

A linguistic and narratological commentary
on

HOMER'S
CATALOGUE OF HEROINES

LINES *Od.* XI.235-269

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1 Introduction

The Catalogue of Heroines (*Odyssey* XI.225-330) is a rather odd passage in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, which is almost completely devoted to the katabasis. Odysseus descends to the Underworld to talk to the deceased seer Tiresias who has significant information about the homecoming of Odysseus. While in the Underworld, Odysseus gets the chance to see his deceased mother for the last time and talk to his former comrades in arms. Here, the Homeric narrator gives the deceased heroes one last chance to talk about their lives and unfortunate death in an excruciating war. Right between the encounter with Odysseus' mother and the stories of the fallen heroes, Odysseus hears the stories of fourteen Heroines, mothers and wives of fallen heroes. Why do these women get such a prominent place in the katabasis? Why do women get a voice at all in this book? Partly because of these questions, the Catalogue of Heroines is a highly debated passage and early scholars even argued that this Catalogue was a later addition to the *Odyssey*, positing it as a mere imitation of Hesiod's Catalogue of Women. However, more recent scholars have defended the originality of the Catalogue of Heroines in the *Odyssey XI* and unveiled its significant thematic role.

The debate surrounding the Catalogue of Heroines, its originality, and its function, is one of the reasons for analyzing this passage. Additionally, this analysis will delve into the contradictory perspectives on the female tradition and female focalization, as well as the diverse discourses employed within the passage. This analysis will not discuss the entire Catalogue of Heroines, but focuses on the first four heroines: Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, and Megara. The commentary is structured into two sections: a general commentary on the passage as a whole and a line-by-line commentary. The overview of the existing literature addressing the Catalogue of Heroines' function in *Odyssey XI* is discussed in the general commentary. The decision to move this part from the introduction to the general commentary aims to keep the introduction to the point due to the extensive body of literature concerning this passage. The line-by-line commentary focuses on line-specific linguistic and narratological phenomena. For reference, the original Greek text¹ and the translation² are included in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#), respectively.

2 General commentary

The general commentary starts with a short summary of the Catalogue of Heroines ([section 2.1](#)), which is subsequently followed by an exploration of the Catalogue of Heroines' role within the broader context of *Odyssey XI* ([section 2.2](#)). Following these sections, an examination of the diverse narrators and their respective focalization is undertaken ([section 2.3](#)).

2.1 The Catalogue of Heroines in a nutshell

The Tyro passage forms an integral part of what is commonly referred to as the Catalogue of Heroines. This Catalogue comprises not only the narrative of Tyro but also an additional eight

¹ Homer, *Od.* XI.235-269

² The translation is one of my own hands.

genealogies of Heroines³. The genealogies are preceded by an introduction (line 225-234) and are subsequently concluded with a breaking-off formula (line 328-330). The entire passage is marked by a ring composition (line 227-330) (De Jong 2001:281). Each of the genealogical narratives contains one or more of the following elements: (a) the name of the father, (b) the name of the husband, (c) the name of the divine lover, or (d) the name(s) of the children. These elements may be presented as mere mentions or expanded into a narrative. In Table 1, I set out the specific elements that are incorporated within the genealogies of Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, and Megara.

Heroine	Included elements with line numbers			
Tyro	a (236)	b (237)	C (238 – 253)	D (254 – 259)
Antiope	a (260)		c (261)	D (262 – 265)
Alcmene		b (266)	c (268)	d (267)
Megara	a (269)	b (270)		

Table 1. Overview of elements in each genealogy. A minuscule refers to a notion of an element. A majuscule refers to an element expanded into a narrative. This table is based on the overview included in (De Jong 2001:281-282).

2.2 Function of the Catalogue of Heroines in Odyssey XI

As briefly stated in the introduction, a variety of perspectives has been posited regarding the function of the Catalogue of Heroines. I chose to elaborate on two distinct perspectives: the Catalogue of Heroines as imitation of Hesiod's Catalogue of Women ([section 2.2.2](#)) and the Catalogue in the light of the female tradition ([section 2.2.3](#)). Prior to delving into these interpretations, a concise overview of the role of catalogues as narrative components is presented ([section 2.2.1](#)).

2.2.1 Catalogues as a part of the narrative

A Catalogue is defined as “a complete list of items, typically one in alphabetical or other systematic order” (Gaertner 2001:299). Expanding upon this definition, Gaertner defines three fundamental attributes intrinsic to catalogues (Gaertner 2001:299-304). First, catalogues are alien to the narrative proper, contributing to a retardation of the narrative pace. Second, catalogues function as instruments that redirect the reader's focus and adjust their perception of the events, or the characters involved. Third, catalogues carry emphasis. In the context of these foundational attributes, Gaertner posits four utilization scenarios for Catalogues: describing characters of the plot, intensifying the presentation of the events, foreshadowing future events, and enhancing the reader's emotional investment in the narrative.

