

HOUTO TOI TODE SEMA PIPHAUSKOMAI: SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS IN THE ODYSSEY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Prologue	1
Chapter 1: Odysseus Πολύτεχνος: Introduction and Methodology	8
Chapter 2: Who is Odysseus?: Ogygia to Phaeacia	42
Chapter 3: Becoming Odysseus (Again): Phaeacia (and Beyond)	98
Chapter 4: Who Odysseus is: Ithaca (and Beyond?)	139
Epilogue	227
Bibliography	229

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that material objects, as particularly solid, tangible, qualified, understandable aspects of human life, have a tendency to accumulate around them complex constellations of interrelated meanings, so that to invoke an object is to evoke any number of its associated connotations. Because of this strong evocative capacity, representations of objects in poetry can function to communicate vast amounts of information elegantly and efficiently. In the Homeric poems, objects are one element of the poet's traditional repertoire of poetic strategies, and I explore the semiotics of poetic objects in Homer and demonstrate their capacity to do poetic work by analyzing how and what objects communicate about Odysseus' identity in the *Odyssey*. In the first chapter, I explain the methodology and interdisciplinary background of my project, and I define my use of the word 'sema' to describe poetically rich objects as a synthesis of John Miles Foley's application of the term to poetic strategies which engage in traditional referentiality and Christopher Tilley's anthropological conception of objects as 'solid metaphor' in which information can be stored and retrieved. Chapters 2-4 proceed along the course of the *Odyssey*'s narrative and analyze objects significant to Odysseus individually and as they are interwoven into the poem's nexus of themes and meaning. Chapter 2 focuses on *Odyssey* Book 5 and Odysseus' disenfranchisement and distance from human civilization at his introduction, followed by his reengagement with his humanity and unique identity as a craftsman by building a boat with which he begins a long process of rebirth, re-initiation, revenge, renewal, and return. In chapter 3 I discuss Odysseus' reentrance into human society mediated by the Phaeacians, and the continuation of initiatory themes on Phaeacia. I also touch briefly on Odysseus' adventure tales by tracing the presence therein of a single object whose unusual usage is specifically Odyssean. In the fourth and final chapter, I discuss Odysseus' reintegration into his own community and household, and the series of recognitions facilitated by objects (such as the bed that Odysseus himself built) that allow him to resume his identity as Ithacan king, hero, husband, father, and son.

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PROLOGUE

The organization of this dissertation warrants some explanation at this point. The first chapter is devoted to introducing the parameters and intentions of the project, as well as the methodological background on which the subsequent philological analysis of the *Odyssey* in chapters 2-4 is founded. Chapter 1 begins with an introduction to the argument that representations of objects in Homer have the capacity to ‘do poetic work’ by communicating significant information, and explains the way that this project is focused through an examination of how and what objects communicate about Odysseus’ identity in the *Odyssey*. Next, I define ‘objects’ for the purposes of this project, and survey Classical scholarship on objects of various sorts and in various capacities. I then survey Classical scholarship on Homeric identity, and define ‘identity’ particularly as it pertains to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. I next turn to research and literature on objects and their role in the conception of the self in human thought from various disciplines to better understand how the Homeric bard (and his audience) perceived objects and utilized them in his poetry. This chapter concludes with an explanation of my use of the word $\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$ to describe how objects can act as meaning-laden poetic strategies through which the poet efficiently and elegantly communicates potentially vast amounts of information.

Chapters 2-4 are organized along the course of the narrative of the *Odyssey*. Because of this organizational choice, some objects are discussed in multiple chapters or throughout the dissertation rather than in a single section. This organization is perhaps less straightforward than a series of single-object case studies, but because my project is an investigation of objects’ roles in Odysseus’ identity, following the poem’s narrative trajectory demonstrates more clearly the ways that objects are used to communicate information about Odysseus over the course of his return home. My intention is to reflect (and maintain) the complex ways that objects, themes,

and meaning are interwoven throughout the poem, rather than pulling at threads and unraveling nuanced webs of interrelations. For instance, Odysseus' unique identity as a craftsman and his craftsmanship are not confined to one episode of the *Odyssey*, but rather they are spread across the poem and occur in various contexts to varied effect. As a result, Odysseus *qua* craftsman and the products of his craft are discussed in every chapter. This prologue seeks to prepare the reader for chapters 2-4 by providing brief outlines of the material covered in each of these chapters.

Chapter 2 spans Books 1-5 of the *Odyssey*, but focuses largely on Book 5 and Odysseus breaking out of stasis and obscurity on Calypso's isle. When we are introduced to Odysseus in Book 5, he is at his most disenfranchised and distant from humanity and home; however, his return is swiftly set in motion, and we learn how Odysseus defines himself and is defined by objects as he begins a long process of rebirth, re-initiation, and renewal of his various roles amongst his community and his family. I begin chapter 2 by briefly discussing Penelope, her veil, and her weaving ruse before turning to Telemachus, who speaks to the Ithacan assembly while holding a king's staff (σκῆπτρον). Telemachus' tentative foray into kingly authority connects him to his father Odysseus, a *bona fide* σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς (σκῆπτρον-bearing king) – but at his introduction Odysseus is far removed from his σκηπτον-bearing days on Ithaca. He will soon revive them, but first he will bear a walking stick (σκῆπτρον) in his disguise as a lowly beggar. However, before Odysseus can don his disguise and infiltrate his suitor-infested house, he must reach Ithaca by crossing the sea.

The second chapter proceeds with a discussion of Odysseus' connections to Hermes: the god of boundary-crossing and male initiation is sent as a messenger to tell Calypso that she must allow Odysseus to cross the boundary of the sea, and thus begin his re-initiation into human society. On Ogygia, the boundaries humans normally experience are conflated and confused;

Odysseus asserts his identity as a human and reengages with his particular identity as a craftsman when he builds a boat with which to cross the sea, and therefore to cross the threshold back into humanity. After a discussion of Odysseus' boat-building and the connections between crafting objects and crafting poetry, I consider the poetic connotations of the destruction of the boat by Poseidon's storm. After losing his boat, Odysseus is saved by Ino-Leucothea, whose aid and anti-drowning veil are involved in his rebirth and re-initiation. When Odysseus finally reaches the shore of Phaeacia, he returns Ino's veil to her and is left naked, unlike any other hero in the Homeric poems. I examine the particular focus on Odysseus' exposed body at this point, then conclude the chapter with Odysseus' final actions in Book 5: in his exposed state, he seeks cover and decides to fashion a makeshift bed for himself under two inosculated trees. As he beds down, Odysseus is compared to a 'seed of fire,' which begins his association with fire and the burning desire for vengeance, and anticipates his ultimate return and triumph.

Chapter 3 covers Books 6-12 of the *Odyssey*. In this chapter I focus on Odysseus' reentrance into human civilization and continued re-initiation into male adulthood through his contact with the Phaeacians, and therefore I devote particular attention to Books 6-8. Since this project is mainly concerned with Odysseus' return to Ithaca, the adventure tales of Books 9-12 are covered briefly through just a few select objects. I begin with the tension and uncertainty of Odysseus' first encounter with a Phaeacian, the nubile young princess Nausicaa, who like Odysseus is on the cusp of initiation into full maturity. Odysseus carefully negotiates his way into her good graces and to safety through a speech in which he compares her to a palm tree. I argue that the palm also covertly communicates Odysseus' own rebirth, re-initiation, and return, and that its connection to Apollo anticipates Odysseus' triumph during the Ithacan festival of Apollo. I next turn to the accumulation of details which suggest that Odysseus is reenacting the

ephebic stage of a Greek man's life, including his hyacinthine hair and discus throw during the Phaeacian games. Before and after his discus throw, Odysseus makes veiled claims to his identity as a king and an epic-heroic warrior on specifically Odyssean terms. The Odyssean heroic ideal is also promoted in Odysseus' tales about his adventures, and I trace the presence in these tales of one particular object, the sword, whose creative usage by Odysseus demonstrates his intellectual shrewdness (μῆτις), rather than physical force (βίη). I also discuss Odysseus' fashioning of an olive wood stake with which to poke out the Cyclops' eye, and end with a discussion of objects associated with the shades of the dead in Hades.

The final chapter, which covers Books 13-24 of the *Odyssey*, is the longest and directly examines Odysseus' long-anticipated return not only to humanity but also to his specific community and household on Ithaca. Here, Odysseus finally engages in a series of recognitions with family members and allies, and resumes and acts out his identity as (Odyssean) king, hero, master, father, husband, and son. First, though, Odysseus must recognize Ithaca itself: he awakes on an unknown shore, just as he did on Phaeacia, and convinces another young person to help him with another speech (the First Cretan Lie) that latently communicates important information about himself. This 'young person' is in actuality Athena, who dispels the mist in which she has shrouded Ithaca and proves the land's identity to Odysseus by pointing out the olive tree and cave of the Nymphs by the harbor. The hero and goddess then conspire together to destroy the hubristic suitors, and Athena disguises Odysseus as an elderly beggar in an act of reversal. A reversal of the norm typically precedes a ritual reaffirmation of the established order such as a New Year festival, which the festival of Apollo on Ithaca appears to be. I consider the deerskin which Odysseus wears in disguise, and in exclusion from society, versus the proper clothing that he needs to reintegrate into his community.

I continue with the clothing Telemachus receives as a gift from Helen, and then examine Odysseus' revelation of his identity to his son at Eumaeus' hut. Odysseus next is recognized by his dog Argus on his way to his house. I analyze the connections between Argus and Odysseus, and Odysseus' assumption of Argus' role as hunter and guardian of the house upon the dog's death, as well as Odysseus' further connections to dogs, and thus to vengeance, in the poem. As Odysseus enters his house, he takes up a dog's typical position on the threshold and leans against the *σταθμός* (column, doorpost), which is described with a formulaic phrase of crafting. I argue that the repeated phrase cues the audience to understand Odysseus as the craftsman of the object in question, and further to understand that the object in question communicates significant information about its crafter. To establish himself on the threshold by the *σταθμός*, though, Odysseus must best the beggar Irus in a fight. Odysseus beats Irus and drags him from the house, and I consider Irus' expulsion as a kind of ritual expulsion of a scapegoat whose removal cleanses a community of pollution and promotes its prosperity.

Next I examine Eurycleia's recognition of Odysseus by his unique scar, and discuss the two narratives about Odysseus' naming and adolescent boar hunt that are prompted by the scar. Next I discuss the bow of Odysseus and the bow contest which Penelope sets as both a bride contest and an identity test. The bow is kept in the storeroom of the house, and I argue that this repository for precious objects is a model for Odysseus: its construction is described with the formulaic phrase for crafting mentioned above (which I believe indicates that Odysseus himself is its crafter), and it contains the material products of Odysseus' creative and acquisitive life. I next turn more specifically to the bow contest, and discuss it in light of comparative evidence which suggests that there is a particularly strong link between skill at archery and good kingship. I end my discussion of the bow with the object's connection to Apollo, and then analyze

Odysseus' victory at the bow contest and victory over the suitors with his bow at the festival of Apollo in terms of victory at athletic competitions held during festivals. Odysseus' triumph in the slaughter of the suitors marks the culmination of the long process of his re-initiation, and it is also the culmination of the spring imagery that begins on Ithaca, as well as the bird imagery that indicates divinely ordained vengeance.

After the slaughter, I discuss Odysseus' bed, which he himself fashioned from a still-rooted olive tree. The bed is further evidence of Odysseus' identity and his identity as a craftsman, and it is linked forward and backward in the narrative of the poem and the chronology of Odysseus' life to various objects. I consider the bed as an object which grounds Odysseus to his home and his Ithacan identity, and as an object in which nature and culture are harmonized in a specifically Odyssean way. The bed serves to prove Odysseus' identity to Penelope, but before the two can reunite on the bed, Odysseus relates to his wife the prophecy he received from Teiresias in the underworld. I analyze the prophecy in this different context, and suggest that here it perhaps has an agricultural and therefore cyclical connotation, much like seasonal Apolline festivals and New Year festivals. The final object by which Odysseus is recognized in the *Odyssey* is definitely agricultural: Odysseus proves his identity to his father Laertes by describing the orchard Laertes gave to him when he was a child. I discuss the orchard's connection to the bed as an object which identifies him and roots him to his homeland, as well as harmonizes nature and culture, and I briefly compare the schism between nature and culture and the differing heroic ideals in the *Iliad*. After this speculative glimpse of the ways my project could be built upon by analyzing Iliadic objects and Iliadic ideals in comparison to Odyssean ones, I conclude this chapter and this dissertation by circling back to where I began in chapter 2: I discuss the final iteration of the story of Penelope's weaving ruse which varies from the other

tellings in a small but significant way. Penelope's web demonstrates the ways that objects can change in the Homeric poems, and the ways that the Homeric poet is able to deftly manipulate polysemous and mutable objects to communicate information crucial to his poem.

CHAPTER 1: Odysseus Πολύτεχνος: Introduction and Methodology

It implies no doctrine of property and worldly goods to observe that objects are important: they can define and substantiate people's roles, their standing, their way of life. And some objects gather...special associations so that they betoken much more than themselves...And in a society which is bound about by roles and ceremonies, like that of the Greeks, symbols of status, gifts, keepsakes, heirlooms, works of art have an especially prominent place as miniature repositories of huge associations.

Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*

Thus does Taplin begin his discussion of objects in Athenian tragedy, but his pithy description of significant objects as “miniature repositories of huge associations” applies off the stage and prior to the 5th century, as well. This project is a study of these miniature repositories and their huge associations specifically in Homeric poetry. I argue that the representation of objects in Homer functions poetically to communicate volumes of complex information to a culturally privy audience: as particularly solid, tangible, qualified, understandable aspects of human life, objects readily accumulate constellations of meanings around them so that to invoke them is to evoke any number of their associated connotations. Because of their strong evocative capacity, (representations of) objects in poetry can act as focal points that initiate and stabilize webs of interwoven meanings that enrich poems as well as poetic traditions; put another way, objects are a kind of vivid hinge around which thought and meaning turn.

One of the things that significant objects can communicate information about is personal identity, both outside of and within a poetic context. This project explores how and what objects communicate about Odysseus' identity as a means of focusing an otherwise immense and nebulous task, and as a way of demonstrating the applications of the kind of sensitive, coherent analyses of poetic objects that this study promotes and exemplifies. While the core of this work is a semiotics of poetic objects, applying the principles of such a semiotics to an investigation of Odysseus' identity shows us how it can inform and enhance our understanding of Homer and

opens the door to further projects of this sort, Homeric and non-Homeric alike. In the interest of keeping the scope coherent and focused, I treat only the objects of the *Odyssey* in this project, which is organized so as to follow the narrative course of the poem; this organizational structure reflects the significant ways that objects appear, reappear, and change in the narrative and express identity cumulatively and progressively. Also, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* demonstrate significantly different poetic agendas, and Odysseus, who is not the central character of the *Iliad*, is represented differently between the two poems. As the proliferation of significant and identifying objects in the *Odyssey* will make clear, the work is particularly concerned with identity – especially that of Odysseus.

Defining ‘objects,’ and objects in Classical scholarship

‘Objects,’ for the purposes of this project, are defined as any and all sorts of things that are represented in poetry (and generally exist outside of poetry) as physical materials. By this definition, objects span a broad continuum of things whose material existence and poetic functions vary considerably: objects include aspects of the natural world, such as plants; things artificially crafted by gods or humans, such as weapons and clothing; animate things, such as animal and human bodies; and spaces and places both natural and defined by human activity.¹

¹ For more on the human body as an object and the body’s place in the Homeric conception of selfhood, see below. Defining objects as all physical materials allows the inclusion of the body, while defining objects as ‘externals’ would exclude the body, at least as Aristotle uses the term: *EN* 1098b12ff. describes the three classes of ‘goods’ as those that are external (ἐκτός), and those of the soul (ψυχή) and of the body (σῶμα). Aristotle’s use of the word ψυχή is inconsistent with its usage in the Homeric poems, which is expounded in Clarke 1999: ch. 3, 5, and 6, and the word σῶμα is never used of living bodies in Homer, only corpses (Clarke 1999: 116-7). Attempting to understand Homeric thought through Aristotle threatens to be anachronistic, and in this study I eschew Platonic, Aristotelian, and other post-Homeric treatments of the human body and ψυχή, and their relations to ‘external’ materials. See Hodder 2012: 7-8 for a distinction between a ‘thing’ and an ‘object’ from an archaeological perspective. See also Heidegger’s seminal book *Being and Time*, and Heidegger 1971: 163-84 for the philosopher’s later essay on ‘the thing’ in modern thought.

Because this definition comprises a staggering amount of material, there is necessarily some cherry picking of the most significant objects in terms of what they communicate about Odysseus' identity. Therefore this project focuses largely on Odysseus' body and particular objects that are owned by Odysseus, especially those which he himself crafted.

Odysseus is the only Homeric hero depicted crafting objects, and as we shall see in the subsequent chapters, his exceptional skill at crafting is a fundamental aspect of his identity. As I discuss below, the objects which he crafts in his capacity as 'Odysseus πολύτεχνος' (much-skilled Odysseus), as I call him, reflect significantly on their crafter in part because of the special relationship between producer and product which renders fashioning a kind of self-fashioning. Additionally, certain objects more closely connected with other people (e.g., Penelope's veil) and natural objects without owners (e.g., wild olive trees) are discussed when particularly relevant. I concentrate mainly on Odysseus' return to his (human) community and home, and thus discuss his adventures as well as divine or magical objects only briefly. Space and place, though essential to Odysseus' identity, are also largely omitted from this study in order to rein in the parameters of my work and to focus on objects that are in general more fathomable and concrete. Similarly, the more economic aspects of Odysseus' estate, such as his livestock, are generally excluded, in part because economics and objects related to economics have enjoyed relatively thorough treatment in the past.

Moses Finley's seminal book *The World of Odysseus* analyzes the *Odyssey* for its insight into the Homeric economy, and has spurred further investigation of the so-called 'gift

economy' in Homer, which incorporates archaeological evidence into the study of Homeric economy and society.² Research on Homer from a more agricultural bent typically occurs in studies of archaic and Classical Greek agriculture more generally, such as Isager and Skydsgaard's introductory text, with Bakker's book *The Meaning of Meat and the Structure of the Odyssey* marking a recent addition to the scholarship that focuses specifically on Homeric poetry.³ Bakker's book is one of a number of studies that address a single type of object in Homer: e.g., Bakker addresses Homeric meat, Mueller exemplifies discussions of Homeric weaving and textiles, and Bershadsky provides illuminating insight on Homeric shields.⁴ This project takes the different tack of analyzing the myriad objects connected to a single person, which yields a comprehensive portrait of the ways that the poet engages with and uses objects of all kinds to do poetic work, filtered and focalized through studying their application to the depiction of the central figure of the *Odyssey*.⁵

² Finley 1954. Examples of literature on the Homeric economy include Morris 1986 (who discusses the early Greek economy and uses the Homeric poems in tandem with the archaeological record as his evidence), Hooker 1989 (who examines the role of gift-giving in the Homeric economy, which he considers from a literary rather than anthropological stand-point), and van Wees 1992 (who explores Homeric society at large as a reflection of archaic Greek society). See also Gernet 1981: 73-111 on premonetary value in (historical and mythical) archaic Greece as a kind of religious awe.

³ Isager & Skydsgaard 1992; Bakker 2013.

⁴ Bakker 2013 deftly examines the centrality of the consumption of meat as well as related notions of sacrifice and feasting in terms of narrative theme and organization of the *Odyssey*, and provides in an epilogue a succinct explanation of his poetic methodology (described as "interformularity"; see also ch. 2), but is less explicit about the way he incorporates anthropological, agricultural, etc. evidence into his arguments (see ch. 3, esp. 48ff.). Mueller 2010 discusses weaving a web in Homer as a commemorative act akin to poetry by which women communicate with one another and produce their own feminine κλέος. See also Pantelia 1993 on the poetic significance of spinning versus weaving in Homer. For numerous sources specifically on weaving as a metaphor for poetic song, see ch. 2 below. On Bershadsky 2010, see below.

⁵ I argue that a polytropic analysis of many objects is appropriate for the man of manyness, Odysseus πολύτροπος, and his poem, the poetically polytropic *Odyssey*, more on which below.

Objects at large in Homeric poetry have previously received some scholarly attention, but mainly from an historical or archaeological perspective rather than a poetic one. Lorimer's tome *Homer and the Monuments* approaches objects in the Homeric poems as keys to understanding how such objects existed in archaic Greece.⁶ More recently, Crielaard and Grethlein analyze not only the existence but also the social functions of objects that appear in Homer, but mainly as they pertain to an archaic Greek society whose historicity is assumed by the evidence of the Homeric poems.⁷ However, Grethlein does acknowledge that all conclusions drawn about such a society are tentative because poetry "refract[s] reality in complex ways."⁸ This poetic refraction is central to my approach to the *Odyssey* and this project, and informs my view of Homeric objects as conduits of vast and varied meaning, though I believe that the significance of poetic representations of objects stems from historical objects' capacity for meaning.

While Crielaard and Grethlein's articles treat objects in Homeric poetry from a different perspective and with different intentions than I, their work on objects' cultural biographies and genealogies of ownership are influential on my work, as discussed below. Similarly influential are numerous scholarly texts that address various objects in Homer with a view to their poetic or symbolic function. These include a seminal chapter in Griffin's *Homer on Life and Death* which explores the significance of select objects in the Homeric poems, as well as bits and pieces on particular objects spread throughout book-length studies of the poems and more narrowly focused articles.⁹ For instance, the bed of Odysseus has received abundant scholarly attention

⁶ Lorimer 1950.

⁷ Crielaard 2003 and Grethlein 2008, on both of whom see below.

⁸ Grethlein 2008: 43.

⁹ Griffin 1980: ch. 1 argues that the poet achieves emotion and pathos, and communicates his characters' essential natures and relationships by using symbolically significant objects, and says that "all this is by no means simply a matter of literary style, but arises from the way the Homeric poet sees the world itself. Symbolic and significant objects and gestures are a

for centuries in various contexts: in his aforementioned chapter on significant objects, Griffin calls the episode of the bed, as well as that of the bow and of Argus, each “a symbolic vignette of the meaning of [Odysseus’] absence.”¹⁰ The bed often receives brief mention in studies of the *Odyssey* as a whole such as Ahl and Roisman’s book on Homeric rhetoric, and analyses of Odysseus’ wife and bed-fellow Penelope, such as Heitman’s book, usually discuss the bed’s role in the pair’s relationship.¹¹ Indeed, scholarship on marriage and marital fidelity in the *Odyssey*, such as Zeitlin’s essay “Figuring Fidelity in Homer’s *Odyssey*,” analyzes the bed as a representation of the central couple’s marriage and (in particular, Penelope’s) faithfulness.¹²

Each of these has been a valuable addition to the scholarship, but none treats objects to the extent

development of those which were originally conceived as magical and charged with supernatural power. Sometimes it is not possible to distinguish the two at all clearly,” (24). Griffin is not especially methodologically rigorous in this particular book (in his introduction he simply says, in response to the rise of oral poetics in Homeric scholarship, that he ascribes to “aesthetic methods not essentially or radically new,” and approaches “the epics in a manner not wholly different from the way in which the Greeks themselves approached them,” (xiv)), but his argument is not entirely different from my own. However, I replace the somewhat vague term ‘magical’ with ‘psychological essentialism’ (on which see below), and argue that the poet mined ontological beliefs about objects for the poetic purposes they might serve.

¹⁰ Griffin 1980: 12-3 also calls the bed “the vital key which allows husband and wife to find each other at last...unmoved and unrevealed to any outsiders, it embodies the solidity and wholeness of [Odysseus and Penelope’s] union.”

¹¹ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 266ff. address the bed by discussing the rhetoric of Penelope’s test of the bed, which they call a “rhetorical exercise in mendacity” as well as a “rhetorical demonstration of [Penelope’s] fidelity to [Odysseus].” Heitman 2005 champions Penelope’s centrality to the plot of the *Odyssey* and evaluates her from the assumption that she “offers strikingly accurate and straightforward accounts of her own feelings, intentions, and beliefs.” Like Ahl & Roisman, Heitman also discusses the bed through the test of the bed, and argues that Odysseus passes the test when he demonstrates that he continues to hold the values he held when he made the bed to be a “symbol of marriage as well as a symbol of the stability of the *oikos*,” (98-100).

¹² Zeitlin 1996: ch. 1 adds to a long tradition of scholarship on the episode of the bed by grounding the scene “more fully in the cultural context as well as the narrative, semantic, and symbolic structures of the poem itself.” Zeitlin sensitively analyzes the bed as a double-sided sign-symbol of the entwined yet divergent issues of Odysseus’ identity and Penelope’s fidelity.

and scope that this project does, and none establishes a specific methodology through which to address the poetic functions of representations of objects in Homer.¹³

Objects have been the subjects of sustained, focused philological analysis, but in other texts and areas of Classical antiquity besides Homeric poetry. Articles by Whitley exemplify complex, nuanced archaeological perspectives on the material culture of archaic and Classical Greece.¹⁴ Various Greek texts have been mined for significant objects in studies such as an essay by Bassi, which ranges from archaic poetry to historiography.¹⁵ While the historiography Bassi discusses is that of Thucydides, the numerous objects and their varied functions in Herodotus' *Histories* have received attention in the works of Dewald and Hollmann.¹⁶ Even

¹³ Griffin hints in his chapter on objects about his methodological assumptions without going into much detail. Zeitlin's brief remarks on objects in Homer are brilliant and pithy: "Generally speaking, all material objects in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are invested with psychological and cognitive resonances that go far beyond the details of their mere description to exemplify a typical and indispensable mode of charting social and mental experience...objects are often talismans of power: they can be circulated and exchanged, transmitted as precious heirlooms, endowed with certain active values that inhere in the genealogy of their ownership as well as in the beauty of their manufacture," (19-20). These observations generally square with my own observations and arguments on the role of objects in the Homeric poems, as this chapter makes clear. However, because Zeitlin's project is an essay focused on a single object, she has little opportunity to expand on her comments, and does not incorporate object studies from other disciplines into her work. For more on Odysseus' bed, see ch. 4 below.

¹⁴ Whitley 2002 examines the differences between 'weapon burial rituals' in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in the Aegean and, drawing on the work in anthropology on object biographies, argues that objects included in 'warrior graves' provide us with clues about changing social ideals and identities. Whitley 2013 argues that Homeric objects are "entangled" (with people and narratives) and are agents (*sensu* Gell 1998) which act on their own, either independently or as extensions of people, and that this form of material entanglement is a product of the Iron Age, rather than the Bronze Age. On Homeric/Iron Age human-object entanglements, see also Whitley 2016.

¹⁵ Bassi 2005 analyzes narrativized objects from Hesiod's *Theogony*, Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and Thucydides' *History* to understand the temporal significance of objects in ancient Greek texts across genres and periods, and argues that objects in narrative prefigure, rather than reflect, beliefs about objects in the world and how they function as metonyms for past events.

¹⁶ Dewald 1993 examines the relationship between material objects and their meanings within the larger narrative of Herodotus' *Histories*, and demonstrates that objects' meanings are mutable and contextual, and sometimes multiple, ambiguous, or misleading; objects' potent

riper for object studies has been Classical Athenian tragedy, in which the physically extant objects of material culture intersect with the appropriation of such objects for poetic use.

Taplin's book, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, is an early example of a line of scholarly inquiry that remains active today: the publication of Mueller's book coincided with a panel at the 2016 annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies entitled 'Objects and Affect: the Materialities of Greek Drama.'¹⁷ Such non-Homeric object studies inform my project and my approach to it, but do not overlap with my work. However, they demonstrate the applicability of my arguments concerning the poetic function of objects to other ancient Greek literature (which was subsequent to the Homeric poems, and heavily influenced by them), and indicate an ongoing interest in the close analysis of objects in Classical scholarship, which is currently enjoying particular favor.

Defining 'identity,' and identity in Classical scholarship

Although close analysis of objects is the primary intent of this project, the analysis is focused through the lens of an investigation into Odysseus' identity in the *Odyssey*. Since Homeric identity and selfhood are the focalizing elements through which I explore the poetics of objects, it is necessary here to explain my position on the long-standing debate over the nature of identity in Homer. The scholarship on Homeric identity and related areas such as the philosophy

capacity for meaning requires both Herodotus and us to 'read' them with canny attentiveness to their possibilities. Hollmann 2011 investigates the numerous types of sign systems in the *Histories* (including, but not limited to, objects (discussed at 2.8)), and argues that Herodotus asserts himself as a 'master of signs' with particular skill at interpreting signs and controlling their transmission (n.b. the many parallels to Homeric epic cited throughout his book).

¹⁷ Taplin 1978: ch. 6 discusses the tragedians' use of significant objects and tokens on the Athenian stage through several case studies; Mueller 2016a fully recognizes props in Athenian tragedy as material and agentive, and examines their role in the poetics of performance. She adapts Gell's (notional materialist) ideas on object agency and distributed personhood to her readings of the stage roles of tragic weaponry (15-6). On Gell 1998 and hard versus notional materialism, see below.

of mind is extensive, and continues to be without conclusive consensus. I believe that the range of thought on identity and selfhood in Homer is due at least partially to the fact that Homeric man is a composite phenomenon: rather than pinpointing identity to a particular physical locus or personal quality, I view it as the cumulative and dynamic product of many and various factors.

‘Identity’ and ‘self,’ English terms which lack exact equivalents in Homeric Greek, have in the past been ascribed, and thus confined, to scholars’ various interpretations of Homeric man’s body and mind. Studies such as Snell and Onians’ books tend to expound on terminology like θυμός, νόος, and ψυχή in their attempts to locate the Homeric consciousness and understand Homeric psychology, and it is often noted (as in footnote 1 above) that in Homer σῶμα never refers to the living body, only the corpse.¹⁸ Snell influentially concluded from his research on the organs of consciousness that there is no conception of a unified self in Homer; rather, a person consists of a conglomeration of essentially autonomous organs of consciousness functioning in tandem (and sometimes in contradiction). Successors to Snell, notably Adkins and Austin, call these agentive organs ‘little people’ and ‘homunculi’ that exist within the larger person.¹⁹ More recently, Clarke reexamines the Homeric body (parts) and argues that Homeric man is an indivisible whole whose body, from limbs to organs of consciousness, constitutes the self.²⁰

Some scholars do not associate Homeric identity with the body and/or organs of consciousness, or at least not entirely. Stocking responds to the ambiguous and inconsistent

¹⁸ The relevant chapter (chapter 1) in Snell 1953 (a translation of the 1948 second edition of *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*) was originally published in 1939; Onians 1951. On Homeric psychology, see also Dodds 1951: ch. 1.

¹⁹ Adkins 1970; Austin 1975: ch. 2. For a recent proponent of Snell and Dodds, see Whitley 2016. A recent opponent is Finkelberg 2012 (see also Williams 1993: ch. 2; Pelliccia 1995: 15-27, whose bibliography is extensive).

²⁰ Clarke 1999.

descriptions of the body parts and psychological components of people in Homer by arguing that the Homeric self is the action of a person, the product of all the physical and psychological elements functioning together to act upon the surrounding environment.²¹ Although the body is necessary in Stocking's conception of the self, the individual is identified with his capacity for forceful action, and thus not with the ineffectual corpse. Gill approaches the issue of Homeric selfhood using models developed in modern thought on the philosophy of mind: he argues that ancient Greek psychology was objective-participant in nature, with human action motivated by reasons and reasoning, not conscious acts of will.²²

There is, however, some unity to the seeming scholarly disparity: in an article arguing that human selfhood and cognition extend beyond the brain and body, Malafouris finds it instructive to explore the complicated history of scholarship on Homeric selfhood.²³ Malafouris points out that Snell, Clarke, and Gill, though approaching the issue from different angles, are consistent with one another. Snell may be mistaken to conclude from a lack of unity that there is an absence or deficit of selfhood in Homer, but his acknowledgement that Homeric philosophy of mind is non-Cartesian synchronizes with Clarke's rejection of the division between body and mind or soul in Homer. Likewise, Gill asserts that "the mind constitutes a complex of functions which are unified (in so far as they are unified) by their interaction, rather than as constituting the

²¹ Stocking 2007.

²² Gill 1996: 1-18. See also Gill 1995 and 2006 for more on his perspective on identity and the self in antiquity, and Barnouw 2004: 2.3, 4 whose critique of Snell is significantly influenced by Gill 1996. I leave modern philosophical and psychological theories on these topics largely to the wayside for the purposes of this project, which approaches identity as it was understood by the Homeric bard and his audience (and focuses mainly on objects as a relatively neglected component of selfhood). For some of the most influential contributions to modern philosophy of mind, see Kripke 1980 and Parfit 1987. See also Horkheimer & Adorno 1972: 32-5, 43-80 on Odysseus as the 'enlightened self,' and the prototype of bourgeois man.

²³ Malafouris 2008: 1994-5. For more on the extended mind, see below.

locus of a unitary ‘I.’”²⁴ Malafouris also rightly concludes from these scholars that attempting to locate or otherwise isolate the Homeric self is contradictory to the way that selfhood was conceived of in the Homeric poems.

Also consistent with this view of the self as a complex of unified elements, though from yet another angle, is the work of Kahane, who catalogues the attributes he considers essential to and indicative of personal identity: name, physical qualities, parentage, provenance, and dating.²⁵ This collection of characteristics has some similarities with those Stanford discusses in his analysis of the unique qualities that set Odysseus apart from other Homeric heroes.²⁶ In addition to Odysseus’ body, age, heritage, speech, skills, accomplishments, and temperament, Stanford notes the numerous ‘poly-’ type epithets applied especially to Odysseus²⁷ and interprets the repeated element as indicative of variety rather than degree.²⁸ I believe this further suggests the importance of many different factors contributing to Odysseus’ identity rather than just one, and the variety of elements discussed in the scholarship on identity implies that the self in Homer is more complex and multifaceted than is always recognized.

²⁴ Gill 1996: 15; Malafouris 2008: 1995.

²⁵ Kahane 2005: ch. 2. For more on aspects of provenance (specifically local rivers) affecting identity, see Holmes 2015: esp. 45.

²⁶ Stanford 1964: ch. 5.

²⁷ Nestor describes his θυμός as πολυτλήμων at *Il.* 7.152 (cf. Odysseus declaring πολυτλήμων... εἰμί at *Od.* 18.319), and both the Trojans and Achilles have (or at least need) μένος πολυθαρσές at *Il.* 17.156 and *Il.* 19.37 respectively (cf. Odysseus’ need for μένος πολυθαρσές at *Od.* 13.387), but most ‘poly-’ epithets are reserved for Odysseus alone amongst heroes in Homer. Odysseus does share with Hephaestus the epithets πολύμητις (*Il.* 21.355) and πολύφρων (*Il.* 21.367; *Od.* 8.297, 327), and Hermes is called πολύτροπος at *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 13 and 439, and I believe that Odysseus is significantly connected to these gods in other ways as well, as discussed in the chapters below. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the epithets πολύαινος, πολυμήχανος, πολύτλας, and πολύτροπος are uniquely applied to Odysseus. For an organized catalogue of ‘poly-’ words in the Homeric poems, see Stanford 1950.

²⁸ Stanford 1964: 255n.14 points out that the A scholia on Odysseus’ epithet πολυμήχανος at *Il.* 8.93 provides a list of his various accomplishments, as plowman, shipwright, carpenter, hunter, steersman, etc., indicating that the word conveys Odysseus’ versatility.

While the multiplicity of Odysseus' character(istics) has elicited deconstructionist responses that deny Odysseus a stable, definable identity, I interpret the variety and even contradiction as fundamental to Odysseus' identity.²⁹ As an accumulation of numerous qualities of varying significance, Homeric identity has the capacity not only for contradiction, but also for change. Identity is a phenomenon in process; the body, as one ingredient of the multifaceted self and a convenient example here, can be marked or altered in the course of a lifetime, and changes as it ages over time. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is identified as such by a bodily scar that he received at an important moment in his life: when he reached adolescence, Odysseus participated in a boar hunt with his maternal uncles, and his success and his wound marked him out as no longer a child, but a man and also a particular man: Odysseus.³⁰ The body's mutability does function within a framework. Odysseus' identity is threatened in various ways, including the possibility of bodily transformation into an animal (which is outside of the sphere of normal bodily change), but the fact that his identity is at times endangered reinforces it as something defined and particular rather than destabilizes it.³¹

Multiplicity and mutability are especially essential to Odysseus, the man of manyness, as his numerous 'poly-' type epithets indicate, as well as the *Odyssey*, which is similarly and significantly polytropic in its variety of subject matter, from characters to locations to actions to objects, and its incorporation of various generic forms and shifting moods, which reflect on the poem's kaleidoscopic hero.³² An interpretation and thus exploration of identity as multiply

²⁹ Deconstructionist readings of Homeric poetry, such as Pucci 1987 and Lynn-George 1988, are discussed below in the explanation of my use of the word *σῆμα* in this project.

³⁰ *Od.* 19.386-475. Odysseus' boar hunt and scar are discussed in detail below in ch. 4. For the initiatory qualities of the boar hunt in the *Odyssey*, see Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983.

³¹ On the threat of transformation into animals, see Odysseus and his crews' encounter with Circe in *Od.* Book 10.

³² See Silk 2004 with references for the way that Odysseus' poem parallels his own complexity.

determined and best understood from multiple approaches is particularly appropriate for Odysseus, and so my conception of identity and the self for the purposes of this project are in line with Stanford's wide-ranging account of Odysseus' attributes as well as Kahane, whose discussion goes beyond Stanford's by including a few significant objects.³³ While an analysis of identity from every conceivable perspective is beyond the scope of this project, it is my intention to contribute to a necessarily vast scholarship and complex issue by focusing on objects as a relatively underappreciated piece in an intricate puzzle. Kahane acknowledges objects as capable of communicating significant information about identity, but I argue that the ways that objects can be complex, contradictory, and mutable, in a manner very similar to people and poetry, have been as yet unrecognized for what they add to the depiction of identity, and to Homeric poetry as a whole.

Objects and identity in human thought

To understand objects' complexity, contradiction, and mutability in Homer, this project draws on research about the human perception of objects (outside of a poetic context) from numerous disciplines, which sheds light on how objects can be poetically utilized by the bard. I begin this discussion with the phenomenon of psychological essentialism: proponents of psychological essentialism argue that humans perceive things as having particular qualities, typically unseen or underlying, that determine the nature of the things in question. These qualities are essential to the nature of things, and are thus considered essences.³⁴ Hood

³³ Objects are discussed at Kahane 2005: ch. 4, entitled 'Homeric Signs,' while the other aspects of identity are covered in ch. 2, 'Hidden Habits and the Trappings of Identity.' Lateiner 1995 also acknowledges significant objects as indicative of identity in Homer: "Objects define people, in our world and in the poems. A house, clothes, and an automobile reveal, as they are meant to, personality" (p. 197; see also pp. 195-202, 253ff.).

³⁴ See Medin & Ortony 1989 for a good introduction to psychological essentialism. It is important to note that psychological essentialism does not reflect on metaphysical reality, but

distinguishes between two forms of essentialism, which he calls quiddity and haecceity. The quiddity, or ‘whatness’ of a thing, consists of the qualities that the thing has in common with other members of its category, while the haecceity, or ‘thisness’ of a thing, comprises the qualities that make a thing a unique individual. Hood argues that, while most believe only living things have haecceity, inanimate objects can also be essentialized in this way in human thought.³⁵ I agree with Hood’s conclusions about object haecceity; as both Hood and Bloom note, some essences are transferrable (contagious, even), and contact with a living individual can contaminate an object with his or her unique essence, and thus with haecceity.³⁶

An object with haecceity is often marked out by having a proper name, rather than just a common noun to indicate its category membership.³⁷ While in many other ancient poetic traditions, both Indo-European and otherwise, special objects are given proper names,³⁸ this is

rather on psychological reality: things do not necessarily have essences, but humans significantly believe that they do. Hood 2009 argues that the human tendency to ascribe essences to things is a product of biology, and an ability he terms ‘supersense.’

³⁵ Hood 2014. Mauss 1950 comes to similar conclusions about objects having human-like essences or personalities when they are involved in gift exchanges in Melanesia.

³⁶ Hood 2009: 24, 31, 161, 194-5; Bloom 2010: 102-5. Hood & Bloom 2008 proffer evidence for their belief that humans are natural-born essentialists: the two designed an experiment in which young children were introduced to a ‘copying machine,’ capable of producing a perfect duplicate of any object, and then shown a metal cup and metal spoon. The test subjects were told that one of the objects was valuable because it was made of a precious metal, silver, while the other was valuable because it had once been owned by Queen Elizabeth II. The objects were then ‘copied,’ and the children were asked to rate the value of both the original and the copied object using a set number of counters. The children were over three times more likely to ascribe more value to the original in the case of the object previously owned by the Queen than to the original in the case of the object made of silver (the majority rated the original and duplicate as equal in value in this case). The results of this experiment suggest that even from an early age, humans believe that essences can be transferred from people to objects and can change an object’s value, and that essences do not transfer to copies made of a special object.

³⁷ See Hood & Bloom 2008: 456, with reference.

³⁸ Unique weapons receive proper names with especial frequency in other ancient poetic traditions. For example, Beowulf receives a sword called Hrunting from Unferth in *Beowulf* (and it has been suggested that Hrunting fails Beowulf because it “carries symbolically Unferth’s failure and treachery,” (Hughes 1977: 394)). An example from a non-Indo-European source is

not true of Homeric poetry.³⁹ However, objects in Homer can be marked out as unique individuals via their personal histories: to indicate what specific object is in question, its fabricator or owner(s) are typically provided. As mentioned above, Odysseus is the only Homeric hero who crafts objects, which reflects significantly on his identity and colors these

Sharur, the mace of the Sumerian and Akkadian god Ninurta, described in the *Ninurta Lugal-e* as capable of flight and speech. In addition to Anglo-Saxon and Sumerian (as well as Indic, Iranian, Irish, Norse, Welsh, etc.) traditions, named weapons are adopted in modern literature that is influenced by ancient epic, such as Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (the sword Chrysaor) and Tolkien's Middle-earth novels (the swords Narsil/Andúril and Sting, among many others). On the influence of medieval European literature, mythology, and archaeology on Tolkien's sword-lore, see Whetter & McDonald 2006.

³⁹ There are, however, a few exceptions, depending on how we define objects, and how we define proper names. Places have proper names in Homer (e.g., Ithaca, Troy), as do certain other geographical features (e.g., Mt. Parnassus, the Scamander/Xanthus river – though note that this river is an ἀθάνατον θεόν, (*Il.* 21.380) and the son of Zeus (*Il.* 21.2)). Some animals also have proper names, such as Odysseus' dog Argus, whose name is derived from the use of the word ἀργός as an epithet for dogs (see, e.g., *Od.* 2.11) (see Whallon 2000: 333, who believes that ἀργός is an epithet for Odysseus' dog until its final use in line 326, which is the proper name Argus). Achilles' unique ashen spear in the *Iliad* is an instance in which an object's epithet comes close to acting as a name: the spear has the exclusive epithet Πηλιάς, whose etymology is the subject of word-play in a repeated passage which brings together the Pelian spear, Peleus, Mt. Pelion, and the verb πῆλαι (*Il.* 16.141-4 = 19.388-91) (see Robbins 1993: 12). Πηλιάς is derived from Πήλιον, but its similarity to the patronymic epithets of Achilles (Πηλεΐων, Πηλεΐδης, Πηληϊάδης) derived from Πηλεύς draw the hero and his special weapon, which only he can wield (πῆλαι), into particularly close association. One object in the Homeric poems which might have a proper name is Zeus' αἰγίς, though it is unclear whether αἰγίς is a proper name or a common noun. In Homer, αἰγίς refers only to the immortal object wielded by Zeus (and sometimes by other divinities on loan), but in post-Homeric sources the word αἰγίς can refer to any mundane goatskin (e.g., Herodotus 4.189.1-2; Euripides, *Cyclops* 360). The word αἰγίς (probably derived from αἶξ; see Fowler 1988: 104) might also mean 'goatskin' in Homer (note that Zeus' αἰγίς is described as "shaggy" (ἀμφιδάσειαν, *Il.* 15.309) and "tufted" (θυσσανόεις, *Il.* 5.738; 15.229; 17.593; 18.204; 21.400; cf. 2.448) – but is also golden (*Il.* 24.20-1) and given to Zeus by the smith god Hephaestus (*Il.* 15.309-10)) in the sense of a common noun rather than a proper name. This interpretation is supported by comparison to a similar object in Hittite sources: the ^{KUŠ}kursas is a hunting bag made of leather, most frequently shaggy (warḫui-) goatskin, that is either a mundane object or a divinity's hieratic object which contains abstract qualities (cf. the abstract qualities 'in' the αἰγίς at *Il.* 5.738-40) (on the Hittite hunting bag and the αἰγίς, see Watkins 2000). In Homer the gods possess various objects which are referred to with common nouns applied to mundane objects as well (e.g., Apollo's τόξον). However, the word αἰγίς is never used in the Homeric poems to refer to a mundane object, nor indeed any other object besides Zeus' special αἰγίς, which leaves the question of whether its name is common or proper unresolved.

particular objects in particular ways. The bow of Odysseus is an example of an object not crafted by Odysseus, but whose history of ownership is essential to its nature, and the man and the object reciprocally imbue one another with special qualities by their connection. The bow is discussed at length below in chapter 4, but it exemplifies two features relevant to the present discussion: first, while the bow lacks a proper name, it is in a sense ‘named’ by its owner. The fact that Odysseus owns the bow is used to mark out the object as special, and to indicate which bow in particular is under discussion. When Penelope brings the bow out of the storeroom so that it can be used in the competition she has decided to hold, she announces what bow it is by calling it the μέγα τόξον Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο – “great bow of divine Odysseus,” (21.74). In modern practice, too, we refer to special objects in Homeric poetry by their owners (e.g., ‘the bow of Odysseus,’ ‘the shield of Achilles,’ etc.), and I think this system of ‘naming’ is not insignificant: it indicates that these objects are conceived of as having haecceity.

The second salient feature for the moment is the fact that the bow had a history of ownership prior to its connection to Odysseus, a history which is notable and meaningful for its current owner. Both Crielaard and Grethlein discuss objects’ genealogies of ownership in Homer, which are termed ‘cultural biographies.’⁴⁰ Like people, Homeric objects are represented as accumulating biographies, which are based on their owners and their owners’ biographies.⁴¹ Crielaard and Grethlein each note how every new owner and thus new biographical detail adds ‘value’ or makes the object ‘precious’; the value and preciousness of objects, besides what they

⁴⁰ Crielaard 2003, esp. 51-6; Grethlein 2008: 35-42. See Kopytoff 1986 for a seminal discussion of the cultural biographies of objects in the field of anthropology, with a focus on the commoditization of objects.

⁴¹ See Gell 1998: 232-42 on the application of Husserl’s ‘time-consciousness’ to the idea of the artist’s oeuvre as a single distributed object, which I think also applies to human and object biographies: biographies undergo modification over time, and are therefore dynamic and mutable rather than fixed. See the subsequent chapters for further discussion of the significant ways that object biographies and meanings change in the *Odyssey*.

add to our understanding of how economic and social systems worked in Homeric poetry, indicate the objects' haecceity.⁴² Crielaard and Grethlein also acknowledge objects' role in peoples' identities, Crielaard explicitly asserting that objects are "one of the instruments used to shape identities," and Grethlein explaining that object-owner relationships are reciprocal, with influence (and essence) flowing in both directions.⁴³ Grethlein further argues that an object's biography is often employed by the poet "to create additional meaning and to highlight the narrative," and I think this is an especially significant point: the sort of information and memories that can be stored in an object are another layer of meaning that the poet can access and use to do poetic work.⁴⁴

However, object genealogies are not the only medium through which objects can function poetically in Homer. While the cultural biographies of objects evidence their capacity for haecceity, objects' undisputed quiddity is also important. The qualities that determine an object's category membership can acquire traditional meanings so that any member of the category can cue into these meanings, a capacity which lends itself well to poetic appropriation. Appadurai contrasts cultural biographies with this capacity for meaning, which he calls the 'social history of things,' but argues that each one can influence the other.⁴⁵ An example of

⁴² Crielaard 2003: 52-6; Grethlein 2008: 36. Crielaard says that an object becomes 'personalized' through the strong link with the identity of its owner, and I think 'personalization' is another way of referring to haecceity.

⁴³ Crielaard 2003: 60; Grethlein 2008: 36. For similar sentiments specifically concerning the heroes' arms, see Lissarrague 2010. See also Longo 1996, who argues that the hero's arms ("le symbole concret de la vaillance du guerrier") form with the hero's body an indivisible unit which can be separated only in death.

⁴⁴ Grethlein 2008: 40-3.

⁴⁵ Appadurai 1986: 34-6. "The social history of things and their cultural biography are not entirely separate matters, for it is the social history of things, over large periods of time and at large social levels, that constrains the form, meaning, and structure of more short-term, specific, and intimate trajectories. It is also the case, though it is typically harder to document or predict,

objects with a social history but not necessarily individual biographies and haecceity in Homeric poetry are trees and plants, such as the olive trees which appear throughout the *Odyssey* in connection with Odysseus, as well as Athena, whose link with the olive is not confined to Homer alone.⁴⁶ Also, an extended genealogy of many owners is unnecessary for an object to exhibit haecceity: the bed which Odysseus fashioned for himself is never owned by another man, and is purposefully kept secret from nearly all other people, but rather than rendering the object insignificant these aspects of its history are profoundly meaningful and precisely what make it distinct.⁴⁷

Another sort of object, as defined above, with haecceity but without a genealogy of ownership is the human body. Bodies do have ongoing biographies, as noted by Hamilakis, Pluciennik, and Tarlow, who also discuss bodies as material culture, like other objects, and as “vehicles for identity.”⁴⁸ The similarities in the ways animate bodies and inanimate objects are conceived of as having essences and as both playing a role in shaping identity indicate that there are similarities in the way people think about bodies and objects. This inference is supported by research in the fields of cognitive neuroscience and linguistic typology, as Kemmerer argues in his survey of how each discipline independently reaches the same conclusion: human conception

that many small shifts in the cultural biography of things may, over time, lead to shifts in the social history of things.”

⁴⁶ Olive trees are discussed further in the succeeding chapters, but see Dietz 1971; Detienne 1973; Bonnafé 1985; Burkert 1985: 141; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 20, 26; Cook 1995: 6-8, 89, 104-10, and ch. 5 *passim*; and Kourou 2001: 50-1, who argues that Athena’s connection to the olive tree is a link to a Mycenaean past.

⁴⁷ The only other people besides Odysseus who have seen the bed are Penelope and her maidservant Actoris (*Od.* 23.225-9). See ch. 4 below for a discussion of the bed. In their discussion of the cultural biography of objects (outside of a poetic context), Gosden & Marshall 1999: 175-6 acknowledge contexts in which exchange is unnecessary for an object to have a biography and significance, such as ceremonial performances.

⁴⁸ Hamilakis *et al.* 2002: 11-2. See also the introductions to each part of Hamilakis *et al.* 2002 for anthropological perspectives on the conception of the human body, and Merleau-Ponty 1945 for theories on the primacy of the body in human perception.

of the self begins with the body, and extends out to encompass possessions as well.⁴⁹ This is suggested linguistically, Kemmerer contends, by languages that employ different grammatical constructions to indicate different categories of possessions: those that are alienable and those that are inalienable from oneself. While criteria for inalienability vary, body parts are typically considered inalienable and receive the corresponding possessive forms denoting inalienability. Other commonly inalienable possessions include kin, mental and physical traits, social relations, habitats, and also particular and valuable objects. Kemmerer points out that things which are conceived of as inalienable are correspondingly conceived of as integral to the identity of their possessor.⁵⁰ The fact that certain types of objects can be linguistically marked as inalienable provides evidence about the ways that humans can and do think about objects as aspects of identity and extensions of the self.

Although ancient Greek does not explicitly distinguish between alienable and inalienable possessions, Silvia Luraghi's research on Greek prepositions and cases suggests that the language's use of different grammatical constructions to indicate possession implicitly marks possessions as alienable or inalienable.⁵¹ Luraghi argues that possessions which are alienable require the strongest syntactic binding to indicate their possession, while inalienable possessions can employ less syntactically bound constructions, since their possession is implicit and inarguable. In Greek, the genitive of possession is the syntactically strongest possessive construction, while less bound constructions are the dative of possession and the double accusative; in Homer, body parts take these weaker constructions, which indicates their

⁴⁹ Kemmerer 2014.

⁵⁰ Kemmerer 2014: 193-4.

⁵¹ Luraghi 2003: 43-5.

unsurprising inalienability.⁵² Luraghi also says that the dative of possession denotes physical proximity, which corresponds with the fact that the body is the most proximal object in the individual's schema of the self.⁵³ Thus, the linguistic evidence suggests that in Homeric poetry non-corporeal objects were considered alienable. However, Luraghi asserts that both body parts and other objects such as tools and weapons originally belonged to a single grammatical category in Greek: the category of 'natural instruments,' expressed in the instrumental case.⁵⁴ Luraghi argues that the instrumental case merged with the dative on the basis of the conceptual connection in Greek between instruments and containers, which exert control over what they contain.⁵⁵ Luraghi's arguments suggest an earlier linguistic affinity between body parts and certain objects based on their agentive capacities, if not strict inalienability.⁵⁶

A similar conceptual affinity between body parts and possessions is suggested by evidence from cognitive neuroscience. Kemmerer explains that neuroscientific findings demonstrate a conceptualization of the body as a possession which the individual owns. In addition, the parts of the brain associated with thought about one's body are also engaged when thinking about kin and close friends, as well as one's possessions. Thought about objects that are owned by others does not engage these same parts of the brain, and self-owned objects are also attended, remembered, and valued more strongly than other-owned objects. The areas of the brain involved in self-referential thought are also engaged when an individual is experiencing the

⁵² Luraghi 2003: 51 notes that at Herodotus' *Histories* 1.34.2 the dative of possession is used for children, which corresponds with the trend in other languages and cultures of conceiving of kin as inalienable. See also below on Kemmerer's findings in the realm of cognitive neuroscience.

⁵³ Luraghi 2003: 51, 65.

⁵⁴ Luraghi 2003: 33.

⁵⁵ Luraghi 2003: 36, 66-7, 85. Luraghi interestingly notes that a post-Homeric development of the container metaphor was the idea that words metaphorically function as containers for meaning (p. 90).

⁵⁶ On the agency of objects, see especially Gell 1998, as well as Latour 2005 on Actor Network Theory and critiques of the theory in Hodder 2012: ch. 5 and Malafouris 2013: ch. 6.

‘endowment effect,’ which is the tendency to over-value one’s own possessions and treat them as element’s of one’s (extended) self, and is strengthened the more tactile contact the individual has with the object. Kemmerer reports that this neural evidence has been used to support arguments that extracorporeal objects can be incorporated into one’s sense of self, via the extension of the self.⁵⁷

The extended self is a conceptual phenomenon that has found purchase and varied employment in several disciplines of the humanities and sciences. The idea that humans conceive of the self as a corporeal core that extends out to encompass extracorporeal elements has a starting point in the philosophy of mind’s theory of the ‘extended mind.’ Proponents of the extended mind theorize that human cognition is actively shaped by the environment, which even has the potential to take part in the cognitive processes and arguably affected (indeed, effected) human evolution and development.⁵⁸ The extended mind theory has been adopted with especial fervor by anthropologists and archaeologists who ascribe to various forms of materialism. Much of the recent materialist work is classified as ‘new’ or ‘vital’ materialism, which I here refer to as ‘hard’ materialism in contrast with what I term ‘soft’ or ‘notional’ materialism: hard materialism, similar to Actor Network Theory, values objects specifically *qua* objects and seeks to unburden them from deriving their significance from their social roles, while notional materialism focuses on those very social roles, and what objects reveal to us about ourselves.⁵⁹ Some scholars of

⁵⁷ Kemmerer 2014: 191-2.

⁵⁸ On the theory of the extended mind, see the seminal work Clark & Chalmers 1998, as well as Malafouris 2013: ch. 4. For examples of research on the role of the environment in human evolution and cognition, see Hodder 2012: 37.

⁵⁹ See Bennett 2010, Hodder 2012, and Malafouris 2013 for examples of hard materialism, and Latour 2005 for Actor Network Theory. Gell 1998 exemplifies notional materialism. Opposed to the ‘correlationism’ of materialism is object-oriented ontology, which conceives of objects as ‘withdrawn’ – that is, ontologically prior to their relations to one another. Object-oriented ontology perhaps unnecessarily sacrifices relations and systems in its effort to purify objects of

Classical antiquity have recently appropriated materialism of both sorts: in an article, Purves analyzes objects in the *Iliad* within the framework of hard materialism, while Whitley and Mueller approach archaic Greek archaeology and Classical Athenian drama respectively from the perspective of notional materialism.⁶⁰ Similar to these latter two, I take cues from notional materialism in this project, though I treat not the physically extant objects of archaeology or the theater, but objects as they are adopted and adapted into Homeric poetry. A good example of a notional materialist reading of Homer is an article by Bershadsky, which demonstrates that the terms *ἀσπίς* and *σάκος* in the Homeric poems do not indicate distinct shield types, but rather serve as markers that establish certain expectations in the narrative.⁶¹ This project also explores the poetic function of objects, but rather than analyzing a single type of object I focus on the way that many objects figure into the identity of a single figure, often through the phenomenon of the extended self.

To return to the theory of the extended self, there is neural evidence that extracorporeal objects can be incorporated into the conception of the body schema: Aglioti *et al.* detail the somatoparaphrenia and anosognosia of a patient who suffered a right hemisphere stroke, resulting in the paralysis of her left arm.⁶² The patient denied ownership of her left arm (and denied any problem with her left hemisoma), as well as her left hand rings, which she was unable

anthropocentrism, but its acknowledgement of objects as inherently self-contradictory and mutable while nevertheless possessing a definite character assuages deconstructionist anxieties, and is consistent with my own views of Homer's poetic objects. Harman 2002 is the seminal text on object-oriented ontology, but see also Harman 2012 and Morton 2012 on this philosophy's potential use in literary theory, and Bennett 2012 for a materialist's response.

⁶⁰ Purves 2015; Whitley 2013; Mueller 2016a.

⁶¹ Bershadsky 2010 analyzes all instances of *ἀσπίς* and *σάκος* in duels in the *Iliad* (as well as in other contexts and other archaic poetry) and concludes that the *ἀσπίς* is thematically associated with death and defeat, while the *σάκος* is used to indicate the imminent victory of its bearer.

⁶² Aglioti *et al.* 1996.

to recognize or remember.⁶³ When the rings were removed from her left hand and placed on her right hand, or held in front of her, she recognized them as her own and could recall biographical information about them. When the rings were replaced on her left hand, she again failed to recognize them. In addition, the patient consistently recognized other personal possessions, even when placed in close proximity or in contact with her left hand. Only the objects systematically associated with the disowned limb were similarly disowned, which suggests that those particular objects were mentally coded as part of the patient's body schema, and self, so that when the patient could not recognize her arm she also could not recognize her rings.⁶⁴ Malafouris also discusses what he calls the "biosocial anatomy of extended selfhood" (including the findings of Aglioti *et al.*), and explains that extrapersonal space, which is outside hand-reaching distance of the body, and peripersonal space, which immediately surrounds the body and is within hand-reaching distance, are represented differently in the brain. Further, the neural distinction between near and far space is associated with tools, which can re-map the cognitive topography of space (for example, the artificial extension of the body (via a stick) re-maps far space as near).⁶⁵

Evidence from anthropology and archaeology also suggests that humans engage in various sorts of self extension. Gosden and Marshall provide a number of examples, including one of the most explicit instances of extended selfhood: Melanesians conceive of objects as detached parts of people, and the self as distributed as well as capable of a level of mobility,

⁶³ Aglioti *et al.* 1996: 293 report that the patient asked her son "to remind doctors to take away the hand that they had left in her bed"!

⁶⁴ For further research on the incorporation of objects into the body schema, see the references provided at Malafouris 2008: 1997.

⁶⁵ Malafouris 2008: 1997-8. Recall the role that proximity plays in (in)alienability and grammatical constructions, discussed above.

continuity, and agency impossible for the body alone.⁶⁶ While this conception of people as ‘dividuals,’ rather than individuals, may seem to be an extreme example, Gosden and Marshall’s other case studies are more familiar, but just as representative of extended selfhood, if not as overt.⁶⁷ Gosden and Marshall describe two similar but functionally distinct objects from Fiji: necklaces of sawn sperm whale teeth, presented by Tongan chiefs to Fijian chiefs, derive their value from their well-known, specific biographies of ownership, while *tabua* (single, whole sperm whale teeth mainly held in the hand rather than worn as necklaces) lack specific biographies. Rather, *tabua* have general biographies of many chiefly owners over their long ‘lifespans,’ and both multiplicity of owners and length of lifespans are determined by the color of the *tabua*, which become darker the more and longer they are handled because they absorb the natural oils present in the hand.⁶⁸ Necklaces and *tabua* are not conceived of as literal parts of Fijian chiefs’ persons, but they are examples of the less explicit ways that selfhood is extended beyond the limitations of the body. Gell points out that personhood is “spread around” through numerous cultural institutions and practices, including ancestral shrines, tombs, memorials, ossuaries, sacred sites, etc., and argues that in the modern West, the artist’s oeuvre is an example of distributed personhood.⁶⁹

The Fijian necklaces and *tabua* also demonstrate how the extended self is bound up with object biographies and essentialist thought.⁷⁰ While the accumulation of oil and thus color in the *tabua* is one of the most physical manifestations of essentialist thinking, sociologists

⁶⁶ Gosden & Marshall 1999: 173. On Melanesian society and selfhood, see Strathern 1988. See also Fowler 2004: esp. ch. 3 for an introduction to anthropological approaches to personhood and the role of objects in the conception of the self.

⁶⁷ See also Whitley 2013: 396-7, who points out that scholars such as Snell (discussed above) believe that people in the Homeric poems are effectively represented as ‘dividuals.’

⁶⁸ Gosden & Marshall 1999: 170-2.

⁶⁹ Gell 1998: ch. 9.

⁷⁰ Indeed, Gosden & Marshall 1999 is entitled ‘The Cultural Biography of Objects.’

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton agree that an object becomes ‘charged’ when a person invests it with psychic energy (efforts, time, and attention), which is a transference of a part of the person to the object.⁷¹ The sociological research of scholars, such as the aforementioned as well as Belk, on the role of objects as extensions of the self reveal how broad-ranging and widespread the concept of extended selfhood is. Like Gell, they provide myriad examples from numerous times, places, and cultures of self extension, and theorize about the functions that conceiving of the self as extending beyond the body serve.⁷² In an essay, Csikszentmihalyi argues that this ‘objectification’ of the self serves three major purposes: objects demonstrate their owners’ power, vitality, and status; objects enable and ensure the continuity of the self over time and space; and objects clarify their owners’ place in social networks as symbols of valued relationships.⁷³ Similarly, Belk asserts that objects act as “reminders and confirmers of our identities,” and are instrumental in both the development and maintenance of self-concept.⁷⁴

An important point of overlap among these scholars is the stress laid on the fact that, as Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton put it, man is not just *homo sapiens*, but *homo faber*, a maker of objects.⁷⁵ Although a person can invest various sorts of psychic energy into various objects, creating an object is a special investment and thus a special act of self extension via a consequently special object. By bringing an object into existence with his skill and resources, the creator’s identity becomes linked to, and often expressed by, his creation; fashioning is a

⁷¹ Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981: 4-8. Belk 1988: 144 cites and agrees with the former.

⁷² Belk 1988, 1990, and 1991 are particularly rich in exempla, from inheriting and bequeathing family heirlooms to licking newly acquired possessions to claim ownership.

⁷³ Csikszentmihalyi 1993.

⁷⁴ Belk 1988: 141. As Tuan 1980: 472 puts it, “our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess.”

⁷⁵ Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981: 1.

kind of self-fashioning.⁷⁶ At this point I return at length to Odysseus and the *Odyssey*: as mentioned above and discussed further in the chapters that follow, Odysseus uniquely among Homeric heroes is depicted as crafting objects. I argue that these creations function as extensions of himself, and are therefore particular indicators of his identity. His exclusive depiction as a craftsman makes him effectively ‘Odysseus πολύτεχνος’ – the man who is marked and defined by his exceptional τέχνη (craft(smanship)) of objects, which in turn reflect upon their crafter.⁷⁷

Defining the σῆμα: the poetics of Homeric objects

Odysseus’ identity as a craftsman is also linked to his identity as a poet figure in the *Odyssey*.⁷⁸ Poetry is another kind of fashioning and self-fashioning, and like craftsmen of objects, wordsmiths of poetry work in a medium with the capacity to express complex meanings

⁷⁶ Belk 1988: 150. For a particularly instructive example of fashioning as self-fashioning, see Gell 1998: 232ff. on the artist’s oeuvre as an extension and distribution of the personhood of the artist.

