

An Extended Narrative Pattern in the *Odyssey*

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COMMENTATORS have suggested many possible structures and component patterns around which the plot of the *Odyssey* might be organized.¹ One resource of the composing oral poet is the *theme*,² with the various forms of manipulation to which it is subject: expansion, ring-composition, multiforms of the same theme, *etc.* I here analyze an instance of what some commentators call composition by theme.³ I argue, however, that to view the *Odyssey* in terms of many separate themes, as Lord and others have done, can cause misunder-

¹ Among many relevant studies, the following will be referred to by author's last name: W. J. WOODHOUSE, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 1930); A. B. LORD, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge 1960); M. L. LANG, "Homer and Oral Techniques," *Hesperia* 38 (1969) 159-68; A. THORNTON, *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey* (London 1970); W. F. HANSEN, *The Conference Sequence: Patterned Narration and Narrative Inconsistency in the Odyssey* (=CPCS 8 [Berkeley 1972]); B. FENIK, *Studies in the Odyssey* (=Hermes Einzelschrift 30 [Wiesbaden 1974]); R. B. RUTHERFORD, "At Home and Abroad: Aspects of the Structure of the *Odyssey*," *PCPS* NS. 31 (1985) 133-50; G. CRANE, *Calypso: Backgrounds and Conventions of the Odyssey* (=Beitr.z.kl.Phil. 191 [Frankfurt a.M. 1988]); G. E. DIMOCK, *The Unity of the Odyssey* (Amherst 1989); M. A. KATZ, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminance in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1991); S. REECE, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor 1993).

² For definitions of the *theme* see Lord 68ff and his *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca 1991) 27ff, as well as G. Nagy, "Homeric Questions," *TAPA* 122 (1992) 27. For a different view, see K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer: Narrative Structure in the Iliad* (Princeton 1993) 321 n.47.

³ For examples and analyses of composition by theme, see most recently M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary* V (Cambridge 1991) 11ff; G. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* II (Cambridge 1990) 15ff; B. B. Powell, *Composition by Theme in the Odyssey* (=Beitr.z.kl.Phil. 81 [Meisenheim am Glan 1977]). Hansen, however, uses the term sequence in much the same way that Lord and others use theme. In Lord and many subsequent writers, theme is used for narrative units depicting councils, the return home of the hero, *etc.*; very disparate types of narrative units have been loosely grouped under this single word.

standing of the functions of specific elements in the plot. I suggest that we can better appreciate the *Odyssey's* structure by concentrating not on specific themes but on whole complexes of interwoven themes. I further argue that consideration of such clusters of themes offers a more accurate understanding of Homeric compositional technique than traditional analysis by theme. I employ the phrase "extended narrative pattern"⁴ to refer to a large recurring complex of themes and type-scenes.

Much useful scholarship has focused on the parallels between Odysseus' stay on Skheria and his arrival on Ithaka.⁵ I suggest that the many details replicated in these two sections also have close parallels in the *Apologue*.⁶ I argue that one extended narrative pattern accounts for much of the structure and shape of the *Odyssey's* plot. Let us first consider a basic statement of the pattern, which we shall flesh out with further details.

Stated most simply, the narrative pattern is as follows: *Odysseus, as earlier prophesied, arrives at an island, disoriented and ignorant of his location. A divine helper appears, advising him on how to approach a powerful female figure who controls access to the next phase of his homecoming, and points out potential difficulties regarding a band of young men. His identity a secret, as approach to the female is perilous, Odysseus reaches her, discovering a figure who is initially suspicious, distant, or even hostile towards him. She imposes a test on him, whereupon Odysseus, having successfully passed the test, wins her sympathy and help, obtaining access to the next phase of his homecoming. Their understanding is made manifest in her hospitable offer of a bath. Furthermore, Odysseus is now*

⁴ First used, I believe, by Barry Powell in "Narrative Pattern in the Homeric Tale of Menelaus," *TAPA* 101 (1970) 419-31. As M. W. Edwards notes, "Homer and Oral Tradition: The Type-Scene," *Oral Tradition* 7 (1972) 285f, such an approach is indebted to V. Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (repr. Austin 1968). For distinctions between *theme*, *type-scene*, and *narrative pattern* see Edwards.

⁵ Among recent work see G. Rose, "The Unfriendly Phaeacians," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 387-406; Fenik, *passim*; T. van Nortwick, "Penelope and Nausicaa," *TAPA* 109 (1979) 269-76; Rutherford; Reece 101-21; Katz, *passim*. One of the best such discussions remains Lang.

⁶ Perhaps one reason that correspondences between events at Aiaia and those at Ithaka and Skheria have not been as well established as those between Ithaka and Skheria is that Odysseus narrates the *Apologue*, while the principal narrator narrates the other two sections, resulting in a diminished responsiveness in diction and formula than found between the Skherian and Ithakan sequences.

offered sexual union and/or marriage with the female. Conflict arises, however, between Odysseus and the band of young men. The young men abuse Odysseus in various ways and violate a divine interdiction. The leader of each band has the parallel name of Eury-. Their consequent death, earlier prophesied, is brought about by a divine avenger. A divine consultation limits the extent of the death and destruction.

The *Odyssey* explores three extensive multiforms of this narrative pattern and occasionally offers briefer treatments of the same. The three extended multiforms are: Odysseus, Circe, and the crew; Odysseus, Nausikaa/Arete,⁷ and the Phaiakian athletes; Odysseus, Penelope, and the suitors. In each multiform, a particular element may receive greater development and attention or have a greater function than in the other multiforms. By comparing the three multiforms, however, we can better understand individual details in each narrative unit, some of which have received widely varying interpretations. I argue that the Ithakan multiform, the most expansive, is the goal towards which the other two multiforms tend. They are rehearsals or anticipations of what later unfolds at greater length.

Before noting other tendencies, let us turn to an investigation of the structure, proceeding through Odysseus' encounters in their chronological order of Aiaia (Books 10–12), Skheria (6–8, 11.333–84, 13.1–187) and Ithaka (13.187 to the conclusion of the poem), and synchronically comparing Odysseus' progress through each of the three multiforms. As we are dealing with substantial sections of the poem, discussion of some areas, and relevant secondary literature, is necessarily brief.

Odysseus, as earlier prophesied,⁸ arrives at an island, disoriented and ignorant of his location. Though Odysseus names Circe's island, Aiaia, in his narration to the Phaiakians (10.135), his knowledge of the name is clearly retrospective. Upon arrival he and the crew are literally disoriented as to where they are, ignorant of the island's name and location

⁷ I suggest that the two functions of sexuality and power over Odysseus' homecoming, which elsewhere are embodied in one female (Circe and Penelope), are on Skheria bifurcated into Nausikaa, whose rôle carries an erotic and marital implication, and Arete, who controls access to Odysseus' homecoming. I return to this topic on 13 *infra*.

⁸ Though in each instance, report of the prophecy is delayed until after the actual arrival.

(10.190ff): "we do not know where the darkness is nor the sunrise, nor where the Sun ... rises, nor where he sets."⁹ Circe is able to recognize Odysseus because Hermes had told her he would come (10.330ff): "Argeiphontes of the golden staff was forever telling me you would come to me, on your way back from Troy with your fast black ship." Here as elsewhere, we can equate such divine discourse with prophecy.¹⁰

Similarly, though the narrative earlier mentions Skheria and the Phaiakians,¹¹ Odysseus, on arrival, is unaware of his whereabouts: "Ah me, what are the people whose land I have come to this time" (6.119). Alkinoos later reveals to Odysseus that his father had said that Poseidon would one day severely punish the Phaiakians for ferrying men home (8.564-70). Odysseus is not named, but the prophecy, as carried out in Book 13, clearly refers to his own arrival and departure.

With typical Odyssean irony, Odysseus cannot recognize Ithaka when he first awakens there in Book 13 (13.187ff): "but now great Odysseus wakened from sleep in his own fatherland, and he did not know it, having been long away." His first words, identical to those uttered when he awoke on Skheria, occur only in these two instances (13.200ff=6.119ff).¹² Theoklymenos offers the most important prophecy of Odysseus' return. Having been brought to the palace just as Odysseus is actually headed there with Eumaios, Theoklymenos, descended from an illustrious family of prophets,¹³ correctly prophesies that Odysseus is already on Ithaka, plotting revenge (17.152-61).