Gaertner argues that the Catalogue of Heroines aligns with the third utilization scenario, specifically that of foreshadowing future events (Gaertner 2001:304). From his perspective, the different genealogies of the heroines form the genealogy of Odysseus, thereby situating him within a lineage of mythical figures. While I acknowledge this as one of the subfunctions

³ Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, Megara, Epicasta, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Ariadne, and Eriphyle (De Jong 2001:282).

of the Catalogue of Heroines, I plead that its role transcends this singular dimension, as set out in the following sections.

2.2.2 The Catalogue of Heroines and Hesiodic Poems

Various scholars have argued that the Catalogue of Heroines finds its origin in Boeotian catalogue poetry and is merely an interpolation or an addition, likely introduced by the latest reviser of the *Odyssey*.⁴ Some scholars went even further and concluded that the examined passage is an imitation of Hesiod's Catalogue of Women and his Μεγάλαι Ἡοῖαι. These assertions are substantiated by resemblances in both structural form and thematic content.⁵ In the context of the thematic content, it is imperative to observe that the Catalogue of Heroines incorporates narratives concerning six Boeotian heroines⁶ and, furthermore, four of the heroines find inclusion in the catalogues of Hesiod (Page 1955:36-37). A second line of argumentation is formed by the presence of the direct speech attributed to Poseidon, a feature shared by both the Homeric and Hesiodic catalogues.

.....], [.,]..Ποσειδάων λ[τέξεις δ' ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ ἀθανάτων· σὺ δὲ τ' οὐς κομέειν ἀτιταλλέμεναί τε.]. ἔν' ἀγλαὰ τέκνα τεκ- 5]. τ' ἀνεμέσσητοί τε[ὥς εἰπὼν ὃ μὲν αὖτις] ἀγαστόγῳι ἔμ[παλι πόντῳ]ῃ ἔβη οἰκόνδε [νέεσθαι].].	“χαῖρε, γύναι, φιλότῳ περιπλομένου δ' ἐνιαυτοῦ τέξεις ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ 250 ἀθανάτων· σὺ δὲ τοὺς κομέειν ἀτιταλλέμεναί τε. νῦν δ' ἔρχεαι πρὸς δῶμα, καὶ ἴσχεο μῆδ' ὀνομήνης· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοί εἰμι Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων.”
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(a)

(b)

Figure 1. (a) Hesiod, Catalogue of Women, fr. 30
(b) Homer, *Od.* XI.248-252

The second and third lines depicted in Figure 1a are identical to lines 249-250 featured in Figure 1b. The lines are not conventional, and Page therefore argues that one must be an imitation of the other (Page 1955:37-38). A third and last argument presented by Page draws upon Virgil's *Georgics*. One of the lines of *Georgic* 4, *at illum | curate in montis faciem circumstetit unda*⁷, is said to be taken from Hesiod's Catalogue of Women. This line strikingly mirrors line 244 in *Odyssey* XI: κῦμα περιστάθη οὔρεϊ ἴσον, | κυρτωθέν. However, it is premature to conclude that the Catalogue of Heroines is an imitation of the Hesiodic poems based solely on the observed similarities. Hence, I would opt for a more cautious conclusion, following Heubeck (1990:90-91), that both catalogues likely share a common source. An additional argument in favor of this notion stems from the formulaic repetition of forms of ἰδεῖν, which bears a resemblance to the ἦοῖαι-formula in Hesiod's Μεγάλαι Ἡοῖαι (Rutherford 2001: 93-94).

⁴ Cf., among others, Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1884: 147-151); Bowra (1962: 45-46).

⁵ Cf., among others, Page (1955:35-39); Kirk (1962:237); Stanford (1959:389-390).

⁶ Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, Megara, Epicasta, and Chloris.

⁷ Virgil, *Georgic*, 4.360-361

Whether the Catalogue of Heroines can be regarded as an imitation or not, the question persists regarding its narrative function, particularly in the context of a potential later addition. Several scholars contend that the Catalogue lacks a distinct narrative purpose within the broader scope of the *Odyssey*.⁸ De Jong, for instance, states that this passage does not exhibit direct relevance to the central plot of the *Odyssey* (De Jong 2001:282). However, she does state that the catalogue serves to illuminate Odysseus' intellectual curiosity, thereby establishing a connection with one of the utilization scenarios proposed by Gaertner (section 2.2.1).

2.2.3 The Importance of Women

Fortunately, not all scholars concur with the perspective that the Catalogue of Heroines is a mere later addition and an imitation of Hesiod's work. Contemporary scholarship, led by Lilian Doherty, offers a defense of the Catalogue, attributing significant narrative functions to it. Several theories have been advanced regarding the potential function of the Catalogue of Heroines, including the presence of a 'female tradition' in ancient Greece, its pivotal role within Odysseus' homecoming, and its function as an attempt to regulate female creativity. The following section will briefly explain these three theories.