⁷⁷ Πολύτεχνος is not one of Odysseus’ traditional ‘poly-’ type epithets (indeed, it is a post-Homeric word), but is particularly appropriate for him in light of this project’s focus on Odysseus’ identity as a craftsman of significant objects. Levaniouk 2011: 297-8 points out the similarities between Odysseus and the mythical carpenter Polytechnus, whose story is told in the admittedly late *Metamorphoses* of Antoninus Liberalis (11), as well as fragments of Boeus (fr. 1229.8 Powell). Comparison might also be made between Odysseus and Irish folk hero Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, who is usually depicted as a great poet, trickster, and in particular master of many crafts (he shares with the god Lugh, who is often believed to be connected to Gaulish Lugus and thus Julius Caesar’s ‘Gaulish Mercury’ (*de Bello Gallico* 6.17), the epithets ‘ioldánach,’ ‘skilled in many arts’ and ‘samildánach,’ ‘equally skilled in many arts’). See Doan 1982 on Cearbhall as a craftsman and trickster. Note that τέχνη can mean not only skill at crafting, but also craft in the sense of cunning or wiles (μῆτις), and Odysseus has both of these meanings of τέχνη in spades. See Detienne & Vernant 1978: 272-3; Holmberg 1997: 10-2 on the overlap of τέχνη and μῆτις. On μῆτις, craftsmanship, and Odysseus, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1975: 79-82.

⁷⁸ The connection between craftsmen and poets is discussed further in the subsequent chapters, but see especially West 2007: 35-6, 38-40 on crafting and poetry in a broader Indo-European context, and Nagy 1979: 296-300, 1996a: 89-90, and 1996b: 74-8 on archaic Greek poetry more specifically. It is perhaps interesting to note that Stout *et al.* 2008 argue the neural overlaps between manual praxis (in the form of stone age tool making) and language processing are evidence that the two evolved together in a mutually reinforcing way.

about topics such as identity and selfhood. While the connection between crafting and poetry is discussed further in the chapters below, I turn now to the role of poetry and poetics in this project to conclude the current chapter. The preceding accumulation of multidisciplinary research on human practice and thought concerning objects forms a foundational background for my work, which is ultimately a standard philological analysis of Homeric poetry. Understanding the way humans think about objects informs my argument that ancient Greek bards and their audiences thought about objects as complex and rife with meaning, and because of objects' capacity to signify, when they were incorporated into poetry they were utilized to do poetic work. By 'do poetic work' I mean that in Homer objects are used connotatively and evocatively in the special register of language and meaning that is the hallmark of an oral poetic tradition.⁷⁹ I necessarily assume that the Homeric poems are the product of an oral tradition and continued to exhibit the qualities of oral poetry when eventually written down, and I consider this project a contribution to our understanding of the complex capabilities of oral poetics.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ On oral traditions operating in a particular register and through idiomatic strategies that communicate complex ideas, see Foley 1999: ch. 1.

⁸⁰ For a perspective that is against late-stage orality of the Homeric poems and strongly promotes the poems as written texts, see, e.g., West 2003. On the orality of the poems see, e.g., Lord 1960 and Foley 1999. For Nagy's 'evolutionary model' for the development of Homer, which argues that the poems gradually settled into a relatively fixed form orally, prior to the involvement of writing in their preservation, see Nagy 1979: xiv-xvii and 1996a: ch. 2. I am generally in accordance with Foley and Nagy, and do not attempt a fresh theory of Homeric composition here. Suffice it to say that the 'Homeric question' has been a fiercely contested issue in Homeric scholarship for many years and remains inconclusive. In this project I use the terms 'Homer,' 'Homeric poet/bard,' 'Homeric poetry,' etc. rather loosely; to clarify, I refer not to (the product of) a single, historical poetic genius, but rather to (the product of) a living oral tradition in which individual elements (such as, I argue, objects) overstep the bounds of their immediate meaning and context and refer to other analogous contexts within the idiomatic system (Foley's 'traditional referentiality,' on which see below). For other attempts to employ evidence from cognitive psychology to better understand the capabilities of oral poets, see Rubin 1995 (ch. 3 on the role of visual memory in oral poetry is most relevant to this project) and Minchin 2001 (who discusses visual memory specifically in Homeric poetry at 25-31, and in ch. 3 analyzes the ways that the poet utilizes objects, touching briefly on object histories and 'evaluative information')

In order to clarify my stance on the role of objects in Homeric poetics, I explain my particular use of the word σῆμα for the purposes of this dissertation, as anticipated in the title: οὔτω τοι τόδε σῆμα πιφάσκομαι – “thus do I make this σῆμα clear to you.”⁸¹ Within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, σῆμα generally means a sign, mark, token, or signal, material or otherwise, and can refer specifically to a tomb marker. Like Foley, I extend the Homeric meaning of σῆμα to refer to a particular kind of poetic sign or signal, as I explain below. First, however, I address another analysis of σήματα and a related line of interpretation to which I am opposed. Ford begins his discussion of σήματα by assuming that the technology of writing was known to the Homeric poet because of the presence of an inscribed tablet called a σῆμα in the story of Bellerophon in the *Iliad*.⁸² This contestable assertion forms the basis of Ford’s argument that the bard conceptually linked new and threatening writing with other material σήματα in the poems as vulnerable to destruction, unlike his own oral poetry.⁸³ Ford’s interpretation of the impermanence of object σήματα in Homer is a kind of deconstructionist reading: because σήματα are subject to change and decay, Ford asserts that they not only fail to confer lasting κλέος like oral poetry, but also that they fail to even signify when he says, “The *Odyssey*, delighting in fictions, throws up too many signs of Odysseus and points out that there can be signs with nothing beneath.”⁸⁴

Pucci takes a similarly deconstructionist perspective of the *Odyssey*, though his focus is not specifically on the significance of σήματα but rather Odysseus’ identity, which he argues is

communicated by objects about people or contexts associated with said objects (n.b. that Minchin draws almost exclusively on Griffin 1980 on the use of objects as a poetic strategy to signify “beyond the physical reality of the object”).

⁸¹ *Od.* 23.202.

⁸² Ford 1992: ch. 4. Cf. Steiner 1994: ch. 1 *passim*, esp. 15-6; Holmberg 1997: 26-7; Foley 1999: 1-3 (discussed below). See *Il.* 6.166-80 for the Bellerophon episode.

⁸³ On the destruction or loss of significance of the σῆμα, see also Lynn-George 1988: 252-76. Garcia 2013 largely follows Ford’s arguments about the impermanence of material σήματα, but does not distinguish between written and oral poetry (see esp. ch. 3 and 4).

⁸⁴ Ford 1992: 168.

destabilized by disguises.⁸⁵ According to Pucci, “[d]isguise seems to imply that the signs that “represent” an entity are, as it were, detachable from the entity,” which demonstrates the role of the *σημα* in his conception of Homeric identity.⁸⁶ For Pucci, a person’s identifying signs appearing to be mutable is problematic, and indicative of a lack of stable, consistent identity. Peradotto also acknowledges Odysseus’ disguises and his notably polytropic character, but sees in Odyssean variety a “broadened sense of the self” that, far from denying identity, instead indicates “human potential.”⁸⁷ However, Peradotto balks at the mutability of material *σηματα*: he interprets change as an indication that signs in Homer have an unstable relationship with what they signify. As an example, Peradotto cites the misidentification of an oar as a winnowing shovel in Teiresias’ prophecy about the inland journey Odysseus must take after returning home.⁸⁸ As explained further in the subsequent chapters, I argue that what this episode demonstrates is not so much a misidentification as a re-identification of an object: material objects are subject to the same mortality as humans, and are therefore susceptible to decay and destruction, but because they are also subject to change like humans, they can exhibit a similar polytropy.

In the preceding discussion of the methodological foundation of this project, I have argued that objects are intimately bound to and even indispensable parts of human identity, and that they draw noticeable parallels with people in certain ways, such as their ability to accumulate biographical details. If we accept that objects reflect people’s identities, it is reasonable to believe that they also reflect the variability and change in people’s identities that

⁸⁵ Pucci 1987: esp. ch. 7.

⁸⁶ Pucci 1987: 85.

⁸⁷ Peradotto 1990: ch. 6, esp. 169.

⁸⁸ Peradotto 1990: 157-60. Teiresias delivers his prophecy to Odysseus at 11.118-37, and Odysseus repeats the prophecy to Penelope at 23.264-84.

Pucci finds problematic and Peradotto sees as brimming with potential. I interpret the changefulness of objects as similarly full of potential: as mentioned above, objects have the ability to gather constellations of meanings around them and thus signify more than one thing. Multiplicity and mutability of meaning in objects is not a defect nor is it destabilizing, but as in people it is indicative of potential, and perhaps corresponds to the same potential inherent in oral poetry.⁸⁹ The poetic program of the *Odyssey* itself favors change: the poem of Odysseus πολύτροπος is a poem of life and all the variety, ebb and flow, and even contradiction that it entails, as opposed to death which is petrifying and absolute. Rather than dying in battle like an Iliadic hero, Odysseus is defined by his νόστος, which is a ‘homecoming,’ but also a ‘return to light and life,’ as Frame shows.⁹⁰ Like νόστος, νόος is derived from the same root, *nes-, and both Frame and Nagy argue in favor of an ideological connection between the two: in order to achieve his homecoming, Odysseus must keep his mind intact in spite of the various elements that threaten it.⁹¹ Nagy also claims that there is a working relationship between νόος and σῆμα in Homer, since cognition and recognition are necessary to understand a sign.

Nagy’s work on the Homeric σῆμα and its connection to νόος influences Foley’s perception and use of the word σῆμα, which as mentioned above I adopt and extend in this project.⁹² Foley argues first that the inscribed tablet in the Bellerophon story is not necessarily

⁸⁹ Kahane 2005: 99 argues that Homeric σήματα resist closure and are defined by a “radical, unruly potential” which meaningfully parallels the complex, contradictory, and open-ended nature of Homeric diction, epic poetry, and even the figure of Homer himself.

⁹⁰ Frame 1978 and 2009: ch. 2 in particular discuss the etymological origins of νόστος in the root *nes- (glossed as “to return safely home” in Watkins, ed. 2000: 58).

⁹¹ Nagy 1990a: 202-22, esp. 218-9.

⁹² For different perspectives on the Homeric σῆμα, see Prier 1989 (esp. 179-214 on the *Odyssey*) for a phenomenological reading of objects, signs, and symbols in the Homeric poems, and Barnouw 2004: 3.1, 2 on the Homeric σῆμα (*contra* Nagy) and its relation to the post-Homeric σημεῖον. See also Steiner 1994: ch. 1, who surveys Homeric σήματα in her efforts to trace the relationship between σήματα and alphabetic letters and thus understand how ancient Greeks

an instance of alphabetic writing, but whether the inscription was alphabetic, ideographic, or semasiographic is ultimately beside the point in terms of what a σῆμα is in Homeric poetry.⁹³ As Foley explains, “[s]igns project reality, index knowledge, cue expectable because traditional meanings”; σήματα are tangible symbols that function as windows to emergent realities which otherwise remain secret and unknowable. For Foley, σῆμα refers to all of the traditional strategies in Homer’s poetic repertoire.⁹⁴ The inscriptions on Bellerophon’s tablet are called σήματα because they function like σήματα in this poetic sense, regardless of how they communicate their message. When Foley refers to ‘traditional strategies’ of the poet, he means the formulaic phrases, type-scenes, and narrative themes characteristic of the language and structure of epic poetry. These features qualify as σήματα because they cue levels of meaning that are beyond themselves and their immediate contexts, a phenomenon which Foley calls ‘traditional referentiality.’⁹⁵ I argue that another strategy available to the poet to engage in traditional referentiality is the representations of objects.

Foley acknowledges certain objects in Homer as σήματα by his definition, but these are typically called σήματα explicitly in the poems.⁹⁶ Some objects take part in episodes that Foley considers σήματα, such as the bow of Odysseus which plays a crucial role in “the contest *sêma*,” but Foley does not call the bow itself a σῆμα.⁹⁷ Foley does recognize “tangible objects woven into the fabric of the narrative tradition that are singularly meaningful and recognizable to bard

might have incorporated the new technology of writing into existing modes of communication. Holmberg 1997 argues that the σῆμα in early Greek literature is inherently ambiguous because it is the product of, and is thus characterized by, ambiguous, fluid μῆτις.

⁹³ See Foley 1999: 1-3 on the Bellerophon episode, and the many references at 277n.3, n.4, and 278n.6 for Homer and writing. See also Nagy 1990a: 206-7.

⁹⁴ Foley 1999: 3.

⁹⁵ For more on traditional referentiality, see Foley 1991: ch. 1, 2, and 5.

⁹⁶ Foley 1999: 25-31 and ch. 5.

⁹⁷ Foley 1999: 141-2, 147, 155-7. Foley does use the phrase “the *sêma* of the bow” once, but this refers to the bow contest, not the bow itself.

and audience alike” which “help to “slot” the individuality of whatever character, scene, or action happens to occupy center stage, embedding that unique instance in the ready context of traditional referentiality” – but only when they occur in ‘traditional phrases’: i.e., unvarying noun-phrase formulas.⁹⁸ I believe that, like the features of poetic language that can be implicitly understood as *σήματα*, the poet is capable of employing objects as immanently referential *σήματα* without overtly calling them such. My expansion of Foley’s ideas about the *σημα* to all poetic objects is in part a synthesis of Foley’s work with that of the anthropologist Tilley. Tilley asserts that material culture functions as ‘solid metaphor’: objects act as solid metaphors in the sense that they allow a schematic system of thought to be mapped onto them through which information is stored and retrieved, as a metaphor in speech is a mode of comprehension based on mapping one schema or frame of reference onto another.⁹⁹ Tilley is concerned with physical objects rather than language, and ‘everyday life’ rather than poetry, and he says that solid metaphors act most subtly and powerfully precisely when they are not linguistically translated but rather function at a non-discursive level of consciousness.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Tilley’s ideas about material culture share similarities with Foley’s theories on poetic *σήματα*, which in an earlier work he calls ‘metonyms’ because they access a larger, immanent whole than the immediate context initially suggests.¹⁰¹ This striking overlap in terminology and thought from two separate disciplines informs a foundational assumption for this project at large.

I assume here that human thought extensively employs metaphor and metonym in and out of poetic contexts as a strategy for understanding the world and the human experience. This use

⁹⁸ Foley 1999: 201-16, esp. 216. Foley calls objects in Homer “stage props,” and his bibliography on the subject is limited to Griffin 1980: ch. 1 (312n.44).

⁹⁹ Tilley 1999: ch. 1 and 2.

¹⁰⁰ Tilley 1999: 263.

¹⁰¹ Foley 1997.

of metaphor includes material objects and by extension the representation of objects in poetic contexts. As the previous discussion demonstrates, people think about objects in highly complex ways, especially as connected to identity and selfhood. Because humans so readily layer objects with significance in myriad forms and contexts, it is understandable that the Homeric bard would recognize this quality, and import and flesh out objects' capacity for deep meaning in his work as a strategy for poetic communication. Tangible, understandable, and immediate, objects particularly lend themselves to doing poetic work as *σήματα*: they are accessible to the (original, culturally attuned) audience, and easily gather a nexus of associations that can be variously invoked in different poetic contexts. This is what is meant by objects as 'a kind of vivid hinge around which thought and meaning turn,' and it forms the basic premise through which I perform my philological analysis. To quote Taplin again, objects are "miniature repositories of huge associations," and this project seeks to unlock the doors to some of these repositories to better understand Odysseus' identity in the *Odyssey*, like Penelope unlocking the door to Odysseus' treasure repository – which is a model of his self.¹⁰²

Penelope, along with Telemachus, begins chapter 2, since Odysseus is *in absentia* for the first four books of his poem. However, the majority of the chapter is dedicated to *Odyssey* Book 5 and Odysseus' introduction, which occurs when he is at his most helpless and hopeless on Calypso's isle, and also his most disenfranchised and stripped of material objects. After meeting Odysseus in nakedness and alienation, chapter 3 picks up as the hero negotiates his reentrance into civilization amongst the Phaeacians, and recalls his adventures outside of the civilized world. This project concludes with chapter 4 and Odysseus' return home and reintegration into

¹⁰² *Od.* 21.1-54. Odysseus' treasure repository is discussed in detail in ch. 4 below.

his community and home, which is facilitated by a series of recognitions with loyal members of his household through σήματα of Odysseus' identity.

located in the μέγαρον (the chief room in a house).¹⁰⁴ It is this latter meaning of ‘architecturally stabilizing column’ that is employed in the passage at hand, and that I discuss here. Penelope chooses to locate herself beside a column whose literal function is to support the roof of the house – and whose figurative function by extension is to support the institution of the household. Wohl argues that the σταθμός represents the *axis mundi*, an ithyphallic pillar which supports the entire cosmic structure and is a figure for ‘man.’ The stability of man as *axis mundi* is contingent upon the cooperation of woman: she must be steadfastly located in the house beside man and unwavering in her support of him to prevent the collapse of the cosmos.¹⁰⁵ I argue that the *axis mundi* of the σταθμός here figures not just man, but *the* man, Odysseus.¹⁰⁶ When Penelope stands beside the σταθμός of the house, she communicates her continued devotion to her husband Odysseus and his role as ‘pillar’ of the household, despite his long absence.

As she stands by the σταθμός, Penelope holds her κρήδεμνον before her face. The Homeric κρήδεμνον is a veil, a specifically feminine headdress that, according to Llewellyn-Jones, hangs down from the back part of the head and covers its wearer’s shoulders and back.¹⁰⁷ It has been argued that the κρήδεμνον acts as a social signal in the extra-literary reality of ancient Greece, and as a poetic symbol in the context of Homer: by covering its wearer’s head (and face,

¹⁰⁴ For σταθμός/οί as ‘farmhouse’ in the *Odyssey*, see 14.32, 358, 504; 15.306; 16.45, etc. On one occasion at *Il.* 12.434 σταθμός is used to refer to a scale. On the σταθμοί which serve as columnar doorposts in Odysseus’ house at *Od.* 17.340; 21.45; 22.120, etc., see ch. 4 below.

¹⁰⁵ Wohl 1993: 23. Cf. Nagler 1977: 82-3 and 1996: 153ff.; Bertolín 2008: 94 and n.16. See also Foley 1978 on the necessity of a cooperative relationship between husband and wife.

¹⁰⁶ See ch. 4 below on Odysseus as the carpenter of the house and its σταθμοί, and the σταθμοί as extensions of Odysseus’ identity.

¹⁰⁷ Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 28-35, who believes that the κρήδεμνον, καλύπτρη, and κάλυμμα are synonymous in form and function. Nagler 1974: 44-67 also makes no distinction between these veils in his lengthy and influential discussion of the κρήδεμνον (see 49n.32). Cf. Kardulias 2001: 32, who argues that the κρήδεμνον is worn only by those who possess both αιδώς and χάρις, hence the fact that the goddesses Circe and Calypso both wear a καλύπτρη rather than a κρήδεμνον (10.545 and 5.232, respectively). See also Lorimer 1950: 385 on the physical form of the κρήδεμνον (which she does not consider significantly different from the καλύπτρη).

should she choose to hold it as Penelope does), the κρήδεμνον obscures the wearer from the public gaze and indicates that she is under the protective guardianship of a fully enfranchised man.¹⁰⁸ The male guardianship implied by veiling with a κρήδεμνον communicates that the wearer adheres to the cultural norms of female sexual chastity and αἰδώς (shamefastness), and is sexually inviolate to outsiders without severe repercussions.¹⁰⁹ When Andromache realizes that her husband Hector has been killed in the *Iliad*, she tears her elaborate headgear, including a κρήδεμνον, off in a gesture that symbolizes her grief, as well as the fact that she is now without her male guardian and thus subject to sexual violation.¹¹⁰ Andromache's unveiling parallels the metaphorical description of the walls or battlements of Troy as its κρήδεμνα which are 'loosed' when the Achaeans penetrate the city.¹¹¹ In veiling herself, Penelope is asserting that she is not

¹⁰⁸ Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 121-3, and 128-30, 173-4 on Penelope specifically. See also Kardulias 2001: 29-33, with sources on the anthropology of clothing at 29n.17, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Nagler 1974: 44-6 and 1996: 155-6; Carson 1990: 160-1; Kardulias 2001: 30-3. Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 121-2, 128-9 *et passim* focuses particularly on the high social rank communicated by veiling. On veiling more generally (including male veiling) and in a variety of contexts, see Cairns 2002; cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2003: ch. 6. See Cairns 1993: 120-5, 185-8, 205, 305-40 on feminine αἰδώς. Pausanias' description of the aftermath of Odysseus winning Penelope's hand in a footrace is worth noting: Icarius begs his daughter not to go to Ithaca with her new husband, and Odysseus asks her to make a choice between her father and her husband. Penelope does not respond verbally, but rather by veiling her face (ἐγκαλυψαμένης). Icarius understands Penelope's gesture as a signal that she has chosen Odysseus, and he dedicates an ἄγαλμα to Αἰδώς on the spot where she veiled herself (3.20.10-11). Penelope's veiling communicates her αἰδώς and her commitment to her husband in Pausanias, and her same gesture in Homer is perhaps similarly communicative. On the Pausanias passage, see also Cairns 1996: 153-4; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 171.

¹¹⁰ *Il.* 22.463-72. Note that this κρήδεμνον is specifically the one which was given to Andromache on her wedding day by Aphrodite, making her unveiling at the loss of her husband even more poignant. Cf. Hecuba casting off her καλύπτρη at *Il.* 22.406, also in response to Hector's death. On Andromache's (and Hecuba's) unveiling, see Segal 1971; Nagler 1974: 47ff.; Griffin 1980: 2-3; Kardulias 2001: 30; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 130-2.

¹¹¹ Compare Τροίης ἱερὰ κρήδεμνα λύωμεν, (*Il.* 16.100) with Τροίης λύομεν λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα, (*Od.* 13.388). On the walls of Troy as κρήδεμνα and the overlap between the rape of the city and the rape of its women, see Lorimer 1950: 386; Nagler 1974: 53-4; Kardulias 2001: 30; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 131-2, who points out that Zeus has 'unbound' the heads of many cities

subject to male advances – but her veil is in a sense a disguise, and, I argue, a deception.

Penelope literally disguises her face by covering it, but also figuratively disguises her uncertain and vulnerable situation by claiming with her κρήδεμνον that she is still under her husband's protection and therefore unavailable to other men.¹¹² In reality, Odysseus' extended absence imperils his entire household, and Penelope's misleading self-presentation is a bluff and a bid to safeguard her marriage and her home. Penelope's interactions with the σταθμός and her κρήδεμνον communicate to the internal audience (the suitors) and the external audience her attitude toward Odysseus and her status as his wife, but they also imply the danger Penelope and the entire household are facing and attempting to circumvent in Odysseus' absence.

Penelope's κρήδεμνον is an early glimpse of the disguise and δόλος (crafty trick(ery)) that play important roles thematically in the poem and for the identity of Odysseus, Penelope's perfect match and counterpart.¹¹³ About 200 lines after Penelope's introduction in the *Odyssey* is the first instance of the thrice repeated tale of Penelope's most infamous ruse, which is explicitly called a δόλος: the (un)weaving of the web.¹¹⁴ Penelope contrives to delay marriage to one of

(*Il.* 2.117-8; 9.24-5). Note that a wine jar's seal or stopper is referred to as a κρήδεμνον which is 'loosed' at *Od.* 3.392.

¹¹² Kardulias 2001: 33. See Lateiner 1995: 255-7 on Penelope's κρήδεμνον as one of her "gendered weapons."

¹¹³ Odysseus and Penelope's marital ὁμοφροσύνη, indicating like-mindedness between the pair about their respective roles but not equality in their marriage, is much discussed; see, e.g., Austin 1975: 205-38; Foley 1978; Winkler 1990: 145-61; Katz 1991: 160-6 *et passim*; Wohl 1993; Felson-Rubin 1994: ch. 3 *et passim*; Holmberg 1995; Nieto Hernández 2008. At 6.180-5 Odysseus wishes that the gods may give Nausicaa an ideal life, including marital ὁμοφροσύνη, than which he says nothing is better.

¹¹⁴ The tale of the weaving ruse occurs at 2.93-110; 19.137-56; 24.128-48. For surveys of scholarship on the ruse, see Goldhill 1988: 1-3; Russo *et al.* 1992: 374-5. The trick is called a δόλος/δόλοι at 2.93; 19.137; 24.128. Note that at 19.137, Penelope says, ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω; the verb τολυπεύειν literally means 'to wind off carded wool into a clew for spinning,' and appears to be connected to the metaphorical usage of ὑφαίνειν for 'weaving' wiles (typically δόλος or μῆτις) (see *Il.* 3.212; 6.187; 7.324; 9.93; *Od.* 4.678, 739; 5.356; 9.422; 13.303, 386). On metaphorically weaving wiles in Homer, see Snyder 1981: 193-4; Lowenstam

her suitors by asking them to wait until she has finished weaving a cloth (φᾶρος) as a shroud in which to wind Laertes at his death. By day Penelope weaves the φᾶρος, and by night she secretly unravels her day's work. Penelope's weaving and unweaving tricks the suitors by stringing them along in indefinite postponement, but the φᾶρος on the loom might also be similar to the σταθμός and κρήδεμνον in its trickery. Bertolín argues that the ἰστός, loom, is a female-gendered object which stakes out feminine space; Penelope sets up a ἰστός in the relatively public space of the μέγαρον to “maintain her identity as wife of Odysseus instead of potential bride” and declare the suitors' lack of right to occupy this space.¹¹⁵ Bergren likens Penelope's weaving to (symbolic) architecture: with the vertically suspended φᾶρος Penelope ‘walls’ herself off from intruders.¹¹⁶ The φᾶρος as a cloth barrier that shelters Penelope from the suitors is

2000: 345-6; Bergren 2008: 16-7. On literal versus metaphorical weaving, see Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994: 82-4; Clayton 2004: 21-52. On Penelope's weaving in relation to speech and poetics, see Felson-Rubin 1994: ch. 2; Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994; Slatkin 1996: 234-7; Clayton 2004; Bergren 2008: 219-27. For sources on the connections between weaving and poetry beyond the Homeric poems, see below.

¹¹⁵ Bertolín 2008: 92-6, who notes that ἰστός and σταθμός are both derived from the Indo-European root *steh₂- (see *stā- at Watkins, ed. 2000: 84), which in addition to indicating ‘standing vertically’ has existential connotations in several Indo-European languages (106-7). The μέγαρον is the main room in a house, but the word can also refer to the house itself; Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 138 interprets ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν (2.94; 19.139; 24.129) as “in the palace” and believes that Penelope weaves the φᾶρος upstairs away from the suitors based on Telemachus' remark about his mother at 15.516-7: οὐ μὲν γάρ τι θαμὰ μνηστῆρσ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ/φαίνεται, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπερωῖῳ ἰστόν ὑφαίνει. Telemachus also sends Penelope back “into the house” (εἰς οἶκον) to tend to her work at 1.356-8 and 21.350-3. However, Telemachus' statements are made after the weaving ruse has been discovered, at which point Penelope perhaps withdrew to more private areas of the house and continued weaving (something else) there. Weaving is a common activity for Homeric women (e.g., Helen at *Il.* 3.125; Andromache at *Il.* 22.440; Calypso at *Od.* 5.62; Circe at *Od.* 10.222), so it would not be unreasonable to assume Penelope was engaged in (private) weaving both before and after the ruse of weaving and unweaving the φᾶρος for Laertes. Note also that the line στησαμένη/ἠ μέγαν ἰστόν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὑφαίνε/ειν (2.94; 19.139; 24.129) indicates that Penelope actively set up a loom for her ruse, when presumably there was already a loom in her quarters, as the lines at 1.356-7 suggest. See Bertolín 2008: 95, who argues that Penelope set up a ἰστός in the main hall, though perhaps for symbolic rather than functional purposes. On the ἰστός as ‘ship mast,’ see Bertolín 2008: 92-3, 102-6, and below.

¹¹⁶ Bergren 2008: 225-7.

strikingly similar to the κρήδεμνον, and Lateiner calls Penelope's loom a "nonportable *kredemnon*" which marks her obligation to one group of men (the Arceisiads) and thus removes and preserves her from another.¹¹⁷ Penelope utilizes the objects that are available to her, in particular textiles, to paint a deceptive portrait of herself as protected and inaccessible to outsiders.

There is, however, a problematic element to Penelope's veiling with the κρήδεμνον and the φᾶρος: the concealing veil is at once chastely modest, and erotically alluring. The glossy sheen of the λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα and the curiosity aroused by the unseen and unknown draw the gaze to the object whose very function is to deny visual perception. The veil paradoxically both projects and hides feminine sexual χάρις.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the κρήδεμνον Penelope uses to betoken her status as a married woman might also make her appear like an alluring young bride: Papadopoulou-Belmehdi argues that the importance of the veil in Penelope's representation is a part of her continued identification with the state of courtship.¹¹⁹ The veil was an important element of a bride's trousseau in ancient Greece; Andromache specifically receives her

¹¹⁷ Lateiner 1995: 257-8. Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 129 also calls Penelope's loom an "immovable veil."

¹¹⁸ See Nagler 1974: 55-60 on the veil as paradoxically apotropaic and alluring, and Hera's use of a κρήδεμνον in her seduction of Zeus at *Il.* 14.157-223 (see Kardulias 2001: 33 for a slightly different interpretation of this episode). Nagler calls Penelope "Homer's paradigm of feminine chastity" (65) and says that the κρήδεμνον "is used with Penelope in a relatively straightforward manner to bring out its "hiding" aspect," but because the object is "never entirely free from paradox" Penelope ends up attracting rather than repelling the suitors (71-2). Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 283-93 discusses 'conspicuous veiling,' but says that Penelope does not intend to arouse the suitors. Kardulias 2001: 31-3 likewise discusses the paradox of the veil and believes that Penelope uses the κρήδεμνον to communicate her chastity and unavailability. Forsyth 1979 considers three of the four occurrences of the formulaic phrase in which Penelope holds the κρήδεμνον before her face (1.334; 18.210; 21.65; Forsyth makes no mention of 16.416) to be elements of what he calls the 'allurement scene,' but says that Penelope is alluring because of her chastity.

¹¹⁹ Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994: 95-107 discusses the νύμφη as 'goddess' and 'bride,' and Penelope as a νύμφη.

κρήδεμνον on her wedding day from Aphrodite, and Penelope's shining κρήδεμνον is perhaps her old bridal veil.¹²⁰ The φᾶρος also excites the suitors because they believe that its completion signifies marriage for one of their number.¹²¹ The exact semantic thrust of these chaste yet alluring objects is left ambiguous at the beginning of the poem, but I argue below in chapter 4 that their ambiguity is a purposeful contrivance on the part of the poet to communicate the uncertainty, tension, and disorder of Odysseus' household in his absence. A small tweak to the φᾶρος at the end of the *Odyssey* resolves the problem (and the poem) by unifying the seemingly opposing elements of chastity and allurement, and verifying that Penelope uses the objects at her disposal to protect her marriage to Odysseus.

Σκηπτύχος βασιλεύς

In addition to Penelope, Telemachus also reflects on Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, and especially in Books 1-4 (sometimes called the *Telemachy*). Telemachus' journey to the Peloponnese and his maturation over the course of the poem have long been recognized as parallels of Odysseus' adventures and the rebirth and re-maturation he undergoes as he returns to and reintegrates with human society.¹²² I focus here on one particular object which is involved

¹²⁰ *Il.* 22.470-2. However, if Andromache and Penelope wear their bridal κρήδεμνα past their wedding days, the objects seem to be able to signify that a woman is a bride or a matron. On the (post-Homeric) wedding veil in ancient Greece, see Cunningham 1984; Armstrong & Ratchford 1985; Seaford 1987: 124-5; Carson 1990: 160-4; Oakley & Sinos 1993: *passim*, esp. 25-6, 30-2, 44; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 219ff. Penelope compares herself to the Pandareids who are on the cusp of marriage – but she prays that she may be whisked away by the wind (as these young women were before they could be married) rather than be forced to be the bride of one of the suitors (20.61-82, on which see Levaniouk 2011: ch. 16).

¹²¹ On the bride-to-be weaving a nuptial cloth that is emblematic of marriage in preparation for her wedding day, see Scheid & Svenbro 1996: ch. 3. On wool-working as primarily an emblem of maidens, see Ferrari 2002: 57 (though note that it is certainly the activity of married women in Homer, too).

¹²² The scholarship on Telemachus, his coming-of-age in the *Odyssey*, and his parallels with Odysseus is extensive; see, e.g., Clarke 1963; Eckert 1963; Rose 1967; Bynum 1968; Austin 1969 and 1975: 182ff.; Thornton 1970: ch. 8; Apthorp 1980; Alden 1987; Jones 1988; Roisman

in Telemachus' first foray into manhood, and which connects him to Odysseus: the σκῆπτρον. Essentially, the σκῆπτρον in Homer is a staff. It can be a simple walking stick, something which is leaned upon, as its connection to the verb σκῆπτεσθαι, 'to lean or support oneself on,' suggests. It can also be a symbolic accoutrement carried by priests, prophets, judges, heralds, and most frequently kings, and 'leaned upon' figuratively as a means of communicating the bearer's authoritative position.¹²³ This latter incarnation of the σκῆπτρον has been interpreted variously since antiquity, as a 'talking stick' passed from speaker to speaker in an assembly to a 'magical wand' that renders its bearer inviolate.¹²⁴ While these two interpretations are largely rejected today, there remains a lack of consensus on the functions, origins, and symbolic intricacies of the σκῆπτρον.¹²⁵ However, current scholarly opinion agrees that the σκῆπτρον is

1994; Thalmann 1998: 206-23; Beck 1998-9; Heath 2001 and 2005b: ch. 2; Allan 2010; Petropoulos 2011; Gottesman 2014. On Telemachus undermining the return of Odysseus, see Pucci 1987: 201-8; Peradotto 1990: 117-8; Olson 1995: 64-90; Murnaghan 2002. On the relationship between Telemachus and Odysseus as an ideal, though competitive, father-son relationship, see Felson-Rubin 1994: 83-6; Wöhrle 1999: 117-43. On Odysseus' rebirth and second coming-of-age, as well as his reintegration into human civilization, see below.

¹²³ For example, the priest Chryses carries a σκῆπτρον at *Il.* 1.15; the prophet Teiresias holds a σκῆπτρον in the underworld at *Od.* 11.91; the judges on the Shield of Achilles σκῆπτρα δὲ κηρύκων ἐν χέρσ' ἔχον ἠεροφώνων at *Il.* 18.505; the Greek and Trojan heralds use their σκῆπτρα to stop the duel at *Il.* 7.277; the king Agamemnon takes up his ancestral σκῆπτρον at *Il.* 2.46, discussed further below. See Combellack 1948: 216n.8 for citations on every appearance of the σκῆπτρον in the Homeric poems.

¹²⁴ Talking stick: see Unruh 2011: 280n.5 on Eustathius as an early adherent to this interpretation, as well as 19th century scholar Walter Leaf. Magical wand: see de Waele 1927: esp. 25, 101ff.; Finley 1977: 80 (in contrast, Easterling 1989: 106 and Unruh 2011: 289n.26 argue that there is a sharp distinction between the σκῆπτρον and the actual magic wand in Homer, the ῥάβδος).

¹²⁵ Benveniste 1973: 324-6 theorizes that the most basic function of the σκῆπτρον is as a messenger's staff, and that kings are the messengers of Zeus who transmit his authoritative messages on earth. Combellack 1948 believes that the function of the σκῆπτρον is to indicate that a speaker is about to make remarks of especial solemnity. Easterling 1989 sees more fluidity and ambiguity in the σκῆπτρον than Combellack, but agrees that the common denominator to all σκῆπτρα is moments of solemn verbal interchange. Mondy 1980 and Unruh 2011 agree with one another that the σκῆπτρον symbolizes the king's ability to inflict punishment on those who disrespect his will, though they each reach this conclusion

especially connected to authoritative speech. The σκῆπτρον is prevalent in the Homeric ἀγορή (assembly), and oaths are sworn upon it.¹²⁶ Priests, judges, and heralds share with kings a particular link to authoritative speech, and the σκῆπτρον is paired together with θέμιστες (judgments) on a few occasions in Homer to form a unit of the physical and abstract expressions of royal authority respectively, as in the following:

...εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
εἷς βασιλεύς, ᾧ δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω
σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισι βουλευῆσι. (Il. 2.204-6)

Let there be one ruler,
one king, to whom the child of crooked-counseling Cronus gave
a σκῆπτρον and θέμιστες, so that he counsel them [the people].¹²⁷

In Hesiod, too, the σκῆπτρον indicates the authority of the bearer's speech, which is in this case poetic speech. In the proem of his *Theogony*, Hesiod describes being chosen as the mouthpiece of the Muses and claims that he received a σκῆπτρον from them, and Martin argues that it is a gift from Zeus.¹²⁸ Agamemnon's ancestral σκῆπτρον from Book 2 of the *Iliad* is explicitly described as having a genealogy of ownership that includes Zeus, the king of gods and men, who gives to a king a σκῆπτρον and θέμιστες by which he enacts his authority over the people:

...ἀνὰ δὲ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
ἔσθη σκῆπτρον ἔχων τὸ μὲν Ἴφαιστος κάμε τεύχων.
Ἴφαιστος μὲν δῶκε Διὶ Κρονίῳ ἀνακτι,
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ ἀργεῖφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,

independently: Mondi argues that the σκῆπτρον is a symbol of the king's divine authority and the mundane equivalent of Zeus' thunderbolt, while Unruh argues that the σκῆπτρον represents its bearer's ability to punish because it is essentially a cudgel with which the king can (threaten to) beat the unruly. See also Griffin 1980: 9-12; Lynn-George 1988: 48-9; van Wees 1992: 31, 33, 83-4, 276-80, 284-5.

¹²⁶ See, e.g., *Il.* 1.233ff.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Il.* 9.98-9.

¹²⁸ *Th.* 30-3; Martin 1984: 35.

αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρεΐ ποιμένι λαῶν, 105
 Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστη,
 αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λείπε φορῆναι,
 πολλῆσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.
 τῷ ὃ γ' ἐρυσάμενος ἔπε' Ἀργείοισι μετηύδα· (Il. 2.100-9)

And lordly Agamemnon
 stood up holding the staff which Hephaestus made.
 Hephaestus gave it to lord Zeus, son of Cronus,
 and Zeus in turn gave it to the messenger Argeïphontes;
 and lord Hermes gave it to Pelops, driver of horses,
 and Pelops in turn gave it to Atreus, the shepherd of the people,
 and, dying, Atreus left it to Thyestes, rich in sheep,
 and Thyestes in turn left it to Agamemnon to bear,
 and to rule over many islands and all Argos.
 Leaning on it, he spoke words among the Argives:...

Crielaard argues that an extended genealogy of ownership such as this one gives an object additional value in Homeric culture, creates a connection between past and previous (and potential future) owners, and is evidence that authority was rooted in the deep past.¹²⁹

Agamemnon's deep past includes Zeus himself, and when Agamemnon addresses the Achaeans he physically and metaphorically leans on the σκῆπτρον as a symbol of his authority as sanctioned by Zeus. However, in addition to its connection to authoritative speech, the σκῆπτρον often paradoxically occurs in contexts of questioned or questionable authority, and both of the passages quoted above (Il. 2.204-6, 100-9) are situated in such a context.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Crielaard 2003: 53-6.

¹³⁰ It is unclear whether this paradox is inherent in the σκῆπτρον, as is the paradox in the κρήδεμνον, which is fascinating *because* it is apotropaic; perhaps the σκῆπτρον can be both authoritative and non-authoritative because the same object is both kingly staff and lowly walking stick. It is also possible, as I suggest below, that a glaring schism between an object with strong, traditional connotations of authority and a context of faltering authority is created in order to highlight the authoritative figure's failure. The repeated occurrence of σκῆπτρα and σκῆπτρον-based words in such contexts in the Homeric poems suggests that the object's use to communicate violation of a king's authority was traditional.

Griffin points out that Agamemnon takes up his Zeus-given σκῆπτρον and leans on it as he addresses the Achaeans after Zeus deceives him with a false dream.¹³¹ Agamemnon's address is a test, which the troops fail, and they rush off to the ships to leave Troy. Odysseus then takes Agamemnon's σκῆπτρον from him and delivers the passage above (2.204-6) as a rebuke to any common man (δήμου τ' ἄνδρα, 2.198) he finds, after beating him with the σκῆπτρον.¹³² Attention is notably drawn to Agamemnon's σκῆπτρον here, but also to his deception and subsequent failure to elicit the desired response to his speech, which prompts Odysseus to take hold of the physical object and thus take control of the situation. Odysseus does not undermine Agamemnon's authority, he asserts it to the people; but the whole debacle throws an ambiguous light on the great king. I believe that the centrality here of the σκῆπτρον, the symbol of basileutic authority *par excellence*, puts a point on the equivocality and casts this episode's contrast with ideal kingship into sharper relief.¹³³

In addition to the prominent presence of Agamemnon's σκῆπτρον in this Iliadic episode, the relatively rare word σκηπτοῦχος, 'σκῆπτρον-bearing' (applied only to kings in Homer) also appears once. After Agamemnon relates his dream to a council of elders (γέροντες), Nestor admits that the dream would be deemed false if anyone but the best of the Achaeans had seen it, and as the gathered elders rise to obey Agamemnon, despite wise, old Nestor's misgivings, they are called σκηπτοῦχοι βασιλῆες – "σκῆπτρον-bearing kings," (2.86). Again, a σκῆπτρον word is used in a context of uncertainty and subtle wavering of kingly authority. And again concerning

¹³¹ Griffin 1980: 9-11. Agamemnon's false dream from Zeus is at *Il.* 2.5-40, and Agamemnon takes up his σκῆπτρον at 2.46.

¹³² Odysseus takes Agamemnon's σκῆπτρον at *Il.* 2.185-6.

¹³³ See Easterling 1989: 110-1 on this episode of the *Iliad* as a comment on the problematic nature of power and responsibility among Homeric kings; cf. Griffin 1980: 9-11 who believes that the episode undermines Agamemnon's kingship and represents him as a failure.

Agamemnon, Odysseus later on upbraids the great king for truly suggesting that the Achaeans leave Troy, saying:

σίγα, μή τις τ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν τοῦτον ἀκούσῃ
 μῦθον, ὃν οὐ κεν ἀνήρ γε διὰ στόμα πάμπαν ἄγοιτο
 ὅς τις ἐπίσταιτο ἧσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν
 σκηπτοῦχος τ' εἶη, καὶ οἱ πειθοίατο λαοὶ
 τοσσοῖδ' ὅσσοισιν σὺ μετ' Ἀργεΐοισιν ἀνάσσεις. (Il. 14.90-4)

Silence, lest anyone else among the Achaeans hear this speech, which a man would not at all let through his mouth, whoever knows in his heart how to speak fittingly and is σκηπτρον-bearing, and as many people obey him as you rule over among the Argives.

Odysseus accuses Agamemnon of saying what a σκηπτοῦχος who knows how to speak rightly would not say, emphasizing the connections between the σκηπτρον, proper and authoritative speech, and kingship. Diomedes similarly reprimands Agamemnon for suggesting retreat, and the Zeus-given σκηπτρον figures in his rebuke, as well.¹³⁴

Earlier in the *Iliad*, Nestor uses the phrase σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς as he attempts to defuse the tense situation between Agamemnon and Achilles, each of whom is trying to assert his own authority and avoid losing face in what becomes an intractable impasse. Nestor advises Achilles not to wrangle with a σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς (i.e., Agamemnon), who as a rule has a greater portion of τιμή (honor) than everyone else.¹³⁵ A σκηπτρον is also physically present in this scene: before Nestor intervenes, Achilles swears an oath on a σκηπτρον that Agamemnon will regret dishonoring him because he will withdraw from the war, resulting in many casualties for the Greeks and much grief for Agamemnon. Achilles punctuates his oath by throwing the σκηπτρον down: ποτι δὲ σκηπτρον βάλε γαίῃ – “he threw the staff to the ground,” (1.233-46).

¹³⁴ Il. 9.37-9: σοὶ δὲ διάνδιχα δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω· σκήπτρω μὲν τοι δῶκε τετιμῆσθαι περὶ πάντων./ἀλκὴν δ' οὐ τοι δῶκεν, ὅ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον.

¹³⁵ Il. 1.277-9.

While Griffin interprets this act as a rejection of, and withdrawal from, the community, Mondì posits a linguistic and semantic link between σκῆπτρον and post-Homeric σκηπτός, ‘thunderbolt,’ and argues that throwing a σκῆπτρον to the ground is a demonstration of royal anger, like Zeus hurling his thunderbolt to the earth, and thus an emphatic affirmation of royal authority.¹³⁶ But these two interpretations are perhaps not mutually exclusive. Throwing down the σκῆπτρον might symbolize a rejection of an individual or community’s ὕβρις, while also making a claim to the authority to make such a judgment.

This is indeed the context in *Odyssey* Book 2: Telemachus calls to meeting the first assembly of the Ithacans in 20 years (at the prompting of Athena in disguise as Mentès).¹³⁷ The herald Peisenor places a σκῆπτρον in the hand of the young man, who reproaches the suitors for their malicious treatment of his household, despite the fact that Odysseus was once their king and πατήρ δ’ ὧς ἦπιος ἦεν – “he was like a kind father,” (2.47).¹³⁸ At the end of his speech, Telemachus ποτὶ δὲ σκῆπτρον βάλε γαίη/δάκρυ’ ἀναπρήσας – “threw the staff to the ground, bursting out in tears,” (2.80-1). Like Achilles, Telemachus suffers injustice at the hands of the community, and the authority he claims for himself is not honored. Telemachus, though, is not an established king; the assembly in Book 2 is his first venture into attempting to exercise royal authority in his community, and part of his negotiation of the transition to manhood, though his tears suggest that he is still somewhat immature and ineffectual. However, the young prince is not totally without support: Mentor promotes the Arceisiad rule when he reproaches his fellow Ithacans for allowing the suitors to violate Odysseus’ authority with impunity, beginning with the following:

¹³⁶ Griffin 1980: 11-2; Mondì 1980: 209-11.

¹³⁷ ‘Mentès’ encourages Telemachus at 1.272-4.

¹³⁸ Peisenor hands the σκῆπτρον to Telemachus at 2.37-8.

κέκλυτε δὴ νῦν μευ, Ἰθακήσιοι, ὅττι κεν εἴπω·
 μή τις ἔτι πρόφρων ἀγανὸς καὶ ἥπιος ἔστω
 σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, μηδὲ φρεσὶν αἴσιμα εἰδώς,
 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ χαλεπὸς τ' εἶη καὶ αἴσυλα ρέζοι·
 ὡς οὐ τις μέμνηται Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο
 λαῶν οἷσιν ἀνασσε, πατήρ δ' ὧς ἥπιος ἦεν. (2.229-34)

Listen to me now, Ithacans, what I have to say:
 let one who is a σκηπτρον-bearing king no longer
 be earnestly gentle and kind, nor have justice in his heart,
 but may he always be severe and take harsh actions,
 since no one of the people whom he ruled remembers
 godlike Odysseus, and he was like a kind father.

Lines 230-4 here are repeated *verbatim* at 5.8-12, where Athena addresses an assembly of her fellow Olympians (Ζεῦ πάτερ ἠδ' ἄλλοι μάκαρες θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες – “Father Zeus and the other blessed gods everlasting,” 5.7) as she advocates for Odysseus’ long-overdue return home.¹³⁹

Athena’s speech in Book 5 sets the scene for Odysseus’ introduction to the poem, which, as mentioned above, parallels Telemachus’ coming-of-age through the hero’s rebirth and reestablishment of his place in the community and royal authority. Also, in his current situation Odysseus, like Telemachus, is suffering injustice at the hands of his community and is powerless to actively respond to the violation. The repeated speeches of Mentor and Athena and the similar contexts of anxiety over royal authority link the father-son pair.

Although the σκηπτρον is physically present only in Book 2 and not Book 5, I argue that the use of the word σκηπτοῦχος, which alludes to the σκηπτρον, is meaningful in these passages. Although Odysseus is not explicitly called σκηπτοῦχος, the epithet is indirectly applied to him: Mentor and Athena suggest that every σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς cease being fair and just if this particular σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, Odysseus, was fair and just, and yet is now disrespected without consequence; when authority can be violated with impunity, what incentive is there to honor it?

¹³⁹ Note that after the Ithacan assembly Athena appears to Telemachus in the form of Mentor to urge him on his journey (2.267-95), and subsequently accompany him to Pylos.

The statement is specifically about the outrage of disrespect for kingly authority going unpunished, and the social, political, and even cosmic disorder such wanton violation entails. The use of the word σκηπτοῦχος in this speech and at this point in the narrative, when Odysseus is stagnating on Calypso's isle, is particularly apt: Odysseus is at his most dispossessed and disenfranchised and his household is suffering under extreme ὕβρις, so the reminder of the σκῆπτρον through the epithet here forms a vivid contrast with Odysseus and his household's current situation. The violation of authority is all the more flagrant if Unruh is correct in his argument that the σκῆπτρον is a symbol of power because it represents a cudgel with which the king can take violent retribution on the disobedient.¹⁴⁰ Odysseus himself demonstrates the use of the σκῆπτρον to beat insubordinates when he beats the common men who rush to the ships in Book 2 of the *Iliad*, and when he thrashes Thersites for speaking ill of Agamemnon.¹⁴¹ Referring (obliquely) to Odysseus as a σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς perhaps hints at the violence the suitors will face when Odysseus finally returns and reasserts his rule.

The hubristic disregard for Odysseus' kingship is further communicated in Mentor and Athena's speech if the speech contains elements of the "ruler's truth." The widespread, Indo-European phenomenon of the "ruler's truth" is one of many genres of discourse subsumed into Homeric poetry (as well as the poetry of Hesiod).¹⁴² It is the notion that a king ensures his community's prosperity and safety through the spoken word, which derives its power from its truth.¹⁴³ The "ruler's truth" has been recognized in the *Odyssey* in speeches delivered by Odysseus himself about good men or kings: at 8.166-77 Odysseus reproaches the young

¹⁴⁰ Unruh 2011: esp. 290-3.

¹⁴¹ *Il.* 2.198-9, 265-8.

¹⁴² On genres of discourse in Homeric poetry, see Martin 1984: 30-1.

¹⁴³ Note the derivation of δίκη from the root *deik-, 'to show, pronounce solemnly,' (Watkins, ed. 2000: 14-5) whence also δεικνύναι and Latin *dicere*. For more on the "ruler's truth" and its permutations in various Indo-European languages and cultures, see Watkins 1979.

Phaeacian Euryalus and describes a good man who is less physically beautiful but more gifted in mind and speech, and at 19.107-14 Odysseus (in disguise) likens Penelope to a good king whose just rule causes his community to prosper.¹⁴⁴ Martin and Levaniouk interpret these passages respectively as instances in which Odysseus employs the traditional motif of the “ruler’s truth” whilst incognito to covertly signal that he is a king. The speech of Mentor and Athena has some contextual similarities with a “ruler’s truth” speech: the man and the goddess each deliver their speech in an ἀγορή, like Odysseus at 8.166-77 and the anonymous good king in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, both of whom are resolving a νεῖκος (quarrel).¹⁴⁵ At the beginning of the assembly at which Mentor speaks, Telemachus’ arrival is described with what Martin terms a “looking on” motif:

βῆ ῥ’ ἴμεν εἰς ἀγορήν, παλάμη δ’ ἔχε χάλκεον ἔγχος,
οὐκ οἶος, ἅμα τῷ γε δύο κύνες ἀργοὶ ἔποντο.
θεσπεσίην δ’ ἄρα τῷ γε χάριν κατέχευεν Ἀθήνη.
τὸν δ’ ἄρα πάντες λαοὶ ἐπερχόμενον θηεῦντο. (Od. 2.10-3)

So he made his way into the assembly, and he held a bronze spear in his hand,
not alone: together with him two swift dogs followed.
And Athena poured marvelous grace down on him,
and so all the people gazed at him as he approached.

The “looking on” of the people similarly occurs at *Odyssey* 8.173 and *Theogony* 85.¹⁴⁶ However, neither Mentor nor Athena is a king and thus neither is signaling his/her own kingship, though each one is wise and connected to Odysseus.¹⁴⁷ Their speech also implies that before he left for

¹⁴⁴ On 8.166-77 see Martin 1984, and on 19.107-14 see Levaniouk 2011: 27-8.

¹⁴⁵ *Th.* 79-93. Quarreling: *Od.* 8.238-9 and *Th.* 86-7.

¹⁴⁶ Note also the similarity of the description of Odysseus’ entrance into the Phaeacians’ assembly at *Od.* 8.16-9, which creates a link between the son’s first assembly and the father’s first assembly, after his rebirth (more on which below).

¹⁴⁷ Mentor’s name probably means ‘adviser,’ and is derived from the Indo-European root *men-, ‘to think,’ whence Latin *mens* and possibly also Minerva (see *men-¹ at Watkins, ed. 2000: 54). When Odysseus set out to Troy, he turned over his whole household to his companion Mentor’s care for safekeeping (2.225-7).

Troy, Odysseus was gentle, kind and just, which are the very qualities a king who displays the “ruler’s truth” is supposed to have.¹⁴⁸ It appears that Odysseus did not make σκολιαὶ δίκαι/θέμιστες – “crooked judgments,” the mark of a bad king in the *Iliad* and Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, during his rule on Ithaca.¹⁴⁹ However, in the chaos that reigns in his absence, Odysseus’ δίκη is disregarded and drowned out by the ὕβρις that is frequently demonstrated by the suitors throughout the poem.¹⁵⁰ As Watkins and Nagy demonstrate, Hesiod specifically represents ὕβρις as the polar opposite of δίκη.¹⁵¹ In the *Works and Days*, those who give δίκας...ἰθείας – “straight judgments” have cities that prosper and are protected from war, famine, and destruction, while those who act with ὕβρις (οἷς δ’ ὕβρις τε μέμηλε, 238) suffer all of those misfortunes.¹⁵² Likewise, δίκη and ὕβρις contrastingly characterize the good and bad generations respectively in the myth of the ages of man.¹⁵³ Odysseus the kind and gentle king represents the δίκη needed to counter the force of ὕβρις that is the suitors. Thus Mentor and

¹⁴⁸ This is demonstrated in the Irish *Audacht Morainn*, a *speculum principum* dating to 700 AD, which promotes the “ruler’s truth” and gives the following advice to the king:

Apair fris, (a) ba trócar, (b) bad firióin, (c) bad chosmuil, (d) bad chuibsech, (e) bad fosath, (f) bad eslabar, (g) bad garte, (h) bad fialainech, (i) bad sessach, (j) bad lessach, (k) bad éitir, (l) bad inric, (m) bad suthnge, (n) bad foruste, (o) bad fírbrethach.

Tell him, let him be (a) merciful, (b) just, (c) impartial, (d) conscientious, (e) firm, (f) generous, (g) hospitable, (h) honourable, (i) stable, (j) beneficent, (k) capable, (l) honest, (m) well-spoken, (n) steady, (o) true-judging. (Kelly 1976: sect. 55)

On the *Audacht Morainn* generally and this passage in particular, see Watkins 1979: 182 and Martin 1984: 33-6.

¹⁴⁹ *Il.* 16.384-93, where Zeus destroys crooked-judging men’s harvest with a torrential downpour in retribution for their disregard of δίκη; *W&D* 219, 221, 250, 262, 264.

¹⁵⁰ E.g., 1.368, 4.627, 15.329, 16.86, etc.

¹⁵¹ Watkins 1979: 192-4 and Nagy 1979: 151-6.

¹⁵² Just people: 225-37; hubristic people: 238-47.

¹⁵³ *W&D* 109-201.

Athena's speech is ideologically of a piece with the sentiments of the "ruler's truth" and its opposite, the "ruler's falsehood."¹⁵⁴

Another possible connection to this Indo-European cultural phenomenon is the physical object used to symbolize authority: the staff. During an ancient Irish inauguration of a king, a rod would be passed from a poet to the king.¹⁵⁵ Martin notes how the proem of the *Theogony* resembles an inauguration ode for Zeus which describes the (divine) king's genealogy and battle prowess, just as Irish inauguration odes did. The σκῆπτρον Hesiod receives from the Muses is a gift from Zeus, who in turn is confirmed in his authority by the poet's speech: the *Theogony*.¹⁵⁶ Also, just as the "ruler's truth" is connected with "straight" δίκαι/θέμιστες, the σκῆπτρον is joined with θέμιστες and described as the particular province of kings, and both given by Zeus, as demonstrated in the passage quoted above (*Il.* 2.204-6).¹⁵⁷ On the Shield of Achilles there is a rich farmland enjoying a bountiful harvest, perhaps as the result of a "ruler's truth," and the ruler is present: the βασιλεύς surveys the harvest and holds a σκῆπτρον.¹⁵⁸ Recall also that throwing the σκῆπτρον to the ground demonstrates a rejection of ὕβρις, as well as the authority to

¹⁵⁴ Note that the δίκη/ὑβρις dichotomy is not limited to Greek, but occurs in other ancient Indo-European cultures and languages (see Watkins 1979: 193-5).

¹⁵⁵ The rod was linked to kingship as well as authoritative poetic speech: the rod-supplying poet and king reciprocally confirmed one another's authority, and expressed their own authority through speech. This Irish rod is paralleled by the Greek σκῆπτρον. On Irish royal inaugurations see Martin 1984: 35 and n.15. On the connections between poets and kings in the proem of the *Theogony*, see Duban 1980. The staff or scepter as a symbol of royalty that is given to a king by a god is not limited to Indo-European traditions, as Griffin points out. Assur-Nâsir-Pal of Assyria claims that Assur gave him the scepter which rules the people, and at Babylon Marduk gives the scepter to the king who reveres him (see Griffin 1980: n.25; Mondl 1980: n.20, 22).

¹⁵⁶ *Th.* 1-34; Martin 1984: 35.

¹⁵⁷ Another instance in which δίκη, speech, and the authority of the σκῆπτρον are connected and employed in the context of a public νεῖκος is on the Shield of Achilles, where elders (γέροντες) hold σκῆπτρα and judge a dispute, with two talents of gold forming the reward for the one who δίκην ἰθύντατα εἶποι – "should speak the straightest judgment," (*Il.* 18.497-508).

¹⁵⁸ *Il.* 18.556-7.

understand what δίκη is.¹⁵⁹ Σκηπτοῦχος therefore appears to be an appropriate epithet to use when invoking the “ruler’s truth” and interrelated notions of authoritative speech and kingly justice.

The occurrence of the word σκηπτοῦχος at Odysseus’ introduction anticipates his ultimate resumption of his kingship, and when Odysseus finally returns to Ithaca he carries a σκῆπτρον – but it is the walking stick of a beggar, not the staff of a king.¹⁶⁰ The σκῆπτρον’s ability to be either a symbol of power for the highest of the high, the king, or a simple cane for the lowest of the low, the beggar, makes it particularly appropriate for Odysseus the king’s disguise as a beggar. While Mondì says that the royal σκῆπτρον is “vulgarized” when it serves as a walking stick in the *Odyssey*, Martin argues that it is necessary to remember Odysseus’ royal status both when he is outside of his community and when he returns to it in disguise as a beggar “in order to appreciate the full resonances” of these portions of the poem.¹⁶¹ I agree with Martin, and with the number of scholars who believe that Odysseus’ kingship is latently present in his beggar’s σκῆπτρον.¹⁶² Like his Cretan tales whose lies contain the truth, the σκῆπτρον is part of Odysseus’ disguise and yet indicative of his true kingship, and an appropriate attribute for the man of ambiguity and manyness, Odysseus πολύτροπος.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ *Il.* 1.245; *Od.* 2.80-1.

¹⁶⁰ Athena gives Odysseus a σκῆπτρον at 13.437 when she transforms him into an aged beggar, further on which in ch. 4 below.

¹⁶¹ Mondì 1980: 209; Martin 1984: 43-4.

¹⁶² E.g., Nagler 1974: 123-4; Goldhill 1988: 11; Steiner 2009: n.71.

¹⁶³ Note that Mentor and Athena’s speech contains both οὐ τις, (2.233; 5.11) and μή τις, (2.230; 5.8), and thus perhaps hints at Odysseus’ infamous δόλος in which he tells the Cyclops that his name is Οὐ τις, which is homophonous with οὐ τις, which in turn is rendered as μή τις in certain syntactical situations, and which in its turn is homophonous with μή τις. The ambiguous σκῆπτρον might be distantly connected to this episode, in which Odysseus makes himself virtually identity-less through the name ‘Nobody,’ but also simultaneously displays the greatest (and best-known) turn of his μή τις, which is an identifying feature of Odysseus πολύμητις. On the Cyclops episode and Odysseus’ cunning punning, see ch. 3 below.

The ambiguity of the σκῆπτρον is suggested when Odysseus is compelled to fight the beggar Irus. After easily defeating Irus, Odysseus drags him out to the courtyard, props him up,

...σκῆπτρον δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε χειρί,
καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
“ἐνταυθοῖ νῦν ἦσο σύας τε κύνας τ’ ἀπερύκων,
μηδὲ σύ γε ξείνων καὶ πτωχῶν κοίρανος εἶναι
λυγρὸς ἐών, μή πού τι κακὸν καὶ μεῖζον ἐπαύρη.” (18.103-7)

...and stuck the σκῆπτρον in his [Irus’] hand,
and speaking addressed him winged words:
“Now sit here and keep away the pigs and dogs.
Do not you yourself be king of guests and beggars,
wretch that you are, lest you somehow bring something even worse upon yourself.”

Even as a beggar, Odysseus is ‘king,’ and he uses the σκῆπτρον to sardonically comment on the downfall of Irus’ reign.¹⁶⁴ His rout of the younger and larger, but weaker and overweening man also prefigures his ultimate victory over the hubristic suitors who challenge his kingship.

Odysseus’ disguise as a beggar is not the only instance when he appears to be other than he is while holding a σκῆπτρον: during the teichoscopia in the *Iliad*, Antenor recalls Odysseus’ presence in an embassy sent to the Trojans to negotiate Helen’s return.¹⁶⁵ Antenor explains that Odysseus at first did not seem to be a great orator, and did not gesture with his σκῆπτρον in the manner of an experienced speaker, but his appearance was deceiving: his words were νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίησιν – “like winter snowflakes,” (*Il.* 3.222), and no mortal man could compete with him in speech (οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ’ Ὀδυσῆϊ γ’ ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος, 3.223). With the σκῆπτρον in his hand, Odysseus is a master of disguise, and a master of authoritative speech.

Odysseus’ σκῆπτρον *qua* beggar’s walking stick has yet another poetic function:

Odysseus leans on the σκῆπτρον to support himself, and Newton explains that this is one of

¹⁶⁴ On Irus as a surrogate for Odysseus in a kind of φαρμακός ritual, see Steiner 2009: 76ff. and ch. 4 below.

¹⁶⁵ *Il.* 3.214-24.

many ways that the hero is represented as having a connection to Hephaestus.¹⁶⁶ Both are described as having weak or crippled legs, and Hephaestus also uses a σκῆπτρον as a walking stick because he is χολεύων – “limping,” (*Il.* 18.417).¹⁶⁷ Hephaestus has a further connection to the σκῆπτρον: he is the craftsman of Agamemnon’s ancestral σκῆπτρον.¹⁶⁸ Nagy explains that the σκῆπτρον Hephaestus makes in the *Iliad* is called ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ – “imperishable always” because it started out as a thing of nature, subject to wilting/perishing (‘phthi-’), and was then transformed into an unchanging thing of culture, a “social artifact.”¹⁶⁹ Since the wood of the σκῆπτρον is no longer a part of the natural vegetal cycle, it has an immortality that allows it to last for generations, which can perpetuate the memory of a mortal human through a genealogy of ownership. Similarly, κλέος ἄφθιτον in the form of Homeric poetry is a way of shifting a mortal out of nature and into culture.¹⁷⁰ As a craftsman, Hephaestus can turn the natural and perishable into the cultural and everlasting. Odysseus is also depicted as a Hephaestean craftsman in the *Odyssey*, uniquely amongst Homeric heroes: an example of his crafting is the extended passage in which Odysseus expertly builds a boat to leave Calypso’s island, discussed below.¹⁷¹ As West explains, the language of the professional craftsmanship of carpentry was often applied

¹⁶⁶ At 17.196 the verb σκηρίπτεσθαι is used, and at 17.203 and 338 σκήπτεσθαι. Recall Agamemnon physically and metaphorically leaning on his σκῆπτρον at *Il.* 2.109, mentioned above. See Newton 1987 for a full discussion of Odysseus’ connections to Hephaestus; cf. Flaumenhaft 1982: 34-7; Hedreen 2016: 135-46.

¹⁶⁷ *Od.* 8.230-3, 306-12 and *Il.* 3.191-8. Newton 1987: 13, 15 also notes that the suitors throw foot-related items at beggar-Odysseus (footstools: *Od.* 17.462-3, 18.394-8; a cow’s foot: 20.299-300), and the numerous mentions of the threat to Odysseus of being dragged away by the foot (16.274-7, 17.478-80, 18.10) are reminiscent of Zeus hurling Hephaestus from Mt. Olympus by the foot (*Il.* 1.591).

¹⁶⁸ *Il.* 2.101, quoted above.