A divine helper appears, advising him on how to approach a powerful female figure, who controls access to the next phase of his homecoming, and pointing out difficulties regarding a band of young men. On Aiaia, Hermes encounters Odysseus

⁹ Citations from the *Odyssey*, unless otherwise noted, are from the translation of R. Lattimore (New York 1967).

¹⁰ The *Odyssey* offers a parallel in Hermes' visit to Aigisthos, described by Zeus at 1.38ff.

¹¹ Zeus first names the land and people in his prophecy at 5.34ff.

¹² Clearly there are significant differences in Odysseus' arrival at the three islands. He is accompanied by his crew when he reaches Aiaia, while he is completely alone when he makes his landfall on Skheria, his landing on Ithaka falling somewhat in between. Each sequence, however, has Odysseus ignorant of his location, and frustrated as a consequence.

¹³ The poem gives his lineage at 15.225-56, as well as the partially suppletive information at 11.291ff.

after Eurylokhos and the half crew fail to scout the island. The god appears, assuming the form of a young man (10.277ff):¹⁴ “there as I came up to the house, Hermes of the golden staff met me on my way, in the likeness of a young man with beard new grown, which is the most graceful time of young manhood.” In a curiously playful¹⁵ speech Hermes advises Odysseus that the crews have been transformed and confined to pens. Then, counseling Odysseus how to approach Circe safely, he predicts a hostile reception. Armed with Hermes’ drug and advice, Odysseus is to proceed by offering the threat of violence with his drawn sword and making no agreements with her until she swears an oath that she will devise no further harm.

Odysseus begins to have difficulties with his crew during the stay on Aiaia. Although earlier episodes foreshadow what later develops into almost open hostility. The first stop in the *Apologue* offers an anticipatory echo of this tendency.¹⁶ After successfully sacking Ismaros, the crew ignores Odysseus’ suggestion of a quick departure (9.44f, “they were greatly foolish and would not listen, and then and there much wine was being drunk, and they slaughtered many sheep on the beach.” As a consequence, the Kikones have time to gather allies and counterattack Odysseus and crew, turning a successful raid into a disaster claiming six crewmen from each ship. Rebellion continues when, sailing home from Aiolos’ isle, an unnamed

¹⁴ Hermes’ physical form here has occasioned much comment. See A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey II* (Oxford 1989) 58f *ad* 10.274–79 for a brief summary of the different points of view. The debate centers on an alleged lack of motivation for Hermes’ appearance as a young man, when archaic iconography more typically presents him as a somewhat older male. Although he assumes a similar form for his intervention at *Il.* 24.347, his youthful appearance there is thought to be more fittingly motivated by the context. Heubeck and others thus assume the Aiaian passage is modelled on *Il.* 24. I offer a different view below.

¹⁵ *E.g.* Hermes opens with a question to which he knows the answer, much as Athene plays with Odysseus at *Od.* 13.221ff and Apollo teases Hektor at *Il.* 15.244f; *cf.* 24.360ff, where the testing seems mutual between Hermes and Priam. This is quite typical of divine intercourse with mortals; *cf.* also Yahweh’s questions of Adam at *Gen.* 3:9ff. I suggest that Hermes, in ὄδύστηνε, makes something of a play on the first two syllables of Odysseus’ name, which he never utters.

¹⁶ For the term “anticipatory echo,” see M. W. Edwards, “*Topos* and Transformation in Homer,” in J. Bremmer, *et al.*, edd., *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry* (Amsterdam 1987) 50ff.

ἑταῖρος suggests that the crew open the bag of winds,¹⁷ which subsequently blow them back to the isle (10.34f). In effect, minor mutinies occur in both episodes. On Aiaia the narrative begins to assign distinct personalities and names for the crew. Eurylokhos, deputed to lead half the men to investigate the island, fails to carry out Odysseus' orders, partly conforming to the established mutinous pattern that will reach a climax on Thrinakia.

On Skheria, Odysseus prays to Athene that he come among the Phaiakians as φίλος and ἐλεεινός. As with Hermes in Book 10, the divine helper takes a youthful form: "There the gray-eyed goddess Athene met him, in the likeness of a young girl, a little maid, carrying a pitcher" (7.19f). When Odysseus asks her for directions to Alkinoos' palace, the disguised Athene warns him that the Phaiakians are not hospitable to strangers (7.33, οὐδ' ἀγαπαζόμενοι φιλέουσ' ὅς κ' ἄλλοθεν ἔλθῃ). The narrator has earlier described her covering Odysseus in a mist so that no Phaiakian would taunt or provoke him (7.15ff). The warnings about possible Phaiakian hostility¹⁸ point ahead not only to the delays Odysseus will face in the palace but especially to the rude taunts he will receive from the young men during the games in Book 8. When he reaches the palace, Athene recommends that Odysseus advance boldly (much as Hermes advised for the approach to Circe).¹⁹ Surprisingly, she bids him to approach not Alkinoos, the king, but queen Arete, whose importance is emphasized in the lengthy expansion that follows on her ancestry and stature among the Phaiakians (7.54–75). The goddess concludes, emphasizing that a successful homecoming depends on Arete's good will (7.75ff):²⁰ "So if she has thoughts in her mind that are friendly to you, then there is hope that you

¹⁷ This constitutes a further parallel in the narrative pattern. Each of the three bands of young men has their homecoming destroyed by a guest-gift given to Odysseus, most prominent of which is Eurytos' bow.

¹⁸ Nausikaa has also warned him at 6.273ff. Note especially her remark, μάλα δ' εἰσὶν ὑπερφίαλοι κατὰ δῆμον (6.274).

¹⁹ "... but you go in with a spirit that fears nothing. The bold man proves the better for every action in the end, even though he be a stranger coming from elsewhere" (7.50ff).

²⁰ Some scholars continue to question the accuracy of Athene's and Nausikaa's claims for the importance of Arete: see, for instance, Fenik 105ff. Despite the difficulties, I suggest that a comparison of her function with those of Circe, Nausikaa, and Penelope reinforces Athene's claim (as well as Nausikaa's, at 6.303–15).

can see your own people, and come back to your house with the high roof and to the land of your fathers.”

In Book 13, having awakened on Ithaka and suspecting treachery on the part of the Phaiakian rowers, Odysseus is again approached by a disguised Athene (13.221ff): “Now Athene came near him, likening herself in form to a young man, a herdsman of sheep, a delicate boy, such as the children of kings are.” As on Aiaia and Skheria, the divine helper takes a youthful appearance. We noted above (n.13) that Hermes’ youthful form in Book 10 has provoked considerable debate, but it is clearly part of the basic structure of all three episodes.²¹ In each encounter the respective deity has come specifically to offer advice and aid; consistent with this purpose, the god assumes an emphatically non-threatening guise.²² I suggest that Hermes’ youthful form on Aiaia is not simply modelled on *Il.* 24.347, but is better understood as conforming to a repeated pattern in the *Odyssey*.

In the ensuing dialogue, Athene teases and manipulates Odysseus, much as Hermes has done in Book 10. She withholds the name of the land, for which Odysseus has specifically asked (13.233), until the end of her reply (13.248), noting that even a fool knows the name of Ithaka: νήπιός εἰς, ᾧ ξείν’ ... εἰ δὴ τήνδε γε γαῖαν ἀνείρεαι (13.237f).²³ Her advice, however, strongly contrasts with the advice given in the earlier multi-forms. She counsels an initially passive approach (13.306ff), as opposed to his bold advance to Circe, and the direct approach to Arete: he is to endure the suitors’ abuse in silence, while plotting their destruction. She also notes that he is to test Penelope (336). This different course of action allows the suitors more room to display their outrageous behavior and places more emphasis on Penelope’s dilemma, whereas neither

²¹ The pattern, in fact, seems quite ancient and wide-spread. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*² V (Bloomington 1957) N716.1, “Man discovers bathing maiden.” Many have discussed the pattern, e.g. Fenik 33ff, Reece 12ff.

²² In book 13 Athene’s visit is first motivated by a teasing test (as Odysseus employs in similar encounters, e.g. that with Laertes in book 24), which then gives way to offering advice and aid: see Reece 10 on a similar mixture of type scenes.

²³ This teasing quality is quite close to Hermes’ dialogue with Priam at *Il.* 24.362ff, perhaps more so than the dialogue between Odysseus and Hermes at *Od.* 10.281ff.