First, Doherty contends that the Catalogue's emphasis on romantic liaisons between mortal women and immortals hints at an audience—both external and, as will be discussed later, internal—longing to partake in tales of courtship idylls (Doherty 2008:75). Doherty argues that the focalization of Tyro (Section 3.1.2) signifies Tyro's agency in her sexual encounter with Poseidon. However, it is noteworthy to mention that Tyro's limited focalization may not suffice as evidence of her ownership in an encounter that bears resemblance to an assault. Doherty counters this argument, dismissing it as a modern perspective imposed on an ancient society (Doherty 2008:69). In conclusion, I concur with Doherty's theory that there may have been a female audience with an appetite for such narratives. Nonetheless, I contend that these tales serve a broader purpose beyond mere entertainment for female spectators.

Doherty's second proposal holds greater credibility. She argues that Odysseus incorporates the Catalogue of Heroines as a gesture to please Arete given her indispensable role in Odysseus' homecoming (Doherty 1991:148). Both Nausicaa (*Od.* VI.303-315) and Athena (*Od.* VII.74-75) underscore the importance of this strategy, and, as evident in *Od.* XI.336-341, Odysseus successfully manages to flatter Arete. In response, she encourages all Phaeacians to bestow him with gifts.

Not all scholars agree that the Catalogue of Heroines portrays women in a positive light. Consequently, they do not posit that the Catalogue was enclosed with the specific intention of pleasing Arete. Wohl argues that the Catalogue of Heroines “can be read as an ideological attempt, through positive and negative exempla, to regulate female creativity in a socially productive way so that women will give birth to heroes, rather than murder kings” (Wohl 1993:37). This viewpoint finds support in the observation that only “virtuous” women receive focalization in *Odyssey XI*, while “wicked” women, such as Clytemnestra, are

⁸ Cf., among others, De Jong (2001: 282); Heubeck (1990: 90-91); Bowra (1962: 45-46).

exclusively characterized through the lens of male narrators. This dichotomy implies that women who fulfill the role of a “good” wife are afforded a voice and agency within the narrative (Wohl 1993:37).

2.3 Narrators and their focalization

De Jong defines focalization as “the viewing of the events of the fabula, a series of events that are either supposed to have taken place [...] or that really have taken place” (De Jong 2014:47). Following this definition, the primary narrator invariably assumes the role of the primary narrator-focalizer. De Jong further categorizes narrator-focalizers based on attributes such as being internal or external, overt or covert, and the level of narration (De Jong 2014:47-56).

In books IX-XII, Odysseus recounts his wanderings to the Phaeacians, stepping into the role of a secondary narrator-focalizer (the Homeric narrator being the primary narrator-focalizer). The focalization of an internal narrator-focalizer is, by definition, overt (De Jong 2014:49). Odysseus recounts his wanderings as if he were actively experiencing them at the very moment, thereby adopting an actorial scenic standpoint (De Jong 2024:61).

In the Catalogue of Heroines, Odysseus describes his encounters with various heroines in the Underworld. It is important to note that none of these heroines narrate their stories using direct speech. In the cases of Tyro and Antiope, their stories are conveyed through indirect discourse (Adema 2017:15-16). The stories of Alcmene and Megara are not even conveyed through indirect discourse; they are merely described by Odysseus. Consequently, Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, and Megara do not explicitly function as narrator-focalizers, as their focalization is embedded within Odysseus' narrative. In the case of Tyro and Antiope, the focalization is explicit, marked with verbs of seeing (De Jong: 2014:50). In the case of Alcmene and Megara, their focalization remains implicit.

Within the Catalogue of Heroines, direct speech is exceptionally scarce, with Poseidon's speech in Tyro's narrative being the sole instance. In this context, Poseidon takes on the role of a tertiary narrator-focalizer. A detailed examination of specific instances of focalization is provided in the line-by-line commentary.

3 Line-by-line commentary

In this section, a detailed examination of specific linguistic and narratological phenomena on a per-sentence basis is undertaken. The line-by-line commentary is structured into three paragraphs: the initial two paragraphs are dedicated to individual heroines, while the final paragraph encompasses a discussion of two heroines. Each paragraph starts with a general description of the encounter with the respective heroine, followed by an analysis of phenomena that are applicable to the entire encounter. Subsequently, the encounter is discussed line by line.

3.1 Tyro

After the emotional conversation with Odysseus' mother, the shades of heroines, sent by Persephone, gather around the blood. Odysseus demonstrates a commitment to interrogate them all. The first heroine he speaks to is Tyro, the daughter of King Salmoneus.

3.1.1 Plot structure

This conversation, the most extensive among all the heroines, can be characterized through the application of the prototypical structure of natural narrative as proposed by Allan and Van der Keur (n.d.: 1). The narrative model developed by Allan and Van der Keur divide a narrative text into seven components: an abstract, an orientation, a complication, a peak, an evaluation, a resolution, and a coda. It is imperative to acknowledge that this framework represents a prototypical structure, and narratives may exhibit variations therefrom. A schematic representation of a plausible structure of this passage is presented in Table 2. It is noteworthy to emphasize the term 'plausible' in recognition of the subjectivity inherent in the segmentation of a narrative into components.

Narrative component	Lines
Abstract	-
Orientation	236 – 240
Complication	241 – 246
Peak	247 – 252
Evaluation	-
Resolution	253 – 259
Coda	-

Table 2. Possible structure of the narrative.