¹⁶⁹ *Il.* 2.46, 186.

¹⁷⁰ Nagy 1979: 174-85.

¹⁷¹ 5.233-61. Note that Paris built his house with the assistance of the best craftsmen of Troy (*Il.* 6.314-7), though neither he nor any other hero (besides Odysseus) is described crafting any object in detail in Homer.

metaphorically to poetry, which was also a form of professional craftsmanship, in many Indo-European languages and cultures.¹⁷² Odysseus' physical crafting with wood is linked to his crafting with words, but at the end of the *Odyssey* both of these creative endeavors of his differ from the craftsmanship and poetry of the *Iliad*: we will find that Odysseus is able to harmonize nature and culture in his crafting, and reconcile κλέος and νόστος which are irreconcilably opposed in the *Iliad*.¹⁷³ For Iliadic heroes, achieving κλέος ἄφθιτον requires that they exit the realm of the natural via death, which precludes the possibility of the hero's νόστος ('homecoming,' or 'return to light and life,' as Frame calls it).¹⁷⁴ In Odysseus' poem, he achieves κλέος specifically through completing his νόστος rather than being frozen in time by dying, and his speech is figured as the "ruler's truth" which causes the natural world to flourish rather than be petrified immutably.¹⁷⁵

In the last passage in which Odysseus is described as σκηπτόμενος – "leaning on a σκηπτρον," (17.338) in his beggar disguise, he arrives at his house for the first time:

ἴζε δ' ἐπὶ μελίνου οὐδοῦ ἔντοσθε θυράων,
κλινάμενος σταθμῶ κυπαρισσίνῳ, ὃν ποτε τέκτων
ξέσσειν ἐπισταμένως καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν. (17.339-41)

¹⁷² West, 2007: 35-6, 38-40. Amongst Greek examples, West cites Pindar's use of the carpentry metaphor, e.g., ...ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοὶ ἄρμοσαν, (*Pyth.* 3.113-4). See also Murray 1981: 98-9; Nagy 1989: 19; Pratt 1993: 67ff.; Rood 2008. The professionalism of the poet is exemplified in the *Odyssey* by Phemius and Demodocus. Note also that at *Od.* 17.383-6 carpenter and bard, along with prophet and healer (and herald at 19.135), are connected by all being δημοεργοί. For the opposing argument that there is a sharp distinction between song and crafts in Homer, see Svenbro 1976: 193-212; Ritoók 1989; Ford 1992: 31-9; Scheid & Svenbro 1996: 111-22; Finkelberg 1998: 100ff.

¹⁷³ See ch. 4 below on Odysseus' still-rooted olive tree bed and orchard. However, not every object Odysseus fashions synthesizes nature and culture; see the discussion of Odysseus' boat below.

¹⁷⁴ See Frame 1978 on νόστος and other words derived from Indo-European root *nes- (see *nes-¹ at Watkins, ed. 2000: 58).

¹⁷⁵ On κλέος and νόστος in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Nagy 1979: ch. 2; on κλέος in the *Odyssey* specifically, see Segal 1994: ch. 5.

And he sat down on the ashen threshold, inside the doors,
 leaning on a cypress-wood column, which its carpenter once
 expertly planed and made straight to a chalk line.

The reference to carpentry calls to mind Odysseus the craftsman of wood and words, and Rood explains the technique of creating a chalk line in carpentry: a string is coated with chalk and drawn tight over the section to be marked and plucked so that a straight line of chalk is left behind.¹⁷⁶ Rood argues that carpentry (shipbuilding specifically) in Homer is associated with the craft of poetry, and compares the plucking of the chalk line string to the plucking of lyre strings, which is used as a metaphor for another kind of string twanging in the *Odyssey*: when Odysseus strings his bow, it is like a singer stringing his lyre, and the bowstring sings when he plucks it.¹⁷⁷ Odysseus explicitly uses a chalk line when building his boat and in the crafting of his unique bed.¹⁷⁸ While the epithet σκηπτοῦχος might not bring to mind all of the connotations explored here, I believe that the reference to the symbolically laden σκῆπτρον at the long postponed introduction of the poem's hero is meaningful, and connects both back to Telemachus in Book 2 and forward to Odysseus in subsequent books.

On the shore of Ogygia

After Athena's speech at 5.7-12, Zeus decides that it is time for Odysseus to begin the process of returning and reasserting his identity as the σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς of Ithaca once more. Zeus sends Hermes to Calypso's island to let the nymph know that Odysseus must now leave her. Hermes εἶλετο δὲ ῥάβδον, τῆ τ' ἀνδρῶν ὄμματα θέλγει, ὧν ἐθέλει, τοὺς δ' αὖτε καὶ

¹⁷⁶ Rood 2008: 38.

¹⁷⁷ 21.406-11, on which see ch. 4 below. Rood 2008: 39-40. See also Moulton 1977: 145-53; Seidensticker 1978: 13-5; Thalmann 1984: 170ff. on the connections between Odysseus and the poet throughout the *Odyssey*, including in this simile.

¹⁷⁸ Boat: 5.245; bed: 23.197. The chalk line comes up again with reference to the carpentry of the house of Odysseus (21.44), and Telemachus sets up the axes for the trick bowshot in a straight line using a chalk line (21.121). See ch. 4 below for more on the formulaic phrase "straight to a chalk line" and what it communicates about Odysseus' identity.

ὕπνῳντας ἐγείρει – “took his rod, with which he charms the eyes of the men/whom he wishes, and also wakes those who are sleeping in turn,” (5.47-8). As a σκῆπτρον can function to identify and define a king, Hermes’ ῥάβδος has special abilities that distinguish him from others (though these abilities are magical, while those of the σκῆπτρον are social). His ῥάβδος has the power to cause or cast off sleep, as this passage explicitly states, and Hermes also puts the Achaean guards to sleep to help Priam reach Achilles’ tent in the *Iliad*.¹⁷⁹ However, in this episode of the *Odyssey* Hermes does not cast sleep onto or off anyone; the ῥάβδος here serves to signal Hermes’ role as psychopomp. Lines 5.47-8 quoted above are repeated nearly *verbatim* at 24.2-4 when Hermes performs his role as psychopomp and leads the souls of the slain suitors to the underworld.¹⁸⁰ The transition between wakefulness and sleep parallels the transition between life and death, and Hermes is connected to transitions and boundary crossing in other ways, as well.

Hermes is a messenger of the gods, passing between divinities and between immortals and mortals, and helps people make dangerous journeys or survive tricky encounters, such as Priam’s journey to Achilles’ tent and Odysseus’ encounter with Circe.¹⁸¹ Burkert connects Hermes’ names etymologically to ἔρμα, ‘a heap of stones,’ meaning stones as markers of territorial boundaries.¹⁸² Hermes crosses physical boundaries in his roles as messenger, psychopomp, and trickster/thief.¹⁸³ Marinatos argues that he also mediates the boundary

¹⁷⁹ 24.444-6.

¹⁸⁰ ...ἔχε δὲ ῥάβδον μετὰ χερσίν/καλὴν χρυσεῖην, τῇ τ’ ἀνδρῶν ὄμματα θέλγει/ῶν ἐθέλει, τοὺς δ’ αὖτε καὶ ὑπνῳντας ἐγείρει.

¹⁸¹ 10.275-306. Note that in this passage Hermes is given the epithet χρυσόρραπις – “with a rod of gold,” (277).

¹⁸² Burkert 1985: 156.

¹⁸³ In the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, the god famously rustles Apollo’s cattle (see Marinatos 2003: 141). Note also that Hermes is the patron god of Odysseus’ own grandfather, Autolycus, ...ὄς ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο/κλεπτοσύνη θ’ ὄρκω τε· θεὸς δὲ οἱ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν/Ἑρμείας· τῷ γὰρ

crossing in the transition to male adulthood: iconographical evidence demonstrates that Hermes can be depicted both as a youth and as an adult and thus straddles this boundary¹⁸⁴; Hermes begins as an infant and appears to reach adolescence through initiatory activities in the *Hymn to Hermes*; and Hermes is depicted in art and in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* as a sexual mediator or sexual pursuer of maidens.¹⁸⁵ Hermes (similar to Hephaestus and Odysseus) also crosses the boundary between nature and culture in the *Hymn to Hermes* through a number of inventions: he turns a tortoise into a lyre, makes sandals by fastening twigs together, and discovers how to produce fire using sticks.¹⁸⁶

It is meaningful that in the *Odyssey* Hermes acts as the gods' messenger rather than Iris as in the *Iliad*; his presence and connection to Odysseus brings out particular qualities of Odysseus' identity that are indissociable from him. Hermes and Odysseus, the only two πολύτροποι figures in Greek epic poetry, both have a capacity for creativity and change that distinguishes and thus identifies them.¹⁸⁷ Hermes' disruption of the stasis on Calypso's island catalyzes and prefigures Odysseus' own creative disruption when he builds a boat and crosses the sea, as Hermes crosses the sea to reach Ogygia. Both Hermes himself and his ράβδος help set up the context of transition: Odysseus is currently frozen in a liminal space between life and

κεχαρισμένα μηρία καῖεν/ἀρνῶν ἠδ' ἐρίφων· ὁ δέ οἱ πρόφρων ἄμ' ὀπήδει, (19.395-8) (see Burkert 1985: 156-8; Pucci 1987: 23-4).

¹⁸⁴ Note that when Hermes appears to Odysseus in Book 10, he is in the form of a young man whose beard has just started to grow: ἔνθα μοι Ἑρμείας χρυσόρραπις ἀντεβόλησεν/ἐρχομένῳ πρὸς δῶμα, νεηνίη ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς,/πρῶτον ὑπηνήτη, τοῦ περ χαριστάτη ἦβη, (277-9).

¹⁸⁵ Marinatos 2003: 131-43.

¹⁸⁶ *h.Herm.* 24-53 (lyre), 79-83 (sandals), 109-14 (fire). See van Nortwick 2009: 88-90.

¹⁸⁷ Odysseus πολύτροπος: *Od.* 1.1, 10.330; Hermes πολύτροπος: *h.Herm.* 13, 439. See Pucci 1987: 24-5.

death, mortality and immortality, but will soon undergo a symbolic rebirth and re-initiation into human society.¹⁸⁸

The connection of the *ράβδος* to Hermes' role as psychopomp is part of a larger complex of imagery that colors Ogygia as separate from mortal human life. Some scholars emphasize the Stygian connotations of the island's features in the following passage:

ὔλη δὲ σπέος ἀμφὶ πεφύκει τηλεθόωσα,
κλήθρη τ' αἴγειρός τε καὶ εὐώδης κυπάρισσος.
ἔνθα δὲ τ' ὄρνιθες τανυσίπτεροι εὐνάζοντο, 65
σκῶπές τ' ἴρηκές τε τανύγλωσσοί τε κορῶναι
εἰνάλια, τῆσιν τε θαλάσσια ἔργα μέμηλεν.
ἢ δ' αὐτοῦ τετάνυστο περὶ σπειῖος γλαφυροῖο
ἡμερὶς ἠβῶωσα, τεθήλει δὲ σταφυλῆσι.
κρῆναι δ' ἐξείης πίσυρες ῥέον ὕδατι λευκῶ, 70
πλησίαι ἀλλήλων τετραμμέναι ἄλλυδις ἄλλη.
ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ ἴου ἠδὲ σελίνου
θήλεον. ἔνθα κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἀθάνατός περ ἐπελθὼν
θηήσαιτο ἰδὼν καὶ τερφθεῖη φρεσὶν ἦσιν. (5.63-74)

A flourishing grove grew around the cave,
alder, black poplar, and fragrant cypress.
And long-winged birds roosted there, 65
owls, hawks, and far-crying sea-crows,
whose work is on the sea.
There stretched around the hollow cave there
a flourishing vine, and it was laden with grape clusters.
And four springs, one after the other, flowed with bright water, 70
close to each other, then turning, each in its own direction.
And around soft meadows were full of violet and
parsley. And even an immortal who came there would
marvel upon seeing it, and would rejoice in his heart.

The barren alder has funereal connotations; the black poplar is present in the groves of

Persephone that mark out the underworld; and cypress indicates the locations of cemeteries.¹⁸⁹

The owl is typically a bad omen connected with death, and hawks and sea-crows feed on flesh

¹⁸⁸ A *ράβδος* is also used for physical transformation: Circe uses her *ράβδος* to (try to) turn men into swine, and back into humans (10.238, 293, 319, 389), and Athena uses a *ράβδος* to transform Odysseus into an old beggar, and back into his younger form (13.429; 16.172, 456).

¹⁸⁹ Groves of Persephone: 10.509-10. Anderson 1958: 7; Holtsmark 1966: 206.

and carrion.¹⁹⁰ The purple iris and parsley are associated with funeral ritual.¹⁹¹ The cave Calypso inhabits has been likened to the underworld as well as to a tomb, and Calypso's name itself, derived from the verb *καλύπτειν* – 'to cover, conceal, bury,' could be funereal.¹⁹² However, other scholars stress the lush fertility of the vine, springs, and meadows, and the orderliness suggested by the three tree species, three bird species, and tidy distribution of the four springs.¹⁹³ For Anderson, the Stygian features noted above are connected to these features, which he argues are Elysian. Like Elysium, Ogygia is an island paradise with luxuriant plant life that indicates a supernatural climate, and thus a carefree existence unlike that typically available to mortals.¹⁹⁴ Thalmann agrees with Anderson, and adds that, beyond Elysium, the situation on Calypso's island is similar to that of the ancient 'Golden Age': in an environment of extraordinary abundance, gods and mortals together share a life of ease, as well as common meals and common beds.¹⁹⁵ Likewise, on Ogygia Calypso and Odysseus share domestic space and activities, and the island is unnaturally fecund and orderly. Van Nortwick points out that this fertility that is at once rampant and yet structured, and seems to exist outside of the forces of time and change, blurs the boundary between mortal and immortal.¹⁹⁶ The environment surrounding Calypso's cave could be chthonic, paradisiacal, reminiscent of the primeval, or a mixture of these things, but in any case the physical features indicate that Ogygia is separate from the human sphere.

¹⁹⁰ Newton 1984: 11.

¹⁹¹ Anderson 1958: 7.

¹⁹² Anderson 1958: 7; Holtsmark, 1966: 206; Newton 1984: 11.

¹⁹³ Austin 1975: 149-52; Crane 1988: 15-6; Thalmann 1992: 47-50; van Nortwick 2009: 14-6.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson 1958: 6-7. Anderson also notes that the meadows of violets and parsley are reminiscent of the meadow of asphodel Achilles inhabits in the underworld (11.538-9).

¹⁹⁵ Thalmann 1992: 47-50.

¹⁹⁶ Van Nortwick 2009: 14-6.

The blurring of distinctions between mortal and immortal is outside of the human experience and problematic for Odysseus, who defines himself as a mortal human. Later on when Alcinous suggests that Odysseus might be a god in disguise, Odysseus is quick to deny his divinity and identifies himself not yet by his name but by his mortal qualities: his human body, the suffering he endures, his deference to the needs of his stomach, and his desire to reach his homeland.¹⁹⁷ On Ogygia, when Calypso makes a last offer of immortality to Odysseus he chooses to remain within the human sphere, which is defined in the same terms: Odysseus acknowledges that Calypso's immortal body is superior to Penelope's mortal body, but he chooses to face the suffering Calypso predicts so that he may return to his homeland.¹⁹⁸ This conversation occurs immediately after Calypso and Odysseus dine together, but on very different fare. While Calypso eats ambrosia and nectar, Odysseus is served *πᾶσαν ἐδωδήν,/ἔσθειν καὶ πίνειν, οἷα βροτοὶ ἄνδρες ἔδουσιν* – “all sorts of victuals, to eat and to drink, such as mortal men feed on,” (5.196-7).¹⁹⁹ Odysseus eats while sitting *ἐπὶ θρόνου ἔνθεν ἀνέστη/Ἑρμείας* – “on the chair from which Hermes arose,” (5.195-6), which furthers the connection between the god and man, but also furthers the distinction between mortals and immortals in terms of their respective diets and thus respective bodies, since Hermes partook of nectar and ambrosia when he sat in the chair.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ 7.199-225.

¹⁹⁸ 5.203-24. Compare 5.211-3: *οὐ μὲν θην κείνης γε χερείων εὐχομαι εἶναι,/οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, ἐπεὶ οὐ πῶς οὐδὲ ἔοικεν/θνητᾶς ἀθανάτησι δέμας καὶ εἶδος ἐρίζειν* and 7.208-10: *οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γε/ἀθανάτοισιν ἔοικα, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν,/οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, ἀλλὰ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.*

¹⁹⁹ Calypso eats ambrosia and nectar at 5.199.

²⁰⁰ 5.92-4. Segal 1994: 17, 23; Pucci 1987: 25 on the qualities of mortality. Pucci also notes that after Odysseus is seated on the chair recently occupied by Hermes, he is described with the adjective *θεῖος*, ‘godlike,’ (5.198) which makes him similar to and yet categorically different from a *θεός*, ‘god.’ See Pucci 1987: 157-87; Bakker 2013: 135-56 on the *γαστήρ* in the *Odyssey*.

As discussed above, one of the ways that Hermes and Odysseus are connected is through their shared capacity for crossing boundaries. Hermes' presence at this particular moment emphasizes Odysseus' identity as a boundary-crosser, which is stifled by his current environment. The boundaries that humans experience and understand as natural overlap on Ogygia, so that there are no boundaries for the human boundary-crosser to transit. The boundary that Calypso coaxes Odysseus to cross is between mortality and immortality, and therefore beyond the human sphere within which he functions.²⁰¹ In refusing to cross this supernatural boundary, Odysseus locates himself at the seashore, which is the kind of threshold that he can and should (and eventually does) cross.²⁰² When he chooses to inhabit a liminal space he demonstrates his rejection of the conflation of the mortal and the immortal on Ogygia; humanity is defined in opposition to divinity, and defined by boundary crossing and transition within a stable framework.²⁰³ To finally break out of his prolonged stasis, Odysseus creatively transforms natural material into a cultural object (like both Hephaestus and Hermes): he builds a boat. Although nature and culture are harmonized later in the poem, here the act of crafting the natural into the artificial functions as a type of human boundary crossing that jumpstarts Odysseus' journey home; the product of his efforts will enable Odysseus to begin the physical crossing of the sea that will catalyze his re-initiation and reentrance into human society.

²⁰¹ Calypso herself notes that mortal men who have sexual relationships with goddesses tend to meet with unfortunate ends (5.118-28).

²⁰² Odysseus is sitting (and weeping) by the seashore at 5.81-4, 151-8.

²⁰³ For instance, crossing a boundary through initiation from adolescence to adulthood entails change since the body ages and develops, but it nevertheless remains a human body and retains distinctive marks (such as scars). When Odysseus is physically transformed by Athena on Ithaca, it is via aging and thus within the framework of the human body (13.429-33). Gods, in contrast, can metamorphose into other entities (e.g., 1.105 and 319-20), and outside of civilized society Odysseus' crewmen undergo transformation into animals (10.233-43).

The boat of Odysseus

The description of Odysseus' construction of his boat is lengthy and relatively technical:²⁰⁴

δῶκέν οἱ πέλεκυν μέγαν, ἄρμενον ἐν παλάμῃσι,
 χάλκεον, ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἀκαχμένον· αὐτὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ 235
 στειλειὸν περικαλλὲς ἐλάινον, εὖ ἐναρηρός·
 δῶκε δ' ἔπειτα σκέπαρνον ἐύξοον· ἦρχε δ' ὁδοῖο
 νήσου ἐπ' ἐσχατιῆς, ὅθι δένδρεα μακρὰ πεφύκει,
 κλήθηρ τ' αἰγείρος τ', ἐλάτη τ' ἦν οὐρανομήκης,
 αὖα πάλαι, περὶ κηλα, τά οἱ πλώοιεν ἐλαφρῶς. 240
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ δεῖξ', ὅθι δένδρεα μακρὰ πεφύκει,
 ἢ μὲν ἔβη πρὸς δῶμα Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,
 αὐτὰρ ὁ τάμνετο δοῦρα· θοῶς δέ οἱ ἦνυτο ἔργον.
 εἵκοσι δ' ἐκβαλε πάντα, πελέκκησεν δ' ἄρα χαλκῷ,
 ξέσσε δ' ἐπισταμένως καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμῃν ἴθυνεν. 245
 τόφρα δ' ἔνεικε τέρετρα Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων·
 τέτρηνεν δ' ἄρα πάντα καὶ ἤρμοσεν ἀλλήλοισιν,
 γόμφοισιν δ' ἄρα τήν γε καὶ ἀρμονίησιν ἄρασσεν.
 ὅσσον τίς τ' ἔδαφος νηὸς τορνώσεται ἀνήρ
 φορτίδος εὐρείης, ἐν εἰδῶς τεκτοσυνάων, 250
 τόσσον ἐπ' εὐρείαν σχεδίην ποιήσας Ὀδυσσεύς.
 ἴκρια δὲ στήσας, ἀραρῶν θαμέσι σταμίνεσσι,
 ποίει· ἀτὰρ μακρῆσιν ἐπηγκενίδεσσι τελεύτα.
 ἐν δ' ἴστον ποίει καὶ ἐπὶ κριον ἄρμενον αὐτῷ·
 πρὸς δ' ἄρα πηδάλιον ποιήσατο, ὄφρ' ἰθύνοι. 255
 φράξε δὲ μιν ρίπεσσι διαμπερὲς οἰσυνῆσι
 κύματος εἴλαρ ἔμεν· πολλὴν δ' ἐπεχεύατο ὕλην.
 τόφρα δὲ φάρε' ἔνεικε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,
 ἰστία ποιήσασθαι· ὁ δ' εὖ τεχνήσατο καὶ τά.
 ἐν δ' ὑπέρας τε κάλους τε πόδας τ' ἐνέδησεν ἐν αὐτῇ, 260
 μογλοῖσιν δ' ἄρα τήν γε κατεΐρυσεν εἰς ἄλλα δῖαν. (5.234-61)

[Calypso] gave him a great ax, fitted to his hands,
 made of bronze, and sharpened on both edges. And on it 235
 was a very beautiful olive wood handle, well fitted into place.
 Then she gave him a well-fashioned adze. And she led the way
 to the far edge of the island, where tall trees grew,

²⁰⁴ I choose to translate the word *σχεδίη* as 'boat' rather than 'raft' to reflect the form of the constructed object. Mark 2005: 71-7 argues that Odysseus crafts a "seagoing vessel" that can properly be called a boat, but is definitely not a raft. Dougherty 2001: 34 chooses the term 'raft' to reflect the etymological connection of the word *σχεδίη* to *αὐτοσχεδιάζειν*, 'to improvise,' because she argues that the vessel is connected to the 'improvised' composition of oral poetry.

alder, black poplar, and fir that reached the heavens,
 dried up long ago, quite parched, that would sail buoyantly. 240
 And once she had shown him where the tall trees grew,
 Calypso, shining among goddesses, went to her house,
 while he cut timbers, and quickly completed his work.
 He felled 20 in all, then shaped them with his bronze ax,
 and expertly planed them and made them straight to a chalk line. 245
 Then Calypso, shining among goddesses, brought augers,
 and so he bored through them all and fitted them to one another,
 and constructed the boat with pegs and fastenings by hammering it.
 As big as some man marks out the bottom of a broad
 merchant ship, when he knows the art of carpentry well, 250
 so big did Odysseus make his broad boat.
 Setting up the deck platforms, fitting them with close uprights,
 he worked them, and finished them with great gunwales.
 And he made a mast and a look-out place fitted to it.
 In addition he made a steering-oar, so he could guide it straight. 255
 And he secured it throughout with osier wickerwork
 to be a defense against waves; he piled up much wood.
 Then Calypso, shining among goddesses, brought him sheets
 to make sails. And he crafted them also.
 And he bound sail ropes and halyards and sheets on it, 260
 then drew it down into the shining sea with levers.

Despite the length of the passage and the use of the vocabulary of carpentry and shipbuilding in particular, it is not completely clear what method of construction is described here. Casson argues that Odysseus builds his ship with mortise-and-tenon joints, while Mark champions the laced method of construction.²⁰⁵ However, the description is missing crucial components of both of these methods of construction: neither is the chiseling necessary to fashion mortise-and-tenon joints included, nor the caulking or wadding necessary for laced boats.²⁰⁶

The ἀρμυρία in line 248 are a particular point of contention, since these ‘fastenings’ could be wooden joints or cords of rope. Besides referring to the construction of Odysseus’ boat,

²⁰⁵ For in-depth explanations of the respective scholars’ opinions on Odysseus’ boat, see Casson 1964; Mark 1991; Casson 1992; Mark 1996; Mark 2005: ch. 4 and 5. In a mortise-and-tenon joint, a tenon tongue is shaped to fit exactly into the rectangular mortise hole in the corresponding member of the joint.

²⁰⁶ Mark 1991: 442-4; Casson 1992: 73-4; Mark 2005: 30-2.

the word otherwise appears in Homer only in a metaphorical usage to refer to agreements which ‘join’ people together.²⁰⁷ Mark therefore turns to Heraclitus to better understand the term: οὐ ξυνηῶσιν ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἄρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης – “They do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself; it is an attunement turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre.”²⁰⁸ However, this brief and elusive fragment is, like the Homeric poetry, variously interpreted by scholars. Mark believes that ἄρμονίη here refers to the literal stringing of a bow or tuning of the strings of a lyre, which would strengthen his reading of the Homeric ἄρμονίαι as cords, while Casson counters that in Heraclitus the word has the metaphorical meaning of ‘harmony.’²⁰⁹ Perhaps Heraclitus fails to clarify the Homeric usage, but he reminds us of the connection the word ἄρμονίη has to bow and lyre strings, which are also suggested by the twanging of the rope to create a chalk line, as discussed above.

While this passage may be technically ambiguous, the mention of the chalk line is one indicator of its poetic richness.²¹⁰ In crafting a boat, Odysseus changes natural material into a cultural object. Segal recognizes this act as the “reengagement of his rational faculties and active temperament” through which Odysseus escapes the inhuman stasis on Calypso’s island, and identifies himself not only as a human, technically savvy in ways other entities are not, but also

²⁰⁷ *Il.* 22.254-5: ἀλλ’ ἄγε δεῦρο θεοὺς ἐπιδώμεθα· τοὶ γὰρ ἄριστοι/μάρτυροι ἔσσονται καὶ ἐπίσκοποι ἄρμονιάων.

²⁰⁸ Heraclitus 51 D-K; text and translation from Kahn 1979: 64-5.

²⁰⁹ Mark 1991: 444; Casson 1992: 74; Mark 1996: 46; Mark 2005: 32-3. In his commentary on the fragments of Heraclitus, Kahn 1979: 196-200 says that ‘harmony’ was not yet an established meaning of ἄρμονίη in the time of Heraclitus, but that the philosopher was deliberately ambiguous in his usage of the word so as to invoke multiple meanings at once, including both the physical ‘fitting together’ of carpentry and the musical tuning of strings and tones.

²¹⁰ Dougherty 2001: 27-9 explores both methods of construction, but does not express favor for either as the ‘true’ method used by Odysseus. Rather, Dougherty, like myself, is more interested in the shipbuilding passage’s connection to the crafting of poetry, and both of these techniques overlap with sewing and woodworking metaphors used to represent the activity of the oral poet in the Greek tradition. For sewing metaphors applied to oral poetry and the etymology of rhapsode (ῥάπτειν + ἀοιδή), see Nagy 1996b: 61-4.

as a particular human: Odysseus, the only Homeric hero who crafts.²¹¹ Van Nortwick notes the emphasis on the reconfiguration of natural shapes into artificial ones, and interprets this as a civilizing imposition of human intelligence and order on nature.²¹² Odysseus planes the (natural) trees into (artificial) planks, making them straight to a chalk line: ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν, (245). He also fashions a steering-oar as a rudder ὄφρ' ἰθύνει – “so he could guide it straight,” (255), and later skillfully guides his boat straight over the sea: ἰθύνετο τεχνηέντως, (270). As a human and a craftsman Odysseus imposes orderliness and straightness on the chaotic, irregular elements of nature, similar to the way that he imposes straight judgments which cause the community to flourish with his word-craft as a king.²¹³

Beyond being rational and civilizing, Odysseus' boat building is a poetic act. Dougherty demonstrates that there was a Greek tradition of associating poetic composition with ships and sailing, beginning with the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships, which functions to catalogue not just ships but also preeminent poetic skill, and continuing beyond the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the so-called Nautilia episode in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.²¹⁴ Hesiod interrupts his advice on sailing to deny any personal experience with the activity, besides having made a short trip to Euboea from Aulis, which he points out was the departure point of the Achaean army on their way to Troy.²¹⁵ In contrasting his exiguous nautical journey with the extended one of the Achaeans, Hesiod contrasts himself and his (strictly agricultural) poetry with Homeric poetry, which involves extensive sailing. Hesiod goes on to explain that his reason for sailing was to participate in a

²¹¹ Segal 1994: 16-7.

²¹² Van Nortwick 2009: 18-9.

²¹³ ‘Straight judgments’ are called δίκας...ἰθείας in the description of what sort of leadership makes for a prosperous city at *W&D* 225-37 (for more, see above).

²¹⁴ Catalogue of ships: *Il.* 2.484ff.; Nautilia: *W&D* 618-94.

²¹⁵ *W&D* 646-53.

poetic competition, which he won (*W&D* 654-62), thus reinforcing the connection between Homeric poetry and sailing, and his opposition (and supposed superiority) to them.²¹⁶

In addition to exploring the way that Homer and Hesiod, as well as later poets such as Ibycus and Pindar, use ships and sailing as metaphors for poetry, Dougherty also analyzes the shipbuilding passage from the *Odyssey* and argues that the boat's construction is described in terms similar to the composition of oral poetry. While the goddess Calypso and her island provide the raw materials (such as wood and cloth), Odysseus' skill and knowledge (see lines 245, 250, and 259) are necessary to produce a finished product (called a *σχεδίη*), just as a poet uses his *σοφία* to take inspiration provided by the Muses and improvise – *αὐτοσχεδιάζειν* – innovative yet traditional poetry.²¹⁷ Dougherty also points out that the verb *ποιεῖν* appears in various forms four times in five lines (251-5), as it and other verbs of making are used in the description of Hephaestus making Achilles' shield in the *Iliad*, which Dougherty calls a “metapoetic” scene.²¹⁸

To add to Dougherty's argument, I note that the shipbuilding passage features repeated usages of words derived from the verb *ἀραρίσκειν*, as well as the words *ἀρμόζειν* and *ἀρμονίη* (in bold font in the quoted text).²¹⁹ The word *ἀραρίσκειν* is first used of something that is fitting or suitable: Calypso brings an ax that is fitted to Odysseus' hands.²²⁰ Its other uses here are for pieces of craftwork that are literally fitted to other pieces, which is also how *ἀρμόζειν* is used,

²¹⁶ Dougherty 2001: 20-7. On Hesiod's *Nautilia*, see also Rosen 1990; Purves 2010: 78-9.

²¹⁷ West 1978: 319 cites numerous examples of *σοφία* referring to the technical skill possessed by poets (as well as other professionals, such as a carpenter at *Il.* 15.412).

²¹⁸ Construction of the Shield of Achilles: *Il.* 18.478ff. Dougherty 2001: 32-7.

²¹⁹ Dougherty 2001: 33 mentions three of these words (*ἤρμισεν*, 247; *ἀρμονίησιν*, 248; *ἀραρών*, 252) as emphasizing the construction techniques typical of both shipbuilding and song-making, but does not elaborate.

²²⁰ 5.234. Note that this ax which suits Odysseus so well has a handle of olive wood. For further discussion of the olive, see below.

and the ambiguous ἀρμονίαι mentioned above are fastenings of some sort. All three of these words are derived from the Indo-European root *ar-, meaning ‘to fit together.’²²¹ Derivatives of *ar- in Greek are applied to the craftsmanship of carpentry, as in this passage, and Nagy argues that such words were also traditionally used in Homer of the craftsmanship of poetry, in correspondence with the Indo-European tradition of comparing poetry and carpentry through the root *tek(s)-.²²²

Nagy notes the use of ἀραρίσκειν in other ancient hexameter poetry to explicitly refer to the ‘fitting together’ of poetry/song.²²³ In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, beautiful song is fitted together: καλή συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή, (164). The Muses in the *Theogony* are called ἀρτιέπειαι – “having words fitted together,” (29), and are described as φωνῆ ὀμηρεῦσαι – “fitting (the song) together with their voice,” (39), as Nagy translates, after choosing Hesiod to be their mouthpiece, giving him a σκῆπτρον and breathing a divine poetic voice into him. Nagy traces the etymology of ὀμηρεῦσαι as he does the name Ὀμ-ηρος, ‘he who fits (the song) together,’ from the Indo-European elements *som-, ‘together’ and *ar-, ‘to fit, join.’²²⁴ Not only is poetry described as fitting pieces together in a way that is analogous to carpentry, but the prototypical poet is also

²²¹ See *ar- at Watkins, ed. 2000: 5.

²²² Nagy 1979: 296-300, 1996a: 89-90, and 1996b: 74-8. Nagy also notes that comparing poetry and weaving is parallel to the poetry-carpentry comparison. On weaving or sewing as a metaphor for poetry in Greek and other Indo-European languages, see Durante 1960; Schmitt 1967: 299-301; Durante 1976: 48, 167-79; Snyder 1981; Scheid & Svenbro 1996: ch. 5; Nagy 1996a: 84-92, 1996b: 63-74, and 2002: 70-98; Graziosi 2002: 18-40; West 2007: 36-8. See *teks- at Watkins, ed. 2000: 89-90, who notes that the root can refer to carpentry or weaving. On the overlaps in the language used to describe the crafts of weavers, smiths, and carpenters in ancient Greece, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1975: 35-82.

²²³ Note also that the verbs ἀρτύειν and ἀρτύνειν, which are also derived from root *ar-, are used metaphorically in Homer for ‘fitting together’ plans, tricks, or lies (see *Il.* 2.55 = 10.302; *Od.* 11.366, 439. Cf. *Od.* 3.152; 16.448; 20.241-2; 24.153).

²²⁴ Nagy 1979: 297-8. See *sem-¹ at Watkins, ed. 2000: 75.

named and thus identified by the act of ‘fitting together.’²²⁵ Odysseus’ engagement in crafting in the *Odyssey* links to his craftsmanship of words, and the extended passage of building his boat that marks and enables his return to civilization identifies him as both material craftsman and, more subtly, verbal craftsman. Numerous aspects of this passage, from the fact that Odysseus constructs a ship to the repetition of *ar- words, hint at the bardic aspect of Odysseus’ identity that will be played out later in the poem.

The crafting of the boat both connects to and contrasts with the way that Odysseus crafted his bed, another prominent descriptive scene of the hero’s handiwork. Odysseus’ boat gives him mobility across the sea, while the bed represents fixity and rootedness in the land.²²⁶ The movement of the boat over the ever-mutable, polymorphous sea suspends Odysseus in a liminal state between the fantastic lands of his adventures and the human land of his home, grounded in reality. This crossing prefigures Odysseus’ ultimate transition from journeys at sea to stability on land: Teiresias has prophesied that after he returns to Ithaca, Odysseus must carry an oar, symbolic of the sea, inland until he encounters someone who is unfamiliar with the sea and sailing and therefore misidentifies, or rather re-identifies, the object as a winnowing shovel, at which point Odysseus should plant it in the ground and sacrifice to Poseidon before finally returning home permanently.²²⁷

²²⁵ Nagy 1979: 298 cites *Od.* 17.381-7 (mentioned above) for evidence that poets, at least in the *Odyssey*, are the social equals of artisans, such as carpenters. The poet is likewise juxtaposed with artisans at *W&D* 25-6 (Nagy 1990b: 56n.25). Nagy also notes the explicit comparison of Homeric poetry to the way that carpenters fit material together at Pindar *Pyth.* 3.112-4: Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν’, ἀνθρώπων φάτις/ἐξ ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοί/ἄρμοσαν, γινώσκομεν.

²²⁶ For more on Odysseus’ bed (23.183-204), see below.

²²⁷ 11.119-37, and relayed by Odysseus to Penelope at 23.264-84.

Part of the play between sea and land comes when Poseidon spots Odysseus on his boat and stirs up a storm. Odysseus laments his misfortune and predicts his demise, then says the following:

τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότε ὄλοντο
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες.
 ὡς δὴ ἐγὼ γ' ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν
 ἥματι τῷ ὅτε μοι πλεῖστοι χαλκὴρεα δοῦρα
 Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλεΐωνι θανόντι.
 τῷ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καὶ μευ κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί·
 νῦν δέ λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἴμαρτο ἀλῶναι. (5.306-12)

Three and four times blessed the Danaans, who died then
 in broad Troy, bringing favor to the Atreids.
 As I too wish I had died and faced my doom
 on that day when very many Trojans threw their
 bronze-tipped weapons at me, over Peleus' dead son.
 Thus would I have gotten my rites, and the Achaeans would have given me glory;
 but now it is my lot to be seized by a wretched death.

Odysseus anticipates a 'wretched death,' that is, a death by drowning at sea, which, unlike a death on land in battle, would afford him neither κτέρεια, funeral rites, nor κλέος, translated above as 'glory.' I believe it is meaningful that these two elements are paired together; the proper funeral (in the context of Homeric poetry) includes a tomb(stone), a σῆμα, which memorializes the dead and transcends his mortality by marking and advertising his existence with a permanent, or at least semi-permanent, device.²²⁸ Hand in hand with this is κλέος, so often qualified as ἄφθιτον, 'imperishable,' in Homeric poetry, the glory or renown that will keep

²²⁸ See the description of Achilles' burial mound, which is ἀκτῆ ἐπι προῦχούσῃ, ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ, ὅς κεν τηλεφανῆς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἴη/τοῖς οἳ νῦν γεγάασι καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσονται, (24.82-4). Σῆμα is used to mean burial mound or grave-marker in Homer at *Il.* 2.814; 6.419; 7.86, 89; 10.415; 11.166; 21.322; 23.45, 255, 257; 24.16, 51, 349, 416, 755, 799, 801; *Od.* 1.291; 2.222; 11.75. Cf. *Il.* 23.326-45 where a σῆμα (sign) might once have been a σῆμα (tomb), and see Nagy 1990a: 216-8 on this passage (cf. Lynn-George 1988: 265-6; Ford 1992: 144-5; Holmberg 1997: 25; Garcia 2013: 149-50). On the σῆμα as gravestone, see Vermeule 1979: 45; Holmberg 1997: 25-6.

the dead hero alive in memory – through the device of poetic song.²²⁹ Odysseus significantly pairs together the material and poetic means of surmounting the transience of mortal life, and imagines that he will have neither if he dies at sea. As a corpse on land can be despoiled and thus stripped of its material signifiers, as well as mutilated by birds and dogs, so at sea the body can be stripped or eaten by fish, which threatens to erase the individual's identity.²³⁰ However, Odysseus, though keenly reluctant to do so, will have to be stripped bare and in a state symbolically analogous to death to undergo his rebirth.

Part of Odysseus' s 'stripping' is the destruction of his boat. If the crafting of the boat is symbolic of or at least analogous to the crafting of poetry, its destruction is perhaps also connected to poetry. Purves and Dougherty both argue that the shipwreck is metapoetically significant, but Purves believes that it indicates the fragility of epic poetry and ultimately the end of the genre, while Dougherty interprets the splintering of the boat as the flexibility and mutability of epic.²³¹ I suggest that one way to understand the significance of the boat is through another similar object in the *Odyssey*: Penelope's loom/web. Like crafting the boat, weaving a web at the loom is metaphorically connected to producing oral poetry, and the two are linguistically linked through the term ἱστός, which can mean the mast of a ship or a loom/fabric made on a loom.²³² Both Odysseus' sailing and Penelope's weaving involve some element of

²²⁹ On κλέος and the σῆμα as grave/grave-marker, see Nagy 1990a: 214-8; Garcia 2013: ch. 4. On κλέος ἄφθιτον, see references provided above in this chapter.

²³⁰ For the corpse mutilated by birds and dogs, see, e.g., *Il.* 1-35; for the corpse eaten by fish, see, e.g., *Od.* 14.135.

²³¹ Purves 2010: ch. 2, esp. 93; Dougherty 2001: 35 *et passim*.

²³² The verb ὑφαίνειν, literally meaning 'weave (textiles),' is also used figuratively in Homeric poetry of intellectual activity, particularly devising plans (often called μῆτις) (e.g., *Od.* 4.678, 739; 5.356; 9.422; 13.303, 386). At *Il.* 3.121-8 Helen weaves a depiction of the contests of the Trojans and Achaeans over her, the subject of the *Iliad* itself. After Homer ὑφαίνειν is used explicitly of crafting song/poetry (e.g., Bacchylides *Ep.* 5.9-10). On Penelope's weaving as a poetic act and the metaphorical connection between weaving and poetry in Greek and other Indo-

craftsmanship and both are connected to the characters' representations as poets, and both the boat and the web are utilized by their respective crafters to aid them in avoiding an undesired fate.

In addition, both Odysseus and Penelope are forced to give up their crafts: Odysseus' boat is broken apart in the storm, and Penelope's ruse is found out and she must finally finish her weaving. However, both of these seemingly ominous occurrences have ultimately positive outcomes, and each plays a part in the poem's continuation.²³³ While Penelope and her weaving will be discussed later, Odysseus, contrary to his own best judgment, must let go of his boat to follow Ino-Leucothea's instructions and thus reach land and live.²³⁴ I believe the destruction of the boat (if not a metapoetic comment on the genre of epic) can be interpreted as another part of the larger theme of transition at this point in the poem: Odysseus is transitioning from his adventures to his reintegration into his community and reclamation of what he lost through his

European languages, see above. The word *ιστός* (connected to the verb *ιστάναι*) originally referred to the loom, as something which stands upright (see Bertolín 2008: 92ff., cited above), but had already been semantically extended to also be used of textiles woven on a loom in Homeric poetry (see Russo *et al.* 1992: 376). The term is used interchangeably in the thrice repeated story of the un/weaving Penelope uses as a stalling tactic (2.94, 104, 109; 19.139, 149; 24.129, 139, 145, 147). In these passages the web is also called a *φᾶρος* and a *σπεῖρον*, both of which words are applied to the cloth Calypso provides for Odysseus to make into a sail (5.258, 318). Dougherty 2001: 31-2 argues that the pairing of the Phaeacian men's prowess at sailing with the Phaeacian women's prowess at weaving at 7.107-11 reinforces the "inherent connection between sailing and weaving."

²³³ Bertolín 2008 argues that the *ιστός* as either mast or loom is a marker of separate, gendered spaces (male or female, depending on the object). Both Odysseus' mast and Penelope's loom are taken down by the end of the *Odyssey* and the reunion of the husband and wife pair.

²³⁴ Penelope's weaving functions slightly differently in that the web she produces is not destroyed, but rather re-identified as a different sort of object, as Odysseus' oar will be on his inland journey. Here Odysseus worries about failing to obtain *κλέος* because he faces death off the battlefield and thus will not have a *σῆμα*, a tomb (the proper Iliadic death and the proper Iliadic *κλέος*). Ultimately he will have *κλέος*, but in a different way: through his homecoming, facilitated by the *σήματα* that prove his identity and allow his recognition, in particular his bed. Unlike Elpenor's oar, which marks his tomb, Odysseus' oar will be planted like a winnowing shovel on a pile of grain, which marks the completion of the harvest and the cyclical, renewing quality of life. This is discussed in greater detail below.

absence. The scene is set for Odysseus' return by stripping away everything extraneous and hinting at the essential qualities that define the hero and will allow him to be recognized (a major theme of the second half of the *Odyssey*) and thus reinstated in his former position.

When the 'extraneous' boat first begins to be broken apart, it is described with the following simile:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης φορέησιν ἀκάνθας
 ἄμ πεδίον, πυκιναὶ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλησιν ἔχονται,
 ὥς τὴν ἄμ πέλαγος ἄνεμοι φέρον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. (5.328-30)

As when the autumnal North Wind bears thistles
 over a plain, and they hold fast to one another,
 so were the winds bearing [the boat] over the sea, now here, now there.

As Bergren notes, when the boat is compared to dried thistles or thistledown that is scattered about in autumn, Odysseus is metaphorically akin to the seed that is carried along within the protective casing.²³⁵ The imagery is picked up again when the boat is finally smashed to pieces:

ὥς δ' ἄνεμος ζαῆς ἤϊων θημῶνα τινάξει
 καρφαλέων· τὰ μὲν ἄρ τε διεσκέδασ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλη·
 ὥς τῆς δούρατα μακρὰ διεσκέδασ'... (5.368-70)

As when a stormy wind stirs up a heap of dry
 chaff, and it scatters [the husks] about this way and that,
 so [the wave] scattered [the boat's] long planks about...

Again the boat is analogous to the chaff that must be removed to reveal the valuable seed within, and again Odysseus is analogous to the seed in this simile. The image of a whole heap of chaff being blown about by the wind suggests a harvest, perhaps one in which the chaff was removed from the seed of the grain with a winnowing shovel that was afterwards planted on the pile of seeds to symbolize the work's completion.²³⁶ Once more, this first episode of symbolic

²³⁵ Bergren 2008: 66-8.

²³⁶ For an example of planting the winnowing shovel on the grain heap, see Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.155-6. Hansen 1977: 38-9; Nagy 1990a: 214.

transition for Odysseus suggests a connection to his final transition, marked by the planting of the oar/winnowing shovel as though at the end of harvest.

Rebirth and re-initiation: Ino-Leucothea's veil

Along with the theme of transition, the imagery of chaff and seed also plays into themes of rebirth and re-initiation that anticipate Odysseus' reintegration into human society, represented by reenactments of biological and cultural beginnings in the life of a human. In addition to being like a seed (whose germination will occur when he reaches Ithaca), Odysseus is interpreted by some scholars as undergoing a symbolic parturition: to leave the feminine 'womb' that is the sea and reach land (which is likened to a father in a simile at 5.394-9), Odysseus must strip away the placental provisions and clothing given to him by a woman, Calypso.²³⁷ The hero is thus stripped down to the nakedness of infancy twice in the poem, first briefly before donning Ino-Leucothea's veil, and again after removing the veil once he has reached land and is swollen and covered in scum, like a newborn.²³⁸ The veil Ino-Leucothea gives Odysseus is interpreted by some as a figurative umbilical cord, but this detail along with all of the other particulars of this scene are ascribed varying metaphorical parallels by different critics.²³⁹ Even if the details are open to some interpretation, the theme of rebirth is an implicit element at this point in the narrative.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ The spring imagery at Odysseus' return to Ithaca and his kingship is discussed below, but see also Austin 1975: ch. 5; Borthwick 1988; Levaniouk 2011: ch. 6. The image of Odysseus as seed continues on later in Book 5, as discussed below. Calypso gives the provisions and clothing to Odysseus at 5.263-7 and he gives up the boat and provisions, and strips off the clothing at 5.370-2.

²³⁸ Odysseus dons Ino-Leucothea's veil at 5.373, returns the veil at 5.459, and is described as swollen and gushing seawater from mouth and nose at 5.455-6.

²³⁹ For details on the varying analyses, see Holtsmark 1966: 208-10; Newton 1984: 12-3; Bergren 2008: 67-9.

²⁴⁰ Segal 1994: 66 says adroitly of interpreting transition ritual in the *Odyssey* that, "the analogies should not be pressed, and there is a certain overlapping, inevitably, between these ritual

However, Ino-Leucothea's veil functions on numerous levels, far beyond playing a small part in the collective imagery of rebirth. When Odysseus dons the veil, it marks the first time in the poem that he changes clothing (save for the recounting of a clothing change with Odysseus *in absentia*), and highlights the significance of clothing and clothing changes that is built up in the previous books and plays out in the subsequent.²⁴¹ The veil Odysseus wears is specifically a κρήδεμνον, as is the veil of Penelope: the analysis of women's headdress and Penelope's veil in particular earlier in this chapter demonstrates the way that clothing can communicate an array of information, from indicating an individual's social status to evoking poetic resonances through its traditional associations. When Penelope first appears in the poem in Book 1, attention is drawn to her veil: she is described as holding her κρήδεμνον in front of her face in a formulaic scene that is repeated throughout the course of the poem.²⁴² Penelope disguises the truth of her vulnerable position and implies that she still enjoys the protection of her husband by wearing a κρήδεμνον (which physically covers her up, and is thus a disguise both literally and figuratively).²⁴³ The veil is the first article of clothing described in connection with Penelope and introduces the theme of deceptive appearance, and it is likewise the first important piece of clothing associated with her like-minded husband, a master of deception, both material and verbal.

To wear Ino-Leucothea's veil, though, Odysseus must strip off the clothing he is wearing when the goddess approaches him – clothing which was provided by Calypso. As Block and

functions and the different stages of Odysseus' journey." Note that solar symbolism has also been acknowledged and analyzed in Odysseus' rebirth and return; see, e.g., Frame 1978: ch. 1-3; Nagy 1990a: ch. 9 *passim*.

²⁴¹ Helen says that she exchanged Odysseus' disguise of rags for proper attire during the Trojan War at 4.235-64.

²⁴² As cited above, the line ἄντα παρειάων σχομένη λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα occurs first at 1.334, as well as at 16.416, 18.210, and 21.65.

²⁴³ For more, see above.

Yamagata point out, various women throughout the course of the poem dress Odysseus in significant ways as a means to control him and his identity.²⁴⁴ Calypso is divine, and attempts to change the mortal Odysseus into her immortal husband. Although she allows him to leave, she first dresses him in clothing that reflects her desires: δῖα Καλυψώ, εἵματά τ' ἀμφιέσσασα θυώδεα – “shining Calypso, putting fragrant clothing on [him]...,” (5.264). Shelmerdine shows that in the majority of instances where clothing is qualified as ‘fragrant’ in archaic Greek poetry, it is the divine raiment of a god.²⁴⁵ When Odysseus finally strips off the ‘coverings’ of Καλυψώ, ‘she who covers,’ he ceases to be under her influence.²⁴⁶ However, Odysseus is not yet on his own: with the veil he is clothed by another goddess, but one whose influence is significantly different.

Whereas Calypso’s clothing pulls Odysseus down in the water (εἵματα γὰρ ῥ’ ἐβάρυνε, τὰ οἱ πόρε δῖα Καλυψώ – “...for the clothing which shining Calypso gave him weighed him down,” 5.321), Ino-Leucothea’s veil has the opposite function, as the goddess explains to Odysseus:

²⁴⁴ Block 1985 argues that women in the *Odyssey* dress Odysseus in ways that reflect their own roles and the aspects of his identity with which they are concerned, and Yamagata 2005 expands on Block’s idea by suggesting that women also use clothing to try to make Odysseus into the man they want him to be.

²⁴⁵ Shelmerdine 1995: 101, 103-4 provides a table of the different types of clothing described with different words for ‘fragrant’ in the Homeric and non-Homeric epics, and cites the four instances in Homer where mortal clothing is fragrant: *Il.* 3.385, 6.483, 18.25, and *Od.* 21.52. In the last of these passages, the εἵματα in Odysseus’ storeroom are called θυώδεα, which Shelmerdine says might mean that it is “redolent of cedar, from the chests in which it lies,” rather than referring to the divine or non-divine status of the textiles. The word θυώδης is also used in the *Odyssey* to describe Helen’s bedchamber as she exits it looking like Artemis (4.121-2).

²⁴⁶ Bergren 2008: 66-71 connects Calypso the ‘Cover-ess’ to other instances of covering in Book 5: Poseidon covers the land and sea with clouds at 5.292-4, and Odysseus is covered by waves at 5.319-21 and 366-7. Odysseus is also like a seed covered by chaff (5.328-30 and 368-70, quoted above). Also, Odysseus ultimately escapes the coverings of these gods and covers himself with leaves (5.487), and Athena puts him to sleep by covering his eyes (5.493).

εἵματα ταῦτ' ἀποδὺς σχεδίην ἀνέμοισι φέρεσθαι
 κάλλιπ', ἀτὰρ χεῖρεσσι νέων ἐπιμαίεο νόστου
 γαίης Φαιήκων, ὅθι τοι μοῖρ' ἐστὶν ἀλύξαι.
 τῇ δέ, τόδε κρήδεμνον ὑπὸ στέρνοιο τανύσσαι²⁴⁷
 ἄμβροτον· οὐδέ τί τοι παθέειν δέος οὐδ' ἀπολέσθαι. (5.343-7)

Strip off these clothes and leave your boat behind for the winds
 to bear, then seek landfall, swimming with your hands,
 at the land of the Phaeacians, where it is destined for you to escape.
 Here, stretch this immortal veil under your chest;
 there is no reason to fear that you will suffer or die.

The veil acts as a life preserver, allowing Odysseus to swim in the sea to safety without the danger of drowning. In addition to this narrative function, the veil also symbolically represents Odysseus' re-initiation in numerous different ways.

Ino-Leucothea's κρήδεμνον appears to have some connection with an initiatory rite of passage on Samothrace, where male initiates would tie fillets around their abdomens and be kept safe from drowning by the Samothracian gods.²⁴⁸ In a similar vein the sea goddess Ino-Leucothea, who was worshipped across the Mediterranean, was believed to protect sailors.²⁴⁹ She was also a goddess of boundary-crossing and rites of initiation: in myth, Ino was originally a mortal woman who transitioned to immortality when she took the literal plunge from her

²⁴⁷ It is perhaps notable that the verb τανύειν – 'stretch' is also used of stretching a string to a bow in the *Odyssey*, in particular when Odysseus strings his bow during the bow contest and the act is compared to someone versed in song stringing a lyre (ὡς ὅτ' ἀνήρ φόρμιγγος ἐπιστάμενος καὶ ἀοιδῆς/ῥηϊδίως ἐτάνυσσε νέω περὶ κόλλοπι χορδὴν./ἄψας ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐϋστρεφὲς ἔντερον οἰός,/ὡς ἄρ' ἄτερ σπουδῆς τάνυσεν μέγα τόξον Ὀδυσσεύς, 21.406-9). The use of the verb in Book 5 might anticipate the similar action Odysseus performs with another significant object in Book 21, with both objects (veil and bow) serving as a source of deliverance for the hero.

²⁴⁸ Burkert 1983: 132. The scholiast to Apollonius Rhodius explicitly connects Odysseus and his veil to Samothracian initiates and their fillets: καὶ Ὀδυσσεά δέ φασι μεμνημένον ἐν Σαμοθράκῃ χρῆσασθαι τῷ κρηδέμνῳ ἀντὶ ταινίας. περὶ γὰρ τὴν κοιλίαν οἱ μεμνημένοι ταινίας ἄπτουσι πορφυρᾶς, (1.917). On Samothrace and its initiates, see Lewis 1958.

²⁴⁹ Burkert 1985: 172; Kardulias 2001: 34. Burkert suggests that Ino-Leucothea had connections to the Syrian fish goddess Atargatis, and theorizes that there were cults devoted to "the Mother and Mistress of the sea creatures." Burkert also notes the similarity of the 'Old Man of the Sea' figure to Ino-Leucothea.

terrestrial existence across the threshold to an aquatic one.²⁵⁰ Although the myth of Ino fleeing from her maddened husband Athamas and diving into the sea with their infant son Melicertes is not explicitly present in Homer, the goddess' former mortality is made clear when she is introduced:

τὸν δὲ ἴδεν Κάδμου θυγάτηρ, καλλίσφυρος Ἴνώ,
 Λευκοθέη, ἣ πρὶν μὲν ἔην βροτὸς ἀυδήεσσα,
 νῦν δ' ἀλὸς ἐν πελάγεσσι θεῶν ἔξ ἔμμορε τιμῆς. (5.333-5)

The daughter of Cadmus saw him, beautiful-ankled Ino,
 Leucothea, who was formerly a mortal, with mortal speech,
 but now in the depths of the sea had a share of honor from the gods.

The fact that she is called the 'daughter of Cadmus' also suggests that the goddess who appears in the *Odyssey* is the same Ino from the Athamas-Ino-Melicertes myth: Athamas and Ino were driven mad by Hera as punishment for rearing the young Dionysus in the absence of his mother Semele, Ino's sister. As the *kourotrophos* of Dionysus, Ino also crossed the boundary of gender when she dressed him in feminine clothing to conceal his identity and keep him safe from Hera.²⁵¹ As Ino-Leucothea, she likewise insists that Odysseus wear a feminine garment to survive.

Kardulias discusses the act of cross-dressing as a common element of initiatory ritual, and points out that the only adult males in the Homeric epics who handle feminine clothing are Odysseus and Telemachus, each of whom experiences initiatory rites in the course of the *Odyssey*.²⁵² While Telemachus does not wear but rather holds the woman's robe (*πέπλος*) Helen gives to him, the robe is intended to be worn by his future bride on his wedding day and thus

²⁵⁰ On the myth of Ino, see Gantz 1993: 112, 176-80, 478.

²⁵¹ The fullest accounts of these myths come from Apollodorus 1.9.1; 3.4.3; Hyginus' *Fabulae* 1-4. See Gantz, cited in the note directly above, for more.

²⁵² Kardulias 2001: 39ff.

anticipates the culmination of his transition to adulthood.²⁵³ That Odysseus dons a κρήδεμνον is also significant: as mentioned above, the garment links him to Penelope who uses the veil meaningfully in a repeated formulaic scene. Also discussed above is what the κρήδεμνον communicates: simultaneously alluring and apotropaic, it is a cultural boundary marker that is only crossed in specific circumstances. As Odysseus and Penelope both dissemble through the use of clothing, Odysseus and Nausicaa are similarly connected by their clothing (or lack thereof) when they first meet: they have both doffed a κρήδεμνον, and therefore confront one another in parallel states of exposure and vulnerability.²⁵⁴ However, unlike women, Odysseus does not cover his face with the κρήδεμνον, but rather ties the garment around his chest.²⁵⁵

By wearing the clothing of the opposite gender in an unusual way, an initiate engaging in cross-dressing ritual draws attention to the cultural categories and norms that are being subverted. Like the monsters and gods Odysseus encounters during his adventures, and the disguises and lies in which he shrouds himself on Ithaca, the familiar and the normal are explored through that which is strange and alien. Wearing the veil, and likewise wearing a disguise, does not negate Odysseus' identity, but enriches it; when he removes the feminine headdress, he (re)affirms his masculine identity and is (re)initiated into human civilization.²⁵⁶ However, without the veil Odysseus is also rendered completely naked: he is vulnerable and dispossessed of all material objects, like a newborn. Block interprets the lack of clothing as a

²⁵³ 15.104-8, 123-30. After she hands Telemachus the robe, Helen wishes for his safe return to his home (σὺ δέ μοι χαίρων ἀφίκαιο/οἶκον ἐκτίμενον καὶ σὴν ἐξ πατρίδα γαῖαν, 15.128-9), which echoes the function of the veil Odysseus receives from Ino-Leucothea: it aids him in his return to civilization after his adventures at sea. For more on Helen in this passage, see ch. 4 below.

²⁵⁴ Kardulias 2001: 31-2. Odysseus removes Ino-Leucothea's κρήδεμνον at 5.459-60 and encounters Nausicaa with nothing but a branch to obscure his nakedness: 6.128-9. Nausicaa and her handmaids take off their κρήδεμνα at 6.100. For more on Nausicaa, see ch. 3 below.

²⁵⁵ 5.346, quoted above, and 5.373.

²⁵⁶ Kardulias 2001: 40-4.

low point in Odysseus' 'humanness,' but his dispossession, especially in the context of rebirth, focuses attention on Odysseus himself and how he is defined and identified.²⁵⁷

Odysseus' body

When Odysseus finally makes landfall on Phaeacia, his physical body features prominently:

...ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἄμφω γούνατ' ἔκαμψε
 χειράς τε στιβαράς. ἀλὶ γὰρ δέδμητο φίλον κῆρ.
 ὄδεε δὲ χροῖα πάντα, θάλασσα δὲ κήκιε πολλή
 ἄν στόμα τε ῥῖνάς θ'· ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἄπνευστος καὶ ἄναυδος
 κεῖτ' ὀλιγηπελέων, κάματος δέ μιν αἰνὸς ἵκανεν.
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἄμπνυτο καὶ ἐς φρένα θυμὸς ἀγέρθη,
 καὶ τότε δὴ κρήδεμνον ἀπὸ ἔο λῦσε θεοῖο. (5.453-9)

He bent both of his knees
 and his strong hands. For his heart was overpowered by the sea.
 And all his skin was swollen, and much seawater gushed forth
 from his mouth and nostrils; so unbreathing and unspeaking
 he lay, hardly able to move, and terrible fatigue was upon him.
 But when he recovered his breath and his spirit was gathered into his heart,
 then he untied the goddess' veil from himself.

The litany of body parts, culminating in the removal of the veil and the ultimate nakedness of Odysseus' body after its piece-by-piece description, begins with the hero's knees. Odysseus' knees receive mention earlier in Book 5 when he fears for his life: when confronted with Poseidon's storm and later with a difficult landing on the beach, his *λύτο γούνατα* – “knees went slack,” (5.297, 406). Here, when he is finally out of danger, Odysseus bends his knees. Knees described as ‘bent’ with the verb *κάμπτειν* typically means ‘sitting down’ or ‘taking rest,’ but in this passage Odysseus also bends his hands, which complicates the action.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Block 1985: 3-4.

²⁵⁸ See *Il.* 7.118 and 19.72, where *κάμπτειν* is used with the singular *γόνυ*, rather than *γούνατα*, to mean ‘take rest.’ By the time of the tragedians the phrase was evidently common enough that the verb *κάμπτειν* itself could mean ‘bend the knee’ or ‘sit’ (e.g., Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* 85).

The bent knees might indicate that Odysseus is exhausted and resting, but he could also be flexing his knees and hands like an infant testing the movement of his limbs for the first time: when limbs are described as γναμπτός – literally ‘bent,’ but meaning ‘flexible’ – it indicates the strength and vitality of the person’s body.²⁵⁹ I believe that another way to interpret Odysseus’ bent knees and hands is that he is crawling on all four limbs. He has just exited the sea after swimming for two days and nights, so crawling up the beach to dry land before collapsing in exhaustion would be an understandable course of action.²⁶⁰ If Odysseus is crawling in this passage, it adds to the imagery of infancy and (re)birth present through his ultimate nakedness as well as his swollen skin and the seawater gushing from his mouth and nose like the dross of parturition.²⁶¹ Crawling at this point would also cause Odysseus’ homeward progress to mimic the natural development of man as illustrated in the Riddle of the Sphinx: after crawling on all fours to land and safety, Odysseus walks upright on two legs amongst the Phaeacians who facilitate his transition to civilization, and on Ithaca Athena transforms him into an old man

²⁵⁹ When Athena transforms Odysseus into a beggar she withers the skin on his flexible limbs (ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι, 13.430), and Odysseus asks to participate in the contest of the bow to determine whether he still has strength (ἶς) left in his flexible limbs (ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι, 21.283). He ultimately does have the strength to string and shoot the bow, which suggests that the transformation to an old man is only ‘skin deep’: the active potential to perform the trick shot that proves Odysseus’ identity still resides within his limbs. Similarly, in the underworld Agamemnon’s shade no longer has the strength (ἶς) he once had in his flexible limbs (ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι, 11.394) when he was alive. For ‘flexible limbs,’ in the *Iliad*, see 11.669 and 24.359. It is also notable that in Homer the knees feature prominently as the location of a person’s strength and vitality, with ‘loosing the knees of’ a victim a common expression for slaying an enemy. For discussion of knees in antiquity and examples from Homer, see Onians 1951: 174-86.

²⁶⁰ 5.388-9.

²⁶¹ In his symbolic infancy, Odysseus’ skin (χρώς) is swollen like a newborn’s, and when Athena transforms Odysseus into an old man she withers his skin (χρώς), and puts the skin (δέρμα) of an old man around him (13.430-2).

whose walking stick acts as a third limb.²⁶² Although Odysseus is not a physical baby on Phaeacia, and he is ultimately rejuvenated in the process of regaining his kingship, his symbolic aging process, like the actual aging process, reflects on his identity.

As discussed in chapter 1, the body is not synonymous with the Homeric self in a simple one-to-one relationship, but rather is one element of a complex, multipart identity. The body is capable of undergoing change, such as losing a limb or even gaining a prosthetic appendage, but neither such change would negate the personhood or selfhood of the individual. However, the status of the body is not without significance. Just as external objects (which can act as extensions of the body) communicate information about people, bodies are indicative of qualities of the self. In addition to the way that Odysseus' body reflects on his symbolic infancy at this point in the narrative, the fact that his hands are mentioned and specifically called *στιβαρός* also demonstrates how the body and its description can convey meaning. Odysseus' hands/arms are qualified with the adjective *στιβαρός* a number of times throughout the *Odyssey*, often in contexts where certain characteristics or experiences of his that had been hidden are unveiled. Before he reveals his identity to the Phaeacians, Odysseus's hands are called *στιβαρός* when he covers his face with his cloak to hide the tears roused by Demodocus' song about the Trojan War.²⁶³ Odysseus covers his tears because he feels shame (*αἶδετο*, 8.86), but his reaction, which

²⁶² Odysseus' very first 'introduction' in the *Odyssey* is through the first word of the poem, *ἄνδρα*, the answer to the Riddle of the Sphinx. However, note that the riddle is first attested only in later sources (e.g., Apollodorus 3.5.8).

