So also with the theme of the club: Bhîma has the epic reputation, well-known to other warriors, of wielding clubs (e.g., *MBh.* 1.123.40, 4.32.16, 9.57.43).[\[6\]](#) Aside from the comparative evidence, there is also the internal evidence provided by the context: **Arēithoos** was actually killed as an exponent of **biē**, which is to be contrasted with the *stratagem* of the man who killed him, **Lukoorgos**.[\[7\]](#) Furthermore, we may suspect that the Arcadian hero who inherited the armor of **Arēithoos** is also by implication a man of **biē**, since Nestor's whole narrative here is intended as an illustration of the old man's **biē** in the days when he was young.

§12. Let us pursue, then, the idea that **Ereuthaliôn** is a man of **biê**. From local Arcadian traditions, we learn that the young Nestor gave form to his joy over defeating **Ereuthaliôn** by doing a dance without taking off his armor (Ariaithos of Tegea *FGrH* 316.7). As Francis Vian points out,^[1] the dance as it is described corresponds to the formal war dance called the **purrhikhê**.^[2] In fact, what Nestor did corresponds to the basic definition of the **purrhikhê** as we find it in Hesychius (s.v. *purrichizein*): [tēn enoplion orchēsin kai suntonon purrichēn elegon](#) 'the word for energetic dancing in armor was **purrhikhê**'.^[3] This word is actually derived from **purrhos** 'fiery red', which in turn is derived from **pûr** 'fire'.^[4] Vian accordingly links the semantics of **purrhikhê** with the name **Ereuthaliôn**, which must mean something like "red" (cf. verb **ereuthô** 'be red').^[5] What could be more appropriate, he asks, than a "red dance" celebrating a "red warrior"?^[6] We may go considerably further than this formulation. The fact is that **pûr** 'fire' is a prime manifestation of **biê**, on the cosmic level and on the heroic as well.^[7] Moreover, the figures of myth who are especially noted for their **biê** are frequently called by names denoting fire--we are immediately reminded of **Purrhos** himself, as also of the wanton society of warriors known as the **Phleguai**.^[8] The element **phleg-** of **Phleguai** is actually the same root as in **phlox** 'flame', a word that marks the **biê** of Achilles in the *Iliad*.^[9] The point is, the concept of **purrhikhê** is appropriate to the name **Purrhos** as well as to the adjective **purrhos**. In fact, there are traditions that derive the name of the dance from the name of the hero. In Archilochus *fr.* 304W, for example, the **purrhikhê** gets its name because **Purrhos** danced it for joy over his defeat of Eurypylos.^[10] In another tradition used by Lucian (*De saltatione* 9), **Purrhos** not only "invented" the **purrhikhê** but also captured Troy through the power of this dance.^[11] It also bears emphasizing that the dance themes of the **purrhikhê** seem to be connected with fires at specific occasions, such as the cremation of Patroklos^[12] or the holocaust of Troy itself.^[13] In sum, the name of the warrior **Ereuthaliôn** is not motivated by the theme of Nestor's "red dance," nor for that matter is the **purrhikhê** motivated by the name of **Purrhos**. Rather, the names of such heroes as **Ereuthaliôn** and **Purrhos** are motivated by the theme of martial **biê** as manifested in the element of fire--and the same goes for the dance **purrhikhê**. We may even say that the **purrhikhê** is a dramatization of **biê** itself. There is in fact an Arcadian festival called the **Môleia**, which dramatizes a duel between **Ereuthaliôn** and **Lukoorgos**

(scholia *ad* Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.164).[\[14\]](#) In Panhellenic Epos, **môlos Arêos** is combat, 'the struggle of Ares' (as at [VII 147](#); also at [II 401](#), etc.). In local ritual, the **Môleia** is a reenactment of such combat. And again, the reenactment amounts to a dramatization of martial **biê**.[\[15\]](#)

§13. Now that we have surveyed the heroic attributes of wind and fire as conveyed by the themes of **Arêithoos** and **Ereuthaliôn** respectively, we are brought back to our central point of interest, the figure of Achilles, whose **biê** happens to incorporate both of these elemental attributes. So far, the most direct Iliadic example of a traditional parallel between the martial rage of the hero and the thunderstorm of Zeus has been [XXI 520-525](#), where the slaughter of the Trojans by Achilles is being directly compared to the burning of a city by divine agency.[\[1\]](#) But the overt description of divine power as manifested in fire and wind combined is actually to be found elsewhere, as in the Hesiodic description of the ultimate thunderstorm effected by Zeus against the Titans (*Th.* 687-712).[\[2\]](#) Moreover, an overt description of the *hero's* power as manifested in fire and wind is also to be found elsewhere. So far, the most striking instance has been the intervention of Hephaistos on the side of Achilles, where the **phlegma** 'conflagration' of the fire god is being conducted by Zephyros the West Wind and Notos the South Wind ([XXI 334-337](#)).[\[3\]](#) Now we may add the scene where Achilles prays to Boreas the North Wind and Zephyros the West Wind to conduct the fires that will cremate Patroklos ([XXIII 194-198](#)); without the winds, the funeral pyre will not burn ([XXIII 192](#)). As the winds blow, they literally "throw flame," and the word for flame is again **phlox** (*phlog'* *eballon*: [XXIII 217](#)).[\[4\]](#)

§14. In the Cremation Scene, the epiphany of the winds Boreas and Zephyros takes the form of a violent storm ([XXIII 212-215](#)), described as happening over the **pontos** 'sea' ([XXIII 214](#)).[\[1\]](#) This image, as I will attempt to show in the next several pages, relates directly to the figure of Achilles. We begin with a simile. When the Achaeans and their king Agamemnon are afflicted by **penthos** 'grief' and **akhos** 'grief' at [IX 3](#) and 9 respectively, their affliction is directly compared to a violent storm brought about by the winds Boreas and Zephyros ([IX 4-7](#)); again, the storm is described as happening over the **pontos** 'sea' ([IX 4](#)). The **akhos/penthos** of the Achaeans and the corresponding **kratos** of the Trojans are of course

brought about ultimately by the Will of Zeus, which takes the form of Hektor's onslaught.^[2] In the same scene where Diomedes acknowledges that Zeus has given the **kratos** to the Trojans and not to the Achaeans ([XI 317-319](#)),^[3] Hektor is actually being compared to a violently blowing wind that stirs up the **pontos** ([XI 297-298](#)). The expression [*huperaeī isos aellēi*](#) 'equal to a violently blowing wind' at [XI 297](#) follows a parallel simile applied to Hektor at [XI 295](#): [*brotoloigōi isos Arēī*](#) 'equal to Ares, the **loigos** [devastation] of mankind'.^[4]

§15. But the immediate **loigos** 'devastation' afflicting the Achaeans in the *Iliad* is of course not the winds of the **pontos** that threaten to destroy their ships, but the fire of Hektor.^[1] Significantly, even this fire threatens specifically *to destroy the ships of the Achaeans*, and this theme is central to the *Iliad*. The Will of Zeus, to give **kratos** to the Trojans until the Achaeans give Achilles his proper **tîmē** 'honor' ([I 509-510](#)), is of course what Achilles himself prays for in his **mēnis** 'anger'. The hero's prayer in fact specifically entails that the Trojans should prevail *until they reach the ships of the Achaeans* ([I 408-412](#), 559, [II 3-5](#), [XVIII 74-77](#)). In this light, let us consider the first indication of the **algea** 'pains' that the **mēnis** of Achilles inflicted on the Achaeans through the Will of Zeus ([I 1-5](#)). It happens when the Achaeans first begin to be losers in the absence of Achilles: as Zeus is weighing the fates of the two sides, the Trojans are found to be on the winning and the Achaeans on the losing side ([VIII 66-74](#)). Zeus signals the decision with thunder and a **selas** 'flash' of lightning hurled towards the Achaeans, who are panic stricken ([VIII 75-77](#)). As Cedric Whitman remarks, "The lightning flash which dismays the Achaeans is a direct reflex of Achilles' retirement. The action of the god and the inaction of the hero are essentially one."^[2] Until now, the most successful Achaean in battle has been Diomedes, and Zeus hurls at him a special thunderbolt with a terrifying **phlox** 'flame' ([VIII 133-135](#)), forcing the hero to retreat and giving him **akhos** 'grief' ([VIII 147](#)). The thunderings of Zeus are a **sêma** 'signal' of victory for the Trojans ([VIII 170-171](#)), and Hektor straightway recognizes that the Will of Zeus entails the **kûdos** 'glory' of victory for the Trojans and **pêma** 'pain' for the Achaeans ([VIII 175-176](#); recalled at [XII 235-236](#), 255-256).