The embedded narrative begins with an Orientation serving the purpose of establishing the narrative's context by introducing its primary participants, temporal and spatial setting, and the circumstances. All these components are present within the Orientation: lines 235/37 introduce Tyro as one of the central characters. Subsequently, lines 239/40 describe both the spatial setting and circumstances, explaining Tyro's affection for the river god Enipeus and her habit of wandering along its banks. The predominant tense employed in the Orientation is the imperfect, accentuating the static nature of the narrative context. The imperfect is repeatedly used within these lines: 236 φάτο, 237 φῆ, and 240 πωλέσκετο. A more detailed explanation of the usage of aorists such as ἴδον and ἡράσσατο, as well as the present tense ἴησι, will be provided in the line-by-line commentary.

After the Orientation, the narrative transitions into the Complication stage, characterized by an abrupt disruption of the initial narrative context. This component is found from lines 241 to 246, narrating Poseidon's deceitful transformation into Enipeus, his seduction of Tyro, and the culmination of their sexual encounter. These events clearly disrupt the narrative's initial circumstances, as Tyro deviates from her usual riverside wanderings to engage in a sexual encounter. Additional markers of the Complication found in this passage include a summary

narrative with the narrative time being shorter than the story time, and the exclusive use of the aorist tense.⁹

The Complication builds to the Peak which starts at line 247. Peaks are typified by scenic narration, direct speech, a different use of particles, the use of the imperfect, and immersion (Allan & Van der Keur n.d.: 11-12). All these characteristics are present in varying degrees in this passage. Narrative time immediately slows down in line 247 where Poseidon takes Tyro by the hand. The narrative's pacing further slows with the inclusion of Poseidon's utterance in direct speech (248 – 252). The different usage of particles is less evident, one may point out that line 245 lacks δέ in the second position, a common feature in most lines, and employs ἄρα. However, this argument alone may not definitively categorize this passage as a Peak. The next feature of the Peak is the frequent use of the imperfect. The only line containing imperfections is the first line of the Peak (247) φῦ, ἔφατο, and ὀνόμαζε. The absence of imperfections in the remaining lines can be ascribed to the direct speech.

In addition to the other characteristics of a Peak, we find elements of immersion within this narrative passage. Allan defines immersion as “the audience’s feeling of being mentally drawn into the world that is represented by the work of art” (Allan 2020:16). He further categorizes immersive features under five general headings: verisimilitude, perspective, transparency of the text, interest and emotional involvement, and the Principle of Minimal Departure. Verisimilitude spans all features that evoke a lifelike mental representation of persons, objects, actions, and their environment. In these lines, there are no representations of persons or objects, but there is a portrayal of an action, specifically, sexual intercourse (line 248, φιλότῃτι).

Another included feature is the scenic narration, as the narrating time approximates narrated time. A third feature is the activation of knowledge schemas. Poseidon's statement that the embrace of immortals is never empty (lines 249/50 ἐπει οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ ἀθανάτων) directly activates the reader's mind to recall myths in which women become pregnant through unions with immortals.

Perspective includes all features that point to the spatio-temporal deictic centre to be within the described scene. Since this is a direct speech, the reader infers that the spatio-temporal deictic center is with Poseidon. This hypothesis is being confirmed in line 252 when Poseidon addresses Tyro with τοί, creating the sensation that the reader is directly communicating with Poseidon.

Transparency of the text implies that the reader's focus is directed toward the storyworld, thus diverting attention from the text itself as a medium. Features that enable transparency include the inclusion of direct speech and the absence of metanarrative elements. Both of these features can be identified in this Peak.

The fourth heading is interest and emotional involvement. This speech is crucial for the main storyline because, until line 252, Tyro is unaware that she has engaged in sexual intercourse

⁹ 241 εἰσαμενος, 242 παρελέξατο, 243 περιστάθη, 244 κυρτωθέν, 244 κρύψεν, 245 λῦσε, 245 ἔχευεν, and 246 ἐτέλεσε.

with Poseidon. This revelation is a surprise for Tyro and captivates the audience, as they now comprehend that Tyro is the mother of demigods.

The last heading is the Principle of Minimal Departure which states that the storyworld should not depart from the 'real world' as we know it. In this Peak we depart slightly from the real world as Tyro is having sexual intercourse with a god in disguise. Nevertheless, the narrative adheres to the 'real world' in the sense that Tyro becomes pregnant through unprotected intercourse. In conclusion, considering this discussion of immersion features, it can be inferred that immersion is indeed present within this Peak.

Besides the linguistic features indicative of a Peak, the content should also align with the author's communicative goals. Arguably, the most crucial line within this Peak is the one in which Poseidon reveals his identity. This significance arises from two primary reasons. Firstly, this marks the initial occasion on which Tyro discloses this narrative to an audience, as she was previously constrained from sharing her secret (251 ἴσχεο μηδ' ὀνομήνης). Throughout her mortal life, she maintained her silence, and only in death does she finally unveil her concealed truth. Secondly, this revelation of Poseidon's involvement establishes the divine lineage of Tyro's offspring.