²⁶³ 8.83-6. Cairns 2002: 77-8 notes that Odysseus' veiling with his cloak is a prelude to, and foil for, the revelation of his identity to the Phaeacians, and compares Odysseus' concealment and revelation to Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, who covers herself in a dark garment (42, 182-3) and disguises herself as a wretched mortal (90-4), but ultimately reveals her true identity in a divine epiphany (275-80). Cairns (76ff.) also notes that men in ancient Greece veil or otherwise conceal themselves when they feel that their honor has been impaired, such as when they have indulged in emotions considered inappropriate to display in public. Here, Odysseus is specifically concealing his tears and does so out of shame (*αἰδώς*, also prominent in feminine

is significantly different from that of the Phaeacians (τέρποντ' ἐπέεσσιν, 8.91), is indicative of his particular identity – an identity which he keeps under wraps for the time being.

Similarly, when Odysseus is still incognito amongst the Phaeacians he initially declines to participate in any athletic contests, but ultimately relents and with a στιβαρός hand he throws a discus (which is more στιβαρός than those used by the Phaeacians) further than any other competitor.²⁶⁴ Odysseus thus proves his athleticism, which had been doubted, and by revealing the capability of his body reveals information about his self.²⁶⁵ The vim and vigor of Odysseus' body are likewise revealed in spite of his disguise as an old beggar when he girds up his rags to fight Irus: his limbs prove to be more impressive than the spectating suitors imagined, and their description is capped by a reference to his στιβαροί...βραχίονες – “strong arms,” (18.66-9).

Athena specifically embellishes Odysseus' appearance at this point, but it is unclear whether she is reverting his transformed body to its natural state or overcompensating in his rejuvenation. In any case, Odysseus' revamped body reflects qualities that his disguise belies, similar to the way that his lying tales shroud his identity and yet are built from kernels of truth. The use of

veiling, as discussed above). It is perhaps notable, too, that Penelope frequently veils (discussed above) and frequently cries (e.g., 1.336, 363; 4.704-5, 800-1, etc.) in the *Odyssey*. At 8.521-31, Odysseus again weeps in response to another of Demodocus' songs about the Trojan War, though on this occasion he does not conceal his tears, and he is compared to a woman weeping over the body of her dead husband. As Odysseus is compared to a woman, Penelope is compared to men (a king at 19.107-14, mentioned above, and a sailor at 23.233-40, mentioned in ch. 4 below), and Foley 1978 discusses the ways that these 'reverse-sex similes' clarify the structure and meaning of the relations between husband and wife (on reversals in similes in the *Odyssey*, see also Moulton 1977: ch. 4). Odysseus' weeping and ashamed veiling are perhaps a part of the reversal that ultimately reinforces the norm when order is finally restored, but they also form an interesting point of contact between him and Penelope and appear to contribute to the presentation of their relationship.

²⁶⁴ 8.184-98.

²⁶⁵ Odysseus is doubted at 8.158-64. It is also notable that Odysseus throws the discus after replying to the Phaeacian Euryalus' doubts with a speech that Martin 1984 identifies as part of the tradition of the “ruler's truth” (discussed above), which functions to covertly signal Odysseus' identity as a king (8.165-77). For more on Odysseus' discus throw, see ch. 3 below.

στιβαρός in the passage quoted above, as in these passages, signals a context in which core elements of Odysseus' identity are exposed.²⁶⁶

A Phaeacian thicket and the σπέρμα πυρός

After doffing the veil and considering his limited options because he is physically exposed, Odysseus decides to seek refuge in a nearby thicket. Here he finds a sheltered spot:

...δοιοὺς δ' ἄρ' ὑπήλυθε θάμνους,
 ἐξ ὁμόθεν πεφυῶτας· ὁ μὲν φυλῆς, ὁ δ' ἐλαίης.
 τοὺς μὲν ἄρ' οὔτ' ἀνέμων διάη μένος ὑγρὸν ἀέντων,
 οὔτε ποτ' ἠέλιος φαέθων ἀκτῖσιν ἔβαλλεν,
 οὔτ' ὄμβρος περάσκει διαμπερές· ὡς ἄρα πυκνοὶ
 ἀλλήλοισιν ἔφυν ἐπαμοιβαδίς... (5.476-81)

He went under two bushes
 which grew from the same spot; one of wild olive, and one of cultivated olive.
 Neither did the rainy might of the gusting winds blow through them,
 nor ever did the shining sun strike them with its rays,
 nor did the rain pass all the way through them, so close together
 did they grow, interlacing with one another.

Odysseus takes cover beneath two inosculated trees: an ἐλαίη, an olive tree, and a φυλίη, whose exact species is uncertain but is generally believed to be a kind of wild olive.²⁶⁷ If this is true, the combination of wild and domestic cultivars of the olive in this scene is apropos: Odysseus' transition between the realm of his adventures and human civilization is marked by the physical intertwining of wild and cultivated trees.²⁶⁸ His nakedness is symbolic of infancy, but a newborn is not yet a member of human society, and is similar to an animal because of its initial nakedness and otherness. The tension between the overlapping qualities of the wild and the civilized in

²⁶⁶ The word στιβαρός also occurs in the *Odyssey* in the following passages: 1.100; 4.506; 8.136; 12.174; 14.528; 15.61; 18.335.

²⁶⁷ Forster 1936: 100; Russo 1993: 51; van Nortwick 2009: 22 all identify the φυλίη as a species of wild olive. Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 287 notes that while a scholiast calls the φυλίη a wild olive, Hesychius calls it a species of fig, and φυλίη might be connected to φυλίκη, the evergreen thorn in some dialects of Modern Greek.

²⁶⁸ Van Nortwick 2009: 22.

Odysseus continue through this scene and into his encounter with Nausicaa, far beyond the intermingled trees.

Even if the species of the φυλίη is in doubt, the ἐλαίη is certainly an olive tree, and it is the means of Odysseus' salvation and protection, as so often in the *Odyssey*: as noted above, the handle of the ax so well-fitted to Odysseus' hand with which he builds his boat is made of olive wood; the trunk out of which Odysseus makes a stake to poke out Polyphemus' eye is olive wood; there is an olive tree at the safe harbor on Ithaca where the Phaeacians place the sleeping Odysseus and their gifts to him, and he and Athena sit by it to plot the suitors' destruction; and the bed which Odysseus himself built is fashioned from an olive tree.²⁶⁹ Like the olive tree bed, which later functions as a token of recognition and proof of identity, Odysseus 'builds' a bed of leaves for himself at the foot of the olive tree(s) on Phaeacia: ἄφαρ δ' εὐνήν ἐπαμήσατο χειρὶ φίλησιν/εὐρεΐαν· φύλλων γὰρ ἔην χύσις ἥλιθα πολλή – “at once he gathered together a wide bed with his own hands, for there was a very great heap of leaves,” (5.482-3). This handmade olive bed anticipates and thus links to the later one, and itself acts as an indicator of Odysseus' identity as a resourceful craftsman.²⁷⁰

In addition, bedding down in the thicket connects Odysseus to the wild boar, and in particular the wild boar he slew as an adolescent on Parnassus, described as follows:

ἔνθα δ' ἄρ' ἐν λόχμῃ πυκινῇ κατέκειτο μέγας σῦς·
τὴν μὲν ἄρ' οὐτ' ἀνέμων διάη μένος ὑγρὸν ἀέντων,
οὔτε μιν ἠέλιος φασέθων ἀκτῖσιν ἔβαλλεν,

²⁶⁹ 5.234-6; 9.319ff.; 13.102, 122, 346, 372; 19.190, 195, 204. The recurrence of olive trees and olive wood in the *Odyssey* and their significance for Odysseus' identity are discussed further below; see also Schein 1970: 75-6; Bonnafé 1985; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 20, 26; Segal 1994: 47n.14, 60n.31; Cook 1995: ch. 3 and 5 *passim*.

²⁷⁰ The inosculated wild and cultivated olive trees on the Phaeacian shore perhaps do not only mark Odysseus' reentrance into the human fold, but also anticipate the synthesis of nature and culture achieved in the bed fashioned from a rooted olive trunk (see Bonnafé 1985: 115-8).

οὔτ' ὄμβρος περάσκει διαμπερές· ὡς ἄρα πυκνή
ἦεν, ἀτὰρ φύλλων ἐνέην χύσις ἥλιθα πολλή. (19.439-43)

There in his snug lair lay a huge boar;
neither did the rainy might of the gusting winds blow through it,
nor did the shining sun strike it with its rays,
nor did the rain pass all the way through to it, so dense
was [the lair], and there was a very great heap of leaves on it.

The boar's lair is identical to the thicket in which Odysseus beds down, and each is topped off with a pile of leaves.²⁷¹ Like the olive trees, the wild and the civilized are intertwined:

Odysseus' knowledge and skill as a craftsman are implied when he makes himself a bed, but this crude nest of leaves likens him to a wild boar. In turn, the connection to the boar is reminiscent of Odysseus' past encounter with a boar, which was in the context of a hunt and had undertones of initiation into male adulthood and thus full human society. From the boar Odysseus received his identifying scar, which, like his bed, is used to prove that he is indeed Odysseus.²⁷² It has also been argued that he truly becomes 'Odysseus' when he slays the boar because he both gives and receives pain, fulfilling the intrinsic reciprocity of the middle voice in the verb ὀδύσασθαι, from which his name is derived.²⁷³ Also, Odysseus' trip to Parnassus is scheduled in advance when Autolycus gives the baby Odysseus his name: he is to visit his grandfather and receive gifts from him when he has reached adolescence (ὀππότε' ἂν ἠβήσας).²⁷⁴ By hunting the boar Odysseus becomes a man (ἄνδρα, 1.1) and he becomes *the* man, Odysseus (ἄνδρα...πολύτροπον,

²⁷¹ On the similarities between these passages, see Bonnafé 1985: 106ff.; Russo 1993.

²⁷² The boar wounds Odysseus at 19.449-51. Odysseus is recognized and acknowledged as himself via his scar by Eurykleia (19.392-3), Eumaeus and Philoitius (21.217-20), and Laertes (24.331-3). For more on the scar, see ch. 4 below.

²⁷³ Autolykus gives Odysseus his name at 19.406-9. On Odysseus' name see Stanford 1952; Dimock 1956; Austin 1972; Clay 1983: 54-68; Peradotto 1990: ch. 5 and 6; Russo 1993: 52-3, 55-6 (on its connection to the boar hunt specifically). See also ch. 4 below.

²⁷⁴ 19.410-2.

ὄς κτλ.); his connection with the boar at the end of Book 5 affirms and confirms his established identity.²⁷⁵

The act of bedding down in the leaves is also described with the following simile:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις δαλὸν σποδιῇ ἐνέκρυψε μελαίνῃ
 ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιῆς, ᾧ μὴ πάρα γείτονες ἄλλοι,
 σπέρμα πυρὸς σώζων, ἵνα μὴ ποθεν ἄλλοθεν αὔοι,
 ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς φύλλοισι καλύψατο... (5.488-91)

As when someone hides a firebrand in a black heap of ashes
 at the outskirts of a field, where there are no other neighbors nearby,
 saving the seed of fire, lest he have to get a light from somewhere else,
 so did Odysseus cover himself with leaves.

The seed imagery that was first suggested with the comparison of Odysseus' boat to thistle-down and chaff continues here with the σπέρμα πυρός: again, Odysseus is likened to a seed.²⁷⁶ The simile suggests isolation and removal from society, since the keeper of the fire is in a remote location and alone, like Odysseus at this moment; however, fire is a mark of civilization, and separates humanity from the animal realm. Once again, the ideas of wild and domestic intertwine. As the seed of fire, Odysseus also has another connection to Hephaestus, the smith god whose intimate association with fire distinguishes him from the other gods in Homeric poetry.²⁷⁷ As Burkert notes, Hermes, with whom Odysseus is also associated, invents fire and

²⁷⁵ For more on Odysseus' connection to the boar and his boar hunt, see below. A thorough discussion of the topic is found in Levaniouk 2011: ch. 10.

²⁷⁶ Thistles: 5.328-30 and chaff: 5.368-70, discussed above. Bergren 2008: 66-71. The metaphorical application of both down from thistles and chaff winnowed from grain seeds to Odysseus' boat might be another example of the tension between the wild and domestic. I would like to thank Susan Drummond for bringing this to my attention.

²⁷⁷ Burkert 1985: 168, who notes that the name 'Hephaestus' is even used on one occasion to mean 'fire' (*Il.* 2.426). Burkert also cites Hephaestus' use of fire to tame the Scamander River at *Il.* 21.328-82. See also Ratinaud-Lachkar 2010: esp. 154-5.

firesticks in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which is part of his role as “the trickster who is responsible for founding civilization.”²⁷⁸

Levaniouk points out that fire and burning were associated with the notion of survival and return from the dead, typically denoted by the root *aith-*. When formerly-mortal Ino-Leucothea speaks to Odysseus and saves him from death by drowning, she is in the guise of a bird called an *αἴθουα*.²⁷⁹ Levaniouk also explores the semantics of the word *αἴθων*, whence the name Odysseus chooses for himself in his lying tale to Penelope: Aithon.²⁸⁰ In Homeric and other archaic poetry, *αἴθων* means not only literally burning, but also psychologically burning with desire, often for vengeance after wrongful displacement or exile.²⁸¹ As Aithon is a fitting and significant name for Odysseus to call himself as he seeks restitution for the suitors’ hubris after his long absence, so the image of Odysseus as fire itself communicates information about his identity: he is a seed that will defy death to rise phoenix-like from the ashes, and both renew and avenge his homeland.²⁸² When Odysseus is stripped down to the bare essentials, alone and dispossessed of all material goods, even clothing, his physical body and the world around him prove rich with meaning that defines, not negates, his identity. After many hints of what is to come in the rest of the poem, Book 5 ends with Odysseus falling asleep.²⁸³ Although it is Athena who pours slumber on his eyes, we are reminded that Hermes the boundary-crosser has power

²⁷⁸ *h.Herm.* 111. Burkert 1985: 156-7. Hermes’ invention makes him “a rival of Prometheus, the artful bringer of fire,” who is also a trickster and culture hero figure, and also invents sacrifice as Hermes does (*h.Herm.* 120-9). On the myth of Prometheus and its ancient sources, see Gantz 1993: 154-66.

²⁷⁹ 5.337. Levaniouk 2011: 132.

²⁸⁰ 19.183.

²⁸¹ For a full discussion of *αἴθων*/Aithon, see Levaniouk 2011: ch. 2. She concludes that Aithon is more than just a name Odysseus applies to himself, but a traditional heroic figure also connected to Erysichthon in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and used by Theognis.

²⁸² The boar also has a link to Odysseus’ association with fire: the boar Odysseus hunts on Parnassus is described as having fire in his eyes (19.446). Levaniouk 2011: 132-3.

²⁸³ 5.491-3.

over sleep and wakefulness and the transition between them.²⁸⁴ As in Book 13, Odysseus' sleep here marks a transition that readies the audience for his journey's next chapter.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Burkert 1985: 157. On Hermes' ability to cause men to sleep or wake, see above.

²⁸⁵ 13.79ff.

CHAPTER 3: Becoming Odysseus (Again): Phaeacia (and Beyond)

On the shore of Phaeacia

Odysseus' sleep by the Phaeacian shore segues to the next chapter of his journey, but the themes and imagery kindled in Book 5 (as well as the earlier books) continue and build throughout the *Odyssey*.²⁸⁶ After Odysseus' symbolic (re)birth and the initiatory elements of Book 5, Book 6 continues the theme of adolescence and the transition to adulthood, both for the hero and some of the people he encounters as he reenters human society for the first time. The first person Odysseus meets on Phaeacia is Nausicaa, the young princess whose nubility is made abundantly clear in her introduction and subsequent interaction with Odysseus.²⁸⁷ Nausicaa, like Odysseus, is asleep at the beginning of Book 6, and Athena visits her in a dream in the guise of one of her friends.²⁸⁸ The disguised goddess scolds Nausicaa for letting her shining garments lie about uncared for when her "marriage is near at hand" (γάμος σχεδόν ἔστιν, 6.27), which requires that she and her companions be well-dressed.²⁸⁹ She suggests that they wash the clothes in the morning so that Nausicaa will be ready as soon as possible, since she will not be a παρθένος (maiden) long – the best of the Phaeacians are already courting her!²⁹⁰

Nausicaa's eligibility for marriage is made clear to her and to the audience through explicit references to her imminent nuptials, as well as via traditionally wedding-tinged elements: the laundering of special clothing signals preparation for marriage, as is discussed further in chapter 4.²⁹¹ Nausicaa's dream also appears to be part of a tradition of (future) wives

²⁸⁶ On sleep as a ritual element of transition in the *Odyssey*, see Segal 1994: 68-72.

²⁸⁷ On this episode as an 'idyll of courtship,' see Doherty 2008.

²⁸⁸ 6.15-23.

²⁸⁹ 6.25-8.

²⁹⁰ 6.31-5.

²⁹¹ The clothing Nausicaa must wash in preparation for her impending nuptials is specifically described as εἶματα...σιγαλόεντα (6.26) and ἔσθῆτα φαεινὴν (6.74), and Penelope's φᾶρος

dreaming about the appearance of (potential) husbands.²⁹² The marital-erotic theme is further reinforced when Nausicaa and her friends are compared to Artemis and her entourage of nymphs as they play ball (σφαίρη...ἔπαιζον, 6.100) and dance (τῆσι δὲ Ναυσικάα...ἤρχετο μολπῆς, 6.101): a game of ball in particular appears in an erotic if not definitively marital context in Anacreon,²⁹³ while the verb for ‘play’ (παίζειν) often occurs when pubescent girls reach the threshold of adulthood, which is marked for them by marriage.²⁹⁴ For example, παίζειν is used in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* of the activities of the nymphs and παρθένοι in the χορός of Artemis from which Aphrodite (in disguise as a mortal girl) claims to have been abducted by Hermes so that she can become Anchises’ wife.²⁹⁵ Artemis is the overseer of παρθένοι and their transition to womanhood through marriage, which is often figured as pursuit and abduction from a circle, or chorus (χορός), of playing or dancing girls.²⁹⁶ Calame surveys the ritual choruses, typically of young girls, dedicated to Artemis in ancient Greece, and argues that the phrase ἤρχετο μολπῆς indicates that Nausicaa’s role is that of chorus leader (χορηγός) of such a chorus,

likewise shines like the sun and moon when she washes it after its completion (24.147-8), as discussed further below. For more on shining cloth in Homer, see Shelmerdine 1995. On the washing of clothing and shining as connected to weddings, see Austin 1991: 238-9; Clayton 2004: 47-8; Levaniouk 2011: 271-2. Note also Eumaeus’ story of the Phoenician slave woman in his father’s household who was seduced by merchants while out doing the laundry (15.417-22).

²⁹² Cf. Penelope’s dream at 19.535-50, shortly before Odysseus’ revelation. See Levaniouk 2011: ch. 13, esp. 235-6, for more examples of brides’ premarital dreams.

²⁹³ Anacreon *PMG* 358, on which see Rosenmeyer 2004: 166-8 and the extensive bibliography provided therein. On ball-playing as pre-nuptial and nuptial, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 159 and Ingalls 2000: 9.

²⁹⁴ Rosenmeyer 2004. Calame 2001: 87-8 argues that in a choral context παίζειν refers to the dancing of a young girls’ chorus, particularly during a ceremony dedicated to Artemis. See also Karakantza 2003: 13.

²⁹⁵ *h.Aphr.* 5.117-27, on which see Rosenmeyer 2004: 169 and Shapiro 1995: 160. Note also that νόμφη can mean a young woman (at the moment of leaving childhood by becoming married, or a young married woman until her first childbirth) in addition to a kind of lesser goddess (Calame 2001: 26).

²⁹⁶ Van Nortwick 1979: 271; Burkert 1985: 150-1; Sourvinou-Inwood 1985: 125-7 and 1987: 145; Ingalls 2000: 9-10; Karakantza 2003: 13-4.

like Artemis in her chorus of nymphs.²⁹⁷ In addition to the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, there are numerous mythological examples of young women (e.g., Helen, Persephone, etc.) who are raped while dancing, singing, or playing in a chorus, or while out on an excursion.²⁹⁸

When Odysseus awakes and enters the scene at this point in the narrative, the audience is prepared for him to play the role of bridegroom, or potentially that of rapist. As we consider the possibilities suggested by the poetic context, Odysseus contemplates similar uncertainties: is he now among mortals or monsters, and will he be met with hospitality or hostility?²⁹⁹ As the hero wonders whether he is finally on the threshold of reentering human society, the audience also anticipates that he will reestablish his identity as a man and as the particular man Odysseus, but elements suggesting Odysseus' potential savagery render the momentous occasion as fraught as his own current anxieties. As noted in chapter 2 above, Odysseus is uniquely, unheroically naked after swimming to shore with Ino-Leucothea's help, and his keen self-awareness prompts him to quickly improvise a loincloth of sorts out of an olive branch in a gently comedic and human moment.³⁰⁰ This passage also contains one of five occurrences of the noun-epithet phrase *χειρὶ παχείῃ* in the *Odyssey*: it is "with a stout hand" that Odysseus breaks off the leafy branch. Though scholarly opinion is divided (particularly over its application to Penelope), J.M. Foley argues that this phraseological *σῆμα* indicates that the agent's action is being carried out according to traditional heroic principles.³⁰¹ Foley further argues that, despite the unheroic

²⁹⁷ Calame 2001: 42, 87-8, 91ff.

²⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Theseus* 31.2; Eustathius on *Od.* 3.91; *h.Dem.* 2-5; *Il.* 16.181-3; Hesiod fr. 140 (M-W); Moschus 2.63-76. See Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 299; Shapiro 1995: 159-60; Watrous 1999: 168; Karakantza 2003: 11-2. Note that the water's edge tended to be particularly fraught with peril for young women in Greek myth, and Nausicaa and her companions play by the seashore.

²⁹⁹ 6.119-26.

³⁰⁰ 6.127-9.

³⁰¹ Foley 1999: 218-21 discusses all the occurrences of *χειρὶ παχείῃ* in the *Odyssey*, and a number of its uses in the *Iliad*, where traditional heroic behavior is even more prevalent. The

nature of plucking an olive branch to safeguard one's modesty, the fact that Odysseus does so "with a stout hand" cues the heroic context, and communicates both Odysseus' identity as a hero of the Trojan War, and his current intention to reestablish his identity in his community and household.³⁰²

As Odysseus appears before the girls on the beach, he is compared in a simile to a lion.³⁰³ Iliadic heroes on the battlefield are likewise compared to lions on a number of occasions, most similarly Sarpedon at *Iliad* 12.299-301.³⁰⁴ In the similes of both Odysseus and Sarpedon the lion is compelled to stalk sheep in a protected farmstead, but the Sarpedon-lion is commanded by his courageous spirit (*θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ*), while the Odysseus-lion is commanded by his stomach. Like the reference to Odysseus' stout hand, the lion simile is a traditional element of heroic poetry that reminds the audience of Odysseus' established identity as a hero, but is simultaneously bent to the demands of the context and injected with the same ambiguity and tension that hang over Odysseus, whose very humanity is in question at this moment in the narrative. While some aspects of the lion simile are appropriate for a hero in the heat of battle,³⁰⁵ others are less suitable: the lion's ravenous desperation, rather than bold spirit, has been interpreted as

phrase is used of Penelope at *Od.* 21.6, on which see Russo *et al.* 1992: 148-9 and citations; Lowenstam 1993: 26-32; Nagler 1993; Roller & Roller 1994.

³⁰² Foley 1999: 220. Note that *χειρὶ παχείῃ* also occurs twice in more overtly heroic contexts in the *Odyssey*: once when the young Odysseus slays the wild boar from which he receives his identifying scar (19.448), and once during the slaughter of the suitors (22.326), which plays a major role in the ultimate restoration of Odysseus' identity.

³⁰³ 6.130-6.

³⁰⁴ On *Od.* 6.130-6 compared to *Il.* 12.299-301, see Magrath 1982: 207-8; Pucci 1987: 157-61; Watrous 1999: 171; Karakantza 2003: 16ff.

³⁰⁵ One notable feature is the lion's blazing eyes (*ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε/δαίεται*, 6.131-2), which is particularly appropriate for Odysseus here: as discussed above in chapter 2, he is described as a 'seed of fire' (5.488-91) when he beds down like the wild boar he slew on Parnassus, whose eyes also blaze with fire (*πῦρ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι δεδορκώς*, 19.446). As also discussed above, Odysseus is burning with a desire for vengeance, and later aptly chooses Aithon as an alias. Levaniouk 2011: 37 notes that at *Iliad* 11.548-55 Ajax is compared in a simile to an *αἴθωνα λέοντα* which attempts to eat men's cattle, and she translates *αἴθων* here as 'ravenous.'

indicative of wild brutality.³⁰⁶ Others find the image of a bedraggled and peckish lion outside of the battlefield context a humorous one, also to unheroic effect.³⁰⁷ Some scholars draw attention to the erotic qualities of the simile and broader narrative: Cook suggests that the lion simile had already been appropriated by erotic poetry when (this portion of) the *Odyssey* was composed, so that its use here is a deliberate conflation of epic and erotic poetry.³⁰⁸ Another element often cited for its erotic connotations occurs at the end of the simile: ὧς Ὀδυσσεὺς κούρησιν ἐνπλοκάμοισιν ἔμελλε/μίξεσθαι – “thus was Odysseus about to mingle with the fair-tressed girls,” (6.135-6). The verb translated as ‘mingle’ can be used in a neutral sense for social intercourse, but is also a euphemism for sexual intercourse, and seems to carry with it the possibility of rape.³⁰⁹

‘Danger’ is the message received by the girls, who find his appearance terrifying (σμερδαλέος δ’ αὐτῆσι φάνη κεκακωμένος ἄλμη – “he seemed terrifying to them, befouled with brine,” 6.137) and scatter. In addition to their littoral exposure by being out on an excursion by the sea and playing and dancing like Artemis and her chorus without any male escorts, the girls are even further exposed to potential sexual violence by their literal exposure: they have recently

³⁰⁶ Pucci 1987: 159; Watrous 1999: 170; Magrath 1982: 207-8, *et passim* on the increasing violence of the lion similes in the *Odyssey*.

³⁰⁷ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 51-2; Cook 1999: 157; Glenn 1998, esp. 108-10 for a survey of other like-minded scholarship; de Jong 2001: 158.

³⁰⁸ Cook 1999: 158n.27. See also Glenn 1998 on the various erotic connotations in the lion simile, as well as Watrous 1999: 170-1 on the mixture of erotic and heroic language.

³⁰⁹ Although silent on its appearance at 6.136, Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 311-2 says of the usage of μίσεσθαι at 6.288 that the verb was used euphemistically of sex only later. However, those convinced of its sexual connotations in Homer include Glenn 1998: 109-11; Watrous 1999: 170-1; Ingalls 2000: 10; and Felson-Rubin 1994: 47 who says that the verb “suggests that this is a scene of potential rape.” Note that μίσεσθαι is used as a euphemism for sex once with εὐνή καὶ φιλότητι and once without in the context of a seaside seduction at *Od.* 15.420 and 430, and it occurs (with φιλότητι) at *Il.* 6.165 in the context of potential rape. I believe that at *Od.* 6.136 the verb hints at the possibility of erotic contact. On μίσεσθαι at 6.288, see Cairns 1990.

cast off their veils (κρήδεμνα) to play ball unencumbered.³¹⁰ As discussed above in chapter 2, a woman's veil communicates her protection under a male guardian and her sexual inviolability, so the removal of their veils leaves the girls even more overtly vulnerable.³¹¹ Unknown to the frightened girls, but known to the audience, Odysseus has also cast off a veil recently: Ino-Leucothea lent him her veil which protected him not from rape but from drowning and whose loss left him not partially exposed but completely naked.³¹² Although the veil does not function for Odysseus exactly as it does for a woman, the parallel unveiling of the girls and the hero suggests that the potential rapist is vulnerable like the potential victims.

The only girl who does not flee is Nausicaa, despite being unveiled like her companions.³¹³ Although she is figured as the prospective bride to Odysseus' prospective bridegroom, Nausicaa might actually be the less vulnerable of the two as they face off. As noted above, she and her friends are likened to Artemis and her chorus of nymphs, with Nausicaa specifically compared to Artemis.³¹⁴ While maidens in a chorus led by Artemis are at risk of abduction and sexual violence, the goddess herself is inviolate. Numerous scholars interpret Nausicaa's equation with Artemis as an indication that she, too, is ultimately invulnerable.³¹⁵ It has also been suggested that Artemis' identity as the πότνια θηρῶν, mistress of wild beasts, is

³¹⁰ 6.100.

³¹¹ Nagler 1974: 44ff.; Kardulias 2001: 30-2; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 121-3, and 132 on Nausicaa and her companions specifically. See also van Nortwick 1979: 271 and 2009: 27; Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 299; Shapiro 1995: 160; Ingalls 2000: 8-11; Karakantza 2003: 19.

³¹² Odysseus doffs the veil at 5.459 after reaching the shore of Phaeacia. See ch. 2 above.

³¹³ 6.139.

³¹⁴ 6.101-9.

³¹⁵ On the poet's comparison of Nausicaa to Artemis at 6.101-9 and Odysseus' comparison of Nausicaa to Artemis at 6.150-2, see Redfield 1982: 191; Hague 1983: 136; Thalmann 1992: 54; Felson-Rubin 1994: 47; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 53-4; Cook 1999: 157-8; Watrous 1999: 168; van Nortwick 2009: 27.

present here, so that Odysseus' lion is not only a non-threat but to some extent the pawn of the young girl before him.³¹⁶

This point in the narrative is one of tense ambiguity: Odysseus' identity is on the line, since he could prove to be a civilized man or a primitive brute, and so is his life: he stands before the person who has the power to be his savior or his destroyer. If he leans to the leonine, he might find himself tamed by this substitute Artemis; however, if he leans to the human, his fate might resemble that of Actaeon after his disastrous interaction with Artemis.³¹⁷ Perhaps more mundane but no less dangerous is the threat Nausicaa poses as a possible 'detaining woman': she could persuade Odysseus to postpone his homecoming as Circe and Calypso did, but unlike the goddesses, Nausicaa offers him a temptingly human alternative to his former home.³¹⁸ As Odysseus stands on the threshold of reentrance into the human community he is beset by dangers and pitfalls on all sides, and at this crucial moment his actions will determine his future as well as demonstrate important aspects of his identity. Although not privy to the dream Athena sent to Nausicaa or the poet's Artemis simile in the narrative, Odysseus exhibits his adeptness at interpreting *σήματα* and thus ensures his safety and return home in a speech to the young princess that van Nortwick aptly calls a "virtuoso performance."³¹⁹ Odysseus' exceptional intelligence is a well-known characteristic, but his aptitude for reading signs might also have to

³¹⁶ On Artemis' identity as the *πότνια θηρῶν*, see Burkert 1985: 149. On Artemis', and therefore Nausicaa's, associations with the *πότνια θηρῶν* in this episode, see Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 300, 302; Cook 1999: 157-8; Watrous 1999: 172-6.

³¹⁷ On potential undercurrents of the Actaeon myth in this episode, see Redfield 1982: 191; Felson-Rubin 1994: 161 n.18; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 53; Cook 1999: 157-8. The Actaeon myth, and the reversal of hunter to hunted, might also be present on Ithaca when Odysseus in disguise as a beggar wears a deerskin (13.436) and is nearly mauled by dogs (14.29-38), on which see Levaniouk 2011: 143-52.

³¹⁸ Gross 1976; van Nortwick 1979: 271 and 2009: 26-7; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 53; Cook 1999: 157-8; Ingalls 2000: 12.

³¹⁹ Van Nortwick 1979: 272. On the structure of Odysseus' speech, see de Jong 2001: 160.

do with his connection to trickster figures.³²⁰ Dewald points out that in Herodotus' *Histories* the ability to read objects correctly, as well as to manipulate objects' symbolic meanings, is a distinguishing mark of trickster figures.³²¹ Odysseus' speech to Nausicaa is an early demonstration of his mastery of both deciphering and ciphering meaning, an ability which he further displays throughout the course of the poem.

Odysseus makes it clear in his speech that he understands Nausicaa and her feelings and desires, though how exactly he knows is not explicitly stated. The fact that Odysseus reads Nausicaa and the situation rightly has been noted before, but what signs lead him to the correct course of action are, as in the poem, left unstated in the scholarship.³²² His speech plays to Nausicaa's preoccupation with her eagerly awaited marriage, which could be ascertained from her age as well as the marital-erotic connotations of the laundering of the clothes and game of ball. In any case, Odysseus has become aware of Nausicaa's status and mood which were so explicitly communicated to the audience: he flatters her in language packed with nuptial allusions. To start with, the speech features numerous elements of ancient Greek wedding songs. Odysseus begins by asking Nausicaa whether she is mortal or divine and comparing her to Artemis.³²³ Wedding songs commonly utilize the language of the *εικασία*, the comparison of the

³²⁰ On Odysseus' Autolycean wiliness, see Stanford 1964: ch. 2. For Autolycus as a trickster, see *Il.* 10.260-71. On Autolycus' (and by extension Odysseus') association with the trickster/thief god Hermes, see *Od.* 19.395-8 and ch. 2 above. On the Cyclic epic tradition that Odysseus is actually the son of Sisyphus, another trickster figure, see Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 43 (301D); Hyginus, *Fabulae* 201.

³²¹ Dewald 1993: 59n.8 and 59-60 on the particular trickster figure Amasis in Herodotus.

³²² Gross 1976: 312 says that Odysseus makes use of "implicit possibilities" in his speech, but does not elaborate. See also van Nortwick 1979: 271-2; Cook 1999: 158.

³²³ 6.149-52.

bride and/or bridegroom to heroes or gods.³²⁴ In addition to being a typical wedding song motif, the comparison to Artemis hearkens back to the Artemis simile which, as discussed above, also communicates marital connotations.³²⁵ Odysseus next employs a μακαρισμός, a blessing, which he directs to Nausicaa's parents, siblings, and finally her future husband.³²⁶ Like the εικασία, the μακαρισμός was a traditional feature of wedding songs, and the mention of its usual recipient, the bridegroom, makes the marital quality of Odysseus' speech all the more apparent.³²⁷ Odysseus continues with another comparison, but this time he likens Nausicaa not to a goddess or heroine, but a palm tree.³²⁸

Nausicaa and the palm

The palm is particularly interesting and multivalent. Comparisons to plants often occur in wedding songs, and trees in particular appear in Sappho and Theocritus.³²⁹ However, nowhere else in extant Greek literature is a bride or bridegroom compared to a palm. The palm both adheres to a traditional motif of wedding songs, and allows for complex poetic meaning beyond the context of the wedding song. Part of the palm's extensive function is to further reinforce the established marital context: the palm works in tandem with the comparison to Artemis, as well as

³²⁴ For examples and discussion of the εικασία in ancient Greek wedding songs, see Hague 1983: 132-4, and 136 specifically on Odysseus' comparison of Nausicaa to Artemis. See also Watrous 1999: 167-8; Ingalls 2000: 11.

³²⁵ It is perhaps also noteworthy that both comparisons of Nausicaa to Artemis mention her conspicuously tall stature as a major point of similarity (compare 6.107-9 to 6.151-2).

³²⁶ 6.153-61.

³²⁷ On the μακαρισμός, see Hague 1983: 134-5, and 137 specifically on Odysseus' blessing. Hague points out that the μακαρισμός is ultimately a kind of indirect εικασία since it implies comparison to the gods, who are commonly referred to as the μάκαρες, 'blessed ones.'

³²⁸ 6.162-9.

³²⁹ Sappho, fr. 115 compares a bridegroom to a slender sapling (ὄρπακι βραδίνῳ), and Theocritus, *Idyll* 18 compares Helen to a cypress in a garden (κάπῳ κυπάρισσος, 30). For comparisons to other plants in wedding songs, see Hague 1983: 132, 135-6. Ingalls 2000: 11 also notes that Odysseus calls Nausicaa a θάλος, 'young shoot,' when praising her (6.157), and at 6.66 her upcoming marriage is called θαλερός, which is derived from θάλλειν, 'grow in abundance.'

the altar that is part of the palm comparison itself. Rather than being just any palm, the tree to which Odysseus likens Nausicaa is the one growing by the altar of Apollo on Delos: he tells her, Δήλω δὴ ποτε τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῶ/φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα – “On Delos I once saw such a thing [as you] by the altar of Apollo: a young palm sapling shooting up,” (6.162-3). Sourvinou-Inwood points out that the combination of palm and altar had important associations with Artemis, particularly in her role as overseer of παρθένοι as they cross the boundary to adulthood via marriage. A palm and altar frequently appear together in ancient Greek iconography in scenes of erotic pursuits or abductions, which are nuptial, as discussed above.³³⁰ The combination of Artemis, altar, and palm reiterates the marital connotations conveyed earlier in the image of Artemis leading her chorus of nymphs, but the choice of the palm here allows far more to be communicated than the choral motif alone.³³¹

In addition to furthering the nuptial context, the palm allows Odysseus to communicate information about himself both to Nausicaa and to the audience. First, he makes it clear that he is no monster or animal, but a man who understands the intricacies of human customs, from richly allusive language to religious practices: the Delian palm was the destination of an annual

³³⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood 1985. According to Burkert 1985: 144, the sanctuary on Delos, including its earliest temple and the Horn Altar, belong to Artemis rather than Apollo, though he does not comment on the Odyssean ‘altar of Apollo.’ Levaniouk 2011: 98 points out that Callimachus connects both of the twin deities to the Horn Altar in his *Hymn to Apollo*: Apollo builds the altar out of the horns of animals Artemis hunted (60-3). In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Leto promises Delos that Apollo will have his altar and temple on the island (87-8).

³³¹ For the opposing argument that Odysseus compares Nausicaa to the Delian palm to discourage her ideas of courtship and marriage because comparison to a palm is “without an overt, sensual element,” see Gross 1976: 312; van Nortwick 1979: 271-2. Ahl & Roisman 1996: 54 believe that Odysseus converts Nausicaa to a tree through his words to indicate to her that she is safe from sexual violence, just as Daphne was physically transformed into a tree to escape the pursuit of Apollo.

religious pilgrimage for the Athenians, and was of special importance to Ionians generally.³³²

Immediately before introducing the image of the palm, Odysseus says to Nausicaa, σέβας μ' ἔχει εισορόωντα – “wonder holds me as I look at you,” (6.161); his reverential awe (σέβας) both connects back to the comparison to Artemis and looks forward to the comparison to the palm at the altar of Apollo and its divine associations. If Odysseus did not visit Delos on a religious pilgrimage, he at least tells Nausicaa (and us) that he has been to the island and while there saw the altar along with the palm.³³³ His language, though not explicit, suggests that he went to Delos sometime during the Trojan expedition: ἦλθον γὰρ καὶ κεῖσε, πολὺς δέ μοι ἔσπετο λαός,/τὴν ὁδὸν ἧ δὴ μέλλεν ἐμοὶ κακὰ κήδε' ἔσεσθαι – “for I went there, and a great host followed me, on that journey on which grievous woes were fated for me,” (6.164-5). The audience is thoroughly familiar with Odysseus' former sorrows, and he is thus able to assert his identity as an Iliadic hero to the informed while simultaneously withholding his specific identity from Nausicaa and the Phaeacians for the time being, though hinting at an earlier position of authority and some sort of ill fortune.³³⁴ Odysseus' troubles are not all in the distant past, either: he explains to Nausicaa his most recent hardship (spending 20 days at sea between Ogygia and Phaeacia) and beseeches her to help him by showing him the city and giving him some

³³² On the Delian palm as a site of religious pilgrimages, see Ahl & Roisman 1996: 54, and the primary sources provided in n.25. See also Stanford 1964: 52-3; Harder 1988: 513, and 510 on the antiquity of Apollo's cult on Delos. On Odysseus' demonstration of his mastery of the codes of civilized behavior, see Thalmann 1992: 52.

³³³ As I note below in ch. 4, it is unclear whether Odysseus truly did visit Delos or his story about seeing the Delian palm is a fabrication, like his Cretan Lies. In either case, the story communicates information about Odysseus' identity and intentions to his (internal and external) audience.

³³⁴ Tsagalis 2008: ch. 3 comments on an apparently Cyclic episode in which Odysseus and Menelaus went to Delos with the Greek host to seek the daughters of Anius, the Oinotropai, who were able to feed the starving army. This is perhaps the Delian excursion referenced here in the *Odyssey*, and Tsagalis points out the similarities between this episode and the meeting between Odysseus and Nausicaa. Note that Aeneas consults Anius, the son and priest of Apollo, on Delos about a new home for the Trojan refugees at *Aeneid* 3.73ff.

clothing.³³⁵ Odysseus is in the position of a suppliant and therefore at Nausicaa's mercy; when he compares her to the Delian palm tree he perhaps does so to indicate his need for rest and regeneration.³³⁶

Delos and its palm were established as places of rest and regeneration for wanderers, as they were for Leto when she gave birth to Apollo and Artemis on the island using a palm tree for support.³³⁷ Ahl and Roisman astutely point out that Odysseus is a wanderer who seeks the rootedness of home, which he receives from a wandering people who are subsequently frozen in place like the formerly wandering Delos after Leto's labor.³³⁸ The palm specifically has further connections with regeneration: the Greek word for palm, φοῖνιξ, is also the word for the mythical phoenix, a sun bird which regenerates itself from the ashes.³³⁹ According to Pliny, there is a species of palm which dies and is reborn from itself just as the phoenix does, and it is from this

³³⁵ 6.169-79.

³³⁶ Hague 1983: n.16 points out that the palm is twice in extant archaic art depicted as sympathetically drooping over mourning or dying people and says that, "Odysseus has chosen a plant compatible with his position as suppliant." The link Hague suggests is tenuous, but perhaps with his comparison of Nausicaa to a palm Odysseus manipulates the princess into a sympathetic role. See Hurwit 1982 on the wilting palms in vase paintings.

³³⁷ *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 115-9. For the palm as the symbol of Leto, see Ahl 1982: 380-3. According to Pliny, *Natural History* 16.99 the contemporary palm on Delos dates to the birth of Apollo. Cicero, *de Legibus* 1.1.2 says the Delian palm that is a tourist attraction during the Roman Republic is supposedly the same one which Odysseus saw. Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants* 4.13.2 gives the palm at Delos as an example of the longevity of some plants.

³³⁸ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 54.

³³⁹ For the earliest known mentions of the phoenix in Greek literature, see Hesiod, fr. 171 Rzach and Herodotus 2.73. On the link between birds in general and solar rebirth, see Gresseth 1964: esp. 93ff. (see also Levaniouk 2011: ch. 17 on Penelope as a kind of solar consort like Alcyone, both of which women's names appear to be linked to mythical birds of solar rebirth (πηνέλωψ and ἀλκυών, respectively)). On the connections between the palm and the phoenix, see Ahl 1982: 380-3; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 54-5, esp. n.27. Note that Odysseus says the Delian palm is specifically a young specimen (φοίνικοσ νέον ἔρνος), which perhaps reinforces the quality of renewal. On this Homeric palm's inconsistency with the botanical reality of young palm trees, which are squat and bushy rather than tall and slender, see Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 305; Harder 1988.

palm that the phoenix received its name.³⁴⁰ The palm and phoenix also have connections to lunar and solar calendars respectively, as do Artemis and Apollo, and the island of Delos more generally. Interestingly, Horapollo tells us that in Egyptian hieroglyphs the phoenix designates a man returning from a prolonged residence abroad.³⁴¹ The phoenix and its fiery rebirth from the embers are highly relevant to Odysseus and the imagery that has been established to communicate his situation and themes: previously a seed of fire hidden in a heap of ashes, when he reaches the Phaeacian court he will sit “on the hearth in the ashes by the fire” (ἐπ’ ἐσχάρῃ ἐν κονίησιν/πὰρ πυρί, 7.153-4) and Alcinous will raise him out of the ashes and seat him in the place of his favorite son to mark his acceptance.³⁴²

χειρὸς ἐλὼν Ὀδυσῆα δαΐφρονα ποικιλομήτην
 ὤρσεν ἀπ’ ἐσχαρόφιν καὶ ἐπὶ θρόνου εἶσε φαεινοῦ,
 υἱὸν ἀναστήσας ἀγαπήνορα Λαοδάμαντα,
 ὅς οἱ πλησίον ἴζε, μάλιστα δέ μιν φιλέεσκεν. (7.168-71)

Taking wise, many-wiled Odysseus by the hand,
 [Alcinous] raised him from the hearth and seated him on a shining chair,
 having bid his manly son, Laodamas, stand up,
 who sat beside him, and whom he loved the most.

³⁴⁰ Pliny, *Natural History* 13.42.

³⁴¹ Horapollo 1.35.

³⁴² Ahl & Roisman 1996: 100. Newton 1984 argues that when Odysseus clasps Arete’s knees in supplication (7.142) and immediately sits down on the ground, the poet is alluding to rituals of rebirth (see Diodorus Siculus 4.39 and Plutarch, *Moralia* 264ff.). Although Odysseus is never officially pronounced dead and given a funeral and cenotaph on Ithaca, Newton sees similarities between his situation and that of a δευτερόποτμος/ὑστερόποτμος, ‘man of second/late fate,’ who had received funeral rites after being assumed dead, but later reappeared: he cites the imagery of death on Ogygia and the themes of rebirth after Odysseus leaves the island, which I also discuss above in ch. 2. At *Il.* 9.445-95 Phoenix recounts his history as a near-parricide and fugitive from his home country who reentered society through Peleus’ generosity, which shares similarities with Odysseus’ First Cretan Lie to Athena (*Od.* 13.256-86): he claims that he fled his home because he committed a homicide, and he is potentially seeking absolution and return to civilization. It is perhaps also notable that Odysseus’ conversation with Penelope (whilst still in disguise) and his ultimate recognition appear to occur by the hearth (19.55, 389; 23.89) – which is where Agamemnon is killed upon his homecoming (3.234) (see Borthwick 1988: 15).

Tsagalis points out that the palm often represented the eternal recycling of life in ancient iconography, which further connects the tree to the phoenix and the themes of rebirth, return, and renewal.³⁴³

These themes are also associated with Apollo, who has connections to palm trees: in addition to a palm's role in his birth and a palm's presence by his altar on Delos, the sudden, sweet nod of the Delian palm marks Apollo's arrival in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* and the palm was the first tree associated with Apollo according to Harder, who also notes that palm fronds, much like Apollo's laurel, were symbolic of victory.³⁴⁴ The palm, altar of Apollo, and by extension Apollo himself communicate renewal and victory that will play out throughout the course of the poem. When Odysseus returns home and triumphantly avenges himself and his household, it is with Apollo's weapon and during the festival of Apollo.³⁴⁵ Like the palm, the festival of Apollo is associated with both renewal and marriage: the festival in the poem shares similarities with extra-literary festivals such as the Dorian ἀπέλλαι, seasonal festivals that typically involved initiation ceremonies, such as the feast of the ἀπέλλαι at Delphi which was a feast of ἔφηβοι.³⁴⁶ Apollo is an overseer of adolescent boys' transitions to adulthood, and acts as his brother Hermes' sponsor in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which relates Hermes' coming of

³⁴³ Tsagalis 2008: 57-8 with references at n.45.

³⁴⁴ Callimachus, *Hymn* 2.4-5: ἐπένευσεν ὁ Δῆλιος ἠδὲ τι φοῖνιξ/ἔξαπίνης. Harder 1988: 511 says, "Die Palme ist der erste Baum, der dem Apoll zugeordnet wurde; Palmwedel wurden dann auch als Siegeszeichen verwendet." Pausanias 8.48.2-3 explains that a palm crown was a typical reward for victors at ἀγῶνες, and a palm was placed in the victor's right hand at all games. He says that the custom supposedly originated with Theseus when he held games in honor of Apollo on Delos while returning home from Crete and crowned the victors with palm.

³⁴⁵ Cook 1995: 150, 156-7; Levaniouk 2011: 98; Bakker 2013: 100.

³⁴⁶ On the ἀπέλλαι, see Burkert 1975 and 1985: 144, 255. On their connection to the Odyssean festival of Apollo, see Levaniouk 2011: 66.

age and shares thematic parallels with the *Odyssey*.³⁴⁷ The Odyssean festival of Apollo is also similar to New Year festivals, which restored order after a period of dissolution and reversal, and were of course seasonally recurring.³⁴⁸ Apolline festivals usually occurred in spring or early summer, and in the poem the festival of Apollo and Odysseus' homecoming take place in this season of renewal, as the accumulation of spring-related imagery suggests.³⁴⁹ Marriage is not just a part of girls' transition to womanhood, but boys' transition to manhood, and Levaniouk points out a recurring story pattern in which a boy falls in love with a girl and they become betrothed at a festival of Apollo.³⁵⁰ In these narratives the betrothal also involves Artemis in some way, just as the palm does double duty by connecting to both the clusters of Apollo-Odysseus-male coming of age, as well as Artemis-Nausicaa-female coming of age. Although Odysseus does not ultimately marry Nausicaa, he undergoes a kind of re-marriage when he is finally reunited with Penelope, who has parallels with Nausicaa including comparisons with Artemis.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Levaniouk 2011: 63-6. See Shelmerdine 1986 for a survey of the parallels between the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and the *Odyssey*, and ch. 2 above for Odysseus' connections with Hermes. On Apollo's associations with male maturation, and his own status as eternal ἔφηβος, see Burkert 1985: 144-5; Versnel 1993: 313-34.

³⁴⁸ On the Odyssean festival of Apollo as a New Year festival, see Levaniouk 2011: 80; Bakker 2013: 96-101. On dissolution and New Year festivals, see Burkert 1983: ch. 3 (and 130-4 on Odysseus establishing "a new order in place of chaos"). On the New Year festival in Athens specifically, see Burkert 1985: 227-34.

³⁴⁹ On signs of spring and their correlation with Odysseus' homecoming, see Austin 1975: ch. 5; Borthwick 1988. Levaniouk 2011: 106-7, 203-5 explains how disguised Odysseus' prediction that Odysseus will return with the waning of the last moon and waxing of the next (14.160-1 = 19.306-7) implies seasonal change and is a reference to the festival of Apollo. The new moon is also a part of New Year festivals (Burkert 1985: 231; Levaniouk 2011: 80; Bakker 2013: 96-101).

³⁵⁰ Levaniouk 2011: 322. Robertson 1991: 25, 33 argues that marriages were customarily arranged at springtime festivals of Apollo.

³⁵¹ After Odysseus has slaughtered the suitors, he has a wedding song performed to avoid rousing the suspicions of the other Ithacans, who apparently find it unsurprising, if reprehensible, that Penelope would finally choose to marry one of the suitors during the festival of Apollo (23.133-

When Odysseus compares Nausicaa to a palm, he communicates a vast amount of information simultaneously that functions differently for the internal audience (Nausicaa) and external audience (us): Odysseus plays to Nausicaa's desires with the palm, since it signals marriage, but its connection to Apollo and his festival look forward to the marriage Odysseus will resume with Penelope at the end of the poem, of which we are aware. The palm is an object that elegantly slots into the program of Odysseus' speech and efficiently expresses to Nausicaa the themes that are so persuasive to her, and it guarantees the hero his safety and ultimately his return and resumption of his identity as husband, father, and king.³⁵² In addition, the palm is an object whose semantic complexity allows Odysseus to also cue another aspect of his identity that is at the forefront here and is further communicated in a number of ways beyond the palm: Odysseus is at the stage of an ἔφηβος. Although the term ἔφηβος is not Homeric, it is clear that the period of 'being at early adulthood (ἡβη)' is recognized in the poems through phrases such as ἡβης μέτρον, "the measure of young adulthood," and the idea that it is something which is reached or attained, as when the suitors endeavor to kill Telemachus, πρὶν ἡβης μέτρον ἰκέσθαι – "before he reaches the measure of young adulthood," (4.668).³⁵³ Young adulthood is a quality which Odysseus exhibits both implicitly and explicitly despite having reached adulthood over 20

52). Although a ruse and in that sense 'fake,' the wedding song (like Odysseus' Cretan Lies) also reflects the truth of the situation: Odysseus and Penelope reunite in marriage at this moment. On the parallels between Nausicaa and Penelope, particularly as 'brides' being guided by Artemis to marriage, see Ingalls 2000. Gresseth 1979: 73 suggests that Nausicaa's role in the poem was originally played by Penelope herself, based on a comparison of the *Odyssey* and the *Nalopākhyāna*, a story contained within the *Mahābhārata*.

³⁵² Tsagalis 2008: 56-60 also argues that there are Dionysiac elements to the palm and the Nausicaa episode generally. Note that according to Marinatos 2003: 140-1 Dionysus is an overseer of adolescents as they cross the boundary to adulthood.

³⁵³ The brief description of Hermes (who is associated with boundary crossing and with Odysseus, as discussed above) when he appears to help Odysseus safely face Circe (an episode with initiatory elements, as mentioned below) gives us a sense of ideal male ἡβη in Homeric poetry: ἔνθα μοι Ἑρμείας χρυσόρραπις ἀντεβόλησεν/ἐρχομένῳ πρὸς δῶμα, νεηνίη ἀνδρὶ εὐοικῶς/πρῶτον ὑπηνήτη, τοῦ περ χαριεστάτη ἡβη, (10.277-9).

years ago: he is physically and behaviorally youthful, and even described as having ἦβη specifically, as well as in the midst of a metaphorical rebirth replete with the elements of ritualistic (re)initiation.³⁵⁴

Odysseus as ἔφηβος and hero (and king)

It is appropriate that Odysseus plays out the role of an ἔφηβος at this point in the narrative, but Levaniouk also argues that youthfulness (vacillating with old age) is a traditional feature of his persona and that he is a “hero of young men” and their transition to adulthood and full acceptance in the community.³⁵⁵ My discussion of ‘Odysseus as ἔφηβος’ is heavily indebted to Levaniouk’s research, and I seek to build on her work by suggesting some further points of contact between youth and heroism, and kingship and speech, both on Phaeacia and on Ithaca (note that much of what occurs on Phaeacia is not restricted to this episode alone, but plays out again on Ithaca and is essential to Odysseus’ return).³⁵⁶ Levaniouk points out how Odysseus’ age fluctuation occurs not just in the *Odyssey*, but in the *Iliad* as well, which suggests that the quality was traditional.³⁵⁷ Levaniouk also sees a cultic dimension to Odysseus as a hero of male maturation: although the epic narrative only allows Odysseus’ return to occur once, the elements of seasonally recurring renewal and generational progress present in the New Year festival of

³⁵⁴ For Odysseus’ ἦβη, see 8.136 and 16.174, as well as further discussion below.

³⁵⁵ For Odysseus as a hero of male maturation and the epic epitome of this process, see Levaniouk 2011: 62ff.

³⁵⁶ In addition to (still) playing the role of a youth on Ithaca, Odysseus (already) communicates his identity as a king on Phaeacia, on which see below. On the parallels between Odysseus’ revelation on Phaeacia and on Ithaca, see Fenik 1974: 53-5. See also Louden 1993 and 1999: esp. ch. 1, who argues that there is an extended narrative pattern in the *Odyssey* (in which Odysseus arrives on an island and is advised by a divine helper how to approach a powerful woman who controls access to the next stage of his homecoming, as well as alerted to the potential danger posed by a band of young men) that occurs both on Phaeacia and on Ithaca.

³⁵⁷ Levaniouk 2011: 75-9.

Apollo suggest that Odysseus' role has a ritual subtext and the capacity for cyclical repetition.³⁵⁸

Also potentially cultic is the way that Odysseus embodies the ideal youth but is also the destroyer of the young. In this way he is reminiscent of Apollo, truly the ideal ἔφηβος but also the destroyer of Achilles, who is strikingly similar to the god and called by Nagy his ritual antagonist.³⁵⁹ Odysseus' connection to ephebic Apollo is reinforced almost immediately after he mentions the Delian palm and altar in his speech to Nausicaa: the young princess is swayed by his supplication and promises to show him the city and to give him food, drink, and a bath.³⁶⁰

Odysseus gladly takes a bath, and afterward he is rejuvenated by Athena:

τὸν μὲν Ἀθηναίη θῆκεν Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα
 μείζονά τ' εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα, καὶ δὲ κάρητος
 οὐλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας.
 ὥς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνήρ
 ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
 τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει,
 ὥς ἄρα τῷ κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῆ τε καὶ ὤμοις. (6.229-35)

Athena, who was born from Zeus, made him [Odysseus] taller to look at and better built, and down from his head she sent curly locks, like a hyacinth flower. As when some skillful man overlays gold on silver, a man whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athena taught every kind of craft, and he makes graceful works, so did she pour grace upon his head and shoulders.

The description of Athena's treatment of Odysseus' hair suggests that it has been lengthened, which would be appropriate for an ἔφηβος; indeed, ἀκερσεκόμης, 'with hair unshorn,' is an

³⁵⁸ Levanouk 2011: 79-80.

³⁵⁹ Nagy 1979: 62-3, 120-1, 142-4. Odysseus' victory over the suitors is similar to his victory over the youths participating in the Phaeacian games. Nagy 1990b: 118-25 discusses ancient Greek athletic contests as mock combat with ritual underpinnings that developed from (according to Burkert 1985: 105-7) either initiation rituals or rituals to compensate for death. The victor of the contest 'lives' while the losers 'die'; additionally, the athletes (like initiates) undergo a ritualized death to prepare for rebirth to a new 'life' in the case of victory. Odysseus' victory at both the Phaeacian games and the festival of Apollo plays into the theme of rebirth and renewal.

³⁶⁰ 6.186-210.

epithet of Apollo.³⁶¹ The comparison of his long, ephebic hair to a hyacinth perhaps likens Odysseus to Hyacinthus, the ephebic lover of Apollo who was struck and killed by Apollo's discus before he could make the transition to adulthood.³⁶² In any case, the hyacinth (and ἄνθεα (flowers) more generally) has erotic, marital, and youthful connotations: Stigers calls it “an image of youth and beauty and probably virginity.”³⁶³ Virginity is not always a factor, but hyacinths often appear in seductive or erotic contexts: hyacinths are present, along with other ἄνθεα, when Persephone is raped in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and the earth sprouts various ἄνθεα including the hyacinth when Hera and Zeus make love in the *Iliad*.³⁶⁴ Prauscello notes that hyacinths were privileged flowers for garlands, which are associated with weddings.³⁶⁵ She also sees in Odysseus' bath, anointment, and new clothes a wedding ritual, and points out that Odysseus also receives a bath, anointment, and new clothes after slaughtering the suitors and before his (re)marriage to Penelope, and he is likewise rejuvenated by Athena whose handiwork is compared to a skilled craftsman in lines identical to those quoted above.³⁶⁶ In fact, the entire

³⁶¹ *Il.* 20.39; *h.Ap.* 134.

³⁶² Note that the myth of Hyacinthus is not present in Homer; its earliest appearance is in Hesiod, fr. 171.6-8. On Hyacinthus and the discus, see Levaniouk 2011: 68, 71-2. Athena also beautifies or rejuvenates other members of Odysseus' household (2.12 = 17.63; 18.187-96; 24.367-71), but Odysseus is the only person whose enhanced hair is compared to a hyacinth.

³⁶³ Stigers 1977: 90-2 discusses Sappho, fr. 105c (οἶαν τὰν ὑάκινθον ἐν ὄρεσι ποιμένες ἄνδρες/πόσσι καταστειβοῖσι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος...) and concludes that the hyacinth represents the vulnerability of immature, untouched beauty. Stigers argues that the context of this fragment of Sappho was a female-only θίασος rather than a wedding song, but see n.20 for those who support the wedding song context, as well as Hague 1983: 135 who suggests it might be an adaptation of an image taken from a wedding song. On the hyacinth as erotic and nuptial, see also Prauscello 2007: 93. See Irwin 1990: 216-8 on the word ἄνθος in phrases that indicate youth (e.g., ἄνθος ἥβης, *Il.* 13.484) and the erotic connotations of such phrases.

³⁶⁴ *h.Dem.* 7, 426. Note that Persephone's rape occurs while she and her friends are on an excursion in a flowery meadow and are playing (παίζειν, 5, 425). *Il.* 14.348. See Irwin 1990: 214n.49 for all instances of the hyacinth in Greek poetry to the Alexandrian period.

³⁶⁵ Prauscello 2007: 94 n.27.

³⁶⁶ Prauscello 2007: 93. See also Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 308. Odysseus is bathed, anointed, and clothed at 23.153-5. Note that 6.230-5 = 23.157-62, but 6.229 and 23.156 differ.

sequence of lion simile/bath/crafting simile occurs again on Ithaca, and this Phaeacian sequence has been interpreted as marking the end of Odysseus' wandering and anticipating his homecoming.³⁶⁷

For Friedrich, the lion simile is indicative of a wild, natural state that is antithetical to civilization, indicated by the simile of craftsmanship.³⁶⁸ A bath often functions as a motif in ancient Greek literature of completing a task and/or entering (or returning to) another world.³⁶⁹ Odysseus' baths in the *Odyssey* do just this, according to Friedrich: bathing signals Odysseus' transition from the uncivilized world back into the human fold on Phaeacia, and his household's transition from disorder and chaos to proper rule by a proper ruler on Ithaca.³⁷⁰ While the lion similes of the *Odyssey* have often been noted for their unusual elements and contexts compared to the lion similes that occur on the battlefield in the *Iliad*, much of the scholarly discussion surrounding the crafting simile concerns the authenticity of its appearance in Book 23, which is considered by some to be a late interpolation by rhapsodes.³⁷¹ Those in favor of the simile's authenticity have considered the compositional significance of its repetition, but the fact that the hero is compared to craftsmanship, which is a relatively rare subject for a Homeric simile, has received less extensive attention.³⁷² I argue that the comparison of Odysseus to craftsmanship is

³⁶⁷ The Ithacan lion simile occurs at 22.401-6 after Odysseus has slaughtered the suitors. On the function and significance of the lion simile/bath/crafting simile sequence, see Friedrich 1981: 125-33.

³⁶⁸ Friedrich 1981: 127-8.

³⁶⁹ See reference at Friedrich 1981: 128 n.13 on bath motifs. See also Segal 1994: 72-6 on the bath as a ritual element of transition (connected to birth and rebirth) in the *Odyssey*.

³⁷⁰ Friedrich 1981: 127-33.

³⁷¹ For scholarship on the lion similes, see above. For a bibliography of supporters and dissenters concerning the authenticity of the crafting simile at 23.156-62, see Russo *et al.* 1992: 329.

³⁷² Friedrich 1981: 125 n.10 provides references on the compositional significance of the simile's repetition. Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 308 notes the rarity of the crafts in Homeric similes and lists similes involving shipbuilding (9.384), ironworking (9.391), and being a bard (21.406) for

not arbitrary and without meaning; it taps into and reinforces his identity as a craftsman, and also stresses the importance of the relationship between producer and product. Athena also beautifies and rejuvenates other members of Odysseus' household in the poem, and in a similar manner to Odysseus' makeover in the repeated passage in question: Athena pours grace over Telemachus (and Odysseus again), and makes Penelope and Laertes taller and statelier.³⁷³ But Odysseus is the only person whose beautification includes a crafting simile.³⁷⁴

The fact that the simile is both unique to Odysseus and repeated *verbatim* as the culmination of a poetic sequence at crucial moments in the narrative suggests its significance to both the hero and his poem. The 'skillful man' who crafts an object out of gold and silver in the simile appears similar to Odysseus: both have connections to crafting gods, Hephaestus and Athena, and are competent at crafting, though Odysseus is not a professional craftsman. However, Odysseus is not compared to the craftsman here as he is in other similes. Instead, he is compared to the crafted object, and is the handiwork of the divine technician Athena, which translates divine patronization into the mundane, fathomable terms of a producer-product relationship and in the process emphasizes the connection between producer and product. The comparison of Odysseus to a craft instead of a craftsman is the reverse of what is expected, and the surprising reversal draws attention to the way that crafter and craft can be, in a symbolic sense, interchangeable.³⁷⁵ As discussed above in chapter 1, there is a strong tendency in human thought to conceive of humans (and animals and other objects) as having essences which are

comparison. Note that all of these similes are from the *Odyssey*, and two of the three compare Odysseus to a professional in the crafts.

³⁷³ Telemachus: 2.12 = 17.63; Odysseus: 8.19; Penelope: 18.187-96; Laertes: 24.367-71.

³⁷⁴ Magrath 1982: 209 n.7.