§16. Now we are ready to examine how the Will of Zeus is translated into the fire of Hektor's onslaught against the Achaean ships. Once Zeus sends the flash of his thunderstroke, "lightning carries the day; fire is on the Trojan side, and burns threateningly in the form of watchfires which at the end of Book VIII dot the plain, and burn throughout the succeeding night."
[1] By the beginning of Book IX and thereafter, the threat of fire from the Trojan side is consistently formalized in one theme: *Hektor will burn the ships of the Achaeans*:

- [IX 76-77](#), 241-242, 347, 435-436, 602, 653
- [XI 666-667](#)
- [XII 198](#), 441
- [XIII 628-629](#)
- [XV 417](#), 420, 597-598, 600, 702, 718-725, 743-744.[2]

In fact, Hektor already realizes his function as threatening fire against the Achaeans' ships when Zeus signals victory for the Trojans by way of his thunderstroke ([VIII 170-171](#)), and the hero actually says then and there to his fellow Trojans:

[all' hote ken dê nêusin epi glaphurêisi genômai,](#)
[mnêmosunê tis epeita puros dêioio genesthô,](#)
[hôs puri nêas eniprêsô, kteinô de kai autous](#)
[Argeious para nêusin atuzomenous hypo kapnou](#)

But when I get to the hollow ships,
let there be some memory in the future[3] of the burning fire,
how I will set the ships on fire and kill
the Argives right by their ships, confounded as they will be by the
smoke.

[VIII 180-183](#)

When the fire of Hektor finally reaches the Achaean ships, the Muses are specially invoked for the telling of this vital event ([XVI 112-113](#)).[4] Zeus himself has been waiting to see the **selas** 'flash' of the first ship to be set on fire ([XV 599-600](#)), which is to be the signal that his Will has been fulfilled, that the **kûdos** 'glory' of victory has been taken away from the Achaeans

and awarded to the Trojans ([XV 592-599](#)). The **selas** 'flash' that marks the final enactment of Zeus' Will must be compared with the **selas** 'flash' of his thunderstroke at [VIII 76](#), which had signaled the beginning of the reverses suffered by the Achaeans.[\[5\]](#) Once the fire of Hektor reaches the ships of the Achaeans, the Will of Zeus is complete: the narrative makes it explicit that Zeus will now shift the **kûdos** 'glory' of victory from the Trojans to the Achaeans ([XV 601-602](#)). Even this reversal is expressed in terms of "driving the Trojans away from the ships" (*ibid.*).

§17. Once the Will of Zeus is complete, the prayer of Achilles in his **mênis** is thereby fulfilled. The hero's prayer, as we have seen, has the same limit as the Will of Zeus: the Trojans should prevail *until they reach the ships of the Achaeans* ([I 408-412](#), 559, [II 3-5](#), [XVIII 74-77](#)). Thus when Achilles himself sees the fire of Hektor reaching the ships of the Achaeans at [XVI 127](#), he sees in effect the ultimate fulfillment of his **mênis**. For Zeus, the **selas** 'flash' of Hektor's fire at [XV 600](#) signals the termination of the Trojan onslaught, which was inaugurated by the **selas** of his own thunderstroke at [VIII 76](#). For Achilles, the same fire at [XVI 122-124](#), called **phlox** 'flame' at 123, signals the end of his wish that the Trojans should reach the ships of the Achaeans and the beginning of his concern that their ships should be saved from the fire of Hektor ([XVI 127-128](#)). The hero now calls upon his substitute, Patroklos, to avert the fiery threat that his own **mênis** had originally brought about:

alla kai hôs, Patrokle, neôn apo loigon amunô̄n
empes' epikrateô̄s, mē dê puros aithomenoio
néas eniprêsô̄si, philon d' apo noston helôntai

Even so, Patroklos, ward off the **loigos** [devastation] from the ships and attack with **kratos**, lest they [the Trojans] burn the ships with blazing fire and take away a safe homecoming [**nostos**].
[\[1\]](#)

[XVI 80-82](#)

Patroklos is a savior of the Achaeans by virtue of temporarily averting *from their ships* the fire of the Trojans:

ek nêôn d' elasen kata d' esbesen aithomenon pur

He drove them [the Trojans] from the ships, and he quenched the blazing fire.

XVI 293

hôs Danaoi nêôn men apôsamenoi dêion pur

Thus the Danaans, having averted from the ships the burning fire ...

XVI 301

Appropriately, Hektor is called phlogi eikelos Hêphaistoio 'like the **phlox** [flame] of Hephaistos' (XVII 88) in the very action where he has killed Patroklos;[2] the word **phlox** in this expression again implies the thunderstroke of Zeus.[3]

§18. To sum up, the **kratos** of the Trojans is signaled by the *fire* of Zeus in a thunderstorm, which is expressed with the same diction that expresses the *fire* of Hektor's onslaught against the ships of the Achaeans. On the other hand, the **kratos** of the Trojans is also signaled by the *wind* of Zeus in a thunderstorm. What is **kratos** for the Trojans is **penthos/akhos** for the Achaeans at IX 3/9, which in turn is compared by way of simile to violent winds raging over the **pontos** 'sea' at IX 4-7.[1] In the same scene where Diomedes acknowledges that Zeus has given the **kratos** to the Trojans (XI 317-319), Hektor is likened to a violent wind raging over the **pontos** (XI 297-298).[2] Just like Hektor's fire, these winds signaling **kratos** are expressed with the same diction that expresses the overall image of a thunderstorm brought by Zeus. As further illustration, I add the following simile describing the Trojans on the offensive:

hoi d' isan argaleôn anemôn atalantoi aellîi,
hê rha th' hupo brontês patros Dios eisi pedonde,
thespesiôi d' homadôi hali misgetai, en de te polla
kumata paphlazonta poluphloisboio thalassês,
kurta phalêrioônta, pro men t' all', autar ep' alla.

And they came, like a gust of the racking winds,
which under the thunderstroke of Father Zeus drives downward
and with gigantic clamor hits the sea, and the many
boiling waves along the length of the roaring sea
bend and whiten to foam in ranks, one upon the other.

XIII 795-799

§19. Since the traditional imagery that marks Hektor's onslaught as the ultimate bane of the Achaeans is appropriate to either the fire or the wind of a thunderstorm, Hektor is presented as a hero who is either "like fire" or "like wind" in Homeric diction. But there is an obvious difference in the Iliadic treatment of these two images. Whereas the threat of fire to the Achaean ships is both figurative and real, the threat of wind is only figurative, conveyed by similes. For the *Iliad*, Hektor's fire is real, even though it is expressed with imagery that suits the celestial fire of thundering Zeus; the threat of the god's winds, however, is real only as a general condition that can be expected to affect the Achaeans as a seafaring society. Still, the point remains that the most direct threat to the Achaeans, on land as well as sea, is the destruction of their ships--expressed in images most appropriate to a thunderstorm of Zeus. On the land, Achilles had it in his power both to bring the ships to the brink of fiery destruction by way of his **mēnis** and then to rescue them from the fire by way of his surrogate Patroklos. On the sea, we may then ask, does Achilles have a power over winds that matches this power that he has over fire when he is on the land?

§20. Since the *Iliad* treats the onslaught of the Trojans as wind *only by way of simile*, we should expect the same mode of expression for any Iliadic treatment of the theme for which we are searching: how Achilles has the power to rescue the Achaean ships from the winds. I submit that I have found this theme in the simile deployed at the very moment Achilles has just put on the new armor made by Hephaistos. As the hero takes hold of his magnificent shield, it gives off a **selas** 'flash' described as follows:

tou d' apaneuthe selas genet' êüte ménês.
hôs d' hot' an ek pontoio selas nautêisi phanêîi
kaiomenoio puros, to te kaietai hupsoth' oresphi
stathmôi en oiopolôi: tous d' ouk ethelontas aellai

ponton ep' ichthuoenta philôn apaneuthe pherousin:
hôs ap' Achillêos sakeos selas aither' hikane kalou daidaleou

From it [the shield] there was a **selas** [flash] from far away, as from the moon,
or as when from out of the **pontos** [sea] a **selas** [flash] appears to sailors,
a flash of blazing fire, and it blazes up above in the mountains,
at a solitary station, while they [the sailors] are being carried along against their will by winds
over the fishy **pontos**, far away from their phloi. So also the **selas** from the beautiful and well-wrought shield of Achilles shot up into the aether.

XIX 374-380

Previously, we have seen the **selas** 'flash' of fire as a signal of destruction for the Achaean ships ([VIII 76, XV 600](#));^[1] here, on the other hand, it is a signal of salvation from the winds. The winds threaten the isolation of the sailors from their **phloi**, while the fire promises reintegration with them. Yet, ironically, the fire of reintegration is itself isolated and remote, much as the hero who is himself signaled by its flame.^[2] The fire at the solitary station overlooking the **pontos** shoots up into the ethereal realms ([XIX 379](#)), and the transcendence of this earthly fire marking Achilles is matched by a multiple comparison with celestial fire: the light from the hero's shield is compared both to this earthly fire and to the light of the moon as well. Moreover, the light from his helmet is then likened to that of a star ([XIX 381-383](#)). And finally, the sight of Achilles fully armed is compared to the sun itself ([XIX 397-398](#)). At this moment, of course, Achilles is about to enter his war in the *Iliad*. Not only in simile but in reality as well, Achilles is emerging as savior of the Achaeans.