The final component of the prototypical narrative structure is the Resolution. The Resolution serves the function of concluding the narrative by detailing the outcomes of preceding events (Allan & Van der Keur n.d.:13). It shares commonalities with the Complication in terms of its Narrative Mode and the use of summary narration. Similarly, like the Complication, the singular verb tense utilized is the aorist¹⁰, emphasizing event sequencing and the time of narration is shorter than the narrated time, indicative of summary narrative. In terms of content, the Resolution indeed addresses the consequences of the preceding events, focusing on Tyro and Poseidon's offspring. After this resolution, the narrator, Odysseus, turns directly to the next heroine, Antiope, rendering the presence of a Coda unnecessary in this context.

3.1.2 Focalization

The Tyro passage is an embedded narrative into the Catalogue of Heroines. It is not immediately evident who focalizes this embedded narrative: is it Odysseus, who recollects his conversation with Tyro, or is it Tyro herself who becomes the central focal point? A nuanced examination of the text provides insights into this aspect. The repetition of the verb φημί (236 φάτο and 237 φῆ) suggests that the narrative is Tyro's own personal account, thereby implying a focalization by Tyro (Gazis 2015:73-74). Furthermore, additional evidence supporting Tyro's role as the focalizer can be found in the choice of verbs, such as ἡράσσατο (238) and πωλέσκετο (240), which portray actions in alignment with the heroine's autonomy. This explicit ownership of the narrative situation further reinforces the focalization by Tyro. Notably, the use of the adjective “πολὺ κάλλισος” to describe Enipeus accentuates Tyro's emotional attachment to him, thereby aligning with a focalization by Tyro herself, given her deep affection for Enipeus.

¹⁰ 253 εἰπών, 253 ἐδύσατο, 254 ὑποκθσαμένη, 254 τέκε, 255 γενέσθην, 257 ναῖε, and 258 τέκεν

3.1.3 Tyro: Line by line commentary

235. ἴδον Gazis (2015:71) argues that the frequent use of ἴδεν should not be considered just as formulaic convention. Its principal function is to highlight Odysseus' ability to see in the Hades. This contributes to the veracity of Odysseus' report of the conversations and to the perception of space in the Hades. The place of ἴδεν in the sentence underlines the importance of the word: ἴδεν occurs either at the end of the first hemistich or immediately after (Gazis 2015:71).

236. εὐπατέρειαν ironic choice of words. The father of Tyro, Salmoneus, is known for defying Zeus and being punished for it. Therefore, he can hardly be called a 'good' father. It is possible that Homer draws here a comparison with Helen, the only other woman in Homer called εὐπατέρεια.¹¹

236. ἦ Bakker and Manolissou argue that the anaphoric pronoun is used for anaphoric reference within the narrative rather than using οὗτος (Manolissou 2001:139; Bakker 1999:5). The anaphoric use of οὗτος is reserved for speeches. In this passage, only the anaphoric pronoun is used. Bakker argues that Odysseus is talking about something far and distance and therefore uses the anaphoric pronoun instead of οὗτος (Bakker 1999:5).

The function of ἦ is referent tracking (Buijs & Kroon n.d.:9). Referent tracking can be categorized into three subfunctions: priming, focusing, and (continued) topicalizing (Buijs & Kroon n.d.:11). The initial phase of referent tracking, referred to as priming, serves the purpose of bringing the referent within the mental horizon of the narratee. This is typically accomplished through the use of a noun phrase. An example of this is observed in the preceding line, where the noun phrase Τυρώ εὐπατέρειαν is used to introduce Tyro. In the second stage of reference tracking, anaphoric referential expressions frequently come into play, as is the case here with the use of ἦ.

238. ἡράσσαι' ingressive aorist (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989:92). The ingressive aorist is used to indicate the beginning of a condition. Therefore, this aspect of the aorist focusses less on the boundedness of the situation and more on the consequence of the beginning of the verb. In simpler terms, it produces a static outcome and is, therefore, well-suited for use in an Orientation.

239. ἦσι present. In this line, a present tense is used to make a timeless statement.

241 τῷ see 236. ἦ

241 – 242: these two lines are linked by an integral enjambement. The first sentence, τῷ δ' ἄρα εἰσάμενος γαιήοχος ἐννοσίγαιος, cannot be considered grammatically correct. This enjambement can be explained through the Theme-construction. A Theme is a "constituent specifying an [entity or an, *RJA*] ensemble of entities with respect to which the following *clause* is going to present some relevant information" (Allan 2009:141). Here, γαιήοχος

¹¹ // VI.292 and Od. XXII.227

έννοσίγαιος, functions as the Theme and can be viewed as an information unit with a metrical boundary between the information units.

τῷ δ' ἄρα εἰσάμενος γαιήοχος έννοσίγαιος_{THEME} |
έν προχοῇς ποταμοῦ παρελέξατο δινήεντος·

243. οὐρεῖ ἴσον the inclusion of this simile gives the impression of an eyewitness. Additionally, similes enhance the sense of immersion. Minchin argues that the force of a simile lies in the image conjured up in our minds (Minchin 2001:142). While she may push the argument regarding the potency of a simile to an extreme in her book, I believe it holds true in this straightforward case.