³⁷⁵ The simile in question is not the only one in Homer whose comparison is surprising, and to significant effect: cf., for example, the simile in which Penelope, not Odysseus, is compared to a sailor who survives a shipwreck and reaches land (23.233-40, mentioned in ch. 4 below and discussed more fully in Foley 1978).

transferrable to other entities, and in particular that the essence of producer is transmitted to product. I argue also in chapter 1 that the producer-product relationship is especially important for Odysseus because the objects he crafts signify information about his identity, so that for him fashioning is an act of self-fashioning. Odysseus is strikingly similar to the craftsman in the simile, and yet it is to the object that he is compared, because craftsman and craft identify and signify one another. Odysseus' comparison to the object instead of the man puts a point on the intimacy between producer and product – as well as between himself and Athena.³⁷⁶ Later on in the poem is a producer-product relationship in which the crafter's identity is an explicitly inalienable element of the craft: Helen makes it clear that a robe which she made is permanently imbued with her identity, and thus acts as a keepsake of her identity.³⁷⁷

Although not expressed in exactly the same terms, the fact that there is a relationship between producer and product, and specifically a weaver and a web, is seen on Phaeacia, as well. Nausicaa is able to generously accommodate Odysseus' need for clothing because she and her friends were fortuitously on the beach in order to launder the household's finery in preparation for her wedding. This clothing is later recognized by Nausicaa's mother, Arete, who made it herself with her handmaids, and it is her familiarity with her own handiwork that prompts her to inquire about Odysseus' identity:

τοῖσιν δ' Ἀρήτη λευκώλενος ἤρχετο μύθων·
 ἔγνω γὰρ φᾶρός τε χιτῶνά τε εἶματ' ἰδοῦσα
 καλά, τὰ ῥ' αὐτῇ τεῦξε σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισι γυναιξί·
 καί μιν φωνήσασ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
 “ξεῖνε, τὸ μὲν σε πρῶτον ἐγὼν εἰρήσομαι αὐτή·
 τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἶματ' ἔδωκεν;
 οὐ δὴ φῆς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἰκέσθαι;” (7.233-9)

³⁷⁶ See also ch. 4 below, where I discuss the *verbatim* repetition of the crafting simile and Odysseus' subsequent conflation with an object of his own making: his olive tree bed.

³⁷⁷ 15.123-6. Helen's robe is discussed further below.

White-armed Arete started their conversation,
 for upon seeing them, she recognized the beautiful clothes, cloak and tunic,
 which she herself made with her serving women.
 And addressing him she spoke winged words:
 “Stranger, I myself will ask you something first:
 Who are you among men, and whence? Who gave these clothes to you?
 Did you not say that you came here by wandering over the sea?”

In the Homeric poems, crafts are closely tied to their crafters: a crafted object can act as a memento of its creator as it circulates through and between households and communities, is easily recognizable to its creator, and has the capacity to be a token or signal, particularly for its creator but for others, as well. Ahl and Roisman suggest that the clothing in which Nausicaa dresses Odysseus might be used as a form of tacit communication between the princess and her mother. The clothing that Nausicaa and her companions washed were the high quality garments worn to weddings, so it is possible that she styled the handsome stranger as a bridegroom to signal her intentions to Arete, whom she instructs Odysseus to supplicate as soon as he arrives at the palace.³⁷⁸ It has been pointed out that numerous women in the *Odyssey* produce textiles and clothe Odysseus in them as a means of controlling his identity and expressing their desires.³⁷⁹ It might also be telling that Nausicaa chooses to give Odysseus a φᾶρος rather than a χλαῖνα: although both garments are types of cloaks, Levaniouk points out that the φᾶρος appears to be associated with marriage and/or love-making, and might be the proper attire for weddings.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 59. See also Mueller 2010: 4. Nausicaa tells Odysseus to supplicate Arete at 6.303-15, though note that according to Nausicaa, Arete’s favor will help Odysseus leave Phaeacia and return home. See 6.239-45 for Nausicaa’s wish that her future husband be either like Odysseus or Odysseus himself.

³⁷⁹ Block 1985: 2; Yamagata 2005: 540 specifically mentions Nausicaa giving Odysseus clothes washed in preparation for marriage.

³⁸⁰ Levaniouk 2011: 118, 124, 126. See also Levaniouk 2011: 117-8 for an explanation of the differences between a φᾶρος and a χλαῖνα, and 271-3 (and ch. 4 below) on Penelope’s φᾶρος and its associations with marriage.

Whether Odysseus' new φᾶρος specifically marks him as a bridegroom or not, it allows him to enter human company. Once he has successfully reentered human society, Odysseus is able to participate in activities that function to define his identity and prove his worth and worthiness to be a part of the community. Odysseus' statuses as an ἔφηβος and a stranger, as well as an illegitimate son and a younger brother as he later styles himself in his Second and Third Cretan Lies respectively, coincide with his need to prove himself worthy of a place in society.³⁸¹ One such activity that allows as yet unproven men the chance to fully integrate into society is athletic competition. Odysseus participates in the games that are held on Phaeacia, and I argue that his involvement is significant and polysemous. To start, the Phaeacian games reiterate Odysseus' association with youthfulness and the young. When Alcinous proposes athletic contests, it is clear that it is the young men who participate: βᾶν δ' ἴμεν εἰς ἀγορὴν, ἅμα δ' ἔσπετο πουλὺς ὄμιλος, / μυρίοι· ἄν δ' ἴσταντο νέοι πολλοί τε καὶ ἐσθλοί – “[Alcinous' court and Odysseus] went to the assembly, and a great crowd, countless, accompanied them; and the young men, many and excellent, stood forth,” (8.109-10). After the young Phaeacian men engage in a number of games, Alcinous' son Laodamas suggests inviting Odysseus to participate, since he appears quite capable:

...φυὴν γε μὲν οὐ κακός ἐστι,
 μηρούς τε κνήμας τε καὶ ἄμφω χειρᾶς ὕπερθεν
 αὐχένα τε στιβαρὸν μέγα τε σθένος· οὐδέ τι ἥβης
 δεύεται, ἀλλὰ κακοῖσι συνέρρηκται πολέεσσιν. (8.134-7)

...indeed, he is not bad when it comes to his stature,
 his thighs and calves and both arms above
 and his strong neck and great might; not at all does he lack
 youth, but he has been broken down by many hardships.

³⁸¹ Levaniouk 2011: 72. Second Cretan Lie: 14.199-359; Third Cretan Lie: 19.172ff. See Levaniouk 2011: ch. 4 on Odysseus as not just a youth but a younger brother who is deprived and hungry (for vengeance) in a similar way as his assumed name Aithon indicates.

Odysseus' body looks fit for athletic competition, and Laodamas specifically says that he is endowed with youthful vim and vigor, ἥβη. As discussed above in chapter 2, στιβαρός often appears in contexts in which disguised or unverified elements of Odysseus' identity are revealed.³⁸² The youthful strength that Laodamas sees in Odysseus is doubted by the young Phaeacian Euryalus, but confirmed when Odysseus throws a more στιβαρός discus than the Phaeacians used from his στιβαρός hand farther than the other participants.³⁸³

Not only does Odysseus prove that he possesses the ἥβη to excel in athletics, he also beats the young competitors at their own game: Levaniouk points out that the discus is a marker of the themes of youth and generational conflict in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*.³⁸⁴ In the *Odyssey*, the youthful suitors are twice described as throwing the discus, and Odysseus will eventually engage with them in the contest of the bow (ἄεθλος, 19.572, etc.) which evolves into their slaughter, also figured by Odysseus as an ἄεθλος: while an athletic competition is ritual and figurative, this 'contest' literally plays out the ancient Greek agonistic narrative of a single victorious youth surviving and all of the losers dying.³⁸⁵ As noted above, the discus is also the

³⁸² Note that at 5.453-9 (discussed above), στιβαρός also appears in a list of body parts.

³⁸³ 8.158-98.

³⁸⁴ Levaniouk 2011: 69-71. See also 73-8 on swiftness in running as an attribute of the young and Odysseus' unexpected victory in the footrace during the funeral games for Patroclus despite the other competitors belonging to the younger generation. Walcot 1984: 362, 365-6 argues that Odysseus' running ability is associated with his kingship on comparison with Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian pharaohs' boasts about their prowess at running, and the 'dedication of the field' ceremony at the Sed festival (a jubilee to reaffirm the pharaoh's power as ruler) in which the pharaoh ran across a piece of land representing all of Egypt, thus "renewing his claim as legitimate ruler."

³⁸⁵ The suitors are called νέοι at 13.425, 14.61, 17.494, 18.6, 20.361, 21.179, 184 and κοῦροι at 2.96, 16.248, 250, 17.174, 19.141, 24.131. The suitors throw the discus at 4.626-8 = 17.168-70. After triumphing in the contest of the bow, Odysseus sardonically says, οὔτος μὲν δὴ ἄεθλος ἀάατος ἐκτετέλεσται·/νῦν αὖτε σκοπὸν ἄλλον, ὃν οὐ πῶ τις βάλεν ἀνὴρ./εἴσομαι, αἶ κε τύχωμι, πόρη δέ μοι εὐχος Ἀπόλλων, (22.5-7) before he begins killing the suitors. On the victor metaphorically 'living' while the losers 'die' in athletic contests, see above. Felson-Rubin 1999

instrument of the death of Hyacinthus, the ephebic lover of Apollo, which furthers the association between the discus and youth, as well as their connection to Odysseus.³⁸⁶ Gross argues that the Phaeacian games are similar to the athletic competition involved in courtship-rivalry, and that by participating, Odysseus is also engaging in the rivalry for Nausicaa's hand in marriage.³⁸⁷ As discussed above, marriage marks both male and female young adulthood, and betrothal can occur at festivals of renewal and coming of age, such as Apolline festivals.

The fact that the games and specifically the discus communicate these and other themes is emphasized in the description of Odysseus' discus throw:

τόν ῥα περιστρέψας ἤκε στιβαρῆς ἀπὸ χειρός,
 βόμβησεν δὲ λίθος· κατὰ δ' ἔπηξαν ποτὶ γαίῃ 190
 Φαίηκες δολιχῆρετμοὶ, ναυσίκλυτοὶ ἄνδρες,
 λαὸς ὑπὸ ῥιπῆς· ὁ δ' ὑπέρπτατο σήματα πάντων
 ῥίμφα θεῶν ἀπὸ χειρός· ἔθηκε δὲ τέρματ' Ἀθήνη
 ἀνδρὶ δέμας εἰκυῖα, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζεν·
 “καὶ κ' ἀλαός τοι, ξεῖνε, διακρίνειε τὸ σῆμα 195
 ἀμφοφῶν, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι μεμιγμένον ἐστὶν ὀμίλῳ,
 ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρῶτον. σὺ δὲ θάρσει τόνδε γ' ἄεθλον·
 οὐ τις Φαίηκων τόδε γ' ἴξεται, οὐδ' ὑπερήσει.” (8.189-98)

Whirling around, he flung [the discus] from his strong hand,
 and the stone whizzed by; and the Phaeacians, men of long oars
 and famed for their ships, crouched down to the ground
 under the flight of the stone. It flew over the marks of all,

also compares the Phaeacian games with the bow contest and slaughter of the suitors, and Krischer 1992: 22-3 analyzes the Phaeacian and Ithacan episodes for their similarities.

³⁸⁶ See Levaniouk 2011: 80 on the Spartan Hyacinthia, an annual festival of Apollo that is concerned with renewal as well as male maturation, like the Hyacinthus myth. It has also been interpreted as a New Year festival, and in all these respects is similar to the Odyssean festival of Apollo on Ithaca.

³⁸⁷ Gross 1976: 314-5 says that Euryalus doubts Odysseus' physical prowess and insults him (8.158-64) because the Phaeacian was one of Nausicaa's suitors before Odysseus' arrival and he is indignant about Alcinous offering her hand to the stranger (7.313). See also Felson-Rubin 1999: 95 n.15. Note that according to Pausanias 3.12.1-5, Odysseus won Penelope's hand in marriage by winning a footrace. Although there are no earlier sources on Odysseus and Penelope's marriage, the athletic contest to settle the courtship-rivalry and Odysseus' exceptional speed at running (a hallmark of youth and a victory for Odysseus in the *Iliad*) are both present in Pausanias.

speeding swiftly from his hand. Then Athena marked the throw, looking like a man in build, and she spoke a word and addressed him: “Even a blind man, stranger, could distinguish your mark, feeling it with his hands, since not at all is it mingled with the mass of others, but is by far the foremost. Celebrate this contest: no one of the Phaeacians will reach it, nor throw beyond it.”

Not only is Odysseus far and away triumphant over his fellow competitors, as is confirmed by Athena who will also oversee his victory over the suitors, but also the imprint left by the discus in the ground is called a σῆμα. This σῆμα marks the discus’ landing spot, marks Odysseus as the victor, and marks him as a particular man with particular associations, rather than just any man. The use of the term σῆμα here anticipates its use for the identifiers that facilitate his recognition by the members of his household on Ithaca, and thus indicates that the discus signifies important information about Odysseus. Martin points out that the discus throw, in addition to communicating Odysseus’ affiliation with youth, singles him out as a superior individual.³⁸⁸ When Odysseus throws the discus, the Phaeacians are literally lowered down: they crouch to the ground as it flies past them and then past all the other σήματα. Martin explains that the word ὄμιλος is used of inanimate objects only here and otherwise refers to a throng of people, typically warriors, and can mean a group of spectators at a contest. The crowd of Phaeacians attending these games is in fact called a ὄμιλος, as quoted above. Odysseus’ throw (σῆμα) is not mixed in with the crowd of other marks, which acts as a σῆμα (sign) of that fact that Odysseus is not mixed in with the crowd of other people but “is by far the foremost.”

Odysseus is thus marked as a superior athlete, and Martin argues that the σῆμα of the discus also punctuates the hero’s coded claim to being a surpassing speaker and king, as well. When Euryalus taunts Odysseus about his reluctance to participate in the games, Odysseus

³⁸⁸ Martin 1984: 46-7. Note that the σήματα of the Phaeacian participants also mark the landing spots of these other competitors’ throws, mark all of the Phaeacians as the losers, and mark them as part of the ὄμιλος (see below) to which Odysseus is superior.

responds by chastising the young man in a speech identified by Martin as belonging to the “ruler’s truth” genre of discourse, which I discuss in chapter 2.³⁸⁹ His ability to deliver such a speech demonstrates that Odysseus is a good speaker, and the speech’s genre covertly indicates that Odysseus is a king. The man who is less beautiful but exceptionally gifted in speech is a king figure as well as a disguised self-reference to Odysseus himself, and he stands out among the other people (μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγορομένοισιν – “he is conspicuous among those gathered,” 8.172) like Odysseus’ discus throw among the other σήματα, which reiterates and thus confirms the sentiments of the speech.³⁹⁰ It is possible that Alcinous, himself a king, hints that he correctly interprets Odysseus’ kingly status from his speech and discus throw when he says the following:

ξεῖν’, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀχάριστα μεθ’ ἡμῖν ταῦτ’ ἀγορεύεις,
 ἀλλ’ ἐθέλεις ἀρετὴν σὴν φαινέμεν, ἢ τοι ὀπηδεῖ,
 χωόμενος ὅτι σ’ οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἐν ἀγῶνι παραστάς
 νεῖκεσεν, ὡς ἂν σὴν ἀρετὴν βροτὸς οὐ τις ὄνοιτο,
 ὅς τις ἐπίσταιτο ἧσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν·
 ἀλλ’ ἄγε νῦν ἐμέθεν ξυνίει ἔπος... (8.236-41)

Stranger, since these things you say among us are not without grace,
 but you wish to show the excellence which is granted to you,
 angered that this man approached you and quarreled with you
 in the assembly, in a way no mortal would disparage your excellence,
 whoever knows in his heart how to speak fittingly,
 come now, heed my word...

Alcinous acknowledges Odysseus’ excellence as a speaker and as an athlete. Martin points out that a mark of a good king is the ability to solve a quarrel (νεῖκος) in the assembly (ἀγορή/ἀγών)

³⁸⁹ Martin 1984: esp. 43-4, 46-7. Odysseus’ reproach of Euryalus is at 8.166-77.

³⁹⁰ Martin 1984: 47 points out that Odysseus’ “ruler’s truth” speech in Book 19 (107-14) is also followed by a σῆμα that communicates information about Odysseus’ identity: the pin which Penelope gave to Odysseus when he left for Troy is called a σῆμα (19.250). The clothes Penelope gave him also seems to be a part of the σήματ’...ἔμπεδα, but Martin does not mention them. On the clothes and pin, see Levaniouk 2011: ch. 7 & 8, and below.

and that Odysseus solves his quarrel in the assembly with Euryalus by winning the contest.³⁹¹

Line 240 refers to any man who does not denigrate Odysseus, but might also be a coded reference to kingship: the phrase ἄρτια βάζειν occurs only once else in the Homeric poems, in a line identical to this one. After the wall which protected the Achaeans has been razed in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon suggests that they withdraw from Troy and Odysseus rebukes him:

σίγα, μή τις τ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν τοῦτον ἀκούσῃ
 μῦθον, ὃν οὐ κεν ἀνήρ γε διὰ στόμα πάμπαν ἄγοιτο
 ὅς τις ἐπίσταιτο ἧσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν
 σκηπτοῦχος τ' εἴη, καὶ οἱ πειθοίατο λαοὶ
 τοσσοῖδ' ὅσσοισιν σὺ μετ' Ἀργείοισιν ἀνάσσεις. (Il. 14.90-4)

Silence, lest anyone else among the Achaeans hear this speech, which a man would not at all let through his mouth, whoever knows in his heart how to speak fittingly and is σκηπτρον-bearing, and as many people obey him as you rule over among the Argives.

In this passage Odysseus, a king and someone who knows how to “speak fittingly,” chastises a fellow king for failing in the realm of speech, which he ties to bearing a σκηπτρον and ruling over many people and thus to kingship. Also of note is the fact that ἄρτιος is derived from the verb ἀραρίσκειν and therefore the Indo-European root *ar-, ‘fit together.’ As discussed above, poets (including prototypical poet Ὀμηρος) ‘fit’ the song together, and this repeated line suggests that the speech of (ideal) kings is fitting, because it is expertly fitted together.³⁹²

In addition to alluding to the traits of a king, Alcinous’ speech also promotes the Phaeacian identity: while not the best boxers or wrestlers, he boasts that the Phaeacians excel at

³⁹¹ Martin 1984: 43-5. Martin discusses Nestor as an ideal king who is a preeminent speaker and whose function in the *Iliad* is to solve the quarrel in the assembly between Agamemnon and Achilles. Also, the ideal king in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (81-93) is an excellent speaker, settles quarrels in the assembly, and is described as conspicuous among those gathered with the same phrase Odysseus uses at *Od.* 8.172 (μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν, *Th.* 92). Note that Martin considers *Th.* 85 and *Od.* 8.173 (along with *Od.* 2.10-3 and 8.16-9) examples of the “looking on” motif.

³⁹² On the σκηπτρον and words derived from I.E. *ar-, see ch. 2 above.

running and sailing and value feasts, song, dance, clothes, baths, and beds.³⁹³ Alcinous focuses attention on these pacifistic talents and predilections in response to Odysseus' superior discus throw and the speech he delivers immediately afterwards. Odysseus says that he will accept a challenge in any of the warlike athletic contests from any of the Phaeacians (except his host, Laodamas) and claims particular prowess at archery specifically in a martial context.³⁹⁴ Odysseus' description of his mastery of the bow anticipates the digression on the bow which plays a prominent part in his revelation and vengeance on Ithaca: both passages feature the preeminent bowmen Heracles and Eurytus, heroes of an older generation whose bows are ultimately owned by the two best archers of the current generation, Philoctetes and Odysseus.³⁹⁵

Concerning himself, Odysseus says the following:

εὖ μὲν τόξον οἶδα εὖξοον ἀμφαφάσθαι·
 πρῶτός κ' ἄνδρα βάλοιμι ὀστεύσας ἐν ὀμίλῳ
 ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων, εἰ καὶ μάλα πολλοὶ ἐταῖροι
 ἄγχι παρασταῖεν καὶ τοξαζοῖατο φωτῶν.
 οἷος δὴ με Φιλοκτήτης ἀπεκαίνυτο τόξῳ
 δήμῳ ἐνὶ Τρώων, ὅτε τοξαζοίμεθ' Ἀχαιοί. (8.215-20)

Well do I know how to handle a well-polished bow:
 I would be first to shoot and strike a man in a crowd
 of hostile men, even if very many companions
 were standing close by me and were shooting arrows at the men.
 Philoctetes alone surpassed me with the bow
 in the land of the Trojans, whenever we Achaeans shot our bows.

³⁹³ 8.241-53.

³⁹⁴ 8.202-33.

³⁹⁵ The backstory of Odysseus' bow occurs at 21.11-41 and is discussed further in ch. 4. See also Andersen 2012, who notes that Philoctetes' ownership of Heracles' bow is not explicitly stated here, and might not have been part of the tradition at this point. The notion that Philoctetes had Heracles' bow dates to the mid-fifth century at the latest (see Gantz 1993: 459).

From this assertion Alcinous is able to infer Odysseus' identity as an epic-heroic warrior and an Achaean, as well as his participation in the Trojan War, all of which prompts him to praise his own people and their differing values.³⁹⁶

In addition to Odysseus' identity as a youth and a king, this episode signals his identity as a Greek and an epic hero.³⁹⁷ However, Andersen points out that archery is not especially prominent or laudable in the *Iliad*, in which poem Odysseus is represented as a spearman.³⁹⁸ Odysseus' speech promotes his identity as a Greek and a hero, but in specifically Odyssean rather than Iliadic terms: Odysseus in the *Odyssey* is a great archer who ultimately avenges himself and asserts his identity with his special bow, as is anticipated here. After the games, Odysseus eventually relates to his hosts his name and homeland and begins the long narration of his adventures between Troy and Phaeacia. In his adventure stories, too, Odysseus promotes the Odyssean heroic ideal, though in different ways. Like the overarching narrative of the *Odyssey*, the adventure tales contain elements of dissolution and reversal, such as monstrous savagery and death, but also elements of human order and renewal, and Odysseus' identity is both threatened and reinforced. Although Odysseus' adventures are packed with fascinating objects, they admittedly receive short shrift here: this project focuses particularly on Odysseus' reintegration into human society and resumption of his position on Ithaca, and on the mundane objects of the bard and audience's world rather than the fantastical and otherworldly objects of the adventure

³⁹⁶ Alcinous has likely already grown suspicious of his guest's identity (e.g., Alcinous alone notices and understands Odysseus' tears when Demodocus sings about the Trojan War, and he suggests that they instead engage in athletic contests (8.73-103)).

³⁹⁷ See Rose 1969: 400-1; Thalmann 1992: 61-2; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 78-9 for the idea that Odysseus indicates his Greek and heroic identity here, whether consciously or not. Cf. Stewart 1976: 66-8, who argues that Odysseus is rejecting Iliadic athletic competition as vain and frivolous.

³⁹⁸ Andersen 2012: 139-40.

tales.³⁹⁹ To discuss the adventures within the scope of this project, I follow a single object (with a few digressions) that is iconic of the epic-heroic warrior but is used in unconventional ways during Odysseus' time outside of human society, where the Iliadic hero exists: the sword.⁴⁰⁰

The sword of Odysseus

Throughout the course of his adventures, Odysseus endeavors to use his sword in the manner of a typical, heroic warrior, but is foiled in his attempts. He instead must use his sword, and in some cases another object entirely, in unusual, creative ways that promote the powers of μῆτις, intellectual shrewdness, rather than βίη, physical might.⁴⁰¹ After the Cyclops Polyphemus kills and eats two of Odysseus' men and goes to sleep, Odysseus' first impulse is to kill the monster with his sword. However, he stays his hand because he realizes that he and his remaining crewmates are not able to move the boulder Polyphemus placed at the opening of the cave; killing Polyphemus would leave them trapped in the his lair.⁴⁰² Odysseus must improvise: he cobbles together a plan and crafts a tool with which he can execute his stratagem. Odysseus

³⁹⁹ With exceptions: for instance, Ino-Leucothea's veil, discussed in ch. 2, appears to have magical anti-drowning properties.

⁴⁰⁰ Cook 1999: 154, 160-2. Although the sword is not as prominent as the spear in the *Iliad* (Saunders 2004 analyzes wounds in the *Iliad* and shows that swords cause only 18 wounds in comparison to 99 by spears (javelins and thrusting-spears combined), though it is perhaps notable that sword wounds are always fatal, while spear wounds are not), the sword plays a larger role on the Iliadic battlefield than the various contexts of the *Odyssey*. Note that the sword is a component of the arming motif in the *Iliad* (see Armstrong 1958).

⁴⁰¹ On Achilles and the *Iliad* promoting βίη as the preeminent heroic value in contrast to Odysseus and the *Odyssey* promoting μῆτις, see Nagy 1979: ch. 3. See also Cook 1995, who argues that the polarity between βίη and μῆτις is integral to the structure of the entire *Odyssey*. (For an analysis of μῆτις and βίη as a gendered dichotomy in early Greek literature, see Holmberg 1997, who discusses Odysseus as a man of μῆτις at 13ff.) Cf. Barnouw 2004: 1.3 who argues that μῆτις is opposed to ἀτασθαλίαι rather than βίη in the *Odyssey*. Note that when Nestor is advising his son Antilochus on chariot-racing, he says that μῆτις is a crucial attribute of successful artisans and workmen (*Il.* 23.313-8), to whom Odysseus has a unique affinity. On ancient Greek μῆτις generally and μῆτις in Antilochus' race specifically, see Detienne & Vernant 1978: esp. ch. 1. See also Dunkle 1987 on μῆτις in Antilochus' chariot race in terms of the μῆτις-βίη dichotomy, as well as μῆτις in the other funeral games.

⁴⁰² 9.296-305.

notices that the Cyclops has cut down an olive tree and left it in his cave; he deduces that Polyphemus is waiting for the fresh tree trunk to dry so that he can carry it as a staff (ρόπαλον), but otherwise has no intentions to craft the raw material.⁴⁰³ Odysseus and his crew note that the tree is the size of the mast of a ship, which is exactly what Odysseus earlier said the Cyclopes failed to craft, and what Odysseus did craft in the detailed shipbuilding passage in Book 5, discussed above in chapter 2.⁴⁰⁴ Odysseus also crafts this olive trunk, not into a mast, but into a stake with a fire-hardened point:

τοῦ μὲν ὅσον τ' ὄργυιαν ἐγὼν ἀπέκοψα παραστάς
καὶ παρέθηχ' ἐτάροισιν, ἀποξῦναι δ' ἐκέλευσα·
οἱ δ' ὀμαλὸν ποίησαν· ἐγὼ δ' ἐθόωσα παραστάς
ἄκρον, ἄφαρ δὲ λαβῶν ἐπυράκτεον ἐν πυρὶ κηλέω. (9.325-8)

Standing by it, I cut from it a length as great as a fathom
and gave it to my companions, and bid them to shave it down,
and they made it smooth. Standing by it, I sharpened
the point, then immediately took it and hardened it in a blazing fire.

Ahl and Roisman point out the repetition of the personal pronoun ἐγώ(ν) and the seemingly redundant participle παραστάς: Odysseus' language stresses his personal involvement in the crafting of the stake and the importance of the act of crafting.⁴⁰⁵

By tapping his talent for innovative thinking and his skill at handiwork, Odysseus creates a weapon that is usable in ways a sword is not. Even this specialized weapon's use is described in the terms and terminology of craftsmanship: when Odysseus thrusts the stake into

⁴⁰³ 9.319-21. Note that when he is disguised as a beggar Odysseus asks Eumaeus for a ρόπαλον to lean on (σκηρίπτεσθαι) and Eumaeus supplies him with a σκηπτρον (17.195-9), which suggests that the two words can be used interchangeably.

⁴⁰⁴ On the Cyclopes' failure to engage in shipbuilding and sailing and the opportunities they thus squander, Odysseus says, οὐ γὰρ Κυκλώπεσσι νέες πάρα μιλοπάρηι, οὐδ' ἄνδρες νηῶν ἐνι τέκτονες, οἳ κε κάμοιεν/νηῆας ἐυσσέλμους, αἳ κεν τελέοιεν ἕκαστα/ἄστε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ἰκνεύμεναι, οἷά τε πολλὰ/ἄνδρες ἐπ' ἀλλήλους νηυσὶν περόωσι θάλασσαν·/οἳ κέ σφιν καὶ νῆσον ἐυκτιμένην ἐκάμοντο, (9.125-30) (the island mentioned here is the so-called Goat Island, which is discussed at 9.116ff.).

⁴⁰⁵ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 115.

Polyphemos' eye he is compared to a ship's carpenter (ὡς ὅτε τις τρυπῶ δόρυ νήιον ἀνήρ/τρυπάνω – "as when some man bores a ship timber with a drill," 9.384-5). Also, the scorching of Polyphemos' eyeball from the blazing tip of the stake is compared to the tempering of iron performed by a smith.⁴⁰⁶ Odysseus' crafting and the similes of craftsmanship lay heavy emphasis on his technological competence, which contrasts with Polyphemos' incompetence, or at least disinterest, in technology.⁴⁰⁷ As mentioned above, the Cyclopes do not build ships, and Odysseus also says that they lack agriculture and communal law, hallmarks of human civilization.⁴⁰⁸ Whereas Polyphemos is content to leave his olive tree trunk in the rough, Odysseus imposes his thought and will, his μῆτις, on the material to make it fit his purposes, just as the olive-handled ax he used to carry out a different task, the construction of his boat, was fitted (ἄρμενον, 5.234) to his hands. The fact that the tree trunk is olive wood drives home the point that Odysseus' crafting here is an important aspect of his identity, since olive appears in two other essential crafting episodes in the poem.⁴⁰⁹ Odysseus represents himself as triumphing not through the βίη of his sword, but through the special μῆτις of craftsmanship that distinguishes him from other heroes, as well as from the Cyclopes. The victory of μῆτις is

⁴⁰⁶ 9.391-4.

⁴⁰⁷ See Schein 1970: 76-7; Frontisi-Ducroux 1975: 81-2; Moulton 1977: 123; Clay 1983: 118-9; Thalmann 1992: 85; de Jong 2001: 231-2.

⁴⁰⁸ 9.106-15. Polyphemos does have at least some level of technology: he has a courtyard around his cave (9.184-5), pens within the cave which separate his flocks by species and age, different types of containers for milk, whey, and cheese (9.219-23, 246-9), and he makes a fire (9.233-4, 251). Scholarship on the Cyclops episode is understandably extensive, but see Austin 1975: 143-9, who says that what Polyphemos lacks is not τέχνη but the intelligence to go beyond his subsistence economy, and van Nortwick 2009: 50-3, who discusses the change Odysseus brings to Polyphemos' particular kind of order. On nature and culture in the Cyclops episode, see Kirk 1970: 162-71, and O'Sullivan 1990 for a response to Kirk.

⁴⁰⁹ The first being the crafting of Odysseus' boat (5.234-61), discussed above, and the second the crafting of Odysseus' bed (23.184-204), discussed below. The inoculated wild and cultivated olives under which Odysseus sleeps on Phaeacia (5.476-7) are also discussed above, and the olive by the Ithacan harbor (13.122, 372) is discussed below. See Schein 1970: 75-6.

reinforced when the name Odysseus cleverly calls himself, Οὐτις, ‘Nobody,’ is shown to be μή τις (homophonous with μήτις) under certain grammatical conditions.⁴¹⁰ When Polyphemus cries out to the other Cyclopes that Nobody (which they understand not as a name but as an indefinite ‘nobody’) is killing him, they respond that if nobody is overpowering him (μή τις σε βιάζεται, 9.410), he cannot avoid an illness from Zeus. The Cyclopes inadvertently hit upon the crux of the entire episode: Nobody, that is Odysseus, and his μήτις act in the place of βίη to outdo (βιάζεσθαι, connected to βίη) the physically superior Polyphemus.⁴¹¹

The next hostile monsters Odysseus and his crew encounter are the Laestrygonians, and Odysseus uses his sword – to cut the cables mooring his ship to the shore: τόφρα δ’ ἐγὼ ξίφος ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ/τῷ ἀπὸ πείσματ’ ἔκοψα νεὸς κυανοπρόροιο – “meanwhile, I drew my sharp sword from my thigh and with it cut away the dark-prowed ship’s cables,” (10.126-7). The phrase ξίφος ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ also occurs at 9.300 when Odysseus contemplates stabbing Polyphemus, and is repeated both *verbatim* and in slightly different terms a number of times in the course of his adventure tales.⁴¹² This is the language of epic warfare, used of Achilles in the *Iliad* both in the heat of battle and when he experiences an ill-advised impulse for violence like Odysseus.⁴¹³ However, it is Athena, not Achilles himself, who stays

⁴¹⁰ 9.366-7, 405-10.

⁴¹¹ On Οὐτις/μή τις/μήτις, see Podlecki 1961: 129-31; Clay 1983: 119-20; Peradotto 1990: ch. 6, esp. 147-9; Goldhill 1991: 32-6; Holmberg 1997: 16-7; Nieto Hernández 2000: 362-3. Note also 9.414, where Odysseus links together his name and his μήτις: ...ὡς ὄνομ’ ἐξαπάτησεν ἐμὸν καὶ μήτις ἀμύμων.

⁴¹² Cf. 10.294; 10.321 (ἄορ ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ) = 11.24; 10.439 (σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ) = 11.231 (note that at 10.439 Odysseus contemplates killing his crewmate Eurylochus but is checked by his other companions, though they do not find it necessary to seize him by the hair as Athena does Achilles); 10.535; 11.48.

⁴¹³ The phrase ἄορ ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ occurs at *Il.* 21.173 in Achilles’ fight with Asteropaeus. At *Il.* 1.188ff. Achilles contemplates killing Agamemnon, and decides to do so; φάσγανον ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ is at 1.190. See Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 30, 50, 59-61, 67, 80, 92.

his hand. In the *Odyssey*, the phrase serves to differentiate Odysseus from the Iliadic hero: it purposefully elicits the heroic activity of the *Iliad*, to which Odysseus' decisions and actions are contrasted. Odysseus next draws his sword from beside his thigh when he is facing a danger not typical of the epic battlefield: the sorceress Circe threatens to transform him into an animal.⁴¹⁴ Fortunately Odysseus is visited and aided by a conspicuously young-looking Hermes before he reaches the dread goddess, and the god instructs him first to draw his sword on Circe to intimidate her and subsequently to sleep with her.⁴¹⁵ Hermes' appearance as a young man whose first beard is coming in and his instructions to engage sexually with Circe make explicit his role as a god who oversees the crossing of age boundaries, in particular from childhood to young adulthood. Marinatos demonstrates that Hermes, in the guise of both adolescent and adult, is connected to maturation rites and thus sexual initiation, especially when coupled with Aphrodite in her capacity as a sexual initiatrix.⁴¹⁶ Together, Hermes and Aphrodite are patrons of young men's budding sexuality outside the context of legitimate marriage. Circe, like her fellow goddess Aphrodite, plays the role of initiatrix so that the sword by Odysseus' thigh is more phallic than militaristic, and his interaction with Circe is less an epic-heroic display and more a sexual awakening.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ 10.321.

⁴¹⁵ 10.275-301.

⁴¹⁶ See Marinatos 2003: 137-42 on Hermes as a patron of boundary-crossing, 142-4 on Aphrodite's role in young men's sexual initiation (including her seduction of the young Anchises in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*), and 145-6 on Hermes and Aphrodite's function as a couple in the maturation of young men. See also 132-7 on the motif of young men either wrestling heavy animals or lifting them onto their shoulders as a rite of manhood; Levaniouk 2011: 148-50 connects this motif with the elaborate description of the huge stag which Odysseus kills then lifts onto his shoulders prior to his encounter with Circe (10.156-71) as another initiatory element in this episode.

⁴¹⁷ On the sexual nature of Odysseus' encounter with Circe, see also Brilliant 1995; Pucci 1998: 160-1; van Nortwick 2009: 55-6.

After drawing his sword with the intention to kill an unsatisfactory crewmate (from which action he is dissuaded by his other companions), Odysseus next has cause to draw his sword during his voyage to the Underworld.⁴¹⁸ Odysseus first uses his sword in the Underworld not as a weapon but as a tool for digging a pit into which he pours offerings for the dead.⁴¹⁹ He then draws his sword again as the shades gather round him to prevent them from drinking the sacrificial blood from the pit until he has questioned Teiresias, and later on he once more draws his sword to allow only one shade to drink at a time so that he may question them each individually.⁴²⁰ Although Odysseus initially experiences fear at the sight and sound of the shades, it is unclear whether the shades are capable of doing him any harm; the sword seems to function less for self-defense as in battle and more to control the shades' access to the blood.⁴²¹ The second time Odysseus draws his sword, there is no suggestion that he is afraid, and he seems to be motivated by his desire to maintain the shades in an orderly queue.⁴²² However frightening and perilous the Underworld might be, it is not the typical battlefield environment of the epic warrior and Odysseus does not use his sword in the typical fashion. The sword does not appear again in the adventure tales after this point, though Odysseus is still tempted by the Iliadic ideal:

⁴¹⁸ Odysseus considers killing Eurylochus and draws his sword at 10.438-42.

⁴¹⁹ 11.24-36. Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 79-80; Cook 1999: 161.

⁴²⁰ 11.48-50, 229-34. Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 86, 92 say that at 11.147-9, 152-3 it is made clear that drinking the blood restores memory and speech to a shade, but see Heath 2005a for complications.

⁴²¹ Odysseus says ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἦρει at 11.43, and earlier cried (and wished to die!) upon learning that he needed to perform a *katabasis* (10.496-9; cf. 4.538-41 where Menelaus grieves at the news of Agamemnon's death), as did his companions (10.566-8).

⁴²² Rather than fear, Odysseus appears to feel grief and pity predominantly in the Underworld: see 11.55, 87, 395. Odysseus also cries with Agamemnon's shade at 465-6. Achilles' shade also laments in death (472, 488), as do the shades of other Iliadic warriors (541-2). Heracles' image (εἶδωλον, 602) looks fearsome (605ff.), but also laments (616). Odysseus once more explicitly feels fear as the countless shades approach him and he imagines that Persephone might send Γοργεῖην κεφαλὴν δεινοῖο πελώρου from Hades (632-5), but he then leaves immediately without drawing his sword.

as Pucci demonstrates, the Sirens' song appropriates the diction of the *Iliad* and lures Odysseus to Iliadic κλέος and thus to death.⁴²³ Odysseus escapes and asserts the Odyssean poetic program, but when he faces Scylla he again attempts epic-heroic action despite Circe's warning to simply allow the monster to eat some of his companions.⁴²⁴ As the ship approaches Scylla and Charybdis, Odysseus dons his armor and takes up two spears in preparation for a fight, but can only look on in helpless horror as his crewmates are devoured.⁴²⁵ These attempted heroic gestures with sword or spears which amount to nothing or are twisted around to different effect raise Iliadic values only to knock them down again: Odysseus must use his unique qualities besides epic militarism to survive the fantastical lands of his adventure tales, and ultimately to regain his home and full identity.

Objects in the underworld

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to return briefly to the *Nekyia*. Homeric eschatology is complex and much debated in scholarship, and what exactly a 'shade' is continues to be controversial.⁴²⁶ A shade in the Underworld is called various things, from νέκυς/νεκρός, suggesting a physical corpse, to ψυχή, suggesting an immaterial wraith. Whatever actually constitutes a shade, it is clear that it looks like the person did while alive, or perhaps shortly after death, and has access to the person's memories.⁴²⁷ Interestingly, the shades look not just like people's bodies, but bodies with objects. It appears that the shades are (or at least seem to be)

⁴²³ Pucci 1998: 1-9. The Sirens' song is at 12.184-91.

⁴²⁴ See 12.116-26 for Circe's warning against fighting Scylla.

⁴²⁵ 12.226ff. On this specific heroic gesture, see Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 130-1.

⁴²⁶ On Homeric shades, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 70-91; Clarke 1999: ch. 6; Johnston 1999: ch. 1.

⁴²⁷ Dead Achilles calls the shades the images of men who have died (βροτῶν εἶδωλα καμόντων, 11.476). When Odysseus first sees the shades he notes that some of them are men who died in battle, and they have their blood-stained armor with them (βεβροτωμένα τεύχε' ἔχοντες, 11.41), which suggests that they appear as they did after death (though the blood may not be their own).

clothed, and certain shades have particular objects with them. Odysseus says that the shades of men who died in battle have blood-stained armor, and the shades of Teiresias and Minos carry golden σκῆπτρα.⁴²⁸ Heracles is a special case, since he truly lives among the gods and the shade of Heracles in the Underworld is just an εἶδωλον (‘image, likeness,’ though this word is applied to other shades, as well), but he behaves like any other shade.⁴²⁹ Heracles holds a bow with an arrow on the string, looking perpetually as though he is about to shoot, and he wears a golden baldrick around his chest. The fact that shades can appear as bodies accompanied by specific objects suggests that these objects were intimately tied to the living people’s identities, similar to the way that objects can enter into a person’s body schema, as discussed in chapter 1.

In Heracles’ case, the bow furthers his identity as an archer, which was established earlier by Odysseus during the Phaeacian games: Odysseus boasts that he is the greatest archer alive, though he defers to two archers of the previous generation, Heracles and Eurytus.⁴³⁰ As in this passage from Book 8, Odysseus is compared and thus linked to Heracles in the Underworld through numerous similarities, one of which being the language used to describe the baldrick.⁴³¹ Karanika points out that the scenes adorning the baldrick are called θέσκελα ἔργα – “wondrous deeds,” (11.610) and depict Heracles’ heroic feats, and the only other appearance of θέσκελα ἔργα in the *Odyssey* is used to describe Odysseus’ adventure tales.⁴³² Heracles’ baldrick is the

⁴²⁸ Armor: 11.41; σκῆπτρα: 11.91, 569. Note that the shade of Teiresias enjoys unique retention of his mental faculties (10.492-5), and Minos issues judgments among the shades (though they are apparently able to converse with him) (11.569-71).

⁴²⁹ 11.601-14. For sources on the idea that the Heracles encounter is a later interpolation, see Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 114.

⁴³⁰ 8.215-28, on which see above.

⁴³¹ On Odysseus and Heracles’ similarities, see Finkelberg 1995; Crissy 1997; Karanika 2011; Andersen 2012.

⁴³² Karanika 2011: 13-4. Alcinous calls Odysseus’ tales θέσκελα ἔργα at 11.374; the phrase also appears at *Iliad* 3.130. Cf. Bennett 1997: 161-6, who argues (unconvincingly, in my opinion) that the scenes on Heracles’ baldrick depict the story of the *Iliad*.

hero's famous, identifying deeds condensed into an object, and Odysseus mentions its craftsman: *μη̄ τεχνησάμενος μηδ' ἄλλο τι τεχνήσαιο, / ὄς κείνον τελαμῶνα ἐῆ ἐγκάτθετο τέχνη* – “would that he who laid down that baldrick by his craftsmanship never have crafted it nor ever craft anything else,” (11.613-4). Heracles himself is the craftsman of his baldrick in the sense that he is the doer of the deeds, if not an actual craftsman, and Odysseus uses the terms of craftsmen and crafted objects to further engage in the agonistic relationship he has already established with Heracles.⁴³³ This competition with the hero from the previous generation who shares a number of similarities with Odysseus will be picked up again on Ithaca, though Heracles will cut a somewhat different figure then.⁴³⁴

Like Heracles, certain objects change semantically over the course of the poem. Teiresias' prophecy to Odysseus about walking inland with an oar on his shoulder until he meets people who mistake it for a winnowing shovel, at which point he must plant it in the ground, in the context of the *Nekyia* reads like a σῆμα in the sense of ‘grave(-marker).’⁴³⁵ The journey with the oar marks the final time Odysseus must leave home, after which he will die peacefully in old age. The image of the planted oar is also conspicuously similar to an actual grave: Odysseus' crewmate Elpenor died by falling off Circe's roof, and in the Underworld his shade asks Odysseus to bury his body, then plant his oar on his grave.⁴³⁶ However, when the prophecy of the oar mistaken for a winnowing shovel is repeated on Ithaca, contextual clues will point us to another interpretation.⁴³⁷ And Ithaca is just where Odysseus is headed at the end of his adventure tales: the Phaeacians keep their promise to provide their guest transport home, and

⁴³³ The poet/‘craftsman’ of the *Odyssey* is perhaps also engaging in competition with the poets/‘craftsmen’ of an epic tradition concerning Heracles.

⁴³⁴ 21.24-30, discussed below.

⁴³⁵ Teiresias' prophecy: 11.119-37.

⁴³⁶ Elpenor's death: 10.551-60; Elpenor asks for burial: 11.66-78; Elpenor is buried: 12.8-15.

⁴³⁷ Odysseus repeats Teiresias' prophecy to Penelope at 23.266-84.

Odysseus once again enters a deep sleep that signals the transition to the next chapter in the hero's story.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁸ 13.79-80. See above on sleep and transition in the *Odyssey*.

CHAPTER 4: Who Odysseus is: Ithaca (and Beyond?)

On the shore of Ithaca

Just as crossing the sea and sleep marked Odysseus' reentrance into humanity, so do they mark his reentrance into his own specific community. This echo of Odysseus' landing on Phaeacia sets us up to anticipate similar themes, episodes, and objects on Ithaca, and we are not disappointed.⁴³⁹ The Phaeacians place the sleeping Odysseus under an olive tree that grows at the head of the Ithacan harbor, which recalls the inoculated wild and cultivated olives under which Odysseus beds down on Phaeacia.⁴⁴⁰ Although Odysseus is initially unaware that he has reached Ithaca because Athena shrouded the land in mist, Athena eventually dispels the fog and points out the olive tree as a σῆμα to Odysseus that he has arrived at his homeland that, like the olive, plays a role in his identity.⁴⁴¹ This σῆμα that facilitates recognition of Ithaca anticipates the recognition of Odysseus by members of his household, one of which will also involve an olive tree.⁴⁴² The olive at the harbor also looks forward to Odysseus' eventual victory when Odysseus and Athena sit under the tree together to plan the suitors' destruction.⁴⁴³

Along with Odysseus, the Phaeacians place the gifts which they gave him upon his departure under the olive tree.⁴⁴⁴ Odysseus and Athena later store away these gifts in the cave of the nymphs to keep them safe, though the gifts are never explicitly retrieved in the course of the

⁴³⁹ On narrative patterns repeating not just on Phaeacia and Ithaca, but in Odysseus' adventure tales as well, see Louden 1993 (with bibliography on the Phaeacia-Ithaca parallels at n.5) and 1999, as cited above.

⁴⁴⁰ Ithacan olive: 13.102, 122, 346, 372. Phaeacian olives: 5.477, on which see ch. 2 above.

⁴⁴¹ 13.344-52.

⁴⁴² The olive tree bed is central to Penelope's recognition of Odysseus at 23.177ff., discussed below.

⁴⁴³ 13.372-3.

⁴⁴⁴ 13.120-4.

poem.⁴⁴⁵ Gifts given to guest-friends typically function to commemorate the relationship between the giver and recipient, or the giver specifically: as discussed in chapter 1, material objects can be conceived of as assuming the essences of persons, then extending those persons' identities beyond an individual's spatial and temporal limitations.⁴⁴⁶ These gifts, however, apparently never make it to Odysseus' storeroom. Instead of being objectified via the gifts they give, the Phaeacians end up literally objectified when Poseidon turns their ship to stone and they fear that he will bury their city under a mountain as prophesied.⁴⁴⁷ Poseidon petrifies the ship specifically so that the Phaeacians will stop transporting people across the sea, which renders them isolated and without guest-friendships. The final mention of their gifts in the *Odyssey* has a similar effect: Odysseus recounts his stay with the Phaeacians, capped off with their gifts, as part of his adventure tales when he tells them to Penelope.⁴⁴⁸ As Poseidon cuts the Phaeacians off from the rest of the human sphere physically, Odysseus incorporates them and their gifts into the realm of his stories, rather than his own mundane reality.⁴⁴⁹

The cave of the nymphs appears to articulate the theme of rebirth that was so prominent on the shores of Phaeacia. Levaniouk compares this Ithacan cave to the cave of Eileithyia on Crete at Amnisus, which is associated with birth, and mentioned by Odysseus in his Third Cretan

⁴⁴⁵ 13.363-71.

⁴⁴⁶ On two occasions in the *Odyssey* (15.126, 21.40) a gift is explicitly called a *μνημα* of a person or a relationship, discussed further below.

⁴⁴⁷ 13.149ff.

⁴⁴⁸ 23.338-41.

⁴⁴⁹ Segal 1994: 58-61 argues that the Phaeacian's gifts disappear because they represent the intangible "wealth" of understanding and experience Odysseus gained during his adventures. I think the inclusion of these gifts into Odysseus' tales of his adventures is also a demonstration of how a poet can incorporate material objects into his work in significant and polysemous ways: the gifts paint both their givers and recipient in particular ways, communicating the lavish wealth and proper hospitality of the Phaeacians, but also the fairy-tale qualities of Phaeacia when its people and gifts are subsumed into Odysseus' adventure stories.

Lie.⁴⁵⁰ Both caves are located by a harbor and a source of fresh water, and are associated with nymphs.⁴⁵¹ Life-giving springs and rivers are common features of the sacred places of Eileithyia, and both the nymphs and Eileithyia are kourotropic deities associated with initiation as well as fertility and birth. There is no cave by the Phaeacian harbor (though Odysseus' makeshift bed is perhaps cave-like in the shelter it provides), but there is a river which specifically bears Odysseus out of the sea.⁴⁵² This river provides a place for the Phaeacian women to wash clothes (an activity with erotic undertones, as discussed above) and Odysseus bathes in it as well, and is then rejuvenated by Athena.⁴⁵³ Odysseus' bath in the river might be comparable to the bathing places of young women that appear to be connected with birth, such as the river Amnisus.⁴⁵⁴ Phaeacia also lacks nymphs, though Nausicaa and her companions are compared to Artemis and her nymphs, and Odysseus at first wonders whether the cry of the girls is the sound of wilderness-dwelling (including river spring-dwelling) nymphs.⁴⁵⁵ Levaniouk points out that Artemis has connections with Eileithyia as a goddess of childbirth, and in Apollonius Rhodius Artemis bathes in the river Amnisus and the waters of the Parthenius.⁴⁵⁶ On

⁴⁵⁰ Levaniouk 2011: 93ff. See 19.186-9 for the cave of Eileithyia.

⁴⁵¹ The Ithacan harbor and cave of the nymphs (with its ὕδατ' ἀετιόοντα) are described at 13.96-112, 345-50.

⁴⁵² Odysseus escapes the sea via the river at 5.441-53. On Odysseus' bed on the Phaeacian shore, see ch. 2 above. Thalmann 1992: 99 points out that Goat Island has a cave and springs (by a safe harbor, which is shrouded in mist when Odysseus and his men arrive; there are also nymphs) (9.136ff.), and there is a cave inhabited by nymphs on Thrinacia (12.317-8). Cf. also Polyphemus' cave, whose entrance he seals with a boulder (9.240-3, etc.), like Athena seals the cave of the nymphs on Ithaca with a rock to protect the Phaeacians' gifts (13.370).

⁴⁵³ The river provides a washing place for laundry: 6.85-7; Odysseus bathes in the river: 6.224-6. See ch. 3 above on the connotations of youthfulness present in Odysseus' makeover.

⁴⁵⁴ See Levaniouk 2011: 95-6 and reference at n.11.

⁴⁵⁵ Comparison of Nausicaa and her friends to Artemis and her nymphs: 6.102-9; Odysseus thinks the sound of the girls playing might be nymphs: 6.122-4. On the initiatory and nuptial connotations of the nymphs and especially Artemis, see ch. 3.

⁴⁵⁶ Levaniouk 2011: 99-100. Apollonius Rhodius 3.876-7. Note also Eileithyia's role in Artemis' birth in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 115-9.

Ithaca, the nymphs fill in for these goddesses, and their cave contains bees like the Cretan cave in which Zeus was supposedly born and nourished with honey.⁴⁵⁷ The cave thus reiterates the themes of renewal and rebirth established on Phaeacia, and looks ahead to their continuation throughout the poem.

When Odysseus awakes on Ithaca he is shrouded in Athena's mist and he expresses his uncertainty about his location in language identical to that he used on Phaeacia: despairing (ὄ μοι ἐγώ), he wonders whether the people here are unlawful and savage, or hospitable to strangers.⁴⁵⁸ On both islands Odysseus learns the answer to his question through Athena. On Phaeacia, Athena prompted Nausicaa to go to the shore where she would encounter Odysseus; later, Athena appeared to Odysseus as a young girl and guided him to Alcinous' house, shrouding him in mist to avoid an unpleasant confrontation with any of the Phaeacians.⁴⁵⁹ On Ithaca, the young, royal-looking person Odysseus meets is Athena herself disguised as a shepherd boy.⁴⁶⁰ The goddess' disguise and the mist she spreads round Odysseus here do not function to conceal him from gossipy locals, but give him an opportunity to prove his identity as Odysseus ποικιλομήτης (which Athena calls him at 13.293) via a "virtuoso performance" like the speech he delivered to Nausicaa.⁴⁶¹ This speech is the first of Odysseus' three Cretan Lies, and he claims to be a Cretan who killed Idomeneus' son in a night ambush for wanting to steal his

⁴⁵⁷ See Levaniouk 2011: 93-4, 96 for more on bees and honey. The bees in the Ithacan cave are mentioned at 13.106. On infant Zeus being nourished with honey, see Antoninus Liberalis 19. For more sources on Zeus' Cretan birth cave, see Levaniouk 2011: 94 n.4.

⁴⁵⁸ 13.200-2 = 6.119-21. After this opening statement on Phaeacia Odysseus wonders whether he hears nymphs, while on Ithaca he proceeds to curse the Phaeacians for failing to keep their promise to bring him to Ithaca.

⁴⁵⁹ On Nausicaa, see ch. 3 above. Athena aids Odysseus in person on Phaeacia at 7.14ff.

⁴⁶⁰ 13.221-5. As a shepherd, Athena is παναπάλω, οἳοί τε ἀνάκτων παῖδες ἔασι.

⁴⁶¹ On Odysseus' speech to Nausicaa, see ch. 3. For ποικιλομήτης as an epithet of Odysseus, see *Il.* 11.482; *Od.* 3.163; 7.168; 22.115, 202, 281.

plunder from participating in the Trojan War; as a result, he voluntarily fled Crete.⁴⁶² Like the speech to Nausicaa, this speech functions on multiple levels: it is shrewdly tailored to persuade the internal audience (the ‘shepherd boy’) to aid this stranger in need by presenting him as sympathetic but also potentially dangerous. His self-description suggests that he is worthy of the local boy’s assistance, and also someone willing and capable of killing potential transgressors, with a family to avenge him if necessary.⁴⁶³

Although this story is fabricated (which could also be the case for the story of the Delian palm), it reflects Odysseus’ true nature to an informed audience (like us), just as the Delian palm did, as discussed above.⁴⁶⁴ It has been noted that the First Cretan Lie contains echoes of the Trojan War: not only does Odysseus claim to have fought in the war, he also says that he was involved in a dispute with Idomeneus that is similar to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. He also says that he killed a quick-running young man with a wealthy father in an ambush at night, which forms a parallel with Odysseus’ actions in the Doloneia.⁴⁶⁵ The theme of dishonor and subsequent revenge is pertinent to the *Iliad*, but it also anticipates the outcome of the *Odyssey*: Odysseus will take his revenge by killing the young men who dishonored him and spoiled his property using his cunning.⁴⁶⁶ It might be the case that the hints of Odysseus’ true identity are meant for the internal audience to understand, as well: although Odysseus is not explicitly suspicious of the shepherd boy’s identity, we learn here that he knew

⁴⁶² 13.256-86.

⁴⁶³ Walcot 1977: 9-10; Haft 1984: 292, 300; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 159-60.

⁴⁶⁴ There is no indication in the *Odyssey* that the story of the Delian palm is a fabrication, but there is also no direct evidence in the poem that Odysseus went to Delos and saw the palm as he says. Whether or not the story of his trip to Delos is true is not especially important; in either case, Odysseus uses the Delian palm to communicate significant information about himself and his intentions to his audience.

⁴⁶⁵ Haft 1984: 292, 303; see 303n.48 for line-by-line comparisons between the First Cretan Lie and the Doloneia.

⁴⁶⁶ Walcot 1977: 11-2.

the young girl who led him to Alcinous' home on Phaeacia was actually Athena in disguise, though there is no mention that he recognized her in Book 7.⁴⁶⁷ The Second and Third Cretan Lies are likewise fabricated to play to the desires of the internal audiences (Eumaeus and Penelope, respectively), but also reflect Odysseus' true identity.⁴⁶⁸ Though Odysseus is the party in disguise in the Second and Third Lies, it has been suggested that in each case there is covert recognition despite the concealment.⁴⁶⁹ In addition, Levaniouk suggests that Crete indicates not just lies and disguise, but allusive signs embedded in the lies that anticipate epiphany linked to renewal and rebirth.⁴⁷⁰ Each of the Cretan Lies also represents Odysseus as an outsider and suppliant like he was to the Phaeacians, as well as a man concerned with vengeance for some

⁴⁶⁷ After Athena has revealed herself to him, Odysseus says, ἠλώμην, ἦός με θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν·/πρίν γ' ὅτε Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐν πίοιι δῆμῳ/θάρσυνάς τε ἔπεσσι καὶ ἐς πόλιν ἤγαγες αὐτή, (13.321-3).

⁴⁶⁸ Haft 1984: 300. The Second Cretan Lie (14.191-359) told to Eumaeus entertains the loyal swineherd and complements his concern for his absent master by mentioning Odysseus, and it gains his sympathy by mirroring his own suffering. The Third Cretan Lie (19.165ff.) told to Penelope also appeals to her sympathy and focuses largely on discussing Odysseus; it also demonstrates the speaker's culture and rhetorical skill in response to Penelope's erudition. On the Cretan Lies reflecting the truth, see Haft 1984; Emlyn-Jones 1986: 8; Goldhill 1991: 45; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 159; Clayton 2004: ch. 3. For further sources on Odysseus' lies, see Richardson 1996: n.8.

⁴⁶⁹ On the possibility that Eumaeus recognizes Odysseus before the hero's direct self-revelation, see Roisman 1990; Ahl & Roisman 1996: ch. 8 (Murnaghan 1987: 91-117 says there is subconscious recognition when Eumaeus loans Odysseus a cloak). The question of Penelope's early recognition is the subject of much debate (see Emlyn-Jones 1984 and Doherty 1995: ch. 1 for an overview of the issue and scholarship). For arguments that Penelope recognizes Odysseus, either consciously or subconsciously, before the trial of the bed, see Harsh 1950; Whitman 1958: 303; Amory 1963; Austin 1975: 200ff.; Stewart 1976: 103ff.; van Nortwick 1979: 276; Russo 1982; Murnaghan 1987: 47-52; Winkler 1990: 160; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 217-37; Vlahos 2007, 2011; Levaniouk 2011: *passim*; Yamagata 2011. For recent responses to the notion of early recognition, see Floyd 2011; Loudon 2011; Reece 2011.

⁴⁷⁰ Levaniouk 2011: 101-3 compares Odysseus' Cretan Lies with Demeter's Cretan lie in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (119ff.): Demeter's tale reflects her true situation and anticipates her epiphany and return, which bring both natural and human renewal. Kearns 1982; Murnaghan 1987: 11-6; Reece 1993: 181-7 also discuss Odysseus' self-revelation as comparable to divine epiphany. See also Levaniouk 2011: 103-6 on Crete's particular connection to mythic and ritual renewal.

sort of deprivation, as his affiliation with youth suggested on Phaeacia.⁴⁷¹ Like Odysseus' description of the palm, his Cretan Lies express the themes of revenge and ultimate renewal that are essential to Odysseus and the *Odyssey*.

Reversal and dissolution: Odysseus as beggar, Odysseus as deer

After Athena dispels the mist and reveals the land to be Ithaca, Odysseus kisses the ground as he did when he first reached the shore of Phaeacia (κύσε δὲ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν – “he kissed the grain-giving plowland,” 5.463 = 13.354).⁴⁷² The goddess and hero then conspire together to take revenge on the suitors, and Book 13 ends with Athena altering Odysseus' body as she did on Phaeacia.⁴⁷³ However, Odysseus experiences not rejuvenation and proper attire, but withering of his body and tattering of his clothes. Athena puts on Odysseus the skin of an old man, then the skin of a deer along with other clothing that is properly squalid for a beggar. Odysseus also receives interesting accoutrements: Athena provides him with a σκῆπτρον and a πῆρη, typically translated as ‘wallet.’ The σκῆπτρον has no description, but the wallet is ugly, riddled with holes, and hangs on a ‘baldrick’ (ἀορτήρ, like Heracles’) made of twisted rope.⁴⁷⁴ These objects appear simultaneously appropriate for a beggar and oddly regal: as discussed in chapter 2, the σκῆπτρον is strongly connected to kings and is used as a beggar's walking stick only by Odysseus in disguise in the Homeric poems.⁴⁷⁵ The wallet is more explicitly lowly, but the choice of the word ἀορτήρ, which brings to mind the ἄορ (sword) of the battlefield, for its

⁴⁷¹ See ch. 3 above and Levaniouk 2011: ch. 4 *et passim* on Odysseus' connection to youth and his self-presentation in his Cretan Lies as an illegitimate son or younger brother, and therefore a man who is hungry and deprived (i.e., αἶθων/Aithon).

⁴⁷² Note that Agamemnon also kissed his homeland upon his return from the Trojan War, though not in the same formulaic phrase used of Odysseus: καὶ κύνει ἀπτόμενος ἦν πατρίδα, (4.522).

⁴⁷³ 13.429-38. See ch. 3 on Odysseus' bodily rejuvenation on Phaeacia.

⁴⁷⁴ Heracles' baldrick: 11.609, on which see ch. 3 above.

⁴⁷⁵ The lame god Hephaestus also appears to carry a σκῆπτρον to use as a walking stick (*Il.* 18.416-7), and Odysseus places his beggar's σκῆπτρον in Irus' hand after defeating him (*Od.* 18.103), but the object makes no further appearance in the poem.

strap is striking. The fact that Odysseus is truly, if latently, a king but looks like a beggar shares similarities with mythic scapegoats (φαρμακοί) like the Athenian king Codrus and Oedipus.⁴⁷⁶ I discuss scapegoats and their place in ancient Greek ritual as they pertain to the *Odyssey* below, but what is pertinent about scapegoats at this point is that they involve some sort of reversal. Odysseus' appearance as a member of the lowest social stratum in his community is a reversal of his normal position at the top of the hierarchy.

Levaniouk also suggests that reversal is present in the deerskin in which Athena clothes Odysseus: Actaeon is likewise 'clothed' in a deerskin and transformed from hunter into hunted.⁴⁷⁷ Burkert theorizes that the Actaeon myth reflected a ritual of the hunt in which there is first dissolution and reversal, followed by the restoration of order.⁴⁷⁸ As mentioned above in chapter 3, dissolution and reversal precede the restoration and renewal of New Year festivals; in anticipation of the upcoming festival of Apollo, Odysseus undergoes reversal from king to beggar, and from hunter (dog) to hunted (deer). As Odysseus progresses toward the reestablishment of his position and identity in his community he will be associated not only with kings but also with hunting dogs (discussed below), but first he (nearly) reenacts Actaeon's hapless fate. As he approaches Eumaeus' hut disguised as a beggar and wearing a deerskin, Odysseus is almost mauled by the swineherd's dogs.⁴⁷⁹ Although Odysseus is not in mortal

⁴⁷⁶ Codrus dressed as a slave and left Athens to mingle with the invading Dorians, and ended up killed in a brawl. This fulfilled the prophecy that the Dorians would not be able to conquer Athens if they killed Codrus. See Burkert 1979: 62-3, 65 for discussion of Codrus as a scapegoat, and 169-70 n.13 for ancient sources of the Codrus story. On Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* as a scapegoat who is both regal and lowly, see Vernant 1990: 125-40. For other mythical scapegoats in ancient Greek literature, see Bremmer 1983: 303-7. Steiner 2009: 74-89 argues that Irus plays the part of φαρμακός and famine demon in the *Odyssey*, on which see below.

⁴⁷⁷ Levaniouk 2011: 142ff.

⁴⁷⁸ Burkert 1983: 112-3.

⁴⁷⁹ 14.29-38.

danger in this encounter, he reaches the depths of his reversal when he resembles the “torn-up victim” whose death is the low point before ultimate restoration.⁴⁸⁰ Hints of the forthcoming resolution and Odysseus’ true identity crop up immediately in his (disguised) reunion with Eumaeus: Roisman even argues that language used when Odysseus is attacked by the dogs anticipates recognition of his identity.⁴⁸¹ In addition to Roisman’s sensitive analysis of the allusive way that Eumaeus and Odysseus seem to communicate a shared knowledge of Odysseus’ identity without direct acknowledgement of recognition, Odysseus hints at important, repeated themes and his looming self-revelation.

As mentioned above, Odysseus’ Second Cretan Lie taps into the ongoing theme of deprivation and hunger: Odysseus says that he is an illegitimate son and therefore was deprived of an equal share of his father’s inheritance.⁴⁸² Odysseus-the-beggar also directly claims that Odysseus-the-king will return with the first of two references to the period of the new moon:⁴⁸³

τοῦδ’ αὐτοῦ λυκάβαντος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ’ Ὀδυσσεύς.
 τοῦ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνός, τοῦ δ’ ἴσταμένοιο,
 οἴκαδε νοστήσει, καὶ τίσεται ὅς τις ἐκείνου
 ἐνθάδ’ ἀτιμάζει ἄλοχον καὶ φαίδιμον υἷον. (14.161-4)

Odysseus will come here in this very period:
 when one month wanes and the next waxes,
 he will return home, and he will take vengeance on whoever

⁴⁸⁰ Burkert 1983: 113; Levaniouk 2011: 146-8.