§21. For the moment, however, let us restrict our vision to the inner world of the simile, where the fire that is compared to Achilles is pictured as rescuing sailors from the winds that blow over the **pontos** 'sea'. I draw attention in particular to the word **pontos**, which serves as the setting for the dangerous winds in our simile. We have in fact already seen **pontos** as the setting for the winds that are compared to Hektor's onslaught, which in

turn is endangering specifically the Achaean ships ([IX 4-7](#), [XI 297-298](#)).^[1] The theme of danger is actually inherent in **pontos**. From a comparative study of words that are cognate with **pontos** in other Indo-European languages, most notably Indic *pánthāhō*. 'path' and Latin *pōns* 'bridge', Émile Benveniste found that the basic meaning of the word is 'crossing, transition', with an underlying implication that the actual act of *crossing* is at the same time marked by *danger*.^[2] The semantic aspect of crossing is inherent in the place name **Hellē-pontos** 'Crossing of Hellē',^[3] a compound recalling the myth that told how **Phrixos** and **Hellē** crossed the Hellespont by riding on the Ram with the Golden Fleece. The aspect of danger is likewise inherent in the myth itself. During their crossing, Helle drowns, while Phrixos is saved (cf. [Apollodorus 1.9.1](#)).^[4] The contrasting themes of danger and salvation here are reflected formally in the words of Pindar: Phrixos was "rescued out of the **pontos**" by way of the Golden Fleece ([ek pontou saôthê](#): [P.4.161](#)). Even the epithet system of **pontos** in epic diction reflects the word's dangerous aspect. Let us consider the qualifier **ikhthuoeis** 'fishy, fish-swarming' as applied to **pontos** at [XIX 378](#) (also [IX 4!](#))^[5] and to **Hellēspontos** at [IX 360](#). The application of this epithet is motivated not so much by a fanciful striving for picturesque visualizations of the sea, but rather by the sinister implication of dangers lurking beneath a traveling ship. As we survey the collocations of **pontos** with the plain noun for "fish," **ikhthūs**, the ghastly themes of danger become overt:

[ê ton g'. en pontōi phagon ichthues ...](#)

... or the fish devoured him in the **pontos**

[xiv 135](#)

[êe pou en pontōi phagon ichthues ...](#)

... or perhaps the fish devoured him in the **pontos**^[6]

[xxiv 291](#)

§22. We come back to the image of a fire on high that flashes salvation for sailors bedeviled by violent winds as they make their way over the **pontos**

([XIX 374-380](#)). It remains to ask whether there are any other instances, besides the simile of [XIX 374-380](#), where the figure of Achilles is directly associated with such an image. The answer is yes, with an added detail that is not without interest. *The flash of salvation for sailors may emanate from the tomb of Achilles himself, situated on a headland overlooking the Hellespont:*

[amph' autoisi d' epeita megan kai amumona tumbon cheuamen Argeiôn hieros stratos aichmêtaôn aktêi epi prouchousêi, epi platei Hellêspontôi, hôs ken têlephanês ek pontophin andrasin eiê tois hoi nun gegaasi kai hoi metopisthen esontai](#)

Over their bodies [of Achilles and Patroklos] we the sacred army of Argive spearmen piled up a huge and perfect tomb,
on a jutting headland, by the wide **Hellêspontos**,
so that it may be bright from afar for men coming from the **pontos**
both those who are now and those who will be in the future.

[xxiv 80-84](#)

The preoccupation with future generations who will sail the Hellespont is also apparent in the words of Achilles himself, as he lays down instructions for the building of his tomb:

[tumbon d' ou mala pollon egô poneesthai anôga, all' epieikea toion: epeita de kai ton Achaioi eurun th' hupselon te tithe menai, hoi ken emeio deuteroi en nêessi poluklêisi lipêsthe](#)

And I bid you to build a tomb,[1] not a very big one,
only a beautiful one. Later [when Achilles dies and is enshrined with Patroklos], you Achaeans
will make it wide and tall--you who will be left behind me in your
many-benched ships.

[XXIII 245-248](#)

The Achaeans of the future who survive Achilles are "Achaeans in ships." The tomb of Achilles maintains its impact on future generations even in the warped vision of Hektor, who fancies himself as the man who will kill the one who is "best of the Achaeans":[2]

ton de nekun epi nêas eüsselmost apodôsô,
ophra he tarchusôsi karê komoôntes Achaioi,
sêma te hoi cheuôsin epi platei Ellêspontôi.
kai pote tis eipêisi kai opsigonôn anthrôpôn,
nêi poluklêidi pleôn epi oinopa ponton:
'andros men tode sêma palai kataethnêîtos,
hon pot' aristeuonta katektane phaidimos Hektôr!
hôs pote tis ereei: to d' emon kleos ou pot' oleitai.

And I will return his corpse to where the well-benched ships are, so that the long-haired Achaeans may give him a proper funeral and pile up a tomb for him by the wide Hellêspontos. And some day someone from a future generation will say as he is sailing on a many-benched ship over the wine-dark pontos: "This is the tomb of a man who died a long time ago. He was performing his **aristeiâ** when illustrious Hektor killed him." That is what someone will say, and my **kleos** shall never perish.

VII 84-91

Having long ago considered the irony of Hektor's words,[3] we are concerned now only with the vision of Achilles' tomb. The insistent references, here and in the other passages, to a future time beyond the narrative--a time when men will still contemplate the hero's tomb--reveal Achilles as not so much a hero of epic but rather a hero of cult. The future of the narrative is the here-and-now of the Homeric audience, and to them the tomb of Achilles is a matter of religion, reflecting this era's marked preoccupation with hero cults.[4] We recall Iliad XII 2-33, that other isolated instance where the perspective of the narrative switches from the heroic past to the here-and-now of the Homeric audience.[5] There too, the Achaean warriors who fell at Troy are suddenly perceived not as heroes of epic, **hêrôes**, but as heroes of cult, **hêmitheoi** (XII 23).[6]

§23. With his tomb overlooking the Hellespont, Achilles manifests the religious aspects of his essence as hero even within the epic framework of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. His cosmic affinity with fire and with the winds that blow violently over the **pontos** is appropriate to his being the Hero of the Hellespont, whose tomb flashes a light from afar to sailors who pass through it ([xxiv 83](#)).^[1] --and we may compare again the light that is their very salvation from the violent winds of the **pontos** ([XIX 375-378](#)).^[2] Achilles is needed because the danger is there--not only in the semantics of **pontos** but also in the reality of the **Hellēspontos**. The sailing conditions that prevail at the Hellespont have always been most difficult, and I merely cite the following report from our own time:^[3]

It is probably not too much to say that on three days out of four during the sailing season what a landsman would describe as a tearing north-easter is blowing during a good part of the day right down the channel. But this is not all. A ship has not only this headwind on its sails to fight with; it has the opposing current under its keel, at least whenever it is in mid channel. The surplus of the enormous masses of fresh water poured into the Black Sea over the evaporation from its surface is enough to cause a stream; and when this is reinforced by the wind, it becomes a very serious matter for a sailing ship.

§24. The Hellespont, then, is a focal point for the heroic essence of Achilles: Homeric poetry presents his tomb as overlooking its dangerous waters, the setting for violent storms expressed by the same imagery that expresses the hero's cosmic affinity with fire and wind. Moreover, epic diction presents this fire and wind as primarily endangering the ships of the Achaeans, which are conventionally described as being beached on the Hellespont ([XV 233](#), [XVII 432](#), [XVIII 150](#), [XXIII 2](#)). In other words, the Hellespont is also a focal point for the heroic essence of all the Achaeans who came to fight at Troy. Moreover, Troy itself and the Hellespont are presented in epic diction as parallel markers of the place where the Trojan War took place ([XII 30](#), [XXIV 346](#)). It is by sailing down the Hellēsponton ... ichthuoenta 'fish-swarming Hellespont' that Achilles could have left Troy and come back home safely to Phthia ([IX 359-363](#)).^[1] In fact, from the standpoint of a Homeric audience in the eighth or seventh centuries B.C., the site of the Trojan War is significant not so much because of Troy itself

but because of the Hellespont, passage to the Black Sea.^[2] And the prime affinity of Achilles with the Hellespont and the realms to which it leads will survive for centuries, well beyond the classical period. From inscriptions found in the Black Sea area, we know that Achilles still presides over the **pontos** even as late as the second/third centuries A.D.: he is in fact still worshiped as the **Pontarkhēs** 'Ruler of the **Pontos**'.^[3]

§25. The cosmic affinity of Achilles with the **pontos** in general and with the **Hellēspontos** in particular is of course inherited from his mother **Thetis**. We are reminded of the initial Iliadic scene where the solitary figure of a weeping Achilles is pictured gazing out toward the **pontos** ([I.350](#)),^[1] actually praying to the divine Thetis ([I.351-356](#)). The goddess then makes an epiphany that is characteristic of a true Nereid, emerging from the sea like a cloud of mist ([I.357-359](#)). Of course, Thetis was actually born in the **pontos** ([Hesiod Th. 241](#)/244), the granddaughter of **Pontos** incarnate ([Th. 233](#)). In Pindar's *Isthmian* 8, a poem that tells how she would have given birth to a son greater than his father if Zeus or Poseidon had mated with her (lines 31-35), she is actually called **pontian theon** 'goddess of the **pontos**' (line 34). To avoid the danger that the essence of Thetis poses to the cosmic order, the gods get her married off to the mortal Peleus (lines 35-40).^[2] And the son that issues from this marriage of Peleus and Thetis grows up to fulfill a function that is latent in the very word **pontos**:

gephurōse t' Atreïdai-
si noston

... and he [Achilles] bridged a safe homecoming for the sons of Atreus.