244. κυρτωθέν hapax.

245. ζώνην one of the four man-made objects¹² in the Catalogue of Heroines and the only one within the current passage. A ζώνη is “the lower girdle worn by women just above the hips” (Lidell & Scott n.d.) and is associated with marriage and childbirth. This line is perhaps an interpolation and was already rejected by critics in antiquity (Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989:93). Zenodotus omitted this line and Aristarch rejected it (Van der Valk 1949: 260-261). However, Van der Valk argues that the decent description of a sexual encounter aligns with Homer’s style (Van der Valk 1949: 260-261).

246 – 247: these lines are connected by a periodic enjambement. The first sentence, αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' ἐτέλεσσε θεὸς φιλοτήσια ἔργα, serves as a temporal clause. The second sentence contains the main clause: ἐν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρί, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε. The first sentence functions as a Setting. A Setting is defined as “the time and place coordinates defined explicitly or implicitly in the discourse.” (Allan 2009:147). The first sentence thus defines a certain situation as a base for the following events. Here, the first sentence defines time coordinates for the events in the second sentence.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' ἐτέλεσσε θεὸς φιλοτήσια ἔργα,_{SETTING} |
ἐν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρί, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε.

248 – 249: Once more, these lines exhibit a connection through the use of a periodic enjambment.

χαῖρε, γύναι, φιλότῃτι· περιπλομένου δ' ἐνιαυτοῦ_{SETTING} |
τέξεις ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ

250 τούς see 236. ἦ. In this specific context, τούς refers to Tyro’s future children, introduced in line 249 with a noun phrase (ἀγλαὰ τέκνα).

257 ὁ δέ denotes a topic shift and is positioned as Contrastive Topic (Janse 2020:18).

¹² ζώνη (XI, 245), βρόχος (XI, 278), ἔδνα (XI, 282), and χρυσὸς (XI, 327) (Rachel 2022:107)

258 – 259: these lines are a perfect example of a Tail. A Tail is defined as “[The clause] may be followed by loosely adjoined constituents which add bits of information which may be relevant to a correct understanding of the clause.” (Allan 2009:143). The Tail gives thus additional information about the main clause. It is mostly used if the narrator is not completely sure that the addressee understands the context.

τοὺς δ’ ἑτέρους Κρηθῆι τέκεν βασίλεια γυναικῶν,
Αἴσονά τ’ ἠδὲ Φέρητ’ Ἀμυθάνά θ’ ἱπποχάρμην.^{TAIL}

In the first line, it seems that the narrator assumes that the addressee knows who the other children of Tyro are. In the second line, the narrator starts doubting and decides to add the names of the children, just to be sure. Line 259 therefore functions as a Tail.

3.2 Antiope

The second conversational partner of Odysseus is Antiope, one of the lovers of Zeus, and mother of Amphion and Zethus. This passage is significantly briefer than the Tyro passage, comprising a mere five lines. Due to its brevity, allocating distinct components of the prototypical narrative structure, as outlined by Allan and Van der Keur (n.d.:1), is difficult. There are no clear differences in tense use as the imperfect and aorist are used alternately. Additionally, there is also no difference in narration time or difference in particle use.

Nonetheless vestiges of Antiope's focalization can be discerned within this passage. In line 261, εὔχετο (‘she brags’) suggests that that Antiope takes pride in her intimate encounter with Zeus. Furthermore, the notion of Thebes’ founding can be seen as Antiope’s focalization. The foundation of Thebes is usually ascribed to Cadmus and this alternative story gives rise to controversy. Through the decennia, different interpretations are proposed. The Homeric scholia suggested that Amphion and Zethus were the initial founders of Thebes before it was subsequently destroyed and rebuilt by Cadmus. Apollodorus presented a similar interpretation but in a reversed sequence, suggesting that Cadmus founded Thebes, and Amphion and Zethus reconstructed it (Gazis 2015:79). Stanford (1959:391) contended that Cadmus at least founded the upper city of Thebes. However, these explanations have proven unsatisfactory, leading me to propose a more narratological interpretation, following (Gazis 2015:80). Given that this founding narrative is a part of Antiope's story and is focalized by Antiope, we should analyze it from her perspective. Antiope chooses to remember her sons as the founders of Thebes and even identifies herself as the mother of Thebes' founders. It is worth noting that she appears to possess some knowledge of the alternative founding story, as she mentions that her sons were the πρῶτοι (263) to establish Thebes. However, her decision to exclusively highlight this version of the story grants temporal priority to her narrative.

An open question remains if there is a specific function in the narrative for including the foundation of Thebes, as also the next two heroines, Alcmene and Megara, have connections to Thebes. Larson (2014:420) argues that, based on the geographical associations, there was a positive political and cultural relationship between Boeotia, especially Thebes, and Athens (Larson 2014:420).