⁴⁸¹ Roisman 1990: 219 and Ahl & Roisman 1996: 168-9 point out that the word κερδοσύνη (cunning intelligence) occurs in the *Odyssey* only at 14.31 and at 4.251 where Helen says that Odysseus once entered Troy in disguise but she was nonetheless able to recognize him. Also, words derived from the base κερδ- appear “in every scene in which Odysseus is recognized through his disguise.”

⁴⁸² 14.200-10. Levaniouk 2011: 57. Like the First Cretan Lie to Athena, the Second Lie reflects Odysseus’ true past by presenting him as a participant in the Trojan War (14.235-42) (the Trojan War is also the setting for the story Odysseus tells to coax Eumaeus to give him a cloak, 14.468-506). Odysseus also claims to have survived being shipwrecked at sea, then accepted as a suppliant by a king after he was found on the shore by the king’s child (14.310-20), much like the actual events of Books 5-7.

⁴⁸³ The other occurrence is at 19.306-7.

dishonors his wife and glorious son here.

The exact meaning of *λυκάβας*, translated here as ‘period,’ is uncertain, but it has been pointed out that the succeeding verse clarifies what time period it refers to: the few dark nights between the disappearance of the old moon and the appearance of the new moon.⁴⁸⁴ Odysseus is claiming not only that the return of the king will occur, but that it is imminent. The dark, interlunar period has already begun during Odysseus’ stay in Eumaeus’ hut, as one of the night’s description as *σκοτομήνιος* – “in the dark part of the month,” “moonless,” (14.457) demonstrates. As becomes clear in the course of the poem, the festival of Apollo (which is potentially a New Year festival that restores order after a period of reversal) is fast approaching, and it coincides with the return of the moon as well as the return of the hero.⁴⁸⁵ The themes of return (to light and life) and vengeance are also present in the words *νοστήσει* (connected to *νόστος* and thus indicating a return not just home but ‘to light and life,’ according to Frame) and *τίσεται*.⁴⁸⁶

Odysseus asks that in return for this good news he be rewarded with a set of proper clothes, something which he says he needs very much, as he also did on the shores of Phaeacia.⁴⁸⁷ Odysseus later repeats to Eumaeus his desire to receive clothing in return for bearing true tidings, and hints at his desire for a cloak when they bed down for the night.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ Austin 1975: 244-6; Russo *et al.* 1992: 91-2; Levaniouk 2011: 203-5; Bakker 2013: 97-8. These scholars discuss the history of the interpretation of the word *λυκάβας*, including the ideas that it means the festival of Apollo Lyceus or Lycius, or is connected to the monthly feast of Apollo Neomenius (Apollo of the New Moon).

⁴⁸⁵ On the foreshadowing on Phaeacia of Odysseus’ return occurring during the festival of Apollo and this festival as a possible New Year festival, see ch. 3 above. The festival is explicitly mentioned at 20.156, 276-8; 21.258-9.

⁴⁸⁶ On the root **nes-* and its derivatives, including *νόστος* and *νόος*, indicating a return from darkness and death, see Frame 1978.

⁴⁸⁷ 14.152-5. Odysseus asks Eumaeus for a *χλαῖνα* and a *χιτών* (14.154), while he asks Nausicaa for a rag (*ράκος*, 6.178) or any piece of cloth (*τί που εἶλυμα σπείρων*, 6.179) she might have with her. Nausicaa ultimately gives him a *φᾶρος* and *χιτών* (6.214). On this clothing, see ch. 3.

⁴⁸⁸ 14.395-6, 468-506.

Eumaeus loans Odysseus a cloak for the night, and claims that Telemachus will give him a set of clothes when he returns.⁴⁸⁹ Telemachus indeed promises Odysseus a set of clothing, as does Penelope.⁴⁹⁰ Proper attire, as on Phaeacia, marks a person as a member of the community rather than a social outcast; Odysseus' repeated desire for clothes and his hosts' repeated promise to give them anticipates his return but also indicates that it is not yet complete. In fact, Odysseus specifically says to Eumaeus that he will not receive the clothing until the king returns, and outright rejects Penelope's offer of creature comforts like cloaks.⁴⁹¹ As Levaniouk points out, Odysseus refuses to doff his disguise and don the outfit that reveals his true identity and status until he has made his full return: when the suitors lie dead, Odysseus will finally wear a φᾶρος and χιτῶν.⁴⁹²

Telemachus and the μνήμ' Ἑλένης χειρῶν

Unbeknownst to Odysseus, as he expresses his need for proper clothes to Eumaeus, Telemachus is simultaneously receiving a gift of clothing. However, Telemachus is given not a cloak and tunic for him to wear, but a πέπλος (woman's robe) intended for his future bride to wear on their wedding day.⁴⁹³ As mentioned above in chapter 2, Kardulias points out that the only other adult male who touches any sort of female garb is Odysseus when he wears Ino-

⁴⁸⁹ 14.508-17. Eumaeus also tells Odysseus that Penelope promises to give him clothing if he speaks the truth about her absent husband (17.556-8).

⁴⁹⁰ 16.79 (Telemachus) = 17.550 (Penelope). Penelope also tells the suitors she will give clothing (along with other gifts) to the beggar (Odysseus) should he succeed in stringing the bow (21.338-42).

⁴⁹¹ 14.155; 19.336ff.

⁴⁹² Levaniouk 2011: 110-7 discusses clothing as a marker of status and Odysseus' need yet rejection of clothing when disguised as a beggar in greater detail. Odysseus finally wears proper clothing at 23.155, after his bath and before Athena rejuvenates him in the crafting simile discussed above in ch. 3.

⁴⁹³ 15.104-10, 123-30.

Leucothea's κρήδεμνον around his chest.⁴⁹⁴ Both of the Laertids thus receive feminine clothing from a woman at the end of their respective journeys from home. Just as Ino-Leucothea's κρήδεμνον has an initiatory flavor for Odysseus, Helen's πέπλος anticipates the marriage that will be the climax of Telemachus' initiation into adulthood. The wedding gown perhaps also looks forward to Odysseus and Penelope's (re)marriage, which will be the culmination of Odysseus' (re)initiation and return.⁴⁹⁵

In addition, Helen's gift is one of two objects in the *Odyssey* called a μνήμα: related to the verb μιμνήσκειν, a μνήμα is something which serves to remind or help one remember, generally translated as 'memento' or 'keepsake.'⁴⁹⁶ In Homer, the word μνήμα is used only of objects, and all of the objects exchange hands. All the μνήματα in the Homeric poems are also remembrances of people, though not necessarily the people giving the objects.⁴⁹⁷ This is, however, the case for both of the μνήματα in the *Odyssey*: the πέπλος is a memento of Helen, and Odysseus' bow is a memento of his guest-friend Iphitus.⁴⁹⁸ While the bow is specifically a μνήμα 'of [Odysseus'] dear friend,' the πέπλος is indirectly a μνήμα of Helen by being a μνήμ' Ἑλένης χειρῶν – "memento of Helen's hands," (15.126). The craftsman of the bow is not stated

⁴⁹⁴ Kardulias 2001: 39.

⁴⁹⁵ Note that Penelope is mentioned in the gift-giving scene: Helen instructs Telemachus to give the wedding πέπλος to his mother for safekeeping until he marries (15.127-8). See Felson-Rubin 1994: 83 on Helen's πέπλος as a "talismán for fidelity" for Telemachus' future wife.

⁴⁹⁶ There can be overlap between μνήματα and σήματα: an object which functions as a μνήμα of another object also has the potential to function as a σῆμα. However, the terms are not identical. A μνήμα in Homer denotes a relationship between itself and another object in the form of memorialization, whereas a σῆμα connotes meaning and, as Nagy 1990a: ch. 8 explains, requires a cognitive leap, νόησις, to understand.

⁴⁹⁷ In the *Odyssey*: the robe Helen gives to Telemachus is a μνήμ' Ἑλένης χειρῶν, (15.126) and the bow Iphitus gave to Odysseus in guest-friendship is a μνήμα ξείνοιο φίλοιο, (21.40). In the *Iliad*: the bowl (φιάλη) Achilles gives to Nestor during the funeral games of Patroclus is a Πατρόκλοιο τάφου μνήμ', (23.619). On Homeric μνήματα, see Crielaard 2003: 53-7; Grethlein 2008: 35-45; Mueller 2010: 9ff.

⁴⁹⁸ On the bow as a μνήμα of Iphitus, see below.

in the *Odyssey* and in all likelihood was not Iphitus considering that it was passed down to him from his father Eurytus, but the πέπλος was made by Helen herself (κάμεν αὐτή, 15.105).⁴⁹⁹ By calling the πέπλος a μνήμα “of Helen’s hands,” the poet draws attention to that fact that it is her handiwork, and also draws attention to the way that this particular μνήμα functions: it is a remembrance of the fact that Helen gave it as well as the fact that Helen made it.⁵⁰⁰ An object can act as a μνήμα of a person (in the terms of psychological essentialism, be imbued with the essence of a person) simply by being given as a gift by that person, but as discussed above there is a special connection between producer and product, and perhaps a correspondingly special degree to which a product can commemorate its producer (and be imbued with his or her essence).⁵⁰¹ Helen might also be preemptively establishing a guest-friendship with a woman whose identity is as yet unknown (Telemachus’ future wife), and thus staking her place in the

⁴⁹⁹ Achilles is also presumably not the craftsman of the bowl he gives to Nestor at *Il.* 23.615ff.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Helen’s handiwork in the *Iliad*: at 3.125-8 she weaves a ἱστός which depicts the contests of the Trojans and Achaeans over her and thus the subject of the poem itself. For sources on weaving as a poetic act, see ch. 2 above. On weaving as a form of communication between women more generally, see Mueller 2010: 2-8, 11.

⁵⁰¹ Mortal craftsmen in the Homeric poems who are notable solely because of the objects they crafted include Phereclus, who made the ships which brought Helen to Troy (*Il.* 5.59-64); Tuchius, who made Ajax’s shield (*Il.* 219-23); Epeius, who made the Trojan Horse (*Od.* 8.493); Polybus, who made a ball the Phaeacians toss about (*Od.* 8.372-3); Icmalius, who made the chair upon which Penelope sits during her conversation with her disguised husband (*Od.* 19.56-8). Note that none of these objects are explicitly represented as gifts. One might also compare the clothing Penelope gave to Odysseus before he left for Troy (*Od.* 19.215-60): although it is not explicitly stated that the clothing is Penelope’s handiwork, it is generally assumed to be (see Kardulias 2001: 38 and Mueller 2010: 5). Kardulias calls the clothing a “gift,” though the relationship between husband and wife differs significantly from guest-friendships. The clothing might play some role in Penelope and Odysseus’ relationship, but in the context of the poem it appears to function not to commemorate Penelope but as a σῆμα of Odysseus. For more on this clothing in particular and Odysseus’ other clothing in the *Odyssey*, see Levaniouk 2011: ch. 7.

Ithacan royal dynasty.⁵⁰² For the time being, Penelope takes the mystery woman's place and is left holding the wedding dress.

Before Telemachus returns home with Helen's memento, he, like Odysseus, stops off at Eumaeus' hut. Here, a sort of two-way, or mirrored, recognition takes place: neither father nor son has seen the other (in adulthood, at least) and yet each must recognize the other as 'son' and 'father,' respectively. Uniquely among recognition scenes with members of Odysseus' household, the recognition between Odysseus and Telemachus does not involve any (explicit) *σήματα*, since Telemachus' infancy at the time of Odysseus' departure precluded them from establishing shared signs of identity. However, it has been made clear over the course of the poem that Telemachus resembles Odysseus, and their shared resemblance might act as a *σημα* that guarantees both of their identities.⁵⁰³ Even transformed into an old beggar, Odysseus apparently looks like himself, but Athena magically rejuvenates him for his reunion with Telemachus.⁵⁰⁴ Why make Odysseus conspicuously young before Telemachus recognizes him as 'father' and he recognizes Telemachus as 'son'? Perhaps because the pair's mirrored recognitions take place through the fact that they are mirror images of one another, both

⁵⁰² Cf. the guest-friendships Helen apparently established in Egypt after the Trojan War with Polydamna (who gave her *φάρμακα*, 4.227-32) and Alcandre (who gave her a golden distaff and a silver basket with a golden rim while her husband Polybus gave gifts to Menelaus, 4.125-32). On female *ξενίη* networks in Homer, see Mueller 2010: esp. 6-8.

⁵⁰³ Athena in disguise as Mentès says that Telemachus' head and eyes are similar to Odysseus' (1.208-9); Nestor says that Telemachus speaks like Odysseus, but also says, *σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα*, which suggests a physical resemblance (3.123-5); Helen notices that Telemachus looks like Odysseus' son before his identity is revealed, and Menelaus concurs that Telemachus' feet, hands, eyes, head, and hair are similar to Odysseus' (4.141-50).

⁵⁰⁴ Penelope remarks that the beggar is the same age as Odysseus and assumes that Odysseus' hands and feet must now look like the beggar's (19.358-9); Eurycleia says she has never seen anyone with such similar build (*δέμας*), voice, and feet as Odysseus as the beggar (19.380-1); Philoitus notes the beggar's lordly appearance, and is prompted to think of Odysseus and imagine him wearing rags like the beggar (20.194, 205-6). Athena rejuvenates Odysseus at 16.172-6. On the oddity of this rejuvenation, see Ahl & Roisman 1996: 194-5.

physically and narratively. As mentioned previously, Telemachus undergoes experiences and performs activities that parallel those of Odysseus; for instance, Telemachus also goes on a journey away from his home, and he appears to take steps toward full male maturity and adulthood.⁵⁰⁵ In addition, Telemachus expresses doubt about his heredity and thus his own identity and subsequently undergoes a series of recognitions as ‘Telemachus, son of Odysseus’ that culminates on his return home in his recognition by Odysseus himself as his son.⁵⁰⁶ The father-son reunion marks the apogee of Telemachus’ series of recognitions, while Odysseus’ series of recognitions (and return home) is at its perigee: the recognition by Telemachus is Odysseus’ first. This recognition also requires no shared signs and appears to occur through the similarity of Odysseus and Telemachus’ bodies, while object-σήματα are extensions of the body perhaps in a way similar to non-related household members being more distant or extended from an individual than blood relatives.⁵⁰⁷ At the moment that Odysseus and Telemachus’ bodies are mirror images of one another, Odysseus validates the recognition of Telemachus’ identity performed previously by others and Telemachus passes the torch to Odysseus to be recognized in what might be called a ‘role-transference.’ This is the term Bynum uses in his discussion of similar father-son relationships in Serbocroatian oral epic poetry, and he describes Odysseus and

⁵⁰⁵ For sources on Telemachus and his role in the *Odyssey*, see ch. 2 above.

⁵⁰⁶ When Athena-disguised-as-Mentes asks Telemachus if he is Odysseus’ son in Book 1, Telemachus responds by saying that while his mother claims he is, he does not know (nor does anyone know who his father is) (215-6), but note that after being recognized as ‘Telemachus, son of Odysseus’ by Mentes, Nestor, Helen, and Menelaus, Telemachus asserts his lineage without hesitation to ‘the beggar’ in Eumaeus’ hut (16.117-20). On Telemachus being recognized as Telemachus, see Murnaghan 1987: 35-7. Roisman 1994: 13ff. discusses Telemachus’ desire to be recognized as an adult by Odysseus.

⁵⁰⁷ All of Odysseus’ other recognitions require at least one σῆμα, though the σῆμα that proves his identity to Eumaeus, Philoitius, and Eurycleia is his scar and thus part of his body. Note also that Laertes is a blood relative like Telemachus and yet Odysseus provides him with multiple σήματα (his scar and a description of all the trees in the orchard Laertes planted for him). On the sign-less recognition between Odysseus and Telemachus, see also Goldhill 1991: 9-12.

Telemachus as “doubles of each other.”⁵⁰⁸ While other scholars have noticed and commented on the way that Odysseus and Telemachus double each other or substitute for one another, Murnaghan makes a particularly piquant observation: the pair act more like brothers than father-and-son when they face the suitors as comrades-in-arms, and later when they express competitiveness with one another before the aborted battle with the suitors’ families.⁵⁰⁹ Perhaps when Odysseus is rejuvenated so that he and his son appear like *agemates* and brothers, Telemachus starts to assume the roles of ‘youth’ and ‘younger brother’ that have been associated with Odysseus. Ultimately, Odysseus will assert himself as king and no longer hunger for vengeance, but Telemachus, like a younger brother who is paradoxically ‘lesser-among-equals,’ experiences maturation and yet does not achieve the level of authority that Odysseus does. Telemachus might be poised to be Odysseus’ successor not only to his lineage and throne, but also to (some of) his cultic and poetic roles.

Argus and Odysseus as dog

Telemachus is not the only one who might act as a kind of double or substitute of Odysseus. The next recognition of Odysseus is by his old dog Argus, who lies on a pile of dung

⁵⁰⁸ Bynum 1968: 1297, 1302. On ‘role-transference’ and the transference of identity between Odysseus and Telemachus, see also Petropoulos 2011: 9ff., 135ff. See also de Jong 2001: 389 on the ‘role reversal’ simile at 16.17-21, which draws the father and son together by underscoring the similarity between their experiences.

⁵⁰⁹ In addition to the sources cited above on Telemachus, Eckert 1963: 52 says Odysseus and Telemachus are a doubled father-son hero similar to those in Near Eastern myth, and van Nortwick 2009: 75 says that Telemachus acts as a “surrogate for Odysseus” beginning in Book 17 (similarly, Felson-Rubin 1994: 84 says that Telemachus fathers Odysseus when he is in disguise as a beggar and depends like a son on Telemachus). Murnaghan 2002: 151-2 points out that Odysseus obliquely proposes the role of brother to Telemachus when he questions him (still in disguise) in Eumaeus’ hut about whether he has brothers, since a man can trust his brothers to fight beside him when a great quarrel (*veĩkoç*) arises (16.95-8). At 24.506-15, Odysseus admonishes Telemachus not to disgrace his *γένοç* in the anticipated battle, Telemachus asserts that he will not, and Laertes rejoices at their *ἀρετῆç περί δῆριν*.

before the doors of the house.⁵¹⁰ Like the recognition with Telemachus, there are no σήματα involved in Argus' recognition of his long-absent master. It is not made explicitly clear in the text how Argus is able to instantly recognize Odysseus despite his disguise; he perhaps recognizes Odysseus' voice, since he lifts up his head and ears upon hearing Eumaeus and Odysseus conversing, though (apparently) no humans recognize Odysseus' voice.⁵¹¹ Mueller argues that the emphasis on Argus' excellent tracking skills indicates that he recognized Odysseus by his scent.⁵¹² In any case, Argus' recognition of Odysseus demonstrates that despite his transformation and disguise, Odysseus is still himself and still recognizable as himself: there is some essential quality (or qualities) that is both indissociable from Odysseus and definitively identifies him as Odysseus.⁵¹³ Argus' ability to recognize Odysseus without any material, object-σήματα makes the dog himself a (material, object) σῆμα of Odysseus' identity: he proves that the hero is Odysseus, and the same Odysseus who left Ithaca 20 years ago. Argus is also, as

⁵¹⁰ 17.290-327. Argus' recognition of Odysseus is notably absent from Murnaghan 1987. See Gainsford 2003: 57 on the Argus scene as a recognition, but not a formal recognition type-scene by his definition. De Jong 2001: 421 analyzes the Argus scene as a recognition.

⁵¹¹ 17.290-1. Note that Eurycleia does claim that the beggar's voice is similar to Odysseus' at 19.380-1.

⁵¹² Mueller 2016b: 9-10. Eumaeus praises Argus' skill at tracking prey at 17.316-7, though the dog's sense of smell is not overtly mentioned. Mueller acknowledges the lack of direct evidence, but points out that in Xenophon's *Cynegeticus* hunting dogs are valued for "having good noses" (εὐρινες, 4.2). Mueller also notes that Eumaeus' dogs are able to perceive something humans cannot: at Athena's arrival at Eumaeus' hut, the dogs see her and cower away, although she goes unnoticed by Telemachus (*Od.* 16.157-63). Note that Hermes, god of boundary crossing, can pass undetected by dogs (such as at *Hymn to Hermes* 145), and is invoked as Hermes Κυνάγχις (Dog-Throttler) at Hipponax fr. 3a.1 West and Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 23.2 (see Franco 2014: 116, 231n.181). Ahl & Roisman 1996: 199 also note that it was Hermes who slew the thousand-eyed 'watchdog' Argus.

⁵¹³ Mueller 2016b: 12-3 says that a god's disguise transforms his body and voice (see, e.g., Athena's assumption of Mentor's form (δέμας) and voice (αὐδή) at 2.268, 401; 22.206; 24.503, 548), but Odysseus "keeps his own body and voice. His disguise consists instead of the accelerated aging of his other attributes. Rather than taking on another's features, he remains on the spectrum of self-sameness." Mueller also says that the traces of his former self that remain despite his disguise are "ineradicable" (4). Odysseus is steadfastly himself.

we shall see, a multivalent poetic σῆμα that communicates a multitude of information about Odysseus, and mirrors his master much as Telemachus mirrors his father.

The Argus episode has received scholarly attention since antiquity, with ancient scholars tending to focus on Argus' loyalty while modern scholars tend to focus on the pathos of the scene.⁵¹⁴ Numerous scholars have also remarked on the similarities between Odysseus and Argus, as well as Odysseus' household: in his disguise as a filthy beggar Odysseus resembles the tick-infested dog, and when he enters his house Odysseus will be abused and neglected just as Argus has been, as has his parasite-infested house.⁵¹⁵ Both Odysseus and Argus are noble creatures who deserve respect, yet each has been forced to inhabit the margins of society by the hubristic suitors and unfaithful servants.⁵¹⁶ Argus has also been compared to other 'dogs' in the *Odyssey* that stand before the house: Beck shows that the gold and silver dogs at Alcinous' palace, the wolves and lions at Circe's house, and the farm dogs at Eumaeus' hut all reflect their masters and households, and he argues that the recurring similarity between dogs, masters, and houses prepares the audience to perceive such a similarity between Argus, Odysseus, and Odysseus' house.⁵¹⁷ Thus we are prepared to understand through Argus and Odysseus' current states that the house is similarly in a state of disorder and a reversal from the norm. However, the Argus episode also anticipates the restoration of order so frequently foreshadowed in the lead

⁵¹⁴ Scodel 2005: 402. See Edwards 1987: 54 for an example of modern scholarship that emphasizes the pathos of the episode. For the history of the reception of the Argus scene, see Most 1991.

⁵¹⁵ Rose 1979: 218, 220; Beck 1991: 159ff.; Goldhill 1991: 12-3; Thalmann 1992: 96; Race 1993: 100; Reece 1993: 170; Segal 1994: 56-7; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 199; de Jong 2001: 421; Köhnken 2003: 391-3; Scodel 2005: 402.

⁵¹⁶ Goldhill 1991: 12-3; Thalmann 1992: 96.

⁵¹⁷ Beck 1991, who also points out that at Hesiod's *Theogony* 310-2, 764-73 Cerberus is of a kind with his master and home (159). See also Rose 1979: 218; Goldhill 1988: 12-3 (who also discusses Scylla as one of the 'dogs') and 1991: 12; van Nortwick 2009: 69. Reece 1993: 14-5, 169-70 calls this the "motif of the guard-dog at the door" and considers it a common element in the traditional arrival/hospitality scene.

up to the festival of Apollo and the master's return. Franco insightfully compares the Argus scene to the fate Priam imagines for himself in the *Iliad*: the Trojan king envisions being slain by an enemy in his home, then torn apart by the dogs he himself raised on the threshold of the house.⁵¹⁸ Priam's dogs are specifically called θυραωρούς – “door-watching,” i.e., “watchdogs,” but once the house has been penetrated by those who are hostile to it, the dogs engage in a monstrous reversal by eating their own master on the threshold they were meant to protect from such disorder.⁵¹⁹ Franco points out that Priam's dogs fail to recognize him, and their failure results in the disintegration of Priam's identity and social dignity and prefigures the complete annihilation of his house and the Trojan people as a whole.⁵²⁰ In contrast, Argus' recognition of Odysseus confirms his identity and anticipates the restoration of proper order in the house and Odysseus' resumption of his status as master of the house and king of the Ithacans.

Rose notes how similar Argus and Odysseus were in their youth, and these youthful similarities demonstrate the normal order which will return after the period of reversal.⁵²¹ Like Odysseus, Argus once possessed exceptional speed and strength, and he retains his keen intelligence to the last.⁵²² Rose points out that just as Argus mirrors Odysseus with his heroic, and specifically Odyssean, ἀρεταί (good qualities, martial virtues), so Odysseus mirrors Argus

⁵¹⁸ Franco 2014: 65-6. *Il.* 22.66-71.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. the failure of recognition and endogenous anthropophagy of the dogs, and thus horrific reversal, in the Actaeon myth.

⁵²⁰ Note that mutilation by dogs (or birds) after death rather than receiving a proper funeral denies the perpetuation of identity, on which see Vernant 1991.

⁵²¹ Rose 1979: 222ff.

⁵²² Eumaeus tells the disguised Odysseus that if Argus were such as he was when Odysseus left for Troy, the beggar would soon see the dog's “speed and strength” (ταχυτήτα καὶ ἀλκίην) (note also that the name Ἄργος is derived from ἀργός – ‘swift’ or ‘bright’), and claims that no prey could escape Argus because he was so “clever” (περιήδη) at tracking (17.313-7). On Odysseus' associations with great speed, see ch. 3 above. Rose 1979: 223 cites Odysseus' wrestling match with Ajax at *Il.* 23.707-37 as well as the “abundant evidence of the *Odyssey*” for Odysseus' strength. Rose assumes Odysseus' preeminent intelligence needs little proof, as do I.

when he is turned “imagistically into an excellent dog” in two instances I discuss further below. For Ahl and Roisman, Odysseus’ metaphorical transformation is more immediate: when Argus, who is a “kind of substitute for the absent hero,” dies after recognizing Odysseus, the “watchdog is replaced by his master.”⁵²³ Ahl and Roisman compare Argus and Odysseus’ relationship to the interchangeability of hound and hero in Irish epic tradition.⁵²⁴ They point out that in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Cú Chulainn takes the place of the smith Culann’s dog after slaying it in self-defense, and thus receives his name: “the dog of Culann.” Indeed, Cú Chulainn was previously called Sétanta, but when he slays Culann’s hound he assumes his adult name and identity: McCone explains that Cú Chulainn incorporates the martial virtues the great dog embodies when he overcomes it, and when he replaces the hound he fulfills its function as Culann’s guard dog but also becomes the guardian of his people.⁵²⁵ Although Odysseus does not actively slay Argus, like the Irish hero he will become the hunter and guardian that the dog was upon its death.

Odysseus is further associated with dogs, both hunters and guardians, in two subsequent episodes mentioned briefly above.⁵²⁶ The first of these is the description of the special pin

⁵²³ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 198-201. Argus dies at 17.326-7.

⁵²⁴ Ahl & Roisman 1996: 199-200 also discuss an interesting Irish legal practice: if a dog was present on a property long enough to relieve itself, it made a territorial claim to the property on behalf of its master, which required legal recompense. Cow dung was then used to ritually separate the dog and master from their claim to the property. Ahl & Roisman suggest that the dung heap on which Argus lies might be a ritual attempt to alienate the dog, and by extension his absent master, from the estate. See also Ahl 1989: 193.

⁵²⁵ McCone 1984: 11. Larsen 2003: 177 points out that Cú Chulainn is frequently referred to as ‘Hound’ in the *Táin*, particularly in a martial context. He also notes that Cú Chulainn’s arming scene is immediately subsequent to his naming scene.

⁵²⁶ Some scholars draw a sharp distinction between hunting dogs and guard dogs in Homer, such as Scodel 2005: 403-4, who associates the guard dog with the ornamental table dog (τραπεζεύς), which is a mark of conspicuous decadence and associated with the consumptive, rather than productive, suitors (Priam’s dogs, which are θυραωρούς, are also τραπεζῆας at *Il.* 22.69). Levaniouk 2011: 44 contrasts the hunting dog Argus with the mother dog (which she calls a “guardian”) to which Odysseus is compared in a simile at *Od.* 20.14-6. However, many scholars do not separate hunters and guardians: Franco 2014: 24 groups hunting dogs and guard dogs

Penelope gave to Odysseus when he left for Troy: a hunting dog grasps and strangles a fawn which struggles to escape.⁵²⁷ Penelope also gave Odysseus a particular set of clothes whose description, along with that of the pin, serves as σήματ'...ἔμπεδα – “sure signs,” (19.250) that the ‘beggar’ once entertained Odysseus – or perhaps is Odysseus himself.⁵²⁸ Through the σῆμα of the pin, Odysseus, who was identified with and by the hunting dog Argus, is again identified with a hunting dog whose successful hunt foreshadows Odysseus’ ‘hunt’ of the suitors.⁵²⁹ The suitors are also identified with fawns when Menelaus says that Odysseus will destroy them like a lion who returns to his lair to find fawns bedded down in it and destroys them, a simile which is repeated by Telemachus.⁵³⁰ Odysseus wears a deerskin in his disguise as a beggar in an instance of reversal from his true status; at his epiphany, he will strip off his rags and rather than being a deer hunted by dogs like Actaeon, he will resume his identity as a hunter and a dog who hunts down deer, i.e., the suitors.⁵³¹ At the moment that Odysseus finally reaches the threshold of his house he is recognized (and thus identified) by and ultimately replaces his hunting dog, and he is

together as working dogs, contrasted with display dogs. (Franco 2014: 96 also discusses the Erinyes as ‘dogs’ who hunt down their prey, as well as guard the sanctity of oaths and all sacred, inviolable boundaries.) Argus is definitively a hunting dog, but Mainoldi 1984: 115 compares him to other guard dogs, and Reece 1993: 169-70 considers Argus a guard dog and an example of the guard dog motif. Wilson 2006: 191 calls Argus the guardian of the house as well as the guardian of the domestic moral order. When Odysseus asks Eumaeus whether Argus was a swift runner or like table dogs which men keep ἀγλαΐης δ’ ἔνεκεν at 17.308-10, he contrasts hunting dogs with table dogs. If Argus is a guard dog, Odysseus’ (feigned) uncertainty suggests that guard dogs could be either hunters or table dogs. I argue that Argus and Odysseus have connections to both hunting dogs and guard dogs.

⁵²⁷ 19.225-31.

⁵²⁸ Levaniouk 2011: 136 argues that Odysseus’ extraordinarily detailed recollection of the pin and clothes implies “surely not that the Cretan stranger has a photographic memory, but that he is none other than the former wearer of the pin.” See also Harsh 1950: 11 and Vlahos 2011: 43.

⁵²⁹ Rose 1979: 224-5; Goldhill 1988: 17; Beck 1991: 163; Reece 1993: 170n.8; Levaniouk 2011: 138-9.

⁵³⁰ 4.335-40 = 17.126-31.

⁵³¹ On Odysseus’ deerskin and comparison with the Actaeon myth, see above. Note that in the *Iliad* Odysseus and Diomedes are compared to dogs pursuing a deer or hare when they chase down Dolon (10.360-4).

later recognized by the scar he received during an initiatory hunt.⁵³² Hunting, an activity which defines an adult man and his role in the world, played a major role in the formation of Odysseus' identity and is a similarly important part of how he regains it through his connection with the hunting dog.⁵³³

Odysseus is also connected to the guard dog beyond his replacement of Argus. As Odysseus sees his unfaithful maidservants leave the house to sleep with the suitors, his heart barks within him like a dog who stands over her puppies and barks at a man she does not recognize.⁵³⁴ Like a mother dog with puppies, Odysseus is keen to protect his family from any threat. However, just as he controlled his desire for immediate vengeance in the Cyclops' cave, Odysseus controls his impulse to strike forthwith by reminding himself that he endured something *κύντερον* – “worse, more outrageous” but literally “more dog,” (20.18) when the Cyclops ate his companions, who in Book 9 are compared to puppies.⁵³⁵ In addition to demonstrating Odysseus' fervor to guard his family, the simile also connects him to a complex nexus of associations between mother dogs, maternal rage, and a burning desire for vengeance.

These interconnections are well exemplified by Hecuba, who in Euripides' *Hecuba* satisfies her rage for vengeance for the murder of her son Polydorus by blinding his murderer Polymestor and murdering his children in turn. Polymestor prophesies that Hecuba will become

⁵³² On Odysseus' scar, see below.

⁵³³ Goldhill 1988: 14. On the first hunt as a process of initiation into the world of adult males, see Vidal-Naquet 1986: ch. 5. On the erotic connotations of the pin, see Felson-Rubin 1994: 30, 58.

⁵³⁴ 20.13-6. On the mother dog simile, see Rose 1979: 226ff.; Goldhill 1988: 16; Beck 1991: 163-4; Reece 1993: 170n.8; Levaniouk 2011: 44ff.; Franco 2014: 108ff. On the maidservants, in particular Melanthe, as ‘dogs’ who are traitors to the house, see Rose 1979: 228; Beck 1991: 164-5; Franco 2014: 99-101.

⁵³⁵ 20.17-21; 9.289. On *κύντερος* and *κύντατος* as “more dog” and “most dog,” see Franco 2014: 118-20.

a “dog with a fiery gaze,” and her tomb will be a sign for sailors called the σῆμα of the dog.⁵³⁶ Franco explains that guard dogs in antiquity typically had bright, shining eyes with which they penetrated the darkness of the night, and a dog’s aggression manifested “as flashes of flame that shot from the eyes.”⁵³⁷ She connects to the fieriness of dogs’ eyes the Dog Star, which is the brightest of the stars and brings with it the scorching heat of summer that parches the land and withers the crops. The Dog Star is sometimes represented as the catasterism of Orion’s dog Sirius, but also appears as the catasterism of the dog Maira who was so grief-stricken at the murder of her master Icarus that the gods transformed her into the Dog Star so that she could return each year to wreak vengeance with her blazing heat.⁵³⁸ Interestingly, in Lycophron Hecuba is metamorphosed into not any dog, but Maira.⁵³⁹ In an anonymous lyric fragment, it is the Erinyes who turn Hecuba into a dog “with gleaming eyes” (χαροπᾶν).⁵⁴⁰ The Erinyes are likewise ‘dogs’ who act as guardians of δίκη and sacred boundaries, and as hunters that incessantly hound their victims in their zeal to exact vengeance.⁵⁴¹ Such are the Erinyes in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*: they are called upon by a mother, Clytemnestra, to hunt down and take

⁵³⁶ On Hecuba’s connections to vengeful mother dogs, see Franco 2014: 108-16. Levaniouk 2011: 45 cites other ancient sources for the Hecuba story and notes that Odysseus always has some role in her fate. Euripides, *Hecuba* 1265: κύων γενήσῃ πύρσ’ ἔχουσα δέργματα and 1273: κυνὸς ταλαίνης σῆμα, ναυτίλοις τέκμαρ.

⁵³⁷ Franco 2014: 112-3.

⁵³⁸ Franco 2014: 113, with ancient sources on Maira at 229n.162.

⁵³⁹ Lycophron, *Alexandra* 334 (Franco 2014: 229n.163).

⁵⁴⁰ Franco 2014: 112. *PMG* 965.

⁵⁴¹ Franco 2014: 94-6. Franco also notes the numerous similarities between the Erinyes and Hecate, who is variously φῶσφορος, φύλαξ, προθύρῃα, and προπύλαια, and who wanders cemeteries at night with a torch of infernal fire, surrounded by dogs (96, 114-5). Levaniouk 2011: 45 points out that at Lycophron, *Alexandra* 1174-7 Hecuba becomes the hound of Hecate in Hades. Franco 2014: 111, 119 notes that Demeter is invoked by her worshippers in Arcadia as Erinys at Pausanias 8.25.4, and she discusses Demeter’s maternal fury at the loss of her daughter Persephone in the *Hymn to Demeter*: her grief is κύντερον, (90) the more the other gods try to soothe her, and the terrible year of famine she induces is called κύντατον, (306). Note also Hecate’s presence in the *Hymn to Demeter* (26, 52ff.).

vengeance on her murderer (who in this case happens to be her own son, Orestes), and they are described as avenging hounds who hunt down their prey by scenting his blood.⁵⁴² Theognis likewise imagines taking revenge by becoming a dog (though not a mother dog) and drinking his enemies' blood.⁵⁴³ Just as Theognis and Odysseus both call themselves 'Aithon' to indicate that they have been separated from their homes and are burning for retribution on their return, each becomes metaphorically or imagistically a dog as part of the theme of vengeance.⁵⁴⁴ Both Theognis and Odysseus also seek revenge after returning from Hades, though only Odysseus is able to journey to the underworld yet return home alive; whether as flesh-and-blood man or spectral hound, each is like the infernal Erinyes in his dogged hunt for vengeance.⁵⁴⁵

Odysseus on the threshold

In addition to the associations with vengeance, it is notable that Odysseus is compared to a mother dog when he is near the threshold (ἐν προδόμῳ – “in the forecourt,” 20.1): he is located

⁵⁴² *Choephoroi* 924, 1054; *Eumenides* 131-2, 230, 244-53. On the Erinyes as dogs in the *Oresteia*, see Heath 1999: 33; Wilson 2006: 191, 198; Franco 2014: 94-5.

⁵⁴³ Theognis 345-50. Levaniouk 2011: 43-4 and Franco 2014: 221n.75 both link Theognis' use of the dog metaphor to represent vampirism and desire for vengeance with the Erinyes.

⁵⁴⁴ Theognis calls himself 'Aithon' at 1209. On the connections between Theognis and Odysseus and their shared concern with return and vengeance, see Nagy 1985 and Levaniouk 2011: ch. 2. Levaniouk also connects the simile in which Odysseus is compared to a roasting sausage as he tosses and turns in his bed (20.23-9, immediately after he convinces his barking heart to endure) to the theme of burning for revenge (47-8).

⁵⁴⁵ Franco 2014: 93, 220n.69 provides examples of dogs executing justice or avenging their masters. Wilson 2006: 191 cites an interesting case of a dog receiving post mortem retribution: Euripides supposedly defended some Thracians after they sacrificed and ate a Molossian hound belonging to a hunter named Archelaus. Some time later, Euripides happened to be in Thrace when Archelaus set his hounds loose for the hunt. These hunting dogs, which were the offspring of the dog the Thracians killed, came upon Euripides and tore him apart, thus taking their revenge (see also Compton 2006: ch. 13). In the Irish *Aided Cheltchair Maic Uthechair*, Celtchar must make recompense for murdering Bláí Briugu by ridding Ulster of three menaces, each of which is either a great hound or at least has canine associations, and the last of which results in Celtchar's death. According to McCone 1984: 1-2, this story “is essentially a tale of Bláí Briugu's posthumous revenge upon his murderer, Celtchar, since it is the three tasks imposed upon the latter in lieu of death or exile that bring about his ultimate destruction.”

at the natural station of a watchdog, and cannot sleep, much like the watchman at the beginning of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* who compares himself to a dog as he holds his post on the roof of the house.⁵⁴⁶ The watchman has been compared to Argus, who is likewise positioned near the threshold, προπάροιθε θυράων – “before the doors,” (17.297) of the house.⁵⁴⁷ As Argus dies, Odysseus enters his house and installs himself on the threshold in his dog's place. Reece notes that from this moment Odysseus “maintains a permanent position” at the threshold, and Segal points out that it is from his seat at the threshold that Odysseus shoots the trick shot with his bow, after which he strips off his rags and leaps on the threshold to begin the slaughter of the suitors.⁵⁴⁸ The recognition between Odysseus and Argus, and Argus' subsequent replacement by Odysseus, also coincide with Odysseus' recognition of his house: when Odysseus and Eumaeus first reach the house, just prior to the Argus scene, Odysseus stops and remarks on the house and its architecture:

Εὔμαι', ἧ μάλα δὴ τάδε δώματα κάλ' Ὀδυσῆος,
 ρεῖα δ' ἀρίγνωτ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν πολλοῖσιν ιδέσθαι.
 ἐξ ἑτέρων ἕτερ' ἐστίν, ἐπήσκηται δέ οἱ αὐλή
 τοίχῳ καὶ θριγκοῖσι, θύραι δ' εὐερκέες εἰσὶ
 δικλίδες· οὐκ ἂν τίς μιν ἀνὴρ ὑπεροπλίσσαιτο. (17.264-8)

Eumaeus, surely this is the very beautiful house of Odysseus,

⁵⁴⁶ Odysseus is described as awake and unable to sleep at 20.5-6, 24ff. Athena then visits him and, after reassuring him of his imminent victory, puts him to sleep at 20.30-54. The watchman is like a dog on the roof at *Agamemnon* 3, and mentions his sleeplessness at 12-7.

⁵⁴⁷ Harriott 1982: 16 compares the watchman of the *Agamemnon* to Argus.

⁵⁴⁸ Reece 1993: 15-6 discusses ‘waiting at the threshold’ as a motif of the Homeric hospitality scene, and says that when Demeter steps upon the threshold of the house of Celeus and fills the doorway with divine light in the *Hymn to Demeter* (188-9), her presence “takes on the form of a divine epiphany.” On Odysseus' self-revelation as a divine epiphany and the connections between his return and the return of the goddess Demeter, see above. Segal 1994: 80-1 cites important appearances of the threshold at 17.337-40, 20.258, 21.124, 21.420-3 (Odysseus shoots the trick shot), 22.2 (Odysseus leaps on the threshold), 22.203-4, and 23.86-9, as well as thresholds besides that of Odysseus' house. Goldhill 1988: 11 also remarks that “Odysseus will still have to fight the other beggar, Irus, for the privilege of his place at the threshold,” more on which below.

and it is easily recognized and seen among many.
 It has one building after another, and its courtyard is completed
 with a wall and copings, and the doors are well-secured and
 double. No man could *hyperoplissaito* it.

The exact meaning of Odysseus' speech here is not entirely clear, due in part to the *hapax legomenon* ὑπεροπλίσσαιτο. Commentators have been divided on the verb's meaning since antiquity, some favoring 'overpower' (from ὄπλον, 'weapon') while others prefer 'scorn' (from ὑπέροπλος, 'arrogant'). The commentary by Russo *et al.* suggests the translation "surpass in adornment or equipment" (from ὀπλίξειν, 'to adorn or equip finely').⁵⁴⁹ The latter two translations emphasize the craftsmanship of the house, and are supported by the attested variant to εὐερκέες, εὐεργέες, 'well-built.' However, εὐερκέες is found in the majority of the manuscripts, and complements the translation 'overpower' by likewise accentuating the house's defensibility (due to its fine craftsmanship). Austin argues for 'overpower,' as his translation of the line makes clear: "This is not a house a man could storm from without."⁵⁵⁰ Austin claims that this speech foreshadows the fact that the house will be "stormed from within," and points out that the "landscape formula," in which a luxurious house is described in lavish detail, is strikingly truncated here: there are no precious metals adorning Odysseus' house, nor is it high-roofed or shining.⁵⁵¹ He also points out that the dung heap by the doors on which Argus lies is less than flattering for a palace, and interprets its presence as a sign of the household's disorder and decay. For Austin, the description of the house's beautiful and solid construction suggests

⁵⁴⁹ Russo *et al.* 1992: 32 also prefers εὐεργέες to εὐερκέες in line 267 and argues that Odysseus' speech is meant to stress the good craftsmanship and construction of the house.

⁵⁵⁰ See Austin 1975: 168-71 on the house of Odysseus. It appears that Lateiner 1995: 197 also translates ὑπεροπλίσσαιτο as "could overpower," though neither he nor Austin addresses the obscurity of the word.

⁵⁵¹ Cf. Alcinous' palace at 7.81-132. Menelaus' palace is similarly gleaming at 4.43-6. Goldhill 1988: 10 also compares the Ithacan landscape and palace to the other places and residences Odysseus has seen in his travels, and calls Odysseus' description of his house a "disguised recognition."

the order of the past, but its conspicuous brevity and the dung heap in place of a fruitful orchard indicate the chaos of the present.

Whether or not Odysseus comments on the fortification of the house and foreshadows his victory as the result of a cunning infiltration rather than outright aggression, the quality of the house's craftsmanship is unquestionably present in his speech. There is also an emphasis on recognition in this passage and the following: after saying that the house is "easily recognized" (ἀρίγνωτ'), Odysseus says that he recognizes (γινώσκω, 17.269) that men are feasting inside and Eumaeus replies that Odysseus has easily recognized (ῥεῖ' ἔγνωσ, 17.273) 'it' (either the house or the state of the house).⁵⁵² The repeated recognition words perhaps anticipate the imminent recognition of Odysseus by Argus, but this scene is also a recognition by a craftsman of his craftsmanship.⁵⁵³ After the intervening Argus episode, Odysseus finally enters the house after Eumaeus:

ἀγχίμολον δὲ μετ' αὐτὸν ἐδύσετο δώματ' Ὀδυσσεύς,
 πτωχῶ λευγαλέῳ ἐναλίγκιος ἠδὲ γέροντι,
 σκηπτόμενος· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ περὶ χροῖ εἵματα ἔστο.
 ἴζε δ' ἐπὶ μελίνου οὐδοῦ ἔντοσθε θυράων,
 κλινάμενος σταθμῶ κυπαρισσίνῳ, ὃν ποτε τέκτων
 ξέσσειν ἐπισταμένως καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν. (17.336-41)

Closely following after him [Eumaeus], Odysseus entered the house, resembling a miserable beggar and an old man, leaning on his σκηπτρον. And he wore wretched clothes on his body. And he sat down on the ashen threshold, inside the doors, leaning on a cypress-wood column, which its carpenter once

⁵⁵² Cf. the recognitions of (σήματα that prove the identity of) Odysseus by Eurycleia (ἔγνω/οὐλήν, 19.392-3 and τὴν [οὐλήν]... γνῶ, 19.467-8), Penelope (σήματ' ἀναγνούση, 23.206), and Laertes (σήματ' ἀναγνόντος, 24.346).

⁵⁵³ Note that Argus does not 'recognize' ((ἀνα)γινώσκειν) Odysseus, he "perceived that Odysseus was nearby" (ἐνόησεν Ὀδυσσεά ἐγγὺς ἔοντα, 17.301). On recognition versus perception and Argus' perception of Odysseus, see Mueller 2016b: 2-4, 10-1. As noted above, Mueller argues that Argus identifies Odysseus by his scent; could this olfaction-based recognition be hinted at when Odysseus says he 'recognizes' (γινώσκω) that men are feasting in the house ἐπεὶ κνίση μὲν ἀνήνοθεν, (17.270)?

expertly planed and made straight to a chalk line.

This passage reminds the audience to ‘look’ at Odysseus by reiterating his appearance as a beggar and an old man who wears foul clothing and leans on a σκῆπτρον. As mentioned above in chapter 2, this is the last time Odysseus leans on his σκῆπτρον, which is simultaneously an accoutrement of his feigned lowliness and a latent symbol of his status as king, and the act of leaning is transferred and thus linked to the column at the threshold.⁵⁵⁴ The construction of this column is described with the repeated, formulaic phrase “[I/he] made [it] straight to a chalk line,” which Rood argues is connected to poetry via the similarity of plucking a string to create a chalk line to plucking the strings of a lyre.⁵⁵⁵ I argue that, in addition, the phrase cues the audience to understand the object in question as the handiwork of Odysseus, and prepares us to receive information about Odysseus’ identity.

The phrase appears soon after Odysseus’ introduction to the poem in the extended description of the construction of his boat, discussed at length in chapter 2, which allows him to begin his homeward trajectory.⁵⁵⁶ It is used again in Odysseus’ description of his construction of his olive wood bed which brings his journeys within the poem to an end by proving his identity and finalizing his return to his home and his former life.⁵⁵⁷ In addition to these passages in which Odysseus is explicitly the craftsman of the objects, the phrase is used twice in reference to the craftsmanship of Odysseus’ house: once in the passage quoted above in reference to the

⁵⁵⁴ See ch. 2 on the connotations of the σκῆπτρον. While the passage quoted above is the last time that Odysseus is explicitly described as leaning on his σκῆπτρον, the shade of Amphimedon recalls for the shade of Agamemnon how Odysseus appeared as a beggar leaning on a σκῆπτρον when he first entered his house at 24.157-8 (repeated *verbatim* at 17.202-3, and nearly *verbatim* at 17.337-8).

⁵⁵⁵ Rood 2008: 39-40, on which see ch. 2 above.

⁵⁵⁶ 5.245.

⁵⁵⁷ 23.197. See below on the σῆμα of the bed.

column at the threshold, and once in reference to the threshold to Odysseus' storeroom.⁵⁵⁸ In each of these instances τέκτων is the subject of the verb ἴθονεν rather than Odysseus unambiguously, but from the description of his bed it is clear that Odysseus was at least one of the carpenters of his house, and the fact that each description of the house's craftsmanship occurs in a context of important information about Odysseus and includes a formulaic phrase used elsewhere of Odysseus' crafting suggests that Odysseus himself is the carpenter.⁵⁵⁹ Referring to him as "(a/the) carpenter" in these passages emphasizes his identity as a craftsman and the intimacy of his connection to his house, which, like his canine alter ego Argus, has been neglected and disrespected in his absence.

Like his dog and his house, Odysseus first returns in a bedraggled state, but one which belies his true identity. Reece claims that sitting on the threshold is a "posture that symbolizes submission and helplessness," but as the σκῆπτρον is a beggar's walking stick that hints at the king's staff, Odysseus' posture on the threshold includes contact with the column which might hint at his status as master of the house, despite his current appearance as outsider and

⁵⁵⁸ The threshold to the storeroom is "straight to a chalk line" at 21.44, and discussed further below.

⁵⁵⁹ Odysseus describes how he not only built the bed, but also built the entire room around it, including the roof and doors, at 23.192-4. Also, the bed serves as a σῆμα of Odysseus' identity for Penelope because no one else (beside Actoris) has ever seen it (23.226-9), so if other carpenters were involved in the construction of the house they apparently had no participation in the construction of the bedroom. Austin 1975: 170 also points out that the formulaic phrase "[I/he] made [it] straight to a chalk line" is used of Odysseus' boat and bed, and the two household thresholds, and assumes that Odysseus is the carpenter, saying, "when Odysseus leans against that carefully finished cypress column, the description signals that the carpenter has returned." However, Austin does not discuss one further occurrence of the formula: when Telemachus sets up the axes for the bow contest, he makes the trench for the axes "straight to a chalk line" (21.121). This scene emphasizes Telemachus' excellent crafting skills, like his father's, and is once again intimately connected to Odysseus' identity: Odysseus' victory in the bow contest proves his identity, and leads to his victory over the suitors.

suppliant.⁵⁶⁰ In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra greets Agamemnon on his return from Troy by calling him the τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα... ὑψηλῆς στέγης/στῦλον ποδῆρη – “dog of the fold...sure-footed pillar of the lofty roof,” (896-8). Although Clytemnestra's intent is deadly, her praise must be believable to deceive Agamemnon and lure him to the house and his fate.⁵⁶¹ It thus appears that the master of the house ought to be both its guard dog and roof-supporting pillar.⁵⁶² This passage of the *Agamemnon* perhaps alludes to the *Odyssey*, since it marks the beginning of Agamemnon's νόστος and reentrance into his household and community, which is a tragic reversal of Odysseus' victory, and Clytemnestra continues on to call Agamemnon γῆν φανεῖσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα – “land appearing to sailors beyond hope,” (899), much as Odysseus appears like land to shipwrecked sailors for Penelope at their reunion.⁵⁶³ Just as the lord of the house is called its ‘dog’ and ‘pillar’ in the *Agamemnon*, Odysseus replaces his house's literal dog then subsequently leans against the actual supporting pillar which he crafted himself.

⁵⁶⁰ Reece 1993: 16. See Wohl 1993: 23 and ch. 2 above on the σταθμός as a (phallic) representation of man, who, like the pillar of a house, supports the social and cosmic structures with the cooperation of woman (who stands steadfastly by the σταθμός/man).

⁵⁶¹ However, Wilson 2006: 191n.17 calls Clytemnestra's speech to Agamemnon a “potentially offensive piece of flattery,” and it should be noted that Agamemnon at first rebuffs Clytemnestra's laudations, though it is unclear whether this is due to their excessive length (*Ag.* 915-6) or the specifics of her speech, or if it the suggestion that he walk on the tapestries that chafes him (921-2). Agamemnon also says that praise should come from others (916-7), so perhaps it is not the praise he finds unsuitable but the source.

⁵⁶² As noted above, there is a similarity between masters, their dogs, and their houses throughout the *Odyssey* (see Beck 1991), but there might be an especial affinity between dogs and σταθμοί at the threshold. As Odysseus approaches the house of Alcinoos, he marvels at the golden doors and silver σταθμοί set in a bronze threshold, which are guarded by gold and silver (and immortal and ageless) dogs (7.81-94). While Alcinoos' guard dogs and σταθμοί/entryway are literally made from the same materials, Odysseus' guard dog and σταθμοί/entryway are of a piece in the sense that they are both subject to aging and deterioration: the dog is a flesh and blood mortal, and the σταθμός and threshold are made of cypress and ash wood respectively rather than ‘ageless’ metals.

⁵⁶³ *Od.* 23.233-40.

The act assimilates Odysseus to the object, making the craftsman metaphorically into his craft and *vice versa*.⁵⁶⁴

Irus and the *φαρμακός* ritual

In the process of establishing himself as the ‘sure-footed pillar’ of the house on the threshold, Odysseus must square off against a true beggar who lays claim to the suppliant’s spot: Irus.⁵⁶⁵ Odysseus’ bout with Irus is often interpreted as a prefiguration of his impending battle with the suitors, but of particular interest here is Odysseus’ transference of his beggarly accoutrements to Irus after his swift victory.⁵⁶⁶ Odysseus drags the defeated Irus out to the courtyard, props him up, and *σκῆπτρον δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε χειρὶ* – “put his *σκῆπτρον* into [Irus’] hand,” (18.103). After a few choice words, Odysseus *ἀμφ’ ὤμοισιν ἀεικέα βάλλετο πήρην,/πυκνὰ ῥωγαλέην· ἐν δὲ στρόφος ἦεν ἀορτήρ* – “threw around his shoulders the ugly wallet, riddled with holes; and it hung on a baldrick made of twisted rope,” (18.108-9). It is unclear whose shoulders now bear the tattered wallet, but Russo *et al.* and Steiner argue that Odysseus has transferred both his *σκῆπτρον* and his wallet to Irus.⁵⁶⁷ Russo *et al.* considers Odysseus’ bestowal of his beggarly accoutrements on Irus as a symbolic step away from his lowly position and toward “full

⁵⁶⁴ Note that in the recurring formulaic phrase in which Penelope holds her veil before her face when in the presence of the suitors, she stands *παρὰ σταθμὸν τέγεος πύκα ποιητοῖο* (1.333 = 16.415 = 18.209 = 21.64; cf. 17.96, where Penelope sits *παρὰ σταθμὸν μεγάροιο*, and note that Nausicaa stands by the column in her father’s palace with the same formulaic line at 8.458), which suggests her fidelity to her husband if we consider the roof-supporting columns of the house to be Odysseus’ handiwork and therefore extensions of him. See also ch. 2 above.

⁵⁶⁵ Irus demands that Odysseus leave the forecourt (*εἶκε, γέρον, προθύρου*, 18.10), and threatens to drag him out. Odysseus replies that there is room enough for both of them on the threshold (*οὐδὸς δ’ ἀμφοτέρους ὄδε χεῖσεται*, 18.17) and threatens Irus in turn. Irus again threatens Odysseus (18.26-31) and their verbal jousting is described as taking place *προπάροιθε θυράων ὑψηλάων/οὐδοῦ ἐπι ξεστοῦ*, (18.32-3).

⁵⁶⁶ Steiner 2009: 72-4 provides a survey of readings of the Irus episode with relevant bibliography.

⁵⁶⁷ Russo *et al.* 1992: 53; Steiner 2009: 85-6 also notes that it is possible Odysseus restores Irus’ own wallet to him, but this wallet’s identical description to the wallet Athena provides Odysseus at 13.437-8 might suggest that it is one and the same.

recovery of his true identity,” while Steiner offers a more complex interpretation of the entire Irus episode: she suggests that Irus is a kind of *φαρμακός* or famine demon whose ritual expulsion cleanses the community of pollution or scarcity and promotes agricultural prosperity.⁵⁶⁸

As mentioned above, Odysseus’ identity as king and appearance as a beggar make him reminiscent of the mythic *φαρμακοί* who are kings dressed as lowly individuals, and who sacrifice themselves in order to save their people.⁵⁶⁹ In ritual practice, rather than requiring the death or exile of the king (or other valuable member of society), a scapegoat would take his place.⁵⁷⁰ This scapegoat *φαρμακός* is of lowly status but well dressed and fed before he is driven out of the community. In each case the *φαρμακός* is drawn from the margins of society, the king from the top and the beggar (or slave or criminal) from the bottom, and is subject to reversal prior to expulsion. In the *Odyssey* it is Odysseus who undergoes the reversal of social transvestism, and he is also threatened with expulsion from the house, but Irus ultimately acts as his scapegoat: Irus is expelled in Odysseus’ place and receives his ambi-valent *σκῆπτρον* and wallet, objects which make him both lowly beggar fit to play the *φαρμακός* and *φαρμακός* who is surrogate for the king.⁵⁷¹ Also, Odysseus hints in his pre-bout threats to Irus that he will not return to the house again, but ultimately drags him only to the courtyard; here Odysseus orders

⁵⁶⁸ Steiner 2009: 76ff. explains the various ways that Irus resembles a *φαρμακός* or famine demon (low social status as a beggar, insatiable appetite, his descriptive and derogatory name and renaming by the suitors, exchange of invective speeches with Odysseus, and ultimate expulsion from the house).

⁵⁶⁹ King Codrus of Athens (discussed by Burkert 1979: 62-3, 65) and King Oedipus of Thebes (discussed by Vernant 1990: 125-40). On other mythic *φαρμακοί*, see Bremmer 1983: 303-7 and Compton 2006: 10-3.

⁵⁷⁰ On ritual *φαρμακοί*, see Burkert 1979: 64ff.; Bremmer 1983: 300ff.; Burkert 1985: 82-4; Compton 2006: 3-7; Steiner 2009: *passim*. For further sources on the *φαρμακός* ritual, see Compton 2006: 3n.1.

⁵⁷¹ Note Odysseus’ sarcastic command to Irus *μηδὲ σὺ γε ξείνων καὶ πτωχῶν κοίρανος εἶναι*, (18.106), mentioned in connection with the *σκῆπτρον* in ch. 2.

Irus ἐνταυθοῖ νῦν ἦσο σύας τε κύνας τ' ἀπερύκων – “now sit here and keep away the pigs and dogs,” (18.105), making him a watchdog and thus Odysseus’ surrogate in yet another capacity.⁵⁷² Steiner further points out that in later sources the expulsion of the φαρμακός is accompanied by his replacement with a parallel yet opposite figure who indicates prosperity and abundance.⁵⁷³ As Irus is cast out and takes pollution and famine with him, Odysseus returns and brings purification and plenty; Odysseus is ultimately shown to be the opposite of a lowly beggar, but at this point resembles Irus.⁵⁷⁴ Just as Irus is ravenous and consumptive (like his doubles the suitors), Odysseus is burning and ‘hungry’ for vengeance, and upon his victory over Irus he wins Irus’ seat on the threshold as well as a γαστήρ (stomach) of a goat to satisfy his own γαστήρ and exclusive access to beg at the suitors’ tables in perpetuity.⁵⁷⁵ It is also notable that the φαρμακός ritual was an annual occurrence at the Athenian Thargelia, a festival of Apollo. Vernant points out that the Thargelia also included parading and depositing the εἰρεσιώνη (an olive or laurel branch wound with wool and hung with fruits dedicated to Apollo), which “represented the

⁵⁷² Odysseus warns Irus against fighting him since Irus will undoubtedly lose, adding οὐ μὲν γὰρ τί σ' ὑποστρέψεσθαι οἶω/δεύτερον ἐς μέγαρον Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος, (18.23-4). Note that Antinous threatens Irus that in the case of a loss, he will send Irus off to the mainland (where he will be tortured and humiliated by the bogeyman King Echetus (18.83-7). See Griffin 1989: 71-2 on potential connections between Echetus and mutilation or death in agrarian rites of kingship-by-trial). Steiner 2009: 85 notes that Irus’ deposition in the courtyard is contrary to the usual requirement that the φαρμακός be driven beyond the city’s borders, and argues that Irus resembles an apotropaic talisman, which is typically located near the threshold and mirrors the malignancy it is intended to ward off. As φαρμακός/famine demon, Irus wards off scarcity, and as watchdog he wards off dogs.

⁵⁷³ Steiner 2009: 86-7 discusses the replacement of the φαρμακός in Aristophanes’ *Knights* and *Wealth*.

⁵⁷⁴ Note that the φαρμακός ritual was purificatory: “The Greeks unequivocally called this procedure ‘purification,’ *kátharsis*” (Burkert 1979: 65).

⁵⁷⁵ Steiner 2009: 88-9 cites Levaniouk’s arguments on Odysseus’ fiery hunger as αἴθων/Aithon. Antinous promises the victor of the fight his choice of two goat stomach sausages and perpetual begging privileges at the tables of the suitors at 18.44-9. On the importance and poetic complexities of the γαστήρ in the *Odyssey*, see Pucci 1987: 157-87 and Bakker 2013: ch. 8. See Levine 1982; de Jong 2001: 438 on the similarities between Irus and the suitors.

rebirth of springtime” and “consecrated the end of the old season and ushered in the young new year.”⁵⁷⁶ If it is correct to read the Irus episode as a kind of *φαρμακός* ritual, it is perhaps yet another piece of the festival of Apollo and the king’s return.⁵⁷⁷

The scar of Odysseus

The return of the king is a major theme of the ciphered, riddling conversation between Odysseus and Penelope, and many of the themes connected to return crop up in this scene.⁵⁷⁸ Odysseus hints at his kingship to Penelope by comparing her to a good king who makes his land and people prosperous in a speech that belongs to the “ruler’s truth” genre.⁵⁷⁹ In his Third Cretan Lie, Odysseus calls himself Aithon and says that he is the younger brother of Idomeneus the Cretan, thus communicating his burning hunger for vengeance.⁵⁸⁰ Odysseus’ description of

⁵⁷⁶ Vernant 1990: 129-30. See also Burkert 1979: 65ff. and Burkert 1985: 82-4 on *φαρμακοί* at the Thargelia. Note that the Thargelia occur not at the very beginning of spring but the beginning of the harvest: “the first corn is carried in procession as a boiled dish or as a form of bread, called *thargelos*” (Burkert 1985: 265).

⁵⁷⁷ For an intriguing analysis of the poet as exile and scapegoat/*φαρμακός*, see Compton 2006, esp. ch. 5 on Homer and ch. 10 on Theognis, who shares numerous similarities with Odysseus, as discussed above. Thalmann 1988: 21-6 also discusses Thersites in the *Iliad* as a scapegoat/*φαρμακός*, as well as Hephaestus. Odysseus’ connections to Hephaestus are discussed above, and it is noteworthy that it is Odysseus who verbally and physically abuses Thersites, as he does Irus, thus ejecting him from the *ἀγορή* (*Il.* 2.265-77), though Thalmann focuses on Achilles as Thersites’ tragic scapegoat double.

⁵⁷⁸ For the idea that Odysseus and Penelope are covertly communicating to one another about Odysseus’ identity in Book 19, see Harsh 1950; Vlahos 2011 (esp. 40ff.); Levaniouk 2011. I believe that Penelope recognizes her guest’s claim to be Odysseus in the course of their conversation, and decides to give him further opportunities to prove his identity more definitively. See Winkler 1990: 152 on Penelope referring to Odysseus as a *σημάντωρ*, which Winkler translates as “sign-giver.”

⁵⁷⁹ 19.107-14; cf. Odysseus’ reproach of Euryalus at 8.166-77, discussed in ch. 3. On the “ruler’s truth,” see ch. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ 19.172ff. See above on the name Aithon, Odysseus’ associations with youth, the Cretan Lies, and the theme of vengeance.

the pin likens him to an avenging dog that will hunt down the suitors.⁵⁸¹ He also explicitly prophesies his own return once again with the verses delivered earlier to Eumaeus: τοῦδ' αὐτοῦ λυκάβαντος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεύς, / τοῦ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνός, τοῦ δ' ἰσταμένοιο – “Odysseus will come here in this very period: when one month wanes and the next waxes,” (19.306-7 = 14.161-2), meaning that Odysseus will return along with the new moon, which coincides with the festival of Apollo.⁵⁸² Odysseus and Penelope’s careful verbal dance skirts direct recognition, only to be interrupted by a direct recognition: Eurycleia happens upon Odysseus’ unique scar while washing his feet.⁵⁸³ The scar is an object by my definition in the sense that it is a visible and tangible (per Eurycleia’s tactile perception of it) alteration of Odysseus’ body: a mass of scar tissue has a material existence, like the rest of the body.⁵⁸⁴ Although not explicitly called a σῆμα at this point, the scar is an excellent example of the way that an object in poetry can be employed to communicate information, such as the two interconnected narratives cued by the scar which both figure profoundly into Odysseus’ identity.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸¹ 19.225-31, discussed above. Odysseus also describes the special clothing Penelope gave him when he left for Troy (19.225-6, 232-5), which Levaniouk 2011: 120ff. argues has connotations of initiation to manhood, marriage, and renewal after a period of dissolution and reversal.