Pindar I.8.51

In other words: by dint of his exploits at Troy ([I.8.51-55](#)), Achilles made it possible for the leaders of the Achaeans to traverse the sea and go back home. The semantics of "bridge" here correspond to the semantics of Latin *pōns*, cognate of Greek **pontos**.^[3]

§26. The cosmic powers of Thetis over the **pontos** are evident from local traditions connected with her actual cult. Perhaps the most striking example

is in [Herodotus 7.188-192](#), the account of a shipwreck suffered by the Persian fleet off the coast of Magnesia. The precise location of the shipwreck was an **aktē** 'headland' called **Sêpias** (after **sêpiâ** 'sepia, cuttlefish')--given that name, says Herodotus, because local tradition had it that Thetis was abducted by Peleus at this spot (192). Moreover, the storm that wrecked the ships of the Persians took the form of a violent wind that the local Hellenic population called the **Hellêspontiês** (188). We are reminded that the tomb of Achilles was on an **aktē** 'headland' at the **Hellêspontos** ([xxiv 82](#))![1] After the storm has raged for three days, the Magi of the Persians sing incantations to the wind and *sacrifice to Thetis*, having been informed by the natives of the lore connecting the name **Sêpias** with her and the other Nereids ([Herodotus 7.191](#)).

§27. The place **Sêpias** is connected with Thetis not only because Peleus abducted her from there. In a story that was probably incorporated in the epic *Cypria*, the polymorphous Thetis actually assumes the shape of a **sêpiâ** 'sepia, cuttlefish' at the very moment when Peleus mates with her (scholia *ad Lycophron* 2.175, 178).[1] This identification is most significant in view of the sepia's function as animal of **mêtis** in Greek lore (e.g., **sêpiê dolomêtis** in Oppian *Halieutica* 2.120).[2] As Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant have argued most convincingly, Thetis herself is a figure of **mêtis**.[3] To go into this topic now would be to stray far beyond my line of inquiry, which has been confined mainly to the **biê** of Achilles and its cosmic affinities. Suffice it to say that the **mêtis** of Thetis also relates to the **pontos**. It is a key to the fundamentals of navigation, as embodied in the orienting principles of **Poros** 'charted path [over the sea]' and **Tekmôr** 'goal', which are opposed to the disorienting principle of **Skotos** 'darkness'. These personifications of opposing themes stem from the local cosmogonic traditions of Laconia as preserved in the poetry of Alcman, *fr.* 2P. From this same fragment, we also know that the opposing figures of **Poros/Tekmôr** vs. **Skotos** are presented as fundamental cosmic principles that are transcended by one all-encompassing figure, who is none other than the goddess Thetis![4] I will simply refer to Detienne and Vernant for a discussion of the rich mythology surrounding these related themes of navigation, orientation, and cosmogony,[5] confining myself here to one point: in local traditions such as the Laconian, Thetis figures as a primordial goddess with the most fundamental cosmic powers, and her primacy is

reflected by the utmost reverence that is her due in cult (consider the Laconian practices mentioned by [Pausanias 3.14.4](#)).[\[6\]](#)

§28. My point is that Thetis must by nature also transcend the concept of Achilles, a son who is after all a mere "demigod," **hēmitheos**. Her power over the **pontos** entails the principle of **mêtis**, whereas his power has affinities only with the **biê** of wind and fire.[\[1\]](#) And yet, the heroic irony is that Achilles as son of Thetis could actually be more powerful than Zeus himself, *if only he had been fathered by the god instead of a mortal* ([Pindar I.8.31](#)-35). We have indeed seen that the **ménis** of Achilles creates effects that are parallel to those created by the **biê** of Zeus in a thunderstorm, and that these effects are actually validated by the Will of Zeus. In this sense, Zeus himself is validating the divine potential of the mortal Achilles. Moreover, the theme of the hero's divine potential is actually conjured up by the manner in which the Will of Zeus goes into effect in the *Iliad*. The wind- and firelike devastation from the **ménis** of Achilles is willed by Zeus because Thetis asks for it ([I.407-412](#), 503-510). Moreover, the validation of the hero's essence in the *Iliad* is in return for what Thetis had done for Zeus, when she rescued him from imprisonment by his fellow Olympians ([I.396-406](#)). Here we see a vital link with the theme of the hero's divine potential. Thetis rescued Zeus by summoning **Briareôs** the Hundred-Hander, who then frightened the Olympian rebels away from ever endangering Zeus again ([I.401-406](#)). In this context, the Hundred-Hander is specifically described as [biên hou patros ameinôn](#) 'better in **biê** than his father' ([I.404](#)). The theme is strikingly parallel to what would have been if Zeus or Poseidon had mated with Thetis.

§29. The figure of **Briareôs**, also called **Aigaiôn** ([I.404](#)), is a sort of nightmarish variant of Achilles himself. In the Hesiodic tradition, **Briareôs/Obriareôs**[\[1\]](#) is likewise one of the Hundred-Handers ([Hesiod Th. 147-153](#)). These figures are equal to the Titans themselves in **biê** ([Th. 677-678](#)), and they use their **biê** to defeat the Titans ([Th. 649-650](#)), thus ensuring the **kratos** of Zeus ([Th. 662](#)).[\[2\]](#) Their action in defeating the Titans ([Th. 674-686, 713-719](#)) is in fact a correlate of the victorious action taken by Zeus himself with the **biê** of a cosmic thunderstorm ([Th. 687-712](#)).[\[3\]](#) In other traditions, **Aigaiôn** is likewise a figure who fights against the Titans (*Titanomachy* fr. 2 p. 110 Allen); moreover, he lives in the sea and

was actually fathered by **Pontos** (*ibid.*). On the other hand, still another tradition has **Briareôs** fathered by Poseidon himself (scholia *ad Iliad I 404*). [4] These variant figures **Briareôs** and **Aigaiôn**, [5] synthesized as one figure in *Iliad I 403-404*, conjure up the Iliadic theme of Achilles. He too is an exponent of **biê**; he too has strong affinities with the **pontos**. Here is a hero who would have been better than Poseidon--better than Zeus himself--if either had fathered him. Just as the divine essence of Zeus was validated by the **biê** of **Briareôs/Aigaiôn**, so also the god will now validate in return the heroic essence of Achilles in the *Iliad*. The **biê** of the Hundred-Hander is an antecedent for the **biê** that will mark Achilles. The hero cannot be the best of the gods, but he will be the best of heroes. And in the poetry that all Hellenes must recognize, he will be the best of the Achaeans.

Notes

§1n1. [Ch.19 §§3-4.](#)

§1n2. [Ch.3 §§1-8.](#)

§1n3. Ibid.

§1n4. [Ch.2 §§12-18.](#)

§2n1. For a survey of other such periphrastic naming constructs: Schmitt 1967.109- 111. On **îs** as a synonym of **biē**: [Ch.5 §37](#) and [Ch.12 §9n4](#).

§2n2. There is also an attestation of **biē** + genitive of **Hêra-kleês** at [XVIII 117](#); also at Hesiod *fr.* 1.22MW. Periphrases combining a noun with the genitive of a name are less archaic than those combining a noun with the adjective of a name: Schmitt, p. 110n670. In this light, the preponderance of **biē** + adjective of **Hêra-kleês** over **biē** + genitive of **Hêra-kleês** is itself significant.

§2n3. [Ch.18 §2.](#)

§2n4. On the semantics of this name: [Ch.7 §16n3](#), [Ch.12 §7n3](#), [Ch.14 §12n3](#).

§2n5. The element **îphi-** is the instrumental of **îs**, a synonym of **biē** (cf. n1). For a similar pleonasm in a naming construct, consider [Hesiod Th. 332](#): **îs** + genitive of **biē** + adjective of **Hêra-kleês** (**is ... biēs Hêraklēiēs**).

§2n6. This construct is less archaic not only because of the genitive (n2) but also because the compound name **Patro-kleês** is truncated to **Patroklos** in these combinations ([Patrokloio biēn](#)); see [Ch.6 §12](#) and n1.

§3n1. [Ch.9 §21.](#)

§3n2. [Ch.9 §9.](#)

§3n3. [Ch.9 §§7, 21.](#)

§4n1. Again, [Ch.3§§1-8](#).

§4n2. On these themes see Segal 1971 and Redfield 1975.

§4n3. [Ch.7§22](#).