Circe nor Arete plays a lasting rôle, by comparison with Penelope, in Odysseus' agenda.

The Ithakan multiform is a greatly expanded version of those on Aiaia and Skheria. Odysseus' meeting with Athene, for instance, is almost four times as long as the two earlier divine encounters (13.221-440; cf. 10.275-308, 7.18-81). Part of the expansion involves indirection: Athene instructs Odysseus to visit first Eumaios, not Penelope.²⁴ Athene's Ithakan consultation also differs from the two earlier scenes, for only here does the deity assume her proper form (13.288ff), while in Books 10 and 7 Hermes and Athene retain their youthful guise throughout. The most striking difference, however, is that on Ithaka Athene counsels disguise and indirection, whereas on Aiaia and Skheria Odysseus approaches the female directly.²⁵

His identity a secret, as approach to the female is perilous, Odysseus reaches her finding a figure who is initially suspicious, distant or even hostile towards him. When Odysseus arrives, Circe does not know who he is, but the narrator leaves no doubt as to her hostile intent. She drugs the drink she offers him, a grave violation of hospitality (the narrator notes her ominous intent, *κακὰ φρονέουσ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ*, 10.317). Furthermore, the crew, transformed into pigs, are kept in a pen, apparently intended for eating.²⁶ Well armed by Hermes' warning, however, Odysseus withstands Circe and rushes forward, sword drawn, as if to kill her. Startled and in a panic, the goddess embraces his knees in supplication, asking the standard question between strangers, *τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆς;* (10.325).²⁷ Though not analyzed as such by

²⁴ Eumaios shares some parallels with Alkinoos in this respect. Each is Odysseus' first host on his respective island, until Odysseus wins over Arete/Penelope. Each is closely concerned with the initial storytelling that occurs in both locales.

²⁵ This is partly due to the different contexts. On Ithaka many people, whether loyal servants or hostile suitors, are capable of recognizing Odysseus if he is not disguised.

²⁶ On this as the likely intent, see Crane 64 and Powell (*supra* n.3) 16 n.53.

²⁷ For a study of the other passages initiated by this line see A. Webber, "The Hero Tells His Name: Formula and Variation in the Phaeacian Episode of the *Odyssey*," *TAPA* 119 (1989) 1-13.

commentators, the encounter is a recognition scene.²⁸ What distinguishes it from most recognitions is Circe's status as a goddess. Armed with Hermes' earlier prediction of Odysseus' arrival, she immediately deduces his identity.²⁹ On both Skheria and Ithaka the approach to the female is significantly more complex. As suggested earlier (*supra* n.7), I argue that the functions found together in Circe and Penelope are on Skheria separated into Nausikaa and Arete, Nausikaa retaining the sexual and marital element, Arete remaining a more powerful but less intimate figure.³⁰ Odysseus must first approach Nausikaa before he can advance further.

In terms of her prior position in the narrative, Nausikaa functions as an anticipatory echo of Arete: Odysseus' success in coming to terms with her anticipates his later success with Arete. Furthermore, the narrative offers close parallels between Odysseus' encounter with Nausikaa and later encounters with Penelope.³¹

As with Circe, divine prompting engineers Nausikaa's meeting with Odysseus. Where Circe received direct warning from Hermes (10.330f), Athene sends Nausikaa a dream that predisposes her to view Odysseus as a potential husband. Nausikaa, and the episode itself, dwells almost obsessively on the possibility of marriage with Odysseus.³² The encounter is im-

²⁸ S. Murnaghan, for instance, does not include it in her thorough analysis of Odyssean recognition scenes in *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1987).

²⁹ Hermes thus functions as a consummate mediator in this episode, as he is responsible both for advising Odysseus on how to deal with Circe, as well as having advised Circe of the eventual approach of Odysseus.

³⁰ From a related perspective, consider Crane's comments: "The Medea of the *Argonautica* fuses in a single character aspects which the *Odyssey* distributes between Nausikaa on the one hand and Circe/Calypso on the other hand" (142). Many commentators have, in fact, assumed that Nausikaa is partly based on an earlier tradition of Medea's rôle.

³¹ For recent commentary on this parallel, see especially Lang, van Nortwick (*supra* n.5), and Katz 86f, 114f, 136f, 141, *etc.*

³² See the close of Odysseus' speech to her (6.180-85), her subsequent proclamation, "If only the man to be called my husband could be like this one" (6.244), her anticipation of abuse from the other Phaiakians, "Surely he is to be her husband" (277), and Alkinoos' explicit reference to marriage with Odysseus (7.311ff). There is a considerable literature touching on this subject: see, for example, Woodhouse, and R. Lattimore, "Nausikaa's Suitors," in *Classical Studies Presented to Ben Edwin Perry* (= *IllStLangLit* 58 [Urbana 1969]) 88-102.

bued with a subtle erotic potential,³³ partly due to Odysseus' unique nakedness, the *locus amoenus* where they meet, and Nausikaa's own focus on marriage.

Alone among the female multiforms, Nausikaa displays none of the suspicion or hostility prominent in the others. As Odysseus approaches, the serving maids flee; but Nausikaa remains to face him, Athene having put daring into her heart. Supplication is again part of the initial approach to the female, as with Circe, though here rôles are reversed as Odysseus tactfully supplicates Nausikaa, asking the way to the city, the identity of the people—but chiefly flattering her (147–69), implicitly deducing and playing on her interest in marriage (180–85). Odysseus' own identity remains undisclosed. His deft ability to communicate with her will reappear in his encounters with Arete and Penelope, and broadly recalls his coming to terms with Circe.

In Odysseus' initial approach to Arete, supplication and surprise are again central ingredients. He startles Arete as he had Circe, for Athene's mist of invisibility breaks only when he embraces Arete's knees. Athene emphasizes that the approach to Arete is dangerous, and this is her motivation for supplying the cloud of mist (7.15ff).³⁴ Unlike Circe and Nausikaa, Arete makes no response, nor do any of the other Phaiakians until Ekheneos admonishes them for failing to receive the stranger hospitably. Even after the proper formalities have been initiated, Arete still refrains from answering Odysseus until Alkinoos has questioned him, with Odysseus repeating his plea for an escort home. Only after all the others have retired for the night does Arete, alone with Alkinoos and the mysterious stranger, enter into discourse with Odysseus.

Arete addresses him with the same half line uttered by Circe in the Aiaian multiform, but adds a different ending referring to the clothes Odysseus is wearing (7.238): τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἶματ' ἔδωκεν; Her long hesitation in offering any response to the man who specifically supplicated her is indicative of the various retardations that typify the Skherian multiform, but can also be seen to signify caution and suspicion on

³³ See e.g. Fenik 127, 243; cf. Joyce's adaptation of the scene in *Ulysses* and M. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley 1974) 47.

³⁴ Both Nausikaa (6.274ff) and Athene (7.30ff) emphasize the potential danger that awaits Odysseus as he approaches the queen.

her part.³⁵ She has waited until the other Phaiakians have left (just as Odysseus' first interviews with Circe and Nausikaa were conducted in private, 10.310ff, 6.138–99) before raising a question that must have been on her mind the entire time: the clothes Odysseus is wearing, which were last seen in her daughter's possession. In reply, Odysseus evades revealing direct information about himself other than his most recent whereabouts, and finds instead an opportunity to praise Nausikaa's conduct.

As he approaches the palace on Ithaka, Odysseus encounters physical violence and verbal abuse more direct than in the approaches to Circe and Arete. He first sees Penelope when she makes her appearance before the suitors in Book 18 (208–89). Penelope's appearance has been criticized as unmotivated, a narrative inconsistency.³⁶ But the sequence closely parallels Athene's intervention to ensure Nausikaa's encounter with Odysseus.³⁷ Earlier, after hearing Eumaios' account of his guest (17.529ff), Penelope asked to speak with the stranger; but Odysseus suggests delaying the meeting until the suitors depart for the night (17.560ff).