⁵⁸² On the meaning and significance of these lines, see above.

⁵⁸³ 19.392ff.

⁵⁸⁴ On Eurycleia’s recognition of the scar via the sense of touch rather than sight, see Mueller 2016b: 5ff. Clayton 2004: 76 calls the scar a “literal reweaving” of Odysseus’ skin, and compares it to the φᾶρος Penelope weaves, unweaves, and reweaves.

⁵⁸⁵ Odysseus calls the scar a σῆμα ἀριφραδέξ when he uses it to prove his identity to Eumaeus and Philoitus (21.217-20), and when Laertes asks for a σῆμά... ἀριφραδέξ of his identity, Odysseus shows his father his scar and names the trees in the orchard, which Laertes recognizes as σήματ'... ἔμπεδα, (24.328-46). On the narratives prompted by the scar, see Auerbach 1953: ch. 1 who famously argues that Homeric poetry is entirely devoid of temporal perspective, so that there is only ‘illuminated’ foreground without any background. For critiques of Auerbach, see de Jong 1985; Lynn-George 1988: 2-27; de Jong 1999; Köhnken 2009 (originally published in 1976).

The first of these narratives recounts Odysseus' birth and subsequent naming by his grandfather Autolycus, who promises to give him gifts when he has reached adolescence (ὀππὸτ' ἄν ἠβήσας, 19.410) and visits his maternal kin on Parnassus. The second narrative recounts this very occasion: the adolescent Odysseus accompanies his grandfather and uncles on a boar hunt during which he receives his identifying scar from a boar, then successfully kills this boar. Dimock points out that an ancient commentator glosses ἠβήσας – “reached adolescence, grown up” with ὀδυσσάμενος, meaning not that the verbs are synonymous, but that for Odysseus, growing up entails ‘odysseusing,’ enacting his birth name.⁵⁸⁶ Odysseus' name is the subject of much scholarly activity, since it is unclear whether it should be interpreted in the active or passive sense of the verb ὀδύσασθαι, which indicates hatred, anger, or pain.⁵⁸⁷ It has been suggested that understanding the verb in the reciprocal middle voice allows us to properly understand Odysseus both as the man who suffers and the man who causes suffering – Trouble, as Dimock elegantly dubs him.⁵⁸⁸ Through the boar hunt, Odysseus lives up to his name: he both receives pain in the form of a thigh wound destined to become a thigh scar, and inflicts pain when he slays his adversary in turn.⁵⁸⁹ By this act of ‘odysseusing,’ he attains young manhood and becomes specifically Odysseus. As I noted above in chapter 2, in slaying the boar Odysseus becomes a man (ἄνδρα, 1.1) as well as the particular man Odysseus (ἄνδρα...πολύτροπον, ὃς κτλ.). The scar is the material product of his self-enacting act, and Felson-Rubin and Sale compare it to Heracles' lion skin, which is likewise a material trophy commemorating a youthful

⁵⁸⁶ Dimock 1956: 52.

⁵⁸⁷ In addition to Dimock 1956, see Stanford 1952; Austin 1972; Clay 1983: 54-68; Peradotto 1990; Russo 1993: 52-3, 55-6.

⁵⁸⁸ On the middle voice in the debate over Odysseus' name as active or passive, see Peradotto 1990: 129-34. On Odysseus as Trouble, see Dimock 1956: 57.

⁵⁸⁹ On the exchange of pain with the boar, see Dimock 1956: 55; Peradotto 1990: 145; Russo 1993: 55-6.

hunt and victory that is worn on the body, though the skin is external to Heracles' own skin.⁵⁹⁰

The scar might also be connected to Odysseus' name and identity as a fulfillment and material version of his name if there is a punning hint of the word οὐλή, 'scar' in (non-Homeric) variants of the name Odysseus like Oulixeus or Olyseus, whence Latin Ulixes.⁵⁹¹

The hunt at which Odysseus receives his scar and becomes Odysseus has long been appreciated for its initiatory flavor.⁵⁹² The beast at the center of Odysseus' hunt, the boar, is also recognized as the animal *par excellence* to prove a young hunter's manhood: highly aggressive and thus valorous in battle, the boar is the animal double of the hero who hunts it, and his partner in the equivalence formed between hunter and hunted.⁵⁹³ The boar is particularly connected to Odysseus, not only through the hunt and scar, but also in their shared ruthlessness and ability to lurk in hiding before bursting out of their camouflage.⁵⁹⁴ As discussed above, when he first reaches Phaeacia Odysseus beds down in a leafy lair that is described with verses nearly identical

⁵⁹⁰ Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983: 160 note that "Heracles hunts the Cithaeronian lion at age 18, perhaps the right age for initiation (Apoll. 2.4.9-10)."

⁵⁹¹ On possible resonances of the word οὐλή in Odysseus, see Clay 1983: 59n.10; Peradotto 1990: 146.

⁵⁹² See, e.g., Bremmer 1978: 10-1, 15-6; Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1981: 138-9; Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983: 141-6; Thalmann 1992: 113; Russo 1993: 52; Segal 1994: 6-7.

⁵⁹³ Russo 1993: 57-8; Davies 2001: 4-6.

⁵⁹⁴ Levaniouk 2011: 177 *et passim* in ch. 10. Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983: 145 argue that "through contact" an animal could transmit its powers to a novice, adding that "a scar conveys to its receiver some of the feral powers of the beast who delivered the wound." Perhaps Odysseus also becomes Odysseus through the hunt because the boar transfers its essence to him via the physical contact which leaves the memorial mark. Jamison 1999: 265 also asserts that the "fury of the boar was literally incorporated into the body" of Odysseus when he received his scar, and compares the transference of the boar's fury to the wearer of boar-hide sandals in the Indic Rājasūya, a ritual for the consecration of a king. Jamison thus considers the scar a "mark of kingship" and a sign of Odysseus' identity as a king (see 266-7 on the Vedic myth of the kingly god Indra shooting a boar with bow and arrow). Note also that Odysseus is compared to a boar in a simile at *Il.* 11.411-20, and in the Doloneia wears a boar tusk helmet which he receives from Meriones and whose genealogy of ownership can (maybe not so) coincidentally be traced back to a theft by Autolycus (*Il.* 10.260-71) (see Clay 1983: 74-89; Davies 2001: 6; Levaniouk 2011: 172-5). See Hatto 1957: 155-60 on depictions of boar on helmets (and crests) for defensive protection in ancient Germanic sources.

to those describing to the lair of the boar on Parnassus, and like the boar Odysseus will effectively burst out of his disguise when he strips off his rags and slaughters the suitors.⁵⁹⁵ The hunt prefigured Odysseus' participation in heroic battle at Troy, and perhaps is recalled at this point in the narrative to prefigure his battle with the suitors, which is likewise a step toward full identification as Odysseus. As he was as an adolescent on Parnassus, Odysseus at this point in the poem is once again in a marginal and (literally) liminal state and cross-dressed in terms of social class like an initiate commonly does in terms of gender.⁵⁹⁶ Marginality and ambiguity for the initiate lead to integration and defined social roles in adulthood, and boar hunts in Greek and other Indo-European myth seem to suggest either proper initiatory behavior or failure, particularly concerning sexuality.⁵⁹⁷ The boar has been noted for its especial virility, which it can pass on to its hunter double, but also the frisson of danger in its method of attacking by goring up toward the groin of a human pursuer.⁵⁹⁸ Odysseus receives from such an attack a scar on his thigh that makes him a man; Adonis dies by a boar tusk wound to the thigh, and instead of

⁵⁹⁵ Compare 5.478-80 to 19.440-2. On the connection between the two passages, see Russo 1993; Levaniouk 2011: 178-80.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Odysseus donning Ino-Leucothea's veil in Book 5, discussed above and at Kardulias 2001: 39ff. as an act of initiatory transvestism.

⁵⁹⁷ Davies 2001: 1-2 provides a survey of Indo-European narratives (informed by Hatto 1946: 355-6 (*et passim* on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*) and 1966: 35ff.) in which a boar hunt leads either directly or indirectly to a hero's death and features (often illicit) sexual passion, including the 11th c. Persian romance *Wīs and Râmîn*, the Irish and Scottish folktale *Diarmuid and Gráinne*, Siegfried's death in the *Nibelungenlied*, and the old Provençal *Daurel et Beton* and related *chansons de gestes*. Davies also notes the link between the boar and illicit sex in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan und Isold* (8). See also Levaniouk 2011: 185-6. Greek sources include the story of Meleager and the Calydonian boar (on which see Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983 and 1984; Davies 2001: 2; Levaniouk 2011: 181, 186-8, all of whom provide ancient literary sources and scholarly references) and Thrasylus' murder of Tlepolemus during a boar hunt and subsequent pursuit of Tlepolemus' widow (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.1-15) (on which see Davies 2001: 6; Levaniouk 2011: 184).

⁵⁹⁸ Hatto 1946: 354 and 1966: 37; Davies 2001: 4-5; Levaniouk 2011: 183.

becoming a man is emasculated.⁵⁹⁹ Meleager successfully kills the boar he hunts, but Felson-Rubin and Sale point out that he improperly mixes with the hunt, the realm of the virgin goddess Artemis, the courtship of Atalanta, and ultimately dies.⁶⁰⁰ Odysseus performs a successful hunt, and only afterward courts and marries Penelope. The tale of the boar hunt is told in the *Odyssey* after Odysseus has covertly hinted at his identity to Penelope, and once the interrupting digression is over Penelope immediately turns to the post-hunt step in maturation: marriage.⁶⁰¹

The bow of Odysseus

Upon returning from the digression on the scar to the main narrative, Penelope tells Odysseus about her dream in which an eagle kills her pet geese and claims to be her husband returned.⁶⁰² Levaniouk convincingly argues that a bride's dream before her wedding or before meeting her husband is a traditional element, and Penelope's self-conscious and prophetic performance of her dream-song for Odysseus taps into the tradition and cues Odysseus to confirm its veracity, which he does both by verifying the dream's prophecy and later fulfilling it.⁶⁰³ Penelope next says that there are two sets of gates through which dreams pass, one made of horn for dreams which come true and the other made of ivory for dreams which go unfulfilled.⁶⁰⁴ After expressing doubt yet desire that the dream came from the gates of horn, Penelope suddenly

⁵⁹⁹ Bion, *Epitaph* 8-13. Cf. the myths of Attis, who in some versions dies by emasculating himself, and in the Lydian version is killed by a boar (Pausanias 7.17.8, 10-12), as well as the death of Meleager's uncle Ancaeus by being gored in the groin by the boar (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.392-400). See Davies 2001: 5; Levaniouk 2011: 183-4.

⁶⁰⁰ Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983 and 1984. Note that Atalanta is not present in every version of the Calydonian boar hunt, nor is Meleager's love for her explicit when she is present. See, e.g., Most 1983 in response to Felson-Rubin & Sale 1983.

⁶⁰¹ Levaniouk 2011: 189, who comes to the same conclusion, adds that the association of manhood, virility, and access to women with boar hunts also points to the resumption of Odysseus and Penelope's marriage.

⁶⁰² 19.535-50.

⁶⁰³ Levaniouk 2011: ch. 13, with sources on other interpretations of the dream at 231n.3. Odysseus confirms the dream-eagle's words at 19.555-8.

⁶⁰⁴ 19.562-7.

announces to her guest that she intends to hold a bow contest to determine her husband.⁶⁰⁵ The scholarship on why Penelope makes this decision at this particular point is vast, but suffice it to say the contest (ἄεθλος) is undoubtedly (pre)nuptial: Penelope says that the contest is for the suitors and that she will leave her “wedded home” (δῶμα κουρίδιον, 19.579-80 = 21.77-8) and follow whoever can accomplish the feat the contest entails.⁶⁰⁶ This feat is the stringing of a special bow followed by an extraordinary trick shot in which the participant must send an arrow through a row of twelve axes.⁶⁰⁷ The contest has its precedent in a shooting trick Odysseus used to perform:

...νῦν γὰρ καταθήσω ἄεθλον,
 τοὺς πελέκεας, τοὺς κεῖνος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐοῖσιν
 ἴστασχ' ἐξείης, δρυόχους ὥς, δώδεκα πάντας·
 στὰς δ' ὅ γε πολλὸν ἄνευθε διαρρίπτασκεν οἴστων. (19.572-5)

For now I will set up as a contest
 the axes, those which that man [Odysseus] used to set up in his house
 in a row, like blocks holding up the frame of a ship under construction, twelve altogether.
 And he used to stand very far off and shoot an arrow through them.

The fact that Odysseus' peculiar pastime provides the basis for the contest connects him specifically to the activity, as does the comparison of the axes' configuration to δρυόχοι used in the construction of ships, another activity particularly associated with Odysseus among Homeric

⁶⁰⁵ 19.568-81.

⁶⁰⁶ On Penelope's decision to hold the bow contest, see, e.g., Harsh 1950: 13, 17; Amory 1963: 102ff.; Thornton 1970: 96-103; Combellack 1973: 33-40 and 1983; Austin 1975: 229-35; Stewart 1976: 120ff.; Russo 1982: 10-1; Marquardt 1985: 41; Murnaghan 1987: 133-9; Felson-Rubin 1987: esp. 73-4 and 1994: 16-7, 33; Winkler 1990: 154-5; Katz 1991: esp. 94-5, 100, 103, 106-7, 109, 111-2, 117-8, 147; Russo *et al.* 1992: 104-5; Thalmann 1992: 114-5; Foley 1995: esp. 97-104; Helleman 1995: 239, 249-50; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 237-8; Scodel 2001: 321-4; Heitman 2005: 3-4, 8; Levaniouk 2011: ch. 14; Vlahos 2011: 52-3. Penelope describes the contest to Odysseus at 19.576-81 (and again to the suitors at 21.73-9).

⁶⁰⁷ The trick shot is probably fantastical and thus beyond definitive reconstruction, but see Russo *et al.* 1992: 137-47 for a thorough discussion of the possibilities, as well as Russo 2004: 95-7.

heroes.⁶⁰⁸ Penelope does not explicitly say here that the contest must be performed with Odysseus' bow, though the fact that stringing the bow is part of the contest suggests that the object is unusual. Odysseus seems to acknowledge that the bow for the contest is special when he calls it τόδε τόξον ἐῦξοον – “this well-polished bow,” (19.586), which recalls Penelope's description of the dream gates ξεστῶν κεράων – “of polished horns,” (19.566).⁶⁰⁹ We later learn that Odysseus' bow, frequently called ἐῦξοος, is likewise made of horn.⁶¹⁰

This detail of the bow's construction has prompted some scholars to speculate about the form and function of the bow using literary and archaeological evidence on other bows in antiquity, but others interpret the bow of horn in tandem with the dream gates of horn.⁶¹¹ The gates of ivory and horn are a long-standing crux in Homeric scholarship; scholars are convinced of their meaningfulness, but disagree over their meaning. A vast number of interpretations have been suggested, from a connection between ivory, teeth, and (deceptive) speech and between

⁶⁰⁸ Craftsmanship is referenced again when Telemachus digs a trench for the axes καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν, (21.121), on which see below.

⁶⁰⁹ Note the frequent use of verbs of planing/smoothing/polishing (ξεῖν, ἀμφιξεῖν) in tandem with the formulaic phrase καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν, (5.245, 17.341, 21.44, 23.196).

⁶¹⁰ When Odysseus calls the bow τόδε τόξον ἐῦξοον, he might be using a typical description for any great bow: in the *Iliad*, Pandarus' bow, which is also made of horn, is called ἐῦξοον, (4.105), as is Helenus' bow (13.594), though it is not explicitly described as made of horn. Also, when Odysseus boasts of his prowess at archery to the Phaeacians, he claims he knows well how to handle a τόξον...ἐῦξοον, (*Od.* 8.215) and continues on to explain his excellence with the bow on the battlefield. However, as I discuss below, I believe this is a reference to Odysseus' special bow used for the contest, and it is notable how frequently this bow is called ἐῦξοος (in addition to 19.586, at 21.92, 281, 286, 326, 336, and 22.71). Perhaps at 19.586 Odysseus is indicating that he is familiar with the bow in question. ‘Aithon,’ or anyone else generally knowledgeable about Odysseus, might know of the bow because it is an important and public piece of his identity. It is also possible that Odysseus is hinting through his familiarity with the bow that he is Odysseus himself, just as he will later prove himself Odysseus through familiarity with the bow. We learn definitely that Odysseus' bow is made of horn at 21.395.

⁶¹¹ Lorimer 1950: 276-7 discusses the different types of bows that are known from antiquity, and surveys the bow in Homer at 289-305. McLeod 1984: 204-6 and Sutherland 2001: 113 analyze Odysseus' bow (concluding that it is composite, reflexed, and backstrung) and discuss the history of such bows in antiquity. See Haller 2009: 411n.58 for more sources on ancient bows.

horn, the cornea of the eye, and (indisputable) sight common in antiquity, to Amory's psychological reading of ivory as connected to Penelope and her passive and intuitive thought process in contrast to Odysseus, connected to horn, who is active and consciously knowledgeable.⁶¹² Several recent readings of this passage, while still at odds over what the ivory gates signify, are unified in their belief that the gates of horn are connected to Odysseus' bow of horn.⁶¹³ Haller and Vlahos argue that Penelope chooses to represent dreams which are accomplished as passing through gates of horn because she is covertly communicating to the beggar, who has obliquely claimed that he is Odysseus in his conversation with her, that he can simultaneously fulfill her dream and prove his identity with his bow: the bow is a weapon with which he can slaughter the suitors, and it is an instrument with which he can demonstrate the special activity it turns out only he can perform.⁶¹⁴ The bow contest is not just a bride contest, but an identity test, as well.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹² For surveys and sources on the various ancient and modern interpretations of the gates of ivory and horn, see Rozokoki 2001: 5; DeSmidt 2006: n.2; Haller 2009: 398, 404-5; Vlahos 2011: 50-1. For Amory's reading, see Amory 1966: esp. 49-57. See Russo 2002 for other mythological gates which might have influenced the Odyssean dream gates. Another common observation made on the dream gate passage is the punning wordplay which links ἐλέφαντος with ἐλεφαίρονται and κέραων with κραίνουσι (and ἀκράαντα). For more on this passage, see Loudon 1995: 39-41.

⁶¹³ E.g., DeSmidt 2006: 288-9 connects the ivory gates to the tusk of the boar which wounded Odysseus in his adolescence; Haller 2009: 406ff. agrees with the ancient interpretation that ivory indicates teeth and thus deceptive speech; Vlahos 2011: 49 argues that ivory refers to the sword, which in Homer and other ancient Greek poetry is sometimes kept in an ivory scabbard.

⁶¹⁴ Haller 2009; Vlahos 2011: 49ff. Winkler 1990: 153-5 and Latacz 1992: 83-5 also believe that with the dream Penelope is hinting to Odysseus that she wishes for him to kill the suitors and how he might go about this task, but neither connects the bow of horn to the gates of horn.

⁶¹⁵ Schein 2002: 88n.6 argues that Odysseus' bow (and Achilles' spear (see *Il.* 16.140-4)) is an instance of the common folk motif of an object that only one man can wield. He also notes that both Odysseus' bow and Achilles' spear are used by their respective masters for vengeance. Cf. de Jong 2001: 508, who believes that stringing and shooting the bow are (theoretically) not activities exclusive to Odysseus.

Odysseus' bow is connected to his identity in numerous different ways.⁶¹⁶ When Penelope goes to fetch the bow at the beginning of Book 21, there is a brief description of the storeroom of the house and its contents before a digression on the origins of the bow interrupts the narrative – or is sandwiched between descriptions of the storeroom like the bow is stashed away within the room.⁶¹⁷ We learn through this digression that Odysseus received the bow as a gift from Iphitus, the son of Eurytus, while they were both in Messene. Odysseus was in Messene on an embassy to retrieve stolen sheep on behalf of the community, sent by his father and the other Ithacan elders. The expedition occurred *παιδνὸς ἐόν* – “when he was a boy,” (21.21), and Schein calls the public errand “a kind of ritual of initiation into manhood” similar to the boar hunt on Parnassus.⁶¹⁸ Schein points out that on each of these initiatory journeys Odysseus returned home with valuables (from Messene, the bow, which is treated as a *κειμήλιον* (treasure), and (presumably) the lost sheep, and from Parnassus, *δῶρα* (gifts) given by Autolycus and his sons), as well as a signifier of his heroic adulthood (from Messene, the bow, and from Parnassus, the boar scar) with which he establishes his identity as a youth and reestablishes his identity on his return home from the Trojan War.⁶¹⁹ On his trip to Messene Odysseus also demonstrates his ability to perform the rituals of hospitality and guest-friendship required of a

⁶¹⁶ Because of the bow's potential mobility via gift exchange, Murnaghan 1987: 116 claims that it “is not associated specifically with Odysseus,” but her position is uncommon. Cf., e.g., Segal 1994: 54, who says the bow “is not simply an instrument, a necessary means for winning a coveted prize, but a part of his human past and of a life he is about to reclaim.” Lateiner 1995: 197-8 calls the bow the most significant object in the poem, and goes so far as to term it Odysseus' “objectual correlate.”

⁶¹⁷ Penelope goes to the storeroom where Odysseus' treasures (*κειμήλια*), including the bow, are kept: 21.5-12; digression on the history of Odysseus' bow: 21.13-41; Penelope proceeds to open the storeroom and retrieve the bow: 21.42ff.

⁶¹⁸ Schein 2002: 98-9. Cf. Austin 1975: 230 on the bow contest as “an enactment of a ritual from Odysseus' own life, a paradigmatic act as the digression on the scar is a paradigmatic tale.”

⁶¹⁹ Autolycus and his sons give Odysseus gifts at 19.460.

good king: in exchange for the bow, Odysseus gives Iphitus a sword and a spear.⁶²⁰ However, the two never fully realize the guest-friendship begun on their respective journeys. Iphitus went to Messene in search of his missing mares and their offspring, but while a guest in the house of Heracles he was killed by his host, who kept Iphitus' horses for himself.

Iphitus was the son of Eurytus, who as we recall from Book 8 Odysseus paired with Heracles as the two greatest archers of the previous generation of heroes.⁶²¹ In Book 8 we also learn from Odysseus that Eurytus and Heracles hubristically tried to compete with the gods in archery; the former challenged Apollo himself, and as a result Apollo killed him.⁶²² This brief description of Eurytus' death has drawn significant scholarly interest because it differs from the more prevalent version of the Eurytus myth. In a non-extant epic poem called the *Sack of Oichalia*, Heracles destroys the city of Oichalia and kills its king Eurytus, most likely in response to a major slight on Eurytus' part: according to other literary and archaeological sources, Heracles competes in an archery contest for the hand of Eurytus' daughter Iole and wins the contest, but is denied his prize. The sack of Oichalia is Heracles' response to being denied what he is rightfully due.⁶²³ The discrepancy between Eurytus' death in the *Odyssey* and in the *Sack of Oichalia* has prompted Schein to suggest that the poet of the former was simultaneously

⁶²⁰ Telemachus also forms a guest-friend relationship with Nestor's son Peisistratus on his first journey away from home (see 15.195-7 and Schein 2002: 99), and accumulates some *κειμήλια* of his own. Note that Odysseus and Iphitus met when they were both the guests of Ortilochus (21.15-6), and Telemachus and Peisistratus are hosted by Ortilochus' son Diocles on their journey (15.186-8, almost immediately before Telemachus and Peisistratus are confirmed as *ξείνοι*).

⁶²¹ 8.223-4, mentioned above in ch. 3.

⁶²² 8.225-8.

⁶²³ For sources on the sack of Oichalia myth, see Gantz 1993: 434-7, 457-8. On reconstructing the *Sack of Oichalia*, see Burkert 1973. On the varying versions of the Eurytus myth and the *Odyssey*, see Krischer 1992: 20-1; Crissy 1997: 46-8; Schein 2002: 94-5. Andersen 2012: 143-4 claims that Eurytus' alternate death "is just ignored and does not come into the picture" in the *Odyssey*.

alluding to and denying the version of the latter poem as a kind of competitive power play.⁶²⁴ Whatever the poetic program of the Odyssean bard, we find that Odysseus' bow formerly belonged to a man who either arrogantly challenged Apollo and paid for his hubris with his life, or who refused to honor Heracles' victory in a bow contest and in turn was killed by him, depending on the version of the myth the audience assumes.⁶²⁵ Also potentially problematic is Heracles' presence in the story of the bow's origins: from his appearances in Books 8 and 11, we know that Heracles and Odysseus both excel in archery and are both doers of θέσκελα ἔργα – “wondrous deeds,” (11.374, 610).⁶²⁶

Some scholars believe that Heracles and Odysseus are once again similar in Book 21, to disturbing effect: Odysseus' slaughter of the suitors could be interpreted as the murder of his 'guests' at the table.⁶²⁷ However, others argue that Heracles and Odysseus are specifically contrasted with one another.⁶²⁸ Schein's suggestion about the poetic agenda of the *Odyssey* bard perhaps illuminates this point of academic disagreement: both the similarities and the differences between the two heroes allow Odysseus (and his poem) to engage in an agonistic relationship with the greatest hero of the previous generation (and his poems). Odysseus' comparable heroic skills and accomplishments, established in Books 8 and 11, demonstrate his ability to compete

⁶²⁴ Schein 2002: 94. Cf. Martin 1989: 228-30 on the *Iliad*'s agonistic relationship with Heracles epics such as the *Sack of Oichalia*, expressed through competition between Achilles and Heracles.

⁶²⁵ Schein 2002: 95. Andersen 2012: 145-6 also acknowledges Eurytus' less than ideal demise(s), but does not consider it problematic vis-à-vis the bow's history. Rather, he argues that Eurytus' excellence with the bow makes him a suitable former owner of Odysseus' special bow.

⁶²⁶ See ch. 3 above. The speech of Heracles' εἶδωλον to Odysseus at 11.617ff. also draws comparison between the pair (see Crissy 1997: 51; Schein 2002: 91-2).

⁶²⁷ Crissy 1997: esp. 43, 45, 50-1. Schein 2002: 90-8 is more equivocal, acknowledging both similarities and differences between the two heroes, but he concludes that “the ethical contradictions in these allusions to Heracles are clear and strong.”

⁶²⁸ Clay 1983: 91-6; Danek 1998: 247-9, 403-6; Andersen 2012: 149-51.

with and match Heracles. The impious behavior of Heracles, hinted at in Book 8 and made explicit in Book 21, is in pointed contrast with Odysseus' actions and indicates the younger hero's superiority: unlike his predecessor, Odysseus upholds social institutions rather than violating them.⁶²⁹ Likewise, the previous ownership of the bow by Eurytus appears to act as a link to the past generation that allows rivalry, but does not presuppose identical behavior on the part of the subsequent owner, Odysseus.⁶³⁰ As I discuss below, Odysseus' actions are sanctioned by Apollo instead of posing a challenge to the god, and in punishing the suitors Odysseus enforces the norms of the rigid institutions of hospitality and guest-friendship which they transgress. When Odysseus went to Messene as a youth he formed what was most likely his first guest-friendship via the exchange that gave him the bow, an object which functions as a *μνήμα ξείνοιο φίλοιο* – “remembrance of a dear friend,” (21.40).⁶³¹ The bow is a memorial of the very thing, proper hospitality, it will ultimately be used to avenge and reinstate after years of violation.⁶³² It is because of the bow's function as such a *μνήμα* that it remains at home in Odysseus' storeroom.

The storeroom of Odysseus

After the story the bow ‘contains’ within it, the narrative returns to the storeroom which contains the bow. Penelope unlocks and opens the doors to the room in an extended description:

⁶²⁹ In Book 11 Heracles tells Odysseus that he was compelled by a lesser man to perform harsh labors (621-2), but it is unclear whether he labored as punishment for yet another impious deed. See Gantz 1993: 381-2 for the various catalysts of Heracles' labors.

⁶³⁰ On the bow's connection to the older generation of heroes, see Schein 2002: 95; Russo 2004: 97; Grethlein 2008: 38-9. If the behavior of a bow's owner affects the behavior of its subsequent owner, we might expect Philoctetes (if we assume he inherited Heracles' bow, as Clay 1983: 92 does) to appear transgressive in the *Odyssey*, which he does not (though his presence in the poem is so brief that very little can be said definitively about him other than that he excels at archery).

⁶³¹ On the bow as a *μνήμα*, see Crielaard 2003: 56.

⁶³² On the emphasis on good hospitality in the story of the bow's origins, see Clay 1983: 91; Murnaghan 1987: 116; Griffin 1989: 72; Reece 1993: 174-5; Segal 1994: 53-4; Schein 2002: 96; Grethlein 2008: 42-3; Andersen 2012: 141, 145.

οὐδὸν τε δρύϊνον προσεβήσετο, τὸν ποτε τέκτων
 ξέσσειν ἐπισταμένως καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθουνεν,
 ἐν δὲ σταθμοῦς ἄρσε, θύρας δ' ἐπέθηκε φαεινάς,
 αὐτίκ' ἄρ' ἢ γ' ἰμάντα θοῶς ἀπέλυσε κορώνης,
 ἐν δὲ κληῖδ' ἤκε, θυρέων δ' ἀνέκοπτεν ὀχῆας
 ἅντα τιτυσκομένη. (21.43-8)

...And [Penelope] stepped upon the wooden threshold, which its carpenter once expertly planed and made straight to a chalk line, and fitted columns on it, and put on shining doors. At once she quickly untied the bolt-strap from the handle, and thrust the key in, and knocked back the bolts of the door by shooting it straight in.

The storeroom's threshold, doors, and locking mechanism foreshadow the bow contest and slaughter of the suitors in a number of ways: the door's κορώνη (translated as 'handle') on which the bolt-strap is tied anticipates the bow's κορώνη (a notch at the tip of the bow for the string), against which an arrow is leaned between suitors' attempts during the contest.⁶³³ When Odysseus performs the marvelous trick shot to win the contest, ἤκε δ' ὄϊστόν/ἅντα τιτυσκόμενος – “he sent forth an arrow, shooting it straight,” (21.420-1) so that it travels through the axes, just as Penelope thrusts the key into the lock on the doors.⁶³⁴ Earlier, Penelope is described as holding the key χειρὶ παχείη – “with a stout hand,” (21.6), and during the slaughter of the suitors Odysseus' hand will likewise be described with the same formulaic phrase.⁶³⁵ Odysseus begins the slaughter by taking aim at Antinous: ἐπ' Αντινόω ἰθύνετο πικρὸν ὄϊστόν – “he aimed a bitter arrow straight at Antinous,” (22.8). The same verb, ἰθύνειν, appears in the formulaic phrase of crafting something straight to a chalk line (καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθουνεν), which is used in the description of the storeroom. As discussed above, I argue that this phrase indicates that Odysseus himself is the carpenter of the craft in question, and once again the phrase is used of a

⁶³³ 21.138, 165.

⁶³⁴ Hoffer 1995: 529-30; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 247.

⁶³⁵ 22.326, though Odysseus holds a sword χειρὶ παχείη, not his bow. On the phrase χειρὶ παχείη, see ch. 3 above.

threshold, to which columns are fitted (ἄρσε from ἀραρίσκειν, discussed in chapter 2). I also argue that the phrase acts as a cue that prepares the audience for important information about Odysseus' identity, and here the storeroom is rife with such information.

As mentioned above in chapter 1, the room that functions as a repository for Odysseus' treasures also functions as a model for Odysseus: the room is a place he created, a place he crafted and carved out into the world, and it holds the variety of objects he has accrued over the course of his life, particularly through his success at the kind of aggressive acquisitiveness typical of Homeric kings.⁶³⁶ The storeroom contains κειμήλια (treasures): χαλκός τε χρυσός τε πολύκιμητός τε σίδηρος – “bronze and gold and much-wrought iron,” (21.10), θυώδεα εἴματ' – “fragrant clothing,” (21.52) in chests, and the bow in its case along with a quiver full of arrows.⁶³⁷ Presumably the storeroom also contains the gifts Odysseus received from Autolycus and Autolycus' sons on Parnassus, and other objects from gift exchanges and plundering performed over the course of his life (and perhaps eventually will contain the gifts of the Phaeacians which were stashed away in the cave of the nymphs when Odysseus first reached Ithaca).⁶³⁸ All of these objects are economically valuable and contribute to Odysseus' cumulative wealth, but they are all also potential ‘repositories’ of stories and histories, as well as

⁶³⁶ On Homeric kings' treasure accumulation, from a socio-economic rather than symbolic perspective, see van Wees 1992: ch. 4, esp. 218ff.

⁶³⁷ The bow, quiver, and arrows are mentioned at 21.11-2, 59-60. At 21.54, the bow's case is described as ὅς οἱ περὶ κειτο φαεινός. Lateiner 1995: 197 equates the bow in its shining case to Penelope who hides behind her shining veil, each left behind in Ithaca and each at long last set out before the suitors. In addition to the precious metals listed at 21.10, Penelope has her handmaids carry out of the storeroom an ὄγκιον, ἔνθα σίδηρος/κεῖτο πολὺς καὶ χαλκός, ἀέθλια τοῖο ἄνακτος, (21.61-2). This perhaps refers to the axes used in the contest, if ἀέθλια here means ‘gear, equipment (for a contest).’ It could also indicate the axes if ἀέθλια is read as ‘prizes (in a contest)’: Walcot 1984: 364 argues that the axes are part of Odysseus' accumulated treasure, and points out that iron axes are the prize in the archery competition at Patroclus' funeral games (*Il.* 23.850-1). We might imagine that Odysseus won the axes used for the trick shot in an earlier archery contest.

⁶³⁸ On the cave of the nymphs, see above.

vast and varied associations and meanings – that is, they all have the potential to be *σήματα*, and in Odysseus’ possession they are *σήματα* tied to him and his life and identity.

The storeroom is not only a repository for Odysseus’ treasures, but also for the “miniature repositories of huge associations” that color his personal history; the storeroom represents Odysseus not only as his craftsmanship, but also as his objectual double, a container in which the material results of his life’s work are stored away.⁶³⁹ These objects incorporate the story of their transition to Odysseus’ ownership into their histories, and also affect Odysseus’ history with their own biographies and genealogies of ownership. They likewise have the capacity to extend Odysseus’ story and his self outward through future exchange. The objects in the storeroom thus have the potential to prove Odysseus’ identity, as the bow demonstrates. The bow is the product and the remembrance of an important part of Odysseus’ life: it commemorates his initiatory journey to Messene and the establishment of his guest-friendship with Iphitus. After it is transferred to his possession, the bow becomes the instrument with which Odysseus can perform the unique actions (stringing the bow and the trick shot) that prove his identity because they are possible for him alone. The bow is also connected to Odysseus’ identity in myriad other ways, as the current discussion demonstrates. Although the bow is removed from the storeroom for the contest, it remains within the master’s house, which is the carpenter’s craftsmanship, and is consistently associated with the house/craft. The *εὐξοος* bow is physically connected with the *εὐξέστης σανίδεσσιν* – “well-polished doors,” (21.137 = 21.164) when it is leaned against them between attempts at the bow contest. After beginning the slaughter of the suitors with the bow, Odysseus eventually leans it against the *σταθμός*, which we earlier learned was *ξέσσειν ἐπισταμένως καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυεν* – “expertly planed and made

⁶³⁹ Taplin 1978: 77, on which see ch. 1.

straight to a chalk line,” (17.341), so that he can arm himself with shield, helmet, and spears.⁶⁴⁰

It is here, at the *σταθμός* and threshold, that Odysseus strings the bow, performs the trick shot, and strips off his rags, revealing and proving his identity.

The bow contest

The stringing of the bow is pegged by some scholars (generally those interested in ascertaining the form and function of the bow) as another indicator of Odysseus’ identity: they argue that the bow is of the composite type, which requires that the would-be archer sit down to string it.⁶⁴¹ Rather than a test of strength, stringing a composite bow is a test of knowledge, of *μῆτις*, and Odysseus proves himself (yet again) a man of *μῆτις*. The entire bow contest, stringing and all, is also illuminated by comparison to an Indic parallel: the *svayamvara*, or ‘self-choice’ ceremony.⁶⁴² The *svayamvara* was a ritual through which a woman chose her husband, and it frequently (at least in epic poetry) included a contest for her suitors, the winner of which the bride would ‘choose.’⁶⁴³ One example of the contest-determined type of *svayamvara* (*vīryaśulka svayamvara* – ‘self-choice with manly deed as bride price’) that is especially similar to the Odyssean bride contest is the *svayamvara* of Draupadī in the *Mahābhārata*.⁶⁴⁴ As Jamison

⁶⁴⁰ Odysseus leans his bow against the *σταθμός* and arms himself at 22.120-5. Note that the shield Odysseus takes up is called a *σάκος*, which Bershadsky 2010 demonstrates is thematically associated with the imminent victory of its bearer (while the *ἀσπίς* indicates death and defeat).

⁶⁴¹ Lorimer 1950: 292; Walcot 1984: 362-3; Sutherland 2001: 113. The latter suggests that the suitors are unfamiliar with composite bows because they have not been to war nor have they travelled widely. 21.420 makes it clear that Odysseus shoots the bow whilst sitting, and probably strings it from a seated position, as well.

⁶⁴² On parallels between Indic epic and the *Odyssey*, see Germain 1954: ch. 1; Gresseth 1979; Jamison 1999. The Odyssean bow contest’s similarities with the *svayamvara* are also noted at Griffin 1989: 69 and Russo 2004: 98-100.

⁶⁴³ Jamison 1999: 246-7 points out that at Draupadī’s *svayamvara*, Karna is able to perform the manly deed to win the contest, but Draupadī rejects him, apparently because he is a lowly charioteer. At *MBh.* 5.171, Ambā explicitly says that she chose her husband prior to her *svayamvara*, despite the fact that it involved a contest.

⁶⁴⁴ *MBh.* 1.175-81.

explains, both bride contests include the same elements (though in different orders): the contest (which consists of stringing a special bow and performing a trick shot) is announced, the suitors gather at the palace, the bride appears before the suitors, the suitors' names are proclaimed, the suitors attempt and fail the contest, an outsider disguised as a beggar wins the contest, the suitors protest and battle the winner, and the winner and bride ultimately unite.⁶⁴⁵ Comparison to Draupadī's svayaṃvara underscores the Odyssean bow and bow contest's association with marriage, but it goes a step further as well: Gresseth points out that Draupadī's father, Drupada, sets the task for his daughter's svayaṃvara knowing that only Arjuna can string the great bow and perform the trick shot with it.⁶⁴⁶ Drupada chooses Arjuna as the winner before the contest occurs, so that the contest functions as an identity test. Likewise, the contest in the *Odyssey* can only be won by Odysseus, and is not only a bride contest but also an identity test; thus the bow is once again a marker of Odysseus' identity.

The bow is also connected to Odysseus' identity as a king. Schein considers Odysseus' successful participation in the rituals of guest-friendly gift exchange, through which he received the bow, indicative of his kingly qualities.⁶⁴⁷ Scholars have also noted a couple of instances in Herodotus' *Histories* in which bows and victory in bow contests demonstrate suitability for kingship: the Persian king Cambyses had his brother Smerdis sent away and later killed because

⁶⁴⁵ See Jamison 1999: 248-58 for details on all of the parallels between the bride contests of the *Odyssey* and the *Mahābhārata* (Jamison argues that comparison with the Indic poem helps to explain some of the more puzzling elements of the *Odyssey*, such as Penelope's decision to show herself to the suitors at 18.158ff.). Note that the 'battle' between the suitors and the outsider (and his allies) in the *Mahābhārata* is largely superficial and bloodless in comparison to the total destruction of the suitors in the *Odyssey*. Cf. the svayaṃvaras of Sītā in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Raghuvamśa* (in which Rāma lifted and broke the great bow of Śiva to win Sītā's hand; see Germain 1954: 20-1, 23-4, 26) and of Damayantī in the *Mahābhārata* (see Gresseth 1979 on the numerous parallels between the story of Nala and Damayantī and the *Odyssey*).

⁶⁴⁶ Gresseth 1979: 82n.28. See also Germain 1954: 16.

⁶⁴⁷ Schein 2002: 99.

Smerdis alone among the Persians was able to draw a great bow, which Cambyses saw as a threat to his rule.⁶⁴⁸ Herodotus also relates a story in which Heracles bears three sons with a snake woman and instructs her that whichever of their sons can draw his bow and wear his belt can inhabit the land she rules, while those who fail to do so must be exiled. Only the youngest of the sons, Scythes, succeeds at the tasks, and thus he founds the line of the kings of Scythia.⁶⁴⁹ Egyptian evidence also points to a similar ideological connection between skill at archery and ability to rule. Walcot surveys the archaeological and literary evidence from Egypt (in particular from the Eighteenth Dynasty) and finds that kings are frequently represented as unsurpassed archers who can perform unparalleled feats with the bow.⁶⁵⁰ Chief among these archer-kings was Amenophis II, whose bow no one else could draw and who could shoot arrows straight through copper targets as he drove by them on his chariot.⁶⁵¹ Walcot points out that at the Egyptian Sed festival (a jubilee which ritually reaffirmed the pharaoh's power as ruler), a royal priest handed a bow and arrow to the pharaoh, who shot an arrow at each of the four points of the compass.⁶⁵² Archery also played a crucial role in the Indic Rājasūya, the ritual consecration of a king. In the course of the Rājasūya, the king is sprinkled with a ritual unction, dons fine

⁶⁴⁸ Herodotus, *Histories* 3.30, on which see Germain 1954: 43; Walcot 1984: 364-5.

⁶⁴⁹ Herodotus, *Histories* 4.8-10. See Germain 1954: 43; Walcot 1984: 366.

⁶⁵⁰ Walcot 1984 ultimately argues that the Mycenaeans adopted from the Egyptians of the Eighteenth Dynasty a ritual ordeal consisting of an archery contest to establish the right to rule as legitimate monarch, and it is this ritual which survives in garbled form in the *Odyssey*. Cf. Germain 1954: 41-3, who focuses on the bow's connection to kingship among ancient Near Eastern peoples.

⁶⁵¹ On Amenophis II (also called Amenhotep II), see McLeod 1984: 208, 210; Walcot 1984: 361-3; Sutherland 2001: 114. Walcot also points out that Amenophis II was, like Odysseus, renowned for his running ability.

⁶⁵² Walcot 1984: 365-6. Note that another important ceremony of the Sed festival was the 'dedication of the field,' which required that the pharaoh run across a piece of land representing all of Egypt to renew his claim as legitimate ruler. Odysseus is also notable for his prowess at running, and his victory with the bow (both at the trick shot and in the slaughter) reaffirms his status as king at a festival, as well.

garments (called the ‘womb and gestational membranes of lordship’), is proclaimed king, and handed a bow and arrows.⁶⁵³ The bow is the insignia of kingship, and represents the king’s power to chastise his enemies and control his subjects by force.⁶⁵⁴ The king demonstrates this power through the next step of the Rājasūya: he participates in symbolic warfare by mounting a chariot and shooting an arrow at (and deliberately missing) an armed member of the warrior class (a Kṣatriya). After the chariot drive, the king dons another insignia of kingship, a pair of boar-hide sandals, which transfer the fury of the boar to the king. The comparative evidence from Egypt and India is indicative of the bow’s prevalence in rituals of royal consecration and archery’s ideological connection with successful kingship in antiquity. The numerous parallels between the Egyptian and Indian rituals and representations and the bow contest of the *Odyssey* make clear the Odyssean bow’s associations with kingship and its ability to prove Odysseus’ identity as a king, among other things.

Comparison with the Rājasūya ritual also helps elucidate some of the seemingly anomalous features of the bow contest in the *Odyssey*. Jamison links Odysseus’ footbath and recognition by Eurycleia to the Indic king’s unction and the proclamation of his kingship.⁶⁵⁵ She also points out Odysseus’ refusal to accept proper attire before slaughtering the suitors and the

⁶⁵³ On the Rājasūya and its parallels in the *Odyssey*, see Germain 1954: 43-4; Jamison 1999: 258ff. On the garments as the ‘womb and gestational membranes of lordship,’ see Jamison 1999: 268-9 and n.115.

⁶⁵⁴ Jamison 1999: 259-60 notes that according to one text (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 5.3.5.30), the bow symbolizes and endows the king with vīrya – “manly courage, heroism.” Cf. the ability of the Homeric σκῆπτρον to represent a king’s power to violently punish wrongdoing and enforce his rule, discussed above in ch. 2 (and see Unruh 2011).

⁶⁵⁵ Jamison 1999: 264-5, who also notes the prominent digression on the boar hunt in Eurycleia’s recognition scene, and how the boar, like the Indic boar-hide sandals, marked Odysseus as a man and a king as well as transferred its fury to him.

role of lordly garments in the Rājasūya.⁶⁵⁶ Jamison also suggests that the sandals Penelope offers to give ‘the beggar’ if he is victorious in the bow contest in lieu of her hand in marriage have kinglier connotations than they initially seem to.⁶⁵⁷ The Rājasūya also provides a suggestive parallel for Telemachus’ participation in the bow contest. The son and heir of the king took part in the Rājasūya sometimes by being anointed via the same ritual unction as his father and handed the bow, and other times through a ceremony in which the names of father and son were intertwined and the bow was handed to the son to mark and solidify the line of succession.⁶⁵⁸ The king’s son also sometimes joins his father in the chariot drive and mock battle, and if not the king hands the bow to the queen after the ‘battle’ and wishes that his son may have success with it in future.⁶⁵⁹ Rather than indicating an incestuous desire to win his own mother’s hand in marriage, Telemachus’ participation in the bow contest and the authority he asserts over the bow demonstrates his worthiness as successor to his father and his father’s

⁶⁵⁶ Jamison 1999: 268-9. Odysseus (in disguise) asserts that although he needs a proper cloak and tunic, he will not accept them until Odysseus returns home (14.153-5; cf. 395-6, and Eumaeus’ promise that Odysseus himself will give ‘the beggar’ clothing at 515-6), and he does not don fine clothing until after he has revealed himself and slaughtered the suitors. Note that Telemachus and Penelope also promise him clothing at 16.79-83 and 21.339-41 respectively, and include in their offer a pair of sandals, which are a royal accoutrement in the Rājasūya. Note also the role of clothing as a σῆμα that proves to Penelope ‘the beggar’s’ familiarity with Odysseus at 19.225ff., which Jamison calls a ‘pseudo-recognition’ foreshadowing the real recognition by Eurycleia. On Odysseus’ quest on Ithaca for proper attire (which will act as a marker of his status), see also Levaniouk 2011: 110-7, and above.

⁶⁵⁷ Jamison 1999: 265ff. Penelope offers sandals (πέδιλα) as a prize at 21.341. Telemachus also offers to give his guest sandals (πέδιλα) at 16.80, and Eurymachus offers Odysseus sandals (ὑποδήματα) at 18.361 when he insultingly suggests that Odysseus work for him as a laborer.

⁶⁵⁸ Jamison 1999: 260-1. Cf. Homeric patronymics, which enshrine a person’s lineage in the important identifier of his name. Telemachus atypically lacks a patronymic adjective based on the names of Odysseus or Laertes in the Homeric poems, but several patronymic phrases identify him as the son of Odysseus (on which see Higbie 1995: 147ff.). Uniquely, Odysseus identifies himself in the *Iliad* with a paedonymic phrase (2.260, 4.354), asserting his identity as the father of Telemachus as one of his chief honors, and in a sense intertwining their names and identities (Higbie 1995: 159-60).

⁶⁵⁹ Jamison 1999: 263-4.

kingship.⁶⁶⁰ In addition to attempting to string the bow (and nearly succeeding), Telemachus is involved in the bow contest by making preparations for it: he sets up the axes, and in the process digs a long trench for them which he “made straight to a chalk line.”⁶⁶¹ Although Telemachus had never seen the axes’ special configuration before, he is able to construct the layout necessary for the bow contest, just as his father used to do, and for this activity the poet employs the formulaic phrase *καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν*, which is otherwise used only of Odysseus’ craft-y endeavors.⁶⁶² Telemachus’ seemingly innate ability to craft links him to his father and indicates his worthiness as his father’s son along with his ability to (almost) string the bow. The appearance of the phrase *καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνεν*, as I argue above, also signals that the craft (the row of axes) and the context (the bow contest) communicate significant information about Odysseus’ identity, and in this case the craft is the medium (literally) through which Odysseus proves to be himself in a context designed specifically to identify him.

Penelope, too, has substantial contact with and control over the bow, from deciding to hold the contest to fetching and carrying the bow from the storeroom to insisting that Odysseus be given a chance to string and shoot it during the contest.⁶⁶³ The Indic queen was similarly

⁶⁶⁰ Telemachus asserts his authority over the bow (and his mother) at 21.344-53. Other scholars who believe that Telemachus’ near success in the bow contest indicates his worthiness as Odysseus’ successor include Segal 1994: 55-6; Russo 2004: 95; cf. Griffin 1989: 73; Hoffer 1995: 524. Note also that the name Telemachus, ‘he who fights from afar,’ might be a reference to archery and another connection between the king, his heir, and the role of the bow as a marker of kingship (on Telemachus’ name, see McLeod 1984: 210; Cook 1995: 149; Sutherland 2001: 114; Bakker 2013: 100). Cf. Apollo the archer god’s epithets *ἐκάεργος* and *ἐκατηβόλος* (as well as variants *ἐκατηβελέτης*, *ἐκηβόλος*, and *ἔκατος*).

⁶⁶¹ Telemachus sets up the axes and attempts to string the bow at 21.120-9. Note that Telemachus stands on the threshold (*ἐπ’ οὐδόν*) when he makes his attempt, which is where Odysseus succeeds at the contest and begins the slaughter.

⁶⁶² The formulaic phrase occurs at 5.245, 17.341, 21.44, and 23.197, discussed above and below.

⁶⁶³ Penelope decides to hold the bow contest and informs Odysseus of her decision at 19.571-81; Penelope carries the bow (and arrow-filled quiver) out of the storeroom and announces the

involved in the Rājasūya: as the king's wife and the heir's mother, she acted as the physical link between father and son. If the king's heir underwent the ritual unction and was handed the bow, these ceremonial activities happened in his mother's house, and according to some texts the mother's name was included in the interweaving of the father and son's names.⁶⁶⁴ As mentioned above, if the heir does not participate in the mock battle, the king places the bow in the queen's hands as he makes a wish for his son's successful future, which suggests that she acts as a surrogate until her son is ready to accept the bow.⁶⁶⁵ The family trio together legitimizes the line of succession, and physical contact with the bow links each of the three members to the kingship. In the *Odyssey*, Telemachus, Penelope, and Odysseus all have significant contact with the bow, but it is perhaps most significant for the latter. In Book 8, Odysseus tells the Phaeacians εὖ μὲν τόξον οἶδα ἐϋξοον ἀμφαφάασθαι – “well do I know how to handle a well-polished bow,” (215), and I argue that his assertion about handling a well-polished (ἐϋξοον) bow here foreshadows his eventual ‘reunion’ with his special bow.⁶⁶⁶ The verb (ἀμφαφάασθαι) translated as ‘to handle’ means literally ‘to feel all around (with the hands),’ and is used to describe how a blind man could distinguish the σῆμα made by Odysseus’ discus throw in the Phaeacian games.⁶⁶⁷ As noted above in chapter 3, Odysseus’ σῆμα is not mingled “with the mass of others” (ὀμίλῳ, 8.196) because it is far past the rest of the marks, which indicates that Odysseus is not mixed in with but rather far surpasses the masses (ὄμιλος in its typical sense of “crowd of people”). When Odysseus boasts about his prowess at handling the bow, he says πρῶτός κ’ ἄνδρα βάλοιμι

contest to the suitors at 21.57-79; Penelope tells Eurymachus to let Odysseus participate in the bow contest at 21.331-42.

⁶⁶⁴ Jamison 1999: 260-1.

⁶⁶⁵ Jamison 1999: 264. Cf. Penelope keeping the πέπλος Telemachus receives from Helen until he is ready to marry (15.127-8).

⁶⁶⁶ See above on the especial frequency with which Odysseus’ bow is called ἐϋξοος.

⁶⁶⁷ 8.195-6.

ὀιστεύσας ἐν ὀμίλῳ/ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων – “I would be first to shoot and strike a man in a crowd of hostile men,” (8.216-7) referring to his skill on the battlefield, but his claim anticipates how he will again distance himself from the ὄμιλος (the suitors) by surpassing them in an ἄεθλος (using a weapon that functions as a σῆμα of his identity) – then turn the ἄεθλος into a battle in which he outdoes the ὄμιλος by slaying them all.⁶⁶⁸

A σῆμα of Odysseus’ identity, his scar, is later recognized by Eurycleia not via sight but touch: τὴν γρηῦς χεῖρεςσι καταπρηνέσσι λαβοῦσα/γνώ ρ’ ἐπιμασσαμένη – “the old woman, holding it [the scar] with the flats of her hands, recognized it upon touching it,” (19.467-8). Eurycleia then asserts that the guest is Odysseus and says she had not recognized him until she felt (ἀμφοφάσθαι, 19.475) him. Like the mark from the discus and the scar, the bow is yet another sensuous σῆμα that is ‘recognized’ through tactile perception.⁶⁶⁹ The disguised Odysseus urges Penelope to hold the bow contest she proposes, predicting that Odysseus will return before the suitors can handle (ἀμφοφώντας, 19.586), string, and shoot the bow. After the suitors attempt in vain to manhandle the bow into submission, Odysseus takes his special treasure into his hands. He carefully inspects the bow in a scene rife with tactile words, turning it over and over again in his hands to check its integrity.⁶⁷⁰ Odysseus then proves that he indeed knows well how to handle the well-polished bow: he effortlessly strings the bow, and in doing so proves his identity. Odysseus’ familiarity with and mastery over the bow are communicated

⁶⁶⁸ The suitors are frequently referred to as a ὄμιλος (1.225; 15.328; 16.29; 17.67, 564, 590; 23.303), including during Odysseus’ battle with them (22.263, 282).

⁶⁶⁹ On the haptic recognitions in the *Odyssey* and Odysseus’ reunion with his bow as a recognition scene, see Mueller 2016b: 5-9.

⁶⁷⁰ Mueller 2016b: 8 notes the following tactile words during Odysseus’ inspection of the bow: ἐνώμα, (21.393), ἀναστρωφῶν, (21.294), πειρώμενος, (21.394), and νωμᾶ, (21.400). The tactile words (e.g., ἐβάστασε, (21.405), πειρήσατο, (21.410)) continue as Odysseus strings the bow and performs the trick shot.

through the physical contact he has with this material object, and his contact with the object also signifies the litany of identifying qualities discussed above.

One more quality that is expressed through Odysseus' contact with the bow is his connection to Apollo, the archer god. After Odysseus inspects his bow, he strings it and is described with the following simile:

ὥς ὅτ' ἀνὴρ φόρμιγγος ἐπιστάμενος καὶ ἀοιδῆς
 ῥηϊδίως ἐτάνουσσε νέφ' περὶ κόλλοπι χορδῆν,
 ἄψα ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐϋστρεφὲς ἔντερον οἴος,
 ὥς ἄρ' ἄτερ σπουδῆς τάνυσεν μέγα τόξον Ὀδυσσεύς. (21.406-9)

As when a man who is skilled in the lyre and song
 easily stretches a string around a new peg,
 fastening the well-twisted sheep gut at both ends,
 so did Odysseus string the great bow without effort.

Odysseus strings his bow like a bard strings his lyre; the simile merges Odysseus' identities as archer and poet, and he thus resembles the god of both archery and poetry, Apollo.⁶⁷¹ Once the bow is strung, Odysseus tests it by plucking the string like that of a lyre, and it sings like a swallow.⁶⁷² Schein argues that this sound is analogous to the δεινὴ...κλαγγή – “terrible twang,” (*Il.* 1.49) that Apollo's bow makes as he shoots arrows at the Greek army at the beginning of the *Iliad*.⁶⁷³ Schein also points out that the first arrow Apollo fires is called an *ιός*, which is what Odysseus' arrows are five times called as he shoots at the suitors, rather than the more common

⁶⁷¹ In the *Hymn to Apollo* the baby Apollo's first words declare him lord of both lyre and bow: εἶη μοι κίθαρίς τε φίλη καὶ καμπύλα τόξα, (131). Cook 1995: 149-51 argues that Apollo as archer and poet represents μῆτις as opposed to βίη, so that Odysseus' representation as Apolline archer and poet is another indication that he and his poem favor μῆτις over βίη (cf. the Cyclops episode, discussed in ch. 3). On the connections between Apollo, archery, and craftiness in the Homeric poems, see also Levaniouk 2011: 284 on the Iliadic archer Pandarus.

⁶⁷² 21.410-1.

⁶⁷³ Schein 2002: 99-100.

term ὀϊστός.⁶⁷⁴ Schein suggests that the word ἰός for ‘arrow’ forms a kind of pun with the homophonous word ἰός meaning ‘venom, poison.’⁶⁷⁵ Although the arrows Odysseus shoots at the suitors are not explicitly poisoned, he does own poison (φάρμακον, 1.262) to smear on his arrows (ἰούς, 1.263), which he received from Mentēs’ father. The arrows Apollo shoots into the Greek camp at the beginning of the *Iliad* might also be considered poisoned, since they cause a deadly plague.⁶⁷⁶ All of these similarities contribute to what Schein calls Odysseus’ “quasi-identification” with Apollo: Odysseus’ revelation is like a divine epiphany, and his slaughter of the suitors resembles a god imposing his vengeful wrath on those who dishonored him. To uphold order and chastise the hubristic, Odysseus uses the bow of the man, Eurytus, who challenged Apollo, and according to Apollonius, Eurytus received his bow as a gift from Apollo himself, which would place Apollo’s bow into Odysseus’ hands.⁶⁷⁷ Odysseus’ actions are also indirectly sanctioned by Apollo, since Odysseus makes an attempt on another ‘target’ (Antinous) after that of the contest, praying αἴ κε τύχωμι, πόρῃ δέ μοι εὖχος Ἀπόλλων – “if I may hit my

⁶⁷⁴ *Il.* 1.48. The word ὀϊστός is not entirely absent from *Odyssey* Book 22 and the slaughter of the suitors, but it is far more prevalent in Book 21 where the archery is in the context of a contest rather than a battle: ὀϊστός occurs at 21.12, 60, 98, 173, 416, and 420 (and 19.575 when Penelope proposes the bow contest to Odysseus), while ἰός occurs in Book 21 only at line 423, so that the ὀϊστός which Odysseus picks up (416) and shoots (420) becomes an ἰός as it passes through the axes. The arrows are called both ὀϊστοί and ἰοί at 22.3 as Odysseus prepares to shoot down the suitors, and the term ἰός subsequently occurs at 22.15, 75, 82, 116, 119, and 246, while ὀϊστός otherwise occurs in Book 22 at 8 and 106.

⁶⁷⁵ Note, however, that ἰός, ‘venom, poison,’ is not Homeric.

⁶⁷⁶ *Il.* 1.9-10. Note that when Penelope prays to Apollo’s sister, Artemis, she asks the goddess to kill her by shooting her with an arrow (ἰόν, 20.62). It is perhaps also notable that in a song in honor of Sesostri III, a Twelfth Dynasty Egyptian pharaoh, Sesostri III is described as shooting an arrow like Sekhmet, the goddess of plague and warfare, and felling thousands (see Walcot 1984: 360).

⁶⁷⁷ *Argonautica* 1.88 (cited by Griffin 1989: 72). Apollo does give bows to mortals in the Homeric poems (e.g., Pandarus’ bow was a gift from Apollo (*Il.* 2.827)), so the god’s gift to Eurytus in Apollonius is not without precedent.

mark, and Apollo grant me glory,” (22.7).⁶⁷⁸ The arrow hits its mark; Apollo grants Odysseus victory.

Return, revenge, renewal: the slaughter of the suitors at the festival of Apollo

The epiphany of an Apollo-like figure who shoots Apollo’s bow much like Apollo does is also especially appropriate here during the festival of Apollo. As discussed above, the bow contest and slaughter of the suitors take place during the festival of Apollo, which appears to be, like historical festivals of Apollo in ancient Greece, a festival of renewal and the restoration of order after a period of reversal.⁶⁷⁹ Burkert relates mythic and ritual narratives in which boys or adolescents leave their community to live in the wilderness as wolves for nine years, returning to humanity and human form in the tenth year.⁶⁸⁰ Upon returning, the now-young men are eligible to participate in athletic competitions and to marry, and the next generation of youths is expelled from society. The return of Odysseus (grandson of Auto-lycus) to his community in the tenth year of wandering the wilderness to participate in an ἄεθλος that reintegrates him into society and expels the younger generation from it bears more than a passing resemblance to this initiatory cycle. After a long period of dissolution and reversal, Odysseus’ epiphany is central to the ritual reinstatement of order. His lethal chastisement of the suitors is also a kind of ἄεθλος in which he, the victor, literally rather than figuratively lives while the rest of the competitors

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. Penelope’s similar language at 21.338: εἴ κέ μιν ἐντανύσῃ, δῶν δέ οἱ εὖχος Ἀπόλλων.

⁶⁷⁹ The festival is mentioned at 20.156, 276-8; 21.258-9.

⁶⁸⁰ Burkert 1983: 84-93, who provides numerous sources on these narratives, both within and outside of the context of the pan-Arcadian Lycaia festival. Note that the metamorphosis back from wolf to human is contingent upon the werewolf’s abstinence from consuming human flesh; during his time in the wilderness, Odysseus specifically opposes cannibalism when he triumphs over the Cyclops. Cf. the discussion at Levaniouk 2011: ch. 5 on Minos, whom Odysseus as Aithon claims as his grandfather, and either the nine-year periods of his kingship or conversations with Zeus at nine-year intervals (19.178-9), which Levaniouk argues are indicative of cyclical social renewal, including the king’s renewed coming-of-age and reaffirmed status as king.

die.⁶⁸¹ As mentioned above in chapter 3, Odysseus is Apolline in his embodiment of the ideal youth while also acting as destroyer of the young. With the suitors' deaths, Odysseus reaches the culmination of his rebirth, and he reenacts, in a sense, the initiatory 'battle' (i.e., the boar hunt) of his youth. Odysseus' biological double, his son Telemachus, similarly reaches a peak in his initiation to manhood through his first battle. In his first victory against a foe, Telemachus uses a δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος – "long-shadowing spear," (22.95; cf. 97), a phrase which is found throughout the battlefield scenes of the *Iliad*, but occurs on only two other occasions in the *Odyssey*: the spear Odysseus carries on his initiatory trip to Parnassus and uses to slay the boar is long-shadowing (19.438), as is the spear the rejuvenated Laertes casts at Antinous' father, Eupheithes, in the final battle with the suitors' relatives (24.519, 522). This phrase, typically found in martial contexts, links all three living Arceisiads together in acts of new or renewed military valor and confirms not only the manhood of each one but also their lineage's succession.⁶⁸² Telemachus is also grazed on the wrist by a suitor's spear in the course of the battle, and Eckert considers this a kind of initiatory scarification, akin to that which Odysseus received from the tusk of the boar.⁶⁸³

In the slaughter of the suitors we also find the culmination of the building imagery of spring, the season of renewal and the festival of Apollo *qua* New Year festival. As discussed above, Odysseus' prophecies to Eumaeus and Penelope of his own return coinciding with the new moon imply seasonal change and the beginning of the yearly cycle.⁶⁸⁴ During Odysseus' conversation with Penelope, she 'melts' with tears like snow at the tops of mountains melts into

⁶⁸¹ See Nagy 1990b: 118-25, cited above, on the symbolic deaths of the losers and rebirth to a new life for the victor in ancient Greek athletic competitions, and the competition's origins in rituals of either initiation or compensation for death. See Cook 1995: 156ff. for a comparison of Odysseus' victory during the festival of Apollo with the Athenian Panathenaic games and the ritual of the Panathenaia more generally.

⁶⁸² Segal 1994: 8.

⁶⁸³ 22.277-8. Eckert 1963: 54.