§4n4. Ibid. Note that the contrast of **biē** and **dikē** in [Hesiod W&D 275](#) is illustrated with the behavior of beasts: since they do not have **dikē** ([W&D 278](#)), they devour each other ([W&D 276-278](#)).

§4n5. On the theme of orientation as it relates to **mêtis**: [§27](#).

§4n6. On **phrazomai** as the verb of **mêtis**: [Ch.3§5n4, §7n2](#).

§4n7. Like the Cyclops, Antiphates too is a cannibal: [x 116](#), 124. Ironically, Odysseus had defeated the Cyclops by way of **mêtis** ([ix 414](#), 422). Note also the word play of **mê tis** 'no one' in [ei ... mê tis se biazetai](#) 'if no one uses **biē** against you' at [ix 410](#) (cf. also [ix 405](#), 406): **mê tis** conjures up **mêtis**!

§4n8. Besides the application of **megalêtōr-** 'great-hearted' to a wide range of warriors in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we may note in particular the combination of this epithet with **Phlegues** at [XIII 302](#) and with the **thûmos** of Achilles as at [IX 629](#) (on which see [Ch.7§22](#)). It is this same **thûmos** that tempts the hero to eat Hektor raw ([XXII 346-347](#)).

§5n1. Also in [Hesiod W&D 518](#).

§5n2. Also in [H.Hermes 115](#).

§5n3. Note also [Xanthoio ... menos](#) 'the **menos** of Xanthos' at [XXI 383](#). The noun **menos**, which like **biē** and **îs** is used to designate the power of heroes as well as to name heroes in periphrastic constructs, also designates the power of the rivers ([XII 18](#)), of the winds ([xix 440](#)), of fire ([VI 182](#)), of the sun itself ([XXIII 190](#)). See Nagy 1974.268-269.

§5n4. The verb **memonen** 'is in a rage' is from the same root *men- that yields **ménis**, a word applied in the *Iliad* to the anger of gods *and* to the

anger of Achilles--exclusively among heroes ([Ch.5§8n2](#)). Note that **menos** can designate 'rage, anger' as well as 'might, power' (*ibid.*).

§6n1. On **menos** as 'might, power' and as 'rage, anger': [§5nn3,4](#).

§6n2. Overall as well, the war between the Titans and the Olympians is settled "by **biê**" ([biêphi](#): *Th.* 882). In fact, the cosmic régime of Zeus and his Olympians is maintained by **Kratos** and **Biê** personified ([Th. 385-401](#)). On the other hand, Zeus had originally achieved his cosmic supremacy by using both **biê** 'might' and **tekhnai** 'artifice' ([Th. 496](#)) against his father Kronos.

§6n3. Cf. the thunderstorm of Zeus at [xii 403-426](#). I draw special attention to the **thuella** 'gust' of wind at [xii 409](#); elsewhere, **thuellai** are described as conduits of fire ([xii 68](#)). Discussion at [Ch.10§41n4](#).

§6n4. §4.

§6n5. Cf. again the thunderstorm at [xii 403-426](#); in this case, the collective anger of the gods (cf. [xii 349](#)) is initiated by Helios ([xii 348-349](#), 376, 377-383) and executed by Zeus ([xii 387-388](#)). On occasion, water rather than fire is the predominant manifestation of a thunderstorm inflicted by Zeus: cf. [XVI 383-393](#).

§6n6. Cf. n3.

§7n1. For a basic work on the Indo-Iranian figure *Vâyu*: Wikander 1941. On the Indo-Iranian forms of Männerbund: Wikander 1938; for the broader standpoint of the Indo-European peoples in general: Dumézil 1969b.

§7n2. Cf. Dumézil 1968.63-64. My citations from the *Mahâbhârata* follow the numbering of the critical (Poona) edition.

§7n3. Wikander 1947, Dumézil 1968 part I.

§7n4. There are still traces of an archaic relationship between *Vâyu* and Indra in the oldest body of Indic literature: see *Rig-Veda* 1.139.1-2, 2.41.1-3, and the commentary by Dumézil, p. 51 (cf. also his p. 58n2).

[**§7n5**](#). Dumézil, pp. 63-65.

[**§8n1**](#). [Ch.6§§12-22](#).

[**§8n2**](#). On the **philoī** as a Männerbund: [Ch.5§27](#).

[**§8n3**](#). Compare the wording that describes the isolation of the Cyclops at [ix 188-189](#).

[**§8n4**](#). [Ch.9§§12\(n1\),33\(n2\)](#).

[**§8n5**](#). In the poet's own words: [legomenon de touto proterōn / epos echō](#) 'I have this **epos** as spoken of those that came before' ([Pindar N.3.52-53](#)). To defend my translation "of" (instead of "by"), I cite the discussion by Schmitt 1967.93-95. (I admit, however, that my interpretation may be undermined by an apparent parallel in [Pindar P.3.80](#); thanks to Mark Griffith.) Compare also the introduction to a tale about another hunter, Meleager, at [IX 524-525 \(Ch.6§12\)](#). The stories about the boyhood of Achilles may be compared with parallel traditions as attested in the Irish evidence; I cite the *Boyhood Deeds of CúChulainn* and the *Boyhood Deeds of Finn*, with translations conveniently available in Cross and Slover 1936.137-152, 360-369. Cf. J. Nagy 1978.

[**§8n6**](#). It is tempting to identify this spear with the **meliē** that Achilles inherited from his father Peleus ([Ch.9§12](#)). From Pindar's words we also hear that Peleus himself, when he was still in his prime, had captured Iolkos "alone, without an army" ([monos aneu stratias: N.3.34](#)).

[**§8n7**](#). On the theme of the hunter in general: Vidal-Naquet 1968(b). On the manner in which Achilles eats his game: [Ch.7§22n5](#). Even within the span of this boyhood narrative, the theme of eventually taming the savage disposition of Achilles is replayed: the Centaur Cheiron is responsible for the upbringing of the young hero, and as such he is described as "augmenting his **thūmos** [of Achilles] in all things that are fitting" ([en armenoisi pasi thumon auxôn: Pindar N.3.58](#)). On the savage **thūmos** of Achilles as replayed in the *Iliad*, see [Ch.7§22](#) (compare Bhîma, who himself commits cannibalism: *Mahâbhârata* 8.61.5 ff., anticipated at

2.61.44-46). Cheiron, by contrast, is "the Centaur who has the most **dikē**" (dikaiotatos Kentaurôn: [XI 832](#)).

§9n1. On the meaning: Chantraine [I 109-110](#).

§9n2. There is one exception, in the *Doloneia*, where Dolon is called **podôkês** ([X 316](#)). I do not count the instances in the plural, where **podôkes** is a conventional epithet for swift horses (e.g., [II 764](#)) and for their charioteers ([XXIII 262](#)).

§9n3. Cf. [XXI 564](#), [XXII 173](#). It is also "with swift feet" that Achilles routs Aeneas from Mount Ida ([XX 189](#)) and confronts the god Apollo himself ([XXII 8](#)). Cf. also [XXI 265](#), where Achilles is described as **podarkês** as he stands up against the river god Xanthos and matches "**biê** against **biê**" (enantibion: [XXI 266](#)).

§9n4. §2.

§9n5. §2n1.

§9n6. In view of such pervasive associations between the themes of windspeed and **îs/biê** in epic diction, I am inclined to reconsider the standard etymology offered for **Îris**: root *uî- 'bend' (e.g., Chantraine [II 468-469](#)). Instead, I propose the root *uî- as in **îs** 'force, might', and I defend this alternative by adducing the traditional epithet system of Iris, which consistently dwells on the theme of windspeed: **podênemos** 'having feet of wind' (exclusive to her, in *Iliad* 10x), **podas ôkea** 'swift with her feet' (exclusive to her, in *Iliad* 9x), **aellopos** 'having feet of wind' (exclusive to her, in *Iliad* 3x). The **îris** is a 'rainbow' at [XVII 547](#) insomuch as it functions as a **teras** 'foreboding sign' *either of war* ([XVII 548](#)) or *of a storm* ([XVII 549](#))--precisely the two themes associated with **îs**!

§10n1. Achilles is compared to such a speeding horse at [XXII 21-24](#) (theēisi at 23). When Achilles is chasing Hektor, the verb **theô** applies to both (theon: [XXII 161](#)).

§10n2. §7.

§10n3. In this connection, we should note that the feminine plural of **thoos** serves as the ubiquitous epithet for the ships of the Achaeans ([I12](#), 371, etc.), which of course have a distinctly martial function in the *Iliad*. We recall that the Battle of the Ships was a **loigos** 'devastation' for the Achaeans, who were to be rescued from Hektor's onslaught by Achilles/Patroklos ([Ch.5§§10-12](#)). What bears emphasizing is that the Achaeans were rescued *because their ships were rescued from Hektor's fire* (cf. [XVI 80-82](#); further discussion at [§§15-20](#)). In this sense, Achilles (/Patroklos) is savior of the Achaeans by being the guardian of their ships (discussion at [§20](#)).