As a prelude of sorts to the first interview, postponed until Book 19, Athene motivates Penelope to appear much as in Book 6 she motivates Nausikaa's encounter with Odysseus. Critics have noted that Penelope gives one reason for now appearing before the suitors (declaring that she wishes both to appear before them and to dissuade Telemakhos from associating with them) but claims a different motivation when she speaks before them (chastizing Telemakhos for allowing shoddy treatment of the stranger and the suitors for their ignoble attempts at wooing her).³⁸ The narrative displays a parallel discrepancy between Nausikaa's stated motivation for taking the wagon out (to wash her brother's clothing) and her actual intention (interest in marriage). Both appearances are provoked

³⁵ Fenik 1–18, among others, has dealt at length with her delay. Though his study is valuable one, I do not agree with his conclusion about Arete's function in the narrative (105ff). I argue that she plays a more central rôle than he suggests.

³⁶ For a summary of the objections and suggested inconsistencies, see Katz 78–93.

³⁷ On the similarities see Lang and van Nortwick.

³⁸ On the discrepancy, see, again, Katz 78ff and the earlier discussions she summarizes.

by Athene in order to bring Odysseus into contact with the respective females for the first time, with both masking their true motives. Furthermore, this scene directly highlights Penelope's sexuality to a degree unique in the poem,³⁹ and we have already noted the sexual modality in Nausikaa's rôle.⁴⁰

By appearing before them in this way, Penelope is able to manipulate the suitors into offering her substantial gifts (18.275–303), as an admiring Odysseus observes her deception.⁴¹ We might compare Arete's manipulation of the Phaiakian nobles in the *Intermezzo*, as she arranges for further gifts for Odysseus (11.338–41). Although this element occurs in different sequence in the two multiforms, with Penelope ignorant of Odysseus' presence, both queens nonetheless use their own power to obtain gifts as part of a coming to terms with Odysseus.

In all three multiforms Odysseus' first encounter with the female is the most overtly sexual. When Penelope descends before the suitors (and Odysseus), "Their knees gave way, and the hearts in them were bemused with passion, and each one prayed for the privilege of lying beside her" (18.21f). Odysseus' first encounter with Circe is the only explicitly sexual scene described between the two, and we have already noted the essentially sexual and marital element in Odysseus' encounter with Nausikaa.⁴²

In his first conference with Penelope (Book 19) and the arrangements that bring it about, Odysseus acts much as Arete had: cautiously unwilling to converse until he is alone with Penelope.⁴³ This conforms to Athene's suggestion, in their initial meeting on Ithaka (13.336), that Odysseus will test his

³⁹ See the discussion by V. J. Wohl, "Standing by the Stathmos: Sexual Ideology in the Odyssey," *Arethusa* 26 (1993) 40f.

⁴⁰ See further Wohl (*supra* n.39) 27ff on Nausikaa's sexual identity.

⁴¹ On the narrative problems in Odysseus' seemingly clairvoyant understanding of Penelope's motives, see Katz 89, 118.

⁴² We may have one slight trace of this tendency in Arete. At the end of Odysseus' first evening at court, Arete bids her servants prepare a bed for the stranger (7.335–43). This is the only occasion in Homeric epic where a host urges a guest to go to bed without a request having been made (Reece 67). This is perhaps as close as Arete comes to suggesting any sexual modality, and only distantly echoes Odysseus making love to Circe and Penelope.

⁴³ That Odysseus is able to dictate the time of the interview is an indication of his subtly growing stature on Ithaka.

wife rather than seek immediate reunion.⁴⁴ In their second interview, however, their position will be reversed, as Penelope will conform to the pattern of the suspicious, distant female. I defer further discussion of their first conference until the next section.

*The female imposes a test on him, whereupon Odysseus, having successfully passed the test, wins her sympathy and help, obtaining access to the next phase of his homecoming. Their understanding is made manifest in her offer of a bath. Furthermore, Odysseus is now offered sexual union and/or marriage with the female.*⁴⁵ On Aiaia, Odysseus passes a test, in no uncertain terms, as he remains neither enchanted nor transformed by Circe's spell. Her supplication of the mortal hero underscores the unique and unexpected nature of Odysseus' success. Nonetheless the goddess quickly recovers her composure and suggests that they make love as a token of faith and trust (10.333ff).

The *Odyssey* is discreet as to the sexual relations between Odysseus and Circe: a single line serves to describe their love-making (10.347): "I mounted the surpassingly beautiful bed of Circe." We note, however, that although Odysseus will delay eating with Circe out of concern for his crew, no such concern delays their sleeping together (*cf.* Heubeck *ad* 10.346). I suggest that this is an indication of the power of Circe's sexual allure, as well as conforming to Hermes' earlier decree. Four servants then prepare a luxuriant bath for him and a banquet for Circe and her guest. The bath is a standard element of hospitality,⁴⁶ but in these three multiforms it conveys, I suggest, a greater than usual intimacy, bordering on the erotic.

On Skheria Odysseus implicitly passes a test in the way he negotiates the delicate encounter with Nausikaa. Her test would seem to be that of determining his suitability as her husband. Her doubts answered by his speech, Nausikaa bids her servants to bathe Odysseus, but in the subsequent narrative they do not

⁴⁴ Such a procedure is inherently part of Odysseus' character, as well as his necessary reaction to the story of Agamemnon's reception by Klytaimnestra.

⁴⁵ The separate acts grouped together here, though clearly present in each multiform, do not all occur in precisely the same order in each sequence.

⁴⁶ For the most complete treatment of this topic see Reece. Earlier commentators include W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer (=Problemata* 7 [Berlin 1933]).

do so (6.211–16). Instead they provide him with the necessary implements for bathing himself. Commentators have complained of inconsistency.⁴⁷ Odysseus' nakedness may offer a partial reason for an apparent aloofness on their part. Facing a nude adult male in a room intended for bathing may be one thing, facing him in the wild—a not infrequent locus for rape in classical myth—may be another.⁴⁸ Yet in terms of the narrative pattern, the servants' aloofness serves as an anticipatory echo of the shoddy treatment Odysseus will receive from Penelope's maids, and conforms to the repeated characterization of the Phaiakians as distant to strangers.

After Odysseus bathes, Athene pours χάρις on him, prompting Nausikaa's admiration (6.242ff). She bids her servants to offer him food and drink, in effect granting him ξενία. Lacking a hearth or οἶκος, however, Odysseus is not yet officially accepted into a family or city. Nonetheless, Nausikaa's actions foreshadow the ξενία that Arete and Alkinoos will bestow. In all three multiforms, Odysseus' reception of ξενία is closely tied to his coming to terms with the female.⁴⁹ Nausikaa now guides Odysseus to the next phase of his homecoming, as Athene specifically intended,⁵⁰ by directing him to Arete. As with Circe and later with Penelope, Nausikaa becomes a marital possibility, thanks in this case to her father's offer (7.313),⁵¹ though acceptance remains outside the range of narrative possibilities.

Instructed by Nausikaa (6.289–315) and Athene (7.48–77), Odysseus sets forth to win over the aloof Arete. As an indication of the complexity of this part of the sequence, both Arete and Penelope will require two tests of Odysseus. In Arete's first meeting with him, the explicit test she imposes is an accounting of the court clothing he wears, as well as an

⁴⁷ For a recent discussion see P. V. Jones, "Odyssey 6.209–23: The Instructions to Bathe," *Mnemosyne* SER. 4 42 (1989) 349–64.

⁴⁸ For a very different perspective on Odysseus' nakedness, see J. Gutglueck, "A Detestable Encounter in *Odyssey* VI," *CJ* 83 (1988) 97–102.

⁴⁹ See Katz 177 for the view that Penelope establishes a relationship with Odysseus based more on ξενία than on a γάμος. Cf. B. Goldfarb, "The Conflict of Obligations in Euripides' *Alcestis*," *GRBS* 33 (1992) 109–26, for consideration of similar issues.

⁵⁰ 6.114, "and she [Nausikaa] should be his guide to the city of the Phaiakians."

⁵¹ As Crane noted (136ff) the offer is not surprising, only the swiftness with which Alkinoos makes it.

explanation of who he is and, perhaps, what his motives are. In his lengthy reponse, Odysseus carefully addresses both issues, clearly satisfying her on the former but deliberately providing only the most recent information as to his identity, merely stressing that his desire is to return home, and that not even goddesses were able to restrain him permanently. Odysseus appears to pass Arete's initial test, however, for he wins preliminary acceptance in the palace.