3.2.1 Line by line commentary

260. τήν the usage of τήν can be explained in two different ways. Firstly, τήν functions as a discourse deictic marker (Buijs & Kroon n.d.:9), signifying that the narrator refers back to the entirety of the preceding discourse. In this context, the preceding discourse, the narrative of Tyro, becomes part of the common ground between the narrator and the addressee. Secondly, τήν δέ denotes a topic shift. τήν δέ is positioned as Contrastive Topic, with Ἀντιόπην designated as the Given Topic (Janse 2020:19).

260. ἴδον aorist. The presentation of events by the aorist tense induces a chronological interpretation of the events (Van Gils & Nijk n.d.:3). The narrator's use of the aorist tense in this instance points to the progression of narrative time.

261 εὔχετο imperfect. Although the imperfect tense often portrays a situation as ongoing within a specific timeframe (Van Gils & Nijk n.d.:3), in this particular context, the imperfect tense is used to focus attention on what will happen next (Van Gils & Nijk n.d.:4)

262-264: the aorist tenses in these lines (262 ἔτεκεν, 263 ἔκτισαν and 264 πύργωσάν) are used to underline that these events are bounded and completed when the next events occur.

3.3 Alcmene & Megara

The final heroines examined in this section are Alcmene and Megara, respectively mother and wife of Heracles. These two heroines are collectively addressed within a passage spanning five lines, with three lines devoted to Alcmene and two to Megara. It is worth noting that they are introduced into the narrative with only a single instance of the verb “ἴδεῖν”. Sammons makes a valid argument that it was plausible to integrate the mention of both women into a single entry (Sammons 2010:77). Nevertheless, it is apparent that Homer deliberately provides each of them with an independent entry.

In Alcmene's case, her entry is characterized by an emphasis on Heracles' divine lineage (line 268: ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσι Διὸς μέγαλοιο μιγεῖσθαι). Conversely, in Megara's entry, the focus shifts towards Heracles' mortal lineage (line 270: Ἀμφιτρύωνος υἱὸς). This juxtaposition is perhaps a reference to the double nature of Heracles, which is mentioned at the end of *Odyssey XI*.¹³ An alternative interpretation can also be rooted in narratology. It is conceivable that these lines are focalized by Alcmene and Megara themselves. Alcmene, much like Antiope, takes pride in her divine encounter, while Megara strives to recollect Heracles as a mortal man and consciously refrains from references to her tragic marriage (Gazis 2015:80).

Further, these lines do not introduce any narratological elements that have not been previously examined. However, it is worth noting the presence of two integral enjambments, which can be clarified through the application of the Theme construction.

267-268: these lines are linked by an integral enjambment. For the definition of integral enjambment, see lines 241-242. In this specific instance, line 267 (ἦ ῥ' Ἡρακλῆα

¹³ Homer, *Od.* XI.601-626

θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα) presents Herakles, to which the following clause (line 268) is going to present some relevant information, specifically that Herakles is the son of Zeus.

ἦ ῥ' Ἡρακλῆα θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα_{THEME}
γείνατ' ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσι Διὸς μέγαλοιο μιγεῖσα·

269-270: these lines are linked by an integral enjambment. For the definition of integral enjambment, see lines 241-242. In this specific context, line 269 presents Megara, to which the following clause (line 270) is going to present some relevant information, namely, that she was married to Herakles.

καὶ Μεγάρην, Κρείοντος ὑπερθύμοιο θύγατρα_{THEME}
τὴν ἔχεν Ἀμφιτρύωνος υἱὸς μένος αἰὲν ἀτειρής.

4 Conclusion

This concludes the narratological commentary on *Odyssey XI.235-269*. This commentary mainly focused on the narrative function of the Catalogue of Heroines in the *Odyssey* and the focalization of Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, and Megara. The embedded narrative of Tyro has been examined in greater detail compared to the entries of Antiope, Alcmene, and Megara. Smaller linguistic phenomena have been discussed when they were encountered. Two of the most challenging aspects of this commentary included identifying the plot structure of the embedded narrative and categorizing the various enjambments in the text.

The difficulty in determining the plot structure arose from the fact that Allan and Van der Keur's paper offers a prototypical structure, and the distinction between the different components can be somewhat ambiguous. Additionally, classifying the enjambments posed a challenge, as Allan (2009) primarily discusses the more obvious examples in his article. The classification of the less straightforward enjambments proved to be complex, and, as a result, not all enjambments have been included in the analysis.

Despite these challenges, I really enjoyed writing this commentary and delving into the scholarly literature on the Catalogue of Heroines. I was particularly intrigued by the various forms of focalization and how concisely one's perspective can be conveyed within a few words.

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Appendix A

235. “ἔνθ’ ἧ τοι πρώτην Τυρῶ ἴδον εὐπατέρειαν,

ἧ φάτο Σαλμωνῆος ἀμύμονος ἔκγονος εἶναι,

φῆ δὲ Κρηθῆος γυνὴ ἔμμεναι Αἰολίδαο·

ἧ ποταμοῦ ἠράσσατ’ Εὐπιῆος θείοιο,

ὃς πολὺ κάλλιστος ποταμῶν ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἦσι,

240. καὶ ῥ’ ἐπ’ Εὐπιῆος πωλέσκετο καλὰ ῥέεθρα.