§11n1. Here the poetry itself is actually referring to an epithet as an epithet; then it follows up by explaining why the epithet is appropriate. The same epithet **korunêtēs** 'club-bearer' is applied to Areithoos at [VII 9](#); if we had only the latter attestation, we would never know that the epithet is directly pertinent to the story of this hero.

§11n2. The **kratos** 'superior power' of a warrior takes the form of **biê** 'might': [Ch.5§37](#). In other words, a warrior may have **biê** and still lose without the **kratos** that only Zeus and the Olympians can grant. In this case, Areithoos implicitly has **biê** but has failed to get **kratos** from the gods. On the other hand, Lykoorgos wins by using *stratagem* rather than the *might* of **biê**. Still, he wins without **kratos**, which is properly a requisite of **biê**. (Even the cosmic regime of the Olympians is actually maintained by the combination of **Kratos** and **Biê**-personified: [Hesiod Th. 385-401](#).) The implicit **biê** of Areithoos is in direct contrast with the stratagem of Lykoorgos.

§11n3. On **eûkhos** as 'fame': Muellner 1976.110-112.

§11n4. That is, "the man with the most **kratos**" ([kartiston](#)).

§11n5. Surely the phrasing here calls for an accompanying gesture by the performer.

§11n6. On the context of *MBh.* 4.32.16, see Dumézil 1968.90,92; cf. also his p. 63. In one episode (*MBh.* 3.157.68), Bhîma's club is compared to Indra's bolt, *released with the speed of wind*.

§11n7. For further traces of Areithoos and Lykoorgos in Arcadian lore, see [Pausanias 8.4.10](#), 8.11.4.

§12n1. Vian 1952.242-243.

§12n2. For collections of testimonia on the **purrhikhê** and related dances: Latte 1913.27-63 and Prudhommeau 1965.300-312; also Vian, pp. 249-250. One thing that emerges from Vian's documentation is the association of the **purrhikhê** with the **kômos**; the institution of the **kômos**, as we have seen, is in turn a partial heir to the ideologies of the **lâos** ([Ch.12§§20-21](#)).

§12n3. Cf. also Hephaestion 213.10 Consbruch. On poetry that can be sung to the accompaniment of the **purrhikhê**: Severyns 1938 [II 176](#).

§12n4. Chantraine [III 959-960](#).

§12n5. Vian, p. 242; on the formal relationship of **Ereuthaliôn** and **ereuthô**: Chantraine [II 369](#).

§12n6. Vian, p. 242. Cf. Latte 1913.27-29, who argues that the "red dance" is motivated by the red garb traditionally worn by warriors in war (cf. Aristotle *fr. 542* Rose on the martial **phoinikis** 'red cape' of the Lacedaemonians).

§12n7. §§5-6.

§12n8. [Ch.7§5](#), [Ch.9§10](#).

§12n9. Above, §6.

§12n10. Preserved in Hesychius s.v. purrichizein, in the same article that commenced with the basic definition of the word. For further testimonia relating to Archilochus *fr. 304*, see the scholia to [Pindar P.2.127](#), the scholia (T) to [Iliad XVI 617](#) (= Eustathius 1078.23), and *Etymologicum Magnum* 699.1. Cf. Latte, p. 30.

§12n11. Cf. also Eustathius 1697.1-6 *ad Odyssey xi 505* and the scholia (B) to Hephaestion 299.1 Consbruch, where we hear that the **purrhikhê** originated when **Purrhos** leapt out of the Trojan Horse. On the alternative

tradition that Achilles "invented" the **purrhikhê**: Aristotle *fr. 519* Rose. On the **Trôikon pêdêma** 'Trojan Leap' as a dance form that apparently served to signal the Capture of Troy, see the scholia to [Euripides *Andromache* 1139](#) and to Lycophron 245-246: as Achilles leapt off his ship, he hit the ground with such **biâ** 'force' that he caused a spring to gush forth, which was named **Trôikon pêdêma** (cf. Antimachus *fr. 84* Wyss). On the **Trôikon pêdêma** of Pyrrhos himself at the hour of his death at Delphi, see [Euripides *Andromache* 1139-1140](#). In the same context (verse 1135), the offensive and defensive maneuvers of **Purrhos** are actually designated as **purrhikhai**. On the offensive and defensive motions of the **purrhikhê**: [Plato *Laws* 815a](#). As Borthwick 1967 argues cogently, the death dance of Pyrrhos at Delphi reenacts his own **Trôikon pêdêma** when he captured Troy. Cf. Pindar *Paean* 6.114-115, where Pyrrhos is described as e[p/en]thoronta 'leaping upon' the very altar of Priam in order to kill the old king.

§12n12. Aristotle *fr. 519* Rose (see [Ch.6§30n3](#)).

§12n13. See again n11.

§12n14. Since we have only one source for this information, we cannot know for sure whether we are dealing here with a mistake, in that the duel in the *Iliad* is between Areithoos and Lykoorgos. On the other hand, we may be dealing with a genuine variant. Discussion by Vian, pp. 242-243n8. In either case, the essential thing is the ritualization itself.

§12n15. I would expect the reenactment of the **môlos** 'struggle' to take primarily the form of a dance, with a **mîmêsis** of the maneuvers taken by Lykoorgos against the hero of **biê**. Compare the epic narrative of these maneuvers at [VII 142-145](#) with the dancelike description of a wolf's movements in [Pindar *P.2.83*-85](#). Discussion at [Ch.12§21](#). In terms of "drama," the fate of Ereuthalion/Areithoos is of course "tragic"; as for the **môlos** 'struggle' between Odysseus and **Îros** at [Odyssey xviii 233](#), the fate of the loser, this mock hero of **biê**, is of course "comic." On **Îros** and the theme of **biê** ridiculed: [Ch.12§9n4](#).

§13n1. [§5](#).

§13n2. Again, [§6](#).

§13n3. Again, [§6](#).

§13n4. Cf. [§6](#).

§14n1. The winds then move inland, approaching the pyre of Patroklos ([XXIII 215-216](#)). When their work is done, they take their leave the same way as when they arrived--over the **pontos** ([XXIII 230](#)).

§14n2. [Ch.5§25](#).

§14n3. Again, [Ch.5§25](#).

§14n4. On the parallelism of Ares and the winds: [§10](#).

§15n1. [Ch.5§§10-12](#).

§15n2. Whitman 1958.133-134.

§16n1. Whitman, p. 135.

§16n2. Cf. Whitman, *ibid.*

§16n3. This expression indicates a *poetic* recording of an epic event for audiences of the future: [Ch.1§3n2](#).

§16n4. Again, [Ch.1§3n2](#).

§16n5. [§15](#).

§17n1. Cf. [Ch.5§12](#)

§17n2. He is also [phlogi eikelon](#) 'like a flame' at [XIII 688](#).

§17n3. [§6](#).

§18n1. [§14](#); also [Ch.5§25](#).

§18n2. *Ibid.*

§20n1. §§15, 16.

§20n2. Just as the fire is apaneuthe 'far away' at XIX 374 and the sailors are philôn apaneuthe 'far away from their **philoî**' at XIX 378, so also Achilles and Patroklos are described as philôn apaneuthen hetairôn 'far away from their **philoî** companions [**hetaîroi**]' at XXIII 77; discussion at §8.

§21n1. §§14, 18.

§21n2. Benveniste 1966 [= 1954] 296-298.

§21n3. Benveniste, p. 298.

§21n4. On the name **Phrixos**, see Radermacher 1943.312. I would also adduce VII 63-64, describing the **phrix** 'shudder' brought down on the **pontos** by Zephyros the West Wind as it begins to blow violently, "and the **pontos** becomes black from it [the **phrix**]."

§21n5. On the context of IX 4, see again §§14, 18.

§21n6. Cf. Householder/Nagy 1972.768.

§22n1. The **tumbos** 'tomb', also called **sêma** 'marker' at XXIII 257, is to be located ep' aktês 'on a headland': XXIII 125. Note the parallel with xxiv 82: aktêi epi prouchousêi 'on a jutting headland'.

§22n2. Ch.2§3.

§22n3. Ibid.

§22n4. Ch.6§§28-30. The narrative of the *Iliad* leaves it open, however, whether the Tomb of Achilles is man-made or a natural formation: Ch.9§16n1.

§22n5. Ch.9§§15-16.

§22n6. Ibid. Whereas Thetis calls Achilles exochon hêrôôn 'best of **hêrôes**' in the diction of Panhellenic Epos (XVIII 56), he is called 'best of

hemitheoi' in the diction of the local lyric of Lesbos (Alcaeus 42.13LP: aimitheôn [...], where the word for 'best' is lost in a lacuna).

§23n1. §22.

§23n2. §20.

§23n3. Leaf 1912.358-359.

§24n1. The theme that Achilles would reach home "on the third day" (IX 363) may be connected with the controversial expression tritaion anemon in Pindar N.7.17, which has been variously explained as "third-day's wind" or "third wind." For an introduction to the controversy: Lloyd-Jones 1973.130.

§24n2. On the penetration of the Black Sea in the eighth/seventh centuries B.C.: Drews 1976.

§24n3. For documentation, see Fontenrose 1960.256n37, who also points out that Farnell's 1921 book on Greek hero cults fails to take this epithet into account, even at p. 409n69. For more on Achilles as **Pontarkhês**: Pfister 1909.536-537 and Diehl 1953.

§25n1. Of course the **pontos** here is the **Hellêspontos**.

§25n2. Cf. Iliad XVIII 429-434.

§25n3. On Latin **pôns** and Greek **pontos**, see again Benveniste 1966 [= 1954] 296-298.

§26n1. Cf. also §22n1.

§27n1. Detienne/Vernant 1974.159(n129).

§27n2. For a wealth of further documentation: Detienne/Vernant, pp. 160-164.

§27n3. Detienne/Vernant, pp. 127-164; their argument is well worth reading in its entirety.

§27n4. For a detailed treatment: West 1963, 1967; Detienne/Vernant, pp. 134-138.

§27n5. Detienne/Vernant, pp. 127-164. Cf. also Penwill 1974; much as I admire this article, I disagree with its interpretation of **Poros** and with its separating of Thetis from *thétis 'creation'.

§27n6. Divine figures with local traits that resist Panhellenic systematization tend to be non-Olympian, no matter how important they may be in the local traditions; cf. Rohde [I 39-40](#)n1. So also with Thetis in the Panhellenic Epos of Homeric poetry: she is distinctly non-Olympian and is treated as *socially* inferior to the Olympians (cf. [XX 105-107](#), [XXIV 90-91](#)). But her cosmic powers are clearly recognized ([I 396-406](#), [XVIII 429-434](#)). Cf. Nagy 1974.277-278; also West 1963, 1967 (esp. p. 3).

§28n1. Similarly with the fire god Hephaistos: his fire entails not only **biê** as at [XXI 367](#) but also **mêtis** as at [XXI 355](#), where the god is called **polumêtis** 'whose **mêtis** is manifold'.

§29n1. On the name: West 1966.210.

§29n2. On the theme that **Kratos** and **Biê** maintain the cosmic régime of Zeus, see [Th. 385-401](#) (cf. [§11n2](#)).

§29n3. To put it another way, in defeating the Titans the **biê** of the Hundred-Handers and the **biê** of Zeus are two variants of one theme that are combined in the narrative of the *Theogony*. For more on the **biê** of Zeus: [§6](#) (esp. n2).

§29n4. There seems to be a concession to this variant in *Th.* 817-819; cf. West, p. 210.

§29n5. Solinus 11.6 says that Briareos had a cult at Karystos and Aigaion, at Khalkis.

Appendix

On the Forms *krataiō-* and *Akhaiō-*

§1. Our point of departure is the verse-final form **krataiis/Krataiin** in [*Odyssey xi 597/xii 124*](#).^[1] The conventional explanation, that we have here an **id**-stem feminine built from the adjective **krataio-**, is plagued with difficulties on the formal and functional levels.^[2] I cite in particular the verse-final **â**-stem feminine **krataiē**.^[3] Where an **id**-stem feminine adjective is formed from an **o**-stem adjective, we do not expect the parallel inheritance of an **â**-stem feminine. The clearest example of this restriction is Homeric feminine **thoūris** (never *thoūrē) compared to masculine/neuter **thoūr-os/-on**.^[4] Even in the two most obvious archaic instances where the **id**-stem becomes a substantive, the corresponding **o**-stem adjective retains a two-gender system. Thus: **hēmeris** 'cultivated vine' compared to **hēmer-os/-on** 'tame' and **nukteris** 'bat' compared to **nukter-os/-on** 'nocturnal'.^[5] In fact, the author of an exhaustive monograph on the family of **id**-stems in Greek allows the inclusion of **krataiis** into this family only on condition that it be considered anomalous: in the face of the attested verse-final feminine **krataiē**, he treats **krataiis** as a likely case of "Augenblicksbildung."^[6] What with such difficulties in explaining **krataiis** as an **id**-stem, I offer an alternative morphological explanation, however tentative, that is in accord with the contextual interpretation of [*Odyssey xi 597/xii 124*](#). I propose that in both attestations, **krataiis** is a *bahuvrīhi* adjective originally shaped *kratai-uis 'whose force has **kratos**'.^[7]

§2. The immediate problem with this explanation is the short **i** in the reconstructed compound element *ui-.^[1] The radical form *uî- 'force' survives in Homeric diction as a simplex noun with long ī: nominative **îs** ([XI 668](#), etc.), accusative **în'** (three attestations, all prevocalic: hence probably **în**).^[2] instrumental **î-phi** ([I 38](#), etc.). There is also a cognate noun in Latin, again with long ī: nominative **uîs**, ablative **uî**, and plural nominative/accusative **uîrēs**. The question, then, is whether *ui- can be the variant of *uî- in the posited formation of a *bahuvrīhi* compound *kratai-uis.^[3] There seems to be comparative evidence from Indic, where nouns

ending with radical or even suffixal *i* (nominative singular *-is*) have variants with *i* (nominative singular *-is*) in the second element of *bahuvrīhi* compounds.^[4] As for Greek, nouns other than **îs** that end with radical **î** are practically nonexistent.^[5] On the other hand, nouns ending with suffixal **î** (nominative singular **-is**) are well attested, although the **î** is regularly extended by **-d-** or **-n-** when followed by a vowel in the ending. Hence the genitive of **knêm-îs** is **knêm-îdos**, not ***knêm-íos**; likewise, the genitive of **akt-îs** is **akt-înos**, not ***akt-íos**. In this category too, however, there are definite traces of **i** coexisting with **î**. Consider **knâmides** (*Alcaeus fr. 357.5LP*), **stamînessi** (*Odyssey v 252*), **klâîdes** (*Pindar P.9.39*; compare **klâîdas** at *P.8.4*), etc.^[6]

§3. I pursue the hypothesis further by positing besides ***kratai-ui-** an extended feminine *bahuvrīhi* formation with suffix ***~-'ia-/ia-**, of the type **kûdi-aneira** (from ***kûdi-áner-ia**).^[1] Such a formation may be the actual ancestor of the attested Homeric feminine **krataiê**, under the following two conditions:

1. the suffix ***~-'ia-/ia-** was leveled to ***-ia-**
2. an original combination ***-ui-ie{an,2,10}-** survived as ***-uia-**.

In the case of the second condition, we may note that there are solid parallels for the loss of ***** without trace in the second member of compound formations. Consider Greek **neo-gn-o-** (from ***-gn-ó-**), Indic **á-bhv-a-** (from ***-bhu-o-**), etc.^[2] As for the first condition, there is a clear Homeric example of ***-ia-** leveled from ***~-'ia-/ia-**: the feminine **hetairê** 'companion' results from the leveling of ***hétaira/ hetaírês/etc.** (from ***hétaria/hetariâs/etc.**).^[3] Accordingly, I offer the reconstruction ***krataiuia** for Homeric **krataiê**.

§4. The example of Homeric **hetairê** is instructive in other respects as well. Like **krataiê** (9x, *Iliad* only), it occurs only in verse-final position (**hetairê IX 2**, **hetairên xvii 271**).^[1] Whereas the feminine **hetairê** is rare, the corresponding masculine **hetairo-** 'companion' is common, with more than 250 Homeric occurrences. Moreover, about one-sixth of these are in verse-medial rather than verse-final position. Similarly, masculine **krataio-** occurs in verse-medial (**XI 119**) as well as in verse-final position (**XIII 345**, **xv 242**, **xviii 382**).^[2] The masculine/feminine distribution of

hetaîros/hetairê in Homeric diction is significant for the present argument because the masculine **hetaîros** is actually built from the feminine **hetairê** (which in turn was built from another masculine form, **hetaros**).^[3] In fact, the leveling of feminine *hétaria/hetariâs/etc. to **hetairê/hetairês/etc.** can be attributed directly to the pressure of the new masculine type **hetaîros** upon the old feminine type that had given it shape: **hetaîr-os** requires a new feminine adjunct with stem in *-â-*, so that **hetair-ê** displaces *hétaira. Thus we may even argue that verse-final **hetairê** and verse-final **krataîê** both conceal an earlier *hétaira and *krátaia respectively.^[4]

§5. As a parallel for the accent of **krataio-**, we may cite the unique Homeric instance of masculine **Trôious** 'of Trôs' ([XXIII 291](#): metrically shaped --; epithet of **hippous** 'horses'), apparently built from the feminine visible in **Trôiai** 'Trojan' (see especially [XVI 393](#): metrically shaped --; epithet of **hippoi** 'horses').^[1] We may contrast the oxytone accentuation of this secondary masculine **Trôious** with the barytone of primary masculine **Trôioi** 'of Trôs' ([V 222](#), [VIII 106](#), [XXIII 378](#): metrically shaped -{dn,11r} [[breve]][[breve]] {up,11r}; epithet of **hippoi** 'horses'). The accentuation of disyllabic feminine **Trôiai** 'Trojan' and its declension shows clearly that this word was originally built with a stem in *~-ia-/ -ia-,^[2] as I have also argued in the case of **krataîê**.