Arete still makes no response to Odysseus' supplication, specifically aimed at her. Athene earlier utters what we can view as a technical term for the process through which Arete goes in her relations with Odysseus, the goddess noting that he will obtain his homecoming εἴ κέν τοι κείνη (Arete) γε φίλα φρονέησ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ (7.75). Elsewhere in Homer this term (and its opposite κακὰ φρονέων) usually describes a deity's attitude towards a mortal.⁵² In this narrative pattern φίλα φρονέουσα describes the female after Odysseus has reached an accommodation with her. Circe is first described as the exact opposite. When Odysseus initially approaches her she is κακὰ φρονέουσ' (10.317). Though never described as φίλα φρονέουσα, Circe displays such an attitude in her intimacy, hospitality, and subsequent aid to Odysseus.⁵³ Arete becomes φίλα φρονέουσα when, in the *Intermezzo*, she proclaims that Odysseus is her ξείνος.⁵⁴ Why she does so, however, has been a matter of considerable debate. As she was not present at Odysseus' triumph in the athletic games, only his overall demeanor and

⁵² Such passages include *Od.* 1.43 (Hermes to Aigisthos), 307 (Athene to Telemakhos); 6.313 (Arete to Odysseus); 7.15 (Athene to Odysseus), 42 (same), 75 (Arete to Odysseus); 16.17 (general, in a simile, of father to child); 20.5 (Odysseus to the suitors). For κακὰ φρονέων/φρονέουσα: *Il.* 16.783 (Apollo to Patroklos); *Od.* 10.317 (Circe to Odysseus). See also δολοφρονέουσα, 10.339, Circe to Odysseus before they make love.

⁵³ On her intimacy, note how she delineates their initial love-making (10.334f): ὄφρα μίγντε εὐνή καὶ φιλότῃτι πεποιθόμεν ἀλλήλοισιν. As to her subsequent aid, consider the two lengthy sets of advice before the *Katabasis* and before the resumption of his wanderings, as well as provisions and even knowledge of a particular knot (8.447f).

⁵⁴ Official recognition or conferral of the status is normally a masculine rôle. On this see Katz 134ff, 174. That Arete performs this rôle is another subtle indication of the power she wields.

tact so far displayed, and his narratives in the first half of the *Apologue*, could account for her shift in position.⁵⁵

The *Apologue* makes a case for her coming to terms with Odysseus on two counts. It continually depicts an Odysseus focused on returning home, even leaving two goddesses who desired him as their husband (9.29–33). In effect, Odysseus establishes a thesis, which much of the *Apologue* supports, that “nothing is more sweet in the end than country and parents ever, even when far away one lives in a fertile place, when it is in alien country, far from his parents” (9.33–36). Odysseus’ assertion is rhetorically similar to that which closed his earlier speech to Nausikaa (6.182ff): “for there is nothing better than this, more steadfast than when two people, a man and his wife, keep a harmonious household.” With a parallel use of comparatives, Odysseus in each case claims an ideal, aimed at a specific audience: priority of marriage (with no mention of children,⁵⁶ hence a young married couple), aimed at the young, marriage-minded Nausikaa, and priority of parents and homeland, aimed at his hosts, parents themselves and, as rulers, an embodiment of Skheria itself. Much of Odysseus’ subsequent narrative demonstrates his desire to return home in spite of formidable obstacles that would have defeated a man with less self-control.

Secondly, Odysseus tailors his narrative of the *Nekyia* so that it focuses almost exclusively on women, until the *Intermezzo* directs a more traditional focus on the heroes who died at Troy. Sent explicitly to consult with Teiresias, Odysseus first encounters his mother Antikleia (84–89), driving him to tears, though he keeps her at a distance until he has dealt with the prophet (90–151) as instructed. Although he has included his mother as a topic of inquiry (141–44), Odysseus only now enters into a dialogue with her (152–225), *at greater length than with Teiresias*. Antikleia concludes with the admonition, “but remember these things for your wife, so you may tell her hereafter” (11.223f), further depicting Odysseus as a man concerned about his wife and sensitive to the reactions of women. There follows the Catalogue of Women (225–332),

⁵⁵ See L. E. Doherty, “The Internal and Implied Audiences of *Odyssey* 11,” *Arethusa* 24 (1991) 145–76, for a convincing analysis of how Odysseus tailors parts of the *Nekyia* for Arete’s benefit.

⁵⁶ J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey I* (Oxford 1988) ad 6.181–85.

after which Arete proclaims (11.336ff): “Phaiakians, what do you think now of this man before you for beauty and stature, and for the mind well balanced within him? And again he is my own guest.” Arete is now φιλά φρονέουσα, in effect answering Odysseus’ supplication at 7.146–52, and fulfilling the rôle earlier forecast by Nausikaa and Athene.⁵⁷ Odysseus has now passed a second test. Further, she advises (commands?) the others at court to bestow additional gifts upon Odysseus. Odysseus’ final words in Skheria are to Arete (13.59–62), a further acknowledgement of her central rôle. As his first words at court were also to her (7.146–52), his focus on Arete encapsulates the entire Skherian sequence after the initial meeting with Nausikaa.⁵⁸

The process by which Odysseus comes to terms with Penelope is similarly complex. Odysseus has three meetings with Penelope: her appearance before the suitors (18.158–303, discussed above), their lengthy interview (19.53–604), and the recognition scene (23.85–343). The first interview (19.53–604) offers numerous parallels with Odysseus’ encounter with Arete.⁵⁹ As with Arete, clothes form a significant topic in the first interview with Penelope. Penelope begins with the same formulaic question asked by Circe and Arete (19.105=10.325=7.238a). As before, Odysseus avoids revealing any particulars of his identity. His initial response (19.107–14), praise of her reputation and stature, thematically parallels Athene’s description of Arete (7.66–74). But when he claims to have hosted Odysseus, Penelope requires proof. To test him, as she explicitly states is her purpose (19.215), she asks what clothes Odysseus wore on that occasion. As with Arete, Odysseus is able to reach an understanding on the basis of his account about clothes of central interest to his female interlocutor. In each case, his answer contributes to the temporary identity he is establishing. Her test satisfied, Penelope notes, “Stranger, while before this you had my pity, you now shall be my friend and be respectd

⁵⁷ Note that Athene’s agenda at 8.21f, ὡς κεν Φαιήκεσσι φίλος πάντεσσι γένοιτο δεινός τ’ αἰδοῖός τε, also describes the process by which Arete becomes φιλά φρονέουσα.

⁵⁸ S. Tracy, *The Story of the Odyssey* (Princeton 1990) 80.

⁵⁹ The parallels have been noted by many. Among these, see Doherty (*supra* n.55) 172f; Lang 163f.

here in my palace" (19.253f),⁶⁰ equivalent to Arete's declaration in the *Intermezzo* (11.336-41).

Having passed her test, Odysseus now prophesies his own return, but finds an incredulous Penelope. Much as the Skherian multiform, the Ithakan sequence now postpones a full coming to terms between Odysseus and Penelope, a parallel in the lengthy delay between Odysseus' initial supplication of Arete and her eventual proclamation of him as her ξείνος. Penelope does, however, offer Odysseus a bath, a sign of his being accorded full hospitality. But the bath will be deferred until the second interview between Odysseus and Penelope in Book 23.

Although Odysseus reaches an understanding with Penelope after other elements in the pattern we have yet to discuss, we shall nonetheless briefly analyze it here, as it complements the interview of Book 19. Penelope refuses to believe Eurykleia's report of the slain suitors (23.10ff, 63ff). Descending into the μέγαρον, "She sat a long time in silence" (23.93), much as Arete had done. Odysseus turns his attention to Telemakhos and to plans for the coming battle with the suitors' relatives, and suggests that they bathe and dress. As many have noted, Odysseus' emergence from his bath is described with the same lines used after his bath on the shore at Skheria (6.230-35=23.157-62).⁶¹ Still apparently unmoved, Penelope poses the test of the bed, and, unique among the poem's characters, temporarily outwits Odysseus, causing him to lose his characteristic self control. Only now, after an aloofness worthy of Arete and with an apparent distance suitable to Circe, does Penelope, satisfied in multiple tests, come to an agreement with Odysseus. Shortly thereafter, husband and wife make love. As in the Aiaian multiform with Circe, we note the close proximity of the bath and the love-making.