τῷ δ’ ἄρα εἰσάμενος γαιήοχος ἐννοσίγαιος

ἐν προχοῆς ποταμοῦ παρελέξατο δινήεντος·

πορφύρεον δ’ ἄρα κῦμα περιστάθη, οὐρεῖ ἴσον,

κυρτωθέν, κρύψεν δὲ θεὸν θνητὴν τε γυναῖκα.

245. λῦσε δὲ παρθενίην ζώνην, κατὰ δ’ ὕπνον ἔχευεν.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ’ ἐτέλεσσε θεὸς φιλοτήσια ἔργα,

ἐν τ’ ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ, ἔπος τ’ ἔφατ’ ἔκ τ’ ὀνόμαζε·

“χαῖρε, γύναι, φιλότῃτι· περιπλομένου δ’ ἐνιαυτοῦ

τέξεις ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ

250. ἀθανάτων· σὺ δὲ τοὺς κομέειν ἀτιταλλέμεναί τε.

νῦν δ' ἔρχευ πρὸς δῶμα, καὶ ἴσχεο μὴδ' ὀνομήνης·

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοί εἰμι Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων·

“ὥς εἰπὼν ὑπὸ πόντον ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα.

ἢ δ' ὑποκυσαμένη Πελὶν τέκε καὶ Νηληϊα,

255. τὼ κρατερὼ θεράποντε Διὸς μέγαλοιο γενέσθην

ἀμφοτέρω· Πελὶς μὲν ἐν εὐρυχόρῳ Ἰαωλκῷ

ναῖε πολύρρηνος, ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἐν Πύλῳ ἡμαθόεντι.

τοὺς δ' ἐτέρους Κρηθῆι τέκεν βασίλεια γυναικῶν,

Αἴσονά τ' ἠδὲ Φέρητ' Ἀμυθάονά θ' ἵππιοχάρμην.

260. “τὴν δὲ μετ' Ἀντιόπην ἴδον, Ἀσωποῖο θύγατρα,

ἣ δὴ καὶ Διὸς εὖχετ' ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσιν ἰαῦσαι,

καὶ ῥ' ἔτεκεν δύο παῖδ', Ἀμφίονά τε Ζῆθόν τε,

οἳ πρῶτοι Θήβης ἔδος ἔκτισαν ἑπταπύλοιο,

πύργωσάν τ', ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν ἀπύργωτόν γ' ἐδύναντο

265. ναιέμεν εὐρύχορον Θήβην, κρατερῶ περ ἔόντε.

“τὴν δὲ μετ' Ἀλκμήνην ἴδον, Ἀμφιτρύωνος ἄκοιτιν,

ἣ ῥ' Ἡρακλῆα θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα

γείνατ' ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσι Διὸς μέγαλοιο μιγεῖσα·

καὶ Μεγάρην, Κρείοντος ὑπερθύμοιο θύγατρα,

270. τὴν ἔχεν Ἀμφιτρύωνος υἱὸς μένος αἰὲν ἀτειρής.

Appendix B

235. There I first saw Tyro, daughter of a noble father,
who said that she was the offspring of the flawless Salmoneus,
and said that she was the wife of Cretheus, son of Aeolus.
She fell in love with the river, divine Enipeus,
who is far the most beautiful of rivers that flows on earth,
240. and she was accustomed to come and go to Enipeus' beautiful waters.
But the earth-embracing Earth-shaker, lay beside her, appearing like him,
in the outpouring of the whirling river.
A purple wave encircled them like a mountain,
curved, and hid the god and the mortal woman.
245. He removed the belt of a virgin and shed a sleep over her.
When the god finished the act of love,
he took her hand, and spoke and called her by her name:
"Be happy, woman, with this love. As soon as the year comes around,
250. you shall bear glorious kids, as the embraces of immortals are never empty.
Tend and cherish them.
Go home now and refrain from mentioning my name!
But know that I am Poseidon, the Earth-Shaker."
So saying, he went into the surging sea.
And, after she conceived, she bore Pelias and Neleus,
255. who became both strong assistants of the great Zeus.
Pelias, rich in sheep, lived in the spacious Iolcus,
and the other in sandy Pylos.
And the queen of women bore to Cretheus others,
Aeson and Phereas and Amythaon, filled with joy of chariot battle.

260. And after her, I saw Antiope, daughter of Asopus,
Who boasted that she had slept in the bent arms of Zeus,
and she bore two kids, Amphion and Zethus,
who first established the seats of seven-gated Thebes,
and build walls, since they could not live unwalled
265. in spacious Thebes, mighty though they were.

And after her, I saw Alcmena, wife of Amphitryon,
she conceived Herakles, the brave-spirited, the lion-hearted,
after she laid in love in the arms of the great Zeus,
and Megara, daughter of the high-spirited Creon,
269. whom Amphitryon's son, always unyielded in force, had to wife.