§6. My provisional reconstruction of **krataîâ** from *krataiuia- leads to a parallel explanation of **Akhaiâ-**: after loss of laryngeals, I posit *Akhaiuia (from *ui-ie{an,2,10}{-}). Like **hetaîro-**, **krataio-**, and **Trôio-**, the masculine **Akhaio-** would be a secondary formation built from an older feminine. The distribution of **Akhaio-** in Homeric diction is also similar to that of **hetaîro-**: the vast majority of the masculine forms occur in verse-final position, but a distinct minority are verse-medial (again, roughly one-sixth). The two forms even share a distinctive epithet: besides verse-final **euknêmîdes Akhaioi** 'Achaeans with fair greaves' (36x in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), we find verse-final **euknêmî- des hetaîroi** 'companions with fair greaves' (5x in *Odyssey*). Likewise, the distribution of Homeric **Akhaiâ-** is similar to that of **hetairâ-**: it is extremely rare and occurs only in verse-final position: **euplokamîdes Akhaiai** 'Achaean women with fair curls' at [ii 119](#), [xix 542](#). Compare **Trôiai euplokamoi** 'Trojan women with fair curls' at [VI 380](#), 385.^[1]

§7. If indeed *Akhaiuia- is basic to a secondary masculine *Akhaiuió-, the latter's function as an ethnic noun could in turn motivate such feminine derivatives as *Akhaiuíd- 'Achaean' and *Akhaiuâ.^[1] Compare Homeric **Dardanid-** ([XVIII 122](#), etc.) and **Dardaniê** ([XX 216](#)), motivated by the ethnic noun **Dardano-** ([II 701](#), etc.).^[2] The reconstruction *Akhaiuíd- would account for the Homeric feminine **Akhaiid-** ([I 254](#), etc.); as for *Akhaiuâ-, we may find it in the Linear B texts as *a-ka-wi-ja-de*, if indeed this spelling may be interpreted as *Akhaiuâñ-de 'to Achaea'.^[3] We also find it as **Akhaiîê** in [Herodotus 5.61](#) (epithet of Demeter!) and as **Akhaiîês** in Semonides 23.1W.^[4]

§8. I have perhaps taken up too much time in pursuing what must remain merely a formal possibility: that **krataio-** and **Akhaio-** are compounds built with *ui-. The main justification for raising this possibility remains the thematic evidence of **kratos**, **akhos**, **îs**, and other forms related to them. I admit, however, that the purely formal evidence could still take us in many other possible directions.^[1] For the time being, I will simply close with a few comments on some formal difficulties that remain.

- From the evidence of Linear B texts, we see that **palaio-** 'not new' is probably a thematization of **palai** 'near in past time' (see Chadwick 1976). Perhaps **krataio-** is likewise from *kratai plus -o-? But **kratai-** is not attested as an adverb like **palai**. Or perhaps **krataio-** is *krata plus -iiο- (cf. adverb **karta**)? But how to explain the accent of -iiο-?
- A reconstruction like *Akhaiuioí may perhaps not account properly for the Latin borrowing *Achîuî*; of course, the latter form may be simply the reflex of **Akhaioi**, with the *u* serving as hiatus breaker. Compare Latin ~*ig* from **Argeîoi** (the Greek has no **u** before {hp,[v7](#)}-**oi**); this Latin borrowing is attested early (e.g., Plautus), and I see no reason to insist on an analogical insertion of *u* by way of *Achîuî*.
- Another problem is that the reconstruction *Akhaiuió- would fail to account for *Akhaiuó-; this form, however, is not attested to my knowledge in Greek, unless we read the Cypriote spelling *ti-mo-wa-na-ko-to/sa-ka-i-wo-se* (Masson 1961 no. 405.1) as *Timouanaktos Akhaiuos. This reading is vitiated, however, by the necessary assumption that word division has been neglected between the patronymic (genitive) and the hypothetical ethnic (nominative). In fact,

word divisions are faithfully observed in attested Cypriote spelling (word-final *-s* spelled *-se*). Also, there is an actual word divider between *ti-mo-wa-na-ko-to* and *sa-ka-i-wo-se*. Discussion in Masson 1961.69. Besides, etymologically genuine **uo** can be spelled *o* in Cypriote (Thumb/Scherer 1959.160), and we may therefore expect the reverse as well (*uo* for **o**).

- If indeed **Akhaio-** was never **Akhaiuó-*, then an argument could be made for its morphological parallelism with **krataio-** even without positing compound formations.
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Notes

§1n1. See [Ch.5§36](#).

§1n2. See Chantraine [II 579](#) and Risch 1974.144.

§1n3. See [Ch.5§30](#).

§1n4. For a survey of **id**-stem feminines built from **o**-stem adjectives: Meier 1975.46-47.

§1n5. See Kastner 1967.100, who infers that the **i**-stems have here precluded the building of **â**-stems. In compounds, of course, the preclusion of feminine **â**-stems by **i**-stems is a general rule: e.g., **haplo-is** and **haplo-os/-on** (see Meier, pp. 47-50).

§1n6. Meier, p. 47.

§1n7. See again [Ch.5§36](#).

§2n1. For the moment, it is necessary to posit a short **i** simply in order to account for the accentuation of **Krataiin** at [xii 124](#); on which see Wackernagel 1953 [= 1914] 1167-1168 and Meier 1975.47n110.

§2n2. Chantraine [II 469](#).

§2n3. See also the arguments of Bader 1976 for the coexistence of radical *ui- and *uî- (from *ui-{an,2,10}-), which she posits to explain *ui-ro- (as in Latin *uir*, Tocharian A *wir*, Irish *fer*, Old English *wer*, etc.) compared to *uî-ro- (as in Indic *vîra-*, Lithuanian *vyô'ras*, etc.). Note that the Italic languages seem to attest both *ui-ro- (Latin *uir*) and *uî-ro- (Umbrian *ueiro/uiro*; Volscian *couehriu* from *ko-uîriôd); see Bader, pp. 207-208.

§2n4. See Wackernagel 1905.98-99 and 1930.187; compare also the radical element *bhû-* which may be either *-bhû-* or *-bh...-* as the second element of *bahuvrîhi* compounds.

§2n5. In Schwyzer's list ([I 570-571](#)), we find only two other sure examples: **kîs** and **lîs**, neither of which has a definite Indo-European pedigree. {sy,be}

§2n6. See Schwyzer [I 465](#). Consider also nominative singular **ornîs** ([IX 323](#), [XII 218](#)) and **ornis** ([XXIV 219](#)). But here the original stem may have been **-i-**: cf. **orneon** from *órneion.

§3n1. For the cognate type of compound feminine in Indic: Wackernagel/Debrunner 1954.388-390.

§3n2. See KuryEowicz 1968.213. Cf. also Indic feminine *-bhv-i-* besides *bhû-* in compounds (Wackernagel 1930.197 and Wackernagel/Debrunner 1954.387-388).

§3n3. Risch 1974.167; also Chantraine [II 380-381](#).

§4n1. Also verse-final **hetairê** at [H.Herm. 31, 478](#).

§4n2. Also in verse-medial position at [H.Herm. 265, 377](#).

§4n3. Risch 1974.167; Chantraine [II 380-381](#).

§4n4. There is also an interesting comparison to be made on the level of semantics: whereas **krataiê** functions exclusively as the epithet of **Moîra** 'fate' in Homeric diction, **hetairê** at [IX 2](#) is applied to **Phûza**, a supernatural personification of **phûza** 'routing of the enemy'. **Phûza** is the **hetairê** of **Phobos**, personification of **phobos** 'turning and running out of fear'. The

immediate context is that the Trojans are routing the Achaeans ([IX 1-2](#)), who are afflicted by **penthos** ([IX 3](#)).

§5n1. Wackernagel 1953 [= 1914] 1176.

§5n2. Ibid.

§6n1. The form **euplokamîdes** (+ Akhaiai) need not be an ad hoc feminine created on the model of **euknêmîdes** (+ Akhaioi), *pace* Risch 1974.144 and Meier 1975.65. Even if it were so, however, it does not follow that the entire combination of **euplokamîdes** + **Akhaiai** was created on the model of **euknêmîdes** + **Akhaioi**. The two combinations function as a set containing traditional variants, and the possibility remains that the older noun may have attracted the newer epithet.

§7n1. Presumably *-uiid- and *uiíâ- yield *-uid- and *-uíâ-.

§7n2. For this type of derivation: Meier 1975.26-29.

§7n3. See [Ch.5§35](#). For an attempt at establishing a regional distinction in the prehistoric usage of **Akhaiid-** and **Akhaiiâ-**, see Aitchison 1964.

§7n4. West reads **Akhâiê̄s**, which represents an apparent phonological development from **Akhaiiê̄s**: Schmidt 1968.8n24.

§8n1. Alan Nussbaum and Jochem Schindler have kindly offered me their advice on the available evidence. They are of course not to be held accountable for the views I have expressed.