Conflict arises, however, between Odysseus and the band of young men. The young men abuse Odysseus in various ways

⁶⁰ Note the assertive "in my palace (ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐμοῖσι)," used by Penelope only here, and the similarly assertive 19.94, where she rebukes a rude serving maid.

⁶¹ Hainsworth (*supra* n.56) noting the repeated simile and context, declares (*ad* 6.232-35), "The repetition cannot have been conscious." Such an assertion, however, depends upon a severely limited view of the architectonics possible in oral composition.

and violate a divine interdiction.⁶² Although the Ithakan multi-form offers the most direct conflict between Odysseus and the young men, the two other multiforms offer significant suggestion of such conflict.

We earlier noted a pattern of insubordination by Odysseus' men and by Eurylokhos in particular. Elpenor, the only other crew member developed as a distinct personality, also becomes a problem on Aiaia. Though Elpenor may seem harmless enough, having had too much to drink (10.555, οἶνοβαρείων), the only other characters described by Homer as οἶνοβαρείων are Polyphemos (9.374) and Eurytion the centaur (21.304), both notorious violators of ξενία and other social norms, both meeting with violent punishment. Furthermore, Elpenor's other qualities—that he is “not terribly powerful in fighting nor sound in his thoughts” (10.552f), as well as drinking to excess—are emblematic of much of the crew's behavior.⁶³ Elpenor falls to his death, startled from a drunken sleep by the crew's loud noises (556: κινυμένων δ' ἐτάρων ὄμαδον καὶ δοῦπον ἀκούσας). Although ὄμαδος occurs only here in the *Odyssey*, ὀμαδεῖν occurs five times (1.365; 4.768; 17.360; 18.399; 22.21), always to describe the suitors and the ruckus they create in Odysseus' palace. In Elpenor and the crew, the narrative thus describes behavior quite similar to that of Penelope's wooers. The ἐταῖροι, like the suitors, have been taking part in a nonstop feast, their stay capped by Elpenor's drunken death.⁶⁴

Eurylokhos embodies a more active, overtly disobedient side of the crew. He repeatedly leads the equivalent of mutinies that border on violence. After Odysseus comes to terms with Circe, persuading the goddess to restore the crew and accepting her hospitality, Eurylokhos again rebels, arguing that in remaining with Circe they go to their doom (10.429–37). Odysseus reacts strongly (438–41): “I considered in my mind whether to draw out the long-edged sword from beside my big thigh and cut off his head and throw it on the ground, even though he was nearly related to me by marriage.” This scene

⁶² Powell (*supra* n.3: 33) makes a brief parallel between the three bands of young men.

⁶³ Excessive drinking and consumption turned the Ismaros stop into a disaster (9.43–46), while the proem heavily emphasizes the issue of forbidden consumption at Thrinakia.

⁶⁴ That he dies as a result of his intoxication looks ahead to the suitors' drunken state on their final day.

parallels the violence that will erupt between Odysseus and the suitors. That this occurs on Aiaia suggests an implicit friction between Odysseus and his crew with regard to Circe, perhaps in that only Odysseus has any intimacy with Circe, much as he, not the suitors, will win Penelope.

The conflict culminates on and around Thrinakia, an episode closely linked to events on Aiaia. Helios figures prominently from the beginning of the Aiaian sequence. Circe's lineage, as daughter of Helios (10.137f), suggests an alignment between events on Aiaia and Thrinakia, as do events before Odysseus even meets the goddess.⁶⁵

Uttered by Circe (and Teiresias), and relayed by Odysseus to his crew (12.271–76), the prohibition against eating Helios' cattle is a divine interdiction, comparable to that in Genesis 2–3. The men, weary and fearing death at sea (or so claims Eurylokhos, 12.279–93), are nonetheless for pulling into Thrinakia. Odysseus anticipates their mutiny: "So spoke Eurylokhos, and my other companions assented. I saw then what evil the divinity had in mind for us" (12.294f). Noting that Eurylokhos has the force of numbers on his side (297, ἢ μάλα δὴ με βιάζετε μῶνον ἔόντα). Odysseus has them swear an oath that they will not slaughter the oxen. When Circe's provisions are exhausted, however, Eurylokhos once again leads a revolt, now arguing that the worst of all deaths is to die of starvation (340–51). His reasoning is perverse because he argues for the exact opposite of his earlier speech (279–93), in which, implicitly, death at sea was to be avoided at all costs, now suggesting now that death at sea is preferable to dying on land.⁶⁶ Furthermore, he foolishly minimizes the consequences of violating the divine interdiction.

As Crane has suggested (148), Thrinakia constitutes a test, and an unusual one: "[Thrinakia] is unusual ... it demands that Odysseus remain passive and idle ... nevertheless [it] serves the underlying purpose of every heroic task: it elicits from the hero

⁶⁵ Odysseus hunts a stag for his crew, which he catches because the μένος ἡελίου (10.160) has made it seek a drink in the river. Frequent mention of Helios continues (10.183, 185, 191). Functioning as something of a thematic transition, perhaps, are significant solar emphases in the previous episode with the Laistrygones (10.86).

⁶⁶ C. Segal, "Divine Justice in the *Odyssey*: Poseidon, Cyclops, and Helios," *AJP* 113 (1992) 509, is perhaps too lenient suggesting that "we feel sympathy for the doomed companions; their fault ... seems pardonable." I suggest that the poem intends us to have no more sympathy for the crew than for the suitors.

those qualities that set him apart from ordinary men." Odysseus, here as elsewhere, survives both because he is *πολύτλας* and has learned to respect the gods, much as Zeus suggests in the opening scene.⁶⁷

On Skheria, as on Aiaia, conflict between Odysseus and the band of young men remains largely implicit and potential, flaring up on one brief occasion.⁶⁸ As we noted earlier, Nausikaa and Athene suggest the possibility of friction.⁶⁹ Nausikaa raises the possibility of conflict between Odysseus and the potentially rejected Phaiakian suitors.⁷⁰ And indeed in the athletic games—themselves Alkinoos' attempt at creating a diversion for his guest, who has been moved to tears by Demodokos' singing—conflict does erupt. In reply to Euryalos' abusive response when Odysseus declines to participate, the hero observes, "Friend, that was not well spoken; you seem like one who is reckless" (8.166, *ἀτασθάλῳ ἀνδρὶ ἕοικας*).⁷¹ Provoked, Odysseus does compete, after the fact, surpassing the others in hurling the discus. He also claims other athletic prowess, especially in archery (8.217ff): "I know well how to handle the polished bow, and would be first to strike my man with an arrow aimed at a company of hostile men." Since antiquity commentators have rightly seen connection between this passage and the *μνηστηροφονία*.⁷² I suggest it also parallels the episode discussed above when Odysseus considers slaying Eurylokhos (10.438ff).

⁶⁷ "[Odysseus] who beyond others has given sacrifice to the gods" (1.66f).

⁶⁸ G. P. Rose, "The Unfriendly Phaeacians," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 387–406, remains the best account of potential conflict facing Odysseus on Skheria. For an attempted rebuttal that points out a few excesses in Rose's depiction, but nonetheless fails to overturn most of his formulations, see G. J. de Vries, "Phaeacian Manners," *Mnemosyne* SER. 4 30 (1977) 113–21. See also Reece 104–07.

⁶⁹ See especially 6.273f; 7.15ff, 32f, 60 (the Phaiakians are descended from a *λαὸς ἀτάσθαλος*).

⁷⁰ Woodhouse has explored this perspective most fully, arguing that an earlier folktale version, in which Odysseus would have wooed and married Nausikaa, underlies the sequence. See also Murnaghan 97; Reece 109ff with his references to earlier literature.

⁷¹ Forms of the strongly negative *ἀτάσθαλος* are used to describe members of all three bands, the crew (1.7; 10.68), the suitors (22.416) and here, one of the Phaiakian youths.

⁷² There is no unanimity on the subject, however, witness Hainesworth *ad* 8.215–18, "that episode (the *μνηστηροφονία*) does not need the support of so distant and incidental a comment as this."