⁶⁸⁴ 14.161-2; 19.306-7.

rivers when the warm east wind blows, and she compares herself to the nightingale which sings at the beginning of spring.⁶⁸⁵ In response to Eurymachus' insulting suggestion that he work as a laborer, Odysseus wishes they could compete in field work ὄρη ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τ' ἤματα μακρὰ πέλονται – “in the springtime, when the days become long,” (18.367). During the slaughter, the suitors are driven into a panic like cattle goaded by a gadfly ὄρη ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τ' ἤματα μακρὰ πέλονται, (22.301).⁶⁸⁶ The swallow song of Odysseus' bow when he plucks it also appears to be a part of the imagery of springtime: Borthwick provides evidence that the swallow is typically connected to the arrival of spring (as well as marital fidelity and contentment). Both Borthwick and Austin cite ancient Greek swallow songs, the Rhodian *Chelidonismos* and the Samian *Eiresione*, in which children impersonate swallows and travel door-to-door, demanding entrance to houses and promising prosperity in return for gifts.⁶⁸⁷ According to the Herodotean *Vita*, the *Eiresione* was authored by Homer himself, who accompanied the children on their rounds to sing the song during the new-moon festival of Apollo in Samos that marked the transition between winter and spring. Athena's epiphany during the slaughter is also in the form of a swallow, and she perches on the μέλαθρον, ‘roof beam,’ of the sooty (αἰθαλόεντος, (22.239)) hall, which is where the eagle in Penelope's dream who claims to be her husband returned perches.⁶⁸⁸ The

⁶⁸⁵ 19.204-9, 518ff.

⁶⁸⁶ On spring imagery in the *Odyssey*, see Austin 1975: ch. 5 (esp. 246ff.), Borthwick 1988; Levaniouk 2011: ch. 6 (esp. 106-7).

⁶⁸⁷ Austin 1975: 248-50 (who considers the *Odyssey* an amplified and dramatized *Chelidonismos*); Borthwick 1988: 19. The Rhodian *Chelidonismos* is preserved by Athenaeus 8.360b, and the Samian *Eiresione* is found at *Vita Homeri Herodotea* 33. Losada 1985 also cites the *Chelidonismos* in Athenaeus, and considers the comparison of the bowstring's twanging to the swallow's call an indicator of the theme of return.

⁶⁸⁸ Borthwick 1988: 14-5 takes αἰθαλόεντος to mean that Athena perches above the hearth, which is often where swallows' nests are located in houses, and points out that Odysseus and Penelope hold their conversation in Book 19 and ultimately reunite in Book 23 by the hearth (see 19.389; 23.89, 164-5). I also note the use of another αἰθ- word at a moment of crucial epiphany. The dream eagle perches on the μέλαθρον at 19.544.

epiphanies of goddess and man are thus linked together, and linked to return, the returning spring, and vengeful destruction.

Odysseus is likened to or represented by a fearsome bird of prey on several other occasions in the *Odyssey*. His slaughter of the suitors is prophesied through interpretations of bird signs: Halitherses interprets two eagles which tear at each other as they fly over the Ithacan assembly as an omen that Odysseus will soon return home and destroy the suitors, and Helen asserts that an eagle flying by with a goose in its talons is a sign that Odysseus will return and take his revenge.⁶⁸⁹ Odysseus and his companions are also compared in a simile to vultures which catch and destroy smaller birds as they slaughter the suitors.⁶⁹⁰ This simile is anticipated by an earlier comparison of Odysseus and Telemachus' tearful reunion to the mourning of vultures at the loss of their young.⁶⁹¹ In Book 24 there is a final comparison of Odysseus to an eagle as he swoops after the suitors' relatives.⁶⁹² Rood analyzes all of the specific birds in the *Odyssey* and concludes that there is a conventional association between birds and divinely ordained vengeance.⁶⁹³ Yet again, Odysseus' identity as a mighty avenger is communicated via an object external to him, the bird, as it is through the dog and the burning fire. Odysseus, who calls himself Aithon and is compared to a σπέρμα πυρός – “seed of fire,” (5.490), metaphorically becomes a raging fire that exacts vengeance, and in so doing purifies his house of the pollution it

⁶⁸⁹ 2.146-76; 15.160-78. At 15.525-34, Theoclymenus interprets a hawk (called Ἀπόλλωνος ταχὺς ἄγγελος) tearing a dove in its talons as a sign that no family will ever be kinglier than that of the Arceisiads, which indirectly prophesies Odysseus' return and victory. Similarly, Amphinomus understands an eagle grasping a dove as a sign that the suitors' plot to murder Telemachus will fail at 20.242-6.

⁶⁹⁰ 22.302-8. Cf. the comparison of the disloyal handmaids to thrushes and doves when Telemachus kills them at 22.468-72.

⁶⁹¹ 16.216-9.

⁶⁹² 24.538.

⁶⁹³ Rood 2006, who points out the numerous avian epiphanies of gods in the *Odyssey* (in addition to 22.239-40 mentioned above, 1.320; 3.372; 5.51, 337, 353) as evidence of the link between birds and the will of the gods.

suffered in his absence. After cleansing his house of the contamination that is the suitors (by shooting them with (poisoned) arrows which cause their own pollution in the form of disease, and thus death), Odysseus uses sulfur and fire to purge (perhaps from **pur agere* – ‘carry fire’) the blood from the slaughter.⁶⁹⁴ This series of events is reminiscent of what Nagy calls the “ritual core” of the Olympic games: the oldest known ἄεθλος at Olympia was a footrace in which the contestants raced to the ‘altar of Zeus,’ a heap of ash where as-yet unburned sacrifices lay waiting for the victor, who would set them on fire.⁶⁹⁵ Burkert, and Nagy following him, interpret the Olympic race-*cum*-sacrifice as marking a transition from the pollution of bloodshed to the purification of fire, and from an encounter with death to the renewed life of the victor, symbolized by the fire he lights at the altar. Likewise, Odysseus is the victor of his ἄεθλος and thus enjoys the renewal and return of his life while the other ‘athletes’ suffer literal death; Odysseus is the fire that avenges dishonor, purges pollution, and (re)kindles light and life.

The bed of Odysseus

Immediately after the slaughter of the suitors Odysseus, who is splattered with blood and surrounded by corpses, is once again compared in a simile to a lion, as he is on the shores of Phaeacia in Book 6 of the *Odyssey*.⁶⁹⁶ As discussed above in chapter 3, the lion simile is the first in a sequence of narrative elements that occurs in Book 6 and again in Books 22 and 23 and in

⁶⁹⁴ Note that δάπεδον δ’ ἅπαν αἵματι θῆε at 22.309; θύειν could mean ‘run, flow’ here, but it could also mean that the floor seethes or smokes with blood, making the spilling of the suitors’ blood akin to the fumigation that purifies the house (see Segal 1994: 78n.18, and 76-9 on the purification of the house more generally). Nagy 1990b: 124n.45 provides the possible etymology of Latin *purgare* as ‘carry (*agere*) fire (**pur*),’ but cf. Watkins, ed. 2000: 67 who derives *purgare* from *agere* and *purus*, ‘pure,’ from Indo-European root **peu-* (and **pur/πῦρ*, ‘fire,’ from **paewr̥*).

⁶⁹⁵ Nagy 1990b: 123-5; see also Burkert 1983: 95-8. The details of the footrace are provided at Philostratus, *On Gymnastics* 5.

⁶⁹⁶ 22.401-6 and 6.130-6.

each instance marks a transition from chaos to order.⁶⁹⁷ After the lion simile the sequence continues: Odysseus is bathed, then rejuvenated by Athena in a simile of expert craftsmanship:

αὐτὰρ κὰκ κεφαλῆς κάλλος πολὺ χεῦεν Ἀθήνη
 μείζονά τ' εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα· κὰδ δὲ κάρητος
 οὔλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας.
 ὥς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνήρ
 ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
 τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει·
 ὧς μὲν τῷ περίχευε χάριν κεφαλῆ τε καὶ ὤμοις. (23.156-62)

And Athena poured much beauty over [Odysseus'] head, making him taller to look at and better built, and down from his head she sent curly locks, like a hyacinth flower. As when some skillful man overlays gold on silver, a man whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athena taught every kind of craft, and he makes graceful works, so did she pour grace upon his head and shoulders.

In chapter 3 I argue that this simile, which is repeated *verbatim* (23.157-62 = 6.230-5) at crucial moments in the poem as the culmination of a tripartite sequence, communicates significant information about Odysseus' identity, in particular his identity as a craftsman. Odysseus resembles the 'skillful man' of the simile, who is the protégé of Hephaestus and Athena and capable of crafting beautiful objects. Unlike in Book 6, in Book 23 this simile occurs in a context in which Odysseus appears as a literal craftsman: Odysseus is bathed and rejuvenated in preparation for his reunion with Penelope, which is ultimately achieved when he passes the test Penelope notoriously sets for him concerning his unique, self-made bed.

When Penelope asks Eurycleia to prepare Odysseus' bed for him by bringing it outside of the bedchamber (θάλαμος), Odysseus responds with the following outburst:

⁶⁹⁷ The sequence is as follows: 1) lion simile (citations provided in the footnote immediately above); 2) bath (6.211ff. and 23.153-5); 3) rejuvenation described with a simile of craftsmanship (6.229-35 and 23.156-62). For more on this narrative sequence as an indicator of Odysseus' (and his household's) transition from the uncivilized and disorderly to proper order, as well as other connotations communicated by the individual elements, such as the bath's nuptial undertones, see ch. 3 above.

ὦ γύναι, ἧ μάλα τοῦτο ἔπος θυμαλγὲς ἔειπες·
 τίς δέ μοι ἄλλοσε θῆκε λέχος; χαλεπὸν δέ κεν εἶη
 καὶ μάλ' ἐπισταμένῳ, ὅτε μὴ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν 185
 ῥηϊδίως ἐθέλων θεΐη ἄλλη ἐνὶ χώρῃ.
 ἀνδρῶν δ' οὐ κέν τις ζωὸς βροτός, οὐδὲ μάλ' ἠβῶν,
 ῥεῖα μετοχλίσειεν, ἐπεὶ μέγα σῆμα τέτυκται
 ἐν λέχει ἀσκητῶ· τὸ δ' ἐγὼ κάμον οὐδέ τις ἄλλος.
 θάμνος ἔφυ τανύφυλλος ἐλαίης ἔρκεος ἐντός, 190
 ἀκμηνὸς θαλέθων· πάχετος δ' ἦν ἠϋτε κίων.
 τῶ δ' ἐγὼ ἀμφιβάλων θάλαμον δέμον, ὄφρ' ἐτέλεσσα,
 πυκνηῖσιν λιθάδεσσι, καὶ εὖ καθύπερθεν ἔρεψα,
 κολλητὰς δ' ἐπέθηκα θύρας, πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας.
 καὶ τότε' ἔπειτ' ἀπέκοψα κόμην τανυφύλλου ἐλαίης, 195
 κορμὸν δ' ἐκ ρίζης προταμῶν ἀμφέξεσα χαλκῶ
 εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως, καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνα,
 ἐρμῖν' ἀσκήσας, τέτρηνα δὲ πάντα τερέτρῳ.
 ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἀρχόμενος λέχος ἔξεον, ὄφρ' ἐτέλεσσα,
 δαιδάλλων χρυσῶ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἠδ' ἐλέφαντι· 200
 ἐκ δ' ἐτάνυσσα ἱμάντα βοὸς φοίνικι φαεινόν.
 οὕτω τοι τόδε σῆμα πιφαύσκομαι· οὐδέ τι οἶδα,
 ἧ μοι ἔτ' ἔμπεδόν ἐστι, γύναι, λέχος, ἧέ τις ἦδη
 ἀνδρῶν ἄλλοσε θῆκε, ταμῶν ὑπο πυθμέν' ἐλαίης. (23.183-204)

Lady, this word you have spoken is heart-rending indeed.
 Who put my bed somewhere else? It would be difficult
 even for a very skillful man, unless a god himself should come 185
 and choose to easily put it in another place.
 No living mortal among men, not even one in his youthful prime,
 could easily change its position, since I have built a great sign
 in the artfully fashioned bed – and I myself made it, and not anyone else.
 A long-leaved bush of olive grew within the courtyard, 190
 flourishing in its prime, and it was thick like a pillar.
 And I myself built a bedchamber around it, until I finished it,
 with close-set stones, and I roofed it well from above,
 and added to it tightly-joined doors, fit closely together.
 And only then did I cut off the foliage of the long-leaved olive, 195
 and having cut the trunk from the root up, I smoothed it all around
 with a bronze adze well and expertly, and I made it straight to a chalk line,
 artfully fashioning a bedpost, and I bored all parts of it with an auger.
 Beginning from this I worked up the bed, until I finished it,
 decorating it with gold and silver and ivory; 200
 and from it I stretched straps of oxhide, shining with purple dye.
 Thus do I make this sign clear to you; but I do not at all know
 whether my bed is still firmly planted in the ground, lady, or if some man
 has by now put it somewhere else, having cut under the base of the olive.

Penelope recognizes the σήματ'...ἔμπεδα – “sure signs” (23.206) Odysseus provides her with through his detailed description of the bed’s construction: Odysseus purposefully built a singular and secret ‘sign’ (σήμα), known only to Odysseus, Penelope, and Penelope’s maid Actoris, into the bed when he crafted it out of a still-rooted olive tree, resulting in the bed’s unusual immobility.⁶⁹⁸ This is the μέγα σήμα – “great sign” which makes Penelope’s command that the bed be brought out of the bedchamber impossible, and Odysseus caps his explanation of the bed’s craftsmanship by saying οὕτω τοι τόδε σήμα πιφάυσκομαι – “thus do I make this sign clear to you.” However, as in the case of so many poetic σήματα and object σήματα in particular, as I argue in chapter 1, what Odysseus (and the *Odyssey* poet) ‘makes clear’ is far more than first appears at surface level. According to his description, Odysseus crafted his bed with the same skillfulness as the expert craftsman from the simile quoted above, and even decorated his object with gold and silver as the craftsman did his object (compare 23.200 to 159), which is yet another indicator of Odysseus’ identity as a craftsman in the *Odyssey*. But in the simile it is Athena who is compared to the craftsman, while Odysseus is compared to the crafted object. I have argued above that producer and product are frequently believed to share a special link, but the proximity of the simile of craftsmanship in which Odysseus is compared to an object to the description of the crafting of the bed not only suggests a connection between a maker and the object of his making, it conflates Odysseus with his bed.⁶⁹⁹ The bed functions as a μέγα σήμα/σήματ'...ἔμπεδα of Odysseus’ identity because in a sense it *is* he, it is an externalization of

⁶⁹⁸ Penelope explains that Odysseus’ description of the bed serves as σήματ' ἀριφραδέα that prove his identity (or perhaps prove not that he is Odysseus, but that he is the same as he was when he left for Troy, as Vlahos 2011: 62-4 argues (cf. Felson-Rubin 1994: 38; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 266; Heitman 2005: 99-100)) because the bed has been seen only by herself, Odysseus, and her maid Actoris at 23.225-9.

⁶⁹⁹ Zeitlin 1996: 41-2.

himself.⁷⁰⁰ The bed thus deserves close analysis as an object whose major function is to communicate information about Odysseus' identity because it is an objectified extension of himself.

Odysseus' bed corresponds to his body by the fact that both bed and body are marked with a physical, material feature that is able to serve as a *σῆμα* because it is an exclusive quality. Odysseus' thigh was marked by the boar he hunted as a youth on Parnassus with a unique scar, which functions as a *σῆμα* that proves his identity on more than one occasion in the poem.⁷⁰¹ In turn, Odysseus himself plays the role of the boar in relation to his bed: he marked the bed (as unique) by the way he chose to craft it, which resulted in an object that is *sui generis* and capable of acting as a *σῆμα* – a *σῆμα* of his identity, which he imposed on the bed by marking it.⁷⁰² The description of the crafting of the bed also reaffirms aspects of Odysseus' identity which have already been established in the poem (and discussed in this project): the description uses language and terminology that suggest Odysseus' identity not only as a craftsman but also as a poet. I argue in chapter 2 concerning Odysseus' boat that detailed descriptions of Odysseus' craftsmanship, specifically carpentry, serve to communicate his knowledge and ability to 'fit'

⁷⁰⁰ On the connection between a producer and his product, and the product as an externalization of its producer which plays a role in his identity, see esp. ch. 1 above. See also Starobinski 1975: 348-50 on identity becoming manifest through the "mediation of exteriority" (on the bed's description he says, "The "I have made," together with the object made, are more probative than the "I am" would have been. Outside, in the room and bed he hewed, lies the proof of Ulysses' personal being, *confirmation* of his true essence"). Katz 1991: 179-81, drawing on Starobinski 1975, argues that Odysseus' description of his craftsmanship does not so much effect his recognition or prove his identity, but rather instantiates it – and emphasizes the constructed aspects of identity.

⁷⁰¹ See above for further discussion of the scar.

⁷⁰² Note that the olive tree bed is unparalleled in extant Greek literature, and such an object is also entirely absent from the material record. Germain 1954: 211-2 discusses the impracticalities of constructing a bedpost out of a tree stump, but seeks comparably immobile beds in non-Greek antiquity, which yields little that is conclusive. Dietz 1971: 12-3 also notes the bed's impractical design and concludes that its unfeasibility indicates that the bed must function symbolically.

poetry together like pieces of craftwork. Here, too, Odysseus' technical skill is emphasized (both passages contain words for cutting, planing, and boring, as well as words for expertise), and a word derived from the verb ἀραρίσκειν, 'fit together' (ἀραρυίας, 194) is used, which might suggest a connection to Ὀμηρος, 'he who fits (the song) together.'⁷⁰³ The description of the bed also contains the final occurrence in the poem of the repeated formulaic phrase, "[I/he] made [it] straight to a chalk line," which at once communicates Odysseus' identity as a craftsman (specifically of the object in question) and a poet, and cues the audience that the poet is communicating vital information about Odysseus.⁷⁰⁴ The phrase is twice used of the craftsmanship of Odysseus' house, which I argue above indicates that Odysseus himself is the house's carpenter, and the bed is unquestionably Odysseus' handiwork, as is the entire bedroom around it (192-4).⁷⁰⁵ The bedroom has been interpreted by some scholars as the center and starting point of the rest of the house which was built around it, and if so the bed is the center of this center, the focal point of a set of concentric circles.⁷⁰⁶ In any case, the bed and surrounding bedroom are central to Odysseus' identity, and in addition to indicating their centrality to Odysseus, the circular form of bedroom around bed reflects the way that the bed's description

⁷⁰³ For cutting words, compare 23.195-6 with 6.243; for planing, compare 23.196 with 6.245; for boring, compare 23.198 with 6.247; for words indicating expertise, compare 23.189, 197-8, 200 with 6.245, 259. It is perhaps worth noting that at 6.249-51 Odysseus is compared in a simile to a skillful carpenter of ships, not wholly unlike the simile of craftsmanship that precedes the description of the bed's construction. For more on intersections between craftsmanship and poetry, see ch. 2 above.

⁷⁰⁴ See ch. 2 and above in this chapter for further discussion of the phrase "[I/he] made [it] straight to a chalk line."

⁷⁰⁵ The phrase is used of other parts of Odysseus' house at 17.341 and 21.44, discussed above.

⁷⁰⁶ Starobinski 1975: 350; Churchill 1991: 10; Katz 1991: 180 (who argues that the bed and bedroom function symbolically as an analogue for the hearth, the typical center of the Greek house, on which see Vernant 1983: ch. 6); Zeitlin 1996: 22. Whether or not the bed and bedroom are at the very center of the house is not made clear in the poem.

connects to several other significant episodes by circling backward and forward in the narrative of the poem and the chronology of Odysseus' life in a complex web of relations.

As I have already noted, the description of the bed links backward in the poem, and yet forward chronologically from the time of the bed's construction, to the description of Odysseus' boat. These two passages of Odysseus' craftsmanship create a ring around his presence in the *Odyssey*: Odysseus is introduced in Book 5, stagnating on Calypso's isle until he builds his boat and begins his transition back into the human fold and back to his home, and his homeward journey is completed in Book 23 when he reunites with Penelope through his knowledge of the σῆμα of the bed and reunites with Penelope in love on the bed.⁷⁰⁷ In addition to the similarities mentioned above, the connection between the boat and bed passages reveals major differences: while the boat is a vehicle and thus a necessarily mobile object that is shattered by Poseidon's storm, the bed is specifically immobile and has lasted unchanged for over 20 years. It is the bed's very rootedness that makes it lasting, and, as Zeitlin points out, the fact that the bed's σῆμα (distinguishing feature) is that it is ἔμπεδον (rooted in the earth (ἐν πέδ(ι)φ)) makes it a σῆμα ἔμπεδον (valid sign, sure proof) of Odysseus, whose identity is immutably 'rooted' to Ithaca and his household.⁷⁰⁸ After Odysseus explains the σῆμα of the bed to the satisfaction of Penelope and the two embrace, there is a simile of sailors whose well-built ship is shattered by Poseidon

⁷⁰⁷ Odysseus and Penelope go to bed together at 23.295ff. While Odysseus is fully reintegrated into his own household through his reunion with Penelope, the final recognition and reunion of the poem is with Laertes in Book 24, discussed further below.

⁷⁰⁸ Zeitlin 1996: 42. The significance of the rootedness of the bed is oft-noted in Odyssean scholarship; see, e.g., Austin 1975: 237-8; Bonnafé 1985: 117-8; Murnaghan 1987: 116, 140-1; Pucci 1987: 93; Falkner 1989: 45-6; Winkler 1990: 157-8; Churchill 1991: 10; Lateiner 1995: 278; Vlahos 2011: 66. See also Nagler 1996: 153-4, who considers the boat and the bed to be connected as members of a "series of axis symbols" and as handicrafts of Odysseus, but differentiated in their respective mobility and immobility.

but who survive the shipwreck and set foot on *terra firma* again.⁷⁰⁹ The sailors of the simile are strikingly similar to Odysseus, but the simile ends unexpectedly by comparing them not to Odysseus, but to Penelope. After metaphorically treading water amongst the suitors for years on end, Penelope reaches land when she is reunited with her husband whose knowledge of the σῆμα ἔμπεδον proves that he, too, is grounded (ἔμπεδος) in his family and home.⁷¹⁰

The olive tree bed also links to other instances in which olive wood is connected to the craftsmanship of Odysseus, and thus again looks backward in the course of the narrative and forward in the course of Odysseus' life. As I note above in chapters 2 and 3, the handle of the ax Odysseus uses to build his boat, which is fitted (ἄρμενον) to his hands, is made of olive wood, and the stake Odysseus fashions to poke out the Cyclops' eye is made from an olive trunk.⁷¹¹ In both of these episodes Odysseus' skill at crafting, which is a hallmark of human civilization and a sign of μῆτις, is emphasized, as in the passage on the bed. The olive tree at the heart of the bed likewise connects to live, un-crafted olive trees in the *Odyssey*: I argue above that the olive tree growing at the head of the Ithacan harbor functions as a σῆμα by which Odysseus recognizes his homeland, much like the olive tree bed is a σῆμα by which he himself is recognized.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁹ 23.233-40.

⁷¹⁰ See Zeitlin 1996: 29-31 on the application of the adjective ἔμπεδος to people (mainly warrior heroes) and their attributes in the Homeric poems to indicate desirable physical valor and mental resolve. Odysseus is called ἔμπεδος on several occasions in the *Odyssey* (11.152, 628; 12.161, 434; 17.464; cf. 14.468, 503; 21.426; 22.226). The poetic trajectory of the *Odyssey* is perhaps purposefully away from the chaos of the sea and travel over the sea (to war) and toward the fixity of land and the stability of homeland; note that according to Teiresias' prophecy (11.119-37, 23.266-84, discussed further below), Odysseus' ship oar will be re-identified as a winnowing shovel, an agricultural implement, during one final journey and Odysseus will eventually die in old age "away from the sea" (if this is what ἐξ ἁλός means). It might also be significant that the Phaeacians' supremely mobile ship is petrified and "rooted" (ἑρρίζωσεν, 13.163) in place by Poseidon in retaliation for the safe passage and gifts these seafarers gave Odysseus.

⁷¹¹ 6.234-6; 9.319ff.

⁷¹² Athena points out the olive tree to convince Odysseus that he has reached Ithaca at 13.344-52. This olive is mentioned four times in total (13.102, 122, 346, 372), and is twice called

Odysseus and Athena plot the destruction of the suitors, by which Odysseus reasserts his kingship and regains his household, underneath the olive at the harbor, and it is also under this olive that the Phaeacians deposit the sleeping Odysseus. Odysseus also sleeps beneath two inosculated olive trees, one wild and one cultivated, on the Phaeacian shore after fashioning himself a makeshift bed out of fallen leaves.⁷¹³ Odysseus' slumber beneath these living olive trees connects to the crafted olive tree's function as a bed.⁷¹⁴ The inosculated olives grow so close together (πυκνοί, 5.480) that the sheltered spot beneath them is impenetrable to wind, sun, and rain, much as the room around the bed is completely closed off from the outside world because Odysseus fashioned it with close-set (πυκνήσιν, 23.193) stones and doors fit closely together (πυκινῶς, 23.194).⁷¹⁵ Although no olive is explicitly present on the slopes of Parnassus, I note in chapter 2 the nearly identical descriptions of Odysseus' leafy bed on Phaeacia and the lair of the boar Odysseus slew as a youth.⁷¹⁶ As mentioned above, Odysseus uniquely marked his bed (λέχος) and thus made it a σῆμα of his identity, as the boar leapt out of his lair (λόχη) and marked Odysseus with another σῆμα of his identity. The connection to the scar links the bed backward in time to Odysseus' adolescence, and therefore even further back to Odysseus' birth and naming by his maternal grandfather, Autolycus, which is prompted in the narrative by

τανύφυλλος (102, 346), as is the olive tree Odysseus made into his bed (23.190, 195). These two are the only olives, and the only trees (indeed, the only objects), given this epithet in the Homeric poems.

⁷¹³ 5.476-93.

⁷¹⁴ See Zeitlin 1996: 33-42 on connections between Odysseus' bed and yet another bed: that on which Ares and Aphrodite, in a lay by Demodocus, commit adultery, and are ensnared by Hephaestus so that they remain ἔμπεδον in an embarrassing position as they are exposed to the other gods' mockery (8.266-366).

⁷¹⁵ Bonnafé 1985: 119.

⁷¹⁶ 19.439-43 (with πυκνή at 442). Bonnafé 1985: 106 *et passim* also concedes that olive is lacking from the forest on Parnassus, but argues that the boar's lair is connected to and should be considered among the occurrences of olive trees and wood in the *Odyssey*.

Eurycleia's discovery of the scar while Odysseus is in disguise.⁷¹⁷ The boar hunt with his maternal uncles serves as a rite of passage for Odysseus that propels him into young adulthood (an aspect of Odysseus' identity communicated by the scar), and presumably one of the next steps toward full maturity for Odysseus was the construction of his bed, which preceded and prepared for his marriage (an aspect of Odysseus' identity communicated by the bed). The hunt and the bed/marriage-making are early acts of self-fashioning that create permanent fixtures in Odysseus' adult identity, and in the process fashion material objects that are permanent fixtures in and evocative *σήματα* of Odysseus' life.

The bed is most readily recognized as a symbol of Odysseus and Penelope's marriage; as the medium that facilitates the couple's reunion, which I argue is a kind of re-marriage, the bed's presence and significance forms a ring around their marriage, linking past with present (and presumably future). The fact that the bed is at once a piece of human craftsmanship but also remains a rooted olive tree reflects the phenomenon of marriage as an intersection of nature and culture: marriage is a cultural institution, but deeply rooted in the procreative realities of human biology.⁷¹⁸ The bed is the location of the couple's love-making which consummates their marriage, and this particular bed is as immovable as the conjugal bond is indissoluble. The immobility of the bed is also frequently interpreted as reflective of Penelope's immobility, and thus her fidelity to her husband.⁷¹⁹ Penelope has figuratively stood steadfastly by the firmly rooted bed, much like she literally stands by the *σταθμός*, as discussed in chapter 2. I argue that

⁷¹⁷ 19.392ff.

⁷¹⁸ Starobinski 1975: 351; Katz 1991: 181; Lateiner 1995: 278; Zeitlin 1996: 23-4.

⁷¹⁹ See, e.g., Murnaghan 1987: 116, 140-1; Pucci 1987: 93; Winkler 1990: 157-8; Zeitlin 1996 *passim* (with a brief survey of previous scholarship on the bed at 23-4). Several scholars note that the immobility of the bed alone is not sufficient proof of Penelope's fidelity (since she could have engaged in a liaison without uprooting the bed): see Murnaghan 1987: 141; Ahl & Roisman 1996: 269-70; Zeitlin 1996: 26; Heitman 2005: 99.

the σταθμοί of the house are, like the bed, Odysseus' handiwork, and function similarly to the bed as material extensions of their maker which mirror him in their role as roof supports that hold up the house(hold).⁷²⁰ Wohl conflates the σταθμός and the bedpost when she argues that they both represent an ithyphallic *axis mundi* that is a symbol of man and his role as the supporter of the cosmic structure – supported by woman, whose position beside the *axis mundi* is essential.⁷²¹ Bonnafé also argues that the olive tree bedpost is an axis, but an axis in relation to which all directions are defined, as well as a marker which delineates interior space from exterior space.⁷²² The bed is a grounded, unmoving focal point which orients Odysseus in the world, and is also axial in the sense that many significant episodes and objects in Odysseus' life connect to it like spokes radiating around one central point.

The prophecy of Teiresias

Odysseus and Penelope seal their reunion by making love (and relating to one another the trails and tribulations each endured in their separation) on the bed, but before they retire for the night there is a digression in which Odysseus recounts to Penelope the prophecy he received from Teiresias:

...μάλα πολλὰ βροτῶν ἐπὶ ἄστε' ἄνωγεν
 ἐλθεῖν, ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχοντ' εὐήρες ἐρετμόν,
 εἰς ὃ κε τοὺς ἀφίκωμαι οἱ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν

⁷²⁰ As noted above, Penelope is described as standing by a σταθμός at 1.333, 16.415, 18.209, and 21.64, and she sits by a σταθμός at 17.96. Odysseus leans against the σταθμός at the threshold of the house, which 'the carpenter' (Odysseus) made straight to a chalk line, at 17.340-1, and there are σταθμοί at the threshold (which 'the carpenter' (Odysseus) made straight to chalk line) of Odysseus' storeroom at 21.43-5. Note also that Odysseus leans his bow against the σταθμός at the threshold where he stationed himself when disguised as a beggar at 22.120-1.

⁷²¹ Wohl 1993: 23, 44. Nagler 1977: 82-3 also conflates the σταθμός and the bedpost (and the ἰστός) as symbols for the cosmic axis. See also Zeitlin 1996: 26-7 on woman's fixed position in the innermost space of the house.

⁷²² Bonnafé 1985: 117-8, who notes the numerous prefixes, prepositions, and adverbs of spatial direction and location in the bed passage: ἀμφ(ι)-, (23.192, 196); καθύπερθεν, (193); ἐκ, (196, 199).

ἀνέρες, οὐδέ θ' ἄλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν· 270
 οὐδ' ἄρα τοί γ' ἴσασι νέας φοινικοπαρήους,
 οὐδ' εὐήρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται.
 σῆμα δέ μοι τόδ' ἔειπεν ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε κεύσω·
 ὀπότε κεν δὴ μοι ζυμβλήμενος ἄλλος ὀδίτης
 φήη ἀθηρηλοῖγόν ἔχειν ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὤμῳ, 275
 καὶ τότε μ' ἐν γαίῃ πῆξαντ' ἐκέλευεν ἐρετμόν,
 ἔρξανθ' ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι,
 ἀρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον,
 οἴκαδ' ἀποστείχειν, ἔρδειν θ' ἱερὰς ἐκατόμβας
 ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι, 280
 πᾶσι μάλ' ἐξείης· θάνατος δέ μοι ἐξ ἀλόος αὐτῶ
 ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ με πέφνη
 γήρα ὑπο λιπαρῶ ἀρημένον· ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ
 ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται· τὰ δέ μοι φάτο πάντα τελεῖσθαι. (23.267-84)

...[Teiresias] bid me to go to very many cities of
 men, bearing in my hands a well-fitted oar,
 until I reach men who do not know the sea,
 and do not eat their food mixed with salt, 270
 and indeed do not know red-cheeked ships,
 nor well-fitted oars, which are wings for ships.
 Then he told me this very clear sign, and I will not hide it from you:
 whenever some other wayfarer, upon encountering me,
 should say that I have a winnowing shovel on my shining shoulder, 275
 he told me to then plant my oar in the earth,
 and to offer pleasing sacrifices to lord Poseidon,
 a ram, a bull, and a mounter of sows – a boar,
 and to go back home, and offer holy hecatombs
 to the immortal gods, who hold broad heaven, 280
 all of them in order. Death will come to me (away)⁷²³ from the sea,
 a very gentle sort of death, which will strike me
 when I am worn out by sleek old age, and the people around me
 will be prosperous. All these things he told me will be accomplished.

When Teiresias initially relates this prophecy to Odysseus in Book 11, the two are in Hades and thus a conspicuously deathly context.⁷²⁴ Also, shortly before Odysseus meets Teiresias he

⁷²³ The phrase ἐξ ἀλόος is ambiguous, hence my ambiguous translation, “(away) from the sea.” Either Odysseus’ death will occur when he is far away from the sea, or its source will be the sea (though it will somehow still be “gentle”). For sources on this phrase, see Heubeck & Hoekstra 1990: 86 (though it is assumed here that ἐξ ἀλόος must mean “away from the sea”). For a succinct recapitulation of the issue, see Holmberg 1997: 23n.81.

⁷²⁴ 11.119-37.

encounters the shade of his crewmate Elpenor, who died when he fell off Circe's roof and implores Odysseus to bury his neglected body.⁷²⁵ Elpenor asks Odysseus to σῆμα...χεῦσαι – “heap up a grave mound,” (11.75) for him and to πῆξαι τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ ἐρετμόν – “plant an oar on the barrow,” (11.77). Odysseus agrees to do this for Elpenor, and later explains that he and his remaining companions buried Elpenor's body, concluding πῆξαμεν ἀκροτάτῳ τύμβῳ εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν – “we planted a well-fitted oar on the very top of the barrow,” (12.15). The similarities of planting (πῆξαντ', (23.276), πῆξας, (11.129), πῆξαι, (11.77), πῆξαμεν, (12.15)) a (well-fitted) oar (εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν, (23.268; 11.121, 129; 12.15), ἐρετμόν, (23.276; 11.77)) in the earth ((ἐν) γαίῃ, (23.276; 11.129)) and in a heap of earth ((ἐπὶ) τύμβῳ, (11.77; 12.15)) cause Odysseus' planted oar to resemble a grave marker on a burial mound, and Teiresias ends his prophecy by describing Odysseus' death. However, when Odysseus repeats the prophecy, it is not in the context of the *Nekyia* but after he has reunited with Penelope through his explanation of the bed's construction and before he and Penelope reunite intimately on the bed. As hinted at in chapters 2 and 3, I argue that the radically different context suggests that the prophecy communicates different information upon its second telling.

In the context of the bed, the image of an upright pole marking a space where humans lie beneath it indicates the horizontality not of death, but generative love-making and regenerative sleep.⁷²⁶ Not that death is entirely absent from the reiteration of Teiresias' prophecy, or from sleep and procreation: sleep and death are connected in the Homeric poems, from the personifications Thanatos and Hypnos being represented as twin brothers in the *Iliad* to Odysseus' sleep on the Phaeacians' ship being described as θανάτῳ ἄγχιστα εἰκώς – “very closely resembling death,” (13.80), and procreation is necessary to perpetuate the species

⁷²⁵ Elpenor's death: 10.551-60; Elpenor's shade and Odysseus converse: 11.51-83.

⁷²⁶ On the positive and negative aspects of the horizontal plane, see Bertolín 2008: 104-5.

amongst entities subject to death.⁷²⁷ The prophecy indeed still concludes by looking forward to Odysseus' old age and death, but the σῆμα... ἄριφραδέξ that is the crux of the oracle suggests something less like a burial mound and more like a tree bed which produces the 'fruit' that is the future generation.⁷²⁸ The σῆμα Odysseus is told to expect is a stranger whose ignorance of the sea and seafaring will lead him to call Odysseus' oar a winnowing shovel, an agricultural tool used to separate chaff from grain. This appears to be an understandable misidentification of one object as another, but I argue that the significance of the σῆμα here is that the oar is effectively re-identified as a winnowing shovel, and this re-identification of the object in turn affects Odysseus' identity. The winnowing shovel is an object which is also planted into a heap, but a heap of winnowed grain rather than a heap of earth.⁷²⁹ The planted winnowing shovel functions as a sign that the winnower's work is done, and the harvest has been completed. The oar planted in the earth marks the end of Odysseus' seafaring days, and is perhaps an anticipatory glimpse of his future grave mound, but as a winnowing shovel the object signals an end in agricultural terms: the harvest is seasonal and cyclical, and recurs *ad infinitum*.⁷³⁰ Odysseus began his return to humanity and his home as a σπέρμα πυρός – “seed of fire,” (5.490) whose boat was compared to thistle-down and grain chaff, reached home during the festival of Apollo marking the beginning of spring and the New Year, and will finalize his return when he plants the

⁷²⁷ For Thanatos and Hypnos as brothers, see *Il.* 16.672, 682 as well as Hesiod's *Theogony* 756.

⁷²⁸ DeSmidt 2006: 289 calls the family the new fruit and foliage of the olive tree bed. With Telemachus' birth the tree bed grows larger and encodes the potential for eternal growth.

⁷²⁹ Hansen 1977: 38-9, with reference to Harrison 1904: 241-6, explains the practice of planting a winnowing shovel in a heap of winnowed grain and cites an example of this practice in the context of a harvest festival from Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.155-6: ... ἐπὶ σωρῶ/αὔθις ἐγὼ πάξαιμι μέγα πτύον...

⁷³⁰ Hansen 1977: 38-9 suggests only that planting the oar/winnowing shovel marks the end of Odysseus' “quest as well as his definitive retirement from the sea,” while Nagy 1990a: 214, building on Hansen, adds that the object “is a stylized image of [Odysseus'] own tomb” (cf. Holmberg 1997: 24-5).

oar/winnowing shovel to mark the end of the harvest and the season.⁷³¹ And at its end, a seasonal cycle begins again. Odysseus, though mortal and thus destined to die, goes on to live through many more seasons, as is clear from the fact that Teiresias tells him he will die when he is γήρα ὑπο λιπαρῶ ἀρημένον – “worn out by sleek old age,” (23.283 = 11.136). ‘Sleek old age,’ a phrase which occurs in the *Odyssey* but not the *Iliad*, suggests that the seasons and harvests Odysseus has left to experience (which he modeled and lived through symbolically on his journey home) will be rich and bountiful, and it is said explicitly that his people will prosper. Rather than dying young and ignominiously like Elpenor, Odysseus will reap the harvest(s) of a full human life – including the ‘harvest’ of his bed and marriage.

The orchard of Laertes

Falkner also considers the ‘transformation’ of the oar into a winnowing shovel symbolic of Odysseus’ resumption of agricultural interests and thematically connected to the olive tree bed, as well as to another object: the orchard of Laertes.⁷³² The orchard is the final object I discuss in relation to the tree bed, and the final σῆμα of recognition. The morning after the slaughter of the suitors and his reunion with Penelope, Odysseus seeks out Laertes with the

⁷³¹ The boat is compared to thistledown at 5.328-30, and chaff at 5.368-70. On these passages and Odysseus as a σπέρμα πυρός, see ch. 2. On the New Year festival of Apollo and signs of spring at Odysseus’ return, see this chapter above.

⁷³² Falkner 1989: 52-3: “That the oar, symbol of the hero’s adventures, should be transformed into a winnowing fan and planted into the earth, like the olive tree of his bed or the trees of Laertes’ orchard, symbolizes Odysseus’ resumption of his agricultural interests. As in the earlier recognition scenes the σήματα of olive tree and orchard identified the hero to others, so here the prophecy of Tiresias presents a sequel in which the hero will recognize himself.” See also Henderson 1997: 89, 98. Nagler 1996: 154 connects the bed and the orchard, but not the oar/winnowing shovel. The orchard consists of several individual trees and plants, but I refer to the collective group as a singular object. In Book 24 of the *Odyssey*, the orchard is referred to with the collective singular nouns ἀλωή, (221, 224, 226, 336), ὄρχατος, (222, 245, 257, 358), and κῆπος, (247, 338).

intention of testing whether or not his father will recognize him.⁷³³ In Odysseus' absence, Laertes has been living not in the city but out in the fields, tending the land amongst the servants.⁷³⁴ Odysseus finds Laertes working in the orchard and tells him a lying tale, claiming to have entertained Odysseus several years prior, to which Laertes responds by grieving piteously.⁷³⁵ At this point Odysseus quickly asserts his true identity, and Laertes asks for a σῆμά... ἀριφραδές, (24.329) that proves he is Odysseus. Odysseus first shows Laertes the boar's scar, then turns to the orchard around them:

εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε' εὐκτιμένην κατ' ἄλωϊν
 εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ' ἔδωκας, ἐγὼ δ' ἤτεόν σε ἕκαστα
 παιδὸν ἐών, κατὰ κῆπον ἐπισπόμενος· διὰ δ' αὐτῶν
 ἰκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ' ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα.
 ὄγχνας μοι δῶκας τρισκαίδεκα καὶ δέκα μηλέας, 340
 συκέας τεσσαράκοντ'· ὄρχους δέ μοι ὦδ' ὀνόμηνας
 δώσειν πεντήκοντα, διατρύγιος δὲ ἕκαστος
 ἦην· ἔνθα δ' ἀνὰ σταφυλαὶ παντοῖαι ἔασιν,
 ὀππότε δὴ Διὸς ὄραι ἐπιβρίσειαν ὑπερθεν. (24.336-44)

But come and let me tell you the trees in the well-worked orchard, which you gave to me once, and I asked you about each one, being a child, following you throughout the garden. We went among these ones, and you named and told me each one. You gave me 13 pear trees and 10 apple trees,

⁷³³ 24.216-8. Odysseus' testing of Laertes has long bothered critics for appearing unnecessary and cruel, but several scholars have suggested explanations for Odysseus' puzzling behavior. See Falkner 1989: 42; Scodel 1998: 9-10; and Sels 2013: 190-1 for surveys of previous scholarship on the question. Scodel suggests that Odysseus' lying tale is an attempt to inspire Laertes to heroic action, since his help will be needed to face the slain suitors' outraged relatives. Breed 1999 argues that Odysseus tests Laertes' response when confronted with the consequences of neglecting a family member's corpse (even unintentionally). Sels suggests that Odysseus at first hides his identity to try to soften the emotional impact, which might be enough to kill Laertes, as it did Argus. Pucci 1996: 13 believes Odysseus might be communicating to Laertes that his excessive obsession with his orchard is ultimately an unnecessary refusal of life.

⁷³⁴ 1.188-93; 11.187-96; cf. 16.138-45; 24.205ff.

⁷³⁵ 24.226-317. Odysseus' lying tale, in particular the names he gives to himself and his ancestors, has received much scholarly attention; see, e.g., Clay 1983: 61; Peradotto 1990: 144; Russo *et al.* 1992: 394-5; Sels 2013: 197-9. Breed 1999: 148ff. intriguingly suggests that Odysseus wants Laertes to recognize him as the vengeful revenant corpse of a man who was never given proper burial rites, which might tie into the larger themes of revenge in the poem.

and 40 fig trees; and thus did you name for me the 50 vines
 you promised you would give, and each one bore fruit in seasonal
 succession, and there are clusters of grapes at every stage on them
 whenever the seasons of Zeus from above weigh them down heavily.

At these σήματ' ... ἔμπεδα, (24.346) Laertes is overwhelmed with emotion; he has been reunited with his long-lost son. As with the bed, the orchard's function as a σῆμα of recognition of Odysseus' identity indicates that an analysis of the object will be fruitful for the purposes of this project.

The bed and the orchard connect in several ways besides both acting as σήματα of recognition. Each object is the product of both nature and culture: both consist of a tree or trees, but tree(s) subjected to human influence.⁷³⁶ The trees of the orchard were presumably planted by humans, perhaps by Laertes himself (who is digging about in the orchard at 24.227 and 242), and have since been cared for and cultivated through human labor.⁷³⁷ Since both bed and orchard consist of trees, both are ἔμπεδα, rooted in the earth, and this rootedness is linked to their parallel

⁷³⁶ On the bed as a synthesis of nature and culture, see Starobinski 1975: 351; Bonnafé 1985: 117; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 20; Katz 1991: 181; Lateiner 1995: 278; Nagler 1996: 154; Zeitlin 1996: 23-4. Cf. Cook 1995: 154-5, 161-2, who argues that Odysseus “acculturates nature” when he fashions the tree into his bed, and that there is an antithesis between nature and culture throughout the *Odyssey*. Holmberg 1997: 20n.69, 22 also argues that the bed is purely cultural, and considers the orchard to be wholly natural. Wender 1978: 61 says that both Odysseus' relationship with Penelope and his relationship with Laertes are bonds “founded on nature” because they are represented by trees, but she considers the bed a symbol of the constancy of marriage and the orchard a symbol of the fruitfulness and necessary change of successive generations. Note that although Odysseus does not include any olive trees in his recitation of the orchard that proves his identity, he mentions an olive tree (ἐλαίη) at 24.246 when complimenting Laertes on the care he has invested in his orchard.

⁷³⁷ Note also that the land containing the orchard is described as ... ἀγρὸν.../καλὸν Λαέρταο τετυγμένον, ὃν ῥά ποτ' αὐτὸς/Λαέρτης κτεάτισσεν, ἐπεὶ μάλα πόλλ' ἐμόγησεν, (24.205-7). Russo *et al.* 1992: 382 says of κτεάτισσεν, whose exact meaning is disputed, “it clearly means that with his own hands and with great effort Laertes has brought a piece of land into cultivation, and so made it his own property.” See also Pucci 1996: 7.

functions as σήματ'...ἔμπεδα – “sure signs,” (23.206 and 24.346).⁷³⁸ The rootedness of the bed and the orchard in the earth represents in each case Odysseus' rootedness to Ithaca and to the house, the household, and the House of Laertes. The grounded tree bed and tree orchard orient Odysseus spatially in the world, but they also orient him by “determining his objectives and ordering his priorities,” rooting his obligations and interests in his homeland.⁷³⁹ The orchard might also be interpreted, like the bed, as a material extension of Odysseus' identity. Odysseus did not plant the trees and create the orchard; he was a child (παιδνός ἐών, 24.338) when Laertes named the already-established trees for him.⁷⁴⁰ However, he is set to inherit and thus own and exert his control over them. In Odysseus' extended absence, Laertes tended to the trees he had established as his son's patrimony as if the orchard were a substitute for Odysseus.⁷⁴¹ In the *Iliad*, trees are used as symbols of the successions of human generations, and children are metaphorically described as saplings.⁷⁴² For instance, Thetis describes her son Achilles as

⁷³⁸ Henderson 1997: 89 considers the orchard a σῆμα ἔμπεδον for the Arceisiads because the orchard's harvest is ἔμπεδον in the sense of a sure guarantee. He also believes that calling the orchard σήματ'...ἔμπεδα entwines it with the sign of the tree bed, as well as the sign of the oar/winnowing shovel.

⁷³⁹ Henderson 1997: 92, 100. Note that in the quote provided Henderson refers only to the orchard, while I extend his thought to the bed, as well (though Henderson does consider the orchard and bed thematically linked; see 89). Sels 2013: 200 connects the bed and the orchard as objects which both root Odysseus to Ithaca.

⁷⁴⁰ Note that the tree bed is thus connected yet again forward in the poem and backward to another point in time and in Odysseus' life: his childhood. Henderson 1997: 103 points out that Odysseus is also described as παιδνός ἐών at 21.21 when he went to Messene to reclaim the sheep and herdsmen rustled from Ithaca and ultimately received from Iphitus the bow, which was passed down to Iphitus from his father Eurytus, as the orchard is Odysseus' inheritance from Laertes.

⁷⁴¹ See Pucci 1996: 8-10 on the metaphorical equation of caring for an orchard and caring for a child. Pucci points out that the verb ἀμφιπολεύειν, ‘take care of,’ which is used of the orchard at 24.244-5 and 257, is elsewhere used of humans (18.254; 19.127; 20.78).

⁷⁴² Sels 2013: 201 cites Glaucus and Apollo's similar comparisons of men to the leaves of trees (*Il.* 6.146-9 and 21.464-6, respectively), and three instances of children being compared to trees or plants (*Il.* 18.56-7, 437-8 (Thetis compares her child Achilles to a tree, cited also by Pucci 1996: 8); 22.87 (Hecuba calls her child Hector a plant); 17.53-60 (Euphorbus is compared to an

shooting up like a sapling, and says that she reared him like a tree in an orchard.⁷⁴³ The trees Laertes labors over in the orchard are representative of the son he nurtured from infancy and desperately wishes he could tend to again. The symbolic connection to generational succession is another link between the bed and the orchard: the bed produces metaphorical fruit in cycles of human generations, while the orchard produces literal fruit in seasonal cycles, but fruit that is also symbolic of the Arceisiad family's continuity and prosperity.⁷⁴⁴ However, the orchard trees' ability to produce actual fruit is precisely where a significant difference between them and the bed lies: the trees in the orchard are not only rooted, they are alive. The orchard still grows, still changes with the season, and is continuously subject to and reflective of human input.

The orchard is representative of agriculture, a kind of human 'craftsmanship' in which the craftsman continuously labors over his living craft. Odysseus' reunion with Laertes is commonly interpreted as communicating the agricultural interests of the *Odyssey*: like the oar that is re-identified as a winnowing shovel, the orchard σῆμα marks Odysseus' transition from transitory seafaring to the groundedness of agriculture.⁷⁴⁵ Odysseus' promised 'sleek old age' and Laertes' presence in the poem have been interpreted as demonstrating an Odyssean model of ideal life which balances martial heroism and agricultural endeavors, and favors a long,

olive sapling that a man has raised in a lonely place)). Sels also mentions the common comparison of falling warriors to falling trees, and provides examples at 201n.36.

⁷⁴³ *Il.* 18.56-7 = 437-8: ὁ δ' ἀνέδραμεν ἔρνεϊ ἴσος·/τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ θρέψασα φυτὸν ὡς γουνῶ ἀλωῆς.

⁷⁴⁴ Segal 1994: 50 connects the seasonal cycles of the orchard to the generational cycles of humans and the continuity between generations that is established through the inheritance of objects, such as orchards. Falkner 1989: 43-4 calls the orchard the sign of the inheritance and continuity of the family, and Pucci 1996: 6 likewise considers the orchard a sign of familial continuity and prosperity.

⁷⁴⁵ On the oar/winnowing shovel specifically, see Hansen 1977: 38-9 and Nagy 1990a: 214. Falkner 1989: 52-3 and Henderson 1997: 89, 98 *et passim* consider the oar/winnowing shovel and orchard (and bed) interconnected symbols of Odysseus' return to agriculture.

productive lifetime over dying young in battle.⁷⁴⁶ Indeed, objects which communicate information about Odysseus' identity also demonstrate larger themes in Odysseus' poem and its poetic program, especially in (agonistic) relation to the *Iliad*. Katz compares Odysseus' tree bed with the σκῆπτρον by which Achilles swears his oath in the *Iliad*: Achilles describes this σκῆπτρον, saying ... οὐ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους/φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,/ οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε/φύλλά τε καὶ φλοιόν... – “never again will it grow leaves and branches, since first it left behind its stump in the mountains, nor will it ever sprout afresh; for the bronze stripped off the leaves and bark around it,” (*Il.* 1.234-7).⁷⁴⁷ Odysseus similarly cut off the olive tree's foliage and smoothed the remaining trunk with a bronze adze when constructing his bed, but in the *Iliad* craftsmanship is irrevocably severed from nature when it enters the realm of human culture.⁷⁴⁸ The bed, on the other hand, remains rooted in the earth and ‘grows’ metaphorically with the growth of the household. Nature and culture are harmonized in the bed, and in the *Odyssey*.

Harmony between human life and the cycles of the natural world is also apparent in the literal agri-culture of the *Odyssey*, as opposed to that of the *Iliad*. Agricultural imagery is present in the martial world of the *Iliad* mainly through similes, and these similes tend to be

⁷⁴⁶ Falkner 1989 argues that Laertes is a figure for exploring the “problematic of old age,” and acts as a bridge between conventional heroism and the broader values of post-heroic Ithaca, as well as a model for Odysseus' later years. He points out that Laertes both labors in the orchard and participates in battle when he kills Antinous' father, Eupheithes (24.522-5; note the presence of the phrase δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος, discussed above, at 519 and 522, and another typically martial line at 525, which occurs repeatedly in the *Iliad* (4.504; 5.42, 540; 13.187; 17.50, 311)), and that Odysseus responds to a taunt from Eurymachus by challenging him to agricultural contests or battle (18.366-80). Sels 2013: 200ff. cites Falkner 1989, but considers agriculture “the opposite of martial life,” rather than a complement to it.

⁷⁴⁷ Katz 1991: 180-1.

⁷⁴⁸ On nature and culture in the *Iliad*, see Nagy 1979: 174-85 (cited above) on the notion of κλέος ἄφθιτον, and Redfield 1975: *passim*, esp. 71-2, 101-3, 126, 161-2, 169-70, 200-1, 218-20. Finkelberg 1998: 110-1 argues that craftsmanship in the Homeric poems is a productive force that competes with, and is strictly separated from, the productive force of nature.

pessimistically focused on death. Apollo compares “wretched” (δειλῶν, *Il.* 21.464) mortals to leaves: one moment they flourish, the next they wither and die. Glaucus’ comparison of the generations of men to those of leaves is somewhat more positive, since it acknowledges that while one generation perishes, another grows and lives, but it is still in the context of Glaucus’ cynical dismissal of genealogical litanies (τί ἢ γενεὴν ἐρεεῖνεις; – “why do you ask about my lineage?,” 6.145); the past generations are as obsolete as fallen leaves. When Thetis and Hecuba compare their sons to a tree and a plant respectively, each anticipates her child’s premature death on the battlefield and mourns over the labor she invested in her ‘sapling’ which will ultimately be for naught.⁷⁴⁹ Euphorbus is compared to an olive tree sapling a man has nurtured – but this simile is employed to describe Euphorbus’ death: he falls like an olive uprooted from the ground by a strong wind.⁷⁵⁰ Unlike the doomed men compared to plants that wither or are uprooted in the *Iliad*, Odysseus, like his bed and his orchard, remains ἔμπεδος (‘safe and sound’), and returns to the land whence he first sprouted and to which he is ἔμπεδος (‘firmly rooted’). The bed has produced the ‘fruit,’ Telemachus, that ensures the continuity of Odysseus’ house and lineage, and the orchard with its “seasonal succession” promises to ensure continuity by providing for the family year after year and acting as a living inheritance that links each member of the line to the next (and the previous). Odysseus’ household functions in tandem with the cycles of the natural world and benefits from the cooperation of man and nature. Odysseus will not avoid the death that is inevitable for mortals, but the final σήματα of recognition which prove his identity reiterate and reaffirm the poem’s larger themes of cyclical rebirth and renewal that reached their

⁷⁴⁹ At *Il.* 18.54-60 and 436-41 Thetis laments the fact that the son she raised like tree in an orchard will never return home, and at 22.82-9 Hecuba begs Hector, the beloved plant which she bore, not to leave the safety of Troy to face Achilles.

⁷⁵⁰ *Il.* 17.53-60. Note also that comparisons of dying warriors to falling trees are not infrequent in the *Iliad*.

climax at the new moon of the festival of Apollo that marked the new season, the new year, and the return of the hero as if from the dead.

Penelope's φᾶρος (again)

To conclude this chapter and this project, I circle back around, like the poem, to an object discussed at the beginning of chapter 2 and at the beginning and end of the *Odyssey*: the φᾶρος woven (and unwoven) by Penelope. The tale of Penelope's weaving ruse is told three times over the course of the narrative, but the third iteration in Book 24 has been noted for ending with a deviation from the other versions: εὔθ' ἡ φᾶρος ἔδειξεν, ὑφήνασα μέγαν ἰστόν,/πλύνασ', ἠελίῳ ἐναλίγκιον ἢ ἐσελήνη – “then [Penelope] displayed her weaving, having woven a great web and washed it; and it was like the sun or the moon,” (24.147-8).⁷⁵¹ These two lines suggest that the function of the φᾶρος is in fact nuptial, rather than funereal as Penelope initially claimed. As mentioned above in chapter 3, the laundering of special garments indicates preparation for a wedding: Nausicaa is encouraged by Athena in a dream to go to the seashore and wash her family's finery in anticipation of her wedding day, which is near at hand.⁷⁵² There is another encounter between the sexes in the context of the laundry in Eumaeus' tale about the Phoenician slave woman who was seduced by merchants while out doing the washing, but the only extended scene of laundering clothing in the *Odyssey* is Nausicaa's excursion, which is explicitly in

⁷⁵¹ The story of Penelope weaving her φᾶρος during the day and unraveling it at night occurs at 2.93-110; 19.137-56; 24.128-48. See Lowenstam 2000 for an analysis of the differences between each version of the tale.

⁷⁵² Nausicaa's dream and expedition to do the laundry is at 6.15ff. On the (pre)nuptial connotations of washing fine clothing, see Austin 1991: 238-9; Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994: 117-9; Clayton 2004: 47-8; Levaniouk 2011: 271-2. As I discuss in ch. 3, Nausicaa responds to encountering and being flattered by the seemingly-eligible bachelor Odysseus by giving him a φᾶρος (which appears to be associated with marriage/love-making, and is perhaps the proper attire for weddings (see Levaniouk 2011: 117-118, 124, 126, 271-3)) to wear, perhaps because she is purposefully styling him as her bridegroom (see Ahl & Roisman 1996: 59).

preparation for marriage.⁷⁵³ Austin points out that the period of the conjunction of sun and moon (that is, the new moon) is a particularly propitious time for marriages, and this appears to be the exact timing of Odysseus and Penelope's reunion.⁷⁵⁴ Other scholars have since suggested that the nuptial connotations of this celestial conjunction are present in the comparison of the φᾶρος to "the sun or the moon."⁷⁵⁵ They note that the only other objects in the Homeric poems which are compared to "the sun or the moon" are two houses, that of Menelaus and that of Alcinous, in two identical lines.⁷⁵⁶ Both of these houses are anticipating marriages: Menelaus is hosting a wedding feast for the marriages of his son and daughter when Telemachus arrives, and Nausicaa is on the verge of marriage when Odysseus is entertained by Alcinous, who offers his daughter's hand to his guest.⁷⁵⁷ The φᾶρος that appeared to be a burial shroud for Laertes, and by extension the House of Laertes, is transformed in its final appearance into a bridegroom's robe for Odysseus that plays a role in the family's continuity.

The shift in the function of the φᾶρος unravels a knot of uncertainty left unresolved earlier in the poem, and earlier in this project: the paradox of Penelope as chaste and yet alluring,

⁷⁵³ The Phoenician woman's seduction is related at 15.417-22. Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994: 119 points out that in the *Iliad*, Hector is killed near the Trojan laundries which are supplied with water by springs of the Scamander (22.147-57). The Trojan women used to wash their εἴματα σιγαλόεντα (just what Nausicaa's clothing is called at *Od.* 6.26) here during peacetime, and Papadopoulou-Belmehdi claims that the Scamander was also used for the ritual baths of Trojan brides-to-be before their weddings. At *Il.* 22.442-6, Andromache has a bath prepared for her husband's return, but the bath is drawn in vain: Andromache learns that her husband is dead, and tears off her headgear (including her κρήδεμνον, which was given to her by Aphrodite on her wedding day) (22.463-72) and says she will burn the clothing (εἴματα) of the house, since Hector will get no use out of them (22.510-3). The empty laundries, untouched bath, unveiling, and destruction of fine clothes create a rich tableau of the tragic dissolution of this doomed couple's marriage.

⁷⁵⁴ Austin 1975: 251-2, 283n.17 with reference to Bieber 1949: 32-4, who discusses Greek marriages consummated at the dark of the moon between the final month of winter and the first month of spring.

⁷⁵⁵ Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994: 117-8; Clayton 2004: 47-8; Levaniouk 2011: 271.

⁷⁵⁶ 4.45 = 7.84: ὧς τε γὰρ ἠελίου αἴγλη πέλεν ἠὲ σελήνης.

⁷⁵⁷ 4.1-12; 7.311-5.

married woman and yet bride-to-be. At the beginning of chapter 2 I discuss the problematic nature of the κρήδεμνον Penelope holds before her face when she interacts with the suitors, and the φᾶρος in progress on the loom as another kind of ‘veil’ for Penelope. While these veiling objects signal that Penelope is under the guardianship of her husband and that the suitors are not welcome in her home, the κρήδεμνον held before the face could also be a bridal veil held in a nuptial gesture, and the φᾶρος as veil could suggest a bridal headdress in the sense that its completion means (as the suitors believe) Penelope will choose a husband and marry.⁷⁵⁸ With the change in the tale of the weaving ruse we see how the poet deftly binds together the polar opposites of chastity and allurements, matron and bride, inherent in the veil that obscures Penelope’s character: she is revealed to be not wife and yet potential bride of a suitor, but simultaneously chaste wife and alluring bride of Odysseus, with whom she is ‘remarried’ upon his return. The φᾶρος the suitors believed was a shroud for Laertes and a sign of marriage for one of them turns out to be in a sense a shroud for the suitors, who are all killed, and a wedding garment for an Arceisiad. The bard’s command of the poetic possibilities of representations of objects in his song allows him to employ the paradoxical veil to communicate the chaos and uncertainty on Ithaca and in Odysseus’ house prior to the hero’s return, and then to rework the veil and harmonize its disparate connotations to signify the resolution of Ithacan dissolution, and the resolution of the poem. The φᾶρος, which was literally fashioned, un-fashioned, and re-fashioned, exemplifies the poetic object’s capacity to be polysemic and malleable in the hands of the poet, and to communicate vast amounts of information crucial to the poetic program. Like the oar for a barrow which becomes a winnowing shovel for harvested grain and the trees of the orchard which are transformed from winter’s death-like dormancy to the revivification of spring,

⁷⁵⁸ See ch. 2 above for further discussion and references.

the φῶρος is a shroud when we first find Odysseus frozen in stasis on Calypso's island, but it becomes a wedding robe when Odysseus finally completes his rebirth and begins his life anew.

EPILOGUE

The intention of this dissertation has been to investigate some of the ways that the object, conceived of as ‘solid metaphor’ onto which a particular schema of thought is mapped and in which information is coded, can function as a σῆμα at the disposal of the Homeric poet. As a σῆμα, meaning here any traditional poetic strategy in the poet’s arsenal, (a representation of) an object cues meaning beyond its immediate ontological reality and context by tapping into the nexus of associations and connotations that readily accumulate around it because of its tangible, accessible materiality. For the purposes of this project, I have sought to demonstrate objects’ capacity to do poetic work by analyzing their role in communicating information about Odysseus’ identity in the *Odyssey*. Although my assertion that certain objects are significant for Odysseus is not unprecedented, I contribute a new perspective to Homeric scholarship by scrutinizing the *Odyssey* as a whole through a distinct methodological lens that claims a level of semantic and poetic capacity for objects not yet considered.

My analysis shows that ‘reading’ objects across a poetic text allows us to see how they are not isolated elements in a poem, but are actively woven into interconnected webs of associations and meaning, and serve to advance the themes and poetic program of the work. For instance, Odysseus’ presence in his poem is bookended by lengthy descriptions of his crafting of two objects: his boat and his bed. Both of these objects are connected forward and backward through the narrative to other significant objects (e.g., the ἱστός (mast) of the boat links to Penelope’s ἱστός (loom/web), and the olive tree of the bed links to numerous other olive trees and olive wood), and each one is indicative of Odysseus’ unique identity as a craftsman. In both crafting passages, Odysseus is described as making the object in question “straight to a chalk line,” a repeated formulaic phrase which suggests the plucking of lyre strings, as well as the

plucking of a bow string. I argue that each time an object is described as being “straight to a chalk line,” the poet cues the audience to receive important information about Odysseus, and each time the phrase reminds us that the hero is Odysseus *πολύτεχνος*, a master of many skills including carpentry, poetry, and archery. The boat and the bed both communicate important thematic information about the Odyssean hero, and both objects are Odysseus’ handiwork and thus especially closely linked to him. However, the boat and the bed differ in significant ways that reflect the trajectory of the *Odyssey*’s narrative: the boat is appropriate for Odysseus’ situation at the beginning of the poem, where his craftsmanship is his initial reengagement with humanity and allows him to cross the boundary of the sea and start the process of his re-initiation and return. The bed passage occurs near the end of the *Odyssey* and at the fulfillment of his return, and its unique immobility serves to root Odysseus to the Ithacan identity he has regained. The boat and the bed diverge in meaning, and yet their meanings are interconnected and each is used to communicate the coherent, overarching themes of the *Odyssey*.

Admittedly, this dissertation is not an exhaustive survey of every object in the Homeric poems. For the purposes of this project, it was far more feasible for me to focus squarely on the *Odyssey* and Odysseus. However, as I hint at near the end of chapter 4, the foundations laid here have the potential to inform further analysis of literary objects: I very briefly touch on the ways that objects play into the differing poetic agendas of the Homeric poems (which deserves additional attention in the future) and I believe that the *Iliad* itself is ripe for such an examination as this. Also, as noted in chapter 1, objects have been analyzed in Classical scholarship in numerous genres and periods of Greek literature. I believe that my work on Odyssean objects can contribute not only to our understanding of Homeric poetry, but also to our understanding of subsequent Greek literature, and Western literature and thought at large.

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