The Skherian sequence contains a further element of conflict, far more fatal, that is perhaps indirectly related to this episode. As a consequence of Odysseus' visit, Poseidon will take the lives of the crew who escort Odysseus to Ithaka. Though their identities are never specified, I suggest that they largely consist of the athletes participating in the games in Book 8, among them Euryalos.⁷³ Fifty-two young men are selected (8.35f, 48), who, having finished preparations for the voyage, enter Alkinoos' palace for the feast (8.55f). When Alkinoos proposes the games, he leads the way and "all the other best men of the Phaiakians went" (8.107f), necessarily including the crew. There follows a catalogue of the best athletes, in which thirteen are named, all with nautical etymologies. Of the entries in the catalogue, Euryalos is most prominent (115ff). The crew are referred to as *ἑταῖροι* (8.151), the word most often used by Odysseus of his own crew.⁷⁴

Though the Skherian sequence does not offer an explicit divine interdiction, there is an implicit limitation on the Phaiakians' power to convoy people across the seas. This is apparent both in the prophecy threatening the Phaiakians in this respect (quoted below) as well as in Poseidon's manner of punishing them. Implicitly, Poseidon would seem to intend "do not ferry everyone (or Odysseus) home with ease."⁷⁵

In the Ithakan multiform conflict between Odysseus and the suitors is overt and omnipresent. Initially revolving around hospitality, the conflict ultimately focuses directly on the wooing of Penelope. The poem foreshadows the eventual conflict in the increasingly tense and hostile relations between Telemakhos and the suitors.

In terms of transgressing divine interdictions, the suitors repeatedly violate the basic tenets of Zeus *Ξείνιος*, as the poem repeatedly demonstrates. They mock and ignore divinely inspired prophecies that their own present wrongdoings will lead to their destruction. The disguised Odysseus gives them opportunities to cease their excessive behavior, offering *exempla* from his life of how the gods punished him for reckless acts (17.419–44, 18.125–50).

⁷³ I am unable to find this suggestion in earlier commentators.

⁷⁴ At 13.21 the narrator also uses *ἑταῖροι* of the Phaiakian crew.

⁷⁵ Poseidon's punishment is analogous with the Clashing Rocks through which the Argonauts sailed but no one since, a boundary marking off heroic deeds and times from subsequent eras.

The leader of each band has the parallel name of Eury-. Eurylokhos' name, probably a possessive compound, may mean "having (a) wide ambush."⁷⁶ In effect, he ambushes Odysseus in the series of conflicts and mutinies he leads against him. Ironically, however, Odysseus is the figure in all of Greek mythology most adept at plotting and surviving ambushes.⁷⁷ I suggest that the meaning of the name Eurylokhos is to an extent thematically operative for the similar-sounding Euryalos and Eurymakhos.

Both *ambush* Odysseus, Euryalos in the games, and Eurymakhos on Ithaka, their names specifying the contexts in which their conflicts occur. As do many of the Phaiakian names, Euryalos, perhaps "broad sea" or "having (a) broad sea," signifies his identity with his people, and, perhaps, the location and manner of his death at the hands of Poseidon.⁷⁸

Though Antinoos and Eurymakhos act as virtual co-leaders of the suitors, certain details suggest that Eurymakhos is the principal figure. He, not Antinoos, inquires after the identity of Telemakhos' mysterious visitor in Book 1 (400–411). He is described as the suitor with the best chance of winning Penelope (15.17f). He is the first to address her when she appears to the suitors (18.245–49). He assists in plotting an ambush not only for Odysseus, but for Telemakhos as well.⁷⁹ The second element in his name may foreshadow the μνησθηροφονία, Odysseus' last heroic exploit in the poem, and thus ironically helps glorify the protagonist.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ There is no consensus on the meanings of the three names under consideration. Though the specific elements in Eurylochos and Eurymachos seem unambiguous, there are different possibilities for the second component of Euryalos. H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen* (Göttingen 1982) 71, suggests ἄλλομαι.

⁷⁷ See A. Edwards, *Achilles in the Odyssey* (= *Beitr.z.kl.Phil.* 171 [Königstein 1985]) 15–42 for a study of λόχος in Homer, though, somewhat surprisingly, he does not deal with Eurylokhos.

⁷⁸ Von Kamptz (*supra* n.76: 89, 64) suggests both εὐρυ- "rich in" or ἔρυμαι as possible derivations for the first element of these compounds. He does not, however, address the possibility of any relationship between the three similar names.

⁷⁹ Though Antinoos proposes the attempt, Eurymakhos assents to the plan, 4.663–74.

⁸⁰ It is worth remembering that Herakles, with whom the *Odyssey* several times parallels Odysseus, has as his principal human antagonist Eurystheus (the king, whose power over Herakles is explained at *Il.* 19.95–133), a similar

Their consequent death, earlier prophesied, is brought about by a divine avenger. Teiresias prophesies the death of the ἑταῖροι in no uncertain terms (11.112f), a prophecy afterwards restated by Circe (12.139f).⁸¹ As an indication of the central importance of the episode, Zeus is the divine avenger for the transgression on Thrinakia, destroying the ship with a storm, though Helios is the injured party.

In the Skherian multiform, Alkinoos twice states his father's ancient prophecy: "He said that one day, as a well-made ship of Phaiakian men came back from a convoy on the misty face of the water, he (Poseidon) would stun it and pile a great mountain over our city to hide it" (8.567ff=13.175ff). No specific mention is made of the crew, but their death is a necessary consequence of the prophecy. In this multiform, Poseidon, the injured divine party, exacts his own vengeance.

Of the several prophecies of the suitors' deaths, most important is that of Theoklymenos in Book 20. His prophecy, accompanied by a series of eerie events,⁸² suggests the suitors' proximity to Hades (20.351–56):

Poor wretches, what evil has come upon you? Your heads
and faces
and the knees underneath you are shrouded in night and
darkness;
a sound of wailing has broken out, your cheeks are covered
with tears, and the walls bleed, and the fine supporting
pillars.
All the forecourt is huddled with ghosts, the yard is full of
them
as they flock down to the underworld and the darkness.
The sun
has perished out of the sky, and a foul mist has come over.

compound name, and on a less important level, *Eurytion*. Note also that Eurystheus is Herakles' kinsman, as Eurylokhos is Odysseus' (10.441).

⁸¹ Polyphemos earlier curses Odysseus with approximately the same fate: "let him come late, in bad case, with the loss of all his companions" (9.534). I suggest, however, that the proem, the Ismaros incident, and the general structure of the *Odyssey* argue that the crew, not Polyphemos' curse, are themselves responsible for their deaths.

⁸² *E.g.* the suitors' uncontrollable laughter (345ff), and the transformation of their feast into a mess of blood (348). Fenik (242) rightly compares this last to the strange happenings on Thrinakia as the flesh of the slain cattle creeps and bellows.

Odysseus fulfills the rôle of the divine avenger who punishes wrongdoing in the Ithakan sequence. As commentators have noted, his homecoming has many elements of a theoxeny, in which a disguised god visits mortals to test their hospitality.⁸³ Odysseus is not a god, though many on Ithaka mistake him for one, including some rather astute observers.⁸⁴ But he does serve an agenda directed by Zeus and Athene, in effect carrying out their intentions. The suitors so intimate when one regrets Antinoos' violence against the disguised Odysseus (17.483–87):

Antinoos, you did badly to hit the unhappy vagabond:
a curse on you, if he turns out to be some god from heaven.
For the gods do take on all sorts of transformations,
appearing
as strangers from elsewhere, and thus they range at large
through the cities,
watching to see which men keep the laws, and which are
violent.

When Eurykleia later exults in triumph, Odysseus downplays his own rôle, assigning responsibility to the gods (22.412–16): “These were destroyed by the doom of the gods and their own hard actions, for these men paid no attention at all to any man on earth who came their way, no matter if he were base or noble. So by their own recklessness they have found a shameful death.” As we noted earlier, Athene designs and sets in motion Odysseus' course against the suitors,⁸⁵ enjoying Zeus' full support (24.478ff). Events suggest a parallel, reinforcing divine avenger in Apollo,⁸⁶ on whose holiday the *μνησθηροφονία* occurs and through whose weapon, the bow, it is effected.

A divine consultation limits the extent of the death and destruction. When Helios learns what has occurred, he consults with Zeus, demanding the death of the crew and threatening greater harm if this is not carried out (12.377–83): “Father Zeus ... punish the companions of Odysseus ... for they outrageously killed my cattle.... Unless these are made to give me just recompense for my cattle, I will go down into Hades and give

⁸³ See E. Kearns, “The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny,” *CQ* n.s. 32 (1982) 2–8; Reece 139, 181–86, 200f.

⁸⁴ Telemakhos, 16.178f; Penelope, 23.63–68.

⁸⁵ Note especially 13.396ff.

⁸⁶ Thus the often-invoked Homeric trinity of Zeus, Athene, and Apollo (*Il* 2.371, 4.288, 7.132; *Od.* 4.341, 6.311, 17.132, 18.235, 24.376) seem to work in tandem.

my light to the dead men."⁸⁷ Zeus willingly assents to the former option (384–88): he destroys the crew but spares Odysseus, as he did not transgress the interdiction.

In the Skherian multiform, as at Thrinakia, the injured divine party, Poseidon, consults with Zeus to air his complaint (13.149–52): "This time, I wish to stun that beautiful vessel of the Phaiakians ... so that they may stop and give over conveying people. And I would hide their city under a mountain." Zeus talks Poseidon out of the second option, and grants him free rein to fulfill the first, much as in the sequence with Helios.⁸⁸

In the Ithakan multiform, the suitors' relatives threaten further fighting. As before, the interested deity, Athene, consults with Zeus, considering two options (24.473–76), "Son of Kronos ... What does your mind have hidden within it? Will you first inflict evil fighting upon them, and terrible strife, or will you establish friendship between the factions?" As in the other sequences the more threatening option is avoided. This consultation again underlies Athene's responsibility in the *μνησθηροφονία*, as she, like Helios and Poseidon, here appears in the rôle of the injured divinity.

Having explored the entire narrative pattern in detail, we can now consider it more broadly. Typically, the *Odyssey* develops the three multiforms in ring-compositional sequence.⁸⁹ The poem opens focusing on the suitors and Penelope (Books 1–2, 4.625–847). Books 6 through 8 focus on Nausikaa, Arete and the young Phaiakian athletes, while the *Apologue* depicts the crew and their destruction. The narrative continues with the Phaiakians' escort of Odysseus, and the destruction of their ship. The remainder of the poem concerns the destruction of

⁸⁷ For why Zeus assents so willingly compare Hades' fear in the theomachy at *Il.* 20.61ff.

⁸⁸ Since antiquity, line 158 of Zeus' response has attracted much argument, as the possibilities pose very different narrative consequences. For a recent discussion see J. Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice* (Princeton 1990) 77–82, though I do not agree with his conclusion as to the authenticity of *μέγα δέ: i.e.,* Zeus really recommends that Poseidon obliterate the Phaiakians. I suggest the narrative pattern in the other multiforms is persuasive against such a reading. Also against the manuscript is R. Friedrich, "Zeus and the Phaeacians: *Odyssey* 13.158," *AJP* 110 (1989) 395–99.

⁸⁹ See W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore 1984) 8–21, for a demonstration of the prevalence of this technique in archaic poetry.

the suitors. We have, then, a sequence of suitors, the Phaiakian youths, the crew, the destruction of the crew, the destruction of the Phaiakian rowers, and, finally, the *μνηστηροφονία*. The overall symmetry argues against any episodic view of composition or interpolation.

We can discern various progressions between the three multiforms. For instance, the female figures become increasingly familiar. The Aiaian sequence is the most mythical and unreal. Circe's motivations remain inaccessible.⁹⁰ On Skheria, however, we are quite privy to Nausikaa's thoughts, though perhaps denied deep insight into Arete. The Ithaka sequence offers a still deeper exploration of Penelope's dilemma and emotions. The *Odyssey* as a whole thus offers something of a parallel to the ascending scale of affection Kakridis recovered in the Meleager story and its parallel in Akhilleus and Patroklos.⁹¹ Though he is temporarily swayed by Circe, Odysseus rejects the offer of marriage with Nausikaa and forms a lasting agreement only with the last, most intimate of the females. The pattern thus further demonstrates the way in which Skheria mediates between boundaries and spheres of action in the *Odyssey*.

Though the narrative pattern forms the skeletal structure of much of the *Odyssey*, its influence is not confined to these three multiforms. The poem contains additional shorter multiforms organized around the same elements. Perhaps the two most notable brief versions are Zeus' opening account of Agamemnon, Klytemnaestra, and Aigisthos, and Demodokos' song of Hephaistos, Aphrodite, and Ares.⁹² At somewhat greater length, Telemakhos' visit with Helen and Menelaus explores many of the same elements.⁹³

Recognition of the pattern reveals much about the structure of the *Odyssey*. The sequence offers evidence of an intricate level of design in the poem, though interpretation of that design

⁹⁰ The Aiaian multiform is the least human as well; consider the implied fate of the penned-in crew, paralleling the cannibalism at the hand of Polyphemos and the Laistrygones.

⁹¹ See J. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (Lund 1949) 11ff.

⁹² Though in these brief versions some elements of the pattern are missing or modified. The *band of young men*, for instance, is one male, Aigisthos, and Ares.

⁹³ Again some elements are lacking: e.g. Telemakhos knows his location. Crane 42ff explores parallels between Helen and Circe.

may remain a subjective matter.⁹⁴ Why does the pattern exist, how conscious of it is the composer? The answer depends upon one's point of view concerning oral composition. Clearly such a structure would be a great aid to an improvising composer, consciously or unconsciously. While improvising a performance, a poet aware of the pattern can more easily concentrate on the distinct characterizations of the three females, the different motivations in the three bands of young men, the different levels of response called for in Odysseus, *etc.* I do not think it unreasonable that a bard was aware of the narrative pattern. Oral literature is an essentially conservative medium, retaining and manipulating inherited motifs and type scenes. It may well be that the pattern is older than our *Odyssey*.⁹⁵

I thus argue that we can better understand the *Odyssey's* structure not as a collection of separate themes, but as a complex of themes that should not be so easily separated. Awareness of the narrative pattern helps clarify such reputed narrative inconsistencies as Hermes' youthful appearance at 10.277, the rôle of Arete, the emphasis placed on Odysseus winning her favor and her delay in answering his initial request, Penelope's appearance to the suitors at 18.206ff, the rôle of Theoklymenos,⁹⁶ and the parallels between Athene preventing further hostilities among the Ithakans and Zeus dissuading Poseidon from further harming the Phaiakians,⁹⁷ among others. Although one element may function more smoothly in one multiform than another, as some have suggested with regard to parallels between events on

⁹⁴ On this issue see Rutherford 133ff.

⁹⁵ Many or all elements, for instance, could clearly work for a narrative about Jason and Medea, whose basic episodes, I suspect, are older than the *Odyssey*, in whatever form.

⁹⁶ Lord (174) suggests that he was based on a theme of Odysseus in disguise; D. L. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford 1955) 83ff, is outspoken about Theoklymenos in general. I argue that he is better understood as the most expanded version of the multiform of the prophet who predicts both Odysseus' homecoming and the destruction of the relevant band of young men, Teiresias, and Alkinoos' father, being the other figures.

⁹⁷ I do not claim that my approach resolves all alleged narrative inconsistencies, but I do argue that it provides a more useful lens with which to study them.

Skheria and Ithaka,⁹⁸ the pattern persists, reflecting the essential conservatism of oral literature: why discard a useful motif?

As for the existence of *three* multiforms of the narrative pattern we might consider Levi-Strauss' formulation, "the question has often been raised why myths, and more generally oral literature, are so much addicted to duplication, triplication or quadruplication of the same sequence ... the answer is obvious: repetition has as its function to make the structure of the myth apparent."⁹⁹ In this pattern the repetition helps emphasize the qualities essential to Odysseus: his cunning, perseverance, and piety, setting him apart from the young men, making him attractive to the female figures. Such an Odysseus engages three different females, three different bands of young men. While possessing their own identities, these characters have in common primarily their intersection with Odysseus and the pain or profit that results thereby. I hope that the present study, far from exhausting the specific parallels between the three multiforms, will provoke interest in the resulting implications.¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁸ Cf. the suggestions by Lang 163ff and Reece 116ff that certain elements in the Skherian sequence are awkwardly modelled on particulars more comfortable in the Ithakan multiform.

⁹⁹ C. Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," reprinted in T. A. Sebeok, *Myth: a Symposium* (Bloomington 1965) 105.

¹⁰⁰ I should like to thank the readers for *GRBS* for their helpful comments and suggestions, and the University Research Institute at the University of Texas, El Paso, for a grant that aided